

Shelter Cluster

The Shelter Cluster – The shelter coordination team (SCT)

Summary

At the 2005 General Assembly, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) committed to convening the Shelter Cluster after natural disasters. Over the following six years, the IFRC deployed the Shelter Cluster to nearly twenty disaster response operations worldwide.

The following case study outlines the IFRC's role as convener of the Shelter Cluster through an examination of the cluster system and the Shelter Cluster's key coordination mechanism, the SCT.

* Inclusive list of all IASC members:

American Council for Voluntary International Action (Inter Action)
Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Office of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (SR on HR of IDPs)
Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR)
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UNHABITAT)
United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
World Bank
World Food Programme (WFP)
World Health Organization (WHO)



Humanitarian Reform

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance. It is a unique forum involving the key humanitarian partners. Its membership includes various UN agencies, the IFRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the main NGO consortia.*

The Humanitarian Reform was adopted by the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) following a 2005 review of international responses to humanitarian emergencies, known as the Humanitarian Response Review.

The Humanitarian Reform seeks to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response by ensuring greater predictability, accountability and partnership. It is an ambitious effort by the international humanitarian community to reach more beneficiaries, with more comprehensive needs-based relief and protection, in a more effective and timely manner.

The Cluster Approach

The cluster approach is a component of the Humanitarian Reform. It was designed as a way of addressing gaps and strengthening effectiveness in support of the host government. By clarifying the division of labour, and better defining organisations' roles and responsibilities, the cluster approach helps ensure predictability and accountability, and creates a more structured, accountable and professional system.

At country level, the number, type of clusters activated, as well as the lead organisation is determined by the humanitarian country team. The table on next page outlines the clusters and their leads at the global level.

	CLUSTER	LEAD AGENCY
	Common Service Areas	
1	Emergency Telecommunications	WFP
2	Logistics	WFP
	Technical Areas	
3	Education	UNICEF / Save the Children UK
4	Shelter	
	IDPs (from conflict)	UNHCR
	Natural disasters	IFRC (Convener)
5	Health	WHO
6	Nutrition	UNICEF
7	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)	UNICEF
8	Food Security Cluster	WFP / FAO
	Cross Cutting Areas	
9	Protection	
	IDPs (from conflict)	UNHCR
	Disaster/civilians affected by conflict (other than IDPs)	UNHCR/OHCHR/ UNICEF
10	Camp Coordination and Management	
	IDPs (from conflict)	UNHCR
	Disaster situations	IOM
11	Early Recovery	UNDP

How the IFRC convenes the Shelter Cluster

Convener

The IFRC signed an agreement with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) defining the conditions to lead the Shelter Cluster. This agreement ensures that IFRC maintain its independence, upholds its Fundamental Principles, policies, and procedures as well as to those of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, including the Seville Agreement. The agreement further guarantees that IFRC undertakes no additional accountability obligations,

and clearly defines the commitments of the IFRC to avoid open-ended or unlimited obligations. The specific conditions of this agreement with OCHA position the IFRC as a ‘convener’, as opposed to a ‘lead agency’ for the Shelter Cluster.

Dedicated teams

To coordinate the Shelter Cluster at the country level, the IFRC deploys a SCT. The shelter coordination team serves as a ‘secretariat’ of the Shelter Cluster. Its dedicated, full-time staff work exclusively on coordination services to shelter agencies. The SCT does not engage in any IFRC operational activities, and thus is able to pro-

vide independent and neutral coordination services to the Shelter Cluster members. The IFRC establishes a firewall between its role as Shelter Cluster convener, and its operational role as shelter implementor.

Predictability and flexibility

The SCT is a flexible coordination mechanism. Its composition varies depending on the size and needs of a disaster. The IFRC typically deploys a dedicated team of 3-4 people, but if a disaster response requires additional support from the Shelter Cluster, the SCT can incorporate several additional roles. The key positions of the SCT ensure that core services are provided to shelter agencies, delivering consistent and predictable support that is easy for partners to understand.

Shelter Coordination Team key positions include:

- Coordinator
- Information manager
- Technical coordinator
- Recovery advisor

Other positions depending on needs

- Hub coordinator
- Mapping advisor
- Environmental advisor
- Government liaison
- Media and communications advisor

Inter-agency support

The SCT is supported by various agencies. The coordinator is chosen from a globally managed roster comprised of individuals from the Red Cross Red Crescent. The rest of the SCT positions are often provided by Shelter Cluster partners, which are either fully funded by the cluster partner, or funded by the IFRC through the shelter cluster component of the IFRC Emergency Appeal. This inter-agency team is perceived as more neutral and inclusive by cluster partners, and also allows the SCT to better understand the needs of the different shelter agencies.



The SCT coordinator addresses shelter agencies during a coordination meeting in Port-au-Prince, Haiti in 2010.



A woman looks from the window of her new shelter provided by Shelter Cluster partners in Ulakan Tapakis, Padang Pariaman district, Indonesia. One of the objectives of the Shelter Cluster is to promote participatory good practices and accountability to affected populations.

Funded at country level

The deployment of the SCT is funded through a globally managed project within the country-level Emergency Appeal. This project is managed by the global cluster coordinator who maintains clear accountability. In emergencies where there is no Emergency Appeal, the deployment of the SCT is funded through the Global Shelter Programme.

Scope

The scope of activities coordinated by the SCT during the emergency phase is not limited to emergency shelter. The Shelter Cluster may also deal with transitional and reconstruction issues, since recovery is an integral part of disaster response that begins immediately after a disaster.

Handover

The IFRC hands over the coordination of the Shelter Cluster to an appropriately placed agency such as UN-HABITAT, UN Development Programme, or an international development NGO, when the majority of conversations held in the Shelter Cluster focus on recovery and reconstruction issues.

Experiences

The IFRC has coordinated the Shelter Cluster a total of 17 times as of December 2010: twice in 2006, three times in 2007, four times in 2008, six times in 2009 and twice in 2010.

1. Indonesia Yogyakarta Earthquake – May 2006
2. Philippines Typhoon Durian – Oct. 2006
3. Mozambique Floods – Feb. 2007
4. Pakistan Cyclone Yemyin Floods – June 2007
5. Bangladesh Cyclone Sidr – Nov. 2007
6. Tajikistan Cold Wave – Feb. 2008
7. Myanmar Cyclone Nargis – May 2008
8. Nepal Koshi Floods – Aug. 2008
9. Pakistan Baluchistan earthquake – Oct. 2008
10. Bangladesh Cyclone Aila – May 2009
11. Indonesia West Java Earthquake – Sept. 2009
12. Burkina Faso Floods – Oct. 2009
13. Philippines Typhoons Ketsana and Parma – Oct. 2009
14. Indonesia West Sumatra Earthquakes – Oct. 2009
15. El Salvador Floods – Nov. 2009
16. Haiti Earthquake – Jan. 2010
17. Myanmar Cyclone Giri – Nov. 2010

* Last updated April 2011



For more information on the IFRC shelter and settlements programme, please contact:

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For more on the Humanitarian Reform, the role of the IFRC as convener of the Shelter Cluster and the SCT, please visit www.sheltercluster.org

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