

Emergency Shelter Cluster

Koshi River – August 2008
Nepal

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Introduction

On 18 August, the Koshi River broke through an Eastern retaining wall roughly 10 kilometres north of the Koshi barrage. Shreepurjavdi and Shreeharipur, and portions of Lohaki and Kusahapaschim VDCs in Sunsari District have been completely flooded.

The East-West Highway is currently impassable and there are displaced families living along the non-flooded portion of the highway, along the embankment wall and in neighbouring VDCs in Saptari District. Temporary settlements along the Western side of the highway and the embankment are only accessible at this time from Saptari district.

The affected population within Nepal is currently estimated to be 72,000 persons with additional populations having moved from affected areas in India

In order to ensure a coordinated response to the enormous needs faced by the population in Nepal, the cluster system has been activated including the Emergency Shelter Cluster under the leadership of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

This document provides the members and relevant stakeholders in the Emergency Shelter Cluster with a strategic framework for the provision of emergency shelter and related non-food items to meet the needs of people affected by flooding from the Koshi river in Nepal.

Goals and Objectives

The main goal of the Nepal Emergency Shelter Cluster (ESC) is to ensure a coordinated response to emergency shelter needs in the flood affected areas of South Eastern Nepal in accordance to the guiding principles included in this document. By complementing the efforts of the Government of Nepal (GoN) the ESC and its partners will provide flood affected households appropriate shelter materials, related non food items and training so they can build adequate safe and habitable shelters in accordance with Sphere Project minimum and local standards. The organizations participating in the ESC aim to:

- Quantify the need for shelter assistance to the affected households, through assessment based on level of damage, vulnerability, community capacity and resilience, and hazard risk;
- Provide emergency shelter assistance by complementing the efforts of the Government of Nepal and provide advice where required. It is envisaged this assistance will reach all households and families affected by the flooding by the middle of October.
- Provide assistance regarding winterisation of emergency shelter if/as required and ensure measures taken are acceptable to local cultural needs. Methods and materials employed are to be adaptable and relocated to their original homes.
- Assist those affected households in a way that will complement and benefit the family, the community, and the GoN efforts to reinforce existing coping mechanisms; and
- Instigate a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) process in collaboration with the camp management cluster providing updated and consolidated information on program activities which may result in adjustments to the number of affected population this strategy is aiming to provide shelter.
- Develop shelter interventions to ensure appropriate and equitable shelter assistance across the Koshi river affected District consistent with the standards agreed by the ESC and in line with strategies developed by the GoN;
- The ESC will have a determine timeframe to operate actively and will handover to and existing Early Recovery Cluster.

Response Strategy

The aim of this strategic framework is to provide general guidelines, principles, standards to the members of the ESC to ensure that their work in the field meets, as soon as possible, the immediate needs of people affected by the flooding while respecting relevant GoN policies and related international, domestic, local, cultural and social constraints

The strategy of the ESC focuses on the provision of emergency shelter as quickly as possible to provide the affected population who have lost their homes. Emergency shelter will be provided with an expectation that the materials will ultimately contribute to the construction of more permanent shelter solutions in the future. Operationally, ESC members will strive to:

- a. Use community-based approaches to encourage the participation of affected people in the design and implementation of shelter solutions;
- b. Minimise displacement by encouraging on-site, owner-driven self construction;
- c. Provide shelter solutions are culturally appropriate and respectful of the environment;
- d. Seek to ensure equity across all vulnerable groups; the most vulnerable groups¹ may require disproportionate humanitarian and technical assistance;
- e. Support the recovery of the local economy by buying locally at reasonable prices whenever possible; and
- f. Cover the total needs of the beneficiary community and avoid partial coverage of needs.

ESC agencies are committed to maximise the use of local materials from sustainable and legally certified sources, wherever possible. ESC members are also committed to assist in skills development of the local population to assist in the emergency recovery and reconstruction process.

The ESC will work to find gaps within the response by the cluster partners and ensure coverage via the provision of assistance. The cluster however, is not responsible for any physical or urban planning, land tenure discussions and for implementation of any transitional or permanent shelter phases of the response. Land issues will be addressed by landowners, local authorities and the early recovery phase of the response.

A set monetary value for different types of shelter and NFI² assistance packages should be established and adhered to where possible;

Standard designs for the shelters should be used for the different situations encountered on the terrain while respecting the styles of the community and the impact on the environment;

- Focus and goals of the shelter program to remain on the provision of emergency shelter until those in need and without adequate shelter are provided for;
- Avoiding duplication and overlap. All actors will update information through the ESC informing the cluster who, what, where information and assist in the standardisation of approach;
- The provision of materials (wood, bamboo etc.) to be procured through certified legal and sustainable forested areas while at the same time members may be guided by information about availability and price developments in the local market.
- Provide technical and feasible solutions to adapt actual conditions of shelters to be able to protect beneficiaries from winter conditions.
- Onsite and owner driven construction of emergency shelters is preferred wherever possible;
- Relocation of individuals and families is only appropriate if the previously occupied area has been rendered unsafe due to the flooding event;

Operational Priorities

1. Provide immediately materials that are adaptable for the emergency and more permanent shelter solutions, such as plastic sheeting, timber, bamboo poles, etc, together with relevant fixing materials complemented by appropriate shelter-related NFIs³.

¹ Widows, child and female-headed households, the elderly, and the physically and mentally disadvantaged

² NFI = Non-Food Items related to shelter and sustainable settlement

2. Provide technical advice and materials suitable for winterization of shelters considering historical weather conditions in the area. Options for reducing the effects of winter conditions may include raised beds, improved roof materials including a second layer of plastic sheeting and/or installing a bamboo thatch layer the provision of winter clothing and extra blankets.
3. Work in close communication with the GoN, the camp management cluster and other clusters as appropriate to ensure a coordinated approach to the provision of shelter.
4. With cooperation and guidance from the GoN and the camp management cluster establish an assessment and monitoring system that will support adequate and timely transition to the recovery phase through a clear comprehension of the changing needs of the affected population
5. To provide toolkits to all affected communities remaining in or near their place of origin but not occupied by an officially sanctioned camp to increase their capacity for self recovery
6. To start parallel to the relief operation the recovery programme through in depth assessment and the development of appropriate more permanent shelter in close coordination with the early recovery cluster
7. Cash incentives are to be investigated as to their appropriateness in this response and reported back to the cluster members for action
8. Agencies should where possible target first the most vulnerable⁴ people that were directly affected by the flooding;
9. Agencies should endeavour to support as many affected families as possible in the shortest possible time, with total coverage of their needs.

Management and Coordination

Effective coordination is essential to meet the needs in Nepal in the longer term. In order to achieve the required coordination the ESC coordination team will:

1. Facilitate the establishment of common standards in the provision of shelter assistance to ensure equitable access to assistance across the affected areas;
2. Track shelter-related materials agreed within the Cluster members through information received from active agencies in both Districts (**Bamboo frame, Plastic sheet light duty, Plastic sheet heavy duty, Toolkit, Blanket, Kitchen sets, Sleeping mats, Lights, Solid Fuel, Winter Clothing, Mosquito nets and Cooking Stoves**)
3. Conduct gap analysis of outstanding needs on a regular basis and prioritize allocation of resources with the partners;
4. Support the GoN in the coordination at the national and local level by disseminating their policies, regulations and codes to the partners;
5. Maintain and regularly update information resources on the emergency response to help identify when the emergency response should evolve into a more permanent shelter phase; and
6. Keep local and national Government authorities informed on all activities throughout the recovery and reconstruction process.
7. Support the creation of the Early Recovery Cluster and coordinate smoothly a handover of activities done in ESC

Technical working groups (TWiGs), comprising selected technical advisers from within the ESC will be formed as required to define problems, advise, and provide a solutions to technical issues that may be

³ prioritized list to be defined by the Cluster Technical working group;

⁴ Widows, child and female-headed households, the elderly, and the physically and mentally disadvantaged;

brought forward by members of the cluster. TWiGs will be formed and disbanded on an as needs basis determined by requests and needs from cluster members.

A Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) may be formed dependent on needs expressed by cluster members. The SAG (is this possible, travel distances, times etc). Members of other, crosscutting clusters, such as the early recovery cluster, and the agricultural cluster will be invited by the Strategic advisory group to facilitate timely inclusive and appropriate transition to early recovery

Standards and Guiding Principles

Provision of emergency shelter assistance will strive to comply with minimum standards as outlined in the following documents:

- Policies, regulations, and Codes of the GoN related to housing and sheltering if applicable
- The Sphere Project; Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, 2004; Chapter 4 (www.sphereproject.org);
- The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief (http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/conduct/index.asp?navid=09_08);
- Guide to the use and logistics of plastic sheeting in humanitarian relief (www.plastic-sheeting.org);
- IASC Gender Handbook, Shelter and Gender in Emergencies, p97 to 104.