

Strategy Status	Version	Status	Effective date	Next revision
	2017	Endorsed by the SAG	20 March 2017	June 2017
Shelter Cluster Structure				
Response name	Emergency Shelter and NFIs, Afghanistan Cluster Strategy 2017			
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Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) - Agencies	MoRRD, UNHCR, IOM, DRC, NRC, ARCS, IRC (Donors are welcome to observe.) The ToR of the SAG is available on sheltercluster.org.			
Cluster members	As of January 2017 (35 active members); ACF, ACTED, ADRA, AfghanAid, ARCS, BRAC, CARE, CARITAS Germany, Christian Aid, Concern, Cordaid, DRC, FOCUS, GERES, HRDA, IRC, IMC, IOM, Islamic Relief, Mission East, NAC, NCA, NCRO, NRC, PIN, PU-AMI, QRCS, Relief International, Save the Children, Shelter for Life, Solidarites Int., UNICEF, UNHCR, UN-HABITAT, Welthungerhilfe			
Relevant Technical Working Groups:	The primary objective of the TWIG in 2017 is to review specifications of items in the current standard packages using data from the PDMs and provides technical guidance on shelter interventions. The ToR of the TWIG is available on www.sheltercluster.org			



Current Situation

Needs current situational overview

In 2016 every province of Afghanistan was affected by a natural disaster, while 19 out of 34 provinces were affected by both armed conflicts and natural disasters coupled with a return influx of about 600,000 Afghan refugees and undocumented individuals. Throughout 2016, based on several assessments, the ES/NFI Cluster assisted approximately 594,971 individuals (20 % women, 20 % men, 29 % of girls and 31 % boys) including IDPs, returnees and vulnerable host families with emergency shelter and non-food items. Further, in the last quarter of 2016, the Cluster supported 68,500 vulnerable individuals with winterization materials, which enabled them to cope with the harsh weather conditions. Despite the various efforts made to respond to the emerging needs, the humanitarian situation is expected to continue with consequent impact on the living conditions of the affected population. With the overall high poverty level of most Afghans, the level of resilience towards shocks remains very low. Small-scale disasters such as heavy rainfalls can have massive impact on shelter and non-food item (NFI) needs. With little or no income, most families do not have the capacity to replace their lost items. It is anticipated that displaced families will continue to live in sub-standard and over-crowded accommodations due to lack of alternative options. This situation raises serious protection concerns, in particular for children, elderly, persons with disability or chronic illness, and also exposes women to risk of sexual violence. Furthermore, an estimated 45% of the existing return population (documented and undocumented) are still in need of emergency and NFI assistance. An assessment conducted by IRC in December 2016, for a sample size of 5,072 Household (HH) in four provinces, (Nangarhar 4,308 HH, Khost 430 HH, Paktia 276 HH and Logar 58 HH) for undocumented returnees, indicated that 16% of the returnees were living in their own houses. 60% rented houses, 5% were living in tents, 1% was living in makeshift while 3% had no shelter arrangement at all and were living in the open air. On the other hand, UNHCR estimates that the number of refugee returnees will increase to 630,000 individuals in 2017. Based on the experience of 2016, most of these returnees, especially the most vulnerable, will be in need of immediate emergency shelter and NFIs, coupled with the strain on the host communities and families until a permanent shelter solution is found. Access to land remains one of the major issues impacting the access to shelter for mainly vulnerable families. As compared to the host families who have their land and are settled, displaced and returnee families generally continue to face a lack of access to viable land plots; although there is policy-level progress in land allocation schemes. Tenure insecurity with consequent risks of forced eviction remains a pervasive protection risk. This often results to HLP violations and insufficient restitution mechanisms.

This complex humanitarian situation will require a robust inter-cluster response including livelihood support, cash assistance, emergency shelter and the support to construct permanent shelters for the most vulnerable. The cluster will continue to work with the Government; the Protection Cluster and the House, Land and Property (HLP) partners to address the various land related concerns. Moreover, there is still a lack of links with corresponding development initiatives, such as social housing policies and schemes, as well as larger settlement plans, which is significant for the ESNFI Cluster response to transition from emergency to development.

Beneficiaries:

ESNFI Cluster targets:

- **(HRP2017 Cat A) Natural-Disaster Affected:** humanitarian needs as a result of having been affected by natural disasters
- **(HRP2017 Cat A) Conflict-Induced IDPs:** humanitarian needs as a result of having been affected by armed conflict, both in emergency phase (up to six months) and also in prolonged states of displacement (up to three years)
- **(HRP2017 Cat A) Documented & Undocumented Returnees:** Families recently returning from neighboring countries and are assessed to be in critical need of shelter/NFIs
- **(HRP2017 Cat A) Vulnerable Host Communities:** vulnerable families hosting prolonged IDPs or Returnees and have depleted resources
- **(HRP2017 Cat C) Families falling in acute vulnerability:** HH in prolonged states of displacement who have been assisted with initial emergency assistance but have residual humanitarian needs after six months

Vulnerability criteria

The cluster has adopted seven specific vulnerability criteria for identifying the extremely vulnerable among the affected population: **Female headed household; Child headed (under 18) household; Disabled headed household; Elderly headed household; Very large family** (8 members or more); **Very poor families;** Families with chronically ill members or having other pressing vulnerability – evaluated also by the economic status of the household.¹ (Single-headed household?)

Primary Targets:

ES/NFI assistance will be distributed according to a combination of several factors, such as shelter conditions, economic status, protection concerns and geographical location in line with the cluster standards and informed by joint assessments and post distribution monitoring.

¹ To be adjusted to cross-sectoral standard vulnerability criteria.

Cluster Objectives and activities

Anticipated Targeted population 2017

	Newly displaced (Conflict)	Natural disaster affected	Undocumented Returnees	Documented Returnees	Host families	Prolonged IDPs
Target individuals in need	450,000	200,000	199,800	247,500	27,360	55,000
Cluster Target for 2017						
NFIs	450,000	200,000	88,800	55,000		
Shelter interventions	22,500	25,000	199,800	247,500	27,360	55,000

1 Coordinated and timely ES/NFI response to families affected by natural disaster and armed conflict.

- ES/NFI partners participate in joint assessments to ensure all ES/NFI assistance is evidence based.
- Emergency shelter (in-kind/cash) is distributed to families who are sheltered inadequately (in the open, make-shift or undignified temporary shelter).
- NFI standard packages are distributed to families who lost their assets.
- Repair/reconstruction packages are distributed for families in order to rebuild shelters destroyed or damaged by a shock.
- Post distribution monitoring is done after the end of each implementation phase to ensure accountability and inform improvement of future activities.
- Strategic pre-positioning of emergency ES/NFI stock and preparedness for emergency response through in-kind and feasible cash-based intervention

2 Coordinated and timely ES/NFI response to returnees.

- ES/NFI partners participate in joint assessments to ensure all ES/NFI assistance is evidence based.
- Emergency shelter (in-kind/cash) is distributed to returnees who are sheltered inadequately (in the open, make-shift or undignified temporary shelter).
- NFI standard packages are distributed to returnees who lost their assets.
- Permanent shelters are provided for returnees without dignified shelter solutions and without capacity to obtain it.
- Post distribution monitoring is done after the end of each implementation phase to ensure accountability and inform improvement of future activities.

3 Families falling into acute vulnerability due to shock are assisted with ES/NFI interventions to address humanitarian needs in the medium term.

- Support will be given to vulnerable families who after immediate humanitarian assistance are not capable to obtain adequate shelter.
- Post distribution monitoring is done after the end of each implementation phase to ensure accountability and inform improvement of future activities.

Cluster indicators and targets

Cluster Objective 1 Coordinated and timely ES/NFI response to families affected by natural disaster and armed conflict.
Relates to country-level SO 1

INDICATOR	IN NEED	TARGET	MEN	WOMEN	BOYS	GIRLS
% of assistance provided on the basis of an inter-agency household level assessment of need and vulnerability	100 %	100 %	100%	100%	100%	100%
% of vulnerable individuals affected receiving emergency shelter support including tent package and cash for rent	20 %	80 %	14,155	15,645	22,350	22,350
% of vulnerable individuals affected receiving standard NFI packages	100 %	100 %	123,500	136,500	195,000	195,000
% of vulnerable individuals affected provided with materials or cash to reconstruct/repair shelters	20 %	100 %	2,660	2,940	4,200	4,200
% of responses followed up with post distribution monitoring	100 %	80 - 90 %	80 - 90 %	80 - 90 %	80 - 90 %	80 - 90 %

Cluster Objective 2 Coordinated and timely ES/NFI response to returnees
Relates to country-level SO 1

INDICATOR	IN NEED	TARGET	MEN	WOMEN	BOYS	GIRLS
% of assistance provided on the basis of an inter-agency household level assessment of need and vulnerability	100 %	100 %	100%	100%	100%	100%
% of vulnerable individuals affected receiving emergency shelter support including tent package and cash for rent	15 - 40 %	35 %	27,933	30,873	44,105	44,105
% of vulnerable individuals affected receiving standard NFI packages	10 – 50 %	100 %	27,322	30,198	43,140	43,140
% of permanent shelter needs met	100 %	4 %	2919	3227	4610	4610
% of responses followed up with post distribution monitoring	100 %	80 – 90 %	80 – 90 %	80 – 90 %	80 – 90 %	80 – 90 %

Cluster Objective 3 Families falling into acute vulnerability due to shock are assisted with ES/NFI interventions to address humanitarian needs in the medium term.
Relates to country-level SO 3

INDICATOR	IN NEED	TARGET	MEN	WOMEN	BOYS	GIRLS
% of shock affected vulnerable households supported to recover or obtain adequate shelter	10 - 38 %	100 %	17,683	19,545	27,921	27,921
% of responses followed up with post distribution monitoring	100 %	80 – 90%	80 – 90%	80 – 90%	80 – 90%	80 – 90%

Modalities	<p>Activities will be carried out using modalities suitable for each specific situation and should be based on assessments including market assessment and protection risk analysis followed by mitigation strategies in place, prior to any cash-based interventions. Market assessments should include analysis of both functionality of, and access to, the closest market. Inflation and disruptive activities affecting the local economy should be minimised. Cash is the preferred modality of the ES/NFI Cluster if the following conditions are met: a) accessible to beneficiaries; b) functional; c) stable. Cash for rent assistance will be implemented for maximum six months as a short term emergency response. Meanwhile other options will be considered including support for transitional shelters and referrals to livelihood initiatives. Further, the Ministry of Housing is also to assist the most vulnerable families in need of continuous shelter support.</p> <p>Efforts will be made to promote peaceful co-existence with host communities and ethnic groups through the cluster interventions to include also vulnerable host community families while supporting existing coping mechanism in communities by e.g. building resilience and focusing on longer-term solutions.</p> <p>Efforts will be made to provide shelter interventions within the agreed standards and provide technical support/capacity building to the targeted population receiving various shelter support including Emergency, Transitional and Permanent shelter assistance.</p>
Technical Standards:	<p>CORE NFIs, SHELTER AND WINTERIZATION ITEMS FOR EMERGENCIES <i>(Please Refer to the Technical Standards Guidelines)</i></p> <p>The ES/NFI Cluster partners agreed that NFIs provided to beneficiaries are to be in accordance with specifications defined in UNHCRs Core Relief Items Catalogue forming the basis for technical reference on items' description and standards. For agencies providing cash for NFIs, a market assessment collecting prices of each item from the nearest functional market should be carried out, prior to implementation, in order to identify the specific amount needed to cover basic needs. A Technical Working Group regarding cash for various activities on a regional basis will further determine this.</p> <p>Although the primary aim of the ESNFI Cluster is to provide emergency shelter solutions, shelter interventions in Afghanistan including transitional and permanent shelters depending on funding resources, implementation time/urgency and humanitarian access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Shelters: including tents, plastic sheets and basic emergency shelter items. Possible responses are: Tents and/or the Basic Emergency Shelter Self Construction/Repair Tool Kit • Transitional Shelters: To provide urgent assistance while bridging the gap between emergency shelters and permanent shelter assistance and supporting the repair/rebuilding of damaged housing. • Permanent shelters: Assistance aimed to build, repair and in some cases rebuild lost houses/dwellings or supporting IDPs settlement once land access/rights are obtained. <p>Winterization Package</p> <p>Winterization package is considered by the cluster to only include items for heating as the items they are only distributed when the weather is cold, and when the beneficiaries have been affected by a natural or manmade disaster and thus have lost assets. Clothing and blankets should not be distributed on a yearly basis in preparation for winter as these items are considered to have a life-span of more than one year and can for a minimum amount of money be purchased in local markets.² Considering the large impact that household heating in Afghanistan can have on the environment, the cluster strongly recommends providing gas as the main source of heating during winter months. Gas creates less pollution, minimize deforestation and is to a certain degree the safer choice in heating options. If gas balloons are distributed in-kind, they should be empty during transportation and distribution.</p> <p>People living in rural areas might have limited access to filling and re-filling their gas balloons whereas wood is widely used and available throughout the country. Where gas is the main item in the winterization distribution, awareness on the benefits of switching from wood to gas needs to be done in parallel to ensure that the assistance is used in a sensible manner. Winterization support should always be planned according to the availability of heating options in the market. Thus the Cluster, depending on market availability, recommends the two packages indicated in the Technical Guidelines.</p>

² For more information, please refer to the KIS winter relief guidelines

<p>Coordination</p>	<p>Internal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cluster will continue its efforts to strengthen the internal coordination structures between the national and regional cluster levels. Efforts will be made to maintain coordinated assessments and responses to maximize the use of resources and avoid duplication. <p>External:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ES/NFI Cluster will work with Protection/FSAC/WASH/Nutrition/Health Clusters to maximize harmonization of assistance, sector specific complementarities, and efficiency in responses. This includes joint planning, coordinated assessments, response to needs and vulnerabilities, joint monitoring, amongst others. Mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues including Protection, Gender, and the environment amongst others will be the centre of ES/NFI response. This will include but not limited to the close coordination with and support from the Protection Cluster and the Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA) Taskforce through capacity building, the collection of sex and age disaggregated data, proper gender and protection analysis of the shelter/NFI needs to inform response and achievements. The cluster will actively participate in relevant sub working groups such as; EPSWG, GiHA, HAG, HLP, CVWG and the Inter-cluster working group lead by OCHA. The ES/NFI cluster provides a holistic and coordinated assistance to returnees where there is a need. Efforts will continue to coordinate with the relevant line ministries for ES/NFI related issues and moving towards a more government lead implementation process. The Cluster will maintain positive relationship with OCHA as the overall coordinating body for IDP response and improve inter-cluster coordination to promote synergies within the humanitarian response The Cluster will contribute to joint inter-cluster advocacy messages and representation at the HCT through the Lead Agency Country Representative At the national level, the ES/NFI Cluster will coordinate with relevant government line ministries including MRRD, MoRR and MUDH while at the Provincial and Regional levels, the cluster will coordinate with DoRR, ANDMA and other local authorities. The ES/NFI Cluster will establish a referral mechanism of most vulnerable families to be included into government land and housing scheme and to other partners supporting livelihood activities in achieving their transitional or permanent shelter solutions.
<p>Response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ES/NFI assistance (cash/in-kind) will be provided to families after identifying needs accurately and in line with the cluster's minimum standard Efforts will be made to ensure same level of assistance based on needs by adjusting distributions to agreed standard packages. Where packages (cash or in-kind) are distributed together with FSAC and/or WASH interventions, assessments, analysis and distributions will be done jointly to guarantee cost and time-efficiency using the cross-sectorial vulnerability criteria to help promote joint interventions. With support from the TWIG, the current standard shelter designs will be further reviewed and updated in coordination with the government, to obtain a more focused and mainstreamed approach among partners and strengthen synergies with development partners. The Cluster will focus on qualitative feedback from shelter beneficiaries to establish cultural and geographical appropriateness and preferred modalities will evaluate ongoing shelter projects using the Post Distribution Monitoring Tool The ES/NFI Cluster will continue to preposition NFIs and emergency shelters according to ongoing needs analysis and dynamic changes in movement of people in need. The main transport modality remains via road. However, airlifts to insecure areas including those areas that might be cut off by a sudden armed conflict will be further explored. The ES/NFI Cluster response will be implemented by improving assessments (both HEAT and more sector specific) to identify needs. Cluster specific assessment tools are still to be finalised and endorsed by cluster members. Moreover, participation of national NGOs and relevant line ministries remain a priority throughout 2017. Improve Accountability to the Affected Population through the introduction of a nationwide ES/NFI Cluster Post Distribution Monitoring and feedback mechanisms
<p>Key Issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land and property rights: Most IDPs and returnee families have no access to land rights (poverty and displacement factors) and in some cases land disputes increase the tensions with host communities. The government is working jointly with the national and international civil societies including the Rule of Law Unit of UNAMA and the Housing, Land and Property Task Force on a draft procedure to substitute decree 104 after adoption. Substantial reduction of donor funds to attend shelter and NFIs needs affects the provision of adequate solutions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the agreed standards in ES/NFI response is still a challenge as there are still differences in-kind and cash assistance packages • Security constraints affect directly humanitarian access to people in need hampering proper assessments, implementation and monitoring & evaluation tasks. • Disconnection (in the absence of) with durable shelter and settlement solution places additional burden to Cluster Partner's relief agencies as the emergency assistance has transformed in durable solutions interventions. • Needs to improve the coordination and interaction with national emergency response mechanisms and coordination framework, and also the harmonisation of different approaches/assistance. • Challenge with harmonizing ES/NFI standards with non-cluster partners outside of the coordination framework
Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor progress and gaps in the ES/NFI response, the ES/NFI cluster will use various tools including post-distribution monitoring, 4W reports; stock reports and 3Ws. Joint evaluation of cluster activities will be encouraged. • The Cluster will prepare and maintain updated Work Plan to guide the implementation of response • Cluster peer interaction in M&E activities should be encouraged as a best practice. • The Information Management Officer will provide technical IM support and will keep records of all M & E activities
Exit Strategy	The Cluster will work with the Government and other development stakeholders to develop an exit strategy while advocating for a joint ICCT Early Recovery Strategy