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## Recovery and Reconstruction Working Group

### Questions and Answers Document

#### Introduction

In advance of the Recovery and Reconstruction Working Group (RRWG) Partner Organisations (POs) workshop, held on the 10<sup>th</sup> September, POs were invited to send questions for a Q&A session during the workshop. Questions were also collected during the workshop and have been collected on an on-going basis since the workshop. This document attempts to provide responses for the questions collected. The responses are based on the most up to date information available at the time of preparation and it should be noted that this document will be regularly updated to include additional questions and reflect additional information that may be available.

POs are urged to share questions for inclusion in future versions of this document, either to Siobhan Kennedy, [tech2.nepal@sheltercluster.org](mailto:tech2.nepal@sheltercluster.org), or through the relevant Shelter Cluster District Focal Point and / or Hub Coordinator.

#### **Q: Does the Government of Nepal (GoN) have funds to implement some projects?**

The Government of Nepal (GoN), with support from the World Bank, JICA and other partners has developed the national housing reconstruction programme to operationalise the principles set out in the PDNA supporting the longer term rebuilding process, starting with damage assessment and expected to commence at scale early in 2016. The GoN funds available for housing reconstruction will be primarily used to provide a subsidy of 200,000 NPRs to eligible households to support them with the reconstruction of their homes using an owner-driven reconstruction approach.

#### **Q: Which GoN ministries will be responsible for delivering the reconstruction programme?**

Given the scale and scope of the reconstruction programme the efforts of many of the GoN ministries and departments will be required. The Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD), and the Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agriculture Roads (DoLIDAR), will have primary responsibility for the disbursement of the reconstruction subsidy. The Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD), and the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction, have primary responsibility for defining the technical standards that will govern the reconstruction.

#### **Q: Are GoN approved rural house designs available?**

The Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC) is preparing a catalogue of rural house designs which is currently being finalised, following a technical workshop on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September, and which will be released very soon. The catalogue of designs is intended to be a reference and may also be used to simplify the building permit process for households. If households like a design from the catalogue they can submit the plans for that design with their building permit. There will also be flexible designs available where the dimensions are not prescribed, and the households can set the dimensions to suit their plot and the layout they would like from the range between minimum and maximum allowed values as per the [Nepal Building Code](#). Households will not have to use the GoN provided house designs, but the preparation of other designs must be done by an engineer that is registered with the Nepal Engineering Council and should be approved by the relevant GoN authorities.

**Q: Will households be able to construct with construction materials of their choice?**

Yes. There is no restriction on the type of construction materials which households can reconstruct with, as long as the construction complies with earthquake resistance measures as defined by the [Nepal Building Code](#).

**Q: If Partner Organisations (POs) prepare additional housing designs on top of those prepared by DUDBC, how can these be approved?**

Additional house designs should be submitted to DUDBC for review. The Technical Working Committee under DUDBC is responsible for the technical review and approval of all designs. Once approved, new designs could be included in future revisions of the DUDBC house design catalogue. One area of technical assistance that some Partner Organisations (POs) are considering providing, involves helping communities to generate a flexible design specific to their area and needs and supporting the whole community through the building permit process with this design or designs.

**Q: What is the process of obtaining a building construction permit? Will it be simplified due to the current situation?**

MoFALD are currently in the process of simplifying the building construction permit form, and a simplified application process will also be available. The simplified process is available to households who do not wish to prepare their own house design and plans, but are happy to use the DUDBC prepared prototype or flexible designs (currently being finalised). Where a household is happy to use one of these designs they can simply indicate the design number in their application along with all other relevant information, e.g. plot number, area of the plot, details of the landowner, etc. Where a household wishes to prepare their own house design and plans, this must be carried out by an engineer registered with the Nepal Engineering Council and the application for the building construction permit would take longer to process as the plans would have to be reviewed by the VDC engineer and approved by the relevant GoN authorities. Building construction permits must be applied for at the VDC office, as per the [Local Self-Governance Act \(1999\)](#). MoFALD are expecting to have one engineer in each VDC that has over 1,000 households and one sub-engineer in each VDC with less than 1,000 households to support the building construction permit process.

**Q: What role will the GoN play in approving/inspection of reconstruction?**

The inspection of construction for compliance is a regulatory role and is therefore the responsibility of the GoN. Field inspection teams will be managed through the district level GoN offices, and will be responsible for inspecting the progress of construction in terms of compliance with the National Building Code (NBC).

**Q: Which GoN ministry / department is responsible for carrying out multi hazard risk assessments?**

The Department of Mining and Geology has been charged with carrying out multi hazard risk assessments and is in the process of planning how to carry out such assessments across the earthquake affected areas of the country. Multi hazard risk assessment is not an activity that POs are recommended to carry out, as this is the responsibility of the GoN given the wide ranging and regulatory impacts of such assessments.

**Q: If a household receives financial support for reconstruction their house from a PO will they also be entitled to receive the GoN subsidy?**

The GoN will be responsible for providing the reconstruction subsidy and any POs that also want to support the reconstruction subsidy must align with other International Financial Institutions (IFIs) delivering financing to the GoN for

this. Households who are eligible for the GoN subsidy will be asked to declare, prior to receiving the GoN subsidy, that they have not received any other grant or subsidy for housing reconstruction from another organisation. In cases where households have received a grant or subsidy for reconstruction from another organisation they will no longer be eligible to receive the GoN subsidy. This is defined in the GoN subsidy disbursement policy which is currently going through a review process before being finalised. The GoN has very clearly stated that the key role of POs will be to provide blanket coverage of technical assistance and training to ensure that households, masons, etc. have the support required to develop their knowledge and skills so they can Build Back Better. Households will be entitled to receive other financial support which is not related to housing repair or reconstruction, and which has been approved with the relevant authorities.

**Q: Will the GoN subsidy be provided as blanket coverage or will it be provided based on damage levels?**

The Central Bureau of Statistics will be conducting the GoN damage assessment, due to start after the Tihar Festival, to determine eligibility for the GoN reconstruction subsidy. Eligibility for receipt of the reconstruction subsidy will be determined based on damage levels. Where a household has already moved ahead with demolition of their damaged home, the assessment will use local verification, through neighbours and GoN social mobilisers working in the area, to confirm the damage to the home. Once the assessment is complete, lists of households which are eligible to receive the reconstruction subsidy will be published in each VDC office. Households who are not listed as eligible but feel that they should be will be able to submit a claim to the grievance committees which will be established at local level.

**Q: Will there be additional eligibility criteria to take into account the additional needs of vulnerable households?**

Yes, the damage assessment being conducted by the GoN to determine household eligibility for the reconstruction subsidy includes indicators related to socio-economic criteria, and the overall eligibility criteria are being developed in order to ensure that the households prioritised to receive the reconstruction subsidy are the most vulnerable. In particular, the criteria will look to target women headed households, households with disabled family members, child-headed households, and vulnerable social groups from the poorest of the poor.

**Q: When and how will the GoN subsidy be available to households?**

The subsidy will be distributed to bank accounts, and the GoN and donors are working to support improvements in access to financial institutions to expand the reach of their services. The subsidy will be available following the completion of the damage assessment and the development of the list of eligible households, it is expected that this will be during the first quarter of 2016. The subsidy will be disbursed in tranches with the first tranche made available for construction to plinth level, if this construction is compliant with the NBC then the second tranche for construction to ring beam will be disbursed. If the construction to ring beam level is compliant then the third tranche for the completion of the roof will be disbursed.

**Q: How many HH will be reached through the GoN subsidy?**

The funds that are currently available are sufficient to provide the GoN housing reconstruction subsidy to approximately 120,000 households. The aim of the GoN is to provide the subsidy to all households whose home has been fully damaged. It is expected that additional donors / funds will become available once the programme begins demonstrating successful results in the first year.

**Q: Will the GoN also be offering subsidised loans to affected households?**

Yes, the GoN is proposing to offer two types of loans to earthquake affected households for reconstruction:

1. A loan of an additional 200,000 NPRs, with an interest rate of 2%, which is intended as top-up support for the most vulnerable households. In order to be eligible for this loan, households will have to be recommended by the DDRC. The GoN will act as guarantor for these loans, making it possible for the most vulnerable households to access the loans. In particular, this loan will be targeted at women headed households, households with disabled family members, child-headed households, and vulnerable social groups from the poorest of the poor.
2. A loan of up to 1.5 million NPRs in rural areas and up to 2.5 million NPRs in urban areas, with 2% interest rate. The GoN will not act as guarantor for these loans, and households will have to go through the normal processes with the bank to access these loans, i.e. securing a mortgage and meeting the banks requirements in terms of a guarantor. It is expected that there will be greater uptake of these loans in urban areas where the price of land is generally higher than in rural areas.

The Nepali version of the Central Bank guidelines related to this form of loan are available on the Shelter Cluster website here [http://sheltercluster.org/sites/default/files/docs/central\\_bank\\_guidelines\\_for\\_soft\\_loans.pdf](http://sheltercluster.org/sites/default/files/docs/central_bank_guidelines_for_soft_loans.pdf). An unofficial English translation of this document is being prepared and will be issued as soon as possible.

**Q: Who will build / retrofit the houses?**

The reconstruction will be carried out through owner driven housing construction. Owners will hire trained, skilled artisans according to their needs (masons, carpenters, etc.). The subsidy is designed to support households by providing some of the resources required to reconstruct. The provision of large scale technical assistance and training will be essential to provide households and artisans with the knowledge and skills required for the reconstruction.

**Q: How will market inflation be minimised?**

POs can support by utilising their large field presence to conduct market and price monitoring at regular intervals. There is also scope for POs to support vendors and suppliers directly by including them as key stakeholders in the reconstruction process and providing support for business expansion, quality assurance measures, etc. Under the RRWG there will be Technical Working Group focused on supply chain. Market / price monitoring conducted by POs will directly support the DUDBC divisional offices and CDOs with their efforts to monitor markets, ensure quality of materials available, and minimise market inflation.

**Q: Are there existing approved wage rates?**

Yes, each district has a fixed district wage rate for skilled and unskilled labour which is updated annually. The DDC office in each district will be able to provide this information.

**Q: Is there a clear reconstruction policy, in English, from the government?**

The National Planning Commission has prepared a reconstruction policy which is currently going through an internal review process within the GoN. It is expected that once the National Authority for Reconstruction (NAR) is fully established that the reconstruction policy will be released, and a reconstruction strategy will be developed based on the policy.

**Q: What is the process for a PO to have an MoU in place with the GoN for the implementation of housing programmes?**

The Shelter Cluster advocates for a collective approach to technical assistance and training in order to optimise the resources and capacity of the POs. The RRWG is the platform for the POs to coordinate and collaborate towards this collective approach. One of the key outputs expected from the RRWG is a standard MoU for POs for the core set of technical assistance activities. A common programme, with a common MoU for the range of core technical assistance activities to be provided by POs at VDC and District level can help to guide the PO programme planning, provide predictability for the Government and communities, and streamline the administrative approval, monitoring and reporting processes. Common TORs can also reinforce coverage and balance in the levels of assistance.

**Q: When will the training curricula endorsed by DUDBC be widely available?**

The GoN has released an 'Earthquake Resistant Building Construction Training Procedure' which outlines the procedure to apply to conduct training, and the standards which technical trainings must meet. The procedure is available in Nepali on the Shelter Cluster website here

[http://sheltercluster.org/sites/default/files/docs/eq\\_resistant\\_building\\_construction\\_training\\_procedure\\_2015.pdf](http://sheltercluster.org/sites/default/files/docs/eq_resistant_building_construction_training_procedure_2015.pdf) and an unofficial English translation can be found here

[http://sheltercluster.org/sites/default/files/docs/eq\\_resistant\\_building\\_construction\\_training\\_procedure\\_2015\\_eng\\_unofficial\\_translation.pdf](http://sheltercluster.org/sites/default/files/docs/eq_resistant_building_construction_training_procedure_2015_eng_unofficial_translation.pdf). The DUDBC masons training material, and material for Training of Trainers, can also be found on the Shelter Cluster website here <http://sheltercluster.org/library/dudbc-masons-training-material> and here <http://sheltercluster.org/library/dudbc-tot-material-masons-training>.

**Q: Does the PDNA estimate of 2.7 billion for reconstruction include relocation and retrofitting also?**

The [Post Disaster Needs Assessment \(PDNA\)](#) estimate of 2.7 billion USD is for the construction of new homes, and repair and retrofitting. The PDNA does not include estimates for the cost of relocation, but does include almost 100,000,000 USD as the estimate for the cost of clustering of houses.

**Q: How will Technical Assistance centres be linked with the GoN?**

The technical assistance centres are considered a core activity under the POs collective approach to technical assistance and training and are intended to support the GoN reconstruction programme. The technical assistance (TA) centres will link directly with the GoN District Level Programme Implementation Units (DL-PIUs).

**Q: How will the location of Technical Assistance centres be decided?**

The location of TA centres will be decided based on a variety of parameters. For example, one VDC Cluster Level TA centre may be appropriate for a cluster of 20 VDCs where access between those VDCs is relatively easy. Where access is more challenging, one VDC Cluster Level TA centre may be required for 2/3 VDCs. The level of damage may affect the number of TA centres, i.e. areas of very high damage will generally require a higher number of TA centres. Population level could also potentially affect the number of TA centres, with areas of higher population potentially requiring a higher number of TA centres. Conversely areas with low population density and scattered settlements may require a higher number of TA centres to make sure that all households can access TA. The process of deciding the location of TA centres will be conducted at district level during the preparation of the POs district plan for collective technical assistance and training.

**Q: What support will be provided at municipal level?**

The RRWG advocates for technical assistance and training to be delivered at scale and across all earthquake affected areas, including municipal areas. Technical assistance and training at municipal level will have to be designed in such a way as to take into consideration the particularities of the urban context. It is expected that the uptake of the proposed GoN loans of up to a maximum of 2.5 million NPRs in urban areas, will be much higher in urban areas and that the loans will be a critical source of resources for households reconstructing in urban areas. Households in municipalities will also be eligible to receive the 200,000 NPRs reconstruction subsidy from the GoN, subject to conditions as set by GoN based on selection criteria.

**Q: Will the value of other support received on top of the 15,000 NPRs GoN grant be deducted from the 200,000 NPRs subsidy?**

Households are entitled to receive other assistance which is not related to house repair or reconstruction. This should be coordinated with the local authorities at District and VDC level.

**Q: Will winterisation support be available to households whilst the preparation and planning for the reconstruction is ongoing?**

It is estimated that there are over 80,000 households living in areas above 1,500m altitude who will require additional support for winter. The Shelter Cluster, with support from Shelter Cluster partners, has developed winterisation guidance and a recommended package of assistance to support Shelter Cluster partners to deliver winterisation support.

The winterisation guidance from the Shelter Cluster can be found on the Shelter Cluster website here <http://sheltercluster.org/working-group/winterisation>.

**Q: Are there efforts planned to influence university curricula for engineers with regard to earthquake engineering?**

The [Nepal Engineering Council \(NEC\)](#), the regulatory body for the engineering sector, has been working closely with universities to address the gap in curricula around earthquake engineering. The universities contributed a great deal in the aftermath of the earthquake with students being training by the [Nepal Engineers' Association \(NEA\)](#) to conduct rapid damage assessments, information fairs organised on temporary shelter options, and providing support for shelter needs assessments. Further efforts to develop and advance university curricula for engineers continue and are led by the NEC.