# Strategic Advisory Group Meeting

**26 October 2020**

**MS Teams**

*Present: UNHCR, IOM, PIN, ADRA, Caritas Ukraine, ECHO.*

**Agenda of the meeting**

1. Introduction;
2. Drivers for the transition;
3. What to handover;
4. Timeline;
5. Strategic discussion on ways forward

# Agenda item 1. Introduction

The members of this meeting were introduced. This time, the SAG consists of the members of the following organizations: UNHCR, IOM, PIN, ADRA, Caritas Ukraine, and ECHO. DFID is no longer present in Ukraine, and NRC has finalized its shelter program, reducing its shelter team to only one national staff. The Cluster team has approached NRC several times requesting to confirm their participation as a SAG member, however, no response was obtained.

*In terms of protocol, the further minutes will be taken according to the “Chatham house rules”[[1]](#footnote-1). Members of the Shelter/NFI Cluster coordination team will be referred to as “Cluster Team”; the other participants as “SAG members”.*

# Agenda item 2. Drivers for the transition

According to IASC Reference Module for Cluster Coordination, in order for the Cluster to be deactivated, at least one of the conditions should be fulfilled. In Ukrainian context the following condition is met:

*“The humanitarian situation improves, significantly reducing humanitarian needs and consequently reducing associated response and coordination gaps.”*

The cluster team provided updates on the following drivers in the Ukrainian context that contribute to fulfilling the above-mentioned condition:

1. In the GCA, there is a residual caseload in terms of shelter needs. Even though, the Cluster team estimates approximately 1,000 HHs of the residual shelter caseload, the cases in Donetsk GCA were addressed at least partly by the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU);
2. Partners’ presence and available funds in the sector become more and more limited every year. With regards to winterization, there were only 10 partners who provided assistance to cover the needs of the vulnerable population, and there are currently only 6 partners with confirmed plans for the 2020-2021 season.
3. SESU proved to be a capable state actor to cover the shelter needs. In order to cover the shelter needs, there were 40 brigades mobilized from all over Ukraine. Unfortunately, SESU did not activate their assistance to cover the residual humanitarian caseload in Luhansk GCA.
4. In Ukraine, the state mechanism for compensation was introduced. In 2020, 20 mln UAH were allocated for the compensation as a pilot process.

SAG members raised the following clarification points:

* Is there any indication regarding the future plans for compensation in terms of funding? – The Ministry for Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories (Minreintegration) plans to pilot the compensation with 20 mln UAH to show the effectiveness of the process in 2020 in order to advocate for the increase of funding in the next years.
* What kind of capacity does SESU have in terms of materials and human resources? – SESU managed to mobilize 40 brigades to conduct repairs, but they use tools and resources available on spot. This is one of the reasons why the response in Luhansk GCA is still not activated, as there are no materials available in stock of local administrations.

# Agenda item 3. What to handover

From a practical perspective, the Cluster intends to handover the following tools to the central government and local authorities:

* 5W database
* Sub-national Referral database
* Damage database per address
* Winterization activity matrix
* Technical guidance

While the damage database was handed over to the Minreintegration, the transition of the rest of the tools has only started. For the sake of effective use of some of the above-mentioned tools, there should be clear communication between the central and regional levels.

A SAG member has raised a concern regarding that there may be no HRP in the next years once the Minreintegration takes over the coordination in the humanitarian sector. This concern will be discussed during the bilateral meeting between the Cluster team and Minreintegration; however, there are different forms of possible participation in the HRP process.

# Agenda item 4. Timeline

National level:

* Q1 2019 - Protocol between UNHCR and MTOT (now Minreintegration) signed;
* Q1 - Q3 2019 – capacity building of IM in the Minreintegration
* Q1 2020 – restart of the transition process; restart of the induction process on Cluster functions and instruments
* Q3 - Q4 2020 – establishment of a coordination working group within the Ministry of Reintegration
* Q3 2020 - (TBC) – capacity building of the working group and handover of the main coordination and information management tools
* End of 2020 – deactivation of the Cluster
* Q1 2021 – a working group on winterization convened by UNHCR

Regional level

* + Q3 2020 – local elections, creation of the new raions in Ukraine
	+ Q4 2020 – Q1 2021 – handover of the local coordination duties on the raion level.

The following questions were raised by the SAG members to the timeline:

* Is this timeline agreed by the Minreintegration?
* Is there a possibility to amend/shift this timeline by a few months in negotiation with Minreintegration?

# Agenda item 5. Strategic discussion on ways forward

The Cluster team presented the following possible risk and obstacles during the transition process:

* Change of government;
* Bureaucratic obstacles;
* Low IM and coordination capacities in the government;
* No streamlined communication (between ministries or between central and regional levels);
* No personal commitment;
* COVID-19

SAG members raised the following concerns to be considered during the transition and eventual deactivation:

* *On which level should there be a personal commitment?* In line with the new local elections in October 2020 as well as decentralization reform, there will be new local governments formed, which will provide a new window of opportunities to establish working contacts and handover of the coordination duties. – Personal commitment is required on both levels, in the Minreintegration, as there should be a committed person with decision-making power who will take the lead in coordinating the sector as well as on the local level.
* *Should the Shelter Cluster preserve a commitment to coordinate assistance to other types of emergencies such as natural disasters?* – Natural disasters of different scales may happen in any context at any time, so it is more efficient to build the capacities of local responders rather than to keep Cluster always activated to react. This should be done not only by the Cluster but also by OCHA.
* What if SAG does not endorse the deactivation of the Cluster? - According to the IASC Reference Module, the deactivation is initiated by the HC and led by OCHA. SAG members may provide advice on whether this process is timely or the need is still high and the response should still be coordinated. This advice will be considered by the HCT.

**Ways forward**:

1. All SAG members endorsed the initiation of the deactivation process;
2. All SAG members advised to reconsider the timeline in close coordination with Minreintegration. It can be acceptable to shift the timeline by a few months in order to ensure that the appropriate capacity building processes took place.
3. All SAG members supported the idea to create a winterization working group in 2021 to ensure the continuity of humanitarian assistance. Even though it is UNHCR who convenes this meeting, this does not necessarily mean that UNHCR will solely lead this working group. Any actor can step in to lead or co-lead this working group.
4. The Cluster team initiates a meeting with the Minreintegration to discuss the transition process and the required resources. The Cluster team will share the results of this meeting with the SAG members.
1. https://www.chathamhouse.org/chatham-house-rule/translations [↑](#footnote-ref-1)