# Global Shelter Cluster

## 2014 Thematic Priorities

# Introduction

The Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) annual priorities define the key issues that humanitarian shelter agencies and institutions participating in the GSC wish to address collectively over the coming year. They are established at the annual GSC meeting and provide the rationale for the creation or continuation of specific thematic Working Groups (WGs). The WGs are created to ensure the GSC priorities are addressed and will develop a more detailed definition of their scope and deliverables in 2014. The GSC Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) oversees the work plans of the WGs to ensure that the most relevant issues are addressed with the resources available. Accordingly, the final deliverables to address the 2014 thematic priorities will be defined by the work plans of the WGs, SAG’s guidance on these work plans and the resources available to implement them.

During the planning session and presentations of working groups at the 2013 GSC meeting, the GSC partners identified and agreed on their thematic priorities for 2014. These were further refined by the SAG at its retreat in December 2013. The key identified areas of focus center around the need to finalize the work advanced in 2013 by the Shelter in Recovery, Accountability, and Regulatory Barriers WGs, as well as provide a coordinated platform to discuss Technical and Innovation issues and Outreach and Capacity initiatives. The Coherence WG was considered to have achieved its purpose and provided a body of policy and guidance documents that enhance coherence of the shelter cluster. It was therefore recommended that the Coherence WG finalized activities at the end of 2013. Future or residual coherence issues can be addressed by the SAG. The identified priorities are closely interconnected and they feed into each other in a synergetic way. They constitute different components of a coherent action to be undertaken in 2014 to advance the 2013-2017 Global Shelter Cluster Strategy.

This document only includes the GSC identified thematic priorities to be addressed through WGs. It is not exhaustive of all the work that the GSC will undertake in 2014 and in particular the work to be advanced by the SAG and by the GSC Support Team. There are a number of ongoing and recurrent priorities that the GSC undertakes on an annual basis, including but not limited to the development of the GSC surge capacity system, training, management and administrative support to GSC structures and activities, global information management, engagement with the IASC and its subsidiary bodies, global shelter coordination workshop and meeting, updating of shelter coordination teams deployment and management methodologies, resource mobilization, and internal and external communications. These constitute core activities of the GSC that address critical on-going priority issues as identified in the multi-year strategy and are undertaken recurrently on an annual basis. They are therefore outside the scope of this document, which only reflects work to be undertaken for a limited duration to complete a specific thematic task or output identified as priority by the GSC and elaborated in a WG annual workplan.

The GSC thematic priorities[[1]](#footnote-1) for 2014 are therefore as follows:

# Accountability

**Background and objective**

Throughout 2012 the GSC WG on Assessing Impact advanced a number of initiatives that aimed at better articulating the impact of shelter cluster coordination and response activities. In doing so, members of this WG identified the need to expand the scope of the group’s activities to encompass all elements of the humanitarian program cycle, from preparedness, to assessment and planning, to monitoring, reporting and evaluation. This was also in line with the Transformative Agenda focus on the Humanitarian Program Cycle. The WG on Accountability was therefore established in 2013 to follow on and expand the work of the 2012 WG on Assessing Impact.

Outputs of the WG in 2013 included agreed upon common shelter indicators (indicator registry), indicator guidelines (including baseline, progress and evaluation indicators), country level assessments, development of monitoring and evaluation (response, coordination and impact) methodology and toolkit and shelter cluster strategy template to be used in country-level clusters.

**Outputs**

This GSC priority area for 2014 aims at continuing and expanding the achievements of 2013 by addressing the following issues:

* 1. Design and implementation/piloting of Shelter Information System encompassing the entire project cycle; and in line with IASC reference documentation.
  2. Finalize and pilot a common methodology for evaluations of country-level shelter clusters.
  3. Ensure the use of baseline, progress and evaluation indicators in response situations.
  4. Facilitate better integration of Accountability to Affected Populations in shelter programs.
  5. Review the GSC assessment guidelines.

The outputs above should support the requirements defined by the IASC in terms of performance and impact monitoring and accountability. The development of guidelines on impact evaluation should be accompanied by advocacy activities with donors on the need for extended timeframes for shelter impact evaluations, which take into consideration the longitudinal impact of humanitarian shelter response.

# Shelter in Recovery

**Background and objective**

The objective of this priority area is to improve the way the cluster engages in shelter early recovery activities. In the last years, the Early Recovery Cluster has decided that all such activities should be streamlined through technical clusters. The Early Recovery Cluster will therefore not be activated at a country level as a general rule. Instead, a gap-filling cluster, named after the gap it aims to cover, for instance Capacity Building Cluster or Rule of Law Cluster, might be activated depending on needs and context. As a result, GSC partners feel a mechanism should be put in place to ensure that shelter recovery issues are well taken into consideration.

Outputs of this WG in 2013 included the development of several draft documents (pending SAG approval) including key definitions of shelter and recovery; a recovery framework, guidance and resources list; a policy note on shelter recovery programming; draft ToRs for handover of cluster leadership for the recovery phase; updated standard ToRs for a shelter recovery advisor; checklist of activities, and recommendations for integration of the role into the ToRs of other key members of a Shelter Coordination Team; a template for data collection of individuals with recovery expertise with the aim of establishing a register of shelter recovery advisors; and an advocacy paper on longer term funding for shelter recovery.

**Outputs**

This priority area will promote, in different ways, the inclusion of shelter recovery issues early on in shelter strategies and responses. The activities for 2014 include:

1. Finalization of existing draft documents, tools, policy and guidance developed in 2013.
2. Dissemination, piloting and roll-out of the above mentioned outputs at the country-level.
3. Completion of a register of shelter recovery coordinators.
4. Development and publication of country-level case studies highlighting successful integration of Shelter Recovery in emergency programming.

# Regulatory barriers to the provision of shelter

**Background and objective**

In 2013, the GSC Regulatory Barriers WG developed an annotated resource guide on HLP issues, a booklet on HLP due diligence in shelter response, and a one day HLP training for practitioners which was piloted in the Philippines Haiyan response.

The Regulatory Barriers WG will continue into 2014 to finalize some of the pending outputs in the 2013 workplan and disseminate and roll-out the resulting guidance and tools among country-level clusters.

**Outputs**

Some of the activities to be undertaken in 2014 may include:

* Adjustments to the one-day HLP training based on the Philippines pilot and roll-out training at the country-level.
* Commissioning of a scoping study that identifies gaps in knowledge and resources on regulatory barriers, with recommendations on activities to address these gaps.
* The conduct of in-country regulatory audits linked with the globalhousingindicators.org initiative.
* Development of an advocacy strategy and action plan to further improve collaboration between other global networks and consortia working on HLP and other regulatory issues.
* Development of tools and guidance on community land mapping.

# Technical and Innovation

**Background and Objective**

In the past years the shelter sector has benefitted from a number of initiatives supporting the technical aspects of the shelter response. In addition to very valuable tools and documents produced by different organizations, the publication and website “Shelter Projects”, with contributions from many partners, has served as a useful tool to capture good practice and learning. The GSC aims to encourage a culture of innovation, harnessing new technologies and programming approaches for enhanced shelter response. It also aims to provide a diverse pool of available technical expertise, reflecting the wide scope of disciplines involved in the shelter and settlements sector. There is also a need to capture and disseminate learning in country-level shelter cluster technical coordination activities, to replicate in ongoing and future responses, capturing and sharing innovation and good practice in the field. The GSC endeavors to achieve greater consistency in technical standards, specifications, and policies.

The Technical and Innovation WG to be established will aim to promote technical learning, development and innovation in shelter response.

**Outputs**

The Technical and Innovations WG may advance some of the following initiatives:

1. Review the role of the GSC in promoting and advancing technical development and innovation.
2. Compile and develop technical guidance, templates, technical briefs, references and Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials for use by shelter cluster technical advisors.
3. Monitor and review innovations in shelter programming that can support the work of the coordination team. Possible establishment and maintenance of a database of innovations arising from country level cluster activities.
4. Capture and disseminate good practice through case studies.
5. Document and share successful shelter designs used in previous operations.

# Outreach and Capacity

**Background and Objective**

The GSC aims to increase its capacity through a more inclusive and broad-based coordination platform, with increased participation of emerging humanitarian actors. There is also a need to promote better engagement with and participation of local and national actors, providing relevant and adaptive support to local needs and existing national coordination mechanisms. The GSC Meeting also highlighted the need to better understand current existing shelter response capacities and partnerships to ensure complementarity of efforts, as well as explore synergies and opportunities for the provision of inter-agency trainings at the country and global levels in an effort to increase capacity and improve practice.

The Outreach and Capacity WG to be established will aim to expand the capacity of the GSC to support country-level shelter coordination and response.

**Outputs**

The Outreach and Capacity WG may advance some of the following initiatives:

1. Map potential future GSC partners and identify strategies for approaching these possible new partners. Map regional events and identify ways of promoting the Shelter Cluster in those events.
2. Review the role of the GSC in promoting and advancing training and capacity building.
3. Map current capacities, partnerships, and identify gaps and opportunities for inter-agency capacity building and expansion of GSC partnerships.
4. Develop a self-learning online training in shelter coordination and response.
5. Develop a country-level shelter cluster awareness and training curriculum for cluster partners and local and national actors.
6. Develop a GSC capacity building strategy, including mentoring, distance learning, communities of practice and learning events.
7. Work towards defining common deployment methodologies including common ToR for members of the coordination team.

1. Note that the objectives and outputs of each group are indicative and are subject to discussion and revision by the working groups themselves, in agreement with the SAG. The delivery of outputs will be subject to the availability of resources. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)