# Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) Retreat (12-13 December 2013) – Meeting Notes and Actions

## Reflection on the SAG 2013[[1]](#footnote-1)

During this session, the SAG members discussed how the SAG had worked during 2013 and made recommendations for next year. The reflection was organized along the following topics:

Relation between the cluster and the wider sector:

1. The cluster has focussed mainly on coordination management rather than on technical issues. It was felt that there is a need to address technical issues as well.
2. SAG could engage more on individual country-level clusters by having ad-hoc meetings to review key responses.
3. SAG could ask other parts of the sector to take care of particular issues of interest to the cluster.

Links with Working Groups (WG), Communities of Practice (CoP), and Support Team:

1. Current engagement by cluster partners is limited: it is almost the same people in the SAG and the WGs, need to bring more partners to the table.
2. WGs have been positive and have achieved tangible results that need to be compiled.
3. CoPs have not been active enough nor well understood.
4. The Support Team has been very useful but there is a need to clarify the role of its members in IASC meetings and other fora.

SAG Accountability

1. More communications should be made to the GSC flagging the SAG meetings, decisions taken, outputs produced, and overall explanation of the cluster.
2. A document to be produced clarifying the role of SAG members; this could have the form of an institutional commitment explaining what being a SAG member entails. Similar could be done for chairs of WGs, WG partners/observers.

SAG and country-level Shelter Clusters:

1. Need to capture and share learning from country-level clusters and country-level working groups
2. More linkages with country-level cluster coordinators through regular updates and teleconferences.
3. Regional cluster meetings: no need to formally establish them if they do not exist already to avoid creating an additional layer. If needed for particular reasons they can take be facilitated by the Regional Focal Points.

SAG Funding and resourcing:

1. It would be good to quantify the benefit that the cluster provides to cluster partners.
2. Greater promotion of better coordination between initiatives undertaken by cluster partners to limit duplication of work. Some of them could be done jointly as cluster products.
3. Explore a funding and contributory mechanism including contributory membership.

## Blue sky discussion on what GSC could achieve

SAG members discussed what the GSC could be doing and what it could stop doing. They were encouraged to be open, imaginative, proposing new ideas even if these are extreme. The following issues were raised in no particular preference order:

1. HR issues could be better addressed (good shelter practitioners becoming coordinators, cluster coordinators could have a role as mentors)
2. Joint shelter coordination training for cluster coordinators rather than separate ones.
3. Inter-sectorial response, increase links with other sectors.
4. Standardized approach between response n conflict/disasters: Support Team should work as one.
5. How to engage in non-cluster settings (ie. Syria situation)
6. Possibility of including an NGO as an additional third GSC co-lead. It could be a rotating role.
7. Cluster performance: how to improve less efficient country-level shelter clusters, the SAG could monitor them and find a way to address the weaknesses. This could include questioning cluster strategies that are not working
8. Leverage on other initiatives such as CaLP, Shelter Centre
9. Increased Advocacy: define clear common messages
10. Liaise more with other actors:
    1. Development actors (World Bank, Development Banks, professional bodies…)
    2. NGOs specialized in different aspects of shelter: BuildChange, Architecture for Humanity, Architects without Borders, Un Techo…
    3. Advocate at managerial level with big NGOs that could do more shelter: World Vision, Mercy Corps, CHF.
11. Senior Management Training on Shelter issues
12. Classification of shelter solutions: define a standard glossary or classification of solution so that there is a common understanding.

## Working Session on SAG decision making and endorsement of documents by the cluster

SAG members agreed on better decision making mechanisms for next year. The following was agreed:

1. A matrix to be prepared capturing the functions and roles of SAG, Support Team, WGs, Cluster Co-Leads, and CoPs. (defining decision making process, outputs and deliverables, representation, etc). It should also capture the relation with other clusters. This matrix/framework becomes a concrete layout of what the cluster is, and will give the SC further accountability.
2. SAG [current ToR](https://www.sheltercluster.org/Global/Global%20SAG/TOR%20-%20GSC%20SAG.doc) to be revised in order to give a bigger role to SAG members. SAG members are comfortable channelling to the SAG questions, concerns or issues from cluster partners but not formally representing other organisations.
3. As per SAG ToRs**,** decision making is done by consensus which means that there are no objections from any of the SAG members to the decision. This is to be maintained.

SAG meetings:

1. Regular SAG meetings to be better organized:
2. Pre-defined dates should be fixed for regular SAG meetings
3. Agendas, documentation and decisions expected to be shared well in advance to enable informed decision-making.
4. A discussion on country-level clusters should be included in the agenda of the meetings.
5. Ad-hoc SAG meetings to be called for thematic issues or for L3 emergencies.

Shelter Projects

1. This initiative will become a cluster product as it was in the beginning. However, it is essential that cluster partners contribute to funding it.

Endorsement of documents by the Cluster[[2]](#footnote-2):

1. Documents produced by the different bodies of the cluster in the exercise of their functions and approved by the SAG will become cluster documents as per the defined process. These documents will only have the cluster logo.
2. The Cluster will not endorse any documents that have not been produced by the cluster given the implications this would have. The cluster will prepare an explanation of the reasons why it cannot endorse any documents to be put in the website.
3. Additionally, a disclaimer will be put in the website explaining that the documents in the website are not endorsed by the cluster but are documents that country-level clusters and shelter practitioners find useful.

## Feedback on GSC meeting 2013

A discussion was had around the 2013 GSC meeting and how to improve it for next year. The following points were raised:

1. More of the feedback from partners to be done beforehand and consolidated in advance of the meeting through surveys, emails or other mechanisms
2. Country-level cluster coordinators to be asked earlier and more clearly about the support they need from the GSC.
3. More time to be allocated for networking and cross-fertilization between clusters.
4. The meetings to be held earlier, around 29 Sept- 3 Oct or 6-10 Oct in order to avoid conflicting with CAP season and other activities.
5. The sequencing of the different shelter events and the CCCM events to be improved. Several options were discussed the following was considered the most appropriate. It was agreed to discuss it with CCCM and Shelter Centre to seek their inputs and agreement:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mon | Tues | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat | Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thur |
| Coordination Workshop | | GSC MEETING | | Shelter Centre Meeting | |  | Joint CCCM Coordination Workshop | CCCM Retreat | | |
| Internal | Joint |

1. More background to these meetings can be found in Annex 1

## Review of the GSC Strategy 2013-2017 and priorities for 2014

The following was discussed and agreed around the strategy and the priorities for 2014. The Strategy can be found [here](https://www.sheltercluster.org/Global/Global%20SAG/2013%20-%202017%20GSC%20Strategy.doc).

Overall strategy and process:

1. The current strategy document to be fine-tuned and some outcomes to be consolidated. However the strategy should not lose its ambition.
2. There is no need for an additional lengthier document giving more background and detail to the current strategy.
3. The strategy to be consulted with the country-level clusters. They will be asked to identify anything missing, add comments, and identify how they can contribute.

Priorities for 2014

1. To be consolidated by SAG members based on the feedback received from the partners during the GSC meeting.
2. Based on the document on priorities, the SAG will decide on the Working Groups needed to address the priorities. The following Working Groups were initially discussed:
   1. Technical and Innovation
   2. Shelter in Recovery
   3. Accountability
   4. Regulatory Barriers to Shelter
   5. Capacity Building and Resources

Achievements

1. A document to be produced summarizing the achievements of the cluster: what was achieved, what resources were used, what was not achieved and why. This will be a living document that will be updated as needed. This document will be useful for advocating for support to the cluster to the management of cluster partners and to other partners and donors.

## Review of other GSC bodies: Working Groups, Communities of Practice, Support Team and with other clusters

The SAG members discussed how to improve the performance of these other GSC bodies:

Working Groups (WG): More info can be found [here](https://www.sheltercluster.org/Global/Pages/Working-Groups-2013.aspx)

1. Prepare 1 page document that clearly defines the process of WGs : formation, closure, membership, timeframe, process (Process: SAG identifies issues; SAG request the formation of WG; interest to lead/participate is requested via email; SAG and ST identify WG chair; WG meets and produce work plan, outputs and timeline; SAG endorses the workplan; all outputs should be endorsed by the SAG; WG are deactivated by the SAG)
2. Shortcomings :links between outputs and field needs are not always clear; no plan for field roll out; unpredictable engagement by WG members; more focused outputs
3. ECHO contribution supports the WGs in their outputs, not to specific deliverables.
4. WGs to engage with non-traditional actors (ie. Universities, professional bodies…)

Communities of Practice (CoP): More info can be found [here](https://www.sheltercluster.org/Global/Pages/Communities-of-Practice.aspx)

1. So far CoPs have worked best when connected to one individual. This is to be formalized by creating an email address for that CoP and link them to the email of individuals: Cluster Coordination: Pablo/Miguel/All coordinators; Website: Neil/Gabriela; Environment: Kelly/Anita. A disclaimer should be put explaining that these CoPs are just for information sharing and do not reflect the position of the cluster.

Support Team (ST)[[3]](#footnote-3): More info can be found [here](https://www.sheltercluster.org/Global/Pages/Support-Team.aspx)

1. A matrix to be prepared summarizing all the IASC meetings and who participates.
2. Participation in IASC meetings is usually as cluster lead agencies. However, where the cluster is asked to be represented, SAG members, as well as ST members, can represent the cluster.
3. The SAG should be more involved in giving feedback to IASC documents and decisions.
4. Standard TOR should be agreed for country-level shelter cluster coordinators and other positions of the Shelter Coordination Teams

Working with other clusters

1. Capture good examples of collaboration with other clusters as good practices to be shared on the website.

## Cluster resourcing and sustainability

SAG members discussed on ways to increase the sustainability of the global cluster, particularly the Support Team.

1. Cluster partners might be ready to collaborate in maintaining the Support Team if they are given the tools to clearly explain it to their management.
2. Produce a document which presents the Support Team, its roles, and the minimum number of position required for the cluster to run effectively, a governance model document. This document should target managers and thus be presented in a clear and appealing way.

# Summary of Action Points and documents to be produced

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Action Point** | **Who** |
| 1 | **Reach out** to other cluster partners to chair and participate in WGs (1.d) | **SAG / ST** |
| 2 | More **communication** between country and global level cluster and more global updates explaining SAG decisions and other related issues from GSC (1.h) | **ST** |
| 3 | Promote **better coordination between initiatives** undertaken by cluster partners to limit duplication of work. Some of them could be done jointly as cluster products. (1.n) | **SAG** |
| 4 | Funding and **contributory mechanism** to be explored (1.o) | **SAG** |
| 5 | **Increase relation with country-level clusters and working groups** and capture and share learning (1.j & 1.k) | **ST** |
| 6 | **SAG ToR** to be revised as explained in points (3.b & 3.c) | **ST/SAG** |
| 7 | **SAG meetings:** Regular meetings should be better organized as explained in point. Ad-hoc SAG meetings to be called for thematic issues or for L3 emergencies. (3.d) | **ST** |
| 8 | **Consult with the** **CCCM and Shelter Centre** on sequencing of shelter events (4.m&4.n) | **ST/SAG** |
| **Documents** to be produced (all of them should be short) | |  |
| 9 | A **commitment document** outlining the implications of being a SAG member. A similar document for chairs of Working Groups, WG partners and WG observers. (1.i) | **ST** |
| 10 | An **overall matrix document** better defining and formalizing the roles and responsibilities and relationships between the SAG, Support team, WGs, Cluster Co-Leads, and CoPs (3.a) | **ST** |
| 11 | **Explanation** of why the cluster cannot endorse any documents that have not been produced by the cluster (3.h) | **ST** |
| 12 | A **disclaimer** for the website explaining that the documents in the website are not endorsed by the cluster (3.i) | **ST** |
| 13 | **Strategy 2013-2017** tobe fine-tuned and some outcomes to be consolidated. The strategy to be consulted with the country-level clusters. (4.a&4.c) | **ST** |
| 14 | **Priorities for 2014** to be consolidated by SAG members and approved on next SAG meeting along with the WGs to address them. (4.d) | **SAG** |
| 15 | **Summary of achievements** document (5.f) | **ST** |
| 16 | A summary of the process **Working Group** activation, de-activation, and approval of documents (6.a) | **ST** |
| 17 | Document explaining the **Support Team** and roles (RFPs and GFPs) and asking for support from cluster partners. Target: cluster partners management (7.b) | **ST** |
| 18 | Create an **email address** for each of the **CoP** and link it to different persons (6.e) | **ST** |
| 19 | A **matrix summarizing all the IASC meetings** and who participates (6.f) | **ST** |
| 20 | **Standard TOR** for country-level shelter cluster coordinators and other positions(6.i) | **ST** |
| 21 | Capture **good examples of collaboration** with other clusters as good practices (6.j) | **ST** |

# Annex 1

# GSC Meetings Feedback Notes:

# DRAFT - Discussion document - 11/11/13

Following both the 2012 and 2013 Global shelter cluster workshops there were many comments from workshop participants surrounding the overlap between cluster meetings, cluster lead agency meetings and the shelter centre. It was noticed that scheduling issues can lead to a perceived divide between those coordinating and those implementing & developing shelter responses and can prevent those attending cluster meetings remaining up to date on sectoral thinking, as well as undermining previous project funding of the shelter centre meeting by the majority SAG members.

Following the 2013 global cluster meetings, both SAG members and members of the global shelter support team agreed to find solutions to prevent this from happening at the following meeting.

Co locating all workshops (apart from internal ones) – same venue - was seen by most as a positive option, however additional work is required on scheduling to reduce overlaps as far as possible.

This document summarises a discussion held by the global shelter cluster support team, and outlines some of the options. This discussion is subject to the agendas of common days being collectively developed so that the needs of all parties are addressed in all meetings, specifically given the significant financial (as well as opportunity costs due to removing staff from operations) of sending field staff to meetings:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Meeting | Objective | audience |
| Shelter meeting  (technical / sectoral issues) | Discuss shelter (humanitarian +development) programmes designs solutions and sector practice.  Part of consultation on sector projects and shelter centre activities  (note currently this is the global meeting for technical issues) | Shelter Practitioners / individuals  -Humanitarian agency staff  - consultants  - academics + students  - development professionals |
| Coordination workshop | Discuss and share humanitarian shelter tools and practice | Shelter coordination team members and those who deploy them |
| IM workshops (internal) | Promote, Discuss and share IM tools and practice | Mainly internal IM staff |
| GSC meeting | Revise SC workplan for next year | Agency representatives (currently coordinators are included – gives field presence, but leads to multiple representations per agency) |
| Internal workshops | Internal agency networking and issue resolution, strategy development and sharing of policies | Agency staff |

**Table 1) shelter related meetings and associated activities**.

Note: CCCM workshop currently runs immediately after the shelter workshop and is preceded by internal agency days where CCCM issues are discussed.

Further clarity is required on audiences of the various meetings. For example: as the meetings are currently established, do field cluster coordinators really need to attend the global shelter cluster meeting, as the formal target audience is agency representatives? How can duplication between workshops and meetings be avoided and are the durations of each meeting fixed?

**OPTION 1)** Cluster coordinators workshop held in spring GSC meeting held in autumn

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| WINTER | | SPRING | | SUMMER | | AUTUMN | | WINTER |
|  |  |  | COORDINATORS  INTERNAL WORKSHOPS  SHELTER MEETING |  |  |  | GLOBAL SHELTER CLUSTER MEETING  SHELTER MEETING |  |

**OPTION 2a)** all workshops held in autumn, and spread over a weekend (planning based on current workshop duration)

Constraints:

* CCCM needs 3 consecutive days (1 internal) – adjacent to the shelter workshops.
* Internal workshops (IFRC/UNHCR/IOM) need to be during the week to capitalise on attendance
* GSC meeting cannot conflict with other meetings
* Some overlap with shelter meeting is essential.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | M | T | W | T | F | S | S | M | T | W | T | F |
| SHELTER MEETING |  | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| COORD WORKSHOP |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| GSC MEETING |  |  |  | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| INTERNAL WORKSHOPS | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| OPEN TRAINING |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| CCCM |  |  |  |  |  | X |  | X | X |  |  |  |

**OPTION 2b)** all workshops held in autumn, and spread over a weekend

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | M | T | W | T | F | S | S | M | T | W | T | F |
| SHELTER MEETING |  |  |  | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| COORD WORKSHOP |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |
| GSC MEETING |  | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| INTERNAL WORKSHOPS |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| OPEN TRAINING |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| CCCM |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X | X | X |  |

**OPTION 2c)** all workshops held in autumn, contained within a week

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | M | T | W | T | F | S | S | M | T | W | T | F |
| SHELTER MEETING |  |  |  |  | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| COORD WORKSHOP |  | X |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |
| GSC MEETING |  |  | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| INTERNAL WORKSHOPS | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| OPEN TRAINING |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| CCCM |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X | X | X |  |

1. SAG ToRs and more background on the SAG can be found [here](https://www.sheltercluster.org/Global/Pages/SAG.aspx). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Endorsement of documents was actually discussed on the last day during the Parking Lot session but it is captured here for greater clarity. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Support Team was actually discussed in the parking lot session at the end of the retreat, but is compiled here for greater clarity. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)