



**Global Shelter Cluster**  
ShelterCluster.org  
Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter

## **Step 0 Forming the Technical Working Group (TWG)**

### **Informing Choice for Better Shelter**

**A Protocol for Developing Shelter and Settlement  
Information Education Communication (IEC) Resources**



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Global Shelter Cluster – Promoting Safer Building Working Group

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Case study example – use of protocol: a timeline

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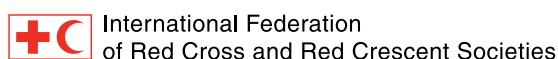
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Working group participants:





## Step 0 Forming the Technical Working Group (TWG)

### 0.1 Introduction

- The purpose of this step is to ensure that the TWG is set up with the appropriate composition and terms of reference to ensure it can identify the shelter and settlement (S&S) information gap and deliver appropriate IEC, whether this be through using existing resources, modifying existing resources or creating new ones.
- If undertaken post-crisis, it is recommended that this step should be undertaken within two weeks after the crisis, and the duration of the step to form the TWG should be no more than a week, even if more members join later.
- If undertaken during a slow onset emergency or as part of a protracted crisis, it is still expected that the step should take no more than a week, again with more members joining later.



IEC TWG Typhoon Bopha 2012. Photo: David Dalgado, 2013

## 0.2 The terms of reference

- Current best practice requires all cluster working groups to be output orientated and timebound, with clear terms of reference (ToR). The Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) of the cluster should help create and approve the ToR. Key guidance includes:
  - Define the output as ‘appropriate communication media/method following assessment’, rather than a specific communication medium (e.g. poster) unless this is already known to be the most appropriate medium from the outset.
  - Ensure that roll-out strategy, monitoring of impact, guidance on when to modify IEC and the process for modifying are included in the ToR.
  - Ensure that the resources produced are based on collected evidence and field experience from the particular context and, ideally, piloted before larger-scale roll-out.
  - Ensure that the focus of IEC is not only on ‘safer building’ but also includes other factors relevant to affected households, for example: settlement considerations; environment; space; thermal comfort; healthier housing; protection considerations; security; privacy; and housing, land and property (HLP) information gap issues; as well as strength and durability.

See the draft ToR contained in the example tools section which accompanies this protocol, which can be tailored to the context.

### 0.3 Composition of IEC TWG

#### Composition of the TWG

Chairing of TWG	<p>Push for a government-delegated representative (e.g. national technical institute) to chair or co-chair the meeting.</p> <p>If a Communicating with Communities Working Group (CWC WG) exists, then encourage the TWG to be a shared initiative between the shelter cluster and the CWC WG.</p>
Number of TWG participants and priority	<p>A typical TWG could include 6–10 active members, representing a range of agencies and national authorities/institutes with different skills and competences. However, where it is not possible to get this number (particularly in preparedness) or to get active participation from some, it will be necessary to set aside time to consult those the TWG would normally want as active members.</p> <p>In large crises, the technical coordinator may face significant interest in IEC initiatives from agencies and individuals and end up with large numbers requesting to be part of the TWG. The TWG should be open to everyone interested, however, priority in terms of contributing and voicing opinion needs to be carefully managed by the chair of the TWG meetings and the technical coordinator, and priority given to those who bring the necessary mix of skills, experience and knowledge of the local context.</p>
Priority skills, experience and background (with reference to the local context)	<p>The following should be prioritised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge of local construction practices (be wary of a TWG made up solely of international engineers and architects: ensure that local engineers, architects, builders, carpenters, masons, and other relevant skilled trades are represented wherever possible)</li> <li>• knowledge of in-country building codes and compliance framework</li> <li>• knowledge of/involvement in past humanitarian shelter responses in the local context</li> <li>• knowledge of motivators, enablers and barriers related to S&amp;S</li> <li>• knowledge of tenure issues and their impact on promoting better S&amp;S</li> <li>• knowledge of how affected people prefer to share information related to S&amp;S (e.g. communication experts)</li> <li>• specialists from other relevant sectors (e.g. protection and water and sanitation and hygiene promotion (WaSH) specifically)</li> <li>• it is essential to have specific engagement with anthropologists, sociologists, technical experts and specialists in education</li> <li>• it is essential to have specific engagement with communication, marketing and advertising practitioners (e.g. through trade bodies or relevant institutes)</li> <li>• it is essential to engage relevant authorities and institutions. This can include line ministries that relate to housing, in both recovery and response phases, and also national authorities that support and develop the building code, for example. Where possible, aim for dedicated staff from the relevant authorities to support or be an appointed interface with the TWG.</li> </ul> <p>Where it is not possible for members with the above range of skills, competence and experience to be regular, active participants in the TWG, they must be actively consulted on a one-to-one or small group basis, or through the sharing of outputs. Time must be taken to share consultation findings and advice from these professionals with the TWG.</p>

- At TWG meetings, set and regularly remind members of meeting ground rules, so that stronger personalities do not drown out relevant input from quieter members. As with all TWGs, this may need to be actively managed.
- The protocol has a number of steps. Large groups can be better utilised by delegating parts of the protocol to member agencies or groups of members. Information can be cross-checked for different geographical areas or contexts, for example, if the same sub-step process is undertaken by different members working in different areas/contexts.
- Inform the in-country agency staff member that they are responsible for ensuring their agency is consulted internally, to avoid last-minute interjections from HQ-based shelter specialists.
- Check that the TWG members have visited affected areas and are up-to-date with changing contexts and consider group field trips as appropriate. If, for example, TWG members are very interested in the quality of bricks but the majority of the affected population is currently building shelters using recovered timber and plastic sheeting, there is the risk that guidance and IEC on the quality of bricks will be provided when IEC on emergency shelter might be more appropriate at the time.
- Ensure that national and regional professionals are part of the TWG and that it is not dominated by those from outside the country and region.
- As appropriate, consult actors who have specific expertise in environmental considerations, age, gender and diversity in relation to the TWG and protocol step and sub-step processes and outputs.
- In preparedness, there may be limited engagement and resources. The SAG members are likely to be those coordinating and undertaking the steps and a longer timeframe may be required.

#### 0.4 Engagement with national authorities

- The outputs of the TWG will need to be endorsed by relevant authorities and it is important that these stakeholders are engaged from the outset.
- The process for achieving endorsement with the relevant national authorities should be discussed as early as possible.
- The SAG, the shelter cluster lead and the working groups should all engage with national authorities. The IEC TWG should look upon this as a good opportunity to open and strengthen dialogue with key national and local authorities and local/national/regional institutes.<sup>1</sup>
- If the government shelter cluster lead is not able to be involved directly then a technical member from a relevant authority or national institute should be appointed to represent them.
- In some contexts, for example conflict, it may be difficult to engage with the national government; if this is the case, look to local authorities for engagement where appropriate.

#### 0.5 Reporting back to the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)

- Although some SAG members will be part of the TWG, the technical coordinator facilitating the TWG should share a brief update at every SAG meeting and be prepared to face questioning on process, timeframe and content of outputs.
- The SAG also has the power to redirect, close and approve outputs of TWGs.

<sup>1</sup> Examples of authorities/institutes/NGOs of national and regional importance could include: Nepal Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET) in South Asia, Asia Disaster Preparedness Center in South-East Asia, the national disaster management authorities or equivalent bodies set up in most countries, and universities specialising in disaster risk management (DRM), for example.

## 0.6 Membership turnover

- Immediately after a crisis international staff turnover will likely be very high until longer-term staff are recruited. Prioritise having local ownership of the TWG with as many members as possible from the country affected.
- Document decisions and keep a decision log.
- When new members join the TWG, the technical coordinator/TWG chair should find time to induct them and go through the work that has already been undertaken and the rationale for decisions up to that point (using the decision log).

## 0.7 Understanding the varying agendas within the TWG

- Some agencies may have specific mandates, and/or may be trying to position themselves to better access funding, for example.
- Wherever possible the technical coordinator should take time to engage with members on a one-to-one basis or in small groups outside of working group meetings to hear their concerns, interests and positions: This is helpful when trying to build consensus.

## 0.8 Competence

- Explain to new members of the TWG that they must express opinions within their competence and that the TWG needs supporting evidence.
- When there is doubt on statements and contributions that arise in the TWG, push for evidence to back up opinions. Ask for assessment reports, photos of local practice, research reports etc. When this is not available those expressing the opinion could also be asked for a referral to those who can provide evidence supporting this.

## 0.9 Preliminary understanding of national disaster risk reduction (DRR), development and recovery framework

### 0.9.1 Importance of sub-step

- Recognise that many countries and regions have pre-existing frameworks (plans, legislation, regulations, agreements) for DRR and development that will need to be considered by the TWG to ensure coherent IEC. Frameworks for DRR and development will also impact on the recovery framework (the government's plans for recovery, but also those of all stakeholders who may be able to impact recovery, including business, the UN, sectors/clusters, development banks, foreign donors).
- Understanding the wider recovery framework will allow the TWG to mitigate risks, as well as to better understand any potential synergies which could increase the impact of IEC initiatives.
- Recognise that humanitarian shelter agencies often play a small role in the overall recovery post-crises, and that any IEC should be coherent and supportive of the broader frameworks (for recovery, DRR, and development).
- If the government is planning a cash grant or loan programme to support reconstruction, then the relatively small humanitarian funds may be more effectively used through technical assistance (including IEC initiatives developed as part of this TWG).
- To avoid risks associated with compromising households' ability to access funds and/or comply with standards from a government recovery programme at a later date, it is essential to have early engagement with the relevant government departments and agencies regarding likely plans and scenarios for recovery.



Source: <http://mudh.gov.af/348/kandahar-master-plan> [accessed 03 Feb 2019]

### 0.9.2 Process – preliminary understanding of national DRR, development and recovery framework

- Discussions should help identify if:
  - the government has plans to undertake a large assessment and will inform households as to their need to demolish and reconstruct, repair and/or retrofit
  - any existing government assessment and classification/marketing exist, and whether these concern only the safety of re-entering a house temporarily, or also refer to classification related to the suitability of a structure for repair, demolition and rebuilding
  - the building codes and the regulatory framework for construction (permits, inspections etc.) are going to be revised and enforced
  - there are plans for a post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) and if there is likely to be a large development bank-funded government recovery programme
  - what the government's policies and programmes in general will be regarding recovery, and what technical assistance needs there may be (and government plans for technical assistance)
  - the government is planning conditions on eligibility with regards to a recovery programme, including whether this will exclude households assisted by humanitarian agencies in this case it will be important to discuss this risk with potential beneficiaries, and to match likely government assistance
  - interventions are planned that might impact on IEC, or on how IEC fits in and relates to programming (e.g. local authorities setting up information kiosks, increase in government building inspectors, temporary reduction in tariffs, banks allowing repayment holidays for those with mortgages)
  - insurance companies are prioritising assessments and settlements (where applicable).
- Recognise that recovery plans might change considerably from initial discussions and that dialogue needs to be continuous.

### 0.9.3 Output – preliminary understanding of recovery framework

- Document in 1-2 pages the initial consultations and information shared on the national framework of recovery. Highlight key risks to be avoided and constraints that need to be taken forward in developing IEC resources. For example, 'building codes are being revised and anyone not complying with the new codes will not be eligible for assistance' will affect the content of IEC related to knowledge of building practice.
- Agree regular follow-up meetings to keep the dialogue open and to update this document.



## 0.10 Liability and legalities

- At the outset of the TWG, the technical coordinator needs to ensure that there are representatives of the national authority that leads the cluster or an appropriate delegated authority. For the cluster to give advice, it must be approved and authorised by the national authorities. This may include the local representative of the relevant authority. This is partly to ensure the credibility of the IEC amongst stakeholders (including households) and utilise the reach of government for dissemination, but also because of potential liability issues when offering professional advice (regarding safer building for example). The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Shelter Cluster is not an entity with legal standing in-country.
- Note that some countries have a national cluster system or similar recognised under national legislation and this may impact on the work of the TWG, if the TWG falls under the national cluster.
- From the start the TWG ToR should state how the IEC is expected to be branded and that ownership is common to the members of the TWG. For printed material, the country level shelter cluster logo will normally be used with the logo of the relevant government authority (normally the shelter cluster lead); however, space may also be kept blank to allow the agency printing or using the item to place their logo in addition to the other two logos.
- The native files (e.g. Adobe InDesign) of any material developed should be stored with the Global Shelter Cluster information managers.

## 0.11 'Good enough' and timeliness

- A balance will need to be found between the pressures of being timely in the production and dissemination of the IEC and achieving a quality of material that is 'good enough'.
- To increase impact, IEC should be shared between the shelter cluster TWG and affected communities and other key stakeholders frequently; IEC development should be iterative; and the TWG may communicate on the same theme a number of times in different formats and detail.
- Low-risk information (for example, a press statement on evident failure mechanisms released by an agency) can be issued quickly, with more detailed but higher-risk information (for example, guidance on repairs) shared after more careful consideration and based on significantly more evidence and review.
- Root 'good enough' in minimising the risk of doing harm and balancing this with the potential benefits for sharing information to promote better shelter and settlement outcomes as quickly (or in a timely manner) as possible.

## 0.12 Funding and budgeting for IEC

- Effective IEC resource development will require funding, and as early as possible donors should be approached to support the process outlined in this protocol. This can be through direct approaches by the cluster coordination team and SAG and also by agency members themselves in relation to the development and use of IEC within their programmes.
- Agencies will also need to be provided with guidance on what budget to include in the programme proposals for IEC initiatives.
- There is limited information available on the percentages of funds required for IEC and technical assistance more broadly to have impact, and every context, information gap and set of IEC objectives will be different.
- As a minimum, the TWG should be advocating for agencies to ensure they have adequate resources for technical assistance (including IEC) included in their programme proposals.