CONCEPT PAPER
FOR INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PLATFORM
(to UNHCR Programme Unit)

Introduction and key objectives of the Shelter Cluster Somalia

The Shelter Cluster is a forum where all actors can discuss and agree on issues related to shelter and NFIs supported by a coordinator and secretariat which aides the cluster members in attaining effective shelter/NFI action in Somalia. In order for the cluster to be effective in the provision of shelter and NFIs to the Somali population in need, a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG), which comprises the key 10 shelter actors, guides the larger SC membership with policy decisions, strategic direction and coordination mechanisms. As Somalia stabilises, the SC is responding by reducing its life-saving activities and progressing towards sustainable and durable (shelter) solutions.

In the Somalia context, the shelter partners and lead agency for the Shelter Cluster will share the roles and responsibilities to fill in the gaps with dedicated field staff and resources. Dedicated and/or committed personnel filling all positions detailed in the recommended SC structure (see annex organogram) would be essential to provide a platform for information sharing, in-depth analysis and strategic thinking. The lead agency will dedicate resources at National level while the shelter partners will dedicate resources at Regional level. Without dedicated staff at National and Regional level, the secretariat would be limited to providing a general overview with snap-shots without concrete strategic thinking and planned action. NRC, DRC, ARC, DFI, UNHCR and UNHabitat have agreed to take the role up of Regional Shelter Cluster Coordinator.

The **key objective** of the Shelter/NFI Cluster is to enhance the coordination and effectiveness of provision of shelter/NFI assistance. Specifically the SC will be responsible to facilitate and guide the following actions:

- Planning and Strategy development
- Coordinating and supporting service delivery
- Informing strategic decision-making
- Advocacy and resource mobilization
- Monitoring and reporting
- Capacity building and emergency preparedness

Coordination, monitoring and supporting service delivery

The SC will establish and maintain effective coordination mechanisms through a platform of information sharing, both at national and regional level, in close collaboration with government counterparts. The lead/co-lead agency and the wider SC membership will share the tasks and responsibilities at field level and will work through agreed upon ToRs to ensure a standardized methodology of data capturing, data sharing and analysis. The coordination activities will strive to reduce duplication, to address gaps and to ensure that service delivery is driven by the agreed upon strategic priorities.

The SC will ensure that adequate monitoring mechanisms are in place to review the IMPACT of the cluster members their activities and the progress against implementation plans. The SC will promote joint monitoring and the use of on-line platforms for the benefit of the wider shelter community to track IMPACT, to improve information sharing and to increase learning from successful programmes. The SC will provide feedback to UNOCHA through the Inter Cluster Working Group (ICWG) that will feed the general updates and the CAP reviews.

Rational of the project/platform

It is widely recognized that the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions is undermined if they are not based on timely and accurate information. Humanitarian actors in Somalia recognize this as a particular challenge due to limited access in the high-security context and the low capacity in human resources of the Shelter Cluster to take on board such a role. The Shelter Cluster has started a sustainable Shelter Working Group, which will help standardize all the tools and methodologies that the Shelter Cluster is using (cfr Project Cycle Management).

The main challenge of the Shelter cluster members is the lack of access to up to date and accurate countrywide IDP profiling of humanitarian needs. Reliable baseline needs assessments are required to enhance the accountability of Cluster member's programming in Somalia. Since August 2012, ACTED in partnership with IMPACT Initiatives and through the REACH programme, has carried out several shelter assessments, camp profiles and mapping activities in Somaliland, Puntland and Mogadishu. As a result, the Shelter Cluster (through REACH) has been able to provide fact sheets and maps of urban centres of Bossaso, Galkayo, Hargeisa, Garowe and Mogadishu. Although there has been a huge improvement in collection and sharing of information, the fact sheets have remained static in the past due to the following reasons:

- The SC did not have any mechanism of information management to continue data collection.
- The SC did not have the dedicated staff at field level and therefore was un-able to coordinate baseline surveys and general assessments.
- The SC did not have dedicated IM/GIS officers to ensure that the data was ready for analysis and the production of maps.

The Digital Platform

The SC has found the dedicated positions in the field and is investigating with the private sector how innovative technologies can help to ensure that information is collected in a systematic and sustainable manner. The Shelter Cluster would like to increase its engagement with the Regional Shelter Cluster Coordinators by providing _a digital platform_ for the collection and transmission of information. Using the digital platform would ensure that the data is captured through common and agreed tools (standardization process mentioned above). The use of logic and rules within the tool would reduce errors that often occur when entry of data is done manually (after field consultations). The system further ensures that all data is available digitally in real time both in the field, Mogadishu and Nairobi. This would allow for rapid evidence based decision making. The digital platform further promotes communication in-between the IM officer and the field coordinators. It would form (in-time) a historical record of all information and would help with the monitoring of IMPACT of shelter projects.

The digital platform would be put at the disposition of the wider shelter community who would use it for their own programming purposes (information being shared with the wider community). The system should be flexible to provide different degrees of permissions that control what users can see and do (to be further discussed with the partners). The platform should ensure the protection of data.

The following initiatives will be piloted through the platform:

- Capturing of the 4Ws (Who, What, Where, When): A core activity of the cluster is to compile and verify the information regarding the activities of the partner agencies. Collecting this information digitally will eliminate errors and allow regular follow up by the Cluster Coordinator.
- Inter-Agency and individual Shelter Assessments and baselines: Joint assessments build a common vision of the humanitarian needs and allow for an evidence-based response.

Flexibility within the different templates will be necessary to ensure that the standard tools can be adapted to the different geographical regions and programmes within the shelter cluster.

- Individual monitoring of Shelter projects: The SC will promote joint monitoring to look at IMPACT of the shelter projects.
- Mapping exercises: As 90% of all work in Somalia for the Shelter Cluster is related to IDP settlements and is inter-linked with site-planning, data regarding shelter densities, fire-breaks and communal services will be mapped. Information will be captured to ensure that maps of all settlements can be provided.

In order to implement the system, the following support will be necessary:
- 27 Smart Phones: Somalia has been split geographically in 9 regions (average 2 phones per region and extra 9 for joint assessments). Each phone will have the following minimum specifications: WIFI, 3mp camera, 4gb memory, GPS, and Android operating system.
- Mobile Application: The mobile application will render data collection tools including the following elements: text, integer, multiple select, single select, date, time, GPS point, and multimedia. The tools will include validation and skip logic. The mobile application will allow users to enter data while off-line and will only upload data when a connection is available. Users must log in to the mobile application so that all records they create are tagged with their identification.
- Web Application: The web application aggregates the data received from field users and provides a set of dashboards for simplified monitoring. The system has an automated charting function and google maps integration. The user management system allows the client to create separate "locations" and "departments" within the system and assign permissions that control what users can see and do.
- 5 Days Diagnostic and Conceptual Evaluation, including 4 survey designs: The Company will support the Cluster on how best to implement digital data collection with its partners. This will include a review of existing data collection tools, an identification of new data collection initiatives possible and the appropriateness or inappropriateness of digital data collection for each scenario. The objective is to produce a work plan for the Cluster of related and prioritized digital data collection activities (see above: 4W matrix, assessments, monitoring and mapping).
- Building of the 4 surveys: The Company will work with the Shelter Cluster to finalize the data collection tool (see above standardization process) and translating the paper form to digital. This support will include an iterative process with the Shelter Cluster even after deployment in the field to finalize the tool based on experience.
- 3 Days Training Focal Points and Cluster Staff in the field (including travel): The Company will support Shelter Cluster staff to train Regional Shelter Cluster Coordinators both on the tool itself and the use of digital data collection. At the end of the training Shelter Cluster staff will have a thorough knowledge of the tool, how to collect data with the phone and how to trouble shoot recurring issues. The Company will train cluster staff on the use of the web application.
- 1 Day training in user Set Up, Maintenance and Data Analysis: The web application allows for granular control of users' roles. Users are only allowed to see and act on information they have been assigned. The configuration of this system is unique to each organization. The Company will train the IM officer and the National Shelter/Protection Cluster coordinators in the configuration, analysis and the maintenance of the platform.
- Help Line: mFieldwork staff will provide remote support to both mobile and web application users through a help line. The help line will be available through Skype, email and phone.