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SHELTER/NFI CLUSTER PARTICIPATION AND MEMBERSHIP GUIDELINES

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I. What is the cluster approach?

The cluster approach is a set of structures, processes, principles, and commitments to coordinate humanitarian action when a national government requests international support. It aims to make the humanitarian community better organized and more accountable to crisis-affected people.

What are clusters?

Clusters are voluntary groups of humanitarian organizations working in specific technical sectors of humanitarian action e.g., Shelter, Health, Protection (shown in the dark blue segments in figure 1). Cluster members can include NGOs, United Nations agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, and government bodies involved in humanitarian response. They coordinate action to ensure the best outcomes for people affected by crises, at all the stages shown in the arrows in the diagram. Clusters promote coordinated and aligned strategies, good practices, avoidance of duplication, address gaps and share information.

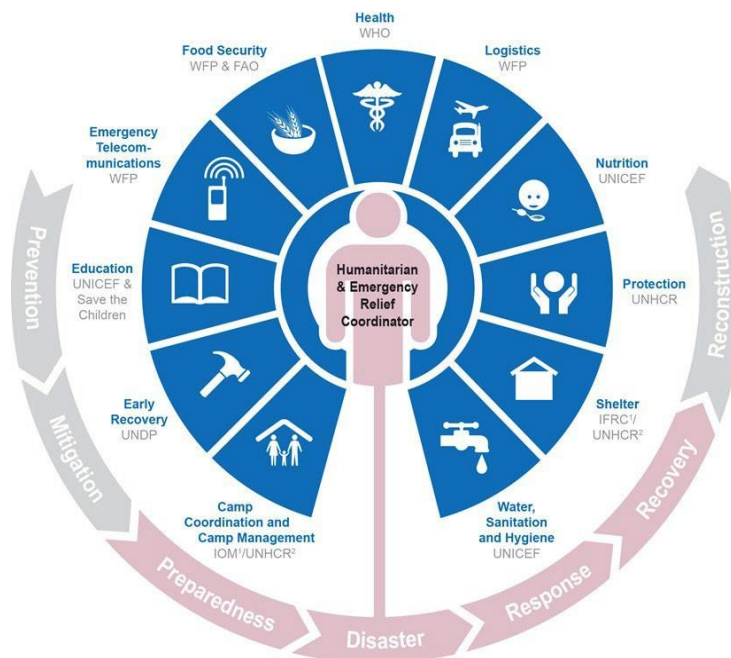


Figure 1

They build national capacity to prepare for emergencies, and advocate for more effective and accountable humanitarian action. All clusters are responsible for up- holding protection principles and preventing sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. There are 11 clusters globally. The same clusters can be activated at a national level and occasionally at a subnational level in response to a particular emergency.

Each global cluster is led by United Nation agencies, IFRC or an international NGO. At the country level, clusters are usually co-led by a United Nations agency and an NGO.

II. Why should your organization join the cluster system?

The cluster system can enable your organization to better serve affected people through:

- Increased influence, visibility, and understanding of procedures.
- Access to technical guidance and support.
- Access to information about what others are doing and any gaps.
- Partnership opportunities with other organizations.
- Funding opportunities with various donors.
- Adopting aligned approaches to minimize tensions among the people we serve and to accommodate stronger impact across the cluster.

Shelter Cluster Palestine: The aim of the Shelter Cluster Palestine is to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies and provide clear leadership and accountability in the main areas of Shelter and Non-Food Items. Realizing the importance of cluster coordination, Shelter Cluster promotes a common strategy and good practices, avoids duplication, addresses gaps, and shares information among the cluster members. It builds national capacity to prepare for emergencies, and advocates for more effective and accountable humanitarian action.

Shelter Cluster is open to:

- Academia/research institutions
- Donors
- International Financial institutions (IFIs)
- International NGOs
- National/Local authorities
- Private Sector
- Red cross/Red Crescent Movement (IFRC, ICRC, National Society)
- Regional/National/Local NGOs
- UN agencies
- Other (Those that do not fall into any of the above)

III. How to become a shelter cluster partner?



STEP 1

Submit relevant documents as evidence of being active member criteria below to im1.palestine@sheltercluster.org.

Eligibility Criteria:

- The organization should share its agency profile with the cluster for review and endorsement by the SAG.
- The organization should have operational presence and staffing in the governorate of operations.
- Cluster members must commit to adhering to the 12 minimum commitments, as outlined in the IASC guidelines for cluster coordination at the country level.



STEP 2

Confirmation of eligibility by the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG).

The organization should:

- Complete the cluster Capacity Mapping tool, indicating the sub-districts of operational presence.
- Subscribe to the Shelter Cluster mailing list, providing focal point contact details.



STEP 3

Active participation and strong commitment

The new cluster member should actively participate in the cluster by:

- Regularly reporting the 5Ws for both planned and completed activities and stock report as well.
- Consistently attending cluster meetings.
- Implementing the activities aligning across the Shelter Cluster.

IV. How to become an active Shelter Cluster member



New Member

Submit relevant documents as evidence of meeting the criteria below to im1.palestine@sheltercluster.org.

Active member criteria:

- Submit 5Ws reports for both plans and completed activities three times within the first three months of joining the cluster.
- Attend cluster meetings three times within the first three months.
- Implement activities on the ground at least once within the first three months.
- Attend field level cluster meetings at least once within the first 3 months.
- After three months, the criteria for "Old Members" will apply.



Old Members

Requirements for Active Membership for Existing Members.

The organization should:

- Submit 5Ws reports for both Plans and completed activities four times in the last six months of joining the cluster.
- Attend OPT Shelter Cluster meetings four times in the last six months.
- Attend field-level Shelter cluster meetings two times in the last six months.
- Have supported or implemented activities on the ground at least twice in the last six months.



Cluster Reports

Reporting frequency for Active Membership for Existing Members.

The member should report:

- Completed Activities: Report completed Shelter/NFI activities biweekly upon Shelter Cluster's IMO's request.
- Stock Status: Report the current stock/in pipeline stock capacity to the Cluster biweekly upon Shelter Cluster's IMO's request.
- Planned Activities: Report planned activities for the upcoming month to the Cluster biweekly upon Shelter Cluster's IMO's request.

V. General Shelter Cluster membership commitments:

The organization, willing to join Shelter Cluster Palestine, should abide by 12 minimum commitments for participation in clusters as prescribed in the Intra-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines for Cluster Coordination at Country Level:

1. Commitment to humanitarian principles, the Principles of Partnership, cluster-specific guidance, and internationally recognized program standards, including the Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).
2. Commitment to mainstream protection in program delivery (including respect for principles of non-discrimination, do no harm, etc.)
3. Readiness to participate in actions that specifically improve accountability to affected people, in line with the IASC Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and the related Operational Framework.
4. A demonstrated understanding of the duties and responsibilities associated with membership of the cluster, as defined by IASC Terms of Reference (ToRs) and guidance notes, any cluster-specific guidance, and country cluster ToRs, where available.
5. Active participation in the cluster and a commitment to consistently engage in the cluster's collective work.
6. Capacity and willingness to contribute to the cluster's response plan and activities, which must include inter-cluster coordination.
7. Commitment to mainstream key programmatic cross-cutting issues (including age, gender, disability, environment, HLP, debris management, and HIV/AIDs).
8. Commitment by a relevant senior staff member to work consistently with the cluster to fulfil its mission.
9. Commitment to work cooperatively with other cluster partners to ensure optimal and strategic use of available resources and share information on organizational resources.
10. Willingness to take on leadership responsibilities in sub-national or working groups as needed, subject to capacity and mandate.
11. Undertake advocacy, and disseminate advocacy messages to affected communities, the host government, donors, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), Cluster Lead Agencies (CLAs), the media and other audiences
12. Ensure that the cluster provides interpretation (in an appropriate language) so that all cluster partners can participate, including local organizations (and national and local authorities where appropriate).

VI. Palestine Context:

1. Regular participation at the cluster (partners shall ensure their participation in both national and subnational level meetings which are covering their project locations) and contribution to the ad-hoc information, cluster flash updates, situation reports, and other activities as requested.
2. Mandatory completion of the cluster standard reporting (plans, stock monitoring and 5Ws) when requested.
3. Share responsibility for cluster activities, including assessing needs, developing strategy/plans/policies, post-implementation evaluations, and knowledge management/lessons-learned sharing, and developing and updating guidelines to improve the performance and coordination reflecting the observation.
4. Respect and adhere to agreed Humanitarian principles, policies, priorities, and internationally accepted standards.
5. Participate in and contribute to the relevant technical working groups (TWiGs), Strategic Advisory Group (SAG), and other strategic and technical committees for reviewing of the flash appeal and other proposals for resource mobilization and advocacy when needed.
6. Join in inter-cluster joint initiatives when close collaboration is needed to accommodate an aligned and consolidated approach, considering complicated political geography and various restrictions in the operational context.
7. Flexibility and availability to take the lead at the district/neighborhood level as a cluster focal point when a designated shelter cluster partners are facing challenges of access or other challenges

VII. Membership and Participation

While keeping independence of the Shelter Cluster, to promote information sharing, consolidated decision making, and accommodate an aligned approach across the cluster, the Shelter Cluster Palestine provides various platforms with a specific purpose.

Based on the different level of contribution, the members have access to:

1. **Regular/ad-hoc updates through newsletters, factsheets, and other informative emails and access to the information on the Shelter Cluster website:** All the registered members
2. **National/Gaza/West Bank Shelter cluster meeting discussing shelter specific subjects:** Shelter Cluster Partners, other cluster partners and observers with interests in the specific activities of the Shelter Clusters
3. **Shelter Cluster+ meeting discussing shelter related general subjects:** Shelter Cluster Partners, other cluster partners and observers with interests in the specific activities of the Shelter Clusters, Donors and Government entities of member states

4. **Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) Meetings:** Selected active Shelter Cluster partners committed to
 - 12 days of work a year to meet the SAG responsibilities. (½ day meeting per month, and ½ day to review key documents, strategy, advocacy messages, etc);
 - Actively and consistently participate in SAG meetings and provide timely contributions;
 - Demonstrate a commitment to the Shelter Cluster by contributing to its activities beyond the SAG, for instance through participation in TWGs;
 - In case of conflict with other priorities leading for a SAG member to miss the SAG meeting, the Shelter Cluster should be informed with a clear justification at the National and Sub-National level. Relevant coordinators keep the track record and follow up with the SAG member bilaterally if there would be no timely submission of the justification;
 - Member’s absence for three consecutive meetings, without reasonable justification, shall be considered as having resigned from SAG without further notice.

5. **Technical Working Group Meetings:** These are specific to the Terms of Reference for defined topics and outputs. Agency staff can nominate themselves to join the ToR specific TWGs to be able to develop guidance if they believe they have appropriate expertise (potentially from programmes they have previously or currently undertake). Those in ToR specific TWGs are expected to actively contribute to the TWG work especially the drafting of guidance or sourcing of information to inform the guidance (e.g. through assessments or research for example).

6. **Other workshops and capacity building activities:** Selected partners through application and evaluation considering the priorities, needs, and available resources.

VIII. Discontinuation of the membership:

1. Organizations failing to abide by the IASC minimum commitments will have their cluster membership revoked. Refer to the following link for the Key Operational IASC Guidance.
<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/about-principals/key-operational-iasc-guidance-executive-and-operational-summaries>

2. Organizations that will have stopped their operations in Palestine can inform the cluster of their discontinuation of membership.

3. Cluster membership is discontinued if the cluster is de-activated.