



**Shelter Cluster NWSW Cameroon**

ShelterCluster.org

Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter



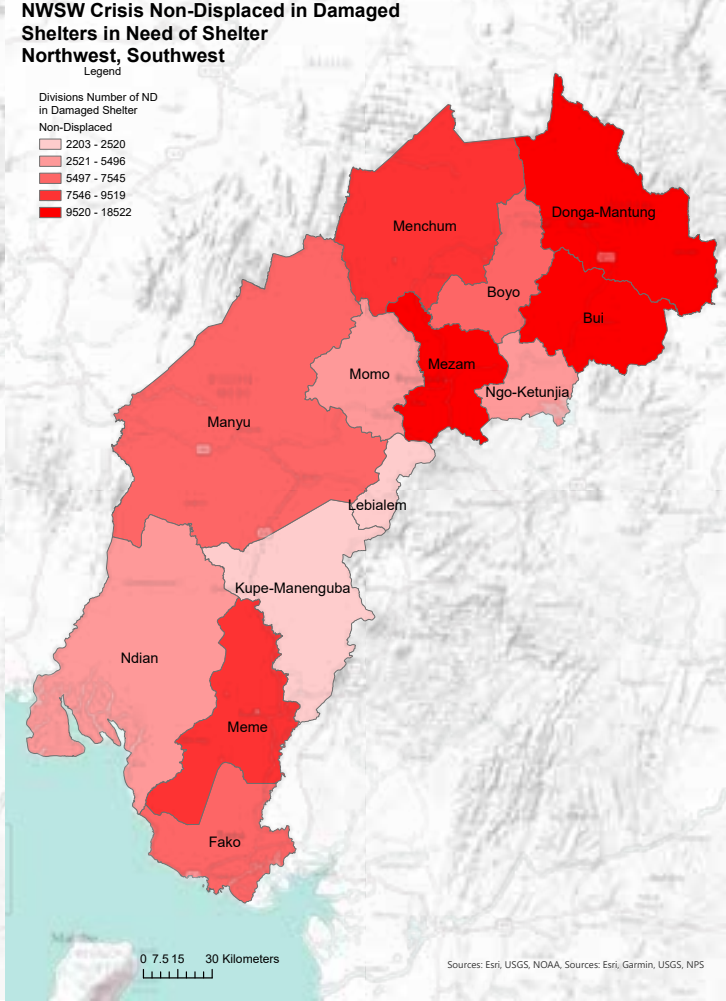
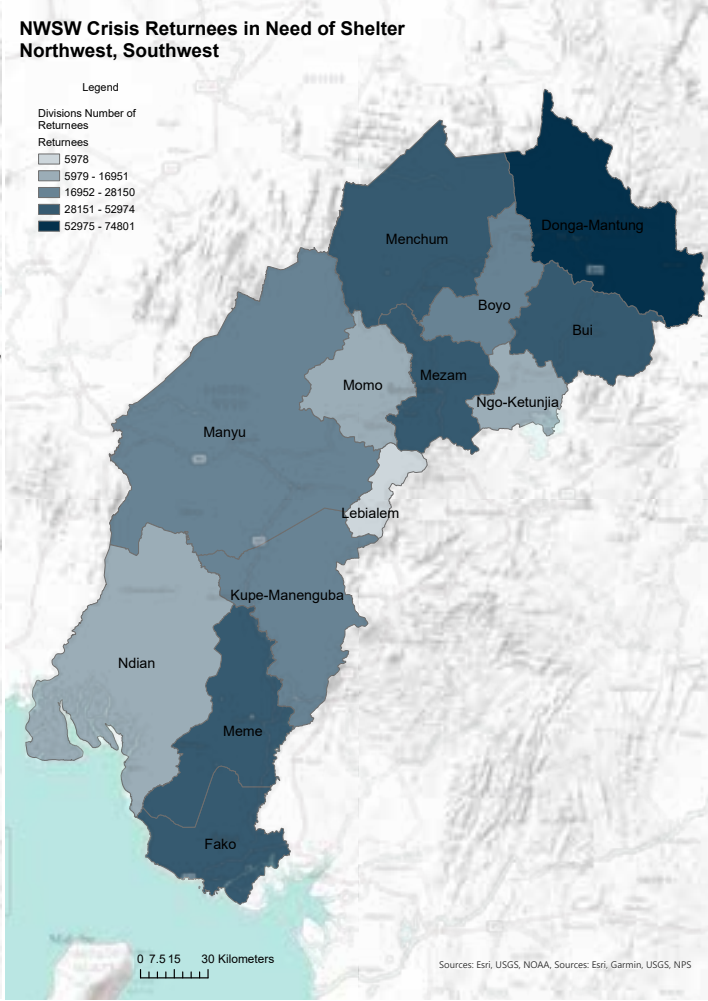
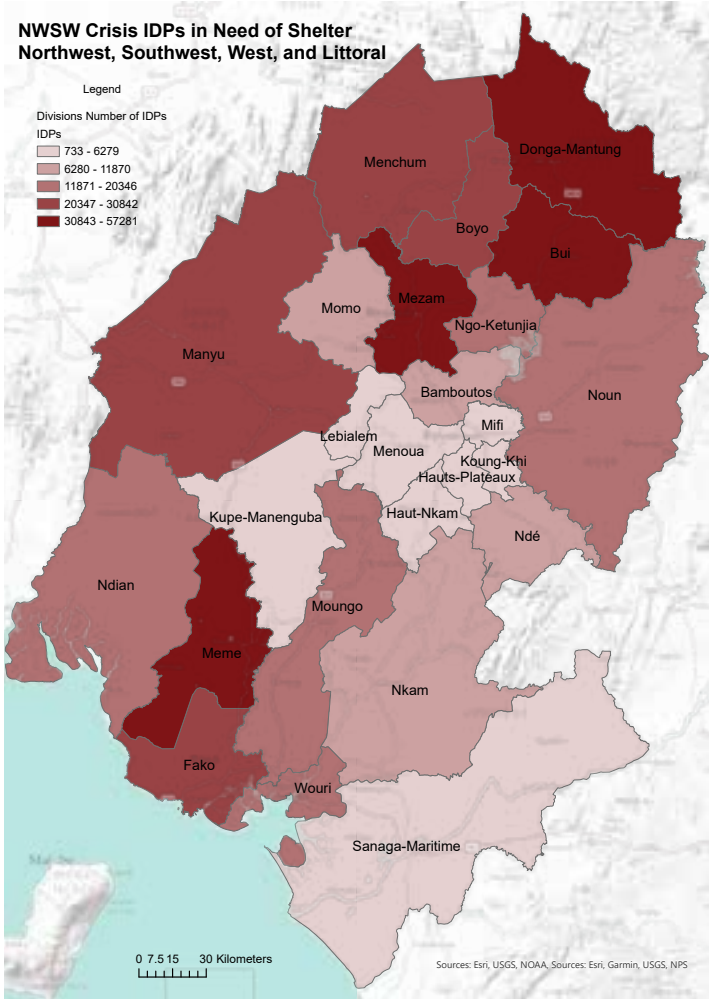
# Northwest and Southwest Cameroon Shelter Cluster Strategy 2023

## Shelter Cluster Strategy Update and Structure

Strategy Status	Version	Effective Date
Final	4	June 2023

Name of Response	Internal Displacement and Damage to Shelters Response in the Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon
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Shelter Cluster Partners with operational funds reported in the 5W	AMEF, AWA, Caritas, CRS, DRC, H4BF, HURAC, IOM, Intersos, IRC, PUI, NRC, Rhema Care, SHUMAS, SIRDEP, UNHCR

# Affected Area and Population: Crisis in the Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon



## Situation

Cameroon's Northwest and Southwest Regions are two of the most natural resource abundant of the country. The two regions are also home to a number of English-speaking citizens who have long felt marginalized and under-represented in Cameroon's central government. Some of the communities, due to distance and lack of suitable roads, have been more easily able to conduct their business in Nigeria rather than in Cameroon. This lack of representation, the lack of investment in infrastructure improvements, lack of ability to easily update civil documentation, and poor education and healthcare services resulted in lawyers and teachers peacefully protesting in 2017. These peaceful protests descended into violence as several groups sought to take advantage of these protest movements to start a secessionist movement to put in place the "State of Ambazonia" which is a political claim that is based on a historical demarcation of the Northwest and Southwest regions as the Southern Cameroons. This demarcation was done following World War II when Germany lost its territorial colonies and they were divided between the British and the French prior to the establishment of the country of Cameroon. The conflict in the Northwest and Southwest Regions is not considered an armed conflict by the definition of the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent due to the fact that the parties to the conflict lack a degree of organization and the threshold of conflict activity not being reached.

According to data collected by the Protection Cluster arbitrary arrest, property destruction, threat to life and personal security, abduction/kidnapping, and torture and inhuman treatment are the most commonly reported protection incidents from the crisis. These acts are perpetrated by both parties to the armed conflict. Throughout the crisis, estimates of fatalities vary with various sources claiming

4905 deaths<sup>2</sup> to 6000 deaths<sup>3</sup> throughout the 7 years of the conflict. It is difficult to determine the figure given that neither of the parties to the conflict publishes official figures on civilian casualties and verification is difficult. In addition to this is the fact that Cameroon has only conducted 3 census throughout the country's history with the last one conducted in 2005. Without official statistics, the impact on the overall population is difficult to determine except for victim testimony about the impact the crisis has had on their communities.

In addition to the number of people killed through these human rights violations, homes have been looted, burned, damaged, or destroyed as another tactic of the conflict. The precise number of homes damaged is not known as there was never any baseline started at the beginning of the crisis and due to limitations in access to verify damages and occupants in the aftermath of such events. According to household data collection of 13,500 households, 1% of these households were burnt intentionally, while 7% report that their homes were damaged accidentally throughout the course of the crisis. Given that Shelter Cluster partners do not have complete access to some of the most conflict affected locations in Boyo, Bui, Lebialem, Donga Mantung, Menchum, Kupe-Manenguba, Momo, Ndian, and Manyu Divisions, Shelter Cluster partners also asked IDPs what the state of their shelters was in their area of origin. 48% report that their shelters were destroyed, 40% report that their shelters were damaged, and 9% report that they don't know the condition of their area of origin homes.<sup>4</sup> These statistics are indicative of the need for housing over the next several years.

Each time that there are human rights violations or the fear of them, it results in displacements. In analysing the trends of displacements since 2020, the number of people displaced has continued to decline as the crisis has grown more protracted, and populations tend to engage in pendular movements more often than staying in one

<sup>2</sup> Raleigh, C., Linke, A., Hegre, H., & Karlsen, J. (2010). "Introducing ACLED: An armed conflict location and event dataset: Special data feature". Journal of Peace Research, 47(5), 651-660. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343310378914>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr17/6838/2023/en/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://sheltercluster.org/north-west-south-west/pages/northwest-and-southwest-cameroon-crisis-coordinated-shelter-household>



## Situation

displacement location. Nevertheless, there are frequent emergency situations that result in the displacement of IDPs requiring Shelter Cluster partners to be ready to respond.

The Shelter/NFIs Cluster has been active since 2018 for the Northwest Southwest regions of Cameroon together with 7 other clusters to support the response to the ongoing crisis in both regions. The Shelter Cluster is led by UNHCR. The Cluster currently has 16 operational partners. In August 2022, NRC was nominated as the Co-Chair of the Shelter Cluster. As of 2023, the Shelter Cluster began covering the West and Littoral region as part of its coordination. The Shelter Cluster is not activated in these regions as they are hosting regions and not actively affected by the crisis. Given the significant number of reported IDPs in these regions and partners interested in implementation, the Shelter Cluster's role is to provide coordination support services in these two regions. The roll out of the [shelter coordination approach in the two regions was done in June 2023](#).

Despite having 16 operational partners, the Shelter Cluster is only on track to reach the needs of 70,000 people this year which would be only 24% of its annual target had all funding been received. Since its activation, when the Shelter Cluster partners received \$2 million dollars in funding for its first 2 months of implementation, the Shelter Cluster in the Northwest and Southwest has wavered between an average annual funding of \$1.1 to 1.6 million dollars. The decline in funding is not linear due to the fact that some national NGOs self-fund some limited activities and the inability to estimate individual agency changes in staffing. Not only is the Cluster underfunded, but a number of partners are lacking the appropriate human resources to absorb and implement funding in the area of humanitarian shelter which is exacerbated by the current dynamics of the crisis.

Beyond challenges with funding and human resources, Shelter



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Cluster partners are also confronted with many access issues in addition to limited days to be able to be in the field to implement good shelter programming. Firstly, the splintering of Non-State Armed Groups has resulted in a number of road blocks and checkpoints throughout the two regions which make humanitarian access difficult. The West and Littoral Regions are hosting regions and are not impacted by the elements of the crisis. In addition to security-related lack of access is the fact that the rainy season also exacerbates the conditions of the roads complicating the delivery of items and making some roads impassable.

Since the start of the crisis, partners are also confronted with a number of lock-downs that Non-State Armed Groups call in order to protest against the government. Every Monday, within the Northwest and Southwest regions, is a lock-down day which has required some agencies to shift their working modality from Tuesday to Saturday, while other agencies work from home on Monday. All public holidays or major events involving losses by the Non-State Armed Groups or involving the Government of Cameroon usually result in lock-down days limiting the presence of humanitarian agencies in the field. Even if Non-State Armed Groups don't call a specific lock-down, the population stays at home and humanitarian agencies apply alternative work modalities out of precaution. The number of reduced days both in the office and in the field slow humanitarian responses.

Due to the deteriorating security environment, the humanitarian community has gradually continued to lose protection by presence in the areas where the affected communities reside. This loss of humanitarian presence has been particularly devastating on shelter programming which requires agencies to be physically present at the shelter level. Security limitations have resulted in many humanitarian partners not being able to go beyond the distribution site to conduct good shelter programming at the shelter level. As the crisis has grown protracted, the need for more adequate shelter response options has grown, but partners are lacking both the human resources and the capacity to work at the household level.

The crisis in Cameroon's Northwest and Southwest Regions is predominantly characterized as an urban and suburban crisis. Many of the displaced have settled in urban areas and are renting their accommodation or staying with host families.

- **(Displaced) Population in rental accommodations** struggle with affordability of shelters and fears of eviction due to their inability to afford the cost of rent. According to data collected by Shelter Cluster partners, roughly 42% rent their accommodation. There have been reported evictions, increases in the price of rent and people forcing to leave when their resources are depleted as they are unable to pay anymore. Most shelter conditions are under the minimum standards, as houses or rooms are shared between several families. Due to the expense of rent, some IDPs resort to paying a very low fee to live in sub-standard housing or housing that is at risk of being vulnerable to natural disasters. The presence of this informal housing market that was present before the crisis has been exacerbated by the internal displacement crisis.
- **(Displaced) Population in host families** mostly live in overcrowded and cramped situations. According to data collected by Shelter Cluster partners, 20% of IDPs have no agreement to stay in their current shelter, 16% of IDPs are living in the home of a host family free of charge, 5% are living in the home of a host family with a fee, 2% are living in a separate shelter than the host family, and 1 % are hosted in exchange for a service or favor to the host family. The sanitation facilities seem overstretched for this population group due to the general overcrowding and NFI needs are as acute as for the first population group for the same reason. As the conflict continues into its sixth year, the hosts of these IDPs are also becoming exhausted and seeing their own resources diminishing. They have critical NFI needs and also need support to maintain their shelter conditions given its use by many people. Lack of privacy and adequate sleeping space are also concerns given that they can cause risks of gender-based violence (GBV) and other protection incidents.
- **(Displaced) Population self-settled in rural areas** are either living in makeshift shelters or sharing very basic agricultural facilities with other families, like cocoa ovens, which only provide them with a common roof. According to the February 2023 MSNA, there were 82 bush settlements identified in the data collection representing 17,887 internally displaced people out of the estimated 375,246 IDPs within the Northwest and Southwest regions. In the Southwest Region, in the most conflict-affected areas it is common for IDPs practicing pendular movements to rush to the bush for safety and then return to their homes as soon as the insecurity incident has passed. While bush settlements are less common in the Northwest Region, there are various informal settlements established by IDPs that have been set up as a temporary accommodation to take safety. Settlement types in rural areas include informal settlements some hidden in the bush, camps built by agricultural cooperatives for their own employees, and recognized official rural villages. Tenure types can vary from ownership of house or apartment, hosting, illegally squatting, and various forms of public and private ownership of property. Sanitation facilities are totally absent, most IDPs lack proper roofing and they have very few to no basic household items, as most escaped their home without anything. It is important to note that SW and NW regions have different rural environments, the SW being covered with tropical forest the NW has a savanna-like flora. The climate is also seemingly colder in the NW. Moreover, some families are prone to multiple displacements following security constraints, fear of arrests and ongoing conflicts.
- **Returnees who return to find their homes damaged or destroyed:** One of the major obstacles to durable solutions will be the need for returnees to repair or construct their shelters upon return to their area of origin. Currently, 70% of returnees in the Northwest and 56% of

## Population Groups

returnees in the Southwest have reported damage to their shelters. 52% of these returnees cited lacking money to conduct the repairs as one of their major challenges to rebuild, followed by lack of technical know how and having anyone in their community being able to support them with the repairs (13%). Given the high number of IDPs still in displacement reporting damages and destruction of their homes, it can only be anticipated that the repair needs for returnees will continue to be a need over the next several years and beyond the end of the crisis.

- **Non-Displaced Population living in damaged shelters:** 38% of non-displaced people in the Northwest and 44% of non-displaced people in the Southwest report various levels of damage to their homes. Amongst the people targeted by this shelter strategy are particularly vulnerable people including those with disabilities who are not able to move to alternative and better shelter in the aftermath of damages. Lack of money for repairs was cited as being the most prevalent challenge for this population group. 23% of these non-displaced people in the Northwest and 24 % of people in the Southwest in these damaged shelters reported to have at least one person with a disability in their household. In addition to having damage done to their shelter, they may also lack essential household items particularly bedding and mosquito nets.
- **Vulnerable Hosts of IDPs:** IDPs in hosting situations have at times stayed with hosts for quite some time and vulnerable families often give up and share their resources with IDPs. These hosts are sometimes in need of NFI through in-kind or monetary support in order to help them cope with expenses caused by sharing their accommodation with vulnerable IDPs. At times, the shelter can degrade more quickly due to use by a significant number of people. Repair interventions should be done with discretion to the vulnerability of the IDPs and hosts living in these accommodations, but this population would be a priority for NFI support.



## Vulnerability Analysis and Beneficiary Selection

In June 2022, the Shelter Cluster developed its vulnerability analysis which enables Shelter Cluster partners to evaluate the vulnerability of the affected population based on the type of shelter they have, the condition of the shelter, their lack of capabilities, and the NFI items that they have. The details and the [calculation methodology for this vulnerability analysis are found in the Vulnerability Guidelines](#). In summary beneficiary selection for each of the major areas of intervention for the Shelter Cluster should be the following.

NFIs	Rent	Repairs
IDPs, Returnees, Hosts	IDPs, Returnees	IDPs, Returnees, and Non-Displaced living full time in damaged shelter caused by dynamics of conflict (burnt or damaged during conflict)
Does not have all sleeping items for # of people in house (blankets, mattress, mosquito nets, bed sheets, etc.)	Is currently renting or has no agreement to stay in their shelter (ensure tenure mainstreaming and agreement is in place for secure enough tenure)	House is damaged and has needs for repairs and current obstacles to repairing or rebuilding
Does not have enough kitchen materials to cook and feed people living in their shelter properly	Spends 30% or more of their income on rent	Severity of shelter damage per parts of the shelter damaged (roof, windows, doors, walls) Note that if giving cash for rent amount for these people it is too small to cover moderate to severe damages
Does not have a stable source of lighting at night	Spends more than 10,000 XAF	Shelter materials, items, and labours and stated amongst priority needs
Does not have an ability to store water and has less than 20L per person per day in their shelter	Has less than 3.5m2 per person in their current shelter	Is living in the shelter full time
Has NFI severity levels 3,4, 5	If their shelter is damaged are living in the shelter full time	Has proper tenure security such as owner of the house or has permission from the landlord to conduct repairs
	States renting and affordability as one of their priority needs	Has Shelter severity levels 3,4, 5
	Has Shelter Severity 3,4,5	



## Response Analysis

In 2022, the Shelter Cluster partners reflected in its strategy that the shelter response needed to be upgraded to better meet the scale of needs created by the crisis in the Northwest and Southwest. While for the last few years, emergency shelter kits and NFI kits were the bulk of the response, the Shelter Cluster is advocating for light repairs and to support the population in purchasing construction materials and tools that will better meet the shelter needs created by the crisis.

The Shelter Cluster continues to envision emergency shelter kits for situations where a population may be recently displaced to the bush or as partitions in collective centres or in hosting situations to increase privacy or when a shelter is newly damaged. As the NWSW region is still in a situation of active conflict with pendular displacements and unpredictability, the Shelter Cluster is proposing to support 45,903 households with emergency shelter kits. Beyond the emergency for IDPs in protracted situations, returnees who find their house damaged or destroyed or for vulnerable populations who are left behind in damaged shelters, the Shelter Cluster is advocating to provide more sustainable materials and tools that will help IDPs, returnees, and non-displaced meet their shelter needs. In situations, where returnees return to find houses damaged or burnt or where vulnerable non-displaced are still leaving in damaged shelter, the Shelter Cluster targeting 250 households with repair support. The Shelter Cluster is also encouraging the mainstreaming of environmental considerations. Common shelter types throughout the 4 regions rely on natural resources such as mud (mudbrick shelters are the most common shelter type), wood, and bamboo and also provide better shelter than emergency shelter kits.

The Shelter Cluster is aiming to support 18,500 households with support to purchase shelter materials and labour. During the consultations for potential CERF funding, the Coordinating Unit for Persons with Disabilities provided feedback that the Emergency Shelter Kit was not a response option suitable for such persons. Shelter repairs and support with hiring labour would be a better way to address the shelter needs, particularly for persons with disabilities left behind in damaged shelters. The Shelter Cluster is also encouraging market-based approaches such as supporting the production of these materials (in the case of mudbrick) and also the engagement of the population as they are able in livelihood projects (cash for work, supporting construction workers impacted by the crisis with starting a business, trainings on safer building practices) that also lead to better shelter solutions. These Shelter solutions are also more accountable to the affected population who have often requested CGI sheets or tools to support them in providing support.

Affordability of shelter has also been reported as a critical need amongst the population, therefore the Shelter Cluster is targeting 1,112 households with rental assistance. Lessons learned from 2022 reveal that rental assistance can support households in moving to safer and more habitable shelter and also in providing secure enough tenure for a few months. Such programs require monitoring and also can be coupled with repair support to ensure that the shelter is meeting minimum standards. Rental interventions can also be seen as a part of GBV case management in close coordination with members of the GBV AoR to move victims of GBV from overcrowded shelter or places where abuse has happened to better shelter. Issues with overcrowding are widely reflected in Shelter Cluster Assessments and Post Distribution Monitoring, and it is important that shelter interventions mitigate the risk of Gender-Based Violence by seeking to create space and privacy for those living in hosted or rental type scenarios.

In 2022, the Shelter Cluster also revised its standard NFI kit to provide more dignified living conditions. Family size sleeping mattress replaced sleeping mats to be more reflective of the type of housing in the Northwest and Southwest. It is also important to consider larger household

sizes and households where there are many hosts and IDP families who may need to receive more than 1 kit in order to ensure non-sharing of mosquito nets, mattresses, and sleeping spaces. The Shelter Cluster continues to advocate for the reduction of plastic packaging in its kits and also encourages partners to mainstream this practice when working with vendors in market-based programming for access to items. 47,860 households will be started with NFI assistance in 2023.

In terms of modality of implementations, cash is the preferred modality of most beneficiaries. However when it comes to shelter repairs and use of shelter kits, Shelter Cluster partners report through both the Standardized Household and PDM tool that beneficiaries would prefer a combination of cash and in-kind support. This is also in line with the Shelter Cluster guidelines to ensure technical monitoring of any repair or cash for repair interventions. This guarantees better outcomes, safety, and improvements for the beneficiaries. Cash and Voucher activities for NFI have shown to yield success. A challenge however has been the rising prices of the items in the kits, especially during the months from March to August where global markets were impacted by the Crisis in Ukraine. In August, the Shelter Cluster had to revise upward the price of the standard NFI kit. Shelter Cluster partners have voiced concerns that prices may rise with the new year period, which would mean that partners may not be able to reach as many households as originally planned. The Shelter Cluster has put into place a market monitoring tool to help the Cluster jointly monitor changes in market prices.

In terms of geographical coverage of the response, the Shelter Cluster is activated for the Northwest and Southwest region, while also maintaining a light coordination mechanism for the West and Littoral regions where IDPs have also taken shelter. In 2023, the 5W tool which has shown success in the Northwest and Southwest will be introduced to the Littoral and West regions to better record shelter and NFI activities of partners. 294,460 people will be targeted for Shelter and NFI assistance which includes 137,381 IDPs, 71,540 returnees, and 85,540 non-displaced (includes hosts of IDPs and those left behind in damaged shelters). 174,270 people will be targeted in the Northwest, 102,350 people in the Southwest, 11,059 people in the West, and 6,781 people in the Littoral.



## Objectives



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**National HRP/2023 strategic objective under which the cluster objectives fall**

**Objective 1:** Reduce mortality and morbidity of 1.3 million people affected by crisis

**Specific objective 1.1:** 1.3 million vulnerable people affected by crisis benefit from immediate minimum food, nutrition, WASH shelter and lifesaving health services by the end of 2023

**Objective 3:** Reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen resilience of 920,000 affected by crisis

**Specific Objective 3.1:** By the end of 2023, 920,000 vulnerable people have indiscriminatory, regular, and safe access to quality basic services.

**Shelter Cluster Objective 1.1:** Targeted crisis-affected households, including those in protracted displacement, returnees, and host communities, are provided with core and essential non-food items.

Activity	Indicators	Target
Distribution of Standard NFI Kit or Monetized Equivalent	# of HHs assisted with core and essential Non-Food Items; # of items distributed per type of item	47,860 HHs

**Shelter Cluster Objective 1.2:** Targeted crisis-affected households, including those in protracted displacement, returnees, and host communities, are provided with timely life-saving emergency shelter.

Activity	Indicators	Target
Distribution of Emergency Shelter Kit or Monetized Equivalent	# of HHs assisted with distributed/installed emergency shelter materials/kits	45,903 HHs

**Shelter Cluster Objective 2.1** Targeted crisis-affected households are provided with safe and sustained shelter support, including those in protracted displacement, returnees, and host communities.




Activity	Indicators	Target
Repairing damaged households	# of HHs assisted by constructed/repaired/rehabilitated house/apartment	19,600 HHs
Pilot Transitional Shelter Programming		
Rental Assistance	# of HHs assisted with rental assistance	1,112 HHs
Training or knowledge transfer on vernacular shelter construction	# of people trained	100 individuals

# Activity Matrix



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Please click on the activity matrix to be able to see a large version of the document through the [Shelter Cluster website](https://sheltercluster.org/).

Activity matrix 2022 NWSW Strategy						Version: May 2022				
Response	2022-23									
	Activity	Definition	Output indicator	Targets	Modality	Target population group	Cost	Type of activity	Duration / Frequency	Priority vulnerable groups of the impact
	Distribution of Emergency Shelter Kits	Currently given restrictions put in place by authorities, the shelter kit only includes 2 x 4 x 5 Tarpaulin sheets and one nylon rope. Voucher modalities tend to be more appropriate to ensure that the household is able to also purchase the appropriate kit items which typically include: •Polyester Rope 12mm x 50 m •Nails •Pickaxe •Shovel •1 kg 75 mm nails •Hammer •Handsaw	# of HHs assisted with distributed/installed emergency shelter materials/kits	18492 HHs	In-kind  e-voucher	Recently Displaced IDPs, Protracted IDPs in need of replenishment; IDPs living in the bush; rural areas; non-displaced people living in damaged shelters IDPs in urban areas; IDPs who receive kits but require additional items for adequate shelter; IDPs and Returnees in Damaged Shelters	20-80 USD depending on shipping and weight;  Monetization of complete kit including metallic items is around 160 USD (38,000 XAF)	Makeshift shelters, Occupied damaged shelters, Damaged shelters, Collective Shelters	6 months particularly in the climate of NWSW  particularly in the rainy season; can be one year in ideal climates	Jobsless because of the impact of crisis, Single female/male headed households, Albino, persons with disabilities, Elderly, Chronically ill, Victims of Protection Incidents
	Distribution of CGI sheets for roofing (3.05 x 9m)	For those IDPs who are living in an adequate shelter who have constructed shelters out of thatch, but lack the quality roofing material to protect themselves from the elements, if distributing in-kind materials you should make sure that beneficiaries are able to have elements from the shelter kit to use the CGI sheets as roofing materials. Mixed modality approaches including distribution in-kind combined with voucher assistance for access to building items could also be considered.	# of HH assisted with shelter	3424 HHs	In-kind/e-voucher	IDPs whose tarpaulin has degraded on damaged shelters, IDPs living in makeshift shelters who lack adequate roofing, IDPs living in the bush	\$21 USD (15,000 XAF) 2 pieces of	Makeshift shelter	CGI on its own is a more permanent property and is a very common roofing structure throughout bush, but not	Persons with disabilities, Single female headed households, Elderly headed households, Single male headed households, Victims of Protection Incidents, Albino, People suffering from trauma (PTSD) amongst elderly, children, and adults; crisis related low income
	Pilot Transitional Shelter Programming	Pilot intervention to be eventually implemented with the support of WASH and FSL Clusters to support IDPs, Returnees, or Non-Displaced in owner driven approaches to build longer term shelters, of a transitional nature (3-5 years lifespan); community based approach can also be considered with cash for work activities benefitting crisis-related jobsless people and access to housing for more vulnerable categories			Mixed modality	IDPs in urban areas, returnees/non-displaced living in damaged shelters; more stable areas of SW region	Construction of Shelters: Up to \$700 USD per shelter; leveling works and site preparation \$1800 (excludes materials)	Makeshift shelters, sporadic settlements, occupied damaged shelters	3-5 years	Crisis impacted jobsless, Returnees, Non-Displaced, Single male headed households, Female Headed Households
	Standard NFI kit	•2 Synthetic sleeping mats (plastic), tear proof and water impervious, 200 x 200 cm. •2 Blanket, fleece, light thermal resistance, 150 x 200 cm. •2 Mosquito nets, long-lasting insecticidal nets, rectangular large, 160 x 180 x 150 cm •1 Stainless steel/aluminum cooking pot with handles and lid, 5 L. •1 Stainless steel/aluminum cooking pot with handles and lid, 10 L. •6 Stainless steel plates (deep), diam. 22cm. •6 Plastic cups with handle, max. 0.5 L. •1 Plastic jar with lid for drinking water, 2 L. •1 Stainless steel serving spoon, 35 ml. •1 Stainless steel spoon, 10 ml. •1 Plastic basin, medium size, 7 L. •2 Jerry cans, food grade LDPE, suitable for drinking water, rigid, screw cap. Light colour only (white, yellow), UV treated for long-term outdoor use, 20 L. •1 Heavy duty plastic bucket, without lid, 15 L. •Solar Lamp	# of HHs assisted with core and essential Non-Food items, # of items distributed per type of item	12457 HHs	In-kind  vouchers	IDPs in rural/remotest areas, Newly Displaced, IDPs/returnees in urban areas, can also arrange with vendors to pop-up fairs in rural areas	360-515 (18,000-82,425 XAF) Depending on kit content	Makeshift Shelters, informal settlements	Typically a one off Assistance: Protracted IDPs may require occasional replenishment of items	Persons with disabilities, Single female headed households, Elderly headed households, Single male headed households, Victims of Protection Incidents, Albino, People suffering from trauma (PTSD) amongst elderly, children, and adults, Children headed households, Unaccompanied minors
	Family Size Sleeping Mattress	A Proposal to modify the standard kit to include Family Size Mattresses instead of the synthetic sleeping mats to be more culturally appropriate and according to IDPs' needs. Partners implementing voucher programs have noted that the standard voucher amount (in line with the standard kit above) is not enough to cover all IDPs' needs.			In-kind/ e-voucher	IDPs in rural and urban areas; Returnees whose houses have been damaged and no longer have a mattress	30,000-60000 XAF (\$48-96 USD)	IDPs in living in unsuitable shelters, those struggling with affordability of their shelters, Homes, Makeshift shelters, homes without electricity, damaged shelters where electricity is also impacted	One time assistance	Victims of GBV or other protection incidents, Female Headed Households, Elderly, House bound Persons with Disabilities, Chronically ill, Pregnant/Lactating Women
	Larger Rechargeable Solar Lamp	Often Preferred by beneficiaries, because the light is lasting longer (estimated to be around 5 hours before needing to be recharged), can be given to extremely vulnerable and only if resources are available			In-kind/ e-voucher	IDPs in spontaneous informal settlements	8000-10000 XAF (\$14-\$16 USD)	Makeshift shelters, homes without electricity, damaged shelters where electricity is also impacted		Particularly female headed households, large families with school age children,
	Provision of Fuel and Cooking	Provision of Charcoal or cooking stoves to those who are unable to access these materials on their own only if resources are available			In-kind	IDPs in spontaneous informal settlements, Non-Displaced living in damaged shelters who are unable to access fuel or markets	5000-7000 XAF	Makeshift Shelters	One time assistance	Chronically ill, Elderly, House bound Persons with Disabilities
	Rental Assistance	Providing access to accommodation for internally displaced people living in urban areas; should be done in coordination with Livelihoods actors or protection actors to ensure sustainability of the accommodation and so that the IDP is not put at risk when the funding of the organisation ends	# of HHs assisted with rental assistance	484 HHs	Conditional Restricted Voucher/Cash for Rent  Agency rental agreements  Advocacy to landlords	Extremely vulnerable categories conditional to a tripartite agreement with the landlord, agency, and tenant  Agency rents the accommodation on behalf of the affected population  Agency advocates to landlord or authorities for IDP to rent accommodation beyond the finalization of	3300-9200 XAF per month depending on location; Cluster recommends rental market assessment conducted under the advice of the cluster coordinator	Homes/Apartments  Homes/Apartments  Homes/Apartments	3 months	Victims of GBV or other protection incidents, Female Headed Households, Albino, Vulnerable Youth who are also able to access livelihood activities, Returnees whose homes were destroyed
	Training/Capacity Building Cluster Coordination Activities	Capacity Building activities for members of the cluster or for affected population themselves on shelter/building techniques Management of coordination: including hosting coordination meetings, workshops, putting in place tools such as the SW reporting tool and dashboard, score card, referral system, cluster strategy, cluster coordination performance monitoring and other necessary trainings as requested by partners	# of people trained  # of partners participating in the coordination	856 individuals  25 partners	Workshops, Training Sessions, Tools Put in place, Reports back to the Cluster	Cluster partners, returnees, protracted IDPs	Lumpsum: \$231,000			Measured by the outputs listed above



## Risks and Challenges/Constraints

Given the overall situation in NWSW, programming is difficult due to the uncertainty; the shelter response has to take into consideration the following constraints identified and highlighted by the shelter cluster partners:

### Funding

The crisis in the Northwest and Southwest regions has been recognized as one of the most neglected crises on the globe. Of the multiple global crises that are occurring in the world, it is only Ukraine and Madagascar's overall flash appeal who has received over 50% of its funding. Cameroon's appeal has only received 20% of the necessary funds to meet the targets.<sup>2</sup> According to data collected by the Global Shelter Cluster as of the 1st quarter of 2022, only 16% of the funds required to respond to the shelter needs have been received by country-level Shelter Clusters thus far this year.<sup>3</sup> In Cameroon, this figure is also at 17% nationally<sup>4</sup> and in the Northwest and Southwest regions only at 13%.<sup>5</sup>

### Access to the affected population

- Security constraints, many control points mounted by the military and the many roadblocks of the non-state armed groups combined with deteriorating road infrastructure will require flexibility in delivery schedules
- The HCT approved the specific new Access Strategy for the Northwest and Southwest regions. In addition to adhering these principles each cluster agency should also ensure that they are able to negotiate with all parties to the conflict. This is becoming increasingly more difficult due to the splintering of non-state armed actors. It is important to keep updated about these

<sup>2</sup> <https://fts.unocha.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://sheltercluster.org/> Admin extract from country-level clusters online Factsheets

<sup>4</sup> <https://sheltercluster.org/response/cameroon> March 2022 Factsheet shared by email

<sup>5</sup> <https://sheltercluster.org/north-west-south-west/factsheets/2022-04>



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groups in the different areas where humanitarian agencies are delivering shelter assistance.

- IDPs multiple displacements- It has also been noted that IDPs engage in frequent pendular movements as a coping mechanism and may stay in the bush for a week or more and then return. By the time the movement is reported to the Shelter Cluster, the IDPs have already returned back home.
- IDPs who are hiding in the bush are afraid of having their location identified and are at times reluctant to share information required to provide them assistance.
- Loss of identification documents

### Limited information

- Level of destruction of their houses and villages- While getting some indication from assessments conducted in the first quarter of the year, the Shelter Cluster needs to continue to document the scope of damages done. New damages are still difficult to confirm due to access challenges.
- The exact number of IDPs is difficult to determine, given that the baseline data is based only on key informants through several years of the OCHA/IOM Multisector Needs Assessment. This also makes it difficult to define the number of returnees, which seems too high.

## Guiding Principles/Key Issues

**Safety and dignity** The Shelter Cluster shall identify the physical and psychological threats populations can face in accessing services related to shelter and NFI distribution and act to prevent, minimize, or mitigate their negative effects. All interventions need to carefully consider avoiding them causing further harm to the beneficiaries (Do no harm). All projects will be respectful of cultural and religious practices and implemented with the highest regard towards the target populations' privacy. Shelter Cluster partners are always reviewing the feedback that they are receiving about how they are implementing their activities in the field. During the first quarter of the year, the Shelter Cluster reviewed feedback coming from the MSNA about the perception of distribution points being too far and the population not having enough awareness about the distribution timeline. In addition to this feedback, Shelter Cluster partners will also try to share findings from post distribution monitoring and trends from their complaints and feedback mechanisms in order to target common challenges that beneficiaries may be encountering with access to Shelter and NFI assistance. Furthermore, the Shelter Cluster has put in place a [standardized post distribution monitoring tool that help in monitoring whether partners' interventions are meeting minimum minimum standards of safety and dignity](#).

**Vulnerability criteria** (such as persons with disabilities, separated children, unaccompanied minors, and child headed households, single female headed households, elderly headed households, single male headed households, victims of protection incidents, the chronically ill, jobless because of the crisis, pregnant/lactating women, albino, and people suffering from trauma due to the crisis) must be agreed on by all cluster partners and harmonized between clusters to ensure a coherent shelter/NFIs response. Shelter Cluster partners will also work to come up with a common score card for evaluating particular shelter vulnerabilities of this crisis.

Protection mainstreaming will be ensured in all Shelter and NFI



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interventions. Shelter/NFI interventions must be designed with the principle of “do no harm” and with a protection lens. Partners are encouraged to engage in protection capacity building training offered by the protection cluster and report any protection concern they encounter in delivering shelter and NFI support. A particular focus for the Shelter Cluster this year will also be improving capacity for GBV referrals and prevention in shelter activities. The Shelter Cluster is working with the GBV AoR to ensure representation in capacity building initiatives and also in updating the GBV Pocket Companion that Shelter/NFI practitioners can use in the field in case of coming across GBV victims.

**Gender considerations:** The Cluster will ensure that its activities are informed by a gender perspective and pay attention to the goal of gender equality. The cluster is committed to equal participation of men and women, ensuring for instance that all assessments have female assessors, and the full participation of women and girls from the affected populations. Also, consideration will be made to the location of shelter projects vis-à-vis their distance from water sources; the location of kitchen and latrines and in general, all efforts will be made to preserve the privacy and safety of women, men, girls and boys. The cluster will promote women's active participation to ensure community ownership and gender inclusion. In 2021, several cluster Shelter/NFI Cluster partners (ASWEDO, CRS, Mother of Hope, and RAGJ) were trained on Gender in Humanitarian Action which launched the Northwest and Southwest Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Groups in the region. The Shelter Cluster will coordinate closely with this working group under the leadership of UNFPA to ensure that it has a gender sensitive response.

**Context-specific response.** In light of the various population groups, sheltering solutions and different needs, shelter or NFI interventions must be tailored to be need- based and context-specific. The needs

## Guiding Principles/Key Issues

of local host communities accommodating IDPs in their homes also need to be factored into the humanitarian response.

### **Capacity building on NFI distributions and Shelter activities.**

Since 2022, the Shelter Cluster has held a number of workshops with the Shelter Cluster partners to reinforce capacity and to put in place a number of tools designed at improving the implementation of shelter programming. The Shelter Cluster will continue to conduct a number of in person workshops aimed at reinforcing the capacity of partners to use all tools found in the Shelter Cluster program cycle management.

**Contingency planning.** In 2023, the Shelter Cluster put in place a detailed contingency plan. This was highlighted by a number of new displacements and natural disaster situations and the need for partners to better improve their response and coordination during emergency situations.

**Environmental Mainstreaming:** In March 2023, 31 Shelter Cluster members were trained in environmental mainstreaming and since April, Shelter Cluster partners have started reporting on their environmental mainstreaming activities through the 5W. Through using the Nexus Environmental Assessment suite of tools, Shelter Cluster partners should continue to seek that their interventions do no further harm to the environment while seeking to increase beneficiary awareness on better environmental practices.



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## Advocacy Messages

### **Advocacy for better shelter solutions and a more adequate shelter response:**

For four years, the shelter response of the Shelter Cluster has been primarily focused on the distribution of emergency shelter kits. As the situation has become more protracted and given a ban placed on the metallic items in the shelter kit imposed in October 2020, the response is not really in proportion to the shelter needs observed in the field. A shift to voucher assistance proves promising, but whether shelter outcomes are achieved with such emergency levels of assistance is yet to be determined and the Shelter Cluster will continue to ensure that partners are monitoring their interventions against these minimum standards of habitability. Beyond this emergency assistance, the Shelter Cluster also desperately needs resources to ensure that their interventions are better accompanying the internally displaced, returnees, and the non-displaced in their shelter solutions and repairs to damaged homes. Transitional shelter programming and the capitalization on local construction practices in the Northwest and Southwest will also be further developed in Shelter typology guidelines and a profiling of the different housing types and materials in the two regions.

### **Advocacy for Monetization and Market-based approaches of the response and owner-driven approaches to Shelter:**

As of the first four months of 2022, 37% of the cluster's activities are being implemented with vouchers for NFI and shelter. A small case load is also being targeted for cash for rent. The Shelter Cluster will continue to follow up with these partners on the outcome of their interventions and the appropriate use of modality for implementation. Capacity building on monetization for shelter interventions and additional resources for the response will enable the Shelter Cluster to put in place guidelines on cash for repairs and cash for work modalities that would encourage owner driven approaches to the shelter needs of these communities. Given the security concerns in the context of the Northwest and Southwest, the feasibility of such longer-term approaches will have to be consulted and carefully



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negotiated with all stakeholders to ensure no further harm to the targeted beneficiaries. The Shelter Cluster will also continue to advocate for market-based approaches. Partners have noted that by working with vendors through their voucher programming that they have been able to overcome some of the supply challenges that they had encountered for items when attempting to procure in-kind.

### **Advocacy messages on House, Land and Property (HLP):**

Partners are encouraged to engage in advocacy interventions to protect the rights of IDPs renting accommodations and avoid their evictions, such as negotiating with the landlords to improve rental conditions and secure their tenure. The HLP situation and constraints (ownership, legal documentation, etc.) must be taken into account for all shelter activities undertaken especially when building, even temporary structures. The Shelter Cluster is currently advocating for the Housing, Land, and Property Area of Responsibility under the Protection Cluster to regular share information and referrals regarding situations where crisis-affected populations may be at risk of eviction.

**Advocacy messages on access:** Access to the affected population is a significant constraint for humanitarian actors including shelter/ NFI partners. Advocacy for improved, safe, and regular access must be ensured at all levels and supported by all actors, especially considering hard to reach areas. The Shelter Cluster will also implement the Northwest and Southwest Access Strategy and adhere to its principles of humanitarian engagement with all sides; no armed escorts to preserve humanitarian neutrality; and no payments to any stakeholders for access to the affected areas. The Shelter Cluster will work closely with OCHA to update on any specific access issues. Each Shelter Cluster partner must also ensure that they are properly briefing all stakeholders in the area of implementation to ensure access and maintain humanitarian impartiality.



## Advocacy Messages

### **Advocacy with Authorities to Better Understand the Role of Shelter as a critical life-saving component of the response:**

The objectives of the Shelter Cluster are often misunderstood in this context and so it is important that the Shelter Cluster attempt to strengthen ties with authorities to brief them about the intended impact of the Shelter Cluster strategy and its intention of protecting the most vulnerable people impacted by the crisis. This also needs to be accompanied by humanitarian-development nexus to think about the longer-term housing needs that each population group has suffered as a result of the crisis.

**Improved Advocacy on Housing Rights issues in the context of the Northwest/Southwest:** Related with the scope and scale of damages conducted throughout this conflict, the Shelter Cluster will work with its partners and the protection cluster to ensure that it is collecting information about the number of homes damaged, burned, and destroyed as a result of this crisis. This will also help to ensure that the scope of the problem will be better understood by stakeholders to this crisis and also result in advocacy to prevent domicile from continuing to negatively impact the affected population's right and access to adequate housing. This information will also help the Shelter Cluster to better partner with development stakeholders who may need to address the longer-term housing needs of the population.

**Humanitarian-Development Approaches:** In line with the Shelter Cluster's desire to put in place more transitional shelter strategies, the Shelter Cluster advocates for the activation of the Humanitarian-Development Task Force to look into the establishment of a task force specific for the Northwest and Southwest region. Some of the challenges that are at the root of the current conflict will not be addressed without investment and planning from development actors, so early intervention and planning is required to ensure continuity between humanitarian shelter interventions and longer-

term housing approaches. Simultaneously the Shelter Cluster will also aim to work closely with UNDP other relevant clusters on the area of infrastructure challenges such as Education, Health, and WASH Clusters to start thinking about the longer-term implications that repairs to schools, hospitals, and WASH infrastructure can do to accompany improved housing in the affected area.



# NWSW Shelter Cluster Coordination Toolbox

During the last 18 months, the Shelter Cluster has put in place a one pager to support partners in the coordination of each stage of the program cycle, this page represents the cycle that Shelter Cluster partners should follow to implement good shelter programming in the context of the Northwest and Southwest crisis. The standardization will help the Cluster to share updated information on changes in the context.

