



**SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS
(NFI) SECTOR STRATEGY**

2025 - 2026

APRIL 2026

Coordination

Lead Agency: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Co-Coordinating Partner (NFI): Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)

Government Co-Lead (Shelter): Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (MoLAE)

The 2026 Shelter/NFI Sector Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) comprises the following organisations; Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Insan Organization for Development, Syria Development Initiative (SDI), Shafak Organization, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organization for Migration (IOM), and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

Sector Transition

- As part of the humanitarian reset, the Shelter/NFI Sector is advancing toward consolidation with CCCM and the HLP Area of Responsibility.
- The transition aims to strengthen integrated responses to displacement, align with the Government's No Camp policy, and reinforce area-based programming that links shelter rehabilitation, site management, and tenure security.



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Rapid, principled, and people-centered — readiness at the heart of our response.

Context and Needs Overview

Syria continues to face a severe and complex shelter crisis driven by protracted conflict, economic decline, environmental shocks, and ongoing displacement and return dynamics. Widespread housing damage and limited access to essential household items continue to undermine safe and dignified living conditions.

The 2025 Nationwide Housing Damage Assessment indicates that 89% of communities are affected, with nearly half experiencing damage to over 50% of housing stock. While most homes remain repairable, financial constraints are the main barrier to recovery.

Over 5.5 million people remain internally displaced, many living in inadequate conditions, while returns continue into damaged housing, increasing pressure on already fragile environments.

Shelter needs are closely linked to access to Core and Winter NFIs. Without these, repaired homes remain uninhabitable, undermining return sustainability. The crisis is therefore defined by large-scale but repairable housing damage, persistent displacement, increasing returns, and limited access to basic household support, compounded by climate risks and funding gaps.



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Bridging emergency response and resilience to support recovery and stability inline with the Global Shelter Cluster Strategy 2030

Executive Summary

The Shelter/NFI Sector Strategy for 2025–2026 aims to address persistent humanitarian needs in Syria, driven by protracted conflict, mass displacement, inadequate shelter conditions, and growing climate risks. Despite sustained interventions, assistance continues to fall short of needs, with significant funding gaps constraining partners' ability to scale responses. This reality underscores the necessity of prioritization and value-for-money programming to ensure resources are directed where they can achieve the greatest impact.

Anchored in the 2026 Humanitarian Response Plan, the strategy sets out a three-pronged operational focus that balances emergency response with pathways toward durable solutions and housing resilience. These priorities are reinforced by targeted advocacy, partner capacity building, and inter-sectoral collaboration to ensure inclusive, accountable, and sustainable responses. Ultimately, the strategy seeks to maximize the impact of limited resources, deliver assistance at scale, and lay the foundations for protection-centered recovery that strengthens long-term resilience.

Key Priorities

1


Emergency Shelter and NFI Support for Newly Displaced Populations and Protracted IDPs in Collective Shelters and IDP Sites

2

Support to Safe and Dignified Returns through shelter rehabilitation, NFI assistance, and rental support.

3

Enhanced Contingency Capacity for rapid deployment in response to new displacement, natural hazards and spontaneous returns.



Placing rights, dignity, and inclusion at the center of every shelter response

1 Emergency Shelter & NFI Assistance for IDPs

Emergency shelter and non-food item (NFI) assistance remains a lifesaving priority for both newly displaced populations and protracted IDPs who continue to reside in camps and collective centres across Syria. Despite more than a decade of crisis, hundreds of IDP sites and collective shelters remain occupied, hosting families who are unable to return home due to a combination of factors including:

- Destroyed or uninhabitable housing in areas of origin.
- Unresolved Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) issues preventing restitution or reconstruction.
- Persistent insecurity and access constraints in areas of return.
- Limited funding for large-scale housing rehabilitation and durable solutions.
- Ongoing displacement dynamics, with new caseloads adding pressure to already congested sites.



The Sector response balances rapid emergency assistance for newly displaced households with sustained support for protracted populations who remain dependent on humanitarian aid in camps and collective centres. Priority interventions include:

- **Upgrading Collective Centres & IDP Camps:** Enhancing habitability through minor repairs, partitions, lighting, ventilation, and stronger WASH/Protection linkages.
- **NFI Replacement:** Supplying essential items to vulnerable households whose NFIs are depleted.
- **Tent Replacement and Repairs:** Replacing or repairing dilapidated tents and responding to damage from flooding, fires, or other hazards.
- **Utilization of Vacated Shelters:** Allocating dignified, durable shelters to families unable to return home and living in poor conditions.
- **Seasonal Support:** Providing winterization and hot-weather support kits to mitigate climate risks.
- **Protection Mainstreaming:** Prioritizing women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities, with measures to reduce GBV risks and enhance safety and dignity.

Sustained support for IDPs in camps and collective centres is vital to preserve lives and dignity while protecting coping capacities. It also highlights the urgent need for durable housing solutions, HLP resolution, and investment in rehabilitation in areas of origin to gradually reduce reliance on humanitarian aid.

Outcomes

- Vulnerable IDP households in camps and collective centres have access to safe, dignified, and habitable shelter conditions.
- Essential NFIs are replaced or replenished, restoring household functionality and reducing negative coping strategies.
- Emergency shelter needs are addressed through timely tent repair or replacement, minimizing exposure to hazards.
- Seasonal support mitigates climate-related risks, protecting households from extreme cold and heat.
- Protection risks—including GBV, child protection concerns, and barriers faced by persons with disabilities—are reduced through mainstreamed, inclusive approaches.
- Reliance on protracted humanitarian assistance is gradually reduced through investment in more durable shelter options and strengthened linkages to housing rehabilitation and HLP resolution in areas of origin.



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Bridging emergency response and resilience to support recovery and stability inline with the Global Shelter Cluster Strategy 2030

2 Support to Safe and Dignified Returns

Facilitating safe, voluntary, and dignified returns is a core priority of the Shelter/NFI Sector Strategy. Many displaced families remain unable to return due to widespread housing damage, unresolved HLP issues, lack of essential services, and insecurity, while others express a clear intention to go back. A sequenced, protection-sensitive, and area-based approach is therefore required to restore habitability and support reintegration.

Strategic Approach

The Sector promotes a comprehensive return support package that integrates shelter rehabilitation, NFI provision, and rental assistance. Interventions will:

- Align with principles of voluntariness, safety, dignity, and sustainability.
- Link household repairs with community infrastructure through area-based programming.
- Promote recycling and reuse of debris and local materials to reduce costs, enhance value-for-money, and support environmental sustainability.
- Engage development actors to ensure complementarity with recovery and stabilization initiatives.

Key Elements

- **Shelter Rehabilitation:** Minor to heavy repairs based on technical assessments and damage classifications, with promotion of cash-for-repair to empower households and stimulate local markets.
- **Transitional Shelter Solutions:** Enhanced self-help shelter, or emergency shelter kits (ESKs) where rehabilitation is not immediately feasible, ensuring households have dignified interim housing.
- **NFI Provision:** Core and seasonal NFIs to restore basic living conditions and replace depleted items for vulnerable returnees.
- **Rental Support:** Temporary cash-for-rent assistance for families without immediate access to habitable housing, prioritizing vulnerable households, with strong market monitoring to prevent exploitation and explore linkages to durable solutions.

Expected Outcomes

- Families safely reoccupy rehabilitated homes or access transitional shelter solutions where repairs are not immediately possible.
- Returnees receive essential NFIs to re-establish household functionality.
- Vulnerable households benefit from temporary, dignified rental solutions.
- Area-based interventions, debris reuse initiatives, and development linkages foster cohesion, resilience, and durable pathways beyond humanitarian support.



3 Preparedness and Rapid Shelter & NFI Response

The Shelter/NFI Sector maintains a dedicated Emergency Response Mechanism (ERM) to ensure life-saving assistance is delivered to newly displaced populations, spontaneous returnees, and households affected by natural hazards or conflict. This mechanism is designed to deploy within 48–72 hours of verified triggers, stabilizing households during the critical early phase of displacement and reducing exposure to unsafe or undignified conditions.

Strategic Approach

Contingency capacity is underpinned by:

- Clearly defined activation triggers, including sudden-onset displacement, conflict-related destruction of housing, natural hazards such as floods, fires, or earthquakes, and large-scale spontaneous returns.
- Pre-positioned stocks of emergency shelter kits, tents, and core/winter NFIs in strategic hubs.
- Resilient supply chains, leveraging local procurement where feasible, to strengthen continuity of operations, reduce delivery times, and support local markets.
- Pre-identified standby partners at governorate level with proven readiness and rapid deployment capacity.
- Mixed-modality responses (in-kind and cash) tailored to context and market functionality.
- Activation through verified alerts from OCHA, CCCM, Protection, and local authorities.
- Integration with inter-sector contingency planning protocols, ensuring coordinated, multi-sectoral response and complementarity with health, WASH, food security, and protection interventionsPriority Interventions



Priority Interventions

- **Emergency Shelter Kits & Tents:** Immediate in-kind distribution to households sleeping in the open or lacking shelter.
- **NFI Support:** Core and seasonal NFIs provided in-kind or through cash, depending on access and market conditions.
- **Cash-for-Rent (CfR):** 1–2 months of short-term assistance where housing stock is available and markets are functional.
- **Collective Centre Support:** Rehabilitation/adaptation to accommodate displaced families in safer, more dignified conditions.
- **Incident Response:** Rapid repair or tent replacement following floods, fires, or other sudden shocks.



Outcomes

- Life-saving assistance delivered within 72 hours of verified triggers.
- Reduced protection risks and exposure to harsh conditions for vulnerable households.
- Predictable, harmonized, and accountable rapid response, linked to multi-sector contingency planning and longer-term rehabilitation and recovery.



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2026 HRP

SHELTER				NFI
6.2M	PEOPLE IN NEED		6.3M	
0.8M	TARGET		2.0M	
\$180.2M	FUNDING REQUIREMENT		\$197.5M	

Sector Objectives

Shelter Objective 1: Deliver life-saving and life-sustaining emergency shelter support to vulnerable populations.

Shelter Objective 2: Strengthen protection and social cohesion through rehabilitation of shelters and related infrastructure.

NFI Objective 1: Ensure timely access to life-saving and seasonal non-food item assistance.

These objectives are closely aligned with the **2025 HRP strategic objectives:**

- SO1: Save lives through life-saving, multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance.
- SO2: Enhance the prevention and mitigation of protection risks.
- SO3: Strengthen resilience and access to basic services.

Integration and Cross-Sectoral Coordination



Protection Sector:

Work with Protection partners to uphold HLP rights, security of tenure, and GBV risk mitigation, ensuring safe designs, tenure documentation, and protection-sensitive shelter interventions.

CCCM Sector:

Coordinate with CCCM for site profiling and camp service delivery, using joint data and monitoring to guide shelter upgrades, decongestion, and integration with site governance.

Early Recovery & Livelihoods:

Collaborate on debris removal, infrastructure repair, lighting, and cash-for-work schemes that create livelihoods while supporting community recovery and shelter improvements.

WASH Sector:

Integrate water, sanitation, drainage, and waste management into shelter responses through joint planning, ensuring safe, dignified, and health-secure living conditions.

Cash Working Group:

Align with CWG on harmonized transfer values and market-based responses, enabling efficient, accountable, and beneficiary-centered cash for rent, repair, and NFIs.

Environmental Considerations

All shelter interventions will mainstream environmental safeguards. The Sector promotes the use of NEAT+ (Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool) to systematically evaluate environmental risks and inform site selection, shelter design, and settlement planning. This includes assessing water availability, soil stability, vegetation cover, and exposure to hazards to ensure interventions do not create or exacerbate environmental vulnerabilities.

In line with principles of circularity, debris recycling and reuse will be actively encouraged, particularly in rehabilitation contexts, to reduce waste, minimize environmental impact, and support local livelihoods through rubble processing and reuse in road bases or construction aggregates.

Recovery programming will also integrate risk mitigation strategies such as improved drainage systems, erosion control measures, and solid waste management to protect both communities and ecosystems. Overall, the Sector will ensure that recovery programming avoids further environmental degradation and contributes to ecosystem rehabilitation and climate resilience

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76%

Households surveyed in the CCCM Sector's Movement Intentions Assessment cited inadequate housing as the primary barrier to returning to their area of origin.

Sector Principles

- Do No Harm: Minimize adverse impacts
- Protection Mainstreaming: Prioritize vulnerable groups
- Inclusiveness: Gender, age, and disability-responsive programming
- Local Empowerment: Strengthen the role of national actors
- Value for Money: Optimize resources for impact
- Climate Resilience: Mitigate risks and build adaptive capacity
- Accountability to Affected Populations: Participation, feedback, and transparency
- Collaborative Leadership: Inclusive sector governance via SAG and TWiGs



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Advocacy and Resource Mobilization

Advocacy will focus on:

- Closing critical shelter and NFI response gaps
- Facilitating dignified return and recovery through investments in durable housing solutions.
- Scaling up winterization support to mitigate seasonal risks.
- Promoting GBV-safe shelter options to ensure protection-sensitive programming.
- Mobilizing climate-resilient investments, including exploring opportunities for private sector engagement and accessing climate finance mechanisms.

Advocacy efforts will be framed around the life-saving, protection, and resilience dimensions of shelter and NFI assistance. Engagement with pooled funds (SHF), bilateral donors, development actors, and non-traditional financing partners will be intensified to address underfunding and sustain emergency readiness.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

Monitoring is conducted via 4Ws, stock reporting tools, Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM), and beneficiary feedback. Results will inform adaptive programming and guide resource allocation to evolving needs.

The Sector is committed to strengthening feedback and accountability mechanisms, including community feedback channels, complaint and response mechanisms (CRM), and regular consultation with affected populations.

In addition, the Sector will conduct annual After-Action Reviews (AARs) for key activities to capture lessons learned, strengthen accountability, and guide continuous improvement in preparedness and response.

Technical Guidance and Standards

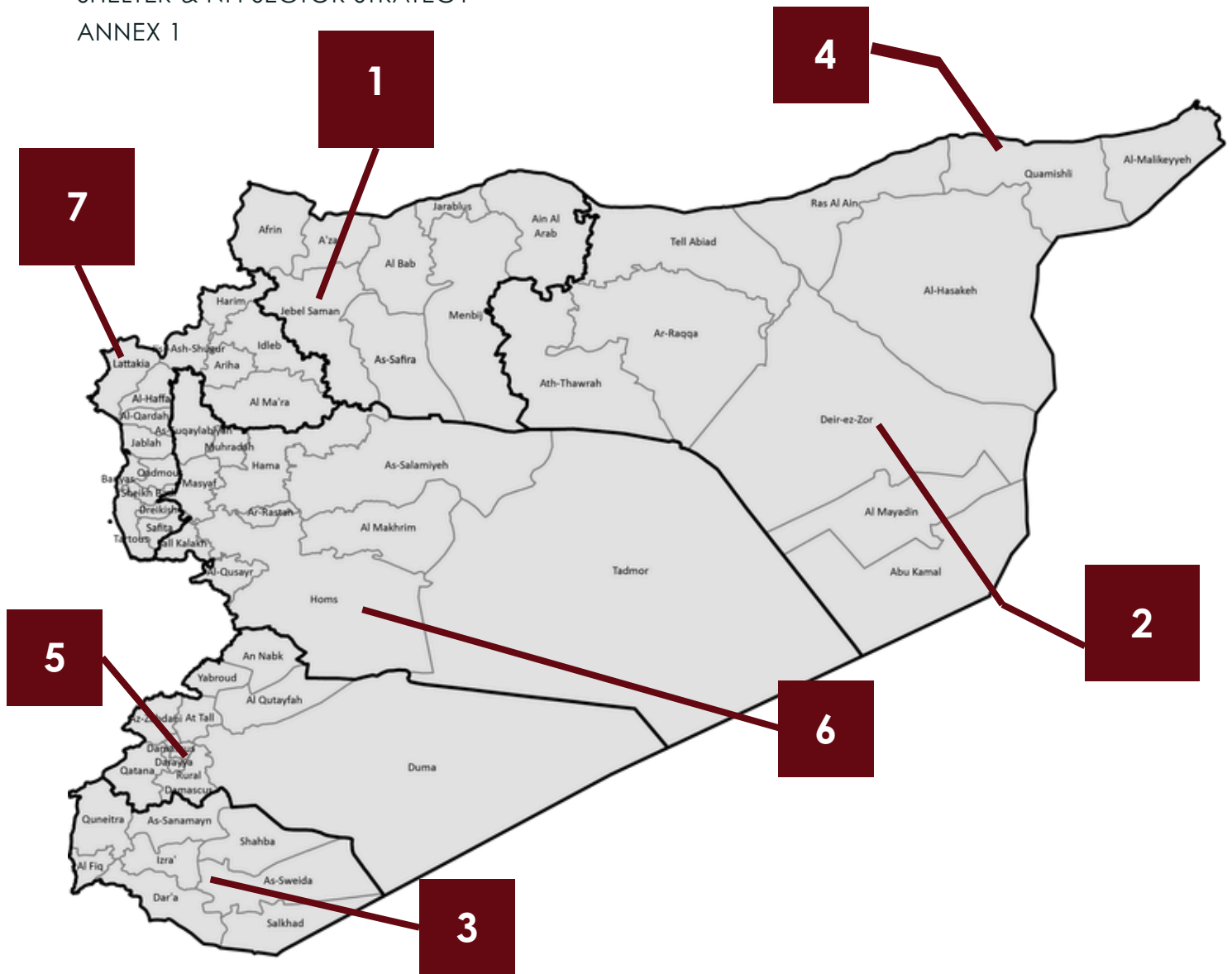
The Shelter/NFI Sector provides a suite of technical guidance and standards to ensure harmonized, accountable, and protection-sensitive interventions, including:

- Shelter/NFI Emergency Response Mechanism
- Shelter Repair & Rehabilitation Guidance
- Cash for Rent SOPs and Market Monitoring Tools
- Winterization Toolkits
- HLP and GBV Mitigation Standards
- Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) protocols
- NFI Guidance Note
- Guidelines on Shelter kits

Dissemination and Capacity-Building

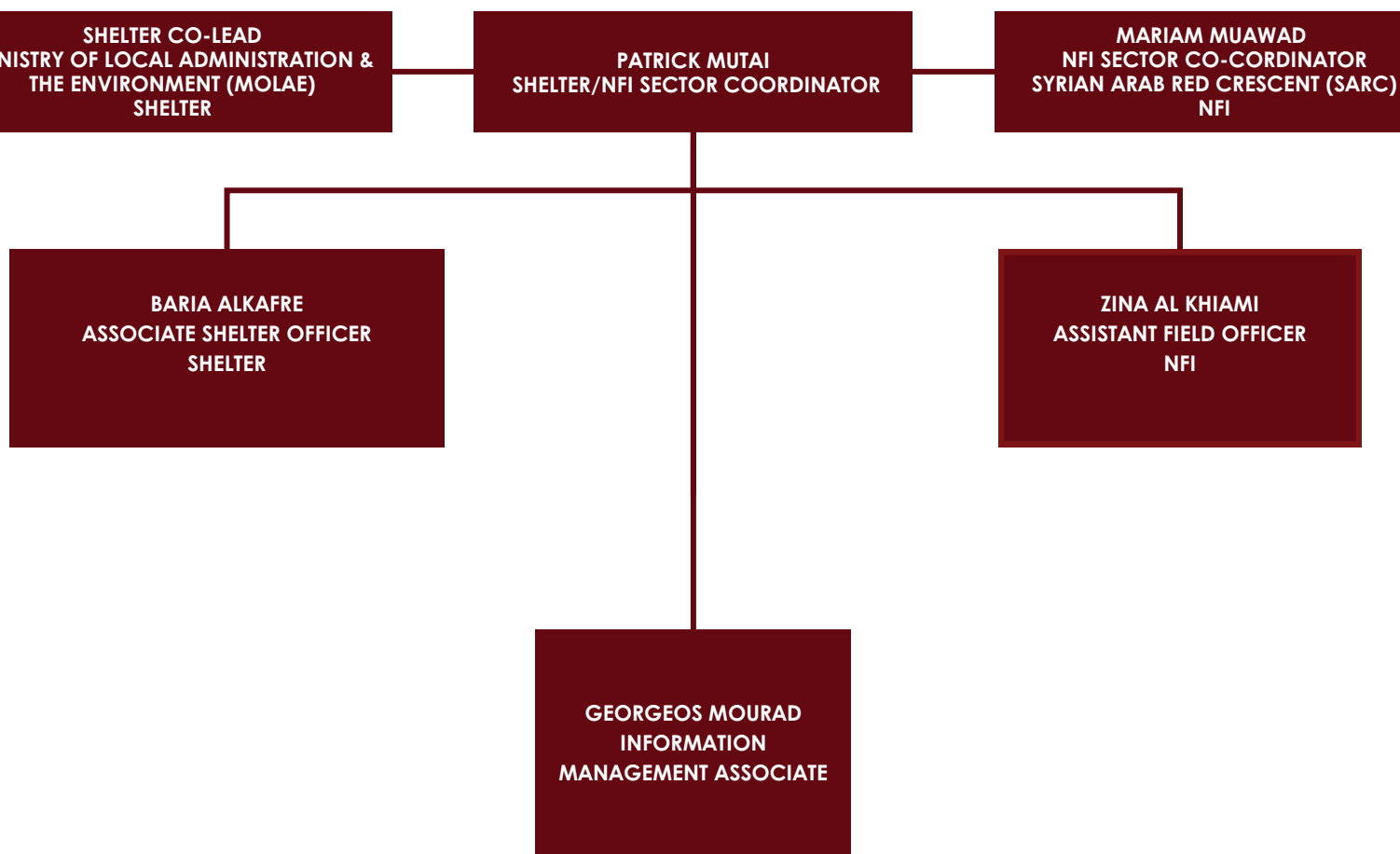
To ensure consistent application across partners, these standards and SOPs are disseminated through national and sub-national coordination hubs, regular technical workshops, and partner trainings. Guidance is also integrated into field-level briefings, induction packages, and cluster meetings, with technical working groups providing ongoing support and clarification as needed.



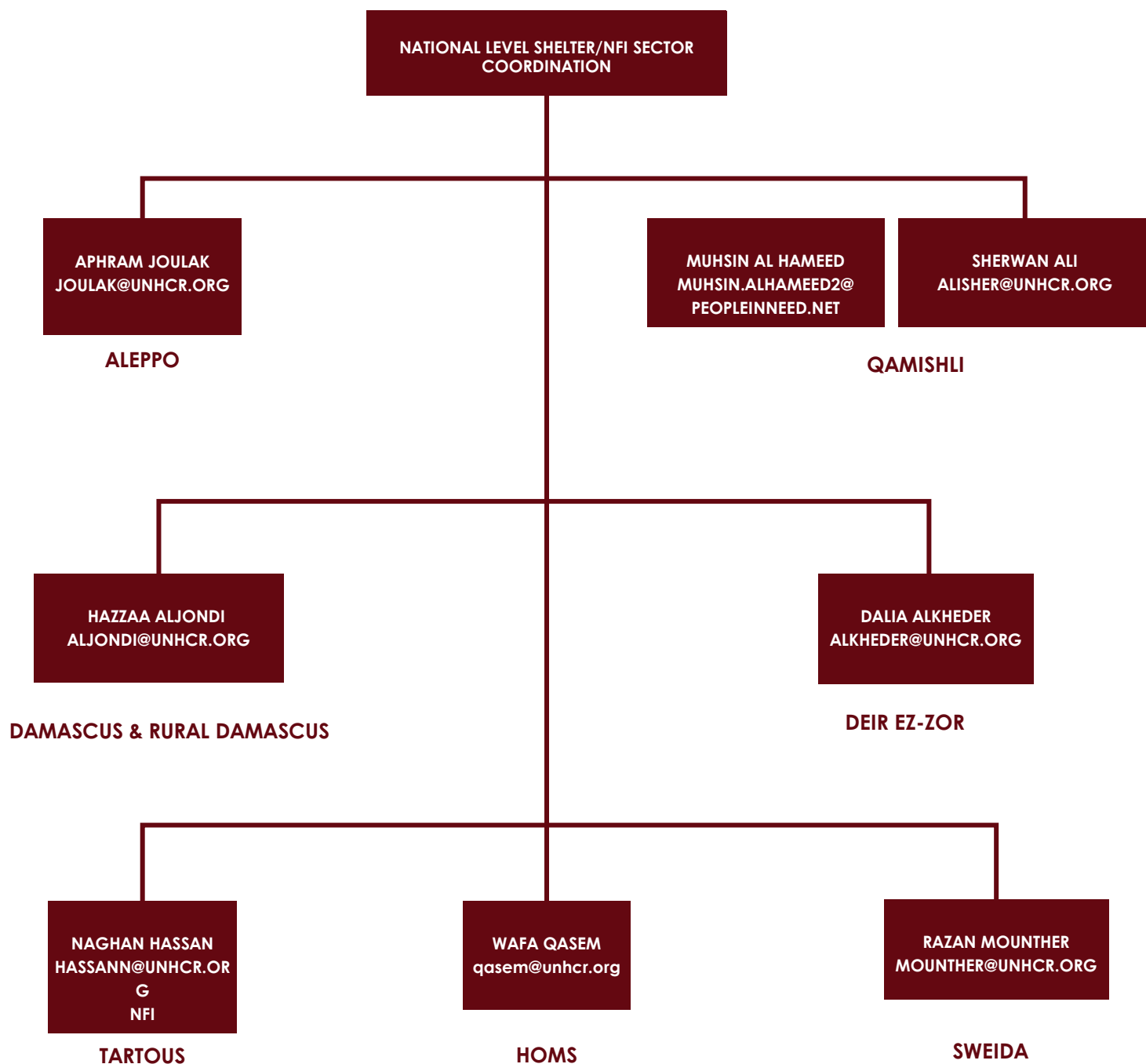


Sub-National Hubs

1. Aleppo
2. Deir-ez-Zor
3. As-Sweida
4. Qamishli
5. Damascus and Rural Damascus
6. Homs
7. Latakia



NATIONAL LEVEL COORDINATION STRUCTURE



SUB- NATIONAL LEVEL COORDINATION STRUCTURE

SHELTER & NFI SECTOR STRATEGY

ANNEX 4

No.	Sector	SO	Activity	Target (Families)	Unit Cost (\$)	Total Cost (\$) (Incl. Op. cost)
1	NFIs	SO1	Winter NFI distribution	409,647	230	108,351,655
2	NFIs	SO1	Core NFI distribution	378,131	205	89,144,464
3	Shelter	SO2	Moderate damage housing repairs	24,196	1,650	47,907,693
4	Shelter	SO2	Heavy damage housing rehabilitation	11,988	3,000	43,157,520
5	Shelter	SO2	Minor damage housing repairs	33,726	800	32,377,296
6	Shelter	SO1	Transitional shelter construction	13,803	1,000	16,563,720
7	Shelter	SO2	Building common area rehabilitation	36,184	248	10,746,647
8	Shelter	SO2	Community infrastructure rehabilitation	36,184	165	7,164,433
9	Shelter	SO1	Collective centre rehabilitation	10,000	550	6,600,000
10	Shelter	SO1	Emergency shelter kits/materials	42,338	110	5,588,578
11	Shelter	SO1	Cash for rent support	3,691	900	3,985,902
12	Shelter	SO1	Tent replacement/new tents	5,000	500	2,999,999
13	Shelter	SO1	Site-level improvements	10,000	225	2,699,999
14	Shelter	SO1	Tent repair	3,000	55	198,000
15	Shelter	SO1	Household-level shelter improvements	2,718	50	163,080
16	Shelter	SO2	Community capacity building	4,052	10	48,628
17	Shelter	SO2	Technical capacity building (staff)	300	60	21,600
			Total Funding Requirement			377,719,214

SHELTER & NFI SECTOR STRATEGY
ANNEX 5

Organization Name	Acronym	Organization Name	Acronym
ACT Alliance / Finn Church Aid	ACT/FCA	Concern Worldwide	CONCERN
Action Against Hunger	AAH	Danish Church Aid	DCA
Action For Humanity	AFH	Danish Refugee Council	DRC
Adventist Development and Relief Agency	ADRA	Doctors Without Borders – Médecins Sans Frontières	MSF OCA
Aga Khan Foundation	AKF	Farmacéuticos Mundi	Farmamundi
Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development	ACTED	Freedom Musk Foundation	FMF
Ahl Alhadeeth Association	HAIDO	Global Communities	GC
Al Ihsan Charity (Aleppo)	Aleppo	GOAL	GOAL
Al Ta'alouf Association	AL-TA'ALOUF	Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East	GOPA
Albatoul Association for Humanitarian Services	AAHS	Hand in Hand for Aid and Development	HiHFAD
Al-Bir Wa Al-Ehsan Charity Association In Ras Alain	Bir&Ihsan	Human Appeal International	HAI
Al-Sham Humanitarian Foundation	AHF	Ihsan for Relief and Development	IhsanRD
Amal Organization for Relief & Development	Amal	Insan Charity Organization	ICO
Arche noVa - Initiative für Menschen in Not	Arche Nova	International Association for Relief and Development	ONSUR
ATAA Humanitarian Relief Association	ATAA	International Committee of the Red Cross	ICRC
Bahar Organization	BAHAR	International Humanitarian Relief	IHR
BINAA Organization for Development	BINAA	International Humanitarian Relief Association	IYD
Blumont	Blumont	International Organization for Migration	IOM
Care International	CARE	Islamic Relief Syria	IRS
Caritas Switzerland	CACH	Khyar Ommah Association	Khyar Ommah
Catholic Relief Services	CRS	MEDAIR	MEDAIR
Child Care Society	CCS	Mercy without Limits	MWL

SHELTER & NFI SECTOR STRATEGY
ANNEX 5

Organization Name	Acronym	Organization Name	Acronym
Molham Volunteering Team	MVT	Syria Relief	SR
Mouj	Mouj	Syria Relief & Development	SRD
Muzun for Humanitarian & Development	MHD	Syrian Arab Red Crescent	SARC
Nasaem Khair Organization	NKO	Syrian Engineers for Construction and Development	SECD
Nima for Relief and Development	NDYD	Syrian Organization for Development	SOD
Norwegian Refugee Council	NRC	Syrian Society for Social Development	SSSD
ONG Rescate	RESCATE	Takaful Al Sham Charity Organization	TAS
Our Hands Association in Lattakia	Ayadina	Terre des Hommes - Lausanne	TDH-LAUSANNE
OXFAM International	OXFAM	The Aid Organization of the Protestant Church in Switzerland	HEKS/EPER
People in Need	PIN	The Syrian Association for Relief and Development	SARD
POINT Organization	Point	Turkish Red Crescent	TRC
Première Urgence Internationale	PUI	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR
Qatar Charity	QC	United Nations Human Settlements Programme	UN-Habitat
Secours Islamique France	SIF	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	UNRWA
Shafak Organization	SHAFAK	Violet Organization	Violet
Sham Alkhair Foundation	SAKF	WATAN Foundation	WATAN
SKT Organization	SKT	Welthungerhilfe	WHH
Social Care Society in Hama	SCS	WeWorld - Gruppo Volontariato Civile Onlus	WeWorld - GVC
Social Development International	SDI	White Hands Association	Beyaz Eller
Solidarites International	SI	Yedi Basak Humanitarian Relief Organization	YEDI BASAK
St. Ephrem Patriarchal Development Committee	EPDC	ZOA	ZOA
Syria Al Yamama Charity Association	SYCA		

About the Shelter/NFI Sector

The Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI) Sector in Syria brings together UN agencies, NGOs, the Red Crescent/Red Cross Movements, government counterparts, and local actors to deliver coordinated assistance to crisis-affected populations. The Sector ensures that displaced families, returnees, and vulnerable communities have access to safe shelter and essential household items, while also supporting recovery through rehabilitation and community-based solutions.

Our work is guided by humanitarian principles, global standards, and a strong commitment to protection, inclusion, and resilience. We respond rapidly to emergencies, provide seasonal and core NFI support, rehabilitate damaged shelters, and strengthen local capacities to deliver dignified, sustainable solutions.

Get in Touch

The Shelter/NFI Sector welcomes the engagement of humanitarian partners, donors, and technical experts. To learn more, collaborate, or contribute to ongoing activities, please reach out to the Sector Coordination Team:



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