

Collective Approach to Technical Assistance and the Role of Partner Organisations

Context

The April 25th 2015 and May 12th 2015 earthquakes in Nepal caused widespread damage to housing in the affected districts, as well as loss of life of almost 9,000 people. The Government of Nepal figures indicate that 602,257 houses were fully damaged, and 285,099 houses were partially damaged¹.

The [Government of Nepal Post Disaster Needs Assessment \(PDNA\)](#) set out principles for housing and human settlements recovery and reconstruction as follows:

1. Encourage the participation of communities by empowering them to take control of reconstruction of their houses and ensuring facilitation of Owner Driven Reconstruction.
2. A comprehensive view of housing reconstruction should include holistic habitat development, with basic services and community infrastructure. The principle of build back better (BBB) should translate into a concept of safer settlements.
3. Reconstruction should be seen as a vehicle to build long-term community resilience by reducing vulnerabilities and strengthening community capacities to mitigate future disasters through improved construction practices for the majority of the building stock in the country.
4. Strengthen the local economy through reconstruction and processes that work to the benefit of the poor and marginalised sections who are mostly in the informal sector. Reconstruction should provide an opportunity for the poor to upgrade their living conditions.
5. Ensure sustainable and environment-friendly reconstruction processes, taking note of climate change, natural resource management and scientific risk assessments.
6. Ensure that rehabilitation is equitable and inclusive.

The PDNA also estimated the costs for housing reconstruction and the associated Technical Assistance (TA) as follows:

- Housing reconstruction, repair and retrofitting, **2700 million USD** over 5 years, 2015- 2020.
- Associated TA: (planning for rec, training and quality assurance), **140 million USD** over 3 years, 2015- 2018.

The 'Associated TA' includes training and decentralised technical outreach, designed to ensure that all affected households have access to the information and support required to reconstruct in an improved manner. The 140 million USD estimated to be required in the PDNA represents 5% of the total estimated costs of housing reconstruction, repair, and retrofit. Of this 140 million USD, approximately 10% of this is currently secured through funding earmarked for technical assistance.

Collective Approach to Technical Assistance

The responses to the recovery and reconstruction survey conducted by the Shelter Cluster in early August 2015 clearly demonstrate that the Partner Organisations (POs) intending to support recovery and reconstruction have significant capacity and resources; in total there is over 200 million USD in confirmed funding amongst the respondents.

The Shelter Cluster advocates for a collective approach to Technical Assistance in order to mitigate against the risk of fragmentation, uneven levels of assistance, gaps where there is no assistance, confusing and contradictory advice, inefficient individual efforts to develop tools, and limited information on what is being provided, where, and to whom. Collectively the Partner Organisations (POs) have the resources and capacities to add value and ensure that technical assistance and training is achieved in an effective, and coherent manner, at scale.

¹ <http://drrportal.gov.np/ndrrip/main.html?id=0> – accessed on 8th September 2015

A collective approach will ensure optimisation of resources and coverage, support quality assurance, and ensure greater equity of assistance. It will also allow for the inputs of POs to be maximised, where some POs may act as 'resource' agencies providing particular support, e.g. mason training, M&E, etc., to multiple POs across a particular geographical area or as national level backstopping.

A collective POs approach to TA will also ensure that the GoN-led housing recovery programme can harness the contributions and activities of POs under a common identity, with collective and shared goals and responsibilities, agreed standards and approaches encompassing a range of actors and activities, instead of having a fragmented approach with PO projects agreed on a project, or even activity, basis.

Core Range of Technical Assistance Activities

The Shelter Cluster advocates for the importance of technical assistance to be planned and implemented in time and at scale in order to support the needs of the affected population and for this assistance to take into account the particular needs of vulnerable persons and communities. The core technical assistance activities should be considered to include:

- Technical assistance centres, at District and VDC level
- Training – technical / awareness / training of trainers / practical training for professionals / construction workers / suppliers / Government Officials / humanitarian staff / community / households
- Demonstration construction – houses, VDC level community buildings, walls, foundations, etc.
- Village and house on site demonstrations and Quality Assurance (QA)
- Social mobilisation
- Community orientation sessions
- Information fairs
- FAQs collection sessions
- Communications, media
- Community Resilience Projects

Through the technical assistance centres at district and VDC level the technical assistance will be decentralised in order to achieve scale and provide assistance directly to the affected communities. The technical assistance should continuously respond to the momentum of recovery, as dictated by households and communities, and inform, incentivise, guide, and assist to the greatest extent possible.

Standard MOUs / TORs

In order to operationalise a collective approach to technical assistance a key first step will be the development of a set of standard MoUs / ToRS for the range of core TA activities that will be provided by POs at VDC and District level. Such common agreements will help to guide the Partner Organisation programme planning, provide predictability for the GoN and affected communities, and can streamline the administrative approval and monitoring and reporting processes. Common ToRS can also reinforce optimised coverage and balance in the levels of assistance provided across affected areas.