



Strategic Advisory Group Meeting

31 May 2015

13:00-15:30

UNHCR Office (16, Lavrska St., Kyiv)

Present: ADRA, Caritas, ECHO, IOM, OFDA, UNHCR

Apologies sent by: DRC, NRC, PIN.

Agenda of the meeting

1. [Round of Introductions](#)
2. [Review of last meeting minutes – 5 minutes](#)
3. [Current architecture of Shelter Cluster and Core Functions – 10 minutes](#)
4. [Shelter/NFI referrals and Damage Database Overview – 15 min](#)
5. [External Evaluation and CCPM – 15 min](#)
6. [Integration and Review of Transitional Plan – 30 minutes](#)
7. [Partnership of Donetsk Regional Administration – 30 minutes](#)
8. Strategic Orientation and Ways forward – 5 min

Summary action points:

- Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring to be reported to HCT level;
- To share Transitional plan with participants again for further comments by Friday (03 June 2016), if any;
- Transition plan should be commented before final endorsement by the end of the week (Monday 6th June);
- Engage with the new Ministry with regard to the partnership and follow up accordingly on signing it;
- The pilot partnership with Donetsk GCA Governorate shall be commented in a light of possible inclusion of national authorities (Wednesday 8th June).



Agenda item 1. Round of Introductions

Shelter Cluster thanked participants for attending the meeting. PIN, NRC and DRC sent their apologies for missing the meetings, as they have had prior competing commitments.

6 out of 9 SAG members were counted as present, reaching the **quorum** required for final validation of items discussed during the SAG and for decision making .

Please see detailed [attendance list](#) on p. 13

For reference to the presentations given during the meeting, please see **Annex 1 SAG meeting presentation**.

Agenda item 2. Review of last meeting minutes

Summary: Cluster conducts SAG meetings twice a year to review strategic orientation and work plan of the Cluster. Previous meeting took place on 21st of December 2015.

Discussion:

- **Review of the Cluster activities:**
 - The decision was taken at the last SAG meeting to reduce HRP contingency stock target from 70 000 HHs to 10 000 HHs. The reasoning for this was that the initial target was over-estimated as HRP was planned immediately in aftermath of Debaltsevo shelling in 2015, and the situation has improved since then.
- **The debrief on external evaluation of 2015**
 - External evaluator travelled to Ukraine in the end of November, 2015 and was present in the country for more than two weeks. During the visit, the evaluator met almost every agency and donor. [Finalized External Evaluation Report](#) was released in February.
 - Report recommended to increase presence in the field, provide more technical guidelines, and expressed concerns regarding access to NGCA; however this issue is beyond the scope of the SC alone. Shelter Cluster presence in NGCA remains a significant gap that is to be addressed in the coming months through regular liaison with the Cluster Lead Agency.
- **Update on winterization**
 - Winterization was a key problem; overall the past winter was warm, however in January and February temperature dropped below -20 C.
- **Decentralized Coordination**
 - During the last meeting participants unanimously agreed that Sub-N. SC shall continue its work, with excellent results. New Sub-N. Coordinator has been working in Ukraine since March 2015.
 - During the last SAG the need for decentralized coordination structure for southern part of Donbas (Mariupol) was discussed. However, the UNHCR Field Office developed a concerted coordination structure in line with cluster partners mainly due to a limited number of partners at the time. The Cluster Co-Chair is providing support when travel permits.
- **Validation of strategic orientation as per December 2015 SAG meeting:**

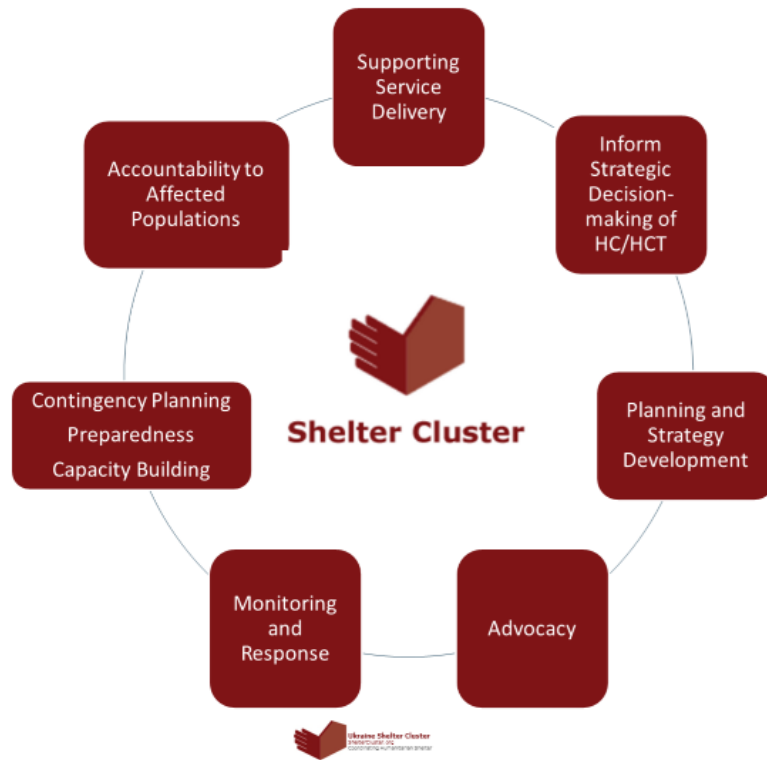


- In 2016, the Cluster has begun to focus more acutely on the issue of durable solutions, as this is one way that the Cluster is mainstreaming accountability to affected populations. This is consistent with the orientation of the authorities, for example, the newly adopted integration program adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers.
- Heavy repairs and reconstruction should have more focus, while need for light and medium repairs is decreasing;
- Linkage between damage assessment and types of assistance shall be established;
- More guidance on solutions per profile of beneficiary is appreciated. SC has been continuously providing guidance on different affected population groups. Additional guidance is necessary and will be provided by the Cluster, especially given protracted nature of the crisis.
- First quarter 2016 – session on experience sharing with regard to cash for rent implementation
- Cluster more engaged with national and local authorities, esp. with regard to integration issues. SC points out that SC is not to be a service provider, but more as advocacy component

Ways forward

What	Status	Ways Forward
Shelter Cluster to increase engagement in NGCA	Delayed	Continued advocacy with CLA for regular deployment to NGCA
Shift of Strategic Orientation to Durable Solutions and specific profiling of beneficiaries	Ongoing	Continue engagement with local authorities on integration while coordinating with databases and ongoing assessments

Core functions



Ways Forward

What	Status	Ways Forward
Continued implementation of Core Functions	On-going	Cluster has disseminated external evaluation recommendations.

Agenda item 4. Shelter/NFI referrals and Damage Database Overview

Summary: Two tools for coordination were presented along with the relevant findings and how that is informing the Cluster’s current advocacy and path towards transition.

Discussion on Referral System

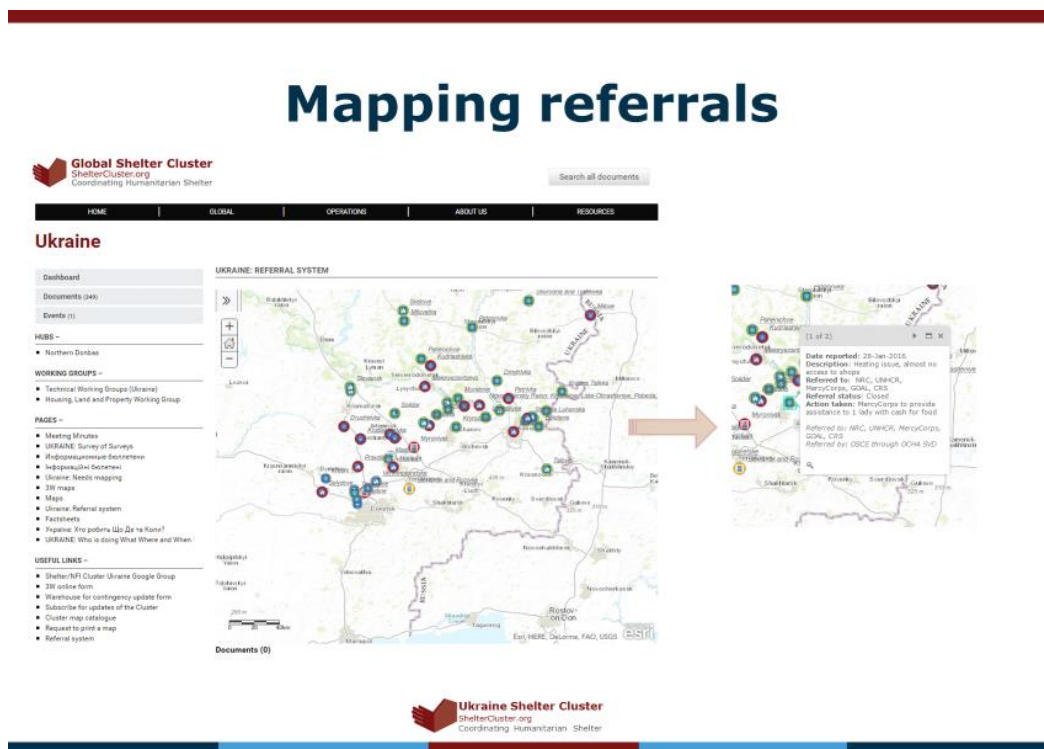
SC Referral system was established in October of 2015. Currently the database contains 66 referrals from Donetsk and Luhansk GCA and 2 referrals from Donetsk NGCA. Most of the referrals cover shelter repairs and winterization issues. Primarily the referrals come from OSCE through OCHA, however partners have started to send the referrals as well, indicative of the needs they cannot address as funding is declining. Thus, highlighting gaps in response. Also NRC ICLA initiative has sent several referrals on shelter repairs, while the initiative provides legal assistance to the beneficiaries. Regional and municipal authorities are actively referring needs to partners and the Cluster and therefore are key stakeholders in the referral system.

The Shelter Cluster finds this to be a successful instrument for coordination as partners are able to jointly evaluate needs and decide on appropriate follow up. Only 2% of cases are pending, meaning no follow up or partner identified As a way to improve the referral system SC considers to add more detailed explanation on the status of the referral.

Another example suggesting successful result of the referrals is the promptness of partners' response. On average, **shelter partners require 1-2 days to agree to conduct needs assessment, and even less time during warmer season).**

With winterization, average term of response is around 1-2 weeks; however it takes longer at the end of winter months due to funding gap caused by annual program cycles. SC also draws attention to the fact that number of referrals accumulated overall since October is relatively low, representing the mechanism of last resort and a safety network and demonstrating good level of coordination among partners.

Another tool is referral mapping, which provides a visual tool that would eventually be handed over to regional authorities following a cluster deactivation. A snapshot of how this tool makes coordination easier among partners was shared during the meeting:



Discussion on Damage Database

Damage Database is a SC initiative that was established in cooperation with local authorities and partners, containing damages/destroyed shelter to apartment level.

Initially the data for the database, containing over 11,000 addresses with reported damages and destructions, was provided by Donetsk and Luhansk regional authorities. Secondly, the Cluster performed consultations with local authorities. For example, Luhansk local authorities recommended to include the following information in the database:

- Are IDPs planning to return to the place of origin?
- Location of homeowner

Further, this data was sent out to partners for reconciliation with their internal databases. Now there are **16,436 addresses** (households) in the database with **12,811 unique addresses** (buildings). The Shelter Cluster is thankful to their partners on the work that they have carried out and their recommendations for making improvements.

Another trend based on the damage database is that **94% of shelter is privately owned**, and the government cannot allocate funding for the repairs of those because it does not have a budget for the private sector which means they have very low technical capacity to rebuild conflict-affected populations' damaged homes, highlighting a clear gap between humanitarian and relief funding.

As evident from the data breakdown on Q1 of 2016, approximately 7% of the response covers heavy repairs and reconstructions. However, the data is not final, since partners are still adding the data and collecting the information from 2014, which is naturally time-consuming. ICRC and LRC are the only partner to report on heavy repairs prior to 2016, however now several partners have funding from UNHCR for heavy repairs and should be able to provide new address information within the next few weeks.

➔ **A question was asked by SAG participants on when the final gaps in repairs would be expected to be available.** Participants were reminded that this tool is a mechanism for providing greater involvement of the local authorities. So it was estimated perhaps August or September, the Cluster may have a more accurate and thorough database. Following this stage, the Cluster would share the database with municipal authorities so that they could perform a verification exercise. It is not expected that the database may arrive to 100% reflection of damages or maybe even to 90% as the database is managed through secondary elements. This is why the municipal validation stage will be critical.

Moreover, Shelter Cluster is in touch with Education, Early Recovery and Health Clusters on collecting information with regard to damaged infrastructure, education and health care facilities. Update on that will be provided shortly once agreement is reached..

➔ **SAG members were also interested in seeing a similar tool deployed in NGCA.** The Cluster said that this was an option they were exploring and through anecdotal sources they were trying to evaluate to what degree the findings of the database reflects the realities on NGCA side. If the Cluster were able to deploy to NGCA this would be one easy tool to introduce.

Ways Forward

What	Status	Ways Forward
Continue tracking metrics for referral system	On-going	Cluster is usually ending tracking when a partner is taking the referral into programmatic consideration.
Release format for Damage Database of Social Institutions	In 2 weeks from SAG	Cluster is performing final consultations with Education and Health Clusters to track repairs to this architecture
Explore mechanisms for releasing Damage Database in NGCA	Delayed	Cluster will work through cluster lead agency and engage with de factos or partners on the ground depending on security situation

Agenda item 5. External Evaluation and CCPM

Summary: The Cluster presented briefly the results of the April 2016 Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM). As low participation rates largely due to survey fatigue resulted in low confidence levels for concrete findings, the Cluster was using the more rigorous external evaluation performed in December 2015 as their main source of performing cluster service delivery.

Discussion

After Humanitarian Architecture Review, CCPM process has been commissioned for all Clusters currently active in Ukraine. The process was not well communicated and with several CCPM exercises being conducted by several clusters at the same time in addition to the fact that it was done in a relatively small time frame, survey fatigue played a role. Invitation to participate in the survey was sent to 759 people who are in the mailing list and all information was available in English and Ukrainian for partners. The final results were that only 10 responses received, which significantly undermines the credibility of results with final confidence levels of 20 and 12 per cent for national and subnational respectively. SAG stakeholders were reminded that in December 2015 an external evaluation took place which was an extensive exercise consulting the majority of partners and other stakeholders and providing an in-depth review of Cluster strengths and weaknesses and recommendations how to improve.

The CCPM workshop had been scheduled for the morning before the SAG and this had been communicated several times to partners. However, as of 9:30 AM (half hour after the start) it was cancelled due to a “no-show” of participants

CCPM seems less relevant for the Ukrainian emergency with limited resources of each partner to participate in all Clusters, which usually creates a scenario of same employees often representing one agency at different Clusters.

Unfortunately, no narrative comments were received for core functions and sub functions that are evaluated as need improvement or weak, which does not allow for concrete adjustments to be made in these functions or to determine how needs can be met.

The December External Evaluation recommendations are being followed up and tracked by the Cluster team.

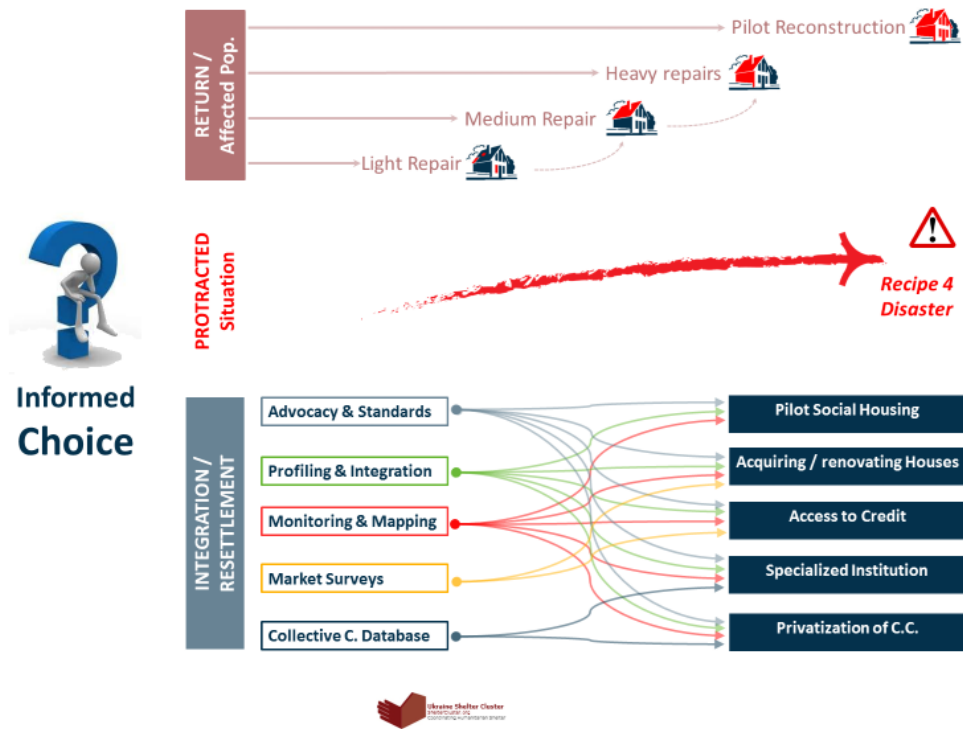
Ways Forward

What	Status	Ways Forward
Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring to be reported to HCT level.	Done on 9th June	Process to be documented in lessons learned



Agenda item 6. Integration and Review of Transitional Plan

Summary: Given the protracted crisis that Ukraine is confronting, the cluster’s strategic orientation should resolve around two scenarios for affected and displaced populations. The infographic for the presentation provides a summary of the Cluster’s discussion on this topic:



Discussion:

Informed choice is an important part for the affected population as a basis to analyse solutions per needs and category of population and is defining for handover. The cluster presented two scenarios which affected populations need to find durable solutions:

- For IDPs returning to the place of origin or for the non-displaced affected population the durable shelter solution would be repairs: light, medium, heavy and pilot reconstruction. With either one type of repair meeting the needs or several consecutive (light initially and then medium) that leads to a durable housing. Partners are already implementing this.
- For IDPs (not returning) this is integration/resettlement as a final solution. The options for resolving these cases are much more complicated varying from social housing, privatization of Collective Centers to specialized institutions for the most vulnerable not able to take care of themselves. In addition, each solution targets specific groups of people. Since development actors are not yet operational in this area, there is an existing gap. While Shelter Cluster will not take lead on implementing those solutions completely, which is beyond its humanitarian mandate, it is the duty to prepare the ground and run pilot projects to invite development actors to operate in this area and make a proper hand over. As practice shows, time between project planning till the first results may take 18-24 months **it is clear that the gap will continue to exist for some time.**

Shelter Cluster has a role to play in preparing this ground and making a bridge with the development actors in areas of:

- Advocacy and Standards;
- Profiling and Integration;



- Monitoring and Mapping;
- Market surveys;
- Collective centres database.

Some of these activities are already up and running, those that are not are an option and feasible.

Unless these two challenges are addressed properly this would lead to a protracted situation and affected people being abandoned and stranded in a situation which would maintain their status quo. At the same time, with dwindling humanitarian funds and the lack of proper mobilization of development actors, these populations could see their condition worsening causing a **recipe for disaster**.

Opportunities for Engagement with National, Regional, and municipal Authorities

There are certain difficulties related to the state-led interventions in the housing sector: clearly there is no budget for the privately owned housing that was damaged. And while private housing is 94% of overall damages, this means that damages to privately owned accommodation is a significant gap not covered at the moment by the state. At this current moment, the challenge of working through authorities may not actually solve the problem of damaged private houses given that for more than two years since the crisis, people are residing in partially or fully damaged houses that are exacerbating humanitarian needs.

It was mentioned that the Government currently is speaking a lot about opportunities for loans for housing programs. Humanitarian agencies have experience from the Balkans and lessons learned should be taken into account when planning rehabilitation of houses and long term programs like that.

Role of urban areas and municipalities is also high, with small, medium and large cities playing often pro-active role in addressing urgent needs and seeking long term solutions.

Role of Intentions and Durable Solutions

Intentions is also component UNHCR as an agency with a protection mandate and having experience in that area, is looking at more closely. Moreover, with many Ukrainians having left the country, their intentions are important to take into account. Notable is that perhaps the number of Ukrainians that left the country is even larger than the number of IDPs. Another option to explore is how this could contribute to understanding the situation better and planning durable solutions preparing for returnee programming. What would be the housing needs for example if these people intend to return to Ukraine?

Rehabilitation

The question of rehabilitation should also be taken with caution since it would be highly inefficient to rehabilitate houses that will not be potentially used, therefore this is a must to take into account at the planning stage.

Limitations of Development Agencies

There is need for differentiated messaging on solutions: on one side, there are needs for development actors to come, while simultaneously emergency referrals are received. However, these two have a geographical division (ex. Sloviansk is no longer that close to the contact line and no longer has shelling, while still perceived as a location not development friendly). Current development donors are not willing to allow operations in these areas despite the needs for housing credits demonstrated by conflict impacted populations in these areas. This message should be conveyed to the development actors.

Summary of discussions on Transitional plan (please see Annex 2 Draft Transitional Plan):

- It was clarified that **tentatively 80%** damages in Donetsk & Luhansk Oblasts recorded in Shelter Cluster database have a response means that verification exercise will be done by municipalities initially, and that 80% will be achieved when all addresses have some type of repair recorded in the database
- Remaining cases of shelter needs in terms of damaged shelter even in areas where needs are largely considered addressed such as Sloviansk was raised and whether current mechanisms (governmental referrals for partners particularly) were adequate for addressing these gaps, as beneficiaries were unaware of where to apply for aid. The Cluster said that the damage database process was one way where they hoped to work with municipal and regional authorities to identify gaps.
- For NGCA all types of assistance provided in the area should be taken into account, including local programmes and assistance coming from external sources. This does not cover majority of needs, but only a small amount of those.

Ways Forward

What	Status	Ways Forward
To share Transitional plan with participants again for further comments	Done on 1st June	Discussion on how to make plan more robust can continue
Draft Transition plan should be commented before final endorsement by the end of the week	Done on 1st June	Cluster to incorporate comments for development of fuller transitional plan

Agenda item 7. Partnership of Donetsk Regional Administration

Summary: The Cluster has developed a draft partnership with Donetsk Regional Administration which was extensive list of areas where Cluster and regional authorities could cooperation. The Cluster presented a brief walk through article by article (please see **Annex 3 Draft Partnership**).

Discussion:

- The format to sign the Partnership was the major question. “Partnership” being a non-binding document on one hand and Shelter Cluster not being a legal entity with the opportunity to sign any agreements or documents was discussed as a potential complication with the title of how document should be called was up for partners’ decision including whether the Cluster Lead Agency should be responsible for final signature.
- Also, such types of Partnerships are unprecedented for cluster operations, before it has never been signed in such a format.
- It is one of the possibilities that UNHCR as Cluster Lead Agency and PIN as Cluster Co-Chair should sign the Partnership on behalf of the Cluster, in case there is agreement on the Cluster side.
- Partnership with Donetsk is a pilot that could help advance with Luhansk authorities and national authorities at later stage. The majority of areas of cooperation are already taking place and advancing.
- An official document, even if in a nonbinding nature, will facilitate NGOs registering their projects within the Government.



- The challenge of ensuring proper coordination between national and regional level was raised, due to challenges of decentralization and streamlining in the context of the Government of Ukraine.
- Therefore, engagement of the newly created Ministry is critical, to avoid any possible tensions between the central level authorities and regional authorities and even more - enhance their coordination. New Ministry can be a signatory to the Partnership as a witness.
- Partnership has no commitments with regard to funding.
- Partnership shall not prevent further cooperation with other actors and specifically engagement with development actors.
- Duration of the partnership is not defined specifically: each party to it may terminate at any time and it automatically ceases after Cluster deactivation.
- Early recovery dimension was recommended to be better reflected in the document.

What	Status	Ways Forward
Engage with the new Ministry in order to ensure that there is proper connection between national and regional authorities on its elements.	On-going	Further liaison with national authorities to discover position; Sub-national Cluster to further liaise with regional authorities to understand communication between regional and national levels
Cluster to consider adding line to Partnership Agreement to include new ministry or national line ministry as witness to partnership	On-going	Cluster continues liaison with national authorities through the Cluster Lead Agency
Pilot partnership with Donetsk GCA Governorate shall be commented by SAG members by Wednesday 8 th June	On-going	Cluster to proceed to signature if no further objections on its contents and final approval of Cluster lead agency.
Cluster to pursue similar agreement in Luhansk GCA.	On-going	Luhansk GCA is reviewing Donetsk GCA agreement to provide their particular feedback from Luhansk context.

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Attendance list

Name	Agency	Function	Email
Artem Dihktiaruk	ADRA	Country Director	dikhtiaruk@adra.org.ua
Juliana Lukyanenko	ADRA	Operation Manager	j.lukyanenko@adta.org.ua
Petro Matiaszek	Caritas Ukraine	Emergency Director	pmatiaszek@caritas-ua.org
Samuel Marie-Fanon	ECHO	Expert Humanitarian Aid	samuel.marie-fanon@echofield.eu
Stephen Rogers	IOM	Senior Program Coordinator	srogers@iom.int
Pablo Mateu	UNHCR	Representative and Cluster lead	mateu@unhcr.org
Sue McIntyre	USAID/OFDA	Senior Humanitarian Adviser	smcintyre@usaid.gov

Shelter Cluster Coordination team:

Name	Function	Email
Igor Chantefort	Cluster Coordinator	chantefo@unhcr.org
Renee Wynveen	Cluster-Co-Chair and Sub-national coordinator	renee.wynveen@peopleinneed.cz
Andrii Mazurenko	Shelter Associate	mazurenk@unhcr.org
Darya Zhagina	Sub-National Shelter Cluster Technical Specialist	darya.zhagina@peopleinneed.cz

List of Annexes:

1. SAG meeting presentation
2. Draft Transition plan
3. Draft Partnership