

Shelter Cluster

Recovery Advisor

of the Shelter Coordination Team (SCT)

The SCT is a flexible team, deployed by the IFRC to coordinate the Shelter Cluster in response to natural disasters during the emergency phase.

Its composition varies upon the size and needs of a disaster, ranging from a 2 to 20 person team. The key roles of the SCT include the following:

- Cluster coordinator
- Information manager
- Technical coordinator
- Recovery advisor

Additional roles can be deployed as required.

Background

In a disaster response operation, the provision of shelter assistance can be an extremely complex process to manage, particularly as the response transitions from the relief phase and into recovery. It is the mandate of the Shelter Cluster to support shelter agencies with their response through the provision of coordination services, thereby improving their efficiency and effectiveness. The recovery advisor is not only critical to this coordination process, but also in determining the direction of the response. Consequently it is a key role in the shelter coordination team (SCT).



The role of the recovery advisor

The SCT serves as a 'secretariat' of the Shelter Cluster, focusing on coordination services to shelter agencies. The recovery advisor is one of the core positions to the SCT, most often deployed through a shelter agency.¹

During the immediate stages of an operational response, shelter agencies often focus on the emergency needs of the affected population. The recovery advisor helps agencies maintain a simultaneous focus on recovery activities. The advisor's work is based upon assessment data from various sources including the government and humanitarian organisations, which is collected by shelter agencies and shared with the SCT.

¹ UN-HABITAT is the 'focal point' agency for early recovery in the Global Shelter Cluster

Within the Shelter Cluster, the recovery advisor evaluates recovery issues with shelter agencies, participates in strategic meetings as the response develops, and provides critical feedback to the SCT as they make developments within the recovery framework. The recovery advisor chairs some of the Technical Working Groups (TWiGs), gathering the initiatives of shelter agencies, and collating them into a common plan of action in order to create standards for response. The recovery advisor also works in close collaboration with the coordinator of the SCT, liaising with the government on recovery issues related to shelter.

Externally, the advisor serves as a focal point for the Early Recovery Cluster and the early recovery network, which are both chaired by the UN Development Programme. The advisor provides an overview on progress and gaps in shelter recovery.

Main activities

Building partnerships

The recovery advisor identifies key partners in the government, local non-governmental organisations, professional or academic groups. He/she encourages the sharing of information and initiatives between these partners, in order to build strong relationships that contribute positively to recovery efforts.

Development of a shelter recovery strategy

The recovery advisor works to develop a shelter recovery strategy with the collaboration of key recovery agencies including the government, the SCT coordinator, and other clusters such as Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Health, and Early Recovery. He/she also incorporates the national context of the emergency and any existing information on successful methods of previous recovery assistance into the strategy. This broad method of cooperation ensures a comprehensive approach is used in the response for the affected population.

Guidance and technical assistance

Together with the government and shelter agencies, the recovery advisor promotes the use of consistent methodologies for damage assessment. This may include an analysis on the capacities of local markets and local communities. The methodologies can serve as technical guidelines, providing guidance for the implementation process of shelter agencies and their programmes.



Technical Working Groups (TWiGs)

The recovery advisor chairs technical working groups, promoting the involvement and leadership of all stakeholders. There can be numerous TWiGs during a response. They exist on a needs-basis only for specific issues, and work collectively in a spirit of mutual cooperation and consensual decision-making. They ensure that responsibilities are distributed appropriately, with clearly defined focal points. In previous Shelter Cluster deployments, the recovery advisor chaired TWiGs that focused on education, awareness raising and outreach materials, with the aim to better inform affected communities about shelter related issues. This included training and capacity building on methodologies for construction, with a specific focus on risk reduction in order to lessen future vulnerabilities.

Handover

As soon as it is appropriate, one of the key activities undertaken by the recovery advisor is to initiate preparatory work for the handover of the Shelter Cluster. The IFRC hands over the coordination of the Shelter Cluster to agencies such as UN-HABITAT, UN Development Programme, or international development NGOs, when the majority of conversations held in the Shelter Cluster focus on recovery and reconstruction.

In some instances, the recovery advisor may become the cluster coordinator in the recovery phase, or alternatively, the organisation he/she works for may take over the coordination of the Shelter Cluster from the IFRC.

Various

Depending on the size and type of emergency, there are a number of additional activities that the recovery advisor may be involved in, including:

- Support the SCT and external partners – such as the government – for site selection and physical planning, while promoting safety, security and support for livelihoods.
- Negotiation with partners involved in rubble removal, debris clearing and recycling, linking them directly to shelter agencies.
- Support efforts to address housing, land and property issues.

- Contribute to sustainable resource mapping and/or guidelines (i.e., timber, bamboo, etc.).
- Support community participation initiatives in recovery, to ensure beneficiaries' needs are addressed.
- Support efforts to integrate methods for disaster risk reduction.

Impact

- By deploying a recovery advisor within the SCT, shelter agencies are encouraged to integrate recovery components of their programming at an early stage in the response.
- By developing recovery principles and standards early in a response, the shelter recovery advisor ensures that there is a more equitable delivery of recovery assistance, thereby reducing conflict within affected communities.
- When appropriate, the recovery advisor is able to identify an agency for handover once the IFRC completes its mandate as convener of the Shelter Cluster. This allows for a more streamlined transition that reduces the loss of institutional information within the Shelter Cluster itself.



**For further information,
please contact:**

Graham Saunders

Head, Shelter and Settlements Department
Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator on behalf of the IFRC
E-mail: graham.saunders@ifrc.org
Phone: +41 22 730 42 41 / Fax: +41 22 733 03 95

www.ifrc.org
Saving lives, changing minds.



For more on the Humanitarian Reform, the role of the IFRC as convener of the Shelter Cluster and the SCT, please visit www.sheltercluster.org