



HUMANITARIAN AID AND CIVIL PROTECTION

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The opinions expressed in this document represent the views of the authors,
which are not necessarily shared by the European Commission.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AMTP	Asylum and Migration Thematic Programme
AGDM	Age Gender Diversity Mainstreaming
ARI	Acute Respiratory Infection
ATS	Alternative Transitional Shelter
AUPP	Aid for Uprooted People Programme
BBB	Building Back Better
CBHA	Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies
CCCM	Camp Management and Camp Coordination
CDC	Community Development Committee (Kenya)
CGI	Corrugated Galvanised Iron
CIAT	Comité Interministériel d'Aménagement du Territoire (Haiti)
CLUP	Comprehensive Land Use Plans (Philippines)
CMP	Community Mortgage Programme (Philippines)
COP	Country Operations Plan (Kenya)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources (Philippines)
DEVCO	Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government (Philippines)
DPWH	Department of Public Works and Highways (Philippines)
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSWD	Department of Social Works and Development (Philippines)
EiA	Environmental impact Assessment
EQ	Evaluation Question
ERC	Enhanced Response Capacity
eSF	electronic Single Form
FAFA	Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FCA	Forgotten Crises Assessment
FINAT	Food and Nutrition Insecurity in Humanitarian Crises Need Assessment Template
FPA	Framework Partnership Agreement
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
GNA	Global Needs Assessment
GoH	Government of Haiti
GoK	Government of Kenya
GSC	Global Shelter Cluster
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
HLP	Housing, Land and Property issues
HLURB	Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (Philippines)
HQ	Headquarters
HUDCC	Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (Philippines)

IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICLA	Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IFRC-SRU	IFRC-Shelter Research Unit
IL	Intervention Logic
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IO	International Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISF	Informal Settler Family
ISSB	Interlocking Stabilised Soil Blocks
JAM	Joint Assessment Mission
LA/NSA	Local Authorities/ Non State Actors
LFA	Logical Framework Analysis
LIAC, PROLIAC	Local and Provincial Inter-Agency Committees (Philippines)
LGU	Local Government Unit (Philippines)
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
LWET	Light Weight Emergency Tent
MGB	Mines and Geosciences Bureau (Philippines)
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MTPTC	Ministère des Travaux Publics, Transports et Communications (Haiti)
NCE	No Cost Extension
NDRRMC	National Disaster Risk Reduction & Management Council (Philippines)
NFIs	Non-Food Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNGO	National Non-Governmental Organisation
NHA	National Housing Authority (Philippines)
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OCP	Operations Continuity Plan (Kenya)
OFDA	Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
PAP	Port-Au-Prince metropolitan area
PPT	Power Point Presentation
RPP	Regional Protection Programme
RSO	Regional Support Office
SAG	Strategic Advisory Group
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SF	Single Form
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SHFC	Social Housing Finance Corporation (Philippines)
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SWAP	Sector-Wide Approach
TA	Technical Assistant
ToR	Terms of Reference
UCLBP	Unit for Construction, Rehousing and Public Buildings (Haiti)
UDHA	Urban Development and Housing Act (Philippines)
UN	United Nations

UNDAC	UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNDP/BCPR	UN Development Programme/ Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOPS	UN Office for Project Services
UNRWA	UN Relief and Works Agency
UN/OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WVI	World Vision International (NGO)

A) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A.1) Background

- Sheltering the victims of disasters and performing some urgent rehabilitation has always been a core humanitarian activity to mitigate mortality and morbidity, and provide access. Sheltering combines however a number of key challenges: it is highly resource intensive, costly, lengthy and technically complex. The urban context has recently added a further dimension to the shelter exercise.
- Since the UN Humanitarian Reform of 2005, the responsibility for coordination of shelter interventions when clusters are activated has been assumed by the Emergency Shelter Cluster – now called the Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) - co-led by UNHCR and IFRC. Numerous shelter activities are also taking place in situations where the cluster system is not activated.
- Nevertheless, the development of shelter response at a level comparable to some other clusters (e.g. WASH or Logistics) has been constrained by a number of limiting factors. Shelter has grown dramatically in importance, relative to other humanitarian sectors, in part as a result of high-profile response e.g. after the Indian Ocean Tsunami and in Haiti. This trend is likely to continue in responses to crises that increasingly happen in urban contexts. The relations between the Cluster and the wider shelter sector, as well as the GSC coordination among two agencies with strong mandates have not always been optimum. Technicality and high costs are not conducive either to LRRD with development donors or under-resourced local authorities.

A.2) Objectives and methodology of the evaluation

- ECHO has not previously carried out any specific evaluation in the shelter sector. As stated in the ToR (Annex I), the main objectives of the evaluation were “to identify the main issues in global humanitarian shelter provision, including bottlenecks; and to identify where DG ECHO would have a comparative advantage in helping to address these issues”.
- The methodological approach has been based on a set of five main evaluation questions (EQs), which have been used as a basis for chapters B.2.1 to B.2.5 of the present report. EQs have successively assessed issues of overall and specific challenges, effectiveness, added value and efficiency – including cost-effectiveness.
- The scope of the evaluation was quite extensive and covered the period from 2005 to 2012, as well as shelter and closely related activities in every context (conflicts or natural disasters, DRR, emergency and more durable shelters, LRRD) and geographical areas. Data was to be collected from desk review, interviews, some field case studies and an online survey. A detailed description of the methodology can be found in chapter B.1.3 and in Annexes II to III, and VI.
- Some constraints were found in the lists of shelter-related projects (Annex IV and Annex V). For the first five years, the lists had to be collected manually. From 2010 onwards, the accuracy of the HOPE database depends on the partners filling in appropriately their Single Form (SF), which may be a challenge in the case of e.g. large multi-sector grants.

A.3) Main Findings and Conclusions

Institutional level

Challenges

- The positive perception of ECHO institutional added values (respect of humanitarian principles, large funding capacities, and potential linkages with other EU instruments) is mitigated in the shelter sector by a lack of dedicated technical expertise, relative to other fields, which is partly due to imposed resource limitations.

- The Humanitarian Aid Regulation provisions are comprehensive and can be interpreted in order to cover very nearly the whole spectrum of shelter activities from preparedness to emergency response and rehabilitation/ early reconstruction. Potential limitations appear in the adjective of “short-term” for rehabilitation and reconstruction – which lacks clarity, in the lack of reference to environmental and ethical challenges, settlements (see below), and early legal assistance.
- Shelter and rehabilitation activities are distributed in the ECHO SF among five main sectors, including Shelter and NFIs. Although this segmentation has pros and cons, it has not been found detrimental to efficiency and effectiveness – which may partly be due to the flexibility generally applied by the ECHO staff.
- However, attaching NFIs to a single sector is misleading, as some of these can be related to shelters (e.g. household items), while others should rather be linked to WASH or protection.
- Shelters are not only an individual or household issue but must also integrate the coping strategy of settlements: as all societies do, those affected by disasters, whether they are displaced or not, rely in part upon their communities for protection, livelihoods and coping with emergencies.
- The institutional settings of the GSC remain complex. As in other sectors, shelter operates within three different contexts and coordination mechanisms: (i) where clusters are activated, usually in larger emergencies; (ii) where they are not activated and the response is predominantly for refugees; and (iii) where they are not activated, which is the largest group in terms of grants awarded by ECHO. There is little global support to development of the latter two contexts and little indication to all stakeholders of how they interrelate, when an emergency spans more than one context.
- The dual GSC leadership is designed around mandated specificities and related interests, and lacks the more integrated and longer-term approach achieved e.g. by UNICEF for the WASH Cluster.
- UNHCR leads the Cluster in conflict situations where there are IDPs, whereas in refugee situations the core mandate of UNHCR takes precedence over the cluster system. However, when ensuring coordination in the framework of refugee crises (as assessed in some of the case studies), UNHCR does not seem to apply consistently the good practice developed by the GSC and other clusters.
- In natural disasters, IFRC is committed to act as the ‘convenor’ of the Cluster at global level, pledging to coordinate at operational level. IFRC however does not assume the responsibility of ‘provider of last resort’ - common to other cluster leads within the UN family - which may leave some open gaps beyond emergency response.
- Both co-leads have benefited from large ECHO thematic funds for capacity building over the period evaluated. Beyond GSC, the broad shelter sector however still requires support and training, as a community of practice. The Cluster co-leads see their responsibility as limited to coordination within activated Cluster responses, and prefer to distinguish strictly between the sector and Cluster.
- As a result, coordination between GSC members, the shelter sector, and other clusters has been lacking. Other key weaknesses for the GSC and the sector in general are to be found in planning; the lack of a comprehensive and broadly accepted terminology with corresponding typology of activities, cost-effectiveness and indicators for measuring impact; or the lack of opportunities for Cluster participants to engage in important technical discussions, with each other or with other clusters (see also strategic level).

Trends

- Significant progress was however noted recently within GSC in the recent development of its Strategy, SAG (Strategic Advisory Group), Thematic Priorities and Working Groups, which ECHO was instrumental in stimulating. The Cluster SAG, formed in 2012, comprises key international actors and has recognised the need to better engage external stakeholders. This approach was noted in the new GCS Strategy for 2013-2017, which is supported by DG ECHO.

Strategic level

Challenges

- The appropriate strategic development of humanitarian shelter stakeholders (institutions, field workers, consultants) that provide the majority of shelter experience and capacity, is possible only if the global community of practice is recognised and supported with common resources, linking them at every level with practical opportunities to collaborate and achieve consensus.
- In this context, DG ECHO feels that such communities of practice have a role to play to influence global clusters and are arguably more influential inside (by joining the GSC and other clusters) than if they stay on the margins. Donors should therefore avoid creating/funding parallel sector platforms, and focus on the global needs of humanitarian reform.
- Other options include supporting clusters to: (i) engage and support sectors programmatically, such as through knowledge management, training and the development of consensus guidance, tools and resources; (ii) support existing and new national and regional communities of practice for shelter, and linking them into a network; and (iii) support `horizontal` inter-cluster and inter-sector resources, such as in knowledge management and training, promoting communication between communities of practice.
- At the level of donors, due to the segmented approach both externally (between donors) and internally (between humanitarian aid and development), there are still gaps left by restricted funding and government policies. Partly due to the above and to the limited opportunities for engagement currently offered by the GSC, there is a need for large donors to the sector to engage even more in strategic discussions, to ensure that policies and resources better complement each other. A point in case is preparedness for future large urban disasters, in which a better coordination with other experienced donors would be required.
- Due to the relatively recent recognition of its importance, shelter activities are poorly supported with guidance, with significant gaps ranging from developing and maintaining plans or strategies to core activities such as repair and reconstruction.
- Other key outstanding issues at the strategic level concern: (i) the lack of funding for preparedness and DRR; (ii) the lack of LRRD/exit strategy with development donors and national actors; (iii) participation of affected and host communities; (iv) the need to promote integrated and flexible approaches for optimum effectiveness, where shelter is combined with e.g. WASH, livelihoods, cash or legal assistance, according to needs; (v) due in part to the lack of particular shelter expertise and guidance, a somewhat excessive focus on emergency short-term solutions, which rapidly tend to become quite costly compared to some transitional shelter solutions (some types of T-shelter, temporary rehabilitation, repairs) that can reach a lifetime of 3 to 10 years and more.

Operational level

Comparative advantages of DG ECHO

- At this level also, ECHO is perceived positively, due to its field presence and knowledge, timeliness, results-oriented approach, and consistent support to coordination platforms. Limitations can most frequently be found in a perceived risk of lack of continued funding from year to year, while facing protracted or recurrent crises and long shelter processes. Despite provisions of the EU Consensus, LRRD is still not optimum.

Other issues

- Operational issues, none particular to ECHO, have also been identified in the shelter sector, including: (i) training at all levels; (ii) implementation capacity of international actors, with too great a dependence upon a limited pool of consultants; (iii) ignorance of the informal sector in which most recipients usually operate, and of the private sector; (iv) implementing partners using mostly indicators of outputs rather than outcomes, and the effects of better shelter on mortality

and morbidity that are not measured; (v) due to the poor legal frameworks of many developing countries, Housing, Land and Property (HLP) is a key protection factor for facilitating return and resilience when facing e.g. occupation of properties or poor resettlements locations.

A.4) Key Recommendations

Institutional level

Overall Sector

- The level of understanding by all stakeholders of the shelter sector needs to be increased, through advocacy and training/ capacity building, and by the funding of these activities (e.g. through ERC) for the benefit of all sector actors.
- In particular, the different interpretations need to be resolved within ECHO and GSC co-leads over whether or not the Cluster is responsible for supporting the all sector stakeholders sector in its broader programmatic needs, as a community of practice. Engagement with the sector is mentioned in GSC thematic priorities, however full responsibility is not mentioned, nor is any indication offered currently as to how the GSC seeks to proceed with engagement.
- Support to the sector through the GSC may contribute additionally to bridging between the different coordination mechanisms used to support humanitarian operations in all sectors. As in other sectors, shelter and settlement activities are coordinated using different mechanisms in non-clustered, clustered and refugee contexts.
- ECHO must therefore consider how best to support each coordination mechanism, and the coordination between coordination mechanisms. Supporting the sector may, for example, be through common knowledge management, a common approach to developing and maintaining strategies and the development of consensus good practice and support tools and resources.

Donors coordination fora

- Further to the suggestion of the Technical Advisory Group of OFDA, more DRR planning and conceptualisation – in particular for future large urban disasters – should be considered between key international donors, e.g. through the OCHA donors' forum or a GSC Thematic Group.
- There is also a need to continue trying to engage into GHD new non-traditional donors who provide large shelter funding, and to harmonise the western approach to accountability with the Muslim values of Zakat.

DG ECHO

- In a possible revision of the ECHO typology of sectors, shelters should be closely associated with settlements, the predominant coping strategy of communities, following in such the lessons from the field and good practices already adopted by SPHERE and key stakeholders.
- NFIs should be considered as a cross-cutting issue (as it is the case for rehabilitation) and should become subsectors under Shelter (and Settlements), WASH and Protection.
- ECHO should reinforce the dedicated in-house technical expertise on shelter issues, taking into account the current limitation of resources. The actual, primarily WASH experts could e.g. be enhanced (upon training, etc.) into “WATHAB” specialists. Training and guidance should also be available to all field Technical Advisors.
- In parallel, in the framework of the FPA partnership measures, a “technical reference working group” could be set up that would integrate specialised technical skills on shelter from DG ECHO and the most professionally involved FPA or FAFA partners. The working group could e.g. gather to discuss ad hoc issues of engineering, standards, indicators or cost-effectiveness.
- To tackle the lack of specific references in the Regulation to some newly identified challenges (environment, ethical materials, and settlements), there would be a need for further interpretation of “protection” in the upcoming policy.

- To clarify in the upcoming policy the definition of “short term” rehabilitation and reconstruction, to be aligned on the actual lifetime of transitional or semi-permanent shelters already funded by DG ECHO.

Strategic level

DG ECHO

- Currently, there is no commonly-agreed way for the sector to develop and maintain strategies, and there is no commonly-agreed open source sector shelter and settlement training, including national level training and modular technical training for continuing professional development. ECHO should support the development of both, encouraging the GSC to recognise existing resources and approaches, e.g. the new open source sector training planned by USAID OFDA.
- When there is an impasse between humanitarian approaches and the policy of a host government, ECHO needs to engage and work with some more “political muscle”. The Commission, i.e. at the Commissioner level but also importantly with the involvement of DEVCO, should consider as soon as possible engaging more with the UN system and/or local government in order to enact effective shelter and settlement strategies, and ultimately facilitate LRRD or exit strategies.
- Consideration should be given by ECHO to supporting UNHCR in reviewing its coordination structures, in the light of progress made in the IASC cluster approach, with particular emphasis upon a partnership approach, independent coordination capacities and joint appeals processes. ECHO should either support reform within UNHCR of its coordination and strategic planning mechanisms, or it should fund implementing and operational partners directly in order to give them voice.
- All humanitarian response is coordinated through three coordination mechanisms: (i) non-clustered response (ad hoc UN-led, +/- 50% of ECHO grants in the concerned period); (ii) clustered response (led by IFRC and UNHCR, 41%); and (iii) responses for refugees (UNHCR led, 9%). There has been almost no discussion with the shelter sector over coordination in non-clustered and refugee coordination contexts, similar to the discussions held within the GSC over clustered coordination. Such discussions should be encouraged and supported by ECHO.
- Outputs should include: (i) ensuring that all sector stakeholders understand each coordination mechanism, including the characteristics that distinguish them from each other; and (ii) how coordination should occur when more than one coordination mechanism needs to coordinate with others. In addition, ECHO should discuss further with the IASC how best to maintain coordination mechanisms between responses – e.g. in the context of frequent natural disasters.
- ECHO should maintain, for optimum effectiveness and resilience purposes, its flexibility in supporting integrated multi-sector approaches in which shelter is a major component.
- Common strategic information management should also be integrated and involve among others: baseline data, such as tracking displacement; livelihoods data, provided e.g. by the EMMA¹ toolkit; household profiling, such as that achieved through the REACH initiative; and specific technical surveys, such as of building damage.
- The upcoming ECHO Shelter guidelines should consider the following strategic issues: (i) as victims are increasingly urban and seek to stay near their damaged housing, as early as natural disasters or conflict situations allow more support should be devoted to early self-repair and reconstruction efforts; (ii) the overall objective of resilience should also comprise support to livelihoods and the local economy, as much as permitted in the ECHO mandate; (iii) initiating HLP as early as possible, even though it is likely to last well beyond ECHO's intervention timeframe; (iv) as feasible within the intervention timeframe, ECHO should engage where relevant with local authorities who are involved in DRR and LRRD and respect principles of humanity and impartiality, without direct funding as per mandate. In parallel, ECHO should

¹ <http://emma-toolkit.org/about-emma/>

continue supporting partners who are working with such national actors on transitional and durable shelter, and support their advocacy on HLP, planning or relocation.

- In parallel, ECHO should consider funding the development of policies and guidelines related to topics such as: (i) the use of shelter as part of peace and reconciliation activities; (ii) camp planning, e.g. in the framework of supporting the CCCM Cluster; or (iii) cross-cutting environmental factors e.g. protection of local resources, the use of local material or innovative technologies, and rehabilitation of camp sites.

Operational level

Overall Sector

- Beyond the current indicator guidelines which are only a “1st step”, GSC and its partners should continue developing shelter-related indicators - SMART as much as feasible but also qualitative or linked to perception – to better capture e.g. outcomes of activities, elements of morbidity and mortality – despite attribution problems –, or “adequacy” (above basic emergency SPHERE indicators, and used by UNRWA) to ensure minimum well-being in very protracted situations.

DG ECHO

- The upcoming Shelter guidelines should consider some operational issues, as relevant: (i) cash assistance to be sub-divided as feasible for accountability purposes among shelter/rental, food aid, etc.; (ii) LRRD actions to mitigate tensions with host populations through e.g. development support to local infrastructures; (iii) funding the most adapted channels for public information about shelter rehabilitation opportunities or legal assistance; (iv) QA at production plants and QC upon site installation for some costly and/or technically complex items, for optimum cost-effectiveness; (v) quality and cost-effectiveness assessments of innovative technologies; (vi) the use of “Universal Design” shelters with inclusive access for all, subject to local cultural adaptations of the design; (vii) better monitoring and repair kits to apply effectively the “Building Back Better” approach; and (viii) preparedness and prepositioning of materials for transitional shelters.

Positioning vis-à-vis emergency, transitional and durable shelters

GSC

- The GSC should initiate – with ECHO support – the definition of a broadly accepted and comprehensive terminology for post-emergency types of shelter for the displaced (transitional, temporary, semi-permanent) and settlement (camps, collective centres, self-settlement in rural and urban contexts). This approach should facilitate a corresponding terminology for those affected but not displaced, or returned, both for shelter (repairs, reconstruction, transitional, semi-permanent) and settlement (house owners, apartment tenants, land tenants), with indications of cost-effectiveness and lifetime.

DG ECHO

- Considering the protracted nature of many crises and the usual lack of LRRD, the higher initial investment cost of transitional shelter solutions must be divided by their expected number of useful years, to which must be added qualitative factors of life. This approach makes them in effect quite cost effective, as compared to short-term shelters that must be replaced regularly, and should be considered by ECHO whenever relevant.
- Such extended durability and periods of support would furthermore still correspond to the accepted definition of transitional or semi-permanent in most donor countries, although they would probably appear as permanent for many vulnerable recipients – offering one response to the LRRD problem.

A5) Summary Table

Main conclusions	Corresponding recommendations
Institutional level	
<p>Potential limitations in the Humanitarian Aid Regulation appear in the unclear adjective of “short-term” for rehabilitation and reconstruction and in the lack of reference to environmental and ethical challenges, settlements, or early legal assistance.</p>	<p><u>For ECHO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The concept of “Protection” needs to be further interpreted to cover new challenges in the upcoming ECHO policy. → “Short-term” needs to be clarified and aligned with the actual lifetime of transitional shelters (see below).
<p>Key added values and comparative advantages of ECHO are mitigated in the shelter sector by a certain lack of dedicated technical expertise, partly due to imposed resource limitations.</p>	<p><u>For ECHO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The current primarily WASH experts could be enhanced, upon training, etc., into “WATHAB” ones. → Training and guidance should be available to all TAs. → A FPA “technical reference working group” could be set up to integrate specialised technical skills from DG ECHO and professionally partners, to discuss ad hoc shelter issues.
<p>In the complex institutional settings of the GSC, where UNHCR leads the Cluster in conflict situations with IDPs and where its mandate takes precedence in refugee situations, the agency does not always seem to apply consistently the coordination practices learned by the GSC.</p>	<p><u>For ECHO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → ECHO should support UNHCR in upgrading its coordination mechanism for refugees, in the light of IASC cluster progress. → In non-cluster coordination settings and alternatively to supporting UNHCR coordination capacities, ECHO should consider funding implementing partners directly for coordination purposes, as well as the humanitarian community in reviewing and upgrading non-cluster coordination mechanisms. → When there is an impasse between humanitarian approaches and the policy of a host government, ECHO in coordination with DEVCO, should engage more with the UN system and/or local government to enact effective shelter and settlement strategies, and facilitate LRRD.
<p>Beyond GSC, the wider shelter sector still requires support and training as a community of practice. The Cluster co-leads see their responsibility as limited to coordination within activated Cluster responses. As a result, coordination between GSC, the shelter sector, and other clusters has been lacking. Key weaknesses can be found e.g. in planning, terminology, or opportunities for all to engage into technical discussions. Significant progress was however noted recently in the development of the GSC Strategy, SAG, etc.</p>	<p><u>For ECHO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → ECHO should continue supporting the GSC Strategy and SAG, together with the development of a consensus linking the sector, Cluster and other donors over shelter planning and training processes. This should be done in full coordination with the development of non-cluster and refugee planning and training processes.

Main conclusions	Corresponding recommendations
<p>For all sectors (not only Shelter), currently three parallel coordination mechanisms are in use: cluster, non-cluster, and refugee. Non-cluster and refugee mechanisms are disproportionately under-developed at both operational and global levels, with minimal capacity developed for coordination between these mechanisms</p>	<p><u>For the Sector</u></p> <p>→ Support to the sector by ECHO is currently limited to coordination, through the GSC. The sector should also be supported in its programmatic needs, such as in developing and maintaining strategies, knowledge management and the development of consensus guidance. This additional support will also be helpful in helping the sector to be able to respond consistently across the three different coordination mechanisms currently in use in humanitarian response.</p>
Strategic level	
<p>A better coordination with other experienced donors would be required e.g. in the framework of DRR/ preparedness for future large urban crises.</p>	<p><u>For donors' coordination fora</u></p> <p>→ More DRR planning and conceptualisation with other key donors should be considered e.g. through the OCHA donors' forum or a GSC Thematic Group.</p> <p><u>For ECHO</u></p> <p>→ ECHO should continue trying to engage new non-traditional donors into GHD</p>
<p>The segmentation of shelter and rehabilitation activities in five main SF sectors has not been found detrimental to efficiency and effectiveness – due in part to the flexibility of ECHO staff. However, shelters must integrate the widely used coping strategy of settlements, and attaching NFIs to a single sector is misleading.</p>	<p><u>For ECHO</u></p> <p>→ In a possible revision of the ECHO typology of sectors, Shelters should be associated with Settlements.</p> <p>→ NFIs should be considered as a cross-cutting issue, to become subsectors under Shelter and Settlements, WASH and Protection.</p>
<p>Due to a number of factors (cost, complexity, and poor strategic and operational linkages) LRRD and exit strategies are often lacking for shelter activities with development donors and national actors.</p>	<p><u>For ECHO</u></p> <p>→ As feasible within the intervention timeframe, ECHO should link up with acceptable local authorities involved in DRR and LRRD, without directly funding them.</p> <p>→ In parallel, ECHO should continue supporting partners who are working with such government and local actors on transitional and durable shelters.</p>
Operational level	
<p>Due in part to the lack of shelter expertise and guidance, there is often too much a focus on emergency short-term solutions, which tend to become quite costly as they must be regularly replaced in a context of protracted crisis and lack of LRRD.</p>	<p><u>For ECHO</u></p> <p>→ Cost-effectiveness of transitional shelters, if understood as incremental, must be compared with other options over an expected lifetime of 3 to 10 years. ECHO should support whenever relevant the higher investment cost of quality transitional shelters.</p> <p>→ ECHO should support the definition of a broadly accepted and comprehensive terminology for the sector. Transitional, temporary or semi-permanent shelters are e.g. in need of</p>

Main conclusions	Corresponding recommendations
	<p>corresponding typology definitions and indications of cost-effectiveness and lifetime.</p>
<p>In urban contexts, the majority of victims are tenants who seek to stay near their damaged assets; the most vulnerable of them are poorly supported, with minimal good practice identified</p>	<p><u>For ECHO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → More early support should be devoted to self-reconstruction and repair efforts, with emphasis on risk management. → HLP or ICLA should be initiated it as early as possible and linked with LRRD.
<p>Implementing partners use essentially indicators of outputs rather than outcomes, and the effects of better shelter on mortality and morbidity are not measured</p>	<p><u>For GSC and the sector</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Discussions should continue with GSC and FPA partners about the most adapted SMART outcome indicators for shelter. → Elements of morbidity and mortality – even though difficult to attribute to shelter alone - should be captured by qualitative indicators of outcome or perceived satisfaction, if SMART indicators are not applicable.

B) MAIN REPORT

B.1) Background of the evaluation

B.1.1) The humanitarian shelter sector

Since the beginning of emergency humanitarian aid activities, sheltering the victims of disasters – and performing some urgent rehabilitation to crucial community and access infrastructure – has been some of the core sector activities to mitigate mortality and morbidity, together with providing food assistance, health, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

However, sheltering presents the most resource intensive and complex type of intervention, as it spans from emergency intervention through early recovery to reconstruction. In addition to the various technical issues that need to be resolved, for each different context, dealing with land and property rights, institutional barriers and community participation and settlement planning, presents further challenges to address in humanitarian sheltering.

As for the other core sectors, along the years of accumulating humanitarian experience, shelter has benefited from a significant range of developments, such as the beginnings of consensus over sector terminology, the definition of standards (SPHERE and others), new techniques, and corresponding diversification of interventions. These range from preparedness to light infrastructure improvements or reconstruction, culturally adapted types of emergency housing, attempts at self-help by communities (food for work, cash for work, kits and tools), rental cash assistance, and coordination with recovery and development programmes.

The recent acknowledgment of the challenge of the urban context for the victims of disasters (most affected people nowadays originate from urban settings and will either remain next to their damaged dwellings or seek a livelihood in another crowded city, where suffering is often invisible) has added a further dimension to the shelter exercise.

Since the UN Humanitarian Reform of 2005, coordination and guidance when clusters are activated have been assumed by the Emergency Shelter Cluster – now called the Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) – co-led by UNHCR and IFRC. Nevertheless, numerous humanitarian shelter activities are also taking place in situations where the cluster system is not activated, and are therefore subject to other coordination mechanisms.

The UN/IASC Transformative Agenda process (finalised in 2012) has further promoted efforts to improve the effectiveness of the humanitarian response, and has established priorities to address challenges in the three broad areas of Cluster Coordination, Leadership and Accountability. In this light, enhanced cooperation took place between the two co-lead agencies.

A more strategic approach has also been set up. A Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) has been established by GSC at the end of 2012, and a 5-years strategy (2013-2017) has been defined. The new strategy aims e.g. at developing the “surge capacity” of the cluster, establishing five “Global Focal Points” to support the management and governance efforts of the two Deputy GSC Coordinators, and to adapt the cluster website to better communicate with the field. A proposal submitted to ECHO's Enhanced Response Capacity fund (ERC) to assist in funding the capacity building of the cluster has been accepted in May 2013.

Nevertheless, as emphasised by most key actors in the sector, the development of shelter at a level comparable to some other clusters (e.g. WASH or Logistics) has been constrained by a number of limiting factors, such as the following:

- Shelter was not considered as a fully-fledged sector by international humanitarian actors until the establishment of the cluster system (in late 2005/ early 2006) whereas other key sectors had been integral parts since 1991 of the UN humanitarian coordination system. The SPHERE standards of 1997 first grouped together shelter and NFIs, a categorisation that still exists today

in ECHO's typology of interventions. 'Short-term' rehabilitation or reconstruction of crucial community infrastructures are disseminated among the five corresponding technical sectors of the FPA nomenclature.

- In that framework, shelter – which per force closely integrates construction skills - has often appeared as a “hidden cross-cutting” activity, as it often depends to a large extent of decisions taken in other sectors and according to other priorities: camp management, protection measures for most vulnerable categories, health (primary centres), children and education (primary schools), WASH (water and sanitation infrastructures), distribution of NFI (Non-Food Items) packages which include key household articles or fuel-efficient stoves, or logistics and transport (essential/small-scale road, bridges to ensure humanitarian access). As a result, shelter experts would often be concerned by the fact that they are “at the end of the line” in terms of decision-making, timeframe, and budgets.
- In addition, there is still a lack of clearly established relations and division of tasks with contiguous sectors, e.g. WASH or Health. Rehabilitation of crucial community infrastructures which complement shelter in providing a comprehensive environment for preventing mortality and morbidity in emergencies (primary health centres, drainage systems, etc.) can be a matter for construction engineering which requires building and shelter-related expertise, before being used by the concerned sectors.
- The somewhat detrimental effect of the original name of the Cluster (“Emergency Shelter” – semantics are important) which is still reflected in the limited mandate of GSC into recovery and development, has not done much to promote transitional activities or LRRD.
- The fact that the relations between the Cluster and the wider sector, as well as the GSC coordination co-led by two agencies with strong mandates, have not always been optimum in the past. As stated in the 2005 humanitarian response review commissioned by the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, “the UN, Red Cross and NGOs remained vertical to each other”.
- The technicality and high costs of some of the sector activities, which are not conducive also to handover/LRRD by some under-resourced local authorities.
- Legal issues for resettling the beneficiaries of emergency shelters (HLP, ICLA²) can also be a constraint when facing contexts such as the lack of land property law in Haiti, or the land tenure system for poor farmers in Pakistan.
- More generally, the lack of clear-cut threshold (and corresponding terminology of definitions) in the sector between emergency and recovery, and the subsequent lack of LRRD with development donors³. The scope of GSC outlines e.g. that, “whilst the GSC's role and responsibilities range from emergency to longer-term shelter, the concept of ‘provider of last resort’⁴ will only apply to meeting emergency needs and not to the provision of longer term shelter or housing or longer term settlement planning”.
- Participatory, settlement or neighbourhood approaches to affected communities for sustainability purposes need to be further developed in the sector.
- As stated above, the emergence of urban crises, which have significantly increased the challenges for the sector.

² Housing Land Property; Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance.

³ This applies for donors where humanitarian and development activities are clearly separated – e.g. between ECHO and DEVCO in the European Commission or between OFDA and USAID – but not for more integrated structures such as e.g. DFID.

⁴ As per the agreed IASC definition, the 'provider of last resort' concept represents a commitment of sector leads to do their utmost to ensure an adequate and appropriate response where there are critical gaps in humanitarian response - depending on funds available.

B.1.2) Objectives and scope of the evaluation

As stated in §3.1 of the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the evaluation, the main objectives of the project are “to identify the main issues in global humanitarian shelter provision, including bottlenecks; and to identify where DG ECHO would have a comparative advantage in helping to address these issues”. The evaluation does not aim at assessing the performance of individual FPA or FAFA implementing partners, but is carrying out an overall assessment at the strategic / sector/ programmatic levels.

Since ECHO has, to date, not yet carried out any specific evaluation of its humanitarian assistance in the shelter sector, the scope of the current evaluation is quite extensive and covers the whole range of shelter-related activities which have been funded by ECHO between 2005 and 2012.

The specific objectives further required to “identify the main issues, as well as related trends (...), particularly from a humanitarian donor's perspective, and with reference to the GSC”, and to assess the interventions funded by ECHO in the shelter sector. The evaluation also had to review existing practices in order to formulate key operational, strategic and policy issues and establish benchmarks against which to assess and adapt DG ECHO's own policies and practices. In this perspective, the project will “inform the forthcoming humanitarian shelter policy guidance of the Commission”.

B.1.3) Methodology

Overall approach

The methodological approach has been based on a set of five main evaluation questions (EQ), which are listed below (see also ToR in Annex I). These questions, which have been slightly amended during the inception phase, reflect ECHO's main concerns on the issue of shelter, and have been used as basis for the chapters B.2.1 to B.2.5 of the present report:

- EQ 1: What are the main institutional, strategic and operational challenges faced by the humanitarian actors in the scope of implementing shelter interventions?
- EQ 2: How do ECHO shelter interventions respond to specific challenges such as: environmental protection; the use of materials from unsustainable or ethically questionable sources; innovative approaches; or protection and participation?
- EQ 3: To what extent do the Commission's humanitarian interventions deal effectively with and address coherently the shelter needs resulting from humanitarian crisis, both in terms of direct support to humanitarian aid operations and capacity building of implementing partners?
- EQ 4: What is DG ECHO's added value/comparative advantage in funding shelter interventions compared to other actors such as donors, governments, and development actors?
- EQ 5: How efficient are ECHO-funded shelter interventions in terms of cost-effectiveness, adaptation to particular emergency contexts, timeliness and any other factor relevant for the delivery of shelter assistance? What good practices can be identified in DG ECHO activities?

In addition to the EQs, the ToR stated that the conclusions of the evaluation should be framed along three main questions (see chapter B.4):

- “How should the Commission and its implementing partners address the challenges identified?
- What best practices/recommendations contribute to the improvement of shelter programming in humanitarian aid? How do such recommendations apply to humanitarian donors, implementing agencies and beneficiaries?
- How should DG ECHO position itself vis-à-vis emergency, transitional and durable shelter solutions? What criteria should be applied to determine how far into transition DG ECHO should be prepared to fund actions?”

The scope of the evaluation had to cover the period 2005 – 2012, the ECHO funded interventions in the shelter sector and closely related activities (rehabilitation of crucial community infrastructures, complementary kits, WASH, etc.) in every context (conflicts or natural disasters, DRR, emergency and semi-permanent shelters, LRRD) and geographical areas.

Three standard phases were followed: desk, field and synthesis. The inception period started at the end of December 2012 and was followed by a Desk Phase, which comprised: a mapping of the ECHO-funded interventions between 2005 and 2012; a comprehensive review of existing shelter policies, guidelines and trends among the GSC co-lead agencies UNHCR and IFRC, its key members, the leading agencies of related clusters, ECHO partners and other major humanitarian and development stakeholders such as USAID/OFDA, DFID, IOM, the World Bank, etc.

In that framework, meetings were held in Brussels, Geneva and the UK, and (essentially) by teleconference. An online survey was also prepared for all the ECHO implementing partners who had not been contacted directly. Details about work plan and interviews can be found in Annex II and Annex III.

After discussions with the involved geographical Units and final agreement by ECHO, the following countries were selected for the field case studies.

- **Lebanon** and **Jordan** in the context of the Syrian refugee crisis. In particular, the large emergency (camps, cash for rent, rapid rehabilitation), transitional, winterization and integrated efforts were reviewed;
- **Haiti** (urban context in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake);
- the **Philippines** (responses to recurrent tropical storms and typhoons);
- **Kenya**, where the assessment focused on the largest refugee camp in the world (Dadaab) populated mainly by refugees from Somalia and the regional drought crisis, and on the Kenyans displaced and sheltered after electoral violence. The study included a regional perspective and discussions with the ECHO SST (Sector Support Team) in Nairobi.

The online survey collected 43 fully completed questionnaires from FPA and FAFA partners, and a separate set of joint replies from 4 Red Cross National Societies. Many other partners also replied that they did not implement shelter activities. This rate of response can be considered as sufficiently significant, considering the very specific topic and a certain “survey fatigue”. The results are summarised in chapters B.2.1 - 5; a detailed analysis of the replies can also be found in Annex VI. The evaluation has been implemented by two core team members, two Field Mission Leaders, and a number of short-term supporting experts. Their names and tasks can be found in Annex II.

Tools

On the basis of the EQs and the various meetings with ECHO staff and external stakeholders held during the inception and desk phases (see tables of meetings in Annex III) an evaluation matrix has been finalised, which is presented in Annex II. The matrix, which is a key guideline and tool for the project, includes also the responding judgment criteria and indicators to be used by the evaluation team members whenever they perform interviews.

Feedback from interviews (face to face or by Skype, in the EU or during field case studies) have been complemented by findings collected during the documentary review (mostly implemented during the desk phase, although continuing in-depth assessment has been performed throughout later phases) and from the online survey, for *triangulation* purposes.

On the probably inaccurate basis of the provided list of shelter projects (see constraints below), a total of 236 projects over the period 2010 - 2012 have nevertheless been screened according to a selection grid with a number of criteria (see Annex V), for in-depth assessment of the project documents (Single Forms, FicheOps, evaluation report if any).

The objective of this documentary assessment work has been to look e.g. at indicators used in the LFA, at reports for mentions of lessons learned, challenges and bottlenecks or positive achievements, innovative/pilot approaches (and their evolution over the years), integrated

approaches with contiguous activities for optimum impact, and cost-effectiveness indications for the various types of activities. Countries which have been visited for field case studies have also been particularly targeted.

Constraints

As outlined in the Desk Report, the lists of shelter-related projects extracted from the DG ECHO E-tools and the HOPE database did not cover adequately the earlier period 2005 – 2009. A further research has therefore been undertaken during the Desk Phase on the basis of the annual lists of projects that can be found on ECHO's website. The resulting lists totalling some 460 projects can be found in Annex IV.

It should however be noted that these lists are not entirely reliable, since there was e.g. no possibility to carry out a key-work search before 2010 due to the lack of a HOPE-like database.

Most earlier projects were therefore selected on the basis of explicit or interpreted references to some type of shelter or shelter-related activities (often as a component only) in the project title – which may or may not have been accurate. Some projects were also retained due to the assumed (although logical) presence of a shelter component – whereas many DRR/preparedness/DIPECHO projects which did not mention a shelter-related activity were not retained - or due to the adoption of an innovative/pilot or integrated/lesson learning approach which is bound to relate closely to shelter activities.

From 2010 onwards, the selection of projects provided by ECHO has been based on a key-word search that has focused on the "Shelter and NFIs" sector n°5 and has not considered e.g. the rehabilitation activities scattered among five other sectors. Although the HOPE database is able to provide list of projects at the level of subsectors (e.g. for sector 5 the subsectors 1 ("emergency temporary shelter") and 2 ("post emergency rehabilitation / semi-permanent shelter"), the accuracy depends on the partners filling in appropriately their Single Form, which may be a challenge in the case of large multi-sector grants. For example, the most recent request from UNHCR to ECHO for the Dadaab refugee complex (2013/00382/RQ/01/01) included 1750 transitional shelters, which would only concern 0.02% of the camp population.

Specific information, for example about the numbers of beneficiaries actually covered by a shelter component in a given project or the related share of the budget, is often available only in the detailed description of the activities and not on a statistical basis.

B.2) Findings from desk review, meetings, field case studies and online survey**B.2.1) Overall challenges in the shelter sector**

EQ 1: What are the main institutional, strategic and operational challenges faced by the humanitarian actors in the scope of implementing shelter interventions?

The shelter sector has been ignored for a long time, relative to other sectors, in part because it is complex, expensive and capacity consuming. Awareness of the sector has increased over the last few years, as the sector becomes recognised progressively as a nexus of humanitarian response. As a result, many of the leading agencies have formed shelter-dedicated departments, notably with IFRC establishing its Department in 2006 and UNHCR establishing its Shelter and Settlements Section in 2011.

Despite significant developments, understanding of the sector is still undermined by limited knowledge sharing, insufficient training and the lack of a comprehensive description of shelter solutions, building upon an agreed categorisation of settlement options.

In addition, shelter – which, funds providing, is bound ultimately to lead to permanent reconstruction, housing, urban planning and so forth - has strong national policy implications. Institutional, strategic and operational challenges and trends may therefore be understood within the structure of host government policy towards those affected, in addition to the capacity of key international actors to uphold humanitarian principles and apply effectively resources, procedures and tools. These multiple challenges can, if they are not properly addressed, undermine the quality and accountability of shelter operations.

Institutional challenges**DG ECHO**

The legal framework of ECHO has been outlined in the desk report. To summarise, the current legal basis of ECHO, i.e. the “Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid”⁵ (the “Humanitarian Aid Regulation” or “Regulation”) includes a number of direct and indirect references to shelter and shelter-related issues.

These provisions duly allow funding for the *construction of housing or shelter for the victims* (art 3) of natural disasters and man-made crises as well as related preparedness activities, although both the preamble (§7) and art 2(d) mention that rehabilitation and reconstruction work – especially on infrastructure – must be „short term“, i.e. „aimed at facilitating the arrival of relief, preventing any worsening in the impact of the crisis and starting to help those affected regain a minimum level of self-sufficiency“. In addition, rehabilitation and reconstruction must be carried out “in close association with local structures” and “taking long-term development objectives into account where possible”.

In the field, these provisions have created some confusion. The interpretation of “short-term”, compounded with poor LRRD (see below) or with the lack of clear definition of sector terminology, such as “transitional” shelter and their role in a response expected by the sector actors, have led ECHO to focus often on emergency shelter solutions (tents, T-shelters, etc.) which need to be regularly replaced and tend to be much less cost-effective than some types of semi-permanent shelters⁶. These issues will be further developed in chapter B.2.5⁷.

⁵ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1996R1257:20090420:EN:PDF>

⁶ Any attempt at defining a chronology is likely to be restricted to the specific context of a given crisis and could not be applied as a general reference. As a result, international agencies have not produced chronological tables beyond generic approaches such as the UNHCR categorisation of typologies attached to the Middle East field report. These

Timeframes of intervention (limited to 2 years in HIPs, whereas sheltering with its multiple components is generally a longer-term issue), respect of humanitarian principles (in particular independence) and the ECHO mandate restrictions on direct funding to local authorities have furthermore prevented, in some cases, potentially useful connectivity with official bodies involved in preparedness and LRRD.

This factor has however been mitigated in many instances by the flexibility of ECHO TAs, who have encouraged partners to link up with and provide capacity building to the relevant local authorities, provided that they respect fundamental principles such as humanity and impartiality.

In December 2007 the “European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid”⁸ jointly signed by the three European Institutions (Council, Parliament and Commission) has further specified the values, guiding principles and policy scope of EU humanitarian aid. The Consensus integrates in its various articles all the above Regulation provisions, although *shelter and rehabilitation are not mentioned* among other humanitarian activities.

In-house shelter expertise, the current limitations in human resources and the terminology used for sectors and sub-sectors – with related challenges in collecting accurate statistics - are considered under operational challenges below, as well as in chapter B.2.5.

GSC

Since its inception in 2006, the Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) has been co-led by UNHCR and IFRC, in a rather complex setting built around the distinct mandates of the two agencies. There have been concerns that the governance structure of the GSC, with its dual leadership designed around mandated specificities and related interests, has become at times cumbersome and lacks the more integrated and longer-term approach achieved e.g. by UNICEF for the WASH Cluster.

UNHCR leads the Cluster in conflict situations where there are internally displaced persons (IDPs), whereas in refugee situations the core mandate of UNHCR takes precedence over the cluster system, which can make the agency rather ambiguously both ‘clustered and non-clustered’.

As witnessed during field case studies in the Middle East (see below), the cluster system may not be activated even if the dimension of the crisis surpasses the coordination capacities of the agency. Furthermore, best coordination practices applied in the field by the GSC do not seem to have been properly integrated so far in the agency’s own approach.

In natural disasters, IFRC is committed to act as the ‘convenor’ of the Cluster at global level, pledging to coordinate at operational level. IFRC however does not assume the responsibility of ‘provider of last resort’, common to other cluster leads within the UN family, which may leave open gaps beyond emergency response (see below strategic challenges in the Philippines). A significant

categorisations are broadly consistent with those developed over five years in a consensus involving 5 IASC clusters and all major sector agencies led by Shelter Centre and published by UN/OCHA in <http://sheltercentre.org/node/12873>, with a graphic summary on the inside front cover. As described in the Report, these categorisations, were also published by the World Bank in <http://sheltercentre.org/library/safer-homes-stronger-communities-handbook-reconstructing-after-natural-disasters-0> (pages 13 and 14) along with a description of transitional shelter (pages 14 and 15) and presentation of reconstruction approaches (summarised pages 101 and 102). There is no timeline in this Handbook in the form proposed. The categorisations are also published in the Sphere Standards, although the Project decided to change two and again no timeline is offered. Again, the movement of those affected between categories during displacement and LRRD will be context specific and will inform the appropriate form and durability of shelter support. The point made in the Report was that it is more cost-effective to support repair and reconstruct (including transitional and semi-permanent) as soon as possible, rather than to continue to support emergency shelter solutions (tents and kits), which need to be replaced regularly.

⁷ A key partner reported e.g. that “*the main issue (in) projects funded by ECHO is related to the lack of clarity around acceptable levels of ‘permanence’ around design. In some countries it is stated that only emergency shelter activities can be funded with humanitarian funds, whilst in other countries ECHO have happily funded construction of permanent housing. Often the underlying argument rests more with per unit costs of a design and ignores aspects of sustainability/durability. These decisions seem to be country specific and dependent on the sectorial/technical understanding of the ECHO team on the ground and their specific areas of interest or focus*”.

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/consensus_en.htm

share of IFRC shelter-related projects, such as through the ECHO funded DREF mechanism, is also implemented out of the Cluster framework.

In this context, ECHO has expressed concerns in the past as to distinctions between funding proposals being submitted at global level by the co-lead agencies for their own needs and for the needs of the GSC.

There was also a perceived lack of consultation and consensus with other GSC partners over the resources sought, and generally weak linkages in terms of support and coordination between Cluster and sector. Issues of relations with the sector, training, recovery, planning, terminology and urban emergencies will be considered under strategic challenges below.

Weaknesses in the Cluster must however be understood in the context of external expectations, and the vision for the Cluster of the co-leads. IFRC has, for example, been careful to distinguish between the Cluster and the broader sector, emphasising that the Cluster is solely intended to support operational coordination and should not become the 'gatekeeper' for the sector. This position needs to be clarified in the context of new GSC strategy (below).

It should also be outlined that a number of other clusters face similar challenges over operational coordination support to the majority of those affected by conflicts and disasters, which are not supported in clustered responses. An example of good practice may gain be found in the WASH Cluster, where the mandate of the lead agency UNICEF extends into development, making easier to engage national and regional stakeholders.

Solutions are being actively sought, and the situation has significantly improved recently. The GSC SAG (Strategic Advisory Group), which has long been advocated by ECHO, was finally established in late 2012. In January 2013, the SAG has ratified a GSC Strategy for the period 2013-2017 as well as the five GSC Thematic Priorities for 2013: Cluster coherence, engagement with local and national actors, accountability, recovery and regulatory barriers.

Among these priorities, the creation of a common roster is part of the coherence outputs, although this will not fulfil the need for more sector capacity. The development of the Cluster at the national level is intended to empower the field efficiency of the cluster, minimising the need for international intervention. Accountability outlines the intention of strengthening the Cluster at both global and response levels, including through the development of guidelines and tools on data preparedness, assessments, planning and strategy development, monitoring, reporting and evaluations.⁹

It should also be noted that the 5th Thematic Priority includes HLP (Housing, Land and Property), which was already part of the 2012 priorities. The HLP working group developed a matrix which identifies the largest and most common challenges. The current approach is to support property rights worldwide and HLP is coordinated with the Protection Cluster.

In March 2013, the GSC circulated to its partners the text of a joint proposal to ECHO's Enhanced Response Capacity grant (ERC), which was accepted by ECHO in May. In particular, the SAG has identified in the 2013-2017 GSC Strategy the need to finalise the internal definition of the Cluster, whilst advancing more effective engagement with other key stakeholders such as LNGOs and local authorities, but also more strategic dialogue with donors.

Strategic challenges

Overall challenges at GSC and shelter sector level

A significant challenge facing the GSC is how it manages its *relationship with the broader sector* worldwide. There is still currently little recognition of the sector outside the GSC and few connections between the sector and Cluster.

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/consensus_en.htm

Knowledge and best practices sharing is crucial element of improving the accountability of the humanitarian agencies and how to integrate the accountability mechanisms into program, country strategies, monitoring and evaluations and recruitment of staff.

Nevertheless, there are few opportunities for sector stakeholders to prioritise their needs, share good practice, prevent the duplication of effort and also arrive at whatever consensus is needed by them over sector guidance, terminology, resources and training, in order to strengthen the relatively limited capacity of sector specialists. For example, a concern raised from the valuable IFRC-SRU (Shelter Research Unit) about current challenges to developing proposals through the GSC in support of the sector is detailed under B.2.2.2.

Training developed by the GSC was understood by its leadership to be for supporting Cluster coordination only, whereas shelter stakeholders lack a common training resource that might increase the scale, consistency and quality of shelter capacity.

Lessons learnt in cluster coordination were not properly disseminated to inform coordination in refugee situations - under the UNHCR mandate - and in non-clustered responses. The latter two contexts have not benefitted overtly from any discussion within the GSC, so far.

Recovery, repair and reconstruction have not to-date received significant attention either, although recovery has now become the 4th Thematic Priority for 2013. There is also broad recognition within the GSC that repair and reconstruction are humanitarian activities, as they impact on mortality and morbidity and commence often the day after a disaster occurs or when a conflict is still active. Neither mortality and morbidity, nor recovery indicators have been developed so far¹⁰.

The reasons why recovery, repair and reconstruction have been such a challenge may be due to donor constraints, capacities, the scale of resources required, the duration of response and coordination with national and developmental stakeholders, all of which need to be investigated further¹¹.

Planning is another often-mentioned challenge for the GSC, both in terms of planning a response, from strategic to project levels, as well as the physical planning or master planning of settlements. Planning a response in shelter requires considerably more detail than the level of planning undertaken through the office of the Humanitarian Coordinator or as part of the Consolidated Appeals Process, as might be imagined for sector activities in supporting the rebuilding in Haiti, for example.

This form of planning requires specialist assessment at community level, e.g. of building damage, as well as regular updating. Changes in the context and in the detail of implementation plans need to be monitored and integrated continually, along with the evolving plans of other sector, as part of a general response strategy.

In terms of the physical planning or master planning of settlements, the additional skills set of an urban planner is required. Both cluster lead agencies and many GSC participants recognise the need for considering settlement¹², as evidenced in the recent retitling of their respective units as 'Shelter and Settlement'.

Regarding **urban emergencies** - an increasing trend identified by the GSC and others – the Cluster is involved in the IASC Reference Group for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas,

¹⁰ The GSC Shelter Cluster Indicators Guidelines (2012) provide sets of output and outcome indicators for shelters, NFIs, vulnerability, HLP, DRR, environmental protection, and 2 cross-cutting themes: WASH and vulnerability (again).

¹¹ The GSC is exploring the longer term impacts of shelter on recovery, led by UN-Habitat.

¹² "A set of covered living spaces providing a secure, healthy living environment with privacy and dignity for the groups, families and individuals residing within them (Corsellis and Vitale, 2005).

and integrates HLP in this approach. Urban response discussions within the GSC extend also to strategic and urban planning, along with recovery, repair and reconstruction.

Inter-cluster coordination is another area for further progress throughout the cluster system. Such coordination and planning is essential to ensure there are no gaps or overlaps between the responsibilities of clusters during a humanitarian response. A number of clusters have initiated processes to explore the borders of their mandates with each other, notably, early on, responsibility matrices developed by the WASH Cluster.

There seem to be few detailed discussions over inter-cluster policies, capacities, resources, procedures and tools, implying also that opportunities for coordination and consistency may have been missed so far. One areas of progress in conversation with the CCCM Cluster has been a preliminary recognition of shared areas of responsibility, within which specific responsibilities need to be agreed at response level.

Participation and inclusion of all stakeholders is important to ensure the continuity and that the consistency of decisions made in the field. This is particularly true for the affected population. This inclusion throughout the response is a continual challenge; nevertheless there is a raised awareness amongst humanitarian actors of the necessity to ensure participation and inclusion of the affected community at neighbourhood level.

In this respect, IFRC developed a Participatory Approach to Safe Shelter Awareness (PASSA)¹³, which emphasises the inclusion of affected community, thus supporting self-help and fostering partnership between the affected community, local authorities and humanitarian agencies. The Cluster, however, still lacks a consensus approach to involving other stakeholders.

The inclusion of community (hence the emphasis on settlement) is also empowered by the recent recognition of the importance of accountability. In the past, the impact of response beyond morbidity and mortality status was rarely measured, neglecting the wider impact on durable solutions (livelihoods, environment and HLP) and downward accountability.

Over the last few years there has been an increasing awareness of lack of **accountability and standards** in the global humanitarian sector. Some agencies have developed their own frameworks however there is no international, legally binding framework.

The members of the Inter-agency Work Group have proposed a framework that attempts to bring together key elements of the established standards like Sphere, HAP 2007 standard, One World Trust Accountability Framework, ISO 9000 in a way that enables the EBC members to use the standards in a practical action¹⁴ and inter-agency standards to ensure the accountability of humanitarian agencies on the global level.

Challenges observed during field case studies

The complexity of the GSC institutional/ structural settings has impacted negatively at strategic level in **Lebanon and Jordan** on the whole humanitarian response and accountability.

The refugee nature of the Syrian crisis in both countries has led the UNHCR mandate to prevail over cluster activation, despite the scale and urgency of the situation (there were fast growing caseloads of 450.000 refugees in Lebanon and 1.2 million in Jordan during the field visits in April 2013) and the strong resistance of both governments against applying effective humanitarian strategies - which arguably would have outlined the fragility of the political situations and the risk of destabilisation.

¹³ PASSA Guidelines can be found on IFRC website : <http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/95526/publications/305400-PASSA%20manual-EN-LR.pdf>

¹⁴ Common Humanitarian Accountability Framework for IWG Agencies - Inter Agency Working Group: Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECB2), Abhijit Bhattacharjee, p.4 <http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/22-accountability-framework-iwg.pdf>

As a result, there was in the second half of 2012 and the beginning of 2013 a logjam situation in both countries, despite huge shelter needs. UNHCR did not seem to be in a position to discuss appropriately strategic issues with the governments and uphold humanitarian principles (in Jordan, even a basic assessment undertaken independently by an NGO that could have contributed to management information for a strategy were not authorised), to raise effectively the issue among international donors, or to deploy the resources to set up appropriate coordination mechanisms.

In addition, the approach of UNHCR to partnership and accountable, dedicated coordination mechanisms (effective and regular meetings, SAG, Working Groups) did not appear to have learnt sufficiently from lessons duly collected at the Cluster level.

Sector-level planning mechanisms did not appear sufficient either in Lebanon or Jordan, although this deficiency is often shared with the Cluster approach.

The shelter sector especially, however other sectors also, require the development and maintenance of up-to-date detailed plans that capture and respond to changing contexts and capacities. These plans must be consistent between regional, national programmes and project levels, as well as between sectors, so that plans and responses may be integrated and implemented in a coordinated and cost-effective manner.

This situation had a number of negative effects on many Syrian refugees, and was also pushing again the living conditions in the already crowded Palestinian camps in Lebanon under the minimum SPHERE standards, due to the influx of new families fleeing from Syria.

Fortunately for the refugees in the Jordanian camps (a minority of the caseload, most being accommodated illegally in private housing), traditional donors were augmented by new regional ones who had identified needs themselves and decided to provide containers for use as family shelter.

In this difficult context, the interventions of ECHO in the shelter sector in both Lebanon and Jordan were considered very positively by all implementing partners. They stressed in particular the readiness of ECHO to discuss proposals, integrated approaches, and provide rapidly adequate support. They also unanimously outlined the consistent efforts of the ECHO TAs towards the lead agency UNHCR to enforce its mandate and apply effectively relevant coordination mechanisms.

In *Haiti*, there was a significant disconnect between relief and development which affected the strategic efforts of most donors during the first 2 years (2010 – 2011), and the approach has remained weak to date. Limitations were due to variety of factors. The scale of the disaster and the urban dimension of the crisis compounded by land right issues made the transition particularly challenging. In a near but undeclared failed State context, the lack of stable government, lack of government leadership, support or shelter/housing policies on the longer term during the first 18 months of the crisis (i.e. until mid-2011) until recently was a major impediment to reconstruction.

Very few international agencies (a few large INGOs with long term commitments) and national bodies (e.g. CIAT - Comité Interministériel d'aménagement du Territoire, an urban planning agency with no authority), could also act as bridges over LRRD. Other bottlenecks against integrated and coherent policies for shelter solutions originated e.g. from diverging agency mandates, pressures from the media, or a certain fear of liability regarding retrofits, damage assessments, house demolition, etc.

Those factors have however been mitigated in many instances by the flexibility and professionalism of ECHO, who has adopted a proactive strategy towards the EU Delegation (and others GoH FTPs) in order to be able to design (and potentially implement) strategic LRRD.

Government policy is finally at an early stage under the - politically oriented - direction of UCLBP (Unit for Construction, Rehousing and Public Buildings), although the implementation between the dual objectives of (i) emptying camps and (ii) providing more sustainable housing solutions in Haiti and not just in the affected areas, has not yet been adequately integrated. The GSC mandate appears to have been too narrow in such a dense urban setting with weak government structures.

Shelter is a political issue in the *Philippines*, as in most other countries including *Kenya*. Progress depends on how the government policy evolves, and actors – including ECHO and its partners - have to adapt. For example, it is a legal requirement for LGUs (Local Government Units) to prepare Comprehensive Land Use Plans, Shelter Plans and Land Inventories for socialised housing.

However, many LGUs do not have the capacity/capability and sometimes the willingness to undertake such preparatory work. Local government capacities, particularly of very small municipalities do not reflect the general perception of government's capacity to respond - capacities vary enormously according to the unexpectedness/unpreparedness and severity of the typhoon. In one instance (Ketsana/Ondoy typhoon), institutional disputes have delayed by two years the signature of a land assessment authorisation by the MGB (Mines and Geosciences Bureau).

The shelter Cluster system has worked well most recently, although in some cases the focus was on the urban areas and GSC meetings did not take place in affected decentralised regions. Nevertheless, ECHO partners are still able to undertake work without the Cluster being called; numerous meetings are taking place at regional, provincial and municipal levels, and local actors respect the need to coordinate.

Through the shelter Cluster system, the different implementing partners also work well together - there is support between the organisations or from the shelter Cluster itself where needed. Common leaflets and technical designs for emergency shelters are shared and used within the Cluster. The Cluster has also standards for transitional shelter, repair kits and typhoon resistance, but not for durable/permanent shelters.

IFRC chairs the Cluster with a government body (DSWD - Department of Social Works and Development) as the co-chair. International actors take a strong role, although they handover as soon as local capacity to manage is available. Government responsibilities and roles in humanitarian shelter are more clearly defined as DSWD takes the lead and also heads other clusters. However, when moving into more durable shelters, site development, settlements and relocation, the roles of the multiple government agencies involved tend to overlap.

For recovery and development stages, the GSC hands over to the Local and Provincial Inter-Agency Committees [LIAC], the relevant government coordinating structure. The quality of the hand over process may vary over time, however.

Funding of the GSC preparedness, information management and coordination functions is also an issue. The shelter Cluster is considering keeping a full time presence in the Philippines to work with stakeholders and government on preparedness, because of the regular and frequent occurrence of disasters. Having a person working regularly with stakeholders would give continuity, be efficient and avoid having to reboot the system every time a typhoon strikes.

As in other countries visited, few international donors support LRRD and durable shelters – which are expensive and benefit relatively few people – beyond humanitarian emergencies. This is particularly true for rural areas, whereas large cities are better served. The World Bank and AusAid are, for example, working with the Social Housing Finance Corporation and the Department of Interior and Local Government on urban poor and informal settlement projects, responding to government plans to move families out of danger zones along water ways and as a result of flood control plans in Metro Manila.

Furthermore, for durable shelters there are concerns about variable construction quality standards, housing types and housing unit sizes in the relocation sites (as stated above, contrary to the Cluster standards on transitional shelters, repair kits, etc. which are available and recognised by all partners).

Land ownership is also a key strategic issue. In rural and coastal areas informal forms of tenure are more prevalent. This leaves families vulnerable to eviction and loss of tenure after a natural disaster¹⁵. Proper documentation is required to show who are the legal owners, as in some cases claims have been filed many years after relocation. Legal settlement activities can be initiated by

¹⁵ According to UN-Habitat, natural disasters and climate change are one of the five of the most prevalent causes of forced eviction.

ECHO partners (ICLA or HLP-like), although the timeframe of humanitarian funding alone is generally not sufficient for securing proper land titles, and LRRD is required.

The EU Delegation is also involved in shelter rehabilitation, but only in the context of the armed conflict in Mindanao through the Aid for Uprooted People Programme (AUPP) and following the thematic priorities decided centrally in the Regional Strategy Programme. A portion of this work has concerned “core shelters”, implemented by UNDP and following SPHERE standards, although the end of the conflict has now closed the shelter / rehabilitation pipeline.

LRRD possibilities with ECHO are therefore limited, since thematic priorities have so far focused on governance and capacity building and not (expensive) permanent shelters that could also come e.g. under the LA/NSA (Local Authorities/ Non State Actors) budget line.

Also from a mixed strategic/operational perspective, the lack of a clear definition for “transitional” shelters appears as a challenge. The concept seems to refer to several different kinds of shelters, including T-shelters, improved tents, traditional constructions, bunkhouses (barrack-type), etc.

The key issue is that transitional shelters or even emergency shelters are often occupied for many years without clear perspectives or exit strategies, for example because of the government taking too long to identify and develop permanent relocation sites, and building durable housing. This situation has led to ECHO being somewhat diffident regarding transitional solutions in the Philippines, as it tends to feel that transitional shelters cannot be accommodated in its relatively short intervention timeframe.

There are furthermore differing standards of what is ‘permanent’ around the world. In the Philippines many beneficiaries would already consider 10 years as permanent, not transitional. At the opposite, most donors come from countries where something permanent cannot be shorter than 30 or 40 years.

Another way to look at the adjective is the quality of housing: the Philippines government tends to consider as permanent shelters those that are able to withstand extremely strong winds of up to 250km/hr, whereas transitional shelters may achieve this in different ways to traditional buildings, given the lighter and simpler structures used.

Transitional shelters have pros and cons. If such shelters can be modified and incrementally upgraded (if built in-situ) or at least dismantled and re-used in the permanent site, they are generally a cost effective approach. Transitional shelters are often of better quality than rural houses formerly occupied by the vulnerable displaced; for this reason, it does not make sense to demolish them.

In *Kenya*, the government rejects the possibility for the Somali refugees of Dadaab to settle permanently. This policy – which should be the subject of joint discussions with humanitarian but also development actors - has so far delayed the agreement of a shelter strategy that would provide more permanent housing. The emergency and transitional shelter solutions currently applied are detailed in chapter B.2.5 under “Cost-effectiveness”.

Finally, the issue of defining what “shelter” itself is should be considered at the strategy level. Although partner organisations have slightly differing definitions of shelter (largely based on the type and cost of response), all respondents referred to shelter as being more than just the housing element.

A broader definition of shelter should encompass DRR, livelihood, mitigation measures, site development, security of tenure, infrastructure and other basic social, health and educational services – and be considered in the wider framework of climate change – which is not part of the DIPECHO envelope in the Philippines, unlike in other countries.

Operational challenges

The challenges discussed below are rather general and theoretical in nature, as chapters B.2.2 – B.2.5 will deal in more details with operational matters.

Capacities and resources

Coordination capacity

The lack of communication among stakeholders might be an issue to establish a comprehensive picture of available funds and resources available. In this respect, ECHO provided consistent support to coordination mechanisms as well as to field assessment and information management. Different field assessment, monitoring and evaluation tools have yet to be integrated.

For example, the IMPACT/REACH initiative for field assessment and information management may be able to make a valuable contribution, e.g. during the field case study to the Middle East, however it would need to be accepted by the governments and other sector stakeholders, as well as be integrated into a more comprehensive baseline assessment of population movement, integrated across the region.

It should be noted that IFRC has developed a set of guidelines¹⁶ for programme managers and technical staff in the field, to strengthen the coordination of projects, its adherence to national building regulations and policies. The cluster approach should increasingly become the tool to define roles and responsibilities and share such best practices, ensuring that this consensus is shared by refugee and non-clustered sector responses.

Specialist capacities

The shelter sector faces an important lack of capacity of experts. Most humanitarian organisations do not employ permanent shelter experts, using rosters on an ad-hoc basis and reducing the specialised capacities and institutional memory of organisations by bypassing this 'on the ground' information source.

ECHO itself has deployed three field experts in the RSOs of Bangkok, Delhi and Amman, together with centrally based technical experts at the SST in Nairobi, to provide shelter support, although they have primarily a WASH technical expertise.

Due to the current restrictions in human resources – the ECHO HQ staff is being reduced and the number of field experts is limited to 140 – it would only be possible to substitute or enhance existing skills, but not to hire additional in-house expertise. The opportunity remains to increase the understand of shelter by all TAs, in addition to reinforcing and expanding specialist capacity within the SST through the broadening of roles, with appropriate support from policy, guidance and training.

This situation often leads to inconsistent information within the organisation and lack of relevant dialogue or sharing of knowledge and cost-effective practices with other concerned stakeholders. Some scattered examples of good practice can be found, though: the USAID/OFDA Technical Advisory Group, which utilises in-house experts with civil engineering urban planning background, (see B.2.5), has been assessed in the Desk report.

Another concern is the lack of HLP experts because land rights need to be resolved before reconstruction can start, slowing the process down and maintaining an emergency or transitional approach. If land issues are left out during humanitarian response, this can become the roots of future conflicts¹⁷.

¹⁶ Post-disaster community infrastructure rehabilitation and (re)construction guidelines, IFRC, 2012, http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/71111/PostDisaster_Infrastructure-Guidelines.pdf

¹⁷ Land - a key issue for humanitarian agencies during armed conflicts, Marion Harroff-Tavel, 2008 <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/feature/2008/economic-security-feature-150608.htm>

Tenants and non-displaced populations or returned populations with no property rights encounter problems concerning who is responsible, while no standing capacities are in place to resolve such issues. The current owner-based response is increasingly inadequate in a world with rising urbanisation and tenancies, while official tenancy agreements in developing countries covers less than 30%¹⁸. If this view is maintained, the necessity for HLP experts in shelter response will increase.

The sector capacity should be also improved to ensure that the local staff or local implementing partners have the skills to implement shelter-related projects and plans, but also to ensure that there is sufficient qualified agency and independent capacity to implement responses.

This is one reason why the development of the Cluster at a local level is essential, and it is part of the GSC thematic priorities for 2013. The lack of parallel mechanisms for the majority of ECHO supported activities, which are in un-clustered and refugee responses, constrains consistent capacity building.

It should be noted that NRC (Norwegian Refugee Council), a key ECHO partner, has been implementing among its five Core Competencies the ICLA approach (Information, Counselling, and Legal Assistance), which aims among others at enabling beneficiaries to claim and exercise the rights to which they are entitled during displacement.

Although ICLA covers some of the issues related to HLP, the short-term humanitarian framework of NRC interventions has led this activity to be integrated by international coordination mechanisms (e.g. in eastern DRC in 2010) into the HLP approach under development by UN-Habitat. Key areas of UN-Habitat's activities in the land and housing sector include "Land & Tenure" as well as the much wider issue of "Housing Rights"¹⁹.

Assessment and planning procedures

Specialist sector assessment

Efforts have been made to enhance the effectiveness of the shelter response and different assessment tools have been developed, although there is currently no comprehensive and broadly accepted mechanism for assessment, monitoring and evaluation that integrates these tools with each other, or with other tools in the response. The lack of an accepted framework constrains both planning and coordination.

Local Estimates of Need for Shelters and Settlements (LENSS)²⁰ is a shelter and settlements assessment toolkit through storytelling techniques, based on a systematic assessment methodology for a specific locality; however it has yet to be adopted widely. Another tool is the Housing (or Building) Damage (or Conditions) Assessment, which provides necessary information for the decision-making process, notably to locate "secure" houses for people in need, speeding up the initial assessment process.²¹

The ECHO assessment tools

Over the period covered by this evaluation (2005-12), ECHO has developed three tools to assess and prioritise its aid: the Global Needs Assessment (GNA) and the Forgotten Crises Assessment (FCA), recently complemented by FINAT (Food Insecurity Needs Assessment Template).

GNA is divided in two stages: the first stage aims to identify the most vulnerable state by using a vulnerability index and the second one aims to identify thanks to the crisis index states that are in an

¹⁸ Official website of the Global Land Tool Network: <http://www.gltm.net/index.php/about-us>

¹⁹ <http://www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=277>

²⁰ LENSS toolkit, Local Estimates of Need for Shelters and Settlements, field version, IASC Emergency Shelter Cluster, 2007

http://sheltercentre.org/sites/default/files/LENSS_Tool_Kit.pdf

²¹ Safer homes for stronger communities – A handbook for reconstructing, World Bank, 2010, p.27-28

http://sheltercentre.org/sites/default/files/the_world_bank_2010_safer_homes_stronger_communities_a_handbook_for_reconstructing.pdf

actual humanitarian crisis matching with ECHO's intervention criteria. The FCA tool is used to identify humanitarian crisis that are not attracting the attention of the international community and therefore are lacking of humanitarian assistance. FINAT is an in-depth analysis that allows the identification of countries and crises where the budget allocations for food assistance and nutrition may require adjustment (increase, decrease) based on identified and forecasted needs.

These tools combined permit ECHO to have a global picture to decide where its assistance will be the best used. The issue nevertheless is that these tools do not provide a sectorial picture of needs (except for food and nutrition through FINAT), and more particularly in terms of emergency or transitional shelter needs.

It should be noted that ECHO is currently (although not covered by the scope of the evaluation ToR) updating the needs assessment capability by setting up an "Integrated Analysis Framework" conducted by geographical units in the framework of the programming exercise. A joint analysis with DEVCO, to be managed by the ECHO A3 Unit, is also considered.

Urban or master planning

Disasters in urban settings are often more financial costly since there is a greater proportion of high-density, multi-storey buildings and major infrastructure, essential to daily functioning of the economy, state and society, as well as effective humanitarian responses.

Furthermore, the high population and construction density render disaster more deadly and destructive, while slums and illegal settlements due to urbanisation have also become a risk problem in mitigation and a legal problem in recovery. Due to climate change, more frequent and severe disasters are likely to happen, including in areas that were not touched before.

Urbanisation has burdened cities with overpopulation, while most of these are economic migrants, rendering housing condition inappropriate and overcrowded. The anonymity of city life also leads to groups, in particular "*households with chronically ill, elderly and/or disabled members*"²² to be largely forgotten.

Furthermore, recovery projects that reconstruct slow cost housing often render them unaffordable for poor people, who are traditionally mainly tenants, pushing them into hazard-prone areas. Finally in urban areas, informality is common for renting agreements and this tends to slow down the reconstruction phase²³.

Disaster preparedness/ DRR in both high income and developing countries is the best solution, especially if the financial capacities are available, as large-scale disasters in major urban areas are more costly than preparatory measures.

Indicators and criteria for the shelter sector

Under Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, the right to safe and adequate housing extends to security of tenure, access to common resources, access to drinking water and sanitation, affordability and infrastructure, to name but a few. To define indicators and criteria it is necessary to address the various levels of shelter response.

Most governments do not have the national legislation for crises; however some of the response standards can be based on the existing national legislative framework, such as building codes, zoning codes and housing, land and property rights. Most countries will also have standards on schools and hospitals, seismic resistance and fire safety, which have to be taken into consideration. Where applicable, these must be taken into account in parallel to the humanitarian standards for shelter that can be found e.g. in SPHERE.

²² Responding to urban disaster - lessons learned, ALNAP, p.6 <http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/alnap-prevention-lessons-urban.pdf>

²³ The reconstruction of rental housing is usually inhibited because neither donors nor governments seem to have clear policies on how to support them. There is response to owners, but not to landowners or tenants. Pioneering work in Haiti uses rent subsidy with technical supervision for upgrades to an acceptable standard, as a driver for landlords to reconstruct.

Local standards

When setting standards for the shelter projects, the local context is a key benchmark. In countries where poverty is widespread the living standards of local population may be below standards of the proposed shelter response, this may lead to frustration.

National standards such as for seismic resistance may be more suited to urban rather than rural contexts, which may lack standards reflecting vernacular and affordable risk reduction methods. To enable integration of displaced population, the local standards should be taken into account and where possible the host population should benefit from the projects as well as displaced population.

Within the indicators relating to local standards, the appropriateness of the local construction prior to crisis should be assessed. If the construction methods could prevent the extent of the damage, this should be reflected within the shelter programme.

In addition, every group within the affected population, including women and the elderly, must be involved in the shelter programme, offering an indicator for the sector. It is also necessary to respect culture and relationships within populations. Assessing the existing distribution of roles within population will provide basis for equitable access to housing and supplies.

Building codes

Building codes are set of minimum standards defining acceptable level of safety for construction. In the first instance, national building codes can be used as indicators for the emergency shelter projects. It may be necessary to adapt them to the context of the disaster and to choose relevant chapters of the codes. Involving local experts and local authorities is important to ensure the national standards are met and the resources already available are being used.

Building codes do not usually cover temporary shelters, even though they should reach a minimum standard as they face the same hazards, which may be agreed within clusters. In some countries there are no building codes, because the country only uses customary law. In this case, community participation is really important to ensure that activities are consistent with usual standards.

Housing, land and property (HLP)

National legislation on housing, land and property should be assessed in order to form a framework to secure protection and durable solutions for refugees and other displaced persons. Where national legislation does not support or sufficiently define the affected population's rights, the international legal framework should be used to support the response.

Primarily, the State has the positive obligation to ensure adequate housing²⁴. Moreover, the State into which displacement took place and also the State where displaced population have citizenship both have the responsibility for the implementation of the housing and property restitution rights²⁵.

Operational challenges observed during field case studies

Due to the diversity of refugee situations and corresponding shelter needs (camps, rented private accommodation, collective centres, emergency and transitional responses, winterisation, integrated approaches with contiguous sectors), the **Syrian crisis** can provide a valuable shelter “tool box” of options for ECHO TAs, with comprehensive lists and costs of categories of shelter issues and responses, together with entry points into neighbouring sectors and activities (WASH, cash assistance, software, legal counselling), for optimum integrated approaches.

This would, however, need a further in-depth comparative assessment by a technical expert, whereas in-house technical support is currently provided by only one WASH expert based at the Amman RSO.

²⁴ Article 11 (1), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966

²⁵ Resolution 2002/7 on Housing and property restitution in the context of refugees and other displaced persons, Sub-Commission on Human Rights, 2002

ECHO has adapted its funding to the context with due flexibility and has consistently sought the most cost-effective solutions, in agreement with the partners. It must be stressed that cost-effectiveness must also integrate elements of dignity – in accordance with local culture, e.g. separating men from women in Muslim countries - and of minimum comfort so that families can face a protracted situation when this is likely to develop.

As this is hardly quantifiable (probably not to be measured by SMART indicators but by quality ones), the most immediately cost-effective solutions (e.g. 1-year sealing off shelter kits) are not necessarily the most relevant in more holistic humanitarian terms.

The current subdivision of sectors in ECHO's FPA (including shelter still being coupled with NFIs), although not optimum, has not been detrimental operationally. In this respect, the flexibility of ECHO TAs to agree on integrated approaches has much contributed to mitigate the strict SF requirement in LFA 4.3.1: "each result is linked to only one sector" - which is not the most easy to apply when, for example, WASH and shelter are completely integrated in a rehabilitation.

Indicators used by partners are mostly focused on outputs (numbers of kits distributed, housing units sealed off, etc.), which is understandable in a critical emergency situation. Outcomes should however be considered as rapidly as possible, as recommended e.g. by the ECHO RSO in Jordan: "delivered aid is used as intended".

Beyond outcomes, the impact of shelter assistance on morbidity and mortality in emergency situations appears very difficult to measure with SMART indicators, especially by shelter actors alone. Incidence of improved shelter on health (e.g. prevalence of ARI or flu during winter) would require baselines and surveys, and could be attributable to other factors.

In *Haiti*, very few NGOs and agencies appeared to have in-depth shelter/housing capacities, experience and knowledge, unlike other sectors (WASH, Education, and Health). In the aftermath of the earthquake, there were also too many newly arrived actors in Haiti who had no previous experience of severe emergencies. If they did not participate in the cluster coordination mechanism, their only official interlocutor on shelter issues for the first two years would have been found at local level (municipalities/*mairies*)²⁶.

As a result, too many t-shelters designs are to be found with wide variations in quality and costs. Guidance on materials, typology and technology was also lacking. A key outstanding stumbling block is land ownership and land access; this has been surmounted with some concerted and creative thinking, although only on a small scale and ad-hoc basis.

In *the Philippines*, a number of operational challenges and limitations were assessed, as follows.

The overall impression is that the 'Building Back Better' (BBB) approach – which is promoted in all ECHO funded shelter projects in South East Asia - has not always been applied consistently (perhaps due to the lack of published guidelines) and is also hard to achieve with the limited materials provided in the repair kits: many beneficiaries just build back 'slightly better'. However beneficiaries still see the repairs as permanent.

Techniques in encouraging BBB varied: some partners trained a pool of carpenters to ensure that typhoon-resistant techniques are applied; whereas some beneficiaries followed the guidelines in limited ways, some not at all and some did not see the importance, or how it could be done with limited materials, etc. Similarly, due to the lack of guidelines, what technical advisors and/or people think is important in making shelters more typhoon resistant, varies.

Although leaflets and typhoon resistant shelter guides are disseminated, people do not always follow the guidance (lack of bracing, unsuitable foundations). When people have cash vouchers for

²⁶ There is little written evidence to substantiate verbal comments (IFRC, IOM) that attendance by smaller NGOs at Cluster meetings was weak (most INGOs and ECHO partners did however attend). IFRC, which led the Shelter Cluster at the outset of the crisis, noted e.g. that "(in May) approximately 80 NGOs attended cluster meetings throughout Haiti" ("A Review of the IFRC-led Shelter Cluster Haiti 2010, p.37, by Sara Davidson, April 2011), whereas some 2000 - 3000 NGOs were operating in the country in 2010 – 2011.

repair materials, they do not always buy the best quality, the only benefit being that they can stretch the budget to a maximum. Partners agree that families cannot be forced to build back better: the leaflets are serve to raise awareness and provide but guidance and advice only. A challenge remains in agencies agreeing with governments how to support communities to understand and mitigate risk. Retrofitting of existing shelters to make them typhoon resistant, although less costly than a new shelter (about 900 Euro) is not done. Shelter repair works are not making typhoon resistant shelters but, at best, are building back as good as before: shelter repair does not address the key issue of typhoon resilience/safety, although this would be possible.

Donors need to be aware of the limitations of shelter repair, although repair works are preferred by donors because limited funding can have a much wider impact and assist many more beneficiaries than if used for permanent shelter, where for the same money only a few families could be assisted. Repair work is also preferred because it enables people to stay in their present location, near their source of livelihood.

Permanent shelter is only appropriate when existing houses have been totally destroyed and/or when no-build zones mean relocation is needed. Families given shelter repair kits and cash vouchers, doing the construction work themselves do not see repairs as a temporary fix. This approach, while maximising coverage, does not support those most vulnerable, whose shelter was destroyed.

There are cases where shelters have been provided but without sanitation and settlements where water supply is very inaccessible or very short in supply - where the need for WASH was not systematically applied because the government/LGU has not followed through on promises. Basic water supply and sanitation facilities are imperatives in building both transitional shelters and in developing relocation sites – together with livelihood for economic recovery.

Finally, monitoring is limited to distribution of repair kits (i.e. outputs) but does generally not concern the outcome of the repairs, or the value of the technical guidance, due to time and cost limitations.

B.2.2) Specific challenges

EQ 2: How do DG ECHO shelter interventions respond to challenges such as

- **Environmentally friendly management of natural resources (use of timber, water, fuel etc.)**
- **Use of materials from unsustainable or ethically questionable sources,**
- **Appropriateness to local context and beneficiaries' needs of up-to-date approaches to technology, design and standards**
- **Protection and gender issues in emergency, transitional and durable shelter settings**
- **Gender issues in emergency, transitional and durable shelter settings**
- **Education and health infrastructures in emergency, transitional and durable settings**
- **Participation of beneficiaries and LNGOs to shelter design and building**

The findings below were essentially collected in the course of the field case studies and are therefore dependent on the local context.

Environmentally friendly management of natural resources (use of timber, water, fuel, etc.); use of materials from unsustainable or ethically questionable sources

General comments from partners outline e.g. that “the humanitarian sectors approach to environment generally is poor - and like many donors/agencies focus remains with protection and gender currently in regards cross cutting issues”.

In *Haiti*, as all materials were imported - especially wood in an already much depleted environment- there was very little pressure placed on the remaining natural resources. Import also authorised a certain level of control: agencies reported to have done their best to procure materials from sustainable and ethically acceptable sources.

In *Lebanon* and *Jordan*, nearly all the materials used for the sheltering of refugees (plastic sheeting, wooden beams, plywood, steel beams and insulation panels for containers, etc.) are also imported and do not currently affect local natural resources. However, there was no indication to be found about the origin of the material (only logos of local importing firms were mentioned), nor about the respect of environmental regulations in their production and transport.

Since most of this material is not ECHO-funded, there was also no indication to be found concerning, for example, the safety of the insulation used for the containers in case of fire (some types of insulation can generate highly toxic fumes).

In Lebanon, the level of environmental concern was qualified of “pathetic” by key international actors: garbage is routinely dumped into the sea, some latrines go straight in the rivers, etc. Environmental protection does not seem a key concern either for the Syrian refugees.

Jordan is more concerned about such protection, especially the crucial aquifer which is a very scarce resource. In the refugee camps, ECHO has not been involved so far in a number of serious issues which have arisen between UNHCR and the government or “new” donors, such as the protection of the aquifer from camp sewage and pollution.

In the *Philippines*, Government blanket logging bans have resulted in use of *steel frames* for emergence/ transitional bunkhouses and in frames for dividing panels in transitional shelters supported by ECHO. Although the production of steel is very energy intensive, if protected against rust and stored correctly, it has advantages because of its durability and reusability.

To be truly environmentally friendly, steel should however be sourced locally and designed for disassembly: it is the responsibility of Local Government Units (LGU) to store the disassembled

bunkhouses and dividing panels, but since capacities of LGUs can vary to a large extent, some (LRRD) monitoring of how this is done might be valuable in developing the approach further.

More technical assistance would also be needed in the selection, design (including e.g. water treatment facilities) and environmental impact of relocation/ resettlement sites for the displaced.

Use of indigenous materials (for example bamboo and palm trees) occurs but is not particularly common as there are legal limitations on what can be done in emergencies. Bamboo is used very commonly in the production of woven mats used for walling and ceilings of transitional houses. Bamboo has also been used in the construction of seating areas and non-structural building elements.

Local culture is respected where possible and ECHO interventions are able to adapt to local contexts. Indigenous roofing materials have been used in some cases (palm thatching); however there are technical concerns about the suitability of some indigenous materials in building safe, typhoon resistant shelters (“Building Back Better”).

The most commonly used *roofing material* is corrugated steel sheet (referred to locally as CGI – corrugated galvanised iron). All groups and beneficiaries referred to concerns about the standard grades available in the Philippines and how suppliers sell sub-standard CGI sheet and even sub-standard coco-lumber. The problem with quality seems to be accepted as the norm.

IFRC have addressed this by importing the CGI sheet from sources where the CGI is cheaper and of a more dependable standard; any negative environmental impact of transportation is counterbalanced by the claim that most local suppliers also import their steel. Further research would clarify how much profiled sheet is imported and how much is imported in more raw forms such as plain sheets.

Good practice was found such as the cutting of pine wood for the construction of ECHO funded relocation housing in Mountain Province was guided by the advice of the indigenous community who proposed cutting the timber from a non-water shed area and hauling the timber several kilometres over the hills to the construction site.

It was also noted that demand for repair and housing materials can have an economic impact with material prices going up and some materials becoming scarce. Efforts are made by the government to control this. In parallel, transitional shelters are of such a good standard and quality that they are sometimes considered by people as being better than their original house (especially in rural housing case).

In **Kenya**, ECHO was found to be flexible and willing to support themes across environment when requested and upon submission of environmental assessment by the partners. However, the support by ECHO to the environmentally friendly management of natural resources around the Dadaab refugee camp seems undermined by the general lack of a consistent a long-term donor approach to the refugee situation, itself subject to an impasse with the Kenyan government policy.

Appropriateness to local context and beneficiaries' needs of up-to-date approaches to technology, design and standards

In general, as the local ECHO Offices did not have dedicated shelter expertise, but instead relied on their implementing partners – and on good common sense - for technical advice on construction techniques.

Some technical expertise is available to partner organisations either in house or through the GSC Cluster (in the Philippines), however assistance in environmental impact and resettlement site planning is lacking, and some LNGO implementing partners also lack expertise and capacity in shelter.

In the **Philippines**, using *alternative construction materials* has not been tried extensively. Many alternative technologies are used in the Philippines low-income housing industry - such as Interlocking Compressed Earth Blocks, structural bamboo, MCR [micro concrete roof tiles] etc.

However some of these materials are not commonly stockpiled by suppliers and require *extensive manual labour in production*, so that it could *only be appropriate for durable housing*. Constraints on using bamboo include the lack of skilled labour to do the jointing and problems with boring insects. CAF [Compressed Agriculture Fibre] boards have also been proposed for use in housing for Washi/Sendong victims.

In **Kenya**, the much contested issue of “innovative” ISSB compressed bricks proposed for transitional shelters in the Dadaab camp is discussed under B.2.5.

It should be noted that, within the framework of the Grant Facility (Specific Objective 2), ECHO has provided in 2010 a funding of 306.000 Euro to the three Benelux Red Cross Societies for developing the IFRC-Shelter Research Unit (IFRC-SRU). The SRU was established in cooperation with the IFRC Shelter and Settlements Department in Geneva in order to build up technical capacities and resources in sheltering within the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.

IFRC-SRU employs three staff with technical background (Architecture and Civil Engineering) with ample field experience in sheltering and collaborates with different universities, research institutes as well as private sector, to facilitate testing and promote innovation and new development in the sector. It is also building partnerships with interested National Societies in the south, and provides consultancy expertise to National Societies to develop custom made solutions for their particular shelter interventions.

The IFRC-SRUs objective is to focus is on context-specific material and technical aspects of humanitarian sheltering, and settlement solutions. The Unit conducts advanced research in periods outside the urgency of disaster response, in order to make available easily accessible technical information and tools that support informed decision making in the field. Furthermore, it intends to identify or develop improved materials, items and shelter- types for a more adapted, cost and time efficient shelter response.

Mapping exercises and consultations with numerous field actors have contributed to developing a comprehensive methodology to capture relevant technical information on built structures and present it in technical fact sheet, including key information on cost, implementation time and expected lifespan. Technical drawings, details and BOQs are made available, if existing.

In addition, the SRU is organising conferences in the EU and abroad, attended by RC National Societies and other concerned actors of the sector, such as NGOs, UNHCR, government and academic bodies.

However, the IFRC-SRU complained (see online survey) that proposals submitted to the ECHO-funded ERC in 2012 and 2013 had been rejected because these were not included in the GSC proposal. This was not possible since GSC, although supportive and co-led by IFRC, focused only its perceived mandate of coordination and does not want to include other types of shelter related activities in their proposals to donors.

Protection and gender issues in emergency, transitional and durable shelter settings

ECHO is committed to follow up on these issues. Protection and gender are part of the SF proposal (section assessment, cross-cutting issues, or information under the ‘results’ chapter) and are checked through monitoring visits. Priority cases have been duly selected in all projects visited by applying vulnerability criteria (e.g. EVI/PSNs - extremely vulnerable individuals/persons with specific needs, see below) that had been discussed with ECHO and the other partners.

The Protection Cluster, led by UNHCR, which acts as the coordination body for protection and human rights-related activities in the humanitarian context, defines EVI/PSNs as comprising of the following categories:

- (i) persons with disabilities unable to access material or family support;
- (ii) older persons (60+ years) at risk with no assets, living alone without material or family support;
- (iii) persons with serious medical conditions impairing survival;

- (iv) single parents such as widows and widowers;
- (v) child-headed households without any support;
- (vi) unaccompanied minors/children; and
- (vii) others identified by the community and verified by agencies giving assistance.

For example in the *Philippines*, priority is given to vulnerable families, including single women headed families, lactating mothers, elderly, families with disability and economic vulnerability. Gender balance is taken into consideration during consultations and in participation in construction. *Universal design*, meaning shelters that are safe and accessible to all, including all forms of disability - not just wheelchair access - regardless of age, gender, disability or health situation, has been specifically included in some projects. This is an approach promoted by Handicap International, which works well with other partners, providing advice on tailor made designs for disabled access. HI has trained the staff of other organisations on disability access.

No particular comments about protection against eviction were noted, although in relocation and the controversial and sometimes arbitrary designation of no-build zones, this can be an issue. Some concerns were also raised about discrimination against larger families in privately funded relocation sites - and effective eviction if families expand to more than 2 children.

ECHO partners have given displaced beneficiaries *information on property rights*, although they did not report that they have otherwise undertaken HLP [Housing Land Property] or ICLA (Information, Counselling and Legal Advice) activities.

Some *negative indirect impacts* were also noted. In the Philippines, tensions with communities surrounding relocation sites have been found, especially when people are moving relatively far from their place of origin into other districts or municipalities. This needs to be considered during the settlement planning and consultation and in follow-up development work, basing beneficiary selection on broad criteria, not just in relocation areas. Often families in surrounding communities have suffered from the typhoon as well.

Although not directly nor exclusively linked to shelter, the poor living conditions of the urban Syrian refugees in *Jordan* have contributed to developing human trafficking in the guise of early marriages to rich citizens of the region.

A further case study, based on documentary review only due to the closure of all field activities, was made regarding the rehabilitation measures applied to the former IDP camp sites in northern Uganda (there were up to 1.8 million IDPs at the height of the LRA crisis). In this context, UNHCR and its partners have provided a comprehensive assistance to return and reintegration to some 11.700 EVI/PSNs. A holistic community-driven process was applied, which included the following components:

- Shelter standards agreed upon by a multi-functional team (size, height and quality);
- Adapted shelters built by community-based Construction Committees, which gathered building materials e.g. grass, mud bricks, poles, water, doors, shutters, nails and tools.
- NFIs: upon completion of each shelter, the beneficiaries were presented with their new home and a household start-up kit (consisting of blankets, jerry-cans, a mosquito net, a hoe, saucepans, cups, plates, a sleeping mat, basins and soap).
- Livelihood: safety-net assistance packages to enhance reintegration, based on profiling by multifunctional teams (MFTs) using an Age Gender Diversity Mainstreaming (AGDM) participatory approach to determine individual capacities to manage assets. As needed, support was given through caretaker or training. Safety-net packages comprised e.g. livestock, petty trade goods, farm tools or seeds.
- ICLA by NRC, including resolution of land disputes/issues, provision of Certificates of Customary Ownership (CCOs), mediation, and even in-court settlements when necessary.
- Special assistance for the disabled, in cooperation with national associations.
- Linkages with longer term development programmes, e.g. in agricultural livelihoods.

The above example – although the lack of field assessment does not allow to state whether it is an example of good practice - illustrates the need for multi-sector approaches and close integration of shelter with livelihood, WASH and legal support in any effective LRRD/recovery solutions, aiming at resilience.

Consistent lessons have also been learned from the integrated LRRD strategy applied for the 16 “Burundi Peace Villages” dedicated since 2003 (with EDF support, implemented by UNDP, UNICEF and FAO) to the return of a rural population displaced by the internal conflict. The project included a strong rural livelihood/food security component in addition to WASH and schools. A legal/HLD component to settle land disputes (there were new settlers in the meantime) was added in 2006. A monitoring system was also put in place. A 2010 report by OCHA still mentions problems of lack of land, poor access to water and healthcare, which are recurrent issues in the country.

Crucial community (e.g. education and health) infrastructures in emergency, transitional and durable settings

There were few findings that would promote more direct linkages of crucial community infrastructures to the shelter sector.

In *Haiti*, ECHO did rehabilitate key health infrastructure after the earthquake to ensure minimum health services in urban earthquake affected areas. ECHO's mandate was respected in that it only covers short-term rehabilitation and reconstruction, and does not specifically include education.

In the *Philippines*, health infrastructure is considered in the provision on camp health clinics. Education infrastructure is considered in the “zero school” approach to transitional shelters encouraged by ECHO. The concern in the latter case is that schools are usually used as evacuation centres and sometimes for what the Education Department would consider for too long, with disruption to class schedules.

With the ATS (Alternative Transitional Shelter) that IOM/ECHO has developed, these spaces would be readily available to accommodate families very quickly after being houses in evacuation centres. The idea is that in between humanitarian crises, the ATS spaces are used as training centres, temporary accommodation etc., but on the understanding that they would be made quickly available if a disaster occurred. For example vacant private houses rehabilitated as ATSs have afterwards been rented out to transitory workers, with an agreement with IOM that they could be emptied quickly in an emergency.

Participation of beneficiaries and LNGOs to shelter design and building

The ‘assessment’ chapter of the partners proposal will indicate to what extent beneficiaries are included in project design, it is one of the criteria for selection of the partner in that it shows context adapted responses and implies participation of the local population.

In the *Philippines*, instead of just asking what people want (there is a very consultative and participatory culture in the country), ECHO tried to do more. The Red Cross societies responded well, with step-by-step guidance offered in pamphlets and posters on how to build a shelter. These can be seen by other people, so there are indirect beneficiaries as well.

LNGOs are mostly commonly involved through local consortiums, supported by an ECHO INGO partner, who strengthens capacity. The LNGO consortiums worked in the most participatory way with existing local groups' leaders and communities on the ground. Local NGOs are very strong and they are more experienced at working together. The group of INGOs that have e.g. been encouraged to work together in Mindanao had some administrative and coordination problems working together, because they did not necessarily share common ground. LNGO humanitarian shelter work tended to be more development oriented, with a more participatory approach and more

empowerment to local structures and communities. ECHO could engage with more LNGOs, which are prolific in the Philippines.

The biggest INGOs (e.g. Habitat for Humanity) and private sector donors (San Miguel Corporation, etc.) doing durable shelter did not, however, participate much in shelter Cluster meetings. These large organisations felt it more appropriate to concentrate their limited resources for coordination on attending the recovery and development meetings with the local authorities, although this did not address the problem of the LRRD 'gap'. LNGOs and private sector actors tended to concentrate on working in urban rather than rural areas, and the linkages between the local authorities and the Cluster were not strong.

Implementing partners stated that beneficiaries were consulted about transitional and durable shelter designs and that designs were modified after first phases as a response to beneficiary feedback. Beneficiaries also participated in the construction of all types of shelters; cash-for-work and shelter repair kits being a common form of livelihood assistance through this approach.

However, participation was limited due to the short emergency timeframe. There was no mention of community involvement in planning of resettlement sites, probably because in most cases, families are from scattered areas.

B.2.3) Effectiveness

EQ 3: To what extent do the Commission's humanitarian interventions deal effectively with and address coherently the shelter needs resulting from humanitarian crisis, both in terms of direct support to humanitarian aid operations and capacity building of implementing partners?

Findings from the desk report, field case studies and online survey provide a consistent picture of effective adaptation by ECHO to the needs.

The humanitarian interventions of ECHO address coherently the shelter needs and provide an effective direct operational support

As also outlined under B.2.4 below, ECHO is largely praised for the flexibility of its approach and its readiness to adapt to identified needs, although with some caveats. 66% of the survey respondents estimated e.g. that the direct support provided by ECHO was “average” or “good”, and more than 90% appreciated the field presence of TAs and RSOs. The skilled technical backstopping delivered by agencies such as IOM or OFDA were also praised. The most frequently mentioned issues about ECHO's effectiveness are listed below.

High level of effectiveness

- ECHO is flexible and would agree to fund – on the basis of substantiated proposals and within the limits of its mandate - a large range of shelter-related activities. Tables illustrating the scope of ECHO funding in the sector were e.g. compiled for the particularly relevant Haiti case study (evolution of responses to the crisis over the period 2010 – 2012).
- ECHO also encourages integrated approaches (within projects and between agencies) to fulfil needs optimally, and fill up gaps. Multi-sector interventions e.g. generally include WASH and NFI kits (when these were not readily available on the local market) as part of sheltering activities. Regular monitoring is effected to check these issues.
- Despite the lack of “settlement” component in the eSF and FPA typology of sectors and interventions, ECHO supports this approach where it seems effective. For example in Haiti, ECHO supported early the “return to neighbourhood” and “integrated neighbourhood” approaches²⁷.
- ECHO is quite proactive in supporting coordination – especially where it appears to be weak, as in Lebanon and Jordan. ECHO TAs participate in key meetings and are kept well informed.
- ECHO reportedly has good relations with DEVCO in the Delegation, and encourages LRRD where feasible, such as in Haiti. In other case studies visited, such as in the Syrian refugee crisis, the current emergency situation and unstable regional context are not conducive to LRRD actions in the shelter sector (measures to mitigate impact of refugees on infrastructures and social support for rising rents should however be discussed; conditional to peace, housing reconstruction in Syria could also be envisaged in the future). It should, however, be noted that some ECHO partners have cooperated closely with DEVCO, e.g. in Lebanon (NRC for reconstructing the Palestinian gathering of Mohajareen, or UNHCR for school support).

²⁷ The return to neighbourhood emphasises emptying camps through a variety of incentives: shelter solutions, WASH, livelihoods, protection, health, DRR, psycho-social, etc. The integrated neighbourhood uses the same tools and adds such things as waste management, public infrastructure, land access, etc. but without the focus on emptying camps and possibly to turn “camps” into “settlements”.

Lower level of effectiveness

- Even though technical support in the shelter sector is provided by some RSO experts (Amman, Bangkok, Delhi), these have primarily a WASH background. As also discussed under B.2.5 and contrary to the OFDA in-house shelter experts of the Technical Assistance Group (TAG), the ECHO TAs are often relying on the technical expertise of implementing partners and common sense. The capacity of this support to cover all technical issues in the concerned countries appears relatively limited, for example in terms of assessing the cost-effectiveness of the various shelter solutions proposed.
- For measuring results of shelter interventions, partners were found to use mainly indicators of outputs (e.g. n° of houses properly sealed off according to a bill of quantities and a set of standards), rather than outcomes (delivered assistance used as intended, etc.).
- Even if HIPs can cover programming up to 2 years, there is still often a perceived (by the partners) risk of lack of continuity from year to year, and of the lack of a longer term strategy (hence funding of longer term activities) in the face of protracted or recurrent crises. Despite this limitation, ECHO is often the donor present the longest and is sometimes the only key donor present. In Haiti, ECHO has funded the earthquake/shelter response continuously since 2010, through consecutive contracts with some of the same partners. It remains the last humanitarian donor after the departure of OFDA.
- Although ECHO's mandate does not allow to fund government and local authorities, the legal basis does not prevent it from cooperating when such authorities are key actors in DRR and LRRD, and when they respect the principles of humanity and impartiality (as it occurs regularly e.g. with DIPECHO in Latin America). However, ECHO generally supports the implementing partners which work closely with local government and national government agencies on relocation sites and transitional shelters, as well as in linking their work to longer term development work.
- The general lack of established LRRD bridges and longer-term donors for relocation and permanent housing solutions impacts negatively on some of ECHO's interventions, due to the lack of exit strategies. Permanent shelters are out of ECHO's mandate, but sometimes an excessive focus on short-term emergency shelters (tents that have to be replaced regularly and become quite expensive) and the avoidance of assistance to relocation (e.g. preliminary planning) is not conducive. ECHO and partners rightly aim to ensure that assistance 'does no harm', although this extends sometimes to believing that if families are not comfortable with being relocated, they shouldn't be pushed towards this, whereas there are often delays in land acquisition and site development, and relocation sites can be inappropriate or inadequately planned.

The humanitarian interventions of ECHO have provided effective capacity building to implementing partners in the Shelter sector

Most partner organisations have general capacity to manage operations effectively, with experience in managing the aftermath of natural disasters has developed over many years. Specialist shelter expertise is often lacking, however, in assessment, strategic planning, site planning, programme and project management. Technical assistance is also still generally needed in staging, relocation planning and environmental impact.

Not all partners have extensive experience in transitional shelter, but have been involved because it was the biggest need - some have e.g. rather WASH or DRR focus but switched to providing shelter assistance. In such cases, ECHO did support partners who faced specific difficulties by linking them (e.g. in consortia) to others with specific expertise. ECHO also encouraged partners to provide capacity building to the concerned local authorities (e.g. IOM in the Philippines has trained some government camp managers).

Over the period covered by this evaluation (2005 – 2012), DG ECHO has funded every year specific Decisions – mostly Thematic ('THM') ones – which usually included both training and

capacity building for staff and relevant projects initiated by implementing partners. These activities did not cover exclusively the shelter sector - which was only one sub-component among many – although they have consistently and largely benefited the two GSC lead agencies, IFRC and UNHCR. This focus – the result of which has been assessed as mixed by ECHO due to the lack of effects on the wider sector out of the two co-leads – has been confirmed by the online survey: 16% of the respondents judged the ECHO funded capacity building as „poor“, and 45% „did not know“. From 2008 to 2011, 5 Decisions have furthermore been specifically dedicated to capacity building only, and were partially related to the shelter sector. In addition to the above, most DIPECHO decisions over the period have included an “education and training” component to enable the local populations and institutions in reinforcing and rehabilitating community infrastructures. A table in the Desk Report offered an overview and figures.

In 2011-2012 in the framework of ERC, ECHO has furthermore supported the IMPACT initiative launched by ACTED and the GSC (IFRC) in rolling out a shelter needs assessment tool (REACH²⁸), which was developed on behalf of the GSC. REACH can be activated either by the GSC or by ACTED, when the humanitarian community in a given country perceives a significant gap in collected information, for information management, strategy definition and capacity building purposes. Finally – and although this period is not covered by the evaluation scope - ECHO has approved in May 2013 an ERC grant to the GSC strategy 2013 – 2017 (see B.2.1).

²⁸ (<http://www.reach-initiative.org>)

B.2.4) Added value of DG ECHO

EQ 4: What is DG ECHO's added value / comparative advantage in funding shelter interventions compared to other actors such as donors, governments, and development actors?

Consistent findings have been triangulated from the desk review, the interviews and the online survey, as follows.

Section 1 of Part II of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (§81-87) outline five key comparative advantages and added value of the Commission:

- global presence, especially in the field through Technical Assistants (TA) and Regional Support Offices (RSO);
- coherence in Community policies, in particular in the areas of humanitarian aid, development, food security, public health and human rights, including LRRD, DRR and preparedness strategies;
- promotion of good humanitarian practices, focusing e.g. on priority needs assessment and not overlooking low visibility crises;
- ability to intervene in politically sensitive situations more flexibly; and
- support of coordination with Member States, other donors and the UN system.

These intended advantages have been confirmed and expanded by the statements collected from stakeholders, both in Europe (they were outlined in the Desk Report), in the field and through the online survey (Annex VI). Very positive aspects of ECHO funding were listed as follows:

- All stakeholders and implementing partners in the field have described the role of ECHO in the most favourable terms. ECHO is a “true, open-minded and flexible partner who can listen, discuss and adapt; it has a good analysis of issues and is quite knowledgeable as it attends all the key coordination meetings; it is possibly the best donor around”. ECHO is involved in the planning process, proactive, responsive and supportive. TAs and RSOs are “pragmatic, experienced and useful”. ECHO supports the complementarity of partners, in terms of expertise and capacity, through consortia. ECHO is also perceived as a “tough” donor concerning the quality of implementation, which is generally seen as a good thing. When required and supported with a well-presented case, sectorial allocation of funding and targets can be renegotiated relatively easily and in a short time by email, whereas other donors may require a longer and more complicated process to change agreements. ECHO monitoring is thorough and regular, when other donors do not come at all.
- ECHO is among the very best donors in primary emergency response, as funding can be available in 3 days. The DFID new Rapid Response Facility (RRF) enables e.g. also DFID to commit to rapid humanitarian funding in the first 72 hours following an emergency (see also B.2.5).
- The field presence is strengthened by strategic approaches and the level of engagement. ECHO has a significant potential influence, due its large donor portfolio.
- Results-oriented approach enforced through the FPA procedures, in particular the integrated Single Form (even if it can become quite long at the end of a project). Disbursement and mobilisation can be fast; the flexibility of the TAs authorises the funding of integrated activities.
- ECHO is not dependent on political considerations. It duly promotes and follows humanitarian and GHD principles, contrary to national governments and most “non-traditional” new donors who are sometimes trying to interfere with humanitarian standards (e.g. refugee camps in Jordan). In the field, ECHO is also vigorously encouraging and funding responsible agencies to enforce effectively their coordination mandates, sometimes to the face of political pressures.

- ECHO is using assessment tools to determine humanitarian priorities, which allow a focus on: low visibility crises by FCA; a global overview by GNA; and food insecurity by FINAT²⁹. All these assessment tools have now been subsumed into the new “Integrated Analysis Approach” managed by Unit A3.
- ECHO funding supports capacity building of the cluster system, in particular the GSC co-lead agencies and more recently the GSC strategy itself.
- Potential LRRD with DEVCO and other contiguous EU policies. ECHO will try to maintain activities for the time needed; in Haiti, ECHO is the only emergency donor still present after OFDA left in 2011, though rental subsidies are also funded by other donors.
- In the online survey, a large majority of the 47 respondents (all of them FPA or FAFA partners of DG ECHO) indicated that they had not been faced either with significant institutional (78%), strategic (65%) or operational (70%) challenges in implementing shelter activities funded by ECHO. Constraints were mainly related to the limited ECHO timeframe while facing longer-term shelter interventions, or a lack of shelter expertise and understanding by some ECHO TAs.

These positive aspects are however somewhat mitigated by the following factors.

- Despite the provisions of the EU Consensus, LRRD with other Commission services was not always found as being optimum – except in Haiti, where ECHO was able to start discussing a LRRD strategy with the Delegation in 2010, soon after the earthquake. In such, it was possibly the only donor to do so. In the Philippines, LRRD was constrained by different thematic priorities defined centrally in the regional programme, whereas in Kenya it was prevented by the government policy, which rejected permanent settlement of refugees. Similarly in Lebanon and Jordan, although in an emergency crisis context, government policies prevented the definition of appropriate humanitarian strategies. In Lebanon, the Delegation was nonetheless cooperating with some ECHO partners (NRC, UNHCR) in sectors contiguous to humanitarian aid, such as the reconstruction of a Palestinian Gathering destroyed by fighting, or increasing the capacities of schools, reinforcing health, sanitation treatment plants, social security system, etc.
- Key donors such as ECHO, OFDA and DFID would benefit from more strategic discussions, e.g. on preparedness, DRR and resilience.
- Key donors such as ECHO, OFDA and DFID would benefit also from more operational discussions, e.g. in Kenya on overcoming the impasse with Government and offering consistent support.
- Although that ECHO RSO experts have considerable field experience and provide guidance when needed, the fact that most relevant ECHO in-house technical experts have a WASH technical background rather than a shelter and construction one, which does not allow some relevant discussions and may be detrimental to the cost-effectiveness of some actions (e.g. in Haiti).
- Due its mandate which does not allow funding to local authorities and the vigorous defence of principles such as independence and neutrality, ECHO has often not been proactive in establishing linkages with those local authorities effectively involved in DRR and LRRD and which follow the principles of humanity and impartiality. Exceptions can be found (e.g. DIPECHO in Latin America), but some opportunities may also have been missed.
- Prior to the recent strategy 2013 – 17, misunderstandings prevailed between ECHO and the GSC co-lead agencies, which stressed that ECHO tended to confuse the cluster with the shelter sector, although many humanitarian shelter activities take place outside the GSC. At HQ level, ECHO was also perceived as less participatory than donors such as DFID, and should have been more open to fund preparedness in the shelter sector.

²⁹ Food and Nutrition Insecurity in Humanitarian Crises Needs Assessment Template, to be overtaken by HINAT (Humanitarian insecurity).

B.2.5) Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness

EQ 5: How efficient are ECHO-funded shelter interventions in terms of cost-effectiveness, adaptation to particular emergency contexts, timeliness and any other factor relevant for the delivery of shelter assistance? What good practices can be identified in DG ECHO activities?

Considering that the OECD/DAC defines efficiency as “a measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results³⁰”, the various aspects of this criteria are successively assessed below.

Cost-effectiveness

The EuropeAid evaluation methodology further specifies that cost-effectiveness “identifies the economically most efficient way to fulfil an objective” and can contribute to answering questions such as “Is it preferable to invest resources in an intervention, to the detriment of another, to achieve the target?”³¹.

In this perspective, and provided that the relevant objective of the ECHO-funded project is, for example, “to provide the displaced with shelters that are the most economical over the envisaged period of displacement and that would also ensure appropriate dignity and protection”, it is worth attempting a comparative analysis of some key findings collected in the context of this evaluation.

It should, however, be stressed that the general lack of specific shelter expertise or resources such as time at relevant overall levels (e.g. in the GSC or with donors such as ECHO), where such comparisons could have taken place and a database built up, do not provide much support to this analysis.

The lack of relevant comments about cost-effectiveness in the survey or of indications among the 236 projects reviewed over 2010-2012 (Annex V) also show that this criterion is generally not a prominent priority among partners. The tables prepared by UNHCR in Lebanon (by a former ECHO staff) can probably be seen as an exception. The ECHO-funded efforts of the IFRC/SRU are also worth mentioning.

Notwithstanding local constraints, a pattern of findings triangulated from field case studies in Haiti, Middle East and Kenya, nevertheless outline the that frequent focus on emergency short-term solutions tend to become quite costly (tents need e.g. to be replaced regularly) after the critical emergency period. Tents are most effective in response to unpredicted influxes; however their quality means that they rarely last long enough for other measures to be put in place.

This focus may be further enhanced by the emergency strategies (or lack thereof) of the key partners in the sector – including the GSC co-leads – who have developed their own shelter models (tents, T-shelters) and may tend to ignore some of the valuable solutions proposed by other actors.

Understanding how to prioritise which projects to fund and how to distribute the funds in order to optimise coverage may be explored through an assessment of cost effectiveness, or value for money.

The use of cost effectiveness is predicated on effective strategic planning, achieved through agreeing clear objectives, benchmarks and indicators for the shelter component, both in terms of reducing mortality and morbidity (for which SMART indicators are needed) and in durable solutions and recovery, involving repair and reconstruction.

Cost effectiveness in shelter funding should consider not only the cost of materials and construction, including logistics, but also the process of training and educating affected population and builders on the hazard-resistant construction methods and techniques. Unit cost per beneficiary may be qualified by the duration of sheltering achieved.

³⁰ Glossary of key terms in evaluation and results-based management, OECD/DAC 2010

³¹ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/evaluation/methodology/examples/too_cef_res_en.pdf

In that framework, key donors have developed their own approach. OFDA prefers e.g. to consider prioritisation through a combination of dedicated technical expertise at global (Technical Advisory Group, see below) and regional or operational levels (by the regional advisors), supported by cumulative guidance derived from on-going operations.

DFID avoids rationalising cost effectiveness (or rather value for money) to the extent of arriving at inappropriate or irrelevant conclusions, recognising that there are too many variables to determine cost effectiveness strictly. Unit cost per beneficiary is not seen as a helpful, as the costs outside shelter become equality important.

However, clear and consistent findings indicate that, for optimum effectiveness, shelter cannot be considered in isolation. Rehabilitations always include a WASH component, and generally need to be complemented by NFI kits and, after the primary emergency period, by livelihood to engage economic recovery, and by HLP to prepare relocation.

Support to shelter and housing will normally be accompanied by support to communal service infrastructure, such as drainage, roads, bridges, schools and clinics, as well as rubble removal after a natural disaster. Cost effectiveness calculation should therefore also integrate these elements.

In general terms, ECHO has been quite flexible about budget and cost-effectiveness (cost/beneficiary) in a humanitarian life-saving situation (large sudden influx, urgent needs for winterisation, refugees disseminated in numerous private dwellings, often unfinished or in bad condition).

In the countries visited, ECHO has not set rigid policy limitations for cost per beneficiary or household³² but has consistently tried to focus on priority responses and the most “cost-effective” solutions adapted to the context (urgent sealing off of unfinished dwellings with the minimum required numbers of doors, windows, etc., some urgent upgrading/rehabilitation when houses are below minimal acceptable standards, winterization/NFI kits for tents), which have been verified by monitoring visits as feasible.

Unit costs per beneficiary and per solution have also been duly monitored, and clarifications asked to partners where necessary, although without the time to make an overall comparative assessment. In such cases, the perception of cost-effectiveness was therefore often based on the partner's stated expertise and the quality of proposals, the experience and common sense of the TA, or was balanced against some more costly and arguably longer term solutions, taking into account factors of budget limits, numbers of beneficiaries, and ECHO's timeframe and perceived emergency mandate.

These factors have often led to positive results. In Jordan, ECHO rejected the proposal of funding expensive containers (2500 – 3500 USD, see below) as transitional shelter solutions in the refugee camps. During field visits by the evaluation, whole batches of such containers were found leaking within weeks or months of distribution, implying the need for quality control mechanisms. In addition, the performance of containers in extreme winter and summer conditions has yet to be ascertained, along with cultural appropriateness, suggesting a lack of consultation and specialist shelter expertise that may have significant cost implications.

In other situations (Haiti, the Philippines), protracted decision process by the government would not have been consistent with the ECHO timeframe of intervention, and would have been detrimental to the effectiveness of solutions beyond simple transitional shelters.

Nevertheless, the situation needs to be further streamlined. Various types of transitional or semi-permanent shelters are proposed by key partners, at higher cost than tents but with an expected lifetime from between three to ten years (see below), which may be more cost-effective if calculated per year/household, but would also fall much beyond ECHO's usual timeframe. The choice would, however, depend on an ad hoc analysis of the local context (analysis of the crisis, actors present, local production and logistics capacities, environmental concerns). In parallel, rental solutions should find exit strategies, as suggested in Haiti.

³² Some partners have mentioned anecdotal cases in other countries where project design has been “driven by cost and not technical reasoning”; this could not be ascertained by this evaluation.

A number of cost-effectiveness analysis and comparative tables were collected during the four field missions, which consistently tend to point out to the fact that the most urgent shelter options, although cheap and effective to respond to crucial needs on the very short term, are not cost effective if the crisis is likely to last more than one year. In such cases, factors of quality, enhanced protection and dignity must be added to mere costs per unit.

In **Lebanon**, a partner was providing emergency “sealing off shelter kit” with middle quality plastic sheeting, some wooden beams and a set of tools for an average cost of 220 USD/household. Although this very basic shelter provided a minimum of winter protection, it is unlikely that it would be found acceptable by urban refugees (the majority), except in the direst emergency and for a very short period only. The duration was not expected to be more than a year, although even this was subject to weather conditions and good maintenance.

Shelter solutions mostly focused on the emergency sealing off and essential rehabilitation (some doors, windows, kitchen and sanitation) of unfinished private housing that the refugees were renting. Even without proper coordination, approaches were fairly similar among partners and across regions, and provided a more appropriate setting for families.

Such rehabilitations typically involved, based on prior a bill of quantity, both shelter and WASH repairs (in addition to NFI kits). The main cost driver, for example for more than 50% of the total costs, could be either shelter or WASH works, depending on the situation. Also depending on the house condition, costs ranged between 1000 and 2000 USD, and could probably be sufficient for 3-5 years of (minimum) dignified living for a household with several small children.

In all cases visited, the families declared to be satisfied and health of children after rehabilitation was satisfactory during harsh winter. The rehabilitation was accompanied by a standard tripartite agreement (owner – refugees – aid agency) which guaranteed rental conditions for one year. Beyond this deadline, sharply rising prices and lack of livelihood may again become key challenges.

It should be noted as an example of good practice that UNHCR in Lebanon has established 2 valuable classifications of options / types of interventions according to shelter situations with average costs, which can be proposed for ECHO's toolbox:

- 9 types of sheltering solutions (in addition to camps) subdivided into emergency / short term (less than 6 months), mid-term (6-12 months) and long term (up to 24 months)
- 12 types of response interventions/activities according to the condition of the shelter, also with expected effectiveness and estimations of cost and time.

In addition to the above lists, some partners suggested their own cost-effective semi-permanent solutions, such as the “box shelter”, made of insulated wooden panels, for a turnkey cost of 3000 USD and an expected lifetime of up to 10 years.

In **Jordan**, some partners have also provided in case of crucial emergency basic winterisation NFI kits (heater, mattresses, blankets, fuel coupons), for a cost of about 330€ per household. Such kits supplement but do not replace shelter rehabilitation, and were reportedly not sufficient alone to protect from winter diseases.

Involved partners focused essentially on shelter sealing off and rehabilitation for the refugees identified as most vulnerable who were renting private accommodations in poorest condition. Much as in Lebanon, the costs of such works ranged from 1500 to 2250 Euro per household. The prices were slightly higher than in Lebanon, due to the fact that many rented houses were older and required expensive roof insulation.

Although cost-effective over a period of 3-5 years, a major constraint was that occupation after an initial period of one year is dependent on the capacity of the family to continue paying the rent. In this context, the application by one partner of the ICLA programme for legal advice was particularly relevant.

It should be noted that impact on morbidity and mortality cannot be measured through SMART indicators by shelter actors alone, to respond e.g. to a specific objective such as “reducing health risks (ARI, flu in winter) linked to bad housing conditions”. Although all visited households

reported to the evaluation that the health of vulnerable women and children had improved after rehabilitation, there were many possible factors contributing to health condition, on top of adequate shelter.

The outcome indicator of “Number/ % of shelter beneficiary households with cases of Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI)”, which can be found in the GSC “Shelter Cluster Indicator Guidelines” of October 2012, is therefore not sufficiently relevant.

In *Haiti*, ECHO has funded a large range of shelter activities from the earthquake in 2010 until early 2013. This provides an interesting perspective of the evolution of solutions (if not strategies) over an extended period of time. Emergency shelter kits were funded during the 1st year of the crisis only. More than 80% of the budget for 2010 was also spent on emergency (tents, 64.4%) and T-shelters (16.8%). This share decreased nearly by half in 2011 (32.3% for tents and 12% for T-shelters), and was entirely replaced as from 2012 by more transitional /semi-permanent solutions (rental subsidies, retrofits, etc.). Over the period, ECHO devoted an average of 20.9% of its annual budget (with variations from 11.7% in 2011 to 36.1% in 2012) to shelter-related activities.

Net costs per household/year are estimated at 250 USD per year for emergency tents and kits, and an average of 400 USD per year for various types and qualities of T-shelters with a lifetime of up to 5 years (subject to good maintenance) in urban areas. These costs are quite comparable in quantity (but not in terms of quality of life) with transitional solutions such as host family support or rental subsidies (250 USD per year), and small core houses (400 USD per year, lifetime of up to 25 years). The most cost-effective solution appears to be house retrofits (assuming a 20 years lifetime): 55 USD per year/rental household³³ - although this solution would also arguably benefit to owners rather than vulnerable tenants, a criteria which remains a key factor for ECHO.

In the *Philippines*, a number of strategies conducive to cost-effectiveness have been promoted by ECHO where feasible, such as: work carried out through LNGOs and LNGO consortia (the main contracts being with FPA partners), tapping into local capacity and experience on the ground; more use of indigenous materials and appropriate local technology; cash rather than materials, to enable people to stretch the budget; materials bought in bulk or using a voucher system at accredited suppliers, which can enable beneficiaries and partner organisations to avail themselves of discounts; universal shelter design (access for all) promoted by Handicap International, which avoids the need for later more costly modifications; the prefabrication of wall panels and reuse of steel frames panels in transitional shelters, involving the stockpiling or pre-positioning of materials; and better quality of construction and a longer lifetime for shelters, which is seen as being cost effective even if the capital outlay is slightly higher.

In *Kenya*, the field visit to the Dadaab refugee camp – the largest in the world - has appropriately outlined the poor cost-effectiveness of emergency shelters vs. longer-term / transitional / semi-permanent solutions, as well as the need to carefully assess the benefit from “innovative” approaches against traditional ones.

Short-term shelter, for new arrivals, is supported with tents, usually the UNHCR/IFRC Family Tent or UNHCR Lightweight Emergency Tent (LWET) but also, when available, the ShelterBox tent.

Under the extreme conditions of Dadaab (as it was the case also in Jordan), all of these degrade beyond use in 6 weeks – 6 months, with the latter months of their use normally being as a semi-weatherproof covering to locally-built huts. IOM stated that in 2012 “in Ifo II East, 50% of the

³³ The average cost of house retrofit is \$1,800 with a maximum budget of \$2,200 (up to \$1,700 for the house and \$500 for site works and/or a latrine). This retrofit serves 2 families: the owner and the renters. If we assume a 20 year lifetime (as this is structural work), the calculation would be as follows: \$2,200 for 2 families = \$1,100 each, divided by 20 years = \$55/yr for the rental family. Sources: CARE, Rodrigo Melo Rivera - Coordinateur Département Aménagement des Quartiers ; Vera Kreuwells, Carrefour Project Coordinator.

camp's population was living in emergency tents that required immediate repair or replacement.” The cost of each of these tents delivered on site, rather than ex-factory, is around 500 USD. Longer-term refugee sleeping accommodation is therefore required for cost-effectiveness, but also to provide more adequate shelter. Four options for longer-term refugee sleeping accommodation have been developed since the establishment of the Dadaab Complex.

i. Interlocking Stabilised Soil Blocks (ISSB), unit cost around 2000 USD.

Introducing ISSBs was considered in part because environmental concerns might be mitigated through both extracting soil from specific areas and removing the need for collecting sticks locally.³⁴ The hope was that ISSBs would not require maintenance for a 5-15 year period.

The blocks are made using specially selected soil and expensive machinery with limited outputs. Although no data was made available on crush tests, it is obvious to all those viewing the prototype units constructed that the blocks do not have the necessary strength to be used in single leaf walls without buttresses, nor will they survive without maintenance for more than one year without a cement plaster. Quality control is one concern, although the suitability of the soil and housing designs should also be considered.

There is a general consensus that the ISSB approach should be abandoned on technical grounds, quite apart from the political concerns over permanent settlement voiced by the Kenyan government. In addition to structural concerns, the material is not familiar to the refugees, who will be required to build, maintain and extend the buildings. Scalability would also be a challenge, given the need for significant contracting, specialised machinery, and the loss in transit that might be expected in moving the blocks on site.

ii. Mud bricks, unit cost around 800 USD.

Mud bricks are formed in a simple mould and sun-dried. They are made with puddled soil selected by the refugees, combined with animal dung and, in the case of some Sudanese refugees, ash in layers as a method of termite control. A different soil mixture with a greater proportion of dung is used for the plaster, which is resilient but requires annual maintenance by the refugees. The most recent shelter designs by NRC and others include buttresses at the corners and along each long wall, counteracting localised failures due to flooding.

Brick making and wall construction are undertaken by the refugees, with assistance to vulnerable families. Borrow pits created by the local extraction of soil are a concern to refugees and hosts, in terms of vector control, disrupting roads access by emergency services and surface water drainage. The ring beam, door, windows and roofing are provided by the assisting agency, with the works carried out under contract.

The quality of the mud brick shelters viewed was good, as was the general standard of works undertaken by contractors. The only concerns voiced by residents were that the shelters needed regular maintenance, and their size (in accordance with SPHERE and UNHCR minimum standards) was not adapted to local context, with other ad hoc structures being used for sleeping, security, privacy and cooking. With maintenance, the mud brick shelters should last indefinitely, although the corrugated roofing sheet is likely to degrade within 20-40 years, depending upon its quality and use (also valid for options iii and iv).

iii. Sticks and mud, unit cost around 800 USD.

Termite resistant building sticks and poles are harvested when they reach maturity and woven into a wall framing, which is then mudded using a similar mixture to that used for the mud brick houses. As with the mud brick shelters, the wall construction and mudding are undertaken by the refugees, with assistance to vulnerable families. Borrow pits created by the local extraction of soil are also a concern to refugees and hosts. Again, the ring beam, door, windows and roofing are provided by the assisting agency, with the works carried out under contract.

³⁴ Ahmed Warsame, UNHCR, consultation on 13-05-2013, see **Error! Reference source not found.**

The quality of the stick and mud shelters viewed was good, showing the largest amount of decoration in the plasterwork which may be one indication of user acceptance, as was the general standard of works undertaken by contractors. The concerns voiced by residents were the same as for mud brick shelters. With appropriate materials selection and maintenance, the sticks and mud brick shelters should last 10-20 years, with the sticks eventually rotting within the walls.

iv. Transitional shelters, unit cost around 700 – 1500 USD (with timber walls)

Transitional shelters were introduced by IOM as a proactive method of offering shelter to refugees whilst avoiding the ban on permanent construction placed by the government. The transitional shelters are timber framed, using a mixture of round pole and sawn timber, with walls of plastic sheeting, apparently of standard UNHCR/IFRC specification. The design enables ISSB or mud brick walls to be built subsequently, once the impasse with the government is resolved. The concerns voiced by residents were over security, in that the plastic sheeting walls might easily be cut through with a knife.

With upgrading using loadbearing ISSB or mud bricks, the transitional shelters should last indefinitely, although if the timber frame is used structurally, it will rot or suffer termite attack within 1-15 years. The consensus between implementing agencies is, however, that such transitional shelters offer no benefits to mud brick or sticks and mud construction, if they are permitted by the Government.

Adaption to contexts

ECHO tools

The ECHO eSF / FPA comprises a number of sectors, among which shelter and rehabilitation activities are distributed. This approach combines shelter and NFIs in sector 5 (which is still consistent with the 2011 SPHERE standards, although without the “settlements” component, but not with e.g. the Cluster system) and subdivides the rehabilitation of crucial community infrastructures among 4 different sectors (2, 3, 7, 9 – see below).

This segmentation optimises on the one side the integration of rehabilitation works with the later use of these infrastructures for the effectiveness of the concerned sectors, and on the other it fragments in several sectors the same technical skills in construction and/or engineering which are closely linked to shelter. In its own work for example, when IFRC rehabilitates a school or hospital, it is done within the scope of the IFRC Shelter Department.

Furthermore, the SF which integrates the whole implementation process from proposal to final report by the partner is itself structured according to the above sectorial subdivisions. In particular – as the FPA is results-oriented - the logframe guidelines (sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 of the Single Form, or sections 4.2.7-9 for counting and updating direct beneficiaries per sector) specify that proposals can only use the sectors and subsectors listed here above, and that each expected result must be linked to one sector only. To mitigate this approach, up to three activities can be proposed for each result, which allows targeting several subsectors per result.

The current approach has not been found detrimental by the many actors interviewed, although this may partly be due to the flexibility generally applied by the ECHO TAs.

Patterns of findings also indicate that the displaced tend to maintain or create communities (e.g. for reasons of origin or for mutual protection), which should be considered in shelter solutions in the form of support to settlement. Such lessons have already been captured and integrated into practices by key stakeholders (SPHERE, the two GSC co-lead agencies and other main donors such as OFDA).

Evaluation findings also point out to the fact that attaching NFIs to a single sector such as shelter is misleading, as they are rather a cross cutting issue. NFIs that should be included in shelter are those related to household items (mattresses, kitchen sets, etc.), while other NFIs should fall under other sectors such as WASH and hygiene kits under WASH, or woman kits under protection.

A side issue of efficiency is the capacity to reflect accurate figures into statistics, for management information purposes. Although the ECHO HOPE database is able to provide lists of projects by subsectors – such as within sector 5 “Shelters and NFIs” for the subsector 1 (“emergency temporary shelter”) and subsector 2 (“post emergency rehabilitation / semi-permanent shelter”) – this ability is also subject to the accuracy of the implementing partners in filling in the eSF.

In many cases, the exact information (number of beneficiaries concerned by the shelter component of the project and the related budget) is only available in the detailed description of the activities, and is not captured by the statistical tools.

The accuracy of the lists of shelter related projects provided through the HOPE database (see also constraints in the methodological section above) are therefore subject to such external factors, for example for some of the very large and multi-sector grants provided to UNHCR for camp management, where subsectors would not always be sufficiently detailed for statistical purposes. Only an individual reading of the various LFAs and project objectives (including their evolution over the lifetime of the project) could provide accurate figures, which was not feasible with the resources of the present evaluation.

Operational adaptation

From an operational point of view, the capacity of ECHO to adapt to contexts and its timeliness ECHO are appreciated by more than 70% of the respondents to the online survey. Examples of good practices in adapting approaches to contexts could be found in all field case studies (Middle East, Haiti). For example in the Philippines, which faces recurrent typhoons, ECHO has been found to respond quickly and effectively in urban context with the development of the Alternative Transitional Shelter concept. This involved the rehabilitation of vacant public and private buildings, to be used as transitional housing rather than schools. The approach was most appropriate in urban situations and, given the prevalence of flooding in cities, it appears as a valuable and replicable preparedness measure. In addition, the “zero school” principle, supported by ECHO, minimises negative impacts on the education system.

In Kenya, ECHO indicated that it does not wish to fund more emergency tents for Dadaab as a proposed response to rapid influxes, since it appears that neither the UNHCR/IFRC Family Tent nor the UNHCR Light Weight Emergency Tent (LWET) are particularly suited to the harsh climate of Dadaab, as they degrade extremely quickly. The proposal to ECHO for 2013 (2013/00382/RQ/01/01) indicates that only 26% of households in the Dadaab refugee complex have adequate shelter.

In-house shelter Expertise, lack of efficiency and effectiveness

The ToR (section 2, last §) state that “overall, DG ECHO’s dedicated capacity to appraise, monitor and evaluate shelter related grants remains modest”. Three experts – who have primarily a WASH technical background – are deployed by ECHO in the RSOs of Delhi, Bangkok and Amman. There is also a WASH/Shelter Focal Point at the SST in Nairobi. This support reflects the necessary coordination of shelter and WASH activities in most rehabilitation projects, although shelter is often the main ‘cost driver’ in these projects; it also reflects the current restrictions imposed on DG ECHO, which decrease HQ staff and limit the number of field experts to 140.

The situation does not compare favourably with the OFDA Technical Advisory Group (TAG), which includes 19 different sectors of expertise and is meant to provide technical support to the regional and country offices. For an annual budget that reaches 60% of ECHO’s³⁵, TAG has two full-time in-house specialists dedicated only to the Shelter and Settlements sector (with urban planning and civil engineering background) at central HQ level. They are assisted by seven regional advisors with a more generalist technical background, although one of them (based in Bangkok) is

³⁵ In 2011, the ECHO budget was 1108 million € (see **Error! Reference source not found.**) and OFDA FY was 864 million \$ (665 million €).

also a skilled shelter and DRR specialist. The main tasks of the HQ TAG shelter specialists are to review proposals from partners (the largest workload), discuss with project managers, provide training and capacity building, update policies and advise the senior management.

As already outlined, without sufficient in-house shelter expertise ECHO may not, for example, be in a position to properly assess technical proposals, improve cost-effectiveness, or promote examples of good practices in matters of innovative techniques. An external stakeholder has listed the added value of the OFDA experts as follows: „*they speak the same language as the partners' experts; they provide relevant technical advice throughout the project, assess proposals, monitor implementation and analyse results; they upgrade policies and can advocate on behalf of the sector with OFDA's management*“.

Timeliness

In primary emergency situations ECHO's funding can be available in 3 days, which places it among the most efficient humanitarian donors. ECHO's rapidity is due to the fact that (i) responses are based on humanitarian needs, but also (ii) it is not a bilateral donor such, such as USAID, AusAID or JICA, which need the go-ahead of the local government. In addition, the FPA system of prequalified partners ensures a good measure of efficiency and effectiveness of response.

However, beyond primary emergency other donors may be faster, as the process of releasing ECHO funds for follow-up work / recovery phase can be much longer, sometimes to the point of making projects almost irrelevant. For example, after the five months that process can take, many potential beneficiaries may already have completed their own temporary rebuilding.

A very specific issue of poor timeliness – probably due to internal financial procedures - was found in Jordan. ECHO urgently advised its partners in the country in mid-December 2012 that a “top-up” budget was available for winterisation activities. Partners submitted immediately proposals that were rapidly discussed with the TAs and sent to Brussels, and corresponding contracts or addendums were approved and signed in early January 2013. However, the timeliness of this top-up was quite late, and winterisation works started only in the middle of the winter period. Furthermore, this top up was not sufficient to cope with the large sudden influx of early 2013. Refugees who got shelter assistance were those who had been identified in project preparation; new refugees coming in later sudden influxes could often not be assisted, due to a lack of funds.

As a result, in most of the cases visited, sealing off could not be completed and additional inputs (missing doors, windows) would still be needed before the next winter. Some families got only a winter NFI kit and no repair could be done to the shelter itself. Many women and children without proper shelter stated that they had been sick during the winter (ARI, flu, etc.).

B.3) Conclusions

The main conclusions identified during desk review, meetings, field case studies and online survey are subdivided below into issues related to institutional, strategic and operational levels.

Institutional and policy level

Legal and operational framework of DG ECHO

Key added values and comparative advantages of ECHO have consistently been triangulated from the EU Consensus, the structured meetings and the feedback from partners and external stakeholders. They mainly include: field presence and knowledge, respect of humanitarian principles, large funding capacities, timeliness, results-oriented approach, support to coordination platforms, and potential linkages with other EU instruments.

This positive outlook is compromised to some degree in the shelter sector by factors including a certain lack of dedicated technical expertise, which is partly due to resource limitations imposed on ECHO but which is also linked to the general lack of guidance, training, capacity building and expertise in the sector.

A better coordination with other experienced donors such as OFDA (see below) would therefore be required, for example in the framework of DRR/preparedness for future urban crises, before such crises happen.

The Regulation provisions are quite extensive and can be interpreted in order to cover very nearly the whole spectrum of shelter activities from preparedness to emergency response, and to rehabilitation/early reconstruction. The current provisions can e.g. also cover rubble clearing (access, free flow), cluster support (coordination), capacity building (training), the contiguous rehabilitation of health, WASH and other critical community infrastructures, all protection-related activities, and even rapid urban/settlements planning (feasibility studies). It should also be noted that the Regulation allows the construction of “housing” which can cover transitional and semi-permanent (i.e. leading to durable) shelter solutions if required.

A potential limitation seems to appear in the adjective of “short-term” rehabilitation and reconstruction – although this clearly relates to any measures aimed at “facilitating relief and preventing the worsening of the crisis” (preamble). This is also quite flexible and should be interpreted in the perspective of subsequent longer-term development activities (Art 2.d) - to be tackled under LRRD – and not as a specific timeline, since Art. 1 allows for activities to be conducted “for the time needed to meet humanitarian requirements”.

Other constraints may however be found in the lack of specific reference in the Regulation to newly identified challenges, such as environmental and ethical protection measures, or the emphasis on “settlements” (integrated approach for communities of victims – which is partly complemented in the Consensus below) and on initiating Housing, Land and Property measures (HLP/ICLA) as early as possible in the emergency assistance process.

Shelter and rehabilitation activities are distributed in the ECHO eSF / FPA among five main sectors: Shelter and NFIs, WASH, Health, DRR/Disaster Preparedness, and Support to Special Operations. This segmentation has pros and cons. It optimises on the one side the integration of rehabilitation works with the later use of these infrastructures for the effectiveness of the concerned sectors and, on the other hand, it fragments in several sectors the same technical skills in construction and/or engineering which are closely linked to shelter. According to eSF procedures, each expected result in project logframe must also be linked to one sector only. To mitigate this approach, up to three activities can be proposed for each result, which allows targeting several subsectors per result.

The current approach has not been found detrimental by the many actors interviewed, although this may partly be due to the flexibility generally applied by the ECHO TAs.

However, grouping together Shelter and NFIs does not appear optimum. Attaching NFIs to a single sector is misleading and NFIs are rather a cross cutting issue – as are sector rehabilitations. Some NFIs are related to shelters such as household items, while others should rather be linked to WASH or protection.

In addition, shelters cannot only be considered as an individual or household issues, as lessons from the field captured by key stakeholders (SPHERE, the two GSC co-lead agencies and other main donors such as OFDA) clearly indicate that the displaced tend to maintain or create communities (e.g. for reasons of origin and/or for mutual protection). This is equally true in offering support to communities affected but not displaced, or those who have returned. This frequent coping process should be considered in shelter solutions under „settlements“. It should be noted that, despite the lack of this component in the eSF and FPA typology of sectors and interventions, ECHO supports the settlements or neighbourhood approach where it seems effective, e.g. in Haiti.

GSC and sector

Over the period covered by this evaluation (2005 – 2012), DG ECHO has funded every year specific Decisions - mostly thematic ones - which usually included both training and capacity building for staff and relevant projects initiated by implementing partners. These activities did not cover exclusively the shelter sector or cluster - which was only one sub-component among many – although they have consistently and largely benefited the 2 GSC co-lead agencies, IFRC and UNHCR.

As a result, IFRC has increased significantly its capacities in shelter response, since it formed its Shelter and Settlement Department in 2006. UNHCR has also achieved some internal recognition of the importance of shelter, with the formation of its Shelter and Settlement Section in 2011. In the relatively brief period subsequently, this has resulted in only a small increase in capacity at global, regional and national levels, with progress still being sought in achieving a coherent and well-represented internal capacity. The humanitarian community as a whole, however, which also requires internal capacity proportionate to need, may not have (yet) benefited to the same extent.

The institutional settings of the GSC remain complex. There have been concerns that the governance structure of the GSC, with its dual leadership designed around mandated specificities and related interests, has become at times cumbersome and lacks the more integrated and longer-term approach achieved e.g. by UNICEF for the WASH Cluster.

UNHCR leads the Cluster in conflict situations where there are IDPs, whereas in refugee situations the core mandate of UNHCR takes precedence over the cluster system.

In natural disasters, IFRC is committed to act as the ‘convenor’ of the Cluster at global level, pledging to coordinate at operational level. IFRC however does not assume the responsibility of ‘provider of last resort’ - common to other cluster leads within the UN family - which may leave some open gaps beyond emergency response.

Three distinct coordination structures exist, therefore, for shelter and settlement response:

- i. the cluster approach, where clusters are activated;
- ii. the sector approach in a refugee context, where UNHCR leads; and
- iii. the sector approach in an IDP context, where coordination is ad hoc, using the same structures used prior to the humanitarian reform process.

These distinct coordination structures imply questions which have not been discussed within the GSC meetings, including:

- a. what is the mechanism for sector coordination for both refugees and IDPs (ii and iii), including activation, responsibilities and global representation, and what support exists in order to improve it, both globally and operationally, similar to that available to the cluster approach (i) outlined in its work plan?
- b. when the operational context requires the use of more than one coordination structure in parallel, such as in the Syria crisis, how is coordination managed between these

- structures, including in terms of both detailed planning and information management, such as monitoring displacement?
- c. how should national and international shelter stakeholders, including those affected, governments and NGOs, best understand these different structures and their respective roles, in achieving greater predictability, accountability, responsibility and partnership?
 - d. beyond support to coordination solely, which is the focus of the GSC, what support exists to capacity, consensus and cooperation of shelter stakeholders worldwide, also in learning lessons and improving good practice?

When ensuring coordination alone in the framework of refugee crises (as assessed in the Lebanon, Jordan and Kenya case studies) UNHCR does not seem to have been informed by the good practices learned by the GSC.³⁶ There is a lack of partnership approach, similar to that of IASC clusters, whereby prioritisation, decision-making and coordination responsibilities are shared in a transparent process, inclusive of all stakeholders. In all three case studies, partners voiced consistent concerns over the coordination by UNHCR given the need for shelter and settlement strategies, the lack of independent coordination mechanisms (in the Middle East only), but also over their handling of resource prioritisation and allocation, in the absence of a consolidated appeals process. Despite a strong commitment to this coordination system by those responsible within the scope available to them, UNHCR retains complete control over resource prioritisation, through its Programme unit. This questions the inclusiveness and accountability of the UNHCR coordination system, which does not appear to have been adequately changed structurally in the light of progress made by the IASC humanitarian reform process, transformative agenda and cluster approach.

In all cases studies, DG ECHO has consistently promoted effective coordination processes. However, ECHO TAs in the field do not always appear to yield sufficient authority on their own to entice such large agencies into improved practices.

Beyond GSC, the broader sector of humanitarian, developmental and governmental institutions that comprise the national, regional and global capacity for humanitarian shelter requires support as a community of practice. Sharing knowledge and good practice between these thousands of institutions, for example, remain a challenge to learning, consensus, coordination, capacity and resilience. The hundreds of thousands of operational fieldworkers contributing shelter activities within the institutions need opportunities to share their knowledge and good practice.

Bordering on institutional and strategic levels, coordination between GSC members, the shelter sector, and other clusters has been lacking. Challenges in achieving effective inter-cluster coordination at global and especially operational/ response level are consistently found. Initiatives at global level to identify gaps and overlaps were not followed through at technical or response levels. Few opportunities have been taken to develop inter-cluster and inter-sector tools or resources, although limited guidance at policy level is under development.

Planning is also a weakness for the GSC and the sector in general, both in terms of planning a response, from strategic to project levels, as well as in the physical (e.g. urban) planning or master planning of settlements. Whereas technical working groups are sometimes very effective at an operational level, few opportunities exist for cluster participants to engage at a global level in important technical discussions that pertain to undertaking practical tasks, such as planning a camp or host family support. As a result, weaknesses and a lack of consensus at operational level can be found in assessment and planning, but also in activities such as agreeing technical options for responses, training, urban emergencies, participation or LRRD.

In this framework, DG ECHO understands support to the global shelter community of practice, or shelter sector, as the responsibility of the GSC. On their side the Cluster convenor and co-lead, IFRC and UNHCR respectively, see their responsibility as limited to coordination within activated Cluster responses. The convenor and co-lead prefer to distinguish strictly between the sector and

³⁶ These are described in the “Minimum requirements for country level cluster leads and services to be provided”, GSC April 2013.

Cluster, whilst ECHO focuses on the global needs of humanitarian reform and TA (leadership, coordination, accountability).

Recently, significant progress was noted, however, within GSC in the recent development of its Strategy, SAG, Thematic Priorities and Working Groups, which ECHO was instrumental in stimulating. The SAG of the Cluster, formed in 2012, comprises key international actors and has recognised the need to better engage external stakeholders such as donors and national or regional bodies. This approach was noted in the new GCS Strategy 2013-2017, which is also supported by DG ECHO.

Strategic level

GSC

The GSC is making significant advances in supporting coordination, within its existing remit and with ECHO support, however it has yet to extend its activities to supporting programmatic areas of the sector. Four challenges facing the shelter and settlement sector that the GSC may wish to consider are that:

- i. the convenor and co-lead of the GSC have a more limited understanding of the scope of the Cluster than in other clusters, supporting coordination but leaving the sector unsupported in key programmatic areas, for example sector training and knowledge management, as well as the development and sharing of good practice and lessons learnt;
- ii. although the thematic priorities of the GSC propose stakeholder engagement, no engagement plan has yet been agreed or implemented, and current GSC partners represent only a small percentage of sector stakeholders, understanding that most international NGOs undertake shelter activities, but also that other stakeholders often play a greater role than all humanitarian capacities combined, including donors and IFIs, LNGOs, government task forces and line ministries, civil defence and civil society organisations;
- iii. although the GSC is exploring coordination roles with other clusters, shelter and settlement activities are undertaken in more than one IASC cluster (for example schools in education; clinics in health; camps and collective centres in CCCM) and few opportunities exist for technical discussions and coordination between clusters; and
- iv. as with all sectors, shelter and settlement is coordinated in three different contexts, non-clustered (led by UN, ad hoc), clustered (convened by IFRC and co-led by UNHCR) and refugee (led by UNHCR).

DG ECHO

The appropriate strategic development of humanitarian shelter stakeholders, including institutions but also field workers and the independent consultants that provide the majority of shelter experience and capacity, is possible only if the global community of practice is recognised and supported with common resources, linking them at every level with practical opportunities to collaborate and achieve consensus. Linkages with field activities are currently extremely weak, constraining how operations inform strategic development, as well as other operations.

However, donors such as ECHO should either support clear distinctions between the cluster and sector, in terms of scope and remit, or avoid creating/funding parallel sector platforms, as each would lobby and compete amongst donors for limited funding. ECHO currently follows the second approach.

The only group that bridges the three coordination structures currently in place is the global community of practice of shelter stakeholders, including governments and the thousands of humanitarian and developmental aid workers that contribute. Communities of practice have a role to play to support, link and influence global clusters and are arguably more influential inside (by joining the GSC) than if they stay on the margins.

Capacity building for the sector (and not just coordination and leadership) can and should be funded by DG ECHO if the case is made and recognized by the collective that this is a priority. Furthermore, there should not be any restrictions to community of practice to join; equally governance arrangements should also be regularly reviewed on the basis of membership itself.

The development by ECHO of a sector policy on shelter funding would also be valuable to its own activities and, if the development of the policy may itself be a consultative process, as a stimulus and resource for other donors and the sector as a whole.

A consistent, comprehensive and broadly-accepted terminology (see also below) as well as a consistent approach to operational planning are currently weak in both the sector and GSC. Without these, a sector policy from ECHO will be less effective, as it will remain open to interpretation and will have no procedure or timeline to offer a frame of reference. The development of a common terminology and planning procedure offer an opportunity to link the sector and Cluster.

Other donors

Due to the segmented approach of large channelling donor bodies both externally (between donors) and internally (between humanitarian aid and development), there are gaps left by restricted funding and government policies.

Understanding the limitations of opportunities for engagement currently offered by the GSC, there is a need for large donors to the sector (such as ECHO, OFDA or DFID) to engage even more in strategic discussions, to ensure that policies and resources better complement each other at both global and operational levels.

For example, there is currently no donor represented in Thematic Groups, in a technical capacity. This would be particularly relevant to prepare for future urban disasters and link to resilience within the disaster theme. Information exchange would also allow donors to become more accountable, e.g. by explaining why they support some activities and not others.

There is a perceived need - at least from the technical actors - for more coordination among key donors involved in shelter and reconstruction (such as USAID/OFDA), to discuss resources and strategies in order to prepare, for example, for relatively expensive shelter activities in the framework of future large urban disasters, in the light of the lessons learnt in Haiti. Such discussions are covered by provisions in the Regulation and by e.g. art 18, 32 and 75 in the Consensus.

More generally, there is also a need for donors to further develop an integrated and coordinated approach to shelter, up to repair and reconstruction activities. There is a widespread confusion over the essential parallel nature of emergency humanitarian and (early) recovery shelter activities, and the lack of accepted terminology does not help. Repairs, reconstruction, transitional or semi-permanent shelters of acceptable quality and cost-effectiveness that may be funded by humanitarian donors to help spanning LRRD in a protracted situation may have a lifetime of 10 years or more, which in turn exceeds the usual humanitarian programming horizon (see also below).

Recovery through LRRD was understood both as a stumbling block (for donors with separated humanitarian and development services such as USAID/ OFDA or ECHO) and as a seamless activity (e.g. by the more integrated DFID) that must occur in parallel with humanitarian response to reducing mortality and morbidity.

Verging on institutional, strategic and operational matters, all stakeholders agreed upon the value of donors achieving a capacity of dedicated in-house shelter experts, able to evaluate and support shelter proposals and activities consistently with those in other major sectors. Any construction-related project is expensive, relative to other humanitarian interventions, and there should be donor capacity available to track and comment authoritatively on implementation costs versus outputs achieved, especially over coverage.

Shelter expertise could improve cost-effectiveness by comparing quality, longevity and cost of solutions proposed by partners, and better sharing lessons learned. In a self-supporting process, the presence of such experts could also by itself reinforce the sector (through training, policy advice and advocacy, coordination with the Cluster) and allow a more discriminate assessment of

concerned proposals from partners – followed by relevant monitoring, as the sector reportedly suffers from a significant lack of expertise.

There is a need to develop a statistically valid and broadly acceptable metric or yardstick to measure the impact of shelter actor interventions. For example, shelter/ NFI indicators in ECHO-funded projects are often fairly simple to meet, with no incentive to achieve greater efficiency of service to beneficiaries; any improvement in technical oversight at donor level should result in a more rigorous approach to setting suitable project-specific – rather than generic – targets that would require adequate technical capacity at field level to achieve these, and thus begin to enhance programme quality and effectiveness with the same resources.

However, the lack of accurate figures about ECHO-funded shelter activities (see constraints in B.1.3) does not promote either the use of dedicated in-house shelter experts by ECHO – as it is done e.g. by OFDA TAG, which insists on their added value.

General strategic issues

The lack of funding of preparedness and DRR is the clearest overall strategic gap identified by the GSC convenor and co-lead; however this was not echoed consistently by other stakeholders. No indication was offered as to either how such support would be prioritised, or how GSC partners would achieve access to GSC resources such as stockpiles.

There is a critical lack of LRRD/exit strategies with development donors and actors concerning durable shelters. There are, for example, no overall guidelines for reconstruction such as the SPHERE standards for humanitarian aid (although the World Bank has published a handbook) and, in the absence of tools developed in consensus within the Cluster, UNHCR has not yet developed guidance supporting reconstruction in complex emergencies similar to that developed by IFRC for disasters.

As a result, 70-80% of the victims of crises may be ignored and may not have access to LRRD in shelters. Most shelter and settlement in durable solutions is currently generated by the “informal” activities of the affected people, who are likely (when communities are not assisted by DRR or DIPECHO projects) to rebuild their dwellings themselves without proper urban planning or appropriate materials – despite initiatives like Building Back Better – and may again become victims of recurrent disasters in their slums and crowded cities.

Although ECHO's mandate does not allow to fund government and local authorities, the legal basis does not prevent cooperation when such authorities are key actors in DRR and LRRD, and when they respect the principles of humanity and impartiality (as it occurs regularly e.g. with DIPECHO in Latin America). ECHO generally supports the implementing partners who work closely with local government and national government agencies on relocation sites and transitional shelters and in linking their work to longer term development work.

From a strategic/LRRD point of view, a key lesson learnt by the EU Delegation in the Philippines is that *shelter appears as a key catalyst for economic development* - once people see something being built, livelihood and services, education and so forth usually follow. The macro- and micro-economic and livelihoods drivers offered by shelter and settlement, such as Haiti following the 2010 earthquake, are poorly understood. These drivers impact critically upon the objectives and planning of operations, as well as on their implementation, whether or not they are understood.

More houses being built is a sign for encouraging livelihood development. Shelter is the main cost driver but it is not enough in itself - people also need livelihood, basic social services like health, education - a complete rehabilitation package of which shelter is just one part. It is therefore important for ECHO to adopt as much as relevant / feasible integrated approaches which include shelter but also WASH and livelihoods – the latter being a fundamental prerequisite for successful relocation, yet is rarely considered sufficiently.

The above echoes findings from the an earlier USAID/OFDA study: *“Relief programs can produce a range of stimuli to the local economy and households income (...) Shelter projects often represent a large portion of the relief programming (...) Informed decisions regarding the investment of limited relief funds in shelter (...) requires an understanding of the economic dynamics surrounding*

the provision of shelter materials, shelter construction and the role of shelter programs in the development process”³⁷.

Among the above issues, the joint approach of Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid towards DRR should arguably benefit from a closer cooperation, as the established relations of Civil Protection with local authorities or with the large resources of concerned military actors would adequately complement in some cases and further contribute to LRRD with emergency humanitarian aid. DIPECHO is widely cooperating already with national civil protection organisations e.g. in Latin America. Such cooperation is important from preparedness through response, including search and rescue involving agencies such as UNDAC in building damage assessment, through to LRRD.

Lessons learnt from field case studies consistently stress the value of holistic approaches for optimum effectiveness where shelter, which is sometimes the main cost driver, is a major component and where the operational integration of activities such as WASH, livelihoods, cash or legal assistance is even more important to success. Among the most positive aspects of the current DG ECHO approach in funding shelter-related activities, findings have outlined the existence of policies and guidelines of other sectors that are related to shelter, such as WASH, gender, LRRD or cash and vouchers.

Lessons from Haiti, Jordan and Kenya further outline that, due in part to the lack of particular shelter expertise and guidance (from DRR onwards) for most actors of the sector and also to local constraints which tend to prevent the definition of strategies, there is often too much focus on emergency, short-term solutions, which tend to become quite costly (tents need e.g. to be replaced regularly) after the usually brief critical emergency period.

This focus may be further enhanced by the emergency strategies of some key partners – including the GSC co-leads – who have developed their own shelter models (tents, T-shelters) and may tend to ignore some of the valuable solutions proposed by other actors³⁸.

In this respect, findings stress that the most cost-effective solutions in terms of transitional or semi-permanent shelters - rather than tents which should be used only for short-term accommodation of influxes - must become part of a shelter strategy for both the displaced and non-displaced, or returned, and where the situation is likely to last without clear exit strategy or LRRD. The selection and combination of repair, reconstruction and transitional solutions would however depend on the local context (in terms of needs and vulnerability, but also actors present, local production and logistics capacities, environmental concerns).

Poor living conditions in camps rapidly become quite detrimental to dignity and economic or social recovery/resilience, which must be part of the cost-effectiveness equation. In the same perspective, repairing of damaged houses must be preferred to displacement and camps wherever feasible, and will better respect the victims' own coping choices: people understandably want to remain close to their former homes to look after their saved assets. Rental of private accommodations should also be preferred, subject to support to host families and monitoring of legal and economic conditions.

More cost effective might be the contingency preparation of medium term shelter, such as collective centres or from the existing housing stock, however in some cases this may result in squatting, materials theft and degradation. The stockpiling of repair kits and materials for transitional shelter would be of some value, if implementation capacity could keep pace with influxes, but would probably result in a significant loss in materials unless they were stored carefully, with some requiring warehousing.

Improving the inclusion and participation of the affected communities host communities and national governments would also imply a more strategic approach to implementation, globally and

³⁷ The Economic Impact of Shelter Assistance in Post-Disaster Settings, August. 2005

³⁸ In Haiti, delays in envisaging transitional solutions may e.g. be partly attributed to the definition of emergency shelter in the IFRC-OCHA MoU as: “The provision of basic and immediate shelter needs necessary to ensure the survival of disaster affected persons, including ‘rapid response’ solutions such as tents, insulation materials, other temporary emergency shelter solutions, and shelter related non-food items. This definition explicitly excludes transitional and permanent housing.”

at response level. Developing a dialogue with affected communities is supported by some agency guidance and increasingly in operations, however there is a lack of common policies and good practice supporting GSC and sector operations, linked to common assessment and planning processes, such as building damage assessment and a commonly-agreed template for response, programme and project planning. In the limits of its mandate, closer working relations with local implementing partners have been explored by ECHO in a recent evaluation³⁹.

There is evidence from the Kenya case study that shelter and settlement activities may be used fruitfully as an innovative *peace and reconciliation component*. Such activities were undertaken in response to the post-election crisis in 2007-2008 and contributed both to achieving capacity as a contingency to respond to any further crisis, and to the lack of significant violence around the 2013 elections. Those affected and neighbours from the ethnic groups responsible for the violence have collaborated in reconstructing the houses destroyed during the violence.

Members of the evaluation team who had been involved in post-conflict activities before the period covered by the present project, can testify that rehabilitation and reconstruction of housing and critical community infrastructures in ECHO-funded projects contributed positively to reconciliation and stabilisation, e.g. in Cambodia or in the former Yugoslavia⁴⁰.

As already noted, in most contexts the lack of a consensus sector terminology have proven confusing for activities such as developing strategies and local participation. The term of transitional shelter⁴¹ is often being used indiscriminately to describe temporary and semi-permanent shelters, although there are some differences in approach⁴². This has led in some places (e.g. Haiti where expectations of beneficiaries from aid agencies may be higher than elsewhere) to the question being asked “transitional to what”? A number of distinct responses exist and more emerge continually, but have yet to be described and supported consistently in consensus terminology, planning and guidance.

Finally, strategies need also to consider risks and assumptions, as massive shelter assistance can have negative impacts in fragile or unstable contexts. In Haiti, there may now reportedly be many more people (200-300,000) in Metropolitan Port-Au-Prince than before the earthquake of 2010, even discounting the many victims⁴³.

³⁹ “Working Directly with Local NGOs”, in January 2013.

⁴⁰ Spot reconciliation projects around Battambang, in ECHO evaluation of the Article 20 (1998-99); ECHO evaluation of rehabilitation in Croatia (1997).

⁴¹ „Transitional shelter is an incremental process of sheltering which can be used to allow time for sustainable reconstruction following a conflict or natural disaster. The transitional shelter process begins with the first distribution of relief items, and results in a flexible covered living space for use until a durable shelter solution has been achieved. The shelters themselves should be relocatable and upgradable, reusable, resellable and or recyclable to maximise choice of shelter and settlement options for the affected population throughout the transition to durable solutions, and to contribute to the reconstruction effort“; Transitional Shelter Guidelines, the Shelter Centre, April 2011.

⁴² „(A) temporary shelter is a shelter provided during the period between a conflict or natural disaster and the achievement of a long-term shelter solution“; and a semi-permanent one is «built on permanent sites and designed with foundations, to be upgraded at a later date by the families ; GSC guidance note for the tropical storm Sendong, the Philippines, 2011

⁴³ It is widely acknowledged by longer term Haiti development professionals (Haitians and international staff and including IOM, UnHabitat and IFRC) that there was a significant influx of rural people to metropolitan PAP area during the response due to the overwhelming concentration of resources there but an accurate number and evidence remains elusive as this is a politically sensitive issue and would require a neutral and specific study to ascertain. IOM officers interviewed by evaluator stated e.g. that” *“Though it is probably true, we don’t have any evidence of it since no national census was conducted. It’s important to note that in Haiti we see an important temporary migration to Port-au-Prince from young people seeking jobs or education. This is an argument used by UnHabitat (and more frequently now by IFRC) to say that IDP camps are populated by people from the provinces who went to PaP after the earthquake (to get land)”...*” in the current camp population (about 350,000) about 50% were “opportunity migrants”.

The response in terms of shelter and other assistance may have exacerbated the underlying rural exodus and failed to assist people to stay in the countryside when they voluntarily moved there from the capital⁴⁴.

Operational level

As stated at the onset of B.3.1, ECHO is generally perceived quite positively by the implementing partners, who outline its presence in the field as well as its responsiveness, openness, flexibility, and capacity of analysis. ECHO has a large portfolio; it is demanding but also supportive. Field monitoring is thorough and regular, and ECHO is among the very best donors in primary emergency response, as funding can be available in three days. The results-oriented approach enforced through the FPA procedures, in particular the integrated Single Form are also appreciated. Furthermore, ECHO is not dependent on political considerations, and duly promotes and follows humanitarian and GHD principles.

Limitations can most frequently be found in a perceived risk of lack of continuity from year to year, and of longer term strategy (HIPs are limited to 2 years) in the face of protracted or recurrent crises and long shelter processes. Despite the provisions of the EU Consensus, LRRD with other Commission services was not always found as being optimum.

A number of outstanding operational issues – none particular to ECHO and most already briefly discussed – have also been identified in the shelter sector, as follows:

- The training of the sector is a consistent challenge. Training national and regional stakeholders is a recurrent concern, as well as the capacity to undertake large-scale skills training of affected populations. There is a need to better understand national capacities, and to engage better and more consistently at country level to overcome the often limited capacities of host countries. Participation and links with LNGOs and local actors on the ground can build up and make better use of existing capacity.
- Implementation capacity of international actors and donors is also a key concern, with too great a dependence upon a limited pool of consultants, including for urban contexts and cross-cutting issues, combined with limited institutional capacities. As a result, specialist sector assessment raises challenges in achieving consensus and widespread use of an acceptable approach.
- In some cases, donor guidelines are not suitable for the conditions on the ground. For example, consensus guidance is lacking on specific response options that currently have little support, such as for planning refugee camps or supporting apartment tenants, as well as to access the knowledge that already exists.
- Many humanitarian donors and stakeholders are still ignoring the informal sector, in which the majority of the population and recipient communities generally operate, as well as the often well-resourced private sector. This is true for displacement as well as for repair and reconstruction by the non-displaced or returned.
- For measuring results of shelter interventions, implementing partners were found to use essentially indicators of outputs (e.g. n° of houses properly sealed off according to a bill of quantities and a set of standards), rather than outcomes (delivered assistance used as intended, etc.). Effects of better shelter on mortality and morbidity were not measured, due to the lack of SMART and attributable indicators.
- As already discussed, calculations of cost-effectiveness must be thorough when defining strategies, as short-term emergency solutions tend to become rapidly quite expensive. Transitional shelters, locally made like sticks and mud brick structures in Kenya, are considerably more cost effective than tents over even one year under harsh climates. The

⁴⁴ It should be noted that ECHO did support through funding the voluntary return to provinces to mitigate the "pull factor" phenomenon. Rural poverty should be mentioned in order to avoid putting the blame on humanitarian assistance which created employment (pull factor for jobless people)

tents need to be replaced frequently and do not offer adequate shelter for medium-term occupation, although they retain their effectiveness in responding to the needs of new influxes. In the countries visited, ECHO has however not set rigid policy limitations for cost per beneficiary or household but has consistently tried to focus on priority responses and the most “cost-effective” solutions adapted to the context.

- Innovative solutions also need to be assessed from the cost-effectiveness and qualitative points of view. The more technologically advanced ISSB compressed brick is, for example, not cost-effective in Kenya. Even pilot houses failed to achieve the quality required for the design selected, or demonstrate any added value over sticks and mud or mud brick structures, whereas they were at least twice the cost and required significant investments in plant, facilities and especially the training of refugees. In the Jordanian refugee camps, containers (not ECHO-funded) were found leaking and would have required quality control at production site and/or quality assurance upon installation.
- The ‘Building Back Better’ (BBB) approach – which is promoted in all ECHO funded shelter projects in South East Asia - has not always been applied consistently, perhaps due to the lack of published guidelines, and is also hard to achieve with the limited materials provided in the repair kits. As a result, many beneficiaries just build back ‘slightly better’ and repaired shelters are not typhoon resistant, meaning that many have rebuilt their vulnerability and have not escaped their disaster cycle. Nevertheless, people still see the work as permanent.
- The “Universal Design” criteria for shelters that are safe and accessible to all, including all forms of disability and regardless of age, gender, disability or health situation, has been specifically included in some projects. This approach, which does not propose standard designs for use without reference to culture or context, is promoted by Handicap International and should also benefit from consistent support.
- For LRRD and longer-term solutions, legal issues such as the occupation of properties of would-be returnees by newcomers, land acquisition for resettlements, no-build zone demarcations or site development by the government are still major bottlenecks, both in practical guidance and the capacity to implement at scale.
- Environmental or ethical concerns were not key issues in the visited case studies, as shelter materials were generally imported and partners did not report any major problem. The exceptions more representative of the global average were in Jordan, where water was a concern in site selection, and in Kenya, where water abstraction, timber harvesting and sand pits caused some security problems around camps. The lack of local resources (especially timber) and environmental protection often led to imports, the source of which could not be evaluated but which should have been confirmed by partners. In some countries, logging bans have imposed restrictions on the use of lumber in all types of shelter, and obliged to find alternative solutions such as steel frames.

B.4) Recommendations

Following the provisions of the ToR (§ 3.2), this chapter is framed along three main questions.

1. How should the Commission and its implementing partners address the challenges identified?

Institutional challenges

- The level of understanding by all stakeholders of the shelter sector needs to be increased, through advocacy and training/ capacity building, and by the funding of these activities (e.g. through ERC) for the benefit of all sector actors. This should be achieved through continuous support by ECHO to the GSC Strategy and the SAG, which should help identifying relevant initiatives to be proposed for funding.
- The existing differences between GSC and sector must be better integrated in policies – including possibly an upgraded GSC leadership structure (below) -, in coordination mechanisms, strategic planning and the development of consensus good practice and support tools and resources, with the overall objective to enhance consistency between Cluster and sector. An overall solutions-oriented perspective should consider pros and cons of e.g. the lessons learned from the WASH cluster which presents a holistic and long-term approach to clustered and un-clustered responses – contributing in such to the relationship between the cluster and the sector. The GSC, along with other clusters, however has limited engagement with and representation of the global community of practice of its sector, which includes many international actors as well as governments and other national stakeholders, requiring support through broad consultation and concerted action.
- Application of the UNHCR refugee mandate should not exclude considering a cluster-led coordination when the scope of the situation threatens to overcome the field capacities of the agency, such as in Lebanon and Jordan (see also strategic challenges below). Similarly, the mandate limitation of the convenor IFRC should not lead to an excessive focus on emergency solutions and delay GSC in initiating as early as possible longer-term resettlement approaches, which are essential to the sheltering process. To overcome these issues, the option of a “neutral” GSC coordinator designated e.g. by the SAG and paid by the core Cluster budget, should be envisaged and supported by DG ECHO.
- The appropriate development of humanitarian shelter stakeholders to best play their distinct roles in response may be achieved only if the different interpretations are resolved within ECHO and global shelter institutions over the distinction between the sector and Cluster. Capacity building initiatives and resources that recognise the differences between sector and Cluster, but aim at linking between them and other sectors and clusters, should be supported. Any initiative aiming to reinforce inter-cluster coordination and integrated approaches should also be able to identify entry points/criteria of vulnerability where shelter actors must consider integrated approaches with other contiguous clusters and sectors, such as WASH, Health, Livelihoods or Protection (including HLP). These approaches need to respect inter-cluster and inter-sector procedures.
- Ultimate reconciliation between Cluster and sector may be reached in due time by recognising systematically challenges such as: a) the need for all sector actions to be coordinated, regardless of the coordination system in use and especially in a context where more than one is in use; b) the potential direct or indirect support that can be gained from the cluster system even if the cluster approach has not been locally activated; c) the need to maintain the cluster system adequately engaged and informed by relevant sector capacity developments, in order to preserve a global overview; (d) recognising both coordination and operational support in refugee and non-clustered contexts, commensurate with their relative levels of activity; and (e) achieving support

for common tools and resources that bridge cluster, refugee and non-clustered coordination mechanisms through the global shelter community of practice, encouraging consistency and consensus in the pursuit of achieving greater predictability, accountability, responsibility and partnership.

- To tackle the lack of specific references in the Humanitarian Aid Regulation to some newly identified challenges (environment, ethical materials, settlements), there would be a need for further interpretation in the upcoming policy of „protection“. This interpretation would cover such communities (either spontaneous or of ethnic/geographic origin) inside which beneficiaries feel better protected, or initial legal measures that are also aimed at protecting the rights of the displaced and facilitating returns and resilience.

Strategic and operational challenges

- When there is an impasse between humanitarian principles and national policy (such as in Lebanon, Jordan and Kenya), ECHO needs to achieve „political muscle“. The Commission, at the Commissioner level but also importantly with the involvement of DEVCO, should consider as soon as possible engaging more with the UN system or local government in order to resolve the impasse over shelter and settlement. Engaging with key actors may ultimately allow LRRD and provide an exit strategy for ECHO.
- Consideration should be given by ECHO to supporting UNHCR in reviewing its coordination structures, in the light of progress made in the IASC cluster approach, with particular emphasis upon a partnership approach, independent coordination capacities and joint appeals processes. ECHO should either support reform within UNHCR of its coordination and strategic planning mechanisms, or it should fund implementing and operational partners directly in order to give them voice.
- There is also a need to better support the coordination of shelter interventions that do not happen within activated clusters, or under the mandate of UNHCR. ECHO could, for example, consider supporting a consortium of strong and willing professional NGOs (often ECHO partners) to carry out temporarily the shelter coordination tasks, when this appears most effective. The specific nature of coordinating and supporting non-clustered response, as distinct from clustered responses which tend to be to larger emergencies, should be understood and different and additional approaches should be developed, coordinated with cluster support.
- ECHO should discuss further with the IASC how best to maintain coordination mechanisms between recurrent responses in a particular context, such as in area prone to frequent natural disasters. This should include capturing and sharing lessons learnt and good practice, possibly involving common resources, such as a knowledge base and training.
- In its integrated support to GSC and the sector, consideration might be given by ECHO to offering some support to the strategic representation of the experience and priorities of sector institutions and capacities not currently represented in the Cluster: a website supporting, a single annual global meeting in Geneva supported an additional teleconference, ad hoc regional annual Cluster meetings and regional Cluster representatives, all of which support GCS activities only, may be insufficient.
- Support should be considered to the development, under supervision of the GSC, of a consistent, comprehensive and broadly-accepted shelter terminology and set of indicators (see also question 3), which would also reinforce the sector as a whole.
- ECHO should furthermore support the development of a consensus linking the sector, Cluster and other donors over shelter planning processes, including developing and maintaining detailed and consistent strategies at response, programme and project levels.
- ECHO should consider funding preparedness, so that organisations such as UNHCR and IFRC can preposition items before a crisis and respond more rapidly.

2. What best practices/recommendations contribute to the improvement of shelter programming in humanitarian aid? How do such recommendations apply to humanitarian donors, implementing agencies and beneficiaries?

Institutional level

- In a possible revision of the eSF/FPA sector classification, shelters should be closely associated with the frequent coping strategy of settlements, following in such the lessons from the field (respecting communities of displaced) and good practices adopted by SPHERE, the two GSC co-lead agencies and other main donors such as OFDA. NFIs should be considered as a cross-cutting issue (as for rehabilitations) and should become subsectors under Shelter (and Settlements), WASH and Protection.
- ECHO should reinforce the dedicated in-house technical expertise on shelter issues; taking into account the current limitation of resources. The current primarily WASH experts could e.g. be enhanced (upon training, etc.) into “WATHAB” ones. Training and guidance should also be available to all field Technical Advisors.
- In parallel, in the framework of the FPA partnership measures, a “technical reference working group” could be set up that would integrate specialised technical skills on shelter from DG ECHO and the most professionally involved FPA or FAFA partners. The working group could e.g. gather to discuss ad hoc issues of engineering, standards, indicators or cost-effectiveness comparison (see below).
- Further to the suggestion of the (technical, not political) TAG service of OFDA, more DRR planning and conceptualisation – in particular for future large urban disasters – should be considered. This could be done through the established channel for discussing with other international donors, such as the OCHA Donor Support Group, or through a GSC Thematic Group where donors can be present in a technical capacity.
- ECHO could help engaging non-traditional donors into GHD, at the same level as traditional ones. There is also a need to harmonise the western approach to accountability with the Muslim values of Zakat (“to give without asking questions”), following perhaps the Muslim Aid booklet on this issue (no web reference found).
- The upcoming Shelter policy should be accompanied by guidelines referring to shelter and settlement, from individual to country level, and from preparedness to development. Additionally, they should also refer to „entry points“ into other sectors that are key for shelter (WASH, health, cash subsidies or vouchers, protection – including SGBV, women, children, elderly and the disabled-, livelihood, HLP, etc.). The guidelines, training and roll-out should include a toolbox for funding consideration by ECHO staff (as relevant and feasible), derived e.g. from the typologies included in the field reports. Software must also be part of the ECHO toolbox, including capacity building for beneficiaries, or self-maintenance guidelines.
- A gap analysis should be undertaken of guidance and tools for technical response, for both displaced and non-displaced populations, especially tenants. For example, ECHO should fund guidelines for camp planning. Despite the on-going importance of this activity (including emerging progress on implementing the neighbourhood approach inside camps), there is currently no updated or general such guidelines. ECHO should also support efforts towards lesson learning and best practice in camp planning.
- Policies related to environmental factors in shelter activities would be of great support to the partners. Also, the dissemination of lessons learned or good practice related to projects where technology, use of local material and sustainability, have been properly considered would be supportive.

Strategic level

GSC

In responding to all four strategic challenges listed in the conclusions, GSC should engage – with ECHO support – into the humanitarian reform process in the following ways.

- Building upon GSC thematic priorities, the Cluster should be encouraged to consider widening its scope to include support to the broader sector, with the explicit objective of supporting the global shelter and settlement community of practice. Where possible, roles should be agreed with each stakeholder group and supported. For example, donors and IFIs might meet to agree common priorities at global and operational levels.
- The Cluster should be encouraged to map the broader sector, in general terms, and consulted in the contexts of national, regional and global capacities. Past, on-going and future initiatives by sector stakeholders might be continually identified, recognised and supported by the full Cluster, where possible, increasing partner engagement and ownership by extending beyond the SAG. As examples of global capacities: the sector training under development by USAID OFDA might be adopted by the Cluster for sector support; and the Shelter and Settlement library, funded by the same donor, might be recognised, used and supported by the Cluster.
- As a result of the consultation, a series of guidelines, tools and resources should be prioritised and developed by the GSC. A joint or coordinated funding mechanism might be considered. These might best specifically include some national and regional priorities. Guidelines, tools and resources might be developed in consensus, with the process of achieving that consensus being part of the objective, in supporting the global shelter and settlement sector community of practice. Appropriate translations might be included in resource development. There is e.g. no dedicated guidance or lessons learnt in support of: tenants, which are the urban majority; apartment buildings, which are the urban norm; or how to plan refugee camps (with CCCM).
- In order to bridge between different coordination contexts and IASC clusters, *horizontal* linkages across coordination contexts and sectors should be developed to complement support by ECHO to *vertical* clustered structures. The global shelter and settlement sector community of practice might be supported with one or a series of resources, such as trainings and dedicated websites, independent but linked to the GSC and other cluster websites. These resources would support and link national, regional and global events, knowledge management and the prioritisation and development of common initiatives across sectors and clusters. Core collaborations might be agreed between clusters, such as with CCCM, Protection and WASH; however it may be inappropriate to limit the scope or management of these resources to the clusters, as this would constrain their ability to support external stakeholders, as well as different coordination contexts.
- As examples of national, regional and global capacities, meetings such as the UK Shelter Forum, Kenyan Shelter Forum and Shelter Meeting should be recognised and supported through the GSC, while each would retain independence, also as they support stakeholders not represented in the clusters, as well as different coordination contexts. Support might include funding, encouraging linkages and the development of common themes, but also greater diversification, in order to increase the coverage, number and frequency of national and regional fora. Again, care should be taken not to limit the scope or management of these meetings to the clusters.
- As an inter-cluster, sector and stakeholder initiative, the UN and UNHCR should be encouraged to elaborate how coordination structures work in non-clustered and refugee responses. Elaboration should include details of how regional responses are intended to be coordinated, in contexts where more than one coordination structure is employed. Discussions with the GSC and other stakeholders should include consultation and dissemination strategies.
- A consistent structure and approach to developing and implementing strategies should be considered by the GSC and the leads of non-clustered and refugee coordination mechanisms. Strategy development and coordination in implementation remain a challenge for the sector. The guideline published by UN/OCHA supporting the development and implementation of shelter

and settlement strategies⁴⁵ appears to have informed these strategies, increasing consistency in terminology and approach, however the lack of both a common template and process constrain the effectiveness of humanitarian response in achieving greater predictability, accountability, responsibility and partnership. Developing and implementing strategies must be supported and be consistent at response, programme and project levels, as each level should contribute.

DG ECHO

- ECHO should maintain, for optimum effectiveness and resilience purposes, its flexibility in supporting integrated multi-sector approaches in which shelter is a major component alongside – as required by needs - WASH, health, livelihood or cash assistance, capacity building software, and legal counselling for the returnees.
- ECHO may explore with its partners how to better include the refugee and host communities in the decision-making processes, in programme design, coordination and implementation.
- ECHO should consider funding the development of guidelines for the use of shelter as part of peace and reconciliation activities, involving protection actors, building upon existing work⁴⁶.
- There is a need for a consistent approach across cluster and sector coordination to the various components of assessment, monitoring and evaluation, in order to arrive at a predictable and accountable system with agreed responsibilities for partnerships across both displaced and non-displaced affected populations. This approach should be linked by common strategic information management and involve a continually updated understanding of: baseline data, such as tracking displacement; livelihoods data, such as provided by the EMMA⁴⁷ toolkit; household profiling, such as that achieved through the REACH initiative; and specific technical surveys, such as of building damage.

Operational level

- Humanitarian coordination should make clear that cash is not distributed for the sake of providing cash assistance, but to cover specific needs (shelter, food...), which do not appear clearly in this framework and may impact on accountability. For accountability purposes, cash assistance should be sub-divided among the relevant sectors: food aid, shelter, etc. – provided that this is possible with the “guichet unique” approach. A do-no-harm approach to cash assistance (e.g. to avoid the indirect negative impact of inflation) must be outlined in the upcoming ECHO shelter guidelines. Programmes involving cash invariably involve other methods of assistance, such as technical advice, and should be understood in planning and implementation in the context of the outcome that they seek to contribute.
- Since shelter assistance to displaced entails large budgets (rehabilitation, cash) and may create frustrations in the most vulnerable categories of the local/ host population, do-no-harm must be applied and LRRD must be considered to mitigate such effects (development assistance to local infrastructure, social assistance schemes, etc.). An understanding must be maintained, therefore, of the macro- and micro-economic context to intervention, through detailed and continuous assessments of livelihoods.
- In humanitarian life-saving situations, cost-effectiveness must be flexible in initial operations and also take into account probable costs over the duration of response. Shelter responses and corresponding budgets should be adapted to locally acceptable cultural and living conditions (1) at location of origin, and (2) at location of displacement.
- Shelter-related indicators must be further developed:

⁴⁵ ref <http://sheltercentre.org/node/12873>

⁴⁶ For example ‘Artisan Training Manual: Step by step construction of low cost house for internally displaced persons in the greater Uasin Gishu County’, DRC, undated.

⁴⁷ <http://emma-toolkit.org/about-emma/>

- ECHO should discuss with GSC and its partners about the most adapted SMART outcome indicators for shelter (e.g. “shelter material is used as intended”) and promote their use;
 - crucial elements of morbidity and mortality should be captured despite attribution problems; a more “flexible/ general” qualitative indicator of outcome (i.e. not SMART based on hard facts but on argued perception of beneficiaries) should be proposed (e.g. “perceived contribution of shelter on improved health conditions”); and
 - indicators of “adequacy” (above basic emergency SPHERE indicators) are used by UNRWA to ensure some minimum measure of wellbeing to the refugees in very protracted/ long-term situations, which should inform the development by ECHO and its partners of indicators for such situations.
- Communications strategies for all responses should be improved and introduced as standard operating procedures, supporting the consultation, participation and communicating in both directions with affected communities. A greater and more systemic use of mobile telephones and the internet should be explored. Opportunities should be sought for poster campaigns and through education. Considering that TV and radio are part of local culture in many developing countries (there is often a TV set in nearly every household, rich or poor), public information about shelter rehabilitation opportunities, legal assistance for rental procedures, humanitarian aid principles, etc., should (also) be made systematically through TV and radio spots.
- Considering the technical deficiencies found in the Jordanian camp of Zaatari on e.g. containers (not ECHO-funded) with leaking roofs or badly stabilised water tanks for WASH facilities, it should be envisaged to fund QA (at production plant) and QC (installation on site), where necessary. Examples include the production of plastic sheeting and tents, which have very variable quality, especially when procured urgently. Greater consideration should be given to the transportation and storage of materials, in order to minimise losses in transit and degradation, such as for bricks and cement respectively.
- Following the example of AusAid (see also LNGO evaluation), ECHO should include a more explicit requirement in agreements that INGO implementing partners have local counterparts on the ground with experience in the particular area concerned, in order to strengthen local capacities and better link to longer term development approaches.
- When this appears most cost-effective and not contrary to sustainable use of local resources, ECHO should encourage repairs, reconstruction and the building of safe transitional shelters with indigenous materials, capacities, skills, tools and designs, including hazard resistant techniques.
- The development of alternative/new technologies should also be supported, but with emphasis upon complementarity and good practice processes, rather than as replacements for locally proven sustainable construction methods. ECHO should fund the qualitative and cost-effectiveness assessment of such innovative technologies and processes prior to use, including upon identifying the gaps that they are intended to fill (e.g. unlike the ISSB compressed bricks in Kenya, which were not adequate and did not fill any gap).
- The use of “Universal Design” shelters, which do not offer standard shelter regardless of context but which promote inclusive access for all age groups, genders and disabilities, should be promoted as specific performance requirements in the future guidelines, with clear advice on local cultural adaptations of the requirements.
- For timeliness and accountability purposes, ECHO should investigate the reasons for the late top-up of winterization budget in Jordan (announced only mid-December 2012).

3. How should DG ECHO position itself vis-à-vis emergency, transitional and durable shelter solutions? What criteria should be applied to determine how far into transition DG ECHO should be prepared to fund actions?

- According e.g. to the typology produced by UNHCR in Lebanon, short-term emergency shelter solutions (tents, sealing off) are meant to last up to 6 months⁴⁸; mid-term options (prefabs, T-shelters, basic/urgent housing rehabilitation) aim at a 6-12 months period; longer term transitional solutions (more comprehensive though still minimal housing rehabilitation, containers) should have a 12 – 24 months lifespan, which corresponds to the HIP horizon.
- Support should be offered to developing guidance on repair and reconstruction recognising, for example, the different requirements for damage created by conflicts and to achieve hazard resistance, always in the context of national building regulations and what is sustainable locally, both economically and environmentally.
- As already stated, ECHO should support – as and when initiated by GSC - the definition of a broadly accepted terminology for post-emergency types of shelter (transitional, temporary, semi-permanent, core housing, sites and services, etc.). This approach should facilitate a corresponding typology of longer-term shelters, with indications of cost-effectiveness and lifetime.
- Depending however on quality and maintenance (training software can have a multiplier effect), longer term transitional shelter solutions (some types of T-shelters, temporary rehabilitations of housing and community centres) can easily reach a lifetime of 3 to 10 years and more. Considering the protracted nature of many crises and the usual lack of LRRD, the higher initial investment cost of such solutions must be divided by their expected number of useful years, to which must be added qualitative factors of life on a longer period for the displaced and especially their coping communities organised in settlements or neighbourhoods. This approach makes them in effect quite cost effective as compared to short-term shelters that must be replaced regularly, and should be considered by ECHO whenever relevant.
- Such extended periods would furthermore still correspond to the accepted definition of transitional or semi-permanent in most donor countries (“permanent“ being tentatively understood as longer than an average familial generation⁴⁹) although they would probably appear as permanent for many vulnerable recipients who traditional housing requires replacement or repair within a generation – solving in such the LRRD problem.
- ECHO should accordingly clarify in the upcoming Shelter policy the definition of “short term” rehabilitation and reconstruction, which needs to reflect the actual lifetime (above) of transitional or semi-permanent shelters that are regularly being funded.
- The most cost-effective solutions in terms of transitional or semi-permanent shelters - rather than tents that should be used only for short-term accommodation of influxes - must therefore become part of a shelter strategy whenever support is considered for the displaced, and where the situation is likely to last without clear exit strategy or LRRD. The choice and combination of transitional solutions would depend on an ad hoc basis from the local context (actors present, local production and logistics capacities, environmental concerns).

⁴⁸ ‘Transitional tents’ should be developed with longer lifespans and offering more adequate shelter. It is worth noting that it is not possible to stand upright in all but a small part of the 3.5m²/person covered area of all current standard tents: Somali refugees in IFO2 said they preferred the LWET over the UNHCR/IFRC family tent because you they could stand up in it. Transitional tent structures should be sufficiently strong to be upgraded using local materials, yet sufficiently small and light to be stockpiled and airlifted. This preliminary conclusion also has relevance to the Lebanon and Jordan case study, especially concerning breaking the cycle of winterising and ‘summerising’ emergency shelter support.

⁴⁹ A familial generation can be defined as: the number of years equivalent to the average age of a mother at the times she has her children, which for the sake of convenience is traditionally regarded as 25 years; the average time between a mother's first offspring and her daughter's first offspring; or the average age of women at first birth. CDC, 2010.

- Also cost effective might be the contingency preparation of medium term shelter options, such as potential collective centres and flood shelters, whilst avoiding squatting, materials theft and degradation, for example by designing flood shelters as schools. The stockpiling of materials for repairs and transitional shelter would be of some value, if implementation capacity could keep pace with influxes, but would probably result in a significant loss in materials unless they were stored carefully, with some requiring warehousing.
- Since the majority of victims are increasingly urban ones and seek to stay in or near their damaged houses and save their assets, as early as possible after natural disasters or as conflict situations allow, more support should be devoted to safe self-reconstruction and repair efforts. Rental of private accommodation should be subject to an assessment of hazard resistance, support to host families and monitoring of legal and economic conditions. T-shelters are sometimes not improved incrementally in urban settings and may skew perceptions and expectations; camps and collective centres are even more detrimental to resilience beyond critical emergencies such as coping with rapid influxes.
- The overall objective of resilience should also comprise support to livelihoods and the local economy, as much as permitted in the ECHO mandate (cash assistance, training, technical certification, mass information campaign, quality management, etc.). Individual and community contribution (labour, space, material, hosting, etc.) must be an integral part of the approach in order to reduce dependency, foster ownership, and find local solutions.
- Due to the often weak legal frameworks of developing countries, HLP is a key protection factor for facilitating returns or resettlement of the displaced, as well as resilience and ultimate recovery. Although HLP is generally a protracted process that lasts well beyond ECHO's intervention timeframe, it is crucial to initiate it as early as possible (e.g. starting with ICLA legal counselling and support) and link it with LRRD actors, involving the capacities to implement at the scales required.
- For repair and reconstruction, or BBB (Building Back Better), ECHO should consider the longer-term monitoring of repair works, as well as better adapted materials packages and improved approaches on how to build/repair back better with a limited budget. Donors should however be aware that it is not realistic to expect families to build back better with an inadequate understanding of risk, poor technical support and limited repair budgets, but only to the same level as before.
- Provided that this is feasible within ECHO's intervention timeframe and local authorities involved in DRR and LRRD duly follow the principles of humanity and impartiality, ECHO should liaise as much as appropriately possible with such authorities, without direct funding, as per mandate.
- In parallel, ECHO should continue supporting partners who are working with such government and local actors on transitional and durable shelter. ECHO should support advocacy by these specialised partners, for example on HLP, planning and relocation.

