Feasibility Study into Low-Cost Housing for Vulnerable Groups in Nord-Kivu

September 2009

Robert D’Cruz

Commissioned by GTZ Partnership Office, Nord-Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo,
Funded by UNHCR, Nord-Kivu
Contents

Acknowledgements .................................................................................................................. 4
List of Acronyms ...................................................................................................................... 5
1. Executive Summary .............................................................................................................. 7
   1.1. The Feasibility Study .................................................................................................. 7
   1.2. Findings .................................................................................................................... 7
   1.3. Limitations of the Study ............................................................................................ 8
   1.4. Next Steps ................................................................................................................ 9
2. Background .......................................................................................................................... 10
   2.1. The Current Security Situation ................................................................................. 10
3. Vulnerable Groups .............................................................................................................. 12
   3.1. IDP’s in Camps ......................................................................................................... 12
   3.2. IDP’s with Host Families ......................................................................................... 13
   3.3. Congolese Refugees .................................................................................................. 14
   3.4. Vulnerable Families of Ex-Combatants ..................................................................... 15
   3.5. The Total Caseload .................................................................................................. 15
4. Prognosis over the Coming Year .......................................................................................... 17
5. The Low-Cost Housing Solution ......................................................................................... 18
   5.1. Beneficiary Issues .................................................................................................... 18
   5.2. Land Issues ............................................................................................................... 18
   5.3. Social Issues ............................................................................................................ 20
   5.4. Management and Financial Issues .......................................................................... 21
   5.5. Construction Issues .................................................................................................. 25
6. Outstanding Questions ......................................................................................................... 27
   6.1. What is the legally recognised mechanism for land acquisition and transfer of property? .................................................................................................................. 27
   6.2. How many beneficiaries are will there be? ............................................................... 28
   6.3. How large should the settlements be? ....................................................................... 28
   6.4. Who will provide funding? ......................................................................................... 28
   6.5. Who will implement the projects? .............................................................................. 28
   6.6. When will conditions be right to start the process? .................................................. 28
7. Next Steps .......................................................................................................................... 29
8. Recommendations .............................................................................................................. 30
A Study into Low-Cost Housing for Vulnerable Groups in Nord-Kivu

Bibliography .................................................................................................................. 31

List of Annexes

a. Annex 1. List of Persons Met
c. Annex 3. Reference Documents
d. Annex 4. Programme Cost Estimate

Table of Figures

Figure 1. Rural Nord-Kivu.................................................................................................. 4
Figure 2. The Democratic Republic of Congo (showing Nord-Kivu) ................................. 6
Figure 3. IDP interviewed on 11 August 2009 at Mugunga II Camp, near Goma ............... 13
Figure 4. Quartier Kasika. Home to many IDP’s staying with host families ....................... 14
Figure 5. The Target Groups .......................................................................................... 16
Figure 6. Programme Cost Estimate Summary .................................................................. 24
Figure 7. Examples of Current Self-Building Practices in Nord-Kivu ................................. 27
Acknowledgements

This report was produced by GTZ, Partnership Office, Nord-Kivu for UNHCR, DRC East and has benefitted from close collaboration with the Ministère Provincial des Travaux Publics, Infrastructures, Affaires Foncières, Transcoms et Urbanisme.

Special thanks are due for inputs from the Goma-based staff of the following organisations CARE International, CARITAS Development, La Chefferie des Bashali, Fonds pour Consolidation de la Paix, Norwegian Refugee Council, Ministère Provincial de Justice, Droits Humaines et Rèinstertion Communautaire, MONUC DDRRR, Rutshuru Administration Territoire, UN Habitat, UN OCHA, UNDP and UNICEF.

Figure 1. Rural Nord-Kivu
# List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CNDP</td>
<td>Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDR</td>
<td>Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDRRR</td>
<td>Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration, Repatriation and Resettlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FARDC</td>
<td>Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (National Army of DRC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GoDRC</td>
<td>Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTZ PO</td>
<td>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, Partnership Operation, Nord-Kivu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Justice</td>
<td>Ministère Provincial de Justice, Droits Humaines et Réinsertion Communautaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Urbanisme</td>
<td>Ministère Provincial des Travaux Publics, Infrastructures, Affaires Foncières, Transcoms et Urbanisme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONUC</td>
<td>Mission des Natons Unies en République Démocratique du Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFI</td>
<td>Non-food items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRC</td>
<td>Norwegian Refugee Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNDDR</td>
<td>National Programme of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (run by GoDRC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGBV</td>
<td>Sexual and gender-based violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAREC</td>
<td>Stabilisation and Recovery Plan for Eastern Congo (run by GoDRC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN OCHA</td>
<td>UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNOPS</td>
<td>UN Office for Project Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>UN Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>UN High Commission for Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>UN Children’s Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational education and training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Study into Low-Cost Housing for Vulnerable Groups in Nord-Kivu

Figure 2. The Democratic Republic of Congo (showing Nord-Kivu)
1. Executive Summary

1.1. The Feasibility Study

This study was commissioned by GTZ PO Nord-Kivu, on behalf of UNHCR, DRC East. The objective of the study was to investigate the feasibility of low-cost housing as a permanent shelter solution for vulnerable groups in the province of Nord-Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo. These vulnerable groups included:

- IDP’s currently in camps who find themselves unable to return to their original locations in Nord-Kivu
- IDP’s with host families who find themselves unable to return to their original locations in Nord-Kivu
- Congolese refugees in other countries who find themselves unable to return to their original locations in Nord-Kivu, and
- Vulnerable families of ex-combatants in Nord-Kivu

The study took place over three weeks in August and September 2009 and included meetings with concerned parties from the GoDRC, the Chefferie (traditional authority structures), humanitarian actors and donor organisations; field visits to relevant areas; interviews with potential beneficiaries; a desk study of low-cost housing practices in other countries and a group discussion among interested parties.

The inclusion of vulnerable urban populations as part of a slum clearance campaign was not considered within the scope of this study.

1.2. Findings

The study found that new low-cost housing settlements can play an important part in the stabilisation phase of Nord-Kivu by providing durable shelter to those vulnerable elements of the population, who find themselves unable to return to their areas of origin, and vulnerable ex-combatant families, who may return to armed groups in order to secure an income. These new settlements would reduce the vulnerabilities of these families and enable them to empower themselves within new communities eventually generating their own income and contributing to the development of the province.

Preliminary estimates suggest that the numbers of beneficiaries that may be eligible to participate in such low-cost housing projects may be in the order of 50,000. Thus, some 10,000 housing units may be required.

In the process of the establishment of any new community the active participation of the prospective community members is the most important element. However, it is also recognised that land security is absolutely essential when considering any permanent housing solution.

The process of land acquisition in Nord-Kivu remains unclear; nevertheless it can only be the responsibility of the GoDRC to ensure that beneficiaries retain 100% ownership of their new homes on a permanent basis. It is well established that community relationships, which is the power and strength of any society, becomes stronger when people feel ownership of their homes (Christel Sumerauer, 2007). Therefore it is essential that the beneficiaries do not pay rents to anyone but maintain 100% ownership of their homes. The GoDRC must therefore facilitate all necessary negotiations and agreements between landowners, current occupiers, neighbouring communities and the Chefferie to enable this. A detailed environmental impact assessment will also be required for any site identified for development to ensure its sustainability.
Given the ethnic nature of conflicts within the Great Lakes Region over the past 15 years, broad consultation, sensitization and transparency of process are seen as being vital for the formation of new settlements and their peaceful co-existence with their neighbours. Unrest in the province has frequently been caused by misunderstandings and ethnic rivalries. New settlements must be multi-ethnic, and should, so far as reasonably possible, include a balance of diverse groups.

Any new communities must exist to the mutual benefit of themselves, their neighbours and former landowners and occupiers. A detailed socio-economic impact assessment must be undertaken on each site identified to ensure that cultural and economic tensions between the new community and its neighbours are properly managed and minimised. The new communities must have access to their own sustainable livelihoods without detrimental effects on their neighbours.

Establishment of empowered community councils should be supported. They in turn should represent their residents (including all minority groups), act as focal points for internal and external communication and action and play a key part in the construction and development of their settlements.

Funding for any such projects should be managed by a committee representing all key stakeholders: GoDRC, representatives from the community councils and donor organisations. GoDRC will be responsible for land acquisition and distribution, sensitization and the provision of physical security. The beneficiaries will be responsible for building their properties and provision of certain materials. Donor organisations will be responsible for all other project costs including the provision of durable community infrastructure, capacity building of the Ministry of Urbanisme and capacity building of the beneficiaries through vocational education and training.

The GoDRC must include the recurrent costs of administration of any new settlements in their own development plans and budgets. The adoption of these new communities into provincial structures will ultimately be the exit strategy of any settlement construction project.

Self-building of houses will be promoted, as this is the traditional means for the creation of living space for low-income families in Nord-Kivu. Through this method, sustainability of any new settlement will be enhanced, the sense of ownership by beneficiaries will be fortified and the local economy will be stimulated through the supply of necessary skilled labour and building materials. Community empowerment will be strengthened through management of the construction process including negotiation of supply tenders (for nails, doors, windows etc.). The capacity of new communities can also be enhanced through the establishment of vocational education and training centres. Extension of participation in these centres to neighbouring communities may also enhance external links.

Housing designs should be the product of extensive consultation with the community in order to ensure increased satisfaction and equitability. Before the designs are finalised a study should be made into improved building techniques employing appropriate methods of fire protection, seismic resistance and the careful use of natural resources (especially alternatives to timber, such as rammed earth and compressed earth blocks). However, such improvements must be presented to and freely adopted by the communities before they are included in housing designs.

A cost estimate for the provision of 10,000 houses is included in the annexes to this report. The estimated total cost was just under US$50 million.

1.3. Limitations of the Study

As the field study was compressed into a two-week timeframe during the humanitarian phase of activities in Nord-Kivu, it was not possible to address all questions of resettlement that arose at that
A Study into Low-Cost Housing for Vulnerable Groups in Nord-Kivu

stage. Also, due to other commitments at that time, key members of the GoDRC and MONUC were not available for in-depth discussion. Notable questions that remain unanswered include:

- **What is the legally recognised mechanism for land acquisition and transfer of property?** Relevant laws are clear and should be reinforced by changes that will be made to the national constitution over the coming months. However, there is a difference of opinion, on the ground, between government authorities and the Chefferie on these issues; this must be addressed and reconciled prior to construction. UNHCR in collaboration with UN Habitat are currently working to solve this problem in Nord-Kivu.

- **When will conditions be right to start construction of low-cost housing?** Low-cost housing is a stabilisation activity. The prevailing humanitarian phase in Nord-Kivu will only pass as security improves in the province. At the moment the peace process is at a critical juncture and it is difficult to predict when the stabilisation phase will start.

- **How many beneficiaries will there be?** Again, as Nord-Kivu is still in the humanitarian phase and many potential beneficiaries are not yet certain whether or not they will be able to return to their areas of origin, it was not possible to determine actual numbers of beneficiaries during the study. The figures included in this report are preliminary estimates based on a recent survey of IDP camps residents (by UNOPS/UNHCR) and previous experience in similar situations in other African countries.

- **How large should settlements be?** This should be determined through dialogue between local authorities, the Chefferie and the beneficiaries. It may be wise to make the communities large enough to sustain their own schools, health facilities and community buildings without posing a burden on neighbouring communities. A figure of 400 households per settlement is suggested for the purposes of this report.

- **Who will provide funding?** MONUC and Fonds pour le Consolidation de la Paix have expressed interest. Others may also wish to be involved as the stabilisation phase approaches. However, firm proposals will be required before funding commitments can be made.

- **Who will implement the projects?** GTZ, UNHCR and NRC have expressed some interest in implementation of parts of the initiative. Again, others may wish to get involved as the stabilisation phase approaches; however the vast majority of implementing agencies in Nord-Kivu currently focus on humanitarian interventions.

### 1.4. Next Steps

Though the time is not yet right to establish low-cost housing settlements, it is believed that such settlements will play an important part in the stabilisation of Nord-Kivu. Therefore a number of activities should start at this stage in order to complete preparations that will enable construction to start at the right time. Most important is that a clear mechanism of land acquisition is agreed and established between the provincial authorities and the Chefferie. Following this, sites can be identified and assessed.

Later, following the continued return of IDP’s to their areas of origin and the start of voluntary return of Congolese refugees, baseline data can be collected and numbers of beneficiaries can be established. Following that, broad sensitization and consultation can start, together with the selection of beneficiaries. After this, infrastructure construction can start and work can begin on housing units.
2. Background

The provinces of Nord-Kivu and Sud-Kivu are conflict zones, which have seen the displacement of over 1.3 million people internally and hundreds of thousands externally to neighbouring countries, notably Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda. The conflict zones are marked by the destruction of social infrastructure, homes and farmland.

UNHCR have played a leading role in assisting IDP’s through their Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) approach. UNHCR plans to support the voluntary return of IDP’s and Congolese refugees from Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi in the returning territories of Masisi, Rutshuru, Beni and Lubero, through the provision of durable shelter and the revitalisation of community dynamics.

This assistance has exposed challenges in several areas including ethnic diversity, problems of land tenure, community solidarity, accessibility to zones of return (due to poor road conditions, which also makes access to construction materials difficult) and finally the inefficient use of natural resources (wood, sand and other construction materials).

GTZ Partnership Operation is working with UNHCR in the provinces of l’Equateur, Katanga, Sud-Kivu and Nord-Kivu through the management of logistics for refugees, returnees and IDP’s on the one part and the reintegration of affected populations into their zones of origin on the other.

In Nord-Kivu GTZ Partnership Operation undertakes logistical support (transport, storage, garaging and management of fuels), but is in the preparation stage for the facilitation of the return and reintegration of refugees and IDP’s in the territories of Beni, Masisi, Rutshuru and possibly Walikale. Shelter assistance is a priority activity for UNHCR.

GTZ PO is involved in devising a shelter strategy for UNHCR for Eastern DRC. GTZ PO is also a member of the shelter working group (GTA, Group de Travail Abris) of the NFI/Shelter Cluster for which UNICEF is the lead agency. Within the GTA, GTZ are very active in the search for an appropriate strategy in terms of emergency, temporary and durable shelter for populations targeted for humanitarian assistance, in the development of standards and tools for monitoring, in the elaboration of a charter for interventions and in the advocacy for the mobilization of financial and material resources.

2.1. The Current Security Situation

Recent developments in Eastern DRC have opened a window of opportunity for the consolidation of peace in the Kivus that the GoDRC and the international community are eager to seize (MONUC, 2009).

Following the signing of the Peace Accords that put an end to the political crisis and armed conflict in the DRC in 2003, and the establishment of a legitimate government in 2006, the eastern provinces of the DRC have continued to suffer intermittent but recurrent cycles of violence. Tensions have mainly been due to the presence of foreign and local armed groups hindering state control and preying on vast areas of the eastern provinces.

The upsurge of violence in Nord-Kivu since August 2008, as a result of the resumption of hostilities by the Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP), created massive unrest, challenging the re-establishment of state authority, straining regional relations and reversing the fragile progress made in peace-building during recent years. Yet, by early 2009, the improvement in diplomatic relations
between the DRC and neighbouring countries (Rwanda and Uganda); the January 2009 cease-fire with the CNDP, the arrest of Laurent Nkunda and the integration of CNDP elements into the national armed forces (FARDC); as well as the joint operations carried out by the GoDRC with the Ugandan army (against the Lord’s Resistance Army) and the Rwandan Army (against the FDLR) have considerably reduced tensions in the eastern provinces.

By February 2009, the GoDRC had re-occupied most of the areas previously occupied by armed groups, which are being progressively integrated into the army. In March 2009, peace agreements between the GoDRC, the CNDP and most armed groups were signed in North and South Kivu. These recent developments have considerably reshaped the political and military landscape in the Kivus and opened the door to reconciliation and recovery in Eastern DRC. At the same time, on-going conflicts with foreign armed groups, notably the Lord’s Resistance Army and the FDLR, constitute remaining security challenges, underscoring the fragility of current peace-building dynamics.

Efforts to resolve the conflict and consolidate peace in Nord-Kivu are currently at a critical juncture. Current political settlements remain fragile. The current situation is characterized by:

- A delicate power-sharing formula in Nord-Kivu, where CNDP military, police and administrative capacities are in the process of being formally integrated into GoDRC structures, but with considerable uncertainty regarding availability of resources to finance and support these efforts;

- A resurgence of violence by the FDLR against the Government and civilians in Nord- and Sud-Kivu following the Joint Operations of January/February 2009, and continued attempts by the FARDC (with MONUC support) to counter these actions.

- Continued crime, harassment, and violence against the civilian population by undisciplined, untrained and unpaid FARDC units in key areas in the Kivus, which is increasing due to new deployments in areas previously controlled by armed groups, as well as in urban centres (including Goma).

- Continuing high levels of violence by rebel groups and insecurity targeting the civilian population, including sexual and gender-based violence, which is impeding the return of over 1 million internally displaced persons (IDP) and refugees, aggravating the humanitarian situation, inhibiting economic recovery at community level, and preventing the extension or restoration of state authority and the return to a state of rule of law.

Further security agreements were made between the President of DRC, Joseph Kabila, and the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame on 9 and 10 August 2009.

Recent security maps and reports can be found in Annex 3.
3. **Vulnerable Groups**

There are currently four main vulnerable groups that are likely to require durable shelter. They are:

- *IDP’s currently in camps* who find themselves unable to return to their original locations in Nord-Kivu
- *IDP’s with host families* who find themselves unable to return to their original locations in Nord-Kivu
- *Congolese refugees* in other countries who find themselves unable to return to their original locations in Nord-Kivu, and
- *Vulnerable families of ex-combatants* in Nord-Kivu

These groups will be described in turn below. Resettlement of slum-dwelling communities in Nord-Kivu was considered to be a development activity and therefore beyond the scope of this report.

It is important to note that the conditions of these groups at the time of writing were uncertain. Little baseline data was available and the situation was highly likely to change depending on the progress of the ongoing peace process.

### 3.1. IDP’s in Camps

According to UNOPS there were estimated to be 195,800 IDP’s registered in official camps in Nord-Kivu at 8 August 2009. A recent survey by UNOPS found that 5% of these expressed a preference to stay where they were instead of relocating back to their place of origin or to another place. This yields a figure of some 10,000 people who may require durable shelter. The reasons for their decisions were not included in the survey.

During this study five heads of families were interviewed in Mugunga 2 IDP camp. They were selected for interview by the camp President, who believed they did not want to return to their areas of origin. Three interviewees said they were unable to return to their places of origin because of ethnic issues, destruction or confiscation of house and land. These three interviewees said they would like to stay either in Goma or possibly a third location if accommodation were made available to them. The other two interviewees stated that they wish to return to their areas of origin when they are safe enough to do so. Notes from these interviews are included in Annex 1.

The GoDRC recognise the right of all Congolese citizens to settle anywhere they wish throughout the country.

Assistance currently given to IDP’s in camps is managed under the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) mechanism. The process is implemented on behalf of the GoDRC by several humanitarian organisations and includes appropriate and targeted assistance. The CCCM includes assistance to facilitate the return to and protection of IDP’s in their areas of origin however, for the time being, most assistance, is provided in the form of aid, protection and services for camp residents.

The update CCCM Strategy can be found in Annex 3.

Assistance is also provided to those IDP’s who choose to return to their original locations by the PEAR programme, which is led by UNICEF. Through this programme standard kits of non-food items are distributed to returning families. The kits include kitchen utensils, plastic sheeting, mosquito nets and other essential items. A full list can be found in Annex 3.
3.2. IDP’s with Host Families

No survey has yet been completed to determine the numbers of IDP’s staying with host families in Nord-Kivu. However, it is generally accepted that of the entire IDP caseload in Nord-Kivu some 30% are registered in camps while 70% stay with host families. If we assume 195,800 are registered in camps, this would set the current number with host families at around 456,900.

Again no survey has been taken of those IDP’s with host families who see themselves as unable to return to their areas of origin, but if we assume the figure to be around 5% (as in the camps as mentioned in section 3.1), this would set the number at around 22,840. Naturally, this figure is a rough, preliminary estimate and detailed baseline studies are necessary to verify this figure.

During this study the heads of seven IDP families currently staying with host families in Goma were interviewed. Of these, two stated that they did not want to return to their areas of origin because parents and other family members were killed, their land had been confiscated and because their houses were destroyed. Notes from these interviews are included in Annex 1.

Assistance currently given to some IDP’s staying with host families is provided under the UMOJA (‘Solidarity’) pilot project implemented by CARE International in two quartiers within Goma. The quartiers chosen, Ndosh and Kasika, were selected for their relatively high vulnerability levels and the 553 beneficiary families were also selected based on their vulnerability. Assistance given included durable shelter support (to accepted local standards), food (through US$100 vouchers), NFI kits (standard kits plus US$80 vouchers), hygiene promotion and SGBV awareness.

The project is currently coming to an end and will be evaluated with a view to expansion. No other assistance project for IDP's staying with host families in Nord-Kivu was known at the time of reporting.
3.3. Congolese Refugees

According to UNHCR (DRC East) statistics in their presentation for the meeting preparing for the Tripartite Agreement (a legal framework for the dignified return of refugees in Rwanda and DRC), there were some 40,400 Congolese refugees from Nord-Kivu who were registered in Rwanda in April 2009. Of the total 49,700 Congolese refugees registered in Rwanda at that time, over 85% expressed a wish to return to the DRC.

However, it is generally believed that a large proportion of these people may not be able to return to their areas of origin within the DRC for a number of reasons. The most important reason is that many have been displaced for so long (in many cases for over 10 years) without access to farmland that their original capacity for farming has been severely reduced. These people may require resettlement in other areas of Nord-Kivu.

According to UNHCR (Uganda) statistics, there were 64,400 Congolese refugees in Uganda at 1 July 2009. Of these, 59,000 originated from Nord-Kivu.

Hence the total number of refugees from Nord-Kivu in Rwanda and Uganda is around 99,040. If we assume that 5% these refugees will wish to stay in new settlements after their repatriation, this would yield a figure of around 5,000 requiring durable shelter.

Assistance to Congolese refugees in Rwanda and Uganda is provided through UNHCR in accordance with relevant humanitarian charters.
3.4. Vulnerable Families of Ex-Combatants

The disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants has been handled through two processes. Foreign ex-combatants have been repatriated to undergo DDR in their countries of origin while Congolese ex-combatants are handled by the GoDRC’s National Programme for DDR (PNDDR). Only Congolese ex-combatants are considered in this report.

Through PNDDR, Congolese ex-combatants who handed in a weapon were given a certificate of demobilization and a small cash sum. Those who did not have a weapon were given a certificate and included in UNDP community reintegration projects. For all those who were not accepted into UNDP’s community reintegration projects little other formal assistance was provided and they must survive on their own. Of these, a significant amount are believed to have rejoined militias in order to secure an income.

The provision of low-cost housing for such vulnerable Congolese ex-combatants and their dependants is considered an important contribution to peace by MONUC who believe it will make them less likely to rejoin militias.

In Nord-Kivu the Amani process, part of the PNDDR aimed at integrating former combatants into the FARDC, officially ended on 8 July 2009 after the closure of assembly areas for ex-combatants. Since that date all non-integrated Congolese armed combatants are now considered enemies of the state and are subject to military operations of Kimia 2; however some larger groups are still occasionally demobilised on an ad hoc basis. Still, efforts by DDR and the Government to conduct ad hoc rapid integration in the field are complicated by the ongoing operations and the insecurity in the area.

The DDR process currently focuses on the GoDRC’s Stabilisation and Recovery Plan for Eastern Congo, STAREC. Here efforts include consolidation of the training and cohesion of the newly integrated FARDC as well as strengthening community reintegration programs for demobilized combatants, in partnership with UNDP.

In Nord-Kivu 16,505 ex-combatants integrated into the FARDC as national soldiers. Some 800 more were demobilised through PNDDR and UNDP. Several thousand more demobilised in mid-2009 through ad hoc arrangements though it is feared that they will receive little support due to their large numbers. It is believed that many families of ex-combatants reside in IDP camps in Nord-Kivu. Of these many share the same vulnerabilities as other camp residents.

No vulnerability survey of ex-combatants or their families has yet been undertaken. Therefore the numbers who may be eligible for participation in a low-cost housing programme remains undetermined. It is recommended that any ex-combatants considered eligible must be subject to the same eligibility criteria that apply to all other vulnerable groups.

For the purposes of this study it has been assumed that around 10% of the families of ex-combatants may be eligible to benefit through a low-cost housing programme. If we also assume that the total number of ex-combatants demobilised before 2010 reaches 20,000; then 2,000 families may be eligible for durable shelter. This would constitute a total of around 10,000 ex-combatants and their family members.

3.5. The Total Caseload

Given the approximate numbers of people requiring durable shelter in the above paragraphs, the total caseload for this study was estimated to be:
The figures included in this section are initial estimates only and must be verified prior to the start of any related low-cost housing project.
4. **Prognosis over the Coming Year**

It is particularly difficult to foresee how events will unfold over the coming year in Nord-Kivu. By 2008 the Second Congo War was estimated to have claimed the lives of 5.4 million people in the region, which has known relatively little peace since 1996, when tensions following the genocide in Rwanda started to spill across the border.

As mentioned in Section 2.1, the peace agreements signed in March 2009 have considerably reshaped the political and military landscape in the Kivus and opened the door to reconciliation and recovery in eastern DRC. At the same time, on-going conflicts with foreign armed groups (notably the LRA and the FDLR) constitute remaining security challenges, underscoring the fragility of current peace-building dynamics.

Hence, at the moment, peace in Nord-Kivu over the coming year is far from certain. Three basic scenarios exist:

- **Peace continues to build.** The new peace agreements hold. Combined military efforts between FARDC, the Rwandan Army and MONUC facilitate the security of further areas of Nord-Kivu. GoDRC authority is restored and stabilisation and resettlement can start.

- **The current fragile security situation persists.** The current humanitarian nature of assistance persists. Stabilisation activities are limited. Resettlement is restricted to certain limited areas of the province.

- **Peace fails.** Displacements of people both internally and externally increase. The humanitarian phase continues and no progress is possible with stabilisation.

*All the above scenarios are possible however, this report will, for the sake of argument, assume that the first scenario mentioned above will prevail.*
5. The Low-Cost Housing Solution

Assuming that the current peace process will be successful then some 10,000 families may require durable shelter assistance. In this report only the feasibility of a low-cost housing solution has been considered. Other solutions, such as extension of host family accommodation may also be viable; however investigation of such solutions was beyond the remit of this study.

The low-cost housing solution will be discussed in detail below, however the following key principles should be born in mind throughout:

- The primary objective of any solution to shelter needs of vulnerable groups must be to reduce their vulnerabilities (GTZ, 2003).
- Clarifying land and property rights are an essential precondition for the deployment of new settlements (Christel Sumerauer, GTZ, 2007).
- A safe home is the family basis for further socio-economic development through social organisation, education and employment.
- Low-Cost housing for vulnerable groups as a permanent settlement solution should be considered a stabilisation activity. It is neither humanitarian response nor sustainable development, but bridges the gap between the two

5.1. Beneficiary Issues

As explained in Section 3. The beneficiary groups considered for inclusion in this report are:

- IDP’s currently in camps who find themselves unable to return to their original locations in Nord-Kivu
- IDP’s with host families who find themselves unable to return to their original locations in Nord-Kivu
- Congolese refugees in other countries who find themselves unable to return to their original locations in Nord-Kivu, and
- Vulnerable families of ex-combatants in Nord-Kivu

The active participation of these beneficiaries will foster their ownership of the resettlement process and thus facilitate the success of any included project.

Before the start of any low-cost housing construction projects, IDP’s must continue to return voluntarily to their areas of origin wherever conditions are conducive. Also, refugees should start to return to their own areas of origin. All efforts must be made to avoid the creation of a ‘pull factor’ which may encourage returnees to stay in new settlements instead of returning to their own.

5.2. Land Issues

Land security is absolutely essential when considering low-cost housing or any other permanent housing solution (GTZ, 2003). Without it, one cannot assume that current beneficiary vulnerabilities will be reduced.
5.2.1. Land Acquisition
Availability of land for new, permanent settlements in Nord-Kivu is limited and problematic. Officially, since 1973 the GoDRC has owned all the land in the country. It has had the power to issue various types of concessions including Perpetual Concessions under the conditions that:

- The land should not remain unused.
- It should not be sold.
- It can only be owned by Congolese citizens.
- It can be inherited.

However, during the course of this study it was evident that, though officials of GoDRC ministries try to promote and plan according to this law, the Chefferie does not always fully agree. Among the general rural population, the Chefferie is believed to have the authority to allocate land. The existing land laws will be reinforced under articles of the new national Constitution, which is to be adopted later this year. It is hoped that this will clarify the issue. However, if it does not, all steps must be taken to reconcile local authorities and traditional structures in order to provide land security to the beneficiaries.

Until then, it is highly recommended that the GoDRC through the Ministry of Urbanisme retains responsibility for the identification and acquisition of land for all sites proposed as Low-Cost Housing developments. This should include all dialogue and agreements with existing landowners and responsible Chefferies.

During this study two sites were identified for further investigation:

- Kiusha, approximately 6km from Kitchanga. Here the Chefferie has agreed to set aside 10 hectares of land for a new settlement for displaced people unable to return to their areas of origin. This area is adjacent to a site that is currently being developed as a mini-hydro power project. For further details of Kiusha see Annex 3.
- Karambi, approximately 25km from Rutshuru in the Busanza area. Up to 2004 the GoDRC planned to use a large area of land here to establish a new settlement. These plans were abandoned due to an outbreak of hostilities however the Assistant en Charge des Questions Politiques et Administratives confirmed that the land was still available for development.

Other potential sites were also mentioned by officials at CARITAS, Goma including Kitchanga-Burungu and Kitchanga-Kahé.

The areas in and around Goma were considered less conducive for resettlement for the following reasons:

- The town’s ongoing expansion as a border crossing and major commercial centre.
- High land prices, which may encourage potential beneficiaries to sell their land to wealthier people triggering a return to their previous level of vulnerability.
- High levels of land occupation up to 15km from the town centre.
- The threat of further volcanic activity from Mount Nyiragongo, which destroyed some 30% of Goma in 2002 and has seen several major eruptions over the past century.
- Further pressure on the natural resources of the nearby Virungas National Park. Large amounts of timber and firewood can be seen being transported from the park into Goma on a daily basis.

5.2.2. Environmental Impact Assessment
Wherever land has been identified for possible settlement construction a thorough Environmental Impact Assessment must be completed. This may be undertaken by a suitably qualified NGO or consultancy. It is important that any new settlement should not pose any lasting negative effects on its environment and also that the environment should pose no negative impact on the new community. The assessment should focus particularly on:
• The amount of land available for housing units.
• Access to a sustainable supply of safe water.
• Access to a sustainable supply of fuel (probably firewood or efficiently produced charcoal) and building materials (e.g. timber from managed plantations, compressed earth blocks, rammed earth construction etc).
• Alternative cooking techniques (including the use of fuel efficient stoves) and promotion of efficient charcoal production.
• Promotion of relevant environmental awareness campaigns within the beneficiary groups.
• Adequate slope for surface drainage without causing problems of erosion (slope should ideally be between 1% and 6%) (GTZ, 2003)
• Threats from volcanic/seismic activity including proximity to active volcanoes, seismic resistance required by houses and public buildings, the permeation of toxic gas through the soil and potential release of gas known to be trapped beneath Lake Kivu.

Other investigations may be warranted by certain attributes of the land (e.g. technical feasibility of the development of the hydro-electric project at Kiushu near Kitchanga). These should be undertaken as soon as possible after any perceived need arises.

5.3. Social Issues

5.3.1. Consultation, Sensitization and Transparency

As with any permanent settlement programme, broad consultation should start in the planning stages. The establishment of new communities including several thousand people will effect nearby communities and socio-economic dynamics for many kilometres around. In Nord-Kivu, given its troubled past and civil demonstrations earlier this year regarding resettlement of IDP’s, such early consultation is paramount.

In order to reduce misunderstandings and consequent tensions, no ethnic group in Nord-Kivu should be excluded from the consultation process.

This consultation can happen through local authority meetings and community meetings and should be followed up with general sensitization of the population on accepted findings and results. This sensitization should exploit all relevant communication methods including local and national television, press and radio as well as further community meetings and poster campaigns.

Selection of beneficiaries must be equally transparent; from the establishment of selection criteria through to the allocation of individual plots.

Recognising the ethnic nature of unrest in Eastern Congo, any communities formed through these processes should be multi-ethnic. Efforts should be made to ensure, so far as reasonably possible, that a balance of ethnicities are present and that the formation of mono-ethnic neighbourhoods within communities is avoided.

These multi-ethnic communities if formed successfully may become models of co-existence that may be replicated in other parts of the province and indeed the Great Lakes Region.

5.3.2. Establishment and Empowerment of Community Councils

As soon as settlements are identified and beneficiaries selected, the establishment of community councils should be supported. These may take a number of forms and may be given several different
titles (e.g. community development council, committee, cooperative etc.) however, it is most important that they are formed freely within the beneficiary group based on a perceived need, that all participating ethnic groups and minorities are represented and that they act as an effective focal point for both internal and external communication and action.

The establishment of a constitution, democratic process and development plan by the community council may help to attract material and financial support from donors and implementing agencies who may wish to further empower it. The council will be the most important vehicle for establishing communication with neighbouring communities in order to promote mutual understanding, identify common goals and establish frameworks for cooperation. As it is empowered, it may also promote the establishment of other focus groups such as a youth group, a technical cooperative, a hygiene education group etc. It may also become the primary forum for the resolution of disputes within the new community.

It is important that any external measures to empower the community council are real and tangible. They should enhance its financial and managerial capacity and promote its ability to determine its own course of development. Over time, as the community council matures and proves its capacity, moves should be made to establish its own legal position within the local Chefferie and government structures. Representing their beneficiary groups, they should have a say in how funds are directed, conduct dialogue at the highest relevant level of government and participate in the selection of designs for housing units.

5.3.3. Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

For each site identified for development a thorough Socio-Economic Impact assessment should be undertaken. This may be undertaken by a suitably qualified local NGO with verified knowledge of the socio-economic dynamics of the area in question. It is important that the establishment of any new settlement is to the mutual benefit of the Target Group, landowners, current occupiers and neighbouring settlements. This will determine:

- What potential exists for tensions between resident communities and new communities with particular emphasis on ethnic issues, land rights and cultural issues? It will also make recommendations as to how these tensions can be avoided.
- What potential sustainable livelihoods exist for new residents without increasing unemployment or posing a threat to existing nearby businesses or farms?
- How much land is available for the further natural expansion of the settlement? The minimum standards set out in the SPHERE report (e.g. 45m² of land per family and 3.5m² of floor space per person) are not considered adequate for the establishment of new permanent settlements. See also Sphere and Camps in Annex 3 (Kennedy, 2005). However, many of the SPHERE guidelines are relevant and can be applied (The Sphere Project, 2004).
- What contribution toward the cost of establishment can be expected from beneficiaries? The costs should be high enough to enhance ownership while not increasing the vulnerability of beneficiaries.
- What access, if any, potential beneficiaries may have to loans and micro-credit through registered financial institutions. Specifically, the proliferation of COOPEC's should be investigated to gauge their potential role in the process.

5.4. Management and Financial Issues

Interest is required from the following stakeholders in order to achieve a successful solution:

- GoDRC
Their roles will be elaborated in this section of the report alongside a discussion of *programme management issues* and *ongoing programmes in the land reform sector*.

### 5.4.1. GoDRC Responsibilities

The government will be responsible for:

- Implementation of the consultation and sensitization campaigns mentioned in Section 5.3.1 above.
- Facilitation of the acquisition of land including the demarcation of plots and transfer of legal titles to the beneficiaries. It is well established that community relationship, which is the power and strength of any society, becomes stronger when people feel ownership of their homes. Therefore it is essential that the beneficiaries do not pay rents to anyone, but maintain 100% ownership of their homes.
- Facilitation of physical security within the settlements through negotiations with the national police, FARDC and MONUC.
- Legal recognition of the new settlements on completion and incorporation of their representatives into the provincial government framework including the Chefferie and relevant line ministries. Their final status should be equivalent to other villages and neighbourhoods within Nord-Kivu. This legal recognition will form the core of the *exit strategy* for all low-cost housing projects.

The above activities are critical to the sustainability of any durable solution. Recurrent costs associated with these government actions must be included in existing government development plans and budgets. It is therefore highly recommended that an agreement is signed between the donor and GoDRC at the start of any low-cost housing project, to ensure that proper commitments are made.

It is recognised that, in order to fulfil these responsibilities, the GoDRC will require significant capacity building. During this study a report was produced by UN Habitat on behalf of UNHCR looking into the issues of land, property and housing rights for displaced people and refugees. In this report a number of important capacity building measures are recommended. These recommendations are elaborated further in section 5.4.3 (Donor Responsibilities) below.

### 5.4.2. Beneficiary Responsibilities

The beneficiaries will be responsible for:

- Organising themselves and selecting a community council which includes representation of all participating vulnerable groups.
- Establishing a development plan for the community and working to ensure its success.
- Maintaining regular dialogue both internally and externally (with the GoDRC, line ministries, neighbouring communities, development actors) to resolve problems and further pursue development goals.
- The provision of a proportion of the project costs either in cash or kind. This will depend on the capacities of vulnerable families as mentioned as mentioned in 5.2.2 above. It may be as high as 40% of total project costs and may be provided in the following forms:
  - Cash, so far as can reasonably be expected. This may also involve the use of credit schemes through existing registered micro-finance or credit institutions (including COOPEC’s). The provision of such credit is normally dependent upon a reliable
source of income to which many of the beneficiaries will not have access; especially at the time of relocation. However, there may be potential to use the completed house (or land titles) as security against such a loan. This should be investigated in the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment.

- Materials, which can be found and processed, close to the site.
- Labour. Self-building will be promoted as discussed later under Construction Issues.

### 5.4.3. Donor Responsibilities

Donors will be responsible for the remaining project costs which will include the construction of all necessary infrastructure including access roads, water supply, education facilities, health facilities and other community buildings. This should be done in collaboration with relevant local and national authorities and should include a significant capacity building programme and provision of technical assistance. It is preferable to have a reasonably high standard of infrastructure construction in order to reduce the long-term maintenance burden on communities. Therefore, it may be prudent to employ local contractors for this task as opposed to self-building.

The capacity of the Ministry of Urbanisme will require strengthening in order to ensure the success of any durable shelter solution. As highlighted during the seminar on Housing, Land and Property Issues for Returning Refugees and IDP’s held by UN Habitat in Goma in July, there is still no legal framework in place to resolve land problems faced by returning populations.

Many recommendations were made as the result of this seminar (UNHCR, 2009). It is already proposed (though not confirmed) that several of these will be included in UN Habitat's land reform projects, including:

- Training of Ministry officials to manage recurrent land disputes.
- Enhancement of technical skills in order to undertake and register digital cadastral surveys within Nord-Kivu.
- Training to enforce existing land laws
- Translate and disseminate land laws in local languages
- Training to strengthen mechanisms for reconciliation and mediation among communities

UN Habitat has applied for funding for these activities.

With regard to low-cost housing for vulnerable groups, support will be required by the Ministry of Urbanisme to establish safe areas for return. This will involve the provision of some basic office equipment by the donor.

Self-building of houses will involve the provision of some form of vocational training among beneficiaries. This will improve the quality of construction and also enhance the capacity of the community to provide services to others as an income generating activity. This may also be supported by donors in the form of construction of VET centres and provision of start-up toolkits. Its education services may also be extended to neighbouring communities to strengthen linkages.

### 5.4.4. Programme Management

Finances for each of the resettlement projects should be managed through committees which comprises representation of all three of the aforementioned stakeholder groups. Depending on the number of settlements identified for development, there may be one committee for each settlement or one committee for all settlements combined.

It is not possible at this stage to predict the exact amount of land or financing required to provide durable shelter for the beneficiary groups because; firstly, the exact number of beneficiaries is not known and, secondly, the size of plots and design of houses must be determined at a later stage.
through consultation with key stakeholders. However, for the purposes of this report a number of assumptions will be made to assist the planning process. These assumptions must be revisited with relevant modifications at the appropriate time.

Planning assumptions:

- The total number of houses required = 10,000. [See section 3.5]
- The number of homes per site = 400. This should be sufficient to justify the construction of new schools and clinics for each site without burdening existing adjacent infrastructure.
- The number of low-cost housing sites should therefore be around 25. A direct division of the figures above.
- The notional size of each housing plot should be 60m². This should allow space for the housing unit, cooking and sanitation facilities, a small vegetable garden and allowances for infrastructure (roads, schools, clinics etc) and future natural expansion of the settlement through increasing family sizes.
- Hence the total area of each site should be around 24,000m² or 2.4 hectares.
- The cost of one housing unit = $3,000. Built to accepted and agreed local standards.

Based on the above assumptions a cost estimate has been prepared for the resettlement exercise. This cost estimate is included in Annex 4 and gives an overall figure of $47.5 million including contingencies. Divided among 25 sites this yields a cost of just under $2 million per site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donor (through Implementing Agency)</td>
<td>$25,220,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GoDRC</td>
<td>$782,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries</td>
<td>$12,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$38,002,200</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation costs (15%)</td>
<td>$5,700,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Contingency (10%)</td>
<td>$3,800,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$47,502,750</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Programme Cost Estimate Summary

Sites may be established as and when the need arises however, it should be noted that, in order to provide necessary capacity building, selection criteria and other pre-requisites, the first settlements may be relatively more expensive than subsequent ones. At the same time, it may be wise to test the feasibility of the low-cost housing process through the implementation of a *pilot project*. 
The beneficiary contribution may be in cash or kind. As only the more vulnerable within each group will be selected, it is unlikely that their ability to contribute cash will be high. Their in-kind contribution is more likely to be through local materials and labour. As mentioned in section 5.3.3, their contribution should be high enough to enhance their sense of ownership for the property without increasing their vulnerabilities.

During the course of this study it was only possible to discuss funding with two potential donor organisations, MONUC/Stabilisation Fund and Fonds pour Consolidation de la Paix. Both expressed an interest in the low-cost housing solution but will require firm proposals to be submitted before funds can be allocated. It is therefore recommended that, following the identification and more detailed study of suitable sites, further potential donors are identified both nationally and internationally and detailed proposals are submitted by prospective implementing agencies.

It should be noted that the management facility of the Stabilisation Fund has yet to be established.

5.4.5. Ongoing Interventions in the Land Reform Sector

With regard to the above programme it is important to keep in mind that UN Habitat has, with the support of UNHCR, recently started the process of land reform and dispute resolution in eastern Congo within their Land Program Agenda.

Following their seminar on the subject in July 2009 they plan to establish a committee at provincial level to implement the resultant recommendations through the framework of a ‘road map’. In this they plan to work with the Ministry of Urbanisme on issues related to the strengthening of land administration and legislation. They are currently working on land conflict management through mediation teams already established in Rutshuru, Masisi and Djugu (in Ituri). They are also working with local communities to sensitize and build capacities for land conflict resolution and management. These mediation activities will be accompanied by a major sensitization component regarding land laws and best practices of land management and administration.

UN Habitat is currently establishing a coordination group including all actors and organisations working on land issues in the Kivus. The terms of reference for this Land Group were being finalised in September 2009 and it was hoped to start operation the same month. In 2010 they are planning to establish land mediation centres at community level.

It is strongly recommended that any major action in the low-cost housing field is closely coordinated with UN Habitat to take full advantage of their work and to avoid duplication and gaps in implementation.

5.5. Construction Issues

5.5.1. Promotion of Self-Building

In rural areas of Nord-Kivu living space is normally created through self-building techniques and skills are widely known. Hence, the self-building of houses will be promoted.

Contractors have quoted over $5,000 for the construction of rural standard houses however, following discussions with rural homeowners, the current normal cost to families is about half of that figure.

Materials that are not available as local natural resources (e.g. roofing sheets, doors, windows, nails and other fixtures, fittings and furniture) may be supplied under a voucher system. Through this system a number of local building material suppliers (perhaps within a few hours walk of the new settlement) may be asked to tender for supply contracts. The lowest bidders may then be selected for supply of materials to beneficiaries against their vouchers at fixed, published rates for a limited period. This system was used successfully during the Umoja Project implemented in 2009 by CARE International to assist IDP’s living with host families within Goma town.
The benefits of the self-build process would be:

- An enhanced sense of home-ownership by beneficiaries
- Further empowerment of the community councils in negotiating their own supply contracts in an open and transparent process.
- Capacity building of the population through sharing of construction and organisation skills through internally or externally facilitated workshops and training courses. Also the establishment of VET centres could be considered to ensure the long-term provision of skilled labour which may generate income within the community.
- That traditional building techniques tend to be the most sustainable and also stimulate demand for local materials, products and skilled labour thus stimulating the local economy.

5.5.2. Housing Design

The design of houses should be the product of extensive beneficiary consultation to ensure satisfaction and reduce the possibility of rejection. During this process beneficiaries must be made aware of both the funds available and the potential of causing envy among neighbouring communities if standards of accommodation or construction are unreasonably high.

A number of standard designs may be adopted depending on family size. However, it is paramount that the community decide through consensus on the standards and quality they want and that chosen designs are clearly understood by beneficiaries and those outside the community who may be concerned.

To enhance the chosen designs a study may be commissioned to ensure optimum quality and environmental standards. The findings and recommendations of this study should be presented to beneficiaries before designs are finalized. Still, the final decision on whether the recommendations are adopted or not should remain with the community. The study should include investigations into appropriate:

- Fire protection techniques (including the safe spacing of houses and alternatives to roofing thatch.)
- Seismic resistance techniques (including simple wall bracing, anchorage of roof trusses and strengthening of corners)
- Use of improved building materials (including compressed earth blocks instead of timber, rammed earth construction, micro-fibre roofing tiles)
6. Outstanding Questions

Given constraints posed by this two-week field study during the humanitarian phase of interventions in Nord-Kivu, some questions that required detailed research, analysis and investigation could not be answered. These questions included:

6.1. What is the legally recognised mechanism for land acquisition and transfer of property?

The question of land acquisition and transfer was raised several times throughout this study with the GoDRC (Ministry of Urbanisme), the Chefferie (Rutshuru Territoire) and humanitarian organisations (Caritas and NRC), however, no clear mechanism or process was enunciated. It was seen that both governmental and traditional authorities believed they had the power to allocate land: the government through existing laws and the Chefferie through popular support.

As mentioned earlier, clarifying land and property rights are an essential precondition for the deployment of new settlements. Therefore these issues must be discussed and resolved between relevant authorities prior to commencement of detailed planning. UNHCR in collaboration with UN Habitat are currently working to resolve this problem in Nord-Kivu.

If necessary, memoranda of understanding should be signed between concerned parties to ensure that the beneficiaries are given 100% ownership of their homes before the end of each project.
6.2. How many beneficiaries are will there be?

Again, as Nord-Kivu is still in the humanitarian phase and many potential beneficiaries are not yet certain whether or not they will be able to return to their areas of origin, it was not possible to determine actual numbers of beneficiaries during the study. The figures included in this report are preliminary estimates based on a recent survey of IDP camps residents and previous experience in similar situations in Africa.

6.3. How large should the settlements be?

The settlements should not pose a burden on existing population centres. They may be adjacent to towns or some distance away depending on the location of sites secured for development. Either way, it would be preferable if they were large enough to warrant their own schools, health facilities and other community structures. This would avoid any increase in pressure on existing institutions and thus avoid tensions between new and existing communities.

For the purposes of this report a figure of 400 families per settlement was considered reasonable. However, the figure can only be determined after more reliable beneficiary numbers and the size and number of sites are known and agreed with key stakeholders.

6.4. Who will provide funding?

Very few donors have a presence in Nord-Kivu. Of these, two organisations were approached to gauge their willingness to provide support.

Fonds pour Consolidation de la Paix, expressed interest in the initiative as did MONUC. Naturally, both require firm project proposals before they can commit funds. It is hoped that, following improvements in the security situation, the focus in Nord-Kivu changes from humanitarian needs to stabilisation activities. This should generate further interest in low-cost housing solutions.

6.5. Who will implement the projects?

GTZ and NRC have already implemented a low-cost housing project in Baraka, Sud-Kivu. GTZ have previously implemented several dozen such projects in stabilising areas throughout the world including parts of El Salvador, Azerbaijan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Turkey, Croatia, India, Cambodia and Sri Lanka.

Of the organisations met during this study, GTZ were keen to continue their involvement in such projects and UNHCR were also eager to provide support. NRC expressed an interest in the construction of schools; they have recently completed 45 new schools in Nord- and Sud-Kivu, 25 of which are permanent.

It is not yet clear who will write the first proposals for low-cost housing.

6.6. When will conditions be right to start the process?

As explained at the start of Section 5, low-cost housing is a stabilisation activity. Nord-Kivu at the moment is firmly within the humanitarian phase. The boundaries between such phases are never clearly defined and are heavily dependent upon the prevailing security situation, which will vary from territoire to territoire and village to village in the province as time passes.

As explained in Section 2.1, efforts to resolve the conflict and consolidate peace in Nord-Kivu are currently at a critical juncture and political settlements remain fragile. Also, as elaborated in Section 4, peace in Nord-Kivu over the coming year is far from certain and several different security scenarios are possible.
A Study into Low-Cost Housing for Vulnerable Groups in Nord-Kivu

The latest peace agreements were signed in March this year and are only starting to take effect after over a decade of unrest. It may take several months of sustained peace in Nord-Kivu before implementing agencies in the province consider moving from the humanitarian phase into the stabilisation phase.

However, for the time being, indicators of progress toward the stabilisation phase are visible. IDP’s are moving back to their homes in certain areas. The presidents of both DRC and Rwanda have held further talks and are keen to pursue a lasting peace in the region. MONUC have revised their Stabilisation Plan (UNSSSSS) and are determined to pursue this together with their ongoing activities from the previous plan.

It is not possible to predict precisely when the security situation will trigger a start to the stabilisation phase however, for the purposes of low-cost housing projects, the following indicators may be used:

- Continued progress to instil lasting security in rural areas of Nord-Kivu.
- Continued voluntary return of IDP’s to their areas of origin within Nord-Kivu.
- Start of voluntary return of Congolese refugees to Nord-Kivu.

Before the start of construction of any low-cost housing projects, IDP’s must continue to return voluntarily to their areas of origin wherever conditions are conducive. Also, refugees should start to return to their own areas of origin. All efforts must be made to avoid the creation of a ‘pull factor’ which may encourage returnees to stay in new settlements instead of returning to their own.

7. **Next Steps**

The following steps should be undertaken in the process of establishing lost-cost housing settlements for vulnerable groups. The steps are broadly in sequence however, some may overlap and others are dependent upon the indicators mentioned in Section 6.6 above.

1) **Acquisition** of land
   a) Identification of potential sites
   b) Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessments
   c) Legal acquisition of sites following negotiations, exchanges, agreements between landowners, GoDRC, Chefferie and current occupiers.
   d) Survey and demarcation of plots
2) Survey of target groups and **baseline** data collection
3) Start of **sensitisation** campaign
4) Establishment of **selection criteria**
5) **Consultation** with selected beneficiaries
   a) Establishment of community development committees, constitutions, development plans and relevant focus groups
   b) Study into improved designs
   c) Standardisation of designs
6) **Vocational** training in self-building techniques
7) Start of **infrastructure** construction
8) Start of house construction
9) Legal transfer of property titles
10) Closure of projects

8. Recommendations

Given the findings and analyses of this report, provision of low-cost housing to vulnerable groups is seen as an important part of the stabilisation process in Nord-Kivu.

The province is currently in the humanitarian phase but may move rapidly toward the start of the stabilisation phase, therefore it is important to start preparations in order to ensure that low-cost housing solutions can be implemented in a timely manner. This will maintain momentum that the peace process may build.
Bibliography


