# Shelter Meeting 14 Breakout Sector Response Options

## Group 5 transitional shelter and housing

**Shelter Meetings**

*The Shelter Meeting is a global biannual conference for the humanitarian shelter sector, with participation in-person and online from around the world from governments, donors, IASC clusters, UN bodies, IOs, the Red Cross Movement, NGOs, independent humanitarian shelter specialists and academic research bodies.*

*Objectives of the Shelter Meeting include; engaging and supporting all stakeholders in the global shelter sector; linking all coordination that is supporting the shelter sector including IASC clusters; engage, linking and supporting other events and initiatives in the shelter sector; engaging in, linking and supporting the events and initiatives of other humanitarian sectors and cross-cutting issues; supporting consensus on policy, standards, specifications & operating procedures; sharing programmatic and technical good practice on on-going field operations; sharing information on project activities valuable for the global shelter sector; agreeing on and prioritising further project activities valuable for the global shelter sector; forming external working groups to support project activities; and reviewing project activities.*

**Shelter Meeting 14, 10th October 2014**

On 10th of October 2014, the Shelter Meeting welcomed participation in-person and online from over 25 countries by representatives from 44 different agencies. Hosted by the IASC Global Shelter Cluster, the meeting breakout groups covered the areas of ‘Response Options‘ and ‘Technical Sector Priorities‘.

Presentations from Shelter Meeting 14 can be viewed [here](http://www.sheltercentre.org/shelter-meeting-14).

As a part of each Shelter Meeting, there are breakout groups, which are meant to begin a greater exploration of the topics relevant and important to current Shelter sector concerns. In Shelter Meeting 14 the theme was ‘Sector Response Options’ which worked to explore terms used by the sector that needed further discussion and definition.

**Next steps**

The conclusions of these breakout groups, including suggestions, will be first circulated in draft to the session chairpersons and team members for their comments. The final notes will inform broader and more formal discussions of these topics within the shelter sector, including through: comments made to the notes posted online on the Shelter Meeting 14 webpage; subsequent Shelter Meetings; related fora, such as the UK Shelter Forum; technical and innovation working group meetings of the IASC global shelter cluster and other IASC global clusters, such as the CCCM, Early Recovery and WASH clusters; as well as other national, regional and global fora, research and academic agencies.

**Notes summarising Group 5 Transitional shelter and housing**

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*In this group there was discussion around terms pertaining to transitional shelter, other terminology associated with it, along with the costs of using it. These notes, along with the notes from the other groups in the breakout sessions from Shelter Meeting 14, will be taken forward through various fora, including the Technical and Innovation Working Group (TiWG) of the IASC Global Shelter Cluster.*

**4.1 Group discussion over the terms ‘Emergencies’ and ‘Transitional Shelter’**

**4.1.1** The group discussed the core definitions of what differentiates emergency and transitional shelter.

**4.1.2** It was agreed that emergency shelter, simply defined, is considered to be plastic sheeting.

**4.1.3** Transitional shelter could include traditional huts (*tukul)* among other structures with a standard lifespan of 2-5 years. Transitional shelter is an intermediary solution between the emergency and permanent phases.

**4.1.4** Transitional shelter is about recovery. It aims to stabilise a community and should lead to durable solution. Sometimes transitional shelters may look very transitional. In other circumstances, they will appear to be permanent. It all depends on the environment in which the shelters are constructed. Putting a concrete transitional shelter in a rural context will have the appearance of a permanent structure, for example.

**4.1.5** Transitional shelter is a temporary housing solution. The form it takes depends on many factors, including the timeline for implementation and the conditions on the ground and in the country.

**4.1.6** Transitional shelter is an intermediary solution between the emergency and permanent phases. Transitional shelter is about recovery. It aims to stabilise a community, and should lead to durable solutions.

**4.1.7** The group examined whether a traditional hut is really transitional shelter. If it is not a step to a permanent shelter, but operates as a permanent shelter, can it be considered transitional shelter?

**4.1.8** It was discussed that it is important to recognise whether or not other stakeholders aware of what is meant by ‘transitional shelter’ and what should be done, when we consider something to be transitional and it is normal for the beneficiaries.

**4.1.9** Stabilised Soil Blocks (SSB) have been studied by group members The group considers SBBs more durable than some local materials in some circumstances. The group concurred that both SSBs and cement blocks may be used in transitional shelters.

**4.1.10** It was noted, that there are significant land issues in countries such as Sudan, which makes it difficult to do ‘housing’ there.

**4.1.11** What is considered to be ‘transitional shelter’, depending on the stakeholder, was considered. As an example: A *tukul* is ‘normal’ for these beneficiaries. Therefore what we consider transitional is, in fact normal. Such beneficiaries also know how to repair the *tukuls*, which makes them a more sustainable shelter solution.

**4.1.12** The idea that transitional shelter is in fact an intermediary solution between the emergency and permanent phases was examined. Transitional shelter is about recovery. It aims to stabilise a community, and should lead to durable solution.

**4.2 What other terminology exists around transitional shelter?**

**4.2.1** Terms such as ‘Progressive shelter’, ‘incremental shelter’, ‘core housing’ (permanent foundations, temporary structure) have been used synonymously with transitional shelter, however each may be understood also to have distinct meanings. The group referred to a pilot project in Darfur as an example of one that reflects the different possibilities.

**4.2.2** If displaced affected populations stay, then they can upgrade the shelter. If they leave to other durable solution, they can take with them materials such as, the CGI roof, metal doors and windows.

**4.3 Costs of these options**

**4.3.1** The group discussed how it is hard to define transitional shelter in terms of the costs of sheltering over the duration of the displacement and recovery. Donors are concerned with cost; however do not currently have an overview or metric with which to compare the costs of sheltering over time.

**4.3.2 The scale and conditions of** Funding dictates what can be achieved. The group agreed on the need to optimize coverage of the most vulnerable affected groups, within the resources available.

**4.3.3** One concern with transitional shelter is over what is being transitioned to? The group sought further clarity over broader programming and funding that includes both transitional shelter and subsequent durable solution.

**4.4 General discussion of concerns surrounding transitional shelter**

**4.4.1** In French, ‘habitat’ is used and includes the environment around the shelter. It is not just the building. There was the suggestion that keeping this idea, of not just the structure, but the surrounding area as well, in mind might be helpful in the response effort.

**4.4.2** The group raised the need for integrated inter-sectoral programming at community or settlement levels. To become more permanent, the shelter must be connected to water and other infrastructure. This is grounded in HLP issues and the environment.

**4.4.3** UN and IASCmandates are involved in how we describe the shelter interventions, and it is very different in IDP and refugee contexts.

**4.4.4** It was noted that language used in describing shelter and inventions has to be adapted, depending on the political sensitivity of the situation.

**4.4.5** The question of static terminology was deliberated by the group. Should there be only one terminology, or is it better to be more flexible with it?

**4.4.6** The group consensus was that transitional shelteras umbrella term is still the best way to describe it.

**4.4.7** The implementation approach must be specific to each displacement context, there are some common steps that may be followed. Implementers need to be careful about the perception of communities in the area of temporary shelter implementation.