

Fiji National Shelter Cluster

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. OVERVIEW

Fiji is highly vulnerable to destructive natural hazards with housing and human settlements exposed to tropical storms and cyclones, volcanic eruptions, flooding, landslides, and earthquakes.

The Fiji Cluster system is the Government-led statutory humanitarian coordination mechanism, that remains operative throughout the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) cycle (preparedness, response, recovery and rehabilitation). Alongside the other 8 national clusters, under the overall leadership of the National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO), the Shelter Cluster functions as a permanent coordination forum through which the network of actors and stakeholders involved in shelter plan for and prepare a joint response to effectively address the shelter needs of the most at-risk population and communities while liaising closely with the cluster responsible for Evacuation Centre Management. In times of emergency, the cluster system supplements the work of the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) in the provision of sector focused auxiliary support. The Fiji National Shelter Cluster is led by the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management (MRMDDM) with the support of two co-leads: the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) for preparedness and response, and Habitat for Humanity Fiji (HFHF) for preparedness.

This document describes the Terms of Reference for the Fiji National Shelter Cluster setting out the purpose, principles, functions, structure, roles, responsibilities, membership and agreed operational practices of the cluster.

2. SHELTER

Shelter provision has multiple benefits, it provides protection from the weather, health (it stops people from falling ill), support for family and community life (shelter provides a safe place for families to live and engage with others), dignity (family members have privacy within their home), security (people can feel safe from the outside world), and livelihoods (work opportunities are close to the shelter). Shelter is often a process; it is more than just four walls and a roof. Affected individuals, households and communities follow their unique 'pathway to permanence', supported at immediate, intermediate, and longer-term moments in their recovery process.

3. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the Shelter Cluster is to collectively plan and implement proportionate, appropriate, and timely shelter responses to disasters which will address both the immediate and longer-term shelter needs of the most at risk affected populations while integrating disaster risk reduction activities. The intent of a permanent cluster system is to ensure continuity, retain and build knowledge, experience and capacity alongside the progression of national priorities.

To achieve this objective the Shelter Cluster will:

- Provide predictable, systematic and country-driven services and core functions (see Section 5).
- Be an inclusive platform for the open exchange of information and knowledge between partners and an accessible forum for all members to discuss issues related to Shelter, which makes informed and collective decisions to improve strategic coordination and prioritisation.

- Remain operational throughout the full DRM cycle, strengthening and contributing to prevention, mitigation and reconstruction activity in addition to preparedness, response and recovery in both urban and rural areas.
- Promote and support communities' shelter & self-recovery, building back safer initiatives and traditional knowledge, coping mechanisms, techniques and systems for community self-reliance and resilience in shelter related needs.
- Maintain, formalise and enhance existing communication and coordination mechanisms, linkages, networks and partnerships among cluster members, national and sub-national DM agencies, international humanitarian actors, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders.
- Work to improve the joint strategic readiness, response planning and coordination of timely, adequate and suitable Shelter NFIs and projects, including reliable information management to reduce gaps, avoid duplication and ensure prioritization of the most- at-risk population.
- Provide operational advice, best practices and troubleshooting assistance to Cluster partners and other stakeholders, including promoting agreed minimum humanitarian standards.
- Ensure adequate prevention and preparedness through capacity building, technical advice and contingency planning, risk reduction programming and public distribution of reliable, trusted information, education and communication materials.
- Identify, and advocate for, the resources required for core coordination services and shelter response operations. While the cluster identifies needs and activities, as well as the resources available from member agencies, the cluster itself does not provide funds or resources.
- Collectively develop a shared work plan and shelter strategy, identify gaps in capability and capacity and define priorities, actions.
- Actively monitor and evaluate Cluster progress, performance and outcomes against the agreed response plan, work plan, strategy, applicable objectives, benchmarks and standards.
- Promote public and private sector understanding of disaster management and risk reduction.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND WAYS OF WORKING

The work of the Shelter Cluster will be guided by a shared understanding and adherence to the Principles of Partnership (see Annex A), namely:

Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented, Responsibility, Complementarity and Cultural Sensitivity

Shelter Cluster partners also agree to:

- Collaborate, share information, and work together constructively in the interest of the wider Shelter sector and the delivery of shelter related disaster management activities.
- Be open, honest and respectful in dealings with Cluster partners and other stakeholders;
- Respect each other's professional views and the perspectives of the partner organisations;
- Be proactive, solution focused and adopt a no surprises approach;
- Follow key protection, safeguarding and accountability principles;

The Shelter Cluster will:

- Provide a safe space to discuss and develop ideas, approaches and responses, and respect confidentiality where necessary;
- Make decisions collectively on a majority vote basis whenever possible;
- Actively work and coordinate with other national clusters, and participate in the, national and sub national DRM coordination and reporting structures and other relevant sector-based coordination forums.

5. CLUSTER FUNCTIONS

The work of the Shelter Cluster will be broadly structured by the following seven functions essential to the ongoing and effective operation, coordination and delivery of cluster objectives:

Function	Service	Scope	Outputs
1. Supporting service delivery	Coordination management	Cluster Coordination mechanisms, Inter-cluster, NDMO, National and subnational coordination structures	Minutes, ToR Org-chart/map
	Information management	Data collection, processing and analysis. Dissemination of information. Liaison with NDMO, and other national clusters.	5W matrices, Stock, Situation, Progress Reports, Factsheets
	Integration	Participation of all stakeholders, including the private sector.	Invitations and engagement
2. Informing strategic decision-making	Coordinated assessments	Joint needs assessments (IDA, DDA etc.) capacities, funding, gaps, progress, impact, and cross-cutting issues.	Assessment, Progress, Analytical Reports and Infographics
3. Planning and strategy development	Strategic planning	Shelter needs priorities and response. Overall strategic objectives (GoF) Cross-cutting issues, Response, Recovery and Rehabilitation	Rehabilitation Strategy Work Plans and Frameworks
	Technical coordination	Common Technical standards, guidance and liaison with other clusters	Technical Guidelines
	Resource mobilization	Clarifying funding options and requirements for sector response Criteria for fund allocation and submissions to pooled funds (CERF etc.).	Shelter appeals Tables, maps, graphs
4. Advocacy	Coordinated communication and advocacy	Sector key messages and advocacy priorities (BBB, PASSA) Communication campaigns, prioritisation of most-at risk population, liaison with NDMO, communication cluster and partners	Stakeholders mapping Advocacy worksheet Advocacy messages
	Legal and regulatory issues.	National policies, guidelines and standards. Legal & regulatory issues related to housing, land and property, construction and building codes, etc.	Submissions Advice and Guidance
5. Monitoring and reporting	Performance monitoring	Monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Corrective actions to address changes. Monitoring achievement of strategy and cluster performance	Cluster reviews Lessons Learned/ After Action, Best practices
6. Contingency, Preparedness and Recovery planning	Contingency planning Rehabilitation planning	Contingency plans (national, sector). Risk mapping and analysis, DRR	Housing section Rehabilitation Programme
7. Accountability	Community liaison	Feedback and complaint mechanisms from affected populations, with attention to protection issues raised. Participation of communities in the response.	Information leaflets Feedback mechanisms

6. STRUCTURE, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Relevant aspects of the DM system in Fiji and the core structures, primary roles and responsibilities of the Shelter Cluster members are described below alongside outline of other cluster operational mechanisms.

The National Disaster Risk Management Council (NDRMC): The NDRMC is the lead government body that has the overall responsibility for disaster management and the formulation of policies and strategies in this regard. In times of emergencies, the Emergency Committee of the NDMC undertakes the coordination of emergency activities. The NDRMC will advise on the national priorities, provide policy direction and maintain oversight of DM activity, including the cluster system. Via the cluster lead agencies and the NDRMO (as the Inter Cluster secretariat), the NDMC will receive regular reports and updates from each sector to assist with ongoing oversight, coordination and monitoring of progress and performance.

National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) and Inter-Cluster secretariat: The NDRMO is responsible for the day to day operations of disaster management and provides leadership, strategic planning, advice, coordination, and the facilitation of Fiji's disaster management system. The inter-cluster forum is the overarching mechanism for humanitarian coordination in Fiji, providing for interoperability between sectoral clusters, sub-national humanitarian coordination and the Fijian Government. *See Annex B for a diagrammatic outline of the relationship between the Fiji National Disaster Risk Management and Cluster Systems.*

Shelter Cluster Lead and Secretariat: The nominated lead government agency responsible for the Shelter Cluster is the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management. The lead agency is responsible for the overall coordination, leadership and performance of the Cluster and will act as a focal point for enquiries on emergency response plans and operations.

The Cluster is chaired by the Permanent Secretary (or delegate) of the responsible Ministry. The Chair is supported by a permanent cluster secretariat which provides ongoing administrative and operational support services to the cluster function including the preparation of agenda, planning, scheduling, convening, and hosting meetings, recording minutes and other support tasks to support the cluster functions and the progression of the cluster work programme. The lead agency will work to actively ensure:

- All partners are included and have opportunity to contribute and participate in the Cluster.
- Respect and actively support the shared cluster leadership and partnership model.
- Timely and appropriate coordination, reporting and representation within the Shelter Cluster, the inter-cluster system (i.e. WASH Cluster and Evacuation Centre Cluster) the national disaster management system and regional humanitarian partnership.
- Ensure cross-cutting issues are addressed including gender, disability inclusion, protection, environment, etc and clear community feedback and accountability mechanisms are identified.
- Effective intersectoral damage and needs assessment and analysis are undertaken and timely disseminated and shared with cluster partners.
- Adequate contingency and preparedness planning is conducted.
- Appropriate sectoral standards and guidelines are in place alongside monitoring and reporting.
- Suitable advocacy for the objectives, activities and resources required by the Cluster.
- Appropriate training and capacity building is carried out.

- Follow simple less-bureaucratic methods of developing relationships in order to minimise additional workloads on partnership and maximise efficiency and benefit of cluster.
- Promote and maximise the intended benefits of the cluster approach and drive the delivery of results.
- Implement knowledge management systems to capitalize on lessons learned and best practices to bring about positive change in Shelter sector policy and practice.

Cluster Co-Leads: The Co-Lead Agencies for the Shelter Cluster are Habitat for Humanity Fiji (with a focus on preparedness) and the International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) with a focus on preparedness and response. IFRC, as convener of the Pacific Shelter Cluster (as a part of the Pacific Humanitarian Team), is also a member of Shelter cluster Fiji, and as co-lead, provides surge coordination capacity to the Shelter Cluster coordination team during response as and when requested by the Lead Agency MRMDDM, to the extent required and possible within available resources.

The Co-Leads will provide predictable, timely and active support to the Lead agency in fulfilling its role for the Cluster as outlined in above, following response **or** preparedness issues. Cluster co-leads will support the lead, coordination team and secretariat in facilitating and achievement of cluster objectives and activities. Co-leads will act as representatives of the Cluster Sector as a whole, rather than representatives of their particular agency.

Shelter Coordination Team: Supported by the Cluster Secretariat and Co-leads, the Shelter Coordination Team is composed of the Shelter Cluster coordinator and roles such as an Information Manager and other Technical Coordinators which may be required to support the day-to-day coordination and function of the cluster, particularly in disaster response times.

Strategic Advisory Groups (SAG): Comprising senior representatives of the Cluster lead and co-leads and other key agencies and partners activity involved in the sector, e.g. the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Works, Ministry for Itaukei Affairs Fiji Red Cross and IOM. The SAG can advise the wider Cluster membership on policy decisions, technical topics and overall strategic direction. The SAG will be convened as and when required to assist with agreed Cluster actions and responses to strategic issues.

Technical Working Groups (TWG): Technical Working Groups (TWGs) will be established, and convened workshops, on as needed basis to provide technical knowledge and guidance on specific technical issues, the production of policy or guidelines, targeted recommendations and/or any other agreed projects as agreed by the Cluster. Other cluster technical focal points may be appointed on a thematic basis. TWGs will comprise the most appropriate technical experts from within the Cluster membership however other experts who may not ordinarily attend Shelter Cluster meetings may also be invited to attend due to the relevance of their expertise. TWGs are time bound, output oriented groups which are disbanded after the achievement of their specific objective.

Cluster Members: Membership is open to other government agencies, national and international NGOs, CSOs and FBOs, the private sector, Red Cross Red Crescent Movement Partners, other UN Agencies and international organisations, academia etc. All cluster members will work together to support cluster functions and deliver the agreed objectives aligned with national priorities. The general scope, conditions, and role of the general membership of the cluster is further defined in Section 7 below.

7. MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

Cluster membership is open to all interested parties involved in the wider Shelter sector. In general, the success of the Cluster depends on active engagement and full participation by its membership. Membership of the cluster requires:

- 1) Ongoing participation in National Cluster meetings and working groups
- 2) Active participation in any existing sub-national Cluster coordination in the locations in which they are implementing Shelter projects.
- 3) Full commitment to consistently engaging in the collective work of the cluster collective, including joint inter-sectoral assessments of needs and developing plans, policies, monitoring, guidelines and recommendations.
- 4) Strict adherence to the agreed Shelter Cluster principles, priorities, and standards.
- 5) Regular completion of Cluster reporting (i.e., 5Ws) when requested by the Cluster Lead.
- 6) Compliance with the Fiji Code of Conduct for all workers in Emergencies.

8. MEETINGS, AGENDA, MINUTES ACTIONS AND REPORTING

Meeting Frequency:

- During non-emergency times, the Shelter Cluster will meet at least every 2 to 3 months.
- At least one dedicated Cluster meeting focused on preparedness will always be convened in September/October well before the start of each cyclone season.
- When activated for emergency response the Shelter Cluster will meet more frequently as and when required. Other ad-hoc Cluster meetings, Strategic Advisory Group Meeting or Working Group meetings requested by Shelter Cluster partners, may be convened at other times outside of the regular Shelter Cluster meeting frequency as outlined above.
- The Shelter Secretariat, in consultation with the Shelter Cluster Leads/Coordination Team, will endeavour to notify members of a meeting date at least 5 working days prior to the scheduled meeting in non-emergency times.
- The Secretariat will provide an online meeting link for those unable to attend in person.

Agenda:

- The Shelter Cluster meeting agenda will be compiled by the Secretariat in consultation with the Shelter Cluster Leads and the Coordination Team.
- The agenda will be circulated to cluster partners at least 2 working days prior to the scheduled Shelter Cluster meeting in non-emergency times.
- Standing agenda Items will likely include general updates from NDMO, highlights from the latest Inter-Cluster meeting, seasonal forecast and weather outlook, levels of prepositioned stocks in-country, update on the shelter cluster preparedness work plan.

Minutes:

- Minutes will be compiled by the Secretariat with oversight by the Cluster Leads.
- During non-emergency times Cluster full Meeting Minutes will be with the agenda for the next meeting. A summary of the agreed action Items will be circulated prior.
- During emergency response times, draft minutes will be circulated to partners at least 48 hours after the meeting.

Action Items and Reporting:

- Any agreed actions will be completed by the responsible party as soon as is practicable in line with agreed timeframes.
- Reporting on updates should be communicated to the Cluster secretariat via the agreed and applicable format i.e. Cluster 5Ws template.

9. AMENDMENT AND REVIEW OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference will be periodically amended, updated and reviewed to ensure ongoing relevance and accuracy, particularly if there is a change in the situation on the ground or in the mandate, structure or activities of the Shelter Cluster. A comprehensive review is recommended at least every 2 years. **A review of this TOR should be undertaken by the end of 2026.**

17/01/2024	Reviewed & endorsed	Outcome of Shelter Cluster workshop.
26/03/2024	Adopted	Resolution of the Shelter Cluster members.
4/03/2025	Minor Amendments	NDRMA 2024 consequently terminology amendments.

10. GUIDING DOCUMENTS

- [Constitution of Fiji – Bill of Rights](#)
- [National Disaster Risk Management Act 2024](#)
- [National Disaster Management Plan 1995](#)
- [National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2018](#)
- [National Humanitarian Policy 2017](#)
- [Climate Vulnerability Assessment 2017](#)
- [National Adaptation Plan 2018](#)
- [Localisation in Fiji: Demonstrating Change 2019](#)
- [Fiji Code of Conduct for all workers in Emergencies \(30 March 2016\)](#)
- Fiji National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) Guideline 2021
- National Emergency Response Team (NERT) Guide 2023
- Community Based Disaster Risk Management Training Manual 2022
- [Fiji Disability Inclusive Community Based Disaster Risk Management Toolkit](#)
- [Fiji Displacement Guidelines and SOP 2019](#)
- [Sphere Standards Handbook](#)
- [A Humanitarian Shelter Terminology Framework 2021](#)
- [Fiji Shelter Handbook: Inclusive and Accessible Shelter Planning for Fijian Communities \(2019\).](#) **Some revision will be required to align with current coordination structures.*
- [Guidelines for Improving Building Safety and Resilience of New Single Storey Houses and Schools in Rural Areas of Fiji, MITT. 2019](#)
- [Supporting Resilient \(Re\)Construction in Remote Fijian Communities, A Holistic Approach To. HFHF 2019](#)
- [Rural Homes Maintenance Manual, HFHF 2021](#)
- [Fiji Home Building Manual 1990](#)
- [HELP FOR HOME Tips to Build Back Safer](#)
- [Fiji Post Disaster Needs Assessment Guidelines: Housing Sector](#)

See the Shelter Cluster Fiji website for additional documents:

<https://sheltercluster.org/geographic-region/fiji>

ANNEX A: Agreed Shelter Cluster Principles of Partnership

Principles of Partnership as endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform, 12 July 2007.

globalhumanitarianplatform.org/pop.html

Principles of Partnership

A Statement of Commitment

Endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform, 12 July 2007

The *Global Humanitarian Platform*, created in July 2006, brings together UN and non-UN humanitarian organizations on an equal footing.

- Striving to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian action, based on an ethical obligation and accountability to the populations we serve,
- Acknowledging diversity as an asset of the humanitarian community and recognizing the interdependence among humanitarian organizations,
- Committed to building and nurturing an effective partnership,

... the organizations participating in the **Global Humanitarian Platform** agree to base their partnership on the following principles:

Equality

Equality requires mutual respect between members of the partnership irrespective of size and power. The participants must respect each other's mandates, obligations and independence and recognize each other's constraints and commitments. Mutual respect must not preclude organizations from engaging in constructive dissent.

Transparency

Transparency is achieved through dialogue (on equal footing), with an emphasis on early consultations and early sharing of information. Communications and transparency, including financial transparency, increase the level of trust among organizations.

Result-oriented approach

Effective humanitarian action must be reality-based and action-oriented. This requires result-oriented coordination based on effective capabilities and concrete operational capacities.

Responsibility

Humanitarian organizations have an ethical obligation to each other to accomplish their tasks responsibly, with integrity and in a relevant and appropriate way. They must make sure they commit to activities only when they have the means, competencies, skills, and capacity to deliver on their commitments. Decisive and robust prevention of abuses committed by humanitarians must also be a constant effort.

Complementarity

The diversity of the humanitarian community is an asset if we build on our comparative advantages and complement each other's contributions. Local capacity is one of the main assets to enhance and on which to build. Whenever possible, humanitarian organizations should strive to make it an integral part in emergency response. Language and cultural barriers must be overcome.

www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org

ANNEX B: Overview of Fiji National Disaster Risk Management and Cluster System

FIJI NATIONAL CLUSTER SYSTEM

