



GSC GREENING EFFORTS AT A GLANCE



Global Shelter Cluster
ShelterCluster.org
Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter

Global Shelter Cluster core mandate – who we are?

The Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) is an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) coordination mechanism that supports people affected by disasters and people affected by conflict-induced internal displacement to live in safe, dignified, and appropriate shelter. The GSC enables better coordination among shelter actors, including local and national governments, so that people who need shelter assistance get help faster and receive the right kind of support. The GSC is a public platform co-chaired by IFRC and UNHCR at the global level, it has 44 partners who participate on a regular basis.

Why Environment consideration is a key aspect for Shelter and Settlements Assistance?

Humanitarian shelter responses require a rapid and large mobilization of shelter and construction materials as well Essential Household Items (EHI)/Non-Food Items (NFI) to meet life-saving and life-supporting needs. Unfortunately, shelter and settlements responses carry one of the highest risks of negative environmental impacts in a humanitarian response, including risks of increased deforestation or overuse of natural resources, the frequent use of plastics and of materials which contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). To tackle this issue, the GSC has strengthened its focus to advance and support partners to reduce negative environmental impacts of shelter responses and also consider climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.

Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) greening efforts

Since 2021, the Global Shelter Cluster's efforts have been supported by ECHO, USAID-BHA, UNHCR, IFRC and other partners, underlining the collectiveness of efforts towards greener humanitarian shelter and settlements responses. The GSC, among other activities that are being implemented both at country and global level, has

- Advocated for an environmentally sustainable shelter response;
- Established an Environment Community of Practice, which has, over the last 10 years provided specialized, technical expertise to country and global partners;
- Contributed, through its partners, the development of global environmental standards, including the Sphere Environmental Sustainability Shelter Standard 7 and
- Played a key role of connecting greening initiatives regarding shelter of lead agencies and global partners.

Moreover, the GSC's and the Environment Community of Practice's reiterated focus on environmental considerations helps to advance towards reducing the negative impacts of shelter assistance, incorporating a wide range of activities which shelter partners have and can further undertake, building upon the many tools and guidance already existing.

Guidance and tools available include

- Assessments tools such as [NEAT+](#), [SMAC](#) and [Checklists](#) for including environmental considerations (aligned with the Sphere Standards)
- Guidance on mainstreaming environmental and climate change considerations in [HNOs & HRP](#)s;
- Think pieces as analysis the scope of environment and climate change integration in the key strategic documents produced by Shelter Clusters such as [HNOs and HRP](#)s; or an overview on [greening procurement practices](#) for humanitarian organisations;
- Guidance on mainstreaming environmental and climate change considerations in Humanitarian Program Cycle such as the [Tip-Sheets](#); [greening Shelter and settlement responses](#); or on [reducing plastics in packaging](#);
- Other documents include country specific assessments and lessons learned; as well as many other tools and guidance.

The Global Shelter Cluster is also strengthening capacity of country clusters and local partners on mainstreaming environmental considerations into their programming through in-person and/or remote trainings, including on environmental assessment tools. Through partnerships with CRATERre, WWF and CRS, the GSC is supporting country-level shelter clusters to effectively design and implement “greener” shelter responses, through contextual research feeding into [Shelter Response Profiles](#), Environment Country Profile, and Innovative Market approaches.

Recently, and aligned with the [Climate and Environment Charter](#) for Humanitarian Organizations, the GSC and its partners have committed to coordinate and advocate for the “reduction in the yearly CO2 footprint of shelter and non-food items” and the “reduction in the amount of plastic distributed per year in shelter and non-food items” among its partners. In 2022, the GSC gathered data from seven major suppliers of shelter items (Tarpaulins, Blankets and Tents) at global level, to make an estimation of CO2 and virgin plastic footprints of those items. Reducing the CO2 footprint of shelter and shelter-related non-food items is in the coming years one of the focus areas of the GSC, in close cooperation and through partners at global and country level. The GSC will support countries clusters as well as global partners through research, coordination and advocacy to achieve this vision as well as many other topics, that will help to make humanitarian shelter responses more environmentally sustainable.

For more on GSC greening efforts, get in touch with us on environmentoperations@sheltercluster.org or visit our [website](#)