



# SOMALIA SHELTER CLUSTER

Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter and Settlements



**SOMALIA**

**EMERGENCY SHELTER & NON-FOOD ITEMS**

**CLUSTER STRATEGY 2024-2028**

## Shelter NFI Cluster Coordination Structure in Somalia

The Shelter and Non-Food Items (SNFIs) Cluster was launched in Somalia in 2006 to enhance the coordination and effectiveness of partner organizations providing lifesaving household items and shelter materials to conflict—and disaster-affected people. The Cluster operates in all six states of Somalia: Puntland, Jubaland, Somaliland, Hirshaabelle, Galmudug, Southwest, and Banadir regional administration.

At the national level, the Cluster Lead Agency is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with the Norwegian Refugee Council as a Co-Lead agency. The country benefits from two main common pipelines managed by UNHCR and IOM, known for their reliability, cost-effectiveness, and steady stream of quality materials. These pipelines are strategically managed nationwide, ensuring a steady supply of materials to the needy/affected populations.

Below is a summary of the cluster coordination structure.

**Cluster Lead Agency:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

### Cluster Coordinator:

Name: Waweru Ndungu

Email: ndunguw@unhcr.org Mobile: +252 770 940 918

### Deputy Cluster Coordinator:

Name: Nurta Mohamed Adan

Email: adan@unhcr.org Mobile: +252 615 682 233

**Cluster Information Management Officer:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

### Information Management Officer

Name: Abdiwali Shukri Khalif

Email: shukrikh@unhcr.org Mobile: +252 615 582 586

**Cluster Co-Chair Agency:** Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

### Cluster Co-chair:

Name: Mohammed Juma

Email: mohammed.juma@nrc.no Mobile: +252 618 454 589

## Continuation.....

**Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) Agencies:** The SAG is the strategic representation of active organizations in the Cluster composed of 2 International NGOs, 5 National NGOs, and 2 UN organizations. Observers of the SAG comprise the Protection Cluster Coordinator, a donor representative (ShelterBox, BHA), and UNOCHA. Sometimes, government counterparts are encouraged to participate. The Cluster Coordinator chairs this SAG committee. SAG plays four key roles:

1. Strategic planning
2. Technical support
3. Advocacy and advisory
4. Coordination support

**Active SNFI Cluster Partner Members:** For 2023, the Cluster has 23 active SNFI partners. These include 2 UN agencies, 2 International and 19 National NGOs.

**Relevant Technical Working Groups:** Technical Working Groups (TWiGs) are created on an ad hoc (need) basis, as per the SAG's recommendation.

# Table of Contents

## Contents

|      |                                                         |    |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1    | Overview .....                                          | 5  |
| 1.1  | Situational Analysis.....                               | 5  |
| 2    | Cluster Goals, Priorities and Guiding Principles.....   | 6  |
| 2.1  | Cluster Goal .....                                      | 6  |
| 2.2  | Cluster Objectives .....                                | 7  |
| 2.3  | Guiding Principles .....                                | 7  |
| 2.4  | Cluster Strategic Priorities .....                      | 8  |
| 3    | Response modalities .....                               | 9  |
| 3.1  | Emergency Lifesaving: In-kind Assistance Approach ..... | 9  |
| 3.2  | Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) .....                 | 9  |
| 3.3  | Hybrid approach - In-Kind and Cash Assistance.....      | 10 |
| 3.4  | Shelter Repair and Retrofitting.....                    | 10 |
| 3.5  | Multisectoral/ Integrated Programming .....             | 10 |
| 4    | Cross-cutting issues .....                              | 11 |
| 4.1  | Protection Mainstreaming.....                           | 11 |
| 4.2  | Gender and Diversity Inclusion .....                    | 11 |
| 4.3  | Environmental Protection and Sustainability.....        | 12 |
| 4.4  | Accountability to the Affected Population (AAP).....    | 13 |
| 4.5  | Livelihoods.....                                        | 13 |
| 4.6  | Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities .....            | 13 |
| 4.7  | Social cohesion.....                                    | 14 |
| 4.8  | Ensuring Safe Access to Assistance .....                | 14 |
| 4.9  | Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Support .....          | 14 |
| 4.10 | Human Rights .....                                      | 15 |
| 4.11 | Urbanization.....                                       | 15 |
| 4.12 | Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) .....                     | 15 |
| 4.13 | Health and Hygiene .....                                | 15 |
| 4.14 | Education.....                                          | 15 |
| 4.15 | Cultural Considerations.....                            | 15 |
| 5    | Monitoring & Evaluation.....                            | 17 |
| 6    | Challenges & Solutions.....                             | 17 |
| 7    | Exit strategy.....                                      | 18 |
| 8    | Definition Operational Terms.....                       | 19 |
| 9    | Annex .....                                             | 20 |



# 1 Overview

The Shelter Cluster Strategy for Somalia is built on the evolving humanitarian landscape and aims to transition from prolonged emergency lifesaving assistance to resilience and recovery. This strategy will guide the interventions of Cluster partners until the end of 2028 with proposed revision in context changes, acknowledging that conditions across Somalia are dynamic and vary significantly by location, necessitating flexible planning and response.



## 1.1 Situational Analysis

Since 1991, the country has experienced persistent conflicts, forced evictions, violent upheavals, and recurrent natural disasters. These challenges have compounded over the past three decades, creating a complex and enduring crisis that has drastically increased the demand for shelter and non-food items (NFIs). However, prolonged displacement, concerns about aid diversion, and the global rise in humanitarian needs have led to a significant decline in shelter funding, resulting in a critical gap between the needs of the affected population and the available resources.

The situation worsened in 2022-2023 when Somalia was hit by an unprecedented drought followed by severe rainfall that caused widespread flooding and decades of conflict. These consecutive disasters, combined with ongoing conflict, led to multiple waves of displacement, forcing hundreds of

thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to flee their homes. The aftermath left Somalia in a dire state, with extensive destruction of homes, protective infrastructure, and livelihoods, further exacerbating the vulnerabilities of already displaced families.

Currently, 88% of IDPs reside in makeshift emergency shelters known as Buuls—domed, thatched structures crafted by Somali women using twigs and rugs. This starkly illustrates the vast and unmet shelter needs across the country.

Displacement impacts extend beyond immediate shelter concerns, affecting rural and urban areas. Continuous displacement has deepened the humanitarian crisis, accelerated urbanization, and strained minimal infrastructure. Overcrowding, lack of adequate services, unplanned settlements, and rising criminality further impact health and social cohesion, particularly among minority groups. Vulnerable and marginalized communities face heightened risks, including gender-based violence, due to their temporary and undignified living conditions. The Somalia Shelter Cluster is navigating a multifaceted crisis that requires a comprehensive and strategic approach. According to the 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP), approximately 4.1 million people in Somalia will require shelter support, yet only 1.3 million are expected to receive targeted assistance. This disparity underscores the urgent need for a strategic response beyond short-term solutions.

The Cluster recognizes several challenges that could hinder the implementation of its key strategic objectives, including financial constraints, equitable resource allocation, logistical difficulties, and access issues caused by insecurity and floods. Additional challenges include repeated displacements due to clan conflicts, internal violence, drought, and flooding, as well as obstacles in securing housing, land, and property rights for protracted IDPs and returnees. Despite these hurdles, the Cluster remains dedicated to providing timely and dignified assistance while advocating for increased resources, peaceful coexistence, and sustainable solutions to address the needs of those affected.

The shelter is essential for immediate survival and well-being, and inadequate shelter continues to expose households to various health and protection risks, such as lack of privacy, eviction, exploitation, abuse, and increased vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence. Furthermore, multiple displacements weaken community coping strategies.

The Cluster is committed to ensuring that protection principles guide all activities and that partners address cross-cutting issues such as gender and disability inclusion, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), Accountability to the Affected Population (AAP), child safeguarding, and the promotion of human rights. All interventions will be conflict-sensitive and incorporate community-based strategies. Additionally, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and environmental protection measures will be integrated into the Cluster's response to mitigate the impacts of future natural disasters like floods and droughts. The Cluster emphasizes the importance of community

ownership and capacity building, recognizing that the community is the first responder to their needs. Humanitarian partners must actively involve the community in all phases of project implementation, ensuring that responses are tailored to the community's specific needs.

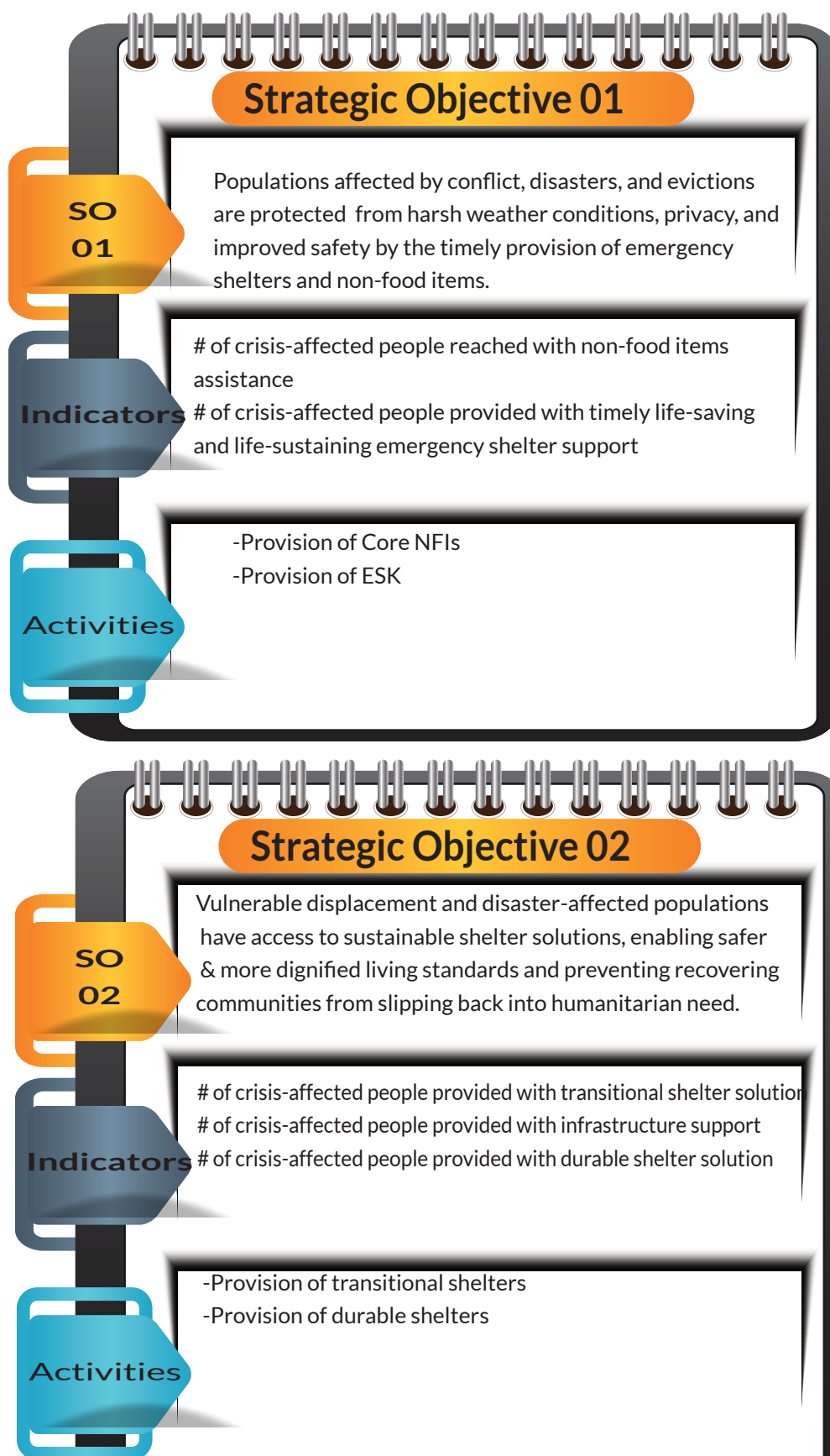
The Shelter and Non-Food Items (SNFI) Cluster response will prioritize the most vulnerable individuals with first-line emergency lifesaving shelter and non-food items (S/NFIs) to mitigate health and protection risks and restore their dignity. The Cluster also acknowledges the high number of protracted displacements across the country. With the government's commitment to providing land, supports cluster and its partners in harmonizing the implementation approaches, the Shelter Cluster will work with partners to develop sustainable pathways for permanent shelter solutions, including constructing, repairing, and upgrading shelters. The prolonged conflict over decades has adversely affected local market supplies and increased prices. The Cluster is aware of the high costs associated with durable shelter interventions and the reduction in donor funding. In response, the Cluster will continue to advocate for and mobilize resources through various networks, ensuring that all efforts are based on evidence of needs and the feasibility of the response modalities.

## 2 Cluster Goals, Priorities and Guiding Principles.

### 2.1 Cluster Goal

The goal is to ensure crisis-affected people live sustainably in safe and dignified conditions by providing adequate shelter, essential household items, and well-planned settlements, focusing on inclusivity, long-term solutions, and community involvement.

### 2.2 Cluster Objectives





## 2.3 Guiding Principles

The principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence guide humanitarian actions. Adhering to these principles is crucial for the effectiveness and credibility of any humanitarian response. They ensure that humanitarian actors provide assistance that respects human dignity and rights, focuses on those most in need, and remains free from political or other non-humanitarian influences.

### **Prioritize Safety and Dignity, and Do No Harm:**

All humanitarian assistance must prioritize the physical and psychological safety, health, security, privacy, and dignity of the individuals and communities it aims to support. Thorough assessments and conflict-sensitive analyses are crucial to ensure that responses meet the diverse needs of all affected groups—men, women, boys, and girls—without exacerbating existing vulnerabilities or tensions. Interventions should avoid unintended negative impacts, such as increased exposure to gender-based violence (GBV), discrimination, deprivation, or coercion.

Shelter and Non-Food Item (SNFI) partners must ensure that all staff receive training on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and adhere to child safeguarding principles. The Cluster is committed to collaborating with partners, including those with their supplies, to harmonize SNFI kits. This coordination aims to prevent potential conflicts and promote a unified, protective response across all interventions.

**Ensuring meaningful access to services and assistance:** Ensuring meaningful access to services and assistance is a fundamental aspect of all humanitarian interventions. Humanitarian actors must strive to give every individual and community the opportunity to realize their rights through access to available services and assistance. This involves identifying and addressing all barriers to access, including logistical challenges, social and cultural factors, discrimination, insecurity, and lack of information about available aid. The shelter Partners should ensure that services are provided in safe and convenient locations and that information about distribution dates and services is communicated clearly to all beneficiaries. Responses must be culturally sensitive and contextually appropriate. All responses should be guided by impartiality, ensuring that assistance is based on assessed needs and provides equitable access for everyone, regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, or other diversities.

### **Participation and empowerment of affected people:**

Active community participation throughout the project cycle is essential for ensuring quality programming, fostering ownership, and achieving sustainable

outcomes. Shelter and Non-Food Item (SNFI) programs must identify, support, and strengthen existing local capacities by empowering communities and actively involving them in the planning, implementing, and monitoring of projects within their communities. Humanitarian actors must ensure that all groups within the affected community, including women, men, boys, girls, and marginalized populations, are given meaningful opportunities to participate in decisions that impact their lives. It is crucial to identify and remove barriers to participation, such as social, cultural, or logistical obstacles, to facilitate inclusive engagement and ensure that all voices are heard and valued.

The humanitarian actors also must ensure that they follow and apply a harmonized community engagement approach while working in the same context to avoid discrepancies that build community misunderstanding.

### **Mainstreaming cross-cutting issues:**

To ensure that interventions are inclusive, equitable, and sustainable, it is essential to integrate key considerations that affect all areas of humanitarian and development work into every stage of program design, implementation, and evaluation. Effective shelter programming must not occur in isolation but should align with cross-cutting issues such as gender, age, disability, environmental impact, protection, and conflict sensitivity.

### **Accountability to the affected population:**

All humanitarian actors' mandate is to prioritize accountability to the crisis-affected people they aim to assist throughout all stages of the response. This requires establishing effective feedback mechanisms in close consultation with the community, allowing for open communication channels. Affected communities must have opportunities to provide feedback on interventions, express concerns, and submit complaints regarding both the response and the conduct of implementation teams. Partners are encouraged to offer multiple, accessible feedback channels that cater to the diverse needs of different community members.

### **Need-based and context-driven responses:**

Any Shelter and Non-Food Item (SNFI) response must be grounded in a thorough needs assessment and tailored to the specific context of the affected population. Partners must recognize that needs are not uniform across all individuals or groups; therefore, a comprehensive needs analysis should be the foundation of any intervention, guiding both the response and the chosen modality.

The Cluster acknowledges the diverse range of needs among the affected population.



However, due to resource constraints, the focus will be on addressing the most urgent needs identified and ranked by the affected communities. The SNFI Cluster's targeting criteria will prioritize support for the most vulnerable groups, including unaccompanied children, female-headed households, persons with disabilities (PwDs), pregnant and lactating women, the elderly, child-headed households, and individuals without community support networks.

### **Build strong coordination and partnerships:**

Shelter and Non-Food Item (SNFI) responses must be integrated with other sectoral responses and involve collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including national authorities, civil society, and other clusters, to ensure a comprehensive and cohesive approach to addressing the complex needs of affected populations. This integrated approach helps ensure that priority needs are addressed holistically and that responses are more effective and efficient.

Effective partnerships and strong synergies are essential to minimize the risks of overlap and duplication of efforts, promote a culture of information sharing, and optimize the use of available resources among partners. To manage expectations and foster trust, all stakeholders—including affected communities, partners, and authorities—should be engaged from the outset of the response cycle. This requires clear communication and proper coordination through established forums such as OCHA, cluster coordination meetings, government bodies, and community committees.

## **2.4 Cluster Strategic Priorities**

**Provision of Emergency Shelter (ES) and Non-Food Items (NFI)** through timely delivery of tailored, life-saving support that restores dignity and enhances protection outcomes. This approach integrates critical cross-cutting considerations, including Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) rights, protection, gender, age, disability, and accountability to affected populations (AAP).

**Strengthening monitoring and reporting systems is a core commitment.** Enhancing assessments, information management,

post-distribution monitoring, and reporting mechanisms ensures accountability, delivers an effective response, and mitigates aid diversion, reaffirming our dedication to these principles.

### **Enhancing rapid response mechanisms and capacities at both field and national levels**

through contingency planning, prepositioning emergency shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs) in strategic locations and strengthening coordination and information flow ensures swift response to acute needs during new emergencies, leveraging strategically prepositioned resources across existing hub facilities.

### **Facilitating durable solutions by constructing, repairing, and upgrading shelters for IDPs, host communities, and returnees.**

This approach adopts settlement-based strategies that are socially inclusive, geographically targeted, and multi-sectoral, providing a comprehensive response to crises and conflict while laying the foundation for long-term recovery.

**The cluster will mitigate protection risks related to housing, land, and property by actively engaging local authorities and communities.** This approach promotes peaceful coexistence between IDPs, returnees, and host populations, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility.

**Increasing cash and market-based programming** empowers beneficiaries and upholds dignity while revitalising local markets to meet the ongoing needs of crisis-affected populations.

### 3. Response modalities

Shelter Cluster partners will provide Shelter and Non-Food Items (S/NFI) assistance to affected populations following a thorough needs analysis guided by assessment and analysis tools. These tools must align with the Shelter Cluster's minimum standards, which include evaluating the need for S/NFI assistance, the severity and magnitude of the conflict or disaster, and the accessibility of affected locations.

To enhance multisectoral programming in shelter response, assessments, analyses, and interventions will be conducted jointly with other clusters. This approach ensures cost and time efficiency and promotes holistic service provision using cross-sectoral vulnerability criteria that foster integration and joint interventions.

Shelter partners will provide various forms of support based on the specific needs of different categories of affected populations:

For newly displaced internally displaced persons (IDPs), displaced populations in IDP sites, and returning populations where housing, land, and property (HLP) issues have been addressed, the immediate emergency support will include temporary shelters (Emergency Shelter Kits), household items, shelter repairs, retrofitting or upgrades, temporary communal structures, information services, infrastructure and settlement planning, rehabilitation of community infrastructure, rental assistance (in urban settings), transitional shelters, and cash support where applicable.

For the most vulnerable host communities impacted by displacement, the support will focus on addressing their specific needs and ensuring they receive adequate assistance.

#### 3.1 Emergency Lifesaving: In-kind Assistance Approach

The Shelter Cluster's response modality directly provides physical goods or services to individuals, households, or communities affected by a crisis. The Cluster recognizes that market supply and stability are often disrupted during a conflict or natural disaster, making them unreliable for supporting a timely, effective, and efficient humanitarian response. Based on assessed needs, shelter and non-food items (NFIs) remain the top priorities for displaced populations.

Non-food items and emergency shelter materials, such as plastic sheets, kitchen sets, blankets, solar lamps, mosquito nets, sleeping mats, and jerry cans, are prepositioned and distributed as in-kind assistance to newly displaced populations and

returnees. The Shelter Cluster also ensures that the composition of the in-kind NFI kits is culturally appropriate and tailored to the specific needs of the affected population to be genuinely effective.

#### 3.2 Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA)

**Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA):** The cash intervention will be scaled up in contexts where the market permits and safety for the target population is guaranteed. The modality provides direct financial support to individuals, households, or communities affected by crises, allowing them to meet their basic needs and prioritize expenditures according to their specific circumstances.

**Flexibility and Dignity:** CVA allows recipients to prioritize their needs, providing a sense of autonomy and dignity and respecting the agency of affected people by enabling them to make decisions that best suit their individual or family circumstances.

**Economic Impact:** By injecting Cash into local markets, CVA stimulates the economy, supports local businesses, and promotes market recovery. This is beneficial in post-disaster or conflict settings where markets need revitalization.

**Efficiency and Speed:** Where there is market support, Cash and vouchers can often be distributed more quickly and efficiently than physical goods, significantly when supply chains are disrupted or logistics are challenging.

**Cost-Effectiveness:** CVA can be more cost-effective than in-kind assistance because it reduces transportation, storage, and distribution costs associated with physical goods, creating room to support a larger population.

This approach includes various forms, such as unconditional cash transfers, which offer complete spending flexibility, and conditional cash transfers, which require recipients to meet specific conditions.

**Unconditional Cash Transfers:** Cash will be provided without any conditions or requirements for the recipient. This modality is typically used when the aim is to meet multiple needs or provide maximum flexibility. Recipients can decide how to use the money based on their urgent needs.

**Conditional Cash Transfers:** Cash will be provided with specific conditions that recipients must meet to receive the assistance. For example, Cash is given on the condition that shelter construction be approved for an agreed-upon instalment to be settled.

**Cash-for-Work:** This is a form of conditional cash transfer where recipients receive cash payments in exchange for participating in labour-intensive public works projects, such as community infrastructure.

### 3.3 Hybrid approach - In-Kind and Cash Assistance

Under specific circumstances, the cluster may provide a combination of in-kind and cash assistance to affected populations. These situations may include, but are not limited to, locations where the market is functioning but lacks certain essential Non-Food Items (NFIs), which can be accessed through the cluster's core pipeline. In such cases, partners must conduct a thorough and meticulous response analysis, guided by a market assessment, to inform their decisions.

Another scenario could involve locally available shelter materials and the need for community involvement in shelter construction. In this case, cash-for-work programs may be recommended to train community members and compensate them for their labour. Cash assistance may also cover transporting shelter materials from the pipeline to their destination.

For IDPs and returning populations, in-kind assistance (selected NFIs) and cash may be recommended to support shelter repairs, upgrades, or expansion. In all instances, partners must adhere to the agreed SNFI technical guidelines and minimum standards in their responses.

### 3.4 Shelter Repair and Retrofitting

Given the protracted nature of displacement in Somalia, Shelter Repair and Retrofitting will be adopted as a critical shelter response modality to enhance damaged or substandard shelters' safety, durability, and habitability. This approach focuses on upgrading existing structures rather than constructing new ones by assessing their repairability, reinforcing their structural integrity, and utilising more durable materials and techniques to improve resilience against environmental hazards.

This modality incorporates safety and accessibility standards, actively engages local communities, and often includes training beneficiaries in basic construction skills to ensure sustainable upkeep. It is a cost-effective solution in situations where shelters

can be rehabilitated instead of being entirely rebuilt.

### 3.5 Multisectoral/Integrated Programming

There is increasing recognition that multisectoral integrated programming is vital for achieving a coherent, complementary, and effective humanitarian response. Over the years, the Cluster has acknowledged the complex needs faced by displaced populations during disasters or conflicts, emphasizing the necessity of addressing these needs holistically. However, given the constraints posed by limited funding, the Cluster may be unable to meet all the diverse needs of affected populations independently. This reinforces the importance of adopting an integrated approach through joint responses.

Partners are strongly encouraged to engage at all stages of the response, from multisectoral assessments to monitoring and evaluation. All participating Clusters must have a shared understanding of the humanitarian context, considering geographical dimensions, vulnerabilities, cross-cutting issues, response modalities, service delivery mechanisms, intervention prioritisation (targeting criteria), protection mainstreaming, and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP).

While each Cluster will maintain responsibility for implementing its specific activities, coordination and collaboration with other Clusters will be central to the joint operational framework and integrated response plan. The respective clusters will facilitate regular monitoring and information sharing, with joint analyses of performance and outcomes conducted monthly or quarterly to assess the effectiveness of the collective response. Programming interventions will be adjusted as necessary based on these evaluations.

Additionally, an integrated programming option could include multipurpose cash assistance, enabling the response to efficiently meet the multiple needs of crisis-affected populations.



## 4 Cross-cutting issues

In the context of the Somalia Shelter Cluster, cross-cutting issues refer to key themes that must be integrated across all stages of shelter interventions to achieve holistic, inclusive, and sustainable outcomes. These issues are essential for addressing the diverse needs of affected populations and are closely connected to broader humanitarian and development objectives. The primary cross-cutting issues include:

### 4.1 Protection Mainstreaming

**The shelter response extends beyond simply providing a roof;** it encompasses a broader approach through settlement programming that evaluates the wider impacts on the affected population. This approach considers all potential risks and aims to achieve protection outcomes, such as reducing gender-based violence (GBV) and fostering peaceful coexistence. The Cluster will collaborate with the Protection Cluster to implement shelter and settlement interventions that prioritize protection outcomes while accounting for protection risks and potential violations. Partners will be encouraged to ensure meaningful access, safety, and dignity in humanitarian aid by:

**Protection-Focused Indicators:** Develop and use specific indicators to monitor the protection outcomes of shelter interventions. These should include indicators of safety, dignity, accessibility, and the participation of vulnerable groups.

**Joint Assessments and Monitoring:** Participate in joint assessments and monitoring activities with protection partners to identify and mitigate protection risks throughout the shelter response.

**Do No Harm:** Implement shelter activities to avoid exacerbating existing vulnerabilities or creating new risks by carefully selecting sites, preventing forced evictions, and ensuring construction does not cause environmental degradation or resource conflicts.

**Safety and Security Measures:** Establish safety measures for construction sites and ensure all shelter activities adhere to safety standards to protect workers and residents. This includes training on safe construction practices and providing necessary personal protective equipment. The shelter design and implementation also give attention to household safety hence inclusion of safe cooking space

**Design Standards:** Develop shelter designs prioritizing safety and dignity, including adequate space, privacy, and accessibility features for people with disabilities. Consider the cultural and social norms of the communities to ensure that shelters are appropriate and acceptable.

**Community Engagement:** Actively engage affected communities in planning and decision-making by conducting consultations and focus group discussions with diverse members. This ensures that all voices are heard and interventions align with the population's needs and priorities.

**Representation of Vulnerable Groups:** Ensure that vulnerable groups, such as women, children, people with disabilities, and minorities, are adequately represented in all decision-making bodies and have a meaningful role in shaping shelter interventions.

**Context-Specific Vulnerability Analysis:** Conduct detailed assessments to understand the specific vulnerabilities and protection risks faced by different groups, such as women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and minority clans, including the impact of displacement, conflict, and natural disasters on these populations.

**Protection Risk Mapping:** Identify and map shelter-related protection risks, including overcrowding, unsafe building practices, lack of privacy, and exposure to violence or exploitation. This process helps prioritize intervention areas and guide the development of safer, more secure shelter solutions.

**Transparency and Information Sharing:** Consistently communicate details of shelter interventions—such as objectives, timelines, and eligibility criteria—in an accessible and clear manner for all community members to foster trust and accountability.

### 4.2 Gender and Diversity Inclusion

Conflicts and natural disasters affect women, girls, men, and boys in different ways. Their varying needs are further compounded by various social and cultural factors (such as status, religion, and ethnicity), producing specific and diverse needs. The Somalia Shelter Cluster is dedicated to an inclusive response in line with IASC guidelines on gender and diversity (SADD). Collecting sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data, the Cluster identifies diverse needs and vulnerabilities, ensuring shelter interventions consider gender roles, social norms, and power dynamics for effective and targeted support.

Guided by inclusivity and accessibility, the Cluster designs gender-responsive shelters with gender-segregated spaces, adequate lighting, wheelchair ramps, and privacy measures, ensuring a safe, dignified environment for all, especially vulnerable groups. The Cluster's commitment to community participation is unwavering, involving diverse groups in planning to ensure varied perspectives and foster ownership and responsibility.

The Somalia Shelter Cluster enhances gender and diversity inclusion by integrating gender-based violence (GBV) risk mitigation into shelter programs. This involves assessing GBV risks, designing shelters to reduce them, creating safe spaces, and establishing referral pathways for survivors. The Cluster works with protection partners to train staff and community members on GBV prevention and response. Capacity building and training are central to the Cluster's gender and diversity inclusion efforts.

The Cluster offers comprehensive training on gender equality, diversity, inclusion, and GBV prevention for shelter staff, partners, and community members, enhancing local capacity. It empowers local organizations and leaders to spearhead inclusive shelter initiatives, promoting sustainability and resilience.

The Cluster ensures a team of females and males in the monitoring, evaluation, and accountability mechanisms, including accessible feedback and complaint systems for community input on shelter interventions. This approach ensures that responses are continuously adapted to meet the diverse needs of all affected populations. The Cluster collaborates with other sectors and local organizations for a coordinated, holistic response.

The Somalia Shelter Cluster strongly advocates for policies and funding that prioritize gender equality and diversity inclusion. By collaborating with donors, government entities, and stakeholders, the Cluster aligns shelter interventions with international standards, including the revised IASC guidelines. This advocacy secures resources for gender-responsive, equitable shelter solutions, enhancing safety, dignity, and resilience for all affected populations.

### **4.3 Environmental Protection and Sustainability**

The Somalia Shelter Cluster is committed to integrating environmental protection and sustainability into all aspects of its shelter response to minimize the environmental impact and promote long-term resilience among affected populations. The Cluster recognizes the importance of sustainable practices in maintaining the natural resources of Somalia, reducing the carbon footprint of shelter interventions, and ensuring that communities are better prepared for future environmental challenges. The following outlines the key strategies and actions the Somalia Shelter Cluster implements to achieve environmental protection and sustainability:

#### **Advocating for Sustainable Shelter Policies:**

The Cluster advocates for policies prioritizing environmental protection in shelter responses by collaborating with governments, donors, and stakeholders to promote sustainable standards and secure funding.

**Coordinating with Environmental and Development Partners:** The Cluster collaborates with environmental groups and development partners to integrate environmental considerations into shelter interventions, supporting sustainability and broader environmental goals in Somalia.

**Integrating Climate Resilience into Shelter Design:** The Cluster incorporates climate resilience into shelter design using materials and techniques resistant to extreme weather. This allows for easy modification or relocation due to climate risks.

**Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Strategies:** The Cluster integrates Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies by selecting safe sites, implementing early warning systems, developing evacuation plans, and using resilient materials to enhance safety. The cluster develops compressive settlement plans to avoid/minimize high concentration of people that negatively impact the environment. The site plan ensures appropriate distance between latrines and water points to mitigate public health risks.

**Use of Locally Sourced and Sustainable Materials:** The Cluster promotes using locally sourced, sustainable materials like bamboo, thatch, and earth for shelter construction to reduce emissions, support local economies, and lower carbon footprints.

**Promoting Durable and Resilient Structures:** The Cluster prioritizes durable, resilient shelters made of quality materials that can withstand harsh conditions, reduce repairs, extend lifespans, and conserve resources by minimizing waste.

**Environmental Awareness and Capacity Building:** The Cluster enhances environmental sustainability by educating stakeholders on resource use, waste management, and renewable energy and training them in sustainable construction and climate adaptation.

**Promoting Energy-Efficient Sources and Technologies:** The Cluster supports renewable energy, like solar and wind, and energy-efficient technologies, such as solar lanterns and stoves, to reduce emissions, deforestation, and pollution.

**Mitigating Deforestation and Land Degradation:**

The Cluster combats deforestation by identifying the key drivers of deforestation and promoting wood alternatives, reforestation, and sustainable land management practices like soil conservation and agroforestry to restore degraded land.

**Waste Management and Recycling:** The Cluster focuses on waste management in shelter construction by promoting the “three Rs” of waste management in settlements; reducing, re-using and recycling, using biodegradable materials, and safely disposing of hazardous waste to reduce environmental impact.

The cluster promotes the repair of shelters through shelter maintenance training and provision of repair kits to IDP.

#### **4.4 Accountability to the Affected Population (AAP)**

To ensure effective and sustainable shelter and non-food item (SNFI) interventions, partners must engage the community in a way that promotes active participation across all groups across the different project cycle phases. This involves ongoing collaboration with inclusive community committees and mechanisms that gather information about the most needy and vulnerable individuals. Partners should incorporate community sensitization on targeting criteria and feedback mechanisms throughout their interventions to reduce potential social tensions and ensure transparency. This community-focused approach fosters involvement and empowerment, leading to sustainable impacts.

The Cluster and its partners will work closely with local authorities and affected populations to identify needs, plan interventions, and provide feedback on the relevance and appropriateness of responses, mitigating potential harm within the community. Prioritizing equitable delivery mechanisms is essential to ensure that assistance reaches all targeted beneficiaries. All partners are encouraged to enhance or establish robust feedback and complaint mechanisms throughout their interventions to facilitate continuous input from affected populations and improve response effectiveness.

#### **4.5 Livelihoods**

Livelihoods are a crucial cross-cutting issue for the Somalia Shelter Cluster, ensuring shelter interventions go beyond providing safe living spaces to promote long-term sustainability and resilience. By integrating livelihoods into shelter responses, displaced populations are empowered through income-generating activities, such as cash-for-work programs, bolster local economies and foster community ownership. These initiatives also prioritize vulnerable groups, including women and youth, offering them tailored livelihood opportunities that reduce dependency on negative coping mechanisms and enhance their protection. Furthermore, linking shelter and livelihood efforts supports environmental sustainability by encouraging eco-friendly practices. Ultimately, this approach helps displaced populations

build self-reliance and dignity while contributing to the local economy, strengthening social cohesion and promoting their recovery pathways.

#### **4.6 Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities**

Crises exacerbate the vulnerabilities of persons with disabilities (PwDs), often creating significant barriers to accessing humanitarian assistance. The SNFI Cluster recognises the importance of including PwDs in all preparedness, response, and recovery phases to prevent marginalization and exclusion. The Cluster will collaborate with protection partners to consolidate and disseminate existing knowledge, such as the Guidelines for Inclusion of PwDs in Humanitarian Action and share best practices to inform and guide activities and programming. Ongoing support for capacity development will be provided through targeted training, advocacy, and rigorous monitoring to enhance partner effectiveness in addressing the needs of PwDs.

#### **4.7 Social cohesion:**

Social cohesion is vital for fostering peaceful coexistence between displaced populations and host communities, building trust, mutual respect, and cooperation, and contributing to long-term stability and resilience. To promote social cohesion, shelter partners will actively engage these communities in planning, decision-making, and implementing shelter interventions, fostering ownership and mutual understanding. Designing shared communal spaces and culturally sensitive shelters will encourage interactions and inclusivity. Utilizing community-based protection committees and providing conflict resolution training will help manage disputes effectively. Promoting joint livelihood projects and skill exchange programs will strengthen economic ties and reduce resource competition. Coordinating with health, education, and livelihood sectors will ensure equitable service access. Regular assessments and feedback mechanisms will be used to monitor social cohesion, while awareness campaigns and cultural sensitivity training will enhance mutual understanding and respect among all community members. The shelter cluster also promote and encourage the existing community level norms and cultures that support and helping each other part of the community collaboration



## 4.8 Ensuring Safe Access to Assistance

Ensuring safe access to services and assistance for all affected population groups is essential in humanitarian action. Every response must prioritize the safety and dignity of those affected, ensuring no harm is caused. This requires identifying, mitigating, and addressing all potential threats and barriers—whether physical, psychological, or environmental—that could hinder safe access to assistance. Effective and meaningful access must also encourage inclusive programming that involves:

Regularly assess different population groups' needs, vulnerabilities, and risks to tailor responses and ensure safe assistance access effectively.

Actively involve affected communities, including vulnerable groups, in decision-making processes to ensure that their specific needs and safety concerns are addressed.

Ensure assistance is distributed fairly, avoiding discrimination, and prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable.

Collaborate across sectors to address multiple needs simultaneously, ensuring a holistic response that enhances overall safety and well-being.

Create and maintain confidential channels for affected populations to report safety concerns, abuses, or barriers to accessing assistance.

Conduct awareness campaigns to educate communities on safety measures, protection from exploitation, and available assistance services.

Encourage and support government and local authority involvement in ensuring safety and access to services for displaced and affected populations.

Integrate protection measures across all activities to prevent violence, exploitation, and abuse, especially for women, children, the elderly, disabled individuals, and marginalized groups.

## 4.9 Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Support

Tenure systems determine who can use what resources, for how long, and under what conditions. In Somalia, customary or informal arrangements primarily influence the existing tenure system concerning housing and land. Due to these informal systems, women and other vulnerable groups often face significant challenges in accessing and owning land and property. Regardless of the tenure arrangement, all individuals retain fundamental housing, land, and property rights.

In many cases, people living in informal settlements,

including internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees, may lack formal legal rights to occupy land. Despite this, they require protection against harassment and forced eviction from their shelters. Humanitarian actors must provide support by offering relevant information and engaging with local authorities on the HLP rights of the affected population. This approach aims to mitigate conflicts between affected individuals and host communities and ensure equitable solutions.

Due diligence is essential to identify and address security of tenure risks faced by different groups, including understanding how land disputes are resolved and managed at the community level. In conflict-affected areas, humanitarian partners should adopt a conflict-sensitive approach to HLP issues, considering the historical context of land contestations to avoid exacerbating existing tensions or causing further harm.

## 4.10 Human Rights

Housing is a right, not a commodity. Integrating human rights as a cross-cutting issue in the Shelter Cluster response ensures that all interventions prioritize individuals' protection, dignity, and equitable treatment, especially the most vulnerable. This approach highlights non-discrimination, equitable access to shelter, and the active participation of affected communities in decision-making processes. It also emphasizes accountability for the responsible use of resources and actions.

Furthermore, this human rights-based approach safeguards vulnerable groups from exploitation and violence while advocating for legal protections, such as land tenure security and protection from forced evictions. By centering human rights in shelter interventions, the response contributes to a safe, dignified, and equitable recovery for all affected populations.

## 4.11 Urbanization

The shelter cluster prioritizes durable solutions for IDPs and refugee returnees by conducting comprehensive assessments to identify specific needs and collaborating with the relevant government institutions and humanitarian partners. This approach aims to strengthen urban planning to effectively address urbanization challenges while simultaneously enhancing service delivery capacity. The cluster also seeks to improve infrastructure and livelihood to consolidate peace gains and stimulate economic growth in alignment with the Somalia National Development Plan 9 and working in collaboration with UNHabitat and UNDP in support of durable solutions on permanent masterplanned sites.





## 5 Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring is a crucial part of the SNFI responses. The Cluster has developed a set of outcome indicators that will be reported regularly through the monthly 5Ws, quarterly, and annual achievement reports. Monitoring will occur at two levels: process and impact/outcome.

**Process Monitoring:** This level focuses on implementing activities under the SNFI technical guidelines and protection principles.

**Impact/Outcome Monitoring:** This level will be conducted through various methods, including rapid and onsite monitoring, post-distribution monitoring (PDM), feedback mechanisms, field visits, and capturing lessons learned to inform future Cluster interventions. Key areas of focus include the relevance and appropriateness of the response, beneficiary

satisfaction, quality and usage of the items, adherence to Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) principles, and any lessons learned to guide future actions.

The Cluster will also perform quarterly, bi-annual, and annual reviews to evaluate overall response effectiveness, identify gaps, note lessons learned, and adjust the Cluster Strategy as needed. Additionally, the Cluster will provide partners with assessment, monitoring, and reporting tools. The Information Management Unit will gather, analyze, and share data collected from all implementing partners at different levels.

The Cluster will use Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM) to enhance service delivery further, identify performance strengths and weaknesses, and determine improvement paths.



## 6 Challenges & Solutions

Contextual differences in Somalia's diverse contexts and settlement types present significant challenges in designing and implementing SNFI responses. Issues related to land limitations and minimal shelter support often force IDPs into makeshift shelters, worsening their already vulnerable situation. Additionally, the needs and response strategies differ between urban and rural settings, requiring tailored approaches. Support is also crucial for those settled in alternative locations, such as with host families, or for pastoralist communities who face sudden shocks like unexpected floods and droughts. Therefore, a thorough context analysis is essential to select appropriate response options and modalities.

**Land Issues and Ownership Conflicts:** For over three decades, the majority of IDPs in Somalia have remained in informal camps under the control

of gatekeepers. Returnee families face similar challenges, particularly regarding housing, land, and property (HLP) issues, as they often encounter disputes with the host population over land ownership. Even when the government intervenes by providing land for durable solution projects, these communities frequently find themselves cut off from essential services and the limited livelihood activities they depend on. The informal land tenure system, combined with traditional practices that restrict IDPs from owning land and property, exacerbates these challenges. In response, the SNFI Cluster will continue collaborating closely with the HLP Taskforce and the government to address these HLP issues, which pose significant barriers to dignified living and the implementation of durable shelters. Therefore, advocacy activities on gender inclusion, property rights, and AAP must be mainstreamed in all SNFI activities.



**Market Systems:** The ongoing conflict exacerbates the situation by damaging infrastructure and complicating taxation. Inflation has led to skyrocketing market prices, particularly for construction materials, driving up the cost of even simple emergency shelters. Additionally, persistent unaffordability issues, commodity shortages, and aid diversion pose significant challenges to some response options, particularly Cash and voucher assistance. As a result, the Cluster may be limited to providing in-kind assistance, which brings its challenges, including high costs related to transportation, storage, safety, and potential delays.

**Unpredictable Context:** The unpredictability of Somalia presents a substantial challenge to the confident implementation of sustainable strategies. Protracted displacement, frequent evictions, clan-based conflict, internal conflicts, floods, and droughts all contribute to a landscape that remains difficult to forecast. Additionally, the government has yet to fully assume its primary responsibility of supporting humanitarian partners in sustaining efforts on the ground. Moreover, for Cash and market-based programming to succeed, a functioning market and developed infrastructure

are essential—both of which remain significant challenges in Somalia's hard-to-reach areas.

**Access Challenges:** Insecurity, limited warehousing capacity, and frequent flooding remain significant obstacles to accessing and delivering assistance to affected populations. These challenges delay the timely delivery of Shelter and Non-Food Items (SNFI) and escalate the costs of response efforts. The situation becomes particularly dire during the rainy season when extensive flooding in many target areas necessitates air transport for aid delivery. Additionally, insecurity along transport routes further hampers service delivery to locations otherwise accessible by road.

**Logistical Challenges:** In connection with the above challenges, the Cluster continues to face significant transportation costs for Shelter and Non-Food Items (SNFIs) due to their bulkiness, whether by air, water, or road convoys to hard-to-reach areas. Budget cuts in the logistics cluster have further compounded this issue, leaving many partners, especially national NGOs, unable to extend their operations beyond their fixed budgets. This financial constraint severely limits their capacity to respond effectively.



## 7 Exit strategy.

Given the decades of protracted displacement, the Cluster, in collaboration with other humanitarian and development actors, continues to advocate for resolving Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) issues. Addressing these issues is crucial for establishing sustainable settlements and neighbourhoods. This process involves constructing safer housing, restoring essential services, creating livelihoods, and increasing means of production to empower communities to self-build and recover.

The Cluster focuses on an owner-driven implementation approach emphasizing sustainability and community engagement to achieve these goals. Communities are actively involved in the design process, selection of beneficiaries, contribution to projects, and monitoring activities through established community structures. Additionally, the Cluster supports training and the construction of houses using cash support, aiming to foster participation and create livelihood opportunities. This approach enables community members to generate income during construction and enhances their sense of ownership and commitment to the completed projects.

The Cluster will also explore other durable solutions where the government has effectively addressed HLP issues and where there is relative

peace, ensuring a holistic approach to long-term stability and recovery.

Additionally, community mobilization and active engagement in all project phases foster a strong sense of ownership among target communities. This sense of ownership is crucial for sustaining the interventions, as communities are more likely to maintain and protect the resources they helped create. The Cluster builds communities' capacity to manage key issues and establish themselves within the broader community by combining the impacts of housing, land ownership, and training. This approach is a critical component of achieving durable solutions and long-term sustainability.

Furthermore, the Cluster focuses on disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities. It supports local markets in rebuilding structures that will continue to meet the community's needs well beyond the duration of short-term projects. By integrating efforts with other sectors—particularly Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL), Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), protection, and education—the Cluster ensures that the diverse needs of affected populations are addressed comprehensively, going beyond shelter and non-food items (SNFIs).

The Cluster also supports efforts by national NGOs to respond effectively to emergency crises, contextualize their responses to local needs, and build the skills of local actors to ensure high-quality programming.



## 8 Definition Operational Terms

**Conflict-affected persons** are individuals directly or indirectly impacted by armed conflicts. This group includes those who are displaced, injured or have lost their homes, livelihoods, or loved ones due to violence and instability.

**Durable solutions:** These long-term strategies are designed to resolve displaced persons' situations and provide them with stability and self-sufficiency. They support communities in building their resilience and make them less reliant on humanitarian assistance.

**Host Community:** the local population that accommodates and supports displaced persons within their area, such as IDPs or refugees.

**Household Items:** Household item assistance supports restoring and maintaining health, dignity and safety and undertaking daily domestic activities in and around the home. This standard addresses items for sleeping, food preparation and storage, eating and drinking, thermal comfort, lighting, and personal clothing. The items usually include a cooking set, blanket, sleeping mat, mosquito net, solar lamps, and Jerrycan.

**Humanitarian Assistance:** Support that seeks to save lives and alleviate the suffering of a crisis-affected population.

**In-kind assistance:** Humanitarian assistance provided through physical goods or commodities. This assistance does not involve the transfer of money.

**Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** These individuals or groups have been forced to flee their homes or habitual residence but remain within their country's borders, often displaced due to conflict, violence, natural disasters, or other emergencies.

**Protracted displacement:** This occurs when displaced individuals remain in temporary or inadequate living conditions for prolonged periods, typically due to ongoing conflict, unresolved crises, or systemic challenges that hinder durable

solutions.

**Returnees:** are persons or groups of people previously displaced who have returned to their original place of settlement spontaneously or in an organized manner but have yet to be entirely (re)integrated.

**Post-distribution monitoring (PDM):** evaluates the effectiveness and impact of aid distributions after they have occurred. It assesses whether aid meets needs, reaches intended beneficiaries, and identifies any issues for improvement. PDM typically involves collecting feedback from recipients, analyzing distribution data, and ensuring that the aid delivery process adheres to established standards and objectives.

## 9 Annex

Assessment tools  
NFI technical guidance  
ESK technical guidance  
Shelter Partner Response



<https://sheltercluster.org/response/somalia>