

# Key processes for diaspora engagement in Shelter & Settlement Assistance

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Despite **the efforts made by the international community to meet the ongoing demand for assistance and services, the humanitarian response consistently falls short of need. This is particularly true in the shelter sector**, where the international community is only able to meet a limited portion of the post-disaster demands, and often is constrained to target only the most vulnerable. Although shelter is regarded as a critical, lifesaving need, alongside other key sectors like health, food and protection, the scope and benefits of providing humanitarian shelter & settlement assistance are underestimated.

The need to support affected communities in their own response and reconstruction efforts, and the progressive recognition that shelter is a process, and not only a product, has led to an **increased emphasis on the need for engagement and partnership with other non-institutional actors, such as affected communities and the diasporas<sup>1</sup> that seek to help them**. It is well known that diaspora actors involvement in humanitarian response is key; it traditionally takes the form of remittances that are sent back to families and communities in the countries of origin. However, the diaspora also plays a significant role in shelter response beyond remittances, including assistance in temporary or permanent return, utilizing transnational networks to mobilize in-kind donations and volunteer missions, supporting disaster-affected governments or local NGOs, the provision of technical skills and providing direct assistance through NGOs, and advancing advocacy efforts, among others. Their ability to provide this assistance may contribute to closing the gap of unmet need and insufficient resources, across different crises contexts..

Under Global Shelter Cluster framework, a specific working group has been formed on strengthening diaspora engagement in shelter response (DESR WG). This new forum has led to the definition of [Standard Operating Procedures \(SOPs\)](#), that were finalized in August 2021. **These are meant to propose a step-by-step procedure for a more coordinated and effective engagement of diasporas in the Shelter & Settlement response**, with the ultimate goal of expanding and improving assistance in the shelter sector to affected communities, at different stages of the crisis management cycle. These SOPs are designed in the hope they may be used in all crisis contexts, where diasporas intervene within the shelter and settlement sector.

These key processes, as identified in the SOPs, aim to highlight the **key actions that should constitute the core of a recommended framework for interagency coordination, communication and cooperation between diasporas and shelter actors**, with the Shelter Cluster, both at the global and country level, being the main reference platform.

## For further information:

**Working Group on Strengthening and Mainstreaming Diaspora Engagement in Shelter Responses** [Webpage](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Diaspora here it is intended as *Emigrants and their descendants, who live outside the country of their birth or ancestry, either on a temporary or permanent basis, yet still maintain affective and material ties to their countries of origin.*

## SOPs on Diaspora Engagement in Shelter & Settlement Response | Key processes by phase

DIASPORA ORGANISATION (DO)*	INTERAGENCY SHELTER COORDINATION
Entry point: Coordination & Technical Focal Points	Entry point: Interagency Coordination Team**
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Define <b>thematic, technical &amp; geographic objectives</b> for Shelter &amp; Settlements programming.</li> <li>❑ Map <b>technical &amp; response capacities</b>.</li> <li>❑ Disseminate <b>Focal Points (FPs) details &amp; DO profile</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Register DO FPs in <b>relevant mailing lists</b>.</li> <li>❑ Support DO in navigating <b>global and in country of interest coordination platform</b>.</li> <li>❑ Invite DO FPs in relevant global and national <b>networking &amp; coordination Events</b>.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Identify &amp; strengthen <b>technical area of interest</b>.</li> <li>▷ Identify &amp; promote <b>DO added value areas</b>.</li> <li>▷ Identify &amp; develop <b>areas for partnership</b>.</li> <li>▷ Disseminate <b>IEC material</b> to DO partners and countries of interest communities and implement <b>safe shelter awareness activities</b>.</li> <li>▷ Build shelter related <b>Volunteers &amp; Staff register</b>.</li> <li>▷ Setup <b>response teams</b> &amp; strengthen their <b>capacities</b>.</li> <li>▷ Create <b>hotline &amp; network hub</b> for information sharing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Identify global and national <b>humanitarian standards</b> for DO to adhere to.</li> <li>▷ Identify global and national <b>Technical Working Groups (TWG)</b> for DO to contribute to.</li> <li>▷ Identify <b>technical guidelines &amp; standards</b> and <b>IEC material</b> for DO to use and disseminate, as for BBS <b>capacity enhancement initiatives</b> that DO could benefit from.</li> <li>▷ Identify relevant national <b>Response Plan &amp; Lessons Learned</b> to DO themes and/or country of interest.</li> <li>▷ Support DO in identification of <b>agencies for DO to partner with</b>, at global and national levels.</li> <li>▷ Introduce DO to <b>key coordination and Information management principles &amp; systems</b>.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▽ Engage relevant global &amp; in country <b>response coordination platform</b> and communicate <b>updated FP contact details</b> (including in country if relevant).</li> <li>▽ Activate response teams, and disseminate <b>Volunteers and Staff register for response &amp; potential secondment</b> to SC/WG &amp; other shelter partners.</li> <li>▽ Contribute to interagency (1) <b>needs assessments, gaps &amp; duplication analysis</b>, (2) <b>response strategy &amp; standards definition</b>, (3) <b>response planning &amp; monitoring</b>, and (4) relevant <b>response Technical Working Groups</b>.</li> <li>▽ Activate hotline &amp; network hub to streamline <b>Accountability to Affected Population &amp; Advocacy</b> initiatives and messages.</li> <li>▽ Adapt <b>DO planning to National Response Strategy</b>.</li> <li>▽ Engage with <b>pool funding mechanisms</b> if relevant.</li> <li>▽ Engage with <b>other DOs to maximise joined interest &amp; contribution</b> to the response.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▽ Coordinate with DO to <b>liaise with in country coordination response platform</b>, especially when no active Shelter Cluster / Working Group is activated.</li> <li>▽ Assess possibilities to <b>include DO seconded staff in coordination team</b>.</li> <li>▽ Involve DO in <b>all Shelter Coordination issues</b>, especially regarding Logistic, Market analysis, Remittances, Accountability to Affected Population &amp; Advocacy <b>to leverage their added value</b>.</li> <li>▽ Assess and leverage opportunities to include DO in <b>Strategic Advisory Group</b> &amp; other <b>decision making coordination forums</b>.</li> <li>▽ Support DO to access <b>pool funding mechanism</b> and <b>operational, thematic &amp; geographic response partnership</b>.</li> </ul>
❑ Coordination engagement, ▷ Preparedness, ▽ Response	
* Apply to all DOs (individual, umbrella organisation, Global Confederation Humanitarian Hub) - ** GSC Global Support Team for global level, Shelter Coordination Team for Shelter Cluster or Working Group for in country/local level	