

# Management response to Shelter and NFI Cluster Evaluation Cyclone Giri Response, Myanmar

## Background

Following the landfall of Category 4 Cyclone Giri in western Myanmar's Rakhine State on 22 October 2010, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) led by the UN RC/HC discussed the need to activate the cluster system in a meeting on 25 October 2010. This was seen not appropriate for different circumstances. However, an informal coordination mechanism was put in place, led by the IFRC for the shelter, as a voluntary effort of the IFRC delegation. At the time, the coordination mechanism's capacity was limited to the capacity in-country. As the situation evolved on 2 November, it became clearer that there was a need to scale up this coordination mechanism with a dedicated team made up of a shelter coordinator and a shelter information manager. Two Myanmar nationals with international experience in shelter coordination teams and information management were deployed to Myanmar from Canada and Haiti to coordinate the Shelter and Non food Items (NFIs) sector until the 10 January 2011, when the coordination was handed over to UNHABITAT for shelter recovery.

## Evaluation process

An independent evaluation was undertaken of the shelter cluster activated in response to Cyclone Giri which struck Myanmar in October 2010. It was commissioned by the IFRC as Global Shelter Cluster Lead for Natural Disasters. The evaluation process was managed by a three-person team including a representative from the Asia Pacific zone, the Planning and Evaluation department (PED), and the Shelter department. The evaluation was carried out by an independent consultant.

The purpose of this evaluation was to:

1. Appraise the service provided by the IFRC as coordinator of the shelter and NFI sector to shelter sector participants – Government, UN agencies, Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, NGOs both national and international, and other actors;
2. Review and analyze the experience of the IFRC with respect to the establishment and operation of the shelter and NFI sector, with a particular emphasis on lessons to be learnt for future operations;
3. Provide recommendations with regard to the IFRC's leadership of future emergency shelter coordination activities at both national and global levels.
4. Examine if there were aspects of the IFRC's shelter sector leadership which potentially might have or actually did compromise the mandate and principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent.

5. Examine the options for the IFRC to continue to have a lead role in the shelter sector during non-emergency periods and the resources required to perform such a role.
6. Examine the linkages between the shelter and the NFI sector and any coordination system set up by the national authorities.
7. Examine the extent to which national actors (NGOs, affected population, civil society and the private sector) were included in the coordination mechanism.
8. Analyze whether actions have been taken to address recommendations (global and not specific to operational context) made in previous cluster reviews.

The review was completed in July 2011 and this management action plan matrix responds to the evaluation report recommendations.

### **Management Response and Follow Up**

This management response matrix provides management views on the relevance of the recommendations and highlights those key areas for improvement which management considers critical to address. It does not constitute an opinion on the accuracy of facts, observations and views outlined in the report.

This management response matrix details each management response against each separate and numbered recommendation. For the purpose of the matrix, the key points have been taken from each of the recommendations. This matrix includes the decision whether a recommendation has been accepted, partially accepted or rejected; and the key follow-up action or deliverable including the timeframe and responsible department or unit. It also includes comments providing additional information or clarification regarding a recommendation. Key follow-up actions and deliverables will be incorporated into the work plans of the departments/units responsible for implementation at the global/zonal and country level.

In reading this management response matrix, it is important to consider the limitations in resources and capacity to implement some of the actions and challenges at the country level.

**Recommendation 1:** IFRC must advocate for stronger emergency response protocols that cannot be compromised and stronger humanitarian leadership when deciding to respond in a disaster, this may include advocacy for a separation of the humanitarian and resident coordinator functions particularly when they are in conflict. IFRC must advocate for a “do or don’t” approach to clusters as informal activation risks compromising the agencies’ accountability given confusion over roles and responsibilities.

Management response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Accepted	Active engagement by IFRC in IASC mechanisms addressing humanitarian leadership in emergency contexts	Starting immediately	Global, Zone
	Create a guidance note on IFRC participation in Humanitarian Country Teams	Mid 2012	Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator/Senior Officer Cluster Coordination (through consultation with HoDs with relevant experience)
	Regular participation in Humanitarian Country Teams during non-emergency periods and after the onset of a natural disaster	Starting immediately	Country delegation

**Recommendation 2:** IFRC Geneva-based shelter delegates should inform participation in the ongoing IASC debate on “mutual accountability”, i.e. the shared responsibility of humanitarian agencies and cluster members to participate in cluster activities. IFRC and ESC members must ensure that relevant agencies, particularly the UN, are actively and transparently engaged in the participatory development of ESC strategies and, importantly, using „common funds” to implement them.

Management response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Partially accepted. Participation, engagement, mutual accountability and the use of common funds in cluster activities has not, as yet, been adequately defined by the IASC.	Development of mutual accountability framework by the Global Shelter Cluster	End 2012	Global Shelter Cluster

**Recommendation 3:** IFRC needs to stay engaged in ongoing discussions in Geneva to strengthen leadership, management, participation and protocols for inter-cluster coordination (building on the draft Guidance for Inter-cluster Coordination) and ensure this translates to better performance at field level through regular contact with local ESC teams.

Management response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Accepted	Active engagement by IFRC in IASC SWG on the Cluster Approach and Global Cluster Coordinators Group initiatives on inter-cluster coordination	Starting immediately	Global
	Produce concise key points document for Heads of Delegation	Mid 2012	Global
<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> Depending on scale, timing, duration, typology and logistical challenges of the humanitarian emergency, changes to standard procedure should be further elaborated and can include changes in the terms of reference, the decision to implement cluster coordination at the national level and/or in sub-national hubs, and the decision to use existing capacity that is not “dedicated” only to cluster management and/or using national staff with cluster experience.</p>			
Management response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
<p>Partially accepted.</p> <p>The recommendation is accepted with the understanding that this recommendation is directed at OCHA/UN system and not IFRC (IFRC’s cluster coordination methodology enables the tailoring of the size and structure of the team, geographical location the establishment of hubs, and range of coordination services to suit the context. National staff has been successfully deployed by IFRC in cluster roles).</p> <p>The recommendation is rejected if such action means withdrawing the limited human resources available within the IFRC country delegation (delegates and/or national staff) from providing the necessary support to the operational needs of the host national society.</p>	Active engagement by IFRC in IASC mechanisms to promote acceptance that individual clusters should determine the scope and nature of the coordination structure and services to be provided.	Starting immediately	Global, Zone and Country

**Recommendation 5:** IFRC and shelter partners have developed extensive guidelines and both technical and managerial support material for emergency shelter. The same attention needs to be paid to Non-Food Items (NFI).

Management response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Partially accepted. In December 2008, the IASC Emergency Shelter Cluster has produced an extensive guidance document titled "Selecting NFIs for Shelter" for this purpose.	This tool is to be shared consistently with the incoming coordinator to focus the early discussion regarding IM	Future operations	Senior Officer Cluster Coordination
	Coordination teams to promote this tool more consistently and effectively during operations.	Future operations	Cluster coordination teams
	Define shelter-related NFI list for IM tracking during an emergency and appropriate standards for such NFIs.	Future operations	Cluster coordination teams

**Recommendation 6:** Strategic decisions sometimes need to be made by the ESC regarding "good enough" reporting to respect the need for timely information. Interpretation of data and advocacy messages, particularly for needs and fundraising, must be vetted by ESC members. The ESC should consider joint reporting on emergency and early recovery needs where the information is available or at least nuance the message when the information is not, particularly for natural disasters where early recovery can happen sooner.

Management response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Accepted	Prepare guidance material for IM and compile sample advocacy messages	2012	Global

**Recommendation 7:** There is a need for closer coordination for information needs, therefore needs assessments and resource mobilization. It is also necessary to clearly communicate and distinguish resource needs when discussing emergency shelter (November) and reconstruction (December), optimise the utility of any needs assessment to look forward to recovery needs and/or backward to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of emergency distributions, and ensure coordinated and complementary participation in inter-cluster meetings.

Management response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Accepted	Engage with donors and stakeholders in-country through HCT, shelter thematic work group and donor forum for better understanding of distinction of shelter needs in emergency, early recovery and recovery phase	2012	Country delegation

<b>Recommendation 8:</b> There remains a need for continuous engagement with local NGOs for preparedness and response. Some areas for discussion with IFRC, MRCS and MNGOs include joint contingency planning with the Myanmar NGO Contingency Planning (MNGO CP) Working Group, and joint MRCS and MNGO capacity building for needs assessments, not least as a contingency when international access is denied. Other areas for clarification and collaboration include determining roles, responsibilities and relationships between parallel cluster systems as presently foreseen in the MNGO CP, and a discussion of field coordination arrangements. All of this is of course much better facilitated by someone who speaks the same language and understands the systems, hence the advantage of engaging more Myanmar nationals in the ESC and in coordination with OCHA.			
Management response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Partially accepted with the following reservations:  This is subject to agreement to link cluster capacities and responsibilities with established country level contingency planning processes and other coordination mechanisms.  Myanmar NGOs follow very different interests which may not be known to the Red Cross or may jeopardize the neutral role of the Red Cross Movement; therefore a contingency planning with selected Myanmar NGOs may be possible but not with the whole Myanmar NGO group. Final decision on that lies with the MRCS leadership and not the IFRC country delegation.	Country delegation to identify opportunities for IFRC's cluster responsibilities to enhance established contingency planning and related coordination mechanisms  Discussion of this recommendations with the MRCS leadership	2012  2012	Country delegation  Head of Delegation
<b>Recommendation 9:</b> IFRC can do more to provide the support needed to a national ESC team. A Myanmar team comes with many advantages that address common criticisms of clusters. But these advantages need to be exploited and any disadvantages coped with, including more continuous technical support from the region, more personalized support from the IFRC delegation in Myanmar and the HoD, including the facilitating of good relations with the MRCS, and promoting accountability within the cluster system by direct interaction with the RC/HC, and attending inter-cluster coordination when necessary.			
Management response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Partially accepted. Additional support	Produce concise key points document	Mid 2012	Global

<p>requires additional resources and/or additional investment in awareness-raising and the delineation of support functions. However, the delegation can play a strategic role in facilitating better relations with the host national society and support the coordination team in gaining better access to and recognition at country-level coordination mechanisms when possible and necessary. IFRC delegation can facilitate briefing session on ESC with the host national society. However the further engagement of HoD would be detrimental to other responsibilities (especially in acute disaster situations) and a more personalized engagement can not be committed to.</p>	<p>for Heads of Delegation</p> <p>Ensure that the coordination team receives or has access to the required technical support</p> <p>Briefing and lessons learnt session with MRCS leadership and senior management on ESC Giri deployment and scenario planning for next ESC activation</p>	<p>Future operations</p> <p>2012</p>	<p>Global/Zone</p> <p>Country delegation</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 10:</b> Regardless of nationality, if for example, in small or medium disasters where the humanitarian response has few and/or no new actors, is limited in geographic scope and scale, and does not require significant resource mobilisation or advocacy, the need for full cluster coordination team deployment needs to be reviewed. Ideally the appropriate profile of the cluster coordinator is a decision by the Humanitarian Country Team or inter-cluster meeting chaired by the HC and the cluster coordinator agencies, including IFRC.</p>			
<p>Management response</p>	<p>Key follow-up action/deliverable</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>Responsibility</p>
<p>Partially accepted. IFRC already tailors shelter coordination teams to the specific emergency, both the size of the team and the profile of the individuals. The HCT can advise on the profile of the coordinator, but this is ultimately the responsibility of the lead agency. More engagement within the HCT to avoid cluster activation in smaller disaster is accepted (and recently already practiced in Myanmar).</p>	<p>IFRC to further define the key competencies of coordination team positions, and to structure the training and rostering accordingly.</p> <p>IFRC country delegations and zone and global counterparts to promote the attributes of IFRC-led teams deployed.</p> <p>Continuous engagement in the HCT and with the UN HC on the threshold when to activate the cluster</p>	<p>2012</p> <p>Starting immediately</p> <p>2012</p>	<p>Global</p> <p>Country delegations, Zone and Global.</p> <p>Country delegation</p>

<b>Recommendation 11:</b> IFRC/ESC must demand effective leadership in emergency protocols (R1) but also inter-cluster meetings, CERF negotiations and addressing disaster-specific coordination problems. When there are issues around perceived lack of leadership (RC/HC and OCHA), or perceived lack of competence of cluster coordinators, regardless of how (in)valid these concerns are a protocol must be in place to manage them. Similarly, the role of the HoD and accountability for (non technical) performance has to be further defined as the Head of Delegation could play an important role in providing essential in-country feedback and guidance on the performance of the coordinator.			
Management response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Accepted with the understanding that the accountability of HoD for deployed cluster staff need to be limited to a minimum as judging performance (as a serious career matter) would be demanding on the available time and resources in times the delegation needs leadership to meet the operational needs of the host national society/IFRC.	Create a guidance note on IFRC participation in Humanitarian Country Teams	Mid 2012	Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator/Senior Officer Cluster Coordination
	Regular participation in Humanitarian Country Teams during non-emergency periods and after the onset of a natural disaster	Starting immediately	Country delegation
	Role of HoD vs. shelter cluster staff management and accountability has to be clearly outlined	2012	Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator/Senior Officer Cluster Coordination, Asia Pacific Zone Director and Head of Operations
<b>Recommendation 12:</b> The operational and administrative relationship between the ESC and National Societies remains vague. General and context specific guidelines and protocols need to be developed to help explain, negotiate and agree on scenarios for ESC/NS interactions. This includes relations with government, representation, visa and travel permission, information exchange, and coherence of NS response with cluster strategies. This discussion can also include the role the NS sees itself playing in coordination and how the IFRC can further strengthen NS capacity in this regard.			
Management response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
Accepted.	Create a guidance note for NS on the Federation's cluster coordination role, and the implications on the NS of country level cluster coordination.	Mid 2012	Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator/Senior Officer Cluster Coordination
	Recommendation to IFRC Southeast Asia Regional Delegation to include this topic in the agenda of DMC and leadership meeting	2012	Country delegation

<p><b>Recommendation 13:</b> The IFRC must be able to fulfil their responsibilities as cluster conveners while respecting the principles of the Red Cross. Independence is one of these principles which can be compromised when the relationship between IFRC and NSs dictate that NSs secure permission for IFRC activities, e.g. the travel of ESC personnel to the field. Contact with field offices, indeed field visits, are an essential part of the ESC responsibilities and the lack thereof is the criticism of many evaluations, not least the Cluster Evaluation II in Myanmar for Nargis. If R12 does not effectively result the greater independence of ESC teams, then alternative arrangements need to be discussed, e.g. delegation of field support to other agencies or travel under the umbrella of UN/OCHA.</p>			
Management response	Key follow-up action/deliverable	Timeframe	Responsibility
<p>Partially accepted. This recommendation has arisen from the very specific context of Myanmar, although clarifying with NS the interagency responsibilities of the coordination role would be of benefit. However, operating under a UN umbrella would compromise the independence and neutrality of the Federation and is not acceptable. Better understanding of the cluster system, and specifically ESC may lead to better access of the ESC team members to the field, but ultimately the ESC team falls under the same obligations as the other IFRC country delegation members and alternative arrangements as IFRC-contracted staff is not a solution.</p>	<p>Create a guidance note for NS on the Federation's cluster coordination role, and the implications on the NS of country level cluster coordination.</p> <p>Briefing and lessons learnt session with MRCS leadership and senior management on ESC Giri deployment.</p>	<p>Mid 2012</p> <p>2012</p>	<p>Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator/Senior Officer Cluster Coordination</p> <p>Country delegation</p>