

## Shelter and NFI

### Overview

Immediately following crises, the provision of shelter and non-food items (NFI) assistance is a critical, life-saving intervention that provides the affected population with safety, protection from the elements, health risks and other factors that could increase their vulnerabilities. Depending on the nature of the crises, shelter and NFI interventions can either improve living conditions for vulnerable populations while they are displaced or can contribute to their safe return or relocation to areas where they can recover from the crises and resume their family and community life. Provision of shelter assistance shall always be a driver or stabilizing influence on post-crisis population movement.

#### **Sphere Handbook (2018) Shelter and Settlements Key Concepts:**

- Everyone has the right to adequate housing
- Shelter and settlement responses aim to provide a safe living environment
- Shelter and settlement responses in urban settings require specific expertise
- Various post-crisis settlement scenarios need to be considered
- These Minimum Standards should not be applied in isolation

Shelter and NFI is one of IOM's Migration Crisis Framework (MCOF) Sectors. IOM's shelter and NFI activities are context driven, rely on IOM's operational presence and cross sectoral activities, and vary depending on the different stages of the response. Specific technical areas within the broader context of Shelter and NFI introduced in this entry include: NFI procurement and distribution, common pipeline management, shelter activities, as well as the act of [protection mainstreaming](#) and [gender mainstreaming](#) in IOM Shelter and NFI programmes.

Shelters must be viewed in the context in which they are or will be built. Shelters exist within settlements, places where people establish a community. The physical space where a community is established has many characteristics which have an important effect on how people live and cope with crisis. Settlements should aim creating a safe environment for the population where they not only have access to safe and adequate shelter but also utilities, critical infrastructure, basic services as well as livelihood opportunities.

IOM has played a major role in humanitarian shelter operations for many decades, working in both operations and coordination, and having a strong role working with partners in support of local authorities. IOM's overall objectives in shelter and settlements are 1) to focus on quality and scale of operations, 2) to deliver people-centred and context-driven responses, 3) to continue to support inter-agency shelter coordination, 4) to promote sectoral learning and increase operational preparedness and, where possible, 5) to ensure positive long-term impact of projects.

IOM's overall approach to shelter is to focus on quality and scale of projects, and to ensure that the context and identified needs are the driver for response. As a result there is no standard IOM Shelter and NFI response, however there is a focus on learning and using experiences from other and past operations to inform all phases of response.

IOM's approach to Shelter and NFI programming goes beyond the delivery of a product, giving equal importance to the process of working with the affected population and humanitarian partners to rebuild their homes and create a safe environment with access to basic services, markets, livelihoods, and other essential services and facilities. Moreover, IOM's Shelter and NFI programmes should be designed to build upon local coping strategies and promote community engagement and self-sufficiency. Local skills, expertise and resources should be engaged and the impact of activities on the environment should be taken into account.

Given the link between shelter assistance and the location where people settle, IOM shelter and NFI programmes consider interventions in the context of the settlement in must always which they operate. Intervening in the right location can help support stabilization and recovery, whilst intervening in an unsuitable location can increase vulnerabilities or even increase tensions within different groups. Beyond the location of the settlement, IOM Shelter and NFI programmes must also consider the settlements short and long term security as well as the livelihoods of the affected populations. Stand-alone shelters will have little impact on the health security, privacy and dignity of those they seek to support unless they are accompanied by services such as water, sanitation, health care and other infrastructure. As a result shelter interventions must work with other sectors, including but not limited to Health, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) , Education, Protection and Early Recovery, at the settlement level.

## Key Concepts

- [Shelter and NFI Coordination](#)
- [Shelter and NFI Operations](#)
- [Shelter and NFI Staffing](#)
- [Housing, Land and Property in Shelter Operations](#)
- [Rubble Removal in Shelter Operations](#)
- [Feedback and Complaint Mechanisms in Shelter Operations](#)

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