Shelter and NFI Operations

Overview

IOM's Shelter and NFI (non-food item) operations are context driven, rely on IOM's operational presence and cross sectoral activities, and vary depending on the different stages of the response - no "one size fits all" approach can be used. The section below will further elaborate on: NFI procurement and distribution, common pipeline management and shelter activities, as well as the act of protection and gender mainstreaming in IOM Shelter and NFI programmes.

Operations

NFI Procurement

Active engagement with procurement and supply is a critical determinant of success or failure of most shelter programmes. There are several ways that IOM can acquire the materials, these include (1) Procurement (international or local), (2) IOM Global Stock or other pre-positioned stocks, (3) In-kind contributions.

International or local Procurement:

Shelter materials are mostly procured by the country office directly, although occasionally, the Manila Supply Chain Unit (MSCU) may support, specifically for L3 responses. Where possible, local materials should be prioritized. In the event that local procurement is not possible, or would compromise the quality of assistance, international procurement should be considered. See Procurement and Supply in Emergencies entry for more details. When procuring internationally, MSCU can support missions in accessing IOM's Global Long-term Agreement (LTA) contracts with NFI suppliers, which offer good value options in terms of cost, quality, and lead time. Sustainability considerations should also be factored into procurements in accordance with the IOM Procurement Manual.

In-kind contributions:

In some cases donors may decide to provide in-kind contributions in the form of goods or services. Donors may approach IOM directly at the country level or can approach IOM at the donor capital level (e.g. The Government of Japan may get in touch with IOM Tokyo to ascertain IOM's willingness and capacity to receive these goods). In discussions with potential donors, ensure that the specification and quality of the items is validated to ensure that they meet needs and expected standards. The mission should also secure funding or have other ongoing projects to cover transport and operation staff for distribution. When receiving in-kind donations, donors must provide 1) a packing list detailing all the items being provided, 2) a pro-forma invoice detailing the value of the items and 3) donor and IOM should finalize an exchange of letters signed by IOM and the donor acknowledging receipt of the goods. The value of the items must be reported to ensure it is properly reflected in PRISM (platform accessible by IOM staff through the intranet). A deed of donation should be completed to document distribution of items to beneficiaries. Standard templates for an exchange of letters and deed of donation have been developed by the Office of Legal Affairs (LEG). Templates are available on the LEG page within the IOM intranet portal.

In all cases active follow up is required on delivery timeframes, materials quality and transportation throughout the procurement cycle. From the outset clearly state volumes, delivery location and item specifications. Ensure that timely and accurate Procurement request forms are submitted attaching specifications. For larger operations ensure that sufficient warehousing is in place and that transportation contracting allows for required flexibility in delivery locations.

For additional details, see Managing In-Kind Donations Guidance Note (under development).

Pre-positioned Stock:

IOM holds limited Global Stocks in warehouses currently located in Nairobi (Kenya), Manila (Philippines), Panama City (Panama), Gaziantep (Türkiye), and Dubai (UAE). These Global Stocks are subject to specific regulations as they represent an agency capital asset and are liable to audit. These stocks can be requested by any Country Office, by contacting MSCU and the DOE RTS at the regional office. To obtain the stocks, requesting missions need budget (either already in place or requested from the MEFM, IOM's Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism) to cover the cost of the materials and the onward transportation.

Pre-positioned stocks held at country level are the result of country level projects and are subject to standard warehouse policy (see the Storage and Warehousing entry for more information). They can be released according to criteria in the agreement with the funding donor.

Additional details can be found at IOM's Shelter & Settlements Community of Practice - Global Stocks page (for IOM internal practitioners).

Global Stock Request Tracking System

To facilitate the withdrawal and management of IOM global pre-positioning stocks, IOM uses an online tool called The Global Stock Request Tracking System. This system enables IOM missions to effectively place inquiries as well as requests for global stock withdrawal from the four global warehouses located in Nairobi, Manila, Panama, Gaziantep, and Dubai. The tool allows missions to track the status of their requests until the goods are finally delivered to the pre-determined location. Moreover, this platform simultaneously allows the Global Stocks team to efficiently manage requests along the stock pipeline, release of stocks, replenishment of stocks and collect the final distribution report from the respective mission post-delivery of stocks. Please ensure you are connected to IOM's intranet network before accessing the page. For information on the availability of Global Stocks, please check the page for Global Stocks List Application on PRISM. For additional information on the Global Stock Request Tracking System, please refer to the User Guide for Global Stocks Request Tracking System (see Resources and Tools) and for other inquiries please reach out to Global Stock Support team.

NFI Distribution

For guidance on NFI Distribution, please see the Distribution Operational Guidance/Toolkit page.

Common Pipeline Management

In addition to procuring and distributing materials for IOM's Shelter Programmes, IOM can also assume the responsibility of acquiring shelter materials and NFIs that can then be accessed by other shelter partners for further distribution to the population in need. This is done through the set up and management of a common pipeline. Common pipelines refer to the process of receiving materials in kind or through procurement, storing them, and transporting them on behalf of multiple agencies. In many locations this service is coordinated with the Shelter/NFI cluster, who is responsible for identifying the locations and best placed partners for distribution.

IOM has managed Shelter and NFI common pipelines in many countries including South Sudan, Nepal and Haiti. The tools developed in South Sudan to manage the Shelter NFI pipeline can be used as a starting point for the development of similar tools in other contexts. These are available in the Guidance Documents and Tools for Shelter-NFI entry.

More information can be found at the Shelter & Settlements Community of Practice - Common Pipeline Management page (for IOM internal practitioners).

Common Pipeline Request Tracking System

IOM has developed an online common pipeline request tracking system which allows NFI pipeline partners to place requests for the release of contingency stocks in the country. The Common Pipeline Request Tracking System enables humanitarian partners to monitor the status of their request process from the application stage and until the stocks are finally delivered to the pre-determined destination. This system aims to effectively process the stock release requests while allowing the partners and donors the transparency on the utilization and distribution of in-kind NFI donations as well as NFIs procured by funding.

For more information on the access to the system and user functionality, please refer to the User Guide for Common Pipeline Request Tracking System (see Resources and Tools). For additional inquiries and support, please contact the Shelter Support team.

Procurement and Logistics for Shelter Interventions

Shelter programmes often entail large-scale procurement and logistics support. Organizing administrative processes and ensuring all programme staff comply with these processes are essential to effective programme implementation. Oftentimes, Shelter and NFI programme staff that are newly hired to support emergency operations are unfamiliar with IOM processes. It is important for

programme managers to ensure that staff on their team are aware of the relevant internal processes. Tracking of Purchase Requests (PRs) and Purchase Orders (POs), deliveries and ensuring quality control are essential for effective programme implementation and monitoring. At the beginning of the Shelter and NFI programme, it is important to clearly define roles and responsibilities of the Shelter and NFI team and the Country Office's procurement and logistics team, and then maintain constant dialogue between the teams throughout the project. Actual distribution or construction beyond the project period may not be accepted by some donors even though procurement of items is carried out within the project period.

Reviewing deliverables based on market prices

It is important to bear in mind that the cost of shelter and NFI materials may change throughout the response. In many cases, the cost of materials increases between budget planning and project implementation due to the high demand for materials, as there may be several organizations providing shelter and NFI support for the response with limited supply. It is important to continuously review whether the project can meet its proposed targets as a result of the changes in market prices for the needed materials. In some cases, market prices may increase to the extent that the total number of shelters that can be constructed is lower than originally targeted. In these situations, it is best to inform the donor of this change either through donor reports or specific updates/meetings, and it is important to regularly assess whether a project modification may be needed.

Shelter Activities

In addition to providing the affected population or its partners with NFIs and shelter materials, IOM's Shelter and NFI programmes should include interventions to complement the delivery of materials with interventions that promote community engagement and resilience building. Key components of IOM's settlement approach to Shelter and NFI response include Capacity Building and Shelter Construction:

Capacity Building:

IOM often seeks to work with crisis affected populations, especially after natural disasters, to deliver shelter related training. The aim is to improve skills and knowledge to build back safer, recognizing that the primary responders, and those ultimately responsible for reconstruction are crisis affected populations.

Training content, duration and targeting is variable and dependent upon the context, and trainings can run from a few minutes at distribution sites to multi-day courses for training of trainers or longer courses for more technical skills. Core training messages are developed in coordination with other agencies, and in many contexts, IOM has provided a strong role in the development of technical content.

The balance between training, provision of material or financial support, construction quality monitoring and other assistance will vary between responses, but evidence shows that a combination of approaches are required to ensure any change in building quality.

The Shelter Support Team can be contacted to assist country offices in developing training programmes tailored for specific contexts.

Shelter Construction:

IOM engages in a very broad diversity of construction projects, in humanitarian, stabilization and other programmes. Shelter related construction may be conducted at the level of individual shelters, in the construction or upgrade of collective shelters or at the level of sites and may vary from the provision of tools and materials to the management of complex site level construction projects with associated drainage, infrastructure and other site works. Shelter design/specifications are usually discussed with the technical working group of the Shelter Cluster at the country level.

In all shelter response, IOM should ensure that even if NFIs and construction materials are being delivered, the outcome is improved shelter. This can be achieved through many ways, through partners, by contractors, by finding ways to enable the community or at least vulnerable individuals in the community, or by direct construction managed by IOM staff. In all cases shelters constructed should be to locally agreed standards. For more durable shelters, designs should meet building codes and the design be reviewed by a qualified structural engineer. It is recommended to build a few shelters for a pilot before engaging a large procurement.

For additional guidance contact the IOM Shelter community, or Shelter Support Team.

Protection Mainstreaming and Gender Mainstreaming in Shelter and NFI Programmes

As stated in the Shelter, Settlement and Recovery Chapter of the Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence intervention in Humanitarian Action, Shelter and NFI interventions are critical to the survival of populations displaced by humanitarian emergencies. Failure to consider GBV-related risks in programming can result in increased GBV exposure for the affected community. For example, Shelters that are poorly designed (e.g. with insufficient partitions in sleeping areas; lack of privacy for dressing and bathing) may increase the risk of sexual harassment and assault for inhabitants.

Risks of GBV can be reduced by designing programmes that continuously monitor for and develop strategies to address emerging GBV-related safety risks related to shelters, settlements and NFIs. This requires meeting internationally agreed-upon standards while also taking into account social patterns from the onset of the emergency and into the recovery phase to build safer and more resilient communities in the long term. Shelter 6 and NFI actors should engage men, women, girls, boys and other at-risk groups in the design and delivery of their programming; prioritize GBV risk reduction in allocation of shelter materials and shelter construction; and ensure equal and impartial distribution of NFIs.

Within the Global Shelter Cluster, IOM has developed a number of resources for the the integration of GBV risk reduction into shelter programmes. These can be found on the GBV in Shelter Programming Working Group and in the Guidance Documents and Tools for Shelter-NFI entry.

Moreover, according to the Housing, Land and Property Chapter of the Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence intervention in Humanitarian Action, crises can exacerbate tensions with regard to housing and access to basic services and increase the risk of violence – especially for women and girls, who are often prohibited from renting, owning or inheriting HLP. Lack of adequate housing during displacement and to facilitate return or relocation may contribute to sexual assault, exploitation and violent domestic situations. When properly designed, Shelter and NFI programmes can not only help to prevent and mitigate the risks of gender-based violence, but can also promote gender equality; assist women and girls in claiming HLP rights; improve security during economic and social transitions; and have a positive impact on post-crisis reconstruction and long-term development.

Links

- IOM Templates for Agreements
- CSOD Online Training on NFI Distribution
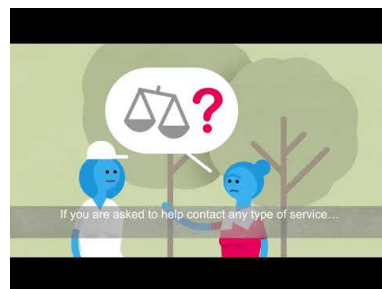- Distribution Operational Guidance/Toolkit

Media

Distribution of Non-Food Items (NFIs) for Shelter

Site Planning in Emergencies

Responding to Disclosure of a GBV Incident

Other Entries in this Topic

- Guidance Documents and Tools for Procurement and Logistics
- Preparedness and Stock Pre-positioning
- Procurement and Supply in Emergencies
- Selection of Implementing Partners
- Sourcing in Emergencies

- [Storage and Warehousing](#)
- [Transport and Distribution](#)
- [Guidance Documents and Tools for Shelter-NFI](#)
- [Project Modification](#)
- [Shelter and NFI Coordination](#)
- [Housing, Land and Property in Shelter Operations](#)
- [Rubble Removal in Shelter Operations](#)
- [Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)](#)
- [Feedback and Complaint Mechanisms in Shelter Operations](#)

Contacts

For more information, please contact the Shelter and Settlements Unit in Geneva: ShelterSupport@iom.int.

Please also find the contact information to the IOM Shelter Reference Group: ShelterReferenceGroup@iom.int.

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