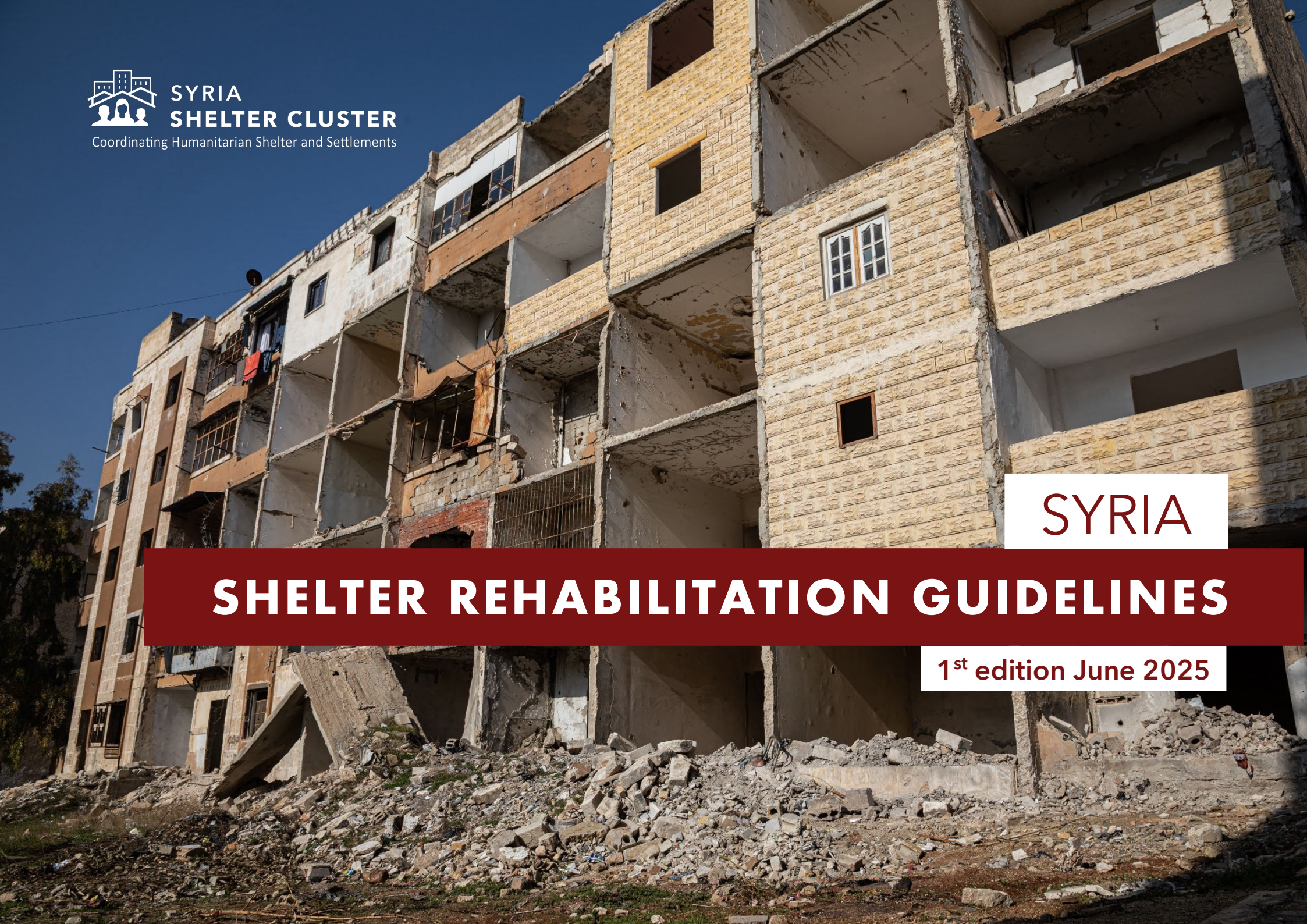
SYRIA
SHELTER CLUSTER
Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter and Settlements



SYRIA

SHELTER REHABILITATION GUIDELINES

1st edition June 2025

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
AoR	Area of Responsibility
BoQ	Bill of Quantities
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
DRP	Dispute Resolution Procedure
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
HLP	Housing, Land and Property
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGA	Income-Generating Activity
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPCA	Multi-Purpose Cash
NFI	Non-Food Item
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCM	Post-Construction Monitoring
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment

Note:

For easy reading, the term "organisation" or "shelter partner" refers to the shelter cluster member implementing the shelter rehabilitation project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document is the result of a comprehensive consultation process conducted by the **Housing Rehabilitation & Repair Technical Working Group**, chaired by the Shelter Cluster and representatives from the Syria Hub (Baria Alkafre), the Northwest Syria cross-border Hub (Julian Tung), and the Northeast Syria Hub (Sherwan Ali).
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1. The context: returns and recovery

As Syria enters its fourteenth year of humanitarian crisis in 2025, it remains the largest in the world, affecting millions of lives. **More than 13 million Syrians had been forced to flee their homes** over the past fourteen years, and 90 percent of people inside Syria – **nearly 16.7 million people** – **require some form of humanitarian assistance**.

Almost one-third of all housing units were destroyed or damaged during the conflict.

As of May 15, 2025, UNHCR and OCHA estimate that over 1.2 million IDPs have returned to their areas of origin. Departures from camps are ongoing, with around 333,000 people leaving camps in northwest Syria since December.

According to the UNHCR, REACH and CCCM intention survey in Northern Syria:

- 46% of people internally displaced in Northern Syria plan to return to their area of origin, 92% planning within 12 months.
- Lack of adequate housing and/or concern over property housing (i.e., destroyed, damaged, inaccessible, occupied, etc.) is one of the main barriers for 76% of IDPs.
- Rehabilitation/reconstruction of homes is one of the top 5 essential conditions for return for 79% of IDPs.

Based on the current numbers of Syrians returning home and explicit requests from refugees and IDPs to be supported in their return, the Shelter Cluster is supporting safe and dignified return through housing rehabilitation programmes.

WHAT IS THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING? [1]

International human rights law, and a dozen international binding texts recognize everyone's **right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate housing**[2]. Article 11, paragraph 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)[3] recognizes the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions". The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) General Comment No. 4 on the right to adequate housing interprets Article 11, paragraph 1 and provides a detailed explanation on what adequate housing entails, which includes:

Legal security of tenure

Tenure takes a variety of forms, including rental (public and private) accommodation, cooperative housing, lease, owner-occupation, emergency housing, and informal settlements, including occupation of land or property. Regardless of the type of tenure, all persons should possess a degree of security of tenure that guarantees legal protection against forced eviction, harassment, and other threats.

Location

Adequate housing must be in a location that allows access to employment options, health-care services, schools, childcare centres, and other social facilities.

Habitability

Adequate housing must be habitable, providing inhabitants with adequate space and protecting them from cold, damp, heat, rain, wind, or other threats to health, structural hazards, and disease vectors. The physical safety of occupants must be guaranteed as well.

Availability of services, materials, facilities, and infrastructure

An adequate house must contain certain facilities essential for health, security, comfort, and nutrition;

Accessibility

Adequate housing must be accessible to those entitled to it. Disadvantaged groups should be accorded full and sustainable access to adequate housing resources. Priority consideration in the housing sphere should be given to disadvantaged groups, i.e. the elderly, children, the physically disabled, the terminally ill, HIV-positive individuals, persons with persistent medical problems, the mentally ill, victims of natural disasters, people living in disaster-prone areas, and other groups;

Cultural adequacy

The way housing is constructed, the building materials used and the policies supporting these must appropriately enable the expression of cultural identity and diversity of housing;

Affordability

Steps should be taken by States Parties to ensure that the percentage of housing-related costs is, in general, commensurate with income levels. States parties should establish housing subsidies for those unable to obtain affordable housing, as well as forms and levels of housing finance, which adequately reflect housing needs. In accordance with the principle of affordability, tenants should be protected by appropriate means against unreasonable rent levels or rent increases. In societies where natural materials are the primary sources of building materials for housing, States parties should take steps to ensure the availability of such materials.

[1] See CESCR General Comment no. 4, paras. 8 (a)–(g).

[2] Adequate housing was recognized as part of the right to an adequate standard of living in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Source: The Right to Adequate Housing, OHCHR & UN-Habitat, November 2009.

[3] International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

2. Objective and approach

OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of the "Rehabilitation of Damaged Houses" response is to provide a durable, long-term solution that enhances the living conditions of affected populations across Syria. By repairing and rehabilitating damaged housing units, the response aims to restore normalcy to the lives of returnees and other vulnerable groups, enabling them to resume their livelihoods and other daily activities. This includes addressing the urgent housing repair and rehabilitation needs of those impacted by ongoing displacement and recent disasters such as the February 2023 earthquakes. The scope of this response also includes unfinished houses in areas of origin, provided they meet defined eligibility and safety criteria and are linked to verified return intentions.

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. Affected areas and return focus

Shelter repair support should be **centred on affected areas and areas of return**, to contribute to durable solutions and sustainable return.

2. Vulnerability-Based Targeting

Due to the lack of resources, assistance should not be provided as blanket support but targeted to the **most vulnerable families**, based on **agreed vulnerability criteria**.

3. Eligibility based on affected areas, areas of origin, not on displacement sites.

Support should target **non-displaced conflict or disaster-affected populations**, **returnees, and IDPs who have initiated the return process but are unable to complete** it due to several barriers, including the fact that their shelter in the area of origin is uninhabitable**.**

4. Verification and Family Presence

Shelter repairs should not be conducted without the family or a representative present. Their presence is necessary to identify the housing unit, participate in the ownership verification process, validate the repair work to be conducted, and interact with the shelter partner and workers.

5. Integrated Approach in Underserved Areas

Shelter repair should be prioritised in areas where basic infrastructure is available or implemented through a **multisectoral approach** that can provide complementary services where they are lacking.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Local authorities and local representatives should be contacted and consulted before implementation of the shelter programme. This outreach establishes a collaborative and participatory approach from the onset of the Programme.

After agreeing the selection of the community with the local authorities, the organisation must inform the local community about the programme and engage them through community participation and, receive and take into account feedback received. It should be clearly communicated that being assessed for the project does not automatically qualify one for the repair and rehabilitation works, as beneficiaries will be selected based on their needs and vulnerability.

Community representatives include:

- Local Councils or local courts;
- Local leaders such as the Mukhtar, Imam, and community elders;
- Leaders of different social groups such as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), women, the elderly and the disabled.

The organisation should agree on the programme scope with the local authorities. Representatives must understand and agree to the scope and nature of the repair and rehabilitation Programme.

The community must be aware of the concept of vulnerability and that only the most vulnerable can be included in the programme. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) clarifies what the scope of the programme and the roles and responsibilities of the organisation and the local authority will be, in full respect of the humanitarian principles. The MoU should be made public to the affected community.

The organisation should include the local community during the planning and implementation of the project by conducting outreach activities such as focus groups discussions. Community outreach must reach the entire community, especially its most vulnerable members. The organisation should allow opportunities for individuals to provide feedback, general comments and complaints about the programme in a confidential manner. Community outreach methods can include the following:

- Holding community outreach meetings
- Creating and displaying information literature
- Announcing information at public events
- Announcing information via electronic methods/WhatsApp

Consultation regarding the repair work

When planning shelter repair and rehabilitation, it is crucial to consult families to ensure their needs and preferences are adequately addressed. Engaging families in the decision-making process fosters a sense of ownership and trust, allowing them to voice their concerns and priorities. This consultation should include discussions about the scope of repairs, timelines, and any specific requirements or vulnerabilities that need to be considered. People with special needs, such as disabilities, should be consulted to adapt the shelter if necessary. By actively involving families, the repair process can be tailored to better support their well-being and ensure that the rehabilitated shelter meets their expectations, ultimately enhancing their living conditions.

AREA-BASED APPROACH

Repairing shelters in locations lacking basic infrastructure can result in beneficiaries abandoning their shelters or people living in inadequate shelters, such as those without access to water and sanitation. Therefore, shelter repair projects should prioritize areas where basic infrastructure is functional.

If shelter repair projects are to be implemented in areas lacking basic infrastructure and social services, the intervention should be part of broader, multisectoral efforts to provide complementary services.

An area-based approach (ABA) focuses on geographic areas with high levels of need. Participatory planning with local authorities, civil society, and service providers ensures access to services across all sectors, such as shelter, WASH, health, and livelihoods. This approach to shelter rehabilitation in Syria, particularly in areas of return, is a comprehensive framework designed to address the multifaceted needs of people living in settlements or neighbourhoods highly affected by conflict and disasters.

1. Key Principles and Characteristics

Targeting Specific Geographic Areas of High Needs:

- The approach begins with identifying and delineating target settlements through participatory mapping and context analysis. This involves using the Shelter Cluster prioritization analysis for shelter rehabilitation, additional available data, and engaging with local stakeholders to define the boundaries of the settlements.
- A thorough context analysis is conducted to understand the broader environment in which the settlements are located. This includes analysing the economy, governance, services, infrastructure, social and cultural aspects, and stakeholder dynamics.

Involving Multiple Stakeholders:

- The approach emphasizes the importance of involving a wide range of stakeholders, including local authorities, community leaders, civil society organizations, and humanitarian agencies.
- Stakeholder mapping is conducted to understand the roles, capacities, and interests of different actors. This helps build effective partnerships and ensures that the response is inclusive and representative of the entire community.

Multisectoral Engagement:

- The approach relies on engaging multiple sectors to address the diverse needs of the community. This includes sectors such as early recovery, livelihoods, health, education, and water and sanitation.
- Multisectoral collaboration is essential from the onset of the response and continues throughout the program cycle. This ensures that the interventions are comprehensive and cohesive, addressing the interrelated needs of the community.

Considering the Whole Population:

- The approach ensures that populations not directly benefiting from the shelter rehabilitation projects are supported by projects from other sectors or indirectly benefit, including through other vocational training, job creation, and an improved local economy.
- Protection and do-no-harm principles are incorporated throughout the program cycle.

2. Integration points

- **WASH and Infrastructure**: Repairing homes should go hand in hand with restoring basic water and sanitation infrastructure. For instance, area projects could cover the rehabilitation of water and sewage systems. The installation of water tanks at the household level is included in the shelter rehabilitation component, contributing to the shelter's adequacy by providing safe water and mitigating the risks of waterborne diseases.
- **Livelihoods and Markets**: Vulnerable families need income to maintain their homes. Programming can combine shelter repair with cash assistance or cash-for-work initiatives that hire local workers, providing income while repairing community infrastructure. Moreover, linking shelter to livelihood support also means engaging local businesses such as construction materials producers and suppliers, strengthening economic recovery alongside physical rehabilitation.
- **Health Services**: Area-based shelters should consider nearby clinics and health outreach services. Integrating health needs (e.g., access for displaced or disabled residents) prevents neglect of people's well-being.
- **Protection and Inclusion**: The approach must actively involve communities and consider vulnerable groups. Participatory assessments and local committees help identify the needs of women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Legal assistance (e.g., on land tenure) can be included to ensure that shelter repairs are secure and rights-based.
- **Education**: Integrating educational support with shelter repair efforts helps stabilize communities, promotes social cohesion, and ensures that children have access to education in a safe environment, contributing to their overall well-being and future.

3. Benefits and Challenges

Benefits

- The approach promotes social cohesion and reduces tensions and inequalities. Families not eligible for shelter repairs may still receive support from other sectors or benefit from job opportunities.
- It strengthens the capacity of local actors and improves relationships between different stakeholders.
- It allows for better resource allocation and enhances the clarity and understanding of providing multisectoral assistance at the local level.

Challenges

- Defining boundaries and focusing assistance on specific settlements can create tensions with surrounding areas.
- Ensuring genuine representation and engagement of all stakeholders can be challenging, especially in conflict zones or areas with human rights violations.
- The approach requires significant time and resources for context analysis, needs assessment, and collaborative planning and implementation.

By adopting this settlement approach, humanitarian agencies can deliver more efficient, targeted, and localized interventions that pave the way for sustainable and resilient communities in Syria.

3. Damage types

	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE AND SAFETY	PROTECTION AGAINST THE ELEMENTS		ELECTRICITY, WATER & SANITATION	
		Masonry walls	Doors/windows		
0 NO/NEGLIGEABLE DAMAGE No damage or aesthetic damages SAFE PROTECTIVE and FUNCTIONAL	**SAFE** No visible damage Structural integrity intact	**FULL PROTECTION** No damage		**Functional**	☒ No repair
1 MINOR Limited damage to a few walls, doors, windows, and roofing. SAFE PROTECTIVE and FUNCTIONAL	**SAFE** Superficial damage Structural integrity intact	**MINOR ISSUES** Possible minor water leakage, some bullet holes in the walls	**MINOR ISSUES** There could be a few damaged windows or doors	**MINOR ISSUES** Such as some broken taps, or no electricity in a few rooms	☒ Repair only for extremely vulnerable HH
2 MODERATE Moderate damages to some walls, openings and utilities. SAFE, Partially PROTECTIVE/ FUNCTIONAL	**SAFE STRUCTURE** Superficial damage Structural integrity intact *However, some damages can affect the safety (damaged stairs, handrails missing…)*	**NO SUFFICIENT PROTECTION** Several walls can be badly damaged with large holes but the stability of the building is not affected	**NO SUFFICIENT PROTECTION** Doors and windows are often damaged. Possibly, no doors nor windows	**SOME OR ALL FUNCTIONS AFFECTED**	☑ **To be prioritised**
3 HEAVY Damages to walls, openings and utilities. Few structural damages. **UNSAFE** Partially PROTECTIVE/FUNCTIONAL	**UNSAFE** A few structural elements are slightly damaged (load-bearing walls, columns, beams, or slabs)	**NO SUFFICIENT PROTECTION** Several walls and a part of the roof can be damaged. The **stability is affected** in a part of the building	**NO SUFFICIENT PROTECTION** Doors and windows are often damaged. Possibly, no doors nor windows	**SOME OR ALL FUNCTIONS AFFECTED**	☑ **Can be repaired if approved by the syndicate of engineers**
4 SEVERE Extensive structural damage. Requires extensive repairs **UNSAFE** NOT PROTECTIVE/FUNCTIONAL	**UNSAFE** Many structural elements are damaged. Rehabilitation would be very costly.	**NO PROTECTION** The majority of the walls are destroyed. The roof can have major holes too.	**NO PROTECTION** All doors and windows are heavily damaged or missing.	**NOT FUNCTIONAL**	☒ Outside the scope of work
5 DESTROYED Completely or partially collapsed. **UNINHABITABLE**	**TOTAL OR NEAR-TOTAL COLLAPSE** Beyond repair.				☒ Outside the scope of work

4. Targeting and vulnerability criteria

1. Aim

- Establish a transparent and common approach for selecting and prioritizing beneficiaries.
- Ensure accountability to the local community, donors, and stakeholders.

2. Population groups included

- **IDP returnees**, including family that have not fully returned because their house is damaged and uninhabitable. Those families should have initiated the return process, and family member should be present in the area of return.
- Non-displaced persons

3. Shelter conditions

Shelter rehabilitation should target those with:

- **Minor damages** (low priority)
- **Moderate damages** (High priority)
- **Heavy damages** (low priority unless the cost of repair is within the budget and a high impact on affected people)

4. Occupancy situation

- **Owners**: Official documents confirming ownership (e.g., Real Estate Registration Statement, Final Court decision document, Municipal contract).
- **Tenants**: Consent from the owner, present current rent contract/lease agreement, and sign a rent contract before repairs.
- **Hosted**: Consent of the owner, Free of Charge Occupancy Agreement with a non-eviction clause for at least one year. The duration of free rent can be extended based on the average rental cost in the area and the repair cost (see § Shelter repair for tenants).

The agreement between the owner and the tenant/ can include the following clause: In case the tenant or the family hosted for free leaves the repaired shelter, the shelter partner has the right to use the shelter to house another beneficiary family for the remaining period. The selection of the family will be done in concertation with the owner to ensure social cohesion. For more details, see § HLP due diligence.

Vulnerability:

To prioritize the most vulnerable households (HHs) that are unable to repair their houses due to financial constraints or the capacity of their members, the following vulnerability criteria are considered:

- **Headed HH**: Female-headed households, elderly people (60+), child-headed households.
- **Low Income**: Households with limited financial resources
- **Households Hosting IDPs/Returnees**: Families providing shelter to internally displaced persons or returnees
- **Chronically Ill and People with Disabilities**: Households with members who have long-term illnesses or disabilities
- **Large Families**: Households with five or more children

SHELTER REHABILITATION SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO STRUGGLE TO RETURN

Considering the immense needs and the dire living conditions of people residing in IDP camps, it is crucial to extend shelter rehabilitation support to IDPs who have not yet fully returned due to several barriers – especially because their shelter is uninhabitable - but are willing to return and have physical presence in the area where the shelter rehabilitation project is implemented.

Many of these IDPs face limitations such as a lack of financial resources, waiting for the school year to end, or needing time to relocate their businesses and family, and their shelter is not yet inhabitable. Also, it is good to consider specific vulnerabilities such as disabilities, gender-related restrictions, or protection concerns that prevent them from moving immediately during the rehabilitation project period.

For selected individuals, a clear intention to return permanently with their families should be formalized through an MoU. The targeted shelter must be the one they plan to live in; it should not be rented out or used for other purposes.

Announcements and registration processes should be conducted in collaboration with camp management structures and local authorities in the targeted areas of origin undergoing rehabilitation works. The selected beneficiaries must provide all available necessary documentation in person, and proactively cooperate with the due diligence procedures.

The return is sustainable only within a well-coordinated multisectoral area-based intervention. Area-based approaches aim to holistically restore basic services, infrastructure, and shelter, fostering a conducive environment for safe, dignified and sustainable returns. In many cases, IDPs have abandoned their areas due to security risks and moved collectively to certain camps. Coordinated rehabilitation efforts—along with complementary services such as WASH, education, protection, and livelihoods—can help re-establish these communities and support voluntary return when conditions allow. This not only facilitates reintegration but also contributes to long-term community resilience and social cohesion.

5. Structural integrity

Structural integrity is defined as the ability of a structure or structural component to withstand its intended load without experiencing failure, deformation, or collapse. It ensures that the structure can hold together under various loads, including its own weight, without breaking or deforming excessively.

Ensuring the structural integrity of rehabilitated apartment buildings is fundamental to creating safe and durable shelters for displaced families in Syria, where the impact of conflict and earthquakes has left many buildings vulnerable. The 2023 earthquake poses a significant risk to already weakened structures, causing foundation shifts, wall collapses, and critical failure of load-bearing elements. In Aleppo city, damage assessment work marked 30,089 residential buildings, representing 20% of the total number of buildings in the city, highlighting the magnitude of the risk.[4]

By confirming the structural integrity of targeted buildings as a pre-condition for subsequent rehabilitation work, rehabilitated shelters can provide displaced families with safe, resilient living spaces, reducing risks associated with future seismic events.

Typologies of Syrian Informality[5]

Informality, manifested by the absence of building permits, can result from distinct and overlapping factors ranging from the lack of legitimate tenure rights to non-compliance with planning ordinances and construction violations. Informality in Syria can be loosely grouped into three typologies:

- **Tenure-based Informality:** Also referred to as squatting, tenure-based informality signifies the prohibitive occupation and construction of public or private land. When carried out collectively or over time, it leads to the formation of informal settlements. Squatting on private property is rare in Syria and does not represent overarching trends.
- **Planning-based Informality**: Refers to areas of mass contravention due to unauthorized development on land that is legally owned and occupied but not allocated for development or zoned for different purposes. This has largely occurred in pre-urban areas within the master plan or expansion areas surrounding major cities. Informal buildings on such plots may host multiple units in the form of apartment buildings. Approximately 70% of informal settlements in Syria are characterized by planning-based informality.
- **Construction-based Informality**: Refers to the construction of buildings or additions that violate building codes and regulations. These violations are individual unauthorized developments that modify or add to constructions incompatible with building regulations (e.g., building height, structural design). This type of informality has become increasingly prevalent in the past two decades, especially during the conflict.

Regardless of the type of informality, and in line with Syrian laws and regulations, structural integrity official reports for such buildings cannot be issued and certified by the relevant authorities. Hence, support provided to affected families living in such buildings must consider the seriousness of the intervention and the extent of the risk that rehabilitation works may cause. Partners are encouraged to consider other types of assistance for these vulnerable families.

[4] Damage Assessment Operational Report, Aleppo Operation Room, July 17, 2023

[5] HLP Right and Security of Tenure in Informal Settlements – UN-Habitat, 2022.

Main Considerations

- **Verification and Certification**: For a building's structural integrity report to be verified and certified, the building must be formal and have building permits/blueprints. If the original documentation is lost or damaged, sector partners can support beneficiary families in restoring them with the necessary official certifications. Informal buildings cannot be targeted under this activity.
- **Occupancy Rights**: Occupancy rights must be legal, recognized by local authorities, and verified by the partner.
- **Structural Assessment**: The structural assessment must be conducted by authorized and experienced engineers, with results certified by the Syndicate of Engineers (Duly Certified Structural Integrity Report).
- **Targeted Constructions**: The structural assessment can target concrete, stone, or any other type of formal construction as per the building typology in the area.

Certification Process

The Syndicate of Engineers plays a central role in certifying the structural integrity reports of buildings before rehabilitation begins. The certification process follows this approach:

1. Authorized engineers conduct on-site inspections to evaluate the extent of damage, focusing on foundation stability, wall integrity, and load-bearing capacity.
2. Advanced techniques like ground penetration radar, rebound hammers, material stress testing, and seismic vulnerability mapping are used to assess risk.
3. A detailed technical report outlines identified weaknesses, recommended reinforcements, and compliance measures aligned with national building codes.
4. The Syndicate reviews the engineer's findings and, upon meeting safety criteria, issues a structural integrity certification, granting approval for rehabilitation.
5. In cases of high risk, buildings may require extensive retrofitting before certification is granted.

6. Scope of work & minimum standards

The rehabilitation works should ensure the following:

Safety

- The building and the apartment are safe and protected against elements and other risks.

Living space and privacy

- One kitchen and one bathroom should be functional whatever the size of the family.
- In addition to the kitchen and the bathroom, one or more living-rooms or bedrooms should be repaired. The numbers would vary according to the size of the family, see § c).
- A corridor connecting the different room should also be repaired.
- Consider common spaces to ensure the security and safety of the residents. When there is a need, "Rehabilitation of common areas" project may be considered (see § 22. Common areas).

Number of bedrooms/living-rooms

- Two rooms by default
- One room for a family of less than 3, when privacy is not an issue.
- Minimum covered space of 4.5m^2/person where applicable.
- Privacy and culture should be considered to mitigate the risk of GBV

Openings

- All external openings should be closed to ensure protection against weather and other risks: durable materials in the targeted area, and temporary materials in the remaining rooms.

Construction standards and building code

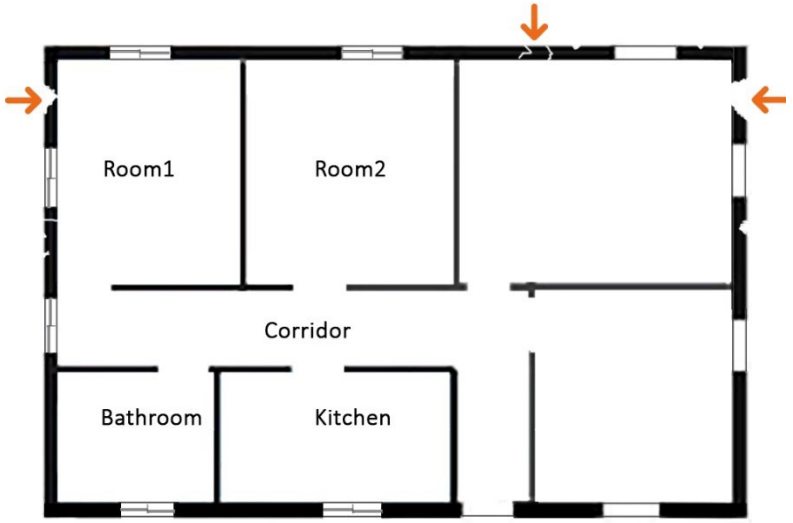
- Follow the building norms and techniques and the most common materials in the given area. This will allow the beneficiary families to operate and maintain the buildings more easily in the long term.

Construction materials

- Utilize the basic materials available in the market, preferably local ones that are functional and common in the project's area. This will allow easy maintenance and replacement when needed.
- Consider previously used materials to avoid significant deviation from what is already there, to remain in line with building norms.
- Try to restore the previously installed items when possible. If they are damaged, repair them if technically possible, including doors and windows to limit costs, avoid use of natural resources and mitigate the impact on the environment.
- Reuse all materials that can be reused, for instance using available materials from the housing unit if possible
- Recycle whenever possible. For example, use recycled concrete, using crushed concrete from demolished buildings as aggregate in new construction projects;

Ensure the structural integrity of the building.

- → Inspect and identify structural issues with the support of an experienced civil engineer.
- If there are structural damages, the Syndicate of Engineers should validate the repair solution.
- For safety reasons, structural damages could be repaired, even if they are outside the targeted room area. If not possible, access to unsafe buildings/rooms should be restricted and clearly marked to prevent accidents.
- Where necessary, remove, replace, or repair damaged materials/elements using shoring.
- Structural cracks, spalling, loss of material, and /or holes are repaired as needed in columns, beams, lintels, load-bearing walls, and slabs to protect the structural integrity of the entire building.



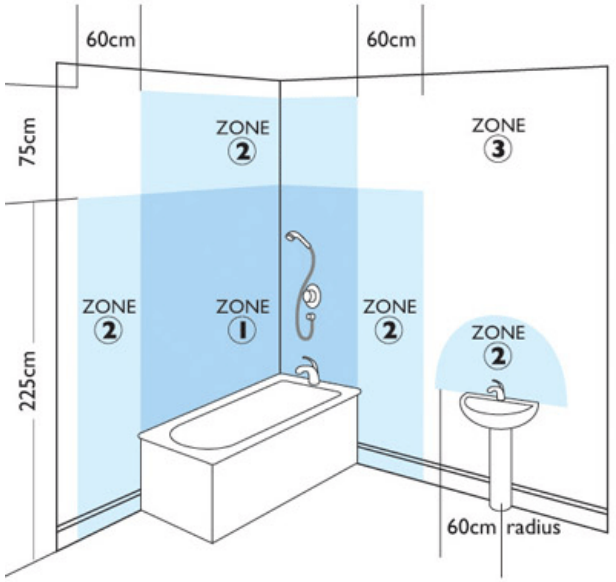
Rooms to be repaired

- First, identify the rooms to be repaired according to "Living space and privacy" consideration (page 12) and in consultation with the beneficiary household.
- If the surface area per person in the living rooms/bedrooms is less than 4.5m2/person, one or more rooms could be added until the 4.5m2/person standard is reached. Most housing units will be larger than the required standard. In this case, only the required covered area will be repaired.
- Sealing the covered living space to improve protection from harsh weather, security, privacy, and access to kitchen and sanitation facilities are the primary concerns of cluster interventions
- As necessary, seal off non-repaired areas to ensure the safety of residents
- The remaining area will be repaired by beneficiaries themselves over time, according to their capacity and Government support

RECOMMENDED WORK

	Minimal requirements in the covered area	Remarks
1. Structural safety	Structural cracks, spalling, loss of material, and /or holes are repaired as needed in columns, beams, lintels, load-bearing walls, and slabs to protect the structural integrity of the entire building.	⚠ The Syndicate of Engineers must approve the scope of structural repair before starting the work.
2. External Walls	All external walls of the required covered space are free from cracks or holes. It's preferred to use previously used materials (when possible and cost-effective) to harmonize the façade and maintain a decent shape. Note: plaster cracking is acceptable.	Plastering can be included if the walls need to be better protected against the rain, such as adobe walls.
3. Internal walls	Interior walls in habitable spaces are free from holes. No signs of structural problems. Note: non-structural hairline cracking is acceptable.	Plastering or painting of internal walls is outside the scope of repairs, except in wash facilities (see below).
4. Internal partitions	Where privacy is a concern, provide a minimum of one internal partition separating sleeping and living spaces.	Use gypsum or 8-10cm cement blocks.
5. Roof	Roof and ceilings are free from cracks and holes. There are no leaks or stagnant water.	Where necessary, apply waterproof silicone to fix leaks, and/or an asphalt layer over the concrete roof.
6. External doors	All external doors into the housing unit (including roof access door) are solid, lockable, and securely fixed to the frame.	Iron, aluminium, wood, or PVC doors may be used.
7. Internal doors	Install or repair doors and windows in the rehabilitated rooms or where they are missing. Lockable doors for the toilet/bathroom. At least one room/bedroom with a lockable door per household.	Wooden door. Doors and windows should provide privacy, protection, and weather-proof space. Privacy is critical in sharing and hosting arrangements.

	Minimal requirements in the covered area	Remarks
8. Windows	Damaged windows are repaired when possible. When not possible, damaged windows can be replaced with new ones, made of the same materials. The natural light opening area per habitable room is at least 10% of the floor area. Optional: Where security is a concern and beneficiaries are unable to do this themselves, protection bars may be installed on the ground floor of the required covered area. Optional: Where feasible, fly mesh may be applied to openable windows.	If living-rooms do not have windows or if the windows are too small (less than 10% of the roof's surface area), the windows could be added or expanded with the family's agreement. All window units in the required covered area are sealed against rain, water, and wind, and have solid panels (such as glass, polycarbonate sheet, or equivalent) securely fixed to the frame. Optional: the remaining windows outside the targeted rooms can be sealed with temporary materials.
9. Water supply	The housing unit is connected to the municipal water network, where it is available, and there is a minimum of 1 functioning water tap per plot. All must have a sewage network connection, functioning and free from leaks. Repair/replace all damaged/missing components, including water and wastewater pipes and fixtures.	**When there is a person with special needs, the bathroom should be adapted to respond to their needs.** When possible, the housing unit should have 3 water points: ▪ 1 in kitchen sink, ▪ 1 handwash basin in the toilets ▪ 1 shower tap
10.Water storage	When water storage is needed and where possible, provide a water tank (minimum 1000 Liters/residential unit). A second tank or a bigger tank should be provided to ensure each family member has access to at least 50 Liters per day. Additional items such as a water pump, manholes, and a water heater (at least 80 Liters per residential unit) can be provided.	Water storage is calculated for a family of 6, assuming 50-60 litres/person/day and a storage capacity of 2-3 days.
11.Kitchen	The housing unit has 1 adequate space for sanitary food storage, preparation, and cooking, separated from the toilet facility by a solid wall.	The recommended minimum space for a kitchen of 3m2 is based on a counter length of 2m, a depth of 60cm, and a 90cm space in front of the counter for safety.

	Minimal requirements in the covered area	Remarks
12. Toilets & showers	Minimum one toilet and shower/bathing space per housing unit with a lockable door and ventilation. Toilets with no signs of leakage are trapped and vented to the outside and connected to either the public sewage system or a private sewage disposal system (e.g., cesspit, septic tank). Toilet and shower floors are smooth and easy to clean; shower walls are plastered up to 1.5m high.	Shower and toilet space may be combined. The recommended minimum area is 3.5 m2. The type of toilet (squatting or sitting) is determined by household preferences. Tiling is recommended for safety and durability reasons. For households with the shower and the toilets in different rooms, tiling toilet surfaces is beyond the scope of work.
13. Ceramic tiles work in WASH Facilities	Repair/replace damaged/missing tiles in kitchens and bathrooms. For houses not tiled before the damage (in the kitchen and bathroom), install only one row of tiles above the kitchen sink, 1m high for the toilets, and 1.5m high for the bathrooms from the floor level.	The aim is to ensure a hygienic place in the kitchen and bathroom. Local materials should be used here. When tiles are damaged or broken during an intervention (such as pipe repair), they must be repaired.
14. Electrical work	In the required covered areas, a minimum of one outlet and one light per room. Light could be added in additional areas for safety reasons. For safety reasons, lights and sockets should comply with the following norms: **Zone 1** - No light and no socket. **Zone 2** - No socket. It is recommended that no light be installed. If no other option is available, a light fitting must be IP44 rated or above. This includes the area 0.6m from the outside perimeter of the bath or wash basin up to a height of 2.25 meters from the floor. **Zone 3** - generally consider an IP20 light fitting as safe. We would recommend IP20 plus. If water jets are ever likely to be used, perhaps for cleaning purposes, light fittings must have a minimum IP65 rating.	

	Minimal requirements in the covered area	Remarks
15. Accessibility	If there are persons with disabilities, they have safe access to the housing unit facilities (toilet/shower, kitchen) and can safely exit the housing unit.	For further guidance, refer to Handicap International guidelines: ▪ General Accessibility Guidelines for Iraq, 2016 ▪ All Under One Roof: Disability-inclusive shelter and settlements in emergencies
16. Heating water	Agencies should consider water heating as a need due to the cold winter. Priority should be given to households with young infants under 5 years and the elderly over 65 years to support water heating during winter periods	
17. Fire damage	The required covered living space must be cleared of all evidence of fire damage (soot, smoke deposits, peeling, minor spalling).	Burnt rooms can be painted.
18. Painting	Outside the scope of work, except for fire damage.	
19. Chimney	The chimney duct is to be cleaned and repaired to ensure stove connections are safe during wintertime.	
20. Stairs, balconies and roof terraces	Stair shafts, balconies, and/or roofs connected to stairs must have a stable parapet to prevent children and adults from falling (including common stairs in multi-unit buildings). The required parapet height is a minimum of 1 - 1.2m; however, where parapets already exist lower than 1 m and are considered stable and safe, they do not need to be replaced.	Cement block walls are preferred, but other materials may be acceptable if they are stable and well secured (e.g., metal or wooden guards).

	Minimal requirements in the covered area	Remarks
21.Common areas	Repair access areas such as the entrance and staircases for safety issues only. This could include: ▪ Repair or installation of handrails ▪ Repair tiles on the stairs if there are safety issues ▪ Enclose all openings posing safety risks, such as elevator shafts, pits, unused apartments, etc. ▪ Repair/replacement of the main gate of the building ▪ Repair/replacement of lighting ▪ Rehabilitation of connection to main utility networks where feasible: sewage, water supply, and electricity. ▪ Installation of a ramp in case a person needs it in the building	
22.Boundary walls	Outside the scope of work.	

Summary of what is outside the scope of work:

- Plastering of internal walls, except in bathrooms and toilets
- Painting, except for fire damage
- Tiles, except in some parts of the WASH facilities
- Boundary walls

Repair of structural damages can be included if validated by the Syndicate of Engineers.

7. HLP Due Diligence

Housing, Land, and Property HLP Due Diligence[6]

The pre-existing lack of sufficient housing supply in Syria has been correlated with weakened HLP rights and security of tenure. The lack of adequate formal housing drives many, especially displaced persons and female-headed households, to occupy abandoned or partially damaged properties, creating significant insecurity of tenure and safety risks.

Informal settlements, often heavily damaged, are particularly vulnerable. Residents frequently lack the formal documentation needed to prove their HLP rights, making them susceptible to losing their property, especially when considering government redevelopment laws like Law 23 (2015) and Law 10 (2018), which pose risks for informal tenure holders[7].

Organizations undertaking shelter and shop rehabilitation must navigate this complex HLP context, as interventions can formalize illegitimate claims, exclude vulnerable groups, and potentially fuel disputes or contribute to politicized reconstruction agendas.

[6] Due Diligence for Land-Based Programming – Technical Guidance Note, UN-Habitat 2022.
[7] To know more about urban laws, check the UrbanLex | The Global Urban Law Database from UN Habitat.

KEY RISKS IDENTIFIED IN SHELTER REHABILITATION

HLP

1. **Legal Compliance:** Rehabilitation often requires municipal permits and compliance with building codes. Failure to comply risks the tenure security of the owner.
2. **Gender and Women's Rights:** Unequal inheritance laws and lack of documentation (often held in male relatives' names) make women's HLP rights fragile. Rehabilitation activities might inadvertently worsen these inequalities.
3. **Exclusion of IDPs and Refugees:** Displaced owners may be excluded from rehabilitation programs if they cannot be contacted to authorize the work, potentially leading to their properties being left unrepaired or even occupied by others.
4. **Eviction and Resettlement:** Occupants of damaged or abandoned properties may be evicted due to rehabilitation activities without adequate resettlement or tenure securing procedures.
5. **Informality:** Laws prevent formal rehabilitation in informal settlements without permits, excluding vulnerable communities and potentially increasing social tensions.
6. **Illegitimate Property Acquisitions:** Rehabilitation could formalize or support the claims of current occupants who acquired property through fraud or coercion during the conflict, preventing legitimate owners from returning.
7. **HLP Disputes:** Increased property value from rehabilitation can trigger disputes over ownership, inheritance, or tenancy rights.

   Tenure Security of Leaseholders: Owners may desire to repossess their property once rehabilitation has been taken. This may result in early terminations of residential leases for personal use or higher rental rates. Tenants with unregistered leases have minimal protection, and rehabilitation without clear provisions could incentivize eviction.
8. **Unidentified Heritage:** Rehabilitating heritage buildings requires specialized expertise, permission from authorities, and adherence to heritage laws. Failure may risk cultural loss and disruption of social fabric.

Other risks

1. **Inflated Costs of Living/Maintenance:** Rehabilitation can increase living costs in the area and maintenance costs for beneficiaries, potentially exceeding their capacity.
2. **Social Privileging:** Rehabilitation might disproportionately benefit certain groups (elites, political sympathizers) over vulnerable populations (displaced, women, informal settlers), exacerbating existing inequalities.
3. **Explosive Remnants of War (ERWs)/Tunnels:** Safety hazards prevent full property use and pose risks to workers and beneficiaries.

RECOMMENDED HLP RISK TREATMENT MEASURES

1. **Conduct HLP Rights Training:** Train staff on general HLP principles (adequate housing, non-discrimination, tenure security, eviction protection, tenant rights) and Syria-specific risks (documentation loss, disputes, politicization, fraudulent documents, etc.), as well as safety procedures for high-risk areas (ERWs).

2. **Conduct Due Diligence training:** Train shelter actors to conduct simple due diligence prior to any intervention. In parallel, establish referral networks to legal actors to support complex due diligence cases.

3. **Comply with Building Codes:** Ensure all rehabilitation complies with municipal regulations and obtain necessary permits to enhance beneficiaries' tenure security. This requires beneficiaries to have State-recognized documentation. Referral mechanisms to legal actors should be in place for owners without the required documentation to obtain the necessary documents and participate in shelter projects.

4. **Prioritize Based on HLP Security:** Make HLP security a key factor in selecting areas for intervention. Avoid areas with high disputes, unregistered transfers, or significant demographic change if rehabilitation might legitimize abuse. Prioritize areas where interventions can strengthen tenure. Consult with local authorities on rehabilitating informal settlements in a way that respects original residents' rights, potentially using Law 23.

5. **Conduct Comprehensive Assessments:** Include HLP considerations in environmental and social impact assessments. Conduct explosive hazard surveys early in the process.

6. **Integrate HLP into Eligibility Standards:** Establish clear criteria based on intended land use, HLP verification status, dispute history, owner presence, secondary occupants, lease agreements (for tenants), and availability of dispute resolution. Refrain from intervening where HLP disputes are unresolved, ownership cannot be verified, the owner is absent/uncontactable, or the intervention would weaken tenure, contribute to exclusionary redevelopment, or where ERWs are present without clearance.

7. **Verify HLP Rights:** Consult HLP experts. Verify rights of both the beneficiary and any third parties using government documentation (Tabou, registered leases, court orders) and civil documentation, cross-referencing with registries. If formal documents are missing, use triangulation (testimony from multiple reliable community sources) and supplementary evidence (utility bills, photos). Assist those who lost documents in replacing them. Document the entire process. Provide special consideration and assistance to vulnerable groups (IDPs, women, female-headed households) who face greater barriers.

8. **Formalize Beneficiary Agreements:** Obtain written permission from all rightsholders involved (owners, tenants, or usage rights holders). The agreement must clearly identify the beneficiaries, property, acknowledge/prove ownership, define roles/responsibilities/scope of work, state that rehabilitation does not confer ownership, and outline dispute resolution mechanisms. It should be signed by beneficiaries, the organization, and a community witness. Encourage tenants to register leases for protection against future issues.

9. **Utilize Referral Systems:** Link beneficiaries to existing local HLP dispute resolution mechanisms and courts. Refer individuals lacking documentation to HLP sub-cluster organizations that provide assistance.

By implementing these risk identification, treatment, monitoring, and review measures, partners can better navigate the complex HLP landscape in Syria and ensure that shelter rehabilitation contributes positively to tenure security and recovery for the intended beneficiaries, rather than inadvertently causing harm or excluding the most vulnerable.

SHELTER REPAIR FOR TENANTS

In shelter rehabilitation projects, tenants—including returnees—have the right to access adequate housing support when appropriate safeguards are in place. Tenants who are living in shelters that fall below minimum standards, may qualify for rehabilitation assistance, provided the necessary improvements are technically feasible.

To ensure eligibility, a vulnerability verification must be conducted for the tenant based on pre-defined criteria.

Where the beneficiary is a tenant, the following conditions must be met:

- Owner Consent: The property owner must be present and provide written approval of the intervention.
- HLP Due Diligence: A full housing, land, and property (HLP) due diligence process must be completed. This includes verifying ownership through available documentation.

A tenancy Assessment should be conducted:

- What is the current hosting or lease arrangement?
- Is there an existing formal or informal rental agreement?
- Is the tenancy status currently under dispute?

MoU

A formal MoU/agreement must be signed by the owner, tenant, and a community witness or local authorities to ensure compliance with local regulations and with the obligations of all parties. This also fosters trust and cooperation between the organization and the community. The objective is to:

- Inform about the roles and responsibilities of all parties
- Protect the right of the tenant and the owner;
- Mitigate the risk of eviction;

The MoU should define:

- The scope of the rehabilitation intervention;
- The roles and responsibilities of each party;
- The dispute resolution mechanisms;

Local authorities should be present during the agreement signing to validate the arrangement, ensure transparency, and align with local regulations.

Duration of the MoU and free of charge period

The objective of the intervention is to provide adequate shelter to vulnerable families that do not own a shelter for the longest time possible. Therefore, the MoU should clearly state that the rent terms (amount and conditions) remain unchanged for at least 12 months following the completion of rehabilitation. However, shelter rehabilitation for tenants should remain attractive for owners. Therefore, the duration could be aligned with the cost of the repair work. For instance:

$$Tenure\ security\ duration\ (months) = \frac{Total\ cost\ of\ repair}{estimated\ monthly\ rental\ cost}$$

Another approach is to negotiate a reduction of the rent in proportion to the repair cost.

8. Modalities

Selecting the appropriate modality for repair and rehabilitation is crucial to ensure efficiency, quality, and sustainability. Each one has its advantages and considerations. The choice of modality should be tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the beneficiaries and the local context.

1. The Different Modalities

Cash for Shelter

Cash and/or vouchers is provided to beneficiaries to allow them to purchase materials/tools and/or hire labourers to undertake the works. Materials/tools for the work can be purchased on the local market by redeeming vouchers at shops. This empowers beneficiaries by giving them control over the repair process and promoting autonomy.

Contractor

The implementing agency tenders and contracts a professional contractor to undertake the works. This ensures that the repair and rehabilitation are carried out by skilled professionals, adhering to high standards of quality and safety.

Agency-driven Cash for Work

The partner recruits local labourers to undertake the works. This modality not only facilitates shelter repair but also provides income opportunities to the local community.

Mix modality

Partner can mix the above modalities to take advantage of each modality.

2. How to Choose the Most Appropriate Modality

Choosing the most appropriate modality for repair and rehabilitation depends on several factors, including the specific needs of the beneficiaries, the local context, available resources, and the goals of the implementing agency. Here are some key considerations:

1. **Needs Assessment**: Conduct a thorough needs assessment to understand the specific requirements of the beneficiaries and the local context. This will help in identifying the most suitable modality.
2. **Resource Availability**: Evaluate the availability of resources, including financial, human, and material resources. This will influence the choice of modality based on cost-effectiveness and feasibility. A market assessment will inform the availability of materials, as well as their stock capacity and prices.
3. **Beneficiary Preferences**: Consider the preferences and capacities of the beneficiaries. Empowering beneficiaries through modalities like cash for shelter can enhance their autonomy and satisfaction.
4. **Quality and Safety**: Ensure that the chosen modality can deliver high-quality and safe repairs. Professional contractors and structured voucher systems can help achieve this.
5. **Local Economy**: Support the local economy by choosing modalities that involve local labour and businesses. This can foster community resilience and economic recovery. A labour market assessment can inform the availability of workers and the skills available in the labour market.
6. **Risk assessment:** Conduct a risk assessment including the risks of each of the potential modalities to be used.
7. **Monitoring and Evaluation**: Implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness and accountability of the chosen modality. This will help in identifying and addressing any challenges during implementation.

By carefully considering these factors, implementing agencies can select the most appropriate modality to effectively facilitate the repair and rehabilitation of shelters in Syria, contributing to the overall recovery and resilience of affected communities.

WHY CASH?

- Cash provides beneficiaries with greater flexibility, enabling them to make substantive decisions about the rehabilitation, prioritize the most crucial elements, and exercise greater control and autonomy. The work can be implemented according to their schedule and families can select local contractors they are familiar with
- Cash can increase the value of assistance directly received by a beneficiary by eliminating profits for contractors and labour costs when households manage repair activities;
- Cash may allow beneficiaries to implement cost-saving measures (negotiating prices for labour, getting items at lower prices, etc.), and may allow them to engage family members or other connections to assist with labour and sourcing;
- Cash stimulates short-term local market recovery (jobs, consumption for local shops, etc.), benefiting the community as a whole;
- Cash programs that involve beneficiaries in the repair of their own home may result in homeowners developing rehabilitation and maintenance skills;
- Cash can allow more privacy without having external, unknown contractors in the beneficiaries' homes.

	Quality work	Cost efficiency	Impact on the local economy	Beneficiary preferences	Flexibility	PROS	CONS
Cash for Shelter	★ è ★★ Quality can be good if the family has the capacity to do or to supervise the repair work. By default, families do not have the skills to supervise complicated work. A technical person should be included to monitor the work for complex repairs.	★★★ Can increase the value of assistance directly received by beneficiaries by eliminating profits for contractors and labour costs when households manage repair activities.	★★★ Cash stimulates short-term local market recovery (jobs, consumption from local suppliers, etc.), benefiting the community as a whole.	★★ Preferred option for minor repair or when a family member has construction skills.	★★★ It gives the family more flexibility in choosing the materials. The works are implemented according to their schedule (in theory), and they may be able to select local contractors they are familiar with.	Excellent value for money for minor or moderate repairs with technical support. Can include voucher modality	Not suitable for heavy damage.
Contractor	★★★ Contractors are selected based on their experience, professionalism, skilled labour, and quality equipment. Adherence to standards and quality are ensured through, a good tendering process, contract clauses and enforcement.	★★ Contractors can get a better price for materials through economies of scale. However, the contractor needs profit. Economies of scale can be offset by the profit.	★★ Modality benefiting larger contractors with experience with NGO/UN Small contractors only benefit as subcontractors.	★★★ Families often prefer the contractor modality because they are unfamiliar with construction work.	★★ Families can prioritise some repair works based on their needs, and they can choose the type of materials in coordination with the organization as long as it is within the Bill of Quantities (BoQs).	Adapted for a large volume of work, where local skilled capacity is unavailable, or where the local market is not functional.	Not cost-effective for minor repairs.
Cash for work	★ / ★★ Quality depends on the skills and experience of the labour as well as the quality of technical support and supervision.	★ Humanitarian organisations have less flexibility to negotiate cost of materials and therefore could be more expensive?	★ Multiplier effect in the economy through job creation. Although it gives less opportunities to local contractors.	★★ Preferred modality from the affected community's perspective as it provides immediate income and promote social cohesion.	★★ *Ditto Contractor*	To be combined with vocational training. To allow newly trained workers, including PWD, women, to access the labour market.	Requires effective management and supervision of labour teams.
Mixed	★★ Ensures quality materials are used for repairs while providing flexibility for the family. Contractors can be used for complex work.	★ / ★★★ Could become less cost-effective if too many modalities are mixed.	★★★ Supports local businesses by redeeming vouchers at shops.	★★★ Empowers beneficiaries by giving them control over material selection and procurement.	★★ Provides flexibility through an owner-driven approach and ensures quality materials.	Provides flexibility and ensures quality materials.	Requires careful planning. Potential complexity in implementation.

CASH FOR SHELTER

Beneficiaries with simple repair requirements and sufficient skills to perform the work themselves can be approached to engage in self-help contracting.

Responsibilities

In self-help, the funds necessary for the work can be allocated directly to the beneficiary who procures the required materials. In this case, possible changes in market values should be considered.

The partner must have the time and resources to support the beneficiary. The support may come in the form of technical advice, as outlined in the Scope of Work (SoW) and Bill of Quantities (BoQ).

To ensure consistency in approach, the partner should select the same payment modality for the entire programme.

The payments provided for self-help rehabilitation are for exclusive use in conducting the necessary work. The partner should carefully consider who the recipient of the cash is to prevent misuse or diversion of funds. Any concerns regarding protection arising from the provision of cash payments must be addressed.

Clauses

Clauses included in the contract should contain the following:

- Work plan, involving a SoW and BoQ, including completion period (preliminary handover and final handover);
- The legal responsibilities of all parties involved; and
- The schedule of payments.

Prepare the self-help agreement

In this case, there is no contract, but rather a shelter repair agreement that includes information from the BoQ and the scope of work.

The agreement should outline the standards by which the beneficiary's shelter is repaired and rehabilitated, in accordance with Programme Standards. The specifications and quantities of materials cannot be changed without the consent of both the beneficiary and the implementing agency.

Cash transfer mechanism

There are various types of cash transfer mechanisms, which are tailored to the targeted beneficiaries, location, security concerns, protection needs, shelter agency capacity, service provider capabilities, and timeline.

The program can utilize one or multiple transfer mechanisms, such as vouchers (commodity or value) or local money transfer companies operating in the targeted locations for direct cash distribution. Partners should recall that cash allows beneficiaries more flexibility and is often their preferred modality of implementation. It may enable beneficiaries to implement cost-saving measures, such as negotiating labour prices and obtaining items at lower prices. Vouchers redeemed at local shops can help ensure quality for materials used while supporting the local economy.

CONTRACTOR

In this type of contracting, the cost may be reduced due to economy of scale, the contractor has more technical capacity, and so the risk of future problems is reduced. A framework agreement format is recommended in order to implement while still identifying beneficiaries and without the need to wait for a final BoQ of all selected shelters. Materials' standards and prices must have been pre-agreed during the tendering process.

Responsibilities

The contractor is responsible for procurement and transportation of materials, coordination of works, including hiring of staff, health and safety practices, as well as a commitment that the work is completed on time. The contractor can hire subcontractors at their discretion to assist with the work. However, they should be monitored and coordinated by the contractor to ensure the work is done correctly, efficiently, and to the required standards.

Clauses

- The following clauses should be included in the contract:
- Legal liability and remedies for injury to staff, third parties, and damage to materials or property resulting from neglect or misconduct.
- Legal responsibilities of all parties involved
- Workplan, including completion period.
- Schedule of payments and how to manage variation orders, incentive and penalty clauses.
- Retention clause, stating how much of the total contract amount is paid after the satisfactory completion of the works and the final handover should be included in the contract.
- An adequate mechanism for Dispute Resolution Procedure (DRP), especially in the context of a non-existent jurisdiction.
- Include what jurisdiction and governing law the contract is likely to be subject to; and
- A code of conduct, including clear child safeguarding and PSEA responsibilities.

AGENCY-DRIVEN CASH FOR WORK

In the cash-for-work modality, work does not require complex technical expertise. Participants of the cash for work (labourers) are selected by the partner to implement the work. Cash-for-work modalities should be inclusive, incorporating age and gender-related considerations to ensure that women, men, and people with disabilities are included in Cash for Work, matching their expertise with the required functions. This modality is recommended when integrated with the Livelihood and Early Recovery components.

Responsibilities

The partner is responsible for:

- The coordination of work, including the hiring of staff and ensuring that the work is completed on time.
- The procurement of materials, equipment, water, personal protective equipment (PPE) and emergency first aid supplies
- Transportation of material to site, including responsibility for losses in transit and storage. In a scenario where a high volume of material is to be procured, the partner should organize the storage and manage the delivery of materials to the beneficiaries and contractors according to their needs. The security of the storage building should be taken into consideration in this case.
- Quality Assurance of materials and tools.

For some of the materials, subcontractors can be hired, for instance, to make the doors and windows.

Hiring of cash-for-work staff

Daily or seasonal workers must be selected based on the necessary skills for the work

Contract / all workers must be provided with a contract that includes:

- Working plan, including completion period (preliminary handover and final handover);
- Code of conduct, including clear child safeguarding and PSEA responsibilities;
- Insurance;
- Legal responsibilities of all parties involved; and
- Schedule of payments.

The implementing organisation must do daily follow-up of the works with the staff, provide guidance, and ensure that their attendance is recorded. The duty of care towards the cash for work staff must be taken into account.

IMPACT OF OTHER UNCONDITIONAL AND UNRESTRICTED CASH SUPPORT

It should be understood that beneficiaries of cash-based shelter interventions might still be eligible for Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA). Likewise, households that have received MPCA may still be eligible to receive cash-based shelter interventions, unless the beneficiary household has used the MPCA to address their shelter needs permanently. For example, a household that received MPCA to partially pay for rental accommodation due to damages making their residence uninhabitable is still eligible to benefit from a cash-based shelter intervention, which will allow them to return to their primary residence.

MIXED-MODALITY INTERVENTIONS

Mixed-modality interventions, which combine various approaches and resources, offer flexibility and adaptability to specific contexts or situations, benefiting from the advantages of each modality while mitigating its disadvantages. Mixed modality could be a combination of two or all modalities. However, mixing too many modalities may result in low cost-efficiency.

Improved Sustainability

Sustainability is a crucial aspect of shelter interventions. Mixed-modality approaches promote sustainable practices by incorporating high-quality and environmentally friendly materials. Those materials can be provided through vouchers for approved suppliers that have sustainable practices.

Additionally, by involving the community and building local capacities, these interventions ensure that repairs and rehabilitations are maintained over the long term, reducing the need for repeated external assistance. This synergy ensures that resources are used effectively, maximizing the impact of shelter repair and rehabilitation efforts while minimizing the environmental impact.

Supporting livelihood

Several successful examples of mixed modality interventions in Syria highlight their advantages. For instance, projects that combined technical training for local builders with the provision of materials and/or financial support resulted in durable and culturally appropriate shelters. These case studies demonstrate the effectiveness of mixed modality approaches in achieving sustainable and impactful shelter rehabilitation.

Mixed modality interventions should involve the local community in the repair and rehabilitation process. This participatory approach empowers residents, giving them a sense of ownership and control over their living conditions.

9. Repair cost

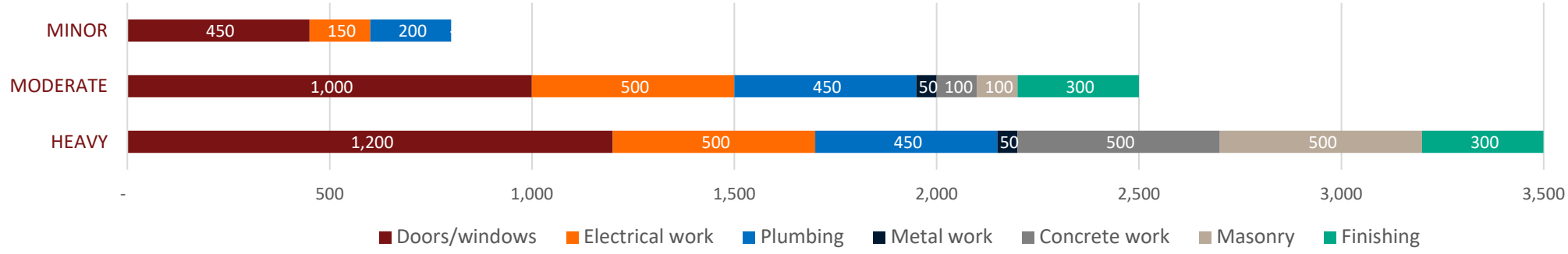
This unified Bill of Quantities (BoQ) for shelter rehabilitation has been developed through a comprehensive review of BoQs from various regions, tailored to fit the geographical areas in Syria. It reflects common items and best engineering practices. However, it remains a flexible reference tool rather than a final or exhaustive list. The BoQ is subject to change based on the outcomes of technical assessments, which may affect both quantities and item specifications. Material selection may also vary depending on regional characteristics, local construction culture, market availability, and community preferences (e.g., aluminum vs. PVC, hollow cement block vs. limestone, or water-based vs. oil-based paint). As such, additional items or modifications may be incorporated during implementation to address specific field needs.

Three Bill of Quantities (BoQs) have been developed to inform the decision regarding the recommended average repair cost, based on the level of damage (Minor, Moderate, and Heavy). The estimated cost for shelter rehabilitation works is based on a comprehensive review and compilation of several BoQs from different regions. It aims to include the most common items and reflect best engineering practices.

The following repair cost is calculated based on different scenarios for a family of five. The cost could increase for larger families.

		Cost ↓	Doors/windows ↓	Plumbing ↓	Electricity ↓	Masonry/concrete ↓	Reinforced Concrete ↓
1 MINOR	☑ **Repair exceptionally for extremely vulnerable**	**$400-$800**	Maintenance: ±6 Installation: ±2	1 water tank (1000L) Maintenance of sink/toilet	Small repairs		
2 MODERATE	☑ **TO BE PRIORITISED**	**$800-$2,500**	Maintenance: ±1 Installation: ±8	1 water tank (1000L) Kitchen and bathroom repaired	2 rooms, bathroom and kitchen partially repaired	10m^2 of concrete floor 3m^3 of walls rebuilt	
3 HEAVY	☑ **Can be repaired if approved by the syndicate of engineers**	**$2,500-$3,500** [8]	Installation: ±10	1 water tank (1000L) Kitchen and bathroom repaired	2 rooms, bathroom and kitchen partially repaired	20m^2 of concrete floor 11m^3 of walls rebuilt	1m^3 new RCC 1m^3 of RCC repaired

ESTIMATED COST OF REPAIRS (USD)



[8] This does not include the cost of the certificate from the Syndicate of Engineers if applicable.

10. Climate action and environment

In Syria's complex humanitarian context, the impacts of climate change, including increasing heatwaves, flooding, and temperature extremes, are becoming more pronounced. Addressing these challenges requires effective climate mitigation strategies to limit CO2 emissions from shelter repair activities. Equally important is the need for climate adaptation to ensure shelters can withstand these changing conditions, particularly extreme heat. Small-scale shelter rehabilitation offers a critical opportunity to integrate climate resilience, environmental sustainability, energy efficiency, and early recovery. These measures not only improve the safety and dignity of shelter but also reduce climate risks, promote eco-friendly practices, enhance energy efficiency, and contribute to longer-term recovery and local capacity-building.

Community Awareness and Engagement

- Train local workers and households in simple, practical, climate-adaptive, and energy-efficient techniques, such as moisture barriers, passive ventilation, reflective surfaces, and energy-saving insulation.
- Engage communities in selecting low-cost, culturally appropriate, and sustainable solutions, including bio-based and/or locally sourced materials such as mud plaster or stone walls, thereby enhancing ownership and sustainability.
- Raise awareness about recycling, reusing, environmental conservation, and energy efficiency, and build local knowledge around climate risks such as heatwaves, flooding, and temperature extremes common in many Syrian regions.

Collaboration with Climate and Environmental Initiatives

- Coordinate with local and international climate resilience actors, NGOs, and early recovery actors to integrate shelter rehabilitation into broader climate adaptation and energy efficiency strategies.
- Partner with environmental and innovation-focused organizations to pilot and scale context-appropriate solutions, including those focused on the circular economy and energy-efficient technologies.
- Leverage technical expertise from climate-focused bodies to improve assessment tools, promote localized innovations, and strengthen shelter designs against emerging climate risks.

Material Selection, Recycling & Waste Management

- Use recycled building materials (e.g., bricks, rubble, timber, plastic) from damaged structures for repairs that do not require high structural resistance. For example, rubble can be reused in sub-flooring, non-load-bearing walls, or insulation infill.
- Encourage on-site sorting and reuse of demolition debris. This reduces environmental degradation and creates local livelihood opportunities for youth, women, and skilled labourers through material recovery and reprocessing activities.
- Use eco-friendly materials adapted to extreme temperatures, such as earth blocks.
- Promote community-based recycling workshops to create items such as plastic tiles, roofing panels, or shading structures, thereby directly linking these efforts with early recovery initiatives.
- Avoid environmentally harmful materials (e.g., asbestos, high-toxicity plastics) and clearly define waste management expectations in procurement contracts.

Flood and Moisture Protection

- In flood-prone zones (e.g., northwest Syria), elevate shelter floors using compacted earth, salvaged stone, or gravel to prevent water damage.
- Create or repair basic drainage systems using recycled materials, such as pipes, plastic bottles, or gutters, to direct water away from shelters and reduce health and structural risks.
- Encourage the use of lime-based plasters or natural sealants for wall damp-proofing in areas with high humidity.

Ventilation and Shading

- Design for cross ventilation by ensuring openings on opposite walls during window repairs or replacements.
- Install shading devices, such as recycled fabric awnings, woven mats, or other energy-efficient solutions, to protect against extreme sun exposure, particularly on east- and west-facing walls.
- Use ventilation components (such as mesh, louvers, or carved blocks) to enhance airflow and indoor comfort.

Roof and Wall Repairs

- Repair and waterproof roofs using recycled tarpaulins, bitumen, or plastic membranes where available.
- For insulation, use natural or reused materials such as strawboard, shredded textiles, or recycled foam, especially in high-altitude areas prone to extreme cold.
- Promote simple solar-reflective paints on roofs or walls using lime or light-coloured clay to reduce heat absorption and improve energy efficiency.

11. Resources

Key resources

- UNHCR, REACH and CCCM intention survey in Northern Syria
- Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement
- IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- New Way of Working, OCHA, 2017
- The Right to Adequate Housing
- Safer Homes, Stronger Communities, A Handbook for Reconstructing after Natural Disasters
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030
- Sphere Standards, 2018
- General Accessibility Guidelines for Iraq, 2016
- All Under One Roof: Disability-inclusive shelter and settlements in emergencies

Damage assessment resources

European Macroseismic Scale 1998 (EMS-98)	Designed to assign seismic intensities in Europe, this framework offers a clear classification system for earthquake damage. It has been used by EEFIT in past deployments. Note: it only covers masonry and concrete frames—steel structures are not included.
US USAR FOG	A field operations guide from the US Army for urban search and rescue, including detailed methodologies for field damage assessment.
ATC-20-1	Field manual: Post-earthquake safety evaluation of building. California's reference for post-earthquake safety evaluations of buildings.
Global Rapid post-disaster Damage Estimation (GRADE)	A GIS-based framework focused on loss estimation. Offers a comprehensive approach to post-disaster damage assessment.
GEM guidance	Improving Post-Disaster Damage Data Collection to Inform Decision-Making. Guidance from the Global Earthquake Model Foundation (GEM) on collecting damage data to support decision-making.
Damage assessments by International Engineers	A detailed paper on the damage assessment campaign following the 2019 Albania earthquake, including insights into the setup and operation of the Damage Assessment Coordination Centre (DACC).
GEM guidance	User guide Windows tool for field data collection and management. Guidance on GEM's Inventory Data Capture Tools for field data collection. Note: the tool may no longer be accessible due to funding limitations.
ICRS	Understanding Building Damage: A Comprehensive Guide to structural and non-structural damage assessment from an insurance perspective.
ATC-20	Rapid Evaluation Safety Assessment Form. A practical example of a rapid safety assessment form used in California.