

Terms of Reference

Technical Sub-Community of Practice

Damage Assessment

July 2025 – Version 1

I. BACKGROUND

The Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) Technical Community of Practice (TCoP) serves as a platform for sharing information, expertise, and practical experiences on technical issues relevant to humanitarian shelter and settlement programs. This includes the development and exchange of best practices, tools, guidance, and field-driven innovations.

The Damage Assessment TCoP is a thematic Sub-Cop (T.S-CoP) within the GSC Technical Community of Practice. It was established to address the growing need for improved technical coordination and harmonization in how shelter damage assessments are conducted following disasters and conflicts.

It is open to all interested individuals, regardless of agency or organization affiliation. The group's value depends on the active participation of its members, who may have some experience performing in a role or subject area of the TCoP, such as architects, engineers, planners, field officers, or affected communities, and are committed to discuss, collaborate, learn, and advance on the various way of conducting Damage Assessment to identify the challenges, the way to work and support the local authorities, to try to align the various methodology, questionnaires and damage criteria between the various geographical response and support each other with expertise, tools sharing and lessons learned.

Damage assessment is a critical component of humanitarian shelter and settlements programs, especially in the aftermath of crises. Accurate and timely damage assessments enable humanitarian actors to understand the extent of destruction, prioritize interventions, and allocate resources effectively. By evaluating the condition of buildings, damage assessments provide essential data that informs the planning and implementation of shelter solutions. This process not only ensures that immediate needs are met but also supports long-term recovery and resilience-building efforts. Engaging local experts in the assessment process ensures that the methodologies are contextually appropriate and reflective of local building practices, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of humanitarian responses.

II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The **Damage Assessments Technical Sub-Community of Practice** provides a collaborative platform for exchanging knowledge, resources, and technical support to enhance the effectiveness of shelter and settlement programs. It connects individuals, private sector, academia and agencies to share experiences and collaborate on initiatives that promote accurate and efficient damage assessment methodologies, ensuring humanitarian responses are both effective and sustainable. Its objectives include:

1. Provide guidance on damage assessment methodologies across different contexts (*flood, earthquake, conflict, etc.*).
2. Strengthen technical capacity.
3. Promote collaboration and coordination in damage assessments
4. Collect, develop¹ and share tools and resources on the GSC Technical Toolkit
5. Advocate for context-specific approaches
6. Facilitate information sharing
7. Support country-level shelter cluster response in developing and reviewing damage assessment and shelter needs assessment upon request.

III. STRUCTURE AND RESPONSABILITIES

¹ Note: Developing new guidance endorsed by the GSC will require a specific ToR and will follow the usual validation process by the SAG.

The voluntary committee chair and co-chairs will moderate the Damage Assessment thematic T.Sub-CoP. All individuals interested in Damage Assessment technical issues are invited to join as members of the T.Sub-CoP and encouraged to contribute actively.

Members interested in joining the T.Sub-CoP committee must submit a request explaining their motivation and the added value of their contribution. They should also include a short bio to allow the committee to assess whether the candidate has the appropriate skills and experience.

Responsibilities of the chair:

- Act as the focal point for communication with the GSC Technical CoP moderator
- Inform the GSC T.CoP moderator to seek approval for selected resources before publication on the [Technical Toolkit](#) webpage
- Organize and schedule meetings with the co-chairs
- Facilitate networking and thematic information sharing
- Ensure the creation of event announcements or news communication on the [Technical Community of Practice](#) webpage
- Fulfill all responsibilities assigned to the co-chairs

Responsibilities of the co-chairs:

- Collect, review, and approve resources
- Define sub-topics within the thematic area
- Organize or co-organize meetings and webinars for the broader theme community (recurrence to be defined in the work plan)
- Dedicate approximately 1 hour per week, 4 hours monthly, depending on the needs
- Contribute to sub-group thematic webinar presentations
- Share experiences and tools

Committee members	Affiliation	Specialization	Contact
Pascal Panosetti (chair)	IFRC / GSC	Shelter Expert, GSC T.CoP moderator & Technical Coordinator	pascal.panosetti@ifrc.org
Arnold Njogu	UNDP	IM/GIS Officer	arnold.njogu@undp.org
Regina Wenk	SDC / SHA	Structural civil engineer	Regina.wenk@aarau.ch
Mamuney Legesse	IOM	Civil Engineer	mamuney121421@gmail.com
Dr Chathu Jayakody	Birmingham City University	Senior Lecturer in Built Environment	chathu.jayakody@bcu.ac.uk
Dr Heba Iskandarani	Birmingham City University	Lecturer in Construction and Architectural Technology	heba.iskandarani@bcu.ac.uk
William Rogers-Tizard	RedR UK	Climate and Engineering expert	william.rogers-tizard@redr.org.uk
Noor Kuchai	RedR UK	Technical Programs Coordinator	noor.kuchai@redr.org.uk

IV. PARTICIPATION AND MEMBERSHIP

Active participation is encouraged by individuals who represent agencies and independents who are engaged in or interested in the technical aspects of Damage Assessment.

To join the Technical CoP, you should do the following:

1. Create a GSC account on www.sheltercluster.org
2. Click 'Follow' on the left-hand side of the [Technical Community of Practice](#) webpage
3. You will now be able to create and reply to discussions within the Technical CoP and Technical Toolkit and receive updates from the TCoP and invitations to TCoP events.

Option: You can also register without an account; however, **we strongly recommend that you create one to also receive discussion threads, which only work with GSC accounts.**

4. Click 'Subscribe without an account' on the left-hand side of the [Technical Community of Practice webpage](#).

Any registered member can initiate conversation threads pending approval by the moderator(s). Anyone who can contribute to and/or benefit from the Damage Assessment group and comply with humanitarian principles is welcome to participate. This may include representatives from:

- Local NGOs or community groups
- Private sector (e.g., eco-material suppliers, technical innovators, etc.)
- Academia (research partnerships)
- Donors
- Individual humanitarian workers / consultants

V. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

Quarterly meetings are proposed to share and exchange information and experiences with the broader Damage Assessment Technical Sub-CoP members. Based on membership interest and engagement, other activities and events, such as webinars, working groups, etc. would be scheduled as needed.

Bi-weekly meetings with the committee co-chairs of the Damage Assessments T.S-CoP to brainstorm, define topics to propose to the broader community, prepare and conduct the regular quarterly general meetings.

Quarterly meetings are proposed to the other Technical Sub-CoP committees' members to coordinate, share and exchange information, lessons learnt and experiences.

VI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATIONS

All Damage Assessment sub-group meetings / webinars recordings and meetings notes are and available on the [Technical Community of Practice](#) webpage and classified on the left menu under "Meetings"; [Damage Assessment - T.Sub-CoP](#).

All technical documents related to the thematic discussions within the Technical CoP are published on the [Technical Toolkit](#) webpage and available on the [Damage Assessment Resources](#) page.

To be automatically informed when resources are published on Technical Toolkit page, click 'Follow' on the left-hand side of the [Technical Toolkit](#) webpage

VII. ANNEXES

Yearly shared Workplan with the other thematic T.Sub-CoP committees (to be developed)