



## INTER-AGENCY SHELTER SECTOR COORDINATION WORKING GROUP

### *Guidelines on Rehabilitation of Small Shelter Units*

Developed by  
Temporary Technical Committee

Chaired by NRC with contributions from ACTED, CISP, COOPI, DRC,  
PCPM, PU-AMI, SCI, SI, SOLIDAR, UNHCR, and UNHABITAT.

## Background

The upgrade and rehabilitation of substandard buildings to provide capacity for sheltering displaced and vulnerable people has been ongoing in Lebanon since 2007, and is a significant part of the shelter sector's response to the Syria crisis. Both empty buildings and buildings occupied by vulnerable people can be addressed. Rehabilitation is typically implemented in exchange for a period of reduced or free rent. This creates greater security of tenure and reduces rental expenditure.

As well as providing shelter for beneficiaries, building owners benefit from an economic asset at the end of a project, and refugee and local rent-payers benefit from additional units being added to the housing stock, mitigating against rent inflation.

The creativity and adaptability of agencies working in different social and economic contexts in Lebanon is a sectoral strength, however the standardisation of principles and minimum shelter standards is required to ensure a quality service to beneficiaries.

This document is a product of the agencies taking part in a Temporary Technical Committee on building rehabilitation. Small Shelter Units (SSUs) are (usually) privately owned unfinished or otherwise substandard buildings that have been brought to minimum shelter standards in order to accommodate between 1 and 6 households.

## Principles

1. SSU upgrade/rehabilitation should provide at least 12 months of secure tenure for beneficiary households.
2. A period of free, reduced or frozen rent should be provided, giving the beneficiary household a benefit equal to or greater than the cost of the works and other associated payments made by the implementing agency to the building owner.
  - E.g. works worth \$1200 per housing unit might justify 8 months rent-free shelter (in an area where rent at \$150/m is realistic), or 4 months rent-free and 8 months reduced to \$75.
  - E.g. works worth \$2600 per housing unit could secure 18 months rent-free shelter (in an area where rent at \$200/m is realistic)
  - Free or reduced rent is preferred. In cases where a 'rent freeze' is considered to be the benefit, the justification for not delivering free or reduced rent should be documented.

## Objectives

Rehabilitation works should focus on the following:

1. Adequate protection from cold and wet weather.
  - Heaters usually come from the distribution sector so, if not supplied direct by the shelter agency, there should be proactive coordination with the agencies concerned.
2. Improved privacy and security of beneficiaries.

- Take into account the differing needs of women and men, girls and boys, elderly people, chronically ill people and people with disabilities.
3. Improved hygiene and access to water and sanitation facilities.
  4. Basic health and safety issues must be removed.
    - Including open drops, sub-standard electrics, falling debris and standing water.
  5. Improved basic electrics.
  6. Addressing the most inadequate living conditions (for already occupied buildings).

### **Minimum shelter standards**

1. 3.5m<sup>2</sup> per person of living space (excluding kitchen and toilet) should be created when possible, and subdivisions for individual households should be provided. Clear justification should be provided in cases where this is not achievable.
2. Electrical works should provide at least 1 light fitting per room (including kitchen and bathroom) and one socket per housing unit. An appropriately specified circuit breaker must be fitted.
3. Toilets should have a ratio of one per 15 people or better. In SSU with 15 or fewer people, consideration must be given to the acceptability to beneficiaries of women and men sharing a single toilet and whether a second toilet ought to be provided.  
Each toilet should include a handwash sink and have appropriate tiling or plastering.
4. Waste water and sewerage disposal should be by connection to a septic tank, mains sewerage, improved pit latrine or other recognised means.
5. Water storage tanks should be specified to provide 70L per person – this may have to be increased to take into account the regularity of supply.

### **Building selection**

Buildings should be chosen in locations which -

1. Minimise potential social, physical and security risks to beneficiaries.
2. Allow easy access by beneficiaries, and support monitoring by the implementing agency.
3. Minimise environmental threats to residents and the host community.
4. Allow beneficiaries access to markets and potential sources of income.
5. Allow beneficiaries access to key services.
6. Offer reasonable access to utilities, especially electricity and water.