

## Introduction

Findings from the UNHCR Home Visit report “Living in the Shadows” indicate high levels of economic vulnerability amongst Syrian refugees, with two out of three living below the Jordanian absolute poverty line of 68 JOD/person/month (96USD). Levels of poverty are higher amongst female than male-headed households. Most families need to spend more than they earn in order to meet their household needs, with average expenditure being 1.6 times greater than income. Refugees must therefore resort to a range of coping strategies to survive. Almost half (47%) of refugee households are in living conditions assessed as bad or urgent, and two out of five live with poor sanitary conditions. Of those renting, one in five families has no rental contract. This lack of proper tenure documentation can be a barrier to obtaining an MOI card, and leaves tenants vulnerable to exploitation or eviction by landlords.

Completion of housing units in unfinished buildings is considered a priority activity under the Jordan Response Plan (JRP) and the Shelter Working Group sector strategy. It relates to the Shelter JRP indicator: “# of housing units completed in unfinished buildings”

This document was prepared by a technical task force of the Shelter Working Group (SWG) in Jordan for the Syrian refugee response and is intended to complement the ‘*Explanation of Shelter Methodologies and Standards in the Jordanian Host Community*’ adjusted extract from the UNHCR Shelter and Settlement Strategy for Jordan and *UNHCR’s Global Shelter and Settlement Strategy, 2014-2018*.

## Definition

The sectorial objective for the provision of adequate shelter and settlement of Syrian refugees in host communities as defined in the UNHCR Shelter and Settlement Strategy for Jordan is: to increase number of people that have access to shelter solutions that provide privacy and emotional support, protection from elements, space to live and store belongings, facilitate access to utilize essential household services/ infrastructures, enhance security of tenure, minimize risk of eviction and reduce the competition between refugees and vulnerable Jordanian households thus benefiting from peaceful coexistence with host communities.

This activity is conducted in unfinished buildings that require finishing works to make them habitable. Completion of housing units in unfinished buildings is an integrated approach which addresses multiple household-level needs faced by vulnerable families. It involves the provision of assistance to increase the housing stock and availability of adequate and affordable shelter and link these with vulnerable Syrian refugees based on secure tenure agreements. The intervention supports the creation of new housing in local communities, by providing funds to property owners of unfinished housing, who in return shall host Syrian refugees without charge for an agreed period, a minimum of 12 months. It contributes towards an increase in the adequate housing stock in Jordan, the local economy and social cohesion through the clear investment in the host community.

## Scope of Intervention

Completion of housing units in unfinished buildings will support the shelter needs of refugees while simultaneously investing in local communities. The activity involves upgrading and rehabilitating existing housing units which are unfinished or incomplete but require a degree of work to bring them to adequate standards. Contracts between the agency and the local property owner as well as lease agreements with beneficiary refugee families will ensure that refugees will live in the upgraded units

rent-free for a period of time (12-24 months). The most vulnerable refugees should receive the longest period of rent-free accommodation and should be selected using the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) criteria. Organisations should encourage a focus on the following core shelter needs:

OUTCOME / JUSTIFICATION	ACTIVITY
Improved, durable protection from cold and wet weather, increased security and privacy	Adding permanent doors Adding permanent windows Insulation (roof, doors and windows) Applying one coat of plastering ( base coat)
Improved hygiene and access to water and sanitation facilities	Installing latrines Installing hand-washing facilities Installing washing facilities Improved drainage Building new / expanding existing septic tanks Mending leakages in water supply Fixing drainage systems
Improve connection to municipal infrastructure and services	Water supply, through connection to mains / installing water tanks Installing separate electricity meters
Removing Health and safety risks	Adding balustrades or barriers to stairs, balconies etc. Adding electrical earth, removing faulty wiring etc. Dismantle and removal of any existing unwanted items and remove all debris from site.
Creating separate sleeping areas to improve privacy and to create a warmer living area (Note: smaller rooms are easier to heat and keep warm during winter)	Installing internal doors Installing lightweight partitions

Works must not include any structural works, or in properties which are structurally unsound.

Completion of housing units in unfinished buildings is implemented through the provision of conditional cash grants directly to the property owner, against a signed contract. The signed contract should specify and include the following:

- A detailed bill of quantity;
- A detailed scope of works;
- The obligation of the property owner to make the housing units available under a rent-free lease agreement;
- Land ownership documents
- Valid, authorised building permits

Beneficiaries are selected based on a vulnerability scoring developed by each implementing agency. The highest scoring is usually granted to households that have no written lease, are at risk of eviction, or are overcrowded. Female headed households, individuals with physical disabilities, the elderly, and other highly vulnerable individuals are prioritized in these instances as they are more likely to resort to

negative coping strategies and less likely to have a secure tenancy.<sup>1</sup> In the future this scoring should be aligned and harmonised with the roll-out of the inter-agency Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF).

## Level of Assistance and Value for Money

Completion of housing units in unfinished buildings will be linked to conditions that allow the tenant to remain rent-free in the upgraded property for a set period of time as defined by the agency and the landlord<sup>2</sup>. This can be summarized in the table below which relates investment limits to certain rental conditions.

Number of HUs	Investment limit (12 months' rent free)	Investment limit (18 months' rent free)	Minimum requirements
1	1,000 JD	1,400 JD	Rent-free shelter for between 12 – 18 months; Security of tenure; No eviction.
2	2,000 JD	2,800 JD	
3	3,000 JD	4,200 JD	
4	4,000 JD	5,600 JD	

Agencies are encouraged to consider incorporating environmental concerns into the project design. This could include the following:

Installation of **solar water heating** to households utilizing renewable energy resource. The solar water heaters will considerably cut down households' energy bills and improve living conditions of beneficiaries.

**Energy efficient lighting** involves replacing standard bulbs with energy efficient compact fluorescent light (CFL) and light emitting diode (LED) bulbs. This will contribute further towards cutting down household energy bill, reported as one of the main challenge faced by vulnerable families.

The distribution of **water saving kits** to reduce household water consumption. The kit can range from shower heads, taps and flushing tank fittings, cutting the overall water consumption by up to one quarter. In addition to the environmental benefits, water saving measures are also expected to reduce costs of water trucking and wastewater disposal faced by vulnerable households.

## Monitoring and Dispute Resolution

It is recommended that agencies conduct regular monitoring to ensure that tenants are still living in the accommodation, the housing is secure and no additional rents are claimed to the tenants by the landlord. The Shelter WG is developing post-activity-monitoring guidelines to monitor the work and outcomes of projects. Implementing agencies should use these guidelines once they are endorsed by the WG; agencies can also use other monitoring tools specific to their organizations alongside the Shelter WG post-activity-monitoring guidelines. It is also suggested that agencies establish a dedicated hotline number for refugees to use for queries and problems.

Shelter actors can support landlords and tenants resolve their disputes by:

<sup>1</sup> Lives unseen: Urban Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities three years into the Syria crisis (CARE)

<sup>2</sup> For more guidance see [NRC's Legal, Regulatory and Protection Considerations for Urban Shelter Responses](#)

- Ensuring that both parties understand their obligations under the contract with agencies taking time to explain the terms clearly. Arranging legal information sessions for landlord and the tenant together can be a helpful way of making sure both parties understand the seriousness of their contractual obligations and potential remedies at law for breach of contract.
- Drafting appropriate contracts that cover the most common types of dispute.
- Providing details of where the parties can go in case of dispute (agreed mediators specified in the contract or legal aid providers).
- Providing a follow-up and feedback mechanism back to the organization.
- Monitoring and recording problems (e.g. evictions) to feed into improved programme design and to share details with other shelter actors in the shelter working group.

Landlords should be supported to regularize their holding through the provision of advice and support. Furthermore enquires should be made regarding the status of the tenant (are they registered with UNHCR, with the Mol). If they are not registered with authorities note that the irregular nature of the property will act as a barrier to them becoming registered and accessing services.