

HLP AoR memo:

**Maintaining Momentum and Focus on Housing, Land and Property (HLP)
through the humanitarian reset:**

Partnerships for protection, homes, land and shelter

The ongoing 'humanitarian reset' includes plans to change the cluster coordination system, including an end of the four Areas of Responsibility within the Global Protection Cluster. This includes Housing, Land and Property. As of July 2025 the Shelter, CCCM and HLP clusters/AoR have been asked to form a new 'Land and Shelter' cluster (name as used in recent IASC communication, but still to be decided).

The HLP AoR is committed to an effective transition ensuring HLP is properly integrated in the new way of working as decided in the coming months. From consultations with HLP AoR colleagues, partners, coordinators it is clear that there are opportunities in this new formulation, and also risks that HLP issues - especially those rooted in protection - could be lost, or less visible in the future arrangements. Early conversations with Shelter and CCCM colleagues have been very positive. We need to be clear and focused to ensure the right breadth of HLP issues and approaches are included for the best possible outcome for affected people.

This note gathers critical HLP issues to be part of this new cluster and ways of working. In particular the HLP AoR imagines a strong continuing connection with the protection cluster¹.

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The HLP AoR and its members are committed to ensure the scope of HLP activities remains comprehensive and technically robust. Sustained attention is needed on critical issues such as women's access to land, inheritance rights, and eviction prevention and response, to create an enabling environment for all people, and especially the most vulnerable and marginalised, to access and enjoy their HLP rights.

The HLP AoR and its members are committed to ensure an effective HLP humanitarian response in line with the IASC six + one core functions as part of the new cluster. There are many practical elements of how this cluster will operate, though the following HLP issues and ways of working should be included to ensure effective, sustainable and dignified outcomes for affected people.

This is a moment to further develop and deepen the integration of HLP activities and issues into the work of shelter and CCCM partners. At the same time there are areas outside of the immediate current scope of shelter and CCCM practitioners that must be maintained in this new cluster. Broadly speaking these fall into the following areas:

- Legal assistance – counselling, awareness, ADR, negotiation, inheritance, strategic litigation
- Policy development re HLP rights – links to HLP in durable solutions i.e. restitution, climate changes and other evolving areas
- Advocacy – rights based and linked to policy development and role of local authorities.

¹ See forthcoming '[Housing, Land, and Property \(HLP\) Rights and Protection: Implications for Humanitarian Response](#)'

HLP technical and thematic areas to be included within the scope of the new arrangements²

- **Assessment and analysis of HLP context**, including formal and customary legal and normative frameworks, consideration of gender, livelihoods, conflict-sensitivity, HLP rights, etc³.
- **HLP due diligence⁴ - identify land for humanitarian infrastructure, understand land tenure arrangements for site selection, ensure humanitarian programmes respect land and housing rights. This will minimise risk of doing harm, prevent evictions, promote long term tenure security and contribute to durable solutions.**
 - Support reasonable due diligence, streamlined within Shelter, CCCM, WASH, food security, Mine Action, etc.
 - **Also, frame due diligence as a strategic investment.** *“Due diligence secures donor and community investments in reconstruction.”* Due diligence is an **essential risk mitigation tool** that safeguards the sustainability and impact of aid investments and a service across clusters and sectors.
- Further integrated work with Shelter and CCCM clusters and partners, especially to increase security of tenure. Collaborative working across these areas ensures effective and durable shelter/cccm interventions.
- HLP to be included as an imperative part of recovery and reconstruction, with clear links to humanitarian response.
- Forced evictions – monitoring and responding to risks/threats of eviction (prevention, mitigation); responding to evictions. This includes for people in camp and camp-like settings and all shelter environments. This is a critical issue as eviction can lead to further displacement and exposure to protection risks.
- Support to restitution processes and the resolutions of land disputes – local, alternative mechanisms and access to justice.
- Continued support for legal reform processes, strengthening land governance mechanisms, and advocacy efforts.
- Documentation safeguarding (within humanitarian response), including awareness raising and likely liaison with local authorities. These processes should be contextually relevant and sensitive, built on careful analysis and not limited to formal documentation and land administration structures.
- Returns, local integration or relocation can cause HLP related challenges - for example, secondary occupation, social tension and/or conflict. Need for alternative dispute resolution approaches and tools (ADR, mediation, negotiation etc).
- Increasing women's access to HLP rights (including analysis of gender and HLP)
- Where relevant, HLP and natural resources, livelihoods, links to climate change and readiness. In the context of humanitarian response this will mean collaborating and coordinating with relevant disaster preparedness and risk reduction actors, including authorities.

² HLP AoR is currently undertaking a mapping of HLP issues within the HNRP. Analysis to follow. Issues include: Disputes - land/resources; forced evictions; destruction of housing, land, property; Land grabbing; Inadequate housing; Secondary/illegal occupation; Lack/loss of ownership of HLP documents - can be insecure tenure destruction/confiscation of HLP documents.

³ [Generic HLP Assessment guidance](#)

⁴ See '[Incorporating HLP Due Diligence into Humanitarian Programming for Implementing Agencies](#)' from Interaction (2025) and www.hlpduediligence.org.

Ways of working, Principles for approaching HLP in the new cluster and in service to others:

- HLP in the coordination architecture:
 - HLP expert agency/global HLP focal point to be part of leadership of the new cluster to ensure focus, collaboration, harmonisation, structured learning, investment across sectors/clusters, and to act as a liaison with donors, member states and other partners.
 - HLP steering group (or similar) made up of key HLP actors (eg. global/regional focal points, specialists etc). This group can support strategic engagement with HLP issues through the cluster.
 - Ensure continued collaboration with the Protection Cluster (see below)..
- Role of HLP leadership in new cluster:
 - Reinforce localisation, with national and sub-national co-ordination by local actors.
 - Promote training for coordination, dialogue, facilitation – soft/life skills
 - Consolidate and develop training, guidance and tools on HLP
 - Enhance local actors' HLP related capacities concerning but not limited to: deliver HLP services (including legal advice), fundraise and manage HLP related projects, advocate for HLP and influence local duty-bearers in design and implementation of HLP related policies.
 - Maintain a formal HLP coordination function at national and sub-national levels - process for partners to request technical HLP coordination and ensure platform for it to happen (eg as a TWG, WG or similar)
 - Maintain specialist HLP IM capacity
 - Address resource disparity – map available resources on HLP and coordination and ensure appropriate capacity wherever possible.
- Integrating HLP within shelter, site management and in support of other clusters:
 - Preserve and enhance the role of HLP as a technical service provider to other clusters/sectors and actors working on response aspects connected to land, housing and/or property. This includes development of relevant guidance and tools.
 - Maintain and deepen connection with the protection cluster and partners, including on protection risks, monitoring and aligned indicators and analytical approaches, wherever possible.

Information Management and Analysis

For information and evidence-based decision making, the 'new' cluster must integrate substantive HLP information management and analysis capacity/function. Much progress has been made since 2023, and this momentum must be maintained to ensure we know what are the key gaps on HLP issues to address for durable and dignified solutions. This has included collaboration with shelter and CCCM cluster IMOs and shelter specialists at REACH and Impact Initiatives.

Specifically:

- Support to countries on HLP IM and analysis
- HPC - maintain link with HLP issues related to protection
- Develop integrated approach to IM with shelter, cccm partners
- Shelter cluster has its own approach to HLP issues – map, consolidate and integrate.

- Link between HLP and protection clusters and ways of working – eg protection risks.
- Monitoring and responding to risks of forced eviction
- Continue discussions - mapping common services, how to work/split work with different Ims
- Structure support - eg regional Information Management (IM) for Central and West Africa (CWA) etc.

Naming the new cluster:

It is not yet decided what the new shelter/cccm/HLP cluster will be called. The name will reflect the focus of the work, how it is seen by others and the visibility of those issues on which it works, so requires careful consideration.

Some initial suggestions include the following:

- Homes, Land and Communities
- Housing, Land and communities
- Homes and Communities
- Land and Shelter
- Settlements

[END]