

# Common Comments

## Guidance Based on Review of Shelter and Settlements (S&S) Applications for USAID/BHA Funding

This guidance is intended to improve the quality of Implementing Partner (IP) Shelter and Settlements applications and improve IP understanding of USAID/BHA's Emergency Application Guidelines. If the Guidelines are followed, the review of Shelter and Settlements applications will be completed faster, increase the quality of programming, reduce human suffering, and save more lives.

### The Basics: Expediting Application Reviews

1. [Reviewing USAID/BHA Emergency Application Guidelines](#)
2. [Page Numbers](#)
3. [Formatting – Consistent Terminology and Language](#)
4. [Reconstruction](#)
5. [Application of Sphere Project Guidance](#)
6. [Bills of Quantities \(BOQs\)](#)
7. [Painting](#)
8. [Plaster](#)
9. [Washers](#)
10. [Sketches, Pictures, and Diagrams](#)
11. [Shelter is More Than a Piece of Plastic Sheeting](#)
12. [Fixing Plastic Sheeting](#)
13. [Plastic Sheeting Number, Dimensions, and Specifications](#)

### Focus on Beneficiaries

14. [Coverage of S&S Needs](#)
15. [Identification of Beneficiaries](#)
16. [Assistance to Vulnerable Groups](#)
17. [Secure Support of Primary Stakeholders](#)
18. [Project Guidance and Monitoring](#)

### Focus on Subsectors and Shelter Opportunity Surveys (SOS)

19. [Shelter and Settlements Subsectors](#)
  - Shelter
  - Settlements
  - S&S Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)
  - S&S NFIs
20. [Shelter Opportunity Surveys \(SOSs\)](#)
  - Settlement-Wide Assessment
  - Resources
  - Utility

### Additional Guidance

21. [Inter-sectoral Collaboration](#)
22. [Protecting Sensitive Beneficiary Data and Avoiding Duplication of Efforts](#)
23. [The Use of Cash and Vouchers to Promote Access to Adequate Shelter](#)

24. [Rental Support](#)
25. [Disaster Risk Reduction \(DRR\) Awareness Efforts](#)
26. [Technical Review Before Upgrading Buildings](#)
27. [Debris Removal Planning](#)
28. [Infrastructure Improvements](#)
29. [Use of Locally Available Materials and Labor](#)
30. [Construction Providers](#)
31. [Qualified staff](#)
32. [Site Planning](#)
33. [Relationship of Shelter Size to Plot/Parcel Size](#)
34. [Addressing Potential Housing, Land, and Property \(HLP\) Conflicts](#)
35. [Exit Strategy](#)

## The Basics: Expediting Application Reviews

### **Reviewing USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) Emergency**

**Application Guidelines:** Reviewing the Shelter and Settlements references found in the [BHA Emergency Application Guidelines](#) and the complementary [Annex A - Technical Information and Sector Requirements](#) along with other relevant guidelines (e.g., the Sphere Project Handbook), will inform application preparation efforts, significantly enhance application quality, and reduce review time.

**Page Numbers:** Ensure that applications and all annexes have page numbers. This will expedite both USAID/BHA review and implementing partner response and application revision efforts.

**Formatting:** Applications must be written in English or submitted with English translations ([ADS Chapter 303.3.20](#)), with the English version being the controlling version, single-spaced, and in 12-point Times New Roman font; all text in tables or charts are allowed to use 8- or 10-point Times New Roman font. Bill of Quantities (BOQs) and diagrams/sketches must also be drafted in English or have an English version and prices must be listed in U.S. Dollars (USD).

**BHA Mandate and Terminology:** USAID/BHA is not mandated to support new construction or reconstruction activities as part of emergency applications. Do not include proposed activities that seek to provide permanent housing, as well as all references to “reconstruction”. Replace with an appropriate term such as “repair” or “rehabilitate”.

When using specific terms or keywords, ensure consistency in the use of terms. Terms such as “establish”, “create”, and “new” reference “new” activities, must not be used to describe repair or rehabilitation of existing structures. Use consistent language across all application documents in order to reduce confusion.

**Application of Sphere Project Standards:** Apply the “minimally adequate covered living space” standards in new or existing structures. Minimum space per person for proposed interventions and related indicators is 3.5 m<sup>2</sup>/person, with household living space a product of this basic space metric times the number of persons in the average beneficiary household (e.g., 3.5 m<sup>2</sup>/person x 6 persons/household = 21 m<sup>2</sup>). If these standards appear impractical, provide justifications for deviations and verify that these deviations would not undermine the intervention’s main purpose(s), including possible linkage of current and foreseeable concerns regarding the spread of infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

**Identification of Beneficiaries:** Identify the number of beneficiaries, the number of beneficiary households, and the average beneficiary household size. This latter metric is key to Shelter and Settlements (S&S) sector activities. Provide the method and/or criteria used to identify and select the beneficiaries of the proposed intervention, as well as the process and degree of transparency to be adopted to select beneficiaries. These basic metrics inform the provision of S&S sector assistance, primarily the calculation of minimally adequate covered living space, as identified by Sphere Project guidance.

- Indicate an estimated timeframe in which the beneficiaries will begin to benefit from proposed activities
- Whether the mode of implementation is in-kind or cash-based, explain what controls will be in place to maintain and assure that beneficiaries will obtain appropriate building repair materials that
  - Meet specifications,
  - At a reasonable price,
  - In the proper quantities, and
  - Available in a timely manner within the budget established.
- Data disaggregation: In applications that entail more than one activity, disaggregate data of beneficiaries per activity. Provide a breakdown of the number of beneficiaries being assisted per activity, including but not limited to: NFI distribution, cash distribution, and repair kits. Explain how to avoid duplication of beneficiaries where one household may receive two or more outputs, either from different activities within the same program or through shelter programs from other agencies

**Bills of Quantities (BOQs):** These items are the basics of shelter and need to be included in applications when covered living space needs to be created via new structures or within existing structures. BOQs may not be needed for proposed hosting support or rental activities if they do not include the creation of covered living space. A BOQ listing the cost per item and quantities/costs by item for all materials needed to create the identified covered living space is a basic project design element that guides project activities. BOQs must include:

- Item name
- Description of item
- Cost per item
- Total quantity of items
- Quantity of items per kit

- Prices in USD
- Labor costs, and
- Costs of safety measures

Provide a detailed description of each item listed in the BOQ. The description may vary depending on the item (material, size, length, cost of treatment, thickness, etc.). For example, when using wood nails, windows or metal roof sheets, provide the length of the nails, the size of the window panes, and the thickness (gauge) of the sheet. Generating BOQs also helps identify the materials that might be available locally, either through salvaging, scavenging, or purchase by beneficiaries.

Implementing partners must identify what materials in the BOQ will be provided by the implementing partner, and what materials (if any) will be provided by the beneficiaries. Related issues are whether beneficiaries will be expected to provide any BOQ items, at what cost, whether these additional costs will pose a burden to beneficiary households, and how to mitigate this burden. Include shelter items that will be provided by beneficiaries at no or minimal cost (e.g. salvaged timber and leaves for roofing) in order to have BOQs reflect all inputs needed to produce proposed shelters. Also, explain whether proposed costs of materials will pose a burden to beneficiary households, and how Implementing partners will mitigate this burden.

Finally, when drafting BOQs, consider a separate BOQ for each sub-sector, or at bare minimum, identify components of BOQ/BOQs most relevant to each sub-sector.

**Painting:** Adhere to the construction standard of two coats or less. Painting must be done for functional reasons, not for cosmetic reasons. One primer coat and one finish coat is sufficient according to USAID/BHA standards.

**Plaster:** If plastering is proposed as an input to S&S activities when sealing of wall spaces (e.g., holes, cracks, etc.) is needed to improve privacy or to prevent access of vectors into living spaces, propose no more than one coat. Limit thickness to no more than one centimeter. List plaster in the BOQ, together with needed details and cost.

**Washers:** If roofing materials are proposed as inputs to S&S activities, include washers in BOQs because washers can reduce tearing and reduce leakage around nail/screw holes. Washers must be approx. 3.8 cm/1.5" in diameter and made of stiff plastic or locally available materials such as recycled bike or vehicle tires.

**Sketches, Pictures, and Diagrams:** When structural work is proposed, field-level diagrams/sketches and/or construction drawings are required showing existing design along with proposed improvements and dimensions. They must illustrate that proposed materials listed in the BOQs are combined to create the needed covered living space. Confirm that all of the materials listed in BOQs will be sufficient to create covered living space reflected in the sketches/diagrams of proposed work. Whenever possible, pictures are also requested from the interior and exterior of existing structures that require repair/rehabilitation.

**“Shelter is More Than a Piece of Plastic Sheeting” (Shelter Inputs vs. Shelter NFIs):** USAID/BHA considers plastic sheeting, rope, and related items (e.g., nails, washers, etc.) as shelter inputs, and not NFIs, and USAID/BHA Emergency Application Guidelines reflect this distinction. If plastic sheeting and other shelter items are proposed, use the S&S Shelter Sub-sector guidance to inform application preparation. Separation of shelter inputs from NFI inputs into respective sector sub-sectors does not prohibit any logistical plans featuring combined packaging and distribution of proposed sector inputs.

**Fixing Plastic Sheeting:** If either plastic or metal roof sheeting is proposed, reference [this video](#)<sup>1</sup> for use in training and feedback activities. The video can also be linked to social media accounts if appropriate as it has been shown in various countries to improve shelter living conditions and reduce hazard risks. French, Spanish, and Creole versions of the video are available online.

Guidance on use of the sheeting is needed as beneficiaries often do not know how to use it to create "minimally adequate covered living space". Provide a detailed description of how the sheeting will be used; how it will be combined with other materials (e.g., rope, wood, nails, existing walls and roofs, etc.) to create covered living space. Detail the costs if the materials are available locally that beneficiaries can provide themselves at no or low cost, either as a substitute for or complement to materials that implementing partners might provide. BOQs and diagrams are exceedingly helpful to expedite the review process. When plastic sheeting is used to create covered living space, include a minimum fixing kit appropriate for the context for attaching the plastic sheeting to the shelter. Fixing items can include nails, rope, or wire.

**Plastic Sheeting Number, Dimensions, and Specifications:** If plastic sheeting is proposed, provide the number to be provided per beneficiary household as well as the dimensions and technical specifications. Compare sheeting with specifications of the sheeting provided by major international humanitarian agencies (e.g., IOM, UNHCR, IFRC, USAID/BHA, etc.). Identify measures that will increase the longevity of sheeting that does not meet or exceed specifications (e.g., covering sheeting with local materials to reduce degradation caused by extended solar exposure, wear and tear, etc.). Also confirm that plastic sheeting is at or above the [standard quality for plastic sheeting set by USAID](#)<sup>2</sup>.

## Focus on Beneficiaries

**Project Guidance and Monitoring:** If beneficiaries will assume a primary role in creating needed covered living space, partners must provide USAID/BHA a detailed discussion on what guidance/training they will provide to beneficiaries. Describe how beneficiary efforts to create covered living space will be monitored throughout the entire project cycle; not just during scheduled visits by implementing partners.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQ4RxSzsGZY>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1866/plastic-sheeting-comparison>

**Assistance to Vulnerable Groups:** USAID/BHA encourages sensitivity towards vulnerable groups in humanitarian programming. However, applications often include limited information on how implementing partners will identify and assist vulnerable households requiring special attention to create minimally adequate covered living space as part of proposed activities. Describe the selection criteria that will be used to identify beneficiaries, taking into account the ability of each household to self-recover based on a detailed socio-economic analysis of their post-disaster condition. Where possible, rely heavily on the affected community to identify the most vulnerable families amongst themselves. Implementing partners must discuss how the need for S&S assistance will be assessed, what criteria will be used to identify S&S beneficiary households, and describe the beneficiary selection process. This information is needed to inform programming and will enhance the ability of partners to identify and clarify assistance to those households unable to create or access such space because of special circumstances (e.g., disabled/elderly/child-headed households, income limits, etc.).

- **Gender and Protection Considerations:** S&S advises implementing partners to contextualize gender and protection for activities in this sector. When describing the design of gender-specific shelters, describe how the privacy and safety needs of women, girls, men and/or boys were taken into consideration, including for the design of public spaces. Placing locks on doors is an insufficient explanation of a gender-specific shelter design as this is a standard privacy response regardless of gender. An example of a gender-specific shelter design can include the provision of breastfeeding spaces where appropriate. These are examples and not meant to be an exhaustive list of potential issues or approaches. When such designs are proposed, include an illustrative BOQ including a list of materials, labor, and cost. Clarify if these designs include repair, rehabilitation, or construction of any type.

**Secure Support of Primary Stakeholders:** Process matters. Stakeholder support and understanding of proposed activities is critical to the success of any humanitarian assistance program. Identify the primary project stakeholders. Describe how proposed activities will engage and consult them to ensure they support the beneficiary selection criteria and approach, and the shelter delivery methods, designs, and costs, including cash transfers.

**Inter-sectoral Collaboration:** When merging different sectors, present a schematic showing the operational relationships among the intersecting sectors. Include a timeline on how they will phase with one another and a performance description of how each sector will be improved by its integration with the other sectors. Finally, present a description as to how the integration effect will be monitored and/or measured.

## **Focus on Sub-Sectors and Shelter Opportunity Survey (SOS)**

**Coverage of S&S Needs:** As a guide to project design, emphasize efforts that use available resources to provide minimally adequate assistance to the maximum number of persons with identified S&S needs. This focus on maximizing coverage is preferred over support of small-scale activities with relatively high per-household costs, with limited potential for impact.

**Shelter and Settlements Sub-sectors:** There are four sub-sectors: shelter, settlements, S&S Disaster Risk Reduction, and S&S Non-Food Items. Details about the sub-sectors can be found on pages 142 and 144 of [Annex A - Technical Information and Sector Requirements](#):

- **Shelter:** Plastic sheeting, tools, and other fixing materials that create covered living space must be incorporated into this sub-sector. They are not considered NFIs. Guidance on the provision of non-shelter structures (e.g. health clinics, nutrition feeding centers, roads) is included in the Structures keyword between pages 185-187 of Annex A of BHA's Emergency Application Guidelines.
- **Settlements:** The S&S team asks that implementing partners use and promote a Settlements Approach when and where appropriate when coordinating an integrated multi-sector programming strategy within social-defined spaces. Refer to the Settlements Approach between pages 144 to 149 in Annex A - BHA's Emergency Application Guidelines. USAID/BHA does not support the area-based approach.
- **S&S DRR:** The sub-sector DRR discusses the activities that can be proposed separately or combined with other S&S sub-sectors. The objective of this sub-sector is to promote DRR activities that make shelter and settlements safer, more resilient, and more habitable. When providing training that will include [Build-Back-Better \(BBB\)](#)<sup>3</sup> techniques, list and describe the proposed BBB techniques to be introduced to trainees. Review the Annex A Guidelines to determine if the proposed BBB/DRR activities must be incorporated into the S&S DRR sub-sector. Also, provide a brief description of how the retention and understanding levels of participants in trainings will be monitored. Design and implement field emergency management exercises to test the outcome purposes of the trainings, score the participants on their proficiencies, and provide remedial programs to ameliorate the deficiencies found through the exercises. Design and implement procedures and criteria to stress test agencies and organizations, to perform under potential disaster scenarios. For more guidance, refer to the World Bank-supported website, [ThinkHazard!](#) and the S&S NFIs subsector, pages 149 to 151 in Annex A - BHA's Emergency Application Guidelines for more guidance.
- **S&S NFIs:** This sub-sector includes cash, vouchers, or direct distribution for beneficiaries to obtain related S&S NFIs. Examples of shelter NFIs considered part of this sub-sector are heating stoves, heating fuel, blankets,

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<sup>3</sup>[https://www.recoveryplatform.org/assets/tools\\_guidelines/GFDRR/Disaster%20Recovery%20Guidance%20Series-%20Building%20Back%20Better%20in%20Post-Disaster%20Recovery.pdf](https://www.recoveryplatform.org/assets/tools_guidelines/GFDRR/Disaster%20Recovery%20Guidance%20Series-%20Building%20Back%20Better%20in%20Post-Disaster%20Recovery.pdf)

and household kitchen sets. When providing these NFIs, include costs and Information, Education Communication (IEC) materials for safe use in your application. For stoves specifically, clarify and justify if this item will be fueled by gas (or other burnable fuel) and how venting will be safely handled. If the stove is a camping or outdoor use type, then the product must not be distributed. Refer to the S&S NFIs subsector, pages 151 to 154 in Annex A - BHA's Emergency Application Guidelines for more guidance. Plastic sheeting, tools, and other fixing materials that are used to create covered living space must be incorporated into the S&S Shelter sub-sector.

**Shelter Opportunity Surveys (SOSs):** There are a number of possible options to address shelter needs, all with various degrees of quality, comfort, functionality, and cost. Often the default response is use of tents and camps, when these options must be last resorts, after all other options have been exhausted. Often overlooked in the effort to identify and respond to needs, is the assessment of impacts on housing *throughout* affected settlements, and not just the houses in those settlements, often referred to as the housing stock, or housing supply.

Relegating assessments to just the housing portion of settlements effectively eliminates up to 40% or more of a given settlement's land area from assessment. This minimizes understanding of the resources, opportunities, and challenges of providing shelter throughout affected settlements. This analytical limitation can undermine the effective, timely, and appropriate delivery of shelter assistance to affected populations.

Settlement-Wide Assessment: The BHA Shelter and Settlements Team promotes use of a Shelter Opportunity Survey (SOS) to respond to the need for systematic, settlement-wide assessment of shelter impacts, needs, resources, opportunities, and challenges. The SOS addresses the need for an information base upon which program and settlement planning can occur. Just as settlements vary widely in a number of ways, so too do SOS efforts. Basic elements include the following:

- Adopting the critically important view that assessment efforts in identified settlements are not confined solely to housing, but all forms of land use activity
- Identifying scale of operations (e.g., camp or street block, neighborhood, district, city-wide, etc.)
- Identifying key data points:
  - For housing: unfinished and damaged single family units and apartments in multistory buildings, informal settlements and hosting opportunities.
  - For land: vacant parcels, underutilized parcels (and identifying percentage of parcel that is possible site for shelter), minimum space for siting shelter (e.g., parcels, or portions of parcels, of, for example, 100-150 m<sup>2</sup>), parcel access, parcel physical/hazard conditions, service access/availability, and parcel ownership.
- Adjusting minimum space factor, as needed, as well as coverage percentage of underutilized parcels, to expand or contract survey.



Early engagement with affected populations, local and national officials, Shelter Cluster staff, and other humanitarian actors can help refine thinking and calibrate parcel size and other metrics to better reflect conditions in affected settlements.

Resources: The more efficient and effective way to base the SOS is using maps, either paper or electronic, complemented by imagery and/or use of drones, with settlement residents as key on-the-ground informants, surveyors, promoters, and analysts. Numerous applications readily available to humanitarian actors can facilitate SOS activities, including, for example:

- iMMAP
- The Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team, and
- The REACH Initiative

Depending on the scale of operations and resources, an SOS can be done fairly quickly, as in a matter of days.

Utility: Rapid, systematic assessment of affected settlements via an SOS effort can result in the identification of a wide range of shelter options, and numerous opportunities for sheltering displaced populations within each option. SOS serves as an expansive triage mechanism to facilitate and focus needed ground-truthing of prospective opportunities to clarify potential use and access issues. Not all identified opportunity sites will be available for use in S&S activities, for a variety of legal, occupancy, environmental, hazard, and other reasons. However, SOS can expedite this process, and result in the identification of candidate opportunity sites.

## **Additional Critical S&S Guidance**

### **Protecting Sensitive Beneficiary Data and Avoiding Duplication of Efforts**

Implementing partners are strongly encouraged to participate in cluster activities to increase opportunities to engage beneficiaries, host country governments, and other humanitarian actors in generating appropriate responses, and avoid duplication in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Also, implementing partners must be mindful of the need to protect beneficiary personal identifiable data, how it is stored and used, and how it will be securely shared with program stakeholders, including host-country governments.

### **The Use of Cash and Vouchers to Promote Access to Adequate Shelter**

Implementing an S&S project using cash-based programming measures (e.g., cash and vouchers) is different from, but equally as complex as, direct shelter construction. Cash is a tool, not an intervention in and of itself. Partners still must ensure the provision of minimally adequate covered living space. Implementing partners must describe how the value of any shelter-related cash transfer is calculated and note the assumptions made. Partners must also describe how most recipients will secure access to shelter (repair, rental, etc.) and explain the extra support (e.g. in-kind assistance, technical support, legal assistance, and referrals) the program will provide besides the cash transfers to ensure that most vulnerable households access shelter consistent with Sphere Project guidance.

Finally, if beneficiaries are expected to repair, upgrade, or build shelters using cash, implementing partners must provide illustrative BOQs and field sketches/diagrams that inform and guide beneficiary activities, recognizing that individual shelter solutions will vary. Make sure to explain how controls will be maintained to assure that beneficiaries will obtain appropriate building materials that meet specifications, at a reasonable price, in the proper quantities, and that the materials are timely available to the beneficiary within the budget proposed.

Although cash transfers do present opportunities for a limited range of shelter activities (e.g., emergency NFIs, tools, and other basic materials), recent [research](#)<sup>4</sup> has documented multiple deficiencies in the use of unconditional or unrestricted cash transfers to support self-help shelter repair and construction. If proposing such transfers for shelter repair or construction, implementing partners must discuss how to avoid or reduce common risks, such as:

- Low quality of construction work performed
- Availability and use of low-quality building materials
- Price inflation in local labor and building materials markets
- Slow pace of shelter activities, frequently leading to program delays, and
- Insufficient cash to meet shelter needs after other humanitarian needs (e.g. food) are met.

**Rental Support:** If rent support is proposed, either as part of S&S or other (e.g., Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance) sector activities, confirm that sufficient supply of rental space is available in settlements of proposed activity, and that this rental space is minimally adequate according to basic Sphere Project guidance for the identified average beneficiary household size. Identify any safeguards that might be needed to prevent displacement of people by beneficiaries who might be able to pay more rent than existing residents in identified rental spaces, to avoid a secondary displacement.

**Use of Locally Available Materials and Labor:** USAID/BHA welcomes and supports the use of local materials and labor where supplies exist and do not generate adverse impacts on local materials and labor markets or degrade local environments. It is often possible, for example, to replace plastic sheeting in whole or part with local materials or select mechanically stabilized earth (MSEs) over traditional retaining walls. Review proposed project designs to increase local material content, assuming these materials do not pose a fire or environmental hazard. When materials are locally provided, they contribute to the local market and allow households to access the materials for future maintenance. Include any assessments made of the local market.

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<sup>4</sup>[https://www.sheltercluster.org/sites/default/files/docs/gsc\\_position\\_paper\\_cash\\_and\\_markets\\_in\\_the\\_shelter\\_sector.pdf](https://www.sheltercluster.org/sites/default/files/docs/gsc_position_paper_cash_and_markets_in_the_shelter_sector.pdf)

USAID/BHA appreciates the active involvement of local workers and supports the training of construction workers as well as community leaders to build shelters. In addition, when conducting building materials market assessments, include evidence demonstrating that building materials markets have adequate access, supply, quality, and stability to meet the demand generated by the displaced population (including those not benefiting from the program, as well as other humanitarian efforts) in settlements of proposed activities.

**Disaster Risk Reduction Awareness Efforts:** Describe the need for DRR at the shelter and settlements levels. In addition to the incorporation of specific measures into structures to reduce identified hazards risks, USAID/BHA encourages adoption of a balanced DRR awareness approach, including a variety of methodologies and tools, including but not limited to demonstrations, publications (e.g. brochures and posters), formal training sessions, and use of social media. Share related documents in applications so that best practices can be identified.

**Technical Review Before Upgrading Buildings:** For proposed activities in conflict zones with limited USAID/BHA access, and where security conditions permit, implementing partners must submit a description of the scope of the activity prior to commencing structural repairs. Include:

- Beneficiary census disaggregated by gender and age groups,
- BOQs for each building disaggregated by dwelling unit (e.g., flats, houses, etc.),
- Geographic coordinates in degrees, minutes and seconds using as reference the World Geodetic System (WGS 84), and
- Pictures illustrating the current status of each dwelling unit.

**Debris Removal Planning:** If conflicts or disasters have generated debris in settlements of proposed activities, implementing partners must provide a detailed description of the approach and assumptions used to estimate the volume of debris to be removed. In addition, maps or other illustrations showing the spatial distribution of debris in the project area must be provided, and areas of proposed disposal sites. Describe the anticipated logistical constraints expected to be addressed via a debris management plan.

**Infrastructure Improvements:** Identify and discuss the extent and cost of service infrastructure repair/rehabilitation activities in settlements of proposed activity, including selection criteria to be used in identifying the infrastructure the partner plans to repair/rehabilitate. In addition, identify costs of each proposed infrastructure project (e.g. markets, water points, roads, etc.), and confirm the qualifications of implementing partner or contractor staff that will perform repair/rehabilitation activities that require specialized knowledge and skills, and/or to guide, support and supervise the quality of proposed work conducted by the program beneficiaries. Finally, provide BOQs, drawings, and narrative descriptions of each infrastructure rehabilitation project in settlements of proposed activities.

**Construction Providers:** When using sub-contractors to informally train and/or educate beneficiaries on how to repair and maintain the rehabilitated shelter, provide curriculum, manuals, educational materials and/or any other training materials. Materials can include information on shelter construction, installation guidance, price expectations, safe shelter practices, and required level of quality.

Make sure to clarify whether sub-contractors will use their own construction tools, or if implementing partners will procure tools for contractors outside of a procurement contract. Confirm who will own tools after the project is complete.

**Qualified Staff & Assessing Risk:** Confirm that qualified staff (e.g. structural engineers, civil engineers, or architects) will be included in project activities to assess new or existing living spaces proposed for occupancy by beneficiaries to ensure that spaces are capable of withstanding common natural hazards without collapsing or injuring beneficiaries or occupants. IPs must avoid, to the extent possible, improving or strengthening structural elements (e.g., columns, beams, and foundations) in buildings of more than two stories. If repair of structural elements in buildings higher than two stories is proposed, IPs must describe the knowledge, skills, and resources that qualify IP staff to perform high-quality structural repairs on time and under budget. Partners must also confirm that qualified staff will verify that all available settlement systems (e.g., water, sanitation, heating, cooling, and electric services, if present) to be used for shelter are working properly throughout project duration.

**Site Planning:** If site planning, site selection, or collective shelter activities are proposed, contact the Shelter Cluster for guidance, and refer to Settlements sub-sector guidance in the Annex A - USAID/BHA Emergency Application Guidelines. Given the importance of Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) issues, describe land ownership status of sites, what criteria will be used to identify sites, whether sites will be group or individual shelter sites, and identify any site planning and preparation work needed on proposed sites. To ensure safety, privacy, and security of even single-shelter sites, adhere to the guidance provided by the Sphere Project Handbook, the Global Shelter Publication [Site Planning: Guidance to Reduce the Risk of Gender-Based Violence](#)<sup>5</sup>, and similar guidance documents.

**Relationship of Shelter Size to Plot/Parcel Size:** This relationship, also expressed as the relationship of covered living space to total living space, is particularly important in camp settings. It is critical to ensure adequate outdoor living space for cooking, washing clothes and dishes, bathing and sanitation, drainage, physical access, services, etc.. Although plots are often informal spaces, not officially demarcated in camp or site plans, they are important social spaces for households. USAID/BHA encourage a ratio between shelter size and plot size of no less than 1:4 or 1:5. For example, a 25 m<sup>2</sup> shelter might indicate plot sizes of 100-125 m<sup>2</sup>. In this configuration, beneficiary households would have a total of 75-100 m<sup>2</sup> of usable outdoor living space on their plots.

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<sup>5</sup>[https://www.sheltercluster.org/sites/default/files/docs/site\\_planning-gbv\\_booklet\\_apr-2018\\_web\\_high-res\\_v3.pdf](https://www.sheltercluster.org/sites/default/files/docs/site_planning-gbv_booklet_apr-2018_web_high-res_v3.pdf)

Typically, shelter to plot size ratios in camps are in excess of 1:7 or more, so there is little justification for reducing shelter size below Sphere Project guidance. However, real or perceived limitations in living space in camp settings are often used to justify reductions in covered living space below Sphere guidance. Even a shelter to plot size ratio of 1:2 or 1:3 generally permits minimally adequate outdoor living space for beneficiaries. However, It is unusual to observe ratios this low in camp settings.

Implementing partners must provide information on shelter and plot sizes when working in camp settings, to both ensure sufficient outdoor usable living space and eliminate efforts to reduce covered living space, even in the densest camps. Additional guidance on this topic can be found on page 252 in the Sphere Project Handbook.

**Addressing Potential Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) Conflicts:** Provide a detailed description on how proposed projects will contribute to protecting the land, housing, and property rights of beneficiaries, whether assisted in-kind or with cash transfers. Describe how the proposed project will address any conflicts that might arise over housing land and property rights. Finally, implementing partners must describe the system the proposed project would establish, or link to, to collect and address HLP grievances in a timely fashion.

**Transition or Exit Strategy:** Every application must have a transition and/or exit strategy. Provide a detailed description of the transition or exit strategy and elaborate on how, when, what, and who will implement the exit strategy. Include how shelters and related infrastructure will be maintained subsequent to project completion.