

B.1 Sphere Project - 2011 - Global standards

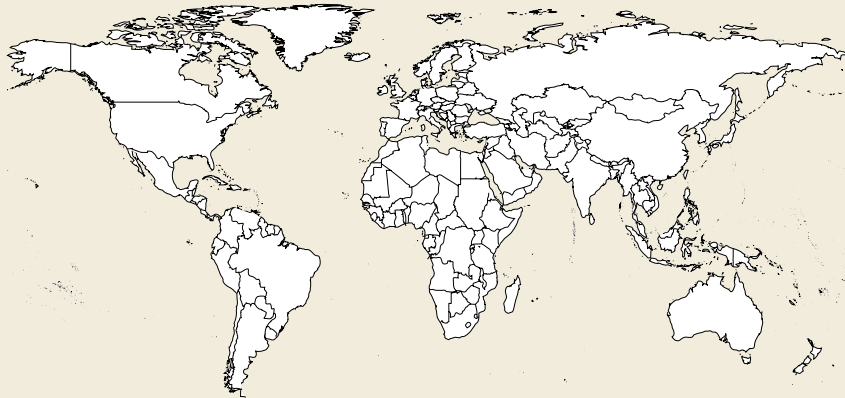
Case study:

Country:

Global

Disaster:

Sphere hand book covers both conflict and natural disaster



Project timeline

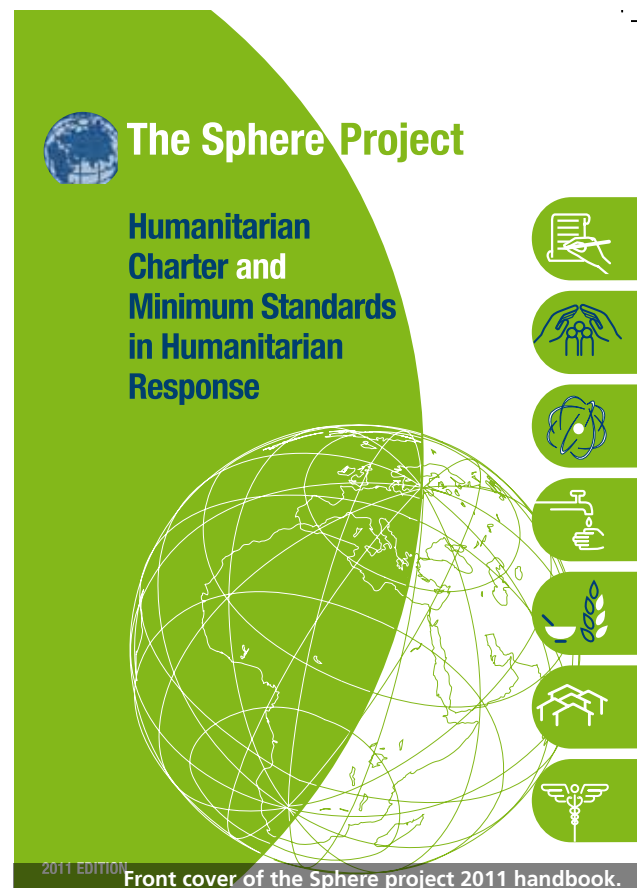
2011 -	- Third edition of sphere handbook
2004 -	- Second edition of sphere handbook
2000 -	- First published edition of sphere handbook
Early 1998-	- Working group established to draft the Humanitarian Charter
1997-	- Sphere Project launched
1994-	- Rwanda refugee crisis

Project description

The third revision of the Sphere Handbook was released in 2011. It built upon the previous two editions and contained a section on "Minimum Standards in Shelter, Settlement and Non-Food Items". This chapter is the closest there is to consensus in humanitarian sheltering practices, and is available for download free of charge from www.sphereproject.org.

Strengths and weaknesses

- ✓ The shelter and settlements chapter of the Sphere Handbook is the best place to get an overview of a commonly accepted understanding of shelter issues.
- ✓ The shelter and settlements chapter of the 2010 handbook is based on consensus surrounding shelter provision. It was developed during a broad consultation process.
- ✓ The document can be very useful starting point for establishing advocacy positions with donors, governments and within organisations.
- ✓ When used well, it can lead to better programming, and as a basis for training in humanitarian shelter provision.
- ✗ The Sphere handbook is often quoted but seldom read in detail. The shelter chapter is less than 50 pages long.
 - The figure of 3.5m² per person is often quoted as being the sphere standard for shelter, however, it is only a "key indicator" under the broader standard of covered living space, and has accompanying guidance notes.
 - It can be hard to meet Sphere standards where there are resource constraints or pre-disaster shelter is below Sphere standards. This is now discussed in the introduction to the handbook under "In cases where the standards cannot be met..."



Sphere project formation

During the 1990s, humanitarian response was going through many changes. New actors including the military and development agencies were actively engaging in humanitarian operations.

Following the 1994 Rwanda genocide where 800,000 people were killed, a multi-donor evaluation concluded that if humanitarian agencies had done a better job, then more lives would have been saved.

This led to a group of humanitarian non-governmental organisations and the Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement establishing the Sphere Project in 1997.

At the core of the Sphere Handbook is a summary of common principles and values, known as the humanitarian charter, as well as life saving universal minimum standards in key sectors.

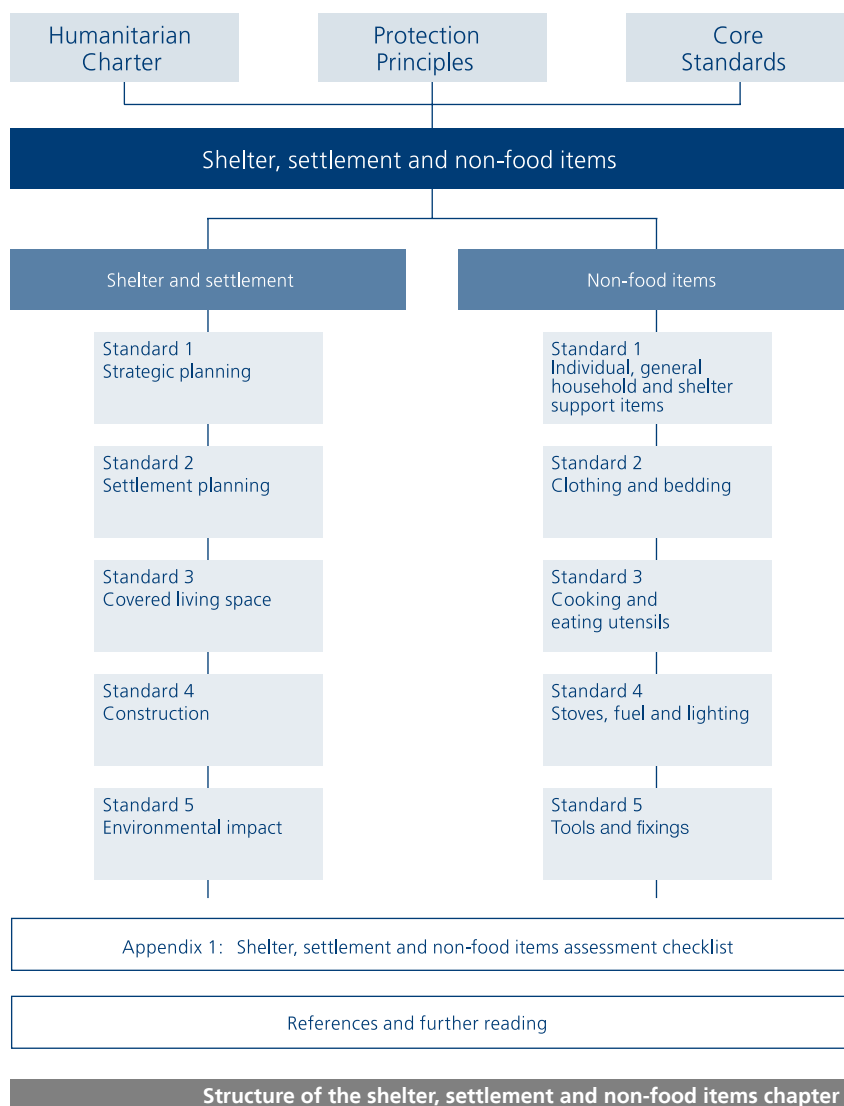
Sphere is based on the humanitarian imperative - that there is the right to give and receive humanitarian assistance wherever needed to prevent and alleviate suffering, protect life and ensure respect for all human beings without discrimination.

Sphere has not been adopted by all organisations. However most of the major organisations working in shelter do aim to adhere to it.

Standards, key actions, key indicators, and guidance notes

The “shelter” chapter in the Sphere handbook now contains 10 standards. Each standard has accompanying key actions, key indicators and guidance notes:

- Minimum standards are qualitative in nature and specify the minimum levels to be attained in humanitarian the provision of shelter.
- Key actions are necessary activities and inputs to be taken in order to meet the minimum standards.
- Key indicators are ‘signals’ that show whether a standard has



been attained.

- Guidance notes are points to consider when applying the minimum standards, key actions and key indicators in different situations.

In addition to the sector specific chapters, the Sphere handbook has core standards in:

- people-centred humanitarian response,
- coordination and collaboration,
- assessment,
- analysis and design,
- performance, transparency and learning,
- aid worker performance.

Shelter settlement and non-food items

Since the inception of sphere, shelter has been seen one of the core areas of humanitarian response. The first edition of the sphere handbook had a chapter on “Shelter and Site

Planning”. It contained six sections including one on household items.

In the second and third editions of the handbook, the shelter chapter was renamed the “shelter, settlement and non-food items” chapter. This chapter now contains five standards on shelter and settlement issues and five standards on non-food items and their distribution (see illustration of the chapter structure above).

2011 edition

The shelter chapter of the 2011 edition of the sphere handbook, recognises some developments in humanitarian shelter, including:

- The need to consider transitional and longer-term recovery/reconstruction issues during the initial or emergency response phase.
- Changes in interagency

coordination.

- The integration of risk and vulnerability reduction in shelter programmes.
- The “embedding” of cross-cutting issues in relation to individual responses.
- Access to non-food items or relief assistance is more than distribution. There is now greater emphasis on the use of cash, vouchers and access to local markets.

New in 2011

Much of the content of the 2004 edition has been revised, edited and updated to reflect evolving practice since 2004. Some of the text in the 2004 edition has been cut.

The sphere shelter chapter now contains a diagram outlining shelter and settlement options, as they relate to non-displaced and displaced populations.

Although in practical terms the shelter and non-food items needs may be the same for both populations after a disaster, the settlement options are very different and will in turn impact on the type of shelter assistance to be provided.

2011- changed standards

“Physical planning” has become “settlement planning” to reflect its focus on space planning issues rather than the strategic issues.

The former “design” standard has been merged within standards on “covered area” and “construction”.

A new “non-food items” standard has been introduced to provide an over arching standard on ensuring access to relief items, including the provision of cash and vouchers and access to local markets.

The non-food items standard on personal hygiene has been moved to the “water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion” chapter.

2011- key actions and key indicators

The use of key actions as well as a limited number of key indicators has enabled a review, revision

and reprioritisation of themes. A number of former key indicators have now been incorporated into the guidance notes.

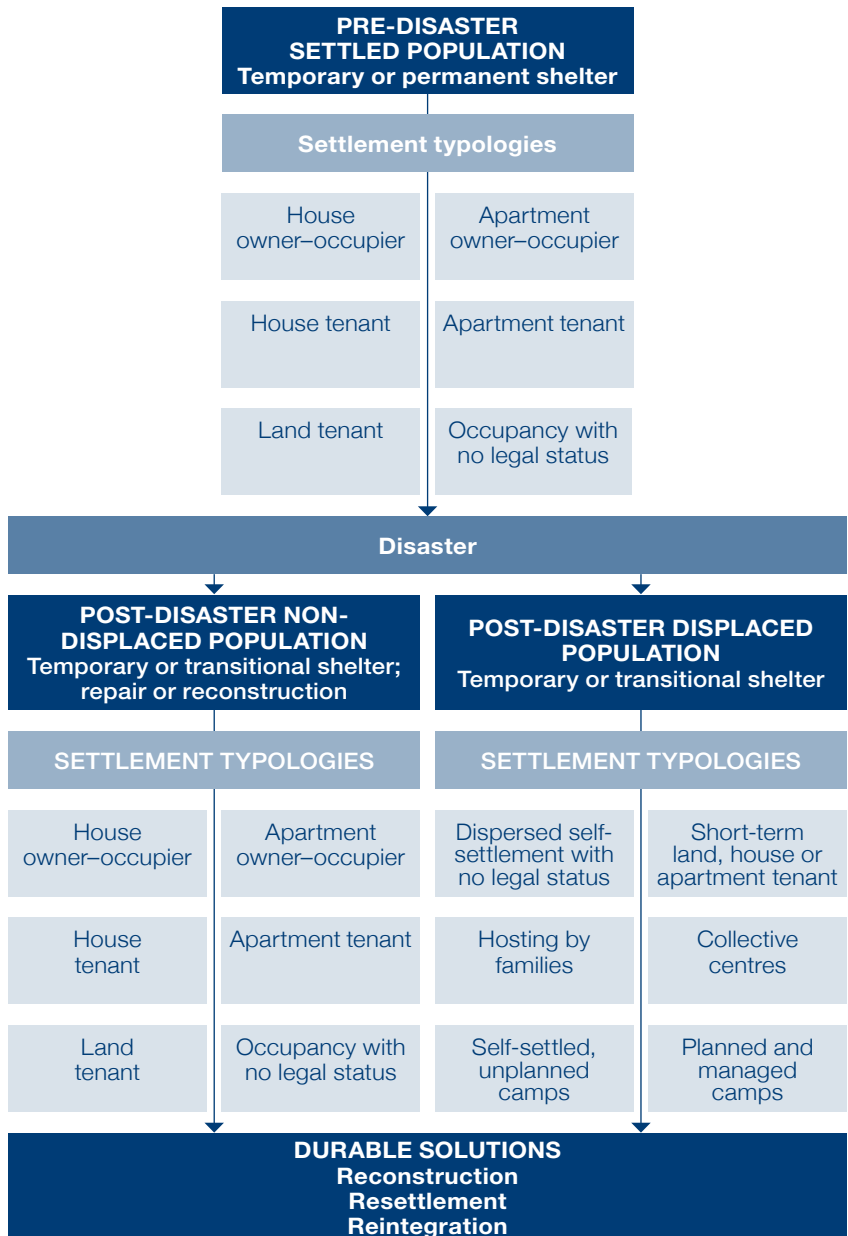
The thematic issues incorporated in the key actions and indicators reflect developments in both the sector and in overall humanitarian action. New content primarily consists of new or expanded guidance on cross-cutting issues.

In the 2004 edition, promotion of livelihoods was less of a priority, with the focus primarily on response

and not recovery/early recovery. In the 2011 edition, enabling early recovery is an explicit theme, with supporting guidance to match.

While Sphere is still primarily intended for the humanitarian response phase, the guidance given in the 2011 edition can inform preparation for and recovery from disaster. Without significantly affecting content, this orientation has influenced the language and guidance on use of the content.

Shelter and settlement options and response scenarios



The Sphere shelter, settlement and non-food items standards

Shelter and settlement standard 1: Strategic planning

Shelter and settlement strategies contribute to the security, safety, health and well-being of both displaced and non-displaced affected populations and promote recovery and reconstruction where possible.

Shelter and settlement standard 2: Settlement planning

The planning of return, host or temporary communal settlements enables the safe and secure use of accommodation and essential services by the affected population.

Shelter and settlement standard 3: Covered living space

People have sufficient covered living space providing thermal comfort, fresh air and protection from the climate ensuring their privacy, safety and health and enabling essential household and livelihood activities to be undertaken

Shelter and settlement standard 4: Construction

Local safe building practices, materials, expertise and capacities are used where appropriate, maximising the involvement of the affected population and local livelihood opportunities.

Shelter and settlement standard 5: Environmental impact

Shelter and settlement solutions and the material sourcing and construction techniques used minimise adverse impact on the local natural environment.

Non-food items standard 1: Individual, general household and shelter support items

The affected population has sufficient individual, general household and shelter support items to ensure their health, dignity, safety and well-being.

Non-food items standard 2: Clothing and bedding

The disaster-affected population has sufficient clothing, blankets and bedding to ensure their personal comfort, dignity, health and well-being.

Non-food items standard 3: Cooking and eating utensils

The disaster-affected population has access to culturally appropriate items for preparing and storing food, and for cooking, eating and drinking.

Non-food items standard 4: Stoves, fuel and lighting

The disaster-affected population has access to a safe, fuel-efficient stove and an accessible supply of fuel or domestic energy, or to communal cooking facilities. Each household also has access to appropriate means of providing sustainable artificial lighting to ensure personal safety.

Non-food items standard 5: Tools and fixings

The affected population, when responsible for the construction or maintenance of their shelter or for debris removal, has access to the necessary tools, fixings and complementary training.