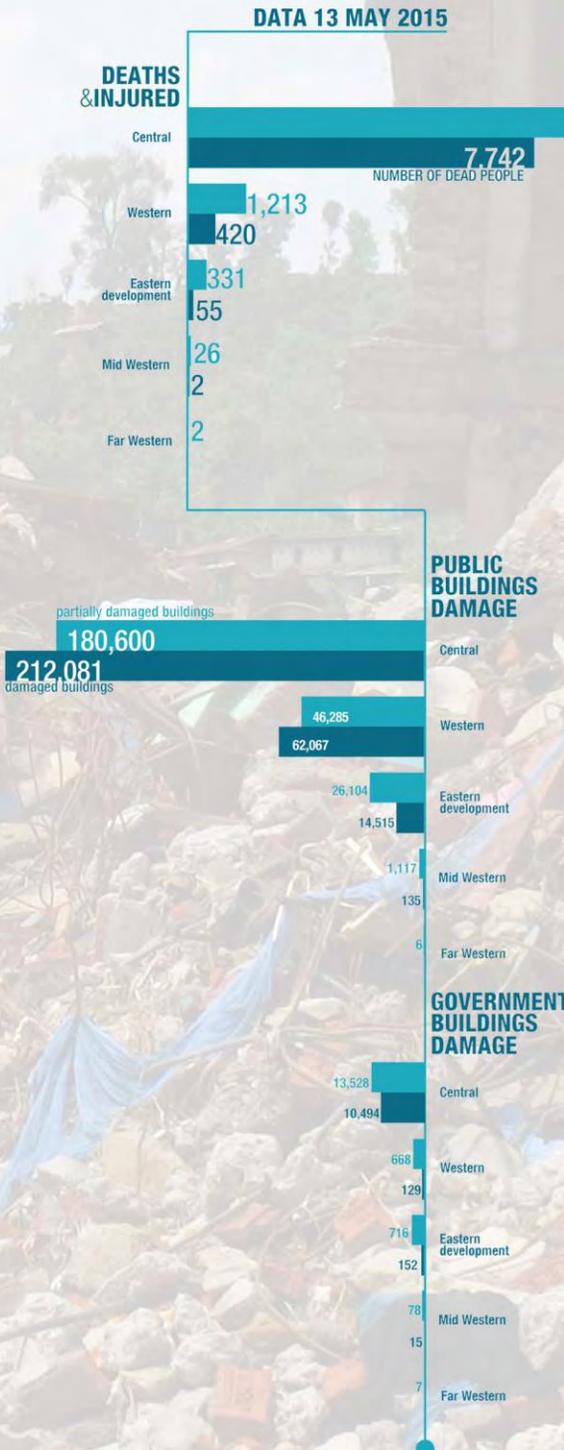


Preamble

This national policy document on transit shelter is a response to the earthquake of 25th April 2015. It has been prepared by the Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI) and presented to the Government of Nepal for its consideration. Whilst CNI will continue to do what it can to directly help the relief and reconstruction efforts, it is hoped that this policy document will be seen as a meaningful way of contributing to and sharing the burden of preparing policy, strategy, plans and assistance packages.

This document reflects the concerns, sensitivities and priorities of Nepal's corporate houses, businesses, civil society organizations and communities. Most importantly, it reflects the situation of Nepal and the needs of the Nepali people. It draws heavily from lessons learnt from international experience and data and information collected, collated and made available by the Government of Nepal and its partners. CNI acknowledges that the document has been put together quickly as a response to the urgency and need of the situation and therefore requests that it is seen as the start of the process and not the end. Responses from public and private sector stakeholders, in particular the government, are strongly encouraged to start a dialogue from which this policy document can grow.

The initiative to develop this policy was taken by the Infrastructure Cell within CNI. The Cell successfully prepared the first Infrastructure Summit in November 2014 and as a professional and impartial group continues to lead discussions on the development of infrastructure across Nepal. The terrible earthquake has caused immeasurable damage to infrastructure, particularly in the hilly and mountainous districts, and the discussion will quickly need to move from initial relief towards how the government, civil society groups and the private sector can help affected communities establish transit shelter to protect people from the monsoon. This document establishes important guidelines that should be observed and followed.



Data sources - Nepal Ministry of Home Affairs and Nepal Police on HDX



Principles

The approach to transit shelter and investment in it should be based on an understanding that new settlements would take two to three years to build. That is normal experience. Though temporary in nature, reasonably well built and “livable” transit shelter built most economically, help people to recover from shock, restart life, remain economically productive and socially engaged and break the dependency and victim mind-set that understandably develops. A reasonably livable transit shelter is an important first step to moving towards normalcy and thereby productive life. Equally important, transit shelter provides required time and space for decision-making, design, planning, participation and construction of good quality permanent houses and settlements. It helps to buy time both for the government and the disaster struck community to plan and implement better rehabilitation.

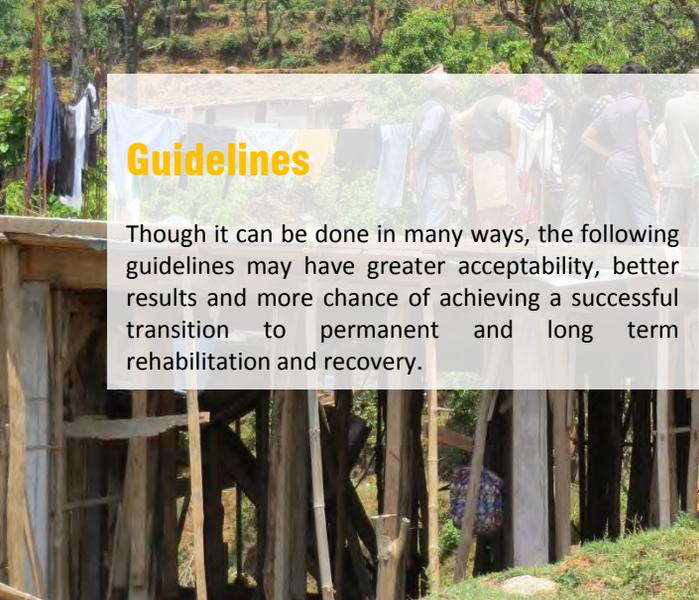
Experience shows that transit shelter built as a “transit colony” risk creating ghetto-isation. Typically, three or four families may be required to share a common shelter in the transit colony of large number of units. This disrupts the family life, makes

people dependent on the government or NGO dole. Most significantly, there is a risk that it can keep residents away from productive work, as they may be displaced from their livelihood. At worst, the colony becomes a gossip place rampant with the “blame game” and collective laziness perpetuates dependency. This should be avoided at all cost and for this reason relocation is generally not advisable. If relocation is absolutely necessary, then the community should be at the core of the decision making process and should be in a position to make an informed decision about the move.

When planning for transit shelter, it is important to understand that the function and form must allow inhabitants to:

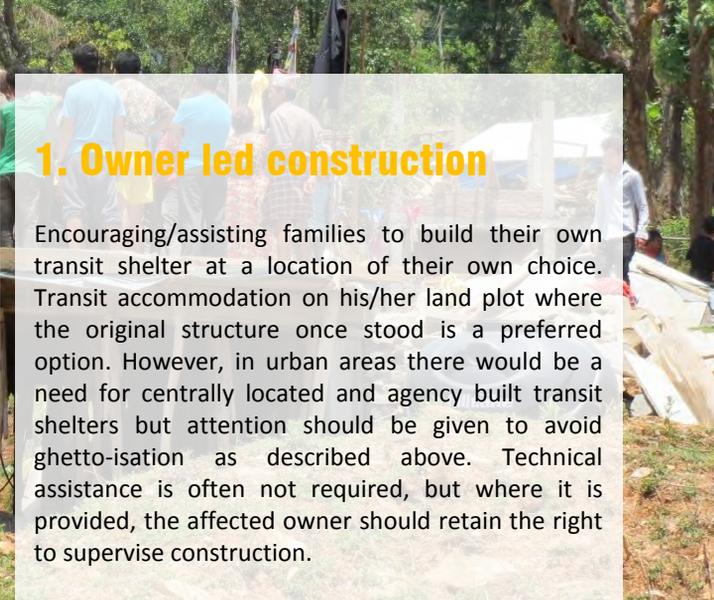
- live reasonably well;
- remain economically and socially productive;
- avoid dependency on aid materials and hand-outs;
- move beyond a “victim” mentality that perpetuates negative thinking such as “we have been ruined, we have been destroyed, we have been crippled”.





Guidelines

Though it can be done in many ways, the following guidelines may have greater acceptability, better results and more chance of achieving a successful transition to permanent and long term rehabilitation and recovery.



1. Owner led construction

Encouraging/assisting families to build their own transit shelter at a location of their own choice. Transit accommodation on his/her land plot where the original structure once stood is a preferred option. However, in urban areas there would be a need for centrally located and agency built transit shelters but attention should be given to avoid ghetto-isation as described above. Technical assistance is often not required, but where it is provided, the affected owner should retain the right to supervise construction.



2. Appropriate financial assistance from the government

Financial assistance should be provided in either cash or materials and should be graded and disbursed based on the assistance package decided by the government and based on the estimates of constructing a unit of 150 sq.ft made from salvage and reusable material. Expenditure on transit shelters would be seen as an additional cost if it were approached as a separate activity. Therefore transit shelter should be considered as the first phase of a two-phase house construction process. Disbursement of relief funds through community groups could help to centralize decision making a village level.



3. Productive use of debris

According priority to site clearance and removal of debris to facilitate construction of transit shelter preferably on an owner's land plot. Piled up and un-removed debris is a grim reminder of the tragedy/damage/ destruction and a psychological reminder of the event. Depending on type of building materials used in the old construction, debris can be put to productive use. The most efficient use is in reconstruction of buildings: stone and brick for walls, salvaged windows and doors for openings, etc. or it could be used for addition and extension to the core house built with the financial assistance. Other possible uses are: crushed hard stone to make stone crete- blocks; for stone masonry (with earthquake resistant features); for road; compound wall; community building, etc. Depending on anticipated use, arrangement could be made to store, remove or recycle debris. The use of contractors to remove debris quickly is encouraged.



4. Reusability of materials

Proper selection of materials for transit shelter is important, especially its dismantability, re-usability and functional and aesthetic integration in new construction at a later stage. The re-usability of materials is key to minimizing cost and wastage. Giving a major portion of assistance in the form of re-useable building materials such as corrugated tin sheets would allow materials used in the transit shelter to be reused in more permanent buildings.



5. Quality and functionality of transit shelter

The quality and live-ability of transit shelter is important as productivity losses could offset cost savings. Consideration should be given for quality, functionality and practicality of form and space. A reasonable area for transit shelter would be approximately 150 sq ft.

6. Tents

Use of good quality tents as transit shelter, where a large number of units are required should be seriously considered, even if they cost a little more. The reusability, constructability and flexibility of tents offsets the cost factor.



7. Provision of community and public services

Facilitating provision of required physical infrastructure and social services by the government or NGOs. Electricity, water, toilets (with proper sanitation), school, dispensary, etc, provided to meet the needs of the community. Toilets, for individual use or shared (between two families) should be established. Community toilets should be avoided because maintenance and misuse issues often arise.

Direct observations

This summary has also benefitted from direct observations made during a visit to Chaap Gaun village, in the Sangachok Village Development Committee in the District of Sindapulchok on Tuesday 12 May 2015.

The village was badly damaged during the earthquake. Approximately 60% of the homes were destroyed and seven members of the village were killed. At the time of the visit, a little over two weeks from the date of the first earthquake, local residents had already begun clearing debris, sorting materials that could be salvaged and in a few cases had even managed to construct rudimentary shelters from the reclaimed materials. These generally comprised a wooden frame with metal sheeting for the roof and walls. In one case the shelter was informally connected to the local electricity supply, drawn from a nearby hydropower plant. This shows the resourcefulness and the resilience of the community.

A general sentiment from members of the village, including men and women of all ages, was that they wanted to stay and rebuild their homes because they felt connected to the land for personal and social reasons. Most importantly, they wanted to stay because their livelihood was rooted in the arable land immediately surrounding the village.

The immediate need was for basic materials to establish transit shelter on the plots where the destroyed houses stood. The community expressed the need for CGI sheeting as a suitable material that would have long-term value. In general, members of the village favoured moving to more modern building materials and construction methods, and away from more traditional mud houses, in the longer term reconstruction because of the perceived risk of old houses. This will be more costly than using locally available materials.