

Shelter Reference Group (SRG)

Terms of Reference

V2 February 2013

Purpose

The purpose of the SRG is to bring together Australian based development and humanitarian actors engaged in shelter programming, to share lessons, encourage innovative practice, build collaborative partnerships, leverage resources, and advocate for the importance of shelter.

Complementing the above, the SRG, as agreed by its members in November 2012, is a:

- Community of Practice
- Knowledge sharing hub
- Vehicle for engaging with AusAID and influencing policy change
- Group to advocate & partner for resources and support

Goals

1. Advocate for the importance of sustainable and resilient shelter to the Australian government, development partners and to build support amongst the Australian public.
2. Use the collective resources of Australian NGOs, academia and the private sector to facilitate the delivery of innovative shelter practice in both humanitarian and development fields, through knowledge exchange and collaborative partnerships.

Thematic focus/linkages

As agreed during the SRG Strategic Visioning exercise in August 2012, SRG members highlighted the most significant 'drivers of change' in the shelter sector to be:

- Scarcity of land due to population growth, climate change and environmental degradation
- Impact of rising incidence and frequency of natural disasters on vulnerable settlements
- Lack of political will to address land tenure/shelter security issues

The SRG goals therefore, will likely be focused on the abovementioned drivers of change. These key themes will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Decision making structure*

A strength to date of the SRG has been its open, collaborative nature. As the SRG further develops with increased membership and additional projects, a structured decision making process is required to ensure fair representation and participation of SRG members.

Suggested decision making principles:

- Decision making process will remain collaborative and consensus based.
- For significant or strategic decisions, a quorum will be required to hold a vote, consisting of SRG member representation of 80% or more.
- In the event of differing points of view on a particular matter, each SRG member agency shall count for one vote. The viewpoint with the highest vote shall be taken. Alternative viewpoints shall be recorded.

- In the event of an equal vote, the convenor may choose to revisit the vote at a later date.

Membership applicability*

SRG encourages engagement by agencies with a focus on shelter programming internationally, either in a development or humanitarian context.

During engagement with ACFID and AusAID, official membership will be listed as non for profit entities. In these cases, academia and private sector agencies would be viewed as observers and/or advisers.

In the case of potential members joining the SRG, in line with the decision making structure above, current SRG members shall vote for, or against their membership. Voting shall be based on the following criterion.

The agency/entity:

- Is currently engaged in innovative, sustainable shelter programming
- Has the ability and interest to share lessons and recommendations
- Is committed to investing resources in the SRG where possible
- Can add value to the SRG through external partnerships, technical knowledge and/or resourcing

Role of members

Whilst the specific role of members will differ according to the context, there remain two general roles of SRG members, which include:

- To attend (face to face; teleconference) and participate in SRG meetings and events to the greatest extent possible.
- To contribute, where possible, the resources of their agency to SRG activities. Resources may include, technical expertise, general human resources, financial resources, existing contacts/partnerships or otherwise.

Specific roles (at the time of writing):

- *SRG convenor & note taker:* Habitat for Humanity Australia
- *Hosting entity for face to face meetings:* Arup

Further specific roles will be defined as the SRG is further developed.

Yearly Agenda of Activities

At the beginning of each year, the SRG will collectively prioritize a list of activities to be targeted, aligning with the SRG's purpose and goals. Member organisations may volunteer to co-ordinate particular activities.

For initial activities in 2013, the SRG member mapping exercise will be revisited and further discussed to identify and prioritise activities.

Meeting frequency

Meetings shall be held every two months, or as deemed necessary by SRG members.

*In the event of the SRG becoming an ACFID endorsed working group, this suggested process may require modification.