

Decongestion and spontaneous camps reorganization

Operationalization of the decongestion strategy I Guidance document

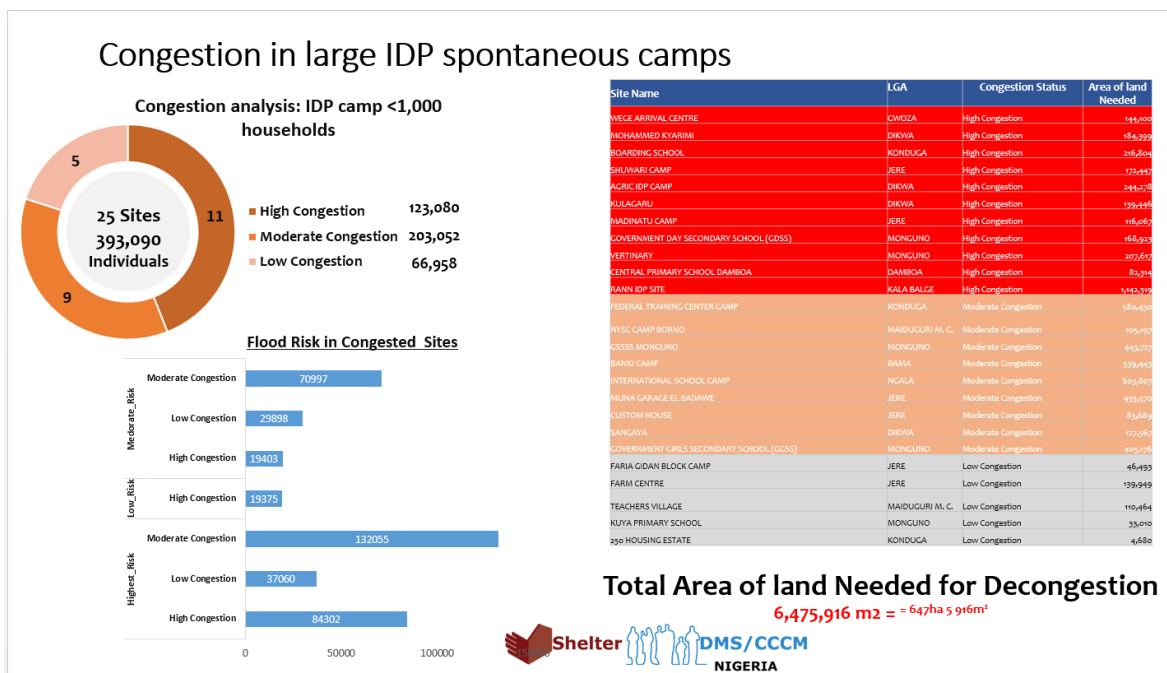
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I. Introduction

The present document outlines the overall guidance for the decongestion and rearrangement of spontaneous IDP sites presenting high levels of congestion, based on lessons learned from different case scenarios in North East Nigeria. The different scenarios are characterized by limited availability of both funding and suitable land; a very realistic scenario to lay the foundation for the reorganization of spontaneous settlements in Borno State.

The dry season (December to April) and the rainy season (May to September) in the North East of Nigeria represent high concerns. The limited space between shelters, as well as the highly flammable shelter materials used by displaced population, **makes the establishment of fire outbreak one of the key priorities to be addressed**. This high congestion on site also causes a high risk of flooding since the self-installation of makeshift shelters **prevents the natural drainage of water during the rainy season**, increasing risks of epidemics.

This guidance note is based on the Sectors’ Standard Operating Procedures for camp improvements as a complementary and operational guidance document ([available here](#)). It is structured around three scenarios, and details a variety of preparatory considerations to be carried out prior to developing a reorganization plan.



II. Current situation in NE Nigeria: Congestion in large IDP spontaneous settlements

This overall congestion analysis was developed through the lens of spontaneous camps hosting over 1,000 households in Northeast Nigeria. Out of all the 272 camps and camp-like settings, 34 camps hosting over 1,000 households were assessed with different levels of congestion (as of April 2018) while taking into consideration settlement dynamics in Nigeria, classified as:

- **Category 1:** High level of congestion (< 15m²/ind.) – 11 camps
- **Category 2:** Moderate level of congestion (15-20 m²/ind.) – 9 camps
- **Category 3:** Existing congestion but lower level (20-30 m²/ind.) – 5 camps
- **Uncongested:** > 30 m²/ind.

In total, 25 sites were assessed as congested under the three categories, hosting 393,000 individuals. The majority of sites are located in hard-to reach areas, where access to land and security dynamics remain important issues hampering the construction of new sites and where camps opened spontaneously. In order to ensure sustainable solutions – laying the foundation for local integration - and while taking into consideration sector standards, an estimated **6,475,916 m²** of land would be required to reorganize spontaneous camps through proper site planning. In other words, continuous efforts are to be made to seek alternative solutions using lessons learned from similar interventions with unsuitable land, a high level of congestion and associated risks, such as Muna Garage, Dikwa, Rann, Ngala, in Borno State etc.

III. Operationalizing the decongestion strategy

Developing a decongestion plan goes beyond the infrastructure planning to reorganize a site. Community engagement is key in order to ensure successful implementation, and that existing community ties are not affected by the changes.

a. Preparatory work

- **Infrastructure mapping**

Review and map existing infrastructures¹ and services (such as bore holes and sanitation facilities) within the site and map the boundaries of land belonging to the landlord in which the humanitarian intervention has been conducted (to define if there are additional potential land negotiations for an extension). Boundaries are often porous and undefined.

- **Community mapping²**

Undertake a community mapping of the settlement: how many communities and leaders are there? Where have they settled and how? What are the community dynamics?

¹ For instance: Infrastructure mapping Muna Garage, Bama General Hospital camp, among other examples.

² See examples of on the ground community mapping for Ngala, Bama and other examples.

It is fundamental to have strong camp management on site, a solid community engagement strategy and adopt a participatory approach.

- **Shelter, settlement and drainage assessment**

Identify the number of makeshift shelters in (i) acceptable shape and needing to be strengthened or reinforced³, and (ii) unacceptable shape and needing to be replaced.

Undertake a shelter assessment to define the most appropriate type of shelter: what are the local practices, which shelter type would fit to community settings, what materials can be used to upgrade the shelters?

Conduct a topographic assessment and/or in absence of topographic capacities, a Digital Elevation Model⁴ (DEM). Identify the weak spots where natural water flows are problematic, to understand total viable land available.

If the site is prone to flooding, conduct a technical drainage survey to identify areas where space will be needed and/or shelter dismantled to build the drainage.

- **Safety assessment**

Undertake a safety assessment⁵ to define risk areas where decongestion is. Involve relevant sectors such as WASH, Protection, FSS, GBV, CP and Health for the provision of additional services once the settlement is reorganized and that new facilities are captured in the final site plan.

- **Maintaining camp population**

Locate the registration of new arrivals away from the congested camp, such as at humanitarian reception centers if applicable, to avoid overcrowding and to direct populations to settle elsewhere in adequate site locations identified in coordination with the government.

b. Community engagement

Consult with the population through Focus Group Discussions involving group leaders, minority groups including vulnerable groups. The points of discussion would include:

- The risk of fire outbreak,
- Replacement of the shelters with sector standard models,
- Average size of shelters,
- Relocation of shelters to comply with the site plan, among other topics.

The FGD can also focus on areas highly congested in order to outline the disadvantage of congestion and how we plan to decongest the areas. For instance, it might be better to reduce the size of some space to allow for

³ Refer to the sector recommended reinforcement/upgrade kits for self-made shelters, available here:

https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/boq_shelter_reinforcement_kits_nigeria.pdf

⁴ Exemple DEM modelisation developed for the [contingency planning exercise](#).

⁵ For reference, site safety and site assessment tool in Nigeria are available on the [Sector Technical Guidance page](#).

some shelters to be upgraded, some shelters will need to be removed or relocated elsewhere to create fire outbreaks or roads, etc.

- Update the reorganization plan following the result of discussions with the community residing in the settlement.
- Establish and agree on modalities for cash-for-work or in-kind support scheme to engage the population in the re-organisation of the settlement.
- Build capacity of the community leaders on camp management, establish a camp management structure following the sectoral approach and ensure community participation and establish feedback and information management mechanisms.

c. Beneficiary selection

In coordination with the population leaders, identify the households to be relocated into new construction of shelters in other land, if applicable. Prioritization can be given to households with vulnerable members, makeshift shelters in bad condition, shelters found in at-risk locations and households willing to be relocated. Undertake registration of heads of households and family size, as well as extended households that may require more than 1 shelter to ensure proximity in the final allocation.

d. Developing a reorganization plan

The approach adopted for decongestion will depend on two main variables: i) land availability, and ii) funding and partner-response capacities. In many cases in NE Nigeria, land for expansion is very limited, and sometimes non-existent due to security restrictions. Additionally, the capacity for partners response can also vary, be it through the distribution of shelter kits, or the construction of emergency shelters.

Given the above, approaches can be summarized into the following three scenarios:

1. Limited available land with no resources for shelter intervention
2. Available land with limited resources
3. Land and resources are available

From the infrastructure mapping, identify the number of additional services needed to be factored into the site reorganization plan. To do so, develop a site plan for the settlement to establish which type of shelter could be used within the space limitations while respecting minimum standards. Factor in communal infrastructures and social facilities needed and their geographic distribution to account for acceptable walking distances. Once defined, the new site reorganization plan should be discussed with IDPs and various stakeholders.

For the purpose of facilitating site management, the site should be categorized into the following levels. A *cluster approach* will also serve as a basis for setting-up the addressing system in the camp.

- **Family Plot:** For emergency shelters, the family plot should be 8m x 8m (6m x 6m in limited sites). For improved emergency shelters, plot size should be at least 7m x 10m.

- **Cluster:** Group of 12-16 plots/shelters make up one cluster. The clusters should ideally allow for communal cooking spaces to ensure adequate distance between the fire and the shelter.
- **Block:** Group of 6-8 clusters form one block. Preferably place sanitation facilities at the centre of the block to give a sense of ownership and minimize GBV risks.
- **Zone :** When the camp is over 1,000 households, divide the site into smaller manageable zones, delineated by existing main roads.

Scenario A: Fire outbreak strategy - Limited available land with no additional resources.

The priority here will be the development of a road network to act as fire breaks within areas of highly congested makeshift shelters built with highly flammable materials. This scenario assumes that some land is available for relocation of shelters without additional material support.

Case study: Reorganization of the spontaneous settlement at Muna Garage El Badawe (SSID BO_S047, coordinates 11.87271, 13.25129) located on the outskirts of the metropolitan area of the city of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. [Action plan and SOP available here.](#)

Scenario B: Available land with limited resources

Allocation of emergency shelter plots to ensure organized settlement with emergency shelter kits on a small plot of land available. This scenario assumes limited funding available to support families with shelter materials, and that land is available for the relocation/reconstruction of makeshift shelters. The priority here is for both fire and flood mitigation.

Scenario C: Land and resources available

This scenario assumes that suitable land has been identified and partners are able to construct new shelters in order to decongest makeshift high-density areas within spontaneous camps, even if not all the land required. Please refer to camp set-up and site planning guidelines, as well as relocation guidance note.

Key considerations to operationalize the plan

- Phased re-arrangement of makeshift shelters by implementing a Cluster approach for smaller groups of shelters.
- As a follow-up of the focus group discussions with communities, piloting a first rearranged cluster allow to involve and sensitize populations regarding the benefit of the reorganisation. Lessons learned demonstrate that with good community engagement and practices, communities themselves continue to keep the same organisation module established on ground.
- The Site Planner provides demarcation of the clusters assigned to the area, for reference.
- Identification of communities and allocation of clusters: Allocation of clusters of shelters takes into consideration family relations, community dynamics and place of origin.
- Relocation of identified households to be followed by the removal of makeshift shelters in the space created.
- Emergency Shelter Kits can be provided to support the re-construction of the makeshift shelters for those requested to relocate due to the creation of fire breaks or construction of additional services.
- Technical support is provided to the households for the re-construction of shelter following the re-arrangement plan.
- In the case when IDPs cannot be supported with the construction of new shelters, the perimeter of the shelter clusters are demarcated on the land to be used by the IDPs to place their makeshift shelters.
- Coordination and communication with all sectors for continuous advocacy for provision of services.
- Continuous advocacy for the identification of new land, in order to avoid increasing the population of high density camps.
- Upgrade of Camp Management Structures following the new reorganization: camp committees, participation and feedback mechanisms, on-the-job training, Terms of Reference, SOP, etc. are to be put in place and/or reorganised to ensure access to services, community engagement and accountability mechanisms.
- Shelter addressing system following the reorganisation paired with registration.