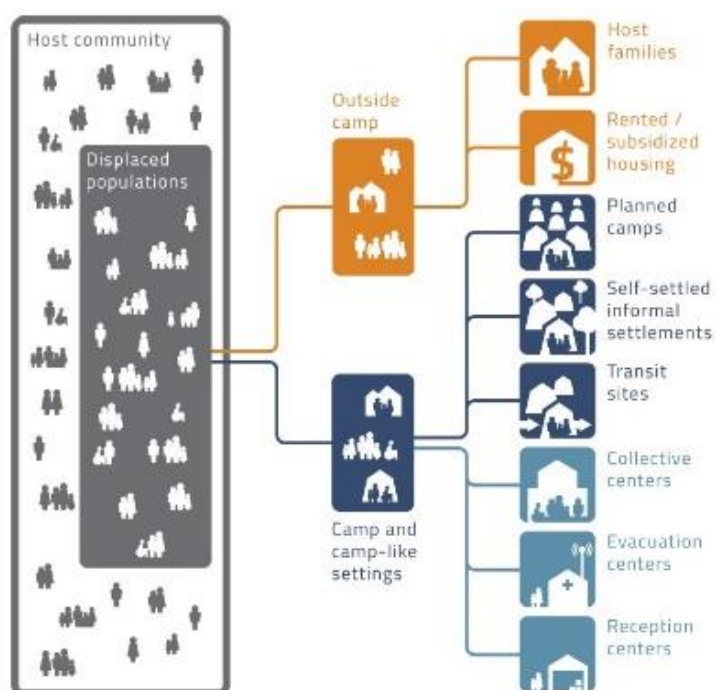# TECHNICAL GUIDANCE & STANDARDS

SITE TYPOLOGY

This section covers:

- Descriptions of temporary site types
- Guidance on developing definitions of types of site ('site typologies') for specific response contexts

BROAD TYPES OF COLLECTIVE DISPLACEMENT SITE

Displaced people settle and seek assistance and protection in many different locations: in urban and rural areas, with host families and in rented housing, and in a variety of different types of temporary site (referred to as **camp or camp-like settings** or **displacement sites**). Temporary sites take a variety of forms: they can be planned or spontaneous, and grouped or scattered, depending on the setting and other factors.

The following categorization of broad types of displacement site / camps and camp-like settings is used in the Camp Management Toolkit, the Minimum Standards for Camp Management, and the CCCM Cluster's Global CCCM Training Package.[1]

Planned camps	Planned camps can be in urban or rural locations. They are places where displaced populations live in purposely constructed sites and have a dedicated management team. Services in planned camps can include water supply, food distribution, non-food item distribution, education and healthcare, from humanitarian agencies or existing municipal infrastructure. These services are typically only for the people living on the site.
Self-settled sites	Displaced groups, often family or related groups, may self-settle in urban or rural sites on their own.. Self-settled sites are often situated on privately owned land. They are characterised by limited or no negotiations with the local population or private owners overuse or access.
Collective centres	Displaced people may find accommodation in public buildings and community facilities, e.g. schools, factories, barracks, community centres, town halls, gymnasiums, hotels, warehouses. Likely not constructed as accommodation, these are often used when displacement occurs in or to an urban setting for temporary or transit accommodation. Levels of assistance vary from full to differing levels of self-reliance, and collective centre management can play a strong role in coordinating services.
Reception and transit centres	Reception and transit centres may be needed at the start of an emergency as temporary accommodation before people are transferred to a suitable, safe, longer-term location, or at the end of an operation as a staging point of return. They are, therefore, usually either intermediate or short term and may also host returnees. Transit centres typically also provide more services to the population and only indirectly engage in community participation activities and decision-making.
Emergency evacuation centres	Emergency evacuation centres are set up to provide appropriate temporary shelter for persons fleeing a specific and immediate threat, such as natural hazards like cyclones, fires, and flooding. Schools, sports arenas, religious or civic buildings are often used. They should be prepared and planned for in advance of disaster events when possible and they need to ensure accessible shelter or keep

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[1] Camp Management Toolkit, 2015 *and* Minimum Standards for Camp Management, 2022

preparation for reasonable accommodation. Central authorities need to plan for the number of people per night, along with the estimated population flow.

Sphere Handbook terminologies: The Sphere Handbook's Shelter & Settlement section (2018) lists 'settlement scenarios' categorized by: *non-displaced people, displaced people in dispersed settings such as rental arrangements,* and *displaced people in communal settings*. The above types of temporary sites (camp and camp-like settings) fall into Sphere 'communal settlement' scenarios. The Sphere Handbook also lists characteristics of settlements, which are used as the basis of the Attributes Framework below.

DEFINING TYPES OF SITE

While broad types of camp and camp-like settings are listed above, the **exact definitions of types of site vary and are often context specific**. Further, **terms** used to refer to types of camps and camp-like settings can be sensitive and might **differ significantly between responses**.

The CCCM Cluster should work with relevant actors to *define types of displacement site* and to standardise the *terms used to describe them.* This is sometimes referred to as the **site typologies**.

Defining types of site – and standardising the terms used to refer to them – is important to:

- Establish a common understanding of important site attributes (characteristics)
- Ensure good communication through use of the same terminologies by different response actors
- Inform operational response planning, with response modalities often differing between types of site

Consulting relevant stakeholders

The aim of defining site typologies is to have a common understanding of types of site among different actors. It is therefore important to identify and **engage key stakeholders** in the process of agreeing site definitions, to input expertise and ensure agreement and buy-in. These might include:

- Government counterparts – taking into account existing government frameworks on displacement management and preferences on terminology
- CCCM actors
- IM & assessment actors – to align site definitions used in assessments and operational response
- Other coordination actors, especially the Shelter Cluster, Protection Cluster, inter-agency coordination / OCHA, depending on the response and specifics of the sites

Bear in mind local terminologies & translations: make sure that the translations of site typologies are appropriate in local languages, as well as aligned with existing terminologies. For example, following the earthquake in Turkiye in 2023 many displaced families were being hosted in self-settled sites. To support the humanitarian response, the TSS Sector (CCCM Cluster equivalent) worked to define the types of displacement site and used different terminologies for these sites in English and Turkish. In English, the sites were termed "informal settlements" - as this is a commonly understood definition among international humanitarian actors. However, the direct translation of this into Turkish means 'slum', so a different Turkish term was used. This ensured the same understanding about these types of site (temporary in nature, and hosting IDP families) among international and national humanitarian actors and the government.

DEFINING ATTRIBUTES OF SITES

If you are working to establish definitions of types of sites, it can be useful to start by defining **key attributes (characteristics)** of types of site in the context you are working in. These can be used to define what is or is not a displacement site, and to identify important differences and similarities between sites.

Some attributes will form the basis of a definition of a type of site, and some might vary within a type of site.

Below is an attributes framework that can be adapted to your context. You can use it to help describe the characteristics of different types of site. An individual site can be of only one type (e.g. 'collective centre' or 'formal camp') but some attributes might be the same across different types of site, or differ within sites (e.g. 'collective centres' might have different shelter types e.g. municipal building or religious building).

> **KEY TOOLKIT GUIDANCE**
>
> See the country examples in the Related Resources below for examples of site typologies from different contexts, and the ways attributes (characteristics) have been selected to support site definitions.

If useful for operational response, you can choose to list attributes for individual sites – see example below.

One of the most important characteristics is often the population threshold - agreeing the minimum number of displaced families living together collectively for a location to considered a displacement site.

Sample Attributes framework, to be adapted to context[2] Categories can be mandatory or optional as relevant.

Attribute Categories	Recommended Attributes	Definition
DEFINING WHETHER A LOCATION IS OR IS NOT A DISPLACEMENT SITE		
Household Density	Collective, Dispersed/Scattered	- Collective: displaced population is residing in a space where assistance and protection can be delivered collectively e.g. camps, collective centres. In some contexts a household threshold should be developed to determine whether families living in the same location are considered to living 'collectively'. The threshold usually depends on number, scale, and situation in sites[3]. - Dispersed: does **not** meet the previous collective description: displaced population is scattered in an area and not residing collectively i.e. are not living in a displacement site
DEFINING ATTRIBUTES OF DISPLACEMENT SITES		
Type of displaced population	IDPs, IDP returnees, other as relevant (e.g. refugees, migrants)[4]	**Population types should be defined as relevant to the context** - If only one population type is residing at the location, or the vast majority is of one type, record this as the site population type - In some contexts there can be Mixed situations when there is a combination of the population types in one site. E.g. if some refugee households are displaced into an IDP site, and it is agreed in the context they should be recorded, note each population type and record that the population is Mixed
Geographic Context	Urban, Peri-urban, Rural	Peri-urban - An area between consolidated urban and rural regions i.e. areas immediately surrounding cities or large urban areas, with mixed urban and rural characteristics
(Legal) Status of the site	E.g. Informal, Formal	Looks at the settlement from two/three perspectives; site planning/creation purpose, legal designation of the land development and contractual relationship/security of tenure (HLP)

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[2] The framework is based on the Sphere Handbook's settlement scenarios and characteristics, which also includes non-collective (i.e. individual household) shelter arrangements. See *Sphere Handbook, 2018 – Chapter on Shelter and Settlement, Appendix 3 Additional Characteristics of Settlement Scenarios*

[3] Examples include the Iraq response (threshold 5 HH), Turkiye 2023 earthquake response (threshold 20 HH)

[4] Sites hosting refugees do not fall under the coordination responsibilities of the CCCM Cluster and need not be included in a Cluster-led exercise. For sites with mixed populations including IDPs, and for IDP returnees, refer to the coordination arrangements of the specific response as to CCCM Cluster responsibilities.

		Whether sites are considered to be formal or informal is context-specific. Category should be used if relevant to the context. For example, planned camps might be 'formal' as they are designated by government authorities, and spontaneously-settled sites 'informal'.
Land ownership	E.g. private, state/public, communal, collective, open access, disputed, etc.	List to be defined based on land ownership types specific to the context
Duration	Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term	These definitions can vary by context and should therefore be defined at response level, and this category used if it is relevant to the context. An example definition for duration could be: - Short-term: 3 months or less (emergency situations) - Medium term: more than 3 months but less than 12 months - Long term: more than 12 months
Site Purpose	Transit, Reception, Evacuation, Accommodation	- Transit: used as temporary shelter (1-5 days) for new displaced population arrivals pending transfer to a more suitable, safe and longer-term settlement option. - Evacuation: pre-designated site to accommodate a displaced or soon to be displaced population during the onset of a disaster. - Reception: a structure to accommodate displaced persons pending a decision on a permanent solution. - Accommodation refers to any other situation not covered above.
Shelter type	e.g. tents, makeshift shelter, transitional shelter, public building, religious building, unfinished building, etc.	List of types of shelter should be defined at response level, depending on the existing shelter types. In some responses, you might want to split this into more than one category, and ensure that multiple shelter types can be recorded for one site.
Site management	Managed, self-managed, no management, remote or mobile management	Managed: no objection from landowner, endorsed by authorities Self-management: community leadership structure or committees
...add categories if needed		

Example of using an attributes framework for individual sites (optional use, if helpful for your context)

Site ID	Site Name	Site Type	Population Type	Density	Location	Legal status	Duration	Purpose	# IDPs (HH)	# IDP returnees (HH)
ID_2342	Roadside camp A	Informal site	IDPs	Collective	Rural	Informal	Medium-term	Accommodation	60	
ID_2343	Camp B	Planned camp	IDPs	Collective	Urban	Formal	Short-term	Reception	100	
ID_2345	Primary School C	Collective centre	Mixed	Collective	Urban	Formal	Short-term	Evacuation	50	10
ID_2346	Camp D	Planned camp	IDP	Collective	Rural	Formal	Long-term	Accommodation	1,100	

CHANGING DEFINITIONS OVER TIME

Attributes of displacement sites can change over time. From, for example, a situation of new displacement when sites are first settled and emergency assistance is provided, to sometimes years later when site infrastructure and services access may have significantly improved and durable solutions for families such as site integration are being sought. Site typologies and definitions might therefore need to be updated as changes occur.

SOMALIA – WHEN IS AN IDP SITE NO LONGER AN IDP SITE? *UPDATE TO IDP SITE DEFINITIONS & RECLASSIFICATION OF SITES*

Why? In 2017, the Somalia CCCM Cluster agreed site type definitions for IDP displacement sites. However, by 2021 the displacement context had changed, featuring continued new displacement alongside protracted displacement and some local integration. Actors were requesting clarity on IDP site definitions, particularly in urban locations where poor host community families and IDPs were co-located, and to have a clearer understanding of the characteristics of IDP sites that required humanitarian services, and the

characteristics of sites where integration in local settlements was feasible or underway and more suitable for durable solutions activities.

How? The CCCM Cluster in Somalia engaged with government authorities at federal and state level, who then ultimately led on the process. The Cluster conducted initial bilateral meetings with other clusters, humanitarian agencies, durable solutions actors, and government authorities. These fed into a national-level workshop in 2021, to discuss what different stakeholders understood to be an IDP site and to start to draw out consensus. Based on the Workshop outcomes, and significantly differing opinions, consultations were held at state level to develop guidance by state, with the agreement of state authorities.

Follow-up A second federal-level workshop was held in 2022, with state and federal stakeholders, to review the state-level guidance. The outcomes were: agreement that a registry of IDP sites would be established, held by local authorities; agreement on criteria to determine when a location should no longer be considered an IDP site and should be removed from the registry; agreement that durable solutions and development actors should take ownership of activities in these locations.

Outcome A federal policy brief was then developed under the leadership of the Somalia Disaster Management Authority, formalizing guidance on IDP site definitions as government policy. Under this guidance, states can choose to either use the federal guidance or adapt it to uphold their own guidance that was developed earlier. This federal policy provides guidance for humanitarian service providers and durable solutions and development actors, on what sites are suitable for different initiatives and support.

See Related Resources below for *IDP Site Definition Guideline, Somali Disaster Management Agency, 2023*

IM AND SITE TYPES

Using common definitions of site typologies is essential for coherence between assessments, IM, and operational work. You may therefore need to engage not only the CCCM Cluster IM team, but also IM and assessment actors such as REACH and IOM-DTM and the inter-cluster IM team in:

- The process of establishing site typologies, and/or
- Integrating the definitions once agreed into assessment methodologies and databases.

If population thresholds are used to define what is or is not considered a displacement site, or as a definition between types of site, it is particularly important to ensure that the same population thresholds are used by all IM / data collection actors.

The definitions of types of sites should be reflected in site masterlists produced by the CCCM Cluster (see Toolkit Section 2. Information Management). When developing site masterlists , a unique ID must be assigned to each individual site, as sites can have multiple names, or names spelt differently. Ideally, these unique IDs should be used by all actors, especially IM actors, in the response. However, if it is unavoidable that other IM actors have their own lists of sites with their own unique identifiers, then a reconciliation method must be agreed upon.

Common Operational Datasets (COD) are usually provided by the inter-cluster IM team / OCHA, referring to administrative areas by codes as well as names. Site masterlists should be integrated into the COD as relevant, or at least be inter-operable with them.

Related Resources

Title	Type	Language	Date
Example – Technical Guidance on Informal Site Definitions, Iraq CCCM Cluster	Example	English	2020
Example – IDP Hosting Site Typologies, Yemen CCCM Cluster	Example	English	2021
Example – Site Terminology and Definitions, Ukraine CCCM Cluster	Example	English	2022

| Example – IDP Site Definition Guideline, Somali Disaster Management Agency | Example | English | 2023 |

References & further reading

- [Minimum Standards for Camp Management](#), 2021
- [Camp Management Toolkit](#), 2015
- [Sphere Handbook, 2018](#) – Chapter on Shelter and Settlement, Appendix 2 Description of Settlement Scenarios
- [Sphere Handbook, 2018](#) – Chapter on Shelter and Settlement, Appendix 3 Additional Characteristics of Settlement Scenarios
- [IOM Emergency Handbook, DTM Toolkit Guide - DTM for CCCM](#), January 2020
- [IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix Field Companion, Correspondence between Settlement Types used in Country & Global Settlement Types](#), 2018

CCCM Case Studies

- [CCCM Case Studies 2021-22](#) Chapter A.1 Somalia – building consensus on site-specific definitions