

EMERGENCY COMMUNAL RELOCATION CENTER (ECRC) OPERATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES



Cox's Bazar, BANGLADESH

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I. Introduction

This document outlines the operational and management guidelines for Emergency Communal Relocation Centers (ECRCs) in the context of the Rohingya refugee response in Bangladesh during cyclone emergencies. Given the country's geographical vulnerability to severe weather events, particularly in coastal areas such as Cox's Bazar, the establishment of ECRCs is crucial for safeguarding the lives and well-being of Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVIs) and other affected populations. The primary goal is to ensure the safety, dignity, and well-being of Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVIs) and affected Rohingya refugees.

This guideline is designed to facilitate a coordinated and systematic approach to the overall management of ECRCs, ensuring that all actions align with humanitarian principles and best practices. The guideline details the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders, including governmental bodies, humanitarian organizations, and community actors, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and communication in managing the ECRC facilities identified to be used for temporary relocation during emergencies.

The ECRC serves as a critical resource for providing temporary shelter, safety, and essential services to displaced individuals during cyclone events. By prioritizing the persons with special needs (PSN), classified as Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVIs), this guideline aims to enhance the efficacy and responsiveness of the emergency relocation process.

ECRCs operate within the existing camp governance structure. Their management follows Shelter-CCCM Sector principles, ensuring coordinated multi-sector service delivery, community engagement, and accountability rather than functioning as standalone service sites.

In light of the increasing frequency and intensity of cyclones exacerbated by climate change, it is imperative that all personnel involved in the management of ECRCs familiarize themselves with this guideline. This will ensure a well-prepared, timely, and effective response to cyclonic threats, ultimately contributing to the protection and resilience of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

II. Scope and Coverage

1. The guideline covers all activities related to the management of ECRCs in the camps, particularly from the selection, functionality, to the roles and responsibilities of key agency/sector on its overall operation. The guideline aims to: (1) clarify mandates; (2) guide on resource allocation; (3) provide for designation of responsible offices/persons.
2. The guidelines will guide RRRC, camp managers, CiCs, sectors, AORs, volunteers, NGOs, and international organizations.
3. Where specifically stated, this guideline will govern both localized and major disasters.
4. Within this framework, SCCCM Site Management Support (SMS) agencies are responsible for supporting Camp Authorities and the DMC by coordinating daily ECRC operations, including population tracking, community engagement, and service mapping.

III. Definition of Terms

1. **Relocation Center** - any site or center hosting evacuees/relocatee which include but not limited to, schools/learning centers, covered community halls, camping areas, collective centers, abandoned houses/buildings, multi-purpose centers.
2. **Relocation Center Coordination**- synchronizing the roles and responsibilities in the overall humanitarian response, including ensuring adherence to agreed Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)¹ standards and operational guidelines.
3. **Evacuees/Relocatee**- refers to Rohingya refugees and, where applicable, affected members of the surrounding host community, who are temporarily relocated from their shelters or usual place of stay within the camp settlement to designated Emergency Communal Relocation Centers (ECRCs) due to imminent or ongoing hazards such as cyclones, landslides, floods, fires, or other life-threatening emergencies.
4. **Emergency Communal Relocation Center Management**- a mechanism through which relief assistance and other humanitarian initiatives can be coordinated to ensure efficient delivery of services to the affected population. Likewise, this includes systems and procedures installed from planning, organizing, conducting and assessing.
5. **Non-Food Items (NFIs)**-are relief goods such as blankets, mats, mosquito nets, water containers/jugs kitchen wares, hygiene kits, etc. provided to disaster victims.
6. **Resource mapping** - is an inventory of available resources that are essential in the management of emergency relocation centers.
7. **Stockpile** - is a prepositioned supply of food and non-food items intended for distribution to the evacuees/relocatees.

IV. Legal Bases

The ECRC management guideline is based on the authority and responsibility of the government to safeguard the lives and well-being of affected populations, particularly Rohingya refugees, during natural disasters and emergencies. This includes the overarching mandate of the RRRC (Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner) office to protect vulnerable individuals and communities.

The guideline also makes reference to the need to align with relevant laws, policies, and standards, including humanitarian principles and best practices for emergency response and displacement management. This likely includes references to national disaster management frameworks, international human rights and refugee protection laws, and guidelines from bodies like the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

Specific legal bases mentioned include provisions for the government to designate sites and facilities as emergency relocation centers, the authority to organize and manage the Evacuation/relocation and

¹ IASC is an inter-agency forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners.

care of affected populations, and the responsibility to ensure the delivery of essential services and protection.

Overall, the legal foundation establishes the government's duty to prepare for, respond to, and support the safe relocation and care of vulnerable populations during crises, with the ECRC guidelines providing the operational framework to fulfill this mandate in the context of the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh.

V. Objectives

General Objective:

To establish guidelines to be used by CiCs and/or camp managers in managing the relocation centers and identifying areas of coordination, collaboration and cooperation among other stakeholders so to ensure the delivery of essential services to the victims of disasters and calamities. It would also define roles, functions, duties and responsibilities and lines of coordination for task implementation.

Specific Objectives:

1. To ensure the availability of established safe emergency relocation centers as temporary refuge for individuals and families potentially at-risk during emergencies and disasters.
2. To ensure that the immediate needs such as but not limited to food, clothing, domestic items, hygiene materials, other essential non-food items, and health services of all refugees relocated in the emergency relocation centers are available and accessible.
3. To ensure that strategies on the prolonged use of ECRC facilities due to post emergency circumstances are considered.
4. To ensure that ECRCs remain strictly temporary life-saving facilities and do not evolve into prolonged settlement arrangements, with early planning for safe return or alternative shelter solutions; and,
5. To define lines of inter and intra operability among Emergency Relocation Center Management and responding agencies at all levels of government including but not limited to local and/or international agencies/organizations/foreign governments, etc.

VI. Statement of General Policies

1. The safety and wellbeing of the affected population, including their livestock and domestic animals by natural or human induced disasters, is the primary concern of the RRRC office. Whenever necessary, the families and communities residing in hazard- prone areas shall be relocated to designated safe areas when their lives are at risk of impending danger or prevailing hazards occur.
2. Gender sensitivity is paramount and will be observed/practiced in all emergencies communal relocation centers including separate facilities for males and for females.
3. All ECRC operations must apply protection mainstreaming principles, ensuring safety, dignity, meaningful access, non-discrimination, and accountability to affected populations (AAP).
4. The management of an emergency communal relocation center is the primary responsibility of the affected local government units or by local government units hosting the displaced families ensuring that these centers are managed and operated following the standards set in this policy. In the event of a displacement beyond the capacity of a local government unit, i.e., where the number of displaced people exceeds the population expected to be accommodated in the pre-identified and equipped Evacuation/relocation centers, the national government shall provide augmentation support including management of Evacuation/relocation centers, additional shelters, provision of

- health assistance, distribution of food and non-food items and others.
5. All schools/learning centers, communal halls, stadiums, multi-purpose centers, mosques and other open spaces can be identified and used as sites for setting up Evacuation/relocation centers.
 6. Alternative temporary shelters shall be established or explored for the evacuees or displaced population. In the event the evacuees/relocatees are already housed in schools, they shall be transferred to alternative shelters such as tents, and other temporary shelters.

VII. Facilities identified as ECRC in Camps

VII.A Key Considerations in selecting ECRC facilities for temporary relocation in the camp settlement

ECRCs are pre-selected using standardized assessment and mapping, based on the following criteria:

1. Proximity to camp populations.
2. Accessibility via safe routes.
3. Siting away from primary or secondary hazards.
4. Structural soundness and compliance with Shelter–Camp Coordination and Camp Management (SCCCM) standards.
5. Availability of adequate WASH facilities.
6. Emergency back-up energy/power provision.
7. Dedicated spaces for EVIs/PSNs (e.g., lactating mothers, children, elderly, persons with disabilities).
8. Minimal disruption to lifesaving services, schools, and cultural/social practices.

The list, map and safe routes of designated ECRCs for each camp/block/sub-block can be found in Annex xxx.

VII.A.1 ECRC Current Occupancy Capacities based on Identified Facilities

According to the **December 2025 UNHCR population data**:

- The total refugee population is **1,143,464 individuals**.
- The total calculated ECRC capacity is **1,024,131 individuals** (based on 0.28 m² per person and 80% usable floor area). (Annex 5)
- This provides **90% coverage of the population at camp level**, confirming that sufficient space exists to accommodate the population during emergency relocations.
- However, **block-level gaps remain**, particularly within the **100-meter and 200-meter radius** of designated ECRCs. These gaps are illustrated in the attached camp/block-level maps. (Annex 6)

VII. B Minimum Requirements for Facilities identified as ECRCs

1. Shelter and Accommodation

- According to the standard of Bangladesh Government occupancy per person in the cyclone shelter 0.28 m², each person will get the minimum 0.28m² space for their accommodation during the crisis, which will be applied only to very short-term life-saving cyclone sheltering. If relocation exceeds 24 hours, site management actors should

coordinate decongestion measures and prioritize EVIs/PSNs for safer and less crowded arrangements wherever possible.

- ECRCs must establish safe entry and exit routes, internal movement pathways, fire safety spacing around cooking areas, and adequate night lighting in common areas to reduce congestion, fire, and protection risks.

2. Camp Management desk or office

- A designated office or desk will be established in each Evacuation/relocation center to facilitate communication and management.
- Each office/desk will be clearly marked for visibility to ensure evacuees/relocatees can easily locate it.

3. Toilets, Bathing, and other WASH related facilities

- Facilities identified as ECRCs must have adequate toilets (1 toilet for every 50 persons) and bathing facilities that should be well lit, properly locked, and adequately ventilated to ensure privacy and hygiene.
- As an alternative option, communal toilets and bathing facilities near the ECRC can be considered especially for short-term pre-emptive relocation (within 24-72 hours).
- ECRCs must also have handwashing facilities (with soap) either inside or within the premises.
- Garbage bins must also be available in the ECRC.
- For ECRCs to be used for long-term displacements (lasting more than three days), provision of additional WASH facilities within the ECRC should be explored with the following considerations:
 - Separate facilities for men and women, with careful attention to children's needs in communal latrines.
 - Toilets must be regularly cleaned and maintained.
 - A ratio of approximately 4 female toilets for every 3 male toilets is recommended.
 - At least 1 in 10 toilets should be accessible for individuals with disabilities.

4. Community Kitchen

- A community kitchen should provide hot meals or ready-to-eat food for people relocated to ECRCs.
- It should provide to meet the basic nutritional needs of affected groups and serve as a storage area for limited food supplies prepositioned before emergencies.
- The kitchen must be strategically located to ensure timely food delivery to evacuees/relocatees.

5. Information Board

- An information board will be set up in each Evacuation/relocation center to provide essential updates and information relevant to the evacuees/relocatees.

6. Storage Area

- A secure storage area will be designated for relief goods, ensuring protection from rodents and insects.
- In facilities where storage area is limited, catchment containers use by relevant sectors in providing Essential household items where all emergency contingency stocks are prepositioned can be considered. However, a separate inventory allocated for people relocated in ECRCs can be considered.

7. Laundry Spaces

- Designated laundry areas will be made available:
 - 1 hand basin per 10 persons.
 - 1 wash bench per 30 persons.
 - Sufficient space to accommodate 20 persons at once.
 - Connected to drainage and water supply, with roofing and lighting.

8. Water Supply

- Ensure the provision of 15 liters of water per person per day.
- Limit access to 50 persons per functioning water tap.

9. Health Facilities

- ECRC facilities should have an overall health facility mapping with health service functionality identified that can be used as reference in referring persons temporarily shelter in ECRC who require immediate medical needs.
- Health services should be accessible within 100 meters of public health facilities; otherwise, health stations should operate daily for the first two weeks of emergencies.

10. Breastfeeding Station

- ECRC facilities must have a breastfeeding station/area to ensure the privacy is given to lactating mothers being relocated in ECRC.

11. Provision for Livestock and Domestic Animals

- Space for livestock and domestic animals should be identified and provided in Evacuation/relocation centers.
- Facilities and food for these animals must be managed during emergencies, ensuring their care and safety with assistance from the Department of Agriculture and other stakeholders.

VII.C Minimum Services to be Provided in ECRCs

A. Food

The ECRC must ensure the provision of adequate food supplies to meet the nutritional needs of all evacuees/relocatees. This includes organizing regular food distributions that provide balanced rations, including staples such as rice, lentils, and cooking oil. Establishing community kitchens is essential for preparing hot meals and ready-to-eat foods, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly. Coordination with local organizations and humanitarian agencies is crucial to maintaining a steady supply of food, fostering stability and security within the camp.

B. Nutrition

Nutrition services are a critical requirement in the ECRC to promote the health and well-being of displaced individuals, especially for children and pregnant or breastfeeding women. The center should implement targeted nutrition programs that include supplementary feeding and micronutrient supplementation to combat malnutrition. Educational sessions on balanced diets must be conducted, and regular screenings should be carried out to identify malnourished individuals. By prioritizing

nutrition, the ECRC will help address immediate dietary deficiencies and support long-term health among the refugee population.

C. Protection

The ECRC must establish comprehensive protection services to safeguard the rights and dignity of all individuals within the camp. This includes providing legal support, psychosocial assistance, and advocacy against discrimination and violence. Community-based protection mechanisms should be created to encourage reporting and response to incidents of abuse or exploitation. Trained staff will work closely with families and community leaders to raise awareness about rights and available resources, fostering a protective environment that empowers refugees and enhances their resilience.

D. Child Protection

Child protection is a vital requirement for the ECRC, where children are particularly vulnerable. The center should establish dedicated Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) to provide a safe environment for children to play, learn, and receive psychosocial support. These spaces will facilitate activities that promote emotional well-being and mitigate the impact of trauma. Additionally, trained personnel must work to identify at-risk children, ensuring they receive necessary interventions, such as educational support and health services. The goal is to protect children from harm and provide them with opportunities for growth and development in a nurturing environment.

E. Gender-Based Violence

Addressing gender-based violence (GBV) is essential within the ECRC framework. The center should implement comprehensive GBV prevention and response strategies, including awareness campaigns to educate the community about rights and available support services. Confidential reporting mechanisms must be established to encourage survivors to seek help without fear of stigma. Trained responders should be available to provide medical, psychological, and legal assistance to GBV survivors. By creating a safe space for women and girls, the ECRC can empower them to reclaim their autonomy and foster a culture of respect and support.

For more details – please see Inter-Sector Business Continuity Plan (BCP) in the annex 7.

VIII. Roles and Responsibilities in Managing Facilities Identified as ECRC in camps

VIII. A Camp level Disaster Management Committees

The Disaster Management Committees (DMC) in each of the camps shall serve as Emergency Communal Relocation Center (ECRC) Management Committee to ensure effective oversight and management of the ECRC in the camps and make sure to support the establishment of temporary, inclusive community representation groups inside activated ECRCs (including women, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and youth) to strengthen communication, conflict mitigation, and identification of vulnerable individuals.

Functions of Camp level DMC in ECRC Management

1. **Strategic Oversight:** Develop and ensure proper management of the facilities identified as ECRC within the respective camps and in alignment with this guideline.

2. **Selection of Facilities to be used as ECRC:** Mapping and periodic updating of ECRCs in their respective camps in accordance with the criteria set in this guideline.
3. **ECRC Coordination:** Irrespective of the sector-lead agency managing the facility identified as ECRC, all matters related to the ECRC operations shall be coordinated through the DMC to ensure harmonized mapping and proper utilization of resources.
4. **Resource Management:** Oversee the allocation and utilization of resources, including funding, supplies, and personnel, to ensure alignment with the minimum requirements and basic services to be provided in the ECRC as stipulated in this guideline.
5. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish monitoring mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of the ECRC operations, implement feedback loops, and make necessary adjustments.
6. **Policy Development:** Formulate policies and procedures for the management of the ECRC, ensuring compliance with national and international standards.
7. **Community Engagement:** Promote active participation of affected communities in decision-making processes, ensuring their voices are heard and needs are met.
8. **ECRC functionality in Emergency Response Planning:** Prepare and update contingency plans for various emergency scenarios, ensuring readiness and swift action when needed. *(for a detailed function, please refer to the Multi-Hazard Emergency (Lifesaving) Relocation Protocol for the Rohingya Refugee Response in Bangladesh.*
9. **Reporting and Accountability:** Ensure transparent reporting of activities, challenges, and successes to stakeholders and facilitate accountability mechanisms.

VIII.B. ECRC Facility Focal

Represented and led by the agency in charge of the regular sectoral activities of the facility/ies identified as ECRC (e.g. Education sector for learning center). Site Management Support (SMS) agencies provide operational coordination support within the ECRC, including service mapping, issue escalation, population tracking, and support to community engagement mechanisms.

Functions of the ECRC Facility Focal

- Ensures the minimum requirements and services are adequately prepositioned in line with the number of occupancy capacity of the ECRC.
- Ensure proper information management system for registering people relocated in the ECRC is available and in line with the monitoring requirement from the DMC as stipulated in this guideline.
- Coordinate with relevant sector lead agency in charge of ensuring timely and adequate provision of necessary assistance, services, and protection to refugees inside the ECRC, adhering to humanitarian standards.
- Closely coordinate with the SCCCM in resolving potential issues related to facility occupancy that would require reallocation of people in other ECRC within the camp.
- Coordinate with local law enforcement and community leaders to maintain peace and security in the Evacuation/relocation centers and protect school properties during occupancy.

VIII.C Disaster Management Unit (DMU)/ Site Management Support (SMS) Volunteers

Following the existing practice in the camps since the beginning of the Rohingya response, the relocation of refugees from high-risk zones to identified ECRCs shall be facilitated by the Disaster Management Unit (DMU)/ Site Management Support (SMS) camp volunteers which will be led by the respective Site Management Support Agencies in the camps.

The function of these volunteers shall be aligned with its existing emergency relocation mobilization plan under the SMSD EPRP.

VIII.D Other Key Considerations in the ECRC Management

VIII.D1 Overall Use and Maintenance of Facilities identified as ECRC

- All facilities identified as ECRC shall be used by the agency in accordance with its original purpose and intention as required by their respective sectors. Therefore, the overall responsibility for maintaining the structural integrity of the said facility (repair/ reinforcement) lies with the agency operating the said facility.
- As part of the emergency response readiness efforts of the ECRC, capacity building initiatives through conduct of training and periodic drills and simulations are required that will be led by the Site Management Agencies. Such initiatives shall refer to the ECRC Management Guideline and the Multi-hazard Emergency Relocation Protocols.
- Together with the ECRC Management Focal and the Site Management Sector lead in the camps, with the technical support of AAP, engagement of communities through consultations must be considered to help understand and address possible resistance and/or hesitation among refugees from being relocated during emergencies. If possible, they should also be included in the periodic drills and simulations.

VIII.D2 Mapping of Resources

- Identify and list Evacuation/relocation centers with details on available facilities for temporary shelter, including their capacity to accommodate families. This should encompass both public and private spaces suitable for transitional shelters.
- Conduct an inventory of facilities, including medical clinics, accommodation rooms, washing and bathing areas, toilets, water connections, and kitchen facilities available for evacuees/relocatees.
- Develop indicative plans to enhance facilities in identified Evacuation/relocation centers to meet humanitarian standards.
- Inventory essential resources needed for effective management of Evacuation/relocation centers, including basic office equipment such as computers, printers, and communication tools.

VIII.D3 Prepositioning of Stockpile for ECRCs

- The prepositioning of essential household items regardless of sectors shall be based on the minimum number of occupancy capacity of each of the facilities identified as ECRC.
- The prepositioning of essential items intended to be provided in the ECRC shall be considered as part of the preparedness checklist that must be regularly monitored together with the overall contingency stocks mapping for the whole camp.
- Given the limitation of financial resources that may be available for the camp settlement response, the prepositioning of essential household items intended for the refugees relocated in the ECRC shall also be factored into the current contingency stocks prepositioning by relevant sectors in their respective camps and/ AOR.
- Sectors responsible for the prepositioning and provision of basis services to refugees during emergency relocation shall also be responsible for ensuring adequate stocks of items are available in the next ECRC activation.

VIII. D4 Registration and Information Management

Registration Procedures:

Establish a streamlined registration process for incoming evacuees/relocatees, utilizing logbooks. Adapt forms to be easily understood and completed by those with limited literacy, using visual aids and simplified language. Ensure multilingual forms and staff are available to communicate with refugees in their native languages. Prioritize accessibility for refugees with disabilities. Engage community leaders and representatives to build trust and improve data accuracy. Feedback and complaints mechanisms must be functional in all activated ECRCs, with clear information shared on available services, expected duration of stay, and relocation or return planning.

a) **Household Profile:** Name, age, and sex of the head of household; place of origin; number of family members; identification of solo parents or unaccompanied individuals.

b) **Vulnerability Assessment:** Identify Extremely vulnerable individuals within each household, including pregnant women (with expected delivery date); lactating mothers; elderly persons; persons with disabilities (PWD) and type of disability; individuals with serious illnesses; malnourished children; sources of income and skills; unaccompanied children; and unaccompanied elderly. Ensure confidentiality and sensitivity during this process.

Master List and Profiling:

Create a master list and detailed profiles of all registered evacuees/relocatees, including those reporting missing or deceased relatives. This information should be based on data collected through logbooks and should be regularly updated. Prioritize the inclusion of details for family members with special needs. Implement robust data security and privacy protocols to protect sensitive information. Population data collected in ECRCs must be aligned with SCCCM Sector camp-level information management systems to avoid duplication and ensure consistent reporting across sectors.

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM):

SCCCM Sector will share the DTM tool within 12-24 hrs of ECRC activation to gather comprehensive information on the needs of evacuees/relocatees. Generate weekly DTM reports, using simplified forms easily completed by the assigned information manager. Consider using visual representations of data to aid comprehension and reporting. Explore the use of appropriate technology to streamline data collection and analysis.

IX. ECRC closure

ECRC closure must be coordinated with SCCCM/site management actors to ensure organized return or relocation of households, verification of movements, and structured deactivation of temporary governance and service arrangements based on the Multi-Hazard Emergency (Lifesaving) Relocation Protocol for the Rohingya Refugee Response in Bangladesh.

X. Annexes

1. Organizational Structure on Evacuation/relocation Center Coordination and Management
2. Non-Food Item Kits (Family, Kitchen, hygiene, water)
3. Registration Form
4. Profile of evacuees/relocatees inside Evacuation/relocation Center
5. List of Emergency Communal Relocation Centers in the Camps with occupancy capacity
6. Camp-Wise ECRC maps
7. Inter-Sector Business Continuity Plan 2026