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TECHNICAL BRIEF

Building an effective assessment team

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1. Introduction

Joint rapid assessment in the first weeks of a disaster requires dedicated and skilled staff. While rapid assessment guidelines often give the impression that methodologies and data collection instruments can be used by non-specialists, reviews of recent multi sectoral rapid assessments undertaken in the first month of a disaster revealed serious concerns regarding the validity of the results obtained when non specialists were used or when inappropriate quality check or technical supervision were performed.

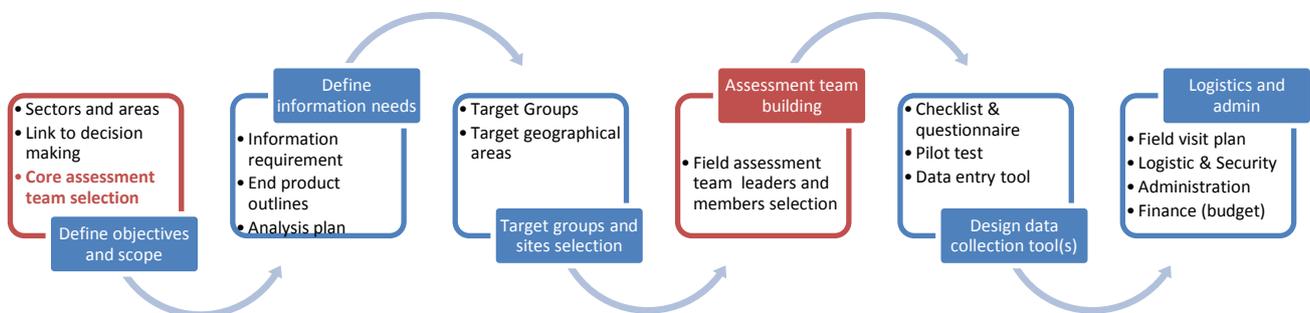
An 2010 operational review of four past coordinated assessments¹ revealed challenges related to both **coordination** (consensus building around information needs, “war of the questions”, generating enough buy in among stakeholders, managing expectations, etc.) and **technical** issues linked to this type of assessment (oversampling, lack of cross sector analysis capacity, limited skills of enumerators, data reliability, and validity issues, etc). None of those challenges is less or more important than the other. In fact, the success of the assessment will depend ultimately on the ability of the assessment team to ensure both types of challenge are addressed appropriately as well as to strike the right balance between accuracy, rigour, inclusiveness, relevance and timeliness.

Recent developments in the field of rapid assessment have further recognized the increasingly important role of secondary data as an informant of and complement to primary data collected through field visits. This increased emphasis on the secondary data component of the assessment process calls for different and additional capacities within assessment teams to better adapt and ensure this “information management” function is also taken into consideration when building and designing effective assessment teams.

The purpose of this document is to provide team composition definitions and descriptions of the functions that need to be filled in to perform a joint rapid assessment in the first weeks of a disaster. This technical brief is designed to guide the first steps of assembling an assessment team, managing and training the team to implementing best practices throughout the assessment steps. Standard job description for each potential function can be found in Annex 1.

The diagram below illustrates (red highlight) when the planning and selection of key personal that will operate at different stages of the assessment needs to happen, e.g. once the decision to undertake a joint rapid assessment is validated at the country level.

Planning for joint rapid assessment



¹ See www.acaps.org, resources section.

2. Core profiles

Two profiles with strong problem solving abilities will be required to lead a successful and time bounded assessment:

- Assessment Coordinator
- Information Analyst

Coordinating a joint rapid assessment implies both the overall coordination of the assessment team and responsibility for the final outputs, but also includes:

- Mobilising external resources (material, human and financial)
- Encouraging stakeholders to take part to the assessment
- Facilitating consensus around the objectives, information needs and scope of the exercise
- Liaising with external actors and managing their expectations around the assessment results
- Ensuring buy-in and ownership around the assessment
- Promote and ensure the use of the data for decision making.

These responsibilities have proven to be extremely time and resource consuming. A dedicated **Assessment Coordinator** is required to carry them out.

In support of the Assessment Coordinator, the **Information Analyst** will supervise all the technical aspects of the assessment, from ensuring the information needs agreed by the different stakeholder are covered to guaranteeing the reliability and validity of the information delivered. The information analyst will also make sure the best and most cost efficient data collection method is chosen to get access to the information required.

Close and regular interaction is required between the Assessment Coordinator and the Information Analyst to ensure that:

- The objectives and the deadlines of the assessment are met
- Supervision and technical requirements are in place for successful implementation of the assessment.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ Assign an Assessment Coordinator and an Information Analyst as soon as the implementation of a joint rapid assessment is confirmed. Both profiles are required from **the beginning** of the process to ensure quality assessment.
- ✓ Ensure both profiles are dedicated for the full duration of the assessment and not sharing tasks and responsibilities with other organizations and roles.
- ✓ When possible, the Assessment Coordinator and the Information Analyst may assume their roles in a more formal forum such as an Assessment Working Group.
- ✓ The earlier assessment coordination starts after a sudden onset disaster, the better. Relief organizations will not wait to start their own assessment. **The window of opportunity for coordinated assessment is extremely short** and requires rapid decisions.

The first assignment of the Assessment Coordinator and the Information Analyst will be to facilitate discussion among stakeholders around the objectives, information requirements and geographical scope of the assessment. Once the assessment and the analysis plan (including tools, sampling, report format, etc.) are agreed by all, additional human resources will be required to support the assessment at different steps of its implementation.

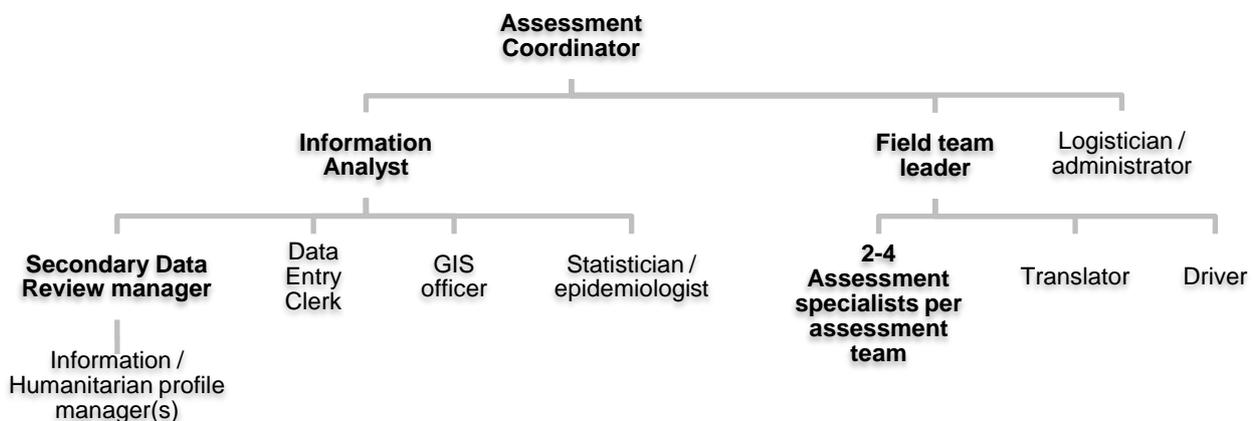
3. Assessment team architecture

The final assessment team structure required will vary with the size of the assessment undertaken, the type of crisis and the context in which the assessment is carried out. The team composition should be determined based on the circumstances surrounding each assessment, considering:

- the scale of the disaster,
- the objectives and scope of the assessment,
- the type of information necessary to collect,
- the source of information,
- the data collection methods chosen,
- the in-country available resources,
- the security conditions.

Chart 1 below provides an example of the different functions and responsibilities that may be needed within the assessment team **during a large scale** emergency. The following team architecture presents only the possible roles within an assessment team and **does not suggest that it must comprise all of the positions**. Depending on the skill set of the team members, and the context and scope of the exercise, one member of the team may undertake different roles in the course of the assessment. Moreover, some roles will only be required for a short period of time (e.g. data entry clerk for the data entry period, GIS officer for the reporting period, etc.). Logistics and administrative tasks can also be shared between several assessment team members in the case of a small or medium scale disaster.

Chart 1 Functions generally associated with joint rapid assessment.



The success of an assessment team depends on the experience, capacity and skills of recruited staff as well as on a clear and transparent division of functions and responsibilities between team members. Such transparency includes the development and sharing of updated and relevant job descriptions for each post and clarity on the reporting lines.

Existing teams can increase their appropriateness and diversity through new recruitment as required, noting that different skills are required for assessment planning, data collection, data analysis and reporting. Recruitment planning is crucial for the success of a rapid assessment and lies in the responsibility of the Assessment Coordinator and the Information Analyst. Ideally and where one cannot rely on appropriate preparedness structures, recruitment should be completed within the first days of the disaster to ensure that the appropriate skills are present at the different key steps of the assessment. The following table gives an example of a chronological timeline for a sudden onset disaster, outlining the specific functions that may be required for each step and assuming that a joint rapid assessment (including primary data collection) is recommended and validated by the end of phase 1.

Estimated timeframe for phase 1 and 2 of joint rapid assessment after a sudden onset disaster - activities and required human resources support

	WEEK 1							WEEK 2													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14							
PHASE 1 ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES															PHASE 1 FUNCTIONS REQUIRED						
Secondary Data Review (collation and analysis)	■																	At least 1 SDR manager + 1-2 information managers + 1 “gatekeeper/Information analyst”.			
Primary data collection (collection and analysis)	■																	1-3 field assessment teams of 1-2 emergency specialists each			
Reconciliation of primary/secondary data, analysis and interpretation			■															1 information analyst + team leaders + SDR manager + sectoral & local experts (incl. Government)			
Reporting			■															Information analyst + SDR manager + GIS support			
Recommendations for phase 2 assessment			■															Information analyst + SDR manager + team leaders			
PHASE 2 ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES								■							PHASE 2 FUNCTIONS REQUIRED						
Joint Rapid Assessment coordination team recruitment				■															At least 1 assessment coordinator + 1 Information analyst, If necessary 1 logistician/administrator		
Assessment plan				■															1 assessment coordinator + information analyst consulting with partners + Admin/logistician		
Analysis plan				■														1 information coordinator + information analyst consulting with partners			
Tool design and pilot test				■														1 information analyst + ad hoc support + Admin/logistician			
Field assessment team recruitment				■														1 Assessment coordinator + information analyst			
Training of assessment teams							■														1 assessment coordinator + information analyst + required ad hoc support + Admin/logistician
Secondary Data Review (collation and analysis)							■														1 SDR manager and/or 1 information manager
Primary data collection (collection and analysis)							■														3-10 assessment teams of 3-5 emergency specialists each + translators + Drivers + Admin/logistician
Data entry and cleansing											■										2-5 data entry clerk + 1 information analyst and/or 1 statistician/epidemiologists
Reconciliation of primary/secondary data, analysis and interpretation														■							1 information analyst + team leaders + SDR manager + sectoral & local experts (incl. Government)
Reporting														■				■	1 Information analyst + assessment coordinator + SDR manager + GIS support		

In all cases, it is important that a critical mass of expertise (an Assessment Coordinator, an Information Analyst, a secondary data review manager and field assessment team members) is appointed and ready-to-operate as soon as possible to ensure that both coordination and technical issues are addressed adequately by specialists **from the beginning**. In the above organigram, positions highlighted in bold represent the functions considered as critical for guaranteeing the success of a joint rapid assessment, when both secondary and primary data collection/analysis work are necessary. The other functions are *ad hoc* support roles that may be required depending on circumstances or only for a certain period of time.

Most functions related to assessments are linked to data collation/collection and analysis/interpretation. However, there are different skills needed to carry out secondary data review and primary data collection, although more experienced personnel may have both sets of skills. The following sections provide guidance on the specific profiles required for secondary data review and primary data collection teams.

4. Secondary Data Review profiles

Secondary data review forms the largest stream of available information in the first days after a crisis. Therefore, it is important to start collating and analysing this information as soon as possible and in real time. Collation can be done by relatively inexperienced individuals with diverse backgrounds, **as long as the team is guided by an experienced team leader**. However, experienced staff is required to perform analysis, mainly because this activity implies the use of expert judgement and lessons learnt for building assumptions that only experienced emergency staff may be able to formulate.

Ideally, a review of secondary data starts immediately after a disaster occurs and, on average, a first report can be finalised within 3-5 days after collation begins. This time constraint strongly limits the possibilities for *ad hoc* recruitment and training. Preferably, there is an assigned and/or prepared team or focal point(s) for secondary data review on stand-by at country, regional or HQ level. Ideally also, existing pre-disaster information has already been compiled into “fact sheets” that can directly be used within the first assessment report by the end of phase 1, reducing the workload associated with the extensive research required to build sectoral pre-disaster profiles. In all cases, a secondary data review manager and the required support resources will need to be appointed or recruited immediately after the onset of the crisis, preferably at the country level. If there is limited capacity at the field level, a remote support to carry on this activity should be considered.

If the first report is supposed to be available after 72 hours, updates of the secondary data may be required on an *ad hoc* basis until the results of the phase 2 assessment are available (2 weeks after the onset of the crisis). Therefore, staff dedicated to collating and updating secondary data may be required through the end of phase 2.

Four core functions have been identified for secondary data review:

Role	Main tasks	Specific skills needed
« Gatekeeper »	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision to start/end the SDR • Final quality check and editing, acting “devil’s advocate”: <i>do you really think this is a <u>major</u> food crisis?</i> 	<p>Generalist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous experience with Secondary Data Review mandatory • Strong editing skills
SDR Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage and coordinate the SDR • Cross sector analysis • Scenario development • Analysis 	<p>Generalist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong IM skills • Previous experience with SDR

Information / Humanitarian profile manager(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate pre-crisis information (hazard and country profile, sector information) • Collate and analyse lessons learned from past similar crisis • Collate and analyse incoming in-crisis information • Collate/estimate affected population figures • Track population movement • Develop the humanitarian profile • Mapping 	<p>Generalist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic IM skills • Rapid estimation of affected population techniques • Basic spread sheet management • Basic GIS capabilities
Sector specialists	<p>Support the analysis of sector specific information (reconciliation and interpretation of pre and in-crisis sectoral information)</p>	<p>Specialist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of local context • Emergency programming experience • Sectoral expertise

Depending on the complexity of the situation, the level of data preparedness and the resources available, multiple functions can be performed by one individual. “Sector specialists” and “Gatekeeper” do not need to be involved for the whole process but only at key moments of the analysis and the drafting. However, it is of key importance that the ‘gatekeeper’ only undertakes the main tasks appointed to him/her to ensure final quality check is not performed only by personnel involved in the data collection. A fresh view on the document structure, logic and argumentation is necessary to avoid common mistakes, duplications of information, and clarity of presentation.

As timeliness is essential for the initial secondary data review, it may be necessary to hire less experienced people who are available immediately. This is only recommended when the team is guided by a skilled and experienced manager. Previous experience with secondary data review is preferable for the whole team, but only mandatory for the ‘SDR manager’ and the ‘gatekeeper’.

General skills and competencies needed for all team members for secondary data review:

- Good knowledge of the humanitarian architecture and main reference websites
- Basics of information management
- Ability to carefully and accurately collate, tag and organise data.
- Ability to analyse and interpret data whilst data collection is on-going
- Basic analytical skills (the ability to draw patterns, detect trends and identify extremes)
- Ability to balance between focused exploration on one hand and open-mindedness on the other hand. Ability to work effectively and collaboratively in a team. Ability to work efficiently under pressure, manage multiple tasks and meet deadlines, while maintaining attention to detail
- Strong written and verbal communication skills. Excellent working knowledge of Microsoft Office (Word, Excel).

Lessons Learned

- ✓ Analysis is easier to facilitate and more dynamic when information managers and the SDR manager are in the same geographical location/office/room.
- ✓ In the event that no data preparedness was undertaken prior to the disaster, the size of the team required to complete a first SDR is important (four team members recommended, including the SDR manager). Following updates may require only one or two members part time, depending of the level of new information released each day.
- ✓ For the first SDR, members of the team must be employable immediately and stay dedicated for a period of at least 72 hours. Changing staff members during this initial work is not recommended.
- ✓ The information managers need not be the people undertaking the analysis but they can’t be completely separated from the analysis process (need quick back and forth in case of questions from the analysts). Analysis must be validated by sectoral experts or generalists with local context knowledge and emergency programming experience.

5. Primary data collection profiles

Primary data collection for joint rapid assessments requires all team leaders (and members if possible) to be highly experienced in emergency response and wherever possible to be familiar with the local context. It is a misleading and unfortunately resilient myth that primary data collection in those phases can be effectively undertaken by non-specialists. Past rapid assessment experiences using non-specialists enumerators, even those who have been trained well, have led to the collection of poor quality data resulting in consistent loss of usable information: a review of 10 past Joint rapid assessment from 2005 to 2011 showed that only 49% of the questions included in questionnaires are actually used in the final reports...

Because time constraints are a major factor during joint rapid assessments, successful primary data collection depends heavily on pre-identification of team members. One way to achieve this is by maintaining a trained assessment pool at the country level. If in-country capacity is insufficient or too limited, new assessment team members must be identified and recruited by the Assessment Coordinator.

As much as possible, human resources involved in field data collection should be drawn from the country office and partners in the country. The resources may include staff from: national ministries and/or national disaster management agencies, civil protection units (when appropriate and possible), national and international NGOs, international organisations², the Red Cross/Red Crescent societies, and civil society partners involved in humanitarian relief interventions.

Recruiting and training staff from local institutions such as universities, research institutes and (local or federal) government agencies such as Bureau of Statistics etc. can also be valuable for the primary data collection exercise **but only when trained in the joint rapid assessment methodology and where led by experienced assessment team leaders**. If capacity is lacking at the national level, additional resources may be requested from the regional offices and headquarters, or external support requested³.

It may be more effective to constitute teams of people already working or located in or near the affected area(s). This means that assessments can be done more quickly, travel and other costs reduced, and the links between assessment, project planning and implementation are enhanced.

Ideally, translators should be hired at the same time as the rest of the team, and should have the same pre-assessment training (see section 5.2). When translators are hired in the field, time must be set aside to brief them on the assessment objectives, terminology, and data collection methods.

5.1 Field assessment team composition and skills

Assessment team members should be assigned functions according to the context and objectives of the assessment. Responsibility for team leadership, note taking, logistics and security should be clearly identified⁴ in advance.

It is recommended to have field assessment team(s) of two to five people maximum, depending on:

- the type of crisis (Complex emergency vs sudden onset)
- the time allowed for each field visit,
- the volume and variety of data to be collected,
- the number and skills of assessors available and
- the transportation available.

² SPDRP, 1999, A Guide to successful damage and needs assessment

³ WFP, 2009, EFSA Handbook

⁴ IASC 2007, IRA Guidance Notes

For sudden onset disasters, the only limitation to the number of teams will be resources available (staff, transportation means, etc.) and the access to affected areas. For an assessment in an insecure area (conflict, complex emergency, etc.), 1-4 teams each with one highly experienced team leader is more appropriate in case the security conditions deteriorates rapidly and safe withdrawal must be organized.

For a rapid assessment based on purposive sampling and direct observation/key informant interview techniques, fewer staff will be needed than for in-depth representative assessments, but the people carrying out the interviews will have to be well trained on the methodology and the purpose of the exercise⁵.

Team diversity should be appropriate to the local culture and context and should have a balance of:

- Women and men, specifically in geographical areas where access to women is restricted for men (Pakistan, Yemen, etc.)
- Ethnicity and religion, specifically where inter-ethnic/inter-religious conflict has occurred (Kyrgyzstan, Rwanda, Bosnia Herzegovina, etc.)
- Age, specifically in locations where older persons will be most accessible through other older persons (as opposed to young men soliciting responses from older women and vice versa)
- Organizations, social and technical background to minimize bias, mandate or sector focused assessment
- National and international staff to ensure nothing is missed, misinterpreted, over emphasized or misrepresented.

When participating in an interagency coordinated assessment, team members must separate themselves from their own agency mandates and adopt an organisational neutral position. Apart from national or local authorities accompanying the assessment team and playing real life roles, no visible signs (stickers, T shirt, bags with logos, visit card, etc) from assessment team members should link the assessors to a specific organization. The assessment team should also carry an official introduction letter stating the assessment objectives and scope as well as detailing the planned use of the information collected.

As much as possible, the assessment team should include:

- Generalists with qualitative and participatory appraisal experience
- Persons with strong interpersonal skills, objectivity and neutrality
- Specialists chosen because of their specific experience and skills⁶ (sectoral expertise such public health specialists, protection experts etc)
- Persons with previous disaster and emergency response experience AND emergency programming
- Persons with knowledge of local context.

As a needs assessment is a dynamic endeavour, it is important to recruit both generalists, with good analytical skills and flexibility to capture the overall situation in the first hours/days of a disaster, and specialists, who can quickly identify problems in the area of interest. The following table⁷ presents advantages and disadvantages of professional profiles and can provide support when deciding which profile or combination of profiles is best suited to meet the requirements of the needs assessment in its specific disaster context.

⁵ WFP, 2009, EFSA Handbook

⁶ IFRC, 2008, Guidelines for assessment in emergencies

⁷ Table adapted from: 2008 IFRC Guidelines for Assessment in Emergencies

Team structure	Advantage	Disadvantage
Generalist(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team can be assembled quickly • Increased flexibility • Reduced time and expense • Broad coverage in short space of time • Good overall analysis of the situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical problems may be overlooked • Lack of specific skills may result in the need for follow-up assessment, when technical problems are identified
Specialist(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can quickly identify problems in their area of expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May miss or misinterpret the wider context • Can take more time to recruit sector specialists for all subjects needed • May overlook cross cutting issues
Multi-disciplinary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse experiences provide good overview for overall analysis • Quick investigation of technical problems avoiding the need for immediate follow-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to assemble the full range of professions • Some technical expertise remains unused • Difficult to coordinate • Large teams can present a security threat and be intimidating to small communities

The selection of appropriate field team leaders is of paramount importance for the success of a joint rapid assessment. Team leaders will be selected primarily according to their level of experience in emergency setting and rapid assessment. They are responsible for:

- Supervising, supporting and facilitating the field work of their assessment team: site selection and validation, key informant identification and selection, leading the first meeting with community gatekeepers, advice on interview techniques, bias reduction, daily logistics and supply, security, etc.
- Ensuring regular briefings and debriefings with team members during and after field visits to discuss the process, assessing the data collected, checking the filled data collection instruments and solving any inconsistency between the collected data and team observations.
- Guaranteeing the objectivity, validity and reliability of the collected data for the Information Analyst.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ The earlier the complete field assessment teams are composed, the better. Pre-identification and training of assessment teams during preparedness phases has proven extremely valuable to speed up the assessment process (Pakistan McRam 2008, 2009 and 2010).
- ✓ Taking the time to recruit appropriately skilled staff composing the right team may save time at a later stage in the assessment process. Joint rapid assessments call for the use of qualitative research methods, **where the main data collection instrument is the data collector**. The more qualified the assessment teams are, the more accurate and reliable the results will be.
- ✓ Clear management lines in terms of support functions are key to making the assessment process run smoothly. Lack of reporting lines and clear responsibilities may preclude the feasibility of the assessment.
- ✓ Ensure people are dedicated to the assessment and not sharing tasks and responsibilities with other organisations and roles.
- ✓ Whether the teams are recruited centrally or at field level, team leaders should be involved in recruiting members of the team wherever possible⁸.
- ✓ Include people who speak the language(s) of the area to be assessed. Include one translator

⁸ IASC, 2009, IRA Guidance Notes.

for each team member who does not speak the local language(s). Do not underestimate the importance of choosing skilled translators/interpreters.

- ✓ Have a mix of men and women of different ages within the team.
- ✓ It can be useful to include representatives of the population living in the affected area.
- ✓ Make sure that national staff members are comfortable with the idea of going to the selected sites. For example, they may be from an ethnic or religious minority group that is not well perceived in a particular area.
- ✓ Note that all people are biased. Their perceptions are based on cultural background, experience, professional training and a multitude of other factors. Ensure a balance in the perspectives of individual team members. Make sure team members are aware of their own biases and that team leaders challenge the team views and conclusions after each field visit.

5.2 Training

It is important to provide assessment team members (staff, volunteers or surge capacity, both national and international) with adequate and timely inductions, briefings, clear reporting lines and up-to-date job descriptions to enable them to understand their responsibilities, work objectives, organisational values⁹ and what management support they will receive¹⁰.

For purposes of orientation, everyone in the assessment team should be aware of the information that is already available both on the current situation and on the situation before the crisis. A pre-crisis assessment briefing package should be a standard product for training and preparation. As a minimum, such a briefing-package should include¹¹ a secondary data review, map of the area, disaster summary sheets on the specific impacts of a disaster, guidelines on data collection techniques, instructions for site and group selection, list of key terms, communications procedures, details of emergency contacts and security procedures etc.¹² The briefing-packages can be distributed prior to or during the training. They can also serve as reference documents when preparing for an assessment.

Everyone working on the assessment must receive training, even if they have undertaken assessments in the past, including translators and drivers.

The training includes:

- Assessment background, objectives and methodology
- Time schedule, assessment timeframe and geographical scope
- Assessment team architecture, roles and responsibilities, reporting and communication lines
- Site and target group selection process and guidance
- Adequate induction and briefing specific to each role¹³
- Techniques and tools to be used, such as questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and direct observation techniques¹⁴
- Mandatory group work and practice on how to use the assessment tools
- Reporting/debriefing requirements
- Communications, security and emergency procedures
- Administrative and logistics arrangements, such as transport and accommodation
- Instructions on the correct use of PDAs, GPS etc. if to be used.

⁹ The Sphere Project, 2011, [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response](#)

¹⁰ People in Aid, 2003, [Code of Good Practices](#)

¹¹ WFP, 2005, [EFSA Handbook](#)

¹² See ACAPS website, www.acaps.org

¹³ People in Aid, 2003, [Code of Good Practice](#)

¹⁴ For guidance on key informant interviews and direct observation please consult the technical brief on primary data collection techniques give hyperlink

For a rapid assessment, it is unlikely that more than one day can be dedicated to training. Even in such a short time, it is important to allow assessment teams to practise using the data collection tools through role-play exercises. Learning by doing, even in an artificial environment such as a simulation, can help the teams to understand the tools and pre-empt errors that commonly occur. The feedback on the proposed data collection instrument may also be useful for revising or adapting it to improve appropriateness to the affected area.

In the early phase of a disaster, staff capacity development may be restricted. Over the data collection period, through daily performance reviews, quality check and feedback from field assessment team leaders and the Information Analyst, inappropriate or inadequate practices should be identified and good practices should be reinforced. Once again, assessment preparedness provides opportunities to identify and develop needs assessment competencies before the disaster strikes¹⁵.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ Due to time constraints, training for joint rapid assessment usually last few hours. It is recommended to have at least one full day of training to ensure consistency on the data collection process. In some extreme cases, only team leaders are trained and team members are properly briefed by them before to go to the field.
- ✓ Inappropriate training leads to unreliable and invalid data. One day of solid training may save three days of data cleaning and management.
- ✓ Better to visit fewer sites with experienced and skilled assessors than more sites with non-qualified staff.
- ✓ People may be sent to different locations for field data collection purposes. Ensure they all receive the same training and be aware they may not always operate together.

6. Other issues

An assessment team requires appropriate logistics, administrative planning and support to complete the job properly and safely. Annex 2 contains a checklist with supplies and equipment the field assessment team may need while carrying out primary data collection.

Optimizing the field data collection period may include adapting the field assessment planning according to the type and source of transportation means available and may imply the need to comply with security protocols of each agency:

- Some partners will not support having staff travel in an armed escort vehicle or in a UN vehicle easily targeted by armed forces. In such a case, choosing/renting anonymous vehicle may be the best solution to ensure the safety of assessment teams and compliance with security protocols.
- Affected areas in remote regions may not be immediately accessible by usual transportation means (road or bridges damaged or flooded for instance) and would require specific arrangements (helicopters plane, boats, etc.). In that case, it is recommended to follow the site selection plan starting with the most accessible areas while preparing for more adapted logistic arrangements to inaccessible areas. Using a two phase approach, you may even release a first report on accessible areas and only later an updated report including the newly assessed areas.

¹⁵ The Sphere Project, 2011, Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response

Lessons Learned

- ✓ Be clear during the design phase of the assessment on who is responsible for providing logistical, financial and admin support for the field assessment. If financial arrangements are planned, make sure they are formalized in paper.
- ✓ A dedicated administrator/logistician participating in the design, organization and monitoring of the field data collection has proven to be extremely valuable in the context of a medium and large scale disaster, specifically (but not only) if there is IT equipment involved (GPS, PDAs, Smart Phone, etc.)
- ✓ A joint rapid assessment **costs money** (from US \$2,000-25,000 for a large scale disaster). Valuable time may be lost trying to access or mobilize so called “free” resources than actually paying or contracting the required services. The lower the budget available for the assessment, the more important it will be to have dedicated support staff for logistic and administration.
- ✓ Pre-identification of support staff and pre-positioning of logistic resources is key to ensuring a timely and efficient assessment.

7. References

- ACAPS 2011, Technical Brief on Secondary Data Review
- CARE, 2009, Emergency Toolkit Programme management guidelines/Assessment
- IASC, 2007, Initial Rapid Assessment Guidance Notes
- IASC, 2009, Initial Rapid Assessment Guidance Notes
- IFCC, 2008, Guidelines for assessment in emergencies
- People in Aid, 2003, Code of Good Practice
- SPDRP, 1999, A Guide to successful damage and needs assessment
- The Sphere Project, 2011, Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response
- WFP, 2005, Emergency Food Security Assessment Handbook
- WFP, 2009, Emergency Food Security Assessment Handbook

8. Annexes

Annex 1. Job descriptions

The following standard job descriptions are attached to this document:

CRITICAL FUNCTIONS	AD HOC SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment coordinator • Information analyst • Field assessment team leader • Secondary data review manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field assessment specialist • GIS officer • Logistician/administrator • Statistician • Translator (can be adapted both for field interprets and document translation) • Driver • Data entry clerk

Job description needs to be adapted to the country specificity and the assessment context. They can be downloaded from the ACAPS website under the resource section.

Annex 2 Supplies and equipment assessment teams may need (adapted from Field Checklist, WFP Kenya)

Team Supplies

- First Aid Kit in each vehicle
- Radio and/or satellite phone
- Cell Phones and chargers, SIM card, phone credits
- Flashlights (torches) and batteries
- GPS, Maps
- Laptop computer (if security conditions permit and power is available)
- Water and food, if supplies may be difficult to obtain in the areas to be visited
- Mosquito nets and/or repellants, if needed
- Spare device batteries
- Internet sticks, backup storage devices

Items for each team member's use

- Clipboard
- Notebooks
- Calculator
- Pens, pencils and pencil sharpeners
- Erasers
- Stapler and pins
- Ruler

Items for Community Level Interviews

- **Sufficient copies of:**
- Community interview guides and recording sheets
- Key Informant guides and recording sheets
- Observation (transect walk) guides and recording sheets
- Materials required for participatory techniques (flip chart sheets, felt tip pens, seasonal calendar formats)
- **A few spare copies of :**
- Guidelines for conducting community/sub-group interviews and using the chosen participatory techniques
- Glossary: concepts and definitions of key words in community-level instruments