2.2 Safety, Security, and Logistics for Field Operations

Overview

For projects requiring field work, you will need to take extra steps to ensure that logistics and security are effectively handled. The following are topics that project managers should consider and have plans for before entering the field. Work with donors, local partners, and stakeholders to fill information gaps and meet these needs.

Logistics

There are many components to managing logistics for field operations. The topics listed below are just a few components that we recommend all organizations and communities consider prior to starting field mapping activities.

Workspace / Meeting space

- Do your operations require a workspace or meeting place?
- Does your operations require a central base with full-day access and wi-fi?

Equipment

Different scopes of work will require different types of equipment. For example, ODK and Kobo software can run on most Android devices, but OMK software requires higher specifications.

- What type of mobile devices will you use to collect data? (Mobile phones, tablets, GPS devices, etc.)
- Does everyone on the team have access to data collection devices? Will you need to procure hardware?
- Does everyone on the team have access to computers/laptops? Or will the team plan to work in shifts?

Refer to Section 1.3 Hardware for guidance on selecting mobile devices, laptops and other hardware for your project.

Transportation

- How will mappers move around in the field?
- Is the scope of work/area of interest large enough that mappers will need transportation beyond walking?
- What types of transportation are available?
- What types of transportation are safe for the context and circumstances?
- Will this type of transportation have associated costs? (i.e. driver fees, rental, fuel)

Safety & Security

Each context is so different that it is difficult to make specific recommendations for safety. Communities and organizations conducting mapping activities should establish contingency plans to address the different types of security incidents that may occur. Team members should coordinate all responses to such incidents so as to safeguard the rights and well-being of local community members, and ensure that staff members and volunteers are not put at risk.

For operations, the key to effective safety and security management is the creation of a culture of security. Each staff member and volunteer has a responsibility for their own safety and security, and that of other team members.

Please note: The below topics are suggestions for mapping teams to consider when building and discussing security plans for mapping activities, and is in no way comprehensive.

- **Personal Security** - What is the appropriate behavior, dress code, language, and forms of communication when interacting with local communities and other stakeholders? Does everyone on your team understand these factors?
- **Legal requirements** - Do you have a letter of permission to conduct field activities? Does your team understand local laws and customs?
- **Communications** - Do you know which communication networks are best for your area of work? Have you provided all team members with internal and external contact details? Have you developed and communicated contingency plans to your team? Does your team have a method for reporting incidents and do team members know how to use it?
- **Travel** - What types of travel will be required for this work? What attire, visibility, documentation is necessary for travel? What types of risks (i.e. crime, accidents) are teams exposed to?
- **Common Crime** - What types of crime are common in the area of work? What is the frequency and occurrence of crime?
- **Medical Emergencies** - Are managers and supervisors aware of team members' pre-existing medical conditions? Does everyone on the team know or have access to information on the location and contact information for local health facilities and emergency services? Do all teams have access to a first aid kit? Is someone on each team trained in first aid?

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Tips:

- Know the emergency services numbers for the local area
- Always have access to a first aid kit
- Teams should have someone trained in first aid
- Let people decide where they work and feel most safe in
- Avoid performing field work alone
- Always obtain relevant permits, licenses, permissions, and visas for work
- Develop a country specific security plan
- Create a minor incident and suspicious activity report
- Establish a process for regular monitoring and review of hazards
- If operating outside of your home country, sign up for travel alerts from your embassy

Resources:

- HOT General Hazard Mitigation Advice