Operational guidance: initial rapid multi-sectoral assessment

July 2014

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P.O. Box 303
CH-1211 Geneva 19
Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 730 42 22
Fax: +41 22 733 03 95
E-mail: secretariat@ifrc.org
Web site: www.ifrc.org

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The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest volunteer-based humanitarian network. Together with our 189 member National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worldwide, we reach 97 million people annually through long-term services and development programmes as well as 85 million people through disaster response and early recovery programmes. We act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people. We do so with impartiality as to nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class and political opinions.

Guided by *Strategy 2020* – our collective plan of action to tackle the major humanitarian and development challenges of this decade – we are committed to 'saving lives and changing minds'.

Our strength lies in our volunteer network, our community-based expertise and our independence and neutrality. We work to improve humanitarian standards, as partners in development and in response to disasters. We persuade decision-makers to act at all times in the interests of vulnerable people. The result: we enable healthy and safe communities, reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen resilience and foster a culture of peace around the world.

Contents

Glossary

Assumption: describes the direction a change factor can take – positive or negative in terms of humanitarian impact. By determining the evolution of each change factor, it is possible to produce a set of assumptions.

Change factor (driver): a factor that is considered to have a determining influence over the direction the future will take.

Knowledge attitudes and practices (KAP) survey: a survey that examines a population's knowledge, attitudes and practice on a specific topic, e.g., hygiene behaviour.

Primary data: data gathered from the information source that has not undergone any prior analysis prior to inclusion in the assessment.

Scenario: indicates alternative ways in which a situation might evolve. It is a set of informed assumptions about a situation that may require humanitarian action.

Secondary data: data collected for a different purpose than the current assessment (both before and/or after the event).

Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1 Why an operational guidance on assessments

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement already has assessment guidelines[1] and has invested in training throughout its network. However, real-time evaluations and operational reviews have indicated that the practice of needs assessments remains a challenge. A number of key areas can be improved, including:

- clearly defined purpose of assessments
- application of appropriate methodologies to different contexts
- identification of geographical and sectoral areas to be covered by assessments
- sufficient analysis and dissemination of findings
- necessary level of skill and experience of assessment team members.

In addition, inter-agency efforts[2] to improve needs assessments have resulted in increased emphasis on specific areas identified as weak throughout the humanitarian sector. These include:

- timeliness and relevance of assessments for decision-making
- use of secondary data in assessments
- analysis of findings to understand the severity of the situation and priority interventions.

These factors have underlined the need for the IFRC to develop this operational guidance building on the existing *Movement Guidelines for Assessment in Emergencies*. This guidance reinforces best practice amongst practitioners.

[1] ICRC and IFRC (2008), *Guidelines for assessment in emergencies.*
[2] The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has developed assessment work through the Needs Assessment Task Force.

1.2 Who the guidance is for

This guidance is to be used by International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) staff (National Societies and secretariat) responsible for planning and implementing a multi-sectoral needs assessment within the *first two weeks* after a disaster. More specifically, it is to be used by National Societies and secretariat's operational managers.

1.3 What the guidance aims to do and what it will not do

This guidance will enable users to carry out multi-sectoral assessments that provide an understanding of the disaster situation in the first two weeks after an emergency. The guidance will describe the process of carrying out a rapid assessment by emphasizing key steps.

Table 1. Information and analysis the operational guidance will support

Disaster	- Description of the event
Scope	- Geographical areas affected
Magnitude	- Number and proportion of those affected
Impact	- Overall impact of the disaster. People, assets and resources affected by the disaster. Does an emergency situation exist? If so, what are its main characteristics?

This guidance will also specify the objectives, data collection techniques and sources of data to be used during rapid multi-sectoral assessments. In addition, the guidance will clarify a method for undertaking analysis of data and the decisions and outputs made as a result of multi-sectoral assessments.

The guidance will not specifically address detailed or sectoral assessments, which should take place after the two-week period covered by this document. The existing *Guidelines for assessment in emergencies* addresses multi-sectoral assessments while there are tools that can be used to undertake sectoral assessments. Vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA) is also often used to determine medium- to long-term recovery programming.

Assessment principles

2. Assessment principles

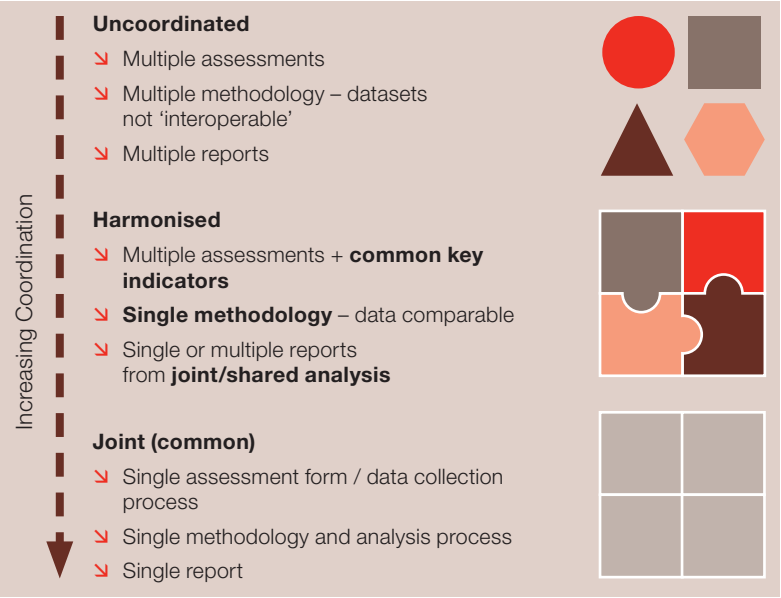
The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement underpin all activities carried out by National Societies and the secretariat. While the fundamental principles constitute a core and essential basis for carrying out assessments, a number of other practical principles should be also be adopted. These include:

- ***Clearly defining objectives of each assessment and ascertaining the outputs and decisions the assessment will support*** (e.g., whether or not a response is required; whether an international surge is required; Emergency Plan of Action; Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) and/or appeal; defining priority interventions).
- ***Balancing available time against information that can be collected.*** Being clear on what information needs to be collected in order to achieve the assessment's objectives vs information that will not be used.
- ***Selecting appropriate sampling methods*** given time constraints.
- ***Increasing focus from community to individual level assessment*** and increasing participation over time.
- ***The continuous nature of assessments*** reinforces the on-going nature of the process and it is therefore important that the design of subsequent assessments is informed by and built on preceding work.

2.1 Coordination

The coordination of assessments can take different forms; Diagram 1 provides an overview of these approaches.

Diagram 1. Types of Assessment



National Societies often participate in assessments with Movement partners. The different roles played during such assessments should be based on:

- National Society mandate and practice in the country
- specific mandates of partners and operational specialities
- Seville Agreement and Supplementary Measures
- Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance
- Code of Conduct for International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief

- Sphere Project's *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*[3]
- human and operational constraints.

Movement assessments are encouraged whenever possible because they:

- have greater impact
- reduce assessment fatigue
- use resources efficiently.

National Societies, as auxiliaries to public authorities, are often asked to participate in joint assessments; they are also often invited to participate in assessments with external partners. However, it is important to recognize that it may not always be desirable to undertake a coordinated assessment (harmonized or joint), refer to Table 2 for list of positive and negative aspects of coordinated assessments.[4]

Table 2. Positive and negative aspects of coordinated assessments

Positive	Negative
Improves coordination and cooperation for the planning and implementation of projects	Potential increased security threat by collaborating with partners in some contexts
More efficient use of resources, logistics, staff, etc.	Collaboration may jeopardize the principles of impartiality or neutrality

[3] I*Sphere for Assessments (2014)*, which has been recently published, is based on the conviction that the use of commonly agreed indicators in humanitarian needs assessment will contribute to greater coherence and coordination both at the national level and in the humanitarian sector as a whole.
[4] IN.B. this is not an exhaustive list.

Positive	Negative
Reduces the potential for assessment fatigue among the affected population	Partners may have specific bias or be mandate driven
Increases coverage of assessments	May take longer to organize and agree methodology

It is important to consider whether it is appropriate to undertake joint assessments with potential external partners. Box 1 details provides a series of questions aimed at ascertaining the relevance/appropriateness of undertaking a joint assessment.

Box 1. Questions to determine whether it is appropriate to undertake a joint assessment

- Are organizational values and operating principles compatible?
- Could collaboration jeopardize the fundamental principles, in particular neutrality and impartiality?
- Are organizations and/or individuals perceived as being biased?
- Does the organization have specific skills, experience, resources (human and material) that would be useful for the assessment?
- Will partnering improve the efficiency of carrying out an assessment?
- Will partnering result in greater geographical or affected population coverage?

Irrespective of the decision to undertake an uncoordinated or coordinated assessment, it is important for National Societies and the secretariat to be aware of other assessments taking place. This can prevent duplication of efforts5 and may allow for wider coverage of the affected area. It is also important to know the different roles that Movement's components and other actors play in assessments.

[5] Numerous evaluations have pointed to assessment fatigue by populations affected by disasters.


Assessment
actors and
their roles

3. Assessment actors and their roles

There are often many humanitarian actors responding to a disaster or crisis. In the wake of a disaster, one of the first actions that organizations take is to carry out an initial assessment, thus providing a situational analysis. It is therefore important to recognize the roles different external actors have in order to be able to coordinate actions. The Movement has many components that can carry out assessments, it is therefore important to have a clear understanding of the roles different Red Cross and Red Crescent response components have in assessments.

3.1 External

The IASC has defined specific roles for different actors in assessments. These are summarized below. For further details please review the *IASC Operational Guidance for Coordinated Assessment in Humanitarian Crises*.

Public authorities: often play a lead role in needs assessment, as the primary responsible for humanitarian assistance to their own disaster affected populations, **public authorities** often call for joint assessments with the National Society, NGOs and UN agencies.

Humanitarian coordinator: supported by Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), is responsible for coordinating emergency assessments across clusters/sectors at the country level, and for determining that there is sufficient buy-in from the main stakeholders, including the government.[6]

[6] IASC (2012). *Operational Guidance for Coordinated Assessment in Humanitarian Crises.*

Cluster/sector lead agencies[7]**:** at the country level are responsible for coordinating sectoral assessments and analysis. Lead agencies are also responsible for engaging in inter-cluster/sector assessment coordination.[8]

Individual organizations: are responsible for supporting joint assessment and/or harmonizing their individual assessments.

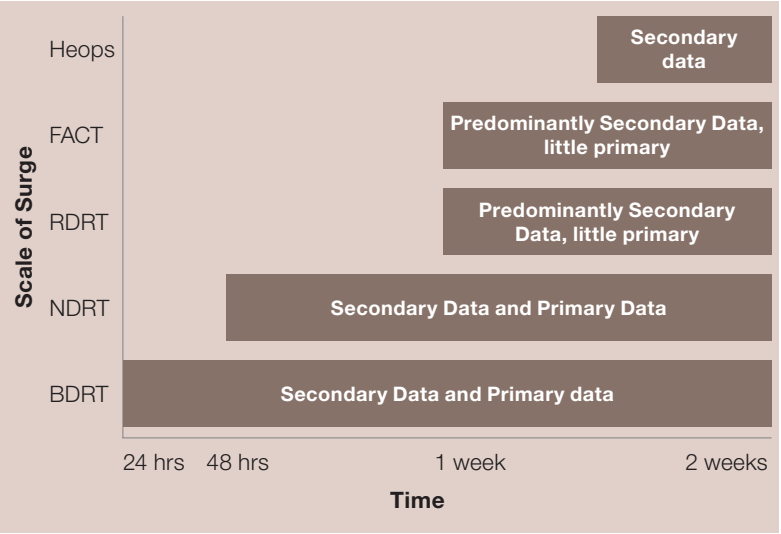
3.2 Internal

There are a number of internal Movement actors and tools that are involved in assessment processes. Their roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined and understood by Movement actors in order to ensure that assessments are carried out efficiently and to acceptable international standards.

Diagram 2 describes the possible timings for engagement of the different surge tools in multi-sectoral needs assessment as well as the type of data they are most likely to collect and use. These timings should be viewed as indicative and will be different in each emergency context.

[7] The IFRC is often the Shelter Cluster lead in natural disasters and is therefore engaged in leading shelter sector assessments and may be asked to contribute to intersectoral assessment processes.
[8] IASC (2012). *Operational Guidance for Coordinated Assessment in Humanitarian Crises.*

Diagram 2. Timing of surge capacity engagement in assessment and the type of data used



3.2.1 The host National Society

The National Society of the affected country has a key role to play in undertaking multi-sectoral needs assessments. The role of the National Society is described in the *National Disaster Preparedness and Response Mechanism Guidelines*. Table 3 provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of National Society leadership, directors and operational teams.

Table 3. Roles and responsibilities of the affected National Society

Leadership	↘ To ensure the timely deployment of the assessment team. ↘ To guarantee that the composition of the team is appropriate for the context and needs. ↘ Share the findings of the assessments internationally. ↘ To ensure that the information gathered during the assessment is used for decision-making and disseminated responsibly and professionally through the established channels.
Directors/ Operations Managers/Disaster Management Managers	↘ To participate in the design of the terms of reference (ToRs) and advise on the composition of the assessment team. ↘ To verify that the methodology is appropriate for the given context. ↘ To support the identification and recruitment of assessment team members.
Operational Teams (NDRT/BDRT)	↘ To be part of the assessment process according to the pre-agreed ToRs. ↘ To make sure that the information gathered during the assessment is relevant to the given context. ↘ To use internationally recognized methods and tools during the assessment. ↘ To coordinate and share information with other local key players.

Adapted from: *IFRC National disaster preparedness and response mechanism guidelines.*

3.2.2 International surge capacity

Within the first two weeks of an emergency, the following potential surge resources are available to National Societies for assessment:

Participating National Society
There are often Participating National Society representatives in the affected country. Delegates or representatives can support the affected National Society efforts to undertake assessments. This support can include participating in gathering secondary data, analysing the data and field visits to affected areas. In addition, the Participating National Society often provides staff in support of Field Assessment Coordination Team (FACT) deployments.

Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT)
These teams are made up of highly qualified disaster-management and technical experts in different areas of humanitarian work drawn from National Societies. They are selected and trained to IFRC standards to be an additional response for National Societies facing emergencies and in need of additional, expert human resources.

Historically, RDRTs have had different roles and responsibilities including assessment, coordination and implementation. There is currently on-going work to clarify the mandate of RDRTs, including their role in undertaking assessments and linkages with global as well as national disaster response tools.

Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT)
FACTs are deployed for medium- and large-scale disasters based on request from the affected National Society. The FACT team is often made up of different sectoral experts and a team leader tasked with coordination of IFRC assets as well as assessing the situation. Due to this dual mandate and the limited time associated with disasters, FACTs will primarily use existing assessment

information (secondary data) available from the Movement and other actors to develop analysis that prioritizes the needs of the disaster affected population.

Head of Emergency Operations (HEOps)[9]
HEOps are individuals with extensive experience in disaster management. They can be deployed anywhere in the world to lead major IFRC emergency response to disasters. HEOps provide strategic leadership to secretariat-led operations including multi-sectoral assessments. Their role is to understand the context within which the operation takes place, and to provide the overall vision and strategic framework within which the multi-sectoral assessments and operations will take place.

Emergency Response Unit (ERU)
ERU is a rapid response tool consisting of specialized personnel and, if needed, equipment. The units can be deployed for both sudden and slow on-set disasters in sectors such as emergency health, water and sanitation, logistics, IT & Telecom and relief. The teams can be deployed for up to four months and depending on the type of event they are called in by a FACT, HEOps or a disaster manager responsible within the zone office. They often work in close collaboration with FACT, RDRTs and the affected National Society's staff and volunteers. Part of an ERU mission is to continuously engage in the assessment process and adjust their operations accordingly.

After the first two weeks of the emergency the National Society can request additional assessment surge capacity through:

Federation Early Recovery Surge Team (FERST)
FERST personnel can be deployed as a team, as individuals on their own, or as a complement to international surge capacity or

[9] IFRC's Global Disaster Response Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs)

national capacities. FERSTs seek to provide expertise and support to processes of detailed and multi-sectoral assessments, analysis and programme planning and to support the integration of quality programming principles (such as integration and participation) into operations at an early stage. More specifically, FERST personnel are often deployed to undertake detailed assessments following on from the initial rapid assessment carried out by the national or international surge tools, produce a list of feasible response options within each technical sector and input into existing programmes, activities and plans based on the assessment findings.

Household Economic Security (HES) roster
The IFRC has a formal agreement with British Red Cross to utilize their (HES) roster as a complement to the range of international surge tools (FERST, FACT, etc.) or as individuals working directly with the National Society. HES are experts with skills in assessment, analysis and programme planning and implementation in food security, livelihoods programming approaches and cash transfer programming.

Shelter Technical Team (STT)
The STTs are a rapid response tool made up of shelter specialized personnel. The team can be made up of one or several members and be deployed to both sudden and slow on-set disasters in the shelter sector. The team, depending on the type and scale of event, is called in by shelter FACT, HEOps or a disaster manager responsible in the zone office. They often work in close collaboration with shelter FACT, relief and logistics ERU, shelter RDRTs and the affected National Society's staff and volunteers. Part of an STT mission is to continuously engage in the assessment process (sectorial or multi-sectorial with a focus on the shelter piece) and to adjust the shelter part of the operation accordingly.


Assessment
team

4. Assessment team

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, taking into consideration the:

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

Team members can be made up of National Society staff and volunteers, the National Society surge capacity including BDRT and NDRT as well as international surge capacity. It is, however, important to have an allocated overall team leader who will:

- mobilize necessary resources (material, human and financial)
- encourage stakeholders (where a Movement or joint assessment is agreed) to take part in the assessment
- facilitate consensus around objectives, information needs and scope of the exercise
- manage expectations around the assessment results (being realistic about what is possible to do given time and resource constraints)
- promote and ensure the use of the data for decision-making
- ensure the objectives and the deadlines of the assessment are met
- include adequate supervision and technical requirements are in place for successful implementation of the assessment
- enable team members to contribute to analysis of the situation through scenario building.

Assessment process

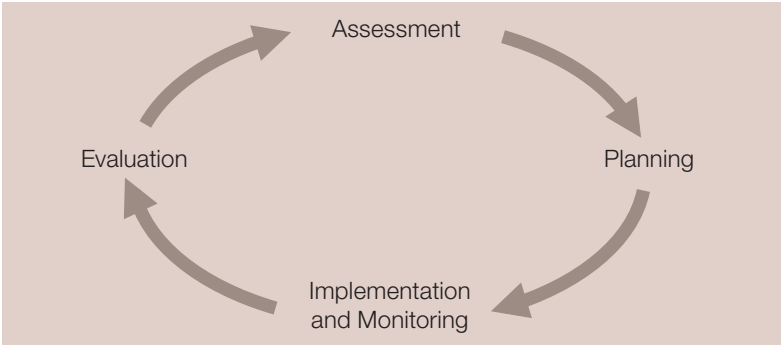
5. Assessment process

5.1 Overview of the assessment process and how it relates to the project cycle

Needs assessments are part of the project/programme cycle. Diagram 3 describes assessments as the first step in the project cycle, where the information collected and analysed during an assessment is used for planning a response.[10]

In an emergency context, time is limited and hence it is often necessary and possible to plan and to start implementing a response at the same time by using available resources (e.g., in country stocks). However, it is important that an Emergency Plan of Action be developed in order to ensure clarity and accountability for the emergency response.[11] It may also be necessary to carry out follow-on assessments prior to planning and implementation in rapidly evolving situations.

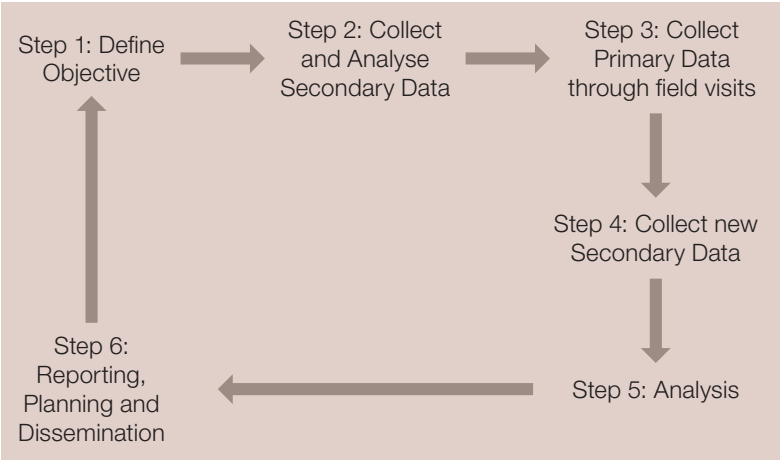
Diagram 3. The project/programme cycle[12]



[10] In this case developing the Emergency Plan of Action.
[11] DREF and emergency appeals require the production of an Emergency Plan of Action.
[12] See Project/Programme Planning: Guidance Manual & M&E Guide (www.ifrc.org/mande)

Multi-sectoral assessments like other assessments follow a process. Diagram 4 describes the process of undertaking a multi-sectoral assessment.

Diagram 4. The process of multi-sectoral assessments



Step 1. Define the objectives of the assessment: these must be defined in the ToRs and clearly state the objective as well as the expected outputs, e.g., an assessment report, an Emergency Plan of Action and or an emergency appeal document (see Section 5.3).

Step 2. Gather and analyse available secondary data: secondary data[13] is available from a number of sources during a crisis or disaster. This secondary data is used for two purposes, to:

- analyse the situation
- determine information gaps and hence information that needs to be collected through field visits to the affected area.

[13] For a definition of secondary data please refer to the glossary.

Step 3. Plan and execute field visits to collect primary data: primary data is collected directly by the Red Cross and Red Crescent during or immediately after a crisis or disaster. It can be collected using different techniques.

Step 4. Collect newly available secondary data: as time passes and the humanitarian community starts a response, more secondary data becomes available that needs to be collated and analysed.

Step 5. Combine all secondary data with the primary data collected through field visits: analysis of secondary and primary data provides a good understanding of the situation and allows for triangulation.[14]

Step 6. Write and disseminate an assessment report and other outputs based on the ToRs for the assessment (e.g., an Emergency Plan of Action): an assessment report should highlight the scale of the problem, magnitude, priority needs and remaining information gaps. The Emergency Plan of Action should describe the planned response.

Step 7. Repeat the process, taking longer and collecting more primary data: based on newly identified information gaps and needs, start by setting objectives for a new assessment. Use the existing analysis from the multi-sectoral assessment as secondary data to inform the planning and implementation of this new assessment.

[14] Triangulation is when data is collected from more than one source to check whether the data is reliable.

5.2 Assessment preparedness

There are many activities that can enable the IFRC to be better prepared to undertake an assessment. Being prepared enables a more efficient and effective approach to multi-sectoral assessments. Preparedness for assessments consists of:

- Including assessments in national and regional/district contingency plans, this includes agreeing on roles and responsibilities within the Movement and with external partners where coordinated assessments are planned.
- Pre-agreed templates and checklists for data collection. Adjustments can be made rapidly to existing materials to meet context specific issues.
- Training staff on data collection techniques and the use of templates or assessment checklists.
- Training of staff on scenario development as a key analysis tool to be used in the first two weeks following a disaster.
- Data preparedness is a key aspect of preparedness for assessments. It is possible to collect relevant information, prior to an emergency that can be used to provide an understanding of the country or region affected by a disaster. This information can be used to understand existing vulnerabilities and how these may have been exacerbated by the disaster or crisis. Annex 3 contains in-country information that should be available prior to an emergency reducing the time necessary to collect data after a crisis has occurred.

5.3 Step 1: Define the objectives of the assessment

A multi-sectoral assessment can be undertaken for a number of reasons including:

- A shock or event has occurred, e.g., an earthquake, floods or military action, etc.
- A slow-onset crisis is evolving e.g., political instability or drought.
- More information is needed about a specific situation.

It is not always appropriate or possible to undertake a multi-sectoral assessment because:

- Many organizations may already be carrying out assessments.
- There is no intention to intervene.
- Existing information (secondary information) is sufficient.
- Access to the affected area is not possible.
- Enough is known about the situation to plan for a more in-depth assessment.

However, when it is decided to undertake a multi-sectoral assessment it is important that the objectives are clear. In addition, it is important to be clear what decisions and outputs an assessment will support.

Table 4. Minimum requirement to be included in the ToR for a multi-sectoral assessment

Topic	Examples
General objectives	To assess: - Priority needs of the affected population resulting from the emergency - Coping mechanisms of the affected population following the emergency - Institutional capacity to respond (e.g., government, Red Cross and Red Crescent, UN, NGOs) - Risks and threats that the affected population are exposed to
Scope/geographical coverage	- Affected areas vs. non-affected areas; directly vs. indirectly affected areas - Rural vs. urban, mountainous vs. riverine/coastal - Administrative units X, Y, Z (provinces, departments, districts, etc.)

Topic	Examples
Targeted groups[15]	↘ Non-displaced ↘ Internally displaced ↘ Refugees
Sectors	↘ Health ↘ Food and nutrition ↘ Water, sanitation, hygiene ↘ Shelter and non-food items
Decisions supported and timeframe	↘ DREF, Emergency Plan of Action, emergency appeal, surge support etc. ↘ Due time for the intermediary findings and the final report; ↘ Frequency of reporting (e.g., reports due every 2-3 days, etc.)

Once the terms of reference for the assessment are written with clear objectives it is possible to determine the exact information needs for the assessment. It should be noted that these information needs can be sourced both through secondary and primary data sources.

5.3.1 Minimum information requirements

Table 5 provides the minimum requirements in terms of information to be collected within the first two weeks of a crisis. It is recognized that not all information is available immediately and that over time, due to the often rapidly evolving situation, figures may change. This is one of the reasons continuous assessment is required.

For specific indicators that relate to the type of information in Table 5 please refer to the IFRC Emergency Plan of Action Monitoring Reporting template.

[15] Annex 2 contains the Humanitarian profile which is standard tool to define populations affected by emergencies.

Table 5. Checklist of minimum information required within two weeks of an emergency

Category	Type of Information
General	Number of people living in the affected area Number of people affected (disaggregated by sex, age and disability, if possible) Number of dead Number of injured Socio-economic characteristics of the population (literacy, economic activity, etc.), Socio cultural characteristics of the population (ethnic group, language, religion, etc.) Existing known vulnerabilities Livelihood profile (farmers, agro-pastoralists, pastoralists, urban livelihoods, etc.) Existing coordination bodies (ministries, NGOs, cluster) and response capacity Operational constraints: transport, roads, communication, etc. Security context
Health	*Health and nutrition status* ↘ Health and nutrition profile of affected population ↘ Endemic communicable diseases *Access to health and nutrition services* ↘ Distance to clinics and hospitals ↘ Does a user fee apply *Availability of health and nutrition services* ↘ Health and nutrition infrastructure damage ↘ Availability of drugs and food supplies at centres ↘ Capacity of the government and other organizations for health and nutrition crisis response
Water and sanitation	*Access to water and sanitation* ↘ Distance to water source ↘ Distance to latrines ↘ Does a user fee apply ↘ Water storage capacity and quality

Category	Type of Information
Water and sanitation	*Availability of water and sanitation (supply)* ↘ Sources of water (river, lake, well, ↘ Quantity of water per person/day ↘ Quality (safe, protected or not) ↘ Latrines or defecation sites per population ↘ Household or community latrines ↘ Hygiene materials (soap etc.) and practice ↘ Capacity of the government and other organizations to cope/ face water and sanitation emergency
Food and nutrition	*Access to food* ↘ Market distribution systems and capacities, and access of people to those markets ↘ Peoples access to normal income earning opportunities ↘ People's own coping mechanisms and how they may have been disrupted by events *Availability of food* ↘ Expected impact on local food production ↘ Likely rate of depletion of household stocks ↘ Capacity of the government and other organizations to supplement market mechanisms, coping mechanisms
Shelter and non-food items	*Access to shelter* ↘ Type of housing ↘ Key community structures ↘ Profile of damage to shelters ↘ Typology of shelter used in case of disaster (tents, school buildings, etc.) ↘ Access to non-food items, (fuel, stoves, blankets, etc.) *Availability of shelter* ↘ Availability of shelter materials in market place, including plastic sheeting, tents, etc. ↘ Availability of public buildings for sheltering ↘ Capacity of the government and other organizations for shelter crisis response

5.3.2 Decisions and outputs of multi-sectoral assessments

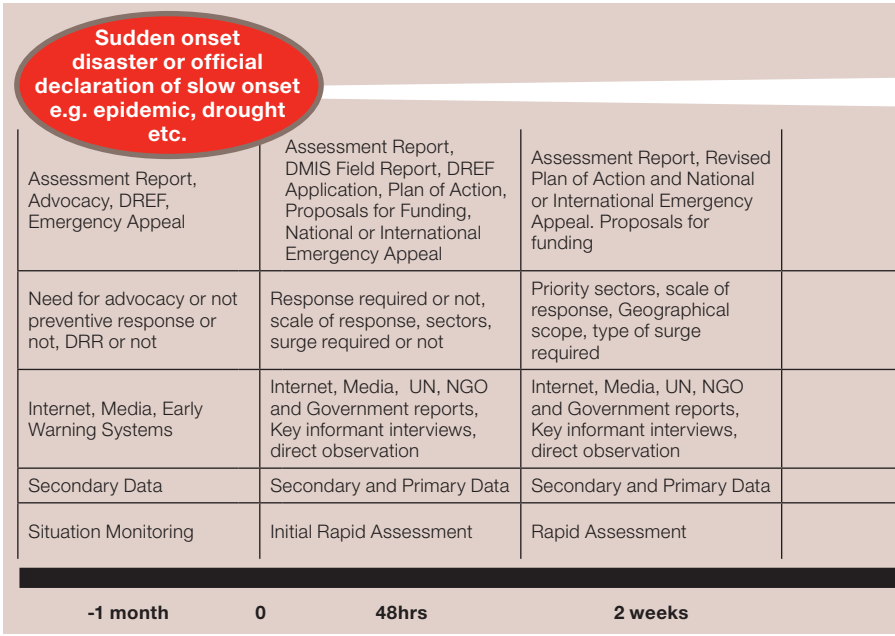
No matter which surge capacity is used it is important that the National Society remains central in the decision-making process. All assessments carried out should therefore feed into the decision-making of the leadership of the affected country's National Society. The role therefore of all international surge tools is to feed into the decision-making of the host National Society.

Once a multi-sectoral assessment has been completed the National Society leadership needs to make some decisions about whether and how to respond. The decisions that it needs to carefully consider and make are described in Box 2.

Box 2. Decisions to be made by the National Society leadership following a multi-sectoral assessment

- Is there an emergency to respond to? If yes, what are the priority needs for intervention?
- Does the National Society have the necessary capacity (human, material and financial)to respond to the emergency?
- If international assistance is required will the government approve?
- What type of international assistance does the National Society need? Financial, human or material?
- Does the National Society require financial assistance through DREF?
- Does the National Society need to launch an emergency appeal?
- Does the National Society require surge support (human resources) from the IFRC and what type of support?
- Does the National Society require material resources beyond existing stocks, what and how much?

Diagram 5. Multi-sectoral needs versus decision-making and associated outputs

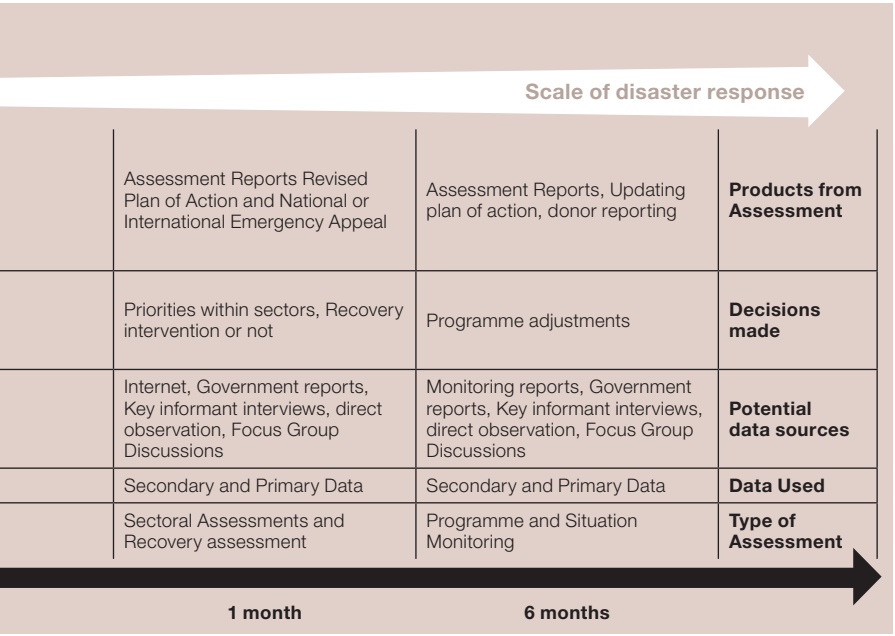


It is important to note that this timeline indicated in Diagram 5 is a guide, however, it should also be recognized that timeliness of assessments is key to ensuring decisions are made at the correct time to shape response and meet the most urgent needs of affected populations. Producing timely assessment reports will also enable faster fund raising as well as a rapid understanding of needs.

5.4 Step 2: Secondary data[16]

The review and analysis of secondary data is a key step in multi-sectoral assessments. Access to secondary data has only,

[16] Much of this section is based on ACAPS Technical Brief on Secondary Data Review.



relatively recently, become easier due to technological advances such as the internet.

5.4.1 Using secondary data: objectives and outputs of secondary data reviews

There are a number of objectives and outputs that can be generated from secondary data reviews, they include:

- Forming a clearer, more detailed and up-to-date analysis of the situation at local level prior to a crisis. It will provide background information about the affected area, groups of interest, risks and vulnerabilities as well as sectoral pre-disaster information.
- Supporting the identification of what and where the problems might be (will provide a description of the character and

plausible explanations of the nature and causes of the disaster impact as well as the related secondary threats).

- Providing part of the baseline with which to compare primary data collection results.[17]
- Identifying information gaps and determining the most appropriate method to access this information (e.g., identifying if a rapid assessment is necessary, information needs, etc.).
- Designing subsequent primary data collection and identifying which sites to visit. This will provide additional information that can be used for sub-dividing the area into relatively homogeneous zones (food economy, rural/urban, coastal/mountainous, internally displaced persons (IDPs)/non IDPs, etc.

Table 6. The different types of secondary data and examples of sources

Pre-disaster secondary information	In crisis secondary information
↘ VCAs of National Societies ↘ National institutions (ministries, research institutes, universities, etc.) ↘ Large survey (demographic health surveys, Mmultiple indicator cluster surveys, population census, etc.) ↘ International development institutions (i.e., World Bank) ↘ Sector fact sheets, e.g., WHO country epidemiological profile ↘ Common operational datasets ↘ UN, local and international NGO survey reports ↘ UN global data sets or country portals	↘ Assessment reports from National Societies, IFRC, local and international NGOs and the UN ↘ National institutions (ministries, local emergency management authorities, etc.) ↘ Media reports ↘ Funding appeals ↘ Situation reports (OCHA, clusters, government) ↘ Humanitarian profile ↘ Geospatial data from UNISAT, Google Earth, etc. ↘ Satellite imagery, UNISAT or private providers ↘ Social media

[17] Please refer to the IFRC M&E guide – 2.2 STEP 2 – Plan for data collection and management page 32- page 33 and 2.2.2 Assess the availability of secondary data

Pre-disaster secondary information	In crisis secondary information
↘ Geospatial data ↘ Online databases (i.e., EM-DAT, prevention web) ↘ Previous IFRC or National Society emergency appeals ↘ Previous IFRC plans of action ↘ Previous flash appeals, Consolidated Appeals Process ↘ Learning documents, ALNAP, evaluation reports, after action reviews ↘ DevInfo, world development indicators, Millennium Developments Goals	

5.4.2 Types of secondary data

There are different types of secondary data, including:

- pre-disaster
- in-crisis.

5.4.3 Organizing and managing secondary data

The amount of secondary data that quickly becomes available during a crisis or disaster is very large. It is important to be able to organize the data, record its conclusions and make a judgement about its reliability and credibility.

What data to look for?

Annex 3 provides a detailed overview of the key information that should be looked at during secondary data review for needs assessment purposes. Table 7 summarizes the type of secondary data that should be collected.

Table 7. Information to look for

Focus	Content
Pre-post crisis	Pre crisis vs. post crisis data
Geographical	National key indicators vs.“affected area” key indicators
Group	Total population vs. specific sub-groups demographic data (refugees vs. residents)
Livelihood	Characteristic of different sub-set of socio-economic profiles (farmers vs. pastoralists)
Vulnerability	Characteristics of different vulnerable groups (disabled, food insecure, unemployed, etc.)
Catchment area	Characteristic of different livelihood zones (urban vs. rural, mountainous vs .riverine)
Gender and age	Characteristics of different categories of the population (women vs men, elders vs. youth)
Sector	Characteristics of different sectors (water and sanitation, health, food security, shelter, etc.)

How to assess secondary data

- It is important to evaluate the **reliability and the credibility** of the data (level of bias, the sources credentials, data collection method, etc.) and **validity** of data collection methods used. Table 8 describes how to make a judgement about whether the information is useable, the reliability of the source and whether the information is of good enough quality.

Table 8. Secondary data quality check

Ask	Check	Scale
Is the data/ information useable?	*Relevance* - to the objectives of the assessment *Importance* - does the information add to the analysis? *Completeness* - is all the necessary information available?	Useable / Not Useable
Is the source reliable?	*Qualifications* - is the source qualified to provide this information? *Reputation* - what is the reputation of the source? *Motive or bias* - does the source have a specific motive or bias?	Do not know / Unreliable / Fairly / Usually
Does the methodology produce good quality data/ information?	*Validity* - accuracy of the information *Reliability* - consistency of the information	Do not know / Low quality / Medium quality / High quality

- Also evaluate the **usefulness** of the data (information sufficiently recent and relevant to the secondary data review, level of disaggregation, etc.)

Be prepared for the following commonly encountered problems while assessing secondary data:

- Data is often **outdated**, numbers are provided without specifying how (or when) it was collected, data is usually at national

and at best provincial level, data is rarely disaggregated, and data may be season dependant.

- **Inconsistent** information. Try to verify important information by comparing inputs from at least three different sources **(triangulation)**. Decide whether the **inconsistencies** will affect the assessment conclusions. Resolve important issues by estimating the confidence you have in each of the sources. Just because information cannot be triangulated does not mean it should be excluded, however, it should be used carefully.

What to analyse?

- Identify the **factors aggravating** the impact of the current crisis (existing vulnerabilities, exhausted coping mechanisms, exposure level of livelihoods to the hazard/shock, etc.). Pre-disaster information will provide very useful insights on how the crisis may have affected the livelihoods, systems and infrastructures in the considered area.
- **Identify the humanitarian profile of the crisis:** Overall number of affected population, dead, missing, injured, etc.). Define, quantify (best estimates) and categorize groups, sectors and areas affected directly and/or indirectly as a result of the crisis.

How to analyse?

- **Involve experts:** These can be individuals or staff/volunteers of the National Society with knowledge of the local context, sector specialist, etc.
- **Conduct a sectoral analysis:** prior to combining and consolidating findings into a cross sectoral analysis section.
- Look outside the collected data, **contextualize it**. Compare situation "before" and "after," compare to international standards/thresholds or to other relevant data (population figures, geography, time, etc.). Use experience and lessons learned from past similar situations to identify risks and likely evolution of the crisis.

- Look at **what differences exist** between groups, sub-groups, sectors and places. Proceed through a "more or less" type of analysis, by using the following key questions: *Who are the most affected groups, what are the most affected areas, what are the sectors requiring immediate interventions, what are the key issues.* Prioritize areas, groups and interventions.
- Make a clear difference between the impact related to the crisis and pre-existing vulnerabilities that may exacerbate the impact.
- Identify **constraints**, **information gaps** and needs for further assessment phases. Always ask: *What's missing? Are there sectors we do not have information about or need more information on?*
- To overcome the "known unknowns," use **assumptions, judgement** and **"educated guesses."** Be clear when you articulate your results that you have done so.
- **Articulate results.** Translate conclusions into easily understandable results. Focus on value added for target audience.

5.5 Step 3: Primary data

5.5.1 Planning primary data collection (a field visit)[18]

It is important to plan primary data collection. Primary data collection should not be undertaken without first having carried out a good secondary data review. The secondary data review is directly linked to the plan for primary data collection because it identifies:

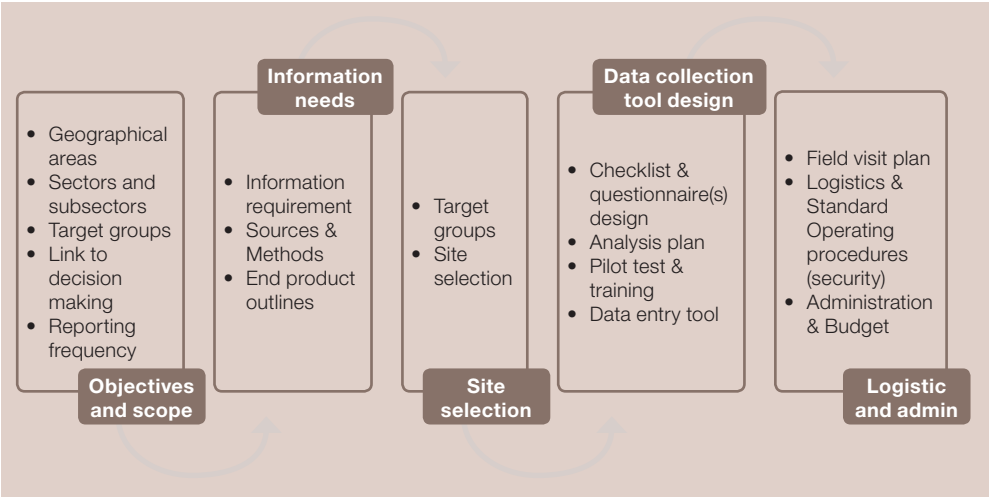
- **Sites that should be visited** to collect primary data. These can be sites where no information exists or is readily available, or sites that the secondary data suggest are the most affected, etc.

[18] Please refer to the IFRC M&E guide - 2.2 STEP 2 – Plan for data collection and management page 32 - 47

- **Gaps in information** that should be filled through primary data collection i.e., sectors that have limited or no information available through the secondary data review.

Diagram 6 describes the steps to take for primary data collection. Prior to undertaking any of these steps, security and safety should be considered. This includes whether safe access is possible to the affected area, what security measures need to be put in place including communication and logistics for the travel (e.g., is a convoy necessary for travel, etc.)

Diagram 6. Planning primary data collection



Step 1: *Objectives and scope of primary data collection*
It is important to be clear about the objectives of primary data collection. For example it may be that following the secondary data review a gap is identified in information on two sectors: health and shelter. This will mean that primary data should only be collected on these two sectors.

In general the objectives of primary data collection are to:

- fill information gaps either on a particular sector, geographical area or vulnerable group
- gather information to triangulate (confirm or refute existing information).

Step 2: *Information needs*

It is important to think about what information is needed to achieve the objectives of the primary data collection. This requires a definition of questions to be answered, data to be collected that would enable analysis. Box 2 provides an example of a question and indicators used to assess access to safe drinking water.

Box 2. Example of question and data used to assess access to safe drinking water

Does the community affected by the disaster have sufficient access to safe drinking water?
Data 1: Distance from housing to water points
Data 2: Waiting time at water points

It is also at this stage that the method of data collection should be agreed. Section 5.5.2 proposes two possible methods for primary data collection namely direct observation and key informant interviews. The afore-mentioned are the two most appropriate methods for primary data collection given time constraints in the first two weeks after a crisis or disaster.

Step 3: *Site selection*

Site selection and sampling in the first two weeks after an emergency is **not done** on a statistically representative basis. However,

knowing where to go to collect information is dependent on a number of factors. These include:

- whether there is access to all areas
- what information needs to be collected (i.e., gaps in information that the secondary data review identified)
- available resources, time, and logistics capacity.

Analysis of secondary data should guide site selection. *Purposive sampling* is mainly used during the first few weeks of a disaster. This means a site has been chosen for a specific purpose. It is important to be clear and transparent about why a site has been visited. This makes the assessment findings more credible when they are shared. It is also important to state why known affected sites have not been visited.

Because purposive sampling is used, the results of the primary data collection cannot be seen as representative but reflect the findings from that site alone.

It is important to have already thought about who to reach out to when visiting a site or location. For example if information needs to be collected about disease outbreaks it may be best to talk to health clinic personnel rather than individual households.

Step 4: *Data collection tool design*
It is important to have agreed on the questions that need to be answered through the primary data collection exercise. These questions can be placed within a checklist or other tool to remind team members.

Step 5: *Logistics and administration*
Field visits are resource intensive. This is particularly true if an immediate response is being mounted at the same time as assessments are taking place. Planning field visits for primary data collection should consider:

- Who is on the team? Specialists, generalists, gender balance, language skills, etc.
- Preparation of movement plan (timeframe, methodology, time schedule, etc.)
- Security (threats, SOPs, etc.)
- Logistic means (transport, accommodation, etc.)
- Basic package include: security envelop, contact list, health kit, GPS, water, notebook, pens, checklist, etc.

5.5.2 Primary data collection techniques[19]

Annex 4 contains a pocket guide to key informant interviews and direct observation.

5.5.2.1 Direct observation

Direct observation allows for a collection of an enormous amount of information and a 'feel' for the situation through sounds, smells and visual impressions. Observation should be carried out in a structured way (where the observer is looking for a specific behaviour/ object, or the absence thereof) and can be facilitated by a checklist. It is recommended to start the data collection with a walk through the location with local people. This can facilitate discussion, and allows the assessor to crosscheck or discover new information.

[19] Please refer to IFRC M&E Guide 2.2.7 Prepare specific data collection methods/tools 38

Observe

- How people relate to one another, especially in light of age, gender, disability, and other minority status.
- People's physical condition and activities. Look specifically at children, older persons, the chronically ill, and those persons with disabilities.
- Conditions of housing, properties, livestock, assets, etc.
- The daily lives and/or difficulties faced by women and other minorities (where and when culturally appropriate).
- State and functioning of public services, sanitation systems, and infrastructure (e.g., schools, water points, health posts, etc.).
- Whether people from different groups have different coping mechanisms or access to aid.

Recommendations

- Collect data without pre-conceived notions or expectations.
- Be active in observations; use all senses to gather impressions.
- Record information using organized checklists to enable comparison between sites.
- Note the absence of services/infrastructure and findings which contradict expectations.
- Respect local culture and gender dynamics; dress, behave, and communicate respectfully.
- Be sensitive to local concerns and the impact of the disaster.
- Be aware of capacities, opportunities, and social capital within the visited community.

Observe	Recommendations
↘ Existing or potential public health risks in public places (waste, pollution, etc.). ↘ Power relationships and potential tensions within the community. ↘ How differently certain segments of the population are affected or vulnerable compared to some others, and why.	↘ Ask permission to take photos and/or ask questions. ↘ Be careful in conflict areas where landmines and explosive remnants of war may pose security threats.

5.5.2.2 Key informant interviews

Key informant interviews should be undertaken with individuals with prior knowledge of the affected community. It is important to carefully select informants so as to minimize bias in the assessment results. Structure interviews with key informants in a way that focuses not only on the problems that people face but also the ways in which they cope with them. Make interviewees feel relaxed, and use a subtle approach. Asking questions will lead you to think of new questions to ask, or to look for alternative information sources to clarify the situation.

Interview

- Ask permission to carry out the interview, ensure informed consent.
- Ask permission to take notes to record the interview. When using electronic devices, explain what it is and how it works.
- Make sure the data collection instrument has space for capturing direct observation comments and notes to verify information and correct inconsistencies.
- Be sensitive of the time needed to complete the interview.
- Triangulate information from multiple key informants.
- Record metadata, e.g., such as date, location of interview, social role of interviewee, group represented by the interviewee, contacts, etc. for each key informant, as this information will be used during the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Recommendations

- Interview people in a safe place that is convenient to them and adapt to their needs.
- Choose key informants in a strategic manner, match information needs with likely key informants sources.
- Make sure the key informants are not compromised in participating in an individual interview. Explain to community observers why the specific key informant was chosen and what topic you want to discuss.
- Ensure people do not expect preferential humanitarian support in lieu of participation.

Interview

- Do not ask questions that may stigmatize people or endanger them.
- Do not induce particular answers by helping an interviewee to respond or have a translator answer on behalf of a key informant.
- Do not collect accounts of direct personal experience but seek information that is important, meaningful or considerable and confirmed by different sources. Do not waste valuable time collecting detailed information when representative data would be just as useful.

Recommendations

- Ensure the anonymity of the data collected. If key protection risks are observed or reported by key informants, refer them confidentially to the most appropriate authorities or agency (police, protection cluster colleagues, etc.) for confidential follow up.

5.6 Step 4: Collect new secondary data

As time passes after a disaster many organizations will be carrying out their own assessments and releasing information about the situation. This can be used to better understand a developing situation. This secondary information should be treated in the same way as the secondary data in step 3 of the assessment process.

5.7 Step 5: Analysis[20]

At this stage the assessment team should have available primary and secondary data. Step 4 of the process highlights the need to make sure that any additional secondary data produced while the team was undertaking field visits should be collated and used in the analysis.

Data analysis involves:

- uncovering and describing patterns and trends
- interpretating and explaning these patterns and trends by placing them in context and using experience.

Data analysis should result in:

- a description of the event
- identification of the geographical areas affected
- quantification of the number and proportion of affected
- an understanding of the impact. The people, assets and resources affected by the hazard. Whether an emergency situation exists and what its main characteristics are.

5.7.1 Key principles of analysis

- Start analysis as soon as data becomes available. Data analysis is carried out by humans, computers can assist the process, but can never be a substitute.
- Analysis should be carried out by a group that is familiar with the context, and has expertise in multiple sectors and emergency programming. Field assessment teams should also be involved in the interpretation of the findings.
- Separate needs analysis from response analysis. Do not confound *Needs* with the *Need to…*
- Data rarely speak for itself and must be interpreted and contextualized to acquire meaning.
- There is no straightforward situation.

[20] Please refer IFRC M&E guide 2.3 STEP 3 – Plan for data analysis p. 48

- Analysis should be aligned with stated objectives and analysis plan. Ensure there is enough time and resources to turn *data* into *information*.
- All analysis has weaknesses. It is important to acknowledge these weaknesses. This is particularly true in the first two weeks following an emergency when information gaps are likely to exist, assumptions need to be made and there is not time to collect statistically representative data.

5.7.2 Key steps in analysis

Data analysis is made up of three steps. These are:

- **Data preparation:** grouping similar data to allow patterns in the data to emerge. These patterns are the basis for analysis and decision-making (e.g., aggregating the number of malaria cases weekly enables ascertaining whether an outbreak has reached epidemic proportions requiring immediate action.
- **Description of data:**[21] describes similarities and differences between two measures. Different comparisons can be made:
  - between geographical locations, district A vs. district B, rural vs. urban locations, camp vs .non-camp, etc.
  - between social groups e.g., agro-pastoral vs. farmer, IDP vs. resident, etc.
  - pre- and post- disaster, dry vs. rainy season
  - against standards in the Sphere Handbook.[22]
- **Interpretation of data:** attaches meaning to data, determining why a trend exists. This requires judgements to be made. Different analyst can interpret the same data differently. It is important that interpretation happens in a multi-sectoral group setting where consensus is reached.

[21] It is important to be cautious when making comparisons since the data collected is not statistically representative.
[22] The Sphere Handbook, *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, is one of the most widely known and internationally recognized sets of common principles and universal minimum standards in life-saving areas of humanitarian response.

5.7.3 Scenario development[23]

A scenario indicates alternative ways in which a situation might evolve. It is a set of informed assumptions about a situation that may require humanitarian action. Building scenarios involves speculating about an uncertain future and envisaging different possible outcomes for a given initial situation.

Scenario building relies on:

- analysis of the current humanitarian situation
- assumptions about expected future risks and opportunities
- resilience and vulnerability of affected population
- existing and anticipated capacity to respond
- experiences from previous "similar" crises.

Scenario building is used to analyse and present the data collected because in the early stages of a crisis or disaster the situation changes quickly and planning needs to factor in a rapidly evolving situation.

The use of the "chain of plausibility"[24] approach to scenario building helps develop realistic scenarios for crisis situations. It works by identifying:

- "Change factors"[25] that are likely to trigger a chain of events that lead to each scenario
- informed assumptions about a given situation.

By gradually combining and modifying the change factors and assumptions, it is possible to analyse different potential outcomes

[23] Scenario building has been adopted by the IASC Needs Assessment task force as an analysis tool for initial rapid assessments.
[24] There are many approaches to scenario building. This approach is recommended as the most flexible. For more information on scenario building approaches see the ACAPS Technical brief on Scenario Building.
[25] Change factors are often referred to as drivers in scenario building literature.

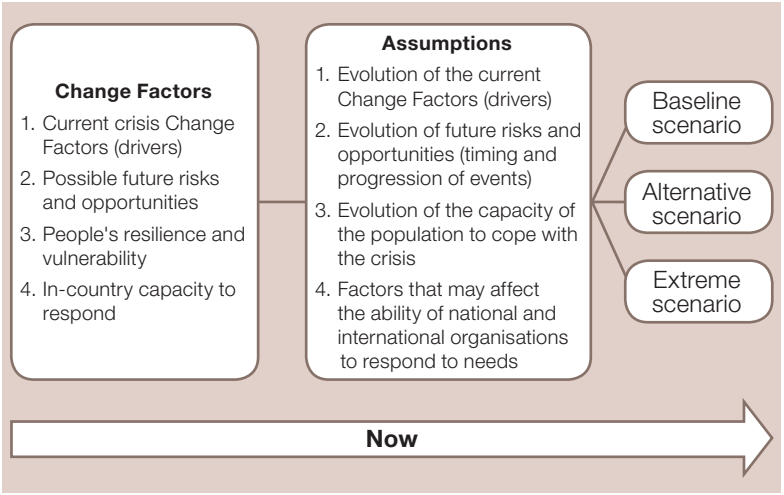
from the baseline (projection of the current situation) to the most extreme.

Diagram 7 represents key aspects of the chain of plausibility approach to scenario building. It works by identifying:

- change factors that are likely to trigger a chain of events that lead to each scenario
- informed assumptions about a given situation.

By gradually combining and modifying the change factors (drivers) and the assumptions, it is possible to analyse different potential outcomes from the baseline (projection of the current situation) to the most extreme.

Diagram 7. Chain of plausibility approach to scenario building



Scenario building based on the chain of plausibility involves **five steps**. The steps that must be followed are:

1. gather and review relevant information
2. define number and scope of scenarios to be developed
3. identify change factors
4. select assumptions
5. develop scenarios.

Step 1 Gather and review relevant information

1. National Society and country contingency plan.
2. Information on the typical effects of similar crises in comparable contexts (emergency appeals, Consolidated Appeals Process or Flash appeals, ACAPS Disaster Summary sheets).
3. Context information on the crisis (secondary data review, including description of current impact and pre-crisis conditions).
4. Forthcoming important events, including secondary effects of the crisis, and key recurring events (rainy season, winter, elections, harvest period, lean season, etc.) that have the potential to influence the evolution of the situation.
5. Lessons-learned, experiences and studies from previous interventions in similar contexts (after-action review, program evaluations, etc.).
6. A mapping identifying the main stakeholders who have an interest or are involved in a given issue or aspect of the crisis and have a significant capacity to influence its development (government, private companies, armed forces, civil protection, etc.).

Step 2 Define the number and scope of scenarios to be developed

1. Define the geographical area and population of interest (scope).

2. Specify the timeframe covered by the scenarios. Take into account upcoming events; assess trends.
3. Avoid thinking immediately of developing scenarios which broadly correspond to the status quo, the ideal, and the worst-case scenario, but rather explore a range of plausible futures, and set the number of scenarios accordingly.

- Scenarios, as used in initial and rapid humanitarian needs assessments, should cover a period of *2-4 months for sudden onset disasters* and 4-8 months for conflict situations.
- For complex emergencies, three to five smaller scenarios may be necessary to define the main possible evolutions. For sudden onset disaster, *two to three scenarios are usually sufficient*.

Step 3 Identify (change factors) drivers

A "change factor" is a factor that is considered to have a determining influence over the direction the future will take. The first stage in identifying "change factors" is to examine the findings of your review **(Step 1)** to detect and isolate specific dynamic factors within a given context. These factors are called "change factors" and may have a positive (opportunities) or a negative (risk) impact on the context. Change factors can be organized in four main categories:

Change factor categories	Examples of change factors
Current crisis change factors (drivers)	Fighting, rainwater precipitation level, aftershocks, price evolution, displacement, malnutrition, food production
Possible future risks and opportunities	Epidemics, flooding, winter, spill-over effects, economic sanctions, elections, rise of extremist movements, social unrest, price inflation

Change factor categories	Examples of change factors
Resilience/ vulnerability of affected population	Coping mechanisms, level of remittances, structural vulnerabilities, social protests, competition over resources, purchasing power, livelihood opportunities
National/ international response capacity	Number of actors vs. scale of the crisis, humanitarian space and access, qualification of humanitarian staff, government capacity/ willingness to respond, donor funding and issued calls for external assistance, contingency stocks

Not all change factors (drivers) need to be considered for scenario building. Select only those which rank high with respect to their probability of occurrence and their expected impact on the affected population, using the following matrix.

Diagram 8. Probability of occurrence vs. expected impact

	Expected impact				
Probability of occurrence (%)	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Important	Major
Very likely (90-100%)					
Likely (66-100%)					
Maybe (33 to 66%)					
Unlikely (0-33%)					
Very unlikely (0-10%)					

- Scenarios are a tool for presenting alternative futures and should not integrate factors that are certain to occur.
- Only change factors with a likely or very likely probability of occurrence should be included in the final document.
- Only change factors that are likely to have a moderate, important or major impact on the situation should be selected.
- As much as possible, combine or cluster **change factors (drivers) that influence each other** (e.g., rainwater precipitation level + displaced population + camp capacity + logistic access to affected sites + epidemic risks).

Step 4 Select assumptions

- Assumptions describe the direction a change factor can take: positive or negative in terms of humanitarian impact. By determining the evolution of each change factor, it is possible to produce a set of assumptions.
- By assessing the relationships between the change factor-assumption pairs, it is possible to identify elements that are related (e.g., overcrowding/ protection issues, return/ land ownership issues, water pollution/ water borne diseases, conflict resuming/ new population displacement, etc.). By combining different sets of related or connected assumptions, it is possible to develop several mini-stories or groups of assumptions that will form the basis of the scenarios.
- When building your assumptions, make sure to rule out implausible assumptions (e.g., magnitude 10 earthquakes, nuclear strike, etc.).
- The challenge is to identify two to five assumption groups that are plausible and are incorporating the most important change factors.
- The first group of assumptions should be based on a simple projection of the current situation without the influence of any significant new factor (it will be used to develop the baseline scenario).

- Then, the set of assumptions used in the baseline model is altered to develop a plausible alternative scenario. If repeated, this process will help produce several alternative scenarios.
- Finally, the set of assumptions is modified to form the basis of an extreme scenario that should still remain plausible enough. This scenario will usually be the one with the highest impact.

Step 5 Develop scenarios

From sets of selected assumptions, full scenarios can be developed. The following template can be used as a short guide:

Each scenario must include as a minimum:

- The **probability** of this given scenario happening and its expected **impact** on the affected population.
- A range giving **a quantitative estimate** of the expected number of people that would be affected e.g., 100-200 and avoid point estimates.
- A **narrative** describing the main points of the scenario, including the population groups and the areas that would be affected.
- The predicted **duration** of the emergency intervention and the potential operational constraints.
- The **priority needs** of the affected population and the humanitarian response needs.
- A specific or memorable **name** catching the core idea of a given scenario.

Scenario reporting template[26]

"Name of the scenario – e.g. "Heavy Rainfall Scenario"						
	Low					*High*
Affected population	*Probability level*			X		
XXX.XXX – XXX.XXX	*Impact level*					X
Core assumptions	*Short description of change factors (drivers) and assumptions: (change factor): heavy rainfall). e.g.:* ↘ After heavy rainfall in the south the floodwaters did not recede for two months and a large area remains inaccessible for assessment and intervention. ↘ Government calls for international assistance to address the IDP issues. ↘ Very low in-country capacity of humanitarian actors to respond to the disaster.					
Context and impact	*Overall effects and impact of the event, e.g.:* ↘ Influx of 150,000 IDPs in overcrowded and inadequate shelter expose the population to public health threats like during the 2008 floods when outbreaks were reported in camps. Affected urban population is attended to, but rural population has to wait several weeks before receiving first assistance due to road disruption. ↘ *Affected areas*: e.g., southwest provinces of the country are the most affected area.					

[26] Annex 5 contains an example of a completed template.

Context and impact	↘ *Affected groups*: e.g., IDPs in public building and camps as well as host population and their characteristics (number, demographics, and specific vulnerable groups). ↘ Duration of the emergency situation: period of time during which emergency assistance may be required.
Operational constraints	↘ Access, security, logistics and communication
Priority needs	↘ *Key interventions (including intervention/ assessment, preparedness measures): Food, water and non-food items distribution will be required. Air transportation for relief items. Early warning system and surveillance for communicable diseases. Coordinated assessment mechanisms.* ↘ *Description of needs for specific affected groups: e.g., IDPs in camps and public building will need temporary shelter until access to their lands and homes is possible.*

Key principles for scenario development

- ↘ Do not base scenarios on factors that are certain, select change factors that are genuinely variable and are thus subject to in-time change.
- ↘ Include support and review from selected key informants and local experts in the scenario building process.
- ↘ Focus of the scenarios should be on their predicted impact on affected people, on their livelihoods and related needs.
- ↘ Prioritize scenarios that are needed to move forward with planning instead of trying to develop all possible scenarios.
- ↘ Include just enough detail to permit planning and communicate to others the anticipated conditions and needs of the affected population.

- Acknowledge that the scenarios developed will never be able to predict exactly the future and therefore will never be completely right.

Through scenario development priority needs are identified, however there remains the task of converting these needs into response options and a plan to intervene. This is done through response analysis.

5.7.4 Response analysis[27]

Response options are generated through needs assessments in a two-stage process. In the first stage, stakeholders are encouraged to think widely and freely about possible options, and nothing is excluded. This can be described as brainstorming or blue-sky thinking.

In the second phase, the response options are documented and assessed, and a range of potential scenarios are considered. The capacities and priorities of the National Society, the community and other stakeholders are assessed. A wide range of factors such as risks, value for money, sustainability and potential adverse effects are considered.

Below is a simple tool or matrix that can be used to decide which programming response options are included in a programme.

Response options comparison tool

- This tool is designed to support decision-making by helping think through all the considerations of different programming response options in a structured way.
- This can help with team planning as well communicating decisions transparently to others including donors.

[27] This section draws on the IFRC Recovery Programing Guidance which considers Response Options Analysis.

Table 9. Comparison tool for response options

Response option (RO)	Timing and duration of RO	Who is targeted by the RO	Expected outcome of the RO	Scale #HH		Cost per HH (CHF)		Total cost (CHF)		In line with National Society plans, capacities and mandate		
				Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	S	C	

Min= Minimum, Max= Maximum, S= Score (1 (low)-5 (High)), C= Comment

- The menu of options to consider is just a generic list of things to consider that can adapted or added depending on the local context.
- For each option to consider a simple scoring system can be used (such as 1-5 with 5 meaning strongly agree and 1 meaning strongly disagree) along with any specific comments that are relevant. When finished, add the total score for each response option, then rank them.
- Those with the highest scores COULD be more suitable, if you feel they are not, take another look at your scores. In the end the decision for which programming options you implement is up to you and your team, this matrix is only intended to help you make that decision.

Having determined the response options a number of products can be produced. These include:

- The Emergency Plan of Action: a key planning tool.
- If needed a DREF application to source funding for the action form the secretariat.

	In line with government priorities		The RO can be implemented in time (consider seasonality)		The impact of RO is high and represents good value for money		The RO has a low chance of any adverse or negative effects on populations or the economy		Implementing the RO is feasibile and risks can be managed		There are the resources available	
	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C

- If needed a national or international emergency appeal to raise funds and in-kind resources.

5.8 Step 6: Reporting[28] and dissemination

A reporting template can be found in Annex 6. An assessment report should be produced every time an assessment is undertaken. This can be shared internally and externally to support outputs such as:

- The Emergency Plan of Action[29]
- A DREF application
- A national or international emergency appeal
- The request for deployment of resources such as B/NDRT, RDRT, FACT, ERUs, HEOps, FERST and HES

[28] Please refer to IFRC M&E guidelines 2.4 STEP 4 – Plan for information reporting and utilization p.57

[29] Please refer to the Guidance on the Emergency Plan of Action for National Societies and/or the Guidance on the Emergency Plan of Action for IFRC Staff.

Reporting after assessments should not be seen as a one-off event. Assessment teams should rather seek to create a shared situational awareness around problems and priorities generated by the disaster. A series of interim reports may be more appropriate and useful than a late final report. Assessments are continuous and build on each other and so reporting should reflect this.

Reports should be completed as quickly as possible because information gathered during emergencies is both time bound and of time-limited validity.

All aspects of the assessment methodology need to be clearly articulated and openly shared. This includes the way the assessment was carried out, the information sources used, sites selected, time frame, the personnel involved, and decisions made about the level of information collected. It also includes the assumptions made in developing scenarios and how conclusions were reached.

Whether an assessment has been coordinated or not the results should be shared widely. The sharing of information helps ensure coordination, provides a shared situational awareness and means that sharing of information is likely to be reciprocated by others.

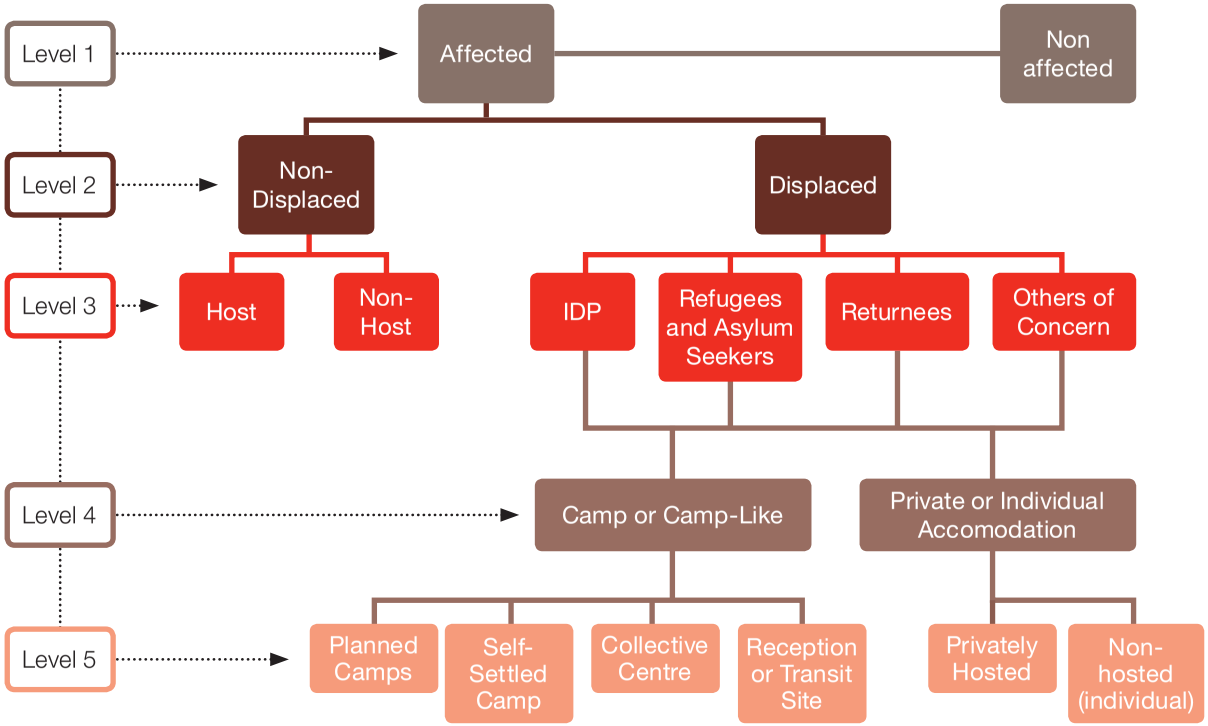
Dissemination can take different forms including submission of the assessment report, presentations and meetings with different humanitarian actors. It is important to know:

- who the audience is
- their specific interest
- how much time they have.

This information will help to formulate the key messages to share.


Annex

Annex 1. Humanitarian profile



Adapted from the guidelines on the humanitarian profile Common Operational Dataset, June 2011

Annex 2. Secondary data sources

Pre-disaster information: Context and vulnerability information					
	Food security	**Health and nutrition**	**WASH**	**Shelter and NFIs**	**Access and security protection**

	• Outcome Indicators of:
	  • Crude Mortality Rate as Deaths /10,000/day
	  • < 5 Mortality Rate as Deaths /10,000/day
	  • Maternal Mortality rate as Deaths/100000 live births
	  • Malnutrition Rate (6-59 months) as % <-2 Z-Scores below mean Weight for Height reference population
	• Population size and spatial distribution by administrative unit and locality (Census, Population projections)
	• Age-sex structure of the population for identification of various categories, especially the vulnerable groups (Census, Population projections)
	• Socioeconomic characteristics of the population (literacy, economic activity, etc.), Socio cultural characteristics of the population (ethnic group, language, religion, etc.)
	• Income levels and basic indicators of well-being and vulnerability
	• Location and other details on the basic social infrastructure
	• Country/regional/provincial/municipal maps
	• L FS, WASH, H&N related maps and GIS data
	• Livelihood profile, baseline data and map
	• Security context				

To be collected	• Available resource materials about agro-ecological and agro-economic context.	• Relevant Health Indicators • Health system details • Health centre type and localization	• KAP survey and traditional, cultural and religious behaviours analysis	• Type of buildings and habitat per area • Construction materials used	• Security incident statistics • Threat types and level

• Seasonal Calendar • Food supply and food security situation of the country • Livelihood Strategies of population groups • Food security indicators (at national e.g. Food Balance Sheets and local level) • Maps of chronic food insecurity areas	• Previous nutritional surveys at national and regional level • KAP surveys on the causes of malnutrition • National and regional statistics of nutritional indicator: infant feeding practices, mortality and morbidity for the main diseases, and CMR for total and < 5 population	regarding excreta disposal, hygiene awareness and water use. • Information regarding national, regional and provincial health statistic: • Diarrhoea prevalence • Cholera endemic zone • Malaria prevalence • Water and sanitation coverage indicators/data.	• Type of NFI fuel used for cooking and heating • Climate conditions in affected area	• Specific protection concerns • Transport means • Logistic coordination and reference bodies

To be produced

- Short description of the political and economic system in the affected area
- Population figures (census data per administrative area), desegregation per sex and age per area as much as possible
- General indicators FS, H&N, WASH, Shelter and other relevant
- Classification of affected areas (urban, rural, coastal, mountainous, etc).
- Maps of main livelihood zones and food economy areas
- Vulnerable groups and related areas (IDH, poverty index, gender statistics, etc…)
- Risks analysis and security analysis (equipment and staff)

Annex 3. Key informant and direct observation pocket guide

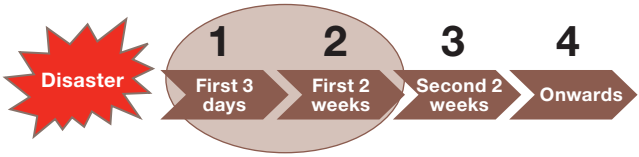
WHAT

Direct observation provides a snapshot picture of an affected location.

Key informant interviews provide information on critical aspects of community life and meaningful indications about access, risks, priorities, vulnerabilities and capacities at the community level.

WHEN

Within 2 weeks



OBJECTIVE

Both methods combined should answer the following key questions in the visited site:

- **WHAT** are the key issues (sector/subsectors) and priorities?
- **WHO** is most affected or vulnerable?
- **HOW MANY** are they?
- **WHERE** they are?
- **HOW BAD/SEVERE** are the issues?
- **WHY** is it that way?

Both direct observation and key informant interviews can be carried out **quickly** and with relatively **few resources** during an emergency.

Useful resource persons may include:
International and national relief teams/officers, religious leaders, doctors, nurses, teachers, UN national staff Government authorities, local leaders, village elders, police, army, fire services, rescue services, NGOs, The National Society IFRC/ICRC, etc.

Both methods are typically used together during primary field data collection for maximum impact.

During direct observation and key informant interviews, take the opportunity to observe with an open mind, compare as much as possible, but **restrict** the information gathering to what can be processed, condensed and analysed **within the field assessment time frame**. Key questions are as follow:

- What has changed over time and/or remained the same?
- What is surprising, important, different about one group, one time, one place when compared to another?
- If it didn't get worse, why not? If it will get worse, what will make that happen?
- What's the next level of detail required?

Annex 4. Example scenario

Multiple Change Factors (Drivers) Situation: Mali 2012

Available Information and Identification of Change Factors (Drivers): Below-average rains in late 2011 resulted in drought conditions across the Sahel in the beginning of 2012. Current estimates indicate that over 4.6 million Malians are food insecure. The on-going drought compounded by an insurgence in the north and political power struggles in the south has resulted in serious food insecurity, malnutrition and large scale displacement in neighbouring countries. Humanitarian operations in northern Mali have been impeded by insecurity, armed violence and a regional proliferation of weapons following the Libyan crisis. Military escorts are being used by most humanitarian organizations to access the affected areas. What began as an attempt for independence by Tuareg rebels has been quickly taken over by militant Islamist groups asserting safe havens for criminal activities in the whole region. In Bamako, violence and protests have been reported after the coup d'état against the ousted President Amadou Toumani Touré. The Government has requested international military support to regain control of the north. The following Change Factors (drivers) have been identified:

1. Conflict between armed groups in the North
2. Fighting between insurgents and Gov. forces in the North
3. Humanitarian space
4. Political stability in the South
5. Government control over the national territory
6. Food insecurity

Cahnge Factors (drivers) deal principally with the consequences of the conflict in the north and the fragile political stability in the south, the pre-existing vulnerability of the population, as well as with the national and international capacity to respond to the crisis. Change Factors (drivers) can be re-organized into three categories:

1. Fighting, humanitarian space and food insecurity in the North
2. Political instability and governance in the South
3. General food insecurity

The first group of Change Factors (drivers) has the highest probability and impact.

Selection of Assumptions and Scenario Outlines:

- **Baseline Assumption**: *Ongoing competition between armed groups leading to increased insecurity. Limited space for operations, increasing humanitarian needs.*
- **Alternative Assumption**: *Successful international military offensive. Better access, decrease of humanitarian needs.*
- **Extreme Scenario**: *Formation of alliances against insurgents and in support of the Government forces fighting to liberate the North.*

Mali – Continued Competition for Power Scenario						
Affected population: 500,000 – 1,000,000	*Probability level*				X	
	Impact level					X

Core Assumptions

- ↘ Competition over power between armed groups continues. Insecurity and limited space for humanitarian operations persist, increasing existing humanitarian needs.

Context/Impact

- ↘ The competition for power between different armed groups in the North continues. However, better armed militant groups are able to suppress resistance from Tuareg rebels and local defence groups and assert control of the North, securing corridors for illegal goods and weapons trade as well as fighters from neighbouring countries. The militant groups are also able to attract and recruit civilians offering livelihood opportunities and basic services. Humanitarian needs increase, especially exacerbating the already poor food security status. Education remains disrupted. Internal displacement from rural areas to urbanized centres, as well as into remote rural areas continues due to violence and insecurity.

Operational Constraints

- High insecurity and increased violence limit humanitarian access for both humanitarian actors and the affected population. Operational constraints include road blockades, checkpoints, attacks of humanitarian personnel and goods as well as kidnapping for ransom of international staff.

Priority Needs

- Emergency interventions in nutrition, health, WASH, protection and education are needed. Needs are high for IDPs in remote rural areas and newly displaced (Emergency shelter, WASH and food and nutrition interventions).

Mali – Alliances Scenario

Affected population: up to 500,000

Probability level				X		
Impact level					X	

Core Assumptions

- Increased formation of alliances against Islamist insurgents and in support of the Government including both local defence groups as well as Tuareg rebels. However, loyalties are shifting and instable. Due to low capacities on the part of the local defence groups, Tuareg rebels as well as the Government, only pockets of control can be regained. Porous borders cannot be secured. Humanitarian needs increase with health and protection needs being a major concern.

Context/Impact

- Shifting alliances are formed, based on regional interests and affiliations. Power is distributed unequally among the groups in the North. Insecurity continues and inter-communal violence rises with increasing capacity of local defence groups. Although alternative market routes and supply are restored, food prices remain high, limiting access to food. Acute malnutrition rises quickly due to the lack of adequate treating centres, medical staff, equipment and medicines. Internal displacement from rural areas to urbanized centres and to remote rural areas continues due to violence and insecurity.

Operational Constraints

- Humanitarian access improves slightly in areas with Government presence and in areas where access has been negotiated between the Government and the power holding armed groups. Operational constraints include road blockades, checkpoints, attacks on humanitarian personnel and goods as well as kidnapping of international staff for ransom.

Priority Needs

- Emergency protection interventions, provision of psycho-sociological support for victims of violence and vulnerable groups such as children and adolescents, women and elderly. Provision of emergency health services and epidemiological surveillance as well as adequate services to treat acute malnutrition. Provision of emergency education services.

Annex 5. Reporting template

Title of assessment:
Include: location of assessment, date, and team members names

Introduction
Include: Context, reason for assessment, overall objective of assessment and time frame of assessment

Methodology
Include: data collection methods, site selection and reasons for selection, constraints faced, Annex tools used for data collection, checklists etc.

Analysis
Scenario reporting template

"Name of the scenario – e.g. "Heavy Rainfall Scenario"						
		Low				*High*
Affected population	*Probability level*			X		
	Impact level					X
XXX.XXX – XXX.XXX						

Core assumptions

Short description of change factors (drivers) and assumptions: (change factor: heavy rainfall). e.g.:

- After heavy rainfall in the south the floodwaters did not recede for two months and a large area remains inaccessible for assessment and intervention.
- Government calls for international assistance to address the IDP issues.
- Very low in-country capacity of humanitarian actors to respond to the disaster.

Context and impact	*Overall effects and impact of the event, e.g.:* ↘ Influx of 150,000 IDPs in overcrowded and inadequate shelter expose the population to public health threats like during the 2008 floods when outbreaks were reported in camps. Affected urban population is attended to, but rural population has to wait several weeks before receiving first assistance due to road disruption. ↘ *Affected areas*: e.g., southwest provinces of the country are the most affected area. ↘ *Affected groups*: e.g., IDPs in public building and camps as well as host population and their characteristics (number, demographics, and specific vulnerable groups). ↘ Duration of the emergency situation: Period of time during which emergency assistance may be required.
Operational constraints	↘ Access, security, logistics and communication
Priority needs	↘ Key interventions (including intervention/assessment, preparedness measures): Food, water and non-food items distribution will be required. Air transportation for relief items. Early warning system and surveillance for communicable diseases. Coordinated assessment mechanisms. ↘ Description of needs for specific affected groups: e.g. IDPs in camps and public building will need temporary shelter until access to their lands and homes is possible.

Response Options Chosen

Include: the response analysis tool and highlight those response options chosen to implement.

Notes

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

For more information on this IFRC publication, please contact:

International Federation of
Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Hakan Karay

Senior Disaster Response Officer,
Disaster and Crisis Management Department

E-mail: hakan.karay@ifrc.org

Tel: +41 (0)22 730 45 13

Skype: reliefofficer1

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