

REPORTING
Second Draft

**Post-Disaster
Damage Assessment
and
Need Analysis**



Asian Disaster Preparedness Center

PO Box 4, Klong Luang Pathumthani 12120 Thailand

www.adpc.ait.ac.th

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
1. Introduction	2
2. Types of Assessment	2
3. Reports	3
4. Format of Reports	4
5. Quantifying Needs	5
6. Terminology	6
7. Resources	6
8. Priorities	6
9. International Donors	7
10. Training	7
 Annexes:	
Annex A: Suggested Format for FLASH Report	8
Annex B: Suggested Format for INITIAL Report	9
Annex C: Suggested Format for Inventory of Resources	14
Annex D: Most Common Priority Needs after Disasters in Asia	16

Acknowledgements

This document incorporates the outputs of the ADPC Workshop on Post-Disaster Assessment and Needs Analysis, Bangkok 24-28 April 2000, extracts from documents produced by participants in the Workshop, and also draws on a variety of other publications including the US Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance Field Operations Guide, the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Field Handbook, the SPHERE Project, and South Pacific Disaster Reduction Program's Guide to Successful Damage Reporting. Permission to incorporate material from these sources is gratefully acknowledged.

INTRODUCTION

1. If officials responsible for organizing post-disaster relief operations are to make effective decisions about the deployment of resources it is essential that they be properly informed. They must have appropriate and timely information about what has happened, what needs to be done, and what resources are available. Their decisions can save lives, minimize injury damage and loss, prevent escalation, prevent secondary hazards and inform people who need to know. Well-organized response will also help to build confidence and enhance credibility.
2. Relief operations are, in essence, the management of information and resources, based on assessments and reports. Information is needed at all levels of administration but the nature of the information required will vary from one level to another. Good assessments and reporting require forethought; the assessment and reporting system should be established in preparedness planning.
3. Some of the data required is already available in the form of *baseline data* (maps, population statistic etc.), which must however be accessible, but this baseline data must be supplemented by *real-time information* (mostly in the form of incoming reports from various sources after the disaster).¹
4. There is a clearly defined sequence to the process of managing information – converting raw data to useful information:
 - Information “in”
 - Sorting (grading, collating, discarding what is unreliable)
 - Evaluation
 - Decision making
 - Information “out” (dissemination)
 - Action
5. Passing on information is every bit as important as receiving it.

TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

6. There are two types of assessment:
 - **Situation (damage) Assessment:** a description of *what has happened*;
 - **Needs Assessment:** a statement of *what needs to be done*.

¹Data is a structured collection of words, figures and other characters; information is useful data.

REPORTS

7. **A FLASH Report** (sometimes called a SOS Report) should be submitted *very quickly*. Its purpose is simply to confirm that the disaster has actually occurred, that steps are being taken to cope with it, to give a first indication of the sort of external relief that might be required, and to inform the recipients that further reports will follow shortly. A suggested format for a FLASH Report is at ANNEX A.
8. **An INITIAL Report** should follow the flash report as soon as possible (within a matter of hours). Its purpose is to inform the recipients of the severity of the disaster and, more importantly, by relating the severity of the disaster to coping capacities, provides the information needed to start mobilizing resources from outside the affected area to help. The report should therefore *briefly* summarize:
 - the severity of the disaster (without necessarily providing precise figures);
 - actions being taken locally;
 - local coping capacities (including locally available resources);
 - the immediate priorities for external relief, where it is required and in *approximately* what quantities; and
 - possible, if there are alternatives, suggest the best logistical means of delivering that relief.
 - a forecast of possible future developments including new risks.
9. A suggested format for an Initial Report is at Annex B.
10. The situation, needs and priorities will change over time. An assessment only describes the state of affairs at the time that the assessment is made. An initial assessment should, therefore, also establish the system for subsequent reports.
11. **An Interim Report** should build on earlier reports providing *additional* and more precise information. To begin with interim reports should be submitted every 24 hours at the same time every day (the time being determined by the recipient according to *his* needs) and thereafter at intervals decided by the recipient. As time goes by, the emphasis of interim reports will shift from the needs for relief to the needs for rehabilitation and reconstruction (e.g. repairs to damaged structures, restoration of agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries and industrial production). It is not necessary to repeat what has already been said in earlier reports unless the earlier details require updating. Interim reports should provide forecasts (with inputs from specialists and people who have experience of previous disasters) and highlight information which may not otherwise be obvious to the recipients e.g.:
 - potential problems;
 - changes, patterns, trends and indicators;
 - particulars of especially vulnerable groups, and any other special concerns.

12. **Specialist or Technical Reports** will provide supplementary technical details for specialists (e.g. engineers and officials responsible for emergency health care.)
13. **A Final Report** will be a summary of:
 - What happened
 - How the response was managed
 - Lessons learned
14. In preparing a report the writer should put himself in the position of the people to whom he is reporting and ask himself “What do *they* need to know in order to meet their responsibilities and to make the right decisions?”
15. A report should not be packed with unnecessary data, nor should it be delayed because of insufficient information. It is better to say “*We do not have as much information as we would like but, on the basis of what we do know and our experience, in broad terms the situation is as follows and we estimate the needs to be in the following range... We shall provide more details as soon as we can*”.
16. The details provided in reports should be as consistent. Conflicting reports from different sources can cause confusion. Desirably, reports from one level of administration to another should be consolidated.

FORMAT OF REPORTS

17. Given that reports will be received from many sources, it is essential that their formats are standard so as to facilitate the process of analysis and collation. Likewise, there should be common understanding of the terminology used. It is, therefore, better that the recipients rather than the writers design the formats. This will ensure that the information is presented in the way that is most helpful to the people who have to act upon it. Reports should be a balance of narrative and tables and they should be formatted so that they can be transmitted electronically.
18. Formats should be as simple as possible and should, like check lists, guide the reporter (who may be inexperienced in organizing disaster response operations) through the sequence of stating the problem → identifying the current status of response → identifying unmet needs (shortfalls or gaps) → decision-making.
19. To keep the formats simple it is better that they are presented in a series of separate parts. This will also make it easier for the recipient to distribute the parts for action by different desk officers. Suggested parts might include:

1. Search and rescue;
 2. Evacuation;
 3. Protection;
 4. Medical and Health;
 5. Shelter and clothing;
 6. Food (including cooking utensils and cooking fuel);
 7. Water;
 8. Sanitation
 9. Lifeline systems (communications, power supplies, transport, etc)
20. The person responsible for completing each part should be clearly designated. Each part should indicate the need for relief workers, supplies and relevant logistical requirements. Unless otherwise stated, the provider should assume that the relief he supplies must be self-sufficient (e.g. food and accommodation for relief workers, transport and drivers, fuel, storage, maintenance, etc). It is often helpful to indicate what is *not* needed (which also shows that that particular item has not been overlooked).

QUANTIFYING NEEDS

21. At some stage it will be necessary to quantify needs. Do not assume that everybody is a “helpless victim” requiring every sort of assistance. Helping people to help themselves is an important part of their rehabilitation. Initial assessments should concentrate on the effects of the disaster and not attempt to rectify chronic needs². In quantifying needs it is sometimes appropriate to use internationally accepted standards³ and planning factors. Examples of planning factors are:

- X Search and Rescue Teams per Y missing people
- X items (plastic sheeting or cooking sets) per family
- Shelter for x% of homeless people (on the assumption that many will have found their own shelter with neighbours or family members further afield)
- X grams of staple food per person for Y days
- X grams per child per day for Y days (for supplementary feeding)
- X liters per person for Y days.
- X tons/liters to create reserves.

22. ***With Flash and Initial Assessments speed of reporting is more important than precise figures.***

²subsequent reports may help to identify unacknowledged problems in society which can be addressed later during rehabilitation.

³Examples of international standards are to found in UNHCR’s Emergency Training Program “Tools and Resources” and the SPHERE Project.

TERMINOLOGY

23. Imprecise terminology, or different interpretations of it, can cause confusion. After a disaster terminology relates primarily to the classification of the victims and the damage to structures and/or services. What is an “affected” person? What does “damaged” mean? The meaning of terms to be used in reports must be clearly defined and standardized in the pre-disaster planning period.
24. **Victims.** It is not necessary to give the total populations of the towns/villages in the affected area since these figures will already be known with sufficient accuracy from population censuses. It is better to describe victims in terms of *needs* e.g. those in need of evacuation, shelter, water, etc.
25. **Damage** can best be described in terms of usability e.g.⁴:

% Damaged	Meaning
100	Structure is unusable. Cannot be repaired.
> 75	Major structural damage. Unsafe for use. Repairable within 1 month.
> 50	Significant structural damage. Unsafe for use. Repairs will take more than 1 week.
> 25	Some structural damage but safe for limited use. Repairable within 1 week.
< 25	Minor structural damage. Usable.

26. The tracking of resources will be crucial to effective response. A suggested format for an Inventory of Resources is at Annex C.

PRIORITIES

27. Experience has shown that there is a consistency of priorities for relief items after certain types of natural disasters. These are shown at Annex D.

⁴Based upon WHO Damage Assessment Form

INTERNATIONAL DONORS

28. Consideration must also be given to the needs of the providers of international relief. They will be pressing to be told what has happened and what they can do to help. For them timing is critical. They will also require assistance in facilitating immigration, exemption of taxes on relief supplies, and help in integrating their relief personnel into the overall relief effort (interpreters, methodologies, equipment and administrative support).

TRAINING

29. Officials responsible for conducting assessments and acting on them require regular training.

ANNEX A

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR A FLASH REPORT

PART 1 – SITUATION

- 1.1. Type of disaster
- 1.2. Date and time
- 1.3. Affected area
- 1.4. Possibility of after effects

PART 2 – INITIAL ESTIMATE OF EFFECTS

Very Approximate Numbers

- 2.1. Dead
- 2.2. Injured
- 2.3. Missing
- 2.4. In need of shelter and/or clothing
- 2.5. In need of food
- 2.6. In need of water
- 2.7. In need of sanitation
- 2.8. Damage to lifeline systems

PART 3 – POSSIBLE NEEDS FOR EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE

- 3.1 Search and Rescue Yes/No
- 3.2 Evacuation Yes/No
- 3.3 Protection Yes/No
- 3.4 Medical and Health Yes/No
- 3.5 Shelter and clothing Yes/No
- 3.6 Food Yes/No
- 3.7 Water Yes/No
- 3.8 Sanitation Yes/No
- 3.9 Repair of lifeline systems Yes/No

PART 4 – NEXT REPORT

The next report, with more details, will be sent at (date/time).

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR AN INITIAL REPORT

PART 1 – SITUATION

- 1.1. Type of disaster
- 1.2. Date and time
- 1.3. Affected area
- 1.4. Number of dead (approx)
- 1.5. Next Report will be sent at (date/time)

PART 2 – SEARCH & RESCUE

Serial Number	Location (district, town or village. Say if the sites are “deep rescue”*)	Total number of people missing (approx)	Response Status (local S&R resources deployed)	Unmet needs for which additional S&R resources are requested (give details e.g. teams, rescue boats, special expertise, heavy equipment)	Priority
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
2.1					
2.2					
2.3					
etc					
Total					

* “Deep rescue” is underground, sometimes associated with a risk of further collapse and/or breathing difficulties.

PART 3 – EVACUATION

Serial Number	Location (district, town or village)	Total number of people to be evacuated (approx)	Response Status (number of people being evacuated under local arrangements)	Unmet needs for which additional evacuation assistance is requested	Priority
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
3.1					
3.2					
3.3					
etc					
Total					

PART 4 – PROTECTION (if applicable)

Serial Number	Location (district, town or village)	Total number of people needing protection (approx)	Response Status (number of people being protected under local arrangements)	Unmet needs for which additional protection arrangements are requested	Priority
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
4.1					
4.2					
4.3					
etc					
Total					

PART 5 – MEDICAL & HEALTH

See page 12

PART 6 – SHELTER AND CLOTHING

Serial Number	Location (district, town or village)	Total number of people requiring shelter or clothing	Response Status (number of people being provided with shelter or clothing under local arrangements)	Unmet needs (number of people for whom external assistance is requested (specify <i>type</i> of assistance required e.g. tents, plastic sheeting, blankets, mosquito nets, clothing))	Priority
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
6.1					
6.2					
6.3					
etc					
Total					

PART 7 – FOOD

Serial Number	Location (district, town or village)	Total number of people requiring food	Response Status (number of people being provided with food under local arrangements)	Unmet needs (number of people for whom external supplies of food are requested. Say if cooking equipment and cooking fuel are required)	Priority
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
7.1					
7.2					
7.3					
etc					
Total					

PART 8 - WATER

Serial Number	Location (district, town or village)	Total number of people without potable water	Response Status (number of people being supplied with potable water under local arrangements; condition of supply system and repair status; availability of surface water)	Unmet needs (number of people for whom external supplies of water are requested. Say if treatment supplies, containers or trucks are needed)	Priority
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
8.1					
8.2					
8.3					
etc					
Total					

PART 9 - SANITATION

Serial Number	Location (district, town or village)	Total number of people without adequate sanitation	Response Status (number of people being provided with adequate sanitation under local arrangements)	Unmet needs (number of people for whom external arrangements for sanitation are requested. Say what arrangements are needed e.g. latrines, soap, detergents, chlorine powder, insecticides, sprayers)	Priority
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
9.1					
9.2					
9.3					
etc					
Total					

PART 10 – LIFELINE SYSTEMS

See page 13

PART 5 – MEDICAL & HEALTH

Serial Number	Location (district, town or village)	Injured		Response Status (condition of medical facilities, hospital wards, casualty rooms, operating theaters, laboratories, water supply, ancillary equipment)	Unmet Needs (List personnel, supplies and equipment required from external sources)	Priority
		Serious	Walking wounded			
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
5.1						
5.2						
5.3						
etc						
Total						

ANNEX C

PART 10 – LIFELINE SYSTEMS

Serial Number	Location (district, town or village, or place to place)	Response Status (condition of systems)				Unmet Needs (List personnel, supplies and equipment requested from external sources)	Priority
		Roads & Bridges	Railways	Power Supplies	Communication System		
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
10.1							
10.2							
10.3							
etc							
Total							

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES
(personnel, materials, financial)

Serial Number	Resource	Location	Contact Address	Available?	Committed to	Notes

ANNEX D**MOST COMMON PRIORITY NEEDS
AFTER DISASTERS IN ASIA**

Need	Typhoons	Floods	Earthquakes
Search & Rescue	Marine SAR	Rescue boats with engines (inflatable and sturdy)	Usually <u>NOT</u> external SAR Teams
Medical	Supplies	Bandages, gauze, Splints <u>NOT</u> medicines	Surgical sets Splints Bandages Sutures <u>NOT</u> medicines
Water Supply	Treatment supplies: - Chlorine tablets - Treatment units - Household containers (20 – 25 Liter) - Community tanks or bladders (5,000 – 8,000 liters) - Water trucks	Treatment supplies: ditto	Treatment supplies: ditto
Shelter	Tents Plastic sheeting Blankets or sleeping bags Mosquito nets	ditto	ditto <u>NOT</u> clothing
Expertise			Structural engineers
\$	\$\$\$	\$\$\$	\$\$\$
Other			Electric generators (5 – 10 KVA)

disaster reduction for safer communities and sustainable development



Asian Disaster Preparedness Center

PO Box 4, Klong Luang, Pathumthani 12120, Thailand
Tel: (66-02) 524-5354 Fax: (66-02) 524-5360

email: adpc@ait.ac.th
www.adpc.ait.ac.th