The Minimum Standards

1 Analysis

Programmes that meet the needs of disaster affected populations must be based on a clear understanding of the situation. The people affected by the disaster, agencies, donors and local authorities need to know that interventions are appropriate and effective. Analysis of the effects of the disaster and of the impact of the shelter and site programme itself are therefore critical. If the problem is not correctly identified and understood then it will be difficult, if not impossible, to make the right response.

Standardised methods of analysis that are used across the sectors have great potential to identify rapidly acute humanitarian needs and to ensure that resources are directed accordingly. This section sets out agreed standards and indicators for collecting and analysing information to identify needs, to design programmes and to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness.

The analysis standards apply before any programme takes place and throughout the programme cycle. Analysis starts with an immediate initial assessment that identifies the impact of the disaster and whether and how to respond. It continues with monitoring, which identifies how well the programme is meeting needs and determines whether changes are required; and with evaluation, which determines the overall effectiveness of the programme and identifies lessons for the future.

The sharing of information and knowledge among all those involved, including the affected populations, is fundamental to achieving a full understanding of the problem and coordinated assistance. Documenting and disseminating information from the analysis process contributes to a broad understanding of the adverse public health and other consequences of disasters and assists in the development of improved disaster prevention and mitigation strategies.

The analysis standards below apply to all three scenarios described in the introduction to this chapter, and to the standards for shelter, clothing, household items, site selection and site planning which follow.

Analysis standard 1: assessment

Programme decisions are based on a demonstrated understanding of the emergency situation and on a clear analysis of people's needs for shelter, clothing and household items.

Key indicators

- An immediate initial assessment that follows internationally accepted procedures is carried out by appropriately experienced personnel.
- The assessment is conducted in cooperation with a multi-sectoral team (water and sanitation, nutrition, food, shelter, health), local authorities, representatives of the affected population and humanitarian agencies intending to respond to the situation.
- The information is gathered and presented in a way that allows for transparent and consistent decision making.
- The information gathered identifies needs for shelter, clothing and household items, and baseline data for monitoring and evaluation. The initial assessment considers the following:
  - **The profile of the displaced population** including:

    Health and nutritional profile (see Health Services, chapter 6 and Nutrition, chapter 3).

    Demographic profile (by gender, age, social grouping).

    Extent of integration with, or segregation from, the local population.

    Attitudes to external assistance, gender and religion.

    Traditional means of support, and whether people are rural or urban in origin.

Traditional lifestyle in terms of use of space, cooking and food storage, child care and hygiene practices.

Traditional building skills and construction methods.

The type of shelter adopted by the displaced population, where relevant.

The needs of groups that are at risk of additional harm.

Actual or potential threats to the security of, and within, the displaced population.

- **The social and economic profile of the host population** including:

  Attitudes towards the influx of displaced people, taking into consideration social, ethnic and/or trade links.

  Previous use of sites proposed for temporary settlement.

  Usage of surrounding natural resources and agricultural land.

  Local building typologies and the market for, and sources of, construction materials.

- **Local infrastructural, natural and material resources** including:

  Level and condition of access including roads, potential supply airstrips, railheads and ports.

  Quantities of wood required for fuel and construction, and of water that can be extracted in a sustainable way.

  Heavy plant already in the area, such as bulldozers and graders, for road-building and site preparation.

- **Physical information** including:

  Topography of the area of land available, and suitable for, settlement and agriculture.

  Variety and protection of potential water sources. (See Water Supply and Sanitation, chapter 2.)

  Areas in the environment that are vulnerable to overexploitation.

Seasonal variations including rainfall, snowfall, temperature variation, high winds, flooding.

Endemic diseases, vectors and pests. (See Water Supply and Sanitation, chapter 2 and Health Services, chapter 6.)

- The assessment considers the national standards for shelter in the country where the disaster has occurred, or in the country where humanitarian assistance is provided, if different.
- Recommendations are made on whether or not external assistance is needed. If assistance is required, recommendations are made on priorities, a strategy for intervention and resources needed. An assessment report is produced that covers key areas and appropriate recommendations.
- Assessment findings are shared with other sectors, national and local authorities, representatives of the affected population and participating agencies.

Guidance notes and critical issues

1. For further details of assessment requirements for site selection and planning, see Site standard 1, site selection. The guidance notes for this standard provide details of the information needed for physical and environmental assessments.

2. Use of early warning information and emergency preparedness should be supported wherever possible as they can contribute to the assessment. Preparedness includes personnel training and stockpiling of supplies, such as shelter materials, in strategic positions. If there is an early warning that a population movement is likely to take place, relevant information needs to be collected immediately and analysed: an inventory of the response capacity of local authorities, the UN system and agencies on the ground should be made; there should be awareness of available experienced personnel, of development plans and of supplies and equipment that can be diverted until replacements are available.

3. Timeliness is of the essence for the initial assessment, which should be carried out as soon as possible after the disaster. If required, there should be an immediate response to critical needs at the same time. As a general rule, a report should be generated within a week of arrival at the site of the disaster, though this depends on the particular event and the wider situation.

4. People who are able to collect information from all groups in the affected population in a culturally acceptable manner should be included, especially with regard to gender and language skills.

5. The procedure for conducting the assessment should be agreed upon by all participants before field work begins and specific tasks contributing to the assessment should be assigned accordingly. A shelter and construction specialist should be included in the assessment team if possible.

6. There are many different techniques for information gathering and these should be chosen carefully to match the situation and the type of information required. As a general rule, information should be gathered more frequently when the situation is changing more rapidly, and when there are critical developments such as new population movements or an epidemic outbreak of diarrhoea. Initial assessments may be quick and unrefined but analysis improves as more time and data are available. Checklists are a useful way of ensuring that all the key questions have been examined.

7. The socio-economic assessment can be based on techniques such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and People-Oriented Planning (POP). If it is not possible to allocate resources to this approach, unstructured interviews and observation should be used.

8. Information for the assessment report can be compiled from existing literature, relevant historical material, pre-emergency data and from discussions with appropriate, knowledgeable people including donors, agency staff, government personnel, community leaders, women, elders, participating health staff, teachers, traders and so on. National or regional level preparedness plans may also be an important source of information.

9. The assessment and subsequent analysis should demonstrate an awareness of underlying structural, political, economic and environmental issues operating in the area. It is imperative that prior experience and the views of the people affected by the disaster are taken into consideration when analysing the dynamics and impact of the new emergency. This requires inclusion of local expertise and knowledge in data collection and analysis of resources, capacities, vulnerabilities and needs. The current and pre-emergency living conditions of displaced and non-displaced people in the area must also be considered.
10. The needs of groups that are at risk of additional harm such as women, children, elderly people, physically and mentally disabled people must be considered. Gender roles within the social system need to be identified.
11. Thinking and analysis concerning the post-disaster recovery period should be part of the initial assessment, so that interventions to meet immediate emergency requirements can serve to foster recovery among the affected population.

Analysis standard 2: monitoring and evaluation

The performance and effectiveness of the shelter and site programme and changes in the context are monitored and evaluated.

Key indicators

- The information collected for monitoring and evaluation is timely and useful; it is recorded and analysed in a logical, consistent and transparent manner.
- Systems are in place that enable systematic collection of information on the impact (positive or negative) of the intervention on shelter, clothing and household needs, and on the environment.
- The use of household items and goods is monitored.
- There is regular analytical reporting on the impact of the shelter and site programme on the affected population. There is also reporting

of any contextual changes and other factors that may necessitate adjustment to the programme.

- Monitoring activities provide information on the effectiveness of the programme in meeting the needs of different groups within the affected population.
- Systems are in place that enable an information flow between the programme and other sectors, the affected population, the relevant local authorities, donors and others as needed.
- The programme is evaluated with reference to stated objectives and agreed minimum standards to measure its overall effectiveness and impact on the affected population.

Guidance notes and critical issues

1. Emergencies are volatile and dynamic by definition. Regular and current information is therefore vital in ensuring that programmes remain relevant. Information derived from continual monitoring of programmes should be fed into reviews and evaluations. In some circumstances, a shift in strategy may be required to respond to major changes in the context or needs. Evaluation of the shelter situation after a period of around six months allows for decisions to be made as to whether and how the programme should continue. On the basis of this information it becomes possible to plan for sustainable activities, long term involvement of agencies, and to address issues of repatriation and reintegration.

2. Information generated by the assessment process is used for monitoring and evaluation of the shelter and site programme. It may also contribute to an initial baseline for the health information system. Monitoring and evaluation activities require close cooperation with other sectors.

3. Information collected should be directly relevant to the programme, in other words it should be useful and should be used. It should also be shared as needed with other sectors and agencies, and with the affected populations. The means of communication used (dissemination methods, language and so on) must be appropriate for the intended audience.

4. Evaluation is important because it measures effectiveness, identifies lessons for future preparedness and humanitarian assistance, and promotes accountability. Evaluation refers here to two, linked processes:

   a) Internal programme evaluation is normally carried out by staff as part of the regular analysis and review of monitoring information. The agency must also evaluate the effectiveness of all its programmes in a given disaster situation or compare its programmes across different situations.

   b) External evaluation may by contrast be part of a wider evaluation exercise by agencies and donors, and may take place, for example, after the acute phase of the emergency. When evaluations are carried out it is important that the techniques and resources used are consistent with the scale and nature of the programme, and that the report describes the methodology employed and the processes followed in reaching conclusions. Outcomes of evaluations should be disseminated to all the humanitarian actors, including the affected population.