
Guidance Note

Rapid Joint Needs Assessment – Phase 01 (INDIA)

Phase 1 – Initial Days
(1-25 days in the immediate
aftermath of a disaster)

Disclaimer:

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in all our information updates, human error at times does get in. please let us know of any typo errors within the document

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Proposed Guidance Document Carrying out the Rapid Joints Needs Assessment Phase 1 – Initial Days (1-25 days in the immediate aftermath of a disaster)

1. Purpose of this guidance

This guidance is intended to support assessment teams in carrying out rapid needs assessment in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, as well as completing the rapid needs assessment report. It is guidance only, and assessment teams can follow their own processes, or adapt the proposals here to suit their own needs. For any questions about the assessment process, please contact

- a. your Regional Programme team leader or
- b. Refer the nearest state level Inter Agency Coordinator or
- c. Reach out to the Sphere India platform at the national level,

2. Objectives of the review process

The assessment process is intended as an immediate reflex action for programmes and their partners to reach out to the affected communities through informed decision making backed by credible information on needs and identified geographies, in relation to the commitments made under the actions mandated by humanitarian imperative.

The core objective of phase 1 Rapid Needs Assessment is to provide a rapid overview of the disaster and the needs for assistance. The assessment will serve the following purposes:

- a) Information collected through this format to form the basis for decision making in the initial stages of a disaster, including the need for more detailed assessments.
- b) This format is designed to assist in the completion of a Phase 1 joint report which is intended to be ready within five days of a sudden onset disaster.
- c) To provide opportunities for reflection and learning between the programme team, partners and other relevant stakeholders in order to synthesise and interpret data, and build ownership and shared understanding of results and priorities
- d) To challenge ourselves to perform even better and provide greater value for money and to ensure decisions are informed by evidence
- e) To hold ourselves accountable for the commitments we have made to the communities we work for, our partners, supporters, funders and others

Note: This format is presently for use in primarily in Rural areas but can be contextualised for Urban settings as well. The data collection ought to be completed in three days and reporting in the two following days. The format compiles information from several sources such as MIRA, JNA formats, Individual agencies RNA etc.

3. Needs Assessment process

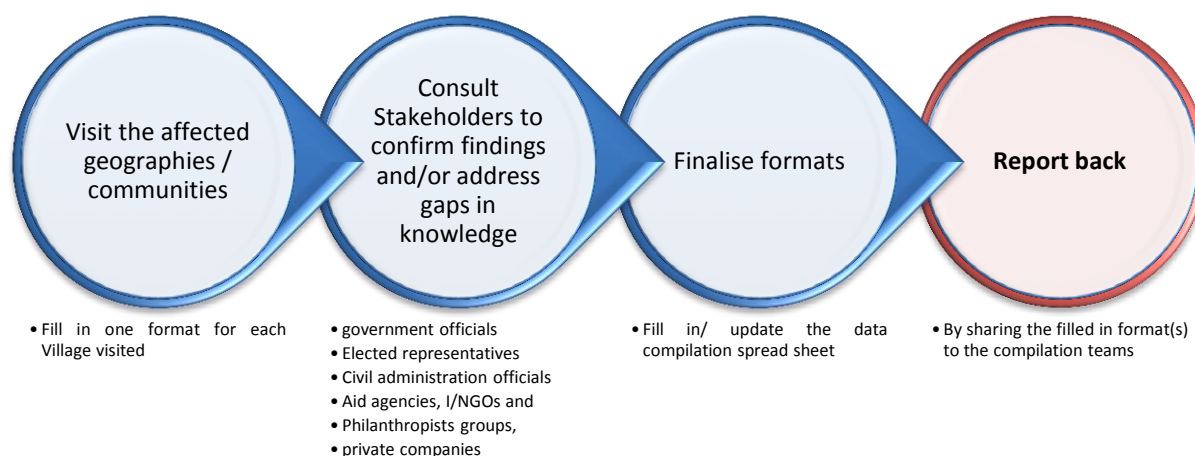
The rapid needs assessment will follow the ToR developed for this process, (please refer the ToR in the Annexure 01)

Once the assessment has been agreed, the following steps will be taken by the Assessment Team to complete the phase 1 format:

- Visit the affected geographies / communities in all disaster affected Villages
- Fill in one format for each Village visited
- Consult government officials and elected representatives (Village committee members, elected representatives) to fill out this format

- Consult other civil administration officials, Aid agencies, I/NGOs and Philanthropists groups, private companies operating in the affected Village(s) to confirm findings and/or address gaps in knowledge
- Finalise the formats and update the data compilation spread sheet
- Report back by sharing the filled in format(s) to the compilation teams

Figure 1. Needs Assessment Process



4. Timeline of the needs assessment

The rapid needs assessment is a contextual exercise that should ideally begin in the immediate aftermath of a disaster (*ex post*). However, there are times when the early warning supports preempt such actions to start prior to the event (*ex ante*) and help in saving quality time post event.

The ideal timeline in a post disaster scenario suggests the following timeline

- a) Pre disaster preparedness actions:
 - i. Training on the needs assessment formats
 - ii. Identification of the teams
 - iii. Demarcation of the vulnerable geographies
 - iv. Collection of secondary data
 - v. Agreements with the govt. officials and civil authorities, elected representatives etc.
 - vi. Identification of roles and responsibilities within the teams and the state IAG's
- b) Day 00-01- process of readying for the needs assessment start
- c) Day 02-03- Assessment teams in the field start the assessments
- d) Day 03 onwards- early information starts coming in and data analysis starts at HQ level
- e) Day 04-05- consolidation of primary and secondary data for a detailed analysis and emergence of critical needs and geographies – simultaneous report writing starts
- f) Day 05-07- Release of the final needs assessment report for the event by the State IAG and Sphere Platform (national)

5. Methodology

- It is important that interviews are conducted at the affected areas within the community habitations.
- It is also important to try to make contact with the identified person/ community at least twice, if the first attempt is unsuccessful. Without these steps, it is very likely that certain types of people, such as the marginalized communities, elderly, Single / widowed women, homemakers, students or the unemployed, will be more likely to participate than would be the case in a truly random selection and the results may well be biased.
- When introducing the questionnaire, the interviewer should make it clear that the intent of the questionnaire and the agency supporting the exercise is to understand the needs of the affected communities and does not in any way relate to a possible future response action either by the individual or the agency.
- The interviewers should ask the questions in the order that they are laid out in the questionnaire, without changing the wording and they should immediately record the responses.
- Participants will not be expected to read any of the questions or write down their answers, and they must never be put under pressure to answer anything that they don't want to answer.
- Inform the interviewer that they should not read out response category options or the answers in the boxes.

6. Question wise guidance

The district format is a mix of secondary data needs and some primary data while the village data format has a higher degree of primary data needed. Complete the format using a combination of key informant interviews, field visits, and direct observation:

Village level format

6.1 Village level format

Total questions: 91

- a) Q 1-7 – to be completed by the assessment team
- b) Q8 – to be filled on the basis of the Geo Coded photo taken with a GPS enabled smartphone camera or a digital camera
- c) Q9- & 11- to be filled by the assessment team in consultation with the partner agency or the state IAG
- d) Q10 &12- this data can be collected by the partner agency at the district / block level
- e) Q13-35, 38-41– fill these questions in mutual consultation with the villagers/ officials cross validated by field investigations where possible
- f) Q36- proper care and diligence while filling this questions
- g) Q37- this question and other questions need specific knowledge of the context and are ideally filled based on observation and attention instead of simple questioning
- h) Q42 -44- these are in some ways leading questions and care must be taken to ensure that we do not end up raising expectations and lead to anticipated early actions due to reflective responses
- i) Q45-68- fill these questions in mutual consultation with the villagers/ officials cross validated by field investigations where possible
- j) Q69-83- these are in some ways leading questions and care must be taken to ensure that we do not end up raising expectations and lead to anticipated early actions due to reflective responses

- k) Q84- specific care should be taken to fill these question as the categories have a tendency of sounding like each other
- l) Information Sources data should be legibly written and the respondents assured that this data will be used strictly in confidence and will serve an academic interest only

6.2 District level format

Total questions: 41

The district level format is to be filled by the partner agency or the district inter agency platform based on the secondary data available before hand and ex post data collection from the district headquarters. The district format has an iterative nature to it and may be refined/ revised twice in the lifecycle of the phase 01 Rapid Joint Needs Assessment

7. Good Practices

- Visit a number of different locations in the affected Village
- When there is conflicting information, the Assessment Team should fill the format in using their best idea at the time, based on their understanding of the disaster’s impact, their own professional experience, secondary data, and lessons learned from similar disasters
- When accessibility is challenged, but where phone communication is possible, the format can be completed over the phone with the permission of the organization/team coordinating the assessment.

8. Limitations

This format is not a survey, rather it:

- Provides a standard format for recording and comparing information about a disaster
- Presents an understanding of the disaster’s impact by the Govt. officials and other stakeholders in the affected area
- Outlines how the disaster is likely to unfold in the days and weeks to follow
- Uses information based on local knowledge and past experiences
- Uses estimations of the numbers/percentages of people affected in different ways (providing an estimate is challenging, but local authorities are in the best position to do this).
- Informs the agencies to mount immediate disaster assistance in the affected geographies and builds the base for need based scalable multi sectoral detailed needs assessment in the days to come.

Some information in this format relates to the pre-disaster situation in the location. This can and should be completed from pre-crisis sources (either in New Delhi/ State capitals or in the districts). Do not waste the time of block officials by/ respondents asking questions that could be answered easily using other sources of information.

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