Inter-Agency Standing Committee

THE MULTI CLUSTER/SECTOR INITIAL RAPID ASSESSMENT (MIRA) APPROACH

PROCESS, METHODOLOGIES and TOOLS

Provisional Version

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- SECTION I: AN OVERVIEW OF THE MIRA APPROACH 6
- SECTION II: PROCESS 9
- SECTION III: METHODOLOGY 13

3.1 Define Assessment Specific Objectives and Scope 13

3.2 Design / Adapt the Analytical Framework 13

3.3 The Secondary Data Review (SDR) 13

3.3.1 Collate pre- and post-disaster secondary information 13

3.3.2 Analyze pre- and post-disaster secondary information 16

3.3.3 Secondary information reliability 16

3.4 The Community Level Assessment (CLA) 16

3.4.1 Define sampling and site selection 16

3.4.2 Customize and pilot test the Investigation Form 17

3.4.3 Collect primary data 17

3.4.4 First and second level analysis 18

3.5 Reconcile SDR and CLA Information and Findings - Final Analysis and Interpretation 18

3.6 Report, Disseminate and Communicate Findings 18

3.6.1 Phase I - Preliminary Scenario Definition 18

3.6.2 Phase II - MIRA Report 19

3.7 The Assessment Cycle 19

3.8 Conclusion 19

- ANNEXE 1: SECONDARY DATA REVIEW 20
- ANNEXE 2: UNDERSTANDING AND CUSTOMIZING THE MIRA INVESTIGATION FORM 23
- ANNEXE 3: TECHNICAL BRIEF: DIRECT OBSERVATION 31
- ANNEXE 4: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS 34
- ANNEXE 5: PRELIMINARY SCENARIO DEFINITION TEMPLATE 38
- ANNEXE 6: MIRA REPORT TEMPLATE 44

ACRONYMS

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
AWG	Assessment Working Group
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CLA	Community Level Assessment
ECB-PROJECT	The Emergency Capacity Building Project
EFSA	World Food Programme Emergency Food Security Assessment
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IASC NATF	Inter-Agency Standing Committee Needs Assessment Task Force
ICCM	Inter-Cluster Coordination Mechanism
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSOCC	On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
PSD	Preliminary Scenario Definition
SDR	Secondary Data Review
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
UN	United Nations
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination System
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
WHO	United Nations World Health Programme

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SECTION I
AN OVERVIEW OF THE MIRA APPROACH

Rationale and Purpose

For several years the humanitarian community and donors have agreed that the absence of a coordinated approach to needs assessment among humanitarian actors has hindered evidence-based decision making and effective humanitarian response. While individual governments, UN Agencies and NGOs have developed various approaches to collecting and analyzing data on humanitarian needs, little effort was dedicated to ensuring the synergies necessary for a robust and holistic identification of humanitarian priorities.

In response, the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) created the Needs Assessment Task Force (NATF) in 2009 to promote cross-sectoral needs assessment initiatives and the holistic, consistent, reliable and timely collection and analysis of data on humanitarian needs in complex emergencies and natural disasters. To address calls for the cross-sectoral identification of key strategic humanitarian priorities, the IASC NATF developed the Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) Approach.

A MIRA is the assessment and analysis of needs carried out during the **first two weeks of a sudden onset disaster.** It is a **multi-sector** assessment carried out by key stakeholders which endeavors to provide the basic information fundamental to all actors, namely the **overview of affected population needs and response priorities** for international support. The MIRA allows stakeholders to **reach a shared understanding of the humanitarian situation and its likely evolution at its earliest stages to support initial strategic response decisions.**

The development of the MIRA approach has benefited from the wealth of experience and knowledge from United Nations organizations, NGOs, donors technical experts and academia and builds upon decades of field practice, lessons learned and existing guidance, tools and methodologies developed by NGOs, clusters and agencies.

It reflects a common vision of that which is both methodologically sound and realistically feasible given the highly challenging environment in which humanitarian needs assessments are frequently undertaken.

Approach

The MIRA Approach aims to structure and reinforce the processes, methodologies and tools supporting multi-sector/cluster assessments.

The process underpinning the MIRA approach aims to be sufficiently explicit as not be misinterpreted but flexible enough to be adapted to field specificities and to minimize delays in the assessment schedule.

Preparedness is key to the MIRA approach. The preparedness phase plays a crucial role in understanding agency and sector capacities, building on their strengths and using these to the fullest when a crisis occurs. This would also provide the opportunity for engagement of governments, and strengthening the involvement and lead of national institutions in assessments.

The performance of existing assessment coordination structures and mechanisms should be optimized during the crisis. For smaller-scale crises, existing in-country capacity to cover the key roles of assessment coordination and assessment and IM expertise should be optimized. In large-scale crises additional human resources for coordinated assessments will likely be required. Where a region is prone to crises, agencies could consider having additional capacity to support at the country level within regional offices. The cross-sectoral analysis that the MIRA approach facilitates is a key "added value" that the process develops.

In addition to process considerations, the MIRA Approach lays out Methodologies and Tools. These are articulated around three fundamental components:

Secondary Data Review (SDR)

The SDR is a standardized methodology for the systematic collation and analysis of pre- and post-disaster quantitative and qualitative secondary information designed to support the assessment of key humanitarian priorities. It helps to determine the extent of the affected areas, and estimate the number of affected people, taking into account the body of evidence about formulating expected response priorities developed over the past decades. The SDR is based on the recognition that secondary data plays a crucial role in the early stages of emergencies when collecting primary data is limited by human resources, time, and access constraints.

For the purpose of the MIRA, primary data is post-disaster data collected by the assessment team in the field, or by others using the same instrument. Primary data is data collected through first-hand experience, using questionnaires, checklist, observations, interviews or other methods that involve direct contact with the respondents (adapted from WFP and FAO). All other data sources that input into the overall analysis of a MIRA report are considered secondary, and can be divided in pre- and post-disaster sources.

Community Level Assessment (CLA)

The CLA is a standardized methodology for the systematic collection, collation and analysis of primary data gathered directly from affected communities. It takes into account the limitations inherent to primary data collection in the early stages of emergencies (e.g. limited number of sites, non-representative sampling) and builds strong synergies with the SDR.

Consequently the CLA focuses mostly on qualitative information and provides a unique opportunity to integrate "needs and priorities as perceived by affected populations" into the broader assessment of key humanitarian priorities. The CLA recommends fewer sites be assessed to allow for greater time at each site and a higher quality investigation. It builds on **direct observation, semi-structured interviews with generalist and specialized key informants** as well as **structured debriefs** (first level of analysis) carried out by field assessment teams at the level of communities.

Analytical Framework (AF)

The AF facilitates the blending of sectoral secondary and primary data by clearly defining and aligning intra- and inter-sectoral information needs to ensure sufficient convergence for reaching a commonly shared understanding of key strategic humanitarian priorities.

As a tool, the AF will:

- Support the definition and alignment of intra- and inter-sectoral information needs;
- Support the identification of required information sources;
- Serve as a common and structured repository for SDR and CLA data/information in support of analysis and interpretation; and
- Provide a structure for reporting on findings.

Deliverables

The Preliminary Scenario Definition (PSD) is the first output of a MIRA Approach. It should be produced in the first 72 hours in order to inform initial response planning and initial funding appeals (i.e. Flash Appeal, CERF, ERF). It may be updated to reflect the evolution of the situation (see Figure 1).

The MIRA Report, the final output of the MIRA Approach, should be produced within 2 weeks of a disaster in order to inform in-depth response planning, including revised appeals, where applicable.

Larger frame of coordinated assessments

The MIRA was not developed in isolation and is, in fact, part of a larger vision on coordinated assessments. The IASC has developed an Assessment Framework outlining a continuum of phases from 0 (preparedness) through 4 (Early Recovery). The MIRA represents the first steps in a series of assessments and activities aimed at ensuring assessments are coordinated and harmonized to provide a more concise picture and robust understanding of a humanitarian situation as it evolves.

Figure 1: MIRA Phases and Products

<table>
<tr><th>TIMESCALE</th><th>72 HOURS</th><th>WEEK 1</th><th>WEEK 2</th><th>WEEK 3</th><th>WEEK 4</th><th>WEEK 5</th></tr>
<tr><td>Assessment Phase</td><td colspan="2">PHASE 1</td><td>PHASE 2</td><td colspan="2">PHASE 3</td><td>PHASE 4</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Deliverables</td><td rowspan="2">PSD</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">PSD Update(s) + MIRA Report</td><td colspan="3">Humanitarian Dashboard</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">In-depth Sectoral Assessments or Multi-Cluster Assessments</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Recovery Assessments</td></tr>
</table>

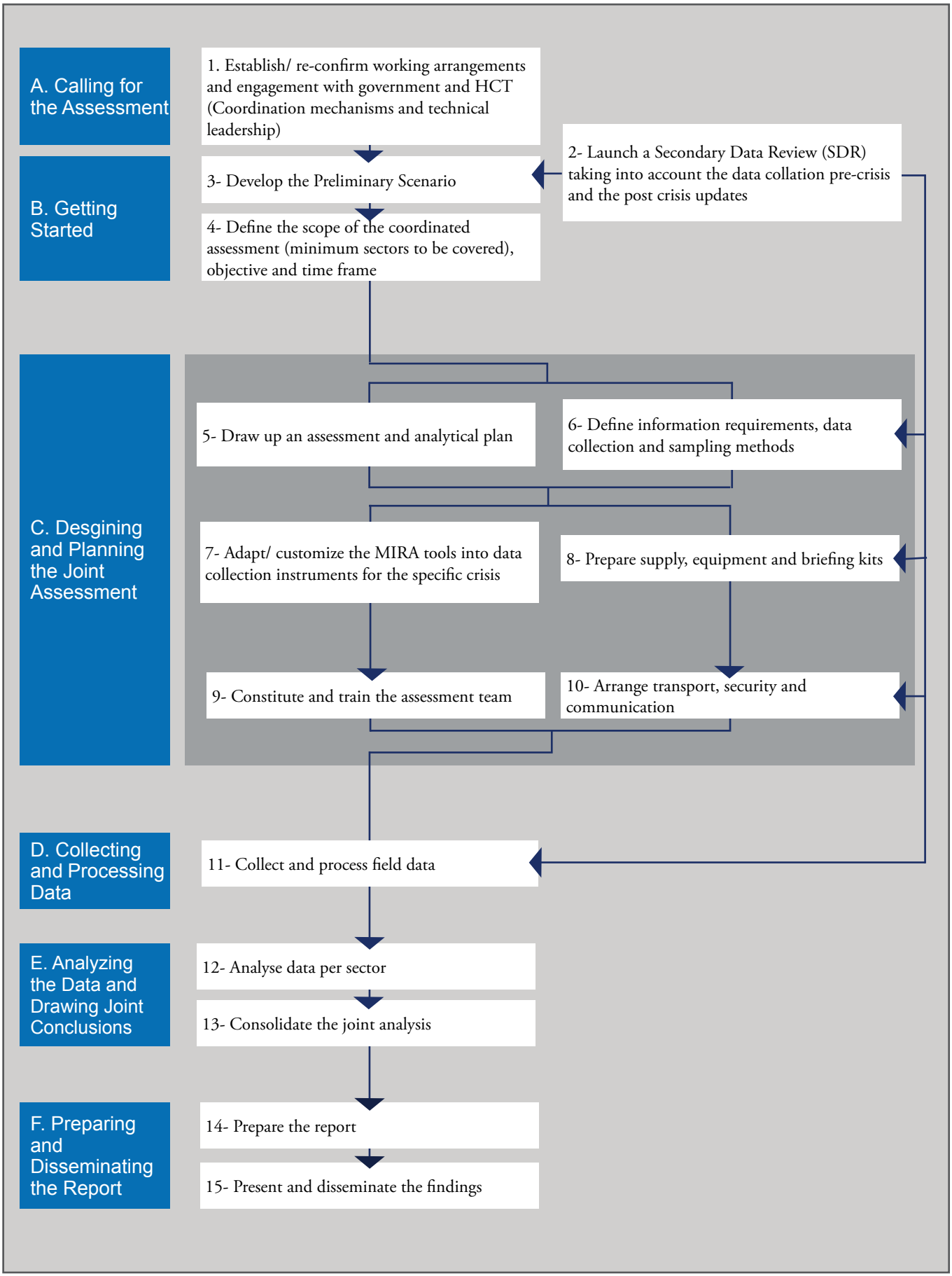
	PREPAREDNESS	SAVING AND SUSTAINING LIVES AND RE-ESTABLISHING ESSENTIAL SERVICES		SAVING LIVELIHOODS AND RE-ESTABLISHING ESSENTIAL SERVICES	
TIMING	**PHASE 0** Before	**PHASE 1** 72 hours	**PHASE 2** Week 1-2	**PHASE 3** Week 3+	**PHASE 4** Second month +
RECOMMENDED TYPE OF COORDINATED ASSESSMENT	**Coordinated Assessment Preparedness**	**Initial Assessment for Preliminary Scenario Definition**	**Multi Cluster/Sector Rapid Assessment**	**Single Cluster/ Sector Coordinated In-depth Assessments**, harmonized across Clusters/Sectors (any single agency assessments should be coordinated by Cluster/Sector Coordinators)	**Continued Single Cluster/ Sector Coordinated In-depth Assessments, with (early) Recovery considerations**, harmonized across Clusters/Sectors (any single agency assessments are coordinated by Cluster/Sector Coordinators)
		MIRA (Multi-cluster Initial and Rapid Assessment)		Continued Inter-Cluster/Sector Assessment Coordination	
ASSESSMENT TYPE & PURPOSE	Coordinated assessment preparedness planning and gathering pre-crisis data	**Initial Assessment** to • Estimate scale & severity of the impact of the event • Locate affected populations • Inform initial response decisions • Inform Phase-2 rapid assessments	**Rapid assessment** to • Inform initial planning of humanitarian response, highlighting priority actions • Define focus for follow-on in-depth assessments • Establish the baseline for monitoring	**In-Depth Assessment** to: • Analyze situation and trends • Adjust ongoing response • Inform detailed planning for humanitarian relief/early recovery, • Establish baseline for operational and strategic / performance monitoring	**In-Depth Assessment** to: • Situation and trend analysis • Inform phasing out of the life sustaining activities • Inform detailed planning for humanitarian relief and (early) recovery • Feed into performance monitoring
METHODOLOGY FOR DATA COLLECTION	• Prepare and agree on assessment formats, indicators and tools • Organize preparedness trainings and if possible simulations • Establish procedures & responsibilities. • Prepare Common Operat'l Datasets (CODs), P-Codes, and Key Humanitarian Indicators • Gather Baseline data • Fact sheets and lessons learned disasters	• Mostly secondary data: pre-crisis information, surveys and reports prior to the event, fact sheets. • Primary data: initial reports from the field, media flyovers, satellite imagery. Direct observation from quick visits to field (if feasible). Information from still functioning monitoring and reporting systems • Use Initial CODs	• Secondary data; various sources • Primary data as in phase 1, complemented by site visits purposively selected, conducting community / key informant interviews • Unit of measurement for site visits is Community (e.g. village, camp or neighborhoods), or Institutions (e.g. schools, health facilities). • Use simple agreed form with key questions • Use Expanded CODs and key humanitarian indicators	• Secondary data; various sources • Use harmonized sector/cluster specific tools • Primary data as in phase 2, but now site visits through purposive and representative sampling methods (using more detailed sectoral surveys questionnaires). • New data from (re)-established monitoring systems • Unit of measurement as in phase 2, but now also household & individual. • Use Comprehensive CODs, key humanitarian indicators	• Sources and Methods as in Phase 3 • For recovery assessment use additional guidance for recovery assessment (Damage and Loss Assessment and sectoral PDNA guidance) • In case of complex emergencies; conflict analysis
INFORM FUNDING PROPOSALS	• Proposals for preparedness	• Allocation of preliminary emergency funding • Initial Flash Appeal • First response proposals	• Emergency response proposals • Revision of Flash Appeal (occurs within one month of Initial Flash Appeal)	• Revised emergency response proposals. • National Recovery and Reconstruction Plan	• Nat'l Recovery & Reconstruction Plan • Consolidated appeal. • Inputs for the Post Disaster Needs Assessment
OUTPUTS	• Assessment preparedness plan agreed by HCT • Compiled pre-crisis data	• Preliminary Scenario Definition (within 3 days) • Preliminary Scenario Definition	• MIRA Report (within 14 days) • Humanitarian Dashboard	• Sector/Cluster Reports • Humanitarian Dashboard	• Sector/Cluster Reports • PDNA & Recovery Framework • Humanitarian Dashboard

*It is important to note these phases are somewhat conceptual in nature, and it is recognized that no sudden-onset disaster operates along an exact timeline.

Figure 1: The Assessment Framework, *IASC Operational Guidance on Coordinated Assessments in Humanitarian Crises*

SECTION II
PROCESS

Figure 2: MIRA Process Flowchart



STEP	ACTIONS	WHO?					
		Counrty / Region / HQ	In-country				
		Overall	Decision-makers	AIM Working Group Members			
		OCHA	HC / RC / HCT / Govt	AIM Coordinator	AIM Expert		Cluster / Sector Leads
					Assessment Expertise	IM Expertise	
Calling for the Assessment	Determine need for a joint assessment. Launch the call for an assessment.[1]		x				
	Ensure buy-in from principal stakeholders, including government, for the assessment.		x				
	Establish/re-confirm an assessment coordination structure.[2]		x				
	Establish/re-confirm working arrangements and engagement with government and HCT (coordination mechanisms and technical leadership).		x	x			
	Examine assessment capacity in clusters/sectors[3] and request any additional assessment support required.		x				
	Promote use of Common Operational Datasets (CODs) across clusters/sectors.		x				
	Launch a Secondary Data Review (SDR).	x	x	x			x
	Participate in SDR (provide information, updates, etc.).					x	x
	Produce the Preliminary Scenario Definition (PSD) (within 3-4 days).		x	x		x	x
	Disseminate the PSD.		x				
A. Getting Started: Coordination of the Assessment	Form an assessment and information management working group (AIM WG) with a coordination function, a technical expert function, an IM function, and representatives of the clusters/sectors concerned.		x	x			
	Ensure that the Preliminary Scenario Definition informs the Phase 2 assessment.	x		x			
	Define the scope of the coordinated assessment, the specific objectives and the timeframe.			x	x	x	x
	Identify any additional human, financial or logistic needs and act on them.	x		x			

[1] Where the government leads assessments, e.g. the Philippines, this should be acknowledged in any reference to HCT engagement in assessments. The leadership and endorsement of the government is critical to the success of assessments. There should be synergy where there are well-established arrangements.

[2] Preparedness missions may have already identified and clarified the structure for assessment coordination based on those existing in-country. For smaller-scale crises, it is likely that in-country capacity, from different agencies which carry out assessments, already exists which can cover the key roles of assessment coordination, and assessment and IM expertise. This capacity should be drawn on during the crisis. In a large-scale crisis countries are more likely to require support from regional offices and/or from surge capacity to cover these functions.

[3] Preferably this has already been carried out during a preparedness mission.

B. Designing and Planning the Joint Assessment	Define information requirements and data collection methods.			x	x	x	x
	Adapt/customize the MIRA tools so that data collection instruments are tailored to the specific context.				x	x	x
	Draw up an assessment and analytical plan.			x	x	x	x
	Select sites to be assessed.				x		
	Draw up an assessment schedule.			x	x		x
	Assemble and train the assessment team. Appoint team leader.			x	x		x
	Arrange for translation of data collection tools as appropriate.				x		
	Develop field notes to accompany data collection tool – including sampling, definitions/terminology , procedures etc.				x	x	x
	Field test the data collection tools.			x			x
	Prepare budget based on assessment plan and schedule.			x			
	Define any special equipment needs (radios, phones, clothing, etc.) and ensure that they are procured for, and available to, all team members.			x			x
	Prepare/supply equipment and security briefing kits.			x			x
	Arrange transport, security and communication.			x			x
	Ensure that teams have necessary security clearance and have attended security briefings.			x			x
	Ensure that administrative arrangements are taken care of including accommodation and lodging for field assessment teams.			x			x
C. Collecting and Processing Data	Analyze pre- and post-disaster secondary information according to the Analytical Framework.			x	x	x	x
	Keep up to date with any changes in context and adapt the scope of the assessments and the assessment tool accordingly.			x	x		x
	Collect field data.				x		x
	Process field data and carry out in-field structured debriefs amongst field assessment teams daily.				x		x
	Collate information collected from field teams via data collection tool					x	x
	Update field teams on affected populations and geographical areas of concern.			x	x		x
	Share initial analysis by data analyst with field teams – provide team leader with a preliminary synthesis.				x	x	x
	Consolidate collected information.				x	x	
	Consider and act on any needs or opportunities for re-orienting and/or scaling-up the assessment.			x	x		
	Revise the Analytical Framework if it is warranted on the basis of new information.			x	x	x	x

D. Analyzing the Data and Drawing Joint Conclusions	Technical sector analysis. Set deadlines for sectoral input.			x			x
	Encourage sectors to focus on priority information. Promote the sex and age disaggregation of information by sector.			x			
	Ensure that the MIRA Analytical Framework is adhered to by each cluster/sector.			x			
	Update AIM WG on affected populations and geographical areas of concern.			x			
	Continue analysis of secondary data.				x	x	x
	Call a meeting of the AIM WG for cross-sectoral analysis.			x			
	Consolidate joint analysis.			x	x	x	x
	Take into consideration cross-cutting issues including gender and protection.			x	x	x	x
	Ensure coherence of analysis. Ensure cross-validation of the findings between the sectors.			x	x	x	x
	Take into account contextual issues.			x	x	x	x
	Incorporate updates into the PSD.			x	x	x	x
	Prioritize needs and operational recommendations.			x	x		x
	Transmit key analyses emerging from the assessment to HC/HCT.			x			
	Transmit early information and analyses to HC for input into the revised Flash Appeal.			x			
	Ensure that analyses from the MIRA are incorporated into the revised Flash Appeal.	x		x			
E. Preparing and Disseminating the Report	Prepare the report.					x	x
	Compile basic information for the report (during field work period).					x	x
	Prepare preliminary findings.				x	x	x
	Clear the report with AIM WG.			x			
	Prepare a presentation of the findings for a wider group of partners.			x		x	x
	Finalize MIRA report.					x	x
	Prepare dissemination plan.	x		x			
	Disseminate the findings.	x		x			

SECTION III METHODOLOGY

3.1 Define Specific Objectives and Scope

It is imperative at the commencement of the MIRA process that the objectives and scope of the assessment are identified to ensure collective agreement and understanding of the work to be undertaken. Specific items for consideration are:

- The geographical scope or coverage of the assessment: which are the areas to be assessed?
- The level of assessment is the lowest level at which data is needed, i.e. is information required at district, provincial or only national level (the level will vary for each type/item of information)?
- Linkages to decision-making and funding mechanisms: is the assessment expected to inform ongoing decision-making and funding mechanisms? Which and how?

As the assessment is implemented, the scope may need to be revised on the basis of new evidence or due to changes in the situation. This is further highlighted in Section 3.7.

3.2 Design / Adapt the Analytical Framework

Similar to the definition of objectives and scope of the assessments, the Analytical Framework, which underpins each step of the MIRA, needs to be collectively agreed upon. It serves as a framework for the collation of sectoral secondary data (through the SDR) and its integration with CLA data. It should therefore meet all sectoral needs. The Framework suggested in Figure 3 as part of the MIRA Approach, serves as a basis which is then adapted at the country level.

3.3 The Secondary Data Review (SDR)

Secondary data plays a crucial role in the early stages of emergencies when collecting primary data is limited by human resource, time and access constraints. The focus of the Secondary Data Review is to develop a shared understanding of the situation based on existing pre- and post-disaster secondary information. The analysis of secondary data will be undertaken on a rolling basis as new information becomes available. It represents an ongoing process of collecting and assessing information to create an understating of the situation that evolves over time.

3.3.1 Collate pre- and post-disaster secondary information

Pre-disaster information is particularly important as it provides an understanding of pre-existing vulnerabilities and risks that may be exacerbated as a result of the disaster. Lessons learned from similar events in the past are also of particular importance. Post-disaster secondary information, as defined in the MIRA, Approach includes all information on the situation following the onset of the disaster that is not collected through the CLA. Post-disaster secondary information enables an understanding of the current crisis situation, while a comparison of pre- and post-disaster allows an assessment of the impacts of both the disaster and of the various interventions.

a) **Pre-disaster secondary information.** This provides an understanding of the situation prior to the disaster and allows the identification of pre-existing vulnerabilities and risks that may be exacerbated as a result of the disaster. Lessons learned from similar events in the past - in terms of priority needs and interventions - can complement this understanding. Pre-disaster information will also serve as the baseline for assessing the impact of the disaster.

b) **Post-disaster secondary information**. This provides an understanding of what has happened after the disaster. This information can be gathered from a variety of sources including the Government, national and international media, national and international NGOs present in the area, civil society, existing/resuming monitoring systems, and religious organizations.

It is recommended that information is organized around three key variables: date, group (i.e. homogenous groups of people who share similar characteristics on how they are affected), and location. These are then organized according to the Analytical Framework. An excel spreadsheet that includes these dimensions can be used to collate all information collected.

As you collate data, it is helpful to keep the following points in mind:

- Collect only what you know you can use. Know the question you are trying to answer and the data you are looking for.
- Immediately identify what Common Operational Datasets are available.
- First collect data at the national level (in-depth reports available on the web or at country level) and then look for disaggregated data for population groups or affected geographic areas.

TOPIC	QUESTION / INFORMATION FIELD	PROVIDE INFORMATION ON: CONTEXT	RISKS & VULNERABILITIES	TRENDS (incl. Projected Trends in earlier stages)
SITUATION OVERVIEW (including scale / severity of disaster)	**1. What is the type of crisis?**	Describe the main characteristics of the crisis. This may include reference to, for example, socio-political, weather, security, health and economic factors. This should give someone solid overview of the nature of the crisis.		Explain how the crisis is most likely to develop in the short, medium and/or long term.
	2. What is the geographical extent of the affected area?	Describe the main drivers or underlying factors of the crisis. This may include reference to, for example, socio-political, weather, security, health and economic factors.		Explain how the main drivers of the crisis identified above are most likely to develop in the short, medium and/or long term. Reference should be made to how recent developments are likely to affect the nature of the crisis. Where possible provide an analysis of how these trends are likely to affect the provision of humanitarian assistance.
	3. How many people are affected?	Indicate what areas are affected by the crisis. Provide an overview of country as a whole indicating those areas that are most affected. This should also describe the severity, extent and nature of the crisis in each area affected.		Describe how the geographical extent and nature of the crisis in different areas is likely to evolve in the short, medium and/or long term. This should also provide a country-wide overview of whether the geographical extent of the crisis is likely to increase or decrease.
HUMANITARIAN ACCESS	**4. What are the logistic considerations in terms of effects of the emergency and options for response?**	Describe affected populations based on status (or level) and impact on excess mortality, morbidity and dignity.	Identify which areas or groups are most affected and most at risk.	Describe the sustainability of the current situation and how likely it is to evolve either positively or negatively in the short, medium and/or long term.
	5. What are the security considerations?	Describe how and the extent to which the crisis affects local livelihoods and income opportunities.	Identify which areas or groups are most affected by and most at risk from a disruption in livelihoods.	Describe how the changing nature of the crisis and response is most likely to affect livelihoods in the short, medium and/or long term.
	6. How do civil-military relations feature in the context?	Describe how and the extent to which the crisis affects access to basic goods and services including, for example, food, health facilities, water/sanitation facilities.	Identify which areas or groups are most affected by and most at risk from a disruption in access to basic goods and services. Examine how these disruptions affect already vulnerable groups.	Describe how the changing nature of the crisis and response is most likely to affect access to basic goods and services in the short, medium and/or long term.
NEEDS	**7. How and to what extent does the crisis affect populations (outcomes)?**	Indicate how many people have been affected by the crisis. Provide information on who is affected, how they are distributed geographically and the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance.	Identify potential risks of deterioration as well as groups that are most at risk including, for example, IDPs, women, ethnic minorities and unemployed.	Describe how the number, type and location of people affected by the crisis and in need of humanitarian assistance are likely to change in the short, medium and/or long term, taking into account pre-identified risks and vulnerabilities.
	8. How and to what extent does the crisis affect livelihoods?	Describe the coping capacities of the local communities and how they have been affected by the crisis. This should take into account both regular capacities such as health care systems and capacities that are specifically designed for crisis response. Describe the adaptability and sustainability of these capacities, and their ability to coordinate with humanitarian response.	Identify whether the needs of any vulnerable groups or areas have not been covered by this initial response by the local community.	Describe how the changing nature of the crisis and response is most likely to affect livelihoods in the short, medium and/or long term.
	9. How does the crisis affect access to basic services and goods?	Describe existing capacities at national/sub-national private sector, non-government and government levels, and how they have been affected by the crisis. This should take into account both regular capacities, for example health care systems, and capacities that are specifically designed for crisis response.	Identify whether the needs of any vulnerable groups or areas are not covered by these capacities. Examine how these disruptions affect already vulnerable groups.	Explain how the changing nature of the crisis and response is most likely to affect these capacities in the short, medium and/or long term.
	10. What is the national / sub-national private sector, non-governmental and government capacities and how have they been affected?	Describe any initial assistance or interventions undertaken by the actors identified in Question 9 in response to the crisis. Identify where they have occurred, how many people have been targeted, reached and covered. Describe any lessons that have been learned through the initial interventions.	Identify whether the needs of any vulnerable groups or areas have not been covered by this initial response.	Explain how the changing nature of the crisis and response is most likely to affect these capacities in the short, medium and/or long term.

Figure 3: MIRA Analytical Framework

TOPIC	QUESTION / INFORMATION FIELD	PROVIDE INFORMATION ON:		
		CONTEXT	RISKS & VULNERABILITIES	TRENDS (incl. Projected Trends in earlier stages)
NATIONAL AUTHORITIES RESPONSE CAPACITY	11. What are their initial interventions to respond to the emergency?	Describe the in-country international response capacities and how they have been affected by the crisis. This should take into account both regular capacities and capacities that are specifically designed for crisis response. Describe any preparedness and coordination procedures that are in place. Comment on the status of the functioning of the cluster system if present and what reporting tools are functional.	Identify gaps in ability of the in-country international response capacity to cover the needs of certain groups or areas.	Explain how the changing nature of the crisis and response is most likely to affect these capacities in the short, medium and/or long term.
	12. What is the coping capacity of the local affected communities and what are their initial interventions?	Outline which agencies/organizations are operating where and in which sectors of intervention.	Explain how the changing nature of the crisis and response is most likely to affect this in-country international response capacity in the short, medium and/or long term.	Explain how the changing nature of the crisis and response is most likely to affect the coping mechanisms of the local affected communities in the short, medium and/or long term.
IN-COUNTRY INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE CAPACITY	13. What is the in-country international response capacity and how has it been affected?	Describe what and where the agencies/organizations identified in Question 12 are already providing assistance in response to the crisis. This should be presented with activities sorted by sector. Describe what processes are in place for the coordination of assessments.	Identify any vulnerability in the population which affect the humanitarian response, for example are there factors within the society which increase the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse.	Explain the most likely changes in the international humanitarian response particularly what activities are planned where and by which organisation in the short, medium and/or long term. Outline any planned coordinated assessments.
	14. Which agencies / organizations are operating where – in which sectors of intervention?	Indicate what proportion of the population in need and the population targeted is being reached by humanitarian interventions	Identify any groups or areas that are in need that are not or not sufficiently being reached or covered by humanitarian interventions.	Explain how the proportion of the population in need being reached by humanitarian interventions is likely to evolve in short, medium and/or long term.
	15. What have they been doing and what are they likely to do in response to the situation?	Indicate what proportion of the population reached has had its needs covered. This information should be included by cluster/sector and disaggregated by sex and age where relevant and feasible.		
COVERAGE & GAPS	16. What proportion of the population in need is being reached by humanitarian interventions?	Identify and describe the main logistic considerations that affect the humanitarian response. This may, for example, include information on the availability and quality of air/road/water transportation networks, telecommunications and storage facilities.	Identify which affected areas or groups are most likely to be adversely effected by these logistic constraints.	Describe how the changing nature of the crisis and response is most likely to affect these logistic considerations in the short, medium and/or long term. Identify those services which are most at risk of disruption and the plans to overcome these obstacles.
	17. To what extent are the needs being addressed?	Identify and describe the main security considerations that affect the local population and the delivery of humanitarian response. This may include, for example, information on the actions of armed groups, gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and UXOs.	Identify which areas or groups are most affected by and most at risk from these security considerations.	Describe how these security considerations are most likely to evolve in the short, medium and/or long term.
STRATEGIC HUMANITARIAN PRIORITIES	18. What are the priority sections for intervention?	State whether civil-military relations are a feature of the context. If yes, describe these relations, and how they affect the local population and the humanitarian response.	Identify which areas or groups are most affected by and most at risk from these civil-military relations.	Describe how these civil-military relations are most likely to evolve in the short, medium and/or long term.
	19. Other key issues to be considered (protection, environment, gender etc)?	This section presents an overview of the priorities for humanitarian intervention based on a review and analysis of the information presented in Questions 1-18 of the Framework. This section should present a summary of key priority interventions per sector.	Priority areas and groups to be targeted for each intervention.	
	20. What are the projected trends for the crisis and response?	This section presents an overview of key cross-cutting issues affected by the crisis and influencing the response. This can include, for example, information on gender, protection, environment, and sexual exploitation and abuse. Information for this section should be supplemented, where relevant, with information from the 'vulnerabilities' sections of Questions 1-17 of the MIRA report.	Priority areas and groups to be targeted for each intervention.	

- Look for important and relevant quantitative information such as census, humanitarian profile, pre-disaster datasets, maps, and sex and age disaggregated population figures by geographic areas. The more disaggregated the data (along sex, age and geography dimensions), the more useful it is for identifying who is most at risk, but also the heaviest it is to manage.
- Importance of data versus time. Some of the desired data will not exist or will be difficult to find. Decide whether the importance of the data justifies the time required to find the data.
- Provide clear timeframe for data collection and identify priorities. Ensure everyone is aware and regularly updated about groups and geographical areas of concerns.

3.3.2 Analyze pre- and post-disaster secondary information

Similar to the collation of secondary information, analysis will happen on a rolling basis as new information becomes available. When conducting your analysis of secondary information, it is important to remember the following:

- Compare the situation "before" and "after", and compare the situation to international standards/ thresholds or other relevant data. Use experience and lessons learned from similar situations in the past to identify risks and the likely evolution of the crisis.
- Cross-analyze key data and use additional information sources to understand or make reasonable inferences about unmeasured conditions or situations; this allows a better understanding not only what is happening and where it is happening but also why it is happening.
- 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: what are the most affected groups; what the most affected areas are; what are the sectors requiring immediate interventions; and what are the key issues. Prioritize areas, groups and interventions. It is imperative to ensure that differential impacts on potentially vulnerable groups (including women, children, elderly, and handicapped persons) are identified.
- Make a clear difference between the impact related to the crisis and pre-existing vulnerabilities that may be exacerbated by the crisis.
- Identify constraints, information gaps and needs for further assessment phases. Always ask: What's missing?
- To overcome the 'known unknowns', use assumptions, judgment and 'educated guesses'.[4]

3.3.3 Secondary information reliability

The SDR highlights the importance of evaluating the reliability and credibility of secondary sources through careful appraisal of: the sources and methodologies used; the age and relevance of the information; the comparability with other sources; and other parameters that may introduce biases.

More detailed information on conducting a Secondary Data Review is provided in Annex 1.

3.4 The Community Level Assessment (CLA)

The primary data collection methodology of the MIRA Approach, referred to as the Community Level Assessment (CLA), recommends investigation forms built on interviews with generalist and specialist key informants as well as direct observations in communities selected through purposive sampling. It proposes a systematic way of investigating needs and priorities as perceived by affected populations. These are and combined with a systematic appraisal of the situation by assessment teams following the visit which aims to help capture more informal (and unstructured) elements of the assessment.

3.4.1 Define sampling and site selection

During the first two weeks after a major emergency, primary data can only realistically be collected at the level of communities. Given the time, access and logistics constraints, collecting meaningful quantities of data at the level of households or individuals is unlikely. Attempts to do so have significantly contributed to the failure of early needs assessment in the past.

Time constraints will normally not permit random or statistically representative sampling. Selecting a sample of sites, which represent a cross-section of typical regions and affected populations based on specified criteria, helps to compensate for the lack of random or statistically representative sampling. Such sampling is known as purposive sampling and includes consideration of parameters such as:

- Urgent need: At the height of a crisis, data collection will be limited to a first and fast exercise. Practical criteria linked to program response will guide site selection. Priority will be placed on assessing areas pre-identified as

[1] ACAPS, March 2011, p6–7.

potentially showing the greatest needs or where vulnerabilities, including population size, density and influx, reported shortage of food and/or water, risk of epidemics and malnutrition, etc. are believed to be highest.

- Accessibility of the sites.
- Gaps in existing knowledge: locations about which little is known, or key information is lacking, particularly where there are no relief agencies already operating.

The sampling size or number of sites to be visited will be determined by the availability of staff, time, and logistical support, as well as the geographic spread of the disaster, and the heterogeneity/homogeneity of the population.

Purposive sampling cannot represent the whole disaster affected population and its results cannot be generalized beyond the target population. Its purpose is only to understand the nature of the most pressing issues/concerns/needs in order to give depth to the findings of the SDR and support the prioritization of interventions.

3.4.2 Customize and pilot test the Investigation Form

The Investigation Form (IF) is built around four core modules:

- Metadata
- Generalist Key Informants
- Specialist Key Informants
- Assessment Team Module

Each of these modules is divided in sub-components which may be selected or discarded to allow for the quick adaptation of the IF to the context. This modular approach also facilitates the scaling up of the IF as access to affected areas increases as illustrated in Figure 4.

Once the sampling and site selection have been agreed upon and the IF has been tailored to the specific context, it is crucial that some extra time is taken to pilot the Investigation Form. For the piloting, questions and observations need to be kept as open as possible with extra space made available for additional comments from both key informants and assessors. Based on the findings of the pilot, the IF may be refined.

Figure 4: Scalability of MIRA's Investigation Form

Module	Module Components	High Resources / Time Constraints (Phase I)	Lower Resources / Time Constraints (Phase II)
Metadata	Assessment Description	Yes (mandatory)	Yes (mandatory)
	Community Description	Yes (mandatory)	Yes (mandatory)
Generalist KI	Screening Questions*	Yes	Yes
	Scoping Questions	No	Yes
	Ranking	Yes	Yes
Specialised KI	Sectoral Components	No	Yes
Assessments Team Module	Observations	Yes (mandatory)	Yes (mandatory)
	Screening Questions	Yes (mandatory)	Yes (mandatory)
	Ranking	Yes (mandatory)	Yes (mandatory)

*Note that Screening Questions may also be reduced by selecting a subset of the 27 items, based on preliminary findings from the review of secondary data, disaster profiles and lessons learned.

More information on the structure of the Investigation Form is provided in Annex 2.

3.4.3 Collect primary data

Pre-departure briefing and daily preparations

All members of the assessment team, including translators and drivers, are briefed before fieldwork commences. This briefing includes:

- The assessment objectives and methodology;
- Techniques and tools to be used;
- Time schedule, and communications, security and emergency procedures; and
- Administrative and logistic arrangements, such as transport and accommodation.

Each investigator should: be thoroughly familiar with the data collection process and the information

being elicited by each question; provide field notes to explain/define key terminologies; and outline site sampling.[5]

In support of the process, the assessment team should make the following preparations daily:

- Identify locations to be visited that day.
- Prepare preliminary list of informants to be interviewed.
- Define responsibilities.

Further, when entering a geographical location, assessment teams should meet with community leaders upon arrival to explain the reason for the visit and the assessment methodology to be employed, while also requesting the leaders' support.[6]

While the questionnaire contains a series of questions posed to respondents based on a standardized approach, the way in which investigators interact with respondents and the manner in which they ask the questions can have a major impact on the quality of the data collected.

Further information on conducting direct observation and key informant interviews is provided in Annexes 3 and 4.

3.4.4 First and second level analysis of CLA Information

First Level Analysis

The last module of the CLA Investigation Form supports a systematic appraisal of the situation by assessment teams, following the visit that may help capture more informal (and unstructured) elements of the assessment. This appraisal constitutes the first level analysis of the CLA. It aims at ensuring a post-visit debriefing is led in a structured manner by all assessment teams. Teams are asked to assess the situation (identifying priority needs, concerns, groups, etc.) based on formal and informal elements of the visit and to justify or expand on their conclusions so that these can be further analyzed and interpreted at the central level.

Second Level Analysis

All information gathered through the CLA is consolidated at the central level. Second level analysis seeks to identify recurrent issues, and compare the situation across sites, between population groups, etc.

3.5 Reconcile SDR and CLA Information and Findings - Final analysis and interpretation

Once SDR and CLA information is reconciled within the Analytical Framework, final analysis and interpretation of key humanitarian priorities can take place. This level of analysis should follow particular process arrangements described in Section 2.

3.6 Report, Disseminate and Communicate Findings

3.6.1 Phase I - Preliminary Scenario Definition

Approximately 72 hours after the sudden onset of an emergency, a reasonable picture of the situation should have developed through your analysis of secondary and initial primary data. At this time, a Preliminary Scenario Definition (PSD) is to be completed. The PSD requires assessors to translate conclusions into clear and easily accessible results. Emphasis should be placed on ensuring value added for the target audience.[7] The PSD will ask for a summary of the following:

- Pre-crisis situation
- Nature of the disaster
- Scope and magnitude (areas, population affected)
- Immediate post-disaster developments
- Emergency response efforts

Emphasis should be placed on "telling the story" through a three to five sentence summary for each of the key clusters/sectors (i.e. food security, WASH, shelter, health, nutrition, protection/security).

The PSD is intended to promote and reflect a shared understanding of the situation by the humanitarian community. As such, it should be shared and discussed with the HCT and Cluster/Sector Leads at the earliest possible time prior to being made public.

As the review of secondary data is to be continued on a rolling basis throughout Phases I and II, assessment teams may wish to update it periodically after its first production.

A template for the Preliminary Scenario Definition is provided in Annex 5.

[5] Technical Brief: Direct Observation and Key Informant Techniques for Primary Data Collection During Rapid Assessments. ACAPS, June 2011, p11.

[6] Impact Measurement and Accountability in Emergencies: The Good Enough Guide. Emergency Capacity Building Project, 2007, p34.

[7] Stet, p7.

3.6.2 Phase II - MIRA Report

After two weeks, a final MIRA report is produced which informs the revision of the Flash Appeal. The report will consolidate the SDR and CLA findings of the first two weeks of the disaster into one single product. The MIRA report responds to the same key questions as the PSD and will have a very similar structure, based on the Analytical Framework.

Before writing the final MIRA report, ad-hoc updates of the PSD can be made as required. Updates may be prepared on request or if any significant changes in the situation are observed (e.g. increase in affected population figures, new affected areas reported, new vulnerable groups identified, increase in population movement, etc.). The skill of the assessment team to integrate large quantities of very diverse data and to produce a cogent analysis is essential.

3.7 The Assessment Cycle

The components that constitute the MIRA Approach should not be considered as a linear sequence. Although they are presented here in a logical flow, it is important to reconsider each step regularly throughout the assessment process and evaluate whether there is a need to update, re-orient or scale-up the assessment.

Defining assessment objectives and scope as well as defining the Analytical Framework are foundational steps in the process. They may, however, need to be revised along the way, as a better, more refined understanding of information needs and gaps becomes available from newly accessible information.

Due to the short timeframe in which the PSD is to be produced, it is expected that an extremely high proportion of it will be informed by the Secondary Data Review. In some instances, the SDR may even be the sole source of information of the PSD. However, if the possibility to investigate sites during this timeframe arises, it is highly recommended that the Community Level Assessment approach be used as this will ensure consistency and continuity of the assessment over time. The modular approach underpinning the CLA Investigation Form aims to facilitate that process (see Annex 2).

As access to affected areas and resources to conduct field assessments increase, the CLA may be expanded incrementally (building on the modular approach of the Investigation Form)reinforcing the contribution of primary data in the overall assessment. Simultaneously, as secondary, particularly post-disaster, data is produced it needs to be integrated into the SDR in the form of updates.

If the nature of the information streams feeding into MIRA products is similar, It is expected that the MIRA Report produced towards the end of Phase II will integrate larger proportions of primary data and post-disaster secondary information than the Preliminary Scenario Definition.

3.8 Conclusion

The final MIRA report should express the views of decision-makers (i.e. HCT, Sector/Cluster Leads and members, the government, donors) on the nature and dynamics of the crisis and the key humanitarian priorities. Using a structured approach to reach that judgment will, however, increase both quality and transparency of the humanitarian assessments, leading to a better humanitarian response.

The MIRA was developed within the larger framework of coordinated assessments. It is expected that the coordinated assessment approach starts in the preparedness phase, and continues throughout the duration of the crisis, as described in the NATF Operational Guidance on Coordinated Assessments.

ANNEX 1
SECONDARY DATA REVIEW

General principles

Bringing together the right people at the right place
The three core competencies of staff required for secondary data analysis are people with sectoral skills, people with general emergency programming skills and responsibilities and people with good local knowledge of the geographic areas being discussed. Conducting a SDR is time consuming, make sure you have enough dedicated resources to capture and analyse the large volume of available data after humanitarian crises.

If dedicated resources are not can and should be undertaken remotely by experienced people, ensuring a strong linkage between field offices and the SDR back up team. available at country level, SDR

Although analysis takes place throughout the data collection, it is important to integrate individuals in the final analysis who did not participate directly in the data collection to ensure fresh perspective.

Providing the right information at the right time:
Timeliness: provide information and analysis in time to inform key decisions about response (e.g. a Flash Appeal) and subsequent primary data collection.

Adequacy: use information that is "good enough" - do not seek more detail or precision than needed

Relevance: provide the information and analysis most relevant to decisions which have to be made.

Coverage: collect data which is adequate to the scale of the problem.

Transparency: be explicit about the assumptions made, methods used and information relied on to reach conclusions, as well as about the limits of accuracy of the data used.

Objectivity: use a variety of sources when collecting and analyzing information so as to provide varied and balanced perspectives for addressing problems and recommending solutions.

Secondary data collection

What information to look for?
Prior to the data collection, ensure the objectives of the secondary data review, the areas of interest (research plan) and the outline of your end product are clearly defined.

Proceed from general to specific and more disaggregated data. The following examples are the most common areas of focus while undertaking SDR for needs assessment purposes:

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 (WASH, Health, Food security, etc)

Use proxy information when data is not available or too old to be relevant (e.g. coping mechanisms as a proxy to the severity of the crisis).

Refer to similar recent crises (same area, country or region) and likely impact to guide your data collection (Cf. Disaster Summary Sheets)

How to proceed?

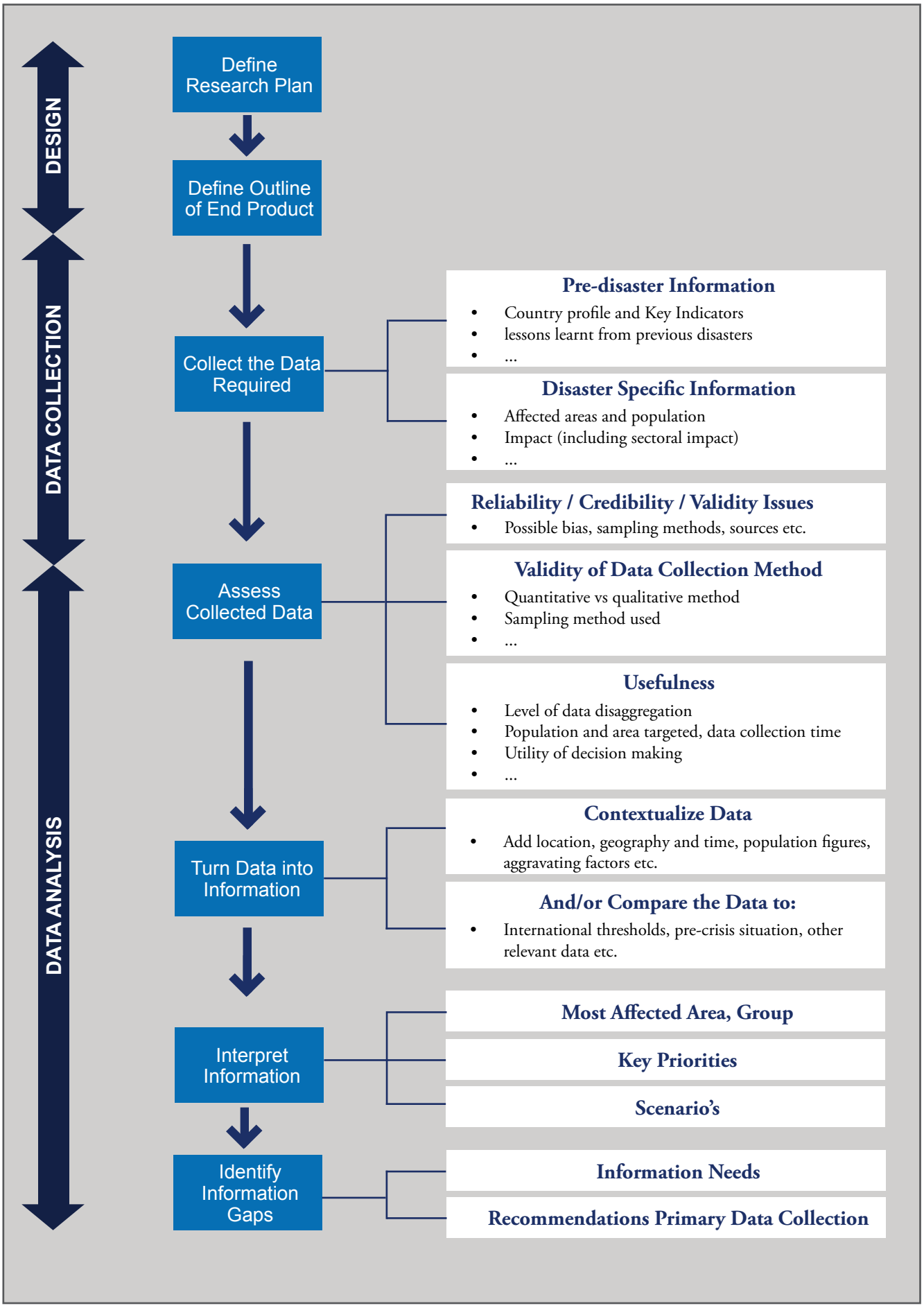
Tag the data collected according to the area of interest (pre or post crisis data; group, area and sector concerned; capacity, risk, need or response related information, etc) or the related heading within your final report to facilitate the information flow throughout the process.

Step by step approach for undertaking a secondary data review

Proceed to regular recap of data collected so far and identify information gaps and "Known unknowns" that may guide further data collection. Updates on post crisis situation may also reveal new groups or geographical area of concern that will require additional area of research.

Look for important and relevant quantitative information such as census, humanitarian profile, pre-disaster data sets, health statistics, demographic data, etc. Statistics may provide useful indications on the

Step by step approach for undertaking a secondary data review



evolution of exogenous factors, patterns and trends.

Use snowball effects: Use the references generally placed at the end of collected reports and documents to guide to more in depth research.

Use/build your information network: Identify key resources (at local, national, regional and HQ level) that can support and contribute to the data collection. Reciprocity is key; exchange information by contacting your network regularly with short updates. Quote people/sources in your report (if not sensitive). When searching for secondary data or questioning the quality of a source that you have already collected, seek advice from sector specialists and other experts with local knowledge. For local level information and data, NGOs or local contacts might also have small libraries that provide additional information or local contact that can facilitate information and relevant data.

Customize your archiving procedures: Standardized architecture should be used while archiving collected data in order to ensure easy retrieval of documentation or easy incorporation of new data collectors. For post disaster information, ensure data is stored in a way that simplifies daily updates of humanitarian profile/ caseload and allows for visualization of trends (e.g. Number of affected population, missing, injured, IDPs, etc.). Each document should be renamed as follow: Date/source/name of the document (e.g. 2008 WFP Food Security Assessment Armenia)

Where to find it?

Pre-disaster Information	Disaster Specific Information
National institutions (Ministries, research institute, Universities, etc)	National institutions (Ministries, LEMA, etc..)
Large Survey (DHS, MICS, Census, etc..)	Media reports
International development institutions (i.e. World bank)	Assessment reports from local and international NGOs
Sector fact sheets	Funding Appeals
Common operational datasets (COD)	Situation reports (OCHA, clusters, Gvt)
UN, Local and international NGOs survey reports	Humanitarian profile (CODs)
UN global data sets or Country portals	Geospatial data from UNISAT, Google Earth etc.
Geospatial data	Satellite imagery, UNISAT or Private providers
Online databases (i.e. EM-DAT, prevention web)	Social media
Previous Flash appeal, CAP	
WHO country epidemiological profile	
ALNAP, evaluation report, After Action review	
DevInfo, world development indicators, MDGs	

ANNEX 2
UNDERSTANDING AND CUSTOMIZING THE CLA INVESTIGATION

Modular Structure

The Community Level Assessment Investigation Form is built around four Modules:

Metadata Module

The Metadata Module gathers a description of the assessment and of the community assessed to ensure data can be traced as well as stratified in the analysis. This module is articulated around 2 components:

Component	Proposed / Mandatory Variables	Comments
Description of the assessment	Date of the assessment	Supports data management and allows for data verification with the Assessment Team
	Assessment Team	
Description of the community assessed	Geo-location (Admin1,2,3 – Place Name / Code – GPS Coordinates)	Supports the stratification of the analysis (based on location, population type, etc.)
	Settlement Type	
	Setting Type	
	Population Type	

Generalist Key Informant Module

The Generalist KI Module gathers all questions aimed at Generalist KIs*. It is articulated around three interlinked components: Screening Questions; Scoping Questions and Ranking & identification of Most Affected Groups

Specialized Key Informant Module

The Specialized KI Module gathers all questions aimed at specialized KIs. These may be health staff, teachers, sanitation engineers, local specialized NGOs, etc. It is aimed at identifying and when appropriate ranking key concerns within a given sector and may be led independently from the Generalist KI Module.

Assessment Team Module

The Assessment Team Module allows the Assessment Team to draw their own conclusions. It takes place at the end of the field visit in the form of a discussion between team members and constitutes PCLA first level of analysis.

The first component of the Assessment Team Module aims at gathering critical observations made during the field visit:

The second component of this module takes the Assessment Team through the Screening and Ranking components of the Generalist KI Module. The

Components	Description	Comments
Screening Questions	Screening Questions form the "backbone" of the Investigation Form. They aim at identifying which items - out of a pre-defined set of 27 - constitute a "Serious Problem" to affected communities.	It is highly recommended that the wording of these items remains unchanged as it is derived from an extensively tested tool (HESPER Scale). Items identified as being a "Serious Problem" - and only those - can be further investigated through scoping questions.
Scoping Questions	Scoping Questions allow for a more in-depth investigation of items identified as being a "Serious Problem" to the community.	Scoping Questions allow KIs to express and rank priority concerns related to each item. Semi-closed questions are recommended. Priority concerns should be categorized a priori to the extent possible, but allow for detecting unpredicted concerns.
Ranking & Identification of Most Affected Groups	Ranking allows KIs to establish priorities amongst items identified as being a "Serious Problem" to the community. The Ranking can be complemented, if relevant, by an identification of specific groups within the community that are more affected by the problem.	It is recommended that Key Informants rank/ prioritize about ¼ of the total number of items assessed (if 26 items were assessed, KI to rank up to 6 items in order of importance). A standard breakdown of groups is provided as a reference.**

* KIs who are able to represent and express the views of their community on a variety of issues. These usually are Community Leaders or Representatives.

* *Standard breakdown of groups:
Men / Women / Boys / Girls / Older persons / Persons with disabilities / Particular ethnic or religious group (specify) / Other, (explain) / All groups are affected in a similar way / Do not know

Are potential sources of contamination (e.g. human faeces) visible near water sources?		
Yes: ☐	No: ☐	Unknown: ☐
Are potential sources of contamination (e.g. human faeces) visible near shelters?		
Yes: ☐	No: ☐	Unknown: ☐
Etc...		

Assessment Team identifies items which constitute a "Serious Problem" based on all elements gathered during their visit (KI interviews, observations, informal observations and discussions, etc.).

Similarly to Generalist KI, the Assessment Team is then required to identify potential groups, within the community, that are most affected by any given problem.

Additionally, for each issue identified as being a key concern, Assessors/Assessment Teams should attribute a severity index. The following scale is provided for reference:

Red	Severe situation: urgent intervention required
Orange	Situation of concern: surveillance required
Yellow	Lack of/unreliable data: further assessment required
Green	Relatively normal situation or local population able to cope with crisis; no further action required

The Assessment Team is finally asked to provide elements of explanation and justification of their conclusions as a wrap up of this first level analysis.

Scalability of the Investigation form

This modular structure allows for a scalable approach. By combining the various modules and/or their components the Investigation form can help easily adapted to specific contexts and constraints in terms of time/resources.

The following is a suggestion of modular approach between phases I and II:

*It is to note that Screening Questions may also be reduced by selecting a subset of the 27 items, based on preliminary findings from the review of secondary data, disaster profiles and lessons learned. Investigation Form Template

Module	Module Components	High Resources / Time Constraints - (Phase I)	Lower Resources / Time Constraints - (Phase II)
Metadata	Assessment description	Yes (Mandatory)	Yes (Mandatory)
	Community description	Yes (Mandatory)	Yes (Mandatory)
Generalist KI	Screening*	Yes	Yes
	Scoping	No	Yes
	Ranking	Yes	Yes
Specialized KI	Sectoral Components	No	Yes
Assessment Team Module	Observations	Yes (Mandatory)	Yes (Mandatory)
	Screening	Yes (Mandatory)	Yes (Mandatory)
	Ranking	Yes (Mandatory)	Yes (Mandatory)

Investigation Form Template

Metadata Module

Date:	
Name of Assessor / Assessment Team:	
Province:	
District:	
Sub-District:	
Place Name:	
Settlement Type:	
Setting type:	
Population Type:	
GPS Coordinates:	X: _____ Y: _____

Generalist Key Informant Module

Screening and Scoping

Is there a serious problem in your community because people do not have enough water that is safe for drinking or cooking?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

1a. What are the main sources of water in your community (rank up to 4)?

- Borehole or well with function. motor pump ☐
- Borehole or well with function. hand pump ☐
- Protected spring ☐
- Protected open well ☐
- Piped water ☐
- Unprotected spring ☐
- Unprotected open well ☐
- Surface water ☐
- Traditional water sellers ☐
- Humanitarian Assistance ☐
- None ☐

1b. Is there a serious problem in your community with food; for example because there is no food or not good enough food or because it is not possible to cook food?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

2a. What are the main concerns related to food in your community (rank up to 4 concerns)?

- Not enough food ☐
- Not good enough food ☐
- No cooking facilities ☐
- No utensils ☐
- No cooking fuels ☐
- Loss of agricultural land ☐
- Loss of agricultural assets (tools, storage capacity, seeds, etc.) ☐
- No physical access to markets - no markets ☐
- No income, money, resources to purchase food ☐
- Other : ☐

2b. Are there significant changes in the total amount of food that people are eating since the disaster, on average?

- Amount consumed has increased ☐
- Amount consumed has decreased ☐
- Amount consumed is the same ☐
- Do not know ☐
- Not applicable ☐

2c. What are the main sources of food in your community (rank up to 3)?

- Subsistence production ☐
- Local market ☐
- Humanitarian Assistance ☐
- Other (specify): ☐
- Other (specify): ☐

2d. Do people in your community have access* to the following nutrition programs?

- Management of severe acute malnutrition (facility based) ☐
- Management of severe acute malnutrition (community based) ☐
- Management of moderate acute malnutrition ☐
- Other (specify): ☐
- Not applicable: ☐

2e. Is there a serious problem in your community because people do not have an adequate place to live in?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

3a. What are the main types of shelter people from your community live in (rank up to 4)?

- Living in a house or apartment ☐
- Improvised shelter (e.g. made from salvaged construction materials, etc.) ☐
- Tents ☐
- Planned temporary or transitional shelter other than tents (e.g. made from distributed items) ☐
- Repaired partially damaged homes ☐
- Buildings used as collective accommodation ☐
- Other buildings (e.g. host family homes, rented accommodation etc.) ☐

No shelter ☐

3b. What are the main situations people from your community live in (rank up to 3)?

- Not displaced ☐
- Host families ☐
- Collective centres ☐
- Planned camps ☐
- Spontaneous camps ☐
- Dispersed settlement ☐
- Other (specify): ☐

3c. What are the main concerns with meeting shelter needs (rank up to 4 concerns)?

- There is no shelter ☐
- Shelters are over-crowded ☐
- Homes are so damaged that they are inhabitable ☐
- Building materials to repair/build shelter are unavailable ☐
- Skills to repair/build shelter are unavailable ☐
- Potential grievances on land issues ☐
- People are lacking basic household items ☐
- Other (specify): ☐

4a. Is there a serious problem in your community because people do not have easy and safe access to clean toilets?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

4b. Is there a serious problem in your community because it is difficult for people to keep clean; for example because there is not enough soap, water or suitable place to wash?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

5. Is there a serious problem in your community because people do not have enough, or good enough, clothing, shoes, bedding or blankets?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

6. Is there a serious problem in your community because people do not have enough income, money or resources to live?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

7a. What are traditionally the main sources of income of people in your community (rank up to 4)?

- Agriculture ☐
- Agro-pastoralism ☐
- Pastoralism ☐
- Small businesses/trading ☐
- Skills to repair/build shelter are unavailable ☐
- Daily work ☐
- Other (specify): ☐
- Do not know ☐

7b. Were the following sources of income affected by the disaster (Highly, Moderately, Not Affected, Favored) ?

- Agriculture ☐
- Agro-pastoralism ☐
- Pastoralism ☐
- Small businesses/trading ☐
- Skills to repair/build shelter are unavailable ☐
- Daily work ☐
- Other (specify): ☐
- Do not know ☐

8a. Are there serious problems within your community regarding physical health; for example because people have physical illnesses, injuries or disabilities?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

8b. Is there a serious problem in your community because people are not able to get adequate health care for themselves; for example treatment or medicines or health care during pregnancy or childbirth?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

9a. Do people in your community have access* to the following Health Services?**

- Free Condoms ☐
- Clean home delivery ☐
- Hygiene promotion ☐
- Outpatient consultations ☐
- Routine vaccination ☐
- Basic essential obstetric care ☐
- Post-exposure prophylaxis for STI & HIV infections ☐
- Inpatient ☐
- Surgery ☐
- Comprehensive essential obstetric care ☐

9b. Is there a serious problem in your community because people feel distressed; for example very upset, sad, worried, scared or angry?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

10. Is there a serious problem in your community because people are not safe or protected where they live now; for example because of conflict, violence or crime in your community, village or city?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

11a. What are the main concerns related to security (rank up to 3)?

- There are no problems ☐
- There is not enough security provided ☐
- Security Actors are abusing people from the community ☐
- Do Not Know ☐

11b. What are the main issues people in your community are facing in terms of safety (rank up to 5)?

- Attacks or bombings ☐
- Combats or clashes between armed groups ☐
- Armed violence ☐
- Presence of landmines or explosive remnants of war ☐
- Continuation of threats from natural disasters (e.g. earthquake aftershocks, etc.) ☐
- Deliberate killings of civilians by the military or armed groups ☐
- Executions or other killings ☐
- Enforced or involuntary disappearance ☐
- Maltreatment of the population (e.g. extortion, forced labour, physical abuse, torture) ☐
- Gender Based Violence ☐
- Arrests and detention ☐
- Abduction or taking of hostages ☐
- Displacement ☐
- Forced military recruitment ☐
- Other ☐
- Do Not Know ☐

11c. What are the main security mechanisms in your community (tick all that apply)?

- Police ☐
- Police – Particular Group : ☐
- National Armed Forces ☐
- Community Security Groups / Neighbourhood Watch ☐
- Other : ☐
- None ☐
- Do Not Know ☐

* Access includes physical, financial and cultural considerations

** Services (or Packages) to be selected from the HeRAMS Standard Checklist of Services - it is recommended to choose services, which gives a broader understanding of the situation in terms of access to health services (e.g. BEOC)

11d. Is there a serious problem in your community because children are not in school or are not getting a good enough education?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

12a. Does the majority of school aged children (>75%) attend school?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

12b. Did the majority of school aged children (>75%) attend school before the disaster?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

12c. What are the main groups of school aged children least likely to participate in school (rank up to 3)?

- Children with disabilities ☐
- Ethnic minorities ☐
- Girls ☐
- Boys ☐
- Other : ☐

13. Is there a serious problem in your community because people have difficulties caring for family members who live with them; for example their children or family members who are elderly, disabled or ill?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

14. Is there a serious problem in your community because people are not getting enough support from other people in the community; for example emotional support or practical help?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

15a. Is there a serious problem in your community because people have been separated from family members?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

15b. Is there a serious problem in your community because people have been displaced from their home country, city or village?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

16a. What are the main reasons why people are unable to return home (rank up to 3)?

- Not applicable – return is impossible; too early in emergency ☐
- Disaster conditions need to subside (e.g. water recede) ☐
- Lack of basic services in place of origin ☐
- Waiting for structural assessment ☐
- The security situation does not allow it ☐
- No transportation home ☐

Other (specify): ☐

16b. What are the main concerns regarding the cohabitation between people from your community and Hosts/IDP Communities?

- Insufficient sheltered space ☐
- Insufficient fuel, resources ☐
- Unequal access to basic services and goods (specify) ☐
- Security threats ☐
- Other (specify): ☐

16c. Is there a serious problem in your community because people do not have enough information; for example information about the situation in which they live now; or the situation in their home country, city or village?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

17a. What are the main sources of information in your community (rank up to 3)?

- Television (specify): ☐
- Radio (specify): ☐
- Newspapers (specify): ☐
- Internet ☐
- Friends, neighbourhood, family ☐
- Community / religious leaders ☐
- Aid workers ☐
- Other (specify): ☐

17b. What is the most important information for your community (rank up to 3)?

- Information on / Communication with Family members ☐
- Information on relief operations (food, water provision, etc.) ☐
- Health advice and treatment ☐
- Market information ☐
- Security information ☐
- Information about the situation in my home community / country of origin ☐
- Weather forecast ☐
- Other (specify): ☐

17c. Is there a serious problem in your community because of inadequate aid; for example because people have no information about the aid that is available, because people do not have fair access to the aid that is available; or because aid agencies are working on their own without involving people in your community?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

18a. Have there been problems in the delivery of humanitarian assistance? (Tick all that apply)

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

18b. Is there a serious problem in your community because people do not feel respected or humiliated; for example because of the situation in which they live; or because of the way other people, including aid workers, treat them?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

19. Is there a serious problem in your community because people are not able to move between places; for example going to another village or town?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

20a. Is movement restricted for any of the following reasons? (Tick all that apply)

- Activities of armed groups ☐
- Presence of landmines ☐
- General violence / serious crime / banditry ☐
- Lack of identity or travel documentation ☐
- Tribal conflict ☐
- Natural obstacles to move out of the location ☐
- Curfews or restricted travelling days / hours / distances or other such restrictions ☐
- Gender restrictions or other discrimination ☐
- Lack / impracticability of the transportation network (bridges, roads, etc.) ☐
- Lack of transportation means ☐
- Other : ☐

20b. What are the main consequences resulting from the restriction of movement? (Rank up to 4)

- Reduced access to water ☐
- Reduced access to health services ☐
- Reduced access to humanitarian relief distributions ☐
- Inability to access fuel sources (e.g. firewood) ☐
- Limited / no access to socio-economic sources / activities (e.g. access to cattle, markets, etc.) ☐
- Risk of physical harm, sexual gender based violence ☐
- Other : ☐

21. Is there a serious problem in your community because people have too much free time in the day?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

* the word "community" should be replaced with the term most suitable to the local geographical context (e.g. village, town, neighborhood, camp, etc.) throughout the Investigation Form

22. Is there a serious problem in your community because of an inadequate system for law and justice; or because people do not know enough about their legal rights?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

23. Is there a serious problem for people in your community because of physical or sexual violence; either in the community or in their homes?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

24. Is there a serious problem in your community because people drink a lot of alcohol; or use harmful drugs?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

25a. Is there a serious problem in your community because people have a mental illness?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

25b. Is there a serious problem in your community because there is not enough care for people who are on their own; for example unaccompanied children, widows or elderly people; or unaccompanied people who have a physical or mental illness, or disability?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

26. Is there a serious problem in your community because people no longer have access to key community infrastructure? (tick all that apply)

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ Unknown: ☐

27. Which infrastructure is most critical to people in your community* today? (rank up to 3)

- Religious centers / sites (specify) ☐
- Cultural centres (specify) ☐
- Youth centres ☐
- Other : ☐

Ranking and Identification of Most Affected Groups

Please identify priority concerns within your community amongst all the items identified as being "a Serious Problem" (Rank up to 6) and list groups within your community that may be most affected.

RANK	SCREENING ITEM	MOST AFFECTED GROUPS	
1	Priority concern #1	Men	☐
		Women	☐
		Boys	☐
		Girls	☐
		Older persons	☐
		Persons with disabilities	☐
		Particular ethnic or religious groups (specify):	☐
		Other (specify):	☐
		All groups are affected in a similar way	☐
		Do not know	☐
2	Priority concern #2	Men	☐
		Women	☐
		Boys	☐
		Girls	☐
		Older persons	☐
		Persons with disabilities	☐
		Particular ethnic or religious groups (specify):	☐
		Other (specify):	☐
		All groups are affected in a similar way	☐
		Do not know	☐
3	Priority concern #3	Men	☐
		Women	☐
		Boys	☐
		Girls	☐
		Older persons	☐
		Persons with disabilities	☐
		Particular ethnic or religious groups (specify):	☐
		Other (specify):	☐
		All groups are affected in a similar way	☐
		Do not know	☐

Assessment Team Module

Priorities and Severity Ranking

RANK	SCREENING ITEM	MOST AFFECTED GROUPS		SEVERITY	COMMENTS / JUSTIFICATION
1	Priority concern #1	Men		Severe situation: urgent intervention required	
		Women			
		Boys			
		Girls			
		Older persons			
		Persons with disabilities			
		Particular ethnic or religious groups (specify):			
		Other (specify):			
		All groups are affected in a similar way			
		Do not know			
2	Priority concern #2	Men		Severe situation: urgent intervention required	
		Women			
		Boys			
		Girls			
		Older persons			
		Persons with disabilities			
		Particular ethnic or religious groups (specify):			
		Other (specify):			
		All groups are affected in a similar way			
		Do not know			
3	Priority concern #3	Men		Situation of concern: surveillance required	
		Women			
		Boys			
		Girls			
		Older persons			
		Persons with disabilities			
		Particular ethnic or religious groups (specify):			
		Other (specify):			
		All groups are affected in a similar way			
		Do not know			

ANNEX 3
TECHNICAL BRIEF: DIRECT OBSERVATION*

Observation is often underrated as a data collection method. Everyone collects direct observation information, knowingly or unknowingly. However, employing direct observation as an effective assessment tool requires consciously using, and recording, what we see, hear, and smell to help shape our understanding of a situation or a problem.

There are two approaches to Direct Observation[1]:

During a structured observation, also referred to as looking for, the observer is looking for a specific behaviour, object or event. For example, when an observer is looking to see if the population uses soap before and after meals, a structured observation can help answer the question. Structured observation can also be used to detect the non-existence of a specific issue (e.g. to see if a population is not using soap before and after meals). To guide a structured observation, a checklist is normally developed to function both as a reminder and a recording tool.

During an unstructured observation, also referred to as looking at, the observer is looking to see how things are done and what issues exist. For instance, if an observer is interested in knowing how people move in and out of a camp, an unstructured observation method would be the appropriate method. To guide an unstructured observation, a short set of open ended questions can be developed that will be answered based on observations.

Strengths and Limitations of Direct Observation

Direct observation can be used to rapidly collect different types of information in an emergency situation. It does not require costly resources, or detailed training, which makes it a quickly usable data collection process.

Observation is also a good way to cross-check people's answers to questions. Its use may generate questions for further investigation and help form future discussions or frame questions in case of inconsistency between what the interviewer of a key informant observes and what the respondents are saying.

However, because direct observation as a data collection technique provides a snapshot of the situation, it has limited power where the situation changes rapidly (e.g. when there is population movement) or is conflict affected. Furthermore, it provides limited information about capacities and priorities of the people[2]. Finally, while specific training is not prerequisite for effective direct observation, some preparation is necessary to ensure that the observers are aware that their own perceptions and expectations are subjective and impact upon how they report and interpret their observations. The gender, age, ethnicity and previous disaster response experience of the observer can all effect the interpretation of data collected during observation. The particular sectoral specializations (e.g. protection, WASH, shelter, etc.) of observers also may influence their observation findings, as they may have a tendency to focus observation on their own area of specialization or to misinterpret something outside of their specialization. The technical expertise required to answer particular observation questions should match the level of technical expertise of the observers.

Basic Principles of Direct Observation

Before the field assessment

Every data collection instrument (e.g. questionnaire, interview checklist) should make provision and space for direct observation comments and notes as they help add context and meaning to the data collected.

Example:[3]

Data collectors must be informed of the value of their observations, through pre-field visit preparation, and on the need to systematically record them in

Table 1: Example of form for recording observations

Location	Observation	Significance	Follow-up
Village X	Poor drainage around well; spilled water flowing back into the well Animals walking around the well	Water contamination likely to lead to diarrheal disease, particularly among young children	Investigate household water usage: do people boil and/or treat water?

* ACAPS Technical Brief: Direct Observation and Key Informant Interviews (2011) was adapted for use as this annex.

1 Child Protection Rapid Assessment Toolkit as of January 2011

2 Adopted from the Guidance on Profiling Internally Displaced Persons, NRC's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and UN OCHA, April 2008 Edition

3 Modified from the 2009 WFP EFSA Handbook

questionnaires or through separate checklists, while ensuring that their observations are separated from the respondents' comments or responses.

Box 2. Key sites for observation include:

Water collection points, latrines, communal washing areas, schools, storage facilities, grave sites, markets, health facilities and religious centres.

During the field assessment

Direct observation starts before an interview or discussion. Observe conditions and particular features from a range of viewpoints and places to provide a representative view of the affected area. Often things seen on the drive into the area or upon entering the village on foot provide valuable contextual data. If there is a high point, such as a hill or a tall building, the site should be observed from above to get a sense of the conditions and variations across the site.

After presenting yourself to relevant site authorities, start the community assessment with a walk around the location. Walking through the area with local people facilitates discussion and can be an excellent way to come across unexpected information (issues that were not predicted).

Spend time in communal or public places (cafés, tea shops, markets, religious buildings). Look around and talk to people. A local market is usually an excellent first stop as it gives a useful picture of what is available, what people produce, buy and sell as well as prices etc.

Observation provides immediate information for assessing the status of existing infrastructure. Driving along a road is a sure way of finding out if it is passable, but be careful in conflict areas where landmines and explosive remnants of war may pose security problems.

During the assessment, take the opportunity to *observe as much as you can*. Look at:

People's physical condition and activities

Observe children, older persons, the chronically ill, and those persons with disabilities

Observe power relationships within the community and whether people from different groups have different coping mechanisms or access to aid

Observe housing, properties, livestock, assets, etc.

Where appropriate, observe the daily lives of women (be aware that in some cultural settings, it is inappropriate and disrespectful for men to observe and/or interview women)

Observe the state of public services, sanitation systems, and infrastructure (e.g. schools, water points, health posts etc.)

Record both what should be there in the community and was not observed. The absence of people in the market, of children in the schools, of men or women in displaced population groups is as important as their presence.

Where culturally acceptable and the security situation permits, take pictures. Photos, video footage and even sketches can be extremely useful in communicating to others the reality of the situation[4]. When photographing individuals or photographing when physically in an affected community, be sensitive to the fact that taking photographs of affected persons can both endanger them (in conflict settings) or be highly inappropriate (such as men photographing women). Do not endanger your assessment team by attempting to take photos where they are prohibited (e.g. military installations, etc.).

Engage in cross-checking information. If you are discussing water, ask to see the water source. If people describe food or building method which you do not know, ask to see it. Direct observation can be used as a means of on the spot triangulation for the responses, discussion, and explanations given by affected persons.

Meet up with the whole assessment team at least once during the fieldwork at each site, to review progress and decide which important places still need attention before leaving the site. This helps avoid gaps in gathering essential data about important points.

At the end of your field assessment visit, hold a meeting with community representatives. Explain what you have done and seen, share your conclusions, and inform the community how this information will be used. Be sure not to make commitments or promises regarding assistance.

After the field assessment

A debriefing between assessment team members should be organised by the team leader to collect observations from the team, triangulate information and wrap up final conclusions of the field visit. Direct observations must be transferred from individual checklists to a data summary sheet where necessary.

Highlight areas where team observations and population responses do not match to enable further analysis of discrepancies and identify triangulation needs.

4 Modified from 2000 IFRC Disaster assessment guideline

Do's and Don'ts of Direct Observation

Do:

Try to avoid entering the observation process with pre-conceived notions and fixed expectations.

Note observations you make and information volunteered that are related to subjects beyond your concerns. Be prepared to follow advice from people you meet on the places you visit. Use the opportunity to observe things which were not planned.

Walk across the community outside of predefined routes such as roads, paths or natural boundaries to obtain a cross-section of points for observation and provide a balanced view of conditions.

Record information which is contradictory or surprising to your expectations .

Keep focused to make useful comparisons. Be active in your observation.

Be curious! Observation is not just about seeing, but also about hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling and touching.

Be aware of what you may not have seen. Note down the absence of services and infrastructure.

Respect local culture. Community members are observing you just as much as you are observing them. Follow local rules of behaviour, e.g. do not smoke during interviews. Be aware of gender dynamics and ensure that your teams reflect this. Be sensitive to local concerns, for example if there is a shortage of food and water, do not consume snacks and drinks in front of affected community members.

Don't:

Begin your observation process with a set of expectations of what you expect to see or seek to record data primarily to prove a pre-existing hypothesis.

Rely on remembering information, record your observations on a checklist or record sheet. Note down both what you do see as well as what you expected to see, but did not.

Focus solely on misery and destitution. Be aware of capacities, opportunities, and social capital within the affected community.

Be intrusive. Take steps to be as sensitive and respectful as possible; observation should as unobtrusive as possible.

Take a photograph without asking prior permission.

ANNEX 4
KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS[1]

In addition to direct observation, key informant interviews are a commonly used data collection technique for rapid assessments. A key informant interview is one where an individual with prior knowledge of the affected community is questioned to gather key information on the impact of the disaster and on priority community needs. The crucial element of a key informant interview is that the informant is well versed in information about his/her community and its inhabitants[2].

Key informants are people with specific knowledge about certain aspects of the community, the site visited, the population or the emergency[3] either because of their professional background, leadership responsibilities or because of their particular personal experience. Typically a key informant is a local leader whether civil, government or religious.

However, *regular* citizens can also be valuable key informants simply because they can share their representative but personal experience. For example, a young female household head may be able to highlight priority needs from the perspective of a mother; likewise a person who is unable to walk without assistance may be able to highlight challenges that certain strata of the community face in accessing aid due to mobility challenges. While not traditionally considered to be key informants, these individual can provide a unique perspective of the experience of *typical* members of the affected community.

Key informant interviews may be used to:

Obtain technical information from people representing specific professions, such as health workers or school teachers

Gain specific knowledge about a specific topic or sector (e.g. interviewing a water committee representative)

Delve into sensitive issues that are not appropriate for group discussion (e.g. protection concerns)

Strengths and Limitations of Key Informant Interviews

Key Informant Interviews enable the collection of basic information. They can be organised quickly and carried out with few resources. Key informant interviews have particular value in gaining a perspective of the impact of the disaster on a community where access to affected populations has been compromised or is difficult. They also provide a holistic and qualitative overview of the impact of a disaster on community members.

The greatest limitation of a key information interview is that it provides a subjective perspective on the impact of a disaster. As with all individual responses, information will have both an individual and a cultural bias which needs to be considered when analysing key informant interview responses.

Choosing Semi-structured or Structured Interviews

This section provides an overview of how to undertake a key informant interview and which issues need to be taken into account. An interview can be semi-structured or structured.

Semi-structured interview (checklist):

A semi-structured interview is a guided interview in which a limited set of questions are decided ahead of time[4]. The questions are open ended, with the aim of stimulating discussion on a given topic. Box 3 describes open and closed ended questions. When conducting a semi-structured interview, the interviewer uses a checklist or question outline instead of a questionnaire and tries to build a relaxed and constructive relationship with the informant through a conversational approach. This requires the interviewer to be familiar with general cultural considerations, be sensitive to the interviewee, and not be judgmental or too set in their pre conceived ideas. While understanding the language can be an advantage[5], the more important concern is to crosscheck translation to ensure that the concerns of the interviewee rather than those of the translator are captured.

Analysing findings from semi-structured interviews entails a labour-intensive process given that there is often a greater range of answers and responses than in other forms of information collection. One way to do this is to try to summarize answers by main points raised and then create a limited number of sub categories. This will help to determine how interviewees prioritised or de-prioritised certain issues. Another option is to summarise the interview into a single summary sheet listing the sectors and sub sectors affected as well as the concerns and priorities expressed by the population. When comparing different interviews across affected communities, the findings of the different summary sheets can be aggregated into one and information

[1] ACAPS Technical Brief: Direct Observation and Key Informant Interviews (2011) was adapted for use as this annex.

[2] Adopted from the Guidance on Profiling Internally Displaced Persons, NRC's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and UN OCHA, April 2008 Edition

[3] 2009 WFP EFSA Handbook

[4] 2006 UNDAC Handbook

[5] World Food Program, EFSA, 2009

analysed to identify patterns and areas of concern.

Structured interview (questionnaire):

In its simplest form, a structured interview involves one person asking another person a list of predetermined questions about selected topics using a questionnaire. The aim of a structured interview is to ensure that each interview is presented with exactly the same questions in the same order. This ensures that answers can be accurately aggregated and that comparisons can be made with confidence between sample sub-groups or between different assessment periods.

A list of predicted options for answers to the questions can be included so that assessors simply need to *tick the box*. This can save time and increase accuracy in the field, however the assessments teams need to take care not to lead respondents by reading out the options. The questionnaire must also always have a space for assessors to include options other than those which have been pre-defined.

Box 3. Types of questions:

Close ended questions have specific answers, which are normally short, with yes or no answers, factual, and easy to verify. They are generally easy to aggregate and analyse as they do not required complex recoding operations.

Open ended questions have no fixed set of responses allowing the respondent to answer as s/he sees fit. They allow the respondent to think and reflect, and give the respondent a chance to voice their answers in their own words. Analysis demands the ability to rank priorities and compare qualitative responses holistically.

Design of a good questionnaire demands technical expertise, experience and a good understanding of the context. Structured interviews are recommended for phase 2 assessments when findings of phase 1 assessment provide practical recommendations on information needs and areas requiring further investigation[6].

Structured interviews can be time consuming and care should be taken to keep them focused. Experience from post disaster responses indicates that spending a roughly an hour per interview and selecting a cross-section of key informants maximises the range and quality of information gathered.

How to select Key Informants

During rapid assessments, key informants are selected to provide general information about population profiles and movement trends, security, context and sectoral issues (water, environment and sanitation, food security/nutrition, shelter, health, protection, environment, education, etc.).

The number and type of key informants selected per location will depend on the range of expertise or perspective available from the pool of key informants, the nature of the disaster, the availability of people and the time that can be spent at the site. When identifying the cadre of key informants, remember to arrange interviews with individuals of different genders, ages, and religious and/or ethnic minorities to ensure a full picture of the affected community. It is important that the assessors take into account power dynamics within a community and that opposing social strata[7] do not speak for each other.

As noted in section 3.2, a key informant can also be an individual who represents certain aspects of the community and can provide meaningful indications about access, risks, priorities, vulnerabilities and capacities at the community level.

Where an affected community includes different population groups, such as a host population and a displaced population, key informants should be selected from all groups of interest[8]. Groups should be divided based on heterogeneity of experience: if one group is likely to experience the humanitarian crisis in a significantly different way than another group, each group should have its own key informant. A key informant for a group of displaced population can be the camp representative or manager. Box four provides examples of people who can be useful key informants.

Basic Principles of key Informant Interviews[9]

Before the assessment

Involve experts in the design and planning of the

Box 4. Useful resource persons for rapid assessment in emergencies may include:

At district/local level, representative(s) of:

District/local authorities, local leaders/village elders, police, army, fire service, rescue services, NGOs, civil defence, IFRC/ICRC, international and national relief teams/organizations officers, religious leaders, UN national staff, health personnel, evacuation centre focal point, birth/death registration officer, etc.

At capital level, representative(s) of:

National authorities, UNDAC & UN agencies members, geographical institutes, departments of meteorology/hydrology, agencies, NGOs, embassies, OCHA staff, etc.

[6] Phase 1 assessment will support the design of an appropriate and adapted questionnaire as well as to guide the site selection process in phase 2 of assessment

[7] Social groups

[8] 2009 Initial Rapid Assessment Guidance Notes

[9] 2007 Initial Rapid Assessment Guidance Notes

assessment, especially for the sampling, the site selection process and the design of the questionnaire.

Field test your data collection instrument and refine it as necessary. A field test will provide a good indication of the complexity of the data collection instrument and the time required to complete it. Questions which key informants have difficulty understanding or which make them feel uncomfortable or prone to providing dishonest answers should be re-worded, replaced or removed following the field test.

Plan your field data collection carefully. Ensure that you have enough time to carry out your key informant interviews. Remember to inform the authorities of your itinerary and carry with you credential letters explaining the objectives of the assessment.

Choose an appropriate assessment team. Experienced people are required for rapid assessment. Ensure gender and age balance within the team(s) as well as translators if necessary. When possible, involve national/local authorities in assessment teams. Divide tasks according to the expertise of team members.

Ensure interviewers are properly trained to achieve accurate and precise assessments. Team members should be briefed on and understand the objectives, methodology and principles of the rapid assessment and the possible interventions that could be implemented as a result of it. Each interviewer should be thoroughly familiar with the data collection process and the information being elicited by each question. Provide field notes to explain, define key terminology and outline site sampling.

During the assessment

Approach the chosen informant (see box 5[10]): be aware of their situation, what activities they are engaged in, and what their surroundings are. Interview people in a safe place that is convenient to them and remember to adapt to their circumstances.

Make sure people understand why you wish to talk to them and what you will do with the information they share. Be careful not to raise expectations.

Ensure good communication and informed consent. Participants must understand that they are not required to participate in the interview. Make sure they understand that a lack of participation will not negatively impact them.

The full list of questions may not necessarily be covered during the interview. The order in which questions are addressed may change according to which key informant is interviewed first. Be flexible and adapt accordingly. Be aware that the more difference there is between the way information is collected at different sites, the more challenging and time consuming it will be to build an overall picture of the humanitarian impact in the affected area.

Start the interview with general questions about the situation and allow the interviewee to raise issues of concern to them before guiding the conversation to the subjects of interest to you. Progress with questions that are factual and relatively straightforward to answer. Move on to more sensitive issues, only when the interviewee is more at ease.

Ensure that the translator, where in evidence, understands the subject and vocabulary of the interview and is able to forge a respectful relationship with interviewees.

Take notes as the interview progresses; ensure that the information is transferred safely and without distortion.

Combine interviews with observation to verify information and correct inconsistencies.[11]

Consult the people affected and not only their *official* representative. Consider the needs of different groups and individuals, seek out marginalised groups and ensure their interests are taken into account.

When an interview is not yielding the kind of overview perspective needed, politely bring the discussion to an end, thank the interviewees for their time, and seek other key informants to talk with.[12]

Structure your interview with each key informant with care. Make sure people know that you value their time and participation. Build trust before asking sensitive questions. Don't end the interview too abruptly.

Box 5: Reducing bias while selecting respondents:

Remember that communities are not homogeneous. Gather and weigh information from local sources that represent different interest groups, including marginalised persons. For example, select informants from both host and displaced populations, where present.

Define the different characteristics of people to consult (e.g. those most affected by the crisis, IDPs, minority ethnic groups, etc). When conducting key informant interviews, check who is present against this criteria. Note groups that are not represented.

Wherever possible, consult the affected population directly, including women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and ethnic or religious minorities. The poorest and most socially excluded people in the affected community are likely to be worst hit by the crisis. Do not rely only on information from official sources and those in power as they do not always represent excluded groups in their communities.

[10] Source: 2010 UNICEF JENA

[11] 2007 Initial Rapid Assessment Guidance Notes

[12] 2009 Initial Rapid Assessment Guidance Notes

Record metadata (such as date, location of interview, social role of interviewee, group represented by the interviewee, etc.) for each key informant, as this information will be used in the interpretation of the data.

Do:

Introduce yourself and gain permission to carry out the interview before asking more targeted questions. Build trust with the persons interviewed, give people time to talk about their priority issues or express grief.

Ask if the key informant is happy for you to take notes or use a PDA to record the interview. With a PDA, you may need to explain what it is and show them how it works.

Be sensitive to the time needed to complete the questionnaire. It should take no more than an hour per key informant to complete, but balance the importance of the data with the time needed to find the specific data. Be flexible and appreciate that the interviewee may have other pressing obligations or may have no obligations and may just need to talk.

Make sure the data collection instrument has space for capturing direct observation comments and notes. Keep the data collection instrument brief.

Avoid/limit open ended questions in the data collection instrument for phase 2.

Choose your key informants well. Know the question you're trying to answer and the data you're looking for. Identify the key information source and focus on finding the critical information.

Choose a limited number of critical topics to discuss with one person. Don't try to run through the whole set of information needs with one key informant only.

Be alert to non-verbal signs and behaviours which indicate how comfortable the person is with the interview, whether questions are too sensitive or if your respondent is losing patience. When people are uncomfortable with your questions, do not insist they answer.

Be consistent. Use the same methods in each community visited. Record data consistently to ease comparisons and highlight obvious differences that stand out.

Record access routes, time taken and other logistical tips to help future plans.

Give voice to all vulnerable groups, specifically women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and religious and ethnic minorities.

Give key informants the opportunity to ask questions or share their thoughts on issues that have not yet been discussed. However, in doing this, be careful not to raise unrealistic expectations of aid if the conversation leads to discussion on areas outside the scope of the assessment or intervention plans.

After the assessment

Conduct a debriefing meeting to give all assessment team members the opportunity to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the interviews and the interview process. Compare findings, views and impressions. Gather observational information, anecdotes, or concerns not captured in the data collection form. Consider the reliability of the key informants as well as your team bias. All of this information should be considered and included in the final report.

Endeavour to maintain communication with the visited communities and inform key informants about how the information they provided is being used and what follow up actions are being taken. Share the final report with them if possible.

Do's and Don'ts for Key Informant Interviews[13]

Don't:

Waste precious time talking as a whole team to one respondent (apart from initial introduction to authorities or other gatekeepers).

Substitute your direct observation for the respondent's answer or explanation to a question. If your observation differs from a respondent's answer, note this and try to determine potential reasons why this may be the case.

Put the interviewee in a compromising situation by conducting an individual interview. Where feasible, explain to the rest of the community why you want to talk specifically to that person and on what topic. Seek their permission before you begin the interview.

Interrogate respondents as an extractive process. Let them talk while guiding the conversation.

Create expectations about future humanitarian support.

Monopolise the time of individual interviewees. Especially during times of crisis, people have their own priorities.

Limit yourself to one respondent's information with regard to one topic: Triangulate by asking other persons about it until you have heard the same answer sufficient times to be confident that there is consensus on this point

Induce particular answers by helping an interviewee to respond.

Ask questions that may stigmatise people or endanger them.

Use people's names when collecting information. Ensure the anonymity of the data collected. When key protection risks are observed, they should be referred confidentially to Protection Cluster colleagues for appropriate and confidential follow up.

Prevent key informants from asking you questions at the end of the interview.

Let a translator answer a question for the interviewee or dominate the interview process.

[13] 2008 and 2009 Initial Rapid Assessment Guidance Notes

PRELIMINARY SCANARIO DEFINITION (NAME OF COUNRTY)

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Description of Crisis:

Overall Impact, Severity of Crisis:

Affected Groups:

Affected Sectors:

HUMANITARIAN PROFILE

(Common Operational Datasets)

NEEDS

(Needs per sector)

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

Logistics:

Security Constraints:

Civil Military:

RESPONSE CAPACITY

(In country capacity and gap analysis)

COVERAGE AND GAPS

(In country capacity and gap analysis)

STRATEGIC HUMANITARIAN PRIORITIES

(In country capacity and gap analysis)

SCENARIOS

Name of the Scenario

Most likely/middle scenario						
	Probability level				X	
	Impact level					X

Core Assumptions and Impact

Assumptions (risks, opportunities and triggering factors):

General Impact and effects of the crisis (estimates of affected population, and displacement patterns, price rises, market disruption, destruction of crops, etc):

Affected Areas:

Response capacity and gap analysis:

Population at Risk and Anticipated Duration of tEmergency

Affected groups (e.g. IDPs is a population at risk in the case of further flooding) **and their characteristics** (numbers, demographics, specific vulnerable groups, coping mechanisms):

How are they affected (e.g. displaced in inadequate shelter, access to basic services, losses of assets):

Location (e.g. in public building in urban areas, in camp settlement etc):

Duration of the emergency situation. Time period during which assistance is required:

Operational Constraints

Security, access, communication:

Priority Needs

Most affected groups:

Most affected areas:

Sectors requiring immediate assistance:

Key interventions (including intervention/assessment preparedness measures)

Name of the Scenario

Most likely/middle scenario						
	Probability level				X	
	Impact level					X

Core Assumptions and Impact

Assumptions (risks, opportunities and triggering factors):

General Impact and effects of the crisis (estimates of affected population, and displacement patterns, price rises, market disruption, destruction of crops, etc):

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Operational Constraints

Security, access, communication:

Priority Needs

Most affected groups:

Most affected areas:

Sectors requiring immediate assistance:

Key interventions (including intervention/assessment preparedness measures)

SCENARIOS

HEALTH

FOOD SECURITY

NUTRITION

WASH

EDUCATION

PROTECTION

EARLY RECOVERY

SHELTER

SITUATION MAP

ANNEX 6
MIRA REPORT TEMPLATE

How to Use this Template

This template provides general guidance on the expected contents of the MIRA report. The template should be tightly linked to the Analytical Framework designed in a given crisis. It should not be viewed as a fixed menu of items that must be covered in every situation. Rather, it is designed to act as a guidance which can be expanded and adapted to the information needs of each context.

For further detail on the type of information that may be expected in each of the proposed sections please refer to the Analytical Framework presented in fig.3. The format and the size of the report are usually agreed upon at the start of the MIRA process. In general it is good to aim to keep the main text of the report concise and easily accessible.

The information in the MIRA report should be used to communicate the findings of the MIRA. The information in the MIRA report should be used to populate the initial Humanitarian Dashboard, and should feed into other reporting mechanisms.

The MIRA Report Template

Situation Overview

1. What is the type of crisis?

2. What are the underlying factors of the crisis?

3. What is the geographical extent of the affected area?

Needs

4. How and to what extent does the crisis affect populations?

5. How and to what extent does the crisis affect livelihoods?

6. How does the crisis affect access to basic services and goods?

7. How many people are affected?

National Authorities Response Capacity

8. What is the coping capacity of the local affected communities and what are their initial interventions?

9. What is the national / sub-national private sector, non-governmental and government capacities and how have they been affected?

10.What are their initial interventions to respond to the emergency?

In-Country International Response Capacity

11. What is the in-country international response capacity and how has it been affected?

12. Which agencies / organizations are operating where – in which sectors of intervention?

13. What have they been doing and what are they likely to do in response to the situation?

Coverage & Gaps

14. What proportion of the population in need is being reached by humanitarian interventions?

15. To what extent are the needs being addressed?

Humanitarian Access

16. What are the logistic considerations in terms of effects of the emergency and options for response?

17. What are the security considerations?

18. How do civil-military relations feature in the context?

Strategic Humanitarian Priorities

19. What are the priorities for Humanitarian Intervention?

20. Other key issues to be considered (protection, environment, gender etc)?