arrangements at headquarters which, given the plethora of agencies, the team was unable to cover adequately.

1.1.2 Methodology

The evaluation covered Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, with some additional observations from Thailand and from a brief review of coordination management and support from regional and international bodies. The evaluation was subject to constraints of time, geographical coverage and availability of key informants. The study was undertaken 9–11 months after the onset of the emergency, and many international personnel had moved on to other posts, while continuity and institutional memory were more evident within national governments and national agencies. Since this depended to some extent on retrospective analysis, it was not always backed by adequate written information, particularly since in the early weeks ad hoc structures and rapid on-the-spot decisions were the norm.

The terms of reference for this evaluation provided a contextual basis for asking some broader questions of the international humanitarian system as a whole.

1 What worked and what did not work in coordination and why?

2 What was the outcome of the various coordination efforts?

   – Avoidance of critical gaps at sectoral and geographic levels?

   – Absence of duplication?

   – Increased/decreased operational costs in the use of assets, resources and funds?

   – Appropriate use of common assets and tools?

   – Sufficient ownership, inclusion, and knowledge transfer among local actors and beneficiaries?

   – Value-added support to national coordination structures?

3 How appropriate was the structure, strategy and style of coordination to the circumstances at country, regional and international level and with specific actors?

4 Did coordination actors bring the right expertise and appropriate critical mass to the relief effort at critical times?

The methods of data collection for the study included a mix of:

- semi-structured, one-to-one interviews with key actors (including by telephone)

- supplementary written inputs

- group interviews (workshop format)

- introduction of key questions into aid-client surveys in Indonesia and Sri Lanka being organised by the TEC Capacities evaluation team – this helped to give some rigour to the otherwise brief impressions gained from field visits

- collection of written data from the field, including (where available) correspondence on decisions taken across the timeline

- a literature search and collation of ongoing/completed agency reviews

- review of country report drafts by TEC steering committee members plus key correspondents from the various UN, IFRC and NGO country teams.

To enable the fullest possible representation of views from the wide range of stakeholders involved, specific findings were cross-checked from one particular data source with those of another. Actors involved included representatives of governments, humanitarian agencies, civil society and bilateral and multilateral donors. Table 1.1 summarises the numbers and locations of interviewees. In addition, the team convened stakeholder consultation workshops/debriefings in Indonesia (3), Sri Lanka (2) and the Maldives (1).

Table 1.1 Informants consulted during the evaluation						
Location	INGOs and Red Cross/Crescent	Local NGOs/CBOs	UN	Donors/IFIs	Government	Military
Indonesia	33	11	23	20	19	10
Sri Lanka	19	11	12	5	13	3
Maldives	7	8	11	2	16	
International HQ (Bangkok, Singapore Europe/USA)	12	1	47	7	5	12 + 6 in Manila/ Philippines
Total	71	31	93	34	53	31

With approximately 2.5 weeks per country, the team relied heavily on OCHA and/or local consultants to set up one-to-one and group meetings in advance, and to advise on key stakeholders. One person from the OCHA management team accompanied the team throughout, although she was not a contributor to the team findings, and the independence of the evaluation from OCHA was assured. Further research assistance was rendered in New York (one person) and Sri Lanka (one person) to amass data from web sources, NGOs and evaluative literature.

1.1.3 Definition of coordination

Most dictionaries define coordination simply as the act of working together harmoniously. In development literature, coordination assumes interdependence, the necessity to manage it and a degree of hierarchy.[7] For our purposes here, we adopt a hybrid definition that includes what coordination is and what it ideally does.[8] Cross-cutting themes, notably adherence to gender analysis and standards, are assumed.

Coordination is a process, the orchestration of effort toward appropriate, effective, efficient and coherent delivery of humanitarian services. It involves the systematic use of policy instruments including:

7 For useful discussions about conceptual differences between coordination, cooperation and interdependence, see Robinson et al (2000).
8 The definition borrows some elements from Borton et al (1996), Minear et al (1992) and Bennett (1995).