

Annex 1: Terms of reference

Background

The tsunami catastrophe that struck Asia on 26 December 2004 is one of the worst natural disasters in modern history. Although the major impact was felt in India, Indonesia, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand, other countries affected include Myanmar, Somalia, Bangladesh, Kenya, Malaysia, the Seychelles and Tanzania. More than 250,000 people are thought to have died, and as many as half a million people were injured, with many needing urgent medical or surgical treatment. Overall, an estimated 5 million people have been directly or indirectly affected. Damage to and destruction of infrastructure destroyed livelihoods, and left many people homeless or without adequate water, sanitation, food or healthcare facilities.

Governments and individuals worldwide responded with unprecedented generosity, in solidarity with the rescue and relief efforts of the affected communities and local and national authorities. This has been instrumental in reducing or mitigating the consequences of the disaster, and in boosting the current recovery and rehabilitation efforts.

Purpose and scope of the evaluation

This evaluation is undertaken as part of the work of the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC). The present joint evaluation will look at the extent to which responses to the tsunami disaster were informed by timely, transparent, comprehensive, accurate and coordinated assessments of impact and needs. This would be most appropriately analysed jointly through a multi-sectoral approach. Indeed, most disaster assessments carried out in the past have focused on the use of sectoral/sub-sectoral or agency approaches to emergency crises, with a subsequent reduction in their effectiveness to respond to the affected population's real needs. Reality on the ground calls for a more holistic and integrated analysis and consequent response.

'Needs assessment' is categorised as: immediate assessment carried out during the first seven days, with more structured assessments carried out during the subsequent three months.

Purpose of the evaluation

- To assess the extent to which immediate and longer-term agency and donor responses and strategies were guided by timely, relevant and adequate needs assessments (what was done well and why, and what could have been done better and how).
- To assess the extent to which information from needs assessments was brought together and made available in a form that could be used by the main actors.
- To determine whether the needs assessments were well coordinated and complementary.
- To make recommendations to humanitarian agencies and donors for improving how needs are assessed in sudden-onset emergencies.
- Within the larger, system-wide evaluation effort of the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, to serve as a pilot and possible future model for system-wide interagency evaluations.

The users of the evaluation results are humanitarian actors (UN, NGOs and donors) and possibly the affected national governments.

Scope of the evaluation

The emphasis of the evaluation will be on the needs assessments carried out by agencies/actors involved, and their priority setting for immediate and longer-term responses. The evaluation will look at the needs assessments carried out during the first three months of the humanitarian response, from 26 December 2004 to 31 March 2005, to determine the effect on people's lives and livelihoods and their needs. The study will also take into account supplies provided and needs addressed or met (for example, by local actors and the military) prior to any needs assessments being conducted.

The evaluation will include two levels of analysis: the extent to which needs assessments guided decision making on planning and programming the response; and, at country level, how far needs assessed were reflected in the response and met the actual needs of the affected populations.

Assessments of needs of the humanitarian response will be reviewed, taking into account shelter, food, security, health (including malnourishment, malnutrition and morbidity), protection issues (including sexual and gender-based violence), livelihood recovery and targeted longer-term solutions for the most affected groups (including orphans and the aged).

The evaluation will include four case studies: two in Aceh, Indonesia, and two in Sri Lanka. In each country, one case study is of a place that was easily accessed, and the other is one accessed only some days after the tsunami. The evaluation is expected to provide examples of good practice; noting practice to be avoided, as well as targeted recommendations to the humanitarian community on how to adopt the lessons and insights identified by this evaluation.

Evaluation criteria and key issues

Each of the three key issues detailed below will be evaluated using the following evaluation criteria as appropriate: timeliness, efficiency, effectiveness, appropriateness, coherence, value-added and connectedness. Gender perspectives will be systematically included throughout the evaluation.

Quality of impact and needs assessments

- Quality of the assessment: was the coverage of the needs and damage assessment sufficiently comprehensive? Did the assessments lead to an adequate understanding of who was affected, where they were, and what were their immediate needs?
- How adequately were anticipated risks (such as vulnerabilities, potential for outbreaks) assessed? Were assessed needs and risks accurate?
- To what extent was local knowledge and capacity used in carrying out the needs assessments?
- To what extent were local capacities (such as local expertise, family ties and support) taken into account in identifying the needs for assistance?
- Were there any unassessed needs (in terms of either geographic coverage or population groups)?
- Did the assessed needs correspond to the actual needs of the populations?
- Was the timing of disaster impact and needs assessment appropriate?
- Were the assessments (and recommendations) appropriately grounded in an analysis of contexts, particularly social issues (such as caste, illegal immigrants, conflict, politics and gender issues)?
- To what extent did analysis reflect a longer-term perspective?
- What assessment mechanisms were put in place after the immediate rapid assessments?
- How effective were the surveillance mechanisms and other subsequent assessments or surveys in directing/adjusting the responses?
- Were there distinct differences in the assessment processes between the most important affected countries?

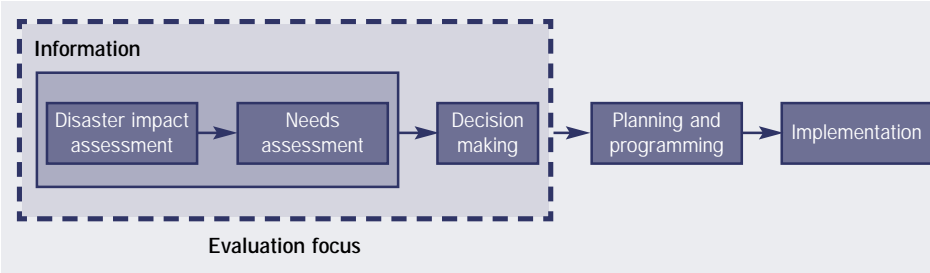
Complementarity and coordination

- Did assessment methodologies make use of existing frameworks for needs assessment in emergencies, such as: the Needs Analysis Framework (NAF) developed for the Consolidated Appeals Process; the UNDG Framework for Multilateral Needs Assessments in Post-conflict Situations; the Standardised Monitoring & Assessment of Relief & Transitions (SMART) Initiative; and frameworks and approaches developed by NGOs addressing sectoral needs (such as CARE, Oxfam food security and agricultural needs, or other national and international standards to determine appropriate interventions, for example the Sphere handbook). Were these methodologies reconciled for commonality of use?
- Did any of the assessment methodologies use any guidelines prepared from a gender-sensitive perspective?
- To what extent were assessments by sector and by beneficiary group comprehensive?
- To what extent were overlapping assessments consistent or contradictory?
- How did needs assessments relate to those done by national governments? Were findings similar or different? Why were they different?
- Were the needs assessments coordinated and complementary to the extent feasible in the aftermath of the disaster?

Effectiveness and use of needs assessments

- Were there coherent and effective mechanisms for the sharing and dissemination of the results of needs assessment in place?
- Use and users of assessment(s): who are the user(s)? What information/analysis did they particularly value? What were the gaps?
- To what extent were assessments useful to formulate responses including alternative options (relief/recovery)?
- Were assessments used to formulate clear strategies on what needed to be done as priority to deal with direct consequences (such as loss of shelter, the injured and the dead)?
- Who made the strategies, based on what information, to what effect? How did these assessments relate to the planning of Flash Appeals?
- Did the needs assessments inform the design and targeting of emergency and early recovery responses? If not, why not?
- To what extent were funding decisions (pledges and commitments) based on the needs assessments?

Figure 1. From assessment to implementation



Links to other thematic studies

This evaluation is linked to other thematic studies in this series. In particular, this evaluation covers issues of coordination (complementarity) in needs-assessment processes and uses. It also addresses issues relating to funding and the extent to which donors' decision-making, strategy formulation and setting of priorities was guided and informed by objective needs assessments. Finally, the evaluation links with the LRRD thematic group concerning connectedness in carrying out needs assessments.

Management of the evaluation

The evaluation of needs assessment will be managed by the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC), WHO and FAO (the Steering Committee), with guidance from the Working Group consisting of various agencies and donors. The Steering Committee's main tasks are to:

- ensure an inclusive process to finalise the ToR
- assist in the mobilisation of resources (financial and in-kind)

- participate in the selection of team members (identifying the team and ensuring quality throughout the process)
- consult on key issues regarding this evaluation
- advise their own agencies and staff on this evaluation, as well as coordinating agency internal substantive feedback to the group
- participate in any workshop that may be planned once the draft report has been received
- ensure ongoing communication with the Working Group
- ensure integration into and coherence with the wider TEC evaluation.

Financial and administrative aspects of the evaluation will be managed by WHO.

Evaluation team and methodology

It is proposed that the evaluation team will consist of three international evaluation experts, covering between them expertise in assessments of immediate needs including those for food, shelter, health, water, restoration of livelihoods and food security, public health, infrastructure, security and cross-cutting issues of gender. One of the three consultants will be the team leader. A research assistant will carry out the background and preparatory work. National consultants will join the core team during each of the country case studies.

The team will make use of the following methodologies:

- inventory, categorisation and selection of the most important needs assessments made during the first three months; in addition to comprehensive multi-sector assessments, attention will be given to assessments relating to health, food security, agriculture and fisheries
- desk review of the quality and methodologies of the assessment reports based on an agreed set of criteria
- consultation with beneficiaries in the three affected countries
- identification of and interviews with key stakeholders, and in particular decision makers, in the three affected countries as well as in donor and agency headquarters
- visits to the disaster-affected areas in Sri Lanka and Western Sumatra; it is proposed that in both Sri Lanka and Indonesia, the team will do an in-depth study in two respective locations: one that was reached by the international community during the first days, and a second where it took a week or longer for the first international assessment and response teams to arrive
- focus-group discussions with stratified opinion sampling.

For comparison purposes, it is important that a consistent methodology be applied in the two countries visited.

Tentative schedule

Starting date (desk review): September

Field missions: October

Schedule for the research assistant: early September

- 2 days briefing in Rome or Geneva with the Steering Committee
- 4 weeks desk review, including inventory, identification of interviewees and missions preparation

Schedule for the team leader: September

- 2 days briefing in Rome or Geneva with the Steering Committee
- 2-day workshop in London with the TEC Evaluation Adviser and Coordinator, and the other study team leaders
- 3 weeks desk review including an inception report
- 2 weeks in Sri Lanka (including a national workshop)
- 3 weeks in Aceh (including a national workshop)
- 2 weeks writing reports
- 2 days in London participating in a synthesis report workshop

Schedule for the two evaluators: September

- 2 days briefing in Rome or Geneva with the Steering Committee
- 2 weeks desk review including an inception report
- 2 weeks in Sri Lanka (including a national workshop)
- 3 weeks in Aceh (including a national workshop)
- 1 week writing reports

Draft report submitted: end of November

Debate on draft report: in the December ALNAP biannual

Finalise report

Integration in TEC synthesis report: end of December

Outputs

A report of no more than 30 pages, excluding an executive summary of no more than 3 pages and annexes. For further guidance on report preparation, see ALNAP guidance. The final report will be made available on the dedicated website, and disseminated through all appropriate channels.

Use of the evaluation report

The evaluation report will stand alone as a discrete account. Preliminary findings and recommendations will be presented to the Steering Group and the Working Group, and will also be discussed with agencies.

The evaluation findings will inform the dialogue between humanitarian partners in forums such as the SMART initiative, the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative and the Sphere Project. The findings will also enable donor agencies to improve analysis, prioritisation and assessment of project proposals received from humanitarian partners.

Finally, the report will be presented at relevant interagency forums, including the November IASC meeting and the December ALNAP meeting. The report will also feed into the TEC synthesis report – planned to be available in draft form by late December 2005.