

RAPID NEEDS ASSESSMENTS: WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Pathway Component: caring capacity & practices

Search Category: caring capacity, norms & practices

Date of Design: 2004

Designer: World Health Organization

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URL:

http://www.searo.who.int/entity/emergencies/documents/rapid_needs_assessment_guidelines_watsan.pdf

CONTENT SUMMARY

Brief Description: This package of documents was developed to strengthen preparedness and response capacity of regional and country offices to meet water and sanitation needs in an emergency. It includes guidance on a variety of data collection techniques in addition to assessment checklists for water, sanitation, and public health promotion.

Uses: The two primary purposes for conducting a water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) needs assessment are to:

1. Inform response priorities and plans.
2. Support the flash appeal for outside assistance should a disaster be of such magnitude that the humanitarian obligations cannot be met within the limits of budgeted resources.

Tool Components: This toolkit is comprised of the following documents:

1. The needs assessment tool: A comprehensive and easy-to-use tool to complete an overview of the essential details of water and sanitation needs in an emergency.
2. Guidance notes: Summarized information to enhance use of the needs assessment tool.

3. Reporting form: A format to summarize the findings from the needs assessment.
4. Flash proposal format: To facilitate requests for resources based on ascertained needs.

OPERATIONS

Number of Staff Required: Not specified; this will vary with different assessments. The tool suggests that the teams should be comprised of a coordinator/liaison, logistics specialists, an epidemiologist, food and nutrition specialists, shelter specialists, and environmental health/water supply specialists. The team may be a mix of local and external members.

Time: The document explains that initial rapid assessments can be quick and unrefined, but should improve as more time and data become available.

Cost of Assessment: Not specified; the context, timing, and scope of the assessment will inform the cost.

Training: This will depend on the assessment techniques employed. If a survey is taking place, significant numbers of staff will need to be mobilized and trained. However, some rapid

qualitative methods could be conducted by fewer staff with previous experience.

Geographic Targeting: This will be determined by the disaster impact and the assessment objectives.

Type of Data Collection: A WASH needs assessment could incorporate a variety of data. The tool first lists a number of practical secondary data sources: satellite data, geographical information, rainfall, soil, geological maps, and aerial photographs. Primary data collection may involve participatory rural appraisal and rapid rural appraisal techniques, household surveys, key informant interviews, focus groups, and a variety of other methods.

Degree of Technical Difficulty: This will vary according to the assessment techniques used; some may be simpler than others.

Complements other Resources: An analysis of sanitation and hygiene could complement a food security and nutrition analysis, providing a more complete picture of possible determinants of undernutrition.