

Assessments in Emergencies

Overview

Needs assessments provide the evidence base for planning humanitarian interventions; they provide the necessary information to define priorities and strategic objectives that can be used for operational planning.

To enable inter-agency and inter-sectoral planning, it is important to coordinate assessments so that they are either conducted jointly or through a harmonized approach. It is important to ensure that all assessment activities inform and engage national and local authorities and the affected population.

Ensuring that assessments are effectively implemented and coordinated will enable IOM to strategically position itself for programme development and implementation. In addition, information gained through assessments can also aid IOM, and the humanitarian community, in determining the level of an emergency. See the Corporate Emergency Activation (L1, L2, L3 Emergencies) entry for more information.

Description

Things to remember when identifying staff for an assessment:

1. **Technical Expertise:** Ensure that the team or individuals engaged in the assessment have the appropriate expertise.
2. **Context:** Ensure that there is a member of the assessment team that is familiar with the country context and the language used in the area where the assessment will take place.
3. **Tools:** Ensure that the relevant assessment forms/tools are available to assessment teams before deployment.
4. **Clearances:** Ensure that the necessary clearances (e.g. security clearances, authorization from government or other relevant parties) are obtained prior to deployment.

Category	Description	Example
Inter-Agency/Inter-sectoral Assessments	This is also referred to in the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) as <i>Coordinated Assessments</i> and described as an assessment carried out in partnership with all humanitarian actors in order to assess the humanitarian situation and to identify needs of the affected population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA). • Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNAs). • Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) within an HRDDP Country Mechanism.
Cluster/Sectoral Assessments	Cluster or sectoral assessments are more in depth assessments of a specific cluster or sector. They can be carried out by several agencies but focused on a specific sector	Child Protection Rapid Assessment (CPRA).
Agency Specific Assessments	Assessments carried out by a single agency. Ideally, this should only be done when an agency needs to understand a specific issue that is not captured in inter-agency or cluster assessments. <i>For example: IOM may carry out assessments to better understand the needs and gaps of migrants caught in crisis as this specific caseload may not be captured in cluster assessments.</i>	IOM assessment of migrants caught in crisis.

Inter-agency/Inter-sectoral Assessments:

1. Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA): Though crises have some similarities, each is fundamentally unique. An understanding of the context is essential to planning an effective humanitarian response. In this light, assessments are essential in emergency programming as the information gathered through assessments provide stakeholders with an improved understanding of the situation, the needs of the population and the complexities. That being said, having too many separate assessments carried out by different agencies or even different teams within an agency can have substantial negative effects. Too many uncoordinated assessments can lead to conflicting or inconsistent information that make it difficult for the humanitarian community to come up with a common understanding of the context. In order to avoid this, joint inter-agency assessments are needed. The **MIRA** is the joint assessment process endorsed by the IASC as part of the **Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC)**. It can be used in sudden onset emergencies, including IASC System-Wide level 3 Emergencies. A MIRA should be initiated as soon as possible in response to a sudden onset crisis.

The MIRA is an inter-agency process enabling actors to reach, from the outset, a common understanding of the situation and its likely evolution. Based on its findings, humanitarian actors can develop a joint strategic plan, mobilize resources and monitor the situation. The MIRA can be modified for use in a variety of contexts to suit the needs of the specific crisis.

2. Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA): The PDNA is a government-led exercise carried out with the support of the European Union, the UN, World Bank and other national and international partners. The initiative brings together national and international stakeholders in order to align recovery efforts. The PDNA collects information on economic damages, losses and defines recovery priorities in a single assessment report. The information made available through the PDNA is used as a basis for developing a comprehensive recovery framework that will guide the implementation of early recovery and long-term recovery programmes.

3. Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) Assessments: An HRDDP Assessment should be undertaken if a project involves support to a non-UN state or regional security force to minimise the risk of the support recipient committing violations of human rights, humanitarian, or refugee law. These assessments can be done at the project level or, if there are multiple projects engaging with the same security force, at the support recipient level. In contexts where HRDDP Country Mechanisms have been established, IOM may participate in joint, inter-agency HRDDP assessments, known as General Preliminary Risk Assessments (GPRAFs). For more information, see the IOM HRDDP Guidance Note.

Cluster-specific Assessments:

Different clusters will also have specific tools available that can be used for assessments. Close coordination with the relevant Cluster Lead Agency is important to avoid duplication and avoid over assessing the affected population. When planning an assessment, be sure to coordinate with the relevant clusters as appropriate. For example, the Child Protection Working Group, under the Protection Cluster have created the Child Protection Rapid Assessment (CPRA) Toolkit that provides information on how to conduct a CPRA in a five-week timeframe. The toolkit is available in the tools and reference section.

The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and Assessments:

DTM is IOM's main system of tools and processes developed to track and monitor population displacement during crises. DTM can be implemented in phases throughout a response. Within the first 72 hours of an emergency, DTM can be rolled out to gather the most essential data for operation planning purposes. Data gathered at these early stages include: a) basic information on the locations of displaced populations, b) basic demographic information, and c) contact details of stakeholders operating in these locations or working with the displaced groups. Data gathered through DTM can be used to feed into inter-agency assessments such as the MIRA. Later on DTM can be expanded to gather more comprehensive data on the profiles of the displaced populations, their needs and gaps in assistance.

Links

- [DTM website](#)
- [MIRA site](#)
- [PDNA page](#)
- [Humanitarian Response site](#)
- [Camp Management Toolkit website](#)

References and Tools

- [MIRA Guidelines](#)
- [Note d'orientation sur l'évaluation multisectorielle initiale rapide](#)
- [Evaluación Multisectorial Inicial Rápida \(MIRA\) Orientación](#)
- [PDNA Brochure](#)
- [PDNA Guidelines](#)
- [CPRA Toolkit](#)
- [UNSDG Guidance Note on the HRDDP](#)

Other Entries in this Topic

- [Project Development in Emergencies](#)
- [Humanitarian Programme Cycle \(HPC\)](#)
- [Migration Crisis Operational Framework \(MCOF\)](#)

Contacts

For more information about the MIRA, please contact the Humanitarian Operations Division (Hum Ops): prdc@iom.int.

For more information about the PDNA, contact the Peace and Recovery Division (PRD): PRDCoreGroup@iom.int.

For more information about DTM, contact DTM Support: dtmsupport@iom.int.

The DHRR RTS in the region can also provide additional information or guidance on this topic.

Document last updated: Jul 2024