

Logistics Assessments and Planning

Common Terms in Assessments

Primary Data New data collected directly from the field, through direct observation, key informant interviews, community group discussions and/or other tools.

Secondary Data Existing data that was gathered previously or provided by other sources.

Indicator A quantitative or qualitative variable that provides a simple and reliable basis for assessing achievement, change or performance.

Vulnerability The conditions determined by physical, social, economic, environmental and political factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of shocks/hazards.

Capacity The resources of individuals, households, communities, institutions and nations to resist the impact of a hazard.

Coping Mechanism The adapted/unusual strategies that people or communities develop as a way of living through difficult times.

Resilience The ability to reduce, prepare for, resist and recover from shocks/hazards.

Bias The perceptions based on cultural background, experience, professional training and many other factors that people have and could disfigure a fact. Every organisation or person is susceptible to bias in some form.

Analysis The process of turning the data gathered during an assessment into useful information to guide appropriate decisions.

Overview of Assessments in the Humanitarian Context

"Assessment is a vital component of the response planning and implementation. It provides the information on which the response is designed and adapted. While good information does not guarantee a good response, poor information almost certainly guarantees a bad one." [UNDAC, 2006 \(Disaster Assessment\)](#)

An accurate assessment depends on thorough planning, design and preparation. Under normal circumstances, the means of collecting and analysing the necessary data and information should be established as part of an organisation's pre-disaster planning. Preparedness ensures no time is lost revising procedures or questionnaires when the disaster hits.

Assessments enable logisticians to understand the impact of a disaster on the environment, how it affects populations, and how the logistics services should be provided. The findings from logistics assessments are critical in enabling appropriate decision making, planning and organisation for effective disaster response. However, logistics or any other functional unit cannot act as silos – every functional unit needs to complete its responsibilities in line with every other unit. This guide is focused on logistics and operational assessments, but will make reference to, explain and use concepts from the programmatic perspective. Logisticians need to have some knowledge and be able to use and discuss these concepts for a comprehensive and accurate assessment.

Definition

An assessment is a planned exercise to gather, analyse and disseminate information about the outcome of an event or a remarkable contextual change. Its aim is to provide accurate recommendations that will allow the decision-makers to tackle or alleviate the undesirable effects of an event in a timely and efficient manner.

An assessment is performed to understand a situation in order to identify problems, their sources and possible consequences. The primary purpose of the assessment process is to determine not only whether an intervention is required, but also the nature and extent of the intervention.

Assessments by Purpose

There may be different scopes when initiating an assessment, however, they are all related and aim to gather information that can shed some light on specific questions that humanitarian organisations have. Normally individual assessments are interconnected and it is common that while conducting one assessment, information gaps are identified that lead to another assessment to collect information about other topics. Experts in logistics tend to intervene in most assessments carried out by an organisation, providing information on the means, transport, accommodation, communication, safety, and other logistics related components that are required for a successful programme. Sector experts will also conduct their own independent assessments.

Common areas of assessment include:

Context Assessment

The political and social background, and major events or cultural changes within a specified geographical area. Some context assessment can function as forecasts as well, identifying the likelihood of future developments.

Needs can be analysed from several perspectives:

**Needs
Assessment**

- Technical assessments focused on programmatic matters that identify the main humanitarian needs.
- Operational assessments focused on the feasibility and possible constraints of programmes.

**Risk
Assessment**

Assess interventions and the different threats, including: operational, reputational, safety and security and others.

**Capacities
Assessment**

Internal and external capacity assessment inform humanitarian organisations ability to respond to an intervention.

- Internally – An organisations’ own limitations and the feasibility of the intervention.
- Externally – Resources available in a specific context, such as airport/seaport capacities, roads, transport means, internet connectivity or energy solutions.

**Stakeholders
Assessment**

Assessment of different stakeholders, especially decision-makers and (if possible) the communities who will be impacted by the assessment; government, authorities, donors, humanitarian coordination bodies, International or national NGOs, heads of households, and any other parties involved in the intervention.
