

DISTRIBUTION OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE/TOOLKIT: 2. Relevant Assessments

Overview

When planning distributions, assessments help to understand the context and identify:

- Needs of different vulnerable groups
- Suitable modalities to deliver the assistance with equitable, safe, and dignified access to women, girls, boys, and men.
- Possible negative impacts and safety/security concerns

Assessments may be rapid and broad, or specific and in-depth depending on the urgency to capture data and respond, e.g. a rapid need assessment that will immediately be followed by a lifesaving distribution, an NFI needs assessment for developing a program, or an in-depth analysis to review/improve ongoing activities.

Continued revision of needs analysis is required to ensure assistance is relevant and delivered through appropriate delivery mechanisms.

This section is not an exhaustive guide to Assessments. It only highlights relevant information for the planning and implementation of distributions.

(See more details in: [ASSESSMENTS IN EMERGENCIES](#) entry)

General Considerations

- Avoid making promises that IOM cannot fulfill. (Needs assessments can sometimes create undue expectations of assistance among communities.)
- Where possible conduct coordinated need assessments. (more below)
- Discuss with government actors the needs, planned responses, and gaps.
- Representatives from local authorities, community leaders, IDP representatives, and camp managers are involved in the assessment.
- Assessments are coordinated with / accompanied by protection specialized staff.
- Assessment teams know and understand the correct referral pathway for protection cases including GBV.
- The assessment team is gender balanced and composed of different cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds as relevant.
- People from the different marginalized groups, such as IDPs-host communities, new-old IDPs are represented in the assessment.
- Specific needs of people with mobility impairments, chronic disease, people with disabilities or other specific groups are considered.
- Conduct **field observations** in affected areas. Verify and cross-check inputs from beneficiaries, local authorities, and community representatives.
- Interview key stakeholders in affected areas (**Key informant interviews**).
- Organize **Focus Group Discussions** with affected communities for qualitative information.
- Conduct **Household Need Assessment** for sampling of quantitative information.
- Assess risks. (more below)
- Assess access, safety, and security. (more below)
- Assess suitable distribution modalities. (more below)

When assessing needs, refer to Sphere Standards and Indicators to ensure you are identifying gaps to meet minimum standards. For

household items for example consider:

- People have sufficient and appropriate quality clothing.
- People have sufficient and appropriate quality items for safe, healthy and private sleeping.
- People have sufficient and appropriate items to prepare, eat and store food.
- People have access to a sufficient, safe, and affordable energy supply to maintain thermal comfort, prepare food and provide lighting.

Inter-agency/Inter-sectoral assessment

Inter-agency and inter-sectoral assessment such as Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA), Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), can inform strategic priorities and objectives, provide information on scale of response, the population/household profiles, displacement trend, and urgent needs. Whenever possible, assessments should be coordinated.

Coordinated assessments can be joint or harmonised. In Joint Assessments agencies use and follow the same methodology and tools. In Harmonized Assessments data is collected, processed and analysed separately, but through common operational datasets, key indicators, and geographical and temporal synchronization, this data is sufficiently comparable to be compiled into a single database and used in a shared analysis.

Rapid Needs Assessments

At the onset of a crisis or where target population are on the move, RNAs, sometimes combined with beneficiary registration can enable rapid delivery of assistance with speed and at scale.

As such, when broad consultation with affected populations is not possible before starting projects, and distributions may begin whilst assessments are ongoing, be prepared to revise the planning as new information comes in.*1

Also See [Beneficiary selection, verification, and registration](#) entry.

Resources	File Format	Language
<p>Rapid Need Assessment Per Location NOTE: This tool can be used for first tracking the need of affected community/location by combining Klls, secondary data analysis, and direct field observations. <i>(Modified from the documents developed by IOM Yemen in 2015 and IOM Pakistan)</i></p>	Word	EN
<p>Beneficiary Registration - Verification Form NOTE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This tool can be used to register the beneficiaries into IOM database. Collected data should be verified according to the eligibility criteria and/or beneficiary selection criteria. Questionnaires must be adapted before deploying in the implementation based on each programme requirement and the context of the intervention. • Same sets of questionnaires are available in EXCEL (human readable excel sheet) and KOBO XLSForm (can be directly imported to and edited by KOBO form designer). Once questionnaires are adapted, logical validation must be done before start data collection. <i>(Modified from documents developed in IOM Afghanistan in 2023, IOM Argentina, IOM Ethiopia, IOM Guyana, IOM Trinidad and Tobago, and IOM Yemen)</i> </p>	Excel	EN
	KOBO XLSForm	EN

Market and cash feasibility analysis

To identify the most suitable modality of NFI assistance (in-kind, cash transfer, voucher, or combination of these), market analysis and cash feasibility assessments are required. Points to assess should include the following:

- Beneficiaries' preferred assistance modality
- Market functionality in target location(s)
- Access limitations for certain population/gender
- The possible impact of distributions on the local market
- Availability and quality of items
- Access to financial service providers
- Negative impact/potential protection risks of in-kind or cash/voucher distribution

For more details of market monitoring and CBI, see [CASH-BASED INTERVENTIONS \(CBI\)](#) entry.

Modality	Possible positive aspect	Possible negative aspect
In-kind items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to preposition and immediate distribution. • Can provide immediate lifesaving assistance. • Can provide critical NFIs where the market is not functioning or is not accessible to beneficiaries. • If people are on the move, it might be easier for them to get some in-kind products that are not easily available on the route. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May bypass local markets. • May lower demand for local business. • Standardized kits may contain items not needed. Can be sold or exchanged to meet individual needs. • Must consider costs of procurement, warehousing, transportation, and distribution. • People on the move/in transit may not be able to carry many items.
Cash/voucher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can offer more choices to affected people. • Can empower/help maintain the dignity of recipients by allowing them to prioritize their own specific needs. • Can support local traders and market systems. • Lower costs of procurement, warehousing, logistics, and distribution. • People on the move/in transit, may be able to obtain necessary items at their destination or next transit point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires functioning, safe, and accessible markets. • Flexibility means people may not use the cash for accessing NFIs, but to cover other expenses. Vouchers can be sold, just like items. Requires time to set up agreements with private sector (shops) and/or financial service providers (transfers). • Fees for the financial providers can be very high. • For people on the move/in transit, vouchers or e-money may not be redeemable at their destination or next transit point.

Risks analysis

Assess the likelihood of the following points and prepare relevant mitigation measures:

- **Interference** in project implementation by local authorities and/or armed groups (in procurement, beneficiary selection, during, and after distribution, etc.)
- **Occupation/confiscation** of warehouses / distribution points / goods
- **Aid diversion** (taxation, fees, percentage of humanitarian assistance)
- **Diverting assistance** to a certain community or geographic area

Access/safety and security analysis

Issues to assess include:

Access

- Issues that may prevent IOM/partner staff from accessing location during the planning, implementation, monitoring, or evaluation phases. (e.g. permissions, time restrictions, etc.)
- Reduced access due to environmental conditions (weather and/or poor infrastructure).
- Issues that may prevent IOM/partner to have unhindered access to affected populations. (e.g. required approvals, verification of beneficiary lists, etc.)
- Lack of community acceptance.
- Ability of people to access the distribution locations. (time-distance travelled, movement restrictions, weather, infrastructure, etc.)
- Safe and unhindered access to affected populations and marginalized groups.

Safety / Security

- Distance from the front line or contested areas in active conflict.
- Likelihood that a community will be targeted by violence.
- Recent security incidents.
- Recent/current community tensions and protests.
- Likelihood of existence of IEDs, UXOs, mines, shelling, armed groups presence and hostilities.
- Likelihood of violence against staff, assets, and/or facilities.
- Likelihood of theft or looting of goods.
- Demands to share project details (such as budget, staff lists, personal details, etc.) by local authorities/stakeholders.

Resources	File Format	Language
<p>Need Assessment Guidelines and Standard Questionnaires for FGDs and KIIs</p> <p>NOTE: This tool can be used to collect qualitative data by conducting FGDs/KIIs with affected community as a part of need assessment. Modify the questionnaires as per actual contexts. (Modified from the documents developed by IOM South Sudan in 2018)</p>	Word	EN
<p>Need Assessment Standard HH questionnaires</p> <p>NOTE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This tool can be used to collect quantitative data by conducting household assessment. Questionnaires must be adapted before deploying in the implementation based on each programme requirement and the context of the intervention. • Same sets of questionnaires are available in EXCEL (human readable excel sheet) and KOBO XLSForm (can be directly imported to and edited by KOBO form designer). Once questionnaires are adapted, logical validation must be done before start data collection. (Modified from the documents developed in IOM Mozambique, IOM Nigeria, and IOM South Sudan in 2018) 	Excel	EN
<p>Distribution Risk Analysis and Mitigation Form</p> <p>NOTE: This tool can be used to assess likelihood of various risks related to distribution projects, including possible issues in access, safety/security of staff, interference, and aid diversion. (Modified from the document developed by IOM Türkiye X-Border in 2020)</p>	Word	EN

Accessing KOBO

The IOM Enterprise Kobo can be accessed via:

- <https://kf.kobo.iom.int> for the Form designer and project management
- <https://kc.kobo.iom.int> for the mobile data collection (Android only - download the KoboCollect app from Google Play)
- <https://ee.kobo.iom.int> for web-based data collection (including iOS tablets and phones).

You can refer to the [Kobo user guide](#) for a more detailed “how-to” guide.

For assistance on account creation or validation of KOBO Forms, contact DTM coordinator in country or contact:

dtmsupportservices@iom.int

Links

- [IOM KOBO for the Form designer and project management](#)
- [KOBO SOP](#)

References and Tools

- [Rapid Need Assessment Per Location](#)
- [Beneficiary Registration - Verification Form](#)
- [Beneficiaries Registration - Verification Form XLSForm](#)
- [Need Assessment Guidelines and Standard Questionnaires for FGDs and KIs](#)
- [Need Assessment Standard HH Questionnaires](#)
- [Distribution Risk Analysis and Mitigation Form](#)

Other Entries in this Topic

- [Assessments in Emergencies](#)
- [Cash-Based Interventions \(CBI\)](#)

Contacts

For more information, please contact the Shelter and Settlements Unit in Geneva: ShelterSupport@iom.int.

Please also find the contact information to the IOM Shelter Reference Group: ShelterReferenceGroup@iom.int.

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