

## **Assessment and Baseline (“Baseline” for external purposes) survey guidance for the recovery operation across 14 Districts, 19.02.16**

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### **Purpose of assessments and baselines for the recovery operation**

Assessments are carried out in order to plan programming and in order to know exactly what, where, who and who is going to be assisted. They usually rely on key informants, Focus Group Discussions and secondary data to plan. More detailed technical assessments are often then done to find out who should receive assistance, e.g. for shelter support. It's important to only collect the information necessary for planning purposes at this stage, though sometimes household surveys are appropriate even if households may not receive targeted assistance.

Baselines on the other hand are usually carried out in order to measure the situation among a given target group, in the known location(s), given the assistance that is going to be provided. And so it is usually, though not always, done after it is known who is going to be assisted, in which location(s) and with what kind of assistance. This prevents the unnecessary collection of data.

In cases where it is known that significant resources will be devoted to particular interventions at the community level e.g health or WASH programming, and detailed household level data is considered

essential both for planning purposes e.g. to inform how hygiene campaigns should be run, and for measurement purposes, then your household assessment can double up as your baseline. This is only appropriate if the programme already knows its target population and areas of programming, but needs to modify its programming to suit the target population. If this information can be collected by alternative means then this should happen instead.

## Common principles

Use: For both assessments and baselines, only collect the data that will be used for analysis. When formulating questions, and considering data collection methods, it's important that the reason for asking the question is known.

Assessment fatigue: Remember communities and officials have already had to participate in multiple assessments. Often they have not benefited directly from this and so may be unwilling to participate in further assessments unless they know that assistance is forthcoming.

Transparency: It's important therefore to be very clear with those you engage with as part of assessments and baselines about what they can expect from the Red Cross. Where it is still not known what assistance will be provided, it is important to clearly explain this rather than raising expectations unnecessarily.

Informed consent: Lastly, everyone has the right not to participate in your assessment and/or baseline survey. It's important not to assume consent, but first to ask for it, particularly for household interviews.

## Baseline principles

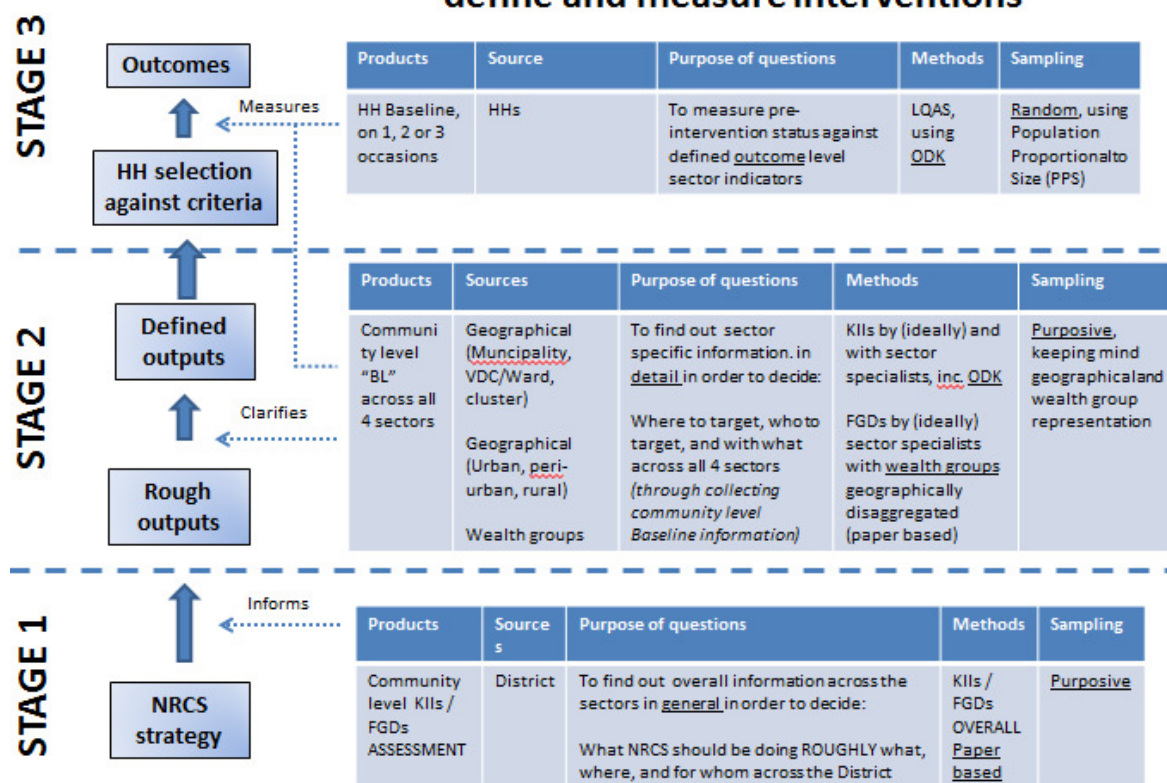
Change and attribution: While baselines can be used to inform your programming, its main purpose is to measure the status of key programme outcome indicators so that change can be witnessed over time. It's important to remember though that Red Cross programmes are usually only one of many influencing factors and it will not always be possible to attribute positive changes in key indicators to the Red Cross intervention.

And so the scale and coverage of the assistance being provided must be kept in mind when designing and carrying out baseline surveys. Only measure what you expect to see. For example, simplistically, if you are only targeting selected categories of vulnerable households for vocational skills training in order to increase their household income, then it's not necessary to measure household income at the level of all households in the community.

Alternatively, if you are training volunteers to be able to communicate the importance of vaccinating children in the context of a disease outbreak, then it will not be necessary to measure the prevalence of the disease at baseline and end-line, as the training is only a preparedness measure (to be available during the recovery phase).

## Assessments and baselines illustration for the recovery operation

### Using assessment and baseline tools to help define and measure interventions



### STAGE 1 ASSESSMENTS

#### Finding out general information in order to decide type of intervention

In some Districts, the priorities for the Red Cross may still not be clear. In other words, you are yet to know how the 4+1 outputs should be adopted. If this is the case, then initial key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with more open ended questions, but still around a common analytical framework should be used. These tools use the following overarching questions:

1. What are the key problems caused by the earthquake (in x location, for y group etc)
2. What are reasons behind this? What has caused these problems?
3. What are the possible solutions to these problems?
4. Given the capacity of actors (in z location), including the Red Cross, who is best placed to deliver these recovery solutions?

Scoping missions are conducted by different technical teams in the targeted districts to hold discussions with the NRCS district chapters, local authorities and other key informants to find out the general situation of the people (see questions above)

## STAGE 2 ASSESSMENTS

### Defining and clarifying outputs: who, what, where, how, when

Most Districts have already completed Stage 1 (see diagram above), having already done different types of appropriate assessments with relevant stakeholders at the VDC/Ward, Municipality, and District ('community') level, and reviews of secondary data, to inform their outputs. But they are unlikely to have made decisions yet on households targeting criteria, where to work, and the details of their sector interventions. They therefore need more information to define and clarify their proposed outputs.

Two different types of information will therefore need to be collected at this stage. Firstly, more detailed sector-specific information from Key Informants and Focus Groups, including at the VDC/Ward, Municipality, and District levels, providing relevant contextual information, and secondly, technical data from relevant technical assessments at the household level from among those that *may* be targeted.

### The tools available

Tools have been developed by NRCS/IFRC/PNS across each sector for general and more detailed technical sector assessments. These tools are in the form of Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, Market Surveys and Household Surveys.

They either collect key background and context information relating to the overall or sector situation in a given geographical area, or they collect more detailed household level information. Both are collected for planning purposes.

The more detailed, technical, tools for assessment at the household level, may be available from the sector working groups or already developed at the District level by partners.

*Urban areas: While these tools may still be applicable for urban areas, they are likely to need adjusting for these contexts.*

### Who collects the data and from what source

It's important to remember that not all the tools are designed to be used by volunteers. Some questions require probing from technical experts, trained in their subject area.

It's also important to remember who is best placed to answer the questions and who are the most reliable and/or representative sources. For example, it will not make sense to ask questions about the proportion of renters in the Ward from a FGD. Instead, this should be asked in the context of a Key Informant Interview to e.g. the Ward Secretary, or alternatively, secondary data should be consulted.

Who to interview is also important if you're carrying out a household baseline survey at this Stage, as different respondents must be interviewed for different types of question.

### Sampling in general

At Stage 2, purposive sampling is usually the most appropriate form of sampling. In other words, you must choose who you think is the most appropriate source of reliable information, remembering also that your data should be disaggregated as necessary by e.g. gender, wealth group, people with

damaged property, urban and rural dwellers etc. Random sampling, is usually not required or appropriate.

### STAGE 3: Measuring outcomes for baseline purposes

Once it has been decided which families will be targeted, particularly for shelter and livelihoods support, it is then appropriate to seek detailed household level information (possibly filling in the gaps from previous household level surveys) about the current situation of these families across the 4 sector areas. It is also easier to do as they now know that they will receive assistance from the Red Cross.

Only information that helps understand the families' situation with regard to the *outcome* indicators across shelter, livelihoods, WASH and health should be collected. This will then be repeated for monitoring purposes and also for end-line survey purposes.

#### The tools available

NRCS/IFRC/PNS have developed tools for the purpose of measuring key outcome indicators at Stage 3. These are available as part of the baseline package.

The questions cover all 4 sectors, as well as Community Engagement and Accountability. The questions are comprehensive and do not all have to be administered in every District and location. Before a district commences the baseline survey exercise, the team should review the list of questions and ensure they are relevant to the context of the intervention area.

For example, some questions will only be relevant to the urban context. The survey team supervisor will be responsible for adapting the standard questionnaire for the local context, using Open Data Kit (ODK).

#### Who collects the data and from what source

With training, it should be possible for volunteer enumerators to collect the data from the required respondents rather than a technical specialist. Training by technical specialists however is very important, not only to understand the purpose of the questions being asked, but how to ask them in a way that best facilitates the collecting of accurate and reliable data.

#### Sampling in general

Whereas at Stage 2 purposive sampling is usually relied upon (as it is not necessary to be able to calculate with any degree of precision how representative the findings are), when carrying out household baseline surveys, random sampling is preferred. This is because it enables a representative sample to be used for the purposes of understanding statistically significant changes between baseline and end-line studies.

There are different types of random sampling, and it is important to understand the options available as they should be applied differently depending on the target population of your sector interventions.

**Sampling from the general population** (*of a defined geographical area*): If your intervention makes no distinction between who is included and who is not e.g. hygiene promotion campaigns that are concerned that everyone washes their hands at key moments, then it can be said that it is directed at the whole community.

In this case, for baseline purposes, it is appropriate to use the entire population as your sampling frame so that it is equally likely for anyone to be included in your sample. If you have a list of all the households in your target area e.g. VDC, then it will be possible to do Simple Random Sampling on the basis of the available list.

If a list is not available, then it is still possible to do random sampling. It is recommended that for the purposes of baseline (as well as monitoring and end-line) Systematic Random Sampling is used.

**Sampling from a target group:** If your intervention, on the other hand, targets a particular group e.g. vulnerable households among those who have lost their homes during the earthquake, as opposed to the whole population in your location, then it will not be appropriate to sample from the whole population. This would not allow you to measure the difference your intervention makes as it is asking the wrong people.

Instead, stratified random sampling must be employed so that random sampling is done only among your target population (once you know who you're targeting). So, for example, if your target group for technical shelter assistance is 'vulnerable households among those who have lost their homes during the earthquake', then your sampling frame is the group of households that you are targeting only. Since you should have a beneficiary list of these households, you can then do Simple Random Sampling against your list. If you then want to see an X% improvement in knowledge concerning safe shelter construction techniques among your target group, it will be far more likely that you can measure this using your household survey.



## Annex 1: Baseline Approach Diagram

