

TOOLS AND METHODS FOR INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENTS

A) TOOLS AND METHODS FOR COMMUNITY PROFILING

- ✓ **Community history** (time line): frequency of shocks and coping mechanisms
- ✓ **Vulnerability context:** proportion of households which are affected by disasters and reasons
- ✓ **Disaster risk assessment:** participatory process of determining the nature, scope and magnitude of negative effects of hazards on a community and its households within a particular time period
 - **Timeline:** narrates the disaster history and significant events that happened in the community
 - **Hazard and resource map:** allows the community to identify graphically the vulnerable members of the community especially the young, the elderly and the disabled who are put at special risk by hazards
 - **Seasonal calendar:** seasonal changes and related hazards, diseases, community events and other hazards related to specific months of a year
 - **Ranking:** analysing problems to know the priorities of a community or the most significant problems faced by the community
 - **Transect:** walking in the geographical area belonging to a community to get a picture of the vulnerability of the community and the resources that are available or may be available for disaster risk management
 - **Historical transect:** graphic presentation of the history of disasters and development in the community (done by recall)
 - **Matrix ranking:** ranking tools used to prioritise hazards or disaster risks, needs or options
 - **Household composition:** human capital, labour force, migration, education, dependency status of various socio-economic groups
- ✓ **Wealth ranking:** typical characteristics of wealth and well-being groups in the community
 - Household assets by wealth group (access to land, water and natural resources; livestock ownership; physical and financial capital)
 - Typical livelihood strategies and sources of assets for each wealth group
 - Rough estimate of the proportion of households in each wealth category
 - Which categories of households are increasing their wealth; staying the same; falling into poverty (reasons)

- ✓ **Focus group meetings:** with community people, non-leaders, separate groups of women and men
 - **Local resource map:** main land types, livelihood activities on each land type, physical infrastructure (roads, public transportation, irrigated areas, water points, schools, health posts, nearest market, electricity, banks, agricultural extension etc.)
 - **Seasonal activity calendar:** crops, livestock, forest, off-farm work, marketing, processing of food and natural products, handicrafts (e.g. leather, textile or metal work), domestic work, by gender, caste and age
 - **Vulnerability context:** shocks, stresses, proportion of households who are food and income insecure in an average year, bad year, good year (reasons)
 - **Problem analysis:** Perceived livelihood problems, causes of problems, coping mechanisms and livelihood opportunities of women and men
 - **Feedback** on project activities and preferred service providers

B) TOOLS AND METHODS FOR ANALYSING VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL LINKAGES

- ✓ **Brainstorming sessions**
 - One day informal brainstorming sessions among the members of the assessment team.
- ✓ **Venn diagram**
 - Venn diagram and/or ‘mental map’ of local institutions, their relative importance and linkages with higher-level institutions.
- ✓ **Colour card exercise**
 - Relationships and linkages between institutions can be mapped by writing key factors on cards, sticking the cards onto a wall in a pattern, and drawing lines between cards to show lines of influence.
 - Coloured cards can be used to represent different sectors and their DRM-related activities.
- ✓ **Group exercise**
 - The participants and stakeholders in the assessment may be divided into few groups and each group given a specific area with the request to present the key linkages within and between the institutions.
- ✓ **Institutional environment mapping**
 - This is a form of stakeholder analysis which illustrates the relationships between actors at micro-level, and the relationships between actors in a particular sector.
- ✓ **Sectoral institutional assessment** ⁴⁶
 - In a sectoral institutional assessment, data are gathered and examined in a tiered analysis, at the political-structural level, the administrative-systems level, and the technical-sectoral level, paying particular attention to the institutional dynamics and linkages among sectoral agencies.

⁴⁶ “Sectoral Institutional Assessment” has been developed and documented by the World Bank as a diagnostic and consensus-building approach to design and plan institutional reforms/development or capacity-building measures as required by sector-specific programmes.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The understanding of vulnerability and disaster as social processes and as the object of social intervention and control can be enriched by an appreciation of commonly accepted concepts and expressions associated with disaster risk reduction. The Table below provides an abstract of definitions issued by the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR).⁴⁷ These are a consolidation of definitions proposed by a number of international organizations and expert consultations convened by UN/ISDR to review concepts and definitions in order to reach agreement on a common terminology for disaster reduction issues.

Agreement on the dynamics of disaster risks is key to ensuring that disaster risks are addressed in national sustainable development frameworks and strategies such as those developed in the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) processes. This also applies specifically to the development of “frameworks for disaster risk reduction” that are being promoted and supported by UN/ISDR and UNDP.⁴⁸ Thus the use of this common terminology during CCA/UNDAF working group discussions will greatly facilitate shared agreement on ways of strengthening the various roles and initiatives being promoted for disaster risk reduction at the country level.

DISASTER-RELATED TERMS AND DEFINITIONS⁴⁹

Capacity	<p>A combination of all the strengths and resources available within a community, society or organization that can reduce the level of risk, or the effects of a disaster.</p> <p><i>Capacity may include physical, institutional, social or economic means as well as skilled personal or collective attributes such as leadership and management. Capacity may also be described as capability.</i></p>
Capacity building	<p>Efforts aimed to develop human skills or societal infrastructures within a community or organization needed to reduce the level of risk.</p> <p><i>In extended understanding, capacity building also includes development of institutional, financial, political and other resources, such as technology at different levels and sectors of the society.</i></p>

⁴⁷ The UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR): As the successor to the 1990-1999 International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (the Strategy) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly to provide a global framework for action to reduce human, social, economic and environmental losses from natural hazards and related technological and environmental disasters. The Strategy aims at building disaster resilient communities by promoting increased awareness of the importance of disaster reduction as an integral component of sustainable development. To implement the Strategy and ensure synergy among different stakeholders in linking disaster reduction with humanitarian and development activities, the inter-agency secretariat of the UN/ISDR (the Secretariat) was established in 2000 with the mandate to coordinate disaster reduction strategies and policies within the UN system and beyond, promote the subject widely and advocate with national platforms.

⁴⁸ See: UN/ISDR. 2004. *Living with Risk: A global review of disaster reduction initiatives*. 2004 Version, Volume 1. Geneva. The “Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction” describes the general context and primary activities of disaster risk reduction programmes, including the elements necessary for preparing a comprehensive disaster risk reduction (or disaster risk management) strategy.

⁴⁹ Definitions are extracted from the longer list available in: UN/ISDR. 2004. *Living with Risk: A global review of disaster reduction initiatives*. 2004 Version, Volume II Annexes. Geneva.

Coping capacity	<p>The means by which people or organisations use available resources and abilities to face adverse consequences that could lead to a disaster.</p> <p><i>In general, this involves managing resources, both in normal times as well as during crises or adverse conditions. The strengthening of coping capacities usually builds resilience to withstand the effects of natural and human-induced hazards.</i></p>
Disaster	<p>A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.</p> <p><i>A disaster is a function of the risk process. It results from the combination of hazards, conditions of vulnerability and insufficient capacity or measures to reduce the potential negative consequences of risk.</i></p>
Disaster risk management	<p>The systematic process of using administrative decisions, organization, operational skills and capacities to implement policies, strategies and coping capacities of the society and communities to lessen the impacts of natural hazards and related environmental and technological disasters. This comprises all forms of activities, including structural and non-structural measures to avoid (prevention) or to limit (mitigation and preparedness) adverse effects of hazards.</p>
Disaster risk reduction (disaster reduction)	<p>The conceptual framework of elements considered with the possibilities to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout a society, to avoid (prevention) or to limit (mitigation and preparedness) the adverse impacts of hazards, within the broad context of sustainable development. The disaster risk reduction framework is composed of the following fields of actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Risk awareness and assessment including hazard analysis and vulnerability/capacity analysis; ■ Knowledge development including education, training, research and information; ■ Public commitment and institutional frameworks, including organizational, policy, legislation and community action; ■ Application of measures including environmental management, land-use and urban planning, protection of critical facilities, application of science and technology, partnership and networking, and financial instruments; ■ Early warning systems including forecasting, dissemination of warnings, preparedness measures and reaction capacities.
Emergency management	<p>The organization and management of resources and responsibilities for dealing with all aspects of emergencies, in particular preparedness, response and rehabilitation.</p> <p><i>Emergency management involves plans, structures and arrangements established to engage the normal endeavours of government, voluntary and private agencies in a comprehensive and coordinated way to respond to the whole spectrum of emergency needs. This is also known as disaster management.</i></p>
Early warning	<p>The provision of timely and effective information, through identified institutions, that allows individuals exposed to a hazard to take action to avoid or reduce their risk and prepare for effective response.</p> <p><i>Early warning systems include a chain of concerns, namely: understanding and mapping the hazard; monitoring and forecasting impending events; processing and disseminating understandable warnings to political authorities and the population, and undertaking appropriate and timely actions in response to the warnings.</i></p>
Hazard	<p>A potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon or human activity that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.</p> <p><i>Hazards can include latent conditions that may represent future threats and can have different origins: natural (geological, hydro-meteorological and biological) or induced by human processes (environmental degradation and technological hazards). Hazards can be single, sequential or combined in their origin and effects. Each hazard is characterised by its location, intensity, frequency and probability.</i></p>

Mitigation	Structural and non-structural measures undertaken to limit the adverse impact of natural hazards, environmental degradation and technological hazards.
Preparedness	Activities and measures taken in advance to ensure effective response to the impact of hazards, including the issuance of timely and effective early warnings and the temporary evacuation of people and property from threatened locations.
Prevention	Activities to provide outright avoidance of the adverse impact of hazards and means to minimize related environmental, technological and biological disasters. <i>Depending on social and technical feasibility and cost/benefit considerations, investing in preventive measures is justified in areas frequently affected by disasters. In the context of public awareness and education related to disaster risk reduction, changing attitudes and behaviour contribute to promoting a "culture of prevention".</i>
Relief/ response	The provision of assistance or intervention during or immediately after a disaster to meet the life preservation and basic subsistence needs of those people affected. It can be of an immediate, short-term, or protracted duration.
Resilience/ resilient	The capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure. This is determined by the degree to which the social system is capable of organizing itself to increase its capacity for learning from past disasters for better future protection and to improve risk reduction measures.
Risk	The probability of harmful consequences, or expected losses (deaths, injuries, property, livelihoods, economic activity disrupted or environment damaged) resulting from interactions between natural or human-induced hazards and vulnerable conditions. <i>Conventionally risk is expressed by the notation</i> <i>Risk = Hazards x Vulnerability. Some disciplines also include the concept of exposure to refer particularly to the physical aspects of vulnerability.</i> <i>Beyond expressing a possibility of physical harm, it is crucial to recognise that risks are inherent or can be created or exist within social systems. It is important to consider the social contexts in which risks occur and that people therefore do not necessarily share the same perceptions of risk and their underlying causes.</i>
Risk assessment/ analysis	A methodology to determine the nature and extent of risk by analysing potential hazards and evaluating existing conditions of vulnerability that could pose a potential threat or harm to people, property, livelihoods and the environment on which they depend. <i>The process of conducting a risk assessment is based on a review of both the technical features of hazards such as their location, intensity, frequency and probability; and also the analysis of the physical, social, economic and environmental dimensions of vulnerability and exposure, while taking particular account of the coping capabilities pertinent to the risk scenarios.</i>
Vulnerability	The conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards. <i>For positive factors, which increase the ability of people to cope with hazards, see definition of capacity.</i>

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The Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Systems Analysis Guide provides a set of tools and methods to assess existing structures and capacities of national, district and local institutions with responsibilities for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in order to improve their effectiveness and the integration of DRM concerns into development planning, with particular reference to disaster-prone areas, vulnerable sectors and population groups. The strategic use of the Guide is expected to enhance understanding of the strengths, weaknesses,

opportunities and threats facing existing DRM institutional structures and their implications for on-going institutional change processes. It will also highlight the complex institutional linkages among various actors and sectors at different levels. Finally, it will help identify gaps within the existing DRM institutions and/or systems including sectoral line agencies that are often responsible for implementing the technical aspects of DRM (e.g. agriculture, water and health sectors).



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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

www.fao.org

ISBN 978-92-5-106056-8 ISSN 1684-8241



TCM/10304E/1/09.08/1200