

REPORT FROM THE WORKSHOP ON
**FIELD-BASED
DECISION
MAKERS'
INFORMATION
NEEDS**

in Sudden Onset Disasters

DM-N



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<http://digitalhumanitarians.com/communities/decision-makers-needs>



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FOREWORD

This is a report about what we need to know in the first weeks of a disaster. Taking into account how fundamental this issue is to all our efforts within information management in crisis situations, it is surprising how little attention the issue has received to date. In the past few years, the volunteer and technical community (V&TC) has repeatedly shown the potential it holds for humanitarian action in terms of collecting, processing, and even analyzing data. However, as a prerequisite to realize the full potential, data collection and processing must be guided by a clear understanding of the decision-enabling information requirements. The issue has been raised repeatedly by the V&TC community itself. For example, in 2011, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs activated the Standby Volunteer Task Force (supported by Humanity Road) to provide situational awareness through a Crisis Map. During the lessons learned workshop held in June 2011, one of the resoundingly clear messages was “What do the Decision Makers Need?” As a result, a group of organizations and passionate individuals created a Decision Makers Needs (DMN) Community to determine how we can figure out that amazingly complex question.

The group initiated two actions to begin mapping the information needs of humanitarian decision makers. The first was to develop a humanitarian decision makers taxonomy which sounds simplistic but is rather a complex task. Through efforts by the UN’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the DMN Community recently released a first version of the taxonomy. Now we can intelligently think about which decision makers we are analyzing and targeting our products or information towards. The taxonomy has been included in an Annex of this workshop report.

Decision-making experts have been conducting years of research on how people make decisions in a variety of environments and what information, cues and biases people use when making a decision. But within the humanitarian community only limited attention has been given to this issue. Therefore, the second activity of DMN was to bring together a small set of seasoned, international responders for a two-day workshop to articulate their decisions and information needs in the first few weeks of a sudden onset emergency. The result is captured in this report. The report is descriptive rather than analytical and by providing a lot of details on how different groups organized and prioritized their information needs and typical

decisions, we hope that others will continue to develop several additional layers of analysis on top and move research on this essential issue forward.

Although it took some time to compile the information and findings from the workshop, it is really exciting that the results are now being released publicly. There is a need to further explore areas that this report is opening up and to begin a much more encompassing study of humanitarian decision making. There are amazing possibilities and a huge breadth of work available especially when you spend time reviewing the decision makers taxonomy alongside the decision and information taxonomies in this report.

We are confident that these two steps are just the beginning of an increased focus on an essential and largely overlooked issue within the humanitarian community.

Andrej Verity & Lars Peter Nissen

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The development and spread of new technology and the internet has opened a new world of possibilities to gather data and create information in a crisis, as illustrated by the role of the Volunteer and Technical Communities (VTC) in recent crises. However, it is not clear which information field managers require to make the best possible decisions. As a result, it is difficult for the VTCs, among others, to collect and analyze data that results in information that is accessible and actionable for decision makers.

To understand the information requirements of humanitarian responders, a workshop was conducted. Its objective was to create an initial framework for decision making and an initial scope of the information requirements in the first phases of a sudden onset disaster, based on interactive input from field-based decision makers. The framework and information requirements should facilitate better support and, ultimately, better decision-making.

This report describes the “Workshop on Field-Based Decision-Makers’ Information Needs in Sudden Onset Disasters,” and provides a detailed description of its process and results. This executive summary provides some of the key results and conclusions. To understand the process by which these results were achieved, please refer to the main document. In brief, participants were asked to brainstorm decisions and information requirements, then discuss the results.

The workshop focused on a single timeframe – the initial phases of a sudden onset disaster – and a limited group of decision-makers – the international response community. A broad set of decisions were considered, spanning interagency, inter-cluster, cluster and organizational decisions.

The key results outlining the types of decisions made in a response are given below in Table 1 (the same as Table 8 in the report), which lists seven dimensions along which decisions might be arranged. The key results outlining the information requirements for response are given below in Figure 1 (the same as Figure 10 in the report). The figure summarizes information requirements and arranges them along a timeframe of response. Table 12 (in the report) lists seven categories of information requirements in more detail. In the report, detailed lists of additional decisions and data requirements are provided.

Given the extensive experience of the decision makers assembled for the workshop, the results offer an important first attempt to understand decisions and information requirements. Feedback on this report and follow-on activities will enable further refinement and, more importantly, use of the frameworks described in this report.

One goal of this workshop was to help Volunteer and Technical Communities (VTC) to understand the information field decision-makers require to make the best possible decisions. These results lay a foundation for this understanding, by providing (1) a framework and set of information required by field-based decision-makers, (2) categories and types of decisions made by decision-makers, and (3) a large set of brainstormed decisions from workshop participants. VTCs and others seeking to support humanitarian action by providing and organizing information can utilize these results to (a) prioritize their efforts toward important information, and (b) organize their information in a manner intuitive and useful to humanitarian decision-makers.

DIMENSION	CATEGORIES
TIMEFRAME	1. First days (flash appeal)
	2. First weeks (mid-term review)
	3. Later (donor conference)
SCOPE	4. Agency/organization
	5. Cluster/sector
	6. Inter-cluster, government, shared actions
	7. Global
LOCUS/AUTHORITY OF DECISION-MAKING	8. Global
	9. Regional
CRITICALITY	10. National
	11. Local
	12. Lifesaving, Mission/Sector Risk
FREQUENCY/DURATION OF DECISION	13. Impact on Beneficiary (e.g. tradeoffs, timeliness)
	14. One-time
	15. Quarterly-Yearly
	16. Monthly
INFORMATION GAP (CONFIDENCE)	17. Weekly
	18. Daily
	19. Probably have info
	20. Can find out
FUNCTION	21. Can guess
	22. No idea
	23. Govt/Donor Relations
	24. Media/Public Relations
	25. Partner Relations
	26. Programming
	27. Operations/Logistics
	28. Security/Access
	29. Resource Allocation

Table 1: Decision Dimensions and Categories

(first days)	(first weeks)	(first months)
<p>CONTEXT AND SCOPE</p> <p>Scope of emergency situation Impact: damage to infrastructure, livelihoods, etc. Geographic areas affected Assistance requirements</p> <p>Affected population Number of affected, locations Status of affected: displaced, vulnerable, etc.</p> <p>Context Local socio-economic, political context Local environmental, weather, livelihoods Local community capacity, coping mechanisms</p> <p>Public and media perception Public perception, awareness, attention Media perception Political will, donor will</p> <p>HUMANITARIAN NEEDS</p> <p>Needs Number in need Types of needs (health, shelter, water, etc.) Locations of needs Needs of sub-groups: displaced, vulnerable</p> <p>Priorities Geographic priorities Priorities across sector Within-sector priorities</p> <p>RESPONDER REQUIREMENTS Basic infrastructure for responders Security, access</p> <p>META INFORMATION Information available Sources of information Accuracy, validity and information</p>	<p>CAPACITY AND RESPONSE PLANNING</p> <p>Other actors' capacity and response: (incl. gov't, military, local community, commercial aid agencies) Responses of other actors (who, what, where, etc.) capacity of other actors (skills, equipment, scale, etc.)</p> <p>Internal capacity and response Internal response plan Internal capacity, structure</p> <p>Available resources: financial, personnel, stocks, technical</p> <p>OPERATIONAL SITUATION</p> <p>Security Current threats Future threats and risks</p> <p>Access Limits to access Logistics capacity and structure</p> <p>Monitoring Issues Trends Accomplishments</p> <p>Measuring and outputs Measurable indicators for output Standards</p> <p>COORDINATION AND INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES</p> <p>Coordination of the response External coordination (with other actors, various levels) Internal coordination (with other parts of the org.)</p> <p>Relevant laws and policies External coordination (with other actors, various levels) Internal coordination (with other parts of the org.)</p>	<p>LOOKING FORWARD</p> <p>Recovery and reconstruction National development strategies Needs and plans for recovery</p> <p>Preparedness Information to collect before crisis</p>
	<p>Agreement on needs</p> <p>Extent of assessments</p> <p>Actions to improve access to information</p>	<p>Preparedness information</p>

Figure 1: Pictorial Summary of Information Requirements

1. INTRODUCTION

This report describes the “Workshop on Field-Based Decision-Makers’ Information Needs in Sudden Onset Disasters,” and provides a detailed description of its process and results. First, this introduction describes the motivation, objective, scope, and process of the workshop, and includes the key results. Next, the results are presented in two sections, focusing on decisions (Section 2) and on information (Section 3). The report provides detailed results not only in final form but also in intermediate stages, including the results from the initial small group exercises within the workshop along with final versions based on participant feedback. For a summary and pointers to the key results, please see the end of the introduction section, as well as Section 4, Summary and Conclusions.

MOTIVATION

The first phases of a sudden onset disaster are crucial. At this time in the operation, the need to act and quickly respond is the greatest, and the least information about what has happened is available. Decisions made in these early stages of an operation have consequences for months and years.

The development and spread of new technology and the internet has opened a new world of possibilities to gather data and create information in a crisis, as illustrated by the role of the Volunteer and Technical Communities (VTC) in recent crises. However, it is not clear which information field managers require to make the best possible decisions. As a result, it is difficult for the VTCs, among others, to collect and analyze data that results in information that is accessible and actionable for decision makers.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the workshop was to create an initial framework for decision making and an initial scope of the information requirements in the first phases of a sudden onset disaster, based on interactive input from field-based decision makers. The framework and information requirements should facilitate better support and, ultimately, better decision-making.

SCOPE

Timeframe: Initial phases of a sudden onset disaster. The workshop focused on defining (1) the information required for making the initial decisions, as well as (2) the information flow to support subsequent decisions that arise as initial decisions are being implemented, perhaps spanning multiple staff rotations.

Decisions: A combination of interagency, inter-cluster, cluster and organizational decisions. The scope of this initial workshop was open to a broad set of decisions, since there can be strong dependence across them (e.g. an organization's decision will impact interagency decisions).

Roles: International response community. In this initial workshop, we did not specifically incorporate participants representing decision-makers in the host government nor the affected population, but their decision-making requirements were considered in discussions.

ORGANIZATION, SUPPORT, AND FACILITATION

The workshop was organized as part of the ongoing efforts of a Community of Interest focused on Decision-Maker Needs, and enabled through the support of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) and the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS).

The workshop was facilitated by Jarrod Goentzel (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Erica Gralla (George Washington University), Lars Peter Nissen (ACAPS), and Bartel Van de Walle (Tilburg University). In addition to the facilitators, essential support and ideas came from Andrej Verity (UN-OCHA) and Natalie Chang (UN-OCHA). The organizers are extremely grateful to all the workshop participants for sharing their time and thoughts; a full list of participants is provided in the Appendix.

SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP PROGRAM

The workshop was conducted over two full days in September 2012. Day 1 consisted primarily of group activities asking participants to brainstorm decisions and information requirements, while on Day 2, participants were asked to review and provide feedback on the consolidated results of the Day 1 exercises. The three main activities on Day 1 were the "Decisions Exercise",

the “Information Exercise,” and the “Framework Exercise.” On Day 2, participants reviewed the results from each of these three exercises, completed a survey to provide further details on information requirements, and discussed overall results and next steps. The full workshop program is provided in the Appendix, and detailed descriptions of the exercises are provided in the sections below, along with the results from each.

INTRODUCTION TO RESULTS

The remainder of this document is organized according to results rather than sections of the workshop. It addresses results around the *decisions* participants discussed and the *information* needs identified.

This report provides a detailed summary of the results of each stage of the workshop, but here we reproduce and provide pointers to the critical tables and figures. The key results outlining the types of decisions made in a response are given in Table 8, which lists seven dimensions along which decisions might be arranged. In addition, a large set of specific decisions is provided within the groups’ results. These detailed data provide a base of evidence for development of additional frameworks.

The key results outlining the information requirements for response are given in Figure 10. The figure summarizes information requirements and arranges them along a timeframe of response. Table 12 lists seven categories of information requirements in more detail. As with the decisions, detailed lists of other data requirements offer evidence for development of additional frameworks and suggestions on requirements for information technology developers.

2. DECISIONS

This section captures the results of the “Decisions Exercise” on Day 1, the feedback given on its results on Day 2, and further discussions of decisions.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE “DECISIONS EXERCISE”

Participants were divided into groups of 6-8 participants, and groups worked in separate rooms. Each group was provided with a flip chart pad, post-its and pens. A facilitator worked with each group.

First, participants were asked to individually brainstorm decisions they would make in an emergency response. They were prompted to reflect on a recent response in which they had worked (multiple responses if they had time), and think through the kinds of decisions they made, writing each one on a post-it. The brainstorming was stopped after about 10 minutes (when the facilitator noted that most had stopped writing).

In the second phase, each participant was asked to describe (to the group) each of the decisions he/she had written on post-its, and put the post-its on the flip chart. As more and more decisions were added to the flip chart, participants were asked to start organizing them in some way; for example, similar decisions could be grouped together. In this workshop, we asked them to initially organize decisions by time: which decisions were made in the first days, first weeks, and first months. As participants added their decisions to the flip chart, we asked the entire group to note further decisions that were missing from the set, since hearing other participants’ suggestions might prompt them to remember additional decisions.

In the final phase of the exercise, participants were asked to think about alternative ways of categorizing or organizing the decisions. For example, rather than categorizing them by time, they might be categorized by criticality or scope. Again, participants were prompted to add any missing decisions to the flip chart.

After the completion of the exercise, the separate groups were brought back together, and each group briefly reported its results to the entire workshop.

GROUP RESULTS FOR “DECISIONS EXERCISE”

The following sub-sections present the results of each of the three groups’ sessions.

GROUP ALPHA

Group Alpha defined the time dimensions by events that demarcate phases of activity rather than fixed time periods like hours and days. They also included rough approximations of the time periods in which these phases typically happen in a response, as a reference point. An additional category was added to represent decisions that did not fit squarely into one time phase but occurred throughout the response. The categories with all ideas written on post-its are presented in Table 2.

CATEGORY	DECISIONS (BRAINSTORMING RESULTS ARE NUMBERED FOR REFERENCE, NOT PRIORITY)
A. DISASTER THROUGH FLASH APPEAL (FIRST 72 HOURS TO ONE WEEK)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Security plan. Decide better security measures, guard shifts 2. Staffing. Staff selection 3. Rapid deployment of experts. 4. Creation of rapid response team, including profile selection. 5. What resources to call on – internal/external (personnel, supplies, finances, logistics) (agency/cluster level) 6. Scale of deployment (no regrets vs. focused) (economic) 7. How much \$ is needed? Where? For what? 8. Establish liaison? Stakeholders 9. Government participation (real vs. token) 10. Mission critical vs. large presence (security) 11. International response/aid needed? 12. Support national capacity or deliver 13. Capacity of government to respond? affected, etc. 14. What are the priority areas? to deploy support or aid? 15. Aid required? 16. Establish staging areas? 17. Advocate response by my organization? Offer? 18. Choose operating partners – FLA (<i>field level agreement</i>) 19. Inclusion of partners 20. Join assessment team? 21. Request Sat equipment? Support equipment. 22. Selecting/prioritizing equipment and infrastructure (IT – telecomm -

internet)

23. Clusters? Activate?
24. Is a new coordination structure required? (i.e. clusters)
25. Response plan is a decision. Scope/concept of operations.
26. Level of funding
27. Initial inter-agency coordination
28. How to track activities within cluster?
29. Initiate operational activities
30. Areas of needs assessment
31. Decide assessment methodology
32. Is a needs assessment required? How big? To where?
33. Quickly how big. Tell region + HQ. People, area affected
34. Draft cost plans (budget)
35. Venue for operations
36. Status of our staff
37. Reinforcement of office/staff?
38. Is additional staff/capacity required?

B.

FLASH APPEAL THROUGH
FIRST MONTH POST-
DISASTER (72 HOURS – 1
MONTH)

1. (What model? Who defines?) Define # affected >> urgent >> critical >> breakdown of #s
 2. End operational activities
 3. Debriefing/evaluation of activities
 4. Info is sufficient for program decision
 5. Respond immediately to accessible areas, or wait for a 'better' picture of needs?
 6. What can we realistically do/achieve with what we have on the grant today? Define the geographic scope and scale of intervention
 7. Specialised needs assessment tools
 8. Meeting planning
 9. When to call cluster meetings – how often is too often?
 10. Full mandate vs. target sectors
 11. Organization diagram. Role.
 12. Assignment of areas of responsibility
 13. Which agencies should be included in the cluster? Inexperienced INGOs? Banned agencies?
 14. Use of software technology
 15. Use existing DRM planning/tools
 16. Step aside for existing staff
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	17. Large tech group at HQ/region
	18. Opening of additional coordination hubs
	19. Which team members to be sent to which locations (agency level)
C. FIRST MONTH THROUGH DONOR CONFERENCE (1-3 MONTHS POST-DISASTER)	1. Development of contingency plan
	2. Decide system for data security and the level of it
	3. Opening up a new office. When and where?
	4. Design form for data collection activities (questions to include or not)
	5. Focus on (own) decision making (geographical)
D. ACROSS TIME PERIODS	1. Media message
	2. What sort of communication/publicity to release (sitrep, press briefing)? (HCT, OCHA, agency)
	3. Set OPR priorities
	4. What are the priority needs?
	5. Call for resources. Appeal/internal mobilization.
	6. What range of activities should agencies undertake? Cluster, government, HCT decision

Table 2: Group Alpha "Decisions Exercise": decision brainstorming results

After posting all of their decision ideas in the time phase categories, the group spent some time coming up with additional ways to categorize decisions. First, the group attempted to define the level of importance for the decisions (section II in Table 3). Initially the categories were phrased in terms of criticality and the degree of constraint and delay that may result from the decision. Reflecting that these categories all seemed to have a negative connotation, the group added another term with positive connotation to complement many of the initial descriptions. Similarly, the group decided that criticality levels could also be described more positively as the impact on beneficiaries, which is the ultimate goal and thus is an effective way to describe importance.

Second, the group considered which people and activities would be impacted by the decision – in other words, the scope of the decision. Since decisions would be implemented by agencies and organizations, this is a natural scope of impact. However, some decisions will only impact certain sectors within an organization; others will impact sectors and span organizations, i.e. apply in clusters. At a higher level, some decisions will span sectors or clusters but remain within the scope of the country and others will affect multiple countries. These definitions for scope are not clearly delineated to be mutually exclusive, so further refinement would be required.

Finally, when considering the scope of decisions, the discussion often referred to the person or group making the decision as an anchor. Examples include the organization’s field team and country office leaders, the government, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), and the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC). This led to a final categorization approach focusing on the locus or authority of decision-making. Roughly in parallel with the scope categories, the group identified four levels of authority: local, national, regional, and global.

Table 3 summarizes the four types of categorization schemes discussed by Group Alpha.

CATEGORY	DECISIONS (BRAINSTORMING RESULTS ARE NUMBERED FOR REFERENCE, NOT PRIORITY)
I. TIME PHASE	a. Disaster through Flash Appeal (first 72 hours to one week) b. Flash Appeal through first month post-disaster (72 hours – 1 month) c. First month through Donor Conference (1-3 months post-disaster) d. Across time periods
II. CRITICALITY OF DECISION / IMPACT ON BENEFICIARIES	e. Mission Ending/Expanding f. Service Restriction g. Service Replacement (i.e. tradeoffs) h. Delay/Expedition i. Minor Inconvenience/Improvement j. No Impact
II. SCOPE OF DECISION	7. Agency/Organization 8. Cluster/Sector 9. Inter-Cluster/Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)/Government 10. Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC)
II. LOCUS/AUTHORITY OF DECISION MAKING	11. Local 12. National 13. Regional 14. Global

Table 3: Group Alpha “Decisions Exercise”: decision dimensions and categories

GROUP BRAVO

Group Bravo placed their brainstorming ideas in the following categories: Agency, Cluster, Inter-cluster, and Other. (These categories align almost perfectly with Group Alpha’s dimension of “Scope of Decision.”) Group Bravo’s categories with all ideas written on post-its are presented in Table 4.

CATEGORY	DECISIONS (BRAINSTORMING RESULTS ARE NUMBERED FOR REFERENCE, NOT PRIORITY)
A. AGENCY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (grouping) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How much money likely to get → strategy → standardization ○ What tools to provide ○ What needs to be done? How much needs to be done? Where is it needed? 2. Decide on needs for additional budgets 3. (grouping) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where to sleep ○ Talk to media or not ○ What kind of transport to use ○ What kind of communications means to use ○ Assign team members to different tasks ○ Main focus on the mission ○ Provide inter agency coordination or not 4. (grouping) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact HQ ○ Activate response plan ○ Decide who will do what e.g. outline logs, coordination, office location 5. Decide programming modalities 6. Organize SAT comm/internet → support teams task 7. What tasks have to be performed by team members 8. Activate emop (immediate funding mechanism) 9. (grouping) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What to do with staff? ○ Communicate and find all staff. ○ Communicate with heads of agencies

10. Where is your coordination center?
11. How can you provide safety and security for your team?
12. Who are the important local authorities or the government to meet?
13. Determine whether additional staff are needed and if so where and when
14. Lifesaving – evacuate yes/no
15. Recovery strategy

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|-----------|--|
| B. | 1. Flash appeal projects → who's in/out |
| CLUSTER | 2. Can we facilitate a broader joint/harmonized assessment? |
| | 3. Assist in DALA HRNA |
| | 4. Decide levels of coordination |
| | 5. Determine the outside contacts/ advice needed |
| | 6. (grouping) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collect – drive around and find other decision makers ○ Gather security team and assess situation ○ Assess beneficiary status – who? |
| | 7. Go or stop search and rescue |
| | 8. Change from SAR to medical care |
| | 9. Organize the logistics and transport for the team |
| | 10. Planning short-term actions and mid-term – 1 week steps → pre-plan recovery/ reporting |
| | 11. To change data management processes |
| | 12. Whether to reduce water trucking (based on an understanding that water kiosks were re-establishing and adequate) |
| | 13. Prioritisation of resource allocation. Phase 3+ |
| | 14. Prioritisation of geographical areas based on govt vs. cluster data. Phase 3+ |

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|---------------|---|
| C. | 1. Self-recovery levels |
| INTER-CLUSTER | 2. How much information shared with govt/media/other partners/other sectors |
| | 3. Decide whether the government considers it a disaster |
| | 4. Decide on whether the government want outside assistance |
| | 5. Decide on method to determine needs |
| | 6. Decide on the capacities in place nationally |
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7. Decide on key constraints to provision of assistance
8. Determine security needs
9. Decide on who to contact to get an overview of the situation
10. Determine key objectives of the operation and strategies to follow
+ advise on level
11. Determine if clusters are needed + which ones
12. Decide to extract national statistical data on pre-crisis
WASH/nutrition situation. (Whether cluster response is meeting
needs. Resilience) Phase 3+

D.	1. Conduct rapid assessments
OTHER	2. Collecting info from source affected areas

Table 4: Group Bravo “Decisions Exercise”: decision brainstorming results

In addition to the categories used for their decision ideas, the group identified dimensions to consider when determining further categorization approaches. Communication is an interesting thread in many of these dimensions. In addition to the more obvious communications with donors and media they identify the aspects of language in which decisions are being made and communicated, and the networks (personal, shared) engaged in the decision.

CATEGORY	DECISION DIMENSIONS AND CATEGORIES
I. SCOPE OF DECISION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agency 2. Cluster 3. Inter-cluster 4. Other
II. OTHER DIMENSIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Government / Opposition 2. Implementing Partners 3. Language 4. Network: Personal, Shared 5. Mission: UN / Other 6. Scope of International Assistance 7. Scope of Communication: Donors, Media

Table 5: Group Bravo “Decisions Exercise”: decision dimensions and categories

GROUP CHARLIE

Group Charlie first brainstormed a number of decisions using the time categories suggested by the facilitators then came up with several other categorization schemes. Each categorization scheme is organized along a dimension (such as time, scope, etc.) and includes categories within the dimension (such as first 72 hours, up to two weeks, etc.). After identifying a large set of dimensions with associated categories, they moved some of their post-its from the original time-based flip chart to the new one, to provide examples of the types of decisions belonging to each dimension. Therefore, the total set of brainstormed decisions is given in *two different tables* below, based on the final location of each post-it.

CATEGORY	DECISIONS (BRAINSTORMING RESULTS ARE NUMBERED FOR REFERENCE, NOT PRIORITY)
A. FIRST 72 HOURS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do we engage in doing activity A (yes/no) 2. Who is available as team 1 (week 1) 3. How to share information? (set up regular meetings, who will participate, etc.) 4. How many funds are we going to allocate (initial response) 5. Information needed for operational purposes, sources, methodologies, timeliness, databases, deployments 6. Launch coordinated needs assessment (multi-cluster/sector) 7. Involvement of actors external to the organization in difficult decision making 8. Technical expertise of people deployed 9. Who will lead the operation at field level? 10. Trigger to activate contingency plan 11. Initiate secondary analysis as part of need assessment process 12. Establishing coordination structure (govt clusters, info sharing meetings, etc.) 13. Number and profile of beneficiaries

B. 72 HOURS – 2 WEEKS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In line with role and responsibilities to decide are: resources, level of intervention, request for support, locations, programs, staff 2. Coordination set up: cluster or not 3. Constitution of teams and leadership 4. Management of information between teams 5. Approaches to camp management 6. How to refer camp needs to partners 7. Tools to use 8. Different approaches to program implementation (including decision-making depending on phase, resources, capacity in country, potential for institutional mobilization) 14. Initiate CERF and/or flash appeal process 15. Priorities once information is available (analysis of data) 16. Criteria to prioritize 17. Working figures (quantification?) 18. How do we deliver priority items and do we need to improve corridors? 19. How many staff for rapid deployment and who (surge capacity)? 20. How do we coordinate with government and with the humanitarian community? 21. Do we activate clusters (assessing common needs and capacities)?
<hr/> C. BEYOND 2 WEEKS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What type of assistance and what timeframes (programming) 2. Decision to phase out assistance programs (example of nutritionist and agronomist working together in Somali region of Ethiopia) 3. Funds needed 4. How do we ensure funding? (fundraising, defining priorities) 5. How do we plan assistance to facilitate recovery?

Table 6: Group Charlie “Decisions Exercise”: decision brainstorming results

DIMENSION	CATEGORIES	DECISION EXAMPLES BY DIMENSION, NOT BY CATEGORY (NUMBERED FOR REFERENCE)
I. TIME	A. First 72 hours B. 72 hours – 2 weeks C. Beyond 2 weeks	(listed in Table 6)
II. SCALE & SCOPE	A. Level 1 B. Level 2 C. Level 3	1. In the affected population, how many do we prioritise? (most vulnerable) 2. How many people do we assist? 3. Which are the most urgently needed items? 4. Geographical zone of intervention 5. Where are the affected people? (Prioritize locations)
III. CRITICALITY	A. Lifesaving B. Not lifesaving	1. Prioritize agencies Needs vs. Demands 2. Are we going to respond? 3. Grading
IV. INFO GAP	A. Probably have info B. Can find out C. Can guess D. No idea	1. How do we communicate? (To an external audience, to donors, to the board) 2. Determine information that can be trusted 3. Where can I get info on potential freight charters?
V. INSTITUTIONAL /COORDINATION	A. Internal B. Government C. Shared D. External	1. Areas of intervention (sectors): water, health, telecom, etc. 2. Establish coordination hubs (where, when, coordination resources) 3. Launch clusters (how many and based on what criteria?)
VI. RESPONSE CAPACITY	A. Local B. Regional C. International	1. What will I take (equipment) and what will I source locally? 2. Do we procure regionally, internationally or locally? (procurement & shipping)
VII. ACCESS & SECURITY	A. UN Security Levels B. Visa	1. Is it safe to deliver & do we need extra measures? (security) 2. How do we address access issues or other risks?

Table 7: Group Charlie “Decisions Exercise”: decision dimensions and categories, with example decisions

CONSOLIDATED RESULTS OF “DECISIONS EXERCISE”

The following categories, given in Table 8, were consolidated and presented by the facilitators on day 2, based on the teams’ discussions on day 1. These are the alternative ways of organizing or categorizing decisions, which participants brainstormed in the last part of the exercise, rather than the set of decisions participants came up with in the earlier parts of the exercise.

DIMENSION	CATEGORIES
TIMEFRAME	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First days (flash appeal) 2. First weeks (mid-term review) 3. Later (donor conference)
SCOPE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Agency/organization 5. Cluster/sector 6. Inter-cluster, government, shared actions 7. Global
LOCUS/AUTHORITY OF DECISION-MAKING	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Global 9. Regional 10. National 11. Local
CRITICALITY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Lifesaving, Mission/Sector Risk 13. Impact on Beneficiary (e.g. tradeoffs, timeliness)
FREQUENCY/DURATION OF DECISION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. One-time 15. Quarterly-Yearly 16. Monthly 17. Weekly 18. Daily
INFORMATION GAP (CONFIDENCE)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Probably have info 20. Can find out 21. Can guess 22. No idea

FUNCTION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Govt/Donor Relations 2. Media/Public Relations 3. Partner Relations 4. Programming 5. Operations/Logistics 6. Security/Access 7. Resource Allocation
----------	---

Table 8: Consolidated Decision Dimensions and Categories

POTENTIAL DECISION FRAMEWORKS BASED ON THE CONSOLIDATED RESULTS

Several potential decision-making frameworks were developed by the facilitators, based largely on the results of the workshop (including the “Decisions Exercise” on Day 1 and participants’ feedback on Day 2) but also incorporating the facilitators’ judgment and background in decision-making.

The goal is to provide an organizing framework for the kinds of decisions made in disaster response. The frameworks given in the figures below (Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4) represent various visual ways of organizing the dimensions brainstormed by participants (see Table 8). Note that various dimensions can be combined in different ways. Sample decisions are also provided, in italics.

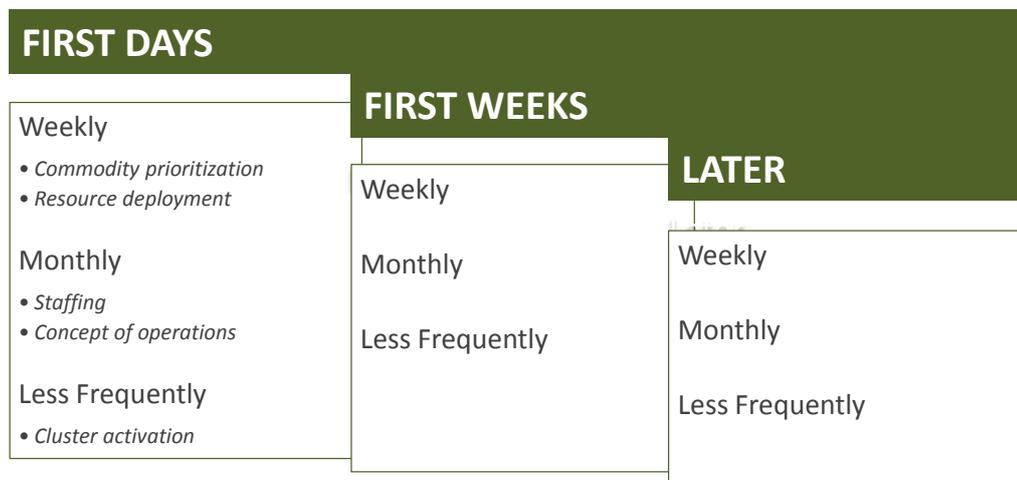


Figure 2: Decision Framework: Time and Frequency

AUTHORITY/SCOPE

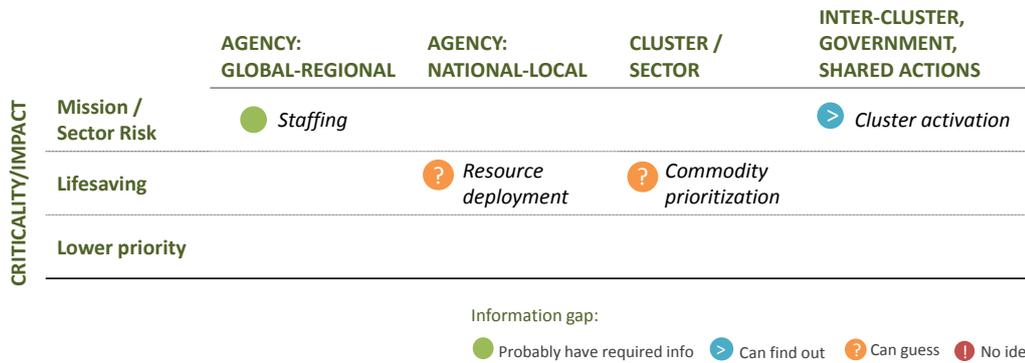


Figure 3: Decision Framework: Scope, Criticality, and Information Gap

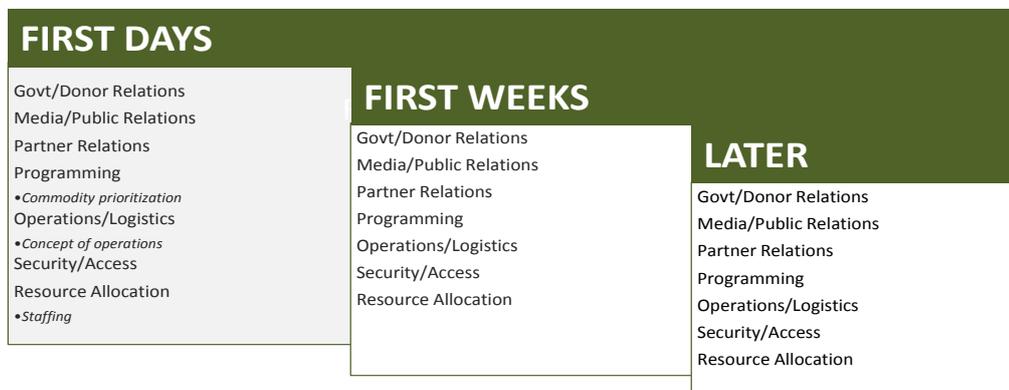


Figure 4: Decision Framework: Time and Function

3. INFORMATION

This section captures the results of the “Information Exercise” on Day 1, the feedback given on its results on Day 2, and further discussions of information.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE “INFORMATION EXERCISE”

Participants were divided into groups of about 6-8 participants (the same groups they worked with in the “Decisions Exercise”), and groups worked in separate rooms. Each group was provided with a flip chart pad, post-its and pens. A facilitator worked with each group.

First, participants were asked to individually brainstorm “what they want to know” in an emergency response, in the first days, weeks, and months. They were prompted to think about a recent response in which they had worked, and think through the kinds of information they were looking for. They could also think about the decisions they had listed in the earlier exercise. As they thought of “what they want to know”, they were asked write each item on a post-it. The brainstorming was stopped after about 10 minutes (when the facilitator noted that most had stopped writing).

In the second phase, each participant was asked to describe (to the group) each of the post-its, and put the post-its on the flip chart. Each post-it captured some kind of information they wanted to know in an emergency response. As more and more items were added to the flip chart, participants were asked to start organizing them in some way. Similar items could be grouped together. In this exercise, we did not impose an organization scheme. Participants (with limited guidance from facilitators) organized them into similar decisions and categories of information.

In the third phase, we asked participants to think about any information that was missing from the set and add post-its to the flip chart.

Finally, if time allowed, participants were asked to refine the categories of information by describing them and adding any missing elements to the flip chart.

After the completion of the exercise, the separate groups were brought back together, and each group briefly reported its results to the entire workshop.

GROUP RESULTS FOR “INFORMATION EXERCISE”

The following sub-sections present the results of each of the three groups’ sessions. Results have been consolidated and edited only for clarity and to reduce repetition.

GROUP ALPHA

Group Alpha categorized their information requirements based on both the topic of the information (baseline, affected population, humanitarian needs, institutional responders, funding, public perception, long-term resolution needs) and on the way in which the information would be used (response planning information, international response requirements, real-time learning). Within each of these categories, several questions, or information requirements, are included. Table 9 lists the categories and information requirements.

GROUP ALPHA

BASELINE

- What was the baseline situation? What has changed (for the worse) and where?
- What information is available already?
- What assessments have been done before?

AFFECTED POPULATION

- What geographical areas are affected?
- How many people are affected? Where are they located? What are their characteristics (e.g. ethnicity, socio/economic, gender)?
- What are the protection [or other sectoral] needs?
- What is the scale of damage to infrastructure? to existing humanitarian efforts? to resilience?
- What are the existing sources of information? e.g. agency, cluster, OCHA, government
- What is our baseline information and how can we enhance it, e.g. local knowledge and previous experience?

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

- What are the lifesaving needs: food, water, health, shelter, protection, and others?
- How many people are in need? What type(s) of needs and where (geographically)?
- What is the source of our information on needs, and is there common agreement?

- What are the stabilization needs?
 - What will my agency do for those affected?
 - Are there existing contingency response plans, and do they cover this situation?
-
- **RESPONSE PLANNING INFORMATION**
 - What other actors are already responding, or plan to respond? Government, military, local community, other organizations? Are there gaps in this information?
 - What are other actors doing: clusters? Government?
 - What are my partner agencies doing? What are their resources and their plans?
 - What did my predecessors do? Who should I work with, and who should I avoid?
 - What has already happened in the response, and how much do we know about this? What else is needed: more of the same, less, something different? What is the impact of the response?
 - How do I get relief to those in need: what are the resources and obstacles?
-
- **INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS**
 - What is the capacity of other actors: the government, the local community?
 - What is the involvement of the government – e.g. what have they said? What is the involvement of the military – e.g. are they present?
 - Do we need to respond: my agency, cluster, humanitarian coordinator?
 - What is our presence on the ground and in the affected areas?
 - What is the management structure of our response? Structure and composition of the relief team?
 - What basic infrastructure is needed/available for responders? What is the state of access, security, physical transport and movement?
 - What, if anything, limits access to the affected population?
 - What are the available resources: financial, personnel, stocks, human, technical capabilities?
-
- **INSTITUTIONAL RESPONDERS**
 - How is the international response coordinated? Is there a cluster?
 - What is the national response? Is there information on relevant standards etc?
-
- **FUNDING**
 - What funds are available, in the short-, medium-, and long-term?
-
- **PUBLIC PERCEPTION**
 - What is the public perception, awareness, and attention?
 - What are the media and donor perceptions?
-
- **REAL-TIME LEARNING**

- What has gone wrong so far, what is adequate, and what has been successful?
- Is there a problem that requires follow-up (e.g. funding)? Are there likely needs or early warnings?
- How do I verify that relief items have been received?

□ **LONG-TERM RESOLUTION NEEDS**

- What are the long-term national development strategies?
 - What are the needs and plans for recovery?
-

Table 9: Group Alpha “Information Exercise”: brainstormed information requirements

GROUP BRAVO

Group Bravo categorized the information requirements in terms of the kind of information required, including the timeframe in which it could be collected (pre-response, during operations), and the topic (measuring and outputs, value). Their “value” category is particularly interesting, in that it seems aimed at directing and prioritizing information collection efforts, and it is unique among the three groups. Table 10 lists the categories and information requirements.

GROUP BRAVO

□ **VALUE QUESTIONS**

- What do I know, and what do I need to know?
- Is it possible to influence the information I receive?
- What and who can provide information that can make a difference?
- How can we determine the validity of information, and how can we define validity?

□ **PRE-RESPONSE INFORMATION**

- What was the situation before the response? (will inform response strategy)
- What can be collected before a crisis?
- What natural resources are available? What are the harvest/crop cycles?
- What are the seasonal changes? cultural norms?
- What is the base skillset of the community, and its cohesion?
- What were the previous responses to disasters? coping mechanisms?
- What is the expected response of the government? Are there restrictions or sensitivities?

□ **OPERATIONS INFORMATION**

- What are the risks and the risk tolerance?
- What was the hazard event and what are its effects?

- What is the general political will for the response, including local and international?
- How much funding is available?
- Who are the primary donors and what information do they need, if any, above and beyond normal reporting?
- What are the estimates of the affected population, and how accurate are they?
- What is the extent of the need?
- How many people are we serving?
- With whom do we need to work?
- Is the situation likely to change? In what ways, and when?
- Do we need external support – goods (items) and services (staff and coordination)? How can we get it? What will it cost?
- How do we balance capacity against expectation? With beneficiaries, donors, media?
- How can we enter the area? What is the state of security, roads, and populations?

□ **MEASURING AND OUTPUTS**

- What can only be collected during a crisis?
 - What are the measurable factors/indicators for project outputs?
 - How do outputs relate to minimum standards for outcomes and to strategic priorities?
 - What are the numerator and denominators to estimate outputs and outcomes?
-

Table 10: Group Bravo “Information Exercise”: brainstormed information requirements

GROUP CHARLIE

Group Charlie organized information requirements largely according to the topic of the information, including scope and context, response and capacity, gaps and needs, coordination, and risks and access. For this group, Table 11 gives the categories, the information requirements, and a *summarized* version of the information requirements.

GROUP CHARLIE

□ **SCOPE AND CONTEXT**

- Summarized:
 - § Affected population
 - § Socio-political context
 - § Emergency situation
- Specific elements of information:
 - § What is the impact and scope of the disaster?

- § How many people have been affected, and how?
- § What are the direct effects and damage from the emergency? number of houses and roads damaged, infrastructure?
- § Where are the affected people and which areas are most critical? Other information about the population?
- § What is the status and geographical scope of the affected population? including locations, scope, displacement, vulnerable groups, etc.
- § Is assistance needed?
- § Has the government appealed for international assistance?
- § What is the local context: political situation, infrastructure, government counterparts?

□ **RESPONSE AND CAPACITY**

- Summarized:
 - § Local
 - § National
 - § Regional
 - § Global
 - § Markets/service
 - § Stocks
 - § Actors
 - § Funding
 - § HR
- Specific elements of information
 - § Do we have government authority to go?
 - § What is the local capacity: government, community, partners?
 - § What militaries are involved, what equipment do they have, and what skills (e.g. aircraft handling)?
 - § Are funds available? Donor commitments?
 - § What is our capacity (staff, funding, etc.)? Do we need to scale up?
 - § Logistics: which airport will be a hub? Is there pipeline information available from companies?
 - § What are other organizations doing? Who is doing what, where?

□ **GAPS AND NEEDS**

- Summarized:
 - § Priorities
 - § What are the gaps/needs?

- § Information
 - Specific elements of information
 - § What are the priority sectors, such as health, shelter, food, etc?
 - § What are the gaps, and what are the needs?
 - § How many people are in need?
 - § What are the sector-specific priorities and gaps (such as medicine, health personnel)?
 - § What are the needs of different sites, including affected areas, displaced, those with host families?
-
- **COORDINATION**
 - Summarized:
 - § Cluster/sector/inter-cluster/agency
 - § Local/national/regional
 - § Who is doing what
 - Specific elements of information
 - § How is information shared? How is the response coordinated?
 - § What is the international response? Who, where? Who is in the field? Which organizations are deploying?
 - § Which staff are deployed?
 - § Are clusters [or a specific cluster] going to form? When and where are meetings?
-
- **RISKS AND ACCESS**
 - Summarized:
 - § Future scenarios
 - § Security threats
 - § Access
 - § Information gaps
 - Specific elements of information
 - § What is the security situation? What are the major threats and how will the situation evolve?
 - § Are any staff directly affected by the disaster?
 - § What is the accessibility of the operational areas? What are the access constraints and where do they exist?
 - § What information are we missing?
 - § What is the engagement of the media?
-

Table 11: Group Charlie “Information Exercise”: brainstormed information requirements

INTERPRETATION OF THE THREE GROUP RESULTS

While the groups categorized their information in different ways, there was strong overlap among the specific “things” each group “wanted to know”. Common elements across groups included the context and scope of the disaster, the ways in which populations and infrastructure were affected, the resulting needs of affected populations, the capacity and response of other actors and their own organizations, the gaps in response that created unmet needs, the mechanisms for coordination among actors, pre-existing baseline data on the context in which they were working, risks and operational needs both for programs and responders, and resources such as funding and media attention. In addition, many groups were interested in how to measure and evaluate ongoing programs, and plan for long-term recovery.

SURVEY ON INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

In order to link information requirements to the decisions they support, on Day 2, participants were asked to fill out a survey categorizing information requirements across decision dimensions. The results follow. Feedback and comments from the participants are also provided for each question.

Q1: Please rank the “things we want to know” in order of importance.

Feedback: Participants commented that many are first-priority so the ranking is difficult. There was also a question about whether they were ranking importance or urgency.

Discussion: Figure 5 shows the average, minimum, and maximum ranking for each category of information requirements, across all respondents. One respondent ranked everything “1” (most important), so the plot also shows the “adj. min.”, the minimum across all the other respondents. Despite the difficulty of ranking these information requirements, it was clear that some were considered more important than others. In general, context, needs, and response planning were considered most important.

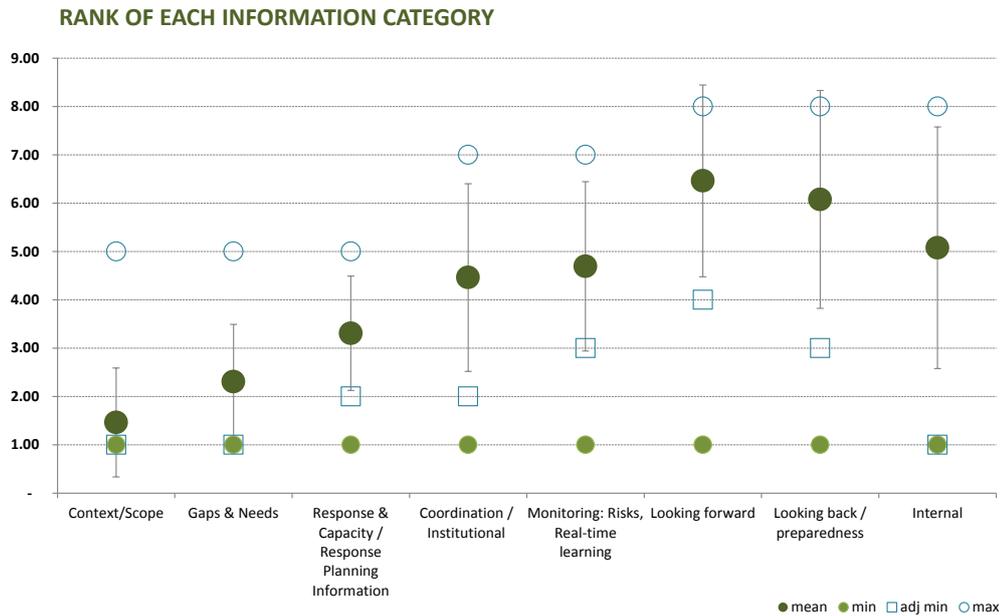


Figure 5: Average, max, and min rankings for each information category

Q2: Please classify “things we want to know” into the following categories. Do we need to know them starting in the first days, first weeks, or later?

Feedback: Participants commented that the same information is required throughout, but the depth of information required changes over time. In addition, some participants separated elements of the categories across time (e.g. security early but rest of category later).

Discussion: Despite the ambiguity noted by participants in their feedback, the results clearly showed the importance of certain information in the first days: context/scope, needs, and internal responder requirements. A second set of information requirements was consistently ranked as needed in the first days or weeks: response planning, coordination structures, and monitoring. Figure 6 shows the survey results, Figure 7 captures these results in pictorial form.

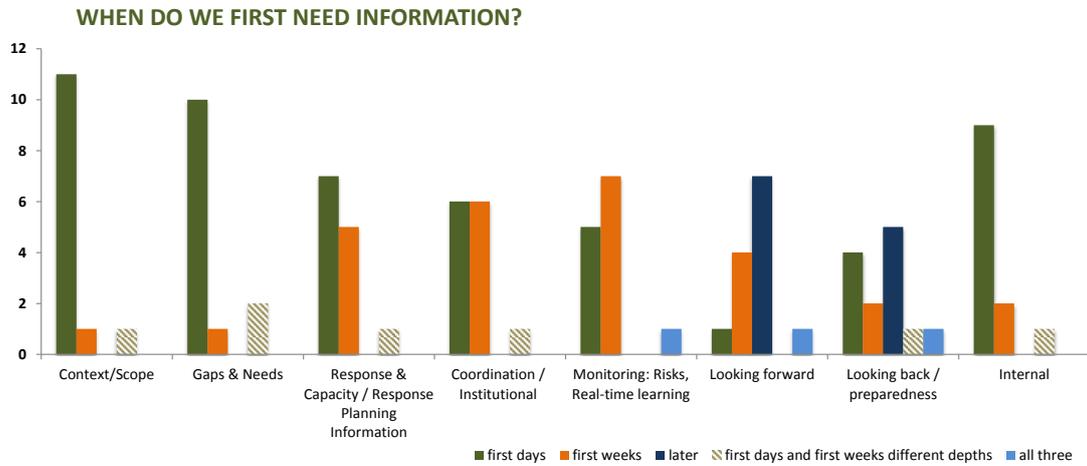


Figure 6: When do we first need information

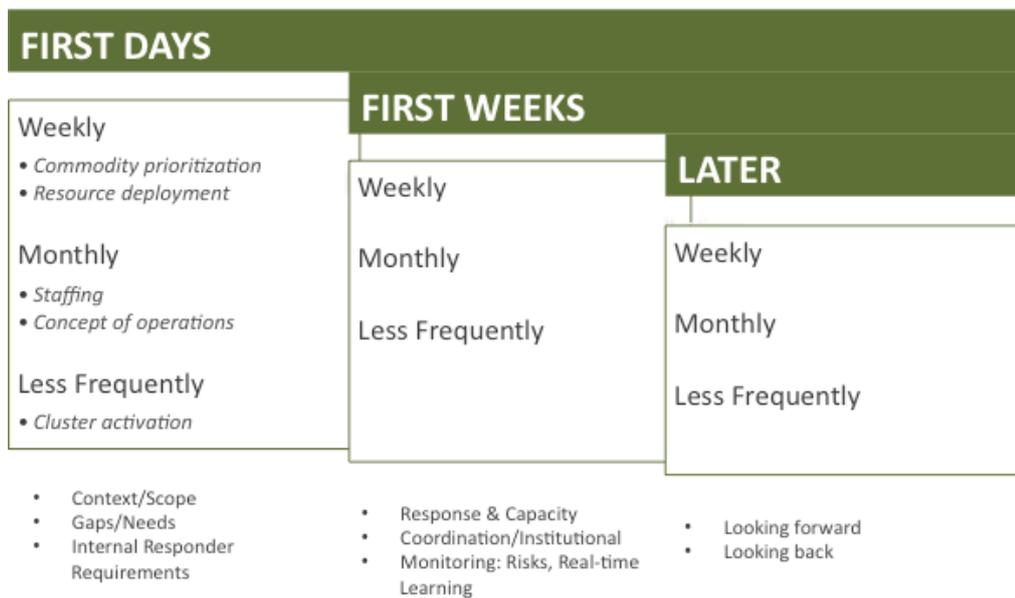


Figure 7: Decision framework, with information needed in each timeframe

Q3: Please classify “things we want to know” into the following categories. Should they be updated at least weekly, at least monthly, or less frequently?

Feedback: Some participants separated elements of categories over time (e.g. security more often than other events in the same categories). In addition, as the situation evolves over time, information updates may be required less frequently.

Discussion:

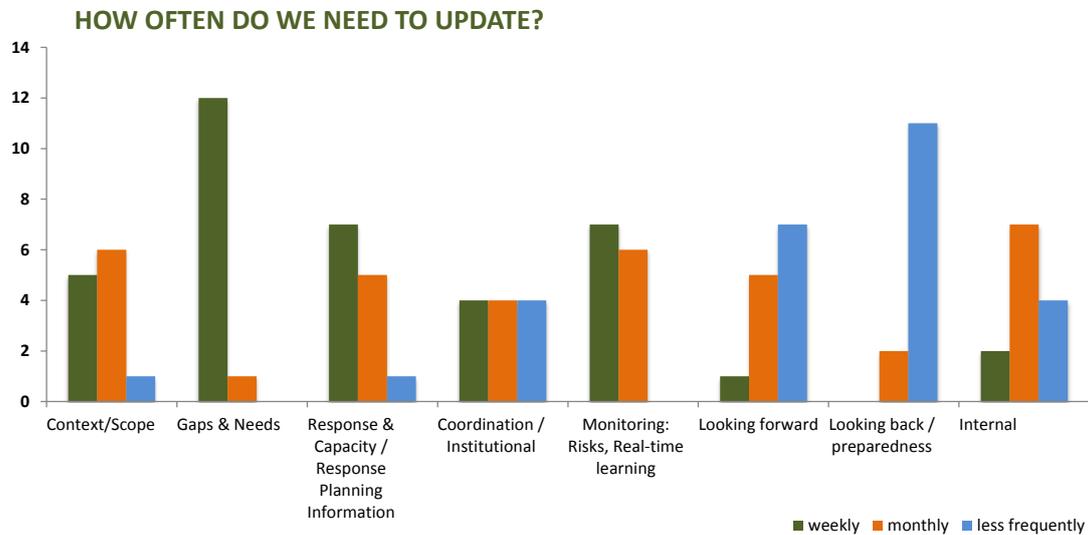


Figure 8 shows the results, which were less clear than those of the previous questions, in part because of the ambiguity of the question. It was clear that needs must be updated at least weekly, and that looking forward and looking back required less frequent updates. The remaining categories showed a variety of responses, suggesting that the update requirements vary. Based on participant feedback, we might surmise that these categories contain elements with different update requirements, or that the update frequency depends on the evolution of the response over time.

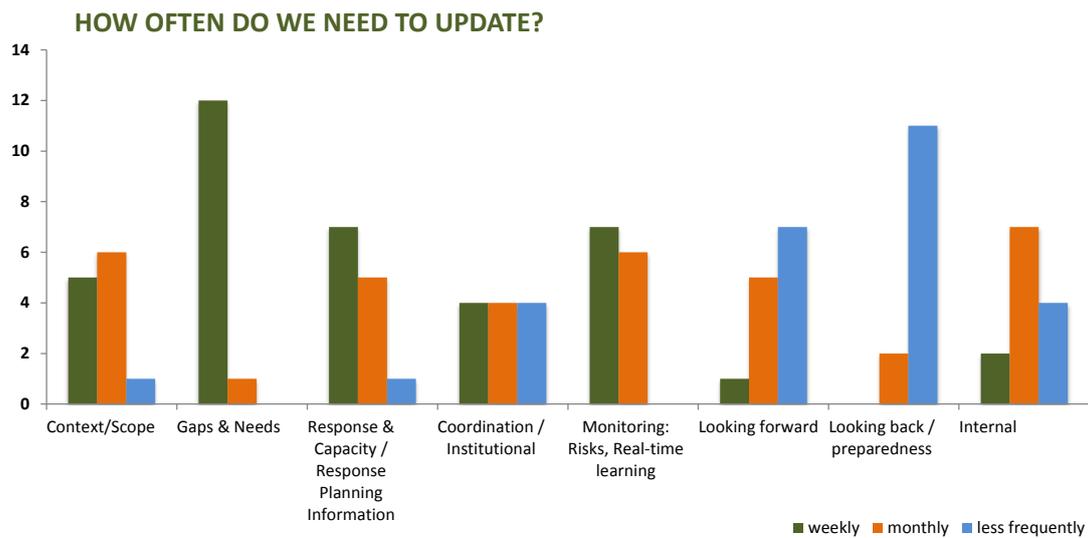


Figure 8: Information update frequency

Q4: Please classify “things we want to know” into the following categories. Are they needed primarily by local/national authorities or regional/global authorities?

Feedback: Nearly all participants said this distinction was hard to make and not very useful. Most information was needed by both, but maybe at different levels of detail. In addition, who needs the information might depend on the scope of the emergency, funding, etc.

Discussion: The results suggest that most information was needed at the local level more than at the higher levels, but given the feedback described in the previous paragraph, further investigation is required to determine what kind of information is needed for each level.

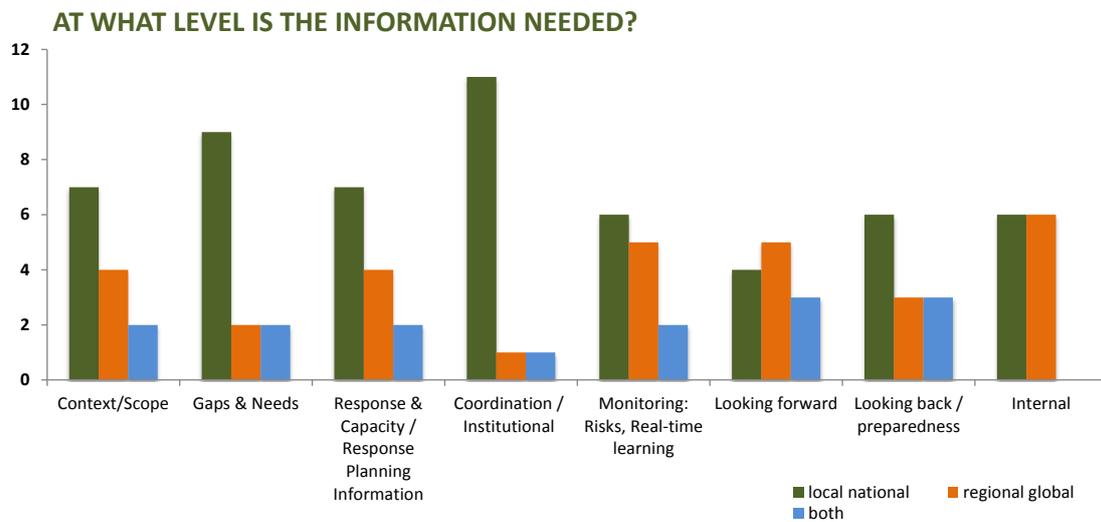


Figure 9 plots the results.

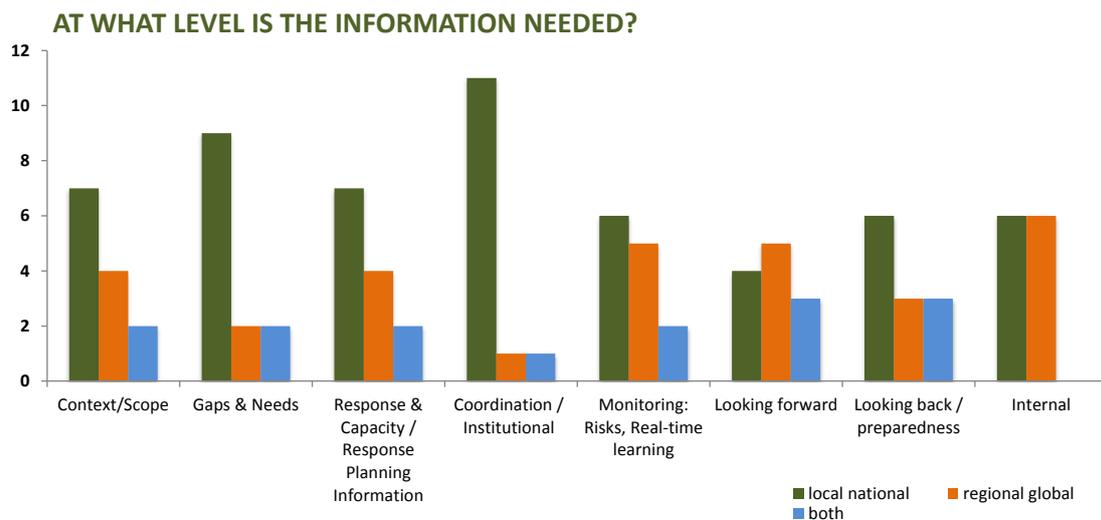


Figure 9: Level at which information is needed

CONSOLIDATED RESULTS

After the workshop, the facilitators consolidated results based on the information items brainstormed by all the teams. Table 12 includes *both* categories and specific “things we want to know”. It was developed by the facilitators based on (1) “things we want to know” brainstormed by each team on day 1 of the workshop, and (2) feedback and discussion, along with the survey, from day 2 of the workshop. In addition, information items that were very specific to a particular sector or agency have been generalized somewhat (e.g. “What are the protection needs?” has been subsumed under “What are the types of needs?”). The intention of this list was to capture comprehensively the “things” workshop participants wanted to know, in a coherent and general framework.

INFORMATION EXERCISE

- **CONTEXT AND SCOPE**
 - Emergency situation
 - § What is the impact and scope of the disaster?
 - § Is assistance needed? Has the government appealed for international assistance?
 - § What geographical areas are affected?
 - § What has been damaged: infrastructure? Housing? Existing humanitarian efforts? Resilience?
 - § What was the baseline situation (before the response), and what has changed (worsened) and where? What assessments have been done before?
 - Affected population
 - § How many people have been affected, and how?
 - § Where (geographically) are the affected people?
 - § What is the status of the affected people? Are they displaced, vulnerable, etc?
 - § What are the characteristics of the affected: ethnicity, socio/economic, gender, etc.?
 - Information availability
 - § What information is available, both baseline (pre-emergency) data and updates on the current situation?
 - § What are the existing sources of information? e.g. from various actors, local knowledge, previous experience
 - § How accurate is our information?
 - Context: socio-political, environment, etc.

- § What is the local socio-political context: political situation, cultural norms, etc?
 - § What is the expected response of the government? Are there restrictions or sensitivities?
 - § What natural resources are available? What are the harvest/crop cycles? Seasonal changes?
 - § What is the base skillset of the community, and its cohesion?
 - § What were the previous responses to disasters, coping mechanisms?
 - Public and media perception
 - § What is the public perception, awareness, and attention?
 - § What are the media and donor perceptions?
 - § What is the general political will for the response, including local and international?
 - § How do we balance capacity against expectation? with beneficiaries, donors, media?
 - Humanitarian Needs
 - What are the humanitarian needs?
 - § How many people are there in need?
 - § What are the types of needs (e.g. food, water, health, shelter, protection...)?
 - § Where (geographically) are the needs?
 - § What are the needs of different groups, including displaced, those with host families, vulnerable groups?
 - § What are the lifesaving needs, and other needs?
 - § What are the gaps in the response?
 - Priorities
 - § Which geographic areas are the most critical?
 - § What are the priority sectors, such as health, shelter, food, etc?
 - Information sources and gaps
 - § Does response community agree on number of people in each type of need?
 - § What are the sources of our information, and the extent of assessments?
 - § What are the existing information sources?
-
- **CAPACITY AND RESPONSE PLANNING**
 - What is the capacity and response of the following elements?
 - § markets & service
 - § stocks
 - § actors (government/military/my organization)
 - § funding (now, mid-term, long-term)
 - § HR/personnel/teams

- § local communities
- Other actors' capacity and response (e.g. government, military, local community, aid organizations, other organizations)
 - § What other actors are responding, or plan to respond?
 - § What is the capacity of other actors in the response? What is the local capacity?
 - § What are other actors doing in their response, and what have they already done? Who is doing what, where?
 - § What is the involvement of the military, and of the government? What capacity, skills, and equipment do they have?
 - § Given the activities of other actors, what else is needed: more of the same, less, something different? What has been the impact of the response?
- Internal capacity and response (my organization and its partners)
 - § Do we (my agency, my cluster, the humanitarian coordinator) need to respond? What will we (my agency) do for those affected? How many will we serve?
 - § Do we (my agency) have government authority to respond?
 - § What are our partner agencies doing? What are their plans and resources?
 - § What is our capacity (local, regional, and global)? What is our presence on the ground and in the affected areas? Do we need to scale up? Do we need external support, e.g. goods or services? How can we get it and what will it cost?
 - § What is the management structure of our response? Structure and composition of relief teams?
 - § What has been accomplished by my predecessors and other members of my organization, and what can I learn from their experience (e.g. who to work with)?
- Internal resources
 - § What are the available resources: financial, personnel, stocks, human, technical capabilities?
 - § What are the prospects for funding, in the short-, medium-, and long-term? Who are the primary donors and what, if anything, do they need beyond normal reporting?
 - § Are there existing contingency response plans, and do they cover this situation?

□ **OPERATIONAL SITUATION**

- Security and risk
 - § What is the state of security? Movement?
 - § What are the major threats and how will the situation evolve?
 - § Are any staffs directly affected by the disaster?
 - § What are the risks and the risk tolerance?

- Access
 - § What, if anything, limits access to the affected population? Other obstacles to relief operations?
 - § How do we reach affected populations?
 - § What is the state of logistics? Is transport capacity available? Where are hubs located? What pipeline information is available? How can I verify that relief items have been received?
 - Information gaps
 - § What information is missing? What do I know, and what do I need to know?
 - § What can I do to get the information I need? What are potential sources of additional information?
 - § How can we determine the validity of the information (and how is validity defined)?
 - Monitoring, early warnings
 - § What has gone wrong so far, what is adequate, and what has been successful?
 - § Is there a problem that requires follow-up (e.g. funding)? Are there likely needs or early warnings?
 - § Is the situation likely to change, in what ways, and when?
 - Measuring and outputs
 - § What are the measurable factors and indicators for project output?
 - § How do outputs relate to minimum standards for outcomes and to strategic priorities?
-
- **COORDINATION AND INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES**
 - Coordination of international response
 - § How is the international response coordinated? How is information shared?
 - § What clusters are activated? How do I interface with them?
 - § What are coordination structures at institutional levels (sector/cluster, inter-sector/cluster, agency, national)?
 - Internal coordination
 - § How is our response coordinated, e.g. at the local, national, and regional levels?
 - Laws and standards
 - § Are there relevant (e.g. national) laws and standards, and where is such information available?
-
- **INTERNAL**
 - Responder requirements (housing, etc)
 - § What basic infrastructure is available and what is needed for responders?
 - § What is the state of access, security, physical transport and movement?

- Responder values

- **LOOKING FORWARD**

- Long term reconstruction
 - § What are the long-term national development strategies?
 - § What are the needs and plans for recovery?
 - Preparedness
 - What information can be collected before a crisis? What can only be collected during a crisis?
-

Table 12: “Information Exercise” and survey: Comprehensive list of information requirements, across all groups, survey, and feedback from participants

SUMMARY DIAGRAM OF COMPREHENSIVE RESULTS

Figure 10 condenses and summarizes the information requirements captured in the comprehensive consolidated results. The major categories are depicted as boxes, with categories and elements of information within them. The boxes are arranged roughly corresponding to the response timeline, with earlier information on the left and later information on the right (not to scale). The arrangement is based on the results of the survey, in which participants were asked to note both the importance and the timeframe for each category of information.

(first days)	(first weeks)	(first months)
<p>CONTEXT AND SCOPE</p> <p>Scope of emergency situation Impact: damage to infrastructure, livelihoods, etc. Geographic areas affected Assistance requirements</p> <p>Affected population Number of affected, locations Status of affected: displaced, vulnerable, etc.</p> <p>Context Local socio-economic, political context Local environmental, weather, livelihoods Local community capacity, coping mechanisms</p> <p>Public and media perception Public perception, awareness, attention Media perception Political will, donor will</p> <p>HUMANITARIAN NEEDS</p> <p>Needs Number in need Types of needs (health, shelter, water, etc.) Locations of needs Needs of sub-groups: displaced, vulnerable</p> <p>Priorities Geographic priorities Priorities across sector Within-sector priorities</p> <p>RESPONDER REQUIREMENTS Basic infrastructure for responders Security, access</p> <p>META INFORMATION Information available Sources of information Accuracy, validity and information</p>	<p>CAPACITY AND RESPONSE PLANNING</p> <p>Other actors' capacity and response: (incl. gov't, military, local community, commercial aid agencies) Responses of other actors (who, what, where, etc.) capacity of other actors (skills, equipment, scale, etc.)</p> <p>Internal capacity and response Internal response plan Internal capacity, structure Available resources: financial, personnel, stocks, technical</p> <p>OPERATIONAL SITUATION</p> <p>Security Current threats Future threats and risks</p> <p>Access Limits to access Logistics capacity and structure</p> <p>Monitoring Issues Trends Accomplishments</p> <p>Measuring and outputs Measurable indicators for output Standards</p> <p>COORDINATION AND INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES</p> <p>Coordination of the response External coordination (with other actors, various levels) Internal coordination (with other parts of the org.)</p> <p>Relevant laws and policies External coordination (with other actors, various levels) Internal coordination (with other parts of the org.)</p> <p>Agreement on needs Extent of assessments Actions to improve access to information</p>	<p>LOOKING FORWARD</p> <p>Recovery and reconstruction National development strategies Needs and plans for recovery</p> <p>Preparedness Information to collect before crisis</p> <p>Preparedness information</p>

Figure 10: Pictorial Summary of Information Requirements

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The “Workshop on Field-Based Decision-Makers’ Information Needs in Sudden Onset Disasters” enabled us to create lists of and develop preliminary frameworks for decisions and information requirements that are common during the initial phases of a sudden onset disaster. These results, which are based on the outcome of one workshop, should not be considered definitive for any of these topics. However, given the extensive experience of the decision makers assembled for the workshop, the results offer an important first attempt to understand decisions and information requirements. Feedback on this report and follow-on activities will enable further refinement and, more importantly, use of the frameworks described in this report.

The key results outlining the types of decisions made in a response were given in Table 8. This table lists seven dimensions along which decisions might be arranged: timeframe, scope, locus/authority of decision-making, criticality, frequency/duration, information gap or confidence, and function; the table also provides categories within each of these dimensions. These dimensions were combined in various ways to suggest preliminary visual frameworks for organizing decisions. In addition, a large set of specific decisions was provided within the groups’ results. These detailed data provide a base of evidence for development of additional frameworks.

The key results outlining the information requirements for response were given in Table 12 and in Figure 9. The table lists seven categories of information requirements: context and scope, humanitarian needs, capacity and response planning, operational situation, coordination and institutional structures, internal, and looking forward. Within each of these categories, sub-categories of information requirements are listed, and in each sub-category, specific questions or kinds of required information are provided. Figure 10 summarizes these information requirements and arranges them along a timeframe of response. As with the decisions, detailed lists of other data requirements offer evidence for development of additional frameworks and suggestions on requirements for information technology developers.

Attempts to link information to decisions were less successful, in part because of the complexity of assigning specific information requirements to specific decisions and in part due

to the lack of time to facilitate an appropriate discussion during the workshop. Nevertheless, linking both decisions and information requirements to a response timeline is a good start and may be sufficient for determining and prioritizing which information to collect at any given time in a response.

One goal of this workshop was to help Volunteer and Technical Communities (VTC) to understand the information field decision-makers require to make the best possible decisions. These results lay a foundation for this understanding, by providing (1) a framework and set of information required by field-based decision-makers, (2) categories and types of decisions made by decision-makers, and (3) a large set of brainstormed decisions from workshop participants. VTCs and others seeking to support humanitarian action by providing and organizing information can utilize these results to (a) prioritize their efforts toward important information, and (b) organize their information in a manner intuitive and useful to humanitarian decision-makers.

Appendix A: Workshop Program and Participants

MONDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

1. Welcome and Introduction

Discuss the objectives and scope

2. Group Exercise 1: Decisions

Participants work in subgroups to brainstorm decisions they have made in sudden onset disasters. Initially, individuals write down various specific decisions, then they categorize the decisions by dimension such as type and timeframe, then brainstorm additional dimensions.

3. Discuss Decisions Exercise

The results of Group Exercise 1 are shared and discussed as one group.

4. Presentation: Information gathering during crisis

Facilitators present some concepts about decision making in complex settings from a theoretical perspective.

5. Group Exercise 2: Information

Participants work in groups to brainstorm information that could be used in making decisions. Initially, individuals write down various specific ideas, then together they categorize the ideas.

6. Discuss Information Exercise

The results of Group Exercise 2 are shared and discussed as one group.

7. Presentation: Decision making during crisis

Facilitators present some concepts about decision making in complex settings from a theoretical perspective. The group discusses approaches for making decisions when we do not have a lot of information.

8. Group Exercise 3: Create a Decision Making Framework

Participants work individually to describe their decision-making in a poster. The task was to create a drawing that they could use to explain their decisions and their jobs to others.

9. Adjourn

TUESDAY 25 SEPTEMBER

10. Recap of Day 1

11. Review and Discuss: Decision-Making Process

The entire group reviews a consolidated description of the decision-making process, based on yesterday's discussions. Facilitators capture revisions suggested by the group.

12. Review and Discuss: Decisions

The entire group reviews a consolidated description of the results from yesterday's Group Exercise 1. Facilitators capture additions and elements that require revision.

13. Review and Discuss: Information

The entire group reviews a consolidated description of the results from yesterday's Group Exercise 2. Facilitators capture additions and elements that require revision.

14. Survey: Information needs along decision-making dimensions

Results from Group Exercises 1 and 2 form the basis of a survey to assess the importance and applicability of each category of information, along the decision-making dimensions. Participants fill out the surveys individually. Facilitators tally results.

15. Group Exercise 3: Applying the results in a case study

Participants work in groups to develop a strategy for an emergency response case study, then evaluate whether the workshop results were helpful in thinking about the response. Did they help in thinking through decisions and information requirements?

16. Discuss Case Study

The entire group discusses the case study and provides feedback on the workshop results.

17. Discuss the survey results

Facilitators present the results of the survey for group discussion.

18. Discuss workshop and next steps

The group discusses the overall results of the workshop, considers implications on practice and defines next steps in continuing to explore this topic.

19. Adjourn

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Appendix B: List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Decision Dimensions and Categories

Table 2: Group Alpha "Decisions Exercise": decision brainstorming results

Table 3: Group Alpha "Decisions Exercise": decision dimensions and categories

Table 4: Group Bravo "Decisions Exercise": decision brainstorming results

Table 5: Group Bravo "Decisions Exercise": decision dimensions and categories

Table 6: Group Charlie "Decisions Exercise": decision brainstorming results

Table 7: Group Charlie "Decisions Exercise": decision dimensions and categories, with example decisions

Table 8: Consolidated Decision Dimensions and Categories

Table 9: Group Alpha "Information Exercise": brainstormed information requirements

Table 10: Group Bravo "Information Exercise": brainstormed information requirements

Table 11: Group Charlie "Information Exercise": brainstormed information requirements

Table 12: "Information Exercise" and survey: Comprehensive list of information requirements, across all groups, survey, and feedback from participants

Figure 1: Pictorial Summary of Information Requirements

Figure 2: Decision Framework: Time and Frequency

Figure 3: Decision Framework: Scope, Criticality, and Information Gap

Figure 4: Decision Framework: Time and Function

Figure 5: Average, max, and min rankings for each information category

Figure 6: When do we first need information

Figure 7: Decision framework, with information needed in each timeframe

Figure 8: Information update frequency

Figure 9: Level at which information is needed

Figure 10: Pictorial Summary of Information Requirements

