



# The CDAC Network Suite of Common Communication Needs Assessment Tools

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The Media Development Agencies (MDAs) of the CDAC Network - BBC Media Action, International Media Support (IMS) and Internews - have come together to develop a suite of common tools for conducting communication needs assessments following a disaster. These tools are based on questionnaires used by Internews in their information needs assessments. For more information visit <https://www.internews.org/global-issues/humanitarian-information/assessments>.

## **Note to humanitarian responders:**

These tools have been developed by MDAs, but this does not exclude other organisations from using them. For example, some of the questions can be included in other sector assessments to ensure data is collected on communication needs.

Guidance has also been developed for humanitarian agencies by the CDAC Network and the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) on including communication questions in their rapid needs assessments. The 'Quick and Easy Guide to Communication Needs Assessments' is available on the CDAC Network Website, along with a 'Pocket Guide' for field practitioners.

## **Why do Media Development Agencies carry out needs assessments in humanitarian crises?**

MDAs carry out information needs and access assessments as a common service to the humanitarian response, as well as to get information to plan relevant programmes which respond to need. The objectives of MDA needs assessments are:

- 1) To determine the most effective way for humanitarian responders to communicate with communities following a disaster, so MDAs can design programmes to support and facilitate two way communication
- 2) To determine what information communities are missing, so they can advocate and support humanitarian agencies and local governments to provide this information to communities effectively

3) To determine the damage caused to local media following a disaster, and determine how they can best support local media to get back on its feet

## How and why have common tools been developed?

These tools have been developed and agreed by a working group of representatives from the MDA Members of the CDAC Network.

Each MDA previously used its own tools to assess these needs. It was decided that a suite of common needs assessment tools should be developed, to avoid duplication and wasting of valuable resources and to improve data collection and analysis. If common tools and methodologies exist, any of the MDAs can carry out an information access and needs assessment and share the data with the others, knowing that it contains the data required for any of the MDAs to plan a response.

## What does this suite of tools include?

This suite of tools includes three questionnaires:

### Affected Population Questionnaire

A questionnaire to be asked to people who have been affected by the disaster, to determine their access to information and communication channels, and their information needs. This questionnaire is amendable depending on context and resources available.

### Humanitarian Responder Questionnaire

A questionnaire to be asked to humanitarian workers or key informants who may have an understanding of information needs and access for people affected by the disaster in the area they are based.

### Media Station Profile Questionnaire

A questionnaire to be asked to staff of media stations, most likely radio and television broadcasters, to find out how their station is currently functioning, and what damage it has suffered as a result of the disaster. This information can be used in mapping of functioning media stations, and in determining what support an MDA might be able to offer to local media.

## How should these questionnaires be used?

These questionnaires should be used as a guide, and should be adapted depending on context, as well as time and resources available.

For this reason, this guidance does not include agreed methodologies. However, for useful guidance on data collection and analysis of rapid needs assessments in emergency settings, refer to 'The Good Enough Guide to Needs Assessments', produced by ACAPS and the ECB Project.<sup>1</sup>

### Affected Population Questionnaire

The 'affected population questionnaire' is designed in the form of a survey questionnaire.

Although rarely possible in an emergency situation, a random sample survey is ideal, to ensure a cross-section of the population is interviewed. Data should be disaggregated by age and gender, to give an idea of information access and needs of different groups.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.acaps.org/en/news/new-assessment-tools-pilot-phase/2>

If time and resources are short, these questions can also be asked in focus group discussions, or in interviews with key informants from the affected population. Questions would need to be reformatted accordingly (eg. instead of using 'you', it would be 'people in your community')

This questionnaire is designed as a menu of questions – not all of the questions should be included, or the questionnaire will take too much time to complete.

It is recommended that the questions in **white boxes** are always asked, while the questions in **grey boxes** underneath will only be included if appropriate.

Which additional questions (grey questions) you decide to include will depend on the following factors:

- **Time and capacity available to undertake the survey and analyse the data**

This will depend on the phase of the emergency, as well as funding and resources available to carry out the assessment. Obviously the more questions that are included, the longer the questionnaire will take to complete. This has an impact on staff time (for data collection and analysis), but also on respondents' time – if the questionnaire takes too long, they may not want to or be able to participate, particularly immediately following a disaster.

Always test the questionnaire before taking it to the field, so you can warn respondents how long it will take before starting. Remember that using a translator can double the amount of time the questionnaire takes to complete.

- **Context, and the relevance of the question**

You will be able to eliminate some questions simply because they are not appropriate to the context. For example, in an area where there is no access to electricity, it is not worth asking everyone if they have access to a television.

Of course there will be some questions you will ask depending on the answer to the preliminary question. For example, if someone says they have access to a radio, you may then ask which stations they listen to, and at what time. If they say no, you may ask why? Have they never had one, or was their radio destroyed?

Testing the questionnaire is important, as some questions may be culturally inappropriate, or may be misunderstood by people in affected communities. Never be afraid to amend or add questions if they do not make sense in that context or do not obtain the information you need.

**Note:** *In the past, people have found the question “What do you most need information about now” difficult to answer, as people have so many other immediate needs, or do not know they have a right to information. You may need to try different ways of asking this question to get the data you need. Asking field staff or key informants what questions the affected community are asking is another way of determining information needs.*

- **Capacity of you or partners to act on the data**

Before including a question, think about what you will be able to do with the data – is it likely that your organisation or a partner agency will be able to help fix the problem identified? Will the data be useful to you in planning your activities, or in advocating to others to include in their planning?

### Humanitarian Responder Questionnaire

The 'Humanitarian Worker Questionnaire' is designed to be asked to key informants working in the field, who have direct contact with people affected by the disaster. It is designed to collect useful information quickly, without conducting a full survey with people from disaster-affected communities.

This questionnaire might be used prior to deploying field staff to carry out an assessment, due to lack of presence in the area, lack of funds, or security concerns. Depending on context, communications infrastructure and what contacts are available in affected areas, these questions may be asked by telephone/email, and could therefore be undertaken from afar. This questionnaire should be amended depending on time available, context and to whom the questions are being asked.

### Media Station Profile Questionnaire

The 'media station profile' questionnaire is designed to be asked to key informants, who will usually be staff from radio or television stations. It is designed to collect information about damage suffered to local media as a result of the disaster. This questionnaire should be amended depending on time available, context and to whom the questions are being asked (i.e. which type of media station is being interviewed).