

9. WASH Assessments

WASH assessments are an essential activity in every refugee setting to identify the locations of the most affected sections of the population, their coping mechanisms, and the most urgent WASH interventions that are required. Timely WASH assessments provide the basis for planning, implementation, and prioritisation of all refugee WASH activities and in many settings are an important factor in saving lives.

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Introduction

The importance of WASH assessments in refugee settings

1. Coordinated WASH assessments are an essential activity in every refugee setting to identify the locations of the most affected sections of the population, their coping mechanisms, and the most urgent WASH interventions that are required. Coordinated WASH assessments can help:

- ◆ Establish a shared vision of WASH needs and priorities;
- ◆ Use limited WASH resources more efficiently;
- ◆ Advocate for increased donor funding;
- ◆ Serve as a foundation for WASH planning and strategy development
- ◆ Reduce duplication of effort;
- ◆ Minimize beneficiary "assessment fatigue";
- ◆ Identify gaps with greater precision;
- ◆ Encourage coordination during the response.
- ◆ Understand current levels of WASH coverage in particular what (if any) WASH access, infrastructure, and services exist, what condition they are in, and what needs to be done to meet the UNHCR guidelines.

UNHCR has the responsibility for ensuring that there are effective and coherent sectoral WASH needs assessments in all refugee emergencies. In all cases, UNHCR and WASH actors must ensure that all WASH assessments are undertaken in a coordinated

manner, adhering to the principles and methodologies generally defined in the publications '*The UNHCR tool for participatory assessment in operations (UNHCR, 2006)*', and '*Operational Guidance for Coordinated Assessments in Humanitarian Crises (IASC, 2012)*'.

Assessments are “the set of activities necessary to understand a given situation”. They include “the collection, up-dating and analysis of data pertaining to the population of concern (needs, capacities, resources, etc.) as well as the state of infrastructure and general socioeconomic conditions in a given location/area.”

**Master Glossary of Terms
(UNHCR, 2006)**

Types of assessment

2. Assessments generally provide the initial basis for planning, implementation, and prioritisation of all refugee WASH activities. They are generally required at the start of any refugee emergency, however the same principles, approaches, and indicators can be used at any time during the course of the refugee emergency to monitor progress and get a sense of the current impact of the WASH programme, and any remaining gaps in WASH service provision (**see Chapter 10**). Assessments types depend upon the context but can generally be classified as:

- i). **Harmonized assessments** that are planned and carried out in partnership with humanitarian actors and where WASH agencies collect, process and analyse data separately, but the



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collected data is sufficiently comparable (because of the use of common operational data sets, common WASH indicators, and geographical and temporal synchronisation) to be compiled into a single database and used in a shared analysis.

- ii). **Joint assessments** where data collection, processing and analysis form one single process among humanitarian actors leading to the production of a single common report.

Uncoordinated assessments occur where WASH actors use different indicators and methodologies, and the resulting data sets are not interoperable, and results cannot be used to inform the overall analysis.

General principles for WASH assessments

- 3. Where possible, all WASH agencies should use common operational datasets for assessments. These are typically available within 48 hours of any refugee emergency and include agreed population statistics, administrative boundaries, and names for settlements (ideally with unique numerical codes). They are essential in both harmonized and joint assessments to ensure that the data collected can be compared, contrasted, and compiled into a single database for shared analysis.
- 4. Where possible, all WASH agencies should also use common WASH data collection tools and methodologies. In ideal settings, these tools and methodologies would have been developed and

finalised as part of ongoing WASH preparedness activities.

Box: IASC Principles for coordinated assessments

1. Ensure assessments identify immediate humanitarian priorities.
2. Whenever possible ensure assessments are led by national governments.
3. Ensure that planning for coordinated assessments is an integral part of inter-agency emergency preparedness.
4. Ensure each assessment builds on existing data.
5. Ensure links between assessment and monitoring are ensured.
6. Ensure assessments collect exactly the data that are required for decision-making.
7. Ensure that assessments are designed/conducted using participatory approaches in a transparent manner.
8. Ensure assessments adequately address priority cross-cutting issues such as gender, age, HIV/AIDS and the environment.
9. Ensure information management considerations are integrated throughout the process.
10. Ensure contextual analysis is undertaken when interpreting assessment findings.

Source: Operational guidance for coordinated assessments in humanitarian crises (IASC, 2012)

- 5. All WASH assessments should be undertaken in a participatory and transparent manner taking into account local preferences and cultural norms. More guidance on participatory assessment approaches can be found in the UNHCR publication 'The UNHCR tool for participatory assessment in operations' (UNHCR, 2006).



6. Whenever possible WASH assessments should be carried out in full collaboration with national refugee and WASH authorities. The results of all WASH assessments should be fully available to national authorities and they should be fully engaged in the process of identifying and prioritising WASH solutions.

7. WASH assessments often end up collecting far more information than is required which can result in overburdening of the affected refugee population. A list of essential questions for WASH assessments can be found in the box on page 345 to help guide agencies. In addition, UNHCR and WASH actors should ensure that every effort has been made to ensure that assessments are well coordinated and affected refugee populations are not visited on multiple occasions by different WASH agencies asking for information.

8. WASH assessments can either be:

i). Initial assessments or rapid WASH assessments which are typically carried out within the first 72 hours following a refugee emergency. Initial assessments may be carried out either as part of a multi-sectoral assessment with other life-saving sectors (typically shelter, protection, nutrition and health) or as a separate WASH rapid assessment.

ii). Comprehensive sectoral assessments which are typically carried out within the first month with a similar methodology to the rapid WASH assessment but in greater depth and over a

longer period of time (typically several days).

The importance of seeking expert professional advice

9. The planning and implementation of WASH assessments in refugee settings requires a skilled and experienced Coordinator. Every refugee context is different and an assessment approach that has worked well in one setting may not work well in another. The coordination of WASH assessments in emergency settings requires the ability to work with different WASH actors under extreme pressure and prepare and organize assessment activities, logistics, and staff with minimal time and resources – often adapting the approach and methodology in real time. WASH assessments can be complicated by additional constraints that include:

- i). A lack of qualified WASH staff with experience undertaking WASH assessments.
- ii). Difficult or insecure access.
- iii). A lack of logistical resources (vehicles) to undertake the WASH assessment.
- iv). Shortage of time to adequately prepare .
- v). Shortage of time to adequately train WASH assessment staff.
- vi). A lack of willingness from the refugee population to take responsibility for WASH infrastructure.

10. In all settings, it is essential to seek expert advice from professionals who are familiar with preparing and undertaking WASH assessments in difficult conditions. Assistance can be sought locally

from sources such as the UN system, NGOs, or specialized governmental authorities that are used to responding to disasters and emergencies. If these cannot meet the need, UNHCR Headquarters assistance should be requested.



Figure 9-1 Group Discussion

Priority actions

Immediate assessment of WASH needs

11. UNHCR and WASH actors must ensure that a rapid WASH assessment is carried out at the start of any refugee emergency. Regardless of the scale of the emergency or the resources available, UNHCR and WASH actors should aim to complete this exercise in a maximum of one day. In order to obtain the most complete picture possible of the WASH needs, the rapid assessment should aim to collect an equal amount of both qualitative (descriptive) and quantitative (numerical) data (see the [box of essential WASH assessment questions for refugee settings](#) on the following page). In most settings, it is recommended UNHCR and WASH actors undertake rapid WASH assessments by carrying out all of the following activities:

- ◆ Rapid key informant interviews (see [section 9.25](#))
- ◆ Rapid focus group discussions (see [section 9.26](#))
- ◆ Rapid observation walk (see [section 9.27](#))
- ◆ Rapid assessment of existing WASH infrastructure and services (see [section 9.0](#))
- ◆ Rapid household surveys (see [section 9.32](#))
- ◆ Rapid assessment of existing WASH management arrangements (see [section 9.35](#))

More information concerning how to carry out these assessment activities can be found in the following pages.

Immediate establishment of a WASH action plan

12. The data collected during the rapid WASH assessment should be processed the same day (typically during the afternoon or evening) and the assessment team should meet and prioritise the findings into those needs that are lifesaving and must be met immediately and those that need a medium term approach. The rapid WASH assessment team does not have to visit the affected communities empty handed and if there is space available in the assessment vehicles it may be possible to bring additional life-saving materials (such as plastic sheeting, soap, jerry cans etc.).

WASH assessment preparation and implementation

13. In most refugee settings it is essential to quickly obtain the most complete picture possible of the needs. This is typically achieved through a needs assessment – which is an information gathering exercise that provides a basis for planning and implementing the refugee programming. It helps in particular to...

- ◆ Identify the locations of the most affected sections of the refugee population
- ◆ Identify any coping mechanisms
- ◆ Identify the most vulnerable groups within the population
- ◆ Identify the most urgent WASH interventions that are required.

14. An assessment also gives an opportunity to the refugee population to present what they feel are their greatest WASH needs and what they think are solutions. Assessments are generally based around five key steps..

- ◆ Identify resources and compile assessment plan
- ◆ Collect data
- ◆ Analyse and interpret
- ◆ Report conclusions
- ◆ Design / modify interventions

15. The first step of preparing the assessment plan generally involves defining the assessment objectives in particular..

- ◆ What is to be assessed?
- ◆ What geographical area will be visited?
- ◆ What secondary WASH data exists?

- ◆ What WASH questions need answers?
- ◆ How will the WASH data be used?
- ◆ What resources exist?
- ◆ What resources will be required (vehicles, staff, data collection forms)
- ◆ How will secondary data be collected and analysed (e.g. maps, village population data, previous surveys)
- ◆ What will be the primary data collection methodologies
- ◆ Preparation of an assessment budget

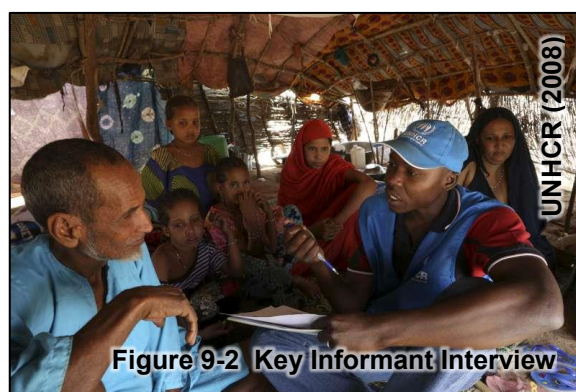


Figure 9-2 Key Informant Interview

Assessment team composition

16. The assessment team size and composition depends upon the assessment objectives and the following..

- ◆ Level of WASH expertise required?
- ◆ Level of local experience required?
- ◆ Level of language proficiency?
- ◆ Adequate mix of gender?
- ◆ Adequate mix of WASH actors and stakeholders?
- ◆ Representation from minority groups (where there are language issues or marginalisation).
- ◆ Need for temporary staff for household data collection?

Box: Essential WASH assessment questions for refugee settings

General questions

- How many displaced women, men, children and families are present?
- Is the number of refugees increasing, staying the same, or decreasing?

Water availability

- From where are water supplies currently being collected
(Note also the origin i.e. groundwater, surface water, rainwater)?
- How far are these water sources? Who owns these water sources?
- What is the average number of refugees per water collection point?
- How much water is being collected per household per day?
- How much water storage capacity does each household have?
- Are the water supplies protected from contamination?
- Is there sufficient yield / quantity? Are supplies reliable / available all day / year?
- What is the quality of these water sources? Are they chlorinated?
- What resources do families have for treating water?
- What alternative water sources exist nearby?

Excreta management

- What is the current defecation practice? Is there a designated area?
- Is the current defecation practice a threat to water supplies or living areas?
- Are there existing toilet facilities? If so, are they used, are they sufficient and are they operating successfully? Are they segregated by sex? Can they be improved?
- Would the population be willing to share or are communal toilets preferred?
- What local materials are available for constructing toilets?
- Is there sufficient space toilets? What is the slope of the terrain?
- What is the level of the groundwater table?
- Are soil conditions suitable for on-site excreta disposal?
- What do people use for anal cleaning? Are there sufficient materials available?
- Is there water available for anal cleansing, flushing or hand-washing?
- How did people manage excreta before the emergency?
- Do men / women / children feel safe using facilities? Do the toilet doors lock adequately?

Solid waste management

- How is solid waste currently managed? What sorts of wastes are being created?
- Are there designated collection points? How frequently is waste collected?
- Where is waste taken and how is it disposed?
- Are there any festering wastes or uncontrolled dumping of wastes?
- Are waste practices a threat to water supplies or living areas?
- How are hazardous wastes managed? Where are these wastes situated?
- Are any organisations responsible for waste collection and disposal?
- What resources (excavators / trucks / staff) do they have?
- Are there existing landfill sites? Who owns the site? Is the site operating successfully?
- Is there sufficient space for a landfill? What is the slope of the terrain? What is the level of the groundwater table? Are geological conditions suitable for landfill?

Hygiene

- Is soap available for hand washing and laundering?
- How and where are children's faeces disposed?
- What is the condition of water storage containers? Is water stored safely?
- Is food stored and prepared safely?
- Are there facilities for bathing, clothes laundering and airing? Are they segregated?
- Do current facilities offer sufficient levels of privacy and security?
- Do women have a place to soak/wash/dry/dispose of MHM materials with dignity?
- Would people be willing to share bathing facilities?

Vector control

- Are there problems with flies, lice, fleas, ticks, rodents, bats, birds, or mosquitoes?
- Is household waste covered daily with at least 20cm soil cover?
- Are there problems of stagnant water or blocked ditches?

Note: The list of questions is not exhaustive and is merely intended as an *aide memoire*. Additional questions should be formulated based on the replies received and the context.

17. During rapid assessments it is generally easier to organize assessment activities using several small independent multi-sectoral teams each with their own allocated vehicle. A typical team composition is as follows:

Team Leader	- Key Informant Interviews
Local Community Representative	- Guide - Key Informant Interviews
WASH Engineer	- Engineering Assessment / Sanitary Surveys
Hygiene Specialist	- Focus Group Discussions
Data Collector	- Rapid Household Survey

18. If possible, the WASH assessment team should include at least one representative of the relevant local authority (regional/provincial/district, as appropriate) for WASH issues and the national entity responsible for refugees should be fully informed of the planned assessment and its purpose.

19. At all stages the reliability of the information being collected should be assessed according to the following categories:

- ◆ **Somewhat Reliable:**
Reasonable but questionable source, method or time relevance of data
- ◆ **Reliable:** From a reliable source, using scientific method and data reflecting current or projected conditions.
- ◆ **Very Reliable:** Effectively unquestioned source, method and time relevance of data.

Box: Principles for rapid assessments

- i). Involve all groups, particularly persons with specific needs, in the assessment to identify potential areas or issues needing immediate attention.
- ii). Explain the objectives and purpose of the assessment to the respondents to ensure their participation. Explain and ensure that all information will remain confidential.
- iii). Try to obtain responses from different sources whenever possible. Do not ask questions if you already know the answer from another source.
- iv). Obtain consent from all adult participants in any activity, and inform them that they can refuse to take part in the assessment without negative consequences. Obtain consent from parent or guardian for the children participants.
- v). Respect the dignity and self-worth of individuals at all times.
- vi). Report incidents immediately to the protection focal point (see Protection incident reporting).

Source: Joint Assessment Missions: A Practical Guide (UNHCR, 2013)

20. To ensure a smooth and productive assessment it may be helpful to create a work plan that includes:

- ◆ WASH assessment aims
- ◆ Site selection methodology
- ◆ Assessment team structure
- ◆ Description of the data collection methods
- ◆ Copies of data collection templates and tools
- ◆ Data analysis plan



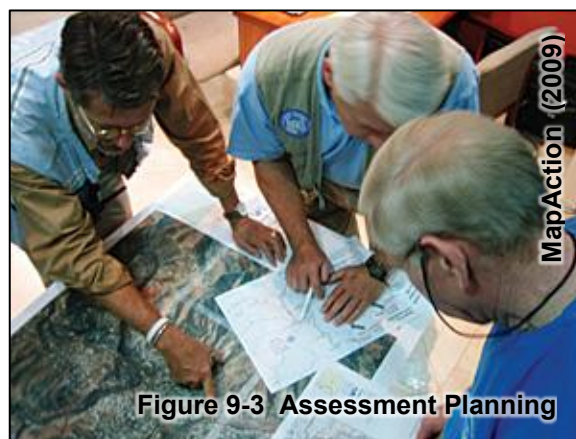
- ◆ Reporting formats
- ◆ Itinerary/schedule
- ◆ Tentative assessment budget
- ◆ Debriefing report structure

Identification of assessment locations

21. Typically rapid assessments will be required at locations where refugees are crossing a border and locations where refugees are congregating. This is generally easier if there are fixed border crossing locations. In the case of a porous border with many crossing points, a sample of the congregation points may need to be assessed to gain an appreciation of the general conditions. If the affected area is large and not all areas can be visited, it should be broken down further into sub-units and a selection of sub-units/sites identified for the field visit. In order to obtain a valid picture of the situation, sites should be selected either randomly or purposively. The number of sites that can be visited will depend upon the context and the resources that are available for the assessment (in particularly staff and vehicles).

22. If there is a long distance from the refugee's place of origin to the border crossing it may be possible to also carry out assessments of any way stations provided there is coordination with governmental authorities and WASH actors in the country of origin. The aim of any assessments at refugee points of entry should be to understand the minimum life-saving WASH interventions that are required to stabilise the situation before the population are moved to a more secure and permanent location. It is also helpful at this stage to make an

initial estimate of any big ticket items that may be required in the long term as it is often significantly easier to allocate funds for these items during the emergency phase.



Field visit security

23. WASH assessments are often conducted in insecure areas and assessment coordinators are generally responsible for ensuring the safety of the field teams. UNHCR and WASH agencies must ensure the availability of telecommunications facilities for the assessment team/s to be able to report back regularly to the field offices. Any required security clearances need to be obtained from relevant authorities before the field visit. In general, all itineraries must be approved by the designated security officer, and all vehicles should comply with minimum operational security standards. In addition, assessment team members should have sufficient level of security training for the context and should have received an adequate security briefing.

Team training and preparation

24. In order to prepare for the WASH assessment, it may be necessary to organise a rapid training and preparation session(s) to ensure

that all field team members understand the WASH assessment objectives, their roles and responsibilities, data collection tools, analysis plan, and debriefing requirements. Before the team training, all questionnaires and interview guidelines should be tested, time recorded, translated and back-translated. Any modifications necessary on the tools as a result of testing and backtranslating should be made prior to the field visit. Other preparatory tasks before undertaking the WASH assessment include:

- ◆ Notification of refugees and/or communities about the upcoming assessment.
- ◆ Finalising security clearance (if necessary)
- ◆ Assembling equipment and materials
- ◆ Ensuring logistical arrangements are made e.g. transport, accommodation, food and drinks.

Key informant interviews

25. During the assessment, it is essential to understand what key informants from the refugee population feel are the critical problems and solutions regarding water supplies, excreta management, solid waste, hygiene and disease vector control. Key informants can include community leaders, religious leaders, teachers, or any other knowledgeable individuals. During the needs assessment, the assessor should try to collect information from as many different gender-balanced sources as possible, and should try to triangulate the information to

ensure it is correct. The **UNHCR WASH key informant interview primer in annex** can be helpful to guide the conversation.



Figure 9-4 Data Collection

Focus group discussions

26. Discussion of potentially sensitive or embarrassing problems and solutions related to privacy, security, comfort, cultural norms and management of women’s menstrual hygiene materials, is usually better achieved on a one-to-one basis or within gender and age specific focus groups. The **UNHCR WASH focus group primer in annex** can be helpful to guide the conversation. When undertaking focus group discussions, UNHCR staff and WASH actors should try to observe the following considerations:

- ◆ Try to foster a natural discussion concerning excreta related issues. Use the focus

group primer questions only as a memory aid.

- ◆ Try to choose participants of the same age and social standing to reduce the possibility of the discussion being dominated by one or two individuals.
- ◆ Try to limit the numbers to a maximum of eight participants.
- ◆ Use a note taker so the facilitator can remain engaged.
- ◆ Ensure the facilitator, note taker and group are of the same sex.
- ◆ Choose a location with privacy.
- ◆ Encourage all voices.
- ◆ Respect all answers.
- ◆ Listen as much as possible and speak as little as possible.
- ◆ If time permits, conduct focus groups with as many different sections of the refugee population as possible including:
 - i). Older women
 - ii). Younger women
 - iii). Teenage girls
 - iv). Older men
 - v). Younger men
 - vi). Children
- ◆ Try to avoid using technical terms or complicated technical drawings. Consider using scale models of toilet options to explain concepts.
- ◆ If appropriate, consider conducting a random walk or participatory mapping exercise to help choose locations for toilets.
- ◆ Respect the time of participants and limit the session duration to a maximum of 45 minutes.

Observation walks

27. An observation walk of the refugee site does not have to take long, and can easily be incorporated into the general needs assessment schedule. For safety and security reasons it should generally be undertaken using a member of the refugee population as a guide. This also allows the possibility to pose questions and collect first-hand information about problems and solutions related to excreta management. During the observation walk, try to visit as much as possible of the existing toilet infrastructure in addition to places where open defecation is taking place. Try also to obtain an even balance of places the guide wants to show you and places they may not want you to see. Make sure you have a digital camera and field notebook to record any public health risks related to water supply, water storage, excreta, hygiene, disease vector, solid waste, hazardous waste, or drainage.



Figure 9-5 Observation Walk

Assessment of existing WASH infrastructure conditions

Assessment of the condition and serviceability of existing WASH infrastructure is an essential part of any needs assessment especially in contexts where there is insufficient

or aging infrastructure (for example in urban contexts).

28. When assessing existing WASH infrastructure, it is essential to assess each step of the water supply, excreta disposal, or solid waste, chain from point of origin to point of use/reuse/disposal. At each step, the key characteristics and condition of the infrastructure and resources should be noted, along with risks to public health, and corrective actions to bring the system back into serviceability. Some large scale WASH infrastructure can be complex to assess and may require specialized expertise.

29. During the infrastructure assessment, it is essential to logically record details of what is observed. The following equipment can be useful as part of the infrastructure assessment:

- ◆ Field notebook and pens / pencils
- ◆ Digital camera
- ◆ GPS unit
- ◆ Tape measure 5m / 16 feet
- ◆ Long measuring tape 30m / 100ft
- ◆ Stopwatch
- ◆ Calculator
- ◆ Chlorine residual and pH tester with consumables
- ◆ Conductivity meter
- ◆ Sterilized sample bottles for faecal coliform testing.
- ◆ Powerful flashlight
- ◆ Overalls
- ◆ Hard hat
- ◆ Waterproof boots
- ◆ Rubber gloves
- ◆ Well dip meter 50m / 160ft
- ◆ Crow bar 1m / 3ft
- ◆ Spade

- ◆ Bucket 20 litres / 5 gallons
- ◆ Turbidity tube
- ◆ Photocopies of sanitary survey forms

30. Sanitary surveying templates can be useful in guiding assessment of the condition of WASH infrastructure. More guidance on the use of sanitary surveys in assessing the condition of WASH infrastructure can be found in [sections 3.86 – 3.90](#).

Assessment of the availability of water supplies

31. Specialist water prospection expertise is generally essential to identify and evaluate potential water sources for refugee settings. If existing groundwater sources are available the possibility of extending or upgrading these existing sources to supply the refugee population should be given priority. A detailed explanation of the steps in water prospection and evaluation for semi-permanent refugee settings can be found in [sections 3.46 – 3.61](#). These assessments are typically carried out in collaboration with UNHCR's site planning section.

Rapid household surveys

32. During the rapid needs assessment it is essential to get a clear picture of the WASH needs not only on a macro-level but also on a household level. Data collected from individual households is invaluable as it allows a snapshot of the current WASH conditions experienced by a representative sample of refugee households to be presented.

33. In order to be able to cover as many households as possible during the emergency site visit the number of questions in the UNHCR rapid household survey tool has been kept to the absolute minimum essential WASH indicators. The aim is that the rapid household survey tool should take no more than 5 minutes to complete at every household. Questions in the rapid household survey tool include...

- ◆ How much drinking water was collected during the previous day?
- ◆ Where (which sources) was this water collected from?
- ◆ How many people shared the water that was collected? (i.e. allows the calculation of per capita water consumption)
- ◆ How much water storage capacity does the household have?
- ◆ What is the condition of water storage containers? (direct observation - clean? covered?).
- ◆ Does the household have access to soap? (directly observe the presence of soap within 1 minute)
- ◆ Self-reported occurrence of watery diarrhoea within the household in the last week?

34. Household surveys are invaluable for monitoring the effectiveness of WASH interventions and understanding the needs. However, poorly planned surveys can expend huge amounts of time and resources and often collect information with little practical value. UNHCR and WASH actors must ensure that all WASH related household surveys are

carried out with a properly designed survey instrument, a sampling plan, and a sample size calculation for the desired level of confidence and precision. No more data should be collected than necessary. The rapid household survey tool and guidance for sampling and sampling size calculations can be found on the wash.unhcr.org website.

Assessment of existing WASH management arrangements

35. Assessment of the existing management arrangements (e.g. who owns, takes care of, and pays for existing WASH infrastructure) is an essential part of any needs assessment especially in contexts where there is aging or inadequate infrastructure. When assessing WASH infrastructure management arrangements, it is essential to describe WHO does WHAT, WHERE, WHEN and HOW for each separate part of the water, excreta management, waste, hygiene, or disease vector control activities. At each step, the key characteristics and condition of the management activities being undertaken (including any transportation, labour, fuel, spare parts and consumable needs) should be noted. Some large scale WASH infrastructure can be complex to assess and may require specialized expertise. Assessment of existing WASH management arrangements has been incorporated into the [UNHCR key informant interview primer question](#) which can be found in the chapter Annex.

Comprehensive assessments

36. The initial rapid WASH assessment is a preliminary



estimate and must be succeeded by a more comprehensive WASH baseline assessment as soon as the situation allows, and no later than 1 months after an emergency starts. In order to obtain a more complete picture of the WASH needs, the comprehensive must include the following activities.

- ◆ Rapid key informant interviews (see [section 9.25](#))
- ◆ Rapid focus group discussions (see [section 9.26](#))
- ◆ Rapid observation walk (see [section 9.27](#))
- ◆ Assessment of existing WASH infrastructure and services (see [section 9.0](#))
- ◆ Rapid household surveys (see [section 9.32](#))
- ◆ Assessment of existing WASH management arrangements (see [section 9.35](#))
- ◆ Assessment of existing WASH legislation (see [section 9.37](#))
- ◆ Institutional capacity assessments (see [section 9.38](#))

Assessment of existing WASH legislation

37. After the emergency phase, UNHCR and WASH actors should take a moment to ensure that national legislation concerning water supply, excreta management, hygiene, solid waste, disease vector control, and drainage are being fully respected. The best way to rapidly assess and understand existing legislation and practice is to involve local experts and authorities in the assessment process as early as possible. During the emergency and stabilisation phases it may be possible to get exemptions to existing legislation for short term

interventions. Assessment of existing WASH legislation has been incorporated into the [UNHCR key informant interview primer questions](#) which can be found in the chapter Annex.

Institutional capacity assessments

38. During the stabilisation phase, or earlier if possible, it is important to take a moment to assess the capacity and needs of waste service providers and local waste authorities along with what additional priority support they may need to carry out their roles. An institutional capacity assessment is a useful exercise to achieve this. In order to get the best results from the capacity assessment process, it is important that this activity is undertaken with a spirit of collaboration and open reflection with the institution. It is essential to ask the service providers are supported to identify and justify what they feel are their most urgent support needs themselves. In order to achieve this, a review of the following with the service providers is helpful..

- ◆ WASH equipment ages, types, capacities and conditions.
- ◆ WASH infrastructure ages, types, capacities and conditions.
- ◆ Human resources structure (organigram) including technical and managerial capacity and experience
- ◆ Fleet maintenance and logistics capacity
- ◆ Operational budgets

39. Examples of institutional support that may be considered include..



- ◆ Technical advisory support (e.g. for management of sanitary landfills, hazardous wastes, recycling and reuse operations, maintenance and logistics operations).
- ◆ Secondment or direct support for additional staffing.
- ◆ Technical training of staff
- ◆ Managerial training of staff
- ◆ Logistics or fleet management support.
- ◆ Provision of additional operational resources (e.g. waste collection vehicles, tools, or infrastructure such as sanitary landfills, or recycling facilities)
- ◆ Provision of managerial resources (e.g. computers, expanded office facilities, or office equipment)
- ◆ Provision of funds to support budget shortfalls or expansion of waste services.
- ◆ A discussion on information collected that day by site and thematic area (e.g. water supply, excreta, hygiene, solid waste etc.);
- ◆ Triangulation of information sources where possible;
- ◆ Discussion of problems encountered or useful practices identified;
- ◆ Key findings, issues and recommendations from the day;
- ◆ Identification of outstanding information gaps to be filled;
- ◆ A review of the methodology and team organisation and adaptation required where necessary;
- ◆ Preparation of any outstanding tasks for the following day.

40. A WASH **organisational assessment tool** has been developed to help UNHCR and WASH actors understand what they can do to help support and build the capacity of WASH organisations that are potential candidates for running WASH operations.

Assessment debriefings

41. Debriefings are a critical step during the WASH assessment process and they should not be skipped. The debriefing should ideally be carried out by the team leader to consolidate thoughts, impressions, and initial findings directly following the assessment. The debriefing should last no more than one hour and should include:

WASH Assessment Analysis

Using an analysis framework

42. One approach to structuring the information collected is to as a group, work through the following questions, consolidating information and organising it around these questions in a framework.
- ◆ What is the problem?
 - ◆ What are the causes?
 - ◆ Who is affected?
 - ◆ Are there differences in regards to age, gender or diversity?
 - ◆ Where? Are there difference related to the location of refugees?
 - ◆ What is the likely evolution in short, medium and long term?
 - ◆ What are potential solutions in short and long term?



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Analysis of assessment findings and development of a WASH action plan

43. Analysis is the process whereby information from all the different assessment sources is synthesised. The WASH assessment coordinator should facilitate the overall analysis and are responsible for bringing the analysis together with the team leaders and technical experts. All team members that have taken part in field visits should participate in the analysis process.

44. The analysis process aims to organise, review, synthesise and interpret the information collected throughout the WASH assessment process. An analysis plan should be used to outline how information collected will be utilised. The final output of the analysis process will be key findings and recommendations and a WASH action plan that clearly describes the short and medium term WASH response strategies in terms of WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN and HOW.

45. An analysis of the secondary data should be conducted immediately after the secondary data collection and before the field visit, as the findings inform the primary data collection needs. Preliminary analysis of primary data should start the same day that it is collected. The overall analysis of both primary and secondary data should be conducted at the end of the field visits, when all data has been collected. The analysis process typically involves:

- ◆ Reviewing the key WASH questions to be answered by the assessment.

- ◆ Reviewing information collected from the secondary data analysis.
- ◆ Reviewing information collected from the field visit.
- ◆ Sorting the information so that only reliable and relevant information is used to help answer the key WASH assessment questions.
- ◆ Organise the information so that each piece of information relates to a key question to be answered by the assessment.
- ◆ Summarise the key findings and information emerging from the discussion into short sentences and bullet points around key themes.
- ◆ Turn findings into conclusions and a WASH action plan.

WASH Assessment Reporting

Format of a comprehensive WASH assessment report

46. A comprehensive WASH assessment report should be a maximum of 20 pages (excluding executive summary and annexes) and follow the outline below.

- Executive Summary:** 2-3 pages, including key background information, needs identified and recommendations.
- Introduction:** Background to comprehensive WASH assessment, objectives, why the assessment was conducted, overview of current situation, what the assessment aimed to achieve.
- Methodology:** How the assessment was conducted, when, which methods and tools were used.



- iv). **Limitations and challenges:**
Description of any problems faced in achieving the overall objectives of the WASH assessment.
- v). **Findings:**
- Overall picture of the refugee situation: origin, number, sites, surrounding community relations.
 - Context: brief overview of the humanitarian context.
 - Key findings (organised geographically per site and by WASH thematic area). In particular the key findings should describe:
 - Will the site require a centralized or decentralized water supply solution?
 - Will the water supply solution be integrated into local infrastructure or will it be stand-alone?
 - Are the soil and groundwater conditions suitable for on-site sanitation?
 - What will be the big WASH ticket items?
- vi). **Needs and gaps:** how current assistance is addressing the WASH needs in addition to any WASH gaps. This section should also include any likely future scenarios and evolution of needs.
- vii). **Conclusions and recommendations:** This section should summarise the main conclusions of the WASH assessment and likely evolution of the situation in the short and medium term.
- viii). **Recommended activities:**
Description of the WASH short and medium term action plans in terms of WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN and HOW.
- ix). **Annexes:**
- ToR.
 - Detailed statistics.
 - Maps.
 - Participants (including names of organisations and individuals).
 - List of secondary data sources analysed.
 - List of sites visited, people met, FGD held, key informants interviewed.
 - Copies of data collection tools used (key informant primer sheets, rapid household survey questionnaires, sanitary survey tools, etc.)