

IASC
(Inter-Agency Standing Committee)
INTER-AGENCY
CONTINGENCY
PLAN

Lao People's Democratic Republic
South East Asia

Initial Draft V.0

June 2012

Contact:
United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office
Lang Xang Avenue, Vientiane, Lao PDR
+856 21 267777
Head of Office, Maya Lindberg Brink
maya.lindberg.brink@one.un.org
+00856 2055514578

Table of Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
2. HAZARD AND RISK ANALYSIS	5
2.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS OF NATURAL DISASTERS AND EPIDEMICS IN LAO PDR	5
2.2 MAIN CHALLENGES TO EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN LAO PDR	6
3. LAO PDR SYSTEM FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE	8
3.1 THE GOVERNMENT OF LAO PDR	8
3.1.1 NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	9
3.1.2 NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT OFFICE	9
3.1.3 PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES	9
3.1.4 VILLAGE DISASTER PROTECTION UNITS	10
3.1.5 MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT	10
3.2 THE LAO RED CROSS	10
3.3 THE UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR AND OFFICE	10
3.4 THE LAO PDR INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE	11
3.5 THE INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE CLUSTERS	11
3.6 THE EMERGENCY TASK FORCE	12
3.7 THE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NETWORK	13
3.8 INTERNATIONAL NON GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS	13
3.9 OTHER DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS	13
4. SCENARIO AND PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS	15
4.1 SCENARIO	15
4.2 PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS	15
5. RESPONSE OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES	17
6. OVERALL MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION	18
6.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	18
6.1.1 GOVERNMENT OF LAO PDR	18
6.1.2 UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR AND OFFICE	18
6.1.3 EMERGENCY TASK FORCE	20
6.1.4 THE LAO PDR INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE	20
6.1.5 THE CLUSTER ARRANGEMENT	20
6.1.6 INTERNATIONAL NON GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS	21
6.1.7 OFFICE FOR COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	21
6.2. SUMMARY OF CLUSTER RESPONSE PLANS	23
6.3 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE	26
6.4 COMMON SERVICE AREAS	31
6.4.1 SAFETY AND SECURITY	31
6.4.2 PUBLIC INFORMATION/COMMUNICATION STRATEGY	31
7. DATA AND INFORMATION FLOW	33
7.1 COORDINATION	33
7.2 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT TOOLS	33

7.3 REPORTING	34
7.4 NEEDS ASSESSMENTS	34
7.4.1 INITIAL INFORMATION/PRELIMINARY SCENARIO DEFINITION	34
7.4.2 COMMON RAPID ASSESSMENT	35
7.4.3 CLUSTER/SECTOR COORDINATED IN-DEPTH SECTORAL ASSESSMENT	36
7.4.4 POST DISASTER NEEDS ASSESSMENT	36
<u>8. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION</u>	<u>37</u>
8.1 CENTRAL EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND	37
8.2 FLASH APPEAL	37
8.3 OCHA EMERGENCY GRANT	38
8.4 LOCAL AND REGIONAL DONORS	38
<u>ANNEX LIST</u>	<u>39</u>

1. Executive Summary

Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is prone to a number of hazards; in particular storms and flooding that occur frequently and leave in their wake a significant social and economical impact. In the past four wet seasons Lao PDR has experienced serious storms and flooding. Based on this high risk and the recommendation from the After Action Review of the Mekong flooding in 2008 and tropical storm Ketsana in 2009 to improve coordination among the Lao Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) members, and between the IASC and the Government, the IASC decided to enhance common preparedness for potential future disasters and develop an Inter-Agency Contingency Plan (IACP).

Under the leadership of the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO), the IACP technical working group (IACP-TWG) was established in October 2011. The IACP-TWG, comprised of United Nations (UN), International Non Government Organizations (INGO) and NDMO emergency technical staff, conducted internal meetings and extensive consultations with humanitarian actors in and outside Lao PDR over a six-month period to develop the first draft IACP, with support from the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (OCHA ROAP).

The contingency plan will support the Government to lead and ensure an effective, timely and coordinated response to mitigate the risk and reduce the impact of natural disasters on Lao communities, through a clear response coordination mechanism and strategy, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities of all IASC members.

The IACP acknowledges the role of the role of the Government as the overall lead in all aspects of disaster response and the role of the IASC in supporting the Government emergency response structures and capacities. The Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) outlined in the IACP are aimed at guiding a rapid onset disaster response, based on the roles and responsibilities of key actors.

The IACP is based on a scenario of a storm and flooding affecting 250,000 people across 5 provinces, with 75,000 of the affected population requiring immediate humanitarian assistance. The IACP is, however, equally applicable to a smaller scale response.

This contingency plan is a first draft. It will undergo a review and revision following the first trial during the 2012 wet season based on lessons learned. It is envisioned that this review will be conducted in late 2012 and will include in-depth follow up consultations with key actors. It is anticipated that the final IACP document will be ready for IASC and Government endorsement before the 2013 wet season.

2. Hazard and Risk Analysis

2.1 Situation Analysis of Natural Disasters and Epidemics in Lao PDR

Lao PDR is prone to a number of natural hazards. The National Risk Profile of Lao PDR identified seven major natural hazards: floods, storms, drought, landslides, disease outbreaks and epidemics, unexploded ordnance (UXO) and earthquakes.¹ In the past ten years, flooding and storms have occurred the most frequently, caused the greatest loss of life, affected the most people and resulted in the greatest economic losses of all hazards.²

Floods

Seasonal flooding occurs each year in Lao PDR during the southwest monsoon season from August to September. Recently, major floods have occurred in 2008, 2009 and 2011. The most significant and prolonged flooding tends to occur in the central and southern provinces, when rivers and tributaries become full from normal or exceptional precipitation in their respective catchment basins, and are then prone to overflowing as the waters from the flooded Mekong advance downstream. Flooding in the low land areas can last for up to four weeks; destroying crops, causing population displacement and increasing the risk of water borne, vector borne and other disease outbreaks.

Tropical Storms

Tropical Storms are a major hazard in Lao PDR, occurring each year during the monsoon season, with peaks generally in August and September. In recent years significant storms have made landfall in 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2011. Historical analysis indicates that the impact of tropical storms is significant however usually localized. The main consequences will usually be flash floods, landslides, destruction of houses, and in rare cases injury and deaths. The impacts of tropical storms are generally within national coping capacities, however, when coupled with other factors such as a heavy rainy season and a late monsoon may trigger floods in the Mekong corridor.³ For example, the tropical storm Kammuri contributed to the 2008 Mekong Flooding and tropical storm Ketsana caused major flooding in 2009.

Drought

In the past decades, the Mekong river basin has experienced several hydrological droughts, mostly affecting the lowland areas of southern Lao PDR. Historical analysis shows that the droughts of 1977 and 1988 are Lao's largest disasters documented, affecting 3,500,000 and 730,000 people respectively.⁴ The effect is felt primarily in the agricultural sector, causing losses to livelihoods and increasing food insecurity. Drought is particularly damaging in contexts such as Lao PDR, where the population is primarily rural and dependant on subsistence farming.

Disease Outbreaks and Epidemics

Outbreaks of major communicable diseases have been reported after disasters in Lao PDR, including malaria, dengue fever, influenza, typhoid, acute watery diarrhea, fever and rash. In 2010 the Ministry of Health (MoH), with the support of the World Health

¹ Asian Disaster Preparedness Center. Developing a national risk profile of Lao PDR. 2010

² OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database (EM-DAT). Accessed 16 April 2012.

³ IFRC/ADB. Legal Preparedness for Responding to Disasters and Communicable Disease Emergencies in Lao PDR (2009).

⁴ OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database (EM-DAT). Accessed 16 April 2012.

Organization (WHO), drafted a National Health Emergency Response Plan 2012-2015 to guide the national health emergency response, including response to disease outbreaks and epidemics.⁵ Large-scale humanitarian assistance has not been required to manage an outbreak in Lao PDR to date.

Earthquakes

Lao PDR has witnessed several small and moderate scale earthquakes in the northern and western areas of the country, with only one registering a magnitude greater than seven, in 1988. There is no official evidence or report of earthquakes causing any impact on human life and physical infrastructure in Lao PDR.

Table 1: Summary of hazards in Lao PDR 2000-2012⁶

Hazard	Events	Average population affected per event	Average lives lost per event	Estimated total economic cost (US\$)
Flood	5	37,331	3.6	\$325,091,116
Storm	1	128,890	16	\$633,014,000
Droughts	4	22,087	0	Data missing
Disease Outbreak and Epidemic	3	22,087	2	Data missing
Earthquake	3	70534	2	Data missing

2.2 Main Challenges to Emergency Response in Lao PDR

This contingency plan aims to address the following challenges, which have been a feature of emergency response in Lao PDR to date:

- Unclear roles and responsibilities of the IASC members and the Government
- Unclear mechanisms and processes for coordination at the inter-agency levels and with the Government
- Unclear or non-existing cluster system arrangements, and varied levels of cluster response planning
- Weak systems and tools for planning, implementing and analyzing common needs assessments
- Lack of clear response SOPs for IASC members
- Delays in response time caused by unclear or slow coordination and decision making processes
- Delays in information collection, collation and sharing caused mainly by the lack of a common approach and clear definitions and/or agreement on information management responsibilities and tasks
- Delays in humanitarian financing mobilization, including delays due to weak or unavailable data and slow decision making processes.

In addition, the contingency plan aims to facilitate progress towards improving the following systemic challenges:

- Unclear or delayed Government approval mechanisms for response
- The need for improved timeliness of the emergency response
- The need for improved Government capacity on a number of issues, including information management at the district, provincial and central levels

⁵ Ministry of Health Lao PDR. National Health Emergency Response Plan 2012-2015. Draft, 2010.

⁶ National Disaster Management Office, 2012. Note- data from 2003 is missing

- The need to establish improved mechanisms for more predictable funding within the Government for emergency response
- The need for improved dissemination of early warning information from the central to the sub national levels
- The need for improved procedures for importation/customs clearance of relief goods and specialist human resources in a disaster. Currently, there is no Government SOP for custom waivers in the context of an emergency⁷.

⁷ IASC consultation and advocacy with the Government is required to ensure that appropriate procedures are place to ensure that the humanitarian response is not delayed.

3. Lao PDR System for Emergency Response

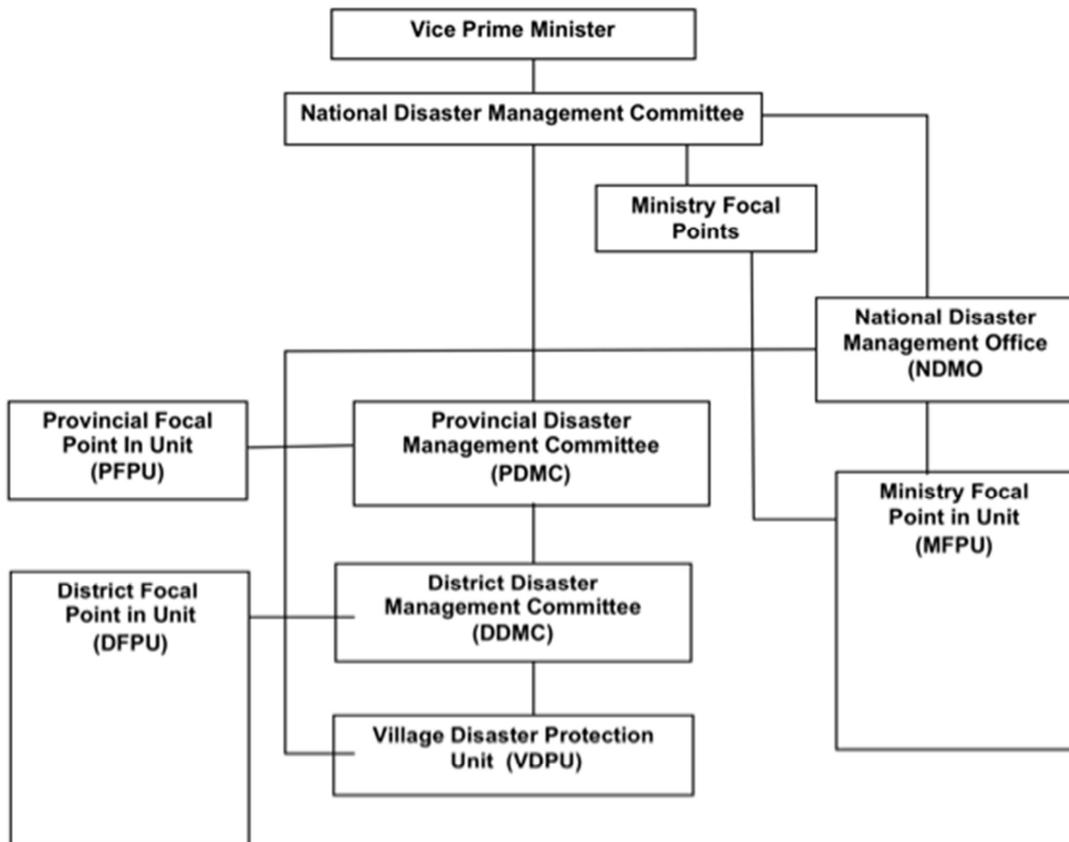
In accordance with the tenets of international law, the Government of Lao PDR has the overall responsibility for leading the emergency response. The UN agencies, INGOs and bi-lateral partners, coordinated through the IASC, support the Government response.

The UN agencies, the Lao Red Cross (LRC), and bi-lateral partners have pre-agreed arrangements with the Government that enable emergency humanitarian activities to be carried out in Lao PDR. INGOs sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for project activities and have flexible arrangements at the National and provincial levels for provision of immediate humanitarian response.

3.1 The Government of Lao PDR

The Government of Lao PDR coordinates disaster preparedness and response activities through the National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC), chaired by the Vice Prime Minister and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), the secretariat to the NDMC. Disaster management committees are established at the provincial and district levels, and Village Disaster Protection Units (VDPU) at the village level, to inform and implement preparedness, assessment, and response efforts of the Government.

Figure 1: Lao PDR National Disaster Management Organization Chart



3.1.1 National Disaster Management Committee

Disaster management in Lao PDR is overseen and coordinated by the Government of Lao PDR through the NDMC; comprised of Ministers and other senior representatives of Government bodies and chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense.⁸ The NDMC has the following responsibilities:

- Overall coordination of disaster management, including recommendations to the Prime Minister to declare a state of emergency, and the request of regional or international humanitarian assistance.
- Coordination of emergency response, including through the development of a master plan for response based on line ministry response plans
- Mobilization of resources for disaster management
- Coordination of disaster risk reduction activities and integration of DRR issues into national and sectoral work plans;
- Development of policies and regulations related to disaster management and provision of overall direction for provincial and district level disaster plans.

3.1.2 National Disaster Management Office

The NDMO serves as the Secretariat to the NDMC and is responsible for preparation of national disaster preparedness and emergency response plans, as well as strategic policy coordination of all disaster relief operations, including data collection and assessments. The NDMO has a key communication role in reporting the disaster situation, planned emergency response and recovery activities to line ministries, including through the NDMC, and in coordinating with the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH) in disseminating early warning information to the PDMCs. The NDMO is responsible for providing technical and capacity building support to provincial, district and village level initiatives.

At the discretion of the Prime Minister's Office, the NDMO serves as the lead agency for the Government of Lao PDR in regional, Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and international disaster management cooperation. Currently, NDMO is the focal point for the ASEAN Disaster Management Committee, and is the focal point for the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction on monitoring and implementation of the Hyogo Framework of Action.

The NDMO co-chairs the IASC together with the UNRC.

3.1.3 Provincial and District Disaster Management Committees

The Provincial Disaster Management Committees (PDMCs) are comprised of provincial departments and are chaired by the Vice Governor. The PDMC is the pivotal point for the implementation of disaster management resources in the province, and serves as a channel for information and disaster management resources.

The PDMC is responsible for coordinating the provincial emergency response, including the actions of organizations in the field, leading assessments and/or participating in assessments supported by INGOs, NGOs and the UN, and informing the NDMO of assistance required for the response. The PDMC will coordinate with NDMO to disseminate early warning information to the districts.

⁸ Please refer to annex 3 for the NDMC decree, 21 November 2011.

The District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) is comprised of a chairman and members of all district level department heads. The DDMC will participate in assessments coordinated by the PDMC or NGO/UN, and report to the PDMC if assistance is required. The DDMC may also request assistance directly from NGOs, INGOs and private entities that are present at the district level.

3.1.4 Village Disaster Protection Units

The VDPU are part of the NDMC structure with the responsibility to prepare for, and take rapid action in the event of an emergency and ensure that support is provided to affected households. The VDPU also mobilize resources for disaster management at the village level and establishes volunteer groups for relief operations. The VDPU will communicate the emergency situation to the DDMC.

3.1.5 Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment⁹

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) via the DMH is responsible for collection and interpretation of climatic and hydrological data, and is in charge of early warning information and dissemination to NDMO, government agencies and the general public. MoNRE, via the Department of Climate Change and Disaster Management, is also in charge of identifying the impact of climate change on the scope and character of natural disasters, and ensures climate change trends are considered in the disaster management dialogue.

3.2 The Lao Red Cross

The LRC, established in 1955, remains very close to the government as a “civil organization auxiliary to the government in humanitarian services”. The Government continues to support the LRC in terms of governance and management, as well as resources. The LRC responds to the needs of the most vulnerable people nationwide through its core programs and services, which focus on disaster preparedness, risk reduction and emergency response at the community level. The LRC communicates early warning information, provides emergency relief supplies including food and medical kits, and conducts village level assessments in coordination with the DDMCs in times of emergency.

The LRC structure in Lao PDR consists of a national office, 17 provincial branches and 47 district chapters. The president of the LRC is a member of the NDMC, and the LRC national office has direct communication with the NDMO. The provincial branch coordinates with the PDMC, and the LRC district coordinator is a member of the DDMC. Since 2004, LRC community activities have been implemented through the VDPU, and other volunteer members. The Austrian, Danish, French, and Swiss Red Cross Partner National Societies support the LRC.

3.3 The United Nations Resident Coordinator and Office

Under the overall emergency response lead of the Government, the UNRC is responsible for leading and coordinating the IASC emergency response in Lao PDR.

The UNRCO is the Secretariat to the UNRC and the IASC.

⁹ Specific roles and responsibilities of MoNRE in disaster management are yet to be clarified

3.4 The Lao PDR Inter-Agency Standing Committee

The Lao PDR IASC is the mechanism for coordination of humanitarian actions, in close collaboration with Government Ministries. The Lao PDR IASC is co-chaired by the director of NDMO, on behalf of the secretariat for the NDMC, and the UNRC. The World Food Programme (WFP) acts as deputy co-chair.

In Lao PDR, the IASC membership is extended to the United Nations agencies, relevant government line Ministries, state owned enterprises, Red Cross Organizations, INGOs, NGOs and donors.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the IASC are currently in draft form, please refer to annex 4.

3.5 The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Clusters

The IASC in Lao PDR has established ten clusters, and each cluster lead agency is tasked with ensuring a coordinated, timely and inclusive response among partners in their respective sectors, in close collaboration with the relevant line ministries and in support of the Government support plan. Each cluster should in principle be co-chaired by a line Ministry.

Informal arrangements for collaboration between or joint work across two or more clusters may be agreed upon on an ad hoc and case-by-case basis depending on the context.¹⁰

Table 2: The cluster arrangement in Lao PDR

Cluster	Cluster Lead Agency	Government Linkage
Health	WHO	Ministry of Health
WASH	UNICEF	Ministry of Health
Food Security	FAO and WFP	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
Nutrition	UNICEF	Ministry of Health
Education	UNICEF and Save the Children	Ministry of Education
Shelter	UN-HABITAT/IFRC	Ministry of Public Works and Transport
Protection	UNICEF and Save the Children	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
Early Recovery	UNDP	Ministry of Planning and Investment
Logistics	WFP	To be confirmed
ICT	WFP	To be confirmed

Please refer to annex 2 for cluster lead/coordinator contact details.

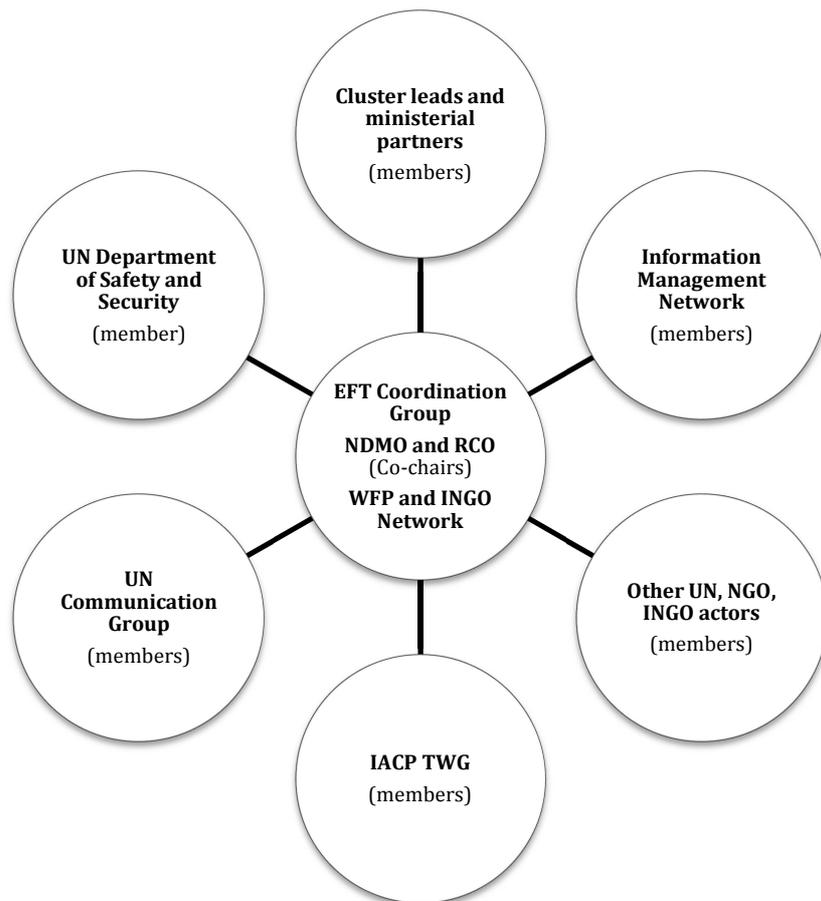
¹⁰ During the Haima response in 2011, Food Security and Nutrition were mobilized as a joint cluster.

3.6 The Emergency Task Force

The Emergency Task Force (ETF) is the technical advisory body to the IASC and an inter-cluster coordination platform. The task force is co-chaired by NDMO and the UNRCO. The UNRCO, NDMO, WFP and the INGO Network will act as ETF coordinators through appointed focal points. The coordinators will be on standby at all times throughout the year and will appoint a replacement when unavailable for ETF mobilization. The ETF members are the cluster leads, the Information Management (IM) focal points, the UN Communications Group (UNCG), the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), the IASC TWG, relevant line Ministry focal points and other relevant actors. Clear focal points will be appointed from each, and all focal points will be included in the ETF mailing list.

The ETF coordinators will call upon relevant members as required, depending on the situation, to participate in ETF meetings and activities. Where members are not contacted by the ETF coordinators, but perceive a need to join ETF meetings, they can request to do so through the coordinators. Please refer to annex 5 for the TOR.

Figure 2: Emergency Task Force structure



3.7 The Information Management Network

The IM Network purpose is to ensure that information before and during a disaster is appropriately collated from various sources and transmitted to the ETF. The IM Network can be mobilized as necessary by the ETF coordinators. The IM Network is comprised of IM focal points from NDMO, each cluster and other relevant organizations and line Ministries, who have the necessary technical skills to professionally manage information. Please refer to annex 6 for the IM Network TOR.

The UNRC can request Information Management Officer (IMO) surge capacity from OCHA for the UNRCO, when required.

3.8 International Non Government Organizations

INGOs with humanitarian mandates are members of the Lao PDR IASC and the cluster system, and act as co-leads for a number of the clusters.

The INGOs coordinate their work through the INGO Network¹¹, which also acts as a focal point for communication and collaboration between INGOs, other development partners and the Government. The INGOs are active in all provinces of Lao PDR. At the local level, the INGOs are expected to work in close collaboration with the PDMCs in emergency preparedness and response.

The INGO Network nominates one person to act as an ETF coordinator.

3.9 Other Development Partners

Key humanitarian donors in Lao PDR are members of the IASC and play a central role in supporting, through funds or in kind support, the emergency response, either through direct support to the Government or via UN agencies or INGOs.

¹¹ <http://www.directoryofngos.org>

Figure 3: Resident international humanitarian structure in Lao PDR

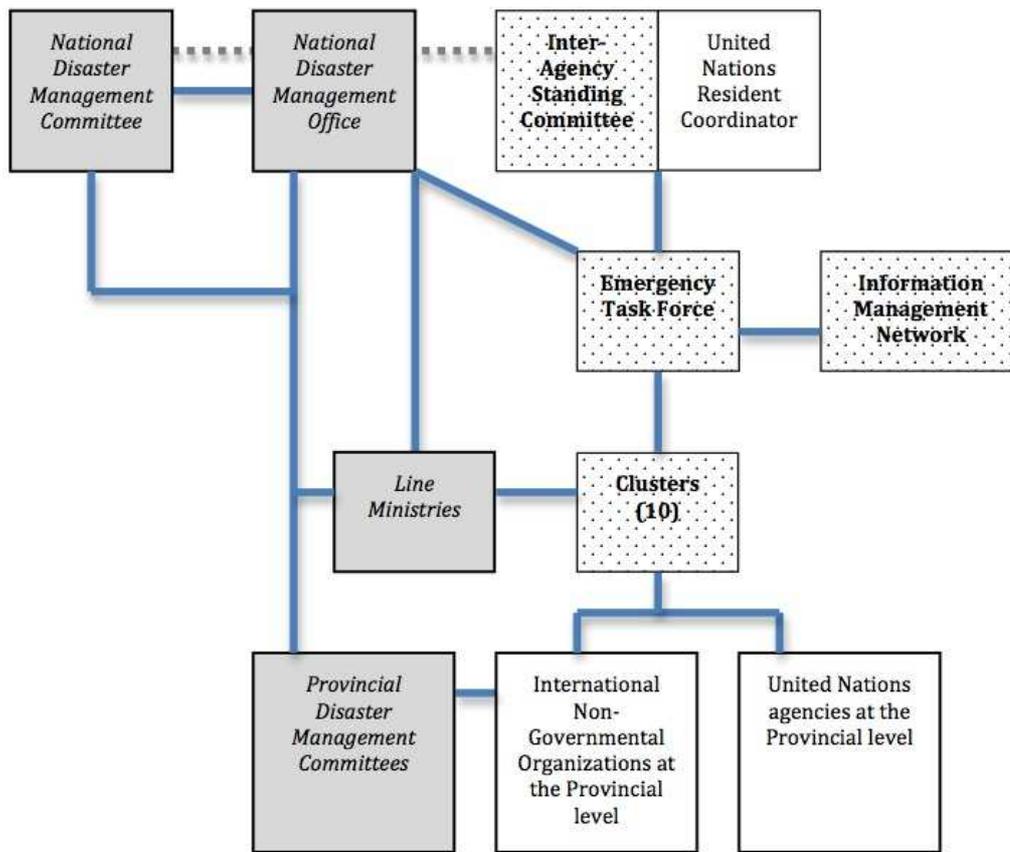


Figure 3 illustrates the resident international humanitarian structure in Lao PDR, and how it relates to the Government disaster management system (figure 1). The textured background denotes entities that have Government co-chairs and members. The dashed lined between the IASC and the NDMC denotes indirect communication pathway.

Further exploration and consultation on how to improve the linkages and communication between the Government and the IASC will be part of the contingency plan review.

4. Scenario and Planning Assumptions

Through consultations and review of national hazard risk analysis documents and past disasters in Lao PDR, the IACP TWG has agreed that for the purpose of planning for disaster response in Lao PDR, the following scenario and planning assumptions should be adopted.¹²

4.1 Scenario

A storm hits central and southern Lao PDR, causing flooding and infrastructure damage across five provinces and directly affecting 250,000 people.

A total of 75,000 persons are estimated to require immediate humanitarian assistance.

The scale of the damage of the scenario is likely to trigger a Government request for IASC assistance. The preparedness measures undertaken for the scenario would also enable a rapid response for storms and floods of a smaller magnitude, and also for different hazards such as earthquake, drought and outbreaks.¹³

4.2 Planning Assumptions

Humanitarian Consequences and Priority Needs

- A large proportion of the affected population lives in hard to access areas, with limited access to health care. The population is mostly poor, largely reliant on subsistence farming and vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition. The communities are prone to storms, flooding and drought.
- The immediate humanitarian consequences of the storm include damage to housing, infrastructure and livelihoods, transport and communication networks, disruption of water systems and sanitation facilities, contamination of water sources, destroyed food stocks, disrupted education and health care services, and disruption to the eco-system and access to natural resources and food sources.
- As a result of destroyed crops and livelihoods and possible increases in disease incidence, a rise in acute malnutrition is forecast, peaking in the following lean season.
- Increased vulnerability of children, women and older people, the disabled and chronically ill.
- The priority needs are potable water, rehabilitation of water sources, food assistance, medical services, temporary shelter and search and rescue services.

¹² The scenario and planning assumptions are based on the experience of the Mekong Flooding in 2008, tropical storm Ketsana in 2009 and Haima flooding in 2011, with the view of adopting a realistic, yet major disaster scenario that will warrant a major response by the humanitarian actors in Lao PDR to support the Government response.

¹³ This contingency plan does not extend to pandemics. Further review and analysis of pandemic planning conducted by the Government, and consultation of how the IASC can support existing Government plans and pandemic response is required as a follow up action in the IACP review process.

Coping Mechanisms

- The affected communities have experience in coping with hazards. Community cohesion is strong, volunteers are mobilized quickly and there is sharing and redistribution of resources and food within and between communities. Alternate housing is usually sought from relatives and other community members, and the reconstruction of houses is possible from natural resources available from the immediate surroundings.

Government Response

- There is strong capacity for the immediate response, through existing systems at the provincial, district and village levels. The assistance is limited by access to financial resources rather than human resources, which is relatively strong. Assistance is provided to the most affected villages, but international resources are necessary to meet the needs of 75,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance. The military and line Ministries have resources including air transport, food stocks, medical resources, communication devices, and provincial and national warehouses. The Government can request assistance from the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (ASEAN AHA)¹⁴ for mobilization of equipment, human and financial resources to respond to disasters. Assistance may also be requested bilaterally with ASEAN Member States.

Gaps and Constraints

- The response will be constrained by difficulties in accessing the affected population, which will affect the timeliness of the response.
- Government systems for emergency response are in place, however there is limited capacity for timely data collection, analysis and transmission of information from the local to the national level and vice versa.
- There is no linked communication system for the NDMO, the police and the military, and mobile phone networks are unreliable, especially in an emergency. The UN agencies have the capacity to communicate through emergency mobile satellite phones and VHF radio, however this system that is not connected to the INGOs who are operating in the field. There is no emergency operation centre that can coordinate and receive information that is being communicated from the affected areas.

¹⁴ <http://www.ahacentre.org/>

5. Response Objectives, Strategies and Guiding Principles

The overall objective of this contingency plan is to support the Government to lead and ensure an effective, timely and coordinated response that will mitigate the risk and reduce the impact of natural disasters on communities in Lao PDR.

The objective will be achieved through a clear response coordination mechanism and strategy, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities of all IASC members.

The IASC response will be guided by the following principles:

- *Response efforts will build on the principle of early recovery; understanding response efforts as a continuum of disaster preparation, response, and recovery, ensuring that the response efforts do not undermine or weaken community resilience and long term development.*
- *The humanitarian community will strive towards the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, the Sphere Project Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards, and the Red Cross Code of Conduct and quality and accountability in aid delivery will be considered and implemented to the extent possible.*
- *Emergency response will ensure consideration of vulnerabilities and special needs associated with gender, age, disabilities, and HIV and AIDS.*
- *Strategic and operational responses will be based on the principle of Government leadership and ownership.*

6. Overall Management and Coordination

This section outlines the mechanism for coordination both within the IASC, and between the Government and the IASC, including clearly defined roles and responsibilities and expected actions of the key actors during the emergency response.

6.1 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1.1 Government of Lao PDR

The Government leads and coordinates national disaster preparedness and response activities through the disaster management committees at the district, provincial and central levels. The overall structure of the Government disaster management system is presented in chapter three.

NDMC will:

- Receive initial information from the PDMCs/NDMO and mobilize a response. The NDMC may meet, or call a ministerial level meeting, to task ministries for response.

NDMO will:

- Upon receipt of early warning information from the DMH, or other sources, contact the UNRCO and the PDMCs
- Coordinate with, and update the PDMCs to collect and summarize initial information
- Report PDMCs information to the NDMC and the UNRCO
- Coordinate with the UNRCO to mobilize the ETF
- Participate in the ETF and co-chair IASC meetings as required in the first 24 hours of disaster¹⁵ or prior to the event; and as required thereafter
- Provide support as required to the PDMCs to gather initial information and conduct rapid assessments.

The PDMCs will:

- Disseminate early warning information to the DDMCs
- Mobilize the initial response, including financial resources
- Coordinate with NGOs, INGOs and UN agencies in the field
- Collect initial information from the affected areas and transmit this information to NDMO and NDMC
- Conduct a rapid assessment and if necessary, request IASC assistance through NDMO
- Transmit data from the common rapid assessment to the NDMO, with support from INGOs as required.

6.1.2 United Nations Resident Coordinator and Office

Under the overall emergency response lead of the Government, the UNRC is responsible for leading and coordinating the IASC emergency response in Lao PDR. In situations where the Government requests international humanitarian assistance¹⁶, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) may consider the designation of a Humanitarian Coordinator

¹⁵ The timeframe will be different for disasters with a slower onset, e.g. floods and droughts

¹⁶ *International humanitarian assistance* is assistance from non-resident actors.

(HC), in consultation with the IASC.

The UNRCO is the secretariat to the UNRC and the IASC, and is the chair of the ETF.

The UNRC will, in consultation with the Government and under its overall lead:

- Call and co-chair an IASC meeting with NDMO in the first 24 hours of a rapid onset disaster or early warning
- Facilitate agreement at the level of the Lao IASC on the establishment of clusters and the designation of cluster leads, ensure that clusters function efficiently, and make resourcing requirements known to the ERC where required
- Lead the development of a strategic response plan for humanitarian action in-country, ensuring that cross-cutting issues (gender, age, human rights, HIV/AIDS, the environment) and activities in support of early recovery are integrated
- Coordinate implementation of the humanitarian response plan by establishing mechanisms for inter-sector/cluster coordination, including for needs assessments, monitoring and evaluation, and communications strategy
- Lead inclusive resource mobilization efforts, ensuring that they reflect documented priority needs
- Oversee monitoring of and reporting on projects funded by Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF)
- Advocate with relevant actors, including the Government, regional organizations (and their military forces), UN entities, civil society, the private sector and the media, on issues of humanitarian concern
- Advocate with all relevant parties, including non-state actors, for compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law
- Ensure that appropriate linkages are made between relief, recovery, transition and development activities, and promote prevention strategies in national development plans

The UNRCO will:

- Support the UNRC, including in his role as HC if and when the UNRC is so appointed, in line with the roles and responsibilities of the UNRC as outlined above
- Coordinate directly with NDMO
- Mobilize the ETF, in agreement with NDMO
- Co-chair the ETF meetings
- Coordinate information flow from and between the IASC members and to the NDMO, as well as information sharing among humanitarian and donor communities in and outside of the country
- Coordinate with non-resident agencies relevant to the response, including OCHA
- Coordinate with the regional cluster mechanism and support the UNRC in coordinating the in-country inter-cluster mechanism
- Support the IASC meetings and facilitate decision-making processes
- Lead the compilation and dissemination of situation reports.
- Coordinate resource mobilization through e.g. facilitating the flash appeal and CERF fund requests

6.1.3 Emergency Task Force

The ETF¹⁷ acts as an emergency operations center. It is the link between the NDMO, the UNRCO, the clusters, the IM Network and the INGOs.

The ETF will:

- Upon notification of an early warning or at the sudden onset of disaster, meet and conduct an analysis of available information, formulate a preliminary scenario and inform the IASC, through the UNRCO chair, of what next steps are recommended
- Receive and assess initial information from PDMCs and IASC member organizations
- Advise the IASC of which clusters are a priority to mobilize, what the immediate response should prioritize, and which resources are required to support the PDMC to conduct a rapid assessment
- Provide information management and technical support to the NDMO
- Support the UNRCO to develop timely situation reports
- Act as an inter-cluster coordination mechanism to promote cluster coordination and full participation from each relevant cluster in the ETF, as well as in assessment and response efforts
- Provide ongoing support to the response, including assessments.

6.1.4 The Lao PDR Inter-Agency Standing Committee

The Lao IASC is the mechanism for coordination between the Government, UN agencies, INGOs and donors of humanitarian actions, in support of the Lao Government emergency response efforts.¹⁸

The IASC will:

- Meet as required upon notification of a hazard early warning, or within the first 24 hours of a disaster to decide on actions for supporting the Government response, and as required throughout the response
- Consider the advice of the ETF on emergency response requirements based on available information and data
- As required, give cluster leads an informal *go-ahead* for response, preceding an official request from Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)
- Organize common rapid assessments, to support the PDMC as required
- Organize joint multi-sectoral assessments and post disaster needs assessments, as required
- Facilitate resource mobilization.

6.1.5 The Cluster Arrangement

The IASC will decide when clusters are to be mobilized and in what arrangement, considering the specific context of the disaster. Clusters will revert to a *non-mobilized* state, when all emergency response and necessary follow up actions have been completed and the IASC and the ETF have been consulted, and the IASC has, through the UNRC, confirmed the demobilization. Demobilized clusters are expected to continue preparedness work as required in between mobilization and continuously review

¹⁷ Please refer to annex 5 for the ETF TOR

¹⁸ In the absence of an emergency where meetings will be held in accordance with the SOP outlined in this contingency plan, the IASC meets every second month throughout the year

experience and lessons learnt from previous responses.

The cluster lead agencies are responsible for ensuring a coordinated, timely and inclusive response in their respective sectors. In Lao PDR, the cluster lead agencies are responsible for promoting strong coordination between the line-Ministry and the cluster members. The cluster lead/coordinator is designated by the cluster lead agency and is responsible for the day-to-day coordination and facilitation of the clusters work. The lead/coordinator should at all times be one identified focal point whose contact details should be communicated to the UNRCO. Any changes to the focal point should be immediately communicated to the UNRCO.

Please refer to annex 7 for the cluster leads TOR.

The clusters will:

- Ensure adequate minimum preparedness for emergency response, through identification of a line Ministry and cluster members, mapping of capacities¹⁹ establishment of cluster coordination mechanisms and development of a response plan.²⁰
- Participate in ETF meetings during the emergency response, as required
- Provide situation report inputs, as requested by the UNRCO
- Nominate one person to act as the information management focal point, who will participate in the IM Network
- Review its response plan and who does what and where (3W) matrix based on the particular disaster and provide input into funding appeals
- Support rapid and other assessments as agreed with and request by the IASC
- Continuously, including when not mobilized, ensure adequate minimum preparedness for emergency response is in place within the cluster, including through continued review of response and preparedness plans and 3W matrix in between mobilization, to be ready at any time for the onset of a disaster.

6.1.6 International Non Government Organizations

The INGOs will

- Provide input into cluster situation reports as members of these clusters
- Provide immediate input into the situation report from the provincial level when requested by the ETF through the INGO ETF coordinator
- Support rapid and other assessments, with a particular focus on support to local authorities, as agreed with and requested by the IASC or within the INGO Network communicated to the ETF
- Ensure their capacity and geographical reach is communicated to the clusters as active members of these

6.1.7 Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

The OCHA-ROAP will provide support to the UNRC, as needed, in coordination with regional offices of other agencies and may provide in country staff support to the UNRCO as required and requested. At the onset of a disaster/emergency and following

¹⁹ The mapping of cluster capacity does not necessarily include the line Ministry

²⁰ Please refer to section 6.2 and annex 8 for the cluster response plans.

consultations with and request from the UNRC, OCHA ROAP can provide the following technical support to the UNRCO:

- Deployment of initial surge to strengthen the UNRCO in overall response coordination,
- Deployment of an UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team to assist the Government and the IASC in disaster response, specialized in inter-cluster coordination, humanitarian financing, assessments, mapping, media and communications, reporting, information management and civil military coordination.
- Provision of support to the application of humanitarian financing tools - Emergency Cash Grant (ECG), CERF, flash appeal and its launch.
- Provision of additional specific support for information management, reporting, media and communications, and civil military coordination beyond the time for which UNDAC can deploy.

6.2. Summary of Cluster Response Plans

Each cluster²¹ has developed a first draft cluster response plan in consultation with cluster members including Government counterparts, based on the contingency plan scenario. The response plans will continue to be revised during the wet season, and will undergo a rigorous review based on any lessons learned in 2012. It is anticipated that the response plans will be further developed to include comprehensive preparedness activities by the time of the contingency plan revision. Please refer to 6 for the detailed cluster response plans.

Health Cluster

The goal of the health cluster is to ensure effective, efficient and timely response to emergency for health coordinated by all health sector partners in Lao PDR under the leadership of the Ministry of Health (MOH).

Health cluster objectives:

- To engage national and international health partners in the effective collaboration and coordination of the health sector response
- To assess and monitor health needs and strengthen disease surveillance
- To respond to health needs and threats including outbreaks, strengthen disease control and identify and respond to gaps that are critical to the delivery of health care.

WASH Cluster

The goal of the WASH cluster is to ensure a effective, efficient and timely response to emergency for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene coordinated by all sector partners in Lao PDR.

WASH cluster objectives:

- Reducing morbidity and mortality cases due to WASH-related diseases
- Preserving life with dignity
- Restoring normalcy in the lives of affected populations by providing safe access to and ensuring use of water, sanitation and hygiene in emergency situations in collaboration with partners.

Nutrition Cluster

The goal of the nutrition cluster is to reduce mortality and to prevent deterioration of nutritional status among the most vulnerable population groups, such as children under five years of age and pregnant and lactating mothers who constitute 17 percent of the total affected population.

Nutrition cluster objectives:

- To maintain full readiness to aid at any time up to 41,750 of vulnerable population (35,000 under-five children, and 7,500 pregnant and lactating women)
- To participate in joint Government-Development Partners on-site assessment within 48 hours of a disaster

²¹ The food security cluster, logistics cluster and ICT cluster response plans will be included in the next draft of the contingency plan.

- To be able to deliver initial nutrition-related assistance – Infant and Young Child Feeding, Management of Acute Malnutrition, Micronutrient Deficiencies - within the first week of a disaster
- To have supplies and capacities to sustain the initial nutrition assistance for a 2-week period, while additional support could be mobilized as needed
- To initiate cross sectoral initial rapid assessment within 1-2 weeks of a disaster
- To conduct nutrition specific rapid assessment within 6-8 weeks of a disaster
- To strengthen nutritional monitoring and surveillance
- To improve effectiveness of assistance provided through identification, documentation and dissemination of lessons learnt

Education Cluster

The goal of the education cluster is to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies including the early recovery phase, and for ensuring greater predictability and more effective inter-agency responses in education, in the main areas of standards and policy setting, building response capacity, and operational support.

Education cluster objectives:

- Promote increased levels of understanding of the key role of education as part of a first phase humanitarian response to all major new emergencies, subsequent phases of response and early recovery.
- Promote and improve on internationally recognized standards of good practice in education responses to emergencies and early recovery (including attention to priority cross-cutting issues for the education sector), and coordinate and disseminate lessons learned within and between emergency responses.
- Coordinate participating humanitarian agencies in providing a rapid and effective holistic response to education-related needs of children and young people resulting from major emergencies as they arise, in collaboration with the relevant national and local authorities.
- Strengthen response capacity through the global pool of specialists skilled and experienced in restoring education services in emergencies.
- Strengthen intervention resources through the global availability of key supplies to support rapid education responses in emergencies.
- Improve capacity of partner agencies to help countries build back education systems better after an emergency, in line with the progression from humanitarian response through reconstruction and on to development.
- Strengthen education in disaster risk reduction efforts and emergency preparedness planning of host governments.

Shelter Cluster

The goal of the shelter cluster is to reduce the vulnerabilities related to Shelter, Settlement and Essential Household Items (EHI) of the disaster-affected population in Lao PDR.

Shelter cluster objectives:

- To provide culturally appropriate, environmentally sustainable and adequate emergency shelter to 75,000 people in approximately 12,500 households (6 people per household used as a planning figure)
- To ensure immediate and effective emergency shelter response for the affected population

- To promote cooperation and coordination among the relevant organizations and beneficiaries representatives

Protection Cluster

The goal of the protection cluster is to ensure that the most vulnerable families and children affected by the disaster are protected from violence, abuse, and exploitation (and extended trauma) and the risks of UXO²².

Protection cluster objectives:

- To engage national and international protection partners in the effective collaboration and coordination of the protection sector response, including the UXO sector, where necessary.
- To assess and monitor child protection needs and carry out awareness raising and prevention activities to protect affected families and children from violence, abuse, and exploitation and UXO risk and injury.
- To initiate family tracing mechanisms and provide (as needed) psycho-social support and protection services through the establishment of Child Friendly Spaces.

Early Recovery Cluster

The goal of the early recovery cluster is to support coordinated assessment of needs and response to ensure effective and rapid long-term recovery.

Early recovery cluster objectives:

- Ensuring coordinated early recovery planning across all IASC Clusters
- Facilitate joint in depth sectoral assessments including existing capacities including existing capacities and opportunities for early recovery
- Coordinating Post Disaster Needs Assessment identifying key areas (including areas not covered by the different IASC clusters), interventions and required budgets
- Lead the implementation of the early recovery efforts

Food Security Cluster

The goal of the Food Security Cluster (FSC) in an emergency is to support the Government of Lao to meet the humanitarian food security needs of affected populations in a timely, effective, and accountable manner.

Food security cluster objectives

- To put in place readiness measures to enable the FSC to carry out its responsibilities in the event of an emergency, in a rapid, appropriate and effective manners;
- To detail procedures and steps which can be followed by the cluster in the event of an emergency, which highlight key stages and accountability and effectiveness measures in the process and
- To strengthen coordinate within cluster members, other relevant clusters, key stakeholders, and donors as well as strengthen the capacity of the government for effective coordination and response to the food security crises.

²² When the disaster occurs in provinces affected by UXO

6.3 Standard Operating Procedures for Emergency Response

This section outlines the SOPs for the IASC members to support the Government to respond to the scenario outlined in chapter four.

Smaller scale emergencies or disasters

Small and medium scale disasters occur frequently in Lao PDR. It is acknowledged that the Government will not request, nor require, the IASC members to be mobilized for small scale emergencies that are within the capacity of the Government to respond to adequately²³. However, coordination processes as outlined in the SOPs remain relevant to ensure that there is a common understanding of the emergency situation between the IASC members, and between the Government and the IASC, as well as a plan for potential next steps in the response.

Therefore, the SOP for contingency plan activation will be followed for *all* hazard events.

It is anticipated that the ETF will be required to meet/consult frequently throughout the wet season, to assess early warning information and make a decision to either remain on standby or elevate the situation to the level of the IASC. The decision to activate the contingency plan, and elevate the response to the IASC level is at the discretion of the NDMO and the UNRCO within the ETF coordination forum. Factors including the severity of the early warning, the geographical area affected, the specific impacts on different sectors, the number of agencies expected to be involved and the Government capacity will be taken into consideration.

In situations where it is agreed that there is no need to activate the contingency plan, the ETF coordinators will, facilitated by the UNRCO, be required to continue to monitor the situation, provide updates to the IASC members and support the NDMO as required.

For smaller scale disasters which have required activation of the contingency plan, the SOPs from hour zero to month two will be followed as far as is appropriate in the given context.

SOP to Activate the Contingency Plan

The DMH of MoNRE is responsible for weather related early warning information, including weather forecasts, precipitation levels and flood risk. The DMH provides hydro-meteorological and forecasting information to NDMC, NDMO and to sub national government structures and the public. During the wet season, daily updates are issued to NDMO, via email, fax or phone. Upon receipt of a serious early warning, the NDMO will contact the PDMC directly to share this information. Other sources of early warning information include the Mekong River Commission and the Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS).²⁴

It can be assumed that there will, in most cases, be some degree of early warning to a severe storm or flood risk in Lao PDR.

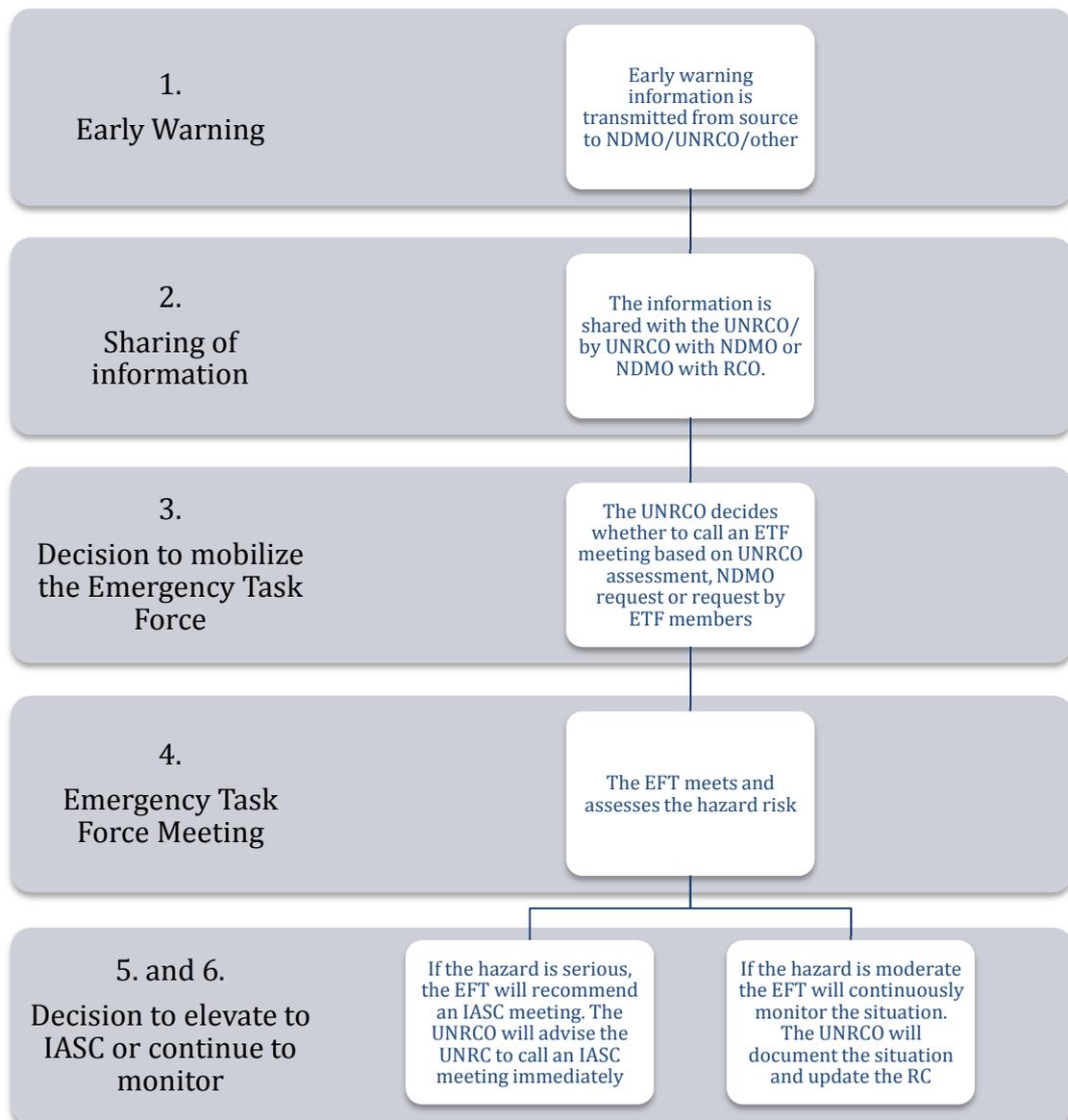
²³ With assistance from INGOs working in cooperation with the PDMCs at the sub national level.

²⁴ www.gdacs.org

1. The early warning or initial information from a hazard event is transmitted from the DMH, local authorities or other sources to the NDMO/UNRCO/other IASC member.
2. The NDMO transmits this information to the UNRCO; or UNRCO to NDMO; or IASC member to UNRCO.
3. The ETF is mobilized by one of the following pathways:
 - The UNRCO decides, based on early warning information/initial²⁵ information from the hazard event, to call the ETF to a meeting
 - The NDMO requests the UNRCO to mobilize the ETF
 - ETF member/s request the UNRCO to mobilize the ETF
4. The ETF meets to assess the hazard risk/initial information and will make an assessment of the risk/magnitude of the hazard. The assessment of the hazard will be communicated to a contact list of humanitarian actors, donors and OCHA. The contact list will be based within and continuously updated by the UNRCO.
5. If the hazard risk/event is serious, the ETF will recommend an IASC meeting and will, based on the available initial information, prepare recommendations for the IASC on further action for response. The UNRCO will advise the UNRC to call an IASC meeting prior to the hazard event if required and possible. A situation report will be issued by the UNRCO. **(IACP ACTIVATED)**
6. If the hazard risk/event is moderate, the ETF coordinators will continue to monitor the potential hazard/event closely and the UNRCO will ensure that all ETF members are aware of the hazard risk and are on standby. The UNRCO is responsible for updating the UNRC, documenting the evolving situation and disseminating information to the IASC. **(STANDBY)**

²⁵ Initial information includes all information sources, including un-validated or anecdotal information.

Figure 3: SOP to Activate the Contingency Plan



SOP Zero (disaster) to 24 hours²⁶

Government²⁷

- NDMO begins coordinating with the PDMCs for initial data collection
- PDMCs coordinate with DDMCs to obtain initial information on the affected areas and populations, and transmit the information to NDMO and NDMC
- NDMO transmits initial field information to NDMC and the UNRCO
- NDMC mobilizes response through line ministries and PDMC
- NDMC updates MoFA on the emergency situation
- PDMC begins coordinating the response in the affected areas
- PDMC, if required, requests assistance to coordinate and conduct a rapid assessment, through the NDMO²⁸
- NDMO updates the ETF on the initial government response (plans) to guide ETF decisions and recommendations to IASC.

IASC

- IASC meeting²⁹
 - The NDMO reports on the response situation; what are the known needs of the affected population; and what immediate assistance from the IASC is required
 - The ETF presents initial information/preliminary scenario and recommendations for response
 - The level of cluster mobilization and the cluster arrangements are decided on
 - Support for a common rapid assessment is discussed, based on request from the NDMO, and the process agreed upon for follow up action
 - The need for ECG, CERF and flash appeal is discussed and the process agreed for the appeal/application or for follow up action to evaluate potential future need
 - The need for UNDAC assistance and surge capacity is discussed
 - The time of the next meeting is decided.
- Cluster leads begin coordination with the line Ministries and partners for:
 - Collection and sharing of initial information from the field.³⁰
 - Immediate response planning and implementation.
- ETF meeting
 - Secondary³¹ data and initial information is reviewed, and the preliminary scenario is updated/revised
 - Inter-cluster coordination begins
- In coordination with NDMO, the UNRCO disseminates the Situation Report Number Two³²

²⁶ This protocol assumes the scenario has occurred and the contingency plan has been activated prior to the disaster event.

²⁷ Further clarify needs to be obtained on the process and timing for the official request for international support from the Government and the requirement for such request in launching a response

²⁸ Based on the scale of the disaster outlined in the scenario, it is assumed in the SOP that the PDMC will require assistance from the IASC members to coordinate and conduct a joint rapid assessment

²⁹ The first IASC meeting may occur before the hazard event, depending on the situation.

³⁰ This information is documented in the situation report input template and emailed to the UNRCO for collation

³¹ Pre-disaster baseline information, satellite imagery, media reports, photos etc

³² Assuming that the first Situation Report was issued prior to the hazard event

- The UNRC communicates to OCHA the preliminary scenario, if surge capacity or UNDAC assistance is required, and if there is an intention to apply for CERF, flash appeal or ECG.

SOP 24 to 48 hours

- Clusters are coordinating the immediate response with line Ministries and other cluster members
- ETF meeting
 - Initial information is compiled and analyzed, with the support of the IM Network
 - The 3Ws matrix is updated or confirmed
 - In coordination with NDMO, Situation Report Number Three is developed and disseminated by UNRCO
 - If required, UNRCO begins drafting the flash appeal and CERF application
 - If required, cluster leads begin development of sector response plans for the flash appeal and CERF application
 - NDMO continues to update the ETF on the Government response (plans)
- IASC meeting
 - NDMO and ETF provide an update on the response
 - A decision is made if it is necessary to trigger a flash appeal and CERF application³³
 - The NDMO confirms what support is required for the common rapid assessment.

SOP 48 to 72 hours

- If decided by the IASC, the UNRCO drafts the flash appeal and CERF request.

SOP days four to five

- If required, the UNRC submits the first flash appeal document and CERF request
- Clusters continue coordinated response through the line Ministries and cluster members
- The ETF meets, as required
- The IASC meets, as required
- Situation reports are issued, as required
- Planning for provision of support to the PDMC/INGO to conduct a common rapid assessment is finalized
- NDMO continues to update the ETF on the Government response (plans)

SOP days six to fourteen

- The PDMC/INGOs are supported to conduct a common rapid assessment
- Above activities continues where relevant

³³ This decision should be made between 24-48 hours at the latest, and preferably within the first 24 hours

SOP weeks three and four

- The common rapid assessment data is analyzed
- A report is drafted and disseminated to the IASC, NDMC, PDMCs
- The flash appeal is revised
- In depth sectoral assessments are conducted, as required
- Above activities continues where relevant.

SOP month two

- A Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) is conducted, if required
- Above activities continues where relevant.

6.4 Common Service Areas

6.4.1 Safety and Security

The primary responsibility for the security and protection of international personnel, dependants and property of international organizations rests with the Government. In the case of the UN, the host Government has a special responsibility under the Charter of the UN, as well as relevant agreements with individual United Nations organizations. The UN and other international organizations have a duty as an employer to reinforce and, where necessary, supplement the capacity of the Government to fulfill these obligations.

For the UN the UN Security Management System (UNSMS) applies to all UN employees and dependents. The primary management tools of the UNSMS are the Security Plan and the Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS), which the Designated Official (DO) for Lao PDR, the UNRC, is responsible, in consultation with the Security Management Team, for preparing and maintaining. The Security Plan contains various security procedures and guidelines including a Natural Disaster Plan³⁴, identifying preparedness and response guidelines for UN staff in the event of a flood. The UN security level in Lao PDR is currently Level One. Travel is permitted to all areas of the country, with the exception of Phoun and Xaisomboun districts in Vientiane Province, which require the approval of the DO.

During a security emergency³⁵ the DO will consult with the SMT to activate a Crisis Coordination Centre (CCC) and mobilize the Crisis Management Group (CMG), which will be responsible to coordinate security response to the emergency.

The UN security system does not extend to the INGO actors. However security arrangements between the UN and INGOs stipulate certain collaboration must and the role of UN to provide assistance where possible. To promote sharing of security information and coordination between the UN and the INGOs, the UNDSS Security Advisor will be requested to participate in ETF meetings, as required.

³⁴ Annex F, Security Plan for the United Nations System in Lao PDR.

³⁵ Security emergencies and crisis situations are defined as actions, circumstances, incidents, or events that present an exceptional and imminent threat to the safety and security of United Nations system personnel, assets and operations.

6.4.2 Communications

Vientiane is covered by an emergency VHF network that will be utilized as the primary means of communication should the telecommunication networks collapse, and, 3 VHF channels exist in Vientiane. Communication with UN staff in the field will be maintained through the sat-phones as per current UN Lao PDR MOSS.

6.4.2 Public Information/Communication Strategy

Coordinated dissemination of public information in an emergency enables the IASC to advocate to the media, government donors and public on the needs of affected populations, and encourages appropriate resource mobilization and action. Public information also aims to clarify how the humanitarian organizations work in time of emergency, to manage expectations on what they can, and cannot, deliver.

The UNCG in Lao PDR is comprised of Public Information (PI) focal points from UN agencies, and provides communications support for the advocacy of the UN. The UNCG is chaired by an identified focal point from one of the UN agencies on an annual rotational basis.

In the event of an emergency or a disaster, the UNCG will be called upon by the ETF coordinators, to support the UNRCO and the ETF in the following tasks:

- Develop common messages and positions on the humanitarian response, for external dissemination to donors and the media
- Draft speaking notes for the UNRC
- Support the UNRCO in drafting timely funding appeals
- Support the UNDP Public Information Officer to update the emergency response website during an emergency.

To facilitate a two-way flow of information between the ETF and the UNCG, the UNCG chair will be requested to participate in relevant ETF meetings. UNCG information will be shared with the INGO Network through the ETF, and also by invitation to the INGO Network PI focal point to join relevant UNCG meetings.

The UNRC can request Public Information and Reporting surge capacity from OCHA, when required.

7. Data and Information Flow

To promote timely and effective information management in a disaster, the following resources, tools, reporting and coordination mechanism have been identified.

7.1 Coordination

Information Management Focal Points and Network

The IM network³⁶, comprised of information management focal points, will support the UNRCO and NDMO by setting up and implementing standard templates for data collection and ensuring information flows from the cluster members to the UNRCO and NDMO (through the ETF). Further, the lead of the IM Network is responsible for ensuring that all relevant information is stored at the UNRCO.³⁷

The UNRC can request Information Management Officer (IMO) surge capacity from OCHA for the UNRCO, when required.

7.2 Information Management Tools

Satellite imagery

Limited capacity exists in Lao PDR to process and analyze satellite imagery, however UNOSAT can provide satellite imagery services, upon request. These services are free of charge, as are the satellite images that can be accessed through the International Space Charter. All requests for satellite images and derived products should be coordinated through the UNRCO.

Pre-disaster information database

The *Common Operational Datasets* are predictable, core sets of data needed to support operations and decision-making for all actors in a humanitarian response. These include; population statistics, administrative units/boundaries, location and name of populated places, transportation network, and hydrology (rivers). The IM network is tasked with identifying the best available data and making it available to the ETF as needed.

The *Fundamental Operational Datasets* are datasets required to support multiple cluster/sector operations and complement the common operational datasets. These datasets are characterized by thematic areas (such as education facilities) and are made available as soon as possible after the onset of an emergency given availability. These datasets are maintained by the IM focal point in the appropriate cluster.³⁸

Geographic Information Mapping (GIS)

WFP's Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping (VAM) Unit has GIS capacity. The OCHA regional office can provide additional remote or GIS surge support, upon request of the UNRCO. If a large amount of mapping is needed, MapAction can deploy dedicated mapping staff.

³⁶ Please refer to annex 6 for the IM Network TOR.

³⁷ The UNRCO is the depository of all emergency response information including data sets, situation reports, mission reports, assessments and evaluations.

³⁸ The fundamental datasets will be organized by each cluster and regularly updated. The datasets will be housed at the UNRCO

Emergency Response Website and Internal Communication Platform

A webpage has been established on the UN Lao website, which will be a depository of critical public information relating to the disaster response. The webpage will be maintained by the UNRCO, with assistance from the UNDP Public Information Officer and the UNCG. The page can be found at the following link:

<http://www.unlao.org/Disaster/DisasterResponse.asp>

The internal communication platform will be developed as part of the contingency plan review.

Contact Lists

A contact list of key actors including NDMO, UNRCO, IASC, ETF, and cluster leads can be found in annex 2. IM focal points are expected to ensure that the contact lists are up-to-date, and reported to the UNRCO.

Who does What and Where Matrix (3W matrix)

The 3W matrix tool is housed by the UNRCO, and should be updated by each cluster IM focal point at minimum twice per year or more frequently during an emergency.

7.3 Reporting

Cluster Situation Reports

Each cluster lead is tasked with coordination of the collection, collation and reporting of sector specific information on the humanitarian needs, response, gaps and constraints in the emergency response. This information is documented in the situation report input template and emailed to the UNRCO at time intervals specified by the UNRCO. Please refer to annex 9 for the situation report input template.

Overall Situation Report

The UNRCO is responsible for the collation of the cluster situation reports and dissemination of the overall situation report. Please refer to annex 10 for the overall situation report template.

7.4 Needs Assessments

Needs assessments in Lao PDR will follow the Multi Cluster/Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) approach of four emergency phases. The procedure for assessments in 2012 is outlined below, however substantial further consultations are required to reach an agreement on a more harmonized and standardized approach to needs assessment methodologies, and to build the requisite national capacity.

7.4.1 Initial Information/Preliminary Scenario Definition

Information in the first 72 hours of an emergency is critical to inform the initial response priorities, and enable organizations and agencies to access humanitarian funding in the first days of an emergency.

In Lao PDR the main sources of information in the first 72 hours are:

- Pre-disaster demographic data
- Communication by phone and fax from local authorities in the affected areas to the PDMCs and NDMO

- Communication from INGOs and UN agencies that are present in the affected provinces
- Satellite imagery
- Media reports

The ETF is tasked with the collation and analysis of initial information and the development of the preliminary scenario definition (PSD). The IM Network is responsible for identification of relevant pre-disaster baseline information and other data sets to support the ETF.

The priority information in the first 72 hours of a sudden onset disaster has been identified and compiled into the Initial Information Guidance Note. Actors who are present in the affected areas will collect this priority information and email/communicate by phone to the ETF each day in the first 72 hours, to facilitate the coordination of the initial information and the development of a PSD. Please refer to annex 11 for the Initial Information Guidance Note Template.

7.4.2 Common Rapid Assessment

The common rapid assessment is a multi-sectoral initial assessment, conducted in the first two weeks following a disaster. The outputs of the common rapid assessment are an initial report and a planning scenario, to inform planning of the humanitarian response and define the focus of follow on assessments, where these are deemed necessary.

Assessment Planning and Coordination

The PDMC is responsible for the planning and coordination of the assessment, with the support of INGOs and UN agencies present at the provincial level. In provinces where the PDMC does not currently have the capacity to coordinate the assessment, INGOs and UN agencies may be requested by the PDMC, through the NDMO, to take the lead or provide substantial support to the assessment planning and coordination. The ETF can be requested through NDMO, or through present INGOs and UN agencies, to provide planning and coordination assistance.

During the first 72 hours of the sudden onset disaster, a PDMC request for assistance or indication of an assessment plan should be provided to the ETF through the NDMO. In situations where the PDMC is not able to initiate the assessment planning within the first seven days, the INGO/UN focal point in the province can alert the ETF that support is required. The ETF will, through consultation with NDMO, mobilize appropriate resources to support the assessment³⁹.

Assessment Data Collection

The data collection should be completed, using the agreed common rapid assessment tool⁴⁰, by day 14 of the disaster. The actors involved in the data collection will include the PDMC, DDMC, NGO and UN agencies present in the province and where required, cluster members identified by the ETF.

Assessment Data Entry, Analysis and Initial Report Generation

The data entry⁴¹ is the responsibility of the PDMC, with support where required from INGO and UN agencies. The PDMC/INGO can request assistance from the ETF for human

³⁹ Resources and capacity must be mapped by the ETF

⁴⁰ Please refer to annex 12 for the common rapid assessment tool template

⁴¹ Format for data entry is being explored with WFP VAM Unit

and other resources. Where capacity does not currently exist at the PDMC for timely data analysis and report generation, the data can be transmitted by the PDMC or the INGO to the ETF for analysis. The cluster leads will be responsible for analysis of each sector, with support where required from the IM Network.

Initial Report Dissemination

The initial report⁴² of the assessment should be disseminated to the IASC and NDMC by day 21 of the disaster.

7.4.3 Cluster/Sector Coordinated In-Depth Sectoral Assessment

The in-depth assessment uses harmonized sector specific tools to analyze the situation and trends, inform adjustments to the ongoing response and inform detailed planning for relief and early recovery.

In Lao PDR, some clusters and lead agencies are well prepared to conduct in-depth assessments, however further work is required to define how the sectoral assessments can be harmonized, including agreement on minimum indicators to be assessed. Further work is also required to ensure that cluster/sector assessments, where several sectors are assessed at the same time, can be coordinated or jointly implemented.

7.4.4 Post Disaster Needs Assessment

The Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) is a government-led exercise that compiles information into a single, consolidated report detailing information on the physical impacts of a disaster, the economic value of the damages and losses, the human impacts as experienced by affected populations, and related early and long-term recovery needs and priorities. In 2011, the Government conducted a PDNA with support from the World Bank and other UN agencies. The tool has been since modified to include further inputs on particularly the human and social aspects. Further work is required to ensure that the tool is both consistent with the global PDNA template, once it is available, and that it is aligned with the overall assessment methodology for Lao PDR of a phased and aligned assessment approach at different stages of the response.

⁴² The report format is yet to be finalized.

8. Resource Mobilization

There are multiple options for resource mobilization in a disaster, and depending on the situation, one or several options may be appropriate. Resources may be mobilized:

- Internally by the agency or organization. In this situation, the single agency internal emergency funding should be coordinated with inter-agency funding requests where possible;
- Bilaterally from donors present in Lao PDR or the region, in a joint or single agency/organization proposal;
- On an inter-agency basis facilitated and overseen by the IASC under the leadership of the UNRC and facilitation of the UNRCO in conjunction with cluster leads, for example the CERF or Flash appeals, or the OCHA Emergency Cash Grant.

The following section outlines the options for inter-agency resource mobilization and provides an outline of local/regional donors who fund humanitarian actions in Lao PDR.

It is anticipated that a CERF application and a flash appeal in the event the contingency plan scenario will be requested. This will be decided by the UNRC based on consultations with the IASC.

8.1 Central Emergency Relief Fund

The CERF is a humanitarian fund established by the UN and replenished annually through contributions from governments and the private sector. The CERF constitutes a pool of reserve funding to support humanitarian action, divided into a loan facility of US\$50 million and a grant facility of US\$450 million. UN agencies and International Organization for Migration (IOM) can apply for CERF funding.

CERF applications⁴³ are submitted by the RC/HC following consultations with the IASC. An application includes a cover letter from the RC/HC to the ERC and a completed CERF application template. The CERF Secretariat reviews the request, and the ERC makes the final decision. Detailed information can be found at the following site:

<http://ochaonline.un.org/cerf/HowtoApply/CERFGuidance/tabid/5818/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

8.2 FLASH Appeal

Flash appeals present an early strategic response plan and specific projects within five to seven days of the emergency's onset. If major uncertainty exists about the evolution of the crisis, the appeal presents the most likely scenarios and the response strategy for each. Flash appeals are usually revised about a month later, when more information is available. They may serve as the basis for funding applications to the CERF (among other donors). CERF generally provides the initial injection of funds for the most urgent life-saving projects in the Flash appeal to cover the time lag between issuance of the appeal and receipt of commitments and funds from donors. The Government cannot

⁴³ Please refer to the <http://www.unocha.org/cerf/> website for detailed information about the different CERF applications

appeal for funds directly in the Flash Appeal, but can be a project partner of a UN agency or INGO.

The RC/HC, supported by OCHA, is responsible for producing the appeal. Organizations that have been asked to lead and coordinate the response within a given sector or area of activity (i.e. cluster or sector leads) have a key role to collaborate with all relevant partners to develop the response plans and vet project proposals for inclusion in the appeal. Flash appeals should include priority projects from all key-implementing agencies on the ground, including NGOs, and have a maximum duration of six months. A Flash appeal may be developed into a Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP)⁴⁴ if the emergency lasts for more than six months.

The UNRC is responsible for submitting the flash appeal to OCHA by day four of an emergency, and the appeal is usually launched by day six.

In 2009, a flash appeal was launched for the Ketsana response in Lao PDR. More detailed information about the flash appeal process can be found at on the following site:

<http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/humanitarian-financing/appeals-system>

8.3 OCHA Emergency Grant

The OCHA ECG is an emergency fund of up to US\$100,000 that can be requested by the UNRC or the Government of an affected country to purchase assistance items and to cover the cost associated with their distribution. The fund is allocated within ten days of a disaster. A grant request template and more detailed information is available on the following site:

<http://ocha.unog.ch/drptoolkit/FEmergencyCashGrant.html - 1>

8.4 Local and Regional Donors

The following local and regional donors provide humanitarian funding, and in some cases in kind emergency response materials and human resources.

- Australian AID (AusAID)
- Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG EU/ECHO) (based in Bangkok)
- The Embassy of the United States of America
- The German Embassy
- The Government of Japan
- The Luxemburg Embassy (based in Hanoi, Viet Nam)
- The Singapore Embassy

Please refer to annex 13 for detailed information of the donors funding mechanisms.

⁴⁴ <http://www.unocha.org/cap/about-the-cap/about-process>

Annex List

1. List of Acronyms
2. Contact List
3. NDMC Decree
4. IASC TOR
5. Emergency Task Force TOR
6. Information Management Network TOR
7. Cluster Leads TOR
8. Cluster Response Plans
9. Cluster Situation Report Input Template
10. Overall Situation Report Template
11. Initial Information Guidance Note
12. Common Rapid Assessment Tool
13. Local and Regional Donor Information