



# STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) ON RELIEF IN SIERRA LEONE

National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA)

SEPTEMBER 2024

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| AAR    | After Action Review  |
| CBT    | Cash-Based Transfers   |
| CBOs   | Community Based Organizations                                      |
| CVC    | Classification and Valuation Certificate                           |
| EOC    | Emergency Operations Centre  |
| FCT    | Family Contact Tracing   |
| GDACS  | Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System                      |
| GOSL   | Government of Sierra Leone   |
| HAP    | Humanitarian Accountability Partnerships                           |
| IASC   | Inter-Agency Standing Committee                                    |
| IDP    | Internally Displaced Persons                                       |
| IFRC   | International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies   |
| M&E    | Monitoring and Evaluation  |
| MDAs   | Ministry, Departments and Agencies                                 |
| MIRA   | Multi-Indicator Rapid Assessment                                   |
| MOF    | Ministry of Finance  |
| MOH    | Ministry of Health   |
| MTA    | Ministry of Transport and Aviation                                 |
| MTI    | Ministry of Trade and Industry                                     |
| NCRA   | National Civil Registration Authority                              |
| NDMA   | National Disaster Management Agency                                |
| NGOs   | Non-Governmental Organizations                                     |
| NRA    | National Revenue Authority   |
| OCHA   | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| ONS    | Office of National Security  |
| RSLAF  | Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces                              |
| SLAA   | Sierra Leone Aviation Authority                                    |
| SL-MET | Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency                                 |
| SLPA   | Sierra Leone Port Authority  |
| SLRA   | Sierra Leone Roads Authority                                       |
| SLSB   | Sierra Leone Standards Bureau                                      |
| SOG    | Standard Operating Guidelines                                      |
| SOP    | Standard Operating Procedures                                      |
| UN     | United Nations   |
| WASH   | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene                                      |



## Foreword

Disasters and emergencies have the potential to strike at any moment, disrupting lives, communities, and entire nations. These catastrophic events, whether natural or human-induced, have a profound impact on individuals, families, and societies, leaving behind a trail of devastation and despair. In these moments of crisis, the timely and effective delivery of relief assistance is not just a necessity but a moral imperative.

The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on Relief presented in this document represents a comprehensive and meticulously crafted framework designed to guide and govern disaster response efforts in Sierra Leone. Developed through a collaborative and consultative process involving key stakeholders, experts, and practitioners in the field of disaster management, this SOP embodies a commitment to excellence, accountability, and humanity.

Sierra Leone, a country highly susceptible to a myriad of disasters, ranging from floods and mudslides to epidemics and industrial accidents, has weathered its fair share of challenges. The resilience and fortitude of the Sierra Leonean people in the face of adversity are testaments to their strength and determination. Yet, as we stand on the threshold of a new era in disaster response, it becomes imperative to introduce a contemporary and fully updated approach that not only addresses the urgent need for prompt and effective disaster response but also reflects our collective experiences and the lessons learned from past disasters.

The SOP on Relief serves as a beacon of hope and a roadmap for action in times of crisis. It is a living document that outlines clear definitions, objectives, and strategies aimed at safeguarding human life, protecting the economy, and fostering community resilience across Sierra Leone. Grounded in international best practices and aligned with global humanitarian standards, this SOP sets forth a systematic and coordinated approach to disaster relief, emphasizing the principles of accountability, transparency, and inclusivity.

In the wake of disasters such as the flooding in September 2015 and the mudslide in August 2017, Sierra Leone has shown remarkable strength and unity in responding to the needs of affected populations. The establishment of the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) in 2020 marked a significant milestone in the country's disaster management efforts, providing a dedicated platform for coordinating relief measures and enhancing response capabilities. The SOP on Relief builds upon this foundation, seeking to further strengthen the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in disaster response and recovery.

As we navigate the complexities of disaster management in Sierra Leone, it is essential to underscore the importance of preparedness, coordination, and community engagement. The SOP on Relief serves as a unifying force, bringing together government agencies, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, and international partners in a concerted effort to deliver timely and equitable relief to those in need. By fostering a culture of preparedness and resilience, this SOP aims to empower communities, build capacity, and enhance response mechanisms to mitigate the impacts of future disasters.



The success of any relief operation hinges on effective communication, collaboration, and coordination among all stakeholders. The SOP on Relief prioritizes these principles, emphasizing the value of community awareness initiatives, robust communication strategies, and comprehensive training for field staff and volunteers. By engaging with local leaders, leveraging local knowledge, and promoting transparency throughout the relief distribution process, we can ensure that assistance reaches those who need it most, in a timely and dignified manner.

In closing, the SOP on Relief underscores our unwavering commitment to the well-being and safety of all Sierra Leoneans. It stands as a testament to our collective resolve to build a more resilient, prepared, and compassionate society that can weather any storm and emerge stronger on the other side. Together, let us uphold the principles of humanity, solidarity, and integrity as we embark on this journey to provide hope and support to those in their hour of greatest need.

Brima Sesay  
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## Executive Summary

The Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) on Relief presented here outline a comprehensive framework for effective disaster response and humanitarian aid distribution in Sierra Leone. These SOPs have been meticulously developed to address the complexities and challenges faced in the aftermath of disasters, ensuring a prompt, coordinated, and transparent relief process. The SOPs encompass a wide range of areas, including beneficiary selection, logistics and supply chain management, community awareness initiatives, monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder coordination, and risk assessment. By implementing these SOPs, the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), along with various stakeholders and partners, aims to enhance the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of relief operations, ultimately ensuring that aid reaches those most in need in a timely and effective manner.

The SOP emphasizes the importance of a systematic and fair beneficiary selection process, ensuring that aid reaches the most vulnerable populations affected by disasters. Criteria for selection include vulnerability factors, assessment of damage, and collaboration with local leaders for validation. This process is designed to be transparent, inclusive, and community-driven, with clear guidelines for appealing and addressing grievances. To enhance cultural sensitivity and inclusivity, the SOP incorporates community representatives in the selection process to ensure that relief efforts are culturally appropriate and aligned with local customs. Additionally, gender considerations are integrated into the beneficiary selection process to ensure equitable access to resources and support for women. Girls, and marginalized groups, who are often disproportionately affected by disasters.

Efficient logistics and supply chain management are vital for the timely delivery of essential supplies during relief operations. The SOP outlines procedures for rapid assessment, sourcing, transportation, and storage of relief items. By leveraging supplier relationships, developing comprehensive logistics plans, and utilizing technology for real-time tracking, the SOP aims to optimize the supply chain for effective disaster response. Recognizing the impacts of climate change on disaster frequency and intensity, the SOP has been designed to incorporate climate action strategies, ensuring that relief operations not only address immediate needs but also contribute to longer-term resilience and adaptation efforts. Additionally, a structured funding mechanism will ensure that financial resources are allocated efficiently, supporting sustainable and effective relief efforts.

Community awareness initiatives play a key role in ensuring that stakeholders are well-informed and prepared for disaster relief efforts. The SOP outlines strategies for organizing community meetings, distributing informational materials, collaborating with local leaders, and utilizing local radio stations for communication. Engaging with communities and promoting awareness of relief processes aims to build trust and empower individuals to take action in times of crisis. Furthermore, ongoing training initiatives for local responders and community members will bolster local capacities and resilience while emphasizing the importance of gender-sensitive approaches in disaster risk reduction.



To ensure comprehensive preparedness, the SOP includes a robust risk assessment framework that identifies potential hazards and vulnerabilities within communities, particularly in the context of climate change. This proactive approach helps inform readiness strategies and enhance the effectiveness of disaster response. Additionally, the SOP establishes feedback and grievance mechanisms, allowing beneficiaries to voice concerns and suggestions through anonymous reporting options and regular surveys, ensuring that community need, including gender-specific concerns, are prioritized.

The SOP includes for a strong framework for monitoring and evaluation to assess the effectiveness and impact of relief operations. Performance monitoring involves establishing measurable objectives, collecting data, analyzing outcomes, and implementing feedback mechanisms. A detailed monitoring framework specifies indicators for assessing success and outlines the frequency of evaluations. By documenting lessons learned, making necessary adjustments, and maintaining transparency, the SOP aims to enhance future disaster response efforts and ensure accountability.

Moreover, this SOP not only focuses on immediate relief efforts but also integrates post-disaster recovery and resilience-building strategies. Emphasizing sustainable development practices will help communities rebuild and strengthen their resilience against future disasters.

In conclusion, the Standard Operating Procedures on Relief presented here provide a detailed and structured approach to disaster response and humanitarian aid distribution in Sierra Leone. By adhering to these SOPs, the NDMA and its partners can ensure that relief efforts are carried out efficiently, transparently, and with a focus on meeting the needs of affected populations. The SOPs serve as a critical tool for enhancing the overall preparedness, coordination, and effectiveness of relief operations, ultimately contributing to building resilience and fostering a culture of preparedness within communities across Sierra Leone.



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# 1. Introduction

Sierra Leone is highly susceptible to a range of disasters stemming from social, geological, meteorological, hydrological and epidemic origins. These disasters manifest in various forms, including droughts, floods, pest infestations and epidemics as well as specific incidents such as fires, windstorms, and major accidents. The existing system for disaster prevention, relief, and rehabilitation encompasses a wide array of services and skills, necessitating effective multi-sectoral harmonization and coordination.

After years of managing disasters and complex emergencies that have impacted millions of Sierra Leoneans across all segments of society, it is imperative to introduce a contemporary and fully updated Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). This SOP will serve as a new framework that not only addresses the urgent need for prompt and effectively disaster response but also reflects our collective experiences and those of non-state actors in the field.

This SOP provides clear definitions for disasters and emergencies, aligning with the fundamental principle of safeguarding human life and protecting the economy. It outlines the overarching aims, general and specific objectives, and strategies to achieve institutional goals and facilitate coordinated actions among all stakeholders involved in disaster management. This SOP is intended to work alongside documentation from the National Disaster Management Agency and draw from best practices outlined in the AFRICAB Final Report (September 2021).

This SOP:

- a) Should be read in conjunction with the NDMA's Sierra Leone Incident Management Systems documentation (see Annex 1). This integration ensures consistency and coherence in our approach to disaster management.
- b) Is grounded on an extensive review of current practices and potential best practice enhancements, drawing insights from the AFRICAB Final Report (September 2021) (see Annex 1). This evidence-based approach aims to strengthen our disaster response mechanisms and improve overall resilience.

By implementing this SOP, we aspire to create a robust and adaptive disaster management framework that not only responds effectively to emergencies but also fosters a culture of preparedness and resilience within communities across Sierra Leone.



## 2. Context Analysis

### 2.1. Overview of the situational context

Sierra Leone is increasingly vulnerable to natural, human-induced, and climate-related shocks, as evidenced by significant events such as the flooding in September 2015, the mudslide in August 2017, and multiple fire incidents in 2021. The recent building collapses in Freetown during July and August 2024 further highlights this vulnerability. Despite various capacity-building efforts aimed at enhancing the response capabilities of national institutions and stakeholders, relief mechanisms still require strengthening through the introduction of a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

When emergencies normally occur, they cause disruptions in livelihoods and economic activity, destroy property, and displace communities. They also compromise essential public services and infrastructure, leading to a reliance on external assistance until normalcy is restored. These situations demand immediate action to save lives and mitigate further destruction. Numerous national and international organizations provide emergency relief, emphasizing the need for streamlined procedures.

An effective SOP is crucial, especially since many disasters in Sierra Leone are preventable and often of human origin. It has been noted that individuals frequently lack awareness of the consequences of their actions and may adopt a laissez-faire attitude, resulting in catastrophic outcomes. Strengthening emergency response through established procedures can help mitigate these risks and enhance community resilience.

The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) has made significant strides to strengthen the roles and responsibilities of the institution mandated with executing relief measures in Sierra Leone (see AFRICAB Report 2021 – Annex 1). In particular, the National Disaster Management Agency Act 2020 established the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) with the core mandate of managing disasters and similar emergencies throughout Sierra Leone. PART (III) of the Act makes provision for the following:

- 1) Respond effectively to disasters and emergencies.
- 2) Stockpile, manage, coordinate and supervise the distribution of disaster relief items.
- 3) Provide first line response in the event of a disaster.
- 4) Organize disaster response and relief simulations and exercises.
- 5) Coordinate response; and reconstruction efforts of local and international partners and organizations.

Since the establishment of the NDMA, the Agency has frequently responded to and coordinated relief addressing the needs of affected populations that have experienced damage and loss arising from the specific impact of disaster incidents such as floods,



windstorms, fire outbreaks, road traffic (fuel tanker) accidents and collapsed buildings to name but a few. The affected population have been provided with food, non-food items and cash-based transfers. In undertaking relief interventions, there has previously been no clear SOP to efficiently conduct distribution, inform and improve procedures and practices (see AFRICAB Report, 2021 – Annex 1). This new SOP will address this gap.

## 2.2. Needs Assessment

The pressing need for a comprehensive SOP in Sierra Leone’s disaster management context stems from several critical gaps identified in the current framework:

- Clarity in beneficiary identification: there is a lack of standardized guidelines for identifying and registering beneficiaries during disaster relief efforts. Many individuals may not be aware of their rights to assistance, or the processes involved in accessing relief, resulting in inequitable distribution of aid,
- Resource Optimization: Given the limited resources available for disaster response, there is a need to optimize the use of these resources to avoid duplication of efforts. A well-defined SOP will establish mechanisms to coordinate the distribution of relief items among various stakeholders, ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in resource utilization,
- Awareness and education: many emergencies in Sierra Leone are preventable through proactive measures and education. There is a critical need for enhanced awareness and education among the population regarding disaster risks and prevention measures. The SOP can provide clear guidelines and protocols to foster a culture of preparedness and resilience within communities.
- Strengthening institutional capacity: the NDMA and other stakeholders require a clear framework that outlines roles and responsibilities to disaster response. The SOP will contribute to strengthening institutional capacity by providing operational guidelines and facilitation training initiatives for personnel involved in disaster management.

## 2.3. Coordination mechanisms

### 2.3.1. National Coordination Structures

Effective coordination mechanisms are essential for managing information flow and resource allocation during relief operations in Sierra Leone. The National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR) serves as the highest coordinating body for disaster management, chaired by the Vice President. This platform convenes quarterly during non-crisis periods and can convene daily during emergencies, involving a diverse range of stakeholders, including government ministries, UN agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).



Upon the declaration of an emergency, the Emergency Coordination Committee (ECC) is activated. This committee comprises critical agencies that facilitate coordinated disaster responses. For example, during the Ebola outbreak in 2014, the ECC was instrumental in unifying efforts across various sectors to implement effective containment measures.

The National Strategic Situation Group (NSSG) plays a key role in monitoring and resource allocation during significant emergencies, assessing situations and directing national operations. The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) serves as a central hub for coordinating responses to both natural and human-induced crises, ensuring effective dissemination of information and management of emergency supplies. During relief operations, the NEOC coordinates logistics, including the distribution of relief items and deployment of personnel. It acts as a communication link among various agencies, facilitating seamless information flow among all stakeholders involved in the response.

At the regional level, Regional Disaster Management Committees (RDMCs) facilitate collaboration between national and local priorities. District Disaster Management Committees (DDMCs) engage local representatives to coordinate preparedness and response plans, ensuring that local needs are adequately addressed.

At the local level, Chiefdom Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs) mobilize community stakeholders and volunteers, often acting as first responders to ensure culturally appropriate responses to local needs. This intricate network of coordination structures empowers Sierra Leone to effectively manage disasters and support its communities during emergencies.

### 2.3.2. Roles and Responsibilities of Key Agencies

The following agencies are designated to play critical roles in coordinating relief efforts in Sierra Leone:

**National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA):** Acts as the primary governmental coordinator for managing national emergencies. The NDMA convenes in the NEOC to direct and coordinate emergency response operations, ensuring alignment among all agencies involved.

**Office of National Security (ONS):** Serves as the primary governmental coordinator for managing national security during emergencies, ensuring that security considerations are integrated into all relief operations.

**Ministry of Finance (MoF):** Authorizes duty-free concessions for relief items entering the country, facilitating the expedited importation of essential supplies during crises.

**National Revenue Authority (NRA):** Ensures efficient clearance of goods at borders and implements anti-smuggling measures to prevent the unauthorized entry of relief items.

**Ministry of Transport and Aviation (MTA):** Facilitates the effective and timely delivery of relief items across transport networks, coordinating logistics to ensure prompt distribution.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation: Processes and facilitates duty-free concessions for authentic relief items, ensuring that international aid reaches affected areas without delay.

Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS): Coordinates the duty-free concession for medical supplies, leading the overall coordination of National Emergency Medical Teams and supporting the deployment of International Emergency Medical Teams.

Sierra Leone Police: Ensures effective security at borders to safeguard the integrity of relief operations and maintains order during distribution efforts.

Immigration Department: Issues landing visas and permits for relief workers, facilitating their entry for humanitarian efforts.

Sierra Leone Airport Authority (SLAA): Assists in the storage and timely delivery of relief items at airport facilities, coordinating with other agencies to manage incoming supplies.

Sierra Leone Ports Authority (SLPA): Facilitates the storage and delivery of relief materials at port facilities, ensuring that goods are efficiently distributed to affected regions.

Sierra Leone Standards Bureau (SLSB): Ensures the quality and safety of relief items through rigorous assessment and compliance with established standards.

Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI): Issues a blanket letter during emergencies to waive the Classification and Valuation Certificate (CVC), streamlining the goods clearance process for relief items.

Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces: Provides additional security at borders and assists in logistics and distribution efforts during emergencies.

Ministry of Social Welfare: Coordinates humanitarian aid, mobilizes resources, and provides targeted assistance to vulnerable groups, ensuring effective distribution during emergencies.

Other Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), such as the Meteorological Agency, the Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, may also be assigned support responsibilities for specific emergency functions. Additional supporting organizations include local radio stations, the Sierra Leone Red Cross, and other relief emergency NGOs.

### 2.3 Inter-Agency Coordination

Inter-agency coordination is critical for an effective disaster response. The following mechanisms shall be implemented to enhance inter-agency coordination:

Joint Coordination Meetings: Regular meetings among key agencies and partners shall be convened to discuss ongoing operations, share updates, and address challenges, fostering collaboration and ensuring clarity of roles.



**Resource Sharing Agreements:** Agencies are encouraged to establish agreements that facilitate the sharing of resources, including personnel, equipment, and supplies, maximizing efficiency during relief operations.

**Integrated Response Plans:** Development of integrated response plans involving input from multiple agencies shall be prioritized to streamline efforts and reduce duplication of work.

**Training and Capacity Building:** Joint training programs shall be organized to enhance the skills of personnel from different agencies, promoting understanding of capabilities and fostering teamwork.

## 2.4 Enhancing Coordination Between National and Local Agencies

To ensure effective disaster management, coordination between national and local agencies must be enhanced through the following measures:

**Decentralized Decision-Making:** Local agencies and communities shall be empowered to make decisions regarding disaster response, ensuring that actions are tailored to the specific needs of affected populations.

**Community Engagement:** Active involvement of community members in planning and response efforts shall be promoted to foster ownership and accountability. Local Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs) shall play a critical role in mobilizing community resources.

**Feedback Mechanisms:** Establishment of feedback channels between national and local agencies shall be prioritized to facilitate continuous improvement of response strategies.

## 2.5 Fostering Partnerships

Fostering partnerships with various stakeholders is essential for a comprehensive disaster response. The following strategies shall be employed:

**Collaboration with NGOs and Community-Based Organizations:** Partnerships with local and international NGOs shall be strengthened to enhance capacity for response, leveraging established networks and expertise.

**Engagement with the Private Sector:** Collaboration with the private sector shall be pursued to provide additional resources and expertise, including donations, logistical support, and technical assistance.

**International Partnerships:** Relationships with international organizations, such as the United Nations and regional bodies, shall be built to facilitate access to additional resources and technical support during major disasters.

## 2.6 Communication Protocols

Effective communication protocols are essential for seamless information exchange within Sierra Leone's disaster management framework, particularly during relief operations. Bidirectional communication shall enable dialogue between national authorities and local communities, allowing for timely incident reporting. Upon



receiving community reports, national structures shall verify the information through subnational organizations before taking action, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the situation.

The National Strategic Situation Group (NSSG) shall utilize Critical Information Requirements (CIR) to identify ongoing information needs, supporting regular updates to the President regarding response operations. Establishing communication channels among local leaders and organizational stakeholders shall further enhance coordination and ensure culturally sensitive responses.

### Recent Developments

In response to recent challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and climate-related disasters, the Sierra Leone government has updated its SOPs to enhance responsiveness during relief operations. These updates include provisions for virtual coordination meetings to ensure ongoing communication during restrictions, as well as the integration of new technologies for data collection and sharing among agencies. The government has also strengthened partnerships with local NGOs and community-based organizations to improve grassroots engagement in disaster preparedness and response.

## 2.4. Roles and Responsibilities of Key Agencies

**National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA):** Serves as the primary governmental coordinator for managing national emergencies, both natural and man-made. The Director and NDMA staff will convene in the EOC to direct and coordinate emergency response operations.

**Office of National Security (ONS):** Serves as the primary governmental coordinator for managing national security.

**Ministry of Finance (MoF):** Authorize duty-free concessions for relief items entering the country.

**National Revenue Authority (NRA):** Ensure efficient clearance of goods at borders and implement anti-smuggling measures to prevent and combat the smuggling of relief items.

**Ministry of Transport and Aviation (MTA):** Facilitate the effective and smooth delivery of relief items across transport networks.

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation:** Process and facilitate duty-free concessions for authentic relief items.

**Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS):** Coordinate the duty-free concession for medical supplies in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development. Leads the overall coordination of National Emergency Medical Teams and supports the deployment of International Emergency Medical Teams.

**Sierra Leone Police:** Ensure effective security at borders to safeguard the integrity of relief operations.





**Immigration Department:** Issue landing visas and permits for relief workers, facilitating their entry for humanitarian efforts.

**Sierra Leone Airport Authority (SLAA):** Assist in the storage and timely delivery of relief items at airport facilities.

**Sierra Leone Ports Authority (SLPA):** Facilitate the storage and delivery of relief materials at port facilities.

**Sierra Leone Standards Bureau (SLSB):** Ensure the quality and safety of relief items through rigorous assessment and standards compliance.

**Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI):** issues a blanket letter during emergencies to waive the Classification and Valuation Certificate (CVC), streamlining the goods clearance process.

**Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces:** Provide additional security at borders to enhance the effectiveness of relief operations.

**Ministry of Social Welfare:** Work with the NDMA to coordinate humanitarian aid, mobilize resources, and provide targeted assistance to vulnerable groups, ensuring effective distribution during emergencies.

Some other MDAs (Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency (SL-MET), the Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security) may from time-to-time be assigned support responsibilities for specific emergency functions. Other supporting organizations include local radio stations, the Sierra Leone Red Cross and other relief emergency NGOs.



**Local Government Authorities:** Local Government Authorities are responsible for implementing disaster response plans tailored to their specific regions. They ensure that local strategies align with national frameworks, facilitating a cohesive approach to disaster management. These authorities work closely with community leaders and organizations to enhance coordination and effectiveness in response efforts. Engaging with local communities is also a priority, as it allows them to understand the unique needs and priorities of the populations they serve.

**Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):** NGOs play a vital role in providing specialized support during disasters. Their contributions include medical assistance, food distribution, and shelter provision for affected populations. NGOs assist in conducting rapid needs assessments to identify the specific requirements of communities impacted by disasters. They also monitor relief efforts, reporting on progress and challenges to the NDMA, ensuring transparency and accountability in the response process.

**Community-Based Organizations:** Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are essential for mobilizing local populations during disaster response efforts. They engage community members in decision-making processes, ensuring that interventions are culturally appropriate and reflective of local knowledge. By leveraging local insights, CBOs help inform response strategies that resonate with the community's needs and enhance overall effectiveness.

**Volunteers and Other Stakeholders:** Volunteers and various stakeholders contribute significantly to disaster response efforts by supporting logistics, distributing relief items, and engaging in community outreach initiatives. Their involvement is crucial for enhancing community preparedness, as they participate in training and awareness programs designed to equip individuals with the skills necessary to respond effectively during emergencies.

### 3.0. Aims and Objectives

The SOP will aim to:

- i. Ensure coordinated communication among national and international organizations, government agencies, and local stakeholders for effective collaboration in emergency relief efforts.
- ii. Create guidelines to streamline resource assessment, mobilization, and distribution, ensuring prompt and equitable aid to address urgent needs.

These will be achieved through the following objectives:

- i. Establish a systematic process to enhance reliability and predictability of emergency responses in the event of an emergency.



- ii. Establish clear roles, responsibilities, and division of labor to enhance coordination within NDMA and with partners.
- iii. Support transparency and accountability in emergency relief operations, enabling affected individuals and stakeholders to clearly understand the actions to expect, monitor implementation, and follow up if agreed-upon procedures are not fulfilled.
- iv. Support in minimizing errors, ensure timely responses, and prevent resource duplication and misunderstandings.

### 3.1. Purpose

The purpose of this SOP is to improve the effectiveness and promptness of humanitarian responses, fostering a common understanding among stakeholders during emergencies. It provides a clear framework for planning, executing, and evaluating relief operations, serving as a crucial tool for coordinating efforts among teams and partners. By minimizing misunderstandings through clear guidelines on roles and responsibilities, this SOP will ensure efficient resource use and accountability, thereby promoting uniformity in the response efforts.

### 3.2. Scope of the SOP

This SOP applies to all personnel involved in emergency management, including central government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), local government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international aid organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. The SOP looks at the main actions expected at the national level, specifically by the NDMA in coordinating partners to ensure the effective provision and distribution of disaster relief items. They do not go into the SOP of individual MDAs and/or sectors responsible for coordinating national security or importing and receiving international relief consignments and equipment. Different sectors are expected to have their SOPs on how they will carry out monitoring and response activities in line with this SOP.

### 3.3. Definitions

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:** Refers to the organization and stewardship of resources and responsibilities to address all aspects of emergencies, particularly focused on preparedness, response, and initial recovery efforts.

**EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC):** Designates specially equipped facilities where government officials exercise direction, control, and coordinate necessary resources during an emergency situation.

**EMERGENCY RELIEF ITEMS:** In line with the Revised Kyoto Convention ratified by the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2015, the definition of 'relief consignments' include



- goods, including vehicles and other means of transport, foodstuffs, medicaments, clothing, blankets, tents, prefabricated houses, water purifying and water storage items, or other goods of prime necessity, forwarded as aid to those affected by disaster; and
- all equipment, vehicles and other means of transport, specially trained animals, provisions, supplies, personal effects and other goods for disaster relief personnel in order to perform their duties and to support them in living and working in the territory of the disaster throughout the duration of their mission.

Procedures for receiving international emergency relief consignments and equipment imported for humanitarian purposes are already outlined in the NRA SOP (2018), which provides specific guidelines for importing international emergency consignments. Additionally, it details customs facilitation measures for the importation and/or transit of relief items. Importantly, this SOP applies to the post-clearance stage of the relief process.

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE:** Encompasses activities conducted from the detection of an event until the situation stabilizes after impact. The primary goal is to save lives and protect property by positioning emergency equipment and supplies, evacuating potential victims, and providing food, water, shelter, and medical care. Visible response actions include securing impacted areas, evacuating threatened locations, conducting search and rescue operations, delivering emergency medical care, and sheltering evacuees. Throughout this stage, emergency managers continually assess damage and coordinate the arrival of incoming support to deploy resources where they are most needed.

**EVACUATION:** An operation that involves the temporary relocation of all or part of a population, whether individually or collectively, from an area where a disaster or emergency is imminent or has already occurred.

**EXPOSURE:** Refers to individuals, properties, systems, or elements present in hazard zones that may face potential losses due to exposure to hazards.

**HAZARD:** A potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon, or human action that can result in loss of life, injury, property damage, social and economic disruption, or environmental degradation.

**RISK:** The probability of harmful consequences or anticipated losses (deaths, injuries, property damage, disruption of livelihoods, or environmental harm) resulting from interactions between natural or human-induced hazards and vulnerable conditions.

**RISK ASSESSMENT:** A methodology for determining the nature and extent of risk by analyzing potential hazards and evaluating existing vulnerabilities likely to harm exposed people, properties, services, livelihoods, and the environment.

**SOCIAL VULNERABILITY:** Characteristics of individuals or groups that influence their ability to anticipate, cope with, resist, and recover from the impacts of natural hazards, recognizing that social vulnerability evolves over time.



**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPs):** Approved methods for carrying out tasks or sets of tasks, typically developed at the departmental or agency level, and sometimes referred to as Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs).

**VULNERABILITY:** Social and material conditions derived from the characteristics of individuals and groups that make them susceptible to harm and loss from environmental hazards, limiting their capacity to cope with disaster adversities.

## 4.0 Activation of SOPs

### 4.1 Triggers for Activation

The SOP shall come into effect upon the official declaration of an emergency following a natural disaster, which may include but is not limited to floods, landslides, storms, wildfires, or any other events that pose immediate threats to public safety, health, and infrastructure. This trigger applies to all local and international assistance.

The SOP takes effect upon the official declaration of an emergency resulting from natural disasters, including floods, landslides, storms, wildfires, or any other events posing immediate threats to public safety, health, and infrastructure. This trigger applies to both local and international assistance. Implementation will follow the emergency classification and notification procedures outlined in Section III of the NDMA Act. A notice regarding the emergency must be published in the government gazette and media. Once the NDMA confirms an escalating emergency, the NDPRRR will convene, promptly informing the President of the situation and advising him/her based on its findings.

### 4.2 Notification Procedures

The President or the Director General of NDMA declares an emergency based on preliminary assessments of the disaster's impact. The declaration should include details on the nature of the disaster, affected areas, and immediate threats to public safety. This should be in the form of a statement/pronouncement that is communicated to all relevant parties, including local responders, MDAs, local councils, NGOs, and international assistance organizations.

The NDMA utilises multiple communication channels (email alerts, text messages, and public announcements) to ensure the information reaches key stakeholders quickly. The affected local communities are also notified about the relief preparedness, evacuation orders, emergency shelters, and available resources to ensure that the relief efforts are timely, effective, and well-coordinated.

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is activated to serve as the central point for coordination. The EOC disseminates further instructions and resources to all responders, including information on resource allocation, logistical support, and safety protocols.



### 4.3 Deployment Procedures

During a relief emergency, the deployment of response teams is a crucial phase that requires careful coordination and execution to ensure effective aid delivery. The process begins with the activation of emergency protocols based on a comprehensive assessment of the disaster, identifying immediate needs and prioritizing areas requiring assistance. Following this assessment, response teams, including medical, logistical, and security units, are mobilized. These teams are equipped with necessary supplies gathered from stockpiles or donor contributions.

A coordinated effort with local, national, and international agencies is essential to streamline operations. Once the teams arrive at the affected area, command centers and distribution points are established to oversee the delivery of support. Continuous monitoring allows for the adjustment of strategies in response to evolving conditions and feedback from the ground.

Key Steps in Deployment:

- Activate and assess needs for targeted assistance.
- Mobilize and transport response teams and supplies efficiently.
- Establish on-site operations for effective aid management.

This systematic approach ensures that relief efforts are organized and responsive, ultimately enhancing the impact of assistance provided to those in need.

### 4.4 Initial Response Actions

In the initial stages of a relief emergency, responders play a pivotal role in ensuring an effective and organized response. Their primary actions include swiftly evaluating the disaster's impact to identify immediate needs, such as medical care, food, water, and shelter. Establishing operational bases and command centers is essential for coordinating efforts and managing logistics effectively.

Furthermore, responders must collaborate with local, national, and international agencies to streamline operations and avoid duplication of efforts. Ensuring the safety and security of both responders and the affected communities is paramount. This includes conducting survivor outreach with a focus on vulnerable populations in urgent need of assistance. By continuously mobilizing resources and adapting to the evolving situation, responders can enhance the efficacy of their aid efforts.

- Initial Response Actions:
- Conduct a rapid assessment of immediate needs.
- Establish command centers for efficient coordination.
- Prioritize safety protocols for all involved.

## 5. Strategies

In the wake of disasters and emergencies, an effective relief distribution strategy is essential for mitigating risks and reducing vulnerabilities among affected populations.



The strategies outlined below focus on the overall relief strategy, operational planning, and coordination with stakeholders. These strategies are designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of disaster response efforts, ensuring that assistance reaches those who need it most.

## 5.1. Overall Relief Strategy

The overall relief strategy encompasses a comprehensive approach to disaster response, integrating the involvement of various stakeholders, the preparation of specific relief plans, and the establishment of financial and relief packages tailored to different types of disasters.

### 5.1.1. Involvement of State and Non-State Actors

One of the core principles of the overall relief strategy is the active involvement of both state and non-state actors in the design and implementation of relief programs. This collaborative approach ensures that diverse perspectives, expertise, and resources are leveraged to enhance the effectiveness of relief efforts.

- Engage various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations, international agencies, and the private sector, fosters a multi-sectoral response that addresses the multifaceted nature of disasters. For instance, collaboration with health organizations can ensure that medical assistance is integrated into relief efforts, while partnerships with local businesses can facilitate the supply of essential goods.
- Involve local communities in the planning and implementation of relief programs is crucial for ensuring that the assistance provided is relevant and tailored to their specific needs. Community participation can take the form of consultations, focus group discussions, and participatory assessments, allowing local voices to inform decision-making processes.
- There is a need for capacity building for both state and non-state actors. Training programs and workshops can enhance the skills and knowledge of stakeholders involved in disaster response, ensuring that they are well-equipped to deliver effective relief services.

### 5.1.2 Preparation of Specific Relief Plans

Recognizing that different types of disasters require tailored responses, the overall relief strategy includes the preparation of specific relief plans for various disaster scenarios. These plans should be comprehensive and address the unique challenges posed by each disaster type.



- Develop specific relief plans for disasters such as drought, flood, accidents, epidemics, domestic fires, bushfires, storms, mudslides, and industrial accidents. Each plan should include:
  - A thorough risk assessment to identify potential impacts, vulnerabilities, and resource needs specific to each disaster type.
  - A clear framework outlining the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders during the response phase. This should include coordination mechanisms, communication protocols, and resource allocation strategies.
  - Provisions for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the response, including feedback mechanisms to gather insights from affected communities.
- Flexibility and Adaptability: Specific relief plans should be designed with flexibility and adaptability in mind, allowing for adjustments based on changing circumstances and emerging needs. This is particularly important in dynamic disaster situations where conditions can evolve rapidly.

### 5.1.3 Establishment of Financial and Relief Packages

To support effective relief distribution, the overall strategy emphasizes the establishment of financial and relief packages that consider the varying scopes and magnitudes of different disasters.

A robust financial framework should be developed to ensure that adequate funding is available for disaster response efforts. This may involve:

- Establishing emergency funds that can be quickly mobilized in the aftermath of a disaster. These funds should be accessible to both government agencies and NGOs to facilitate timely response efforts.
- Integrating disaster response funding into national and local budgets to ensure that resources are earmarked for preparedness and response activities.
- Outlining the types of relief packages that will be provided based on the nature of the disaster. These packages may include:
  - Distribution of essential items such as food, water, shelter materials, and medical supplies tailored to the specific needs of affected populations.
  - Implementing cash-based transfer programs to empower affected individuals and families to make their own purchasing decisions, thereby supporting local economies and facilitating recovery.
  - Collaborating with financial institutions can enhance the efficiency of cash-based transfer programs. This includes establishing partnerships with banks and mobile money providers to facilitate secure and timely transfers.





## 6. Key Considerations for relief distribution

For persons to be considered as affected and be eligible for inclusion on any respective beneficiary list following a disaster, emergency and/or incident, they must fall within one or more of the categories outlined below:

### 6.1. GENERAL CONSIDERATION

The person must have been an affected person as defined in the interpretation section of the NDMA Act 2020. An affected person is defined in the NDMA Act 2020 as: **“a person who is injured or whose property and means of livelihood has been destroyed by a disaster”**.

#### 6.1.1. SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

The affected person:

- Must have been internally displaced by the disaster/emergency/incident; living in a temporary settlement (camp or camp-like settlement).
- Must have been internally displaced by the disaster/emergency/incident; living in a host community with no capacity for self-repair/recovery, no shelter option and/or in a poor makeshift structure.
- Be living in structures without solid walls, a damaged or an unfinished building.
- Be part of households with limited or no income.
- Be from female headed households.
- Be from child headed households.
- Have or be from large families with more than five children (under 18 years old).
- Constitute part of a household with at least one disabled, chronically or acutely ill person.
- Be from a household with at least one elderly person.
- Be from a household with pregnant and/or lactating woman.
- Be from a household with a physically challenged person.

### 6.2. Distribution of relief

The distribution of relief supplies during an emergency is a critical operation that requires methodical execution. First, it is essential to assess the needs of the affected population through surveys and community consultations. Establishing a central command streamlines efforts and prioritizes the allocation of supplies based on urgency.

Key steps include organizing transportation to secure distribution points that are accessible to beneficiaries. A transparent registration system should be implemented to prevent crowding and ensure fair access. Coordination with local organizations will enhance the effectiveness of the outreach.



All supplies must be clearly sorted and labelled, and staff should be trained in distribution protocols. Regular monitoring and feedback mechanisms will help refine the process. Thorough record-keeping of distributed items will ensure accountability and serve as valuable data for future relief efforts.

The Relief and Response Team remains responsible for maintaining inventory and coordinating logistics throughout this process.

### 6.2.1. Safety and Security

Ensuring the safety and security of both beneficiaries and relief workers is paramount during the distribution process. Key considerations include:

- Conduct thorough assessments to identify potential risks associated with the distribution site, including security threats, natural hazards, and health risks. This assessment should inform the selection of safe locations for distribution.
- Implement crowd control measures to prevent chaos and ensure orderly distribution. This may include organizing beneficiaries into smaller groups, using queuing systems, and deploying trained personnel to manage the crowd effectively.
- Special attention should be given to the safety of vulnerable groups, including women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Ensuring that distribution points are accessible and secure for these populations is critical.
- Collaborate with local law enforcement and community leaders to maintain security during distribution events. Their involvement can help foster trust within the community and ensure a smooth distribution process.

#### 6.2.1.1. Security Protocols for Relief Workers

In relief emergency operations, ensuring the safety and security of relief workers is paramount. To protect personnel and maintain operational integrity, several standard protocols should be implemented.

- Conduct thorough security assessments to identify potential threats, including political instability and health hazards in the area.
- Establish secure perimeters through controlled access points and checkpoints to prevent unauthorized entry. All personnel should wear ID badges, and visitor logs must be maintained for accountability.
- Regular communication with local law enforcement enhances security measures, and relief workers should receive training on situational awareness and emergency procedures.
- Establishing reliable communication channels ensures quick responses to emerging threats.
- Maintaining evacuation plans and designated safe zones is crucial.
- Integrate training programs for military and police officers in relief operations. This training should focus on emergency response protocols, crowd management, and the unique challenges faced in humanitarian settings. By



equipping military and police officers with the necessary skills and knowledge, they can effectively support relief efforts while ensuring the safety of both beneficiaries and relief workers.

By integrating these protocols, organizations can create a safer environment for relief workers, enabling them to focus on delivering essential services in affected areas.

#### 6.2.1.2. *Safety Measures for Affected Populations*

In relief emergency operations, implementing safety measures for the affected population is vital to ensure their well-being. Key procedures include:

- Establish designated safe zones to offer refuge from environmental hazards.
- Access to clean water and sanitation facilities to prevent disease, while the provision of nutritious food helps combat malnutrition.
- Provide robust medical care, which includes mental health support, to address both physical and psychological needs.
- Safeguard vulnerable groups, such as children and the elderly, from exploitation and abuse.
- Foster trust and encourage participation in decision-making processes through clear communication regarding available services, evacuation routes, and community engagement.
- Conducting health screenings and vaccination campaigns to prevent disease outbreaks
- Implement feedback mechanisms for continuous improvement in service delivery.
- Organize regular safety drills to prepare the population for emergencies

By prioritizing the safety and dignity of affected individuals and integrating training for military cadets, relief efforts can significantly enhance the effectiveness of emergency responses while ensuring a secure environment for all involved.

#### 6.2.2. Timelines of Distribution

Timeliness is crucial in disaster relief, as affected individuals and families often require immediate assistance. Key considerations include:

- Following a disaster, conduct rapid assessments to determine the needs of affected populations. This information should be used to develop a clear timeline for distribution that prioritizes urgent needs.
- Establish pre-defined schedules for distribution to ensure that beneficiaries know when and where to access assistance. Timely communication of these schedules is essential to facilitate attendance.
- While timelines are important, the distribution process should remain flexible to adapt to changing circumstances, such as logistical challenges or emerging needs identified during the assessment phase.



- Implement monitoring mechanisms to track the distribution process and ensure that timelines are adhered to. This can help identify bottlenecks and allow for timely adjustments.

### 6.2.3. Community Involvement and Acceptance

Engaging the community in the relief distribution process is vital for ensuring acceptance and effectiveness. Key considerations include:

- Collaborate with local leaders and community organizations to identify beneficiaries and facilitate distribution. Their involvement can help legitimize the process and foster community trust.
- Establish channels for community feedback regarding the distribution process. This can include suggestion boxes, community meetings, or hotlines to allow beneficiaries to voice concerns and suggestions.
- Conduct awareness campaigns to inform the community about the relief distribution process, eligibility criteria, and the types of assistance available. This transparency can enhance community participation and acceptance.
- Ensure that the distribution process respects local customs and cultural practices. Engaging with the community to understand their preferences can improve acceptance and participation.

### 6.2.4. Inclusivity and Non-Discrimination

Ensuring that the relief distribution process is inclusive and non-discriminatory is essential for reaching the most vulnerable populations. Key considerations include:

- Follow the established criteria for beneficiary selection to ensure that assistance reaches those most in need, including internally displaced persons, female-headed households, child-headed households, and households with disabled or elderly members.
- Recognize the specific needs of women and girls in the distribution process. This includes ensuring that women have equal access to aid and that their unique needs, such as hygiene products and maternal health resources, are addressed.
- Consider the impact of climate-related disasters, such as flooding, on agriculture and farmland. Provide targeted support to farmers whose livelihoods have been affected by such events, including cash-based transfers and agricultural inputs for recovery.
- Ensure that distribution points are physically accessible for persons with disabilities and provide assistance as needed to ensure their participation in the relief process.



- Implement and enforce non-discrimination policies to prevent bias in the distribution process. Training for relief workers on inclusivity and sensitivity can help ensure that all beneficiaries are treated fairly.

### 6.2.5. Shelter and Housing Arrangements

Effective shelter and housing strategies are vital for ensuring the safety and dignity of individuals affected by emergencies. The first step is to assess immediate shelter needs and identify suitable locations, such as schools or community centers, for temporary accommodations.

Key elements include:

- Establishing a central command to coordinate efforts and streamline operations.
- Quickly deploying emergency shelter materials, such as tents and tarps, to provide immediate protection.
- Involving local communities in setting up shelters to ensure culturally appropriate solutions.

Basic amenities, including clean water and sanitation facilities, must be prioritized. Continuous monitoring is essential to address conditions such as overcrowding and safety. Coordination with local authorities will facilitate the integration of temporary shelters into long-term recovery plans, paving the way for transitional housing initiatives that support the shift to permanent homes post-disaster.

### 6.2.6. Health and Medical Services

In emergency relief operations, health and medical services adhere to a systematic approach to ensure an effective response to urgent needs. Initial assessments prioritize patient care based on the severity of conditions, enabling swift interventions. Collaboration with local authorities establishes vital communication channels for coordinated action.

Key procedures include deploying trained medical teams and setting up field hospitals and mobile clinics to deliver immediate care. Supplies of essential medical equipment and medications are crucial to maintain service levels. Additionally, monitoring for disease outbreaks and implementing vaccination campaigns prevents public health crises.

Psychosocial support and community engagement are integral, providing counseling services and health education to affected populations. Continuous data collection on health outcomes is essential for assessing response effectiveness and adapting strategies as necessary. Together, these efforts ensure comprehensive health and medical services during emergencies, addressing both immediate and long-term needs of affected communities.



### 6.2.7. Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

In emergency relief operations, implementing effective water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) procedures is crucial to prevent disease and ensure community health. The response begins with rapid assessments to identify gaps in water and sanitation resources. Establishing systems for safe drinking water—through purification, distribution, or water trucking—follows immediately.

Sanitary facilities, particularly temporary latrines and handwashing stations must be installed, prioritizing accessibility and gender sensitivity. It is essential to distribute hygiene kits that include soap and menstrual products, supporting personal hygiene efforts. Community education on safe water storage and handwashing practices is vital to prevent disease transmission.

Continuous monitoring of water quality and sanitation facilities ensures compliance with health standards. Additionally, collaboration with local authorities and NGOs is necessary for efficient resource utilization. These structured procedures are designed to provide safe water access and maintain hygiene standards in affected areas, ultimately safeguarding public health during emergencies.

- Conduct rapid WASH assessments.
- Establish safe water supply systems.
- Set up gender-sensitive sanitation facilities.
- Distribute hygiene kits and educate communities.
- Monitor water quality and sanitation standards.

### 6.2.8. Gender considerations

Integrating gender considerations into all phases of disaster response is essential for addressing the unique needs of women, men, boys, and girls. This approach not only enhances the effectiveness of relief efforts but also promotes the empowerment of vulnerable populations. Key steps to consider:

- Conduct thorough assessments to identify the distinct needs and vulnerabilities of different gender groups within affected populations. Utilize surveys, focus group discussions, and interviews to gather relevant information.
- Establish separate shelters, sanitation facilities, and distribution points for men and women to ensure privacy and safety. Regular inspections should be conducted to maintain hygiene and security standards.
- Implement security protocols specifically designed to protect women and girls from gender-based violence (GBV). Hire trained personnel to monitor facilities and establish confidential reporting mechanisms for incidents of violence.
- Create committees that include women representatives to ensure their voices and perspectives are integrated into planning and implementation. Facilitate regular meetings to gather input from women on their needs and preferences.



- Provide gender sensitivity training for all personnel involved in relief operations. Equip staff with knowledge on gender dynamics, GBV prevention, and inclusive practices to enhance their ability to respond effectively.
- Establish gender-sensitive indicators to monitor the effectiveness of relief operations. Collect disaggregated data on service utilization and outcomes to evaluate the impact of interventions and identify areas for improvement.

### 6.2.9. Climate action

As climate change increasingly impacts the frequency and severity of natural disasters, the NDMA must prioritize climate action in its relief operations. By adopting strategies that promote long-term climate resilience. The NDMA can ensure that vulnerable populations are better equipped to withstand the challenges posed by climate-related events. Key steps to consider:

- Conduct assessments to identify the potential impacts of climate change on affected communities. This understanding will inform the development of targeted interventions that enhance adaptive capacity and reduce risks.
- Prioritize the use of local and sustainable materials in relief operations to minimize environmental impacts while supporting local economies. Establish guidelines for eco-friendly practices in all operational activities.
- Optimize transportation routes and logistics to minimize emissions during relief operations. Utilize energy-efficient vehicles and promote renewable energy sources, such as solar panels, in operational facilities.
- Organize workshops and training sessions to educate community members about sustainable practices involve local leaders and organisations to foster collaboration and ensure culturally relevant interventions.
- Partner with organisations specializing in environmental sustainability to conduct joint assessments of environmental impacts. Share findings and lessons learned to promote knowledge exchange and capacity building.
- Establish a framework for monitoring the environmental impact of relief activities. Collect and analyze data on resource use, waste generation, and emissions to assess the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives and make necessary adjustments.

## 7. Justifications for the standard operating procedure on relief

The establishment of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on Relief is essential for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of disaster response efforts. The following outline the rationale behind the established procedures and their compliance with international standards and guidelines.



## 7.1. Rationale Behind Established Procedures

The SOP on Relief is designed to address the complexities and challenges associated with disaster response. The justifications for these procedures include:

- Maintaining a comprehensive and continuously updated inventory of logistical resources is critical for effective disaster preparedness and response. This ensures that all stakeholders have access to a clear inventory of available resources to facilitate rapid response.
- The SOP aims to ensure that relief action programs are effectively implemented for affected populations. This will involve the need for structured relief efforts to address both immediate needs and long-term recovery, thereby promoting community resilience.
- The SOP includes provisions for the contracting of specialist agencies for humanitarian assistance. This ensures that expertise is available to address specific needs, such as medical care, psychological support, or technical assistance for rebuilding infrastructure, demonstrating the importance of leveraging expert knowledge in disaster response.
- The SOP facilitates the preparation of detailed distribution plans for grants and resources allocated for disaster relief. This structured approach ensures that all actions are documented and aligned with the overall response strategy, enhancing accountability and transparency. The Sphere Standards, which focus on humanitarian accountability, emphasize the importance of clear distribution plans to ensure that aid reaches the intended beneficiaries effectively.
- By establishing clear procedures, the SOP supports humanitarian assistance operators, including government agencies, NGOs, and community organizations, in their efforts to provide timely and effective aid. This collaborative approach is underscored by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), which promotes coordinated responses among various actors in humanitarian settings.

## 7.2. Compliance with International Standards and Guidelines

The SOP on Relief is aligned with international standards and guidelines, ensuring that disaster response efforts meet global best practices. Key aspects of compliance include:

- The SOP is grounded in the core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence, as outlined by the United Nations. This ensures that relief efforts prioritize the needs of affected populations without discrimination and are carried out in a manner that respects the dignity of individuals.





- The SOP is designed to comply with the Sphere Standards, which set minimum standards for humanitarian response, including the provision of adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care. By following these standards, the SOP ensures that relief efforts meet the basic needs of affected populations and uphold their rights.
- The SOP incorporates principles from the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which emphasizes the importance of preparedness, response, recovery, and resilience building in disaster management. This framework guides the development of comprehensive disaster response strategies that aim to reduce vulnerability and enhance community resilience.
- The SOP promotes collaboration with international humanitarian organizations, such as the Red Cross and UN agencies, which provide guidance and support for effective disaster response. This collaboration ensures that local efforts are informed by global best practices and that resources are utilized efficiently.
- The SOP includes provisions for monitoring and evaluation, ensuring that disaster response efforts are assessed for effectiveness and accountability. This aligns with the principles of the OECD-DAC criteria for evaluating humanitarian assistance, which emphasize the importance of learning from experiences to improve future responses.

## 8. Items for distribution

The distribution of items in the aftermath of disasters, emergencies, or significant incidents is crucial for supporting affected households and communities. This section outlines the types of items included considerations for gender, storage and inventory management, supply chain management, and quality control procedures.

### 8.1. Types of Items Included

#### *Food Items:*

- In-Kind Food Ration: Each affected household will receive one 50 KG bag of rice and two gallons of vegetable oil. These items are chosen based on international best practices to meet standard nutritional requirements.

#### *Non-Food Items:*

- Essential Non-Food Items: The following non-food items will be distributed per household:



**Table 1: Non-Food Items**

| No | Item          | Specifications (litres) | Unit per household |
|----|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1  | Jerry Can     | 10                      | 1                  |
| 2  | Rubber Bucket | 10                      | 1                  |
| 3  | Praying Mat   |                         | 1                  |
| 4  | Blanket       |                         | 1                  |

*Shelter Kits:*

- For House Owners: Shelter kits will be provided to house owners whose homes have been destroyed or partially damaged. The kits will include:

**Table 2: Building Materials**

| No | Item             | Specifications  | Unit per household |
|----|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1  | Zinc             | 6 feet (Bundle) | 5                  |
| 2  | Roofing Nails    | Packs           | 5                  |
| 3  | 4" Nails (5 Pcs) | Packs           | 5                  |
| 4  | 3" Nails (5Pcs)  | Packs           | 5                  |

*Public Facilities:*

- Shelter Kits for Public Facilities: Similar items as those provided to households, but in greater quantities, will be distributed to public facilities such as schools, health centers, and community centers.

*Cash-Based Transfers (CBT):*

- For Affected Businesses and Farmers: Cash-based transfers will be provided to business owners whose shops have been destroyed and farmers whose crops have been affected. The amount will be determined based on assessments of the incident's severity.
- Support for Bereaved Families: CBT will also be extended to individuals who have lost loved ones, to assist with funeral expenses.
- Affected individuals and families: provide cash assistance to affected individuals and families to meet their immediate needs. Ensure that cash distribution is secure and reaches the intended beneficiaries.

*Gender Considerations:*

- The distribution plan should consider the specific needs of different genders, ensuring that women, who often play central roles in household management



and caregiving, receive adequate food and non-food items. Items such as blankets and hygiene kits should be included to meet the needs of women and children, particularly in the context of safety and dignity.

### *Financial inclusion*

- Promote financial inclusion by facilitating access to banking and financial services for affected populations
- Provide financial literacy training to help beneficiaries manage their resources effectively.

## 8.2. Storage and Inventory Management

Effective storage and inventory control during relief emergencies are crucial for ensuring timely access to essential supplies. The process begins with evaluating storage needs and identifying available facilities, ideally establishing secure temporary storage units close to the disaster zone.

Key procedures include conducting a rapid inventory assessment to prioritize supplies based on urgency and need, alongside implementing a robust tracking system—such as barcoding or RFID—for real-time updates on stock levels. Organizing the storage layout strategically is vital, categorizing items (e.g., food, water, medical supplies) to facilitate quick retrieval.

### **Key Practices:**

1. **Centralized Storage Locations:** Establish centralized storage facilities that are easily accessible to distribution teams. These facilities should be secure, weatherproof, and capable of handling large quantities of supplies.
2. **Inventory Management System:** Implement an effective inventory management system to track the quantities of food and non-food items received, stored, and distributed. This system should include:



- **Barcode Tracking:** Utilize barcodes to streamline tracking processes and minimize errors.
  - **Regular Inventory Audits:** Conduct regular audits to reconcile physical stock with recorded data, ensuring accuracy.
  - **Clear Categorization:** Organize items based on type (e.g., food, non-food, shelter materials) and intended recipient (e.g., households, public facilities) to facilitate easier access and distribution.
  - **Perishable Items Management:** For perishable food items, ensure that storage conditions are appropriate to prevent spoilage. Regularly monitor temperature and humidity levels to maintain quality.
3. **Regular Audits and Stock Checks:** Conducting regular audits and stock checks helps prevent shortages or excessive inventory. Clear documentation and established procedures for receiving and distributing items are essential for ensuring accountability and transparency throughout the process.
  4. **Staff Training:** Training staff in inventory management best practices enhances the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the emergency response.

By implementing these measures, resources can be managed efficiently during crises, ensuring that essential supplies are readily available when needed.



### 8.3. Logistics and Supply Chain Management

Effective logistics and supply chain management are critical during relief emergencies to ensure the timely delivery of essential supplies. The process begins with a rapid needs assessment to identify requirements, followed by the establishment of a central command to streamline communication and coordination among stakeholders.

Sourcing necessary items should leverage pre-established supplier agreements, allowing for the potential bypassing of normal procurement procedures to expedite acquisitions. Transportation logistics must be adaptable to infrastructure challenges, employing alternative routes as necessary.

#### Key Considerations:

1. **Rapid Assessment:** Promptly evaluate the needs of the affected population to determine the most critical supplies required.
2. **Central Command:** Enhance communication and coordination among all stakeholders involved in the relief effort to ensure a unified response.
3. **Efficient Sourcing:** Utilize established supplier agreements to quickly acquire necessary items, minimizing delays.
4. **Transport Coordination:** Navigate logistical challenges effectively by adapting transportation strategies to the current infrastructure conditions.

Additionally, establishing temporary storage facilities near disaster zones facilitates efficient distribution, while transparent tracking systems ensure accountability throughout the supply chain.

#### Key Components of Effective Supply Chain Management:

1. **Supplier Relationships:** Build relationships with reliable suppliers for both food and non-food items, including local vendors. This approach supports the local economy and reduces transportation times.
2. **Logistics Planning:** Develop comprehensive logistics plan that outline transportation routes, delivery schedules, and distribution points. This plan should account for potential obstacles, such as damaged infrastructure or security concerns.
3. **Coordination with Stakeholders:** Collaborate with local and international NGOs, government agencies, and community organizations to enhance the supply chain. Sharing resources and information can significantly improve efficiency and reach.
4. **Technology Utilization:** Implement technology to monitor the supply chain in real time, allowing for quick adjustments to distribution plans based on changing circumstances.



By focusing on these key considerations and components, logistics and supply chain management can be optimized to maximize the impact of humanitarian efforts during crises, ensuring that essential items reach affected populations promptly.

## 8.4. Transportation procedures

Transportation procedures during relief emergencies are vital for ensuring efficient aid delivery. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), in collaboration with the Ministry of Transportation and Aviation, spearheads this effort.

The process begins with a thorough evaluation of transportation needs and available resources. A central command is established to streamline communication and coordination. Logistics teams assess the safest routes, adjusting for potential obstacles and damage, while identifying suitable transport modes such as trucks, helicopters, or boats.

Key steps include:

- Assigning appropriate vehicles based on cargo requirements.
- Employing trained drivers familiar with emergency protocols.
- Implementing real-time tracking systems to monitor progress.
- Maintaining a reserve of drivers, parts, and maintenance personnel to ensure readiness.

Regular debriefs post-delivery help refine future strategies, ensuring that vital supplies reach affected areas swiftly and effectively. Accurate documentation of all shipments enhances accountability throughout the process.

## 8.5. Quality Control Procedures

Quality control procedures are essential to ensure that items distributed meet safety and quality standards. Key practices include:

- Conduct thorough inspections of all items upon arrival at storage facilities. This includes checking for:
  - Checking for expiration Dates to ensure that the food items are within their shelf life.
  - Check for damages or defects in non-food items.
- Ensure that all items meet relevant safety and health standards. This may involve adhering to guidelines set by national and international agencies.
- Provide training for staff and volunteers involved in the distribution process on quality control measures, including how to identify substandard items and the importance of maintaining quality.
- Implement feedback mechanisms for beneficiaries to report any issues with the quality of items received. This feedback should be reviewed regularly to inform future procurement and distribution practices.



## 9. Beneficiary selection process

The beneficiary selection process is a critical component of disaster response, ensuring that aid reaches those who need it most. This process must be transparent, fair, and efficient, particularly in the aftermath of disasters and emergencies. The following outlines the criteria for selection, procedures for identifying beneficiaries, and appeals and grievance mechanisms.

### 9.1. Criteria for Selection

The criteria for selecting beneficiaries should be comprehensive and aimed at identifying the most vulnerable populations affected by the disaster. Key criteria may include:

- Prioritize households based on vulnerability factors such as poverty level, disability, age (elderly and children), and health status. Vulnerable groups, including women-headed households and persons with disabilities, should be given special consideration.
- Assess the extent of damage or loss incurred by households during the disaster. This includes physical damage to property, loss of livelihoods, and access to basic needs such as food, water, and shelter.
- Identify households that have been displaced due to the disaster, focusing on those who have lost their homes or are living in temporary shelters.
- Utilize local knowledge and input from community leaders, such as chiefs and councilors, to identify true beneficiaries. Their insights can help ensure that those most in need are prioritized.
- Ensure that beneficiaries are registered with accurate documentation, including names, addresses, and contact information, to facilitate effective communication and follow-up.

### 9.2. Procedures for Identifying Beneficiaries

The process of identifying beneficiaries should be systematic and inclusive, involving multiple stakeholders to ensure accuracy and fairness. The following steps outline the procedures:

- Information about the disaster is communicated to the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) through various channels, including local authorities, media, and community stakeholders. This initiates the beneficiary selection process.
- A multi-sectoral assessment team is established, comprising representatives from NDMA, National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA), Ministry of Social Welfare, Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS), local councils, UN



agencies, and relevant NGOs. This team will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the disaster's impact.

- The assessment team should utilize the Multi-Indicator Rapid Assessment (MIRA) tool to collect data on the affected population and their needs. This includes gathering information on household composition, property damage, and immediate needs.
- After the assessment, a formal registration process is conducted to document the details of identified beneficiaries. This includes recording the names of household heads, addresses, telephone numbers, and the extent of their losses.
- Engage local leaders and community stakeholders in the verification process to ensure that the identified beneficiaries are indeed those in need. This may involve face-to-face interviews and collateral verification from community members.
- For incidents like mudslides or maritime accidents, Family Contact Tracing (FCT) should be employed to gather data. This involves initiating contact through face-to-face interactions and telephone calls, as well as verifying information through collateral sources such as community leaders and manifests from boat owners.

### 9.3. Appeals and Grievance Mechanisms

An effective appeals and grievance mechanism is essential to ensure accountability and transparency in the beneficiary selection process. The following elements should be included:

- Create accessible channels for beneficiaries and community members to voice concerns or complaints regarding the selection process. This could include suggestion boxes, dedicated hotlines, or designated points of contact within the NDMA or local councils.
- Develop and communicate clear guidelines outlining the process for submitting appeals or grievances. This should include information on what issues can be raised, how to submit a complaint, and the timeline for responses.
- Involve community leaders and stakeholders in the grievance resolution process to ensure that it is community-driven and culturally sensitive. This can help build trust and encourage more individuals to come forward with their concerns.
- Ensure that appeals and grievances are addressed promptly, with clear communication back to the complainants. Regular updates on the status of their appeals should be provided to maintain transparency.
- Implement a monitoring system to track the number and types of grievances received, as well as how they are resolved. This data can inform improvements to the beneficiary selection process and enhance accountability.





## 10. Sensitization work

The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on Relief emphasizes the importance of sensitization work and effective communication to ensure that all stakeholders are well-informed and prepared for disaster relief efforts. The key components of community awareness initiatives, communication strategies, and training for field staff and volunteers.

### 10.1. Community Awareness Initiatives

Community awareness initiatives are essential for ensuring that all stakeholders understand the relief process and their roles within it. These initiatives will involve:

- Organizing community meetings regularly before disaster seasons to engage local populations in discussions about risks and preparedness. These meetings will help build trust and ensure that community members feel empowered to take action as it will provide a platform for dialogue allowing community members to ask questions and express concerns.
- Distributing informational materials such as brochures, flyers, and posters that summarize key aspects of the SOP. The colourful and illustrative brochures to communicate disaster preparedness tips. These materials will be designed to be visually appealing and easy to be understood, making them an effective tool for reaching diverse audiences, including those with low literacy levels.
- Collaborating with local leaders, including Members of Parliament, District Council Chairmen, Paramount Chiefs, Town Chiefs, and Village Heads, to promote awareness of the relief efforts. Local leaders will be trained to services as disaster risk reduction champions in their communities. They will help disseminate information and encourage participation in preparedness activities, leveraging their influence to foster community engagement.
- Utilizing local radio stations to broadcast information about the relief distribution process. This will include announcements about the date, time, location, and types of items to be distributed, as well as the identification and collection requirements for beneficiaries.

### 10.2. Communication Strategies

Effective communication strategies are vital for ensuring that all stakeholders are informed and engaged throughout the relief process. Key strategies include:

- Conducting regular briefings with key stakeholders, including Heads of Camp, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Heads of Households, the Office of National Security (ONS), and the Sierra Leone Police. These briefings will cover the agenda for relief distribution, logistical arrangements, and any changes to



the distribution plan. This proactive approach enhances collaboration and reduces confusion during crises.

- Developing clear and concise messaging that outlines the details of the relief distribution, including the agenda, date and time, location, types of items, and collection requirements. This messaging will be tailored to different audiences to be straightforward and accessible, ensuring that individuals understand what they need to do to prepare.
- Feedback Mechanisms: Establishing channels for feedback from community members and stakeholders. This could include suggestion boxes, hotlines, or designated points of contact where individuals can voice their concerns or ask questions about the relief process. This feedback is used to improve future preparedness efforts.
- Visual Aids: Utilizing visual aids such as posters and infographics that illustrate the relief distribution process. These aids can help convey complex information in a more understandable format, particularly for those with limited literacy skills. In some instances, it is advisable to use visual storytelling through infographics to communicate key messages about relief and disaster preparedness, making it easier for communities to grasp essential information at a glance.

### 10.3. Training for Field Staff and Volunteers

Training is critical to ensure that field staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively implement the SOP on Relief. This training will include:

- Conducting orientation sessions for all field staff and volunteers to familiarize them with the SOP, its objectives, and the roles they will play in the relief distribution process. This will ensure that everyone is on the same page and understands their responsibilities. It will be helpful to include simulations and role-playing exercises to prepare them for real-life scenarios.
- Training on the specific protocols for relief distribution. This training aims to equip personnel with essential skills for effective relief distribution. Participants will learn to verify beneficiary identification, manage logistics at distribution centers, and ensure fair and equitable distribution of items. Key components include
  1. *Verification of beneficiary identification:* Participants will be trained in specific protocols for verifying beneficiaries' identification to ensure that assistance is provided to eligible individuals. This includes
    - understanding the required documentation for beneficiary verification.
    - Implementing systematic checks to prevent fraud and ensure accuracy in beneficiary selection.



2. *Logistics management at distribution centres.* Training will cover best practices in managing logistics at distribution centres, including:
    - planning and organizing the distribution space for optimal flow and accessibility
    - inventory management techniques to track and account for relief items.
    - Coordination with transportation services to ensure timely delivery of supplies.
  3. *Fair and equitable distribution.* Emphasis will be placed on strategies to ensure that items are distributed fairly and equitably among beneficiaries, including:
    - Developing clear criteria for prioritizing beneficiaries based on need
    - Implementing monitoring mechanisms to assess the distribution process and address any disparities; and
    - Training on conflict resolution techniques to handle disputes that may arise during distribution.
- Providing training on effective community engagement techniques, including how to communicate with beneficiaries, address their concerns, and foster a positive relationship with the community. This community engagement training programs is importance in building trust and rapport with residents, equipping volunteers with the skills to navigate sensitive conversations during disasters.
  - Offering training on emergency response procedures, including how to handle unexpected situations that may arise during the distribution process, such as crowd management techniques and conflict resolution strategies, preparing volunteers to handle various scenarios during relief operations.
  - Training on the importance of monitoring and evaluation during the relief distribution process. This will include how to collect feedback from beneficiaries and report on the effectiveness of the distribution efforts. NGOs will provide training on monitoring and evaluation to ensure that field staff can assess the impact of relief efforts and make necessary adjustments based on community feedback.

#### 10.4. ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT FOR DISTRIBUTION TEAM

The following equipment are needed for distribution:

- a) Identifiable work jackets.
- b) Drinking Water.
- c) First Aid Kit (The Distribution Team should have at least one member trained in First Aid).
- d) Megaphones.
- e) Safety Equipment such as gloves and rubber boots.



- f) Rope/ Warning Tape for perimeter lining.
- g) Camera (Beneficiaries should be consulted before any photos are taken).
- h) Flashlights.
- i) Mobile Flood Lights.
- j) Banners.
- k) Whistles.
- l) Visibility Tapes.
- m) Area Map.
- n) Final Distribution List.
- o) Tokens (pre-numbered and serial).

## 11. DISTRIBUTION PROCESS

### 11.1 BEFORE DISTRIBUTION

Before initiating the distribution process, the following considerations should be taken into account:

1. Final verification: confirm and communicate the distribution date, time, and location to all stakeholders.
2. Required support: identify and arrange necessary manpower, equipment, and furniture for the distribution.
3. Prepositioning supplies: ensure essential food and non-food items are prepositioned at distribution centers.
4. Staff preparation: ensure all staff involved in the distribution understand their roles and responsibilities, with an emphasis on gender balance. Staff should attend a briefing session covering non-food distribution procedures and the delivery package list.
5. Preparation of materials: prepare banners, distribution forms, and tokens in advance.
6. Token distribution: distribute tokens to the targeted population (Household Heads) a day prior to the actual distribution, utilizing the beneficiary registration list.
7. Distribution center selection: identify distribution centers in consultation with community stakeholders and beneficiaries.
8. Staffing and volunteer assignment: assign sufficient staff and volunteers—including those from NDMA, MDAs, and local, national, and international partners—based on the number of households to ensure quick and effective responses to queries and complaints.
9. Security coordination: collaborate with the Sierra Leone Police to provide adequate security personnel, ensuring orderly distribution and safe crowd control.



## 11.2 DURING DISTRIBUTION

During the distribution, the Relief and Response Team must ensure:

1. Delivery to beneficiaries: essential food and non-food items are issued directly to beneficiaries, including those in hard-to-reach areas or unable to attend the distribution center. Special arrangements should be made with local chiefs and community leaders for exceptional cases, such as when a beneficiary is deceased, hospitalized, or otherwise incapacitated.
2. Proper handling of Items: items must be offloaded and handled safely to protect them from adverse weather conditions such as sun, rain, and wind.
3. Orderly distribution: the distribution must be organized systematically, with separate lines for men and women. Priority should be given to pregnant and lactating women, the physically challenged, the elderly, and sick persons.
4. Item accountability: all items delivered to beneficiaries must be counted. Any remaining or missing items not delivered must be reported immediately.

## 11.3 AFTER DISTRIBUTION / REPORTING

Following the distribution, the team must ensure:

1. Record Keeping: record all distributed items, including their type and quantity.
2. Returns Reporting: report all items returned to the warehouse, indicating their type and number.
3. Public information: inform the general public of NDMA's contact details, including address, contact person, telephone number, and office hours, for absentee beneficiaries to collect their relief items in the future.
4. Documentation: capture GPS coordinates, locations, and photographs of the distribution activities.
5. Filing of documentation: ensure accurate return and filing of beneficiaries' registration and receiving forms to the logistics officer.
6. Establishment of monitoring system: implement a post-distribution monitoring system to assess the quality and usage of relief items through field monitoring visits.

## 11.4 POST-DISTRIBUTION MONITORING

A strategy for collecting and evaluating feedback from beneficiaries will be employed. Data will be gathered to assess beneficiary appreciation and to obtain accurate information regarding the usage of distributed items. This will be achieved through Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM).

The findings from the monitoring activities will help identify errors, gaps, and potential single points of failure (SPOF) in the distribution process. Additionally, PDM will



evaluate whether beneficiaries are selling or exchanging the items to acquire essential goods that were not provided.

Post Distribution Monitoring should be conducted within one to three weeks following distribution by visiting a sample of beneficiary households and interviewing them about the quality, quantity, and proper use of the distributed items.

## 12. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) section of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) is crucial for ensuring the effectiveness and accountability of disaster relief efforts. This section outlines the framework for monitoring activities, evaluating outcomes, and establishing feedback mechanisms to improve the overall response to disasters.

### 12.1 Performance Monitoring

Effective performance monitoring during relief emergencies is essential for ensuring that resources are utilized efficiently and that the needs of affected populations are adequately addressed. The key procedures for performance monitoring include:

- **Establish Measurable Objectives:** Define clear, measurable objectives for key activities and outcomes related to the relief efforts (see table below).
- **Data Collection:** Regularly gather data through surveys, interviews, and observations to track progress and identify challenges. A schedule for data collection will be established, detailing the frequency, methods, and responsible personnel for gathering information on relief activities. Utilizing mobile technology for data collection—similar to the World Food Programme’s use of mobile surveys in disaster-affected areas—can enhance data accuracy and timeliness.
- **Data Analysis:** Analyze the collected data to evaluate effectiveness and provide stakeholders with regular updates on progress and challenges encountered.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish mechanisms to collect feedback from affected populations and staff, ensuring their perspectives inform the response.
- **Adaptive Management:** Make necessary adjustments based on evaluation findings and document lessons learned to enhance future efforts. During disaster response operations, a real-time monitoring system will be implemented to assess the effectiveness of relief efforts, allowing for timely adjustments as needed. The use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for real-time mapping of disaster impacts, as practiced in Japan, can provide valuable insights for decision-making.
- **Documentation and Transparency:** All monitoring activities will be documented in a centralized system, maintaining records of data collected,



analyses performed, and decisions made to ensure transparency and accountability.

These measures ensure that relief operations remain adaptive, transparent, and focused on meeting the evolving needs of communities in crisis.

**Table 3: Performance Monitoring**

| Key Performance Indicator (KPI)          | Description   | Target                       | Data Source                 | Frequency of Measurement |
|--|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Disaster Response Time                   | Time taken from disaster declaration to the first relief action.      | Within 3 hours               | Incident reports            | Per incident             |
| Relief Distribution Efficiency           | Percentage of relief materials distributed within the first 48 hours. | 95% of materials distributed | Distribution logs           | Per incident             |
| Beneficiary Registration Accuracy        | Percentage of beneficiaries accurately registered for relief.         | 100% accuracy                | Registration records        | Per incident             |
| Community Feedback Score                 | Average score from community feedback on relief efforts.              | Minimum score of 4 out of 5  | Feedback surveys            | Quarterly                |
| Training Participation Rate              | Percentage of NDMA staff and volunteers trained in disaster response. | 100% participation           | Training attendance records | Annually                 |
| Post-Disaster Assessment Completion Rate | Percentage of post-disaster assessments completed within 14 days.     | 100% completion              | Assessment reports          | Per incident             |
| Mitigation Strategy Implementation Rate  | Percentage of planned mitigation strategies implemented.              | 80% implementation           | Mitigation strategy reports | Annually                 |
| Coordination Meeting Effectiveness       | Percentage of stakeholders reporting                                  | 85% positive feedback        | Stakeholder surveys         | Bi-annually              |



|                                 |   |                 |                   |              |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|
|                                 | effective coordination.   |                 |                   |              |
| Resource Utilization Rate       | Percentage of allocated resources effectively utilized.             | 90% utilization | Financial reports | Quarterly    |
| Public Awareness Campaign Reach | Percentage of the target population reached by awareness campaigns. | 75% reach       | Campaign reports  | Per campaign |

## 12.2 Evaluation Plan

The evaluation plan outlines a structured approach for assessing the effectiveness and impact of relief operations. Key elements include:

- **Formative and Summative Evaluations:** Both formative evaluations, conducted during the implementation phase, and summative evaluations, conducted post-implementation, will be utilized to assess the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of relief efforts. The evaluation practices of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) can serve as a model for conducting thorough evaluations that inform future strategies.
- **Stakeholder Involvement:** Engaging stakeholders—including community members and partner organizations—is critical in the evaluation process to ensure a comprehensive assessment and promote transparency. Incorporating community feedback, as practiced in the evaluation processes of the Red Cross, can enhance the relevance and applicability of findings.
- **Learning and Adaptation:** The evaluation plan will emphasize learning and adaptation, using findings to inform future relief strategies and improve operational effectiveness. The After-Action Review (AAR) process, utilized by various emergency services globally, can be adapted to facilitate learning from past experiences.
- **Periodic Review:** Evaluations will be scheduled at regular intervals (e.g., quarterly, annually) to facilitate ongoing assessment and adaptation of the SOP based on lessons learned and changing needs.

### Post-Operation Evaluation

The post-operation evaluation process begins by assembling a diverse evaluation team, including field staff, local stakeholders, and beneficiaries, to encompass multiple perspectives. Establishing clear evaluation criteria aligned with initial objectives ensures a focused analysis of effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.





Data collection will involve both qualitative and quantitative methods, such as surveys, interviews, and analysis of existing records. Following data collection, debriefing sessions will document lessons learned and best practices. The subsequent data analysis will identify strengths and weaknesses in the response efforts while also assessing overall community resilience.

A comprehensive report will summarize the findings and recommendations, which will then be shared with stakeholders and the community. By utilizing these insights, organizations can enhance future disaster response planning, making relief efforts more effective and better attuned to the needs of affected populations.

### 12.3 Effective Reporting and Feedback Mechanisms

Effective reporting and feedback mechanisms are essential for promoting accountability and facilitating continuous improvement in disaster relief efforts. This section encompasses the following key elements:

- **Regular Reporting:** Reports detailing monitoring findings, evaluation results, and insights will be generated at specified intervals and disseminated to all relevant stakeholders, including government bodies, NGOs, and community members. Utilizing dashboards for reporting, as implemented by the Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS), can enhance the accessibility and clarity of information.
- **Feedback Loops:** Mechanisms for feedback will be established to allow stakeholders—especially community members—to share their experiences, concerns, and suggestions regarding relief efforts. This feedback will be utilized to inform decision-making and adapt the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) as needed. The feedback mechanisms employed by the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) can provide a framework for effective community engagement. Establishing effective feedback mechanisms is vital for ensuring that the needs of affected populations are adequately met. Organizations should implement a variety of feedback channels, such as hotlines, suggestion boxes, and community meetings, to enable individuals to voice their concerns and experiences. It is essential to inform the community about these channels and emphasize the importance of their input.
- **Public Access to Reports:** Regular collection of feedback through surveys and direct communication should be standard practice. This feedback must be analyzed to identify common issues and areas for improvement. Addressing these concerns promptly and communicating the actions taken back to the community fosters trust and demonstrates accountability. Proper documentation of all feedback and responses is crucial for future reference and transparency. By actively engaging with the community and adapting based on their insights, relief efforts can remain responsive and effective in meeting the evolving needs of those they serve.



## 13. RISK MANAGEMENT

In relief emergency response, effective risk management is crucial for minimizing hazards and ensuring safety. It begins with identifying potential risks, such as natural disasters or logistical challenges, and analyzing their severity and likelihood. Strategies are then developed to mitigate these risks, including the creation of emergency response plans, securing supply chains, and conducting staff training on safety procedures.

Key operational procedures encompass:

- Establishing clear communication channels for coordination among stakeholders.
- Collaborating with local authorities and NGOs to enhance the response efforts.
- Continuously monitoring evolving situations and adjusting plans accordingly.

Evaluating the effectiveness of risk management strategies post-response allows for improved measures in future emergencies. By implementing these processes, relief operations can be conducted safely, minimizing impacts on responders and affected communities alike. Effective risk management not only safeguards lives but also enhances the overall success of emergency interventions.

### 13.1 Identification of Potential Risks

An effective risk management process begins with a thorough identification of potential risks that may impact disaster relief operations:

**Risk assessment:** Comprehensive risk assessments will be conducted to identify various hazards, vulnerabilities, and the likelihood of occurrence. Assessments will utilize historical data, community feedback, and expert consultations. The risk assessment methodologies used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) can serve as a valuable reference.

**Community involvement:** Engaging local communities in the risk identification process encourages the sharing of local knowledge and experiences, which can enhance the accuracy and relevance of risk assessments. The participatory risk assessment approach used in Indonesia's disaster management efforts can be a model for community engagement.

**Documentation of identified risks:** All identified risks will be documented in a centralized risk register, outlining the nature, potential impact, likelihood, and responsible entities for managing each risk.

### 13.2 Mitigation Strategies

Once risks have been identified, appropriate mitigation strategies must be established to minimize their impacts:

**Development of mitigation Plans:** For each identified risk, specific mitigation plans will be developed that outline actions to reduce vulnerability and enhance



preparedness. These plans will include timelines, responsibilities, and resources required. The mitigation strategies employed by the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) in India can provide insights into effective planning.

**Capacity building:** Training programs and workshops will be implemented to enhance the skills and knowledge of community members and local officials, ensuring they are well-equipped to implement mitigation strategies effectively. The capacity-building initiatives of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) can serve as a model for training programs.

**Resource allocation:** Ensure that adequate resources (financial, human, and material) are allocated to support the implementation of mitigation strategies and to improve community resilience.

### 13.3 Contingency Planning

Contingency planning is essential to ensure a prompt and effective response to disasters when they occur:

**Development of contingency plans:** Comprehensive contingency plans will be formulated for various disaster scenarios, specifying protocols, resource requirements, and roles and responsibilities of stakeholders during emergencies. Ensure all personnel are aware of and trained in these contingency plans.

**Simulations and drills:** Regular simulations and drills will be conducted to test contingency plans, allowing stakeholders to practice their roles and identify areas for improvement. The annual disaster drills will be conducted as preparedness exercises.

**Coordination and communication:** Establish clear communication and coordination channels among stakeholders to ensure a collaborative and unified response during a disaster. The coordination mechanisms employed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) can provide valuable insights for effective collaboration.

By integrating these structured approaches to monitoring and evaluation, as well as risk management, the Standard Operating Procedures for disaster relief will enhance their effectiveness, improve resilience, and ensure that Sierra Leone is better prepared to face the challenges posed by disasters.

## 14. Reviewing and Updating the SOP

### 14.1 Procedures for Revising the SOP

In order to ensure effective implementation and ongoing enforcement of this SOP, there is a commitment to updating and reviewing the SOP on Relief. To promote best practices, this SOP would be reviewed every two years to address emerging issues. The review will be led by and undertaken by the NDMA's Director of Relief & Response in consultation with relief partners. Recommendations for the respective updating of this SOP will be forwarded by the NDMA's Director of Relief & Response for consideration and action by the Director General of the NDMA.



## 14.2 Documentation and Record-Keeping

Effective documentation and record-keeping during a relief emergency are critical for ensuring accountability, transparency, and optimal management of resources. A systematic approach should be established to gather relevant data, covering incident reports, resource allocation, financial expenditures, and volunteer activities. It is essential to utilize standardized forms for consistency and designate responsible personnel for documentation.

Records must be stored securely, whether digitally or physically, allowing for easy retrieval while maintaining confidentiality. Regular updates are vital to reflect changing situations, resource availability, and beneficiary needs. Periodic audits should be conducted to ensure accuracy and completeness of records, which facilitate reporting and post-emergency evaluations.

Additionally, fostering effective communication among response teams through timely sharing of documentation can enhance collaboration and informed decision-making. Overall, a robust documentation strategy is essential for revising plans, training, and addressing future mitigation activities.

Key Procedures:

- Systematically gather and update data.
- Use standardized forms and templates.
- Maintain secure and accessible records.

