



Inter-Agency Coordination

Unified Response Strategy: Report 2013

Sphere India Inter Agency Coordination (Unified Response Strategy (URS) is a program to provide common platform to all stakeholders for preparedness and coordination during emergencies. The program is steered by an Inter-Agency Coordination Committee of Sphere India comprising of members like Cordaid, CASA, Oxfam, Save the Children, UNDMT, DCA, CA, ADRA, Plan, CARE, EFICOR and Seeds.

Executive Summary

Program Background (2006 – 2013): The program started in 2006 with initial support from UNICEF and was led by SEEDS India. Oxfam, EHA, UNDP, Save the Children, EFICOR, CARE and DCA formed initial URS subcommittee, a strategic body for reviewing and guiding the program as required. The URS in practice led to emergence of local coordination groups called IAGs (Inter Agency Groups) at state and district levels in India. Till toady the IAC URS has activated the response response to floods in Bihar, Assam and Orissa in the year 2007, Kosi flood in Bihar, Assam and Odisha floods in 2008, Cyclone Aila in West Bengal: 2009, Flash flood in leh, UP flood in 2010, Uttarakhand flood in 2012 . IAC URS initiated the IAGs in 15 states and in 10 Districts so far besides building the capacity of various stakeholders on URS process by providing trainings on time to time.

Project IAC 2013: In the year 2013, the nominations for the IAC committee were reinvited and Cordaid, CASA, Oxfam, Save the Children, UNDMT, DCA, CA, ADRA, CARE, Plan, EFICOR and Seeds made the new committee. Apart from this, the Chairs of sector committees from Oxfam (WASH), Shelter (Seeds), Food and Nutrition (DCA), Health (EHA), Education (Plan) and Protection (Save the Children) were also invited to the IAC committee for sectoral coordination.

This year the URS process was activated for Drought in AP and Maharastra, Uttarakhand floods and Cyclone Phailin in Odisha and AP. The program also supported IAGs in Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Sikkim and District level IAGs in Uttarakhand and Odisha state.

Aim: To provide a common platform for multi stakeholder coordination, mapping of resources, capacities and vulnerabilities to identify the gaps and overlaps and gradually build a common understanding for common assessment, response, recovery and DRR planning.

Objectives:

- To provide a single platform for coordination during disaster and peace time for DRR measures and to strengthen the participatory approach.
- To provide timely information by establishing a resource center. (SitRep and Response Matrix).
- Mapping of Agencies and their intervention to avoid gaps and overlaps.
- To assess the damages and needs of the affected population to ensure the needs and rights of the affected people are met with dignity.

Key Achievements:

- **Assessments:**
 - For the first time an Inter-Agency Assessment exercise was facilitated for drought situation (AP and Maharastra in March and April 2013). The assessment provided an important insight and need to develop formats for slow onset disasters like drought.
 - The assessment experience improved with activation of sector committees for multi sector assessment of Uttarakhand flash floods. The format was contextualized and practice for multi sectoral assessment improved over earlier experiences.

- The process further improved with multi sectoral assessment of Phalin cyclone in Odisha.
- Frequent use of common assessment formats for Rapid Need Assessment and Multi Sectoral Assessment. The format was reviewed and contextualized specifically for each assessment exercise.
- **Sectoral Coordination:** Activation of sector subcommittee for WASH, Shelter, Food and Nutrition, Health, Education and Protection for sector coordination.
- **Multi stakeholder Coordination** including Government line departments, International/National and local NGOs, Corporates, Academicians, Community representatives, people's representatives and other stakeholders in the consultation process and coordination.
- **House hold level needs and gaps analysis:**
 - The exercise initiated in UK response to develop household level information of needs and access to entitlements which was used for advocacy purpose.
 - The practice further improved during Phalin coordination by adding component of digital mapping for house hold level access to entitlements.
- **Initiation and support to IAGs:**
 - New IAGs initiated in MP, Jharkhand and Sikkim
 - Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, AP and Odisha IAGs were provided support as needed.
 - Process for initiation of IAGs in Maharashtra started with drought assessment

Challenges:

- The inter agency and personal dynamics pose a challenge in reaching to a consensus on important coordination and advocacy issues.
- Capacity and Commitment of the stakeholders towards collaborative action
- Keeping IAGs and URS active in recovery and DRR phase.
- Lack of contingency fund for immediate deployment during emergencies.
- Lack for common formats for slow onset/ conflict and silent disasters like malnutrition.
- Lack of trained resource persons and technology interface for rapid and detailed assessment.

Learning:

- Involvement of other stakeholders like cooperate, academicians and community brought in lot of value and opportunities of diverse perspectives.
- Capacity building of the IAGs and stakeholders need to be prioritized.
- Need to revise assessment formats and build roster of trained resources for assessment.
- Need to have online coordination platform.
- Need to develop format and practice for common monitoring and evaluation.
- Need to have more clarity on roles and responsibilities between Sphere India and the IAGs and the members and other stakeholders.
- Need to have a contingency fund and commitment from advanced trained resources for quick emergency deployments.

Recommendation:

- The learning from 2013 experience be shared and consulted with the stakeholders and used for project planning for 2014.

Detailed Activity Report

Strategic Objective 1-To coordinate with different state level IAGs and provide support to them as needed:

1. Support to AP and Maharastra IAGs:

Support has been provided to the IAGs in AP and Maharastra to coordinate for drought and coordination for response.

Challenges:

- The IAG AP is evolving and didn't have a full time coordinator to timely coordinate and complete the processes in time.
- The absence of IAG in Maharashtra delayed the process and quality compilation.

Key Output/Outcome:

- Minutes of the meetings in Maharashtra and AP and the process documents.
- The need for IAC got recognized in Non IAGs states like Maharastra and growing interest to develop forums for inter-agency coordination.

2. Support to IAG Uttrakhand:

- **Immediate Action by the Coordination Team and Information Dissemination:**
 - Released 8 situation Reports. **Enclosed as annexure 1.**
 - Uttarakhand URS Matrix and District Response Matrix. **Enclosed as annexure 2.**
 - GIS Maps and Expression of Solidarity. **Annexure 3 and 4 respectively.**
 - Compilation of Agencies' Response and submission to Honorable CM, UK. **Enclosed as Annexure 5.**



- **Multi Stakeholder Coordination Meeting 25th June, 2013 at New Delhi:** In view of the large scale devastation, an emergency coordination meeting was called on 25th June to take a stock and possible humanitarian and coordination intervention. The emergency coordination meeting was attended by more than 60 agencies. **Minutes of Meeting enclosed as annexure 6.**

- **Meeting with Honorable Chief Minister of Uttarakhand:** Sphere India and

IAG UK, coordinated for the Chief Minister's meeting with NGOs to ensure better GO-NGO coordination. A preparatory meeting in this regard was also held on 15th July details **Enclosed in Annexure VII**. The honorable CM has deputed relief Commissioner as a focal point for GO-NGO coordination. **Detail minutes enclosed in annexure 7.**

- **Multi Stakeholder and Sectoral Coordination Meeting:** A Multi stakeholder and Sectoral Coordination Meeting was called at Dehradun on 23rd of July, 2013, attended by the representatives from Cooperates, Govt., academics, community etc. **Minutes of Meeting enclosed in annexure 8.**



- **Deployment of Coordinators and Multi Stakeholder Coordination Meeting at district Level:** To facilitate coordination at District Level, Coordinators are deployed in five districts i.e. Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Rudraprayag, Pithoragarh and Bageshwar and further the contract of State Coordinator was extended to facilitate the coordination at a state level. The district level coordination meetings were initiated by the month of August.

Challenges:

- To collect authentic information/data from reliable sources during initial stages of the disaster.
- Fragile environment and lack/poor connectivity through road and mobile/internet.
- To engage other stakeholders like Media etc.
- To get the information from the agencies.
- Challenges in fund transferring and managing through fund managers.

Outputs

- Enclosures I to 8 as mentioned above.
- GIS Maps.

Key Learning:

- Multi stakeholder and sectoral meetings, a key to bring the multi stakeholder and sectoral experts together for better results and output.
- Engagement of other stakeholders like Corporates, academicians in the coordination helped with different perspectives.
- Multi-layer IAC coordination at national, state and district level and direct linkages with each other has helped in coordination, information sharing and highlighting the advocacy issues at each level.

Recommendation:

- A need to have a contingency fund available for any immediate deployment during any crisis.
- To involve other stakeholders like media in the coordination process and to strengthen the coordination with Govt. Cooperates, PRIs and other stakeholders.
- To strengthen the district and state level coordination process.
- Shifting towards joint recovery planning and implementation.

- To keep IAC active at state and district level during peace time and for DRR.

3. Support to IAG Odisha and AP:

Odisha and Andhra Pradesh were severely affected by the cyclone Phailin followed by flood due to heavy rainfall. Support was extended to the IAGs in both the state to facilitate the coordination and assessment. The Sphere India URS was activated during the early phase of cyclone and started providing early warning and situation reports.



Key activities undertaken under to support the Odisha and AP IAG are:

- Information dissemination from the very beginning for early warning and preparedness.
- Immediate deployment of Human Resource to support the coordination at Bhubneshwar.
- One Technical person support through Centurian University at IAG Secretariat.
- Continuity of the coordination at a state and 4 District Level through Save the Children being supported by ECHO.
- Digital platform for coordination being initiated for Household level entitlements advocacy.

Challenges:

- Lack of contingency fund and delay in processing of available funds
- Role clarity among various stakeholders including Sphere India and IAG and other stakeholders.
- Emerging of multi forums for coordination at a state level.
- Involvement of stakeholders like Govt. Non IAG members, Cooperates, Media and others in the coordination process.

Key Output:

- SITREPs, URS matrix. **Attached in annexure 9.**
- GIS Maps. **Attached in annexure 10.**
- District level coordination mechanisms in four districts of Odisha.
- Multi Sectoral Assessment.
- Digital platform for household level information.

- URS is being recognized to ensure efficient utilization of humanitarian aid by the donors like ECHO, DFID etc

Key Learning:

- The existing inter-agency coordination at a state level helped in getting the informations and early activation of URS at a state level.
- The detailed SITREPs and activation of URS before the landfall gives a picture of possible impact and strengthening of preparedness.

Recommendation:

- A guideline on role and responsibility of each stakeholder is much needed to strengthen the coordination.
- District level coordination mechanism to ensure coordination and preparedness at a district and grass root level.

Assessment Missions:

i) Andhra Pradesh and Maharastra Drought Assessment:

In view of the impact on livelihood and large scale migration due to drought situation in Andhra Pradesh and Maharastra, support has been extended to IAGs of respective states to facilitate multi stakeholder assessment. Based on the assessment reports received from both the states, a compiled report has been prepared to understand the impact and needs of the affected people and is attached as **annexure 11**.

Challenges:

- Lack of Common Assessment Formats for sectoral and slow onset disaster like Drought.
- Little or no coordination mechanism in the states.

Output:

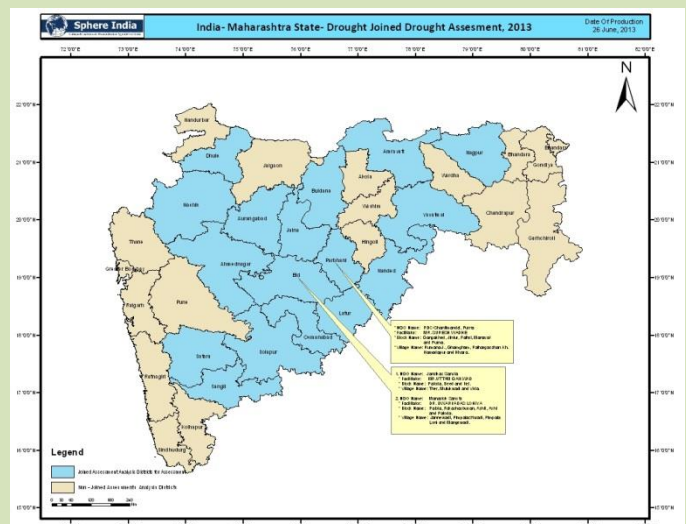
- Drought assessment report for AP and Maharastra.
- Compiled Drought Assessment report.

Key learnings:

- URS activation for slow onset disaster like drought and need to develop common assessment tools and formats for assessment and coordination process.
- Keep IAGs involved in the process, strengthening of existing IAGs and interest to develop coordination forums in non IAG states.

Recommendation:

- Development of common assessment format for slow onset disasters.
- Strengthening of existing IAGs and initiation of process in non IAG states.



ii) UK Emergency Assessment:

- The team of Sphere India and IAG UK participated in the Rapid Need Assessment for immediate life saving needs for UK, Govt.
- Inter-Agency Coordination subcommittee called a meeting on 18th July and activated the sectoral sub committees. Sphere India Sectoral Sub Committees and IAG UK initiated the multi sectoral assessment. The assessment focused on Food and Nutrition, WASH, Shelter, Protection and Education. Sector wise recommendations for immediate, short term and long term were also developed. Based on the sectoral reports a compiled report was prepared and is enclosed as **Annexure 12**.



Challenges:

- Mobile and Road connectivity due to fragile environment and continues rainfall created challenges to assessment team to reach far flung areas during the rapid need assessment.
- Ownership and commitment of the member organizations and lack of role clarity among various stakeholders involved.
- Involvement of the Govt. and other stakeholders in planning common joint recovery plan.



Output:

- Rapid Need Assessment Report, enclosed.
- Detail Sectoral Reports and compiled multi sectoral assessment Report, Enclosed as **Annexure 12**.

Key Learning:

- Collaboration and coordination of GO-NGO for rapid need assessment and optimum utilization of expertise and resources.
- Strengthening and ownership of Sectoral Committees, a key to successful sectoral assessment.

- Detail assessment report is helpful for various stakeholders to plan short, medium and long term plan.

Recommendation:

- Activation of other sectoral committees like Health is very much needed.
- The role and responsibility of Sphere India, Lead agencies and participating agency must be clear from the very beginning.

Strategic Objective 2- To develop new IAGs and provide support to them as needed

Activities undertaken under Strategic Objective 2 are:

i) IAG process in Sikkim:

Support has been provided to initiate the IAG process in Sikkim and the activities undertaken so far are:

- To facilitate the coordination a coordinator has been appointed. Initial individual meeting with few stakeholders including SDMA to initiate the process of IAG formation was conducted. A preliminary list of stakeholder has been prepared so far.
- Individual meeting with Prof. Vinod Sharma, Executive Chairman of SSDMA and discussed the process to update the SDMP and the role and responsibilities of stakeholders involved in the process.
- A concept on Model State Disaster Management Plan has been shared with the officials from SSDMA including Prof. Vinod Sharma, Executive Director SSDMA and Mr. Prabhakar, Deputy Secretary SSDMA along with process.
- A concept Note on consultations to be organized at state and districts level has been shared with the SDMA along with a tentative agenda.

ii) IAG process in MP and Jharkhand:

- Deployment of coordinators in both states
- General and Core committee meetings in MP and Jharkhand.
- Selection of Convener and IAG secretariat in MP.
- Charter has been developed by IAG MP and meeting of IAG to address the nutrition in emergency.

Challenges:

- Delay in fund transfer and management through fund manager, delayed the process in Sikkim.
- Limited fund available for IAG process in Jharkhand and MP.
- Involvement of Govt. in the process.

Output/Outcome

- Initiation of IAG process in MP and Jharkhand.
- General body and core committee meeting minutes of IAG MP.
- Secretariat, Convener and development of IAG MP Charter.
- Individual meeting notes for the process for IAG in Sikkim and Jharkhand.
- IAC is being recognized and is expanding at various levels.

- Sharing and highlighting key advocacy issues like nutrition in emergencies in Jharkhand and MP etc.

Recommendation:

- Continuous support required for the IAGs in terms of technical and HR.
- A standard guideline on role of IAGs and a guideline is much needed.

Strategic Objective 3: Lesson Learnt and Documentation

- A concept note on lesson learnt workshop in UK to be shared with the various stakeholders has been prepared.
- Proposed to organize a lesson learnt event in the last week of March at Dehradun.

Financials:

The project this year has also got support from other agencies like Plan for IAGs in UK and Rajasthan, CASA for IAGs in MP and Jharkhand and Save the Children (ECHO) support for coordination for Odisha Phalin recovery. Most of the project activities could progress as planned inspite of the challenges of delay in processing of funds. The financial utilization as on 31st Jan 2014 is enclosed as Annexure 13.

Since there has been delay in processing for funds at different levels, some of the activities could not be completed in time. These activities will be completed by end April. A no cost extension for this is recommended till April 2014.

The planning for project for 2014 has been initiated based on the learnings and recommendations emerging from 2013 experience.