

Pre-Assessment Planning

Pre-Assessment Planning addresses many of the specific details that need to be in place before we initiate our assessment. A few notes about this activity:

- Some of the activities under *Pre-Assessment Planning* may be specified in a methodology.
- Ideally, this work would be done between 1-4 weeks in advance of the assessor training and field work.
- It is important to document decisions made through this planning process, to streamline field work and for possible inclusion in our assessment report. The form of that documentation is dependent upon the context and capacity of the assessment team.

Two big categories of Pre-Assessment Planning are **Team Organization** and **Logistics**.

Team Organization:

Team organization includes four groups of activities related to the *team size, recruitment, surveying* and *security*.

1. Team Size: Here we consider various elements that determine the size of the assessment team, including geography, productivity and team organization. Ultimately it is focused on understanding how many total assessors do we need for our assessment.

Some key questions to ask in this regard include:

- How many teams do we need? What are the factors that dictate how many teams? (i.e. Geography, local language(s), etc.)
- How many assessors do we need or want in a team?
- What is the structure of our teams? (i.e. in Liberia for our AYP assessment, we had assessors, lead assessors, county coordinators, then an overall assessment manager)
- How is gender considered? What kind of balance is appropriate among the assessment team considering that we may need women to facilitate female FGDs, etc.?
- Are their constraints on teams related to size? (i.e. in for PRIME, car size is a constraint on team size.

Gauging the right number of assessors is both art and science. A number of factors should be considered including:

- The geographic layout of the targeted communities and transportation constraints
- The density of the cities and towns where we want to survey
- The number of days of field work
- The number and complexity of surveying instruments

We additionally need to estimate how productive we expect our assessors to be; estimating how many surveys/FGD/KIIs we should we expect each team/individual to complete. One rule of thumb is to start nu estimating the average number of business surveys (usually the largest assessment) per assessor/day. Experience has shown that between 4 and 6 is a reasonable expectation given

moderately dense communities, and accounting for the fact that some assessors will be engaged in FGDs and KIIs and therefore less productive on business surveys. Using that math, we would expect to need 3 assessors if we are targeting 100 total surveys from a team over 5 days (4 assessors x 5 surveys x 5 days) = 100 total surveys.

2. Recruitment: The methodology should outline at a high level where and how we will recruit assessors. In *Pre-Assessment Planning* we want to do the actual recruitment. Typical steps for this activity include:
 - Developing a SOW for our assessors including skills and other necessary qualifications, possibly also a familiarity with assessment geography.
 - Advertising the position or distributing our scope to our partners if appropriate. For example, in Liberia for AYP we worked with the YMCA.
 - Recruiting, including interviewing, ranking, reference-checking, etc.

Key questions to consider before launching into recruitment include:

- Is our Scope capturing all our assessor requirements? These may have changed or been refined since development of the methodology.
 - How do we ensure appropriate gender balance in the assessment team?
 - Are there capacity issues that we did not anticipate?
 - Is our recruitment fulfilling our participation objectives and principles outlined in the methodology?
3. Surveying Procedures: This addresses specific details of the assessment including:
 - Whether we survey individually, paired or in teams. This applies to the business surveys particularly. For the FGDs and the KIIs it is advantageous to work in pairs, one facilitator and one dedicated note-taker.
 - What general and context specific tips do we want to share? Do we need to create specialized tip sheets for this assessment?
 - Who on the team will do what? What specific tasks will be assigned to each team member. (Note: Often this is determined very close to the assessment time when the team is assembled. This enables roles and responsibilities to be aligned more with assessor capacity.
 4. Security: This activity forces us to consider security issues that our assessment team may encounter. Key questions to be asked regarding security include:
 - Are there general security issues we need to be concerned with?
 - Are there specific security issues related to gender?
 - If there are issues, how will we address them?
 - If the assessment is utilizing tablets for data collection, how will we ensure these are secured safely each night?

Logistics

Logistics includes detailed activities necessary to ensure a high quality, efficient assessment.

1. Assessor Training: Past experience has shown that bringing the entire assessor team together for training is better than attempting to train in the districts/counties or cities where we will be assessing. This helps ensure all assessors are trained on conducting the assessment in a consistent manner, and that the entire team has common understanding about key aspects of the project including the value of LMAs, how the assessment will support the program, performance expectations in the field, etc.

The assessor training may also be coupled with tool development and/or testing and having our entire assessment team participate in that greatly helps optimize our tools. In some cases this may be a logistical challenge when the assessment will cover a disbursed geographic area.

The assessor training is typically between 1 and 3 days, dependent upon the number of tools being used, and whether tool development will be included. For example, the YYC program in Kenya used 3 days for training because it did include tool development. The AYP program in Liberia used only 1-1/2 days because tool development was completed (in a participatory manner) prior to that.

Other considerations for training are training logistics (venue, equipment, supplies, nutrition, etc.) and assessor logistics (travel and accommodations)

2. Transportation: Planning how the assessment team will be transported within and between communities during the assessment is a critical logistical activity. Considerations here include the size of the assessment teams, the area that a team will cover, and the availability and type of vehicles and budget.
3. Accommodations: Part of the logistics planning is also determining where the team will be housed, both for training and in the field. Budget is obviously a consideration as well as safety of our assessors in determining appropriate accommodations. Program staff must decide if lodging will be determined in advance or if assessors will receive a stipend and select their own housing.
4. Into Letters / Badges: It is typically useful to provide our assessment team with some kind of documentation supporting their role in our program. This might take the form of an introduction letter that outlines key aspects of the assessment and/or an identification badge or business card.
5. Appointments: In some circumstances it is appropriate and valuable to schedule appointments with key informants and some private sector stakeholders. Among other reasons, this is typically done because it is customary within that culture or we have an existing relationship with a specific stakeholder.
6. Financials: Handling the financial aspects of the assessment is a vital responsibility. This is further complicated because typically the assessment team is made up of consultants or temporary workers recruited from the community. Some key questions related to finance include:
 - How do people get paid and with what frequency?
 - What kind of agreement, contract or SOW with our assessors will we have? If so, who will be responsible for drafting these? What kind of conditions on performance should be included?

- Where will assessors be paid? If that will happen in the community following data collection, how will those payments logistically be handled?
- Are there any implications that some assessors may work more days than others?
- Will we have different pay scales for different roles?
- Are there any regulatory, labor or legal issues to consider regarding hiring of consultant assessors?
- How will we handle incidentals or per diems?

C O N T A C T

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