

Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT)

Direction of Travel in Asia Pacific (Year 2012-2014)

June 2012

Background

The concept of Red Cross and Red Crescent Regional Disaster Response Teams (RDRT) in Asia Pacific was formulated in 2002. RDRTs were formed in the South (SARD) and South East Asia (SEA) regional offices respectively prior to the establishment of Asia Pacific zone office. The momentum of RDRT development reached a height when a massive earthquake hit Pakistan in 2005 and an RDRT composed of South Asia, Southeast Asia and Central Asia members was deployed. In 2008, an RDRT structure was initiated in the Pacific region; around the same time a decision was made that East Asia region would not establish an independent roster but would continuously contribute its trained manpower for RDRT deployment in operations.

Over the years, the RDRT system has undergone a continuous process of trial and error. With a primary function as a support to National Societies in respond to major disasters that exceed their local coping capacity, RDRT now had significant impact when serve as a peer to peer support within a region and is also considered by many national societies as an opportunity to raise relief capacities by allowing RDRT members to develop skills and learn from the host national society. On the whole, RDRT is a pool of competent and committed personnel who can provide effective disaster response services in support to the National Societies' emergency operations across regions.

A number of curriculums have been developed to ensure RDRT members maintain their high skill sets and knowledge. This includes the RDRT Induction and the RDRT Refresher, as well as specialized curriculums in logistics, water and sanitation, health in emergencies, IT & telecom and shelter.

While the RDRT system has proven to be successful in many ways through numerous deployments for different types and scales of disasters, there are still critical issues to address in ensuring a sustainable structure as well a high level of effectiveness for many different teams being developed with different approaches and paces. These issues include: insufficient resources for development; coordination between different regions; lack of standard mobilization mechanisms; and out-of-date training curriculums in general. To address such issues, several important meetings and reviews have been conducted over the years. Important examples included a RDRT lessons learnt workshop in 2006, Asia Pacific and Global taskforce meetings since 2008, review of 2010 Pakistan floods deployment, review of the induction course (Hong Kong), ToT course (Malaysia) and refresher course (Pacific) respectively in 2011 and a recent skill development review in South Asia in 2012.

This Direction of Travel is an important outcome following the consensus that has been reached between the four regions and the zone office during the Regional Disaster Management and Resilience Coordinator Meeting in January 2012. It sets out where we are going in Asia Pacific and how we will get there. It will serve as a guide *to improve and develop* the RDRT management system from 2012-2014.

Overall Goal for Asia Pacific RDRT (2012-2014)

By 2014, RDRT to be recognized widely as a professional and efficient disaster response tool as part of the global IFRC disaster response system. More specific outcome will be:

Members trained with standardized tools and procedures to facilitate effective mobilization and operation in

the field. All RDRT members will have the knowledge and skills to undertake the following primary functions:

- To undertake primary assessments
- To develop operational planning
- To conduct relief management

Apart from the primary functions, selected team members will be trained with specialized skill sets to perform assessment, planning and implement in areas such as water and sanitation, IT & telecom, shelter, health and logistics.

All RDRT members should also have a secondary goal to serve as a force to further enhance local capacity where required

Roles and Responsibilities

RDRT and their owned National Societies

RDRT is part of the surge capacity owned by the National Societies that is composed of their trained personnel supported by the Federation. It is complementary to National Societies emergency response tools. Each region should find a way to ensure that National Society representations guide the ongoing maintenance and development of the RDRT system – preferably through a regional taskforce.

RDRT may also move in a future direction of expanding as a mobilization force for national and branch disaster response teams' development during normal time where RDRT members be deployed with national disaster response teams structure and play a significant role in leadership.

RDRT and the Federation

Regional offices and the Asia Pacific Zone office hold collective responsibilities but well-defined roles to ensure success for a well-developed RDRT. Essential elements include good maintenance of a roster system, development of standard training curriculum and trainings, and a constant taskforce to lead the process and update the focus of RDRT in the changing context of Asia Pacific.

The regional taskforces and IFRC need to continue to advocate with the National Societies for sustained commitment to supporting the RDRT system and for utilising RDRT deployments. This must include a greater understanding of the payment mechanism and of the effectiveness of RDRT for providing a channel of peer-to-peer support within a region and for increasing the overall learning and development opportunities of the whole region.

RDRT is recognized as part of the IFRC global response system and will work closely with other IFRC global response tools during emergencies.

▪ **Asia Pacific RDRT Taskforce**

The Asia Pacific RDRT taskforce and supporting regional taskforces serve as the driving force for RDRT development . The major role of the Asia Pacific taskforce is to oversee strategic planning, maintain the RDRT standard operating procedures , training standards and curriculum. . The taskforce shall also be responsible to develop indicators and commission reviews and evaluations for tracking the overall progress of RDRT development and its effectiveness.

The taskforce shall be composed of one RDRT focal point from each of the four regions and representatives from the zone office. It shall meet every quarter of which two times will be in person and

two times via video conferencing for the first year. Future frequency of meetings will be defined in the beginning of the next year. Existing regional taskforces are responsible for the maintenance and management of RDRT within their region and shall work in close cooperation with the Asia Pacific RDRT taskforce.

The taskforce will also work closely with technical focal points in RDRT development in specialized area.

Composition of RDRT

The composition of the RDRT is driven by a register approach that represents interested and experienced representatives from National Societies RDRT team members may be trained personnel from:

- National Societies staff and registered volunteers
- IFRC Secretariat staff
- Partner National Societies local staff (where the host NS agrees)

- **Standardization of register categories**

All regions have agreed to adapt to a common system and work towards an optimal number of members that should be maintained across Asia Pacific. In achieving this it is important for each region to review its current register. In undertaking the review standardized categories for supporting the analysis of registers has been defined. The aim of this review process is to move the RDRT membership to category I to ensure a minimum standard of member. The categories are:

Category	Definition
I	Qualified RDRT team member and ready for deployment: Passed RDRT Induction training (and specialized training); assessed (including re-assessment after deployment) and recommended for deployment
II	Passed RDRT Induction training; yet to deploy/assess
III	Passed RDRT Specialist training; did not pass/not yet taken RDRT Induction training
IV	Attended RDRT Induction training, failed in assessment or re-assessment after deployment but still have potential for follow up training
V	ERU trained personnel, requires RDRT Induction training

All RDRT trained members who passed the RDRT induction training and assessments before the year 2012 would be automatically put under Category I. To support RDRT members under the other categories, various capacity building activities including on the job training will be undertaken. The target for 2012-2013 is to provide relevant trainings and opportunity to assess Category II and Category III personnel, enabling them to proceed as Category I team members.

Category IV should be given an annual opportunity to demonstrate an improvement in order to join the register. This could be improved English language skills or additional domestic field experience.

A target optimal number of Category I team members is set for each of the regions according to their context and is totaled as an overall roster target for the zone. This is the number that has been determined to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the RDRT in Asia Pacific and is aimed to be achievable by 2014:

	Induction (relief)	Health	Logistics	IT & T	WatSan*	Shelter*	Total
East Asia	10	--	2	--	5	--	17
South Asia	100	10	10	2	10	10	142
Southeast Asia	60	10	10	2	10	10	102
Pacific	15	--	--	--	--	--	15

Optimal number in Asia Pacific	185	20	22	4	25	20	276
--------------------------------	-----	----	----	---	----	----	-----

*each specialized member will also be trained and competent in basic relief.

▪ Register system

Each region shall maintain their respective register, except for the East Asia region where the register will be maintained by the Asia Pacific Zone office. The register for each region should be shared with the Asia Pacific Zone via the Resource Management System (RMS) platform. Procedures for updating and renewing the registers have should be agreed upon and followed in the Asia Pacific RDRT Taskforce meeting. Registers should include basic personal information, training records, post-training assessments, mission records, as well as post-mission assessments.

Maintaining high skill sets and common assessment standards

A major focus in 2012-2014 is to develop high-quality, up-to-date training curriculum that can be adapted to local contexts. Equally important is the development of common assessment standards for trainings and performance during disasters..

RDRT training should not be considered as a standalone training, but should be linked to other capacity building activities in the National Societies and within the Federation. .

▪ Training

The quality of RDRT training has a direct relation to the quality of the RDRT contribution. Each region is responsible to host and lead RDRT trainings with support from the Asia Pacific RDRT Taskforce.

The Asia Pacific RDRT Taskforce shall assign lead responsibilities for reviewing and updating the standard Induction program, refresher and specialised training. All updates to methodological approaches and supporting curriculum will be undertaken in consultation with the global Surge officer in the Disaster and Crises Management department.

Training schedules will be updated on a regular basis and shared amongst all parties through the Asia Pacific taskforce.

Standardization of training curriculum :

▪ RDRT Induction training & refresher training

To ensure all RDRT members can effectively carry out their basic functions, all RDRT Induction courses are required to follow the standard curriculum which includes the following topics: conducting effective assessments; drafting plans of action; and relief item distributions. While all courses are required to cover these topics, the methodology and approach taken in each region will be aligned to cultural needs.

Refresher training will comprise of a simulation to practice skills combined with technical updates on best practice and participant sharing of experience and learning from deployments. Category I RDRT members are obliged to attend and pass a refresher course every 3 years in order to remain as a member of the register.

▪ RDRT Specialized training

It is pertinent that RDRT members complete both Induction course and specialized course before being deployed as a specialized field in an operation. It is preferable that RDRT members complete the induction course first before moving on to the specialized courses but the order could be switch under special approval from the regional RDRT managements. The curriculum for specialized courses will be developed

and maintained by the technical sectors in consultation with the Asia Pacific taskforce.

Training methodology

Due to the diversity in the level of experience, background and culture of the participants. There is a requirement to review the training methodology currently used and update and adapted this towards more suitable adult learning approaches. Furthermore a wider perspective of how to best develop skills for RDRT members within the wider capacity building opportunities of the Federation is require to enable RDRT members to confidently use the technical skills and knowledge in various contexts.

The use of online assessment/review by the training participants and pre-training online course are some areas that have been identified for further review or development by the Asia Pacific taskforce.

Maintaining effective deployment system

- **Standard operating procedure**

To ensure common deployment procedures that had been developed are followed. The Asia Pacific RDRT Taskforce is responsible for timely updates and dissemination of the procedures. Asia Pacific wide Standard operating procedures will be confirmed and followed by all regions and RDRT members.

- **Deployment terms and conditions**

Standard pre-deployment agreements (including the agreement to release staff/volunteers on roster and accepting RDRT to assist in emergencies) should be signed between National Societies and the regional delegations. The agreements will serve to systemize and facilitate timely RDRT deployment across the zone.

Validated RDRT team members (Category I) are deployed upon the request from a Host National Society; Requests for RDRT will specify the skill requirements and time commitment of the team members for deployment. The AP DMU will confirm the request and endorse the composition of the RDRT team to be deployed. The region of the affected country will initially look to fill the RDRT, if this is not possible RDRT members will be mobilised from the other regions within Asia Pacific and if required other zones. The AP DMU will confirm the final members of the RDRT, while the relevant regional delegations will mobilise the individual members.

- **RDRT in the field**

Once in the field, the RDRT members will conduct the activities outlined in the terms of reference and provide regular reports through the designated reporting lines. RDRT members will be under IFRC insurance policy during the mission and they are under IFRC security tree where ever applicable.

The RDRT may be deployed in different scenarios, including: as a single response tool in a disaster, together with multiple global response tools (e.g. FACT and ERU) in the same operation, or as integrated into a host national societies NDRT structure.

Financial Needs

To achieve the **2014** goal to be recognized as a professional and efficient disaster response tool as part of the global IFRC disaster response system,, continuous financial support is needed. Funding will be used to support the following key areas in the coming **3 years**:

Key area	Proposed activities	Estimated Cost (CHF)
Strategy planning and coordination	- Coordination meetings of Asia Pacific RDRT Task force. Sub-taskforces meetings	100,000
Revision of training curriculum & methodology	- Review and revision - Testing - Building up online courses and online assessment system	100,000
Establishing and maintaining core trainers group	Training of trainers	30,000
Trainings for RDRT team members	- Conduct induction, refresher and specialized trainings	200,000
Maintaining standard roster across Asia Pacific	- maintaining regional rosters and developing links to the RMS	50,000
Staff Support		280,000
Support costs		50,000
Total in CHF		810,000

Key documentation for RDRT strategy and development

2008 07 Asia Pacific Zone DM meeting minutes-decision on the needs of a common RDRT strategy

2008 08 RDRT ToT Concept Paper

2011 Review of RDRT deployment to Pakistan 2010 floods operation

2011 03 RDRT Taskforce Bangkok Meeting Concept Note

2011 10 RDRT Taskforce Terms of Reference

2011 11 RDRT ToT Review Consultancy Report

2011 12 Next step for the RDRT development in the Pacific-finding from a refresher's course

2012 01 RDRT SARD skills development review

2012 01 Asia Pacific Zone DMC Meeting Report

RDRT Standard Deployment Procedure