## International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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# **FIRST ANNUAL REVIEW**

Asia Pacific Standard Operating Procedures

for

Disaster Response and Early Recovery

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

June 2011

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**1. Acknowledgement**

I would like to express my appreciation to all those who took part in the first annual review of the Asia Pacific Standard Operating Procedures for Disaster Response and Early Recovery. My special gratitude goes to those who took enough time to give their contribution twice, in the on-line survey and in additional one-on-one interviews, through phone/skype. Hopefully, their valuable insights have been captured in this report with the aim to support the efforts of the International Federation Secretariat’s Asia Pacific zone offices to further improve the disaster response process in Asia Pacific.

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**2. Abbreviations and Acronyms**

AP - Asia Pacific

DM - Disaster Management

DMIS - Disaster Management Information System

DMU - Disaster Management Unit in the AP zone office in Kuala Lumpur

DREF - Disaster Relief Emergency Fund

ERU - Emergency Response Unit

FACT - Field Assessment and Coordination Team

HNS - Host National Society

HR - Human Resources

ICRC - International Committee of Red Cross

IFRC - International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

MoU - Memorandum of Understanding

NS - National Society(ies)

PMER - Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

PNS - Participating National Society

PoA - Plan of Action

RCRC - Red Cross Red Crescent

RLU - Regional Logistics Unit in the AP zone office in Kuala Lumpur

SOPs - Standard Operating Procedures

TF - Task Force

TL - Team Leader

ToR - Terms of Reference

TPAT - Transitional Planning and Assessment Team

**3.** **Summary**

The updated Asia Pacific Standard Operating Procedures for Disaster Response and Early Recovery (AP SOPs) entered into force on 1 April 2010. The AP SOPs reflect the revised roles and responsibilities of the International Federation Secretariat’s offices in Asia Pacific, based on the Secretariat’s decentralisation process and the outcomes from regional meetings and operational reviews over the past three years.

The main objectives of the SOPs are:

1. to ensure an efficient working process
2. to ensure clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the Federation Secretariat representation with regard to
   1. the management of disaster response and early recovery operations
   2. the facilitation and coordination of international assistance in support of a National Society engaged in disaster response and early recovery within Asia Pacific.

This report has been commissioned by the International Federation Secretariat’s zone office in Kuala Lumpur in order to support the first annual review and updating of the AP SoPs for Disaster Response and Early Recovery, as relevant.

The main objective of the consultancy was to gather and analyse data and identify lessons from experiences in following the SOPs in the period from April 2010 to April 2011 and recommendations for updating as necessary.

The analysis was based on data collected through a desk-top study, an on-line survey and semi-structured interviews. The list of studied reports and evaluations, the on-line survey format, the questions for the semi-structured interviews as well as the list of interviewees, are available in Annexes.

The AP SOPs represent an internal document of the International Federation Secretariat’s offices in Asia Pacific. Consequently, the findings primarily reflect the dynamics in these offices and between them.

However, the International Federation Secretariat’s offices in Asia Pacific perform their tasks within a wider context, including not only the International Federation Secretariat’s headquarters in Geneva but also other Red Cross and Red Crescent stakeholders such as National Societies (NS) and ICRC. Their roles and responsibilities in the international assistance are inter-related. Thus, they are all referred to in this report.

Out of 93 invited informants from the International Federation Secretariat’s offices in Asia Pacific and Geneva, National Societies in Asia Pacific and participating National Societies (PNS), 78 took part in the anonymous on-line survey and 60 took part in the additional phone/skype one-on-one interviews.

In line with the objectives of the AP SOPs, the findings and recommendations are broadly divided into two main categories, those related to the work process and those related to the roles and responsibilities within that work process.

All of the interviewees have expressed their satisfaction with the fact that the AP SOPs have been put in place, following a period of confusion during the International Federation Secretariat’s decentralization process.

It is vital, therefore, to continue disseminating the AP SOPs widely, most preferably within the scope of the on-going disaster preparedness activities and to ensure a formal and actual commitment of all relevant stakeholders.

In order to facilitate the understanding and observance of the AP SOPs, it is necessary to keep them short and to use the language that is clear and easy to understand.

To be unambiguous and easy to follow, the work processes should be further streamlined and roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders more explicitly defined.

It is also important to introduce a more holistic approach, acknowledge the global context and strengthen the linkages between the AP and global processes and procedures.

To be useful and consistent, the SOPs need to remain current. Whenever there is a relevant organizational change, SOPs should be updated and re-approved, too.

**4. Introduction**

##### **4.1 Definition[[1]](#footnote-1) of standard operating procedures**

The aim of this short paragraph is to provide an understanding of the purpose and function of standard operating procedures (SOPs), eliminating any confusion and misunderstanding in their preparation or revision.

Most of the guidebooks on “How to prepare Standard Operating Procedures” define them as a document **describing** **the rules for doing the job in an organization**.

By introducing Standard Operating procedures, organizations wish to:

* detail all steps of the process and document both management and technical activities;
* minimize variation and opportunities for miscommunication;
* promote compliance with organizational requirements;
* promote quality through consistent implementation of a process even if there are temporary or permanent personnel changes;
* reduce efforts and risks;
* improve efficiency and accountability i.e. performance.

SOPs should **contain sufficient detail** so that someone with limited experience or knowledge of the procedure can successfully reproduce it when unsupervised.

SOPs **clarify job requirements** of individual employees i.e. their roles. SOPs also provide a mechanism to identify needed changes, enhance training or evaluate operational performance.

##### **4.2 International Federation global context**

The AP SOPs do not exist independent of their wider context. This context is governed by some documents that bind the Red Cross and Red Crescent stakeholders to respect certain rules in disaster response.

For example, article 5 and 9 of the Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief stipulate that:

*5. Role of the Federation*

5.1 The Federation acts as the information centre for its member Societies regarding situations caused by disaster and **coordinates**, at the international level**, the assistance** provided by National Societies and the Federation or channelled through them.

*9. Preparedness of the National Society*

9.3 All National Societies face the possibility of responding to disasters beyond their capacities. National Societies should therefore make preparations for **receiving and managing international assistance** provided by the Federation.

Even closer to the International Federation are its Constitution and Strategy 2020. The Strategy 2020 outlines that:

“The Secretariat has a constitutional obligation to **organize, coordinate and direct** **international relief action** in accordance with the Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief adopted by the International Conference as a core service to members of the IFRC. Drawing on the complementary capacities of National Societies, we **ensure** that **effective tools** and reliable **surge capacities** are always available in a seamless arrangement that connects global, regional, national and local capabilities”.

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| “**In the absence of the global SOPs, it is difficult to have a real framework for zone SOPs. Asia Pacific is proactive but we should not have completely different SOPs for different zones. – Federation representative** |

The Strategy 2020 guides the current global and zonal disaster management (DM) strategies. This framework presumes an integrated organizational process, reflected in the SOPs. Consequently, the disaster management strategy for Asia Pacific, guides the Asia Pacific SOPs. It appears though that the global DM strategy and the global SOPs are currently under review or being revised.

**Federation Strategy 2020**

**Global DM Strategy**

## Global SOPs

**Approved**

## 2010 Asia Pacific SOPs

**Asia Pacific DM Strategy 2010-2014**

## Pending approval

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| **“In Pakistan, a shelter delegate from Africa was a member of FACT. In Africa they do not have DMU and he reported directly to Geneva. It was difficult for me to get information”. – Federation representative** |

As noted above, SOPs “operationalize” organizational strategies and plans. If SOPs are created without adequate consideration of these factors, the resulting guidelines may be incomplete and ineffective. It has been already reported that processes in force in Asia Pacific zone caused compliance difficulties for a delegate coming from another zone as support to an operation.

The list of procedural documents related to other International Federation zones is available in Annexes under Reference material.

**4.3 Asia Pacific context**

Although 80% of the global SOPs should be applicable to any zone, it is important to note that every zone is different. Therefore, each zone prepares their own documents and specifies processes that are appropriate to their unique context.

According to the 2009 AP Zone Office Disaster Response Protocols, “the AP Senior Management team (Director, Head of Operations and Heads of Regional Offices) have approved a two tier system for supporting National Society disaster response operations i.e. country and zone level. Where the Disaster Management Unit (DMU) represents the zone level and engages directly at national level with the country team (Federation representation and NS) during disaster response providing coherent, decisive and responsive support to NS and the coordination of international existence”.

Consequently, in February 2010, the International Federation Secretariat's Asia Pacific senior management team, approved the updated AP SOPs. It was noted in the AP SOPs that the International Federation Secretariat systems and procedures for finance management, human resource management and reporting were not affected by these SOPs.

The updated AP SOPs entered into force on 1 April 2010. They are based on the revised responsibilities of the DMU, the International Federation Secretariat's decentralisation process and the outcomes from regional meetings and operational reviews over a period of three years.

**The main objective of the SOPs is to:**

* **ensure an efficient working process**
* **ensure clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the Federation Secretariat representation with regard to** 
  + **the management of disaster response and early recovery operations, and**
  + **the facilitation and coordination of international assistance in support of a National Society engaged in disaster response and early recovery within Asia Pacific.**

**5. Methodology**

The AP SOPs represent **an internal document** of the International Federation Secretariat’s offices in Asia Pacific. Consequently, they govern the dynamics between all the International Federation Secretariat’s levels in disaster response and early recovery.

This report has been commissioned to support the first annual review and updating of the AP SoPs for Disaster Response and Early Recovery.

**The main objective of the consultancy was to gather and analyse data and identify lessons from experiences in following the SOPs and recommendations for updating as necessary.**

Specifically, the consultant was responsible for the three key tasks as follows:

Desk-top study:

* A desk-top analysis of disaster response evaluations and lessons learned processes dated between 1 April 2010 and 30 April 2011. The desk-top study was conducted prior to the survey in order to develop appropriate questions for the semi-structured interviews. The list of relevant documents is included in Annexes.

Consultative survey:

* Development of the format of the on-line survey, using the Survey Monkey tool. The content of the survey facilitated feedback on experiences in using the SoPs as well as recommendations for updating.

The web-based survey consisted of 15 questions, divided in two parts: about the respondent and about his/her experience with AP SOPs, respectively. The format is available in Annexes.

Out of the total number of 93 people invited to participate in the review, 78 individuals or 83.9% took part in the survey. The structure of the participants in the survey is shown below.

As stated above, the AP SOPs are an internal document of the International Federation Secretariat’s AP zone offices. Therefore, the disproportion in representation is normal to some degree. As for other stakeholders, a high level of engagement by the participating National Societies should be welcomed, while a modest number of responses from the operating or host National Societies is regretted, as the host NS are the key stakeholders in the internationally-assisted disaster response. It is believed that some contacts indicated in host NS as possible informants felt they had insufficient language or technical skills to respond while others might have been too overloaded with their regular duties.

As regards the professional experience of the respondents, most of the participants stated that they were seasoned disaster managers with more that 10 years of experience and with the sound knowledge and understanding of the global and AP SOPs.

The pre-survey understanding of this reviewer was that the majority of the informants would have either participated in the operations in Asia Pacific and applied the AP SOPs in practice or would have had at least sufficient theoretical knowledge of the AP SOPs. In the on-line survey, they declared their familiarity with the global and zone procedures to a very high degree.

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| **“I did a part of the review in fact but found it directed very specifically to those who actively use the SOPs. I had trouble answering many of the questions in fact, mainly because I'm not very familiar with SOP.” – Federation representative** |

Further in the survey, the respondents declare that for 50.7% of them AP SOPs are periodically relevant, while 46.7% of them think that SOPs are very relevant for their work. Only for 2.7% of participants in the survey, AP SOPs are not relevant.

Nevertheless, further into the survey, some respondents chose to skip certain questions. Consequently, the reviewer activated the survey option “The question requires an answer”. However, prior to the activation of this function, out of the total number of 78 participants, 23 already gave only partial responses.

One-on-one interviews:

* The consultant defined interview methodology for the telephone/skype platform. The interviews took between 15 and 45 minutes, depending on the interviewee and his/her experience. The interviews facilitated additional feedback related to experiences in using the SoPs as well as recommendations for updating. The list of interviewees is included in Annexes.

The experiences conveyed during the interviews were based on operations in a number of different countries in Asia Pacific, but very often referred to and relied on the experiences related to the 2010 floods operation in Pakistan.

Out of the total number of 93 people invited to participate in the review, 60 individuals or 64.5% took part in the interviewing phase. The structure of the participants in the survey is shown below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The Federation Secretariat HQ in Geneva |  | 10 |
| The Federation Secretariat zone office |  | 14 |
| The Federation Secretariat regional office |  | 4 |
| The Federation Secretariat country office |  | 12 |
| The Operating National Society |  | 4 |
| The Participating National Society |  | 16 |
|  |  | 60 |

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The report points out the most commonly mentioned concerns by the informants as well as some specific problems identified in certain processes or AP regions.

This report also contains a number of quotes. It is believed that they convey messages much more clearly than any interpretation could. The quotes remained anonymous.

Please also note that throughout this report, the following terms were used to indicate certain levels of the International Federation Secretariat:

Geneva office - International Federation Secretariat’s headquarters in Geneva;

AP zone offices - International Federation Secretariat’s zone, regional and country

offices in AP;

zone office - International Federation Secretariat’s office in Kuala Lumpur;

regional offices - International Federation Secretariat’s offices in New Delhi,

Bangkok, Beijing, Suva;

country offices - International Federation Secretariat’s offices in AP host countries;

global procedures - ERU, FACT, DREF, resource mobilisation, finance, logistics,

communications, HR, PMER, security;

**6. Findings and conclusions**

The findings are broadly divided into two main categories, those related to the disaster response process and those related to the roles and responsibilities within that work process.

Additional findings under para 6.3 refer to some issues going beyond the AP SOPs. They were mentioned by the informants during the interviews and are considered relevant for the wider International Federation context.

In general, the interviewees feel confident that the AP SOPs bring some more clarity into a very confusing decentralization process.

At the same time, several interviewees (3 PNS headquarter, 1 PNS regional delegation and one host NS) requested a copy of the SOPs during their interviews or in advance, claiming no knowledge of their existence. Although the reasons might be different (inadequate dissemination, change of staff, internal PNS information flow), the fact remains that some stakeholders, relevant enough to be invited to take part in the review, were not aware of the AP SOPs.

Several interviewees have also stated that they have not yet had an opportunity to fully test the AP SOPs in practice. There is a number of National Societies and International Federation Secretariat’s country offices that participated only in DREF operations or minor emergencies that were successfully managed locally. While they have followed certain aspects of the AP SOPs, they feel that an actual reality check is still missing for them and that the AP SOPs are only theoretical for them.

According to the on-line survey, 49.1% of the respondents would have comments on operations management and coordination aspect of the AP SOPs, 24.5% on the implementation provisions, 13.2% on preparedness, 9.4% on representation and 3.8% on maintenance.

**6.1 Efficiency of the work process**

***Pre-conditions***

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| **“Dissemination of the AP SOPs should be given at leadership meetings to ensure commitment and coherence to the procedures” – online survey** |

For the efficiency of any work process, it is crucial to have the **commitment** of all parties involved. It is believed that the implementation of AP SOPs is much more critical than preparedness. In many cases, the National Societies would follow the government line in the implementation of an operation. It takes the willingness of the National Society in the affected country to act in line with the AP SOPs.

The informants generally see the AP SOPs as a welcome move towards further standardization and consistency in their work practice. The AP SOPs are also appreciated for their short format, including the “good graphic summary of the text” in the form of a flow chart on the last page.

However, there are certain aspects of the AP SOPs that may lead into misinterpretations, misunderstandings and confusing disaster response.

According to the on-line survey, 40% of the respondents feel that AP SOPs are comprehensive and detailed enough while 27.3% think that the text of AP SOPs allows individual interpretations and 32.7% say that additional provisions are needed to further clarify the text.

To facilitate adherence, organizational procedures must be unambiguous and must ensure common **understanding**.

For example, the terms like coordinate, facilitate and support have been pointed out. Some interviewees feel that there is a tendency to understand these words as synonyms for decision-making, while decision-making powers are not clearly delegated in the AP SOPs. Well-written SOPs should define any dubious terms either in a separate definition section or in the appropriate discussion section.

The AP SOPs should be clearly worded to be readily understandable by a person knowledgeable with the general concept of the procedure, and in a format that clearly describes the steps in order. Use of diagrams and flow charts breaks up long sections of text and summarizes a series of steps for the reader. Any other relevant information, such as global procedures, should be either attached to the AP SOPs or referred to.

Different titles for the same job position i.e. role in different sections of the same document should be avoided. For example, it appears that an operational manager, head of operation and project manager perform the same function in the field? Standard organizational job titles and job descriptions should be checked and used.

A related issue involves the use of the terms “shall” and “may” in SOPs. An action preceded by the word “shall” is generally considered to be an inviolate rule, while using the term “may” implies greater flexibility and discretion by personnel. Simply using “may” can reduce the effectiveness of SOPs and lead to unnecessary ambiguity.

##### **Preparedness**

Procedures are put in place to manage relations between certain levels. Although preparedness activities are not really a part of disaster response procedures, it is clear that capacity should be there to fulfil the roles and responsibilities of all relevant stakeholders.

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| **“If the NS contingency plan is good, you can respond well” – Federation representative** |

While all interviewees confirm that National Societies should maintain their operational lead role, it seems that a number of the AP NS still lack full capacity to fulfil the obligations built into this role.

In order to further enable the observance of AP SOPs and increase the efficiency of international operations in the event of large-scale and/or complex disasters, it would be desirable to exert continuous efforts in identifying the NS capacities and capacity gaps. Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) or pre-agreements between the International Federation Secretariat and National Societies could then specify their roles and responsibilities in disaster response adjusted to very realistic capacities and a very local context. These mechanisms are also important due to the fact that AP SOPs are not a binding document for the NS. Pre-agreements should guarantee their commitment to their roles and responsibilities as stipulated by the AP SOPs. The first annual review of the AP SOPs may be a good opportunity to move this initiative forward.

Effective implementation of the SOPs normally requires trained personnel. Depending on the situation, instruction may be formal or informal, conducted in the classroom or on the job. As with any type of training, it should take into consideration four general components: motivation, transfer of information, opportunities to practice new skills, and demonstration of competence.

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| “**At the last pre-disaster meeting we launched the country team concept. We do not have anything in writing but we are going to have another meeting soon and we are going to formalize it”. – Federation representative** |

Continuous capacity building of National Societies and simultaneous development or adjustment of their management structure and institutional procedures, gradually build their competence. The capacity building process includes dissemination of the International Federation’s global and AP SOPs. There may be a number of opportunities for that during regular meetings between the International Federation Secretariat’s representatives and NS staff, during regular disaster management working group meetings or specially scheduled training courses conducted by country office disaster managers and/or regional disaster managers.

Preparedness workshops contribute to further observance of the AP SOPs. Simulation exercises represent the right forum for raising awareness of AP SOPs, particularly for those NS in Asia Pacific that do not easily attend big regional disaster management meetings.

The preparedness work should be also focused on the review of the current status and compatibility of the Asia Pacific NS SOPs with the International Federation Secretariat’s AP SOPs as well as on their improvement, adjustment or upgrading, as relevant.

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| **“NS have received the information on the AP SOPs but I feel there is still little understanding of them at leadership and operational levels of what happens in a real situation”. – online survey** |

As PNS representatives are usually invited to participate in the above-mentioned preparedness trainings, these occasions are also an opportunity for the PNS to get acquainted with the current status of the SOPs in Asia Pacific.

Some NS change their leadership more frequently than others. Frequent changes may result in the lack of institutional memory, capacity and accountability. Therefore, the concept of the country team should be further promoted. The idea of “one team-one operation” contributes to more continuity and higher level of efficiency in disaster response.

According to the results of the on-line survey, it appears that AP SOPs are easily accessible through the electronic media, as 65.3% of the participants in the survey use them online. However, 10.7% of the respondents still stated no access to the AP SOPs.

***Planning***

* **Criteria for international support**

A number of interviewees pointed out that criteria for international support should be clearly stipulated in the AP SOPs. This request should be probably reviewed at global level, having in mind that some global procedures (ex. procedures related to the Emergency Response Units – ERUs or the Field Assessment and Coordination Team - FACT) already mention certain criteria that trigger the request for the mobilization of these global tools.

The criteria triggering a request for international assistance are normally based on the assessments carried out by the NS, country office, regional office, the Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) or FACT and include different factors like the adequacy of the NS relief plan, needs that exceed the capacity of the NS to respond, the capacity of the Federation country office to support the NS, the need to coordinate PNS, etc.

In the period under review, the International Federation Secretariat’s Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) supported a number of minor emergencies or the so-called DREF operations in Asia Pacific. According to the available data, there were 16 DREF operations in Asia Pacific in 2010.

On the other hand, devastation caused by natural hazards in several other situations (ex. Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Myanmar, Vietnam, Japan) called for a large scale international assistance. It was noted that internationally supported operations in Asia Pacific are increasingly labelled as “unique.” This kind of labelling may leave the door open for avoidance of adherence to standard operating procedures. Although a certain degree of flexibility and innovativeness is useful for any operation due to their specific features, flexibility should not be interpreted as an excuse for disregarding the standard work process.

##### **Operational timelines**

It appears that a number of interviewees would appreciate a more precise timeline for action in the procedures, specifying who is doing what **at what stage**. In other words, such a timeline should include different phases in disaster response (ex. emergency, recovery, reconstruction) as well as the roles of different stakeholders.

According to the AP Zone Office Disaster Response Protocols, DMU is responsible for the quality and accountability of all disaster response operations that receive external assistance, from the start-up until their final evaluation. However, during the implementation phase, the needs vary. As the operation progresses, the emergency appeal longer-term programmes get more aligned to the annual programmes and the need for the input from other sources, such as regional offices, increases. It is difficult to define a standard point in time for this shift as it heavily depends on the actual context, but an appropriate provision in AP SOPs in this respect would decrease some misunderstandings that appear to exist related to what some interviewees see as a “hand over of responsibilities from the zone level to regional level”.

The timeline could also refer to different processes within disaster response such as the timeline for assessments, launch of the appeal, deployment of FACT, ERU or RDRT. For example, FACT is available up to one month, ERU is available up to four months, RDRT is available on one month rotations.

See below a possible way of presenting timelines, together with the roles, on the example of the assessment flow in case of the international assistance.

Detailed (sectoral) assessment

(one month)

Disaster

Continual assessment or

reassessment

Initial (rapid) assessment

(one week)

Immediate assessment

**P R O G R A M M I N G**

National Society

Country team (National Society + Country office)

RDRT and/or FACT

Regional office/zone office/PNS

As already mentioned above, due to different contexts and a number of unforeseen circumstances (ex. the availability of funds), it is almost impossible to stick to a very strict timeline in disaster response. However, the request for a clearer definition of roles along certain timelines is legitimate for a number of reasons. First, it shows a sequence of events according to the International Federation rules. Second, specific phases represent a structured way of responding. Third, awareness of clearer timelines improves efficiency and performance. Therefore, a graphic presentation of the above-mentioned timelines would further contribute to clarity of the AP SOPs and could represent a good example for further development of procedures in other zones as well as at the global level.

* **Decision-making**

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| **“Everyone had opinions and gave conflicting advice. There was no technical delegate there and NS was the organization I listened to the loudest” – Federation representative** |

The majority of interviewees expressed their view that the AP SOPs do not clearly place the decision-making powers into the hands of any stakeholder.

Major decisions in emergency operations are initially made based on the mixture of pre-disaster assessments and initial assessment results. On page 2 of AP SOPs, it is stated that, “Upon the onset of a disaster, a NS shall closely **monitor** the situation and **share** timely and comprehensive information through the Country Team as well as through the Disaster Management and Information System (DMIS).”

Also on page 2, it is stated that: “In situations where additional support is requested or required, the NS supported by the Federation Secretariat representative in the Country Team will act as **the operational lead** and be responsible for **managing the implementation of the response** to a disaster situation.”

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| **“Decision-making is the responsibility of the people in the country. We are there not to make decisions but to propose options”. – Federation representative** |

According to the same page, DMU “acts as **the international lead** and is tasked with the **coordination and facilitation of international assistance** in support of the National Society, providing oversight, coherence, flow of information, linkage to global processes and quality control of the Federation services provided to a National Society”.

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| **“The lack of clarity regarding leadership roles appears to have affected strategic decision-making processes in the operation”. – Real time evaluation of IFRC response to 2010 Pakistan Floods”.** |

There is no clear indication of a decision-maker. Implementation, support, coordination and facilitation do not necessarily imply decision-making, especially strategic decision-making, which requires leadership.

As a standard, the host National Society alone or in consultation with the Federation (within the framework of the Country Team) should be capacitated and empowered to play that leadership role and make strategic as well as operational decisions related to disaster response.

#### **Appeal process**

According to the AP SOPs, “the DMU together with the Country Team prepares an operational strategy, based on identified needs and the pre-agreed scope of the preliminary emergency appeal and supporting plan of action”. There is no specific indication of the appeal manager. Thus, it is not clear who is actually responsible for the preparation of the appeal.

For example, the time needed for the preparation of the appeal and PoA for the floods operation in Pakistan, showed that the role of the appeal manager as a focal point for the appeal process should be carefully considered.

Normally, the officer in charge of the operation in the country (ex. head of delegation, operational manager) is also the appeal manager, responsible for the preparation and relevance of the appeal and its subsequent revisions, including the preparation of the plan of action (PoA). The appeal manager may be supported by FACT, the relevant technical delegates in the country of operation, by technical delegates from the region as well as by relevant technical departments in the zone office. At zone level, the appeal is approved by the zone Head of Operations and is then sent to Geneva office for quality control, approval and signature of the Secretary General.

The role of regional offices in the appeal process requires further elaboration in the AP SOPs, especially in situations where there is no country office or the country office does not have the relevant capacity.

#### **Recovery**

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| **“SOPs only talk about early recovery, who talks about recovery, any SOPs? Who leads the recovery phase?” – Federation representative** |

Early recovery and recovery concepts are still a novelty to many National Societies. Some NS have introduced the position of recovery officer or a focal person for recovery (like in Nepal) while only a couple of NS have established recovery departments (like in Indonesia).

It is more or less an established practice now to start planning on early recovery simultaneously with relief. In line with the AP SOPs, early recovery is coordinated and supported by the zone office. It appears, however, that there are concerns related to the role of regional offices in the recovery phase of the operation, especially as the recovery delegates sit in the zone office.

A Transitional Planning and Assessment Team (TPAT) was piloted in 2010 Pakistan floods operation to boost the planning process related to the recovery phase. In case TPAT is going to become a new global tool, it is important to further clarify, at global level and in consultation between the International Federation Secretariat and NS, its deployment criteria, its roles and responsibilities in the field as well as clear reporting lines. Once this tool is accepted as common practice, it should be referred to in the AP SOPs.

* **Regional and global tools**

Regional and global tools are normally mobilized and deployed in the context of international assistance. According to the AP SOPs, the request for their mobilization comes from the NS.

Some emergency response tools (ex. RDRT, FACT, ERUs) are referred to throughout the report, related to different issues. Some specific concerns are listed below.

**Regional Disaster Response Teams (RDRTs) -**The term RDRT has been used only once in the text of the AP SOPs. It is stipulated on page 1 that an RDRT member may be deployed as the Federation Secretariat’s representative in the Country Team in case there is no country office in a country of operation. The request for an RDRT deployment goes from the NS to the zone that alerts all regional offices and their RDRT-trained NS.

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| **“Our NS uses technical people that are RDRT trained in ERU teams and we are happy”. – PNS representative** |

The RDRT-trained people represent an integral part of the disaster response capacity in the zone. Therefore, all processes related to the RDRT deployment should be represented as an integral part of the AP SOPs.

**Emergency Response Units (ERUs)** – ERU is a global tool maintained by a number of ERU PNS. This capacity is only available and mobilized at global level.

There seems to be a widely spread opinion among the interviewees that decentralization requires major changes in the ERU deployment procedures. It seems that this opinion is especially related to the reporting lines, once an ERU is in the country of operation.

In practice, ERUs normally carry Terms of Reference (ToR) with them at the time of deployment. The ToR that is prepared by the Surge Officer at Geneva office, is based on the information received from the field. The ToR includes details related to the timeframe of the deployment, reporting lines, location of operation, security situation on the ground as well as any other specific instructions received from the zone. So, it is actually the responsibility of the country level to provide the information related to the ERU reporting lines in the actual context, prior to deployment of ERU.

The operation in Pakistan shows that the host National Society may not be well aware of their responsibilities related to the ERU deployment. Article 11 of the ERU standard operating procedures stipulates the role of the receiving NS and states that “The ERU document ‘On the Reception of ERUs’ outlining the role of the receiving NS and the ways in which it can facilitate the ERU’s work will be shared with the receiving NS and the Federation’s field structure prior to the deployment of ERUs”. In order to further facilitate deployments of ERUs in the field, this document should be disseminated within preparedness training exercises of the NS.

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| “**For us a DREF operation is big enough. It was a major project for us.” – NS representative** |

**Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) -** Although DREF is specifically mentioned only in one short sentence in the AP SOPs, it seems to be increasingly well-known and used funding mechanism in Asia Pacific NS. National Societies are encouraged to request DREF to fund their small-scale operations. According to the statistics, the number of DREF allocations for Asia Pacific in 2010 was 21, 5 for Emergency Appeals and 16 grants for DREF operations.

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| **“With the support of the Federation, I went online and found the form. Instructions were clear, the process was easy” – NS representative** |

Article 6, para 6.2. of the global DREF procedures states that: “In the event of a disaster, a National Society may request a financial support from DREF. The request will be made to the IFRC Representative – the Project Manager - either at Country, Regional or Zone level – depending on the IFRC structure in the region; The Project Manager will communicate the request to the respective Zone as stipulated in the Zone Standard Operating Procedures for DREF. Each Zone has established a DREF Allocation Request Process indicating the agreed steps and involvement of different actors and procedures for technical consultation at country/regional and zone level in the preparation of a DREF request”.

The Asia Pacific zone DREF process steps stipulate that if DREF is needed: “A National Society may request financial support from DREF through their IFRC Country Team representative - Country/Regional Office or DMU as identified in the AP DR&ER SoPs”.

Once the DREF is approved at Geneval level, the new Appeal Code is received, a new project code is opened and funds are transferred to the NS or through the country/regional office. Accordingly, a designated person in the country/regional office assumes the role as the project manager as well as the DREF budget holder. With reference to the AP zone DREF process steps, the AP SOPs should clearly identify the DREF project manager/budget holder as he/she will be responsible to assist the host NS not only in funds management but also in narrative and financial reporting.

The reference to DREF in AP SOPs should include the role of the Geneva office as the level that maintains and approves the funds.

In order to provide even more consistency in case of emergency, National Societies may be advised to add the steps for requesting DREF into their contingency plans or their own SOPs.

##### **Global procedures**

It is stipulated in the AP SOPs that “the agreed Federation Secretariat systems and procedures for finance management, human resource management and reporting will be maintained at all times and are not affected by these Standard Operating Procedures”. The following paras refer to some additional global procedures as well as to certain aspects of the abovementioned procedures that play a significant part in disaster response in Asia Pacific.

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| **“We support the NS with budgeting, reporting, etc but the responsibility lies directly with them”. – Federation representative** |

**Finance -** Principles and Rules for RCRC disaster relief, article 24, para 24.1.2.2 stipulate that “In recognizing the importance of financial reporting, the Federation and/or the ICRC shall undertake to **provide or make available technical assistance** to the Operating Society in order to ensure the timely production of accurate and complete financial reports. Such reports should be regarded both as a management tool for the Operating Society, and as a reporting service to the Federation”.

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| “**A lot of times we did not know how much money we had. They tell us to check the Fednet instead of discussing it with us” – NS representative** |

It is important to raise awareness of financial procedures at NS level as well as to provide support in case there is no capacity within the NS to fulfil those obligations.

If additional capacity is needed for planning the appeal budget, for example, a finance person is mobilized by the zone as a surge or FACT member, in support to the Country Team. The Country Team should at all times have access to the information related to the raised funds in soft and hard pledges.

Lack of NS awareness and/or capacity to respond to the requirements of the International Federation financial system can result in the loss of accountability.

**Fund-raising -** On page 5, the AP SOPs state that “The DMU supported by Resource Mobilisation/PMER[[2]](#footnote-2) will facilitate partner National Society contributions”. Some interviewees understand that the term facilitation in this context means fund-raising. If so, they suggest that “everybody has the responsibility to raise funds”. It appears that a clearer indication of roles and responsibilities of different levels in fund-raising should be included in the AP SOPs.

**Logistics -** The International Federation logistics system has a global function. The Regional Logistics Unit (RLU) in Kuala Lumpur supports the NS in Asia Pacific and shares offices with the zone office. The RLU members are a part of the task force. However, the processes between the DMU and RLU as well as between RLU and country offices (ex. resource mobilization, procurement, etc) are not identified in the AP SOPs.

While a flow chart can easily depict the logistics processes between the Geneva office, RLU, DMU and country offices, a reference in the AP SOPs to the wider logistics procedures may be enough to avoid further misunderstandings related to technical support, procurement or any other issue related to logistics.

**Communications -** Communications plays a crucial role in emergency situations. On page 2 of the AP SOPs, it is stated that “NS will share timely and comprehensive information through the Country Team as well as through DMIS”.

On page 4 of AP SOPs, it is stated that the Country Team provides regular updates on the disaster situation, including media/web stories. On page 5, it is added that “DMU supports the Country Team in preparing these updates and ensures this information is shared with the appropriate stakeholders through communication platforms”.

However, the communications personnel are not a part of DMU. They may be deployed to the country of operation as surge capacity from the zone or region. Within the country of operation, they normally report to the Operational Manager, with a technical line to the zone and/or Geneva office.

With reference to the above, more precise roles and responsibilities of the Country Team and the Operational Manager related to communications in disaster response should be further investigated and incorporated into the AP SOPs. See also below, under Recruitment and Country Team.

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| **“You can have a good document but if you don’t have the right people, the document won’t help” – Federation representative** |

**Recruitment -** When additional human resources are needed in a large-scale emergency, an HR officer is normally placed in the country of operation to initiate the recruitment process. From the country, the request is forwarded to the zone HR (cc to DMU) for further processing, including headhunting or advertising with PNS or elsewhere. The key questions for the interviewees appear to be the quality i.e. experience of the recruited personnel as well as their adherence to the roles and responsibilities as stipulated in the AP SOPs.

According to the on-line survey, 49.1% of the respondents stated that they were just partially satisfied with the observance of the AP SOPs by the practitioners in the field. This group also agrees that observance depends on people and situations. Only 3.6% of the participants are very satisfied with the level of observance of SOPs. The next group of 36.4% of participants are satisfied with the observance of SOPs while 10.9% are not satisfied with the level of observance of AP SOPs.

The roles and responsibilities should be assigned to certain positions rather than to offices and should be generally in line with the roles and responsibilities developed for standard positions through Job Descriptions and more specifically elaborated through Mission Instructions (this practice can be re-introduced if considered relevant).

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| **“HR deployments to the country, should be discussed with the host NS in order to ensure value for our NS in the form of the transfer of technology or knowledge.” NS representative** |

For example, the role and responsibilities of the Operational Manager should be specified in the AP SOPs. This information should be then shared with the NS. In case of emergency, the country office will identify and maintain a qualified person with the approval of the host NS. See more on Operational Manager below, under Country Team.

##### **Country team**

*The country team implements the operation - page 5 of AP SOPs.*

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| **“We are trying to put in place a roster of people that can be sent out as country team members. They have to know the context, to work with SGs and they have to be self-sufficient. We consider this person is international support to NS”. – Federation representative** |

The institution of the Country Team appears to be already well accepted. It facilitates closer working relations and better coordination between the International Federation and the National Society, in line with the International Federation’s responsibility to provide support and assistance to the National Society. It represents the country task force and a country coordination mechanism - NS in the lead role and the International Federation Secretariat’s country office in the supporting role.

According to the AP SOPs, the country team comprises a representative of the host NS and a representative of the International Federation. If there is a country office in the affected country, the country representative, the DM delegate or national staff can be put on the Country Team as the International Federation Country Team representative. According to the AP SOPs, page 3, “the Country Team representative shall be normally considered the Operational Manager and all other operational personnel shall be directly responsible to him/her”.

According to the Terms of Reference (ToR) for IFRC Country Team Representative (in situations where the IFRC does not have a country presence), the Operational Manager provides technical and managerial support to the host NS in assessment, in analysis of needs and identification of possible interventions as well as in planning for and implementing their disaster response and early recovery operation. These responsibilities should be included in the AP SOPs.

In order to avoid any management gaps in large-scale emergencies, it would be advisable to assign the Country Team representative role to senior disaster managers who can execute their tasks more routinely and competently.

#### **Surge capacity**

The term surge capacity has not been used in the AP SOPs. However, there are many aspect of the surge capacity and the term generally refers to operational managers and technical experts at all levels.

Since the DMU coordinates the overall disaster response in AP, some interviewees assume that the main surge capacity in international operations comes from the zone office, while others think that the zone office capacity is used only as the “last resort”. According to the collected information, it can be stated that the Head of DMU or Operations Coordinators serve as surge managers.

Although regional offices actively engage in preparedness for response, some interviewees believe that this level does not have any surge capacity any more. On the other hand, some others consider one disaster manager sufficient surge capacity. In order to further integrate the disaster response process in AP as a whole, the idea of incorporating the regional surge capacities i.e. the regional disaster managers into DMU was put forward.

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| **“One delegate makes a difference if he/she has the right skills. – Federation representative** |

Regional offices are also asked to mobilize and deploy their surge capacity in DREF operations, in their role as technical support in the countries with no dedicated disaster management or technical support at country level. Hence, they are the first requested to engage as country focused people. Similarly, neighbouring NS may be the first to offer and provide the surge capacity.

It is believed that the role of this regional capacity should be further elaborated in the AP SOPs within the scope of the AP response process. For example, as a part of the regional surge capacity, RDRTs have been used in disaster response separately or in combination with FACT. It appears that the introduction of joint FACT/RDRT leadership trainings provided better understanding of the two tools and their roles in disaster response. Thus, a copy of the roster of all AP RDRTs should be maintained in the zone office, similarly to the PNS surge roster.

**Implementation**

* ***Briefings***

A number of interviewees with ERU experience expressed their wish to receive more substantial briefings by the zone or country office before deployment to the field.

Article 14 of the current ERU SOPs stipulate that “The ERU officer shall arrange an operational briefing for the ERU Team leader, together with the officer in charge of the operation, relevant technical officers and security officer of the Federation……….It shall be the responsibility of the Team leader to brief the remaining ERU team members”.

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| **“It is important to have a good briefing. It is a big advantage to see the head of operation, finance, admin and most senior technical person in order to get advice and get it right when you have to make fast decisions” – PNS representative** |

It would be beneficial if the responsibility of the Federation to brief the team leader (TL) of FACT, RDRT or ERU before or upon deployment would be clearly stated in the AP SOPs. The actual briefing line should be adjusted to the current practice in AP and shared with the Surge Officers in Geneva office for FACT and ERU and regional offices in Asia Pacific for RDRT. For example, the AP SOPs could stipulate that the relevant Operations Coordinator at zone level and/or the Operational Manager in the country office shall carry out briefings for RDRT, ERU and FACT team leaders.

The role of the regional office in briefings for RDRT before their deployments, providing that the regional office has all relevant information, should be also clarified.

* ***Lines of communication***

###### Management lines and accountability - According to the results of the on-line survey, only 7.3% of the respondents believe that the managerial lines between the country and zone offices in case of disaster response are always in line with the AP SOPs. The next 52.7% of the respondents believe that the AP SOPs are followed most of the time in that respect, depending on the actual context, while 27.3% of the respondents call for improved observance of the management lines in disaster response. The last 12.7% of the respondents stated that they were not familiar with the procedures.

As regards the managerial lines between the **zone** and the **global level**, 41.8% of respondents feel that the relations at those levels should be further streamlined. Further 23.6% of respondents are satisfied with the current practice, 10.9% are only partially satisfied, 5.5% are not satisfied and 18.2% of respondents are not familiar with the procedures at those levels.

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| **“In Pakistan operation, some people sent me messages stating that they reported to Delhi and not to KL” – PNS representative** |

It appears that the managerial lines are more smoothly established in medium and small size operations. The overwhelming responsibilities at the beginning of the floods operation in Pakistan showed the need for introduction of clearer managerial lines as well as the need for further formalization of these lines in the AP SOPs.

According to some collected statements, managers in charge of the operation in Pakistan changed frequently at the beginning of the operation, causing confusion regarding the reporting lines.

Although continuity contributes to efficiency of the work process, rotation of different individuals in the position of the key operational manager should not have caused such a confusion providing the information about all changes was adequately shared with all relevant stakeholders.

For example, ERU standard operating procedures are completely in line with the above as they state that “During the initial phase of the ERU operation, the ERU Team leader shall report to the designated operational manager in the field. That shall be clearly indicated in the Deployment order/ToR”. A very similar statement is an integral part of the FACT as well as RDRT standard operating procedures and should be referred to in AP SOPs, accordingly.

**Technical lines and expertise -** Sometimes, it seems to be difficult to separate responsibilities towards direct line managers and technical line managers, especially if it appears that there is no technical line management in place. At the same time, it is clearly stipulated in the ERU procedures, for example, that “The ERU shall be technically accountable to and co-ordinate with the relevant Federation sectorial coordinator or delegate or technical officer in the Federation Secretariat (when technical delegate is absent). This includes the sectors: health, logistics, water and sanitation, relief and IT & telecommunications”. There is a similar stipulation in the text of the FACT and RDRT SOPs that could be adjusted and included into the AP SOPs.

See below on logistics example, one possible way of reflecting the management and technical lines in AP SOPs. It is generally reported that the logistics process is one of the better-managed processes, playing a substantial role in international assistance. It is considered a global function. Thus, the RLU has a direct management line to Geneva office logistics department. In the zone, RLU has a direct management line to the zone Head of Operations. According to the AP Zone Office Disaster Response Protocols[[3]](#footnote-3), Head of Operations delegates his disaster response responsibilities to DMU, consequently guiding the lines of communication, too.

**Head of Logistics, Geneva office**

## Technical lines of communication

**Country office**

**FACT / ERU/**

**logist. coordinator**

**Geneva logistics officer**

## RLU- regional logistics coordinator

**Head of Operations, zone office**

## AP DMU

## (Task Force/operations coordinator)

## Country office

## (operational manager)

**Management lines of communication**

**Informal lines of communication -** As already stated in this report, some interviewees have pointed out that the people are the main factor in adherence to the SOPs. Thus, the level of trust between the colleagues would directly influence the informal lines of communication.

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| **“We have a delegate that is seconded there but we also talk to other Federation reps” – PNS representative** |

Informal lines of communication normally contribute to the efficiency of the operation. It should be kept in mind, though, that they should at no times overpower the formal procedures. As already stated above, standard operating procedures are established to minimize variation and opportunities for miscommunication even if there are frequent personnel changes and people do not know each other.

* ***Information management***

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| “**Everyone that should have knowledge, should be copied” – PNS representative** |

Information is commonly shared along the management and technical lines. At the same time, a number of additional personnel may need the same information for various operational reasons (ex. for reporting purposes to donors).

One of more recent examples of managing an overwhelming flow of information at country level includes the following:

Regional health delegate, Zone health unit, Geneva health department advised DMU

DMU took the responsibility to collect and analyse all responses and get back to the country office with one voice.

Country office with no health capacity asked for health advice and sent message to DMU, cc to regional, zone and Geneva technical counterparts.

The above example represents a good way of crisis management and similar kinds of ad hoc arrangements might be needed in disaster response also in the future. It is advisable, though, to have a more normative system in place. To improve efficiency and avoid dependency of the **written information flow** on availability or absence of the designated focal points or on individual decisions, all addressees may be listed in the form of relevant positions. In that way, the lists may be prepared in advance.

According to a number of PNS, the **Task Force (TF)** **meetings** as well as **tele-conferences** organized and chaired by DMU, represent a good approach. TF meetings represent a formal and structured way of contact and a forum for exchange, problem-solving and keeping all parties up to date. In this way, the zone office recognizes the skills and resources of PNS as a potential support mechanism.

In order to maintain the agreed practice as a standard in disaster response situations, the information management flow should be a part of the AP SOPs.

At the same time, it is important to keep in mind the need for flexibility in every standard practice. For example, according to the 1997 MoU with the Red Cross Society of China, the Hong Kong Red Cross has autonomy in international cooperation. Therefore, Hong Kong RC is entitled to direct information flow with the AP zone office. Direct information sharing greatly contributes to a timely mobilization of their surge capacity[[4]](#footnote-4) in support to operations in AP and further afield.

**6.2 Clarity on the roles and responsibilities with regard to the management and coordination of disaster response and early recovery operations**

The clarity of some roles and responsibilities has been already touched upon in the above text. According to the on-line survey, 23.6% of the respondents are very satisfied with the clarity of the roles and responsibilities in the AP SOPs. The following 63.6% are only partially satisfied while 12.7% are not satisfied.

The definitions below in italics are taken from the current AP SOPs, for reference purposes.

***Host National Society***

*The National Society maintains the operational lead of any disaster response and early recovery operation.*

According to the on-line survey, 89.1% of respondents recognize the operational lead role of the National Society in an operation requiring international support. Only 10.9% of respondents consider that the NS lead role in an internationally supported operation is only formal.

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| **“You manage at country level, you support the operation and facilitate international support at zone level” – Federation representative** |

As an operational lead, the National Society, in consultation with the International Federation Secretariat's country office, **manages and implements** the operation on the ground. The country office supports the National Society through the Country Team. This role facilitates learning by doing and offers a platform for further capacity building of the NS.

A request for international support implies the NS engagement with regional and/or global tools and procedures governing them. The capacity of the host NS to fulfil the responsibilities related to the global procedures varies from one NS to another in Asia Pacific. Therefore, National Societies need to be aware of all these responsibilities much before a disaster strikes.

Some NS in the Pacific region are more closely related to the traditional PNS than the International Federation Secretariat’s offices. These National Societies may have some agreements that favour a direct engagement. In order to encourage the observance of the role of the zone office as the focal point in case of international assistance (as stipulated by the AP SOPs), the zone and/or regional offices will need to engage more actively with host National Societies (as well as with PNS) in the pre-disaster period.

A number of interviewees has challenged the capacity of certain NS to fulfil the operational lead role. It is primarily the responsibility of the host NS to make a realistic assessment of their capacities to lead an internationally-assisted disaster response.

In case the host NS does not have the capacity to maintain the operational lead, article 19 of the Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief should be recalled. It may be integrated into the AP SOPs:

“19. Execution entrusted to the Federation

19.1 When the administrative organization of the Society in the stricken country does not enable it to meet the situation, the Federation, at the request of that Society and with its cooperation, may assume the local direction and execution of the relief action”.

#### **Country office**

*The country office represents the Federation Secretariat on the country team.*

As a member of the country team, the country office representative should be at all times ready to **support and facilitate** the NS operational lead role.

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| “**In case of Lao, probably someone from the zone or regional delegation would go there to start the operation.” – Federation representative** |

The major issue related to this level appears to be the question of what happens if there is no country office in place. For example, there are no International Federation Secretariat’s country offices in the Pacific region. However, the host NS in the Pacific region are traditionally strongly linked to the PNS from the region. Their traditional partners are normally the closest ones geographically, either through their representations at country level or through their support from the mainland (for example the French RC in New Caledonia). In comparison, the DMU in Kuala Lumpur seems very far away. The closest International Federation Secretariat's support would come from the regional office in Fiji.

Besides the AP SOPs, the Terms of Reference for the International Federation Secretariat’s representative on the Country Team in situations where the Secretariat does not have a country presence provide a possibility to deploy or assign a representative of another Pacific NS, Pacific RDRT or PNS as the International Federation Secretariat's representative on the Country Team, in support to the host NS and to facilitate the contact with DMU. The AP SOPs are not binding for NS representatives but they should be aware of the fact that by taking up the role as International Federation Secretariat's country representative, they also take up the responsibility to adhere to the AP SOPs.

The ToR may be shared as an addendum to the AP SoPs. The Terms of Reference should be widely disseminated and reinforced together with the AP SOPs.

#### **Regional office**

*The regional office may provide management and technical support and advice to the Country Team.*

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| **“I also copied the technical delegate in the region and the Head of office if there was something major going on in the operation. Regional delegations have knowledge and they need to have an opportunity to give feedback”. – Federation representative** |

In case of disaster, the host National Society, participating National Societies and the country office communicate directly with the zone office i.e. DMU, bypassing the regional office. While it is appropriate to have a short management line in order to speed up the process in case international assistance is needed, simultaneous information-sharing with the regional office should be maintained at all times. Only a well-informed regional office would be able to act quickly and adequately **support** the NS and prepare their surge capacity (technical delegates or RDRT) if the request comes from the zone office. Second, if kept informed on daily basis, the regional delegation would be able to provide a more substantial input for the emergency appeal, including the longer-term components.

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| **“More regional people should get engaged from the very beginning, they have better knowledge of the country and they should get there as surge capacity. – PNS representative** |

As regards RDRTs, it appears that regional expertise and understanding of the regional context are somewhat underestimated in the international response framework. The concept of the Regional Disaster Response Teams (RDRT) is developed though regional fora, the teams or team members are mobilized through regional offices in cooperation with NS and deployed by the zone. In order to facilitate the engagement of RDRTs more regularly and routinely in the international assistance in Asia Pacific, it would be advisable for the regional offices to further encourage the RDRT-trained NS to respond to alerts and deploy their members but also to accept the regional support, if needed.

***Zone office i.e. Disaster management unit (DMU)***

*The DMU provides the zone office support to an operation and initiates international support mobilization on behalf of the National Society.*

While the host NS is described as the *operational lead* “responsible for managing the implementation of the response”, DMU is described as the *international lead*, “tasked with the coordination and facilitation of international assistance in support of the National Society, providing oversight, coherence, flow of information, linkage to global processes and quality control of the Federation services provided to the National Society.” As already stated above under Lines of communication, this role is delegated to DMU by the zone Head of Operations for all disaster response operations that receive external assistance. The Head of DMU reports to the Head of Operations.

The DMU **mobilizes** the international support through an appeal and **supports** the host NS by providing surge capacity, as relevant. DMU gives technical advice and requests mobilization and deployment of the global tools. It is the link between the DMU and Geneva office that requires further elaboration.

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| **“What is the link between DMU and Disaster Services Department in Geneva?” – PNS representative** |

A clearer division of roles and responsibilities related to the management of global tools such as FACT and ERUs at different stages would avoid current ambiguities and a negative impact on the efficiency of disaster response processes. For example, the role of the zone office related to FACT deployment could be presented by a flow chart. See below a possible way of illustrating this process:

Country team manages the FACT

Operations Coordinator at DMU briefs the FACT Team Leader

Surge Officer mobilizes and deploys relevant individuals from the FACT roster

Operations Coordinator at DMU alerts Surge Officer in Geneva

Country Team requests DMU to initiate mobilization of FACT

As stated above under Global context, a process is currently underway regarding the development of global SOPs, which will define and facilitate the relationship between the Geneva office and all five International Federation zone offices. To contribute to the process, a workshop may be organized in Asia Pacific or Geneva to identify the key problem areas related to roles and responsibilities and to find solutions.

##### **Geneva office**

*The headquarters deploy global tools and provide quality assurance and linkages to global processes as well as a global perspective, consistency and quality across all zones.*

Although there is reference to global procedures in several different places in the AP SOPs, it is believed that a more comprehensive paragraph related to the roles and responsibilities of the Geneva office in **support** to the host NS is needed. There are several reasons for it.

First, the AP zone does not function alone but as a part of the global International Federation Secretariat’s disaster response capacity. Second, problems at country level may as well arise due to the lack of awareness of procedures governing some of the global tools. Third, a separate paragraph within the AP SOPs related to the roles and responsibilities of the Geneva office as well as reference to the global tools will allow NS to be more strongly aware of the global framework.

The idea of a formal global surge team to be developed by the Geneva office is currently under consideration. If this concept is approved based on consultations with all stakeholders, the standard operating procedures governing the deployment of such a team should be referred to in AP SOPs.

##### **Participating National Societies**

*Participating National Societies contribute and share their resources to help the NS in the form of in-country or international assistance.*

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| **“AP SOPs should recognize the added value of the ties between PNS and host NS to the operations and encourage their coordination under the multilateral agreements that are put in place”. – online survey** |

As already mentioned above, the relationship between the host NS, the International Federation Secretariat and PNS is most specific in the Pacific region. It is common for the ONS in the Pacific to seek international support directly from their traditional PNS or in coordination with the International Federation Secretariat’s regional office in Suva. There are normally no country offices in the region and geographical distances in the Pacific and the need for efficiency in emergency situations may speak in favour of this approach. Therefore, the regional office in Suva has been a primary contact for NS in the region. Lately however, PNS have become increasingly aware of the role of the zone office.

It also appears there is a need for further clarification of the meaning of international assistance in comparison with in-country assistance, mentioned on page 4 of AP SOPs. In that respect, the profile of an in-country PNS should be clearly defined, as there are different interpretations coming from the PNS, themselves. For example, if a PNS has its regional representation in New Delhi, covering also Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka etc, is the support they may offer to one of these NS, considered in-country or not?

A clearer definition, resulting from consultations and promotion of the AP SoPs and earlier requests for further clarification of the above issue, already exist. The definition that should be incorporated into the AP SOPs, reads as follows:

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| **“When I came the Federation was only talking abut the Federation resources, but now there is a shift towards mapping all resources, they take into consideration PNS resources, too. – PNS representative** |

“International assistance refers to any material, financial or physical assistance mobilised from outside of the affected country. If a PNS has a physical presence within the affected country through a constant bilateral representative supporting the National Society’s programming and mobilises additional material, financial or physical resources within the programme agreements, but from outside the affected country this will be considered international assistance. However, if the PNS has a physical presence within the affected country and provides assistance to a disaster response and recovery operation that is within the scope of their programming agreements i.e. activities of a CBDP/DRR programme, contingency allowances, pre-procured relief stock etc, that are reallocated will not be considered international assistance.”

#### **International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC)**

There is no mention in the AP SOPs of processes involving ICRC, although this organization is an important disaster response stakeholder and partner, especially in complex disasters i.e. in conflict and post-conflict situations. The Seville Agreement and its Supplementary Measures provide a procedural framework for such situations. More detailed procedures are normally articulated in the form of pre-disaster agreements or Memoranda of Understanding at country level. If available, the AP SOPs should reiterate the roles and responsibilities agreed among the International Federation and ICRC in AP. Practices may be drawn from current operations such as in Pakistan, based on division of responsibilities between the International Federation and ICRC, with the agreement of the host NS.

No ICRC representatives have been invited to participate in this review. It is recommended to include ICRC in the list of informants in the future.

**6.3** **Additional issues**

The issues mentioned below go beyond the scope of AP SOPs. However, they are inter-twined with the rules and procedures followed in the AP zone. Thus, it seems important enough to mention them, too.

**RDRT -** It is believed by some informants that Asia Pacific regions are very different and that the inter-regional exchange of RDRT personnel is sometimes a big challenge.

**Human resources –** It appears that the HR factor that influences the efficiency the most is slow identification, mobilization and approval of delegates needed in the emergency phase of the operation. This issue should be considered at global level, especially by those working on different rosters providing adequate and timely surge capacity in disaster response.

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| **“What happens with bilateral contributions? You cannot avoid bilateral contributions that are based on historical links and human relationships. You recognize that they exist but how do you coordinate it within the international assistance?” – PNS representative** |

**Finance -** A number of PNS interviewees mentioned the problem of recording their bilateral support that is not captured by the International Federation financial system. While special systems were established for global disasters like Haiti and Tsunami, standardization of this approach does not seem to be considered.

**Shelter cluster –** Shelter cluster is the responsibility of the International Federation Secretariat and it can influence the efficiency of the work process at country level. Therefore, all developments related to the shelter cluster funding, deployment and coordination should be closely followed.

**Logistics –** It appears that there are some misunderstandings related to the rules and procedures related to the local procurement in AP. According to the chapter on Procurement of Goods and Services in the Logistics procedures “A country representative will conduct in-country procurement of up to CHF 50,000. Regional and international procurement will be conducted by RLUs and Geneva logistics department. Head of Country Representation is fully responsible to ensure that procedures and processes are strictly followed for expenditures below CHF 50’000. **……….** Prior to initiating any procurement process, purchasers within all procuring entities must check the availability of Frame Agreements (FA) for the items to be procured. If there is an existing FA, there is a legal obligation to use it. In exceptional cases the use of FA can be waived subject to a prior approval by the Head of GVA Logistics Department”.

Although the global logistics procedures are currently under review, the provision related to the procurement will hopefully clarify some concrete issues related to this subject.

**7. Recommendations**

So, do the standard operating procedures in Asia Pacific ensure an efficient disaster response work process and clarity on the roles and responsibilities with regard to the management of disaster response and early recovery operations, and the facilitation and coordination of international assistance in support of a National Society engaged in disaster response and early recovery within Asia Pacific?

According to the results of the on-line survey, it appears that 27.3% respondents believe that the AP SOPs contribute substantially to a more timely, efficient and effective external support to the NS during disaster response. The following 18.2% of respondents believe that they contribute moderately while 52.7% believe that timeliness, effectiveness and efficiency depend on people and not just on SOPs. Only 1.8% of respondents see no difference in efficiency when compared with the period before the adoption of the AP SOPs in April 2010.

Based on the responses received through the on-line survey and the interviews, the AP SOPs are a good foundation for an efficient work process in Asia Pacific; a foundation that can be easily further streamlined. The key recommendations for further improvements on the AP SOPs are summarized below.

##### **7.1 Design**

* **Keep the document short.**

Most interviewees are happy with the size of the existing AP SOPs. So, keep it short. Identify the key work processes related to disaster response and illustrate them, accordingly. Describe the roles and responsibilities in a concise and clear way, step-by-step and in an easy-to-read format. The AP SOPs format may follow the line of one page per a work process and one page per related roles and responsibilities.

* **Present the work processes graphically.**

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| **“I am not going to read the text, I go directly to Annex 1 when I want to refresh my memory” – PNS representative** |

Flow charts appear to be a preferable way of reading the SOPs by the informants. Flow charts graphically and schematically show the flow of action and/or relevant management lines. Flow charts in this context are used with the aim to present disaster response as an integrated and cross-functional process with links at different International Federation Secretariat levels as well as beyond the Secretariat framework. For example, the International Federation’s Disaster Response Mechanism Overview for Asia Pacific, which is available through SharePoint represents a good example that can be considered during further revision of AP SOPs.

* **Use the language that is clear and easy to understand.**

The information in AP SOPs should be unambiguous and not overly complicated. It should be conveyed clearly and explicitly to remove any doubt as to what is required.

A short glossary may be included into SOPs to explain the meaning of the used terms as well as the acronyms commonly encountered in the International Federation. This glossary would help maintain the standard terms and enable easy understanding by personnel from different zones, decreasing confusion.

For example: Is the function of Operational Manager equal to the function of Head of Operation or Project Manager? The explanation may seem unnecessary for an experienced RC worker but might be crucial for a newcomer into the system.

Make sure to use the words correctly. For example, it is very important to define accurately who manages and who supports an operation.

The AP SOPs should be precise but inherently flexible, permitting an acceptable level of discretion that reflects the nature of the situation and the judgement of the officer in charge. Balancing the need to reduce ambiguity while maintaining flexibility can be difficult. This concept should be explicitly stated at the beginning of the AP SOPs.

##### **7.2 Preparedness**

* **Share the AP SOPs widely.**

The primary target audience for the AP SOPs is the International Federation Secretariat staff in Asia Pacific. Continual dissemination is particularly important due to the high turnover of staff and a low level of institutional memory.

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| **“Now that we have got the SOPs, we will review them with the delegation” - NS representative** |

The inter-dependent nature of international support makes it important to raise awareness of the AP SOPs across the board, including all other relevant stakeholders.

Keep the AP SOPs easily accessible either in hard copies or in the electronic version.

The PNS representatives in AP should be responsible for sharing the AP SOPs within their own disaster management structure.

* **Continue improving preparedness activities**

As stated earlier, the chapter on preparedness does not really belong in the actual text of the standard operating procedures. It may be shared as an addendum to the AP SOPs for training purposes, as it is important to prepare all stakeholders for their roles and responsibilities in advance. For an efficient operation, it is crucial to have a well-prepared and well-briefed team.

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| **“The second time we used DREF, we knew better” - NS representative** |

For the majority of the NS staff, AP SOPs remain very theoretical before their actual arrival to the field. Therefore, a review of the NS response mechanisms should take place first. The AP SOPs may contribute to further strengthening of those mechanisms.

Simulation exercises as a learning method appear to be the next best thing to actual operations. Disaster management workshops with simulations should be considered for the NS in Asia Pacific also in the future. Other stakeholders should be encouraged to take part as participants or facilitators.

* **Ensure the commitment of all stakeholders**

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| **“How binding are the SOPs for NS? Do you have a buy-in of NS? If they are not binding and not clear, I worry. – PNS representative** |

As stated earlier, for the efficiency of every work process, it is crucial to have the commitment i.e. the buy-in of all stakeholders, regardless of their capacity. The best written SOPs will fail if they are not followed.

It is firmly believed that NS would commit only if they fully understand and acknowledge the aim of the AP SOPs. Therefore, AP SOPs should be actively promoted among all relevant NS in Asia Pacific.

#### **7.3 Efficiency of the work process and clarity on roles and responsibilities**

* **Acknowledge the global context and strengthen linkages with global procedures**

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| **“The minimum consistency should be agreed between the zones and Geneva. Different SOPs in different zones may influence operations at global level”. – Federation representative** |

The Asia Pacific Standard Operating Procedures in Disaster Response and Early Recovery are considered to be more elaborate than SOPs in any other zone. At the same time, they are a part of the wider Federation framework. In order to make the systems and procedures compatible and avoid fragmentation by zone, recognize developments in other zones as well as at global level and facilitate a more streamlined approach to future revisions of AP SOPs.

In anticipation of the revised and updated global SOPs, consider examining the procedures or protocols developed in other International Federation zones. This exercise may provide further insights into the similarities and differences in different zones and, undoubtedly, some constructive feedback to the global level.

The Business Processes Improvement Initiative (BPII) at the global level, is currently working on six priority focus areas for immediate business process improvements: recruitment, staff performance management, career development and talent management, HR preparedness for emergencies, strategic and operational planning (and budgeting), and roles and responsibilities in resource mobilization. This initiative is based on Strategy 2020, Enabling Action 3: Function effectively as the International Federation. Consequently, this initiative may positively influence the processes at zone level. Get familiar with the BPII on FedNet or get in touch with Al Panico, Head of Operations AP and member of the BPII Task Force.

The AP SOPs stipulate that: “The agreed Federation Secretariat systems and procedures for finance management, human resource management and reporting will be maintained at all times and are not affected by these Standard Operating Procedures.” However, there are more than only three global procedures that are important in disaster response. In order to keep the AP SOPs concise, include only short references to global procedures or make an annex to AP SOPs. All global procedures are otherwise available on DMIS.

Improved understanding of the dynamics at higher level will provide a more comprehensive picture of the International Federation disaster response system as a whole and facilitate compliance with both the AP and global SOPs.

* **Streamline the work processes and clarify further the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders**

Answers to the question of what, when and who are key to preparing clearer, unambiguous and comprehensive AP SOPs.

In order to be more precise in presenting the disaster response work processes, use benchmarks or existing standards to show triggers for response, criteria for deployment or response timelines. For details, see under Operational timelines above. It is realistic to expect that in practice, due to different contexts or circumstances, these standards will be observed with certain flexibility, with the agreed procedures representing a necessary normative framework.

Present the AP disaster response processes in the flow chart format and include linkages to global processes.

In order to increase accountability and efficiency of all relevant International Federation Secretariat’s offices, make a shift and preferably, link the roles and responsibilities with specific positions and not offices. If necessary, the responsibilities could be delegated to the next line manager, providing flexibility but maintaining accountability.

Further develop the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders like PNS and ICRC in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of all RCRC stakeholders that may engage in disaster response in support of a National Society.

##### **7.4 Maintenance**

The on-line survey shows that up to 72% of the respondents are ready to engage in lessons learned workshops and consultative meetings and provide further input in order to maintain the relevance of the AP SOPs.

The AP SOPs need to remain current to be useful. Therefore, whenever procedures are changed, the text of AP SOPs should be updated and re-approved. If desired, modify only the pertinent section of SOPs and indicate the change date/revision number for that section in the Table of Contents.

It should be kept in mind that in the 21st century, the International Federation Secretariat deals with great complexity and uncertainty. That means that stakeholders have to feel comfortable with frequent changes and have to be able to adapt easily to innovations and innovative practices. If SOPs describe a process that is no longer followed, it should be withdrawn from the current file and archived.

**8. Annexes**

8.1 Standard Operating Procedures for Disaster Response and Early Recovery in Asia Pacific

- Insert current AP SOPs if considered relevant -

**8.2 List of interviewees**

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| **No.** | **Name** | | **Function** | |
| **IFRC HQ GENEVA** | | | | |
| 1. | | Ela Serdaroglu | Senior Officer, Shelter and Settlements Dept. |  |
| 2. | | Pablo Medina | Senior Officer, Operations Quality Assurance |
| 3. | | Miguel Urquia | Sr. Officer, Shelter and Settlements Dept. |
| 4. | | Birgitte Olsen | Head, Global Logistics Service |
| 5. | | Hakan Karay | Senior Disaster Response Officer, Disaster Services Dept. |
| 6. | | Pieter de Rijke | Surge Capacity (ERU), Disaster Services Dept. |
| 7. | | Elizabeth Soulié | DREF senior officer, Disaster Services Department |
| 8. | | Christine South | Sr. Officer, Operations Quality Assurance |
| 9. | | Dorothy Francis | Surge Officer (FACT), Disaster Services Dept. |
| 10. | | Simon Eccleshall | Head, Disaster Services |
| IFRC ZONE OFFICE KUALA LUMPUR | | | | |
| 11. | Daniel Bolaños | | Operations Coordinator |  |
| 12. | Kathryn Clarkson | | Water and Sanitation Coordinator |
| 13. | Michael Annear | | Head of DMU |
| 14. | Uvarani Trasanayagam | | Senior Finance Analyst, ZFU |
| 15. | Heikki Vaatamoinen | | Operations Coordinator, DMU |
| 16. | Drew Strobel | | Operations Coordinator, DMU |
| 17. | Enkas Chau | | Operations Coordinator, DMU |
| 18. | Felix de Vries | | Shelter delegate |
| 19. | Alka Kapoor Sharma | | Regional Procurement Coordinator, Regional Logistics Unit - AP |
| 20. | Jeremy Francis | | Regional Logistics Coordinator, Regional Logistics Unit - Asia Pacific |
| 21. | Jim Catampongam | | Emergency health coordinator, Health Unit |
| 22. | Patrick Fuller | | Communications manager |
| 23. | Sumant Kumar | | Human Resources Manager |
| 24. | Nigel Ede | | Recovery delegate |
| IFRC REGIONAL OFFICES | | | | |
| 25. | Martin Faller | | Head of Regional Delegation, East Asia |  |
| 26. | Qinghui Gu | | Regional DM delegate, East Asia |
| 27. | Pete Garratt | | Regional DM Coordinator, South Asia |
| 28. | Aurélia Balpe | | Head of Regional Office for the Pacific |
| IFRC COUNTRY OFFICES | | | | |
| 29. | Bhupinder Tomar | | Country Representative, Vietnam |  |
| 30. | Kaustubh Kukde | | Disaster Management Manager, India |
| 31. | Gaurav Ray | | Disaster Management Coordinator, Bangladesh |
| 32. | Bernd Schell | | Head of Delegation, Myanmar |
| 33. | John Anthony Roche | | Head of delegation, India |
| 34. | Bob McKerrow | | Head of Delegation, Sri Lanka |
| 35. | Igor Dmitryuk | | Head of delegation, DPR of Korea |
| 36. | Sanjeev Kumar Kafley | | Disaster management delegate, Myanmar |
| 37. | Victoria Bannon | | Country Representative, Nepal |
| 38. | Selvaratnam Sinnadurai | | Head of Delegation, the Philippines |
| 39. | Sandro Kushashvili | | Head of Operations, the Philippines |
| 40. | Muhammad Qaswar Abbas | | Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Coordinator, Pakistan |
| OPERATING NATIONAL SOCIETIES | | | | |
| 41. | Pitambar Aryal | | Director, Disaster Management Department, Nepal Red Cross Society |  |
| 42. | Niki Rattle | | Secretary General, Cook Islands RC |
| 43. | Tautala Mauala | | Secretary General, Samoa RC |
| 44. | Gwen Pang | | Secretary General, The Philippines RC |
| PARTICIPATING NATIONAL SOCIETIES | | | | |
| 45. | Natasha Freeman | | Logistics Coordinator, Australian RC |  |
| 46. | Sugai Satoshi | | Domestic Relief Dept. Japanese Red Cross |
| 47. | Eunhee Cho | | Sr. Officer, International Relations, Republic of Korea RC |
| 48. | Sonja Bjorklund | | Asia Regional Representative, Finnish Red Cross |
| 49. | Alexander Mahoney | | Regional manager, Asia/MENA, American RC |
| 50. | Stacy Ragan | | Manager, International Operations Centre, American RC |
| 51. | Agnès Dalmau i Gutsens | | Regional Delegate Asia Pacific Zone, Spanish RC |
| 52. | Herve Gazeau | | Head of Delegation, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands, French RC |
| 53. | Davide Zappa | | Regional Representative for South Asia, British Red Cross |
| 54. | Marianna Knirsch | | German Red Cross, Regional Representative Asia/Pacific |
| 55. | Tørris Jæger | | Head of Disaster Management, Norwegian RC |
| 56. | Wilma ter Heege | | Disaster Response Coordinator, Netherlands RC |
| 57. | Arjan Blanket | | Disaster Response Coordinator, Netherlands RC |
| 58. | Dagne Hordvei | | Recovery coordinator, Norwegian Red Cross |
| 59. | Katy Attfield | | Head of DM, Int. Division, British Red Cross |
| 60. | Betty Lau | | Dy, Head of International Relief, Hong Kong RC |

8.3 Terms of Reference (ToR)

**Terms of reference for the Data Gathering and Analysis to inform the review of the Asia Pacific Standard Operating Procedures for Disaster Response and Early Recovery**.

###### Background

In February 2010, the IFRC Secretariat’s Asia Pacific Senior Management team comprising of the four Regional Heads of Office, the Zone Head of Operations and Director, approved the updated IFRC Secretariat Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) for Disaster Response and Early Recovery in Asia Pacific.

The SoPs define the internal arrangements of the IFRC Secretariat for supporting National Societies who respond to disaster and crises situations across Asia Pacific. The updated SoPs are based on the revised responsibilities of the Zone Disaster Management Unit, the IFRC Secretariat’s decentralisation process and the outcomes from regional meetings and operational reviews between 2006-09.

The SoPs reinforce a number of core concepts with regard to how the IFRC Secretariat positions itself in support of National Societies, these include:

* A National Society of a disaster affected country leads the implementation of its disaster response and early recovery operation;
* Communication and decision making for establishing operation needs and strategies will be undertaken between the country and zone levels;
* Where necessary the IFRC Secretariat supports and accompanies a National Society in implementing its disaster response and early recovery operation at the country level; and
* When necessary the coordination and facilitation of external support for a National Society will be undertaken by the Disaster Management Unit on behalf of the Asia Pacific Zone Office. In facilitating external assistance the Disaster Management Unit will take into consideration the available International Federation wide resources and tools within the Asia Pacific zone and globally.

###### Aim of the consultancy

The consultancy has been commissioned to support the first annual review and updating of the Asia Pacific SoPs for Disaster Response and Early Recovery.

The consultant will collect, analyse, and summarise data from one-on-one interviews, surveys and document analysis. The analysis will identifying lessons from experiences in following the SoPs and recommendations for updating as necessary. Actions to update the SoPs will be undertaken by the Disaster Management Unit.

###### Outputs

The consultant will be responsible for the following key tasks;

Preparing a consultative survey:

* The format of the survey will be developed by the consultant using the survey Monkey tool.
* The content of the survey should facilitate feedback on experiences in using the SoPs as well as recommendations for updating.
* The focal groups include representatives from IFRC country, regional, zone and Geneva; AP NS and PNS working in AP. A list of representatives is included in annex 1.
* The survey will be distributed to 100% of the listed representatives in annex A.

Conduct one-on-one interviews with key IFRC, PNS, NS representatives:

* Define interview methodology for face to face and telephone/Skype platforms.
* The content of the interviews should facilitate feedback on experiences in using the SoPs as well as recommendations for updating.
* The focal groups include representatives from IFRC country, regional, zone and Geneva; AP NS and PNS working in AP. A list of representatives is included in annex 1.
* It is expected that 80% of the listed representatives in annex A will be interviewed.

Analysis of evaluations and lessons learnt

* Undertake a desk top analysis of evaluations and lessons learnt processes for DREF and Emergency Appeals operations between 1st April 2010 until 30th April 2011.
* The analysis will identify relevant recommendations and experiences for updating the SoPs.
* Evaluation reports will be provided by the AP DMU.

###### General requirements and timeframe

The agreed deliverables outlined above will be managed through a work plan utilising 30 working days over a one month period between the 15th May to 15th June 2011.

Regular written status reporting and/or on-line meetings using Skype and telephone outlining progress are requested of the consultant.

The consultant will report directly to the Asia Pacific, Head of Disaster Management Unit, Mr. Michael Annear.

**8.4 Online survey questionnaire**

## On-line Survey Questionnaire

### Introduction

In February 2010, the IFRC Secretariat's Asia Pacific Senior Management team comprising of the four regional Heads of Office, the zone Head of Operations and the Director, approved the updated IFRC Secretariat Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Disaster Response and Early Recovery in Asia Pacific.   
  
The updated SOPs are based on the revised responsibilities of the zone Disaster Management Unit, the IFRC Secretariat's decentralisation process and the outcomes from regional meetings and operational reviews between 2006-2009.  
  
To ensure the ongoing relevance and appropriateness of the SOPs, it has been agreed that they will be reviewed annually.   
  
This survey will support the first annual review and updating of the Asia Pacific SOPs for Disaster Response and Early Recovery. Your honest and constructive feedback in relation to your experiences in responding to disasters and crises between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011 will be highly appreciated.  
  
If you are not sure about the best response to any particular question, please choose the one that seems most relevant or closest to your role and experience.  
  
Please note that:  
- AP SOPs stand for the IFRC Secretariat's 2010 Asia Pacific Standard Operating Procedures for Disaster Response and Early Recovery;  
- Federation stands for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
- FACT stands for the Field Assessment and Coordination Team  
- ERU stands for the Emergency Response Unit  
- RDRT stands for the Regional Disaster Response Team  
  
Thank you for your time and contribution.

# **About you**

1.Who do you represent:

O The Federation Secretariat Geneva office

O The Federation Secretariat zone office

O The Federation Secretariat regional office

O The Federation Secretariat country office

O The operating National Society

O The participating National Society

2. How many years of disaster response and early recovery experience do you have?

O More than 10

O Between 5 and 10

O Between 1 and 5

3. Are you familiar with the Federation’s global SOPs for finance, logistics, reporting, FACT, ERU, etc?

O Yes

O I know some of them

O No

O It is not relevant for my work

4. Are you familiar with the AP SOPs?

O Yes

O Vaguely

O No

5. How relevant are the AP SOPs to your work?

O Very relevant

O Periodically relevant

O Not relevant

6. What kind of access do you have to the AP SOPs?

O An electronic version

O I refer to a printed version

O I ask colleagues for assistance

O I do not have access

7. Would you participate in lessons learned workshops/consultative meetings and provide further input in order to maintain the relevance of the AP SOPs?

O Yes, I consider it a good opportunity to further clarify and streamline them

O Maybe, if there is a problem in my own particular area of work

O Not really, I leave it to the relevant managers

**Your experience with the AP SOPs**

8. In your view, are the AP SOPs comprehensive and detailed enough?

O Yes, they are comprehensive and detailed enough

O They are not detailed enough and allow individual interpretations

O Some additional provisions should be included

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| Please explain your answer if you think more detail or additional provisions are needed: |

9. Are you satisfied with the degree of observance of the AP SOPs in the implementation of operations?

O Very satisfied, it is a well established process

O Satisfied, it works well most of the time at all levels

O Partially satisfied, it depends on the situation and people

O Not satisfied

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| If not satisfied, please elaborate: |

10. Are you satisfied with the clarity of roles and responsibilities in the AP SOPs?

O Very satisfied

O Partially satisfied

O Not satisfied

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| If not satisfied, please explain: |

11. In your opinion, is the role of the National Society as operational lead fully recognized in practice?

O Yes, the National Society maintains its role in any operation, including international assistance

O Yes, but with in-country or international support

O Yes, but only formally

12. In practice, is the communication and decision-making for establishing operational needs and strategies between the country and the zone in line with the AP SOPs?

O Yes, as this is the only way to provide full accountability

O Most of the time but there may be circumstances where actions are taken outside the outlined procedures for practical purposes but with the authorization of the relevant level

O Relevant staff at those levels should take a better note of the AP SOPs

O I am not familiar with the procedures at those levels

13. Are you satisfied with the communication and decision-making processes between the zone and the global level?

O Yes, I am satisfied as the practice is in line with the AP SOPs

O I am partially satisfied as the AP SOPs are not always followed in this respect

O These processes should be further streamlined

O I am not satisfied at all

O I am not familiar with the procedures at those levels

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| If not satisfied, please explain: |

14. In your view, do the AP SOPs contribute to a more timely, efficient and effective external support to the National Society during disaster response?

O They contribute substantially

O They contribute moderately

O Timeliness, effectiveness and efficiency depend on people and not only on SOPs

O There is no difference from before

15. If you would make any suggestions or recommendations for the AP SOPs update, would you refer to (in line with AP SOPs chapters):

O Federation Secretariat representation

O Preparedness actions

O Operations management and coordination

O Standard operating procedures implementation

O Standard operating procedures maintenance

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| Please give your suggestion/recommendation: |

**8.5 Interview questions**

These questions varied in practice, depending on the interviewee and his/her experience

and position.

1. What is your operational experience between April 2010 and April 2011?
2. What was/is your role?
3. Was the surge capacity adequately and timely used?
4. Were global tools adequately and timely used?
5. Do you think the operation in question was overall efficient and timely?
6. How effective was the coordination?
7. Were roles and responsibilities understood and fulfilled?
8. Do you have any examples of processes that worked particularly well?
9. In your opinion, how effective was the operation in question?
10. Any additional lessons that you learned? Any recommendations or suggestions?

**8.6 Reference material**

## Documents

1. Standard Operating Procedures for Disaster Response and Early Recovery in Asia Pacific (2010) including the cover letter;
2. Asia Pacific Disaster Management Strategy 2010-2014;
3. AP zone office circular note related to the clarification of international assistance;
4. Terms of Reference for the IFRC Country Team Representative;
5. Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief – revised edition, Geneva 1995;
6. Constitution of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies;
7. International Federation Strategy 2020;
8. ERU Standard Operating Procedures;
9. FACT Standard Operating Procedures;
10. RDRT Standard Operating Procedures;
11. Procurement of Goods and Services on behalf of IFRC – Procurement Processing and Coordination
12. DREF Standard Operating Procedures;
13. AP Zone DREF Process Steps;
14. AP Zone DREF request process update (June 10)
15. AP Zone office DR Protocols
16. AP Zone Response Protocols update 2011
17. The Business Processes Improvement Initiative (BPII)
18. Africa Zone PA work plan
19. West and Central Africa SOPs
20. Eastern Africa Region Guidelines for DREF and Emergency Appeals Management
21. PADRU Activation Plan
22. PADRU Protocols
23. IFRC Disaster Response Mechanism Overview for Asia Pacific
24. Disaster Response Protocols and Response Contingencies for MENA
25. IFRC DMU Working Modalities for Disaster Response in West and Central Africa
26. Seville Agreement (1997) and Supplementary Measures (2007)

**Reports**

1. Evaluation of the Mongolia Severe Winter Operation 2010;
2. Evaluation of the IFRC West Java Earthquake Response;
3. Evaluation of the Vietnam Red Cross Relief Responses to Typhoons Ketsana and Mirinae;
4. Cyclone Giri Relief Operation: Lessons Learned Workshop Report;
5. Cook Islands Tropical Cyclones DREF Review;
6. The Midterm Evaluation of the 2009-2010 Philippines Typhoons Emergency Response;
7. Real Time Evaluation of IFRC Response to 2010 Pakistan Floods;
8. Vietnam Review Trip – 21 March to 7 April 2011, Australian RC, Vietnam RC, IFRC

1. Taken from various sources related to the preparation of Standard Operating Procedures. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. PMER – department for Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting in the zone office in Kuala Lumpur. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. * “……as delegated by the Head of Operations, DMU is responsible for the quality and accountability of all disaster response operations that receive external assistance”.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Hong Kong RC has RDRT and ERU trained personnel deployable with sister ERU NS. It is also developing an ERU. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)