

GEOHAZARDS EXPERT (Senior Technical Adviser)

GENERIC TERMS OF REFERENCE

Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit¹

Natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods often result in significant secondary environmental impacts including land- and mudslides. These secondary impacts can pose immediate, life-threatening risks to humans (both local communities and responders), as well as longer-term challenges. Therefore, a key element of humanitarian response is the rapid risk assessment of GeoHazards and the mitigation thereof.

Responsibilities

- In close cooperation with national authorities and UN response entities, identify, assess and advice on any (potential) risks from land- and mudslides following a natural disaster;
- Work with national and international emergency responders to address acute life threatening situations derived from land- and mudslides, under the guidance of the UN Resident Coordinator;
- Identify any outstanding expertise or equipment needs to address any immediate risks and impacts;
- Support the transition from relief to recovery, by advising responsible actors at national and international level (Government and Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)) of issues such as including monitoring, reforestation, and engineering requirements that need to be addressed in the (early) recovery phase.

Expected Actions

- Support relevant agencies to gather, consolidate and analyze assessment data (using remote sensing where applicable) and provide recommendations to the national and local authorities and the UN Resident Coordinator (or equivalent) to minimize and/or mitigate secondary impacts and promote the integration of appropriate actions into the overall disaster response strategy;
- Communicate rapidly and regularly all findings to national authorities, as well as the Joint Environment Unit, emphasizing the possible need for additional specialized expertise and/or additional equipment as required;
- Identify, where applicable, pre-existing contributing environmental factors to the disasters (e.g. deforestation, poor urban planning, lack of prevention and preparedness);

Note: Contact with media, including interviews, will only be undertaken with consent of the UNDAC team leader and/or UN Resident Coordinator.

¹ For more information on the Joint Environment Unit: <http://ochaonline.un.org/ochaunep>

Qualifications and skills

- Solid background in Applied Geosciences, Civil Engineering, Geology, Geomorphology, Geohydrology, Risk Engineering or combination thereof.
- Ability to distinguish immediate response actions from medium to long-term mitigation, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities;
- Familiarity with rapid risk assessment of geohazards and ability to conduct rapid assessments in a natural disasters and emergency context;
- Familiarity with management of operational support functions including telecommunications, logistics and basic field security;
- Ability to coordinate with international and local agencies involved in disaster response;
- Ability to rapidly assess basic needs and local capacities;
- High motivation, coupled with an ability to improvise effectively in rapidly changing situations with minimal guidance and support;
- Team skills required for working in a multi-disciplinary, multi-national team in field conditions of hardship with an ability to assume authority as and when needed;
- Availability for short-notice mobilization (within 6 to 48 hours) and must be able to stay in the field for up to 3 weeks;
- Knowledge of MS Windows and MS Office and ability to operate standard IT and communications equipment.