



Center for Military Health Policy Research

A JOINT ENDEAVOR OF RAND HEALTH AND THE
RAND NATIONAL DEFENSE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
EDUCATION AND THE ARTS
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE
INFRASTRUCTURE AND
TRANSPORTATION
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
LAW AND BUSINESS
NATIONAL SECURITY
POPULATION AND AGING
PUBLIC SAFETY
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
TERRORISM AND
HOMELAND SECURITY

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis.

This electronic document was made available from www.rand.org as a public service of the RAND Corporation.

Skip all front matter: [Jump to Page 1](#) ▼

Support RAND

[Purchase this document](#)

[Browse Reports & Bookstore](#)

[Make a charitable contribution](#)

For More Information

Visit RAND at www.rand.org

Explore the [RAND Center for Military Health Policy Research](#)

View [document details](#)

Limited Electronic Distribution Rights

This document and trademark(s) contained herein are protected by law as indicated in a notice appearing later in this work. This electronic representation of RAND intellectual property is provided for non-commercial use only. Unauthorized posting of RAND electronic documents to a non-RAND website is prohibited. RAND electronic documents are protected under copyright law. Permission is required from RAND to reproduce, or reuse in another form, any of our research documents for commercial use. For information on reprint and linking permissions, please see [RAND Permissions](#).

This product is part of the RAND Corporation technical report series. Reports may include research findings on a specific topic that is limited in scope; present discussions of the methodology employed in research; provide literature reviews, survey instruments, modeling exercises, guidelines for practitioners and research professionals, and supporting documentation; or deliver preliminary findings. All RAND reports undergo rigorous peer review to ensure that they meet high standards for research quality and objectivity.

TECHNICAL REPORT

Developing a Prototype Handbook for Monitoring and Evaluating Department of Defense Humanitarian Assistance Projects

Marla C. Haims, Melinda Moore,
Harold D. Green, Jr., Cynthia Clapp-Wincek

Prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense

Approved for public release; distribution unlimited



Center for Military Health Policy Research

A JOINT ENDEAVOR OF RAND HEALTH AND THE
RAND NATIONAL DEFENSE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The research described in this report was prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). The research was conducted within the Center for Military Health Policy Research, a RAND Health program, and the International Security and Defense Policy Center, a RAND National Defense Research Institute (NDRI) program. NDRI is a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the OSD, the Joint Staff, the Unified Combatant Commands, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the defense agencies, and the defense Intelligence Community under Contract W74V8H-06-C-0002.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available for this publication.

ISBN: 978-0-8330-5128-8

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors.

RAND® is a registered trademark.

© Copyright 2011 RAND Corporation

Permission is given to duplicate this document for personal use only, as long as it is unaltered and complete. Copies may not be duplicated for commercial purposes. Unauthorized posting of RAND documents to a non-RAND website is prohibited. RAND documents are protected under copyright law. For information on reprint and linking permissions, please visit the RAND permissions page (<http://www.rand.org/publications/permissions.html>).

Published 2011 by the RAND Corporation
1776 Main Street, P.O. Box 2138, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138
1200 South Hayes Street, Arlington, VA 22202-5050
4570 Fifth Avenue, Suite 600, Pittsburgh, PA 15213-2665
RAND URL: <http://www.rand.org>
To order RAND documents or to obtain additional information, contact
Distribution Services: Telephone: (310) 451-7002;
Fax: (310) 451-6915; Email: order@rand.org

Summary

The impetus for the development of a handbook to guide the assessment of military humanitarian assistance (HA) projects came from a January 2008 workshop with combatant command (COCOM) HA managers, “Monitoring and Evaluation of DoD Humanitarian Assistance Programs.” Participants felt that a user-friendly handbook to clarify overall monitoring and evaluation (M&E) concepts and to facilitate project assessment would be particularly valuable to those responsible for overseeing the execution of HA projects in the field. Recent policy guidance and the development of this handbook are part of an increased emphasis on assessment across the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).

Developing the Handbook

The project team took a broad and systematic approach to developing and refining the prototype handbook, which is included as an appendix to this report. To develop the initial draft of the handbook, we first reviewed published reports from various government, nongovernment, and academic sources to better understand different approaches to project assessment. Second, we searched the Overseas Humanitarian Assistance Shared Information System (OHASIS) database to gain a better understanding of existing and proposed Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid (OHDACA) HA projects. Finally, we conducted semistructured interviews, first with COCOM HA managers and then with others, to elicit views on perceived opportunities and concerns related to the assessment of HA projects.

Our interviews suggested that the handbook should include both an educational component—a primer on M&E—and a step-by-step user’s guide for conducting project assessment activities. The primer was developed to provide those tasked with project assessment with a concise, yet comprehensive, introduction to M&E terminology, concepts, and approaches, with an emphasis on the ability to coordinate and communicate with civilian agencies. The user’s guide was developed to walk users through the concrete steps of project-level assessment—from HA project conception and planning to project execution and monitoring for progress and results.

After we completed the first full draft of the handbook in December 2008, we asked stakeholders in DoD as well as experts from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration to review the draft and provide written feedback. As another avenue of feedback intended to inform revision of the first draft handbook, we sought at least one or two countries where it

could be field-tested. Ultimately, DoD HA staff in Albania and Morocco agreed to carry out the pilot tests.

Overall, stakeholders who reviewed the handbook felt that it represented a strong contribution to the M&E literature, not only for DoD but also for the larger international development community. These reviewers provided important feedback that informed our subsequent revisions. Those who pilot-tested the handbook in Albania and Morocco felt that it was a valuable resource aimed at the appropriate level for those conducting field-level HA project assessments. They provided useful comments regarding ways to streamline and simplify the document.

We revised the handbook based on the constructive feedback provided through the review and pilot-testing processes.

Discussion and Recommendations

Although we received extensive and valuable feedback from reviews of the initial draft, pilot-testing was limited to two countries, a small number of projects, and a relatively short time frame. Thus, several aspects of the handbook's use could not be tested, including its use across *all* types of HA projects, its use over time (particularly when a project is handed off from one team to another), and the feasibility and usefulness of compiling data from many individual projects to inform higher-level assessments. Because of the limited pilot testing to date, **we recommend that the prototype handbook undergo further testing, if possible, before it is broadly used.**

Most staff responsible for HA projects are currently not undertaking any project assessment activities, including fulfilling the existing requirement to complete an after-action report, so the perception is that any project assessment activity will add burden. It is hoped, however, that the assessment approach outlined in the prototype handbook will actually reduce the burden on staff after an initial period of uptake and adjustment. However, the potential for reduced burden—both real and perceived—will be contingent on DoD both formally requiring HA project assessment and enforcing that requirement. **DoD should explicitly require HA project assessment and enforce this requirement** (e.g., new project nominations should not be accepted unless assessment requirements from previous projects are met).

The level of burden related to conducting project assessment activities will also depend on the way in which data are captured and stored. To reduce the burden of HA project-level assessment and to allow generated data to be compiled to inform higher-level assessments, **the collection of project assessment information as outlined in the prototype handbook should be incorporated within current and future efforts to upgrade and improve the OHASIS database.**

Without information captured in OHASIS or another similar system, project-level assessments will be of limited use. DoD will need to decide whether it will begin to require project-level assessment using the handbook before this retrofitting of OHASIS is complete or whether it would prefer to wait until the system is redesigned to support assessment activities. While starting sooner may be beneficial from the perspective of training and instilling best practices in project management, the potential for perceived additional burden and limited usefulness is higher without the systems support that would be provided by a redesigned OHASIS database. To the extent that funds are available, **the capture of HA project assessment information**

as outlined in the handbook should be incorporated into OHASIS before HA project assessment is required.

Although there are several different handbook formats that could be tested in an additional round of pilot tests, based on the feedback that we received, **we recommend a letter-sized, spiral-bound handbook with a flexible protective cover and a CD insert that includes an electronic version of the handbook and all handbook worksheets.**

It is hoped that a final handbook, though designed with a specific focus in mind, will be used more broadly over time by DoD and potentially beyond. To support its sustainable use by DoD, in particular, **the handbook should be incorporated into the formal DoD handbook series.**

Prototype Handbook

The prototype handbook is presented as an appendix to this report. It includes three major parts: an introduction, an M&E primer, and a step-by-step user's guide for project assessment. The M&E primer educates handbook users on basic M&E concepts and terms (including those that go beyond the scope of project-level assessment), how to plan for project assessment, and the appropriate use of indicators in various types of project assessment. The user's guide presents 11 project assessment steps and includes various worksheets to facilitate assessment planning and data collection. In addition, the prototype handbook includes its own table of contents and appendixes with supplemental information on community consultation and avoiding bias in project assessment, as well as a glossary of M&E terms.