



Capabilities Summary

MapAction support for emergency operations

December 2007

THE MAPACTION ORGANISATION

1. MapAction is an international NGO, headquartered in the UK, and also has a Latin America/Caribbean section. MapAction's vision is to apply the skills of professionals from the rapidly-evolving geospatial technology sector to help to relieve suffering and safeguard livelihoods in humanitarian emergencies. Its operational capacity is founded on a pool of volunteers who maintain readiness to deploy worldwide, together with a small full-time staff providing leadership and operational and administrative support.
2. MapAction's core mission is to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian disaster and other emergency operations by providing rapid, on-site mapping and information management support.
3. Beneficiaries and operational partners of MapAction are, potentially, any organisations operating with a legitimate humanitarian mandate. In an emergency environment this includes government and international agencies, NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, and donor representatives. MapAction has an operational partnership with UNOCHA and MapAction volunteers attend and instruct on several UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) training courses each year.
4. MapAction receives funding support from a range of sources but most notably from Vodafone Group Foundation and UK Department for International Development (DFID).

MAPACTION ROLE IN HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES



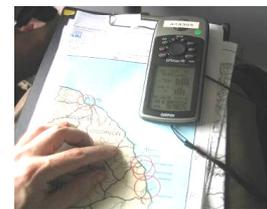
Field team in Pakistan, Oct 2005

5. Coordination of national and international response in emergencies is dependent on effective situational information. Much of this information has a spatial component. In complex and dynamic emergency environments, maps have been shown to be an excellent tool for analysing and communicating situation information. They have particular value in creating a 'common operational picture' which facilitates coordination between agencies and organisations.
6. MapAction maintains a standing capacity to deploy rapid-response mapping/information support teams anywhere in the world for short missions, most often in sudden-onset disaster

emergencies. Teams can comprise from 2 to 8 personnel and can be mobilised within 24 hours. To achieve this, MapAction maintains a pool of 30 deployable volunteers who commit to training together regularly. They are fully equipped to operate in any field environment and carry their own satellite voice and data communications. Activation of a MapAction team often occurs at the request of UNOCHA but can also be requested by other agencies.

7. The mapping team normally establishes a field base near or within a key coordination focal point, which is typically a local or national disaster management centre, or UN On-site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC). The team then delivers mapping and other information support for all operational stakeholders. Maps are produced on-site and distributed on paper, and uploaded to the internet for wider dissemination. Map themes typically include: general situation updates; distribution of affected population; 'who-what-where' (activities of response organisations); infrastructure status; ground and air navigation.

8. A key function of the mapping team is data collection. Baseline GIS data (for example, coordinates of settlements) may be available from institutional GIS users in country. Situation data is obtained from agencies and NGOs and extracted from rapid assessment reports. Also, MapAction personnel can conduct GPS surveys, working independently or accompanying partner organisations' assessment missions.



9. MapAction's deployment duration tends to be short – typically 3 weeks or less. This provides necessary 'first response' information management during the search-and-rescue and early relief stages of an emergency. A handover/continuity plan is always formulated: in cases where a Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC) is deployed this provides an ideal transition.

OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Mapping unit in Garissa, Kenya in Dec 2006

10. Since becoming operational in 2003, MapAction has deployed teams to the following emergencies.

- Asian tsunami (Sri Lanka), 2004
- Niger drought, 2005
- Earthquakes: Pakistan (2005); Indonesia (2006)
- Floods: Suriname (2006), Kenya (2006); Ghana (2007); Mexico (2007)
- Hurricanes and tropical storms: Jamaica (2007); Dominican Republic (2007)

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

11. MapAction is committed to building regional and national capacity in the use of GIS for disaster risk reduction. It is continuing its programme of training and other capacity-building work, which so far has included missions to Tajikistan, Mozambique, Liberia and other part of the world.