Working Paper No. 05 + 06 Needs Assessments in Post-Conflict Situations on behalf of the World Bank/UNDP and BMZ	gtz
Case Study Sri Lanka: In-Country Study	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH

Post-Conflict Needs Assessment in Sri Lanka: In-Country Study
December 2003
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Preface

The following work has been developed in the context of a consultative study carried out by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) on behalf of UNDG/UNDP and The World Bank. In July 2003 these multilateral organizations contracted GTZ in order to develop a practical guide for future Needs Assessments in post-conflict settings, based on a review and analysis of past experiences as well as research on other assessment methodologies in the context of humanitarian aid and development cooperation. The German Ministry for Economic Cooperation, BMZ, additionally supported the in-depth analysis of the four case studies in Afghanistan, East Timor, Liberia and Sri Lanka by co-financing the work of GTZ, with a particular focus on the involvement of bilateral donors in PCNA.

While the preliminary results presented in the following Working Paper have been shared and discussed with UNDG/UNDP and the World Bank, responsibility for the content rests entirely with GTZ.

We would like to thank the following interview partners of the following institutions: The Government of Sri Lanka, World Bank, the UN Country Team (UNDP and WFP), UNDP (New York), bilateral organizations, and the representatives from local and international NGOs.

Please note, that the desk study (Working Paper 5) has been integrated into the in-countrystudy Sri Lanka (Working Paper 6) at hand.

1. Introduction

The present analysis is part of an international initiative in war-affected regions to develop case studies to document good practice and lessons learnt in post-conflict needs assessments. It is intended to review a needs assessment done by multilateral organisations in Sri Lanka between January and May 2003 as part of the peace negotiations that started a year earlier.

All multilateral agencies present in the country were directly involved in the assessment, and stakeholders, communities, and civil society representatives were consulted. The results of the assessment were instrumental in the gathering for a donors' conference in June that year.

Through a combined methodology of interviews, secondary data analysis, and field visits, this report will take into consideration the following:

- the methodologies, strategies and concepts used in the needs assessment,
- the needs assessment process,
- the technical quality and relevance of its analysis and recommendations, and
- the conflict-sensitivity of process and content.

2. The context of the needs assessment

The conflict and its political context

Since 1983, the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have been engaged in an armed conflict in the North and East of the island. At the heart of the confrontation, in which more than 64,000 lives have been lost and over 800,000 persons have been displaced, are issues of governance and exclusion based on ethnicity, language, and religion.

Despite the conflict, the government never ceased to function in the North and East, although sometimes for formal purposes and with a level of service provision not comparable to that in government-controlled areas. While the human cost and physical destruction have been highest in the North and East, the entire island has suffered from the consequences of the conflict. Before 2002, there were only two major attempts at brokering a peace between GOSL and LTTE, both of which failed.

In the December 2001 parliamentary elections, a landslide victory by the United National Front -a coalition of the centre-right opposition and the main Muslim party- gave the new Prime Minister the capacity to introduce a new approach towards the conflict. By the end of December, the LTTE declared a unilateral ceasefire, which was quickly followed up by the Government. Initial contacts brokered by Norway led to a Memorandum of Understanding on 23 February 2002. This paved the way for several rounds of peace talks between the Government and the LTTE.

During the October-December 2002 session of peace talks, a joint mechanism with equal membership from GOSL and LTTE was established, which contained three Sub-Committees: 1) Constitutional and Legal Affairs, 2) Security Matters, and 3) Immediate Humanitarian and Reconstruction Needs in the North and East (SIHRN).

SIHRN soon became the main co-ordination mechanism for humanitarian assistance to the North and East, as it allowed to prepare activities fully recognised by both parties. However, it was a political body concerned with issues of equal representation and ownership rather than a technically qualified institution. Moreover, there were considerable differences in approach as to SIHRN's long-term role. While the GOSL saw SIHRN as a short-term response only, the LTTE regarded it as a platform for future administrative and government structures in the North and East.

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In an atmosphere of growing mistrust, the LTTE withdrew from the peace talks in April 2003 and SIHRN was disbanded. The talks have been suspended since then due to a number of political events although both parties have expressed a commitment to continue respecting the ceasefire.

The humanitarian context

Sri Lanka is a middle-income country (US$ 880 per capita yearly income), which has experienced solid economic growth of about 5% per year over the last two decades. In the South Asian context, Sri Lanka stands out for its achievements in the areas of health and education. In 1977, Sri Lanka initiated a transition process towards a market economy based on liberalized trade, foreign exchange, and investment arrangements. It experienced negative growth for the first time since independence in 2001, mainly due to the effects of the global economic downturn as well as domestic factors including a drought, political turmoil and stalled economic reforms.

This generally encouraging data, however, does not give an accurate depiction of the reality of social and human conditions throughout the country. Particularly in conflict-affected areas, the national census and general assessments have almost no access to gather information and, therefore, most information available is provided by very few international aid agencies working on the ground.

As mentioned earlier, the human cost and physical destruction have had a special toll in the North and East and have left the population in the worst conditions in the island. About 2.5 million people live in areas affected by military activity, many suffering from trauma and destroyed livelihoods. According to the World Food Program, the conflict-affected areas experience the highest levels of food insecurity in the country.

This plight has been compounded by the repeated denial of civil and political rights mainly as a consequence of the manner in which both sides have dealt with conflict and security considerations. The humanitarian community and international actors have denounced instances of torture, intimidation, extortion, and harassment by the main conflict parties to the civilian population. Although contemplated in the ceasefire agreement, cases of child conscription, forceful recruitment, illegal taxation, abductions, political assassinations, and threats are still being reported in these areas.

The International Working Group on Sri Lanka reported "major human rights guarantees […] the peace process does not address. These include freedom of movement […]; freedom of association, and from arrest for exercise of lawful political rights; freedom of expression and of the press; and guarantees to enable displaced persons to return to their homes and carry on their economic activities."

Background to the Needs Assessment

Unlike the case of other conflict-affected countries, multilateral actors continued to

implement development projects in Sri Lanka's North and East throughout the war. Until 2001, however, the Government remained reluctant about a political or even international humanitarian involvement in the North and East.

An important initiative prior to the ceasefire was the "Relief and Rehabilitation for Reconciliation process" (known as Triple R), which took place in 2000 and 2001 and was supported by the World Bank with a wide participation of civil society representatives and organizations. The results brought far-reaching recommendations on necessary changes to address the root causes of the conflict and became a foundation for the nascent peace negotiations.

The process was consolidated under the Poverty Reduction Strategy leading into what is known as "Regaining Sri Lanka". This initiative brings together several important and complementary elements of the Government's program. It includes the framework for economic reform, and the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and directs them into an Action Plan that will be part of the governmental efforts for poverty alleviation.

Following the ceasefire of February 2002, the Prime Minister requested the UN Secretary General to send a High Level Assessment Mission (HLAM) to Sri Lanka to assist in addressing socio-economic issues associated with the peace process. HLAM visited Sri Lanka in April-May 2002 focusing mainly on support to the large numbers of IDPs intending to return to their homelands. Furthermore, it made propositions to enhance joint planning by UN, WB and ADB in post-conflict rehabilitation, poverty reduction and peace-building. The mission led to a commonly produced document "GoSL & UN: Joint Strategy to Meet the Needs of Returned IDPs: July 2002 – July 2003". While still a unilateral initiative by UNDP, this process paved the way for close agency co-operation in the Needs Assessment.

Norway organized a first donor conference to address Sri Lanka's interim needs in Oslo on 25 November 2002, which raised about $ 60 million. Prior to this conference, a multilateral review of resources (the "Stock-Taking Exercise") had been carried out. A major donor conference on the reconstruction of Sri Lanka was scheduled in Tokyo on June 9 and 10, to be co-chaired by Japan, Norway, and the EU.

In mid-December 2002, the Multilateral Group agreed to carry out an in-depth assessment of needs in preparation of the Tokyo conference. On 18 December 2002, GOSL and LTTE agreed to the Needs Assessment and work was scheduled to start in mid-January 2003 and fieldwork was to be completed by end of March. In April, the LTTE pulled out of the peace talks and of the Tokyo donor conference. The Needs Assessment team nevertheless continued to prepare the document for the Tokyo conference, which took place in June that year.

3. The process of the needs assessment

Mandate and Terms of Reference

During a meeting of SIHRN on December 18th, 2002, GoSL and the LTTE agreed to invite the Multilateral Group to produce a document depicting post conflict reconstruction needs, which was not donor or agency oriented but supported the parties' joint presentation at the Tokyo donor conference.

This decision took form of a Road Map, agreed between GoSL and LTTE in January 2003, that called the MG (under the authority of SIHRN) to "present the overall needs of the areas most affected by conflict", thereby distinguishing between short-term needs (timeframe: 12 months) and mid-term needs (timeframe: 2-5 years). Geographically, the assessment would cover the eight districts making up the North and East of Sri Lanka as well four adjoining districts affected by the conflict (altogether 60% of Sri Lanka's territory).

It was decided that the exercise should be carried out in collaboration with the District Needs Assessment Panels (subsidiary bodies of SIHRN representing both parties) and in consultation with civil society of all communities, NGOs at local and national levels, as well as donor representatives. Thereby, maximum use was to be made of available documentation (baseline data, assessments, etc.) and resources.

The Multilateral Group developed generic Terms of Reference for the Assessment to ensure a coherent approach and consistent outputs. These contained an introductory section detailing the background and purpose of the Needs Assessment, its geographical scope and management arrangement. They also outlined the assessment process (with dates for key milestones) and described the required outputs. In addition, they contained two open sections for "Main Tasks" and "Working Contacts", which the responsible UN agency defined separately for each sector.

The standardized requirement for outputs included a short sectoral analysis describing the current situation (in the sector), its relation to the conflict and consequences on people's lives, and the strategy proposed to address them. This had to be followed by an assessment of the needs to be addressed according to the strategy (meaning investments, programmes, etc.). The Needs Assessment team was asked to relate to the policy document "Regaining Sri Lanka" when defining the proposed strategies. The sectoral analysis was followed by two tables for urgent and mid-term needs each detailing proposed activities, their geographic area, beneficiaries, proposed duration, as well as one-time and recurrent costs. For each activity, a programme sheet including measurable outputs, participating authorities/entities and pre-conditions was to be developed.
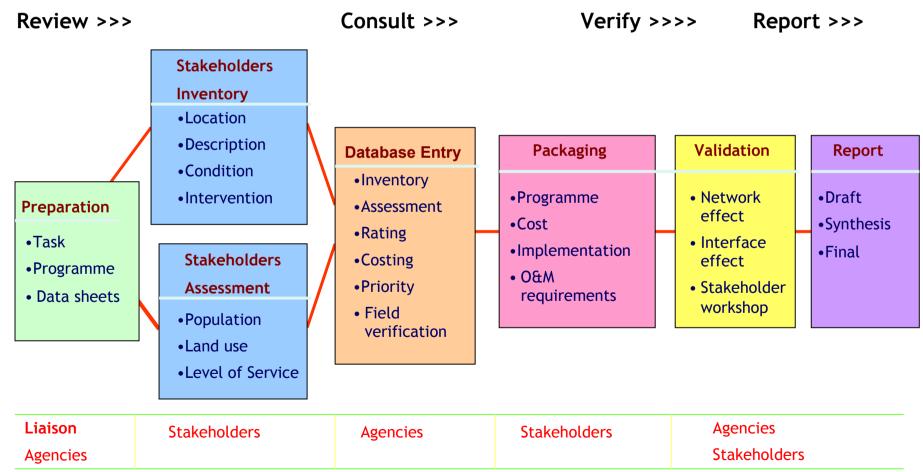
Timeline

The Needs Assessment took place from late January to June 2003. The following milestones can be identified:

Date (2003)	Planned Activity/Event	Observations/Unplanned
27 January	Generic **TOR** agreed by all stakeholders	
28 January	**"Road Map"** (outlining mandate and purpose of NA) agreed by all parties	
20 February	**Inception Workshop** (presenting all NA sectors for general input), chaired by SIHRN, in Killinochchi	No Muslim representatives attended
19-23 March	**Sectoral validation workshops** in Killinochchi to present findings by each lead agency under aegis of SIHRN	An extra day (24th) devoted to Mine Action had to be cancelled due to political disagreement
19-27 March	Drafting and finalization of sectoral documents, drafting of **NA synthesis document**	31/3: UN Residential conference 1-2/4: Special **extra validation session** in Wattala (Pegasus Hotel) with smaller group from GoSL and LTTE 4/4: Special **extra validation session** in Colombo (TransAsia) with donors and civil society
1-3 April	**Circulation of NA synthesis** document to MG for comments	
5-22 April	**Circulation of synthesis** document to GOSL, LTTE and SIHRN for comments	7/4: Document sent for comments
22-25 April	**Revision of draft** NA to incorporate GOSL, LTTE and SIHRN input	9/5: Final draft 9-24/5: Complaints by Muslim community, suggested revisions, and renegotiation of final draft with all parties.
25 April	MG **final review** of NA document for submission to Plenary of Peace Talks	
29 April - 2 May	**Plenary of Peace Talks**	Cancelled due to political problems
6 May	NA **final draft** given to printer, after clearance by Plenary	Delayed to 24 May (due to extra validation sessions and Muslim presentation)
13 May	Government-sponsored **seminar on Tokyo Conference** in Colombo	Cancelled
15 May	NA **final document distributed** to donors (3 ½ weeks before conference)	Delayed to 6 June (just before donor conference)
9-10 June	**Tokyo donor conference**	LTTE did not attend

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Logical process of the Needs Assessment

Review >>>   Consult >>>   Verify >>>>   Report >>>

Stakeholders Inventory
- Location
- Description
- Condition
- Intervention

Preparation
- Task
- Programme
- Data sheets

Stakeholders Assessment
- Population
- Land use
- Level of Service

Database Entry
- Inventory
- Assessment
- Rating
- Costing
- Priority
- Field verification

Packaging
- Programme
- Cost
- Implementation
- O&M requirements

Validation
- Network effect
- Interface effect
- Stakeholder workshop

Report
- Draft
- Synthesis
- Final

Liaison Agencies	Stakeholders	Agencies	Stakeholders	Agencies Stakeholders

Participating agencies

The Needs Assessment was led by the "Multilateral Group" consisting of ADB, WB and UN (with the collaboration of the IMF). The three agencies divided responsibilities for the thirteen sectors of the Needs Assessment according to their relative expertise. ADB covered economic infrastructure, WB social infrastructure (including education, health, housing), UN dealt with employment, agriculture, and governance (initially including public administration, human rights and reconciliation).

Apart from the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank, the United Nations System represented in Sri Lanka included UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, ILO, WHO, FAO, WFP, and UNFPA, as well as IOM (a UN-associated agency). The IMF also collaborated in the process, and IFAD brought resources afterwards for some of the follow up work. For the activities in each sector, a lead agency from the UN system was appointed with the support from focal points in the other agencies when relevant:

Needs Assessment: Sectors and Lead Agencies

Sector	Lead agency	Supported by
Resettlement and protection	UNHCR	WB, WFP, IOM
Roads	ADB	FAO
Telecom and connectivity	WB	
Power	ADB	
Education	UNICEF	WB, ILO, WFP, IOM
Health	WHO	UNFPA, ILO, UNHCR, WB, WFP, IOM
Water and sanitation	ADB	UNICEF, WHO
Housing	WB	ILO, UNHCR, IOM
Ports and railways	ADB	
Employment and skill training	ILO	FAO, UNDP, WFP
Agriculture	FAO	ILO, WFP
Micro-Finance and Income Generation	ADB/UNDP	WFP, FAO, ILO, IOM
Capacity development and institutional strengthening	UNDP	FAO, ILO, UNHCR, ADB, WB

Each agency was to organize its own human resources and logistics to participate in their part of the Needs Assessment. The overall cost of the mission amounted to about US$ 800,000.

With WB and ADB financing, the LTTE brought in senior consultants into the Needs Assessment mission who had work experience with the World Bank and were close to the Tamil cause. This was important in generating LTTE acceptance. Later in the process, some bilateral donors added more experts on cross-sectoral issues (gender, environment, people's participation, conflict-sensitivity, etc.) to join the team.

Data collection

The Needs Assessment mainly collected secondary data, which were available from district offices, LTTE administrative offices, multilateral donors and civil society. Secondary data were plentiful. Where there was not enough secondary material, sector teams conducted some simple surveys, e.g. a census of roads and buildings. Lack of data was generally not a problem. The main constraints were the short time frame and the lack of knowledge as to the existing database.

The Needs Assessment mission involved a high proportion of Sri Lankan staff. All mission members were instructed to go out not as experts, but to ask questions and listen to communities, LTTE, and government officials. Time constraints limited interaction with communities, however.

Sectoral teams were asked to make contact with SIHRN and its District Needs Assessment Panels, relevant Government offices, LTTE SIHRN members and the LTTE Peace Secretariat, the Muslim community, local administrative structures, as well as relevant international, bilateral and civil society organizations.

Good practices – Management strategy

The Multilateral Group (MG) consisting of ADB, WB, and the UN (with collaboration of IMF) was tasked with steering the Needs Assessment at policy level and keeping contact with the conflict parties. The MG met weekly in order to ensure a common direction. Throughout the process, it worked in regular consultation with the Government Peace Secretariat (through SIHRN) and with the LTTE to maintain a sense of shared leadership.

A key challenge for the management of the Needs Assessment in political terms was the different agendas followed by the MG, the GOSL and LTTE respectively: a) The multilateral actors had to be fair to the requests from the conflict parties and also to their own processes and objectives. Their key aim was to mobilize financial support to a politically and economically unstable state; b) GOSL was interested in the rapid delivery of services and rehabilitation to the North and East as part of its strategy of winning hearts and minds; and c) The LTTE needed development in the North and East in order to build its own constituency in the context of transforming itself from a military to a political organization. Thereby, it wanted to be a leader designing and implementing programmes in their areas.

Also, the Needs Assessment was carried out while the peace process was still

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fragile. Central issues about the future of the North and East (e.g. as crystallizing around the mandate of SIHRN) had not yet been resolved. This put pressure on the needs assessment in terms of its comprehensiveness, detail , and participation.

At the operational level, a small Management Team (MT) was appointed in order to coordinate the Needs Assessment process and guide the sectoral experts. It was composed of three full time members and headed by a former UNDP Resident Co-coordinator, who was generally respected and facilitated communications with all parties during the exercise. The MT kept a continuous communication with SIHRN in order to convey recognition of their ownership of the assessment.

For each sector, a "lead consultant" was hired by each agency in charge (see table in page 9), and a "focal point" within each agency took responsibility for coordination and cooperation. Members of other relevant agencies participated in the different teams according to their competencies.

The entire Needs Assessment team comprised nearly fifty individuals, including agency staff and consultants. Around half of the team members were Sri Lankan, and the others included experienced international people with a good local knowledge.

According to the thirteen areas defined in the Road Map by GOSL and LTTE, each agency in charge of a sector received wide guidelines and generic terms of reference requiring them to produce their reports through consultations with GOSL, LTTE, the Muslim community, and civil society. Implementation of this requirement was left flexible, however, and it appears that there were differences between teams as to how far they went on this (e.g. no consultations on physical infrastructure, limited participation of Muslim groups, etc.).

After the data collection and production of draft reports, the validation workshop process was designed to get civil society buy-in, which was also left to individual consultants and agencies. There was some disparity between teams as to how they held these workshops and more precise guidelines could have been very beneficial for the accomplishment of a more balanced quality across sectoral workshops.

Finally, with a view to the utilisation of the findings in the donor conference, GOSL established a "Core Group Preparations for Tokyo", which allowed for interaction between the multilateral and bilateral donors. GOSL also created a "steering committee" for the Needs Assessment consisting of key Sri Lankan ministries.

4. The results of the needs assessment

Structure

The final report is composed of a principal synthesis document divided into short sections presenting the substantive findings in each sector and sub-sector assessed. These are complemented at the end with the estimates of funding requirements for each sector.

The sections and sectors included are:

➢ Humanitarian Assistance and Protection of Vulnerable Groups

- Protection and Resettlement

➢ Revitalisation of Social Infrastructures and Services

- Health

- Education

- Housing

➢ Revitalisation of Economic Infrastructures and Opportunities

- Infrastructure

- Agriculture

- Livelihoods, Employment/Skills, Microfinance

➢ Capacity Development and Institutional Strengthening

- Capacity Development for Rehabilitation and Reconciliation

As annexes to the principal document, the sectoral reports give more detailed substantive and technical information on the identified needs. These sectoral reports cover Protection and Resettlement; Health; Education; Housing; Infrastructure (including roads, railways, ports, telecommunications, power, irrigation, water/sanitation and solid waste); Agriculture (including forestry, fisheries and livestock); Livelihoods (including employment/skills and microfinance); and Capacity Development.

Situation analysis and recommendations

As expected, the situation encountered in all sectors and sub-sectors describe a staggering picture of urgent needs. The conditions portrayed are not only substantially poorer and more desperate than in other areas of Sri Lanka but are also consistent with any region and population devastated by twenty years of war, denial of human rights, and lack of basic services.

The quality of results and the technical soundness of analysis and recommendations

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are remarkable considering the timeframe and pressure under which the team had to operate. The situation analysis, although very compartmentalized due to the methodology employed, is comprehensive enough to be somewhat practical.

The strategy, however, had limitations, as institutionalisation issues could not be considered in their full extent. This poses a threat to attempts to make recommendations and findings operational.

Institutionalisation and absorptive capacity

As mentioned, a limited section of the report refers to capacity building, which is treated as a cross-cutting issue. Capacity is defined as the "ability of society to organize itself in response to the needs identified in this report." The report recognises that this ability has been strongly eroded by the long-standing conflict. Capacity building needs are identified at the level of elected authorities, public administration at all levels, public institutions and private organizations, and civil society. They include strengthening human resources, strategic plans, organization and management, as well as a minimum level of physical assets.

The Needs Assessment report expresses concerns as to the lack of current capacity to implement the proposed rehabilitation programme even though capacity development and institutional strengthening receive the smallest proportion of the overall Needs Assessment budget ($ 27.6 million or 1.8%). Of this, $ 0.4 million (or 0,02%) are set apart for reconciliation and peace-building ("Base Scenario").

As expressed earlier, there is concern that the parties to the conflict requested the Needs Assessment not to deal with the issue of capacity building and institutionalisation in sufficient depth though it was known that the proposed programme far exceeded the existing co-ordination and implementation capacities. This could either lead to delays in implementation (creating frustration among the population) or an increasing sidelining and devaluation of national institutions by the international community.

Part of the problem again is the political character of institutions and capacity building. Originally, the MG wanted to give the sector "capacity development and institutional strengthening" a stronger governance, reconciliation and peace-building focus. Both GOSL and LTTE rejected the governance component, however, which had to be redesigned and relabelled as institutional capacity building to become acceptable.

Cross-cutting issues

Cross-cutting issues (such as environment, gender, human rights, conflict, and participation) do not figure prominently in the Needs Assessment report. The degree to which sectoral reports refer to these issues varies strongly.

Dealing with these issues was a challenge for the Needs Assessment team, both methodologically and politically: a) Methodologically, the Needs Assessment was

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based on a sectoral analysis. The consultants working on cross-cutting issues joined the team at a late stage, while the final report was being prepared. There were also problems with institutional cultures: An engineer specializing in road building saw little reason to pay attention to human rights issues in the region; b) Politically, these issues were very sensitive. Therefore, the Needs Assessment was given a mainly technical focus. The MG had to be mindful about how far it could go in pushing things without being rejected. Human rights and capacity building, for example, were also a subject of the peace talks.

Human rights were a key issue raised by bilateral agencies and civil society regarding the Needs Assessment. In general, they wanted to see rights more mainstreamed in the entire Needs Assessment. Unfortunately this could not be pursued more in depth as GOSL and LTTE did not consider the rights agenda should be given such a pre-eminent role. Similar concerns applied to its dealing with gender, the environment, and conflict-sensitivity.

Good practices – Validation processes

The participation of all parties, civil society, and communities was expected mainly at three stages: inception (workshops), data collection (field consultations), and validation (workshops), thus ensuring a comprehensive circular motion of inductive and deductive processes.

After all data was gathered and the initial draft sectoral reports from the different agencies were produced, a series of validation sectoral workshops took place to review and refine the conclusions. The validation workshops were held in Killinochchi under the auspices of SIHRN, which ensured full participation from both government and LTTE representatives.

The objectives were to discuss, validate and refine the preliminary findings with stakeholders to ensure not only the quality of the data and analysis but also, by widening the participation of all parts of society, to increase the sense of ownership by all parties of a common perspective.

Over a hundred people were invited to the three day event and, throughout separate workshops for each sector, all aspects of the report were reviewed. As an example, the following is the timetable used for the different workshops:

Sectoral Validation Workshops - Killinochchi - Timetable (19-22 March 2003)

Wednesday 19th				
All Day (9.30am-5pm)	**9.30 am – 12.30 pm**	**9.30 am – 12.30 pm**	**1.30 pm – 5 pm**	**1.30 pm – 5 pm**
--	--	--	Resettlement/ Protection (Room 1)	Health (Room 2)
Thursday 20th				
All Day (9.30am-5pm)	**9.30 am – 12.30 pm**	**9.30 am – 12.30 pm**	**1.30 pm – 5 pm**	**1.30 pm – 5 pm**
Education (Room 3)	Roads (Room 1)	Housing (Room 2)	Water/ Irrigation (Room 1)	Power/Telecom (Room 2)
Friday 21st				
All Day (9.30am-5pm)	**9.30 am – 12.30 pm**	**9.30 am – 12.30 pm**	**1.30 pm – 5 pm**	**1.30 pm – 5 pm**
--	Employment/Skills (Room 1)	--	Micro Finance & Income Generation (Room 1)	--
Saturday 22nd				
All Day (9.30am-5pm)	**9.30 am – 12.30 pm**	**9.30 am – 12.30 pm**	**1.30 pm – 5 pm**	**1.30 pm – 5 pm**
Capacity Development (Room 1)	--	--	Agriculture (Room 2)	--

The methodology for the meetings was left very flexible by the MT to each leading agency. In most workshops, each lead consultant presented its findings through multimedia presentations and then the floor was open for comments and feedback. There was some degree of facilitation to attempt agreement among participants (a difficult task with so many attendees) and all expressions were captured by the MT staff for further incorporation into the draft sectoral documents.

An important (originally unplanned) practice was to follow these validation workshops with a second meeting that included fewer representatives from all parties to decide on more detailed matters of content and format. This second validation meeting took place in Wattala (just outside Colombo) and brought together key representatives from both GoSL and LTTE who, over two days, "negotiated" the contents and

wording of the final draft. This extra workshop gave the team the capacity to synthesise the results of the wider validation meeting.

5. The implications of the needs assessment

The peace process

With the interruption of the peace talks, SIHRN has ceased functioning. As a consequence, multilateral agencies have found it more difficult to find common interlocutors for policy and operational consultations.

The main disagreement between GoSL and the LTTE were the long-term implications of the Needs Assessment's short-term recommendations. GoSL insisted on focusing on extremely short-term issues only. The LTTE, on the other side, was adamant on including long-term strategies.

The LTTE criticized the Needs Assessment as an attempt to address humanitarian needs while sidelining political issues. They demanded a coherent development policy framework to be included in the Needs Assessment. The GOSL, on the other hand, did not want to surrender its policy making power in the process.

The peace talks were suspended towards the end of the Needs Assessment but it was nevertheless completed, and eventually both conflict parties separately endorsed its recommendations. All proposals presented at the Tokyo conference had LTTE endorsement in spite of their failure to participate in the meeting.

According to the consideration of the MG, the Needs Assessment was successful because -despite the LTTE pullout- it generated about $ 4.5 billion in donor pledges at the Tokyo conference, which may be $ 1 to 1.5 billion more than what would have been available without it. Although some of the suggested projects may have been in the pipeline already, the Needs Assessment provided them with additional legitimacy.

The view of some bilateral donors and civil society groups consulted is that, in spite of the increased commitment for funding, the decision from the conflict parties to focus on technical sectors (and sidelining capacity building, cross-cutting issues, and reconciliation) represented a lost opportunity for areas considered equally (or more) urgent for peace objectives.

Implementation of needs assessment-related programmes

As of December 2003, there has been no implementation of the Needs Assessment's recommendations as donors linked their pledges to a resumption of peace talks. The MG remains optimistic that donors will keep up their pledges.

In the meantime, UNDP is engaged in preparing a "Transition Strategy" based on the Needs Assessment's recommendations, which is being consulted with GOSL, donors, NGOs and later with the LTTE. Once completed, it will be submitted to the

multilateral group to help define the different roles in post conflict reconstruction. The LTTE is presently preparing its own development plans for the North and East, whereby they make use of the Needs Assessment's findings.

Nevertheless, the awareness created around priorities in conflict-affected areas has already highlighted the most immediate work ahead and prompted initial reactions. Some agencies reported advanced stages of planning or even implementation in areas identified as most urgent through the Needs Assessment (e.g., World Bank has already started planning a housing project in conflict affected areas; similar instances were mentioned by ADB and some UN agencies).

Conflict-sensitivity

The conflict and political sensitivity of the Needs Assessment deserves a special attention as the document had to be careful to avoid any reference to critical political issues. The authors confirm in the introduction to the report that "it is not a planning document, nor does it set out a strategy or a vision for the development of the North and East."

The Needs Assessment was also requested not to include an analysis of the causes of conflict and of its structural consequences for Sri Lankan society (e.g. war-affected economy, role of the military). The wording referring to the conflict and its causes had to be kept vague: "complex political dynamics", "profound schisms", "lack of understanding", or "conflict-induced comportment" instead of human rights violations. The section on reconciliation (also termed "conflict-sensitivity") mainly proposes a Do No Harm approach recommending the conflict impact assessment of future programmes as well as support to small local peace initiatives. Only the brief section on human rights makes cursory reference to some conflict issues such as political rights, rule of law, good governance, social and cultural rights (education, language) avoiding concrete recommendations on the subject.

Equally striking is the lack of attention to demobilization (which was also omitted at the explicit request of the conflict parties), security forces, governance, and a more thorough treatment of human rights. The reluctance to mention conflict issues is evident in the sectoral reports, too.

It appears that this happened at the request of the conflict parties, who wished to start building consensus in the "easier" technical fields, while key political issues were still out for discussion. For this, they focused on relatively short-term rehabilitation, which allows postponing substantial political decisions. Below the conflict parties' unanimity to avoid addressing sensitive issues in the Needs Assessment, however, profound differences in approach and strategy emerge. The GOSL was interested in ensuring its political influence in the North and East. Any international assistance, therefore, must be short-term and avoid creating long-term structures outside the government framework. At the same time, the long-term strategy of gaining acceptance in the North and East by providing a social safety network and economic benefits clearly appears in the wish to attract large-scale

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international assistance to the North and East. The LTTE needed to be recognised as the key development partner in the North and East. At the same time, it was aiming at its involvement in the interim administration in the post-conflict North and East. For this, issues of representation and equality were paramount concerns for the LTTE within the Needs Assessment.

For the Multilateral Group, the challenge of addressing "sensitive issues" in the Needs Assessment presented a fundamental problem. By insisting on dealing with these issues, it would have risked losing the conflict parties' ownership of the Needs Assessment. In this way, it would inevitably have taken side and so lost its independent role.
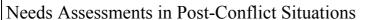
Good practices – Participation and inclusiveness

One of the most important aspects that the Sri Lankan Needs Assessment process highlighted was the need for conflict and political sensitivity. Within this area, officers of bilateral organisations and INGOs mentioned that the decision from GOSL and LTTE to exclude such elements resulted in a document whose capacity to support peace is limited to material dividends with little social considerations. One NGO worker described as paradoxical the fact that, in a document that highlights the very consequences of the lack of peace, the need for reconciliation and peace-building are relegated to a "next to irrelevant" level.

Even though the overall approach to the exercise was not particularly oriented towards identification of needs on ethnic or religious basis, the relevance of the particular considerations of Muslim communities within the conflict presented major difficulties.

There were no Muslim representatives at the Inception Workshops and only four members of the "Displaced North Moslems Association" (none of them from the East, where the Muslim community is strongest) were later invited to the Validation Workshops. Even though special unofficial efforts were made to include Muslim input, they were only consulted as members of the government and not specially recognised in their capacity as representatives of an important constituency within the country (and with a special suffering from the conflict).

The MT explained that the assessment could not make overt approaches to the Muslim community as such because this could have endangered the process with the LTTE. Although most parties agree with this assessment, they also admit that very little attempts were made to negotiate a more inclusive approach from a political perspective.

As a result, once the final draft had been achieved through very difficult negotiations with all parties, Sri Lanka Muslim Congress representatives unexpectedly contacted the MT to express their reserves in relation to the draft and submitted a document requesting a considerable number of changes they considered important in the report. This caused major delays and general concerns as the LTTE consultants had

already left the country and there was no more space and time for renegotiating and redrafting the document.

Since the peace talks were interrupted, it is impossible to know how much the Muslim community would have recognised the findings and legitimacy of the Needs Assessment report if it were used today for reconstruction plans. Communities and representatives contacted in the East expressed their dissatisfaction with the overall approach of the report.

In terms of vocabulary, they felt that the words "ethnic" and "religious" should have been included in most references to vulnerability and special protection. In terms of content, they said that their perspectives on displacement, economic integration, housing, and land rights were not apparent in the document. They described the process as "yet another attempt by the LTTE and the international community to marginalise" them from the country's political processes.

Considering the importance of the Muslim party in the government and in the continuation of the peace talks as well as the fact that the main recent cases of violence in the island have involved the Muslim communities, this oversight could prove a serious one if left unattended. Government officials mentioned that "some sort of damage control with the Muslim (community) will be necessary" if the needs assessment is used for any transition strategy.

6. Lessons learnt

General observations and good practices

The process, content, and implications of the needs assessment exercise in Sri Lanka helped reveal several areas and issues from which to learn, and improve or replicate. Practices had both positive and negative connotations and also had multiple impacts on more than one aspect. Hence, they have been loosely catalogued in this section under "process", "content", and "implications" in order to be understood in their main role, even though their complex nature makes it necessary to understand them as part of a whole with consequences in all three areas.

Process

- **As a common activity the NA helped bring down communication barriers across multilateral agencies**

Most respondents remarked that this Needs Assessment was one of the best examples of effective co-operation by the UN Country Team (including IMF), who managed to agree on the timing, approach, and methodology of the assessment. This was mainly due to efficient management arrangements and the good will of the concerned individuals. Unfortunately, this also highlighted and increased the idea of isolation in relation to the participation of bilateral agencies and the civil society in the process and final result (see next).

- **Limited participation resulted in limited adherence and ownership of the results**

The Needs Assessment received criticism from bilateral donors and civil society because of their reduced participation. There is a feeling that the good co-operation between the three multilateral agencies sidelined the bilateral donors and other agencies. The nature of the exercise made it difficult to include more voices in such a short time, even though this could have serious implications as both sectors are vital to the eventual financing and/or implementation of the recommendations of the assessment.

- **Limited guidelines and communication between agencies resulted in uneven quality or different approaches**

The assessment could have benefited from more communication systems to guide interaction across sectoral teams. Some agencies worked in very good dialogue and even wrote parts of each other's report but other teams worked in complete isolation and only when the results were presented to the management team they realised they needed major reviews.

- **Few lessons from previous needs assessments and planning processes**

The MG Needs Assessment did not stand alone, but was preceded by needs assessments and planning processes at various levels (Triple R, PRSP, HLAM) and followed up by further planning and analysis ("transition strategy"). The challenge is to ensure the linkages between and complementary of these processes, to build on previous work both in terms of content and institutional continuity.

- **Validation workshops: Excellent mechanism, but limited participation and impact. More time and work was needed.**

The sectoral validation workshops proved to be an excellent participatory mechanism to improve quality. The general agreement is that they could have been longer and done in a more systematic manner because of their value and the results. Due to their value, they should be explored further as a useful methodology and initial plans should devote more time and efforts into them in future exercises of this kind.

Contents

- **The exclusion of a political perspective can in some cases affect adversely an assessment and should be considered carefully in negotiations**

The decision from the government and LTTE to avoid a more political perspective, focusing on the technical quality of the final document was well respected by the MG. They believe that the Needs Assessment managed "to stay clear of sensitive political issues" and regard this as a success. From an outside perspective the lack of political analysis affected the comprehensiveness of the Needs Assessment. Future exercises of this type will need at least consider the value of such elements

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and learn from this experience when trying to negotiate the components of the final document.

- **Integration and prioritisation of sectors**

The assessment consciously avoided determining priorities between sectors or making judgments concerning specific projects and implementation modalities. Indeed, the authors insist that "progress must be made in all sectors" and the only form of prioritisation was temporal.

- **The geographic coverage should be consistent with the objectives**

The geographical coverage of the Needs Assessment was quite large for a purely humanitarian Needs Assessment, while it was too narrow for establishing cross-linkages between the situation in the North and East and broader issues of development in Sri Lanka. This could be considered when planning future negotiations for further assessments in the country.

- **The multiplicity and diversity of actors increased likelihood of uneven quality in the consolidated work**

The Management Group as well as the Management Team had little power to steer the Needs Assessment team on substantive issues. This had implications for the strategic outlook and coherence of the final document. Future activities of this kind could consider a greater focus on efforts of coordination and guidelines.

- **Cross-cutting issues were compartmentalised or non-existent**

Due to the decision from the conflict parties to adopt a sectoral approach, the Needs Assessment had major difficulties to address key crosscutting issues, particularly the political and peace dimension of recovery in the North and East. It seems that the agencies worked rather independently on their respective sectors. As a result, the final document contains insufficient linkages between the sectors.

- **Using operating agencies may have limited the capacity to have a wider perspective on needs**

Some UN agencies seem to have found it difficult to separate their operational mandate from their technical responsibilities. This introduced a certain agency focus into the Needs Assessment, which was not considered helpful. This might have been avoided by establishing purely technical teams without agency responsibilities.

- **The focus on needs highlighted symptoms but limited the capacity to consider underlying causes of problems**

The focus on fulfilling needs without paying attention to the sources of the problems that originated those needs was seen as an imbalanced approach that could hamper future efforts. Many respondents highlighted the importance of balancing the focus on needs with the evaluation of underlying causes and crosscutting sectors as the

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only way to address post conflict needs in Sri Lanka.

- **It was an excellent assessment of needs as a whole but did not pay sufficient attention to institutionalisation and absorption capacity**

All respondents agreed that, although the quality and quantity of data can always be improved, the exercise achieved a remarkable result considering time, areas and context. They did express their concern, however, about absorptive capacities and the institutionalisation of interventions.

Implications

- **The NA had an important peace-building impact as a way to engage conflicting parties**

The process of Needs Assessment itself was important, as it provided an opportunity for the conflict parties and other stakeholders to engage in a dialogue on important parameters for future development. The peace-building dimension of the Needs Assessment process, therefore, should receive at least as much attention as the final product.

- **The NA helped continuing second track contacts in spite of breakdown in peace negotiations**

When the LTTE pulled out of the peace talks in April 2003, the GOSL decided to go ahead with the Needs Assessment on its own. It seems that the LTTE separately endorsed its main recommendations, but did not participate in the Tokyo meeting. This was seen as a positive side of the methodology that ensured that the dialogue would continue regardless of the wider peace talks.

- **The likelihood of funding is a double-edged sword as a way to attract parties to the negotiation table**

Donors were strongly involved in the peace process, at times attempting to use international aid as a way to attract the parties to the table. The Needs Assessment and the amount of assistance associated with it (at least in the expectation of locals) played a role in this strategy. This generated great legitimacy for the peace process but also created huge expectations that could prove negative if funds are not forthcoming.

7. Conclusion

Considerations of the Sri Lanka Needs Assessment seem to vary according to two different perspectives:

Local, international and bilateral organisations complained that the close internal cooperation among the multilateral group for this exercise resulted in a feeling of sidelining of local civil society and bilateral donors. The difficulties with the Muslim participation, the limited inclusion of NGOs and local communities in main parts of the process (inception, consultation, and validation stages), the little attention paid to the interests of bilateral donors (particularly in relation to cross-cutting issues, conflict sensitivity, institutionalisation and absorptive capacity, and participation) created impressions that may have affected both ownership and legitimacy of the final document.

The decision from the government and LTTE to dilutenot to focus on critical capacity building, crosscutting issues, and the causes of conflict and their implications for post-war reconstruction was seen as having an adverse effect on the assessment (e.g. in the local press). There were several voices expressing they didn't consider the assessment a practical tool and rather perceived it as merely a "wish list" overly focused on narrow technical perspectives.

Intended as a largely technical exercise, the Needs Assessment was inherently affected by political interests. These political connotations impaired important conceptual and methodological areas and, thus, future activities of this type may want to consider a different approach in the initial negotiations with the parties.

On the other hand, these weak points were also seen as its strong points:

From the perspective of the participating agencies from the Multilateral Group, Sri Lanka can be considered an example of the international community seizing a historic opportunity of supporting a long-awaited peace process by offering substantive and coordinated assistance.

The multilateral actors expressed their satisfaction with their will and ability to work closely together. Considering the number and types of agencies involved, the Management Team had to concentrate major efforts in coordination and cooperation with an extraordinary dynamism.

The process also brought both conflict parties together to analyse problems and define common solutions, with the consequent improvement in the relations between them. Very few earlier exercises had managed to achieve this degree of success in such an undertaking.

8. Documentation

List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GoSL	Government of Sri Lanka
HLAM	High Level Assessment Mission
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Office for Migrations
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MG	Multilateral Group
MT	Management Team
NA	Needs Assessment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SIHRN	Sub-Committee for Immediate Humanitarian and Reconstruction Needs in the North and East
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Fund for Children
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

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