

Questions to Ask About the Location

Permissions

- 1 Are there any special permissions needed from the government, UN or other body necessary to access the area of the country where you are going, or sub sections of that area (like refugee camps)?

Accommodation

- 1 What are options for short term accommodation, office and residence during your first few weeks?
- 2 If the person you are talking to represents an organization, ask if their organization has space in their office or residential compounds to house your team for the short, medium, or long term.
- 3 Does the person know of any possible long term locations for office, residence, or warehouse (if you think you'll need one)?

Communication

- 1 Which mobile phone networks are reliable in the area, and which are not?
- 2 Do organizations in the area use satellite phones? Are there any problems with this?
- 3 Are groups using HF/VHF radios? If so, what are the important details we should know?

Internet

- 1 What kind of internet service is available there? What are you using?
- 2 What kind of mobile internet services work there and which don't?

Financial Services

- 1 Which banks, if any, are operational there? What services do they offer? Which bank do they use? Are they reliable?
- 2 How do they get cash to the area?
- 3 Are there any non-traditional financial services available in the area, like hawalas or mobile cash transfer services through the post office, telephone companies, or other non-bank businesses?
- 4 Are there ATMs and are they reliable?

Local Transport

- 1 What are the vehicle rental options in the area?
- 2 Are there other reliable, safe means of local transportation?

Air Travel

- 1 Are there possibilities to fly in and out of the area? If so, what are they, when do they fly, how much are the tickets and what are any other details we should know about using these services?

Utilities

- 1 What is the availability of electricity?
- 2 How often, on average, does electric power go out?
- 3 How long, on average, does the power stay off when it goes out?
- 4 Are there reliable electricians in town and do they have the contact information for one or two?
- 5 Are there reliable plumbers in the area and do they have the contact information for one or two?

Staffing

- 1 What is the general level of the labor market in the area? Will you be able to find management level staff? Senior management?

- 2 Are there any local ethnic, tribal, or other sensitivities we should be aware of as we are hiring? (or locating our office?)

Markets

- 1 What is available in local markets and what has to be trucked in?
 - IT equipment?
 - Building Materials?
 - Quality electrical supplies?
 - Plumbing supplies?
 - Furniture for office and home?
 - Generators, Inverters, Solar equipment?
- 2 How are the local vendors?
 - Are they literate?
 - How likely is it that they speak English, or even a language other than the most local one?
 - Are they familiar with NGO purchasing procedures?
 - Are they comfortable filling out written bids?
 - Do they use email?
- 3 Will vendors take checks?

Local Contacts?

- 1 If the contact you are speaking to is not located in the field location now, ask them if they have reliable contacts in the area that you can use for information once you get there. Would they mind informing them that you are coming?