Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

Recovery Planning Checklist Packet

Introduction

The primary function of this Checklist Packet is to provide a planning template to communities that have been affected by the impacts of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. An important early step in long-term disaster recovery is a decision by the community to organize and manage the recovery process with a cohesive, planned approach. "Long-term" refers to the need to re-establish a healthy, functioning community that will sustain itself over time. These checklists are designed to assist communities that would like to undertake a recovery planning process but are not sure where to begin and how to organize their process.

The checklists in this packet:

- Outline a step-by-step process for implementing a local Recovery Planning effort based on the experience obtained and the lessons learned by other communities that have undertaken recovery planning after significant disasters affected their community.
- Offers suggestions for seeking outside support and assistance with the planning process and to implement the plan.
- Offers guidance and suggestions for involving the public in the Recovery Planning effort.
- Provides methods for developing a Recovery Plan that is a flexible and usable blueprint for community recovery.

Every disaster is unique, but there are some basic, common principles that can be applied to assist in long-term recovery. Additionally, each community is unique and the types of impacts from a disaster will differ for each community. For this reason, communities may need to modify the Recovery Planning process outlined in these checklists to suit their particular needs.

COMMUNITY RECOVERY PLANNING PROCESS

Step 1: ASSESSING THE NEED - Do we need long-term community recovery planning?
- What are the potential long term impacts of this disaster for our community?
- What are the community infrastructure needs or environmental issues that need to be addressed?
- What are the community's economic needs as a result of the disaster? Are there new economic opportunities? Can we bolster current opportunities?

Step 2: SELECTING AN OVERALL LEADER AND OUTLINING A RECOVERY PROGRAM – Where do we begin?
- The local government must initiate the Recovery program, select a leader and support the program.
- The leader will be the spokesperson for the Recovery program, will "kick-off" the process, serve as the coordinator/facilitator at the community meetings, and establish partnerships with local, state, and federal organizations and agencies.
- Establish a Planning Team to facilitate issue and project identification, provide assistance in the community involvement process, help author the plan, and assist in finding project champions.

Step 3: SECURING OUTSIDE SUPPORT - Where can we get help? (Checklist 1 – Who can help us? & Checklist 2 – Developing a Community Recovery and Resource Day Workshop)

Step 4: ESTABLISHING A PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN - How do we keep the community informed and involved in the process? (Checklist 3 – Public Information Campaign)

Step 5: REACHING A CONSENSUS - How do we secure community buy-in to move forward? (Checklist 4 – Consensus-Building Techniques for Community Meetings)

Step 6: IDENTIFYING THE RECOVERY ISSUES - What are our opportunities?
- What did we like about our community before the disaster? What didn't we like? How can we bring the local economy and environment back better and more sustainable?
- **Think big – let your Recovery Plan inspire -** Private sector developers have been motivated to invest in the communities where the projects identified were born from the community, captivated the imagination, and had commitment from the leadership.
- **Strike while the iron is hot** - and before the public's attention turns to the next breaking news.
- Don't overlook the opportunity to take actions to reduce or eliminate risks from future disasters.

Step 7: ARTICULATING A VISION AND SETTING GOALS - What will strengthen and revitalize our community?
- Establishing a logical framework for your Recovery program can show key community stakeholders how the components of the whole program fit together and how those components contribute to the objective of strengthening and revitalizing your community.
- The community's vision establishes a direction that everyone can drive toward together. Without a common direction, groups in your community can end up working at cross-purposes.
- Goals will mark the actual progress toward your vision. They will give you and your community stakeholders a clear picture of how your Recovery program will achieve its intended purpose.

Step 8: IDENTIFYING, EVALUATING AND PRIORITIZING THE RECOVERY PROJECTS – What makes a good project? (Checklist 5 – Recovery Value Worksheet)

Step 9: DEVELOPING A RECOVERY PLAN - How do we put it all together? (Checklist 6 – Recovery Planning Timeline)

Step 10: CHOOSING PROJECT CHAMPIONS - Who will provide leadership for each project or initiative?
- Project champions can be found in a variety of places including: elected officials, local volunteers, active or influential members of a local community organization, municipal employees, community activists, or members of local professional organizations.
- A good champion will: continue to flesh out the details of the project after it has gone into the Recovery plan; find ways to attract funding to the project; convince others to join in and help bring the project to fruition; serve as project coordinator/leader and work with the person(s) responsible for Recovery implementation to help achieve all of the goals of the project.

Step 11: PREPARING A RECOVERY FUNDING STRATEGY - Where do we get the funding for these projects?
- Establishing partnerships with the various state, federal, and not-for-profit agencies is the most important aspect of preparing a funding strategy.
- You should first look at what local resources or funding opportunities are available to assist in implementing recovery projects. Once this review has occurred you can investigate funding, technical assistance, or other resources from various sources, including: Public Agencies (Local, State, Federal), Not-For-Profit Organizations, Private Foundations, and other organizations or entities
- A special edition of "Disaster Assistance: A Guide to Recovery Programs" is available for the Gulf Coast Oil Spill. Please go to www.xxxxx.gov to download a copy.

Step 12: IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN - How do we make it all happen?
- Identify who is in charge of Implementation.
- Set Priorities - focus on projects that will have the most impact on the community's recovery when completed.
- Move forward on projects that can be completed rather quickly, have significant public support, and available funding. These would be the "low hanging fruit" of the Recovery plan. Completion of these types of projects creates significant visibility for the Recovery program and helps solidify community and political support and momentum for continued emphasis on plan implementation.

Step 13: UPDATING THE PLAN - When are we finished?
- The Recovery plan should be viewed as a 'living' document that adjusts and changes to specific needs as the community works through the recovery process.
- Routine evaluations of the Recovery plan and the implementation process will allow communities to accommodate necessary changes and modifications while striving to fully achieve and implement the plan.

CHECKLIST 2: WHO CAN HELP US? (Step 3)

There are a number of local, regional, state, and federal organizations and agencies that may be able to provide assistance in a community's long-term recovery efforts. In many cases, organizations and agencies may be eager to provide assistance following a disaster but need to be invited to become involved.

The following represent some of the agencies, organizations, and institutions that a community should consider involving in the Recovery program.

☐ **County government agencies** - Can any county/parish government agencies provide assistance? Does the county/parish have greater resources than your community and could it partner with you in the recovery process?

☐ **Regional Planning Commission** - Does the community participate in the activities of the Regional Planning Commission (RPC)? Is it a member? RPCs may have outreach programs for their member communities or may be able to provide technical assistance with project development or grant writing and project funding identification.

☐ **State agencies** - The state will have several agencies that can provide assistance and be partners in the recovery process. Each state will have different department designations and organizations, but these types of agencies should be considered:
- *Governor's Office*
- *Department of Administration*
- *Natural resources or environmental agency*
- *Department of Agriculture*
- *Department of Economic Development*
- *Department of Housing or Community Development*
- *State Human Services Agency*
- *State public health organization*
- *State emergency management agency*

☐ **Private Sector**
- *Major employers in the community or region*
- *Major retailers in the community or region*

☐ **Non- Profit Organizations**
- *State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters*
- *Local Community and Faith-based organizations*
- *Foundations active in the area*

CHECKLIST 3: DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY RECOVERY AND RESOURCE DAY WORKSHOP (Step 3)

☐ Local communities should identify and invite state, federal, and other resource agencies or entities (Non-for Profit or Faith-based organizations active in the area; Economic Development Agencies; Planning Departments; Congressional staff members; etc.) to participate. Use existing agency contacts to seek out other potential attendees.

☐ The workshop forum should be informal and in a setting that will allow discussion and brainstorming among all parties. The meeting space should be arranged for all parties to interact. For example, a horseshoe shaped table arrangement will allow face-to-face contact for discussion as well as a focal point for presentations.

☐ Allow at least several weeks advance notice when scheduling a workshop to ensure adequate attendance by the participating agencies.

☐ Advertise the workshop as a one-day event, but provide enough time at the beginning and end of the meeting for people to commute to and from the workshop, especially when considering the location of state and federal agency offices (For example, schedule the workshop from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.).

☐ Schedule the meeting date to coincide with a local event, activity or festival. This will provide an incentive for attendees to attend the workshop.

☐ Ensure the meeting is accessible for persons with disabilities and with limited English proficiency.

☐ The forum process and agenda should be clearly defined for participants prior to the meeting. Emphasize the informal dialogue and networking opportunity.

☐ If possible, include meals and snacks on-site to maximize workshop effectiveness and to facilitate additional networking or discussion.

☐ If possible, include a tour of proposed projects or sites to allow participants to experience the project or setting in person.

☐ Don't ask for money from prospective partners! Instead, build relationships that will extend well beyond a meeting or workshop. Request ideas, suggestions and solutions to project challenges. Seek partnerships and assistance - technical, organizational, regulatory and financial.

☐ Provide a meeting summary for all participants.

☐ Host a Resource Day on a regular basis (semi-annual, annual, biannual, etc.) depending on scope and nature of the project(s).

☐ Be patient and accept that the process takes time.

CHECKLIST 4: PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN (Step 4)

Committing to the public information campaign early and fully ensures a successful plan by:

☐ Giving community members a chance to develop their own vision for the future of the community and transcend individual issues - it gives them hope for the future and empowerment for the present

☐ Establishing a high Recovery profile, which may bring issues to the forefront and increase the possibility of garnering funding

☐ Encouraging the community to take ownership of the plan and expect results - even after the Recovery team is finished

☐ Making it easier to find champions and funding for your initiatives

☐ Prioritizing initiatives in the Recovery plan

☐ Establishing community 'buy-in' to the plan and the process

☐ Clarifying that the plan is indeed driven by community members - and not by outside parties who may have another agenda

PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN ELEMENTS:

☐ Appoint Public Information Person

☐ Establish contacts with all local media
- Newspaper(s)
- Radio Station(s)
- TV Station(s)

☐ Establish contacts with Groups/Organizations
- Recovery Team
- Mass Retailers
- School System
- Chambers of Commerce
- Volunteers
- Community and Faith-based groups
- Foundations

☐ Identify Communication Mediums
- Local newspapers
- Local Radio/TV
- Social Media/e-mails

CHECKLIST 5: CONSENSUS-BUILDING TECHNIQUES
FOR COMMUNITY MEETINGS (Step 5)

☐ **Mapping Network of Stakeholders**
- General public
- Private Sector
- Government
- Other Groups

☐ **Facilitating the Full Participation of Every Stakeholder**
- Make sure everyone has a turn. Ask dominant talkers to stand down once they've made their points. Urge silent members to contribute. Probe for clarification when statements seem vague. Slow down the proceedings if the information is coming in too quickly for you or the group to process.

  Facilitating means getting all the facts on the table.

☐ **Tracking Group Dynamics**
- In the heat of an emotional community conflict, step back a moment, take a deep breath and ask: What is really going on here? What is really at stake for these community members? Is something happening here that isn't being said directly?

  Tracking group dynamics means paying attention to actions that speak louder than words.

☐ **Mediating among Conflicting Agendas and Perspectives**
- Find common ground. Insist that that group members behave respectfully (even if they don't feel it). Determine what each opposing side can afford to give and where each side draws the line. Don't rush for consensus before the group as a whole has had a chance to process the conflicts and disagreements. Encourage creative solutions.

  Mediating means holding all the conflicting pieces together until they form a workable plan.

☐ **Moving the Process Forward**
- Keep track of time. Keep the agenda and objective(s) in the foreground continually. Press for decisions when the group seems able to move ahead, but do not force issues that the group has not sufficiently processed.

  Moving the process forward means pushing steadily without derailing the process.

CHECKLIST 6: RECOVERY VALUE WORKSHEET (Step 8)

	PROJECT/INITIATIVE NAME: _____	
		SCORE
	POST DISASTER COMMUNITY NEED	
1	Does the project address a previously identified need/issue or has the project been validated by or attained new urgency from the disaster?	
2	Is the project necessary for community health and safety?	
3	Does the project leverage several sources of funding?	
4	Is the project related to the direct impacts of the disaster?	
5	Does the project provide an opportunity to improve upon pre-disaster conditions?	
6	Does the project have documented broad-based community support?	
7	Does the project impact low and moderate-income segment of community?	
8	Does the project address or support distinct social or cultural community attributes?	
	Score for this Category	
	Average: Score/8	
	FEASIBILITY	
1	Does the project have access to the resources and funding sources necessary to cover project costs within project timeframe?	
2	Is the project compatible with government initiatives, regulations and plans?	
3	Is the project scope clearly defined and achievable with measureable outcomes?	
4	Can the project be completed within a reasonable and practical timeframe?	
5	Does the project offer other characteristics related to feasibility such as design or plan flexibility, ease of implementation, offering a sufficient range of options?	
6	Does the project have a committed champion?	
	Score for this Category	
	Average: Score/6	
	SUSTAINABILITY	
1	Can the project pay for itself over the long term- is it sustainable financially?	
2	Does the project apply a mitigation or safety measure to avert future losses related to natural disasters or incidents or national significance?	
3	Is the project geographically located to encourage safe, convenient, and efficient connectivity with other nodes of development within the community?	
4	Does the project protect (or does not harm) key ecosystems; protect wildlife and natural areas; or improve water and air quality?	
	Score for this Category	
	Average: Score/8	

	PROJECT/INITIATIVE NAME: _____	
	CROSSCUTTING BENEFITS	
	Economic Impact	
1	Does the project create or re-establish existing business opportunities or provide new jobs?	
2	Does the project improve deteriorated neighborhoods?	
3	Does the project provide new affordable lease or rent opportunities and/or ownership opportunities for new and existing businesses?	
4	Does the project increase existing business incomes or contribute to additional spending?	
5	Does the project provide new opportunities to diversify the economy by establishing programs or capital projects (e.g. training facility; fiber optic infrastructure; distribution center) that would jump-start new industries?	
6	Does the project create avenues for job training or apprenticeships that would lead to increased wages for skills in demand?	
7	Does the project provide mechanisms to market area assets to potential industries?	
8	Does the project establish economic development plans, new programs, or increase professional staff to facilitate economic growth?	
	Score for this Category	
	Average: Score/8	
	HIGH VISIBILITY AND BUILDS COMMUNITY CAPACITY	
1	Does the project receive financial or physical investment from various segments of the community?	
2	Does the project have the ability to generate national interest through media attention, public agency support, etc.?	
3	Does the project have high visibility and distinct recognition within the community?	
4	Does the project serve as an essential building block and critical element for the community? Without these fundamental or essential public and private sector projects, elements or services the community would be limited in its ability to flourish (e.g. City Hall; water distribution; waste hauling; post office; etc.)	
5	Is the project a catalyst in attracting other projects or developments?	
6	Does the project attract or utilize multiple sources of financial support?	
7	Does the project impact more than one market segment, such as housing, retail, industry?	
8	Does the project serve or support several geographic areas within the community?	
9	Does the project enhance or support significant changes in public policy or principles, such as the adoption of new or improved local codes or ordinances, mitigation of undesirable situations, removal of non-conforming structures, etc.?	
10	Is the project visionary and does it encourage the community to look beyond established patterns, tendencies and framework in search of forward thinking solutions and/or is creative and uses new techniques or methodologies to address issues or produce solutions?	
	Score for this Category	
	Average: Score/10	

	PROJECT/INITIATIVE NAME: _____	
	LINKAGES THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY AND LEVERAGES OTHER PROJECTS & FUNDING	
1	Does the project interconnect among and within the existing community development framework and physically connect neighborhoods, key feature, districts, etc?	
2	Does the project support the existing resources of the community, including cultural, physical, natural, environmental, and geographic resources?	
3	Is the project a result of cooperative planning, development or implementation efforts among various local, state or federal agencies or organizations?	
4	Is the project of a regional nature that supports areas beyond just the disaster affected community?	
5	Is the project related to other community projects, resources, or elements?	
	Score for this Category	
	Average: Score/5	
	ENHANCES THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY	
1	Does the project build on existing strength in the community?	
2	Does the project provide or enhance community services such as schools, libraries, cultural center, community gathering places, recreational facilities?	
3	Does the project provide or enhance a critical facility such as hospitals, fire and police facilities, and other emergency response facilities?	
4	Will the project enhance housing/shelter situations? Does it provide community shelters, enhance mixed-income housing option, or improve assisted living facilities?	
5	Does the project enhance a culturally significant place in the community such as places of historic importance, community gathering places or sites where significant community events took place?	
	Score for this Category	
	Average: Score/5	
8		
	PROJECT RECOVERY VALUE	**OVERALL SCORE**
	TOTAL SCORE	
	AVERAGE	
	circle one **HIGH MODERATE LOW COMMUNITY INTEREST**	

CHECKLIST 7: RECOVERY PLANNING TIMELINE (Step 9)

The following provides a general framework for the Recovery team assigned to carry out the process.

☐ **Issue Identification / Visioning** - begins immediately and is ongoing throughout the Recovery. Team members meet with residents, community groups, local government officials, and stakeholders.

☐ **1st Community Meeting** - to be conducted approximately 10 days to 2 weeks into the process to solicit ideas and input on the community vision and define the issues for recovery. Meeting facilitators should ask questions such as: What are your community's strengths? Weaknesses? What are the issues? How should we reinvigorate our economy? How do we protect and restore our natural resources? What do you want your community to look like in the next 20 years? What kind of community do you want for your children?

☐ **Draft Recovery Plan** - to be completed approximately 4 weeks into the process. The Recovery team will devise a plan based on the community's input and ideas.

☐ **Distribution of Draft Recovery Plan** - due to the compressed time frame of the Recovery planning process, the draft plan may not be completed until the 2nd community meeting, but it should be available for distribution at that meeting or sooner if possible.

☐ **2nd Community Meeting** - to be conducted approximately 6 weeks into the process to solicit community feedback on the draft plan. The plan will be updated to capture relevant community feedback from this meeting.

☐ **Final Draft Recovery Plan** - to be completed approximately 7 to 8 weeks into the process. Projects will be fine-tuned, changed, or cut, based on feedback from the 2nd community meeting. The plan remains a Final Draft because it is intended to be constantly evolving.

☐ **Public Commemoration** - Unveiling of the final draft Recovery plan occurs at this final public meeting.

☐ **Distribution of Final Draft Recovery Plan / Other Materials** - the final draft plan can be posted on websites for mass review after the final community meeting. Other materials, such as posters, calendars, or other creative materials that keep the projects in front of the community should be distributed at this time as well.

☐ **Implementation** - the final draft plan will be the guiding document for implementation. See Step 12: Implementing the Plan.