

Research Terms of Reference

Transitions in protection: Exploring transitions away from humanitarian assistance in Central and Western Ukraine

UKR2414

Ukraine

April 2025

v.1

REACH Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

1. Executive Summary

Country of intervention	Ukraine						
Type of Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>	Natural hazard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Conflict	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	
Type of Crisis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sudden onset	<input type="checkbox"/>	Slow onset	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Protracted	
Mandating Body/ Agency	UNHCR						
IMPACT Project Code	64BIT						
Overall Research Timeframe (from research design to final outputs / M&E)	01/03/2025 to 01/08/2025						
Research Timeframe <i>Add planned deadlines (for first cycle if more than 1)</i>	1. Pilot/ training: 05/05/2025			6. Preliminary presentation: N/a			
	2. Start collect data: 06/05/2025			7. Outputs sent for validation: 14/07/2025			
	3. Data collected: 13/06/2025			8. Outputs published: 25/07/2025			
	4. Data analysed: 27/06/2025			9. Final presentation: 31/07/2025			
	5. Data sent for validation: 27/06/2025						
Number of assessments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single assessment (one cycle)					
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multi assessment (more than one cycle) <i>[Describe here the frequency of the cycle]</i>					
Humanitarian milestones	Milestone			Deadline (can be tentative)			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Donor plan/strategy			31/08/2025		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Inter-cluster plan/strategy			31/08/2025		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cluster plan/strategy			31/08/2025		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	NGO platform plan/strategy			__/__/____		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify):			__/__/____		
Audience type			Dissemination				

Audience Type & Dissemination	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Programmatic <input type="checkbox"/> Operational <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Product Mailing (e.g. mail to NGO consortium; HCT participants; Donors) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cluster Mailing (Protection and CCCM) and presentation of findings at next cluster meeting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presentation of findings (e.g. at HCT meeting; Cluster meeting) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Website Dissemination (Relief Web & REACH Resource Centre) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Follow-up workshop with local stakeholders	
Stakeholder mapping <i>Has a detailed stakeholder mapping been conducted during research design to identify all actors that could contribute to and/or benefit from the research?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes (along with national consultations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
General Objective	To inform humanitarian and transitional policy discussions by exploring how and to what extent ongoing protection-related needs of conflict-affected people in selected hromadas of Central and Western Ukraine are being met at the local level, in the context of the scale-down of humanitarian assistance; and to assess to what extent transition from reliance on humanitarian aid to other, longer-term, solutions is taking place as a sustainable, coordinated, and systematic process.			
Specific Objective(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To assess key outstanding humanitarian needs, particularly in protection, faced by conflict-affected communities in selected hromadas in Western Ukraine. 2. To map out at the hromada level, what humanitarian protection interventions are or have been scaled down, and the capacities of local CSOs and authorities to respond to remaining needs. 3. To identify the main risks and barriers, as well as good practices and opportunities regarding humanitarian phase-down and transition to other, longer-term, forms of assistance (primarily government-provided services). 4. To contribute to the development of benchmarking for determining when conditions are sufficiently stable, in terms of needs and response capacity, to shift towards other forms of assistance. 			
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what extent are the needs of conflict-affected population related to protection being met by sources of support other than humanitarian, in areas where humanitarian assistance is being or has already been scaled down? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Where needs are being met, what has facilitated this process, and how sustainable is it? b. Which actors are involved, and to what extent are they coordinating effectively? 2. What, if any, are the outstanding needs related to protection of conflict-affected population in areas where humanitarian assistance is being or has already been scaled down? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Where needs are not being met, what are the barriers preventing this from happening? 			

	<p>3. To what extent is the shift away from humanitarian support taking place as a sustainable, coordinated, systematic transition at the local level?</p> <p>a. What good practices exist where such a transition is taking place?</p> <p>b. What are the possible consequences where it is not?</p> <p>4. To what extent do dynamics around transition at local level align with the assumptions and expectations of different stakeholders?</p> <p>a. To what extent do the local transition dynamics align with expectations of humanitarian and government stakeholders at national level?</p> <p>b. What are crisis-affected populations' perceptions and expectations of this process?</p> <p>5. What opportunities exist for humanitarian and non-humanitarian stakeholders to strengthen the coherence and effectiveness of their efforts to meet affected populations' acute needs in the context of a scaling-down of humanitarian resources in future?</p>			
Geographic scope	This assessment is aimed at providing an overview of key dynamics in transitions process. Thus, its proposed geographic scope is six hromadas in Central and Western Ukraine: Lvivska, Truskavetska, Vinnitska, Pohrebyshchenska, Ivano-Frankivska, Burshtynska (see selection details in Section 3.2).			
Secondary data sources	See section 3.3.			
Population(s) <i>Select all that apply</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in camp	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in informal sites
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in host communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs [Other, Specify]
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in camp	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in informal sites
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in host communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees [Other, Specify]
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Host communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, Specify]
Stratification <i>Select type(s) and enter number of strata</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Geographical #: 6 (hromada) Population size per strata is known? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vulnerability type #: 5 Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, Specify] #: _ _ Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Data collection tool(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured (Quantitative)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Semi-structured (Qualitative)
	Sampling method		Data collection method	
Semi-structured data collection tool (s) # 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purposive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview (Target #): 90 <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview (Target #): _ _ _ _ _ <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion (Target #): _ _ _ _ _ <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify] (Target #): _ _ _ _ _	
Semi-structured data collection tool (s) # 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purposive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]		<input type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview (Target #): _ _ _ _ _ <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview (Target #): _ _ _ _ _ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion (Target #): 24 <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify] (Target #): _ _ _ _ _	
Semi-structured data collection tool (s) # 3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purposive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]		<input type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview (Target #): _ _ _ _ _ <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview (Target #): _ _ _ _ _ <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion (Target #): _ _ _ _ _ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Household Interviews (Target #): 24	

Disaggregation by gender and age <i>Are you planning to conduct sex/age disaggregated analysis?</i>	Gender		Age			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No		
Data management platform(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IMPACT	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNHCR		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, Specify]				
Expected output type(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Situation overview #: 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Report #: __	<input type="checkbox"/>	Profile #: __
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Presentation (Preliminary findings) #: __	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Presentation (Final) #: 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Factsheet #: __
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Interactive dashboard #: __	<input type="checkbox"/>	Webmap #: __	<input type="checkbox"/>	Map #: __
	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, Specify] #: __				
Access	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public (available on REACH resource center and other humanitarian platforms)				
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted (bilateral dissemination only upon agreed dissemination list, no publication on REACH or other platforms)				
Visibility <i>Specify which logos should be on outputs</i>	REACH					
	Donor: UNHCR					
	Coordination Framework: N/a					
	Partners: N/a					

2. Rationale

2.1 Background

As the needs of conflict-affected populations in Western and Central Ukraine become more protracted in nature, the 2024 and 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plans (HNRP) consequently shifted their focus to providing life-saving assistance in the South and Eastern regions of the country and areas along the Russian border, the so-called “crescent”¹. Consequently, humanitarian actors have begun to scale down aid programmes in the West and Centre. At the same time, initial discussions around transitions out of humanitarian assistance have emphasised the importance of coordinating this process responsibly, ensuring that non-humanitarian systems and resources are in place to meet ongoing, often complex needs, rather than shutting off assistance when the money runs out.

The HNRP 2025 aims to assist 6 million people out of the 12.7 million people in need (down from 8.5 million out of 14.6 million in 2024). It prioritises those with extreme and catastrophic needs, primarily living near the frontlines, as well as individuals with severe needs in areas experiencing pockets of crisis in Western and Central Ukraine. Additionally, the plan emphasises sustainable, long-term solutions by linking humanitarian activities with national mechanisms, complementing Ukraine’s social protection system, and prioritising the provision of essential services through governmental institutions where possible². Yet, as of January 2025 additional issues emerged due to a sudden and potentially long-term decline in funding for both humanitarian and development activities which further strengthens the need for sustainable transition to other forms of assistance³.

Ukraine’s protection system largely covers a wide range of needs of the population, but its quality and capacity need to be further assessed. On top of social benefits provided through institutions such as the Administrative Services Centre, and protection services for specific vulnerable groups, such as Child Protection Services, authorities have established free legal

¹ OCHA, [Ukraine Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024](#), December 2023.

² OCHA, [Ukraine Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025](#), January 2025.

³ REACH, [Impact of reduced humanitarian funding on affected populations](#), February 2025.

aid centres (FLACs) and centres providing psychosocial support (resilience centres = a collaborative initiative of humanitarian stakeholders and local authorities), to address protection needs of the population which are growing amid the war⁴.

Nonetheless, conflict-affected populations in Western and Central areas still face chronic, often complex challenges that threaten both their short-term wellbeing, their longer-term resilience, and the country's wider prospects for sustainable recovery. Over 4 million Ukrainians remain displaced, including many within the Western oblasts, with more expected to flee due to ongoing evacuations near the frontline and border areas⁵. As of December 2024, an estimated 591,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) resided in Western Ukraine⁶ (4% of whom were accommodated in collective sites⁷), adding to the region's population needs, despite it being less directly affected by hostilities.

Other vulnerable groups, such as older people, people with disabilities or chronic illnesses, and households with children (particularly single-caregiver households), face compounded challenges, including health, psychosocial and livelihoods issues. According to MSNA 2024, 47% of households in the Centre and 24% in the West struggled to cover their basic needs⁸. Although the unemployment rate is projected to decline to 10-11% in 2025-2027 and inflation rate is expected to fall to 8.4% by the end of 2025, both indicators will remain above pre-February 2022 levels, leading many households to continue relying on social protection transfers⁹. War has also caused significant damage to vital infrastructure, including the energy grid, affecting electricity availability, which in turn impacts both the economy and living conditions. Additionally, healthcare and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) needs are increasing, driven by war-related injuries and psychosocial issues among both the civilian population and veterans¹⁰.

Addressing these issues has overwhelmed local governments, NGOs, and service providers, who are often operating beyond their capacity—which itself has often been heavily impacted by the conflict—while available humanitarian aid is scaling down. For example, by mid-2023 the estimated number of available social workers had halved since the beginning of the war, which is severely inadequate to meet the rising needs¹¹. Aside from staffing issues, local authorities struggle with limited financial resources to fund social services. In 2023, the government adopted an amendment which redistributed the military PIT from local authorities to central government's budget, in a bid to fund the defence effort. This has negatively impacted local budgets, particularly those of hromadas located near the frontline, as they do not have many other sources of funding¹². Overall, according to UNDP, Ukraine's total recovery and reconstruction needs are estimated at US\$486 billion¹⁴. At the same time, the United Nations notes a lack of reliable data regarding population in need of social support¹⁵.

2.2 Intended impact

While there have not been many studies conducted to evaluate the transition from reliance on humanitarian aid to other, long-term forms of assistance (primarily government-provided services) in Ukraine, it is crucial to deepen the understanding of this process to better inform policy, address challenges and guide future actions in this area. At present, the coordination

⁴ REACH, [Transitions Assessment](#), February 2025.

⁵ OCHA, [Ukraine Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024](#), December 2023.

⁶ IOM, [Ukraine - Internal Displacement Report - General Population Survey, Round 19](#), January 2025.

⁷ REACH, [Vulnerability Assessment in Collective Sites](#), December 2024.

⁸ REACH, [Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment 2024](#), August 2024.

⁹ NBU, [Inflation to Decline from the Middle of the Year and Economic Growth to Accelerate – Inflation Report](#), January 2025.

¹⁰ OCHA, [Ukraine Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024](#), December 2023.

¹¹ UN, [Ukraine Common Country Analysis 2023](#), August 2023.

¹² REACH, [Transitions Assessment](#), February 2025.

¹³ Parliament of Ukraine, Draft of the Law on Amending the VI Chapter of the Budget Code of Ukraine, November 2023.

¹⁴ UNDP, [Employment, energy, debris removal and mine action critical for Ukraine's recovery, says UNDP Crisis Chief](#), September 2024.

¹⁵ UN, [Ukraine Common Country Analysis 2023](#), August 2023.

architecture for durable solutions and the nexus in Ukraine is under review following the arrival of a new United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC), and the stagnation of previous pilot approaches. At the same time, the question of if and how clusters should support managed, “responsible” transitions away from humanitarian assistance in areas deprioritized in the 2025 HNRP remains fiercely debated within national-level coordination spaces. Part of this conversation has focused on developing an approach to “benchmarking” when local needs and capacities are ready to “graduate” away from humanitarian assistance, but as of yet this is largely theoretical and has yet to be accompanied by a clear conceptual framework or measurement approach. There is thus a window for a piece of rapid research to ensure that these ongoing debates are properly grounded in evidence, by providing a tangible snapshot of how the operational realities of transition are currently playing out at field level.

This assessment has a dual focus. Firstly, it aims to determine the extent to which the protection needs of conflict-affected population are being met through sources other than humanitarian aid. Secondly, it evaluates the transition itself, examining whether it is:

- **Systematic:** Based on a structured and methodical approach to change, ensuring that all components are aligned and integrated for a seamless and effective shift.
- **Coordinated:** Entrenched within a process in which various actors or elements work together in a well-organised and synchronised manner.
- **Sustainable:** Seeking changes and solutions that ensure long-term viability.

3. Methodology

3.1 Methodology overview

This assessment will rely on a qualitative approach, including:

- (1) **Secondary data review** (April-July): Analysis of secondary data sources (e.g., reports of international organisations, government reports, programs, plans; government datasets) for initial context understanding and further triangulation of REACH-collected data.
- (2) **Stakeholder mapping** (April): The main humanitarian and non-humanitarian stakeholders responsible for addressing populations’ key needs will be mapped within each of the two hromadas. Mapping will allow for a better understanding of the local structures and feed into selection of key informants for qualitative primary data collection.
- (3) **Preliminary consultations with stakeholders at central level** (April-May): Consultations with the representatives of central government (relevant ministries), humanitarian clusters and development actors will be held to explore the context and relevant governance structures. Understanding of the transition process, along with the expectations and concerns expressed by central-level stakeholders, will inform the research design and later be analysed and compared with the transition experiences described by local stakeholders.
- (4) **Qualitative primary data collection at hromada level** (May):
 - **Key Informant Interviews:** KIIs are a qualitative research method in which detailed, individual in-depth interviews are conducted with individuals who have specialised knowledge of the topic, e.g., representatives of a specific sector or institution. KIIs will be conducted with stakeholders working within protection cluster. Informants will include local actors, such as representatives of the local government, local NGOs, local CSOs, INGOs, as well as UN agencies and coordination structures operating locally, allowing to gain an understanding of the transition process and responsibility structure, along with barriers, opportunities and risks involved.
 - **Focus Group Discussions:** FGDs are a qualitative research method used to gather insights and opinions from a small group of participants through structured or semi-structured dialogue. FGDs with members of vulnerable population groups currently or previously receiving humanitarian assistance will be conducted

to explore the unaddressed needs of the IDP and non-displaced conflict-affected population and gain perspectives of direct beneficiaries of the early recovery transition process.

- Household Interviews: HHIs are a qualitative research method in which detailed, individual in-depth interviews are conducted, asking questions at the household level (about the situation of the household). HHIs with persons with disability and/or chronic illness currently or previously receiving humanitarian assistance will be conducted instead of FGDs with this group to explore their unaddressed needs and gain perspectives of direct beneficiaries of the early recovery transition process.
- (5) **Follow-up workshop with protection stakeholders** (August): Following analysis of findings, a participatory workshop could be held with local and/or national stakeholders to validate findings, identify areas for further exploration and develop initial recommendations.

Key Definitions:

Oblast is the highest administrative unit in Ukraine below the national level.

Rayon is the second level of administrative unit in Ukraine, a part of an oblast.

Hromada is a basic administrative unit in Ukraine, a part of a rayon.

Oblast centre: administrative centre (capital city) of an oblast

Humanitarian needs are the essential needs of individuals and communities affected by crises, such as armed conflicts, or other emergencies. These needs encompass basic necessities, protection.

Humanitarian aid refers to activities providing immediate, short-term assistance (regarding essential needs) to people in need amid crises (such as armed conflicts, or other emergencies).

3.2 Population of interest

Geographical area assessed

This assessment will take an area-based case study approach, aimed at providing a snapshot of key dynamics in the context of limited time and resources. The geographic scope will cover six hromadas in Western and Central Ukraine – although all included hromadas are classified as urban, their coverage includes both urban and rural settlements, allowing to obtain information on different area types.

The exact locations have been chosen based on discussions with humanitarian and development stakeholders. Preliminary selection criteria included:

- 3 oblast centres hromadas and 3 non-oblast centres hromadas to provide an indicative comparison of needs and transition process between different types of areas.
- Hromadas which experienced or which are likely to experience IDP influx.
- A scaling down of humanitarian presence, including hromadas that have largely transitioned to the early recovery stage and those that are going through that process.
- Presence of government-supported social services (incl. FLAC, resilience centres) and collective sites.
- Recommendations by the cluster.

Hromadas chosen for the assessment along with selection criteria:

Oblast	Lvivska		Vinnitska		Ivano-Frankivska	
Hromada	Lvivska	Truskavetska	Vinnitska	Pohrebyshe nska	Ivano- Frankivska	Burshtynska

Oblast centre	x		x		x	
Area type	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban
Significant decrease in humanitarian aid	x		x		x	x
#IDPs /occupied collective sites	3,554 /30	763 /4	1,490 /29	53 /2	958 /19	86 /4
% of occupancy of collective sites	78%	85%	78%	46%	58%	27%
FLAC present	x	x	x	x	x	x
Resilience centre present	To be opened	To be opened	To be opened	x	x	x
Other comments	Many NGOs present – significant humanitarian activity in the first year of war, now reduced; no free spaces in collective sites in Lviv settlement.	No free spaces in collective sites in Truskavets settlement.	Reduction in humanitarian action, but a few INGOs still present; local programmes seem to prioritise veterans over IDPs.	Remote hromada, limited humanitarian presence.	Several NGOs contracted by the Ministry of Social Policy in a bid to support transition.	Drone attacks on hromada.

Population assessed

Population of interest are vulnerable conflict-affected populations, currently or formerly included in humanitarian caseloads, who require social assistance. The assessment will also include the perspective of local humanitarian and governmental service providers and policymakers working within the protection sector.

Unit of measurement

Outstanding needs of the local population will be assessed via FGDs and Household Interviews at the household level. Challenges in the transition process of local stakeholders will be assessed at the hromada level, by sector.

3.2 Secondary data review

The main documents for secondary data review can be found below (see Table 1). Additional documents might be used throughout the assessment depending on research needs and availability new publications.

Table 1. Secondary sources

Secondary source	Purpose of the source	Link
MSNA 2024, IMPACT	- Information on vulnerable groups and outstanding needs	https://repository.impact-initiatives.org/document/impact/893b7468/REACH_UKR_Frequency-Tables-Oblast_MSNA_August24_General-Population.xlsx
Transitions Assessment, February 2025, REACH	- Understanding of primary issues linked to transitions away from humanitarian assistance in Western Ukraine	https://repository.impact-initiatives.org/document/impact/5869a577/IMPACT_UKR_Situation-Overview_Transitions-Assessment_February-2025.pdf
The impact of sudden decreased funding on Ukrainian CSOs, March 2025, REACH	- Understanding the impact of January 2024 funding freeze on Ukrainian CSOs and NGOs	https://repository.impact-initiatives.org/document/impact/3e2fd25e/REACH_UKR_Brief_The-impacts-of-sudden-decreased-funding-on-Ukrainian-CSOs_Feb_March-2025.pdf
Ukraine Vulnerability Assessment in Collective Sites, December 2024	- Understanding of needs and challenges of IDPs residing in collective sites	https://repository.impact-initiatives.org/document/impact/2b285ff4/REACH_UKR_Vulnerability_Assessment_In_Collective_Sites_Report_December_ENG
IDP Profiling in Urban Areas, 2024, IMPACT	- Information on vulnerable groups and outstanding needs	https://repository.impact-initiatives.org/document/impact/a5be0846/REACH_IDP-Profiling_Situation-Overview_Chervonohradsk
IDP Collective Site Monitoring maps, IMPACT	- Mapping active/closing collective sites	https://repository.impact-initiatives.org/document/impact/2a03cf3a/REACH-Ukraine-IDP-Collective-Site-Monitoring-Map-Active-Sites-August-2024.pdf
Ukraine Durable Solutions For People Living in Collective Sites: Outlook and Way Forward, 2024, IMPACT	- Information on vulnerable groups and outstanding needs - Understanding of the expectations and recommendations for early recovery regarding IDPs	https://repository.impact-initiatives.org/document/impact/7d73ed0f/UKR_DS_CCCM_report.pdf
Humanitarian Needs and	- Contextual understanding of the latest	https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/ukraine/ukraine-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2025-january-2025-enuk

Response Plan 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> planning and targeting for humanitarian aid - Key definitions 	
Ukraine Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Assessment 2024, UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding of recovery efforts in Ukraine 	https://www.undp.org/ukraine/publications/updated-ukraine-recovery-and-reconstruction-needs-assessment
Ukraine Common Country Analysis 2023, UN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contextual understanding - Identification of vulnerable groups 	https://ukraine.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/CCA
Documents of the National Council for the Recovery of Ukraine from the War 2022, Government of Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding of the national authorities' plans and expectations for early recovery 	https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/national-council-recovery-ukraine-war/working-groups
United Nations in Ukraine Transitional Framework September 2022-December 2024, UN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding of the UN-Ukraine plans and expectations for early recovery 	https://ukraine.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/UNUkraine_2022_2024_TransitionalFramework_Updated_EN.pdf
A study of recovery initiatives in Ukraine, Ednannia, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contextual understanding of early recovery efforts in Ukraine - Feeding into the Data Analysis Plan 	https://ednannia.ua/images/A_study_of_recovery_initiatives_in_Ukraine.pdf
Humanitarian "Social Service" Review, July-September 2024, Perehid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding of the Ukraine's Ministry of Social Policy planning and expectations regarding transition (NGO contracting) 	offline
Relevant laws and policies of the Ukraine's government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contextual understanding of the social 	https://www.rada.gov.ua/en

regarding social protection	protection system in Ukraine	
Hromadas' budgets	- Contextual understanding of hromadas' financial capacity and priorities	https://openbudget.gov.ua/en/local-budget?id=2600000000

Additionally, consultations with national stakeholders will allow to explore the context of transition from humanitarian aid to longer-term solutions in Ukraine and compare the planning and perception of that process at the central level with the actual transition process at local level assessed via primary data collection. Consultations will be conducted with government stakeholders (Ministry of Social Policy, Ministry of Development), humanitarian clusters and sub-clusters (Protection, Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence, Accountability to Affected Population), and development stakeholders (UNDP, development NGOs).

3.3 Primary Data Collection

Secondary Data Review and consultations with national stakeholders will begin before the start of the primary data collection to feed into the research design and deepen the assessment team's understanding of the transition process from a national or central-level perspective.

Primary data collection will include three components: Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with representatives of vulnerable conflict-affected populations, currently or formerly included in humanitarian caseloads, who require social assistance. Household Interviews (HHIs) with persons with disability and/or chronic illness currently or formerly included in humanitarian caseloads, who require social assistance. Semi-structured (qualitative) Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with local humanitarian and governmental service providers and policymakers working within the protection-related sectors (see Table 2). Some CCCM representatives will be included in the study (within KIIs) to provide a more comprehensive overview of the IDP population's needs. FGDs, HHIs and KIIs will be conducted simultaneously as the findings from each component will complement one another without influencing each other's design.

Table 2. Data collection components

Data Collection Component	Respondents	Target Number of Interviews	Main areas of focus
Key Informant Interviews	Stakeholders working in protection-related sectors in given locations, including representatives of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International organisations/NGOs International NGOs 	0-3 KIIs per hromada (min. 2 per oblast centre); 9-15 in total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are outstanding needs of the population being met by non-humanitarian sources of support? Where needs are being met, what has facilitated this process, and how sustainable is it? Where needs are not being met, what are the barriers preventing this from happening? Which actors are involved, and to what extent are they coordinating effectively?

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is the shift away from humanitarian support taking place as a managed, systematic transition? What good practices exist where such a transition is taking place? What are the possible consequences where it is not? To what extent do dynamics around transition at local level align with the assumptions and expectations of different stakeholders at the national level? What opportunities exist for humanitarian and non-humanitarian stakeholders to strengthen the coherence and effectiveness of their efforts to meet affected populations' acute needs in the context of a scaling-down of humanitarian resources in future?
Key Informant Interviews	<p>Stakeholders working in the protection-related sectors, including representatives of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities Public service providers Local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) Local Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) 	<p>8-13 KIIs per hromada, 48-78 in total</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are outstanding needs of the population being met by non-humanitarian sources of support? Where needs are being met, what has facilitated this process, and how sustainable is it? Where needs are not being met, what are the barriers preventing this from happening? Which actors are involved, and to what extent are they coordinating effectively? To what extent is the shift away from humanitarian support taking place as a managed, systematic transition? What good practices exist where such a transition is taking place? What are the possible consequences where it is not? To what extent do dynamics around transition at local level align with the assumptions and expectations of different stakeholders at the national level? What opportunities exist for humanitarian and non-humanitarian stakeholders to strengthen the coherence and effectiveness of their efforts to meet affected populations' acute needs in the context of a scaling-down of humanitarian resources in future?
Focus Group Discussions	<p>Vulnerable groups of local population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDPs in collective sites IDPs outside of collective sites Single caregivers (members of HHs with children) 	<p>4 FGDs per hromada (each FGD involving 5-10 persons), 24 FGDs in total</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is the shift away from humanitarian support taking place as a managed, systematic transition? What, if any, are the outstanding needs related to protection and CCCM (if relevant) of population in areas where humanitarian assistance is being or has already been scaled down? To what extent are these needs being met by other sources of support?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older people persons (65+ y.o.) with special needs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where needs are being met, what has facilitated this process, and how sustainable is it? Where needs are not being met, what are the barriers preventing this from happening? What are crisis-affected populations' perceptions and expectations of the transition process?
Household Interviews	Persons with disability and/or chronic illness	3-4 HHIs per hromada; 18-24 in total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What, if any, are the outstanding needs related to protection of population in areas where humanitarian assistance is being or has already been scaled down? To what extent are these needs being met by other sources of support? Where needs are being met, what has facilitated this process, and how sustainable is it? Where needs are not being met, what are the barriers preventing this from happening? What are crisis-affected populations' perceptions and expectations of the transition process?

All primary data will be collected by the IMPACT Assessment Team, supported by the Field Team, in May 2025. Data collection will include a pilot phase, after which the results will be discussed, and the Assessment Team will review the debrief forms to make improvements to the tool if needed.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) will be conducted in person, while Household Interviews (HHIs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) will be conducted either face-to-face or by phone, depending on logistical capacity and the security situation. Members of households with persons with vulnerabilities enlisted in Table 3 will be invited to participate in FGDs and HHIs – ideally, the data collection team will attempt to involve persons with given vulnerabilities directly, but if not possible, other members of their households can participate instead. Household Interviews will serve as a replacement to FGDs with persons with disability and/or chronic illness to ensure that people with limited mobility or special needs can participate.

Focus Group Discussions will involve semi-structures exercises to help facilitate and stimulate the discussion – such as noting down services that respondents are aware of, and those that they accessed in their location; and rating statements (Yes, No, Maybe, followed by explanations). Household Interviews will be made uniform with FGDs to the extent possible (questions will be the same, but the way of asking them may differ slightly as they will be adjusted to interviews with one person instead of a group). KIIs will rely on questionnaires adjusted to international and local stakeholders – local stakeholders will be interviewed at hromada level, and international stakeholders will be interviewed at oblast level.

In total, 54-93 KIIs, 24 FGDs and 18-24 HHIs are envisioned, all disaggregated by location (see Table 3). The FGDs and HHIs will enable to include perspectives of the main vulnerable groups in each hromada by providing information on their needs. KIIs will involve the main stakeholders participating in the transition process. The number of KIIs remains flexible, as stakeholder mapping is ongoing in parallel to data collection preparations. The final number of KIIs will depend on the number of stakeholders involved in the transition process and addressing needs of the population within each hromada. KIIs will be additionally disaggregated during analysis by type of actor, while FGDs will be further disaggregated by type of vulnerability.

Sampling will be purposive, with snowball sampling employed to achieve the target number of respondents, with the respondents for FGDs and HHIs reached, i.e., by contacting local NGOs that provide aid to the relevant vulnerable population groups. However, snowball sampling for FGDs will be conducted in a manner that ensures participants who are acquaintances are not placed in the same group. Efforts will be made to ensure reaching about 50/50 male/female ration within FGDs if possible.

Table 3. Detailed sampling

KIIs

Category	Examples of respondents: Representatives of...	Per hromada
INGOs/IOs	Protection	0-3
Local authorities	Bureau of the Head of hromada Social services department Administrative Services Centre (TSNAP) Services for Children	3-4
Public service providers and advisory bodies	Collective sites IDP councils Organisations of people with disability (OPD councils)	1-3
National NGOs/CBOs	NGOs/CBOs providing IDP-oriented services NGOs/CBOs providing social services (incl. legal aid) NGOs/CBOs providing aid/care to persons with disability or chronic illness (incl. older people) NGOs/CBOs providing child protection services NGOs/CBOs providing aid related to GBV NGOs/CBOs providing psychosocial assistance	2-5
Local NGOs/CBOs	NGOs/CBOs providing IDP-oriented services NGOs/CBOs providing social services (incl. legal aid) NGOs/CBOs providing aid/care to persons with disability or chronic illness (incl. older people) NGOs/CBOs providing child protection services NGOs/CBOs providing aid related to GBV NGOs/CBOs providing psychosocial assistance	2-5
Total:		54-93

FGDs

Vulnerability		Per Hromada
IDP	Members of IDP HHs outside of collective sites	1
	Members of IDP HHs in collective sites	1
Host	Members of HHs with children, incl. single caregivers	1
	Members of HHs with older members (60+ y.o.), incl. with special needs	1
Total:		24

HHIs

Vulnerability		Per Hromada
Host	Members of HHs with persons with a disability/chronic illness	3-4
Total:		18-24

3.4 Data Processing & Analysis

Secondary data will be collected and reviewed by the Assessment Team (Assessment Officer and Senior Assessment Officer). Any new relevant reports, factsheets, briefings and other information, will be added to the stock of secondary data and will be used to triangulate the results of the data collection.

Data collection will be conducted by the Assessment Officers and supported by the Field Officers and enumerators, all supervised by the Assessment Team Leader in coordination with the Field Operations Manager. Prior to collecting data Assessment, Field Officers and enumerators will receive a training on qualitative data collection, as well as the specific tools used in this assessment. A pilot data collection of the qualitative components will follow the training. The data collection tools may be adjusted based on the insights from the pilot.

Qualitative data collection will be audio-recorded (dependent on respondents' consent), and the interviewers (Assessment and Field Officers, enumerators) will take notes during data collection. Enumerators and Field Officers will transcribe these notes, using recordings to consolidate them, as soon as possible after the discussions. The transcripts will be translated automatically, with translation verified and edited by the Assessment Officers.

The coding system will be exported as a data saturation grid built via MAXQDA to highlight the key themes, areas of consensus, and areas of disagreement, with the possibility of disaggregating findings by location. A summary of findings will be written and included in the data saturation grid. Qualitative data analysis will be performed according to the Data Analysis Plan (see section 6). All data cleaning and analysis will be reviewed by the IMPACT HQ Research Department.

3.5 Limitations

- A qualitative approach will not provide representative data on humanitarian and early recovery efforts' beneficiaries, however, it will enable to explore the transition process and remaining unmet needs in depth.
- It needs to be noted that this assessment will serve as a case study, providing insights on the transition process in selected locations of Central and Western Ukraine, rather than findings generalisable at country level.
- It would be challenging for representatives of vulnerable population groups to distinguish whether they receive humanitarian or early recovery support. Therefore, FGDs and HHIs will focus on broader service provision and unmet needs.
- Because recruiting respondents for FGDs and HHIs will be conducted with the help of local NGOs, the sample will at least partially include those who have already contacted or are aware of certain NGOs providing aid to vulnerable population groups. It will be more difficult to reach those who did not attempt to access NGO services, therefore this group, potentially with a wider array of unmet needs, may be underrepresented in the sample.
- Persons with certain types of disability or chronic illness, such as those with hearing loss or undergoing complex medical treatment will be more difficult to reach and be included in the sample, therefore this population may be underrepresented.
- Key Informant Interviews will allow to evaluate the transition process and locally provided services. However, answers might be biased, as respondents might be inclined to present their organisations and institutions in a favourable light, or on the contrary – present the situation as more dire than in reality in a hope for attracting more funding.
- Some informants and respondents may not have knowledge of all programmes or stakeholders operating in the hromadas, therefore if they did not mention a certain activity in the given location, it would not directly denote a lack of such activity in the hromada.

3. Key ethical considerations and related risks

The proposed research design meets / does not meet the following criteria:

<i>The proposed research design...</i>	<i>Yes/ No</i>	<i>Details if no (including mitigation)</i>
... Has been coordinated with relevant stakeholders to avoid unnecessary duplication of data collection efforts?	Yes	

... Respects respondents, their rights and dignity (specifically by: seeking informed consent, designing length of survey/ discussion while being considerate of participants' time, ensuring accurate reporting of information provided)?	Yes	
... Does not expose data collectors to any risks as a direct result of participation in data collection?	Yes	
... Does not expose respondents / their communities to any risks as a direct result of participation in data collection?	Yes	
... Does not involve collecting information on specific topics which may be stressful and/ or re-traumatising for research participants (both respondents and data collectors)?	Yes	
... Does not involve data collection with minors i.e. anyone less than 18 years old?	Yes	
... Does not involve data collection with other vulnerable groups e.g. persons with disabilities, victims/ survivors of protection incidents, etc.?	No	<p>Focus Group Discussions will involve participants with vulnerabilities related to IDP status, older age, being a single caregiver to children. Logistical organisation of FGDs will be conducted to account for needs of these populations and adapt the logistics (time and duration of FGDs, location). Participants of FGDs will not be asked sensitive questions about their own experience and no personally identifiable information will be collected.</p> <p>Persons with disability and/or chronic illness will be interviewed separately, via Household Interviews, to account for their needs and adapt the logistics (choice of place of interview, possibility to interview by phone, etc.).</p>
... Follows IMPACT SOPs for management of personally identifiable information ?	Yes	

4. Roles and responsibilities

Task Description	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed
Research design	Assessment Officer, Senior Assessment Officer	Research Manager	HQ Research Department	Protection, CCCM clusters

Data collection	Assessment Officers, Field Officers	Assessment Team Leader	Senior Assessment Officer, Research Manager	Protection, CCCM clusters
Supervising data collection	Assessment Team Leader, Field Operations Manager	Assessment Team Leader	Senior Assessment Officer, Research Manager, HQ Research Department	N/a
Data processing (checking, cleaning)	Assessment Officer	Senior Assessment Officer	Research Manager, HQ Research Department	N/a
Data analysis	Assessment Officer, Senior Assessment Officer	Research Manager	HQ Research Department	Protection, CCCM clusters
Output production	Assessment Officer, Senior Assessment Officer	Research Manager	HQ Research Department	Protection, CCCM clusters
Dissemination	Assessment Officer, Senior Assessment Officer	Research Manager	HQ Communication Department	Protection, CCCM clusters
Monitoring & Evaluation	Senior Assessment Officer	Research Manager	HQ Research Department (MEAL Unit)	N/a
Lessons learned	Assessment Officer, Senior Assessment Officer	Senior Assessment Officer	Research Manager, Field Team, HQ Research Department	N/a

Responsible: the person(s) who executes the task

Accountable: the person who validates the completion of the task and is accountable of the final output or milestone

Consulted: the person(s) who must be consulted when the task is implemented

Informed: the person(s) who need to be informed when the task is completed

5. Data Analysis Plan

The Data Analysis Plan can be found here:

https://repository.impact-initiatives.org/document/impact/acf8dd49/IMPACT_UKR_DAP_Protection-Transitions-Assessment_April-2025.xlsx

