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| **Research Terms of Reference**  **Cost of Living: Adaptation Strategies & Social Interventions in the Community**  **UKR2320**  **Ukraine** | |
| **January 2024**  **v4** | **C:\Users\Megan\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Word\REACH logo white (for a coloured background).jpg** |

# Executive Summary

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Country of intervention** | Ukraine | | | | | | | |
| **Type of Emergency** | □ | Natural disaster | x | Conflict | | | □ | Other *(specify)* | |
| **Type of Crisis** | □ | Sudden onset | □ | Slow onset | | | x | Protracted | |
| **Mandating Body/ Agency** | *USAID/BHA* | | | | | | | |
| **IMPACT Project Code** | *64FPU* | | | | | | | |
| **Overall Research Timeframe** *(from research design to final outputs / M&E)* | 11/09/2023 to 15/04/2024 | | | | | | | |
| **Research Timeframe**  *Add planned deadlines (for first cycle if more than 1)* | 1. Pilot/ training: 5/02/2024 | | | | 6. Preliminary presentation: 19/03/2024 | | | |
| 2. Start collect data: 12/02/2024 | | | | 7. Outputs sent for validation: 25/03/2024 | | | |
| 3. Data collected: 1/03/2024 | | | | 8. Outputs published: 01/04/2024 | | | |
| 4. Data analysed: 13/03/2024 | | | | 9. Final presentation: After 1st April 2024 | | | |
| 5. Data sent for validation: 13/03/2024 | | | |
| **Number of assessments** | x | Single assessment (one cycle) | | | | | | |
| □ | Multi assessment (more than one cycle)  *[Describe here the frequency of the cycle]* | | | | | | |
| **Humanitarian milestones**  *Specify* ***what*** *will the assessment inform and* ***when***  *e.g. The shelter cluster will use this data to draft its Revised Flash Appeal;* | **Milestone** | | | | **Deadline (can be tentative)** | | | |
| □ | Donor plan/strategy | | | \_ \_/\_ \_/\_ \_ \_ \_ | | | |
| □ | Inter-cluster plan/strategy | | | \_ \_/\_ \_/\_ \_ \_ \_ | | | |
| X | Cluster plan/strategy | | | **Cash Working Group**: ongoing discussions on the complementarity of humanitarian and social protection transfers (also through the **Perekhid Initiative**), targeting criteria for MPCA and effectiveness of the new transfer amount;  **Food Security Cluste**r: analysis of difference in livelihood activities within the context of rising prices, locally and across different contexts;  **Livelihood Technical Working Group**: early recovery planning in geographies of interest ;  **Protection Cluster:** strategies on how to deal with the economic exclusion of minorities and vulnerable groups.  **Community Planning for Durable Solutions and Recovery Working Group**: early recovery planning. | | | |
| □ | NGO platform plan/strategy | | | \_ \_/\_ \_/\_ \_ \_ \_ | | | |
| X | Other (Specify): Development Actors | | | **World Bank**: data on local effective coverage of social protection initiatives could inform future work related to the Public Expenditures for Administrative Capacity Endurance (PEACE), for now disbursed at the State level.  **IFC:** could inform further development of their strategies of promoting Public Private Partnerships and investments through local government.  **Council of Europe in Ukraine:** could inform their upcoming project “Enhanced Social Protection in Ukraine”. | | | |
| **Audience Type & Dissemination** *Specify* ***who*** *will the assessment inform and* ***how*** *you will disseminate to inform the audience* | **Audience type** | | | | **Dissemination** | | | |
| x Strategic  x Programmatic  □ Operational  □ [Other, Specify] | | | | **x** General Product Mailing (mail to BHA consortium; HCT participants; Donors)  x Cluster Mailing (Protection, CWG, LTWS) and presentation of findings at next cluster meeting  x Presentation of findings (Cluster meeting)  x Website Dissemination (Relief Web & REACH Resource Centre)  □ [Other, Specify] | | | |
| **Stakeholder mapping** *Has a detailed stakeholder mapping been conducted during research design to identify all actors that could* ***contribute*** *to and/or* ***benefit******from*** *the research?* | X | Yes | | | □ | No | | |
| **General Objective** | *To* ***compare*** *how the rising cost of living impacts* ***households’ livelihood strategies*** *and the* ***local social protection system*** *across two oblasts affected by the conflict to a different degree and across the rural-urban divide, in order to better understand current adaptation strategies to inform early recovery planning* | | | | | | | |
| **Specific Objective(s)** | * *To identify the main drivers leading to the use of* ***negative Livelihood Coping Strategies (LCS)*** *and the longer-term adaptation strategies among households who may (or may not) receive* ***humanitarian or social protection support*** *and who may experience* ***barriers*** *in accessing local public services due to pre-existing vulnerabilities.* * *To explore* ***local*** *authorities’ and public service providers’* ***capacity to support livelihoods through the social protection system,*** *which has been affected by the* ***rising cost of living*** *and by different levels of* ***direct conflict impact*** *across the* ***rural – urban divide****.* * *To understand how coping strategies and longer-term adaptations* ***vary across different oblasts,*** *especially between those more or less directly impacted by the conflict and across the rural - urban divide.* | | | | | | | |
| **Research Questions** | 1. *How are households adapting to the higher cost of living, given their specific displacement status and other pre-existing vulnerabilities?*    1. *What are the factors and mechanisms behind the adoption of the most common negative livelihoods coping strategies (LCS) - specifically, the usage or exhaustion of savings, the foregoing of medical expenses, and the borrowing of food?*    2. *How are households’ livelihood assets and activities affected by humanitarian aid (MPCA), by social system income transfers and by public services?*       1. *What are the impacts of these transfers on longer term adaptation dynamics?*    3. *How do barriers in accessing public services and gaps in social system coverage shape choices related to adaptation strategies, especially for households with specific vulnerabilities?*    4. *How do coping and adaptation strategies vary across hromadas with different characteristics in terms of direct conflict impact and locale?* 2. *What are the adaptations put in place at the local level to ensure the working of the social system and of public services amongst the increasing cost of living and differences in conflict impact across the rural - urban divide?*    1. *How did hromadas and public service providers respond to changes in budgets and hoseholds’ needs driven by conflict and displacement?*        1. *How are priorities for social protection spending and public service provision funding defined locally?*       2. *Were specific social services discontinued or established for the first time? Why?*    2. *What are the main barriers to accessing social and public services for specific vulnerable groups?*    3. *How do hromadas and public service providers manage coordination with I/NGOs and CSOs in the delivery of public services?*    4. *What are the current needs of local authorities and public service providers when dealing with the challenges brought by the increasing cost of living?*       1. *Which type of support would be the most beneficial in strengthening local stakeholders’ capacity?* | | | | | | | |
| **Geographic Coverage** | *Given its comparative aim, the assessment will cover four hromadas: two in Kharkiviska, an Eastern oblast more directly impacted by the conflict, and two in Ivano-Frankivska, a Western oblast indirectly impacted by the conflict, especially through displacement. In each of the two oblasts, a pair of hromadas (one rural and one urban) has been identified within the same raion to increase comparability while allowing to capture different local dynamics in households’ livelihood strategies and social protection systems.*  *The hromadas are:*   * *Kharkiviska oblast, Chuhuivisky raion: Chuhuivska (urban) & Novopokrovska (rural)* * *Ivano-Frankivska oblast, Nadvirnianskyi raion,* *Yaremchanska (urban) & Vorokhtianska (rural).*   *Please refer to pages 11 - 12 for a more in-depth explanation of the sampling strategy.* | | | | | | | |
| **Secondary data sources** | * *REACH, MSNA Ukraine (2023)* * *REACH, JMMI (July – November 2023)* * *National Bank of Ukraine, Inflation Report (April 2023, July 2023)* * *IOM DTM, Ukraine Area Baseline Assessment Raion level, Round 26 (July 2023)* * *IOM DTM, Ukraine Conditions of Return Assessment Factsheet, Round 3 (June 2023)* * *WFP, Livelihood Coping Strategies Indicator for Essential Needs (September 2023)* * *CCD, Alignment Options for Humanitarian Cash with the Ukrainian Social Protection System, Live Discussion Paper (September 2023)* * *PONARS Eurasia, Explaining Ukraine’s Resilience to Russia’s Invasion: The Role of Local Governance and Decentralization Reform (September 2023)* * *Score-inspired Holistic Assessment of Resilience of Population (SHARP), Assessing Social Cohesion, Resistance, and People’s Needs in Ukraine Amid Russian Full-Scale Invasion, Wave 1 2022 (May 2023).* * *REACH, Access to Government-led Social Assistance Programmes In Selected Regions Of Ukraine (January 2023)* | | | | | | | |
| **Population(s)** | □ | IDPs in camp | | | □ | IDPs in informal sites | | |
| *Select all that apply* | X | IDPs in host communities | | | □ | IDPs [Other, Specify] | | |
|  | □ | Refugees in camp | | | □ | Refugees in informal sites | | |
|  | □ | Refugees in host communities | | | □ | Refugees [Other, Specify] | | |
|  | X | Host communities | | | X | Returnees | | |
| **Stratification**  *Select type(s) and enter number of strata* | X | Geographical #: 4  Population size per strata is known? X Yes □ No  (Indicative figures) | □ | Group #: \_ \_ \_  Population size per strata is known?  □ Yes □ No | | | □ | *[Other Specify]* #: \_ \_  Population size per strata is known?  □ Yes □ No |
| **Data collection tool(s)** | □ | Structured (Quantitative) | | | **X** | Semi-structured (Qualitative) | | |
|  | **Sampling method** | | | | **Data collection method** | | | |
| **Semi-structured data collection tool (s) # 1**  *Select sampling and data collection method and specify target # interviews* | X Purposive  □ Snowballing  □ [Other, Specify] | | | | X Key informant interview (Target: 10 per hromada; 40 in total): with local stakeholders.  □ Individual interview (Target #):\_ \_ \_ \_ \_  □ Focus group discussion (Target #):\_ \_ \_ \_ \_  □ [Other, Specify] (Target #):\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ | | | |
| **Semi-structured data collection tool (s) # 2**  *Select sampling and data collection method and specify target # interviews* | X Purposive  □ Snowballing  □ [Other, Specify] | | | | □ Key informant interview (Target #):\_ \_ \_ \_ \_  X Household interviews (Target: 20 per hromada, 80 in total): with the Head of Household.  □ Focus group discussion (Target #):\_ \_ \_ \_ \_  □ [Other, Specify](Target #):\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ | | | |
| **Target level of precision if probability sampling** | NA – Qualitative data collection | | | | NA | | | |
| **Disaggregation by gender and age**  *Are you planning to conduct sex/age disaggregated analysis?* | Gender | | | | Age | | | |
| □ | Yes | | | □ | Yes | | |
| X | No | | | X | No | | |
| **Data management platform(s)** | X | IMPACT | | | □ | UNHCR | | |
|  | □ | [Other, Specify] | | | | | | |
| **Expected ouput type(s)** | □ | Situation overview #: \_ \_ | x | Report, #1: final report focusing on the comparative aim of the assessment along the dimensions of rural-urban and high – low direct conflict impact. | | | □ | Profile #: \_ \_ |
| □ | Presentation (Preliminary findings) #: \_ \_ | X | Presentation (Final), # 1 | | | X | Factsheet, #2: summarised findings for each oblast to be circulated to the local authorities with the aim of increasing the take-up of findings. |
| □ | Interactive dashboard #:\_ | □ | Webmap #: \_ \_ | | | X | Map, 4: \_ \_ |
|  | □ | [Other, Specify] #: \_ \_ | | | | | | |
| **Access** | X | Public (available on REACH resource center and other humanitarian platforms) | | | | | | |
| □ | Restricted (bilateral dissemination only upon agreed dissemination list, no publication on REACH or other platforms) | | | | | | |
| **Visibility** *Specify which* ***logos*** *should be on outputs* | ***REACH*** | | | | | | | |
| ***Donor:*** *USAID BHA* | | | | | | | |
| ***Coordination Framework:*** *BHA Consortium* | | | | | | | |
| ***Partners:*** *N/A* | | | | | | | |

# Rationale

2.1 Background

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which began in February 2022, has led to a sharp and prolonged increase in the price of essential items nationwide. In addition, a harsher socio-economic context characterised by an increase of unemployment and a considerable shrinkage of economy activity[[1]](#footnote-4081) led many households to adopt negative Livelihood Coping Strategies (LCS), to depend on new sources of income - such as humanitarian transfers - and to increase their reliance on the social protection system. At the same time, locally led service delivery and social services provision, that since 2016 have gradually become the responsibility of Hromadas[[2]](#footnote-31819), were also weakened by the shocks of conflict and mass displacement. This assessment proposes to embark on an exploration of the local differences in household livelihood strategies and social protection systems, to inform interventions geared towards strengthening the long-term sustainability of recovery, for both households and their local government.

To begin with, the inflationary pressure in Ukraine has been consistently attested at elevated levels in the course of 2023, which led to a widespread increase in the cost of living. According to the Bank of Ukraine, inflation reached 21,3% in April 2023, and then declined to 7,5% in September[[3]](#footnote-2). In September 2023, the value of the JMMI basket (which includes essential food and hygiene items and is used to monitor price variation across Ukraine) was attested at 1067 UAH, which is a 6% increase from September 2022, and an almost 50% increase from May 2022[[4]](#footnote-3). Indeed, affordability has consistently been registered as a key concern for customers interviewed for the JMMI: in September, 54% of the interviewed customers reported that price increases were their main financial barrier to acquiring goods[[5]](#footnote-4). As essential items (in particular, food and energy) constitute most of the expenses for households with lower incomes, an increase in the prices of these commodities will affect them disproportionately. The World Bank estimated that poverty grew from 5.5% in 2021 to around 24% in 2022[[6]](#footnote-22588)affecting an additional 7.1 million people. While estimates of poverty levels in 2023 are not yet available, the 2023 MSNA shows an increased level of economic need compared to last year’s: 56% of households have a “Severe” or “Extreme” Living Standard Gap in the Livelihood sector, the highest percentage among sectors[[7]](#footnote-5); this represents an increase from 2022 MSNA findings, which instead indicated that only 41% of assessed households had Severe or Extreme Livelihoods needs.

While existing quantitative data provides information on household income sources and on the most widely adopted negative LCS (that is, using and exhausting savings, foregoing desired medical expenses, and borrowing food)[[8]](#footnote-6), the livelihood outcomes of vulnerable population groups also depend on new sources of income such as humanitarian system’s aid and on the responsiveness of the social protection system at the local level. In this regard, a recently published report maps the coverage of these two systems from a legal standpoint, identifying the groups which are not currently (or insufficiently) covered by income-support transfers[[9]](#footnote-7). However, in Ukraine there are considerable differences in capacity between rural and urban hromadas, and oblasts have been impacted by the conflict in different degrees and through various modalities. The lack of in-depth qualitative data at the local level leads to an incomplete understanding of the factors, mechanisms, and sustainable adaptations available for both households and locally led social protection systems. Indeed, while livelihood data at the oblast level indicates differences between rural and urban households, with the former usually being worse off, but not in every aspect; on the other hand, secondary literature and consultations with I/NGOs consistently indicated a deep divide between urban and rural areas in Ukraine, especially regarding available public services and employment opportunities, but also the general levels of development. As such, in the interest of better understanding coping and adaptation strategies to compile solid evidence for early recovery planning, quantitative data would not suffice. It would register differences between urban and local hromadas, but fail to explain how those differences came to be, and what are the current socio-economic dynamics which sustain these different systems. Consequently, only the explanatory approach of qualitative analysis can allow to understand why rural and urban areas not only present different intensity of specific needs, but also different priorities among those needs. A more solid understanding of social protection dynamics and livelihood outcomes in rural hromadas will aid in understanding whether a different approach should be devised to support early development.

2.2 Intended impact

This research, conceived within the Resilience and Early Recovery unit scope of work, aims at providing a better understanding of the sustainability of household livelihoods and of the local social protection system and public service delivery that make them possible in the first place. The analysis of the main factors leading to negative LCS adoption among specific vulnerable groups and of their adaptation strategy will inform early recovery initiatives geared at achieving sustainable livelihoods. At the same time, the exploration of the challenges and adaptations put in place by local stakeholders will shed some light on the considerable differences existing at the local level, with the aim of informing public and international interventions that strive to support and strengthen the social protection system. The findings of this assessment will thus contribute to decision-making across the humanitarian and development sphere, specifically by informing initiatives geared at supplementing local capacity for social service provision and at better supporting specific vulnerable groups of the population.

This assessment is situated within the current efforts at improving the alignment between the humanitarian and the national social protection systems, currently being explored by the Perekhid Initiative, in collaboration with the Cash Working Group (CWG) and the Ministry of Social Protection (MoSP). In addition, as the CWG has recently increased the MPCA transfer value from 2200 to 3600 UAH[[10]](#footnote-8) to address declining purchasing power concerns, exploring how such increase might have influenced vulnerable households’ ability to meet their needs will be of interest to its coordination and participating organisations. Moreover, this research’s focus on local authorities' capacity could inform the strategies being developed by the Community Planning and Recovery Working Group (formerly Durable Solutions Working Group). Furthermore, the attention given to exploring the different support provided to vulnerable groups and their outcomes resonates with the Protection Cluster’s efforts to include marginalised and under-targeted groups of the population. Finally, the proposed exploration of positive adaptations put in place by local communities could provide useful insights for development actors. For instance, the World Bank has been deploying the Public Expenditures for Administrative Capacity Endurance (PEACE) project, through which they reimburse government expenditures on social protection spendings. At this moment, this project is coordinated at the central government level, however, findings from this assessment on local capacity, effective gaps in coverage, and variance in capacity across oblasts could be of interest to them. Moreover, the World Bank’s International Finance Corporation is currently interested in leveraging local government autonomy to promote PPP that could mobilize significant amount of capital for reconstruction[[11]](#footnote-9). Finally, the Council of Europe in Ukraine is launching the project “Enhanced social protection in Ukraine”[[12]](#footnote-10), for which findings of this assessment could be relevant.

In conclusion, this assessment's findings could improve the current understanding of livelihood strategies within the current context of rising cost of living, which can be pivotal in conceiving better targeting for existing and upcoming humanitarian and early recovery programming. By focusing on both households’ and local stakeholders’ needs and challenges, this assessment aims at delivering comprehensive insights which can lead to sustainable recovery and development.

# Methodology

* 1. Methodology overview

This research will be comprised of a secondary data review based on quantitative data and a qualitative primary data collection.

1. **Secondary Data Review:** a review of the available data on negative LCS, livelihood outcomes of different population groups and local authorities' capacity in service delivery. It will entail a review of REACH’s 2023 MSNA livelihood indicators and barriers to public service access, with a focus on displacement status and specific vulnerability groups; as well as a review of REACH’s JMMI data on affordability issues. As available quantitative data is usually not representative at the hromada level, the only data reported in the final products will be the one representative at the next available level (either raion or oblast).
2. **External Consultations:** a process which will lead to a better identification of current issues and data needs within the humanitarian and early development spheres in Ukraine by connecting with members of INGOs, CSOs, and other research-focused organisations which are currently focusing on Social Protection and vulnerable groups. See *Annex I* for a detailed list of stakeholders.
3. **Questionnaires Development**: semi-structured tools specific to Household Interviews (HIs) and Key Informant interviews (KIIs) will be developed, considering their respective objectives and the differences in sampling.
4. **Data Collection:** primary qualitative data collection will be carried out in four hromadas, and it will include two components.
5. **10 Key Informant Interviews per hromada with Local Stakeholders (hromada officials, public service providers in health, education, and employment, CSOs and I/NGOs)** - **40 in total** - to investigate how different levels of conflict-related impact across the rural – urban divide affected the provision of social services and how local stakeholders adapted to the rising cost of living.
6. **20 Household Interviews per hromada with the Head of Household – 80 in total -** to explore livelihoods activities, in particular the main factors behind the adoption of negative livelihood coping strategies and the impact that humanitarian and social protection transfers had on longer term adaptation strategies;
7. **Data Processing:** collection and translation of interview’s transcripts will be monitored by the Assessment Officer to ensure high data quality and saturation of the data. See 3.5 Data Processing and Analysis.
8. **Data Analysis:** this process will be conducted by the assessment team in line with IMPACT’s minimum standards checklist on qualitative data processing and analysis. See 3.5 Data Processing and Analysis**.**
9. **Output Drafting:** the final report, two factsheets (summarising the findings for the two oblasts) and the final presentation will be completed by the Assessment Officer with input and review from the Research Manager.

**Key definitions:**

Household Livelihood Activities are defined as the methods through which a household obtains the means to fulfil basic needs in line with the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework[[13]](#footnote-30004). According to this analytical framework, each household possesses specific livelihood assets (such as their financial, human, and social capital) which sustain and constrain their livelihood activities.

Negative LCS are understood as a type of livelihood activities. When they are characterised by a short-term orientation, a survival orientation and can deplete household capital and impact future household livelihood outcomes, they can be classified as “negative”. In line with the WFP, these are strategies that households can resort to meet their basic food and essential needs, within the context of a prolonged shock or crisis; however, “the livelihood coping strategies applied can damage households' productivity, wealth, and well-being - in the medium and long term - as some of these coping strategies could be difficult or nearly impossible to reverse.”[[14]](#footnote-30375). In Ukraine, the most common LCS have been identified by the 2023 MSNA, as the using or exhaustion of household savings, the foregoing of desired medical expenses (including consultations and medicine purchase), and the borrowing of food. These three strategies all lead to negative consequences in the longer-term, by making households less resilient to future shocks, by degrading the physical health of its members, and by the necessity of relying on social networks, which is not always available and is not sustainable in the longer term.

Income-support transfers is here employed as an umbrella term, including both humanitarian and social protection payments disbursed in the form of monetary transfers; for example, programmatic and emergency MPCA[[15]](#footnote-15691), sectoral cash and vouchers, state pensions, IDP allowances, and other financial support. Detailed information on different transfers available in Ukraine, eligibility criteria and the administrative bodies responsible for their delivery can be found by consulting the live [mapping](https://app.box.com/s/hlux594oiyo05n3s810spllylpo68lhz) exercise compiled and updated by Collaborative Cash Delivery Network[[16]](#footnote-12582). At an analytical level, these transfers are part of households’ livelihood activities, and they represent coping mechanisms that households can resort to. They do not have direct negative influences on livelihood outcomes, as they do not deplete household capital, contrary to what we refer to as negative LCS. However, it is not clear how sustainable they might be in the long term: first, from the point of view of households, which ideally should receive appropriate support towards adaptation and self-reliance, and second, from the point of view of the long-term viability of the social protection system, which will have to cope with the gradual phasing out of humanitarian MPCA.

Coping and adaptation: this document makes frequent use of these two terms, whose related but distinct meaning call for a clarification. Coping is understood as a short-term process, oriented at survival and reactive to a crisis, which might degrade the capital and resources, and thus future assets and outcomes. On the other hand, adaptation has a longer horizon, and refers to a planned and continued process that aims at achieving more sustainable livelihoods processes by finding alternatives to the current ones. These terms are used to both refer to household livelihoods and to viability of the local social protection system.

Vulnerable populations are groups of people who according to secondary data analysis (especially the 2023 MSNA) have a higher-than-average Livelihood Living Standard Gap, that is, displaced people, returnees, rural residents, households including a person with disabilities or a person above 60 years old. Other research and the consultations conducted within the scope of this assessment also identified minorities or marginalised groups such as Roma and LGBTQ+ people, and people not directly targeted by income-support transfers such as the unemployed local community, single parents with 2 children or less, and people close to pension age as having more fragile livelihoods.

* 1. Population of interest

The populations of interest for this assessment are 1) households residing in the chosen hromadas, with a particular attention to the most vulnerable groups of the population; and 2) local stakeholders, that is hromada authorities, public service providers and I/NGOs or CSOs operating in the four selected hromadas.

**Geographical Coverage**

Data collection will be carried out in four hromadas, two in an Eastern oblast more directly impacted by the conflict (Kharkiviska), and two in a Western one, indirectly impacted by the conflict especially through displacement (Ivano-Frankivska). In each of the two oblasts, a pair of hromadas (one rural and one urban) has been identified within one raion, to increase comparability while still being able to capture different dynamics across the two dimensions of rural – urban and high – low direct conflict.

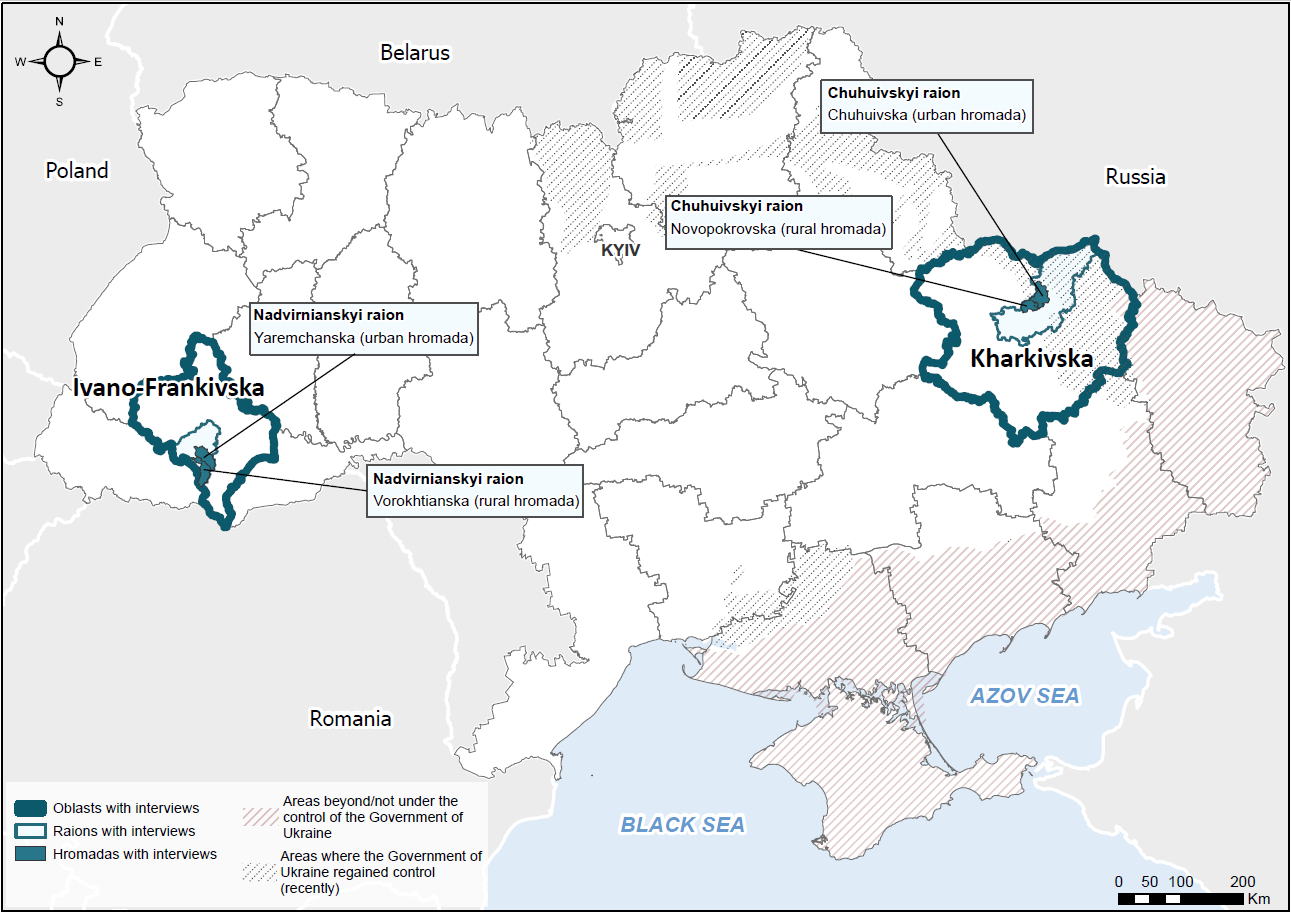
The selected hromadas are:

* + Kharkiviska, Chuhuivisky raion: Chuhuivska (urban) & Novopokrovska (rural)
  + Ivano-Frankivska, Nadvirnianskyi raion, Yaremchanska (urban) & Vorokhtianska (rural).

More specifically, the sampling strategy was developed as follows.

First, the two oblasts were selected in the Eastern and Western macro-region, to capture various levels of conflict-related disruption to social protection delivery. Within the two macro-regions, we selected Kharkiviska and Ivano-Frankivska as both present high percentages of HHs relying on social protection transfers as their main sources of income, and reporting health-related LCS[[17]](#footnote-12).

Second, in order to choose the four hromadas we excluded raions in the frontline areas (up to 35km from the frontline) and those bordering foreign countries, as displacement dynamics are assumed to be quite unique in those areas. Then, each pair of urban and rural hromada was selected within the same raion. For each pair, at least one of the hromadas had to have been assessed by the IOM “Conditions of Return” Assessment. Thissuggests that early recovery activities are needed by residents (with the varying needs that the non-displaced community, IDPs and by newly returned citizens will have) and that living conditions should be conducive to some degree of economic activity. Moreover, the dataset contains hromada level information on livelihoods, conflict-related destruction, and social cohesion, which not only allowed us to ensure that the level of disruption was in line with the sampling strategy, but which also provided background information useful at the analysis stage.



*Figure 1: Map showing the location of the target hromadas.*

* 1. Secondary data review

Find below a list of secondary resources, which have been reviewed to aid in establishing definitions and conceptualisations, and to identify mechanisms and dynamics which call for in-depth analysis and exploration. Moreover, quantitative data has also been employed to inform the sampling strategy.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Secondary source (Link)** | **Purpose of source** |
| REACH, MSNA Ukraine (2023) | * Secondary data review on livelihoods indicators by raions |
| REACH, JMMI ([July](https://repository.impact-initiatives.org/document/reach/ed4987d3/UKR_JMMI_Factsheet_Round_16_July_2023.pdf) – August 2023) | * Secondary data review on affordability indicators by raions. |
| National Bank of Ukraine, Inflation Report ([April 2023](https://bank.gov.ua/admin_uploads/article/IR_2023-Q2_en.pdf?v=4), [July 2023](https://bank.gov.ua/admin_uploads/article/IR_2023-Q3_en.pdf?v=4)) | * Data on inflation, its causes and outlook. |
| IOM DTM, Ukraine Area Baseline Assessment Raion level, Round 26 ([July 2023](https://dtm.iom.int/reports/ukraine-area-baseline-assessment-raion-level-round-26-july-2023)) | * Displacement data. |
| IOM DTM, Ukraine Conditions of Return Assessment Factsheet, Round 5th ([November 2023](https://dtm.iom.int/reports/ukraine-conditions-return-assessment-factsheet-round-5-september-october-2023)) | * Focus on returnees. |
| IOM DTM, General Population Survey Round 14, Snapshot Report, ([October 2023)](https://dtm.iom.int/reports/ukraine-general-population-survey-round-14-snapshot-report-population-figures-and) | * Population estimates by oblast |
| WFP, Livelihood Coping Strategies  Indicator for Essential Needs ([September 2023](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000152115/download/)) | * Define key concepts, preliminary typology of LCS. |
| Mamonova, N., Food sovereignty and solidarity initiatives in rural Ukraine during the war, The Journal of Peasant Studies, 50:1, 47-66, DOI: 10.1080/03066150.2022.2143351 ([2023](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03066150.2022.2143351)) | * Background on agriculture and household subsistence farming in Ukraine. |
| CCD, Alignment Options for Humanitarian Cash with the Ukrainian Social Protection System, Live Discussion Paper ([September 2023](https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/alignment-options-humanitarian-cash-ukrainian-social-protection-system)) | * Key social protection concepts, mapping of social protection and humanitarian transfers in Ukraine, preliminary identification of gaps in coverage. |
| SCORE-INSPIRED HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF RESILIENCE OF POPULATION (SHARP), Assessing Social Cohesion, Resistance, and People’s Needs  in Ukraine Amid Russian Full-Scale Invasion, Wave 1 2022 ([May 2023](https://api.scoreforpeace.org/storage/pdfs/PUB_UKR_SHARP_WAVE_1_17May23.pdf)) | * Baseline data on social cohesion at the oblast level. |
| PONARS Eurasia, Explaining Ukraine’s Resilience to Russia’s Invasion: The Role of Local Governance and Decentralization Reform ([September 2023](https://www.ponarseurasia.org/explaining-ukraines-resilience-to-russias-invasion-the-role-of-local-governance-and-decentralization-reform/)) | * Background on hromada functions, measures of resilience and adaptability |
| Menyhert, B., The effect of rising energy and consumer prices on household finances, poverty and social exclusion in the EU, EUR 31257 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, ISBN 978-92-76-57748-5, doi:10.2760/418422, JRC130650 ([2022](https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e24955fb-4f53-11ed-92ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en)) | * Theoretical framing of the causal pathways linking rising cost of living with economic and social exclusion dynamics. |
| REACH, Access to Government-led Social Assistance Programmes in Selected Regions of Ukraine (January [2023](https://repository.impact-initiatives.org/document/repository/79681733/REACH_Factsheet-Social-Protection-2023_vf.pdf)) | * Background on social assistance’s effective coverage |
| People in Need, PIN’s Livelihood and self-reliance needs assessment report ([July 2023](https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/pin_livelihood_needs_assessment_report_2023_0.pdf)) | * Qualitative livelihoods and protection data for Kharkiviska. |

*Table 1. Secondary Resources consulted*

* 1. Primary Data Collection

**Method**

Qualitative data will be collected by REACH’s field team, in close contact with the AO and the Translation team. Data collection is expected to take place at the same time across the two oblasts, however staggering might be needed due to security concerns. KIIs with local stakeholders will be conducted first to maximise knowledge of specific local dynamics, which will allow to refine the sampling strategy and questionnaire for the second component if needed. They will be conducted in person by the Field Team and will also aim at collecting relevant local contacts for further interviews.

Then, the HIs with head of households will take place in the four hromadas. The preferred methodology is in-person interviews.

The IMPACT field team will support the AO in the identification of local authorities, CSO actors and service providers willing to meet in person and informed on the themes explored by this assessment. Close exchanges with the AO will also ensure that the appropriate sampling is deployed for the HIs.

**Sampling**

The sampling strategy will be targeted to the two components of the study, to select suitable respondents who will be able to provide data on livelihood strategies and local social protection system from both the standpoint of households and that of local stakeholders. It will be developed as follows:

**1. Key Informant Interviews with Local Stakeholders (hromada officials, public service providers in health, education and employment, CSOs and I/NGOs) - 10 per hromada -** to investigate how different level of conflict-related impact across the rural – urban divide affected the provision of social services and how local stakeholders adapted to the rising cost of living.

As the specific objective of this component is to investigate the capacity and adaptation of the local social protection system and the existing barriers to public services’ access for groups with specific vulnerabilities, the strategy has been designed to include local public officials of the hromadas, people involved in public service delivery in healthcare (health facility director), education (headmaster of education facility or education board), and employment services, and representatives of local civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations with specific knowledge of these issues. The FT will send an initial introductory letter to official bodies before the start of data collection, to identify participants and understand the specific competencies of the different bodies and departments. Local authorities will be invited to provide contact information of public service providers, and of locally active I/NGOs and CSOs, which will aid in identifying the latter.

The following table presents an initial sampling strategy, which will be adapted to the local context.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Organisation** | **KI’s Department** | **Target Interviews** |
| Hromada | Community Centers of Social Services and Social Service Centers for Children, Family, and Youth | 1 |
| Emergency Department (where relevant) | (1) |
| Local Level | TsNAP | 1 |
| IDP Council | 1 |
| Local CSOs | Inclusion and employment | 1 |
| IDPs and/or returnees | 1 |
| Elderly citizens | 1 |
| Public Service Providers | Health | 1 |
| Education | 1 |
| Employment Center (if not in hromada, raion) | 1 |
| ***TOTAL*** |  | ***10*** |

*Table 2. Target interviews and preliminary strategy for the Key Informant Interview component.*

This table represents the initial strategy to be followed during data collection, nevertheless, it has to be understood that it could undergo some modifications due to specific dynamics encountered at the local level in each hromada. Indeed, at the hromada and local level, the division of labor between departments and bodies is not uniform across the country, as such some of these bodies might not be present or active. Second, rural hromadas might present fewer of these bodies, or a smaller presence of the CSOs and NGOs. In that case, interviews with local officials might be conducted at the next available level of activity (raion). The AO will ensure that close coordination is maintained with the FT during the sampling process to be able to assist with eventual changes.

**2. Household Interviews with the Head of Household – 20 per hromada -** to explore livelihoods activities, in particular the main factors behind the adoption of negative livelihood coping strategies and the impact that humanitarian and social protection transfers had on longer term adaptation strategies.

The FT will identify respondents based on 1) their displacement status, which constitutes a critical variable when assessing livelihoods - as established by secondary data sources; and 2) their receipt of distinct types of income support. The table below indicates 7 categories of respondents with a corresponding Minimum Interview Target, which will ensure that enough interviews will be captured for each category, while also keeping track of the likely overlaps. Moreover, the FT will also pay attention to specific vulnerable groups, as identified by secondary data review, and will strive to maintain a gender and age balance. Head of household here means the person who is responsible for all or most of the livelihood–related decision making in the household.

Contacts with local KIs will be pivotal in identifying respondents in line with the sampling criteria.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **Options** | **Minimum Interview Target** |
| Income Support | None | 3 |
| MPCA / humanitarian | 4 |
| Social Protection / governmental | 4 |
| Both | 4 |
| Displacement | IDP | 4 |
| Non-displaced | 4 |
| Returnee | 4 |
| ***TOTAL\**** |  | ***20*** |

*Table 3. Minimum Interview Target and sampling criteria for the Household Interviews component.*

**Triangulation**

The AO will closely coordinate with the Field and Translation teams throughout the various phases of the research cycle. If possible, they will travel to the four target hromadas in the first phase of data collection to hold debriefs with the FT and to coordinate changes in sampling strategy, in the event it is needed. This will allow the team to discuss areas where qualitative data aligns or contrasts with secondary resources, enabling the team to seek further information through specific questions or probes.

* 1. Data Processing & Analysis

Data processing and analysis of HIs and KIIs will be performed in line with IMPACT’s Minimum Standards Checklist of Semi-Structured Data Processing and Analysis. Where explicitly permitted by respondents and relevant, audio recordings will be utilized to improve the quality of interview transcripts. Once interview transcripts and enumerator debrief forms have been translated from Ukrainian and/or Russian to English, processing and analysis will result in the following data and analysis to be shared with IMPACT HQ: 1) Enumerator debrief forms, 2) Finalized transcripts in Word document format, and 3) a completed Data Saturation and Analysis Grid (DSAG), and 4) a completed Method Report (with the DSAG), summarizing data collection and analysis methods used.

MAXQDA might be used to analyse the considerable quantity of qualitative data we aim to collect.

As the main aim of this assessment is to compare household livelihood strategies (RQ 1), and local social protection system (RQ 2) across different local contexts, a narrative analysis approach will be employed. The questionnaires have been developed to explore specific accounts and experiences of households and local stakeholders, and the analysis will strive to reformulate these stories around pre-existing structures found in the quantitative data secondary review to compare these accounts across different local contexts.

In fact, the chosen sampling strategy will allow for comparative analysis of geographies along the dimensions of urban - rural and higher - lower direct conflict impact. In particular, the SDR (primarily consisting of oblast-level data from the 2023 MSNA) will allow to conceptualise the different socio-economic dynamic at play in these hromadas, especially in terms of adoption of negative LCS and barriers to public service access. The in-depth qualitative data collected will then allow to build on this background, making it possible to compare household and local stakeholders' adaptation to the increasing cost of living across hromadas.

* + 1. **Limitations**

This assessment will adopt a qualitative approach, as such, its findings will be indicative. The comparative insights stemming from the exploration of rural - urban and higher – lower direct conflict impact will be limited to these locations, which can be conceptualized as case studies.

Secondly, given the localised approach adopted in sampling, quantitative data will not always be representative at that level, and especially for disagreggations (by vulnerability group or displacement). As such, secondary data review will provide data at the oblast level. While having quantitative data at a lower administrative level would have allowed for more specific questionnaires, the value of this research also lies in that it strives to fill a gap in locally contextualized research, as such the lack of hromada-level quantitative data will allow for our findings to present new information and insights into an under-research area.

Secondly, this study sets out to investigate issues related to the hromadas’ capacity to deliver social protection services. Discussions around the Hromada's budget and its use might be considered sensitive by public officials, which could hamper the collection of meaningful data. However, the Field Team will strive to form a trusting relation with the authorities, by ensuring them confidentiality and reiterating the data protection practices followed by IMPACT. Moreover, the questionnaire will not include questions on the extent of conflict-related infrastructural damage in the community, which in previous study had proven to be the most sensitive topic for local authorities.

# Key ethical considerations and related risks

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***The proposed research design…*** | ***Yes/ No*** | ***Details if no (including mitigation)*** |
| … 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 | Consulted with security and field team to identify areas where in-person interviews can be conducted |
| … 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 | Will likely involve persons from vulnerable groups including IDPs, returnees, single mothers, mothers of child / children up to 3 years old, families that raise child / children with disabilities, elderly, Roma Community and LGBT people. Enumerators will be specifically trained in following proper conduct, by reiterating that respondents participate voluntarily in the assessment, that their consent can be retired at any point, that they can refuse to answer questions. Moreover, enumerators will pause or terminate the interview in case the respondent shows signs of distress. |
| … Follows IMPACT SOPs for management of **personally identifiable information**? | Yes |  |

# Roles and responsibilities

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Task Description** | **Responsible** | **Accountable** | **Consulted** | **Informed** |
| Research design | *Reach Assessment Officer* | *Reach Research Manager* | *Country Cluster System, INGOs and NGOs, GIS and Data Officers* | *Country Cluster System, IMPACT Deputy Country Coordinator.* |
| Supervising data collection | *Reach Assessment Officer* | *Reach Research Manager* | *Reach Research Manager* | *IMPACT Deputy Country Coordinator.* |
| Data processing (checking, cleaning) | *Reach Assessment Officer* | *Reach Research Manager* | *IMPACT HQ RDD Unit* | *IMPACT HQ RDD Unit* |
| Data analysis | *Reach Assessment Officer* | *Reach Research Manager* | *IMPACT HQ RDD Unit* | *IMPACT HQ RDD Unit* |
| Output production | *Reach Assessment Officer* | *Reach Research Manager* | *IMPACT Deputy Country Coordinator; IMPACT HQ RDD Unit* | *IMPACT HQ RDD Unit* |
| Dissemination | *Reach Assessment Officer* | *Reach Research Manager* | *IMPACT Deputy Country Coordinator; IMPACT HQ RDD Unit* | *IMPACT HQ* |
| Monitoring & Evaluation | *IMPACT PD* | *IMPACT PD* | *IMPACT Research Manager (RM); IMPACT HQ* | *IMPACT HQ* |
| Lessons learned | *Reach Assessment Officer* | *Reach Research Manager* | *IMPACT Deputy Country Coordinator* | *IMPACT HQ* |

***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*

# Data Analysis Plan

DAP presented in a separate file.

# Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **IMPACT Objective** | **External M&E Indicator** | **Internal M&E Indicator** | **Focal point** | **Tool** | **Will indicator be tracked?** |
| **Humanitarian stakeholders are accessing IMPACT products** | Number of humanitarian organisations accessing IMPACT services/products  Number of individuals accessing IMPACT services/products | # of downloads of x product from Resource Center | Country request to HQ | User\_log | X Yes |
| # of downloads of x product from Relief Web | Country request to HQ | X Yes |
| # of downloads of x product from Country level platforms | Country team | X Yes |
| # of page clicks on x product from REACH global newsletter | Country request to HQ | X Yes |
| # of page clicks on x product from country newsletter, sendingBlue, bit.ly | Country team | X Yes |
| # of visits to x webmap/x dashboard | Country request to HQ | □ Yes |
| **IMPACT activities contribute to better program implementation and coordination of the humanitarian response** | Number of humanitarian organisations utilizing IMPACT services/products | # references in HPC documents (HNO, SRP, Flash appeals, Cluster/sector strategies) | Country team | Reference\_log | *Early Recovery Strategies of INGOs, NGOs and Development Actors. Publications by Cash Working Group, Livelihood and Food Security Cluster, Livelihoods Technical Working Groups, Protection Cluster documents, and BHA URC partners.* |
| # references in single agency documents |  |
| **Humanitarian stakeholders are using IMPACT products** | Humanitarian actors use IMPACT evidence/products as a basis for decision making, aid planning and delivery  Number of humanitarian documents (HNO, HRP, cluster/agency strategic plans, etc.) directly informed by IMPACT products | Perceived relevance of IMPACT country-programs | Country team | Usage\_Feedback *and* Usage\_Survey template |  |
| Perceived usefulness and influence of IMPACT outputs |  |
| Recommendations to strengthen IMPACT programs |
| Perceived capacity of IMPACT staff |  |
| Perceived quality of outputs/programs |
| Recommendations to strengthen IMPACT programs |
| **Humanitarian stakeholders are engaged in IMPACT programs throughout the research cycle** | Number and/or percentage of humanitarian organizations directly contributing to IMPACT programs *(providing resources, participating to presentations, etc.)* | # of organisations providing resources (i.e.staff, vehicles, meeting space, budget, etc.) for activity implementation | Country team | Engagement\_log | X Yes |
| # of organisations/clusters inputting in research design and joint analysis | X Yes |
| # of organisations/clusters attending briefings on findings; | X Yes |

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10. Expected to be implemented by humanitarian organizations from the 1st October. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
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