

# Research Terms of Reference

## Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM)

### AFG2109

### Afghanistan

May 2024  
Version 2

**REACH** Informing  
more effective  
humanitarian action

## 1. Executive Summary

Country of intervention	Afghanistan				
Type of Emergency	X	Natural disaster	X	Conflict	<input type="checkbox"/> Other ( <i>specify</i> )
Type of Crisis	X	Sudden onset	<input type="checkbox"/>	Slow onset	<input type="checkbox"/> Protracted
Mandating Body/ Agency	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)				
IMPACT Project Code	02-AXT				
Overall Research Timeframe	May 2024 - April 2025				
Research Timeframe	1. Pilot/ training (R7): 12/05/2024			6. Preliminary presentation: N/A	
	2. Data collection started (R7): 19/05/2024			7. Outputs sent for validation (R7): 04/07/2024	
	3. Data collected (R7): 09/06/2024			8. Outputs published (R7): 14/07/2024	
	4. Data analysed (R7): 16/06/2024			9. Final presentation: N/A	
	5. Data and analysis sent for validation (R7): 16/06/2024				
Number of assessments <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Single assessment (one cycle)			
	X	Multi-assessment (more than one cycle) Round 2 (R2): July - September 2022 Round 3 (R3): October - November 2022 Round 4 (R4): July – September 2023 Round 5 (R5): November – December 2023 Round 6 (R6): February – March 2024 Round 7 (R7): May – June 2024 Round 8 (R8): July – August 2024 (tentative but likely to be skipped) Round 9 (R9): November – December 2024 (tentative) Round 10 (R10): February – March 2025 (tentative)			
Humanitarian milestones	Milestone		Deadline		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Donor plan/strategy	-- / / --		
	X	Inter-cluster plan/strategy	01/11/2024 – HRNP 2025 submission Ad-hoc - Reprioritization exercises/appeals depending on context (e.g., drought response, returnee appeal, etc.)		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cluster plan/strategy	-- / / --		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	NGO platform plan/strategy	-- / / --		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify):	-- / / --		

<sup>1</sup> The Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM) assessment cycle began in 2022, and this document outlines the updates since the last published HSM Terms of Reference ([ToR](#)) in 2022. Also, this TOR covers the changes in the methodology for round 7 of the HSM in 2024, as well as any potential modifications for future HSM rounds.

Audience Type & Dissemination	Audience type	Dissemination	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Programmatic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operational <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Product Mailing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cluster and Working Group Mailing <sup>2</sup> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presentation of Key Findings to ICCT members <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Website Dissemination (Relief Web and REACH Resource Centre: non-sensitive analysis only) <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	
Detailed dissemination plan required	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> No
General Objective	To provide timely and accurate data and analysis on service provision, sectoral needs, and vulnerabilities across Afghan communities, regularly monitoring the evolution of needs and informing effective prioritisation of humanitarian resources at both the geographical and sectoral levels. <sup>3</sup> HSM also seeks to complement existing assessments like the annual household-level Whole of Afghanistan (WoA 2024s) by offering district-level insights for strategic resource allocation within the Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025 (HNRP).		
Specific Objective(s)	Among assessed settlements <sup>4</sup> in districts <sup>5</sup> , HSM specifically aims to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To identify and highlight geographic areas (districts) and sectors with the most critical needs within Afghanistan, guiding (informing) targeted and evidence-based humanitarian interventions for effective resource allocations quarterly.</li> <li>2. To measure changes and gaps in service provisions, basic needs, and vulnerabilities over time, informing adjustments to the HNRP 2025.</li> <li>3. To contribute to evidence-based decision-making for humanitarian actors, promoting efficient and equitable humanitarian responses.</li> <li>4. Determine vulnerabilities (e.g. shock, migration and reliance on unsustainable income sources) and the coping strategies (e.g. debt and child labour) that may drive multi-sectoral and sectoral needs.</li> <li>5. HSM indicators complement and triangulate WoAA 2024's indicators, adding contexts and insights from KIs' perspective with indicative data.</li> <li>6. Feeding into other REACH assessment cycles, such as the following:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Needs Monitoring Framework (NMF)<sup>6</sup> for longitudinal analyses to monitor the evolution and changes of the needs. HSM feeds data into the NMF, which then feeds into HNRP seasonal reprioritization exercises through the Assessment and Analysis Working Group (AAWG) and Inter-Cluster Coordination Team (ICCT). The objective is to provide more assistance to the most vulnerable populations affected by seasonal changes as HSM provides updates on the humanitarian context quarterly. Out of the NMF's 40 indicators, 28 are derived from the HSM. These indicators are segmented by sector and are harmonized with JIAF 2.0.</li> <li>b) HSM feeds into Quarterly Food Security Monitoring (QFSM) which is developed by the World Food Program (WFP). The QFSM is a focused component of the broader needs monitoring efforts, specifically designed to track and analyze food security trends and indicators quarterly across Afghanistan. The QFSM heavily relies on KI HSM data, with</li> </ol> </li> </ol>		

<sup>2</sup> Accountability for Affected Persons working group (AAPWG), Camp Coordination Camp Management working group (CCCM), Cash and Voucher working group (CVWG), Disability and Inclusion working group (DIWG) Education in Emergencies (EiE), Food Security and Agriculture (FSAC), Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA), Health, Nutrition, Protection and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH).

<sup>3</sup> Assessed services include services directly relevant to sectors of the Education in Emergencies (EiE), Emergency Shelter and Non-Food-Items (ES-NFI), Food Security and Agriculture (FSAC), Health, Nutrition, Protection, and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) clusters. This includes educational services, health services and drinking water infrastructure.

<sup>4</sup> A settlement is defined as a residential unit, either a village mostly located in rural areas and registered under the district governor's office, or a Gozar mostly located in urban areas and registered by the Nahiya offices of the city municipality.

<sup>5</sup> A district is the second administrative level in Afghanistan and is governed by a district governor.

<sup>6</sup> The NMF is a strategic tool developed by the Assessment and Analysis Working Group (AAWG) to provide a regular (quarterly) detailed overview of multisectoral needs, identifying shifts in humanitarian needs and pinpointing hotspots across Afghanistan at a district level.

	27 of its 28 indicators coming directly from the HSM, making it a cornerstone for assessing food security every quarter.			
	c) HSM also feeds ad-hoc analysis such as returnees, flash floods, droughts, etc.			
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the service provision gaps in the assessed settlements in districts?</li> <li>2. What are the vulnerabilities and coping strategies of the districts and compare the changes?</li> <li>3. What are the multi-sectoral and sectoral needs of assessed settlements in districts?</li> <li>4. Based on sectoral and multi-sectoral indices, what are the priority needs of the assessed settlements in the districts? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the districts and sectors with significant specific needs?</li> <li>- How are the priority needs changing at the district level?</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. How are service provisions and needs evolving between conducted HSM rounds?</li> </ol>			
Geographic Coverage	All 401 districts <sup>7</sup> across the 34 provinces of Afghanistan <sup>8</sup>			
Secondary data sources	<a href="#">2023 OCHA Natural Disaster Database</a> <a href="#">Afghanistan: Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) Projection for March – May 2024</a> <a href="#">Afghanistan: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), Acute Food Insecurity Situation for October 2023 and Projection for November 2023 - March 2024</a> <a href="#">DTM Flow Monitoring Dashboard - 2024</a> <a href="#">OCHA Afghanistan - Subnational Administrative Boundaries</a> <a href="#">Whole of Afghanistan Assessment (WoAA 2023) Sectoral and Multi-Sectoral Severity Analysis</a> <a href="#">Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024: Including Sectoral Severity Maps</a>			
Population(s) <sup>9</sup>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in host communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cross-border returnees in host communities
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IDP returnees in host communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Host communities
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Refugees from Pakistan living in Khost and Paktika provinces	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, specify]
Stratification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Geographical #: 401 districts <sup>10</sup> Population size per strata is known? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Group #: 3,235 Basic Service Units (BSUs) <sup>11</sup> Population size per strata is known? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other Specify] #: _ _ Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Data collection tool(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Structured (Quantitative)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Semi-structured (Qualitative)
		Sampling method		Data collection method
Structured data collection tool	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Purposive	<input type="checkbox"/>	Key informant interview (Target #) for round 7: 12,000 KI interviews <sup>12</sup> in all 401 districts
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Probability / Simple random	<input type="checkbox"/>	Group discussion (Target #):_ _ _ _ _
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Probability / Stratified simple random	<input type="checkbox"/>	Household interview (Target #):_ _ _ _ _
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Probability / Cluster sampling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual interview (Target #):_ _ _ _ _
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Probability / Stratified cluster sampling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct observations (Target #):_ _ _ _ _
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Snowballing	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, Specify] (Target #):_ _ _ _ _
Data management platform(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IMPACT	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNHCR

<sup>7</sup> As per UN-OCHA's Afghanistan Subnational Administrative [Boundaries](#).

<sup>8</sup> District boundaries are under revision and potentially subject to change in 2024.

<sup>9</sup> HSM assesses the needs of people in the settlements regardless of their displacement status and highlights their priority needs.

<sup>10</sup> Comparisons between districts will be between non-representative data.

<sup>11</sup> BSUs are defined as sub-district economic and geographic units, each representing settlements and populations with similar levels of service access and humanitarian needs (i.e., accessing the same health facilities, schools, water systems, food distribution points, etc.).

<sup>12</sup> The number of Key informant interviews changes in each HSM round.

Expected output type(s):	<input type="checkbox"/>	Situation overview #: __	<input type="checkbox"/>	Report #: __	<input type="checkbox"/>	Profile #: __
Outputs expectedly are for each HSM round.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Presentation (Preliminary findings) #: __	X	Presentation (Final) #: 1	X	Factsheet #: 1 Sectoral needs and service provision gaps at national, provincial and district levels covering EiE, ES-NFI, FSAC, Health, Nutrition, Protection, and WASH sectors' key findings
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Interactive dashboard #:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Webmap #:	X	Map #: 7 Mapping the service provision gaps, sectoral needs and coverage at the district level to highlight hotspots of needs across the country
	X	Formatted Analysis #: 1 Service gaps and sectoral needs at national and district levels for EiE, ES-NFI, FSAC, Health, Nutrition, Protection, and WASH (non-sensitive indicator will be made public online in the REACH Resource centre)				
	X	Formatted dataset # 1 formatted data will be available upon request				
Access	X	Brief #1: Narrative situational overview or thematic brief of a sectoral key findings				
	X	Public (non-sensitive analysis will be available on the REACH resource centre and other humanitarian platforms)				
Visibility Specify which logos should be on outputs	X	Restricted (sensitive data will go through bilateral dissemination only upon the agreed dissemination list, with no planned publication on REACH or other platforms at this stage)				
		REACH				
		Donor: US Bureau for Humanitarian Aid (BHA)				
		Coordination Framework: OCHA				
		Partners: N/A				

## 2. Rationale

### 2.1. Background

Afghanistan humanitarian situation remains fragile with some level of overall stability in 2024 after the country experienced the economic downturn which intensified after the political transition in August 2021<sup>13</sup> following decades of instability and dire humanitarian situation. Humanitarian needs remain still high amid reports of economic shock and climate change (drought). In 2024, an estimated 23.7 million people—more than half of Afghanistan's population—are projected to require humanitarian assistance.<sup>14</sup> There has been a shift from cross-cutting need across the entire country to hotspots of emergency needs that need to be identified to inform the allocation of limited assistance as funding for the humanitarian assistance is shrinking. Therefore, more targeted, and informed decision-making in the humanitarian response is paramount to target hotspots and areas with severe service gaps. Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM) by assessing and highlighting the priority needs, and service provision gaps and vulnerabilities, across all sectors in all districts in the country will assist in proper and effective targeting for humanitarian response quarterly. HSM has built upon Hard to Reach (HtR)<sup>15</sup> by expanding the coverage to the entire country and was set in motion early 2022. The current term of reference (ToR) stipulates updates in the HSM assessment cycle since HSM [round 1](#) TOR in February 2022 also further adjustment and adaptation to the methodology.

### 2.2. Intended impact

Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM) seeks to inform both the geographical and sectoral prioritization of needs and any subsequent interventions by actors in the response – including OCHA and clusters – by monitoring the evolution of service provisions gap, vulnerabilities, coping strategies and needs of people in the districts. HSM would inform humanitarian response programming by underscoring service provision gaps at the district level in Afghanistan. HSM intends to inform Humanitarian Needs and Responds Plan (HNRP) 2025 and other humanitarian responses such as Integrated food security phase classification (IPC) by highlighting geographical areas with high sectoral and inter-sectoral needs. Thus, HSM informs the ongoing or planned humanitarian interventions and strategic decision-making processes. HSM complements and triangulates the annual household-level Whole of Afghanistan Assessments (WoAA 2024) by filling in information gaps on a regular (quarterly) basis. HSM also feed into other assessment cycles such as the Needs Monitoring Framework (NMF) for tracking the shocks and needs monitoring for longer longitudinal analysis which will build long-term changes in multi-sectoral needs over time.

<sup>13</sup> [OCHA, Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2022 \(January 2022\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> [OCHA, Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024 \(December 2023\)](#)

<sup>15</sup> [REACH, Hard-To-Reach \(HtR\) Assessment](#), which was assessing districts identified as hard to reach for humanitarian actors by the Inter-Cluster Coordination Team (ICCT) (2019)

### 3. Methodology

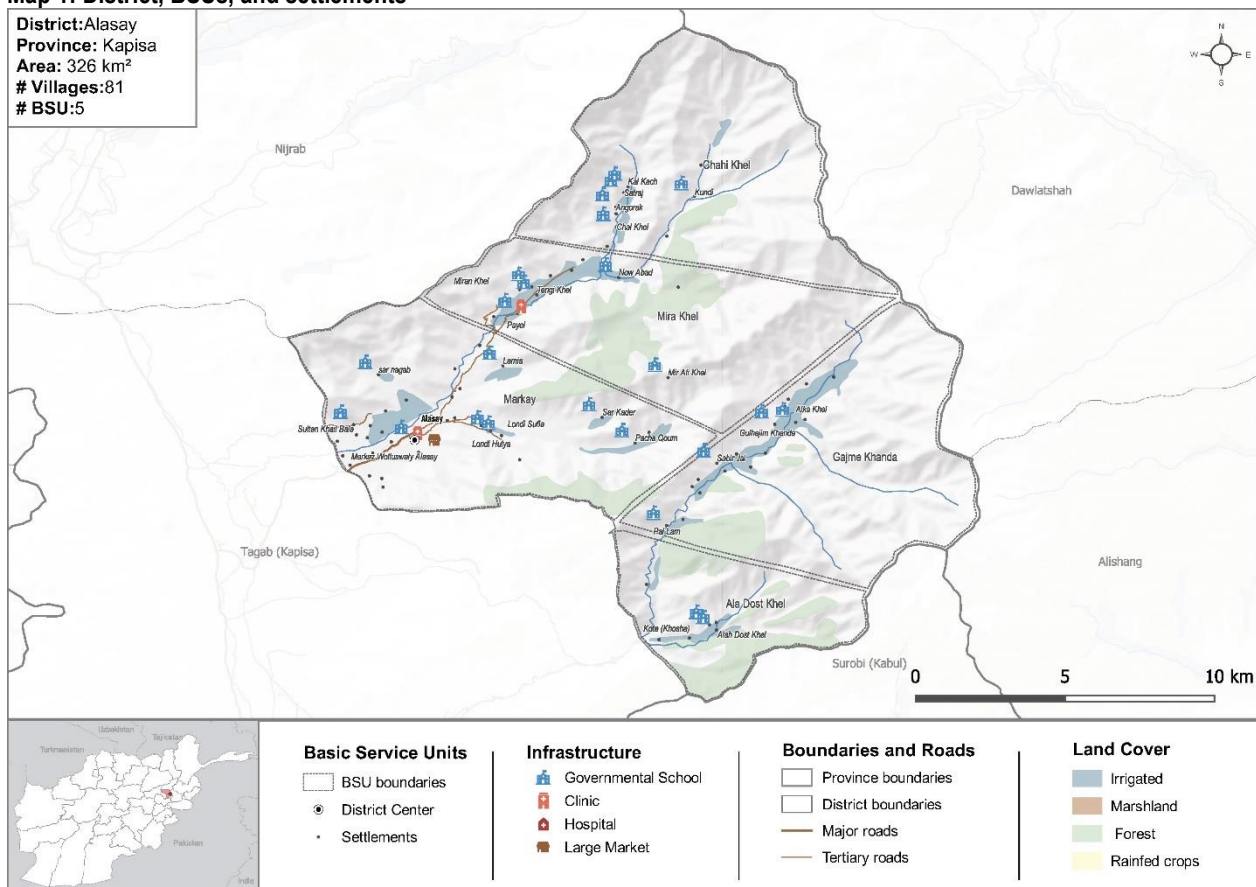
#### 3.1. Methodology Overview

HSM gathers information from community Key Informants (KIs) reporting on conditions in settlements they have recent knowledge of – also known as the Area of Knowledge (AoK) methodology on service provision, multi-sectoral needs, demography and emerging trends in their settlements, with indicative findings. A structured questionnaire<sup>16</sup> is used to conduct key informant interviews on a quarterly basis to complement the representative household survey collected by the Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA, also referred to as Whole of Afghanistan Assessment - WoAA), monitor the evolution of needs over the year and inform regular prioritization exercises at the district level.

Since its inception in February 2022, each HSM round has covered all [401 districts \(admin level 2\) in Afghanistan's 34 provinces \(admin level 1\)](#) which correspond to 419 locally recognized districts reflected in the [previous TOR](#). This nationwide coverage will continue as long as access and resources are secured. For each round of data collection exercise, from the first round (February - April 2022) to the sixth (February – March 2024), enumerators conduct approximately 10,500 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with community members of randomly selected settlements.<sup>17</sup> However, for HSM round 7 (May – June 2024) and upcoming rounds, the sample size will be increased to a maximum of 12,000 KIIs in order to better account for the BSUs' population in the sampling stage.

To ensure that KIs are spread out geographically and inform on all parts of the district, HSM uses a sampling approach based on Basic Service Units (BSUs). BSUs are defined as sub-district economic and geographic units, grouping settlements and populations with similar levels of service access and humanitarian needs (i.e., accessing the same health facilities, schools, water systems, food distribution points, etc.). REACH completed a nationwide mapping of 3,235 BSUs in early 2022, which encompasses roughly 60,000 known settlements across Afghanistan.<sup>18</sup> While BSU data supports and feeds sampling, HSM findings are analysed at the district level, and aggregated at provincial, regional and national levels. Detailed explanation of sampling process is available in the primary data collection section. Please refer to the map 1 below as an illustration of settlement (village), BSUs, and district (admin level 2) as an example.

**Map 1: District, BSUs, and settlements**



<sup>16</sup> HSM questionnaire will be updated prior to the data collection in each round to encompass new changes in contexts and requirements.

<sup>17</sup> The randomized selection of settlements, adopted since HSM Round 2 (September 2022), replaced snowballing.

<sup>18</sup> As of early 2024, there is no consolidated settlement list among the humanitarian response in Afghanistan. REACH has combined lists from OCHA, IOM-DTM, UNHCR and other actors, which is updated regularly based on the validation by REACH field staff.



From HSM round 1 (February- April 2022) until round 6 (February- March 2024), HSM analysis at the district level has been weighted to correct for the number of KIIs per district compared to number of settlements per district. Weights were calculated and applied at district-level aggregation with one weight per district. And for other aggregation levels, e.g., at provincial, regional, and national levels, district-level analysis was the base.

$$\text{Weight per district} = \frac{(\text{total number of settlements in the district})/(\text{total number of settlements in all districts})}{(\text{total number of KIIs in the district})/(\text{total number of KIIs in all districts})}$$

However, after introducing population factor into the HSM sampling methodology for round HSM 7 (May – June 2024) and upcoming rounds, it is decided to not weight analysis at all as HSM embeds population and geographical aspects in the sampling process and its findings are considered indicative only.

### 3.1 Population of interest

While HSM assesses all 401 districts<sup>19</sup> in Afghanistan, it aims to identify districts with the most critical needs and is therefore interested in the general population, regardless of their displacement status. To achieve this, HSM conducts Key Informant Interviews with community leaders, civil servants, or other knowledgeable individuals across settlements in all districts nationwide. Though data collection occurs at the individual level, the KIIs report on the broader needs and characteristics of the residents within their settlements. This approach, with settlements as the unit of measurement, enables HSM to indirectly capture the concerns and circumstances of the wider population, ultimately guiding them in prioritizing areas requiring the most urgent humanitarian assistance.

### 3.2 Secondary data review

To triangulate against HSM findings and inform REACH-designed sectoral and multi-sectoral need indices, HSM will rely on the following secondary data sources:

- [2024 OCHA Natural Disaster Database](#)
- [Afghanistan Seasonal Monitor: FEWS NET – February 2024](#)
- [Afghanistan – Winter planted wheat conditions are improving: FEWS NET – March 2024](#)
- [Afghanistan: Famine Early Warning System Network \(FEWS NET\) Projection for March – May 2024](#)
- [Afghanistan: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(IPC\) Projection for November 2023 – March 2024](#)
- [UNHCR, Afghanistan Returns Response – April 2024](#)
- [Whole of Afghanistan Assessment 2023](#)
- [Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024 – December 2023: including Afghanistan Sectoral Severity Maps](#)
- [WorldPop Database](#)

### 3.3 Primary Data Collection

HSM has a structured questionnaire, encompassing sectoral and multi-sectoral questions at the settlements level. Prior to the HSM data collection in each round, its questionnaire is reviewed and adjusted to align and to catch up with emerging priorities and needs. HSM questionnaire has evolved out of Hard-to-Reach (HtR) assessment and has evolved by each round. Once the questionnaire is updated, so is the kobo tool. Enumerators interview KIIs using smartphones with the Kobo application equipped with HSM questionnaire.

Key informants (KIIs), e.g. community leaders, teachers, doctors – individuals with extensive knowledge of the basic services and humanitarian needs within assessed settlements, have been identified by enumerators through local councils during a participatory mapping process conducted at the inception of the first round of data collection, in 2022. Based on these, a network of KIIs has been developed using a snowballing approach and then a randomisation sampling approach (see below).

KIIs will be conducted in person by enumerators (with the oversight of regionally-based Senior Field Officers). The bulk of KIIs will be conducted in-person. In previous rounds, these represented roughly 80% of all interviews (e.g., round 6). The below steps are observed chronologically for prioritizing type of KIIs according to the KIIs approachability:

- 1) In-person face-to-face KIIs according to the primary randomized settlement list; if not accessible, then
- 2) In-person face-to-face KIIs according to the buffer settlement lists; if not accessible, then
- 3) interview with a person from the target settlement or less preferably from the buffer settlement who had visited that settlement or called someone living there in the three months prior to the interview; if not available, then
- 4) Enumerators do a phone interview with a person from the primary settlement, or buffer settlement as a last resort.

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<sup>19</sup> [401 districts according to OCHA](#) and assessing districts depends on access permission from authorities in each HSM round.

Prior to data collection, REACH field teams receive a training of trainers (ToT) session and get familiarised with the updates in the tool and how to proceed with the HSM data collection. Field teams, in turn, train the enumerators to ensure that all parties are familiar with the HSM questionnaire (Kobo tool).

### Sampling of settlements in HSM

Between HSM round 2, July-September 2022, and round 6, February-March 2024, REACH Afghanistan utilized a randomization sampling approach, instead of snowballing which was in use during the round one and pilot, in order to boost data quality and spread of KIIs. The randomized settlement approach was adopted to reduce bias and better capture settlements that might not be assessed under convenience sampling. The overall settlement lists, which are often updated prior to sampling each round, were fed as input to a customized R script to randomly pick settlements for the HSM survey preparing the primary randomized settlements list and buffer as per the below parameters. This sampling approach is no longer used for round 7 or future rounds but is outlined below for reference:

- All districts and BSUs covered.
- One KI is sampled and interviewed per assessed settlement.
- A minimum of 3 KIIs per BSU (proportional to settlement number per BSU) or all of the remaining settlements if there are fewer than 3 settlements in a BSU
- A minimum of 10% of settlements are covered per district.
- Settlements are selected randomly (i.e., not taking into account settlement population size)

Considering these criteria, the randomized settlement lists (including buffer settlements) were generated and then incorporated into the HSM Kobo tool.

In HSM round 7 and forthcoming rounds, a new HSM sampling process will be used to reflect the population density of BSUs while the key previously established parameters of the sampling will be kept. While results remain indicative and cannot be directly compared with representative household data, this nevertheless aims to further strengthen the degree to which the data provides an accurate indication of conditions experienced by most of the population in the country.

The following sampling parameters include updates in the last three bullet points. These updates focus on conducting Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) in settlements with larger populations. The estimated populations of all the settlements where KIIs are conducted represent 54% of the national population, as KIIs report on behalf of their settlements. KIIs are conducted in 21% of known settlements at the national level. For the HSM round 7 in May 2024, there are plans to conduct 12,000 KIIs.

In previous rounds of the HSM, as well as in the concurrent round 7, one key informant is sampled and interviewed per assessed settlement. The overall updated settlement list, excluding settlements where fewer than an estimated 20 individuals reside, will be fed into an R script that observes the revised HSM sampling parameters as detailed below:

- All districts and BSUs included in the sampling
- One KI is sampled and interviewed per assessed settlement.
- A minimum 12% district settlements coverage
- A minimum of 3 KIIs per BSU or all of the remaining settlements if there are fewer than 3 settlements in a BSU
- Population factor per BSU population of 60% for sampling additional KIIs beyond the minimum of 3 proportional to the estimated BSU population size. In particular, the updated sampling scheme is described by the following steps:

1. Set the *target sample size per BSU*:

$$\text{minimum} + 0.6 \times (\text{BSU pop. size} / \text{avg. BSU pop. size in AFG})$$

However, if the overall sample size across all BSU in a district computed in this way represents less than 12% of known settlements in the district, use the following formula instead (which includes a component of additional settlements to attain the 12% threshold):

$$\text{minimum} + 0.6 \times (\text{BSU pop. size} / \text{avg. BSU pop. size in AFG}) + \text{BSU weight} \times (12\% \text{ of district's settlement} - \text{total estimated sample size in district}^{20})$$

where:

- the *minimum* number of KIIs in a BSU is 3, or the number of known settlements in the BSU, whichever is smaller.
- 0.6 is the BSU population factor parameter referenced above.
- The BSU weight means (# of remaining settlements in BSU / # of remaining settlements in district)

$$\text{or BSU Weight} = \frac{(\text{total\_bsu\_settlements} - \text{total\_estimated\_samples\_in\_bsu})}{(\text{total\_district\_settlements} - \text{total\_estimated\_samples\_in\_district})}$$

<sup>20</sup> total estimated sample size in district means the sum of (3 KIIs per BSU plus population factor per BSU) of the concerned district.

2. Sample all of the settlements in each BSU, if the sample size is greater than or equal to the known number of settlements in the BSU (this occurs due to excessive population factor). Otherwise, sample the settlements until the targeted sample size per BSU is reached, following the cascading scheme:

In each BSU, the settlements are ranked according to their population size, and are spitted into 4 quantiles: large, medium, small, smallest:

- Sample 100% of the large settlements
  - Sample 75% of the remaining medium settlements<sup>21</sup>
  - Sample 50% of the remaining small settlements<sup>21</sup>
  - Sample 25% of the remaining smallest settlements<sup>21</sup>
3. If the target BSU sample size is still not met, sample the remaining N settlements in the BSU as the largest N remaining settlements in that BSU.

This process allocates additional KIIs (beyond the minimum of 3 per BSU) for populous BSUs proportionate to their population and does not allocate KIIs for less populated BSUs. Settlement population size is also taken into account in the allocation of these additional KIIs. The sampling method mentioned above will be used in round 7. If alternative sampling approaches are found to be more optimal, REACH will adopt them. Any changes will be reflected in a methodology annex or an updated Terms of Reference (ToR).

### 3.4 Data Processing & Analysis

Once KIIs are conducted, the survey results are uploaded to a confidential Kobo account. At the end of each round, the HSM data is downloaded and the data quality checks ensue. Data quality is prioritised by implementing a comprehensive data cleaning and verification process during and after data collection. The Data Cleaning Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) is reviewed prior to each round of HSM data collection, incorporating lessons learned, adapting to any modifications in the assessment tool and ensuring compliance with the [IMPACT Data Cleaning Minimum Standards Checklist](#). The Data Cleaning SOPs clearly outline the responsibilities of different staff members, data protection processes, criteria for data deletion and a list of data quality checks focusing on identifying outliers, contradictory or unlikely responses (logical inconsistencies), and any suspicious patterns identified in enumerator data. The SOPs document is available upon request.

Based on the Data Cleaning SoPs of each HSM round, utilizing R software, a cleaning log is generated daily and is shared with the REACH Senior Field Officers (SFOs). The SFOs actively engage with the data collection team lead or enumerators to validate the data and provide feedback in the cleaning log (i.e., confirming the correct answer and reason/or adjusting any mistakes). This feedback is subsequently reviewed by the REACH Regional Field Coordinator (RFC), Senior Project Officer (SPO) and Assessment Analyst (AA) before data it is processed by the database officer. At the end of data collection, after all cleaning logs are processed, the cleaned data is sent to IMPACT HQ for validation. The processed data is used to generate a daily data collection tracker ensuring close monitoring of progress to meet targets and appropriate resource allocation. Data cleaning logs of all changes are available upon request.

As the HSM questionnaire is updated for each round of data collection, so is the HSM Data Analysis Plan (DAP). DAP, synchronised with the questionnaire, consists of individual indicators, sectoral and multi-sectoral composite indicators and relevant disaggregation to offer key (indicative) findings at the national, provincial and district levels. HSM DAP is available on request. DAP serves as guidance to analysis. The analysis is based on HSM-cleaned data and is sent to IMPACT HQ for validation. Moreover, HSM will also serve as one of the key data sources of the Needs Monitoring Framework (NMF), a framework developed by the Assessment and Analysis Working Group (AAWG) – which is co-lead by REACH – to calculate sectoral and multi-sectoral severity needs at the district level to analyze the evolution of needs over time.<sup>22</sup>

### 3.5 Limitations

There are some limitations with the HSM assessment cycle:

- The HSM findings are not statistically representative in nature - indicative only. Despite that, HSM findings provide valuable updates quarterly with a granularity of district level.

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<sup>21</sup> If the remaining sample needed is less than the specified % of the settlement quantile, the settlements will be sorted from highest to lowest based on population, and then sampled from the highest until the required sample size is reached. Otherwise, settlements will be sampled randomly to reach the specified % of the settlement quantile.

<sup>22</sup> The TORs of the NMF 2024 are forthcoming.



- It is challenging to identify key informants with updated/accurate informants in the settlement, particularly female key informants. Despite the challenges, enumerators are asked to look for well-informed KIs for HSM interviews.
- HSM is mostly quantitative in nature and therefore will not investigate the roots causes of findings qualitatively.

1. 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 ( <i>specifically by: seeking informed consent, designing length of survey/ discussion while being considerate of participants' time, ensuring accurate reporting of information provided</i> )?	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	While vulnerable groups are not explicitly interviewed for this assessment, it is possible that vulnerable individuals may be interviewed. Enumerators are prepared and trained for this.
... Follows IMPACT SOPs for management of personally identifiable information?	Yes	

5. Roles and responsibilities

Table 3: Description of roles and responsibilities

<i>Task Description</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Accountable</i>	<i>Consulted</i>	<i>Informed</i>
<i>Research design</i>	Assessment Analyst (AA)	Research Manager (RM)	IMPACT HQ – Research Design and Data Unit (RDDU)	Country Coordinator (CC)
<i>Supervising data collection</i>	Operations Program Manager (PM)	Country Operations Manager (COM)	RM/ IMPACT HQ – RDDU	CC
<i>Data processing (checking, cleaning)</i>	Database Manager (DM)	AA	RM/ IMPACT HQ – RDDU	CC
<i>Data analysis</i>	DM	AA	PM/RM/ IMPACT HQ – RDDU	CC

Output production	AA	RM	PM/DM/IMPACT HQ – Research Reporting Unit (RRU)	CC
Dissemination	AA	RM	IMPACT HQ – RRU	CC
Monitoring & Evaluation	AA	RM	IMPACT HQ – Research Department (RD)	CC
Lessons learned	AA	RM	IMPACT HQ - RD	CC

*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*

## 6. Data Analysis Plan

The Data Analysis Plan (DAP) is available upon request

## 7. Data Management Plan

Available upon request.

## 6. 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	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
		# of downloads of x product from Relief Web	Country request to HQ		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
		# of downloads of x product from Country level platforms	Country team		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
		# of page clicks on x product from REACH global newsletter	Country request to HQ		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
		# of page clicks on x product from country newsletter, sendingBlue, bit.ly	Country team		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
		# of visits to x webmap/x dashboard	Country request to HQ		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
IMPACT activities contribute to better program implementation and coordination of the	Number of humanitarian organisations utilizing IMPACT services/products	# references in HPC documents (HNO, SRP, Flash appeals, Cluster/sector strategies)	Country team	Reference_log	Afghanistan HNO and HRP 2024
		# references in single agency documents			OCHA country documents,

humanitarian response					Cluster-specific documents
Humanitarian stakeholders are using IMPACT products	Humanitarian actors use IMPACT evidence/products as a basis for decision making, aid planning and delivery	Perceived relevance of IMPACT country-programs	Country team	Usage_Feedback and Usage_Survey template	User feedback survey to be conducted at the beginning of each year.
		Perceived usefulness and influence of IMPACT outputs			
		Recommendations to strengthen IMPACT programs			
	Number of humanitarian documents (HNO, HRP, cluster/agency strategic plans, etc.) directly informed by IMPACT products	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 ( <i>providing resources, participating to presentations, etc.</i> )	# 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