

# Research Terms of Reference

Emergency Assessment: Cross-border movement from Kordofan (Sudan) into Pariang (South Sudan), February 2026

SSD2601

South Sudan

February 2026  
Final Version

**REACH** Informing  
more effective  
humanitarian action

## 1. Executive Summary

<b>Country of intervention</b>	South Sudan					
<b>Type of Emergency</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Natural hazard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Conflict	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)
<b>Type of Crisis</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sudden onset	<input type="checkbox"/>	Slow onset	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Protracted
<b>Mandating Body/ Agency</b>	FCDO					
<b>IMPACT Project Code</b>	32GBK					
<b>Overall Research Timeframe</b>	2 Feb – 31 Mar 2026					
<b>Research Timeframe</b>	1. <b>Pilot/ training:</b> NA		6. <b>Preliminary presentation:</b> N/A			
	2. <b>Start collect data:</b> 19 Feb		7. <b>Outputs sent for validation:</b> 20 Mar			
	3. <b>Data collected:</b> 27 Feb		8. <b>Outputs published:</b> 27 Mar			
	4. <b>Data analysed:</b> 6 Mar		9. <b>Final presentation:</b> TBD			
	5. <b>Data sent for validation:</b> 6 Mar					
<b>Number of assessments</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single assessment (one cycle)				
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multi assessment (more than one cycle)				
<b>Humanitarian milestones</b>	<b>Milestone</b>			<b>Deadline (can be tentative)</b>		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Donor plan/strategy		ASAP		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Inter-cluster plan/strategy		ASAP		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cluster plan/strategy		ASAP		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	NGO platform plan/strategy		N/A		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify):		N/A			
	<b>Audience type</b>			<b>Dissemination</b>		

<b>Audience Type &amp; Dissemination</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Programmatic <input type="checkbox"/> Operational <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Product Mailing (e.g. mail to NGO consortium; HCT participants; Donors) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cluster Mailing (Education, Shelter and WASH) to offer presentation of findings at next cluster meeting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presentation of findings (e.g. at HCT meeting; Cluster meeting) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Website Dissemination (Relief Web & REACH Resource Centre) <input type="checkbox"/> In-person dissemination to	
<b>Stakeholder mapping</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
<b>General Objective</b>	To gain a better understanding of the humanitarian situation of populations displaced from greater Kordofan, Sudan, to Pariang, South Sudan, to affect a more informed humanitarian response and enable better prepared response planning, and to enable evidence-based advocacy on behalf of affected populations.			
<b>Specific Objective(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Understand the humanitarian situation in hard-to-reach areas of greater Kordofan:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Understand food, livelihoods, WASH, health, shelter, and protection conditions in these hard-to-reach areas</li> <li>b. Understand how basic service infrastructures have been affected by conflict in these hard-to-reach areas, particularly in the second half of 2025</li> <li>c. Identify the most urgent needs and assistance preferences in these hard-to-reach areas</li> </ol> </li> <li><b>2. Identify displacement concerns for populations leaving hard-to-reach areas of greater Kordofan</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Map areas of origin and displacement routes from greater Kordofan into South Sudan (including Pariang)</li> <li>b. Document challenges faced during displacement, including potential movement barriers, from greater Kordofan into South Sudan (including Pariang)</li> <li>c. Identify potential population groups unable to leave hard-to-reach areas in greater Kordofan</li> <li>d. Identify key push and pull factors influencing displacement from Kordofan into South Sudan</li> <li>e. Understand displaced populations' movement intentions after arrival (settlement, onward movement, return)</li> </ol> </li> <li><b>3. Identify any immediate protection concerns of populations displaced from hard-to-reach areas of greater Kordofan</b></li> </ol>			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify protection issues faced in greater Kordofan, including for populations left behind</li> <li>b. Identify any potential vulnerable groups among displaced populations from greater Kordofan</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Understand humanitarian conditions upon arrival in South Sudan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Understand key needs of displaced populations from greater Kordofan into South Sudan (including Pariang)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Research Questions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. What is the current humanitarian situation in hard-to-reach areas of greater Kordofan?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What are displaced communities’ perceptions on food, livelihoods, WASH, health, shelter, and protection conditions in these areas?</li> <li>b. How have basic service infrastructures in these areas been affected by conflict, particularly in the second half of 2025?</li> <li>c. What are most urgent needs and assistance preferences in these areas?</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. What are key displacement routes and concerns for populations leaving hard-to-reach areas of greater Kordofan?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What are main displacement routes from greater Kordofan into South Sudan (including Pariang)?</li> <li>b. What are key push and pull factors influencing displacement from greater Kordofan into South Sudan?</li> <li>c. What are main challenges faced during displacement, including potential movement barriers, from greater Kordofan into South Sudan?</li> <li>d. Which population groups face increased barriers to leave hard-to-reach areas in greater Kordofan?</li> <li>e. What are displaced populations’ movement intentions after arrival in South Sudan? (settlement, onward movement, return)</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>3. What are immediate protection concerns of populations displaced from hard-to-reach areas of greater Kordofan?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What are key protection issues faced by populations in greater Kordofan, including for populations left behind?</li> <li>b. What groups are particularly vulnerable to protection issues?</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>4. What are humanitarian conditions upon arrival in South Sudan?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What are main needs in areas of settlement in Pariang?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Geographic Coverage</b>	Data collection will take place in Pariang County, Ruweng Administrative Area, South Sudan. Data collection will most likely take place in Ajuong Thok and Pamir displacement sites, as well as potential informal displacement sites around Ajuong Thok. The exact locations of data collection will be determined based on conversations with partners on the ground, upon arrival to Ajuong Thok.			
<b>Secondary data sources</b>	To contextualize this assessment’s findings, the team will draw from a variety of secondary data sources. For a full list, see section 4.3. Main data sources will be IPC data, FSNMS data, IOM displacement tracking data, and others.			
<b>Population(s)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in camp	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in informal sites
	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in host communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs [Other, Specify]
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in camp	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in informal sites
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in host communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees [Other, Specify]
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Host communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Returnees (in any setting)
<b>Stratification:</b> <i>n/a</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Geographical #:_ -- Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Group #: Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Data collection tool(s)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Structured (Quantitative)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Semi-structured (Qualitative)
	<b>Sampling method</b>		<b>Data collection method</b>	
<b>Semi-structured data collection tool (s) #1</b> <i>Scoping FGDs with returnee/refugee leaders/elders</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purposive <input type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]		<input type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scoping Focus Group Discussion (Target: 2)	
<b>Target level of precision</b>	NA – Qualitative data collection		NA – Qualitative data collection	
<b>Disaggregation by gender and age</b>	Gender		Age	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>Semi-structured data collection tool (s) #2</b> <i>FGD with returnees/refugees – Needs</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purposive <input type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]		<input type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion (Target: 4) <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	

<b>Target level of precision</b>	NA – Qualitative data collection	NA – Qualitative data collection
<b>Disaggregation by gender and age</b>	Gender	Age
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: 2 FGDs with women, 2 FGDs with men <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: 2 FGDs with young adults (18-29 years) and 2 FGDs with adults (30+ years) <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Semi-structured data collection tool (s) #3</b> <i>FGD with refugees/returnees – Displacement</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purposive <input type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	<input type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion (Target: 6) <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]
<b>Target level of precision</b>	NA – Qualitative data collection	NA – Qualitative data collection
<b>Disaggregation by gender and age</b>	Gender	Age
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: 3 FGDs with women, 3 FGDs with men <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: 3 FGDs with young adults (18-29 years) and 3 FGDs with adults (30+ years) <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Semi-structured data collection tool (s) #4</b> <i>Individual Interviews with returnees/refugees</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purposive <input type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	<input type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Individual Interview (Target: 30)
<b>Target level of precision</b>	NA – Qualitative data collection	NA – Qualitative data collection
<b>Disaggregation by gender and age</b>	Gender	Age
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: 15 IIs with women, 15 IIs with men <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Semi-structured data collection tool (s) #5</b> <i>HH survey with returnee/refugee heads of households</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Random <input type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Household Interview (Target 175) <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]
<b>Target level of precision</b>		
<b>Disaggregation by gender and age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IMPACT	<input type="checkbox"/> UNHCR

<b>Data management platform(s)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, specify]				
<b>Expected output type(s)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Situation overview: #1 brief	<input type="checkbox"/>	Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	Profile
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Preliminary findings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Presentation (Final): TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>	Factsheet
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Interactive dashboard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Webmap	<input type="checkbox"/>	Map
<b>Access</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public (available on REACH resource centre and other humanitarian platforms)				
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted (bilateral dissemination only upon agreed dissemination list, no publication on REACH or other platforms) – The aim is to publish the final outputs externally. In the case of severe protection-related findings (e.g. human rights violations), however, the team may decide to disseminate sensitive findings bilaterally to trusted partners only.				
<b>Visibility</b>	REACH					
	Donor: FCDO					
	Coordination Framework: NA					
	Partners: NA					

## 1.1 List of acronyms

AFI	Acute Food Insecurity
SAO	Senior Assessment Officer
CR	Country Representative
DSAG	Data Saturation and Analysis Grid
ERRM	Emergency Rapid Response Mechanism
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FO	Field Officer
FSNMS	Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring
II	Individual Interview
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration

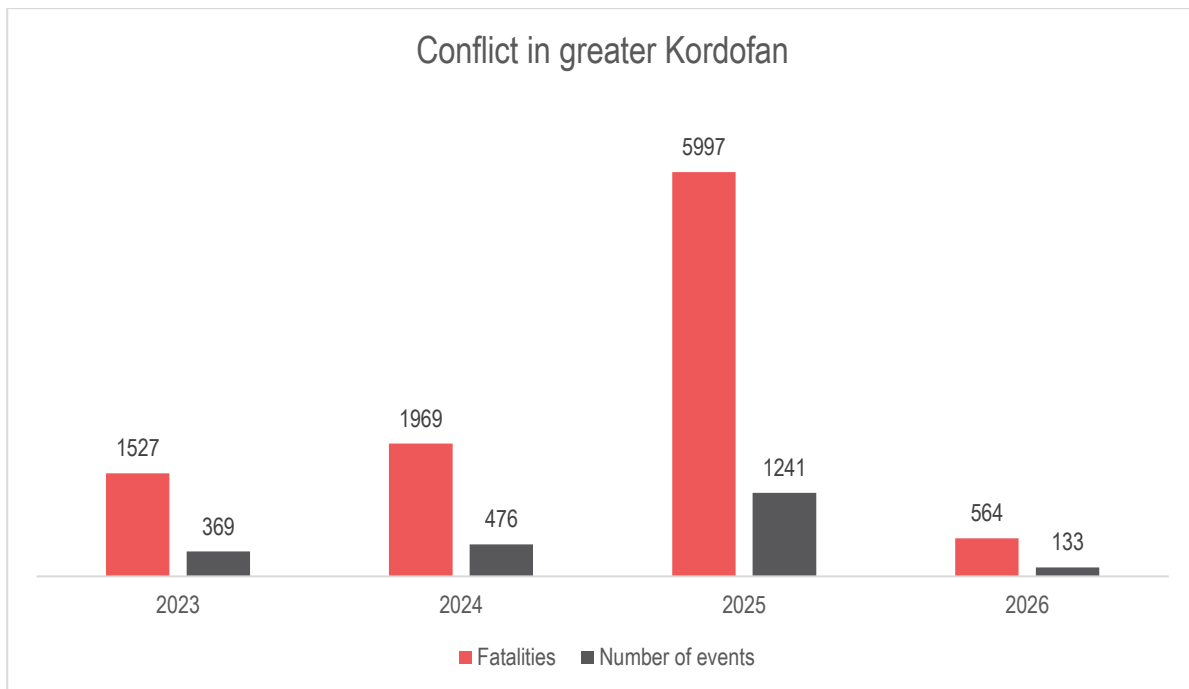
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
KII	Key Informant Interviews
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
RRC	Relief and Rehabilitation Committee
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UN	United Nations
WASH	Water, Sanitafifson and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme

## 2. Rationale

### 2.1 Background

The conflict in Sudan’s greater Kordofan region escalated sharply in 2025 as fighting shifted toward the oil rich-rich region, making it one of the war’s most active frontlines. By late 2025, more than two years after the outbreak of war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), hostilities increasingly concentrated on greater Kordofan, following the RSF’s takeover of el-Fasher, the last SAF stronghold in Darfur.<sup>1</sup> Conflict monitoring data indicate that 2025 was particularly violent in the region: the number of recorded violent incidents more than doubled compared to 2024, while fatalities tripled (see Figure 1). Drone strikes became a defining feature of the escalation. For instance, strikes on Kadugli (the capital of South Kordofan) during the first week of December killed at least 114 people (including 63 children), according to the WHO.<sup>2</sup> A further drone strike on December 9 near Heglig, Sudan’s largest oil processing facility, resulted in dozens more deaths.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 1:** number of fatalities and number of violent incidents in greater Kordofan (North, South and West), from 1 April 2023 until 23 January 2026 (ACLED).



Within the greater Kordofan region, South Kordofan (see map 1) emerged as a major conflict hotspot, experiencing heavy clashes, drone attacks, and rapid militarization throughout late 2025 and early 2026. In addition to drone strikes, armed clashes repeatedly occurred across the state, including north and south of Dilling – the second largest city in South Kordofan. Fighting was reported around Kazgil (100 km north of Dilling) and in villages near Kadugli (80-90 km south of Dilling), where several army outposts were overrun.<sup>4</sup> A conflict monitor recorded damage to both military and civilian sites across the Nuba Mountains in January 2025, and December 2025 became the most

<sup>1</sup> [WHO gives death toll from last week’s drone strikes in Sudan | AP News](#); [Kamikaze Drones Hunt for Targets in Kordofan](#)

<sup>2</sup> [WHO gives death toll from last week’s drone strikes in Sudan | AP News](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Military drone attack on Sudan oil field kills dozens | AP News](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Sudan War Monitor](#)

violent month in South Kordofan since the beginning of the war, in terms of number of fatalities and total number of events recorded.<sup>5</sup> The region is now heavily militarized, with reports of increased recruitment and the deployment of thousands of troops by both warring parties.<sup>6</sup>

**Map 1: Regions of Sudan**



**Intensifying violence in greater Kordofan triggered major displacement in late 2025, with tens of thousands fleeing key towns across South and West Kordofan** (see figure 2). According to IOM data from 27 January 2026, over 88,000 individuals had been displaced within greater Kordofan, including more than 11,000 people displaced in a single week between 23 and 30 December 2025.<sup>7</sup> Populations fled towns including Kadugli, Dilling, and El Koaik in South Kordofan, as well as Heglig and Babanusa in West Kordofan.<sup>8</sup>

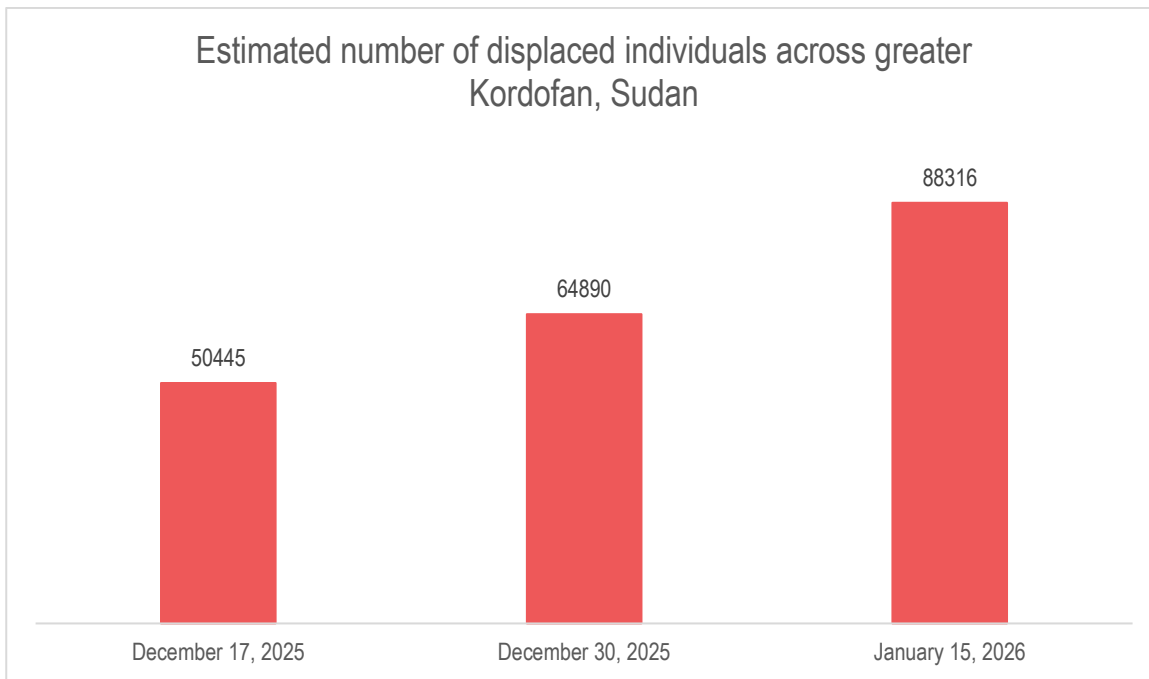
**Figure 2:** estimated number of displaced individuals in greater Kordofan (North, South and West) from 17 December 2025 to 15 January 2026 (IOM).

<sup>5</sup> [Christmas Celebration Bombed in Sudan's Nuba Mountains](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Sudan War Monitor](#)

<sup>7</sup> DTM Sudan. (2026). *Focused Flash Alert—Kordofan Region (Update 02)* (Flash Alert No. 2). IOM.

<sup>8</sup> [Sudan: Needs rise as people continue to flee fighting in Kordofan | UN News](#)



**While many displaced persons reportedly moved northward or eastward within Sudan, a significant share travelled southward into South Sudan in search of safety.**<sup>9</sup> Indeed, cross-border monitoring data showed that a significant number of people crossed the border with South Sudan from December 2025 – entering through Panakuoch, Jau and Liri Points of Entry in Pariang County, Ruweng Administrative Area.<sup>10</sup> UNHCR reported an estimated 6,522 individuals to have crossed into South Sudan from December 5th, 2025 until January 20th, 2026.<sup>11</sup> While most of these new arrivals originated from West Kordofan, a notable increase was reported in arrivals from South Kordofan, particularly from Kadugli and Tolodi.<sup>12</sup> Among new arrivals in were also Darfurians, who had fled Darfur earlier in 2025 – now to be displaced again from greater Kordofan.<sup>13</sup> Returnees primarily entered through Panakuach, while refugee arrivals crossed via Jau and Liri.

**Ongoing instability in early 2026 suggests that displacement from greater Kordofan will continue, with humanitarian actors warning of escalating protection risks and further population movements into South Sudan.** Although SAF broke the sieges of Kadugli and Dilling in January 2026, troops reportedly delivered only food and ammunition for military use – not providing any support for the residents suffering from famine-like conditions.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the situation in the region reportedly remains highly volatile.<sup>15</sup> UN officials have warned that the Kordofan region could face similar atrocities to those seen earlier in El-Fasher, including executions of civilians, rape and other forms of sexual assault, and other human rights violations.<sup>16</sup> In Dilling, suspected collaborators of the RSF were reportedly publicly lynched in the city’s main square after the siege was broken, while others

<sup>9</sup> DTM Sudan. (2025). *Focused Flash Alert—Kordofan (Update 01)* (Flash Alert No. 1). IOM; <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/12/1166619>

<sup>10</sup> IOM DTM. (2026, January 29). *Arrivals from Sudan to South Sudan* [Dashboard]. [Link](#)

<sup>11</sup> UNHCR South Sudan. (2026). *Influx from West and South Kordofan* [Flash Update]. UNHCR.

<sup>12</sup> UNHCR South Sudan. (2026). *Influx from West and South Kordofan* [Flash Update]. UNHCR.

<sup>13</sup> According to IOM, at least 1,959 individuals displaced in Kordofan since October 2025 were IDPs who were already displaced from other states in Sudan to greater Kordofan. The large majority (1,864 IDPs) of these were originally displaced from North Darfur, primarily from Al Fasher locality. (DTM Sudan. (2026). *Focused Flash Alert—Kordofan Region (Update 03)* (Flash Alert No. 3). IOM); [South Sudan — Cross-Border Population Movements at Panakuach Point of Entry #1 \(5-14 December 2025\) | Displacement Tracking Matrix](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Sudan War Monitor](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General | UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases; Sudan War Monitor](#)

<sup>16</sup> [UN human rights chief fears rising violence in Sudan's Kordofan region | AP News](#)

were detained.<sup>17</sup> According to a January 2026 press release from the UN Secretary General, “access routes are still cut off, and the city’s prolonged isolation has pushed conditions to crisis levels”. Meanwhile, kamikaze drone strikes continue to hit strategic and civilian targets, including markets, aimed at disrupting commerce and inducing displacement.<sup>18</sup>

**Early 2026 trends show sustained cross border displacement into South Sudan, especially from South Kordofan, with partners warning of continued and possibly increasing border displacement into South Sudan, especially from South Kordofan, with partners warning of continued and possibly increasing arrivals.**<sup>19</sup> By mid-January 2026, arrivals from West Kordofan had slowed, but UNHCR reported that arrivals from South Kordofan continued to rise. Field partners confirmed that as of the first week of February, hundreds of people were crossing daily into Pariang. While population movements remain unpredictable due to shifting conflict dynamics, UNHCR assessments – supported by interviews with newly arrived refugees – suggest that inflows from greater Kordofan into South Sudan, particularly through Pariang, are likely to continue.<sup>20</sup>

### **Underlying vulnerabilities in greater Kordofan**

**Before the escalation of violence in late 2025, conditions in greater Kordofan were already very severe.** The two largest cities in south Kordofan (Kadugli and Dilling) were besieged since the outbreak of the conflict in April 2023. Agriculture and trade largely stopped, and the prolonged blockade of both towns has severely constrained civilian movement and reportedly transformed surrounding villages into contested buffer zones (Sudan War Monitor, 2025).

**This heavily impacted humanitarian needs in the area.** Kadugli was classified in Famine (IPC Phase 5) with reasonable evidence in the latest IPC analysis from October 2025. Conditions in the besieged town of Dilling (South Kordofan) were estimated to be similar to those in Kadugli town; however, the lack of data prevented IPC classification of this area. These severe conditions have likely persisted through January 2026, as gains from the harvest in North Darfur and the Western Nuba Mountains have likely remain limited due to conflict and insecurity. Furthermore, during the post-harvest and pre-lean season (February - May 2026), acute food insecurity is projected to worsen (IPC, 2025).

**Similarly, IOM reported severe needs among displaced populations.** In a Flash Alert from December 2025, IOM reported more than half of displaced households across greater Kordofan were unable to access needed healthcare.<sup>1</sup> In addition, over half of households in South Kordofan (55%) reported that a household member had gone a full day and night without food within the past month (IOM, 2025).

## **2.2 Information gaps**

**Little reliable information exists on the humanitarian situation in greater Kordofan, especially South Kordofan, due to limited humanitarian presence, restricted access, and ongoing insecurity.** Very limited presence of humanitarian agencies in the region means little data exists,

<sup>17</sup> [Sudan War Monitor](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Kamikaze Drones Hunt for Targets in Kordofan](#)

<sup>19</sup> UNHCR South Sudan. (2026). Influx from West and South Kordofan [Flash Update]. UNHCR.

<sup>20</sup> UNHCR South Sudan. (2026). Influx from West and South Kordofan [Flash Update]. UNHCR.

particularly from the besieged towns of Kadugli and Dilling. Furthermore, much of South Kordofan, including the Nuba Mountains, remains remote and hard to reach, resulting in major incidents (such as the 25 December drone strike in Julud) receiving minimal coverage in news and media reports.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, although significant displacement from greater Kordofan has been reported, little is known about displacement routes, barriers, or movement intentions, and strict restrictions on data collection inside Sudan mean protection risks and potential human rights violations remain largely undocumented.<sup>22</sup>

## 2.3 Intended impact

**To address these gaps, REACH will conduct primary data collection in Pariang County, Ruweng Administrative Area, South Sudan, collecting testimonies from new arrivals from South Kordofan.** The research questions laid out in these Terms of Reference are built around information gaps and needs identified by humanitarian actors and coordination bodies, focusing on population movement dynamics, displaced populations' perspectives on the humanitarian situation in greater Kordofan, including protection risks and concerns, and how needs and livelihoods have changed as a result of displacement. Addressing these information gaps will help provide humanitarian, development and governmental actors with a better understanding of this complex and rapidly evolving context. Thereby, the findings will support partners in developing more inclusive, evidence-based response planning. Additionally, the findings may also support partners' fundraising efforts at a global or national level.

**Preliminary findings may be shared during data collection with the REACH senior management team for further bilateral dissemination to partners and coordination bodies on an ad-hoc basis,** particularly potential findings related to risks such as excess mortality, protection concerns, and anticipated arrivals and needs. Following data collection, a brief will be written and shared with REACH's full product dissemination list. Findings will also be shared with INGOs including ACTED Emergency Response Unit and the Emergency Rapid Response Mechanism (ERRM) Consortium to inform emergency response programming.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Methodology overview

**This research will employ a mixed methodology (quantitative and qualitative) consisting of structured household surveys, focus group discussions and individual interviews conducted in person.** The quantitative methodology is designed to collect household-level data on displacement and the humanitarian situation in greater Kordofan, asking respondents to report on their displacement routes and the situation in their area of residence in greater Kordofan.<sup>23</sup> The qualitative methodology is designed to provide in-depth information on displacement experiences and protection-related issues. The population of interest are individuals who crossed the border from greater Kordofan (Sudan) into Pariang (South Sudan) since 1 December 2025. Data will not be

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<sup>21</sup> [Christmas Celebration Bombed in Sudan's Nuba Mountains](#)

<sup>22</sup> [Christmas Celebration Bombed in Sudan's Nuba Mountains](#)

<sup>23</sup> The key household definition used for this assessment is: "A group of people who regularly eat from the same cooking pot and sleep in the same compound most nights of the week."

statistically representative and should be treated as indicative of the situation at time of collection only. Secondary data will be used to triangulate and supplement findings.

### 3.2 Population of interest

**Geographical coverage:** Data collection will most likely take place in Ajuong Thok and Pamir displacement sites in Pariang County, Ruweng Administrative Area, South Sudan. The exact locations of data collection will be determined based on conversations with partners on the ground, upon arrival to Ajuong Thok. According to a January Flash Update from UNHCR, refugees arriving through the points of entry in Ruweng (Panakuoch, Jau and Liri) are transported from the border to UNHCR-supported transit and reception facilities before relocation to Ajuong Thok and Pamir refugee camps. According to the same UNHCR flash update, arrivals through Jau/Liri represent mainly refugee movements into South Sudan and these individuals are presenting themselves mainly at Yida Reception Centre – currently hosting 656 individuals, more than twice its intended capacity.

**Population of interest and unit of measurement:** For the quantitative component, the population of interest are returnee/refugee heads of households in Pamir/Ajuong Thok, who arrived from greater Kordofan to Pariang County since 1 December 2025. The primary unit of measurement is the household (for indicators related to the humanitarian situation upon arrival in South Sudan), as well as the settlement (for indicators related to the humanitarian situation in the area of origin in greater Kordofan, Sudan). The key household definition used for this assessment is: *“A group of people who regularly eat from the same cooking pot and sleep in the same compound most nights of the week”*. For the qualitative component, the population of interest are returnees/refugees residing in Pamir/Ajuong Thok, who arrived from greater Kordofan to Pariang County since 1 December 2025. In the Individual Interviews, participants will be asked about their individual experiences. In the FGDs, participants will be asked to answer questions on conditions and trends in the broader population group assessed (new arrivals from greater Kordofan into Pariang).

### 3.3 Secondary data review

The table below presents an overview of secondary data to be consulted during the research design phase, as well as for subsequent analysis/reporting. This is a summary of most important reports / datasets / literature used for the assessment. However, more secondary data sources will be used throughout each phase of the assessment.

Table 1 Key secondary data sources used for the assessment (non-exclusive list)

Secondary source	Purpose of source
IPC analysis 2025	Secondary data sources to assess humanitarian situation in Pariang across different sectors, with a focus on food, health, nutrition and WASH.
FSMNS 2025	
ISNA 2025	
IOM event tracking dataset	
IOM flow monitoring registry	

IOM cross-border monitoring dashboard	Background on population movement, to be used in rationale for assessment and in final output.
UNHCR Flash Update: Influx from West and South Kordofan	
Focused Flash Alerts Kordofan Region (3 in total)	

### 3.4 Primary Data Collection

**Primary data collection will take place over 1,5 weeks, between February 19 and 27, 2026.** Data collection will take place in Pamir and Ajuong Thok displacement camps, and potential informal displacement sites, in Pariang County, Ruweng Administrative Area, South Sudan.

#### Sample size and selection

**The target sample size for the quantitative component is 175 households.** As the household survey targets a specific population (returnees/refugees who arrived from Sudan since 1 December 2025), representativeness is not possible and the findings will be indicative of the specific population group only. The sample size was determined based on logistical considerations, and no further stratification will be applied. Disaggregation of findings by demographic characteristics (e.g., population status, gender of household head) might be conducted during the analysis phase, but, as with the overall findings, will not be representative. Households will be selected semi-randomly, through a combination of locally-hired field guides/facilitators and snowball sampling; to ensure all interviewed heads of households are new arrivals who arrived from greater Kordofan into Pariang after the first of December, 2025.

**The target sample size for the qualitative component is 10 FGDs (50 participants in total), 2 scoping FGDs (10 participants in total), and 30 Individual Interviews.** All participants will be sampled semi-randomly, based on displacement status, date of arrival, age and gender. Heads of households will be targeted for FGDs and IIs, or, failing that, adults with a firm understanding of the humanitarian situation in their community. For the Scoping Focus Group discussions (sFGDs), a similar approach will be taken to identify refugee/returnee community leaders/elders who arrived from greater Kordofan to Pariang since the first of December 2025. Locally-hired community mobilisers will assist the Senior Assessment Officer (SAO) in identifying individuals willing to meet in person to contribute to the study. All FGDs will be conducted separately with men and women to reflect standard practice to enable an open environment for discussion, and groups will be approximately 5 individuals in size. FGDs will also be conducted separately for young adults (18-29 years of age) and adults (30 years and above).

Table 2 Data Collection Methods

Method	Target Sample Size	Tool	Unit of measurement
HH survey	Total minimum target of households: 175	One structured questionnaire	Community / Individual
IIs	Total minimum target of IIs: 30	One semi-structured II tool	Individual
Scoping FGDs	Total minimum target of Scoping FGDs: 2	One semi-structured Scoping FGD tool	Community
FGD - Needs	Total minimum target of FGDs: 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women young adult: 1</li> <li>• Women adult: 1</li> <li>• Men young adult: 1</li> <li>• Men adult: 1</li> </ul>	One semi-structured FGD tool – Needs	Individual/ Community
FGD – Displacement	Total minimum target of FGDs: 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women young adult: 2</li> <li>• Women adult: 2</li> <li>• Men young adult: 1</li> <li>• Men adult: 1</li> </ul>	One semi-structured FGD tool – Displacement	Individual/ Community

### Data collection field teams

**Data will be collected by a team of experienced REACH staff.** The team will comprise one REACH SAO and one REACH Field Officer (FO). Additionally, the team will be supported by two field supervisors, two field guides, one translator, one community mobiliser and six enumerators – all to be hired in Pariang County.

**Several trainings will be conducted prior to data collection exercises.** First, the FO will receive a half-day in-person training in Juba from the SAO – aiming to provide i) a deep-dive on the assessment’s objectives; ii) create a thorough and practical understanding of the sampling strategy and tools; and iii) provide a refresher training on good practices for qualitative data collection and ethical considerations. Second, all locally-hired staff will receive a half-day training in Pariang – aiming to provide a robust understanding of the assessment’s objectives and data collection tools, including their translation into the local language.

### Data collection tools

The research will employ a mixed-methods approach, using different tools for the different data collection components:

- **The primary tool for the quantitative component is a structured household questionnaire** designed for a 20–25-minute administration time, scripted in XLSForm for Kobo Collect. It includes standardized indicators covering various sectors (displacement, FSL, health, WASH, protection, etc.). The tool comprises of different modules, covering i) the humanitarian situation in Sudan, ii) displacement and iii) the humanitarian situation upon arrival in South

Sudan. The tool will consist of indicators asked on a settlement level (mainly indicators focused on the humanitarian situation in Sudan), as well as household-level indicators (mainly indicators related to the humanitarian situation in South Sudan).

- **Different tools will be used for the various qualitative data collection exercises** (see table 2).
  - **The scoping FGD interview guides will be only minimally structured.** A very basic guide has been drafted (see Data Analysis Plan), but interviewers will be given autonomy to ask questions that are appropriate based on the discussion and the group's profile. Hence, these FGDs will be more inductive in nature, allowing participants to describe the humanitarian context as they view it, to speak openly about humanitarian needs that they have observed, how needs have changed due to conflict in Sudan, etc. These FGDs will be conducted on the first day of data collection, to further contextualize understanding of the context and, potentially, refine the scope of the subsequent FGDs.
  - **All other tools (two FGD tools and one II tool) will be semi-structured.** Each of the tools will consist of questions, sub-questions and probes related to the assessment's specific objectives and research questions.

For a detailed description of questions asked, and how the information captured will help answer the different research (sub)questions, please see the Data Analysis Plan (DAP) (available upon request).

While the data collection tools are in English, they will be translated by the field teams into the preferred language during the interview as needed. The SAO/FO will take detailed notes during each data collection exercise using laptops and/or notebooks. Field teams will not collect or record any Personally Identifiable Information (PII) that is not included in the Data Management Plan.

#### **Data collection monitoring**

**The SAO will closely monitor data collection throughout the various phases of the research cycle.** Through daily check-ins with the rest of the field team, the SAO will ensure the tools are effective, flow well, and are sensitive to the context, and to ensure that other considerations for informative and respectful qualitative data collection exercises are implemented. Should any issues occur, the SAO will amend the tools as necessary. Depending on field team capacity, transcripts of each data collection exercise will be prepared as soon as possible after the exercise, along with the accompanying debrief forms. In every data collection exercise, the guiding principles of informed consent, 'do-no-harm', confidentiality and respect will be adhered to. Any issues arising shall be reported immediately to the SAO.

### **3.1 Data processing & analysis**

**Quantitative data processing and analysis will be performed in line with IMPACT's Minimum Standards Checklist for structured data collection tools.** Following data collection, the raw household survey data will be downloaded from the Kobo server and undergo a cleaning process in R. This will include checking for logical inconsistencies, outliers, enumerator bias, and adherence to the sampling protocol. The cleaned dataset will be analysed according to the Data Analysis Plan. Analysis will primarily involve the calculation of descriptive statistics (proportions, means, medians with 90%

confidence intervals) for all key indicators. The main disaggregation variables will be population status (refugee/returnee), location of residence in Sudan, and gender of the household head.

**Qualitative data processing and analysis will be performed in line with IMPACT’s Minimum Standards Checklist for semi-structured data collection tools.** As soon as possible after the data collection exercise, transcripts will be written up in English in a digital Microsoft Word document. The SAO shall organise and save all transcripts on the REACH SharePoint space, under password protection. Throughout this process, the SAO will maintain a data tracker to ensure all planned research activities are completed. All the data will be handled in strict accordance with IMPACT’s Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on the Management of Personally Identifiable Information to safeguard privacy and anonymity of the participants. Qualitative data will be analysed using a Data Saturation and Analysis Grid (DSAG). The DSAGs comprise three “layers” of analysis: Discussion Topics, Discussion Sub-Topics, and Data Points. Discussion Topics are based on questions in each qualitative tool. Discussion Sub-Topics and Data Points will be created using an inductive approach, based on the themes emerging from transcripts. If time allows, qualitative data may also be entered into MAXQDA for further thematic analysis, allowing for identification, analysis and reporting of patterns within data. Once interview transcripts and enumerator debrief forms have been translated from the local language into 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, 3) a completed DSAG and 4) a completed Method Report (with the DSAG), summarizing data collection and analysis methods used.

### **3.5 Limitations**

**Generalisability:** Given the chosen sampling strategy, all findings are indicative and not statistically generalizable to the larger population. While the methodology cannot guarantee that the assessment is not missing a particular (vulnerable) population groups’ experience, stratification of the focus groups further by gender ensures that a wider variety of perspectives and experiences is captured.

**Transcripts:** Since interviews will not be audio-recorded, it is likely that “transcripts” will resemble detailed notes. Moreover, as some of the interviews will be translated from the local language to English during the interview by the translator and/or note-taker, it is also possible that some details will be lost in translation or that responses might be abbreviated by the translator. To mitigate this, the team will i) carefully review the transcripts for any translation errors or missing data, and ii) quickly follow up with FOs should any data be deemed wrong or missing, with the aim to correct if possible.

**Response bias:** Participants might provide socially desirable responses or withhold information due to concerns about judgment or stigma. This bias could affect the accuracy and authenticity of the data collected, leading to an incomplete or skewed understanding of the participants’ needs and experiences.

**Timeliness of findings:** Given the dynamic and rapidly evolving context, it is important to note that the findings of this assessment will be based on data collected in February 2026, collecting testimonies from new arrivals from Sudan using a recall period of maximum 2 months (since the target population are new arrivals who crossed the border since the first of December, 2025). Therefore, the assessment’s findings should be understood within this specific timeframe. As the context may evolve between the time data is collected and the time the research output is published, the research

team will strive to minimise this time as much as possible. Furthermore, overall trends and key insights from this study remain highly relevant for understanding humanitarian response planning during times of funding limitations.

## 4. Key ethical considerations and related risks

Table 3 Key ethical considerations

<b>The proposed research design...</b>	<b>Yes/ No</b>	<b>Details if no (including mitigation)</b>
... Has been coordinated with relevant stakeholders to <b>avoid unnecessary duplication</b> of data collection efforts?	Yes	
... <b>Respects respondents, their rights and dignity</b> (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 <b>expose data collectors to any risks as a direct result</b> of participation in data collection?	Yes	
... Does not <b>expose respondents / their communities to any risks as a direct result</b> of participation in data collection?	Yes	
... Does not involve <b>collecting information on specific topics which may be stressful and/ or re-traumatising</b> for research participants (both respondents and data collectors)?	No	One of the objectives of the assessment is focused on protection-related issues and concerns. To mitigate potential re-traumatisation of participants, no questions will be asked directly on protection issues. Instead, questions will be asked in a more general manner, to allow participants to bring up potential protection concerns unprompted – not encouraging or forcing anyone to speak about such issues. Furthermore, the field team will be properly trained on how to respond to and manage such topics if they do come up.
... Does not involve <b>data collection with minors</b> i.e. anyone less than 18 years old?	Yes	
... Does not involve <b>data collection with other vulnerable groups</b> e.g. persons with disabilities, victims/ survivors of protection incidents, etc.?	No	Given the context of South Sudan, it is likely that the assessed population will include sick or malnourished persons, and/or survivors of serious protection concerns. Team leaders have been trained on PSS First Aid, and informed consent will be obtained from

		respondents before proceeding with the survey.
... Follows IMPACT SOPs for management of <b>personally identifiable information</b> ?	Yes	

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

Table 4 Roles and responsibilities

Task Description	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed
<b>Research design</b>	SAO	Country Representative (CR)	GIS Officer, IMPACT HQ Global Emergencies Unit	IMPACT HQ Research Department
<b>Supervising data collection</b>	SAO, FO	CR	CR	CR
<b>Data processing (checking, cleaning)</b>	SAO	CR	IMPACT HQ RDDU	IMPACT HQ Global Emergencies Unit
<b>Data analysis</b>	SAO	CR	IMPACT HQ RDDU	IMPACT HQ Global Emergencies Unit
<b>Output production</b>	SAO	CR	IMPACT HQ Global Emergencies Unit	IMPACT HQ RDDU
<b>Dissemination</b>	SAO	CR	CR	IMPACT HQ, FCDO, Clusters (e.g. Health Cluster, WASH Cluster, Nutrition Cluster)
<b>M&amp;E</b>	IMPACT PD	IMPACT PD	IMPACT HQ	IMPACT HQ
<b>Lessons learned</b>	SAO	CR	CR	CR

**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 is available [here](#).

## 7. Data Management Plan

Table 5 Data Management Plan

Administrative Data			
Research Cycle name	Pariang Emergency Assessment 2026		
Project Code	32GBK		
Donor	FCDO		
Project partners	n/a		
Research Contacts	Maartje Schots – <a href="mailto:maartje.schots@impact-initiatives.org">maartje.schots@impact-initiatives.org</a> Mary Langan – <a href="mailto:mary.langan@impact-initiatives.org">mary.langan@impact-initiatives.org</a>		
Data Management Plan Version	Date: 10 February 2026	Version: 1	
Related Policies	IMPACT Minimum Standards for Qualitative Data Processing and Analysis IMPACT Minimum Standards for Quantitative Data Processing and Analysis IMPACT Guidelines for SOPs for Management of Personally Identifiable Data		
Documentation and Metadata			
What documentation and metadata will accompany the data? <i>Select all that apply</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Data analysis plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Data Cleaning Log, including: <input type="checkbox"/> Deletion Log <input type="checkbox"/> Value Change Log
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Code book	<input type="checkbox"/> Data Dictionary
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Metadata based on HDX Standards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DSAG
Ethics and Legal Compliance			
Which ethical and legal measures will be taken?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Consent of participants to participate	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent of participants to share personal information with other agencies
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No collection of personally identifiable data will take place	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender, child protection and other protection issues are taken into account
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All participants reached age of majority	[Other, Specify]
Who will own the copyright and Intellectual Property Rights for the data that is collected?	IMPACT (REACH) and FCDO		
Storage and Backup			
Where will data be stored and backed up during the research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	IMPACT/REACH Kobo Server	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Kobo Server: <i>[specify]</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	IMPACT Global Physical / Cloud Server	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Country/Internal Server
	<input type="checkbox"/>	On devices held by REACH staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical location <i>[specify]</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, Specify]	
Which data access and security measures have been taken?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Password protection on devices/servers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Data access is limited to the Assessment officer and Research Manager
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Form and data encryption on data collection server	<input type="checkbox"/> Partners signed an MoU if accessing raw data
	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, Specify]	
Kobo Access Rights			
<b>Kobo Access</b>	<b>Person</b>	<b>Account Name</b>	

View and Edit Form, Download Data	Maartje Schots	maasvle			
View and Edit Form, Download Data	Kenyi Alison				
<b>Raw Data Access Rights</b>					
Raw Data Access	Reason	Person			
Access	Data Quality checks	Maartje Schots, Senior Assessment Officer			
<b>Preservation</b>					
Where will data be stored for long-term preservation?	<input type="checkbox"/> IMPACT / REACH Global Cloud / Physical Server	<input type="checkbox"/> OCHA HDX			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REACH Country Server	<input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]			
<b>Data Sharing</b>					
Will the data be shared publicly?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, only with mandating agency / body			
Will all data be shared?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, only anonymised/ cleaned data will be shared			
	<input type="checkbox"/> No, [Other, Specify]				
Where will you share the data?	<input type="checkbox"/> REACH Resource Centre	<input type="checkbox"/> OCHA HDX			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian Response	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With client			
<b>Data protection risk assessment</b>					
Have you completed the Indicators Risk Assessment table below?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, no information that potentially allows identification of individuals is to be collected.			
[Please complete the first 4 columns in the Indicators Risk Assessment table below]					
Risk indicator (including direct and indirect identifiers)	Type of identification on risk	Disclosure implications	Benefits	Class	Required mitigation
<b>Responsibilities</b>					
Data collection	Maartje Schots – Senior Assessment Officer - <a href="mailto:maartje.schots@impact-initiatives.org">maartje.schots@impact-initiatives.org</a> Samia Arop – Field Officer – <a href="mailto:Samia.arop@reach-initiative.org">Samia.arop@reach-initiative.org</a>				
Data cleaning	Maartje Schots – Senior Assessment Officer - <a href="mailto:maartje.schots@impact-initiatives.org">maartje.schots@impact-initiatives.org</a>				
Data analysis	Maartje Schots - Senior Assessment Officer - <a href="mailto:maartje.schots@impact-initiatives.org">maartje.schots@impact-initiatives.org</a>				
Data sharing/uploading	Maartje Schots – Senior Assessment Officer - <a href="mailto:maartje.schots@impact-initiatives.org">maartje.schots@impact-initiatives.org</a>				

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Mary Langan – Country Representative - [mary.langan@impact-initiatives.org](mailto:mary.langan@impact-initiatives.org)

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## 8. Bibliography

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