

Research Terms of Reference

Humanitarian Situation Monitoring in Occupied Territories

UKR2604

Ukraine

July 2026

V2

REACH Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

1. Executive Summary

Country of intervention	Ukraine					
Type of Emergency	☐	Natural disaster	X	Conflict	☐	Other (<i>specify</i>)
Type of Crisis	X	Sudden onset	☐	Slow onset	☐	Protracted
Mandating Body/ Agency	OCHA					
IMPACT Project Code	64BAO, g4BJZ, 64BAG					
Overall Research Timeframe	01/01/2026 to TBD (every 4 months, pending funding)					
Research Timeframe	1. Pilot/ training: 23/03/2026					
	2. Start collect data: 24/03/2026					
	3. Data collected: 09/04/2026					
	4. Data cleaned/aggregated/validated:23/04/2026					
	5. Outputs sent for validation: 06/05/2026					
Number of assessments	☐ Single assessment (one cycle) ☒ Multi assessment (more than one cycle) <i>Every 4 months</i>					
Humanitarian milestones	Milestone		Deadline			
	☐	Donor plan/strategy	__/__/____			
	X	Inter-cluster plan/strategy	Ongoing			
	X	Cluster plan/strategy	__/__/____			
	☐	NGO platform plan/strategy	__/__/____			
	☐	Other (Specify):	__/__/____			
Audience Type & Dissemination	Audience type		Dissemination			
	X Strategic		☐ General Product Mailing (ICCG)			
	X Programmatic		☐ Cluster Mailing (Health, Shelter, WASH, FSL, Education)			
	☐ Operational					
	☐ [Other, Specify]		X Restricted mailing list			

Stakeholder mapping	☐	Yes	X	No
General Objective	The assessment aims to provide humanitarian organisations with information on conditions in temporarily occupied territories (OT), including humanitarian needs and vulnerabilities, displacement dynamics, and challenges in accessing services. It will generate evidence on the general situation in settlements occupied since 2022 through interviews with evacuees and respondents maintaining regular contact with residents in occupied territories. Together, these findings will provide a comprehensive picture of both settlement-level conditions and the specific needs faced by residents in occupied areas, helping to inform humanitarian advocacy efforts.			
Specific Objective(s)	• <i>To identify immediate needs across the key activated clusters and working groups in Ukraine providing assistance in temporarily occupied territories, namely Cash Working Group (CWG), Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL), Health, Protection and its Areas of Responsibilities (AoRs) (Child Protection, Gender-based Violence, and Mine Action), Shelter and Non-Food Items (SNFI), and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).</i> • <i>To identify the main problems and challenges faced by households in assessed settlements.</i> • <i>To assess the overall severity of humanitarian needs at the settlement level</i> • <i>To monitor key demographic characteristics in assessed settlements, including estimated population size and the presence of people with disabilities, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and returnees.</i> • <i>To assess market functionality and access to financial services in order to inform the design and targeting of cash-based interventions</i>			
Research Questions	• <i>What are the main problems and challenges reported by residents in assessed settlements in occupied territories?</i> • <i>What is the overall severity of humanitarian needs among settlements in assessed settlements?</i> • <i>What are the market conditions and access to financial services in occupied territories, and what are the implications for cash-based interventions?</i> • <i>What is the extent and type of damage to infrastructure in assessed settlements?</i> • <i>To what extent are people able to travel across settlements within the OT?</i> • <i>What is the availability of basic services and legal assistance in assessed settlements in occupied territories?</i> • <i>What is the severity of humanitarian needs across key sectors (WASH, FSL, Health, and SNFI), based on the reported prevalence of affected households?</i> • <i>What barriers do households face in accessing essential goods, services, and assistance in occupied territories?</i> • <i>What types of security incidents have reportedly affected settlements in occupied territories?</i> • <i>What is availability of humanitarian assistance in assessed settlements in occupied territories, and which actors are reported to be delivering this assistance?</i>			

Geographic Coverage	Settlements in the OT, excluding areas of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts not under control of the Government of Ukraine since 2014 and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.			
Secondary data sources	Live Universal Awareness Map (LIVEUAMAP) - OCHA Frontline (Current and Historical) Dataset¹ REACH Initiative: Multi-Sector Needs Assessment ACLED – Ukraine crisis analysis IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) OCHA: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (2025) More detailed information can be found under Point 3.3. Secondary Data Review in the Methodology Section.			
Population(s)	☐	IDPs in camp	X	IDPs in informal sites
	X	IDPs in host communities	☐	IDPs [Other, Specify]
	☐	Refugees in camp	X	Returnees
	☐	Refugees in host communities	☐	Refugees [Other, Specify]
	X	Host communities	X	Settlement needs
Stratification	X	Geographical #: ~250 settlements Population size per strata is known? ☐ Yes X No	☐ Group #: Population size per strata is known? ☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Other Specify] #: __ Population size per strata is known? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Data collection tool(s)	X	Structured (Quantitative)	☐	Semi-structured (Qualitative)
	Sampling method		Data collection method	
Structured data collection tool # 2	X Purposive ☐ Probability / Simple random ☐ Probability / Stratified simple random ☐ Probability / Cluster sampling ☐ Probability / Stratified cluster sampling ☐ [Other, Specify]		X Key informant interview (Target #): at least 1 per settlement ☐ Group discussion (Target #): ☐ Household interview (Target #):_____ ☐ Individual interview (Target #): ☐ Direct observations (Target #):_____ ☐ [Other, Specify] (Target #):_____ 	
Target level of precision if probability sampling	__% level of confidence		__ +/- % margin of error	
Disaggregation by gender and age	Gender			
	X	Yes	X	Yes
	☐	No	☐	No
Data management platform(s)	X	IMPACT	☐	UNHCR
	☐	[Other, Specify]		
Expected output type(s)	☐	Factsheet:	X	Report #: Multisectoral report (3 per year minimum)
			☐	Profile #: __

	☐	Presentation (Preliminary findings) #: __	☐	Presentation (Final) #: __	X	Factsheet #:
	☐	[Other, Specify] #: __				
Access	X	Restricted (bilateral dissemination only upon agreed dissemination list, no publication on REACH or other platforms)				
Visibility	REACH					
	Donor: ECHO, FCDO and Department of State (DoS)					
	Coordination Framework: None					
	Partners:					

2. Rationale

2.1 Background

Since the escalation of the war in February 2022, people across Ukraine have faced widespread humanitarian needs across multiple sectors. However, humanitarian actors continue to face significant challenges in understanding the situation in currently occupied territories (OT). Restricted humanitarian access, significant movement barriers for people, as well as protection risks for residents make direct data collection in these areas extremely difficult.

As a result, available information on humanitarian conditions in OT remains limited and fragmented. While some insights are obtained through remote sensing, administrative data, and testimonies from individuals who have evacuated, systematic and comparable evidence on the humanitarian situation remains scarce. This information gap constrains humanitarian actors' ability to monitor the evolution of needs, advocate for affected populations, and inform response planning.

REACH has been conducting Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM) since March 2022. Starting with a Rapid Needs Assessment as the first round, REACH has since completed 24 rounds of data collection aiming to cover existing information gaps and inform the response on humanitarian needs, and how they have changed over time, at the settlement level.

Round 25 builds on previous rounds of OT monitoring and continues to collect structured information on settlement-level conditions and household-level challenges reported by residents in occupied areas. By systematically capturing this information, the assessment aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of humanitarian conditions in OT and support evidence-based advocacy and coordination efforts.

2.2 Intended impact

The assessment aims to strengthen the evidence base on humanitarian conditions in occupied territories by providing regular, structured information on needs, vulnerabilities, and access to services in settlements under occupation.

Specifically, the findings will:

- Support humanitarian coordination mechanisms in understanding the evolving humanitarian situation in occupied territories
- Inform advocacy efforts regarding the needs and challenges faced by populations living under occupation
- Inform the sampling approach of REACH's separate satellite imagery analysis and provide context to support the interpretation of remotely observed changes.
- Provide multisectoral information to humanitarian actors involved in response planning and protection monitoring
- Contribute to broader analysis of humanitarian trends across Ukraine by complementing HSM data collected in government-controlled areas

3. Methodology

3.1 Methodology overview

The HSM OT assesses settlement-level needs for settlements in occupied areas of Ukraine, excluding territories occupied before 2022. The data collection occurs every 4 months. Some questions are framed to capture settlement-level conditions, while others focus on the experience of residents.

Given the currently limited displacement from OT and the challenges in identifying respondents from specific settlements, the assessment aims to provide an indicative understanding of conditions in OT. To support this, HSM aims to cover approximately 10% of all occupied settlements within each raion, based on the most recently available information from LiveUA and the OCHA Frontline (Current and Historical) Dataset.

Questions are designed to understand the needs of settlements within the past 2 months — reflecting the direct experience of evacuees who have left the occupied territories or based on the most recent available information provided by respondents who remain in contact with people currently living in the occupied territories. Additionally, some additional ad-hoc questions may be added to the tool depending on the relevance to the response and seasonality (e.g., winterization, heating needs, etc.). The questionnaire is carried out through face-to-face and telephone interviews and takes around 20 minutes. HSM is implemented via REACH enumerators.

Face-to-face assessment employs a quantitative survey implemented through the Area of Knowledge (AoK) approach. AoK is a data collection and analysis methodology designed to produce information on humanitarian conditions in areas where direct data collection is not feasible. It does so by interviewing key informants (KIs) who possess recent knowledge of the areas of interest either because they continue to be in contact with people living there or because they have recently left those areas themselves.

Eligible respondents include direct key informants, who have left settlements of interest within two months prior to data collection, as well as indirect key informants, who have maintained regular contact with people residing in those settlements within one month before data collection. KIs are selected through a non-probability sampling approach, based on their availability and presence at transit hubs and data collection sites.

Notably, there is no minimum number of respondents required per settlement; therefore, some settlements—particularly smaller ones, may be represented by only one KI, which may further limit the scope and accuracy of the findings.

3.2 Unit of interest

The geographic scope of the assessment covers settlements in the occupied territories of Ukraine, excluding areas of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts that have not been under the control of the Government of Ukraine since 2014, as well as the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. In recognition of the urgent need for data from areas affected by the full-scale invasion, the assessment focuses specifically on settlements occupied by the Russian Federation since February 2022.

Within this scope, respondents of interest are individuals who have recently been displaced from settlements of interest specifically within the two months preceding data collection—and/or those who are in regular contact with people residing in those settlements within the 30 days prior to data collection.

Data are collected at the lowest possible administrative unit, the settlement level (admin-4), as defined by the Ukrainian government. The questionnaire is designed to collect both settlement-level data and data focused on the experiences of respondents' households or of people in the settlement with whom respondents are in contact. Settlement-level questions are used where respondents can reasonably report on conditions affecting the settlement as a whole. Other questions are framed specifically around the respondent's household or known contacts. This distinction is intended to minimise the risk

of extrapolating household-specific experiences to the wider settlement population. The data is merged into an individual-level dataset during the cleaning stage. During the analysis stage, overall findings are presented at the oblast and/or raion level. Residents' experienced data is not aggregated.

The key informant (KI) base has been gradually developed since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, primarily through contacts identified during previous face-to-face data collection activities and through snowball sampling. In some cases, KIs continue to report on settlements they previously resided in for many consecutive rounds. This approach provides continuity in reporting across rounds but may also introduce potential bias where only a limited number of informants are available for a given settlement. To better track sample stability and changes in the respondent pool over time, REACH assigns unique identifiers to KIs within the database.

Basic demographic information is collected from KIs, including gender. For respondents who no longer reside in the settlement but maintain contact with residents there, additional information is collected on the nature of their connection and the frequency of communication with individuals still living in the OT.

Questions are designed to capture either settlement-level conditions, such as service availability, infrastructure functioning, or displacement dynamics, based on respondents' most recent knowledge of the settlement or the experience of residents, reflecting the direct experience of evacuees' own households or, for respondents maintaining contact with residents in occupied territories, the experiences of households they are personally in contact with.

3.3 Secondary data review

Secondary source	Purpose of source
OCHA Ukraine 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP)	To provide a baseline for the monitoring and re-targeting of the HNRP.
OCHA Ukraine Situation Reports	To enhance understanding of the context and key definitions, corroborate primary data, and validate findings through triangulation.
IOM DTM Internal Displacement Reports	To enhance understanding of the context and key definitions, corroborate primary data, and validate findings through triangulation.
UNICEF Ukraine Situation Reports	To enhance understanding of the context and key definitions, corroborate primary data, and validate findings through triangulation.
ACAPS Ukraine Special Reports	To enhance understanding of the context and key definitions, corroborate primary data, and validate findings through triangulation.
REACH Initiative Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment	To enhance understanding of the context and key definitions, corroborate primary data, and validate findings through triangulation.
Institute for the Study of War (understandingwar.org) Ukraine Conflict Updates	To enhance understanding of the context and key definitions, corroborate primary data, and validate findings through triangulation.
Cluster reports	To enhance understanding of the context and key definitions, corroborate primary data, and validate findings through triangulation.
UNFPA Common Operational Dataset on Population Statistics (COD-PS) 2025	To refer to settlement-level population estimates used to inform the sampling frame.
IOM DTM the Flow Monitoring and Frontline Population Baseline Assessment Dataset	To refer to settlement-level population estimates used to inform the sampling frame.

3.4 Primary Data Collection

Primary data collection on the OT is conducted using a quantitative, structured questionnaire administered through the AoK approach. Data collection is carried out via both face-to-face and telephone interviews. Face-to-face (F2F) interviews are conducted by REACH enumerators at collective centres and humanitarian support points in locations that have experienced a high influx of IDPs or serve as known transit centres for people displacing to other parts of Ukraine or abroad. These locations typically include Kyiv, Dnipro, Poltava, Zaporizhzhia, Odesa, Kharkiv, and Mykolaiv, though the specific sites may vary across rounds depending on the operational context.

Enumerators select F2F participants through a non-probability sampling approach based on respondent availability and presence at data collection sites.

In parallel, enumerators conduct telephone interviews through a contact base developed cumulatively across rounds. Key informants from previous rounds who have consented to be recontacted may also be reached remotely in subsequent rounds.

The quantitative data collection tool was developed in close coordination with humanitarian actors in Ukraine, including partners engaged in programming related to occupied territories and/or advocacy activities. This coordination aims to ensure that the tool remains relevant to the information needs of humanitarian stakeholders. The questionnaire focuses on current humanitarian conditions in the settlement as well as household-level barriers to meeting needs. Depending on the indicator, key informants are asked to report either based on their most recent knowledge or on the situation within the two months preceding data collection.

The tool may be periodically adjusted to reflect changes in the operational context. This may include the addition of new indicators or minor revisions to existing questions, for example, to account for seasonal factors such as heating needs during winter months. Data collection is planned to take place every four months, and the questionnaire is designed to take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Prior to each round of data collection, enumerators will participate in remote training lasting approximately one day. During the training, enumerators are familiarised with the research objectives, questionnaire structure, and data collection procedures. Enumerators must complete at least one pilot interview and successfully pass a final test before participating in the assessment. In addition, ad hoc lessons-learned sessions will be conducted to review the implementation of the research design and ensure that the data collection process remains responsive to the evolving humanitarian context in Ukraine.

Sampling within the occupied territories is multi-layered. At the respondent level, eligible KIs are individuals who have left a settlement of interest within the two months prior to data collection (i.e., recent evacuees), or who have maintained regular contact with OT residents within the preceding 30 days.

Data collection is conducted using KoBoToolbox, with access restricted to enumerators and designated REACH team members, each granted permissions corresponding to their specific role. Enumerators use smartphones to enter data directly into the platform during interviews. The data collection tool remains aligned with the questionnaire used in previous rounds of HSM in occupied territories, while incorporating inputs from OCHA, Cluster partners, and organisations working in these areas. Additional indicators may also be added to address emerging information needs relevant to the research.

3.5 Data Processing & Analysis

Primary data will be collected through KoBo and exported to Excel. During primary data collection, the REACH Data Officer will review the data daily to ensure the data collection methodology is being followed by enumerators and investigate any

outliers or other problematic data, including ensuring that the sampling methodology is carried out in accordance with the sampling plan.

Following data collection, responses will be reviewed and cleaned by the assessment team to identify potential inconsistencies, duplicate records, or incomplete responses. Basic quality checks will include identification of soft and hard flags, and logical consistency between related indicators. Other checks may be carried out as necessary. Where necessary, records may be flagged and reviewed in consultation with the field team.

The data team will keep a log of any changes, including cleaning of data, aligning to [IMPACT's Minimum Standards Checklist for Data Cleaning and Processing for Structured \(Quantitative\) Data](#) as well as [IMPACT's Data Protection SoPs](#). Cleaning of data will include conducting cross checks during data collection to ensure logical coherence and avoid errors, checking metadata is fully completed, 'other' responses are appropriately recoded, and all personalised data is removed from the dataset.

The cleaned dataset contains KI-level records and is not aggregated to the settlement level. In most cases, a given settlement was represented by only one key informant (KI), meaning that settlement-level aggregation would risk presenting a single individual's account as if it were representative of the settlement as a whole. Instead, findings should be interpreted as a compilation of individual accounts that together provide indicative insights into the broader situation across occupied territories, rather than settlement-specific conclusions. The dataset combines responses from two KI profiles: individuals who had recently left occupied territories and individuals who had maintained regular contact, during the month preceding data collection, with people residing in the assessed settlements. These two respondent groups are analysed together to broaden the available evidence base by combining recent first-hand accounts with second-hand information relayed through contacts currently residing in the settlements. This approach is intended to provide a more comprehensive overview of prevailing conditions while recognising the different nature and limitations of each information source.

Given the sensitive nature of data collection, IMPACT's Data Protection protocols are strictly observed throughout the study. **Telephone interviews through a contact base** require additional layers of data security due to the nature of respondent identification and contact. The following measures are applied:

- A master contact list containing respondents' full names and telephone numbers is maintained in a restricted-access environment. Access to this list is granted exclusively to the designated Data Officer, who is responsible for its secure storage and management. No other team member shall have access to this file.
- A separate, anonymized list is generated for use by enumerators. In this version, all respondents are identified solely by a unique respondent ID, with no personally identifiable information (PII) visible.
- During data entry in KoBoToolbox, enumerators enter the respondent's ID. Upon doing so, the system automatically surfaces the associated telephone number to facilitate the interview. This mechanism ensures that enumerators can conduct calls without having direct access to the full contact database.

Once cleaned, data will be analyzed through frequency tables which will include disaggregation's by oblast, raion and frontline proximity to identify patterns and variations across different areas of the assessed territory.

3.6 Limitations

There are several limitations within this assessment. Firstly, the assessment relies on information from individuals who have recently evacuated from occupied territories (OT) or who maintain contact with people currently living in OT. Thus, any information the assessment provides carries the inherent bias of these specific respondents. Furthermore, the profiles of evacuees may differ from those of the broader population currently residing in occupied territories. Similarly, individuals who maintain contact with residents in government-controlled areas may not be representative of the overall population remaining in occupied territories. The reporting may be impacted by individual experiences, perceptions, memory recall, or desire to overstate or understate humanitarian needs.

The findings of this assessment should be interpreted as indicative rather than representative. The research is based on interviews with Key Informants selected for their recent knowledge of conditions in occupied territories. However, the information provided reflects the perspectives and knowledge of individual respondents and should not be interpreted as representative of conditions across an entire settlement or population. Furthermore, constraints associated with data collection in occupied territories—including limited access, non-probability sampling, security considerations, and uneven geographical coverage—restrict the extent to which findings can be generalised. The results should therefore not be used to generate, extrapolate, or infer population-level estimates for occupied territories. Any analysis or dissemination of the findings should clearly acknowledge these limitations.

Further, the assessment occurs every four months. Thus, any fluctuations or developments within those four-month intervals may not be captured in the data collection. Urgent or rapidly evolving needs emerging between assessment rounds may be overlooked until the next data collection cycle. The assessment is also unable to provide comprehensive information on the experiences of all sub-population groups within OT. Thus, the specific needs of the most vulnerable populations such as elderly individuals, persons with disabilities, or isolated households may be underrepresented if they are less likely to evacuate or maintain external contact.

Given the assessment uses both face-to-face and telephone interviews to collect information, electricity and communications outages in OT may pose challenges to reaching respondents who maintain contact with those residing in the OT. Disruptions to mobile networks, internet connectivity, or power supply may limit the ability of some respondents to participate or provide current information.

Additionally, protection and safety concerns may affect respondents' willingness to share sensitive information about conditions in OT, particularly if they have family members still living under occupation or fear repercussions. This may result in certain topics such as security incidents, political dynamics, or specific protection concerns being underreported.

Finally, while the assessment strives to maintain low attrition of respondents over time to enable longitudinal tracking of conditions, respondent attrition and changing availability may negatively impact the ability to control for, understand, and report on biases in the sample, potentially affecting the quality and comparability of findings across rounds.

4. Key ethical considerations and related risks

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

The proposed research design...	Yes/ No	Details if no (including mitigation)
... Has been coordinated with relevant stakeholders to avoid unnecessary duplication of data collection efforts?	Yes	
... Respects respondents, their rights and dignity (<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.?	Yes	
... Follows IMPACT SOPs for management of personally identifiable information ?	Yes	

5. Roles and responsibilities

<i>Task Description</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Accountable</i>	<i>Consulted</i>	<i>Informed</i>
Research design	Assessment Officer (AO)	Senior Assessment Officer (SAO), Research Manager (RM)	Research Quality Assurance (RQA), Deputy Country Coordinator (DCC)	Country director
Supervising data collection	Field team, AO	SAO	Field Manager, RM	
Data processing (checking, cleaning)	Data Officer (DO), AO	SAO, RM	RM, IMPACT HQ Research Department	
Data analysis	DO	AO, SAO	RM, IMPACT HQ Research Department	
Output production	AO	RM	IMPACT HQ Research Department	DCC
Dissemination	AO	SAO, RM	DCC	IMPACT country, PD team
Monitoring & Evaluation	AO	SAO	RM, DCC	IMPACT country, PD team
Lessons learned	AO, FO	SAO	RM	DCC

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 complete