

# 2014

## HUMANITARIAN NEEDS OVERVIEW

# GUIDANCE

## BACKGROUND

The humanitarian programme cycle is a coordinated series of actions undertaken to help prepare for, manage and deliver humanitarian response. It consists of five elements coordinated in a seamless manner:

1. needs assessment and analysis;
2. strategic response planning;
3. resource mobilization;
4. implementation and monitoring; and
5. operational review and evaluation.

Most of the elements formed part of the consolidated appeal process (CAP) and were included in appeal documents launched before the start of the year. In lieu of the CAP document, and in order to ensure a more strategic response in country, each response operation should prepare a humanitarian needs overview and a strategic response plan. Mid-year reviews of the CAP will be replaced by more regular, less labor-intensive response monitoring based on an agreed IASC framework.

Successful implementation of the humanitarian programme cycle is dependent on effective emergency preparedness, effective coordination with national/local authorities and humanitarian actors, and information management. With respect to the last point, it is particularly important that each response operation has a complete and up-to-date 'Who does What Where' (3W) database (to better identify coverage/gaps and overlap) as well as an assessment registry.

This guidance focuses on the preparation of the humanitarian needs overview, which is the first milestone in the programme cycle, produced in advance of the planning process and published online. It should be based on a coordinated assessment and analysis approach, and follow the template accompanying this guidance. The deadline for the finalization of the humanitarian needs overview is **30 September 2013**.

Background.....	1
At a Glance: Developing a humanitarian needs overview .	2
Purpose.....	3
Description.....	3
Frequency.....	4
Roles and responsibilities.....	4
Key steps.....	5
Step 1: Planning for analysis....	6
Step 2: Data consolidation.....	6
Step 3: Prioritisation and joint analysis.....	8
Step 4: Production.....	9
Prioritisation tool.....	9
Assessment planning.....	9

Prepared by OCHA  
14 August 2013

# AT A GLANCE:

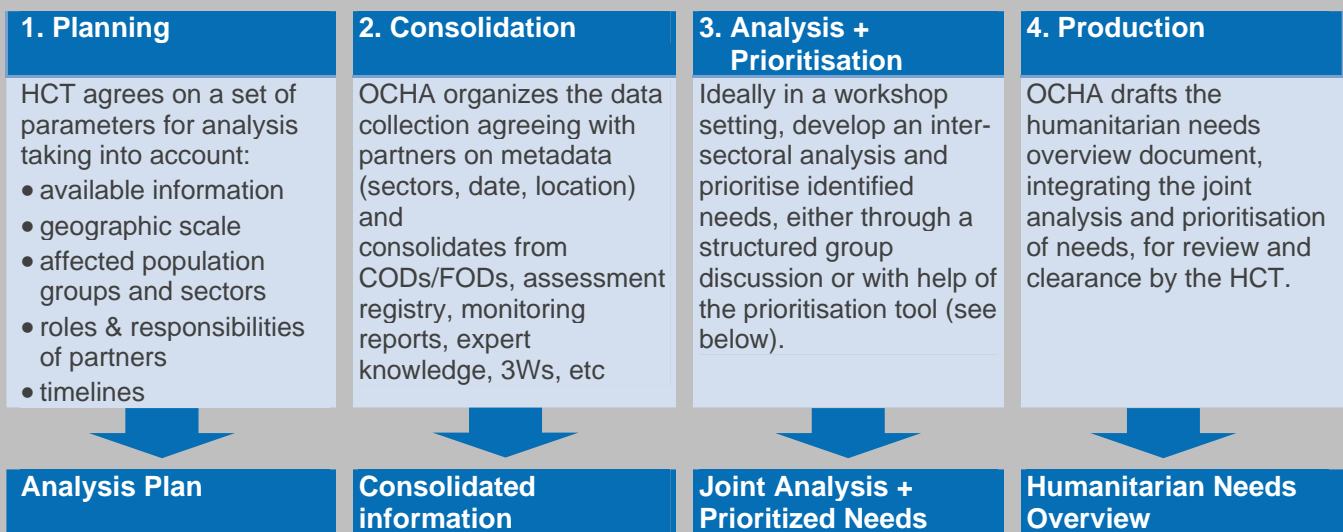
## DEVELOPING A HUMANITARIAN NEEDS OVERVIEW

**1. Purpose:** To support the HCT in developing a shared understanding of the impact and evolution of a crisis and to inform strategic response planning. The humanitarian needs overview builds and expands upon the needs analysis chapter of the former CAP document. Its development is a discrete step in the implementation of the programme cycle and should be done ahead of strategic response planning.

**2. Structure:** The humanitarian needs overview document is structured along the analytical framework developed for the MIRA approach. The framework includes a set of questions focusing on six thematic areas as illustrated below (see also the annotated template).

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Priority Needs</li> <li>2. Impact of the crisis</li> <li>3. Response Capacity</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Humanitarian access</li> <li>5. Assessment Planning</li> </ol> |
|--|--|

**3. Process:** At a minimum, a first draft of the needs analysis document using the above proposed structure should be compiled, soliciting inputs from partners, and ensuring cluster leads are consulted for the finalisation of the document ahead of the strategic response planning phase. Four steps are recommended i) a planning step in which partners tailor the analysis requirements to the country context; ii) a data consolidation phase; iii) an analysis step in which partners agree on a common understanding of the situation and prioritisation of needs; and lastly vi) the drafting of a humanitarian needs overview.



**4. Prioritisation Tool:** To support country teams with the prioritisation of needs a standardised tool has been designed based on a vulnerability ranking approach. The tool provides a method and structure to prioritize needs by weighing and categorising indicators along geographical areas, sectors, inter-sectoral aspects and demographics. It can be adapted to either data poor or data rich contexts. Findings derived from applying this tool should be included under Chapter 2 'Impact of the crisis', sub-header 'Status of the population living in affected areas'.

**5. Assessment planning:** The above process should be used to systematically identify information gaps. Based on these information gaps an assessment plan should be developed in consultation with partners to help strengthen the evidence base for future updates of the humanitarian needs overview.

## PURPOSE

An effective humanitarian response strategy that addresses the priority needs of affected people is based on a thorough inter-sectoral analysis of the existing situation. The purpose of the humanitarian needs overview is to develop a shared understanding of the impact of a crisis on humanitarian needs and to inform the country team's strategic response plan. The information presented should be developed ahead of strategic planning, as stipulated in the programme cycle protocols<sup>1</sup>, and reflect the consensus of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT).

## DESCRIPTION

The humanitarian needs overview is intended to describe the overall humanitarian dimensions of a crisis situation and identifies the priority humanitarian needs. It replaces the needs analysis section of the standard Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) document and has a particular focus on inter-sectoral analysis of needs. It is based on information derived from secondary data, multi-cluster and sectoral assessments, monitoring information and expert knowledge. The humanitarian needs overview is informed by clusters sharing and collating this data and information and developing a joint analysis<sup>2</sup>.



The development of the humanitarian needs overview is not dependent on the availability of uniform and high-quality data – in most country contexts data will be partial or incomplete. Part of the process should be to identify information gaps that can be subsequently filled by assessments or strengthened monitoring systems. Significant information gaps and plans to fill these should be highlighted under assessment planning (section 5).

Depending on the contexts some countries will have the means to undertake more extensive and rigorous needs analysis, while others face more constraints. This guidance provides tailored approaches for shared analysis and prioritisation dependent upon the level of complexity of the humanitarian context, availability of reliable data and capacity of stakeholders to collect this information in a structured manner.

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to the attached Humanitarian Needs Overview template.

## FREQUENCY

The humanitarian needs overview should be produced in advance of strategic response planning to allow adequate time for the HCT to review existing assessment data, undertake multi-cluster or sectoral assessments to fill information gaps, and then analyse and prioritise humanitarian needs<sup>3</sup>. This is usually twice a year in most complex emergencies, but may be more frequent depending on the fluidity of the humanitarian situation.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

HC/HCT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Leadership:</b> The HC/HCT is responsible for <u>initiating</u> the humanitarian needs overview process and <u>endorsing</u> it as the key reference for establishing priority needs and objectives of the strategic response plan.</li> </ul>	
OCHA	Cluster Coordinators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Coordination:</b> Facilitates (on behalf of the HC/HCT) the development of the humanitarian needs overview, and leads the process for its production.</li> <li>• <b>Establishment of caseloads:</b> Develops the Humanitarian Profile<sup>4</sup> that provides information on the number of affected people, including displaced and non-displaced, wherever possible disaggregated by sex and age<sup>5</sup>.</li> <li>• <b>Consolidation:</b> Maintains an overview of conducted and planned assessments with help of an assessment registry.</li> <li>• <b>Indicators:</b> Maintains a list of key emergency indicators (or establishes process in country to identify these).<sup>6</sup></li> <li>• <b>Facilitate joint analysis:</b> Convenes an analysis workshop to agree jointly with partners on priority needs.</li> <li>• <b>A shared understanding:</b> Prepares draft humanitarian needs overview document based on workshop results and inputs from the clusters/sectors.</li> <li>• <b>Dissemination:</b> Finalizes the humanitarian needs overview and submits to the HCT and HC for approval.</li> </ul>	<p>Cluster Coordinators are responsible for consolidating data from monitoring and sectoral assessments and contributing to the joint analysis and prioritisation of needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Coordination:</b> Engage with sector/cluster partners on the humanitarian needs overview to ensure inclusiveness of all partners.</li> <li>• <b>Collaboration:</b> Participate in the development of a process for completing the humanitarian needs overview (review the guidance, adapt templates/guidance, agree timelines, etc.).</li> <li>• <b>Consolidation:</b> Summarise key findings of sectoral assessments and monitoring.</li> <li>• <b>Expertise:</b> Participate in joint analysis exercise leading to prioritisation of humanitarian needs.</li> <li>• <b>Ownership:</b> Review and input into draft humanitarian needs overview.</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> For more information on how to coordinate humanitarian assessments, refer to the “IASC Operational Guidance on Coordinated Assessments in Humanitarian Crises”.

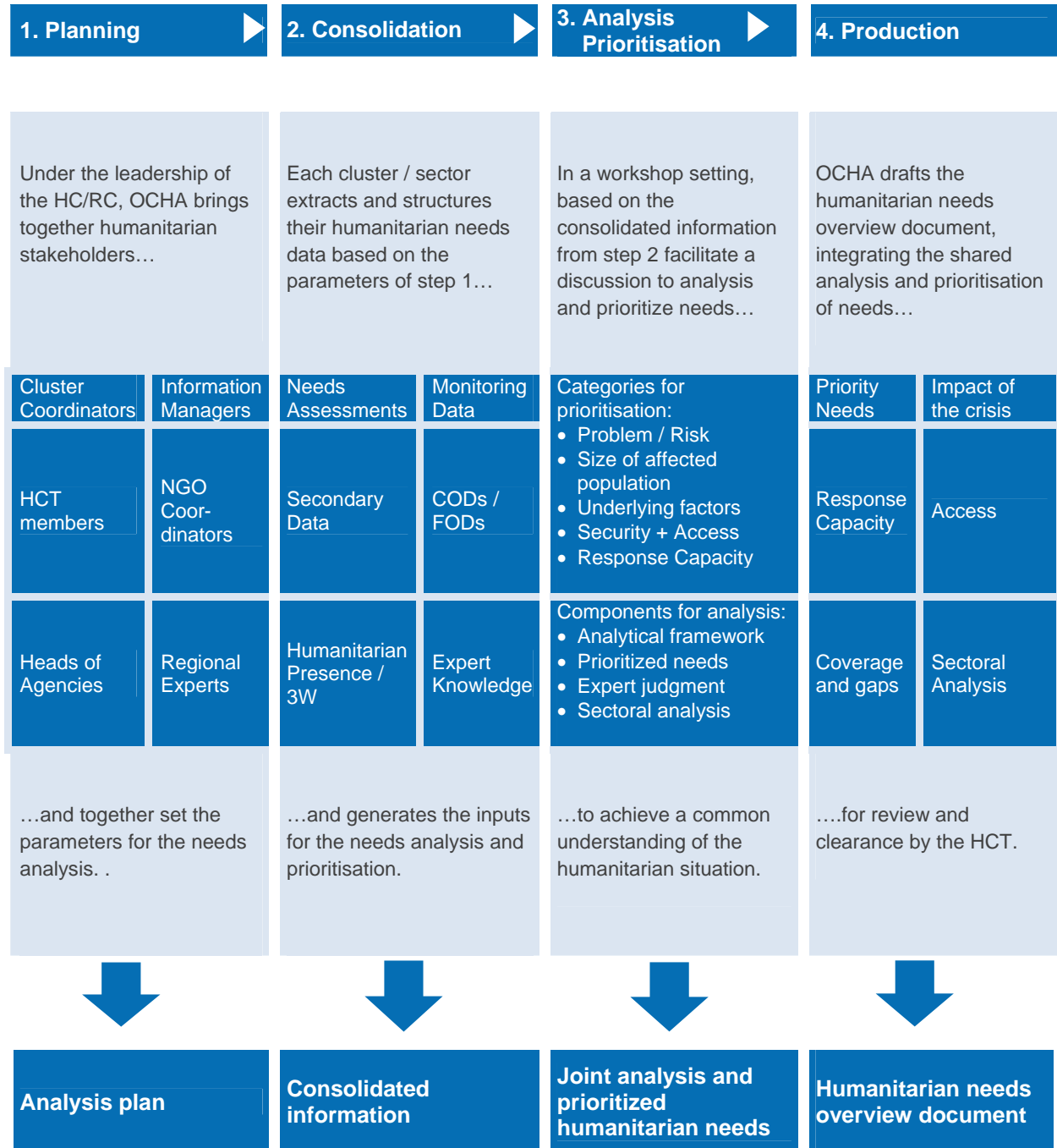
<sup>4</sup> <http://cod.humanitarianresponse.info/about-codfod>

<sup>5</sup> IASC Guidance on the Humanitarian Profile may be found at: <http://cod.humanitarianresponse.info/HPGuidance>.

<sup>6</sup> The Global Indicator Registry provides a bank of indicators agreed by the global cluster leads: [ir.humanitarianresponse.info](http://ir.humanitarianresponse.info).

# KEY STEPS

The development of the humanitarian needs overview is a collaborative process led by the HCT and facilitated by OCHA. All efforts should be made to include the views of crisis-affected people and to involve a wide-range of humanitarian partners. This guidance note suggests four main steps and also offers a practical tool to help facilitate inter-sectoral analysis and prioritization.



## Step 1: Planning for analysis

The first step in generating the humanitarian needs overview is to develop an analysis plan that fits the country context, stakeholders' capacities and the information resources available. This involves convening a working session of cluster coordinators (and their information managers) and other relevant stakeholders to collaboratively set the parameters and boundaries for the needs analysis and prioritisation that will support the development of the humanitarian needs overview. The output of this should be an analysis plan that takes into consideration:

- What are the questions that will guide the analysis (the structure of the humanitarian needs overview provides a broad frame, but this may need to be adapted)?
- What information and data are available (e.g. gender and age disaggregation, market prices, mobile network operators)?
- What geographic areas should the analysis cover (geographic scale)? How granular should the analysis be (administrative level)?
- Which sector needs to be looked at (sectoral scale)?
- Contextual risk analysis; are there any risks that need to be considered, such as those relating to the security and protection of the affected populations and partner staff?
- Which population groups, gender and age, should be taken into consideration (demographic scale)? Are these groups likely to change over time?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of each partner in this process?
- What is the projected timeline for providing information, coming together for a joint analysis, the drafting and clearance of report, etc?

## Step 2: Data consolidation

Based on the parameters set during the planning stage, OCHA (for multi-sectoral data and information) and cluster leads (single sector data and information) will be tasked with extracting relevant data, information and key points from assessments, monitoring systems and other sources and organise this information so it can be used for a joint inter-sectoral analysis. Below is a suggested set of categories that could be used to help structure the data collection:

Information Category	Description	Example
<b>Key Findings</b>	Should describe the observed main problem	Over 50% of grazing land is inaccessible due to conflict
<b>Geographic location and admin level</b>	Area for which the key finding applies	50% of grazing land in <i>District A</i> is inaccessible due to conflict
<b>Population Group</b>	A division of the population by livelihood, ethnicity, living arrangement, gender and age etc	Over 50 % of grazing land is inaccessible in <i>District A</i> due to conflict, severely impacting <i>Pastoralists</i> who traditionally use this resource
<b>Caseloads</b>	Groups of (as identified above) or all of the affected people, in need or at risk due to a given problem	Over 50% of grazing land in <i>District A</i> is inaccessible due to conflict, severely impacting <i>350 Pastoralist households</i> who traditionally use this resource
<b>Response Capacity</b>	Available and relevant information concerning international and national response capacity for the given problem, and/or coping strategies of the affected	Local authorities have agreed on an emergency budget to compensate households for selling cattle at low prices
<b>Response to date</b>	Any information or data concerning recent or planned interventions	Local authorities have compensated 50 households for selling cattle at low prices
<b>Date of information</b>	Date when the information was collected (not when it was made public)	As 1 August 2012 50% of grazing land was reported to be inaccessible due to conflict
<b>Reliability of information</b>	Reliability of the information recorded	1=reliable 2=partially reliable 3=not reliable

An excel sheet or simple table can be used to collect this information. It is recommended that all partners use a similar format so that the information can be easily compiled (above table can be easily exported into Excel for this purpose).

### Basic information management tools to support data consolidation

Working practices in assessment coordination, information management and monitoring vary significantly between contexts. Having basic elements in place to help manage data will greatly facilitate a successful needs analysis and prioritisation process. These include:

#### **COD / FOD:** (Standardized place names and baseline data)

CODs are common baseline datasets that all humanitarian actors require for operational purposes and ideally come from a local source (i.e, the national government). There are two types of CODs: spatial (*administrative boundaries, settlement places, hydrology, hypsography, transport*) and demographic (*population statistics*). <http://cod.humanitarianresponse.info/about-codfod>

#### **Humanitarian Profile:** (subset of CODs featuring overall numbers of people at risk/affected/in need)

OCHA is responsible for compiling the Humanitarian Profile dataset following IASC guidance. The Humanitarian Profile is the only dynamic and non-GIS specific data set of the CODs. Agreeing on overall caseloads is not automatic, but rather the result of analysis and consultations with partners and the host government. It should be based on evidence and a transparent methodology. Additional information on Humanitarian Profile can be found at:

[http://assessments.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/iasc\\_guidelines\\_on\\_the\\_humanitarian\\_profile\\_common\\_operational\\_dataset\\_2012-08-07.pdf](http://assessments.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/iasc_guidelines_on_the_humanitarian_profile_common_operational_dataset_2012-08-07.pdf)

#### **Assessment Registry:** (List of all the assessments / surveys during the reporting period)

OCHA, with cluster leads, should ensure all relevant assessments and other information is compiled at an inter-sectoral and sectoral level. Typically OCHA maintains an assessment registry. It should ensure the registry is up to date and includes the latest assessment results. If the assessment registry is not available or incomplete, OCHA, with cluster leads, should compile a list of all known and completed assessments. In most protracted crises that data is not available or fully reliable. In many cases data will be largely qualitative. Nonetheless, this data should be regularly updated so that effective assessment planning can be carried out to fill information gaps. Guidance can be found at:

<http://assessments.humanitarianresponse.info/files/Draft%20Guideline%20on%20Survey%20of%20Surveys.doc>

#### **Indicators:** (data from monitoring systems / framework)

Data from monitoring systems can provide quantitative elements to the needs analysis process as well as help to suggest trends in humanitarian situations. HCT should agree on a limited set of indicators that will be measured throughout a humanitarian emergency. Where ever possible these indicators should be referenced throughout the data consolidation and joint analytical process. A draft list of recommended humanitarian indicators per cluster and outcome indicators may be found at <http://ir.humanitarianresponse.info> (as of 1 August 2013).

#### **Humanitarian Presence (3Ws):** (the registry of all humanitarian projects / interventions)

On-going identification of who is doing what where (3Ws) is an important tool to help identify capacity and response caps. Clusters / sectors are responsible for providing this information to OCHA, which is responsible for aggregating and maintaining it on an on-going basis. Use the 3Ws to inform analysis and refer to them in the humanitarian needs overview document.



### Step 3: Prioritisation and joint analysis

It is recommended that OCHA convene a workshop (ideally a full day) to facilitate joint analysis and prioritisation of humanitarian needs. The objective of the workshop is to reach a shared understanding of the humanitarian situation. The group should include members from the cluster lead agencies, coordinators and information managers as well as other relevant humanitarian stakeholders such as gender advisors and other experts. The workshop should encourage debate and ultimately consensus on priority needs.

**Prioritisation:** OCHA should facilitate a structured discussion to identify priority needs. The discussion should focus on problems/risks, underlying factors, size of affected population, access, security, response capacity. If helpful, a tool can be used to help categorise and weigh the identified problems to help the group/rank needs methodologically (see annex for guidance on the tool).

**Inter-sectoral Analysis:** Analysis is the process of breaking a complex topic into smaller parts to gain a better understanding. Clusters/sectors will typically analyse needs within their particular domain to support operational planning. The humanitarian needs overview seeks to capture the results of an inter-sectoral analytical process to determine priority needs across sectors, in particular, to support strategic response planning.

This process is largely based on judgement, expert knowledge of the humanitarian context and experience. The template for the humanitarian needs overview is based on an analytical framework<sup>7</sup> which provides the basic elements that should be taken into consideration when analysing the information. The framework comprises three main categories of analysis, namely:

- *Impact of the crisis, in particular status/conditions of populations living in affected areas, determined through the identification of main problems or risks faced by the population<sup>8</sup>, their underlying factors and the size of the affected or vulnerable population.*
- *Humanitarian access, measured through an understanding of the access of humanitarian actors to the affected population, access of the affected population to humanitarian aid, and security conditions.*
- *Response capacity, measured through an assessment of the national and international response capacity as well as an assessment of the population’s coping mechanisms.*

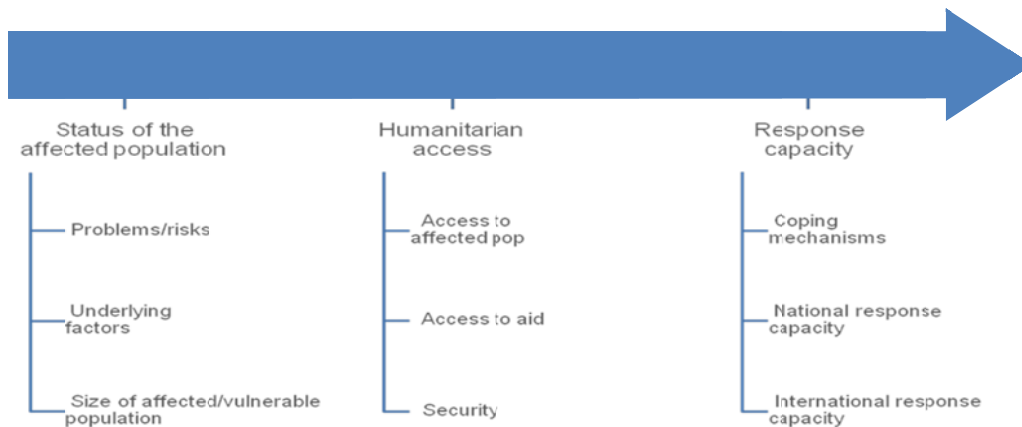


Figure 1: Key topics of needs analysis that together guide the development of outcome projections that in turn lead to prioritisation of needs.

The responses to these questions should be drawn from different sources - collected data and information, expertise and judgement. To ensure that all actors reach a shared understanding on these topics, a structured discussion should be facilitated.

<sup>7</sup> The MIRA Analytical Framework can be found at:

[http://assessments.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/2012\\_03\\_mira\\_framework.docx](http://assessments.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/2012_03_mira_framework.docx)

<sup>8</sup> In identifying and prioritising needs, a gender analysis must be undertaken to ensure the needs, access and participation of women, girls, boys and men, are adequately identified and addressed.



## Step 4: Production

- a) Based on the outputs of the joint analysis workshop, and inputs from the clusters, OCHA will compile a draft of the humanitarian needs overview. The document should include key inter-sectoral information (priority needs, situation analysis, Humanitarian Profile, etc.) Please see the annotated template for detailed guidance. An overview of the structure is illustrated in below table

1. Priority Needs	3. Response capacity
2. Impact of the crisis	– National and local capacities and response
– Drivers and underlying Factors	– International capacities and response
– Scope of the crisis + demographic profile	4. Humanitarian access
– Status of populations living in affected areas	5. Assessment planning

Should the country team decide to work with a prioritisation tool and include the findings directly into the template, it recommended to include it in the chapter 'Status of population living in affected areas'.

- b) The humanitarian needs overview is a public document and should include graphics such as maps illustrating relevant coverage, capacity and access. The document should also include a weblink to the assessment registry to demonstrate the evidence-base.
- c) The humanitarian needs overview should be shared with cluster leads for additional inputs and then submitted to the HCT and HC for endorsement. The findings will be used to support the development of the strategic response plan.

## PRIORITISATION TOOL

To support country teams with the prioritisation of needs a standardised tool has been designed providing a method and structure to prioritize needs by weighing and categorizing indicators along geographical areas, sectors, inter-sectoral aspects and demographics.

The use of a prioritisation tool can help condense large amounts of humanitarian information to a format that assists comparison, ranking, and discussions and can greatly reduce the introduction of bias into decision-making. It provides a composite of multiple qualitative and quantitative indicators that via an agreed formula, delivers a single numerical result and allows the combination of diverse issues into a single framework thereby making comparisons possible.

This prioritisation tool can be used in sudden onset and protracted crises, as a one-off initiative or as continuous situation monitoring tool. The tool can be adapted to either data poor or data rich contexts.

The end product is a heat map which highlights geographic and sectoral accumulated needs, which should be used to guide the discussion further on priority needs. Findings derived from applying this tool should be included under Chapter 2 'Impact of the crisis', sub-header 'Status of the population living in affected areas. Detailed guidance can be found in the prioritization tool package (also available on [assessments.humanitarianresponse.info](https://assessments.humanitarianresponse.info))

## ASSESSMENT PLANNING

Developing a humanitarian needs overview is an opportunity to systematically identify information gaps. Both the assessment registry and prioritisation tool can help pinpoint where information is lacking or weak. In order to be better prepared for the next update of the humanitarian needs overview and increase the evidence base for the analysis, an assessment plan should be developed based on the identified information gaps.