MEASURING SEVERITY - TERMS OF REFERENCE

This TOR is one component of the 2019 joint MSNA strategy and should be read in conjunction with the Joint In-Depth MSNA Assessment Concept Note.

1. BACKGROUND

A needs-based prioritization of response resources is based on an understanding of the severity of the conditions faced by the population. “Severity” expresses the degree of unmet needs - it describes ‘how bad’ the situation is for different groups or in different geographic areas. Classifying the severity of humanitarian conditions is currently a standard component of humanitarian needs analysis, and most humanitarian response plans provide an estimation of severity. Since the escalation of the crisis in August 2017, several actors have introduced ways to measure the severity of needs faced by Rohingya refugees and their hosts. For instance, UNHCR proposed a severity scale for protection concerns at the end of 2017, the ISCG worked on a multi-sector scale in 2018 and ACAPS has designed severity scales to highlight gaps across camps based on the NPM data and established a WASH specific severity scale. To date, none of these scales have been widely adopted, and it is unclear if and how severity results inform the response. This TOR aims to establish a widely agreed-upon and methodologically sound multi-sector severity approach, to inform post-2019 response planning.

2. OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

As of July 2018, the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) and main stakeholders agreed on the need for a consistent and harmonized methodology to measure severity on a household level. The objective of developing such a multi-sector severity scale is to inform strategic response planning by establishing the severity of needs at a household level to:

- Enable prioritisation between households, sites/camps, and population groups according to relevant characteristics.
- Support sectors in identifying the number of people in need per sector, per severity of the need

The expected output of this ToR will be:

- Agreed upon multi-sector approaches for measuring severity on a household level relevant to refugees and host communities.
- Identification of the number and profile of people by severity classification by Q4, to inform post-2019 response planning.

Limitations

- The severity analysis does not intend to provide a comparison between sectors.
- Analysis over time is not a primary objective of the scale. However, if possible, this analysis will be undertaken.
- A separate risk analysis will be required, to integrate natural hazards and protection risks. Forward looking analysis and seasonality can be integrated within the assessment.

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1 ACAPS, Severity Measures in Humanitarian Needs Assessments, August 2016
2 The OCHA Humanitarian Programme Cycle for instance includes severity as a standard type of analysis to be included in the HNO/HRP development process.[this reference is particularly on IDP situations rather than refugee situation]
Please note that severity analysis is separate from a targeting exercise. Although the identification of what it means to be severely in need can inform targeting criteria, it does not provide the information required to select specific households for inclusion of response programmes.

3. METHODOLOGY

Different approaches towards measuring multi-sector severity have been used within humanitarian settings. The severity model proposed under this ToR will developed as much as possible in line with global discussions on multi-sector severity analysis, including approach to severity adopted as part of the Joint Intersectoral Analytical Framework (JIAF). The process of identifying the most appropriate methodology and measurement methods consists of three steps, comprising technical level discussions between the ToR participants and consultation sessions with all relevant stakeholders, specifically sector coordination teams and development actors.

Step 1: Select parameters and indicators

Output: Agreement on severity parameters and relevant indicators by end of June

Define proposed objective of severity measurement and severity parameters.

During consultations with sectors, the parameters of the severity approach as defined within this TOR are further discussed and agreed upon. In addition, as part of the discussions on the design of the in-depth joint MSNA for refugees and host communities, sectors decide on the indicators informing estimates of severity. Several sectors already have a clearly defined understanding of what it means to be 'in need' and related severity rankings. Discussions with other sectors will be based relevant global standards. These discussions will take place as part of the wider discussions on tool development for the in-depth MSNAs.

Separate discussions are held to understand to what extent the refugee and host community severity scales are to be aligned with existing concepts of severity in Bangladesh.

Step 2: Agreement on thresholds and aggregation

Output: Agreement indicator thresholds, weights, methods for aggregation at a household level and approaches to aggregate household severity to a group and geographic level by end of July.

To support sectors in the definition of thresholds and weighting, ACAPS and REACH will test different severity approaches by applying three different models on the UNHCR/REACH and ISCG multi-sector needs assessment data, collected on a household level in November 2018 and January 2019. The pilot will be guided by the Rohingya Crisis Analytical Framework.

The outputs of the pilot analysis will be used as a starting point for discussions with sectors and other decision makers on scales and planned outputs. Sector experts define the thresholds for severity for each indicator or group of indicators, taking into consideration global and contextualized standards as well as technical level recommendations. The outputs of the discussions are merged into one proposed severity approach. Alternative approaches will be developed if required.

Sector experts review the recommended method of aggregation and agree on a final approach.

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3 Several global standards are not appropriate for this context and thresholds and/or indicators will have to be adapted to the context.
Once agreements have been reached, the approach will be finalized, circulated and reviewed by stakeholders.

**Step 3: Measure and validate severity**

**Output:** The number of people in need per severity classification is quantified. Severity analysis is undertaken by group (according to relevant characteristics of diversity) and geographic area by September/October.

- The main tools to measure household level severity are the in-depth MSNAs, planned for August/September. Indicators will be integrated into tool design and the analysis method agreed upon under Step 1 and Step 2 will be applied to the final results.
- Results of the severity measurement will be reviewed and verified by sectors, by mid-October. Afterwards, the final results of the severity measurement will be discussed at a MSNA TWG, IMAWG and Sector Coordinators Level, as part of the overall joint analysis of the MSNA results.

**Roles and responsibilities**

**ACAPS**
- Identification and testing of approach to severity
- Provide rationale and description of most recommended severity approach

**REACH**
- Identification and testing of approach to severity
- Provide rationale and description of most recommended severity approach

**IMWAG - MSNA TWG**
- Review recommended severity approach(es)
- Review severity output

**ISCN and sector coordinators**
- Selection of severity indicators, definition of thresholds and weighting
- Validation of severity results