

## - Terms of Reference - Normative Framework of Humanitarian Need January 2023

### Background

[REACH](#) initiative collects multi-sectoral data in more than 20 humanitarian crises, with the primary aim of informing humanitarian response planning and strategic decision-making. Specifically, our research aims to inform decisions regarding the prioritization of humanitarian assistance – within a specific context, but increasingly also when comparing needs between crises. In order to achieve the latter, there is a need for conceptual and normative alignment between analytical frameworks used in different contexts, so that they can measure the magnitude and severity of needs according to an absolute and globally harmonised scale, rather than the more common practice of developing relative scales with thresholds that are highly contextualized within a particular crisis.

Since 2016, REACH – an initiative of IMPACT Initiatives - has worked to develop the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment methodology to document and analyse sectoral, multi-sectoral and intersectoral needs of crisis affected people. In 2018, REACH launched an analytical framework to guide intersectoral analysis of need, resulting in a compound indicator titled the Multi-Sector Needs Index (MSNI), aimed at providing a holistic understanding of needs, drivers, and vulnerability to guide strategic planning. The MSNI is developed through an analysis of household MSNA datasets to identify sectoral “living standards gaps” (LSG)—or compound indicators that suggest a household is experiencing a deficit in each assessed sector. The LSGs are then aggregated and analysed through the lens of vulnerability/coping capacity to attempt to understand a particular household’s level of overall need. In parallel, other humanitarian actors have made significant progress on improving the analytical rigour of humanitarian needs analysis through the Joint Inter-sectoral Analytical Framework (JIAF) which guides analysis for the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) of humanitarian strategic planning.

Despite such efforts to develop frameworks for measuring needs, REACH (and the humanitarian sector more broadly) still lacks a comprehensive normative framework around how humanitarian need is defined, operationalised, and contrasted with other kinds of need that people experience. Such a framework is necessary for REACH to refine its MSNA approach to balance the objectives of humanitarian needs analysis and conduct analysis that supports prioritization within and across crises. In the absence of such a framework to guide analysis, the interpretation of humanitarian “needs assessments” is necessarily based on a certain level of presumption around priorities and needs.

Within this context, REACH has been funded by the United States Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) to develop a framework to guide MSNA analysis, particularly to inform an update of the MSNA analytical framework.

### Overview of objectives, process, and methods

The objective of this consultancy is to develop a conceptual/normative framework to define our understanding of the notion of humanitarian need in consideration of inconsistencies and conflicting priorities of the literature around humanitarianism. The resulting conceptual framework will assist REACH in defining and balancing the implications for measuring such need. To achieve this, the consultant will:

1. Identify and clarify the normatively valuable goals of humanitarian need
2. Describe trade-offs amongst these goals
3. Identify and recommend an approach to balance the trade-offs
4. Produce recommendations for operationalizing the defined framework through the MSNA (or through another approach)

## Expected approach:

### 1. Inception:

- a. Review of existing literature, frameworks, and secondary data to inform the framework development. The consultant will have access to an internal literature review on this subject. The consultant will be expected to build on this work and map any additional relevant frameworks or theories exist to measure human need and/or prioritise assistance from inside the humanitarian sector (ex. Sphere standards) and outside of the humanitarian sector and critically evaluate their ability to define human need broadly.
- b. The review should help to determine which existing frameworks or theories are already fit-for-purpose and could be adapted for the humanitarian context, or if an entirely new framework is needed.
- c. Stakeholder consultations:
  - i. Within IMPACT/REACH (HQ as well as country-teams) to fully understand the MSNA methodology, variations between country-level LSGs and their normative backing.
  - ii. In close consultation with IMPACT, the consultant will be expected to identify and consult external partners, donors, and stakeholders around how they conceptualise humanitarian need and balance different theoretical elements of need in constructing an understanding of a crisis.
- d. Conduct an analysis to assess the current level of effectiveness of humanitarian actors (including REACH) in documenting and analysing need based on the reviewed literature and consultations.

### 2. Design & Development of the framework:

- a. The normative framework design should be informed by the results of the literature review, clearly identifying elements or concepts that should be balanced in understanding humanitarian need, and linking the assessed frameworks to the broad humanitarian context.
- b. The framework should identify the implications of measuring the concepts developed, including any ethical/moral implications or limitations of measuring such through quantitative or qualitative methodologies.
- c. The framework should include a visual representation of the identified constituent components, including an understanding of linkages between elements that contribute to humanitarian need.
- d. The framework is anticipated to be drafted in two stages: First, an alpha version, which will be presented to REACH and potentially some selected external stakeholders for review and feedback, and second, a beta version that incorporates this feedback.

### 3. Guidance & Recommendations phase:

- a. A final guidance note encompassing the following points:
  - i. Recommendations for implementing the normative framework to create outputs/conclusions, potentially including recommendations for a final “people in need” calculation and distribution of the PIN according to a recommended severity scale

## Deliverables and milestones

(Based on a start date on/about 20 March, 2023)

| Phase  | Deliverable  | Indicative deadline   |
|--|--|---|
| Inception<br>(14 working days over 2 months)                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 2 consultations with global REACH team (remote or in-person)</li> <li>At least 6 consultations with REACH country-teams implementing MSNA research projects</li> <li>Consultations with at least 4 key external stakeholders (remote or in-person)</li> <li>Inception report (15-20 pages) on proposed approach, literature and sources, advised guidance and detailed workplan</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workplan and kick off meeting by 22/03/2023</li> <li>6x consultations – by 08/04/2023</li> <li>Inception report – by 01/05/2023</li> </ul> |
| Design & Development<br>(14 working days over 2 months)      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alpha version of normative framework</li> <li>Beta version of normative framework</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alpha version – by 15/05/2022</li> <li>Beta version – by 15/06/22</li> </ul>   |
| Guidance & Recommendations<br>(14 working days over 1 month) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed guidance note to support implementation of the analysis framework, final analysis outputs, effective dissemination of findings and recommendations for further testing and development</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30/06/2022</li> </ul>  |

## Application and Selection Process

As per guidance set on the tender application available on IMPACT website and no later than the set deadline, the following elements should be submitted in order to review and select candidates:

- Technical proposition outlining the proposed approach, presentation of the team or independent consultant, proposed workplan, this can be done in the form of an introductory letter or chosen template
- Financial proposition in USD, outlining the estimated number of man days and either total or daily rate.
- Bidder's questionnaire (PRO-06.1) and requested attachments (including copy of ID of the bidder's legal representative)
- Bidder's Ethical declaration (PRO-06.2)
- Proof of registration as an independent consultant or registered firm
- Relevant CVs
- At least three past experiences, either published or "grey" policy papers of similar work
- At least three references in relation to similar work

Upon review of written applications, IMPACT will identify one or several potential applicants and will convey them for an interview.

Based upon results from the tender selection, IMPACT teams will be responsible for entering into the contracting phase with the selected consultancy firm or independent consultant(s), against the timeline set above. The contract will notably outline payment modalities which will be based upon achievement of the outlined deliverables and milestones.

## Skills and Experience

### Required

- Excellent academic qualifications, including an advanced university degree in a relevant discipline, such as but not limited to, political philosophy, human security, humanitarian affairs, public health, nutrition, or epidemiology
- At least 10 years of experience in the academic sector, with a specific focus on political philosophy, policy analysis, programme evaluation, and/or research; operational experience also an asset
- Experience and familiarity with the design and implementation of field work in fragile/remote contexts;
- Familiarity with global humanitarian architecture and coordination system an asset, specifically the Cluster system, emergency response and rapid response mechanisms, CERF, and other emergency relief funding mechanisms. As well as familiarity with current humanitarian needs analysis frameworks, including but not limited to MIRA, IPC, JIAF