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Introduction to IMPACT Research cycles

1. About the Research Cycle Guidelines

1.1. Objective
The objective of these guidelines is to outline each step of the lifecycle of every research activity carried out by IMPACT, from initial design through to publication, dissemination and the recording of lessons learned.

1.2. Audience
These guidelines are intended for all IMPACT team members that are involved with implementation of research activities. They are also intended for any external audiences that are involved with research implemented by IMPACT or that are interested in understanding how IMPACT implements research.

1.3. Content
These guidelines describe the processes, guidance and tools used at each stage of the Research Cycle and explains the roles and responsibilities of teams at country and HQ level. Annexed to these guidelines is detailed guidance on specific steps within each stage. Furthermore, templates of tools that should be used during the different stages can be found in the Toolbox section on the Resource Centre. Lastly, these guidelines should be read in conjunction with other available IMPACT guidelines and standard operational procedures (SOPs) that provide further guidance on specific stages in the Research Cycle, also available in the Toolbox section on the Resource Centre.

2. Key Definitions

2.1. The Research Cycle
For IMPACT, the Research Cycle outlines the research process of gathering, analysing and disseminating (secondary and/or primary) data to inform aid action. Each Research Cycle has a unique ID, which is assigned by IMPACT HQ at the opening of the cycle. The Research Cycle ID should be used for reference in all communication about the cycle between country offices and HQ. Each Research Cycle has a clearly defined objective, type(s) of methodologies and output(s), which are specified and explained in a Research Terms of Reference (TOR). Each Research Cycle consists of seven key stages, which are summarised in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Research Cycle stages

How each stage is implemented for a specific Research Cycle, is outlined in the TOR.

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1 The TOR template can be found in the Toolbox on the Resource Centre
2.2. Research Cycles and Projects
Research Cycles can be funded through one or more projects; similarly a Project can fund parts of, one, or multiple Research Cycles. In this context, a Project is a grant between IMPACT, a donor or partner and is framed by a Project Proposal/Contract. The relationship between projects and research cycles is outlined in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: The relationship between Project(s) and Research Cycle(s)

A single Project funds a single Research Cycle
A single Project funds multiple research cycles
Multiple projects fund a single Research Cycle

The focus of this document is on the Research Cycle and all Assessments that fall within the Research Cycle.

2.3. Research cycles and Assessments
An Assessment is a data collection and/or analysis activity with specific research questions, methodology, geographic scope and timeframe, which contributes to the general objective outlined in the TOR. A Research Cycle often governs one Assessment but may cover several Assessments. For example, a Research Cycle with the objective to understand the humanitarian situation in several conflict-affected cities may include a separate Assessment for each city, that each follows the same process for the Research Cycle stages, as outlined in the TOR. The relationship is further outlined in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: The relationship between the Research Cycle and Assessment(s)

A single Research Cycle governs a single Assessment
A single Research Cycle governs multiple Assessments

When a Research Cycle consists of multiple assessments, the TOR should provide a brief, broad summary of the overall cycle while each Assessment is framed by a Methodology Note including a Data Analysis Plan. When a Research Cycle consists of only one Assessment, no Methodology Note is required but instead the methodology and the Data Analysis Plan is outlined in detail directly in the TOR.

The process outputs relevant for Research Cycle and Assessment processes are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Research process components and associated outputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process component</th>
<th>Process outputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Cycle – single Assessment</td>
<td>1 x Research Terms of Reference (full version)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Cycle – multiple Assessments</td>
<td>1 x Research Terms of Reference (summary version) For each Assessment: 1 x Methodology Note</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4. Research cycles and Outputs
A range of outputs are produced during each stage of the Research Cycle. These are summarised in section A.3. Research Cycle Stages below and outlined in detail in each relevant section describing the stages.

Final versions of all outputs and all supporting files (e.g. MXD files for maps) are saved in the "Final files” folder inside the corresponding Research Cycle folder that is opened by HQ on the country level server at the start of the
cycle. This folder is archived by HQ two years after the Research Cycle is completed. A selection of key outputs is also uploaded to the Resource Centre, as directed by the HQ Team.

Research Cycle Stakeholders

The Research Cycle has both internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders include:

1. IMPACT HQ Teams, in particular those within the Research Department
2. IMPACT Country Teams, in particular the Country Focal Point who is accountable for all country level activities and outputs and the designated Research Cycle Focal Point within the Country team, who is responsible for all country level activities and outputs relating to the Research Cycle.

These guidelines describe the activities and outputs expected from both HQ and Country Teams.

External stakeholders involved with a Research Cycle are engaged to different degrees at different stages depending on the design of the Research Cycle. These guidelines describe when and how engagement is sought from external stakeholders at the different stages in the Research Cycle.

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2 Where a country level server is not yet in place, the Country Team is responsible for creating a folder on a local hard drive, where all final Key Outputs from each Research Cycle stage are stored, before the folder is submitted to HQ upon closure of the Research Cycle.
3 See Resource Centre Guidance in Annex 5 and visit the Resource Centre here: http://www.reachresourcecentre.info
3. Research Cycle Stages

The Research Cycle stages followed by all Assessments connect design and planning with implementation, production of outputs, dissemination and lessons learned. Table 2 below outlines the role of the HQ Research Department teams in relation to; the activities undertaken at each stage; the sequencing of implementation during the cycle; which team within the Research Department takes the lead for validation (sign-off), review or provision of advice. This table is followed by Table 3 further below, where the activities and outputs are outlined in further detail, showing during which Stage each activity and output is ongoing and completed.

### Table 2: Research Cycle Stages – HQ roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Key Outputs</th>
<th>Timing and HQ Role</th>
<th>HQ Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Research Design Drafting and Validation</td>
<td>Define objectives of research; develop methodology, plans, tools and outputs templates.</td>
<td>Terms of Reference and/or Methodology Note; Data Analysis Plan matrix</td>
<td>Research Design Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Collection and Processing</td>
<td>Collect data, start tracking progress and log implementation issues.</td>
<td>Progress and Issues Tracking Logbook</td>
<td>Data Analysis Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Analysis and Validation</td>
<td>Monitor, log and alert field teams to potential errors in incoming data; transcribe and monitor for saturation as appropriate, clean final data set.</td>
<td>Raw dataset; Data cleaning log; Clean dataset</td>
<td>Data Analysis Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Analysis and Validation</td>
<td>Produce preliminary analysis on incoming data (if required); Hold joint analysis workshop (if required); Conduct final analysis with clean data set in line with Data Analysis Plan in the TOR.</td>
<td>Analysis files / syntax; Preliminary analysis presentation (if required); Joint analysis workshop minutes (if required)</td>
<td>Data Analysis Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Product Drafting</td>
<td>Finalise product template/structure. Describe, explain and interpret analysed data. Present accurately and coherently.</td>
<td>Product templates; Draft outputs</td>
<td>Reporting Unit GIS Unit for GIS based products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Product Review and Validation</td>
<td>Global review of product, formatted dataset, incorporate feedback, finalise.</td>
<td>Final products Formatted dataset</td>
<td>Reporting Unit Data Analysis Unit GIS Unit for GIS based products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dissemination</td>
<td>Submit final Detailed Dissemination Plan (if required as per TOR) Share findings and products in line with Dissemination Plan/TOR.</td>
<td>Detailed Dissemination Plan (if required)</td>
<td>Communication Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Key Outputs</td>
<td>Timing and HQ Role</td>
<td>HQ Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation / Lessons Learned</strong></td>
<td>Complete M&amp;E Matrix as per M&amp;E Plan in the TOR and summarise findings in an M&amp;E memo. Review and document challenges and good practices in the Lessons Learned Matrix.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Research Design Unit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Cycle closed ->
Table 3: Research Cycle Stages – detailed activities and key outputs completed by the Country Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Key outputs</th>
<th>HQ Vali-</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
<th>Stage 5</th>
<th>Stage 6</th>
<th>Stage 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Set objectives</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Develop methodology/implementation plan</td>
<td>Terms of Reference and/or Methodology Note</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Data Analysis Plan matrix</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Research Cycle opened</td>
<td>Progress and Issues tracking Logbook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Prepare for data collection and entry</td>
<td>Data collection tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Train data collection team and pilot methodology and tool</td>
<td>Structured: Data Cleaning Logbook</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured: Saturation Grid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Launch and supervise data collection</td>
<td>Structured: Monitor, log and brief field teams on potential errors in incoming data</td>
<td>Structured: Clean data set</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured: Monitor saturation</td>
<td>Semi-structured: Transcribed/entered dataset</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Process data</td>
<td>Raw data set</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structured: Clean data in line with Data Cleaning Logbook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured: Transcribe and enter data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Produce preliminary analysis (if required)</td>
<td>Preliminary analysis presentation (if required)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hold joint analysis workshop with external stakeholders (if required)</td>
<td>Analysis workshop minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Conduct final analysis in line with Data Analysis Plan</td>
<td>Analysis files / syntax</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Develop product templates</td>
<td>Product templates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Draft products, incorporate Country team feedback, submit to HQ.</td>
<td>Draft products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Incorporate HQ feedback, finalise products</td>
<td>Final products</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Develop a Detailed Dissemination Plan (if required)</td>
<td>Detailed Dissemination Plan (if required)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Share products and outputs in line with dissemination plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step</td>
<td>Key outputs</td>
<td>HQ Validation</td>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Stage 5</td>
<td>Stage 6</td>
<td>Stage 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<td>---------</td>
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<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Implement the M&amp;E Plan</td>
<td>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation matrix</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation Memo</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Conduct a Lessons Learned exercise</td>
<td>Lessons Learned matrix</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Cycle closed ->
Stage 1: Research Design

1.1. About the Research Design Stage
The activities completed by the Country Team during the Research Design stage are outlined in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Activities completed during the Research Design stage (Stage 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Key outputs</th>
<th>HQ Validation</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
<th>Stage 5</th>
<th>Stage 6</th>
<th>Stage 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Set objectives</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Develop methodology/implementation plan</td>
<td>Terms of Reference and/or Methodology Note</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Data Analysis Plan matrix</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.1.1. Stage opening
The Research Design stage starts when an information gap has been identified and a decision is taken to conduct research.

1.1.2. Stage closing
The Research Design stage ends when the Terms of Reference (TOR) and (if applicable) Methodology Notes (MN) have been validated.

1.1.3. Stage outputs to validate
Terms of References and Methodology Notes need to be validated by the HQ Research Department.

Step 1: Set objectives
During the Research Design stage, the Country Team first defines the objectives of the research (with partners as appropriate) and the corresponding research questions. For the most common types of assessments, standardised general objectives exist, that should always be considered as a starting point for objective development. Always consult the Research Department to find out about existing standardised objectives, and to agree on objectives before designing the research. The General Objective should state what the research is aiming to inform. The Specific Objective(s) should outline what will be identified / assessed, in order to inform.

External stakeholders
It is imperative to consult external stakeholders on research objectives where appropriate, to ensure all stakeholders are in agreement on what the research aims to achieve, before a methodology can be designed to meet the objectives.

Step 2: Develop methodology and implementation plan
Once the objectives are set, the methodology and implementation plan can be developed. This is summarised in the TOR, which is a key output during the Research Design stage. In the TOR, the Country Team outlines research objectives and how the Research Cycle stages will be implemented. The TOR includes the following key parts: 1) Executive Summary, 2) Rationale 3) Methodology, 4) Roles and Responsibilities, 5) Data Analysis Plan, 6) Data Management Plan, 7) Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Plan. The TOR is complemented by three key annex-

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4 See Research Terms of Reference template in the Toolbox on the Resource Centre
1) Data Analysis Plan matrix, 2) M&E matrix and 3) Detailed Dissemination Plan template. The Data Analysis Plan matrix is completed at the Research Design Stage, while the M&E matrix is populated throughout the Research Cycle and submitted within 6 months after completing the research. The Detailed Dissemination Plan template is only used if required as agreed in the TORs. If used, it must be submitted to HQ before products are disseminated.

As the Country Team develops the TOR, they identify the type of Assessment(s) that should be implemented to address the research objectives. This could be one Assessment, such as a multi-sector needs Assessment to inform a humanitarian milestone such as the HNO; or it could be several assessments within the same Research Cycle, such as rapid assessments conducted in different locations in response to different events at different times. If the Research Cycle includes more than one Assessment, the Country Team complete a brief, broad TOR for the Research Cycle, complemented by a Methodology Note for each Assessment.

Table 5: Terms of Reference / Methodology Note contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single Assessment</th>
<th>Multiple Assessments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Terms of Reference</strong></td>
<td><strong>Terms of Reference</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Executive Summary</td>
<td>1. Executive Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rationale</td>
<td>2. Rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Roles and Responsibilities</td>
<td>4. Roles and Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Data Analysis Plan</td>
<td>5. M&amp;E Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Data Management Plan</td>
<td>6. Annexes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. M&amp;E Plan</td>
<td>a. M&amp;E matrix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Annexes</td>
<td>b. Methodology Note – 1 for each Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Data Analysis Plan matrix</td>
<td>i. Executive Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. M&amp;E matrix</td>
<td>ii. Methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Detailed Dissemination Plan (if required)</td>
<td>iii. Roles and Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iv. Data Analysis Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v. Data Management Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vi. Annexes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Data Analysis Plan matrix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Detailed Dissemination Plan (if required)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The TOR (and Methodology Notes where relevant) provide a road map for the overall research, clearly explaining the context and rationale and specifying the final outputs and how they will be achieved. This document informs decision-making around methodology and outputs and ensures a common understanding amongst internal and external stakeholders. It provides a record of the agreed objectives of the research; its rationale; what methodology was intended to be used to implement it; and what the rationale was for choosing this methodology.

**External stakeholders**

External stakeholders should be consulted on the TOR as appropriate, to ensure agreement on indicators, methodology, roles and responsibilities from the outset.

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5 See Data Analysis Plan matrix (Excel) in the Toolbox on the Resource Centre
6 See M&E matrix (Excel) in the Toolbox on the Resource Centre
7 See Detailed Dissemination Plan template in the Toolbox on the Resource Centre
8 See Methodology Note template in the Toolbox on the Resource Centre
Do's and Don't's when drafting Terms of Reference

- ✔ Do choose a methodology that fully addresses the research objectives
- ☑ Don’t overestimate the resources (e.g., number of interviews) needed to meet the objectives
- ☑ Don’t underestimate the resources (e.g., number of interviews) needed to meet the objectives
- ✔ Do account for design effect if you consider using cluster sampling
- ✔ Do account for key disaggregation needed to address the research questions, when you design your sampling
- ✔ Do clearly define the outputs

The TOR (or Methodology Notes as relevant) must be submitted to HQ for validation before any data collection begins. A Research Cycle ID will be assigned by HQ, which should be used in all internal communication about the Research Cycle to avoid confusion. Any pending decisions that prevent complete finalisation of the methodology before data collection begins can be noted in the TOR where appropriate. Where a TOR governs several Assessments, before any data collection begins for an Assessment, a Methodology Note must be completed; added to the TOR as an Annex; validated and uploaded to replace the previous version of the TOR on the Resource Centre. Similar to all key outputs for each Research Cycle stage, all finalised versions must also be stored in the Research Cycle folder.

It is often the case that, for various reasons, an Assessment is not implemented exactly as outlined in the Terms of Reference/Methodology Note. This is logged in the Progress and Issues Logbook during the implementation and outlined clearly in the methodology section of the final outputs. The TOR thus remain as a record of what was originally planned and should be phrased as such (i.e. “20 communities will be selected for inclusion in the sample” not “20 communities were selected for inclusion in the sample”).

See the Terms of Reference template and Methodology Note template on the Resource Centre for step-by-step guidance on how to complete each section and Table 5 above for an outline of TOR versus MN contents.

Stage 1: Research Design – summary

The roles of country and HQ Teams during the Research Design Stage are outlined below, along with the key guidance and tools that should be used and the key outputs to submit and store.

**Country Team role:**
1. Liaise with relevant country-level partners and stakeholders in addition to the HQ Team as needed, to define research objectives, indicators and key disaggregations
2. Prepare Terms of Reference and/or Methodology Note(s) and Data Analysis Plan matrix
3. Share TOR, Methodology Note(s) and Data Analysis Plan matrix with HQ Team for review and validation
4. Begin populating the Detailed Dissemination Plan (if required), the M&E Matrix, the Progress and Issues Logbook; and begin developing product templates

**HQ Team role:**
1. Review and validate TOR, Methodology Note(s) and Data Analysis Plan matrix
2. Open the Research Cycle and assign Research Cycle ID

9 See Progress and Issues log template in the Toolbox on Resource Centre
Key Tools:
- Terms of Reference Template
- Methodology Note Template
- Data Analysis Plan Matrix
- Detailed Dissemination Plan Matrix
- M&E Matrix

Key Guidance:
- Quantitative and Qualitative Data Collection SOPs (forthcoming)
- Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis SOPs (forthcoming)
- Data Analysis Plan Guidance (Annex 1)
- Data Management Plan Guidance (Annex 2)

Key outputs to submit & store:
- Terms of Reference
- Data Analysis Plan Matrix – for each Assessment
- Methodology Notes (if relevant – for each Assessment)

Key Outputs to begin to populate:
- Detailed Dissemination Plan template (if required)
- M&E Matrix
- Progress and Issues Logbook
- Product templates

10 All tools can be found in the Toolbox on the Resource Centre
Stage 2: Data Collection and Processing

2.1. About the Data Collection and Processing Stage

The activities completed by the Country Team during the Data Collection and Processing stage are outlined in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Activities completed during the Data Collection and Processing Stage (Stage 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Key outputs</th>
<th>HQ Validation</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
<th>Stage 5</th>
<th>Stage 6</th>
<th>Stage 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Research Cycle opened</td>
<td>Progress and Issues tracking Logbook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Prepare for data collection and entry</td>
<td>Data collection tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Train data collection team and pilot methodology and tool</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6    | Launch and supervise data collection  
>> Structured: Monitor, log and brief field teams on potential errors in incoming data  
>> Semi-structured: Monitor saturation |  
Structured: Data Cleaning Logbook  
Semi-structured: Saturation Grid | | | | | | | |
| 7    | Process data  
Structured: Clean data in line with Data Cleaning Logbook  
Semi-structured: Transcribe and enter data |  
Raw data set  
Structured: Clean data set  
Semi-structured: Transcribed/entered dataset | | | | | | | |

2.1.1. Stage opening

The Data Collection and Processing stage starts once the Research Cycle has been opened.

2.1.2. Stage closing

The Data Collection and Processing stage ends once the clean data set, raw data set, Data Cleaning Logbook and Saturation Grid have been validated.

2.1.3. Stage outputs to validate

The clean data set, raw data set and Data Cleaning Logbook should be validated by the HQ Research Department.

Step 3: Research Cycle opened

Once the Research Cycle has been opened through the validation of the TOR, a Research Cycle folder on the country level server is opened by HQ. This folder includes a “Final files” folder where the final versions of all key outputs and supporting files (e.g. MXD files for maps) produced at each Research Cycle stage are stored. The “Final files” folder is archived 2 years following Research Cycle closure.11

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11 Where a country level server is not yet in place, the Country Team is responsible for creating a folder on a local hard drive, where all final Key Outputs from each Research Cycle stage are stored, before the folder is submitted to HQ upon closure of the Research Cycle.
Step 4: Prepare for data collection and entry

Data collection takes place at country/operational level, where the Country Team implements the methodology outlined in the Terms of Reference (or Methodology Notes if one of multiple Assessments are governed by the same Research Cycle). Depending on the operational context, primary data collection is undertaken by teams of enumerators hired directly by IMPACT, or through operational partners.

Data collection tools are the questionnaires and forms that the IMPACT Country Team uses to collect data. The questionnaire questions (and response options if a structured form) are first outlined in the Data Analysis Plan, which ensure linkage between the questions and the indicator that needs to be measured to address the overall research questions. Depending on the data collection methodology, the tool may then be built in xls for use with Kobo, ODK or other mobile data collection platforms, with a printer friendly version generated through Enketo. If the tool is semi-structured, it will be administered as a paper form, allowing data collectors to record detailed notes of discussions. Other tools used by IMPACT include direct observation forms that enumerators complete by observing (e.g. infrastructure) as opposed to asking questions, and maps and legends to facilitate participatory mapping, to record e.g., locations of key infrastructure, hazard areas, areas where shelters have been damaged or areas inhabited by different population groups. Numerous examples of previous tools are available on the Resource Centre. Please see Annex 3 for a full list of tools and software; their uses; and relevance at specific Research Cycle stages.

The type of data collection tool used will determine the structure of the dataset that is generated as a result of the data collection. Where a mobile data collection platform is used, the dataset is “automatically” generated as submitted forms are exported from the platform, usually in Excel. As the structure of the dataset directly reflects the tool design, it is important to test exporting data as soon as the tool is built, to understand what the final database will look like, before data collection starts. At this stage, the management of incoming data should be established in accordance with the terms laid out in the Data Management Plan in the TOR.

If a database has to be created to hold the data, e.g. in Excel, this should be completed before data is collected, so that the dataset structure can be tested with the incoming pilot data. Any guidance documents or tools needed to facilitate the implementation of the sampling methodology, e.g. maps of sampled locations, should also be prepared, before data collection begins.

**Anonymisation**

Never collect identifiers unless required for data processing and analysis purposes. This includes but is not limited to; phone numbers, names, obvious professions in small communities and GPS coordinates of individual households. If identifiers are collected, ensure adequate steps to protect the data are implemented in line with the approved data management plan specified in the TOR.

Step 5: Train data collection team and pilot methodology and tool

Before any data collection begins, the data collection team should be thoroughly trained on both methodology and tool(s), and thoroughly briefed on HR, logistics and security procedures. The tools, methodology and team set up must then be piloted in the field, to identify and solve key issues before data collection is launched, e.g. questions that are misunderstood by enumerators and / or respondents and sampling instructions that need further clarification.

Step 6: Launch and supervise data collection

Once data collection is launched, implementation must be supervised and monitored with progress and issues (including any diversions from the methodology) logged in the Progress and Issues Logbook. In addition, incoming data is monitored using the tools summarised in Table 7 below, and the data collection team is briefed and debriefed as frequently as possible (ideally on a daily basis).

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12 See Quantitative and Qualitative Data Collection SOPs (forthcoming) for further detail on the data collection process.
13 See Mobile Data Collection Annex 4 and common Tools and Software in Annex 3.
14 See Data Management Plan Guidance in Annex 2 for more information on data management
15 See Progress and Issues Logbook template in the Toolbox on the Resource Centre
Table 7: Structured versus semi-structured data collection tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structured data collection tool</th>
<th>Semi-structured data collection tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitor, log and brief field teams on potential errors in incoming data</td>
<td>Monitor, log saturation ad brief field teams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data processing (verification and cleaning) begins immediately once the Country Team starts to receive data from the field. For structured data, incoming data should be monitored for errors to ensure rapid field verification if needed and inform briefings and debriefings with enumerators. Data processing must be transparent, accurate, consistent and completely replicable using the raw data collected by enumerators. All alterations that need to be made to the raw data must therefore be recorded in a Data Cleaning Logbook, enabling all amendments to be implemented once the final dataset export is obtained. The cleaned (and anonymised) dataset and Data Cleaning Logbook are deliverables that may be shared externally, and should allow an external partner or auditor to understand any alterations made on the raw data and the rationale for these.

For semi-structured data, incoming data must also be monitored closely using a Saturation Grid to identify where saturation is reached and a question can be dropped or data collection can be halted altogether, or where the question route needs to be amended to explore a topic in further detail. Thorough briefings and debriefings with data collection team ensures any information contextualising the findings are captured and a clear understanding of any modifications to question route.

Step 7: Process data

Once data is collected it should be processed. If the data collection tool is structured the data should be cleaned in accordance to the Data Cleaning Logbook. If the data collection tool is semi-structured, the data should be transcribed and / or entered into a data base.

Do's and Don't's when processing Data

- Don't collect identifiers unless justified and protected
- Don't skip the recoding of “other” categories
- Do check for outliers and seek clarification from the field team
- Do fill the Data Cleaning Logbook accurately

The Data Cleaning Logbook and Saturation Grid can be found in the Toolbox on the Resource Centre
Clean data in line with Data Cleaning Logbook\textsuperscript{17}

Once data collection is completed, the full raw dataset can be exported for cleaning. The cleaning is first conducted in line with the required alterations recorded during data collection in the Data Cleaning Logbook. Once alterations have been conducted in line with the Data Cleaning Logbook, further data checks can be made on the dataset. Any additional alterations that are made to the dataset during this phase must also be recorded in the Data Cleaning Logbook. Once reviewed by the Country Focal Point (CFP), the Data Cleaning Logbook, raw and clean datasets, are submitted to HQ for review and validation.

Transcribe and enter data

For data collection using a semi-structured tool and where data analysis will be conducted with a qualitative data analysis software such as Atlas-ti or Nvivo, hard copies of completed paper forms are here first transcribed into soft copy, using a word processing software (e.g. Word). Transcriptions are then uploaded onto the qualitative data analysis platform, where they are coded. Where analysis is not undertaken using a qualitative analysis platform, analysis may be conducted manually, with codes recorded in a purpose built database e.g. in Excel. Once data is transcribed and entered, whether manually or through uploading on a qualitative analysis platform, the data sets are reviewed by the CFP before being submitted to HQ for validation.

**Stage 2: Data Collection and Processing – summary**

The roles of country and HQ Teams during the Data Collection and Processing Stage are outlined below, along with the key guidance and tools that should be used and the key outputs to submit and store.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Team role</th>
<th>HQ Team role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Prepare and supervise data collection, including training, briefing and de-briefing of enumerators, logging progress and issues.</td>
<td>1. Review progress and issues and provide technical support when needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Monitor incoming structured data and log potential errors, verify these with the field, clean and log changes; transcribe and monitor semi-structured data for saturation and tool amendments.</td>
<td>2. Review and validate Data Cleaning Logbook, Saturation Grid, raw and clean datasets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Provide regular updates to external partners and stakeholders as appropriate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Inform the HQ Team of any changes to start and end dates of the data collection outlined in the TORs, including notification of delays on a weekly basis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{17}See Data Cleaning SOPs (forthcoming) for further guidance.
Key Tools:
- Progress and Issues Logbook template
- Data Cleaning Logbook Template
- Data Saturation Grid Template

Key Guidance:
- Quantitative and Qualitative Data Collection SOPs (forthcoming)
- Data Cleaning SOPs (forthcoming)
- Data Management Plan Guidance (Annex 2)

Key Outputs to submit and store for each Assessment:
- Data Collection Tool(s)
- Enumerator debriefing notes, where relevant
- Raw database
- Data Cleaning Logbook
- Data Saturation Grid
- Clean Database (including metadata)

Key Outputs to begin to populate:
- Progress and Issues Logbook
Stage 3: Data Analysis and Validation

3.1. About the Data Analysis and Validation Stage

The activities completed by the Country Team during the Data Analysis stage are outlined in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Activities completed during the Data Analysis and Validation Stage (Stage 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Key outputs</th>
<th>HQ Validation</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
<th>Stage 5</th>
<th>Stage 6</th>
<th>Stage 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Produce preliminary analysis (if required)</td>
<td>Preliminary analysis presentation (if required)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hold joint analysis workshop with external stakeholders (if required)</td>
<td>Analysis workshop minutes (if required)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Conduct final analysis in line with Data Analysis Plan</td>
<td>Analysis files / syntax</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.1. Stage opening

The Data Analysis stage starts once the clean data set has been validated.

3.1.2. Stage closing

The Data Analysis stage ends once the final analysis has been validated.

3.1.3. Stage outputs to validate

The analysis files / syntax and preliminary presentation (if required) should be validated.

Step 8: Produce preliminary analysis (if required)

The Data Analysis Plan, as defined in the TOR during the Research Design stage, is the key reference tool for all steps in this stage. The Data Analysis Plan outlines which analysis should be produced and the key considerations that need to be taken into account, such as weighting, adjusting for design effect and significance testing before reporting differences between groups, where a representative sampling / census methodology has been used. It also serves as a record of which research questions were supposed to be addressed by which indicators / variables, thereby helping to focus the interpretation of results.

Preliminary findings may be presented to key stakeholders as part of a joint analysis workshop, or separately so that they can be used immediately and can inform strategic planning at country and/or operational level. For quantitative assessments, such presentations should contain descriptive statistics to contain key findings in a factual manner, rather than in-depth analysis. The objective is to generate discussion around ways forward with the in-depth analysis. Bullets, graphs and tables should be complemented with maps, as appropriate. All presentations should be reviewed by the Country Focal Point (CFP) and validated by the HQ Team. For qualitative assessments, codes and themes should be presented with a view to generate discussion around interpretations. It is imperative to consult data collection tools and any debriefing records while conducting the analysis, to ensure the background to each variable and question is understood. Variable names often reveal minimal information about the question that was asked, hence it is impossible to correctly understand the answers without consulting the Data Analysis Plan or data collection tool.
Step 9: Hold joint analysis workshop with external stakeholders (if required)

External stakeholders
In situations where final joint analysis will be conducted with external stakeholders, it is necessary to a) prepare or select a pre-existing sound analysis methodology; and b) prepare preliminary data tables/ findings to review during the analysis workshop. Following a joint analysis workshop, key discussion points, consensus as well as disagreement should be recorded in minutes and approved by participants.

Step 10: Conduct final analysis in line with Data Analysis Plan

Once feedback on preliminary findings has been obtained from stakeholders, the final analysis can be conducted. It is imperative to consult data collection tools and any debriefing records while conducting the analysis, to ensure the background to each variable and question is understood. Variable names often reveal minimal information about the question that was asked, hence it is impossible to correctly understand the answers without consulting the Data Analysis Plan or data collection tool. While it is possible to use a range of data analysis tools, working files should always be systematically organized and clearly labelled. For instance, in Excel, pivot tables should be organized on separate tabs that are intuitively labelled so that another colleague can easily check or complete the analysis if needed. Tableau workbooks, SPSS syntax etc. should also be clearly organized and documented (e.g. record when filters are applied, or records excluded). Codebooks should be clearly labelled hierarchically from main themes -> sub themes -> codes. Analysis files should be submitted to the HQ Team as early as possible, before beginning to draft outputs, to ensure analysis can be checked and any errors addressed which may alter findings. Once reviewed by the CFP, all analysis files are submitted to HQ for validation. It is often the case that additional cleaning needs are identified during the analysis stage. Where this occurs, any alterations must be recorded in the Data Cleaning Log and the clean dataset needs to be re-submitted, with the cleaning log, to HQ for validation.18

Stage 3: Data Analysis & Validation – summary

The roles of country and HQ Teams during the Data Analysis and Validation Stage are outlined below, along with the key guidance and tools that should be used and the key outputs to submit and store.

Country Team role:
1. Conduct analysis according to Data Analysis Plan
2. Ensure all working files are clearly labelled, organised and filed
3. Submit analysis files to HQ Team for review & validation
4. Prepare preliminary findings presentation (if relevant) and submit to HQ Team for review & validation
5. In case of joint analysis, hold a workshop and share minutes with HQ Team

HQ Team role:
1. Review and validate analysis
2. Review and validate preliminary findings presentation

Key Tools:
- Preliminary presentation template

Key Guidance:
- Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis SOPs (forthcoming)
- Data Analysis Plan Guidance (Annex 1)

Key Outputs to submit and store for each Assessment:
- Final analysis data set and working files
- Preliminary findings presentation

In the case of joint analysis:
- Agreed upon workshop minutes

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18 See Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis SOPs (forthcoming) for further guidance.
Stage 4: Product Drafting

4.1. About the Product Drafting Stage

The activities completed by the Country Team during the Product Drafting stage are outlined in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Activities completed during the Output stage (Stage 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Key outputs</th>
<th>HQ Validation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Develop product templates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Draft products, incorporate Country team feedback, submit to HQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.1. Stage opening

The Product Drafting Stage starts once the final data analysis has been validated.

4.1.2. Stage closing

The Product Drafting Stage ends once Country Team feedback has been incorporated and draft products are submitted to HQ for review.

4.1.3. Stage outputs to validate

No outputs are validated by HQ during this stage.

Step 11: Develop product templates

Based on the TOR, clean data set, data analysis and discussions from any preliminary findings workshops, drafting of information products is undertaken by the Country Team. Once reviewed by the CFP, an outline of the planned product templates specified in the TOR should be submitted to the HQ Team for review as early as possible, to avoid unnecessary delays during output production. For some research cycles, as specified in the TOR, a skeleton essay should be submitted. Guidelines are available for standard types of IMPACT information products; including reports, situation overviews, profiles, factsheets, presentations and maps. Templates are also available for: reports, presentations and profiles, which can be adapted in line with requirements agreed with external stakeholders. Specifications for reports, presentations and profiles are set out in the templates and in the Report Drafting Guidelines. Maps, situation overviews and factsheets are likely to vary more depending on their specific purpose and context. Standards for maps are set out in the Mapping Guidelines, while the content and layout of situation overviews and factsheets should be discussed and developed with input from the HQ Team.

Do's and Don't's when drafting products

- Do ensure appropriate terminology is used and consult sector specific terminology guidelines where available
- Do ensure that the output answers the research questions set forth in the TOR
- Do assume your reader is unfamiliar with the context and methodology of the assessment
- Don't draft your output until the data has been validated by the HQ Data Analysis Team

19 All product-related guidelines and standard templates are available in the Toolbox on the Resource Centre
Step 12: Draft products, incorporate Country Team feedback, submit to HQ

Products should be drafted while consulting all key tools and outputs generated through the assessment, to ensure a correct understanding of the data analysis: TOR contain an outline of the methodology, with any diversions recorded in the Progress and Issues logbook; while the Data Analysis Plan outlines how each question in the questionnaire intended to address the overall Research Questions must be clearly answered in the products and data collection tools referred to when writing up the findings, to ensure that all reported findings reflect what was actually measured. Once the drafts are prepared they should be thoroughly reviewed by the Country Focal Point in line with available guidance, to minimise the length of the HQ review process which follows in the subsequent stage.

Stage 4: Product Drafting – summary

The roles of Country and HQ Teams during the Product Drafting Stage are outlined below, along with the key guidance and tools that should be used and the key products to submit and store.

**Country Team role:**
1. Adapt or develop skeleton report / product templates, where relevant
2. Draft information products, following specification in the ToR
3. Review all information products at country level, prior to sharing for global verification

**HQ Team role:**
1. Provide support to develop and modify product templates, as required
2. Review a skeleton or early draft report, when specified in the ToR
3. Provide surge capacity, when necessary
### Key Tools:
- Graphic Charter
- IMPACT Product Templates
  - Report Template
  - Profile Template
  - Presentation Template
  - Map Templates

### Key Guidance:
- Product Drafting Guidelines
- Report Drafting Guidelines
- Mapping Guidelines

### Key Outputs to submit and store for each Assessment:
- Product template, skeleton report where relevant
- Draft information product(s), reviewed by Country Team
Stage 5: Product Review and Validation

5.1. About the Product Review and Validation Stage

The activities completed by the Country Team during the Product Review and Validation stage are outlined in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Activities completed during the Product Review and Validation stage (Stage 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Key outputs</th>
<th>HQ Validation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Incorporate HQ feedback, finalise products</td>
<td>Final products</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.1. Stage opening

The Product Review and Validation Stage starts once the draft products have been submitted to HQ for review.

5.1.2. Stage closing

The Product Review and Validation Stage ends once HQ feedback has been incorporated and when the products are finalised by the Country Team and validated by HQ.

5.1.3. Stage outputs to validate

Final products are validated by HQ.

Step 13: Incorporate HQ feedback and finalise products

Once reviewed in country, products should be sent by email to the Reporting Team for review and validation. The final formatted and anonymised dataset should also be submitted for validation to the Data Analysis team at this stage, to enable sharing of the dataset alongside products. Together with the draft product, Country Teams should provide any supporting or complementary products (e.g. maps for a report / text for maps). Products are reviewed for coherence, consistency, accuracy and presentation. The HQ Team will return products to the Country Team with feedback, which must be incorporated or justified before sharing with other external actor for review. This stage can include several rounds of review if necessary to reach the level of accuracy and quality needed to enable publishing.

External stakeholders

A finalized draft may be shared with partners or key stakeholders for input where appropriate. Provide clear timeframes for partner review. Ensure that partner feedback and any resulting action is systematically recorded in a comments/changes log. Once changes or suggestions by partners have been taken into account, seek agreement on a final version.

Do's and Don't's when submitting Products for review and validation

- Do give the HQ Reporting Unit a heads-up on the product drafting timeline and deadlines
- Do ensure in-country review (including validation by CFP) before sharing the product with HQ for review and validation
- Do allow sufficient time for review and internal validation before sharing with partners/donors
- Don't share the product for review and validation unless you are confident that it is as good as it could be (including spell-check and proofreading)
A final draft should be uploaded on the Resource Centre. The final product can only be recommended for validation by the HQ Team if the following are in place:

- All previous comments have been incorporated or justified
- Information product is in accordance with agreed template, style guidelines and graphic charter
- Only one version of the information product exists on the Resource Centre
- The file is appropriately named, in accordance with Report Drafting Guidelines
  - Product name: IMPACT_Country ISO_Resource Type_Descriptive Title_Month Year
  - Product title: Country ISO_Resource Type_Descriptive Title_Month Year

At the final validation stage, additional comments may be provided. Ensure that time is factored in to incorporate this without missing agreed deadlines with partners or donors.

### Stage 5: Product Review & Validation – summary

The roles of Country and HQ teams during the Product Review & Validation Stage are outlined below, along with the key guidance and tools that should be used and the key outputs to submit and store.

**Country Team role:**

1. Submit products validated at IMPACT country level to HQ, including all supporting products (e.g., maps), formatted dataset.
2. Incorporate HQ feedback before sharing with partners in country for feedback.
3. Incorporate or justify all feedback and comments from partners and submit finalised version to HQ.
4. Ensure that the final version is uploaded in accordance with IMPACT Reporting and Style Guidelines.

**HQ Team role:**

1. Review and validate all products.
2. Liaise with other departments about status of product(s).

### Key Tools:

- Graphic Charter
- IMPACT Product Templates
  - Report Template
  - Profile Template
  - Presentation Template
  - Map Templates

### Key Guidance:

- Product Drafting Guidelines
- Report Drafting Guidelines
- Mapping Guidelines

### Key Outputs to submit and store for each Assessment:

- Final validated version of all products
Stage 6: Dissemination

6.1. About the Dissemination Stage
The activities completed by the Country Team during the Dissemination stage are outlined in Table 10 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Key outputs</th>
<th>HQ Validation</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
<th>Stage 5</th>
<th>Stage 6</th>
<th>Stage 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Develop a Detailed Dissemination Plan (if required)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Share products and outputs in line with dissemination plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1.1. Stage opening
The Dissemination Stage starts once products to be disseminated have been validated by HQ.

6.1.2. Stage closing
The Dissemination Stage ends once dissemination has been completed.

6.1.3. Stage outputs to validate
The Detailed Dissemination Plan, if specified as required in the TOR, should be validated.

Step 14: Develop a Detailed Dissemination Plan (if required)
At a minimum, all dissemination is carried out in line with the dissemination outline in the Terms of Reference. If required as specified in the TOR Executive Summary, population of the Detailed Dissemination Plan template should begin as early as possible during the Research Cycle, including identification of stakeholders and audience. However, it will need to be gradually completed as the research progresses, as the dissemination strategy may be heavily impacted by the outcome of the data analysis and the resulting key findings. **Beware that the completed Detailed Dissemination Plan (if required) should be submitted to HQ for validation before the final products can be released.**

Step 15: Share products and outputs in line with Dissemination Plan
Finalised information products and their key messages are shared at country, regional and global levels. At this stage, data should be shared according to the terms laid out in the data management plan, as agreed with project donors and/or partners. Country Teams are responsible for disseminating information through country-level platforms, country dissemination lists and newsletters, at working groups and with relevant stakeholders and donors. At HQ level, the communications team shares resources with a broader audience through global platforms (including ReliefWeb), at working groups, through media releases, and through bilateral meetings with key partners and donors.

Anonymisation
If collection of identifiers was necessary to facilitate data processing and analysis, make sure all identifiers are removed from a dataset that is being disseminated or shared externally. This includes but is not limited to; phone numbers, names, obvious professions in small communities and GPS coordinates of individual households. Remember to check all parts of files being released externally e.g. comments entered at the end of a questionnaire, and all cleaning logs. Ensure all data stored internally is protected in line with the Data Management Plan in the TORs.
See the **Detailed Dissemination Plan template** and the **Dissemination Guidelines** for further guidance.\(^1\)

### Stage 6: Dissemination – summary

The roles of Country and HQ Teams during the Dissemination Stage are outlined below, along with the key guidance and tools that should be used and the key outputs to submit and store.

**Country Team role:**
1. If required, begin drafting the Detailed Dissemination Plan at the Research Design Stage, and update as needed throughout the Research Cycle (namely once preliminary findings are ready). Submit to HQ Team for review and validation before final outputs are released.
2. Disseminate findings in country with key stakeholders, as per (Detailed) Dissemination Plan and in line with Dissemination Guidelines procedures (e.g. SendinBlue, Bitly, etc.)
3. Publish final versions of all products on country and regional portals as per (Detailed) Dissemination Plan (e.g. Humanitarian Response, ALNAP Syria Learning Portal, Refugee portals, etc).
4. Upload validated (formatted anonymised) dataset to relevant platforms, as specified in the Data Management Plan in the TOR.

**HQ Team role:**
1. Validate Detailed Dissemination Plan (if required) and provide guidance based on country-level requests
2. Share findings/outputs at global level with key stakeholders, as per Dissemination Plan
3. Publish final versions of all document on global portals (e.g. Reliefweb)

**Key Tools:**
- Detailed Dissemination Plan Template

**Key Guidance:**
- Dissemination Guidelines

**Key Outputs to submit and store for each Assessment:**
- Detailed Dissemination Plan (if required)
- Presentations, dissemination campaigns, newsletters and other means of dissemination

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\(^1\) The Dissemination Guidelines & Detailed Dissemination Plan template can be found in the Toolbox on the Resource Centre
Stage 7: Monitoring & Evaluation / Lessons Learned

7.1. About the Monitoring & Evaluation / Lessons Learned Stage
The activities completed by the Country Team during the Monitoring & Evaluation / Lessons Learned Stage are outlined in Table 11 below.

Table 4: Activities completed during the M&E / Lessons Learned stage (Stage 7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Key outputs</th>
<th>HQ Validation</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
<th>Stage 5</th>
<th>Stage 6</th>
<th>Stage 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Progress and Issues tracking Logbook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation matrix</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation Memo</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Lessons Learned matrix</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.1.1. Stage opening
The Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) / Lessons Learned Stage begins when dissemination has been completed. However, Country Teams should already start tracking M&E during the previous stages of the Research Cycle, and populating the Progress and Issues Logbook, which both inform the Lessons Learned process.

7.1.2. Stage closing
This final stage in the Research Cycle ends when the M&E Matrix is submitted to HQ along with the Lessons Learned Matrix, within a maximum of 6 months following the publication of the final research outputs. Once these are finalised the Research Cycle is closed. The “Final files” folder inside the corresponding Research Cycle folder is archived 2 years following Research Cycle closure.

7.1.3. Stage outputs to validate
The M&E memo should be submitted for review and validation. The HQ Team will review and provide feedback on the M&E Matrix and the Lessons Learned Matrix, which will be used as a basis to inform future research cycles.

Step 16: Implement the M&E plan
A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Matrix is completed by the IMPACT Country Team for each Research Cycle, using the tools in the matrix specified as relevant in the M&E plan in the TOR. M&E is the primary responsibility of Country Teams, although parts of the matrix are filled by requesting information from HQ (e.g. ReliefWeb, Resource Centre, Web map downloads) before consolidating at country level. The M&E Matrix focuses on external stakeholders and the information products that have been disseminated. It is used to track engagement and feedback of external stakeholders and records references and downloads of IMPACT products. Once populated, a M&E Memo should be prepared based on the findings in the matrix, which is submitted to HQ for review and validation.

See the Monitoring & Evaluation Matrix and the Internal Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines for further guidance.22

External stakeholders
One of the elements from the M&E plan is to collect feedback from partners and key stakeholders about IMPACT research activities. As such, partners and key stakeholders can be asked to fill in feedback surveys and their feedback on IMPACT activities are sought in meetings.

22 The M&E Matrix and Guidelines can be found in the Toolbox on the Resource Centre
Step 17: Conduct a Lessons Learned exercise

Lastly, upon completion of each Research Cycle, the Country Team reviews the entire Research Cycle and discusses and records key Lessons Learned. The overall objective of the Lessons Learned exercise is to capitalise on institutional knowledge, share problems, solutions and good practice, and to inform future research design in order to increase the quality and effectiveness of future research cycles.

During the exercise, the Country Team reviews each stage of the Research Cycle and note down best practices and problems that were encountered, in the Lessons Learned Matrix\textsuperscript{23}. In addition, the Country Team provides recommendations and action points to address the identified issues. All key outputs from the Research Cycle should be consulted to inform the Lessons Learned exercise, in particular the Progress and Issues Logbook and M&E Matrix.

The Lessons Learned Matrix should be submitted to HQ for review and feedback. Both HQ and Country Teams are responsible for following up on the action points identified. For more information, see the Lessons Learned Guidance in Annex 6.

Stage 7: Monitoring & Evaluation / Lessons Learned – summary

The roles of country and HQ Teams during the Monitoring & Evaluation / Lessons Learned Stage are outlined below, along with the key guidance and tools that should be used and the key outputs to submit and store.

**Country Team role:**
1. Implement the M&E Plan using the M&E matrix and complete a M&E memo based on the findings in the matrix
2. Conduct Lessons Learned exercise and fill in and submit Lessons Learned Matrix
3. Follow up on action points from the Lessons Learned Matrix which are relevant at country level
4. Where relevant, share lessons learned with partners following global review

**HQ Team role:**
1. Review M&E Matrix and provide feedback
2. Review Lessons Learned Matrix, provide feedback and update the Lessons Learned database
3. Follow up on action points from the Lessons Learned Matrix which are relevant at global level

**Key Tools:**
- M&E Matrix
- Lessons Learned Matrix

**Key Guidance:**
- Internal Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines
- Lessons Learned Guidance (Annex 6)

**Key Outputs to submit and store:**
- M&E Matrix
- M&E Memo
- Lessons Learned Matrix
Annex 1: Data Analysis Plan Guidance

The Data Analysis Plan ensures that the corresponding assessment meets the agreed research objectives. The plan outlines how the data collected will address the research questions and thus the research objectives.

Figure 4: Data Analysis Plan overview

Two Data Analysis Plan templates are available in the Data Analysis Plan Matrix, one for assessments using a predominantly structured data collection tool and a second for assessments using a largely semi-structured tool. Key columns from the matrix are pasted into the TOR (see TOR template). Along with the rest of the TOR, the Data Analysis Plan should be started as early as possible and populated gradually as more information becomes available. For example, once the research objectives for an assessment are identified, the Country Team proposes indicators that will help address each question and discuss these with relevant stakeholders as needed. Once indicators are agreed, the Country Team can go ahead and develop questions for data collection tool(s) to measure each indicator. The Data Analysis Plan also captures whether there are key disaggregations that are essential for the Assessment, which in turn determines what sampling approach(es) can be used.

Do’s when preparing a Data Analysis Plan

- Do develop / improve the Data Analysis Plan Matrix: it is a minimum standard, feel free to build on it, e.g. add columns for variable names, data checks / cleaning steps, constraints, etc
- Do stick to one row per disaggregation / output
- Do start populating the Data Analysis Plan Matrix immediately when you start drafting the TOR/Methodology Note Executive Summary
- Do Use the QUANT Data Analysis Plan template when research questions answered by
  - Predominantly structured data collection tool
  - Disaggregations are known
- Do use the QUAL Data Analysis Plan template when research questions answered by
  - Predominantly semi-structured data collection tool
  - Disaggregations unknown (thematic analysis)
For Assessments using a predominantly structured data collection tool, the Country Team also specifies in the Data Analysis Plan whether incoming data must be weighted in the analysis and whether adjustment for design effect must be taken into account, notably due to use of a cluster sampling approach. For Assessments using a predominantly semi-structured tool, the Data Analysis Plan simply links the questions in our data collection tool to the Research questions. Here the analysis follows a more inductive approach, meaning themes and thus potential disaggregations are revealed during the analysis stage.

The Data Analysis Plan also captures for which indicators maps are planned and should be completed in consultation with the country level GIS Focal Point. Reviewing the desired analysis and levels of disaggregation should enable the GIS focal point to identify potential mapping opportunities, from aggregating findings to administrative boundaries to more complex spatial analysis. This will allow the Country Team to better leverage GIS capacity, to capitalize on opportunities to create better GIS products, to identify synergies with products from other missions and provide HQ with advance notification of what is likely to be coming for validation.

See the Data Analysis Plan Matrix for template and step-by-step guidance on how to complete each section.24

Annex 2: Data Management Plan Guidance

During the Research Design stage, a Data Management Plan will be developed within the TOR to ensure that principles of effective data management are followed and that key decisions regarding research data are made at the beginning of the Research Cycle.

**What is Data Management?**
Data management is the process of controlling the information generated during the research project and a means of ensuring data and research integrity. Integrity refers to maintaining the accuracy and consistency of data over its entire life cycle.

**Why is Data Management important?**
The outcome of a research project depends on how well data is managed. Managing data helps researchers organize research files and data for easier access and analysis. It helps ensure the quality of the research. It supports the published results of the work and, in the long term, helps ensure accountability in data analysis. The ultimate goal of data management is to produce quality data sets that are self-describing, i.e. legible. Maintaining data legibility, the level to which data content can be interpreted correctly, is critical.

**Principles of effective data management**
Effective data management practices include
- Preparing and implementing a Data Management Plan
- Designating the responsibilities of every individual involved in the study
- Determining how data will be stored and backed up
- Deciding if and how data will be shared, and to whom

The Data Management Plan (DMP) is part of the TOR and has been developed to provide a clear and concise framework to follow. The Data Management Plan includes the following sections:

1. **Administrative Data**
   This section includes the Research Cycle name and code, donor(s), project partner(s), key research contacts and related policies.
2. Documentation and Metadata

This section outlines what documentation and metadata will accompany the data. At various stages of the Research Cycle, data documentation will be required. Data documentation encompasses the following:

- Data Analysis Plan
- Data Cleaning Log, including Deletion Log and Value Change Log
- Code book
- Data dictionary
- Metadata based on HDX/IMPACT Standards. Metadata gives context to the research data by providing descriptive detail about it. They offer standardized, structured information explaining data in terms of purpose, origin, time references, geographic location, creator, access conditions, and terms of use of the data collection. For greater transparency and more effective use of the data IMPACT shares, the attribution of metadata fields will be required. As HDX is becoming the central repository for humanitarian data sets, it is important that IMPACT data sets have aligned metadata fields that include both HDX fields and minimum IMPACT metadata fields.

Box 1: Minimum metadata requirements

- Location
- Title
- Source
- Description
- Organisation
- License type (‘Creative Commons Attribution for Intergovernmental Organizations’)
- Visibility (Public or Private)
- Tags (in line with HXL)
- Maintainer
- Maintainer Email
- Data of Dataset or Date Range
- Methodology
- Caveats

3. Ethics and Legal Compliance

This section outlines how any ethical issues will be managed (e.g. consent of participants; assessment with minors; referral of protection cases) and how any copyright or intellectual property rights issues will be addressed.

4. Storage and Backup

This section outlines where data will be stored and backed up. It furthermore specifies which data access and security measures have been taken.

5. Preservation

This section outlines where data will be preserved in the long term.

6. Data Sharing

This section outlines which data will be shared where and whether there are any restrictions on data sharing.

7. Responsibilities

This section outlines internal and external responsibilities for data management throughout the data-related parts of the Research Cycle. It specifies who is responsible for data collection, cleaning, analysis, sharing and uploading.
## Annex 3: Tools and Software

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>What it is</th>
<th>What to use it for</th>
<th>Research Cycle Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlas-ti</td>
<td>Analysis software</td>
<td>To analyse qualitative (semi-structured) data</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enketo</td>
<td>Web-based data collection form</td>
<td>Web Forms, also known as Enketo, are used by mobile data collection platforms (e.g. KoBoToolbox) to preview your forms and to enter data directly on your computer</td>
<td>Data collection &amp; Processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kobo ODK</td>
<td>Mobile data collection platform used to collect data, consult the Mobile Data Collection guidance (Annex 4) to ensure you select the correct platform</td>
<td>To administer a structured questionnaire using smartphones, tablets, or web browsers</td>
<td>Data collection &amp; Processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVivo</td>
<td>Analysis software</td>
<td>To analyse qualitative (semi-structured) data</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODK</td>
<td>Mobile data collection platform used to collect data, consult the Mobile Data Collection guidance (Annex 4) to ensure you select the correct platform</td>
<td>To administer a structured questionnaire using smartphones, tablets, or web browsers</td>
<td>Data collection &amp; Processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONA</td>
<td>Mobile data collection platform used to collect data, consult the Mobile Data Collection guidance (Annex 4) to ensure you select the correct platform</td>
<td>To administer a structured questionnaire using smartphones, tablets, or web browsers</td>
<td>Data collection &amp; Processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Analysis software</td>
<td>To analyse quantitative (structured) data</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Analysis software</td>
<td>To analyse quantitative (structured) data</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATA</td>
<td>Analysis software</td>
<td>To analyse quantitative (structured) data</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xls form</td>
<td>A form standard created to help simplify the authoring of forms in Excel. Authoring is done in a human readable format using a familiar tool that almost everyone knows - Excel</td>
<td>When building a questionnaire to be administered via a mobile data collection platform (e.g. Kobo, ODK, ONA)</td>
<td>Data collection &amp; Processing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26 [http://xlsform.org/](http://xlsform.org/)
Annex 4: Mobile Data Collection Guidance

Introduction

For data collection using a structured questionnaire, if the security context allows, mobile data collection will be used. The mobile data collection system gives enumerators the possibility to enter data on tablets or smartphones using an android app – or through an offline or online web browser on a desktop computer. The system has the advantage of making the data collection more standardized and reliable, with a range of functions available to help ensure the consistency of the data collected. IMPACT teams use KOBO toolbox as the default mobile data collection system, unless specific needs of the assessment cannot be met by the application.

Data entered through mobiles phones or desktop computers are aggregated to the application server, where it is stored (an offline version is available in contexts where the internet connection is too unreliable to consistently send data) and can be exported in Excel format.

Two parallel and identical setups of the Kobo toolbox exists for humanitarian use:
- https://kc.humanitarianresponse.info/ = supported and developed by UNOCHA, the data is hosted on an Amazon web server.
- https://kobo.unhcr.org = set up by UNHCR, the data is hosted on a Swiss server.

By default, IMPACT uses UNOCHA Kobo. The Kobo UNHCR server should be used to replace the UNOCHA Kobo server or ODK aggregate when the data collected are linked to a UNHCR mandate – i.e. when the Assessment is:

1. Funded by UNHCR;
2. Collecting refugee information;
3. Collecting information for the Protection Cluster
4. Mandated by a UNHCR-led CCCM Cluster (on a case by case basis)
Form and data management: UNHCR Kobo server

**IMPACT HQ account (Impact geneva)**

- IMPACT HQ manages and owns the IMPACT HQ account.
- The IMPACT HQ account is the sole repository of assessment data collected through UNHCR Kobo server.
  a. Country team shares final xls form is shared with the HQ Data Analysis Team before data collection.
  b. HQ Data Analysis team upload the final xls on the IMPACT HQ account and create the Project.
  c. Final form: The Data Analysis Team share permission to View, Submit and Edit with Country Team for data collection.

**Global enumerator account (reach_collector)**

- IMPACT HQ manages and owns the Global enumerator account.
  a. Data Analysis Team shares credentials to the Global enumerator account with the Country Team, to be used by Country Team enumerators.
  b. IMPACT HQ Team share the final form uploaded on the IMPACT HQ account, with the Global enumerator account.
  c. Final form: Data Analysis Team share permission to Submit with the Country Team.

**Country account**

- Country Team manages and owns the Country account.
- Country Team create one country KOB0 account (if not already existing).
  a. Country Team create Projects on this account for piloting and form testing purposes only (not for data collection).
  b. Country Team shares credentials with the HQ Data Analysis Team.
  c. Country Team designates two focal points in country who can access the account, no one else is allowed access to the accounts.
  d. Once piloting and testing phase is over, the Country Team remove the pilot / test Projects.
Processes

During the form testing / piloting phase:
- Country Team test / pilot form on Country account.
- Country Team share credentials to access Country account with HQ Team.

At the beginning of data collection:
- Country Team share the final xls form with HQ Data Analysis Team through email or Slack.
  a. Final xls form naming should be as follows: [IMPACT Programme]_[country ISO]_[Region]_[Sector]_
     [name Assessment]_[date YYYMMDD]_v1

In case of last minute changes in the form and/or if HQ Team is out of the office:
- Country Team upload the final form to the Country account.
- Country Team share the final form uploaded to the Country account, with the Global enumerator account, 
  with permission to Submit to enable data collection to start and enumerators to submit forms.
- Once the HQ Team eventually upload the form and create a Project on the IMPACT HQ account, the HQ 
  team shares the Project with:
  o Country account, with permission to View
  o Global enumerator account, with permission to Submit
- Country Team transfer the form from the Country account to the IMPACT HQ account using briefcase.
- After the data is transferred to the IMPACT HQ account, the Country Team delete the Project on the Country 
  account.

When data collection is completed:
- HQ removes permissions to access Global enumerator account.
- Country Team remove all pilot forms / test forms from the country account.
Annex 5: Resource Centre Guidance

What is the Resource Centre and what is it used for?

The IMPACT Resource Centre is an online library of all IMPACT resources, which is used both internally by staff, and externally by partners and the general public.

Internally, the Resource Centre is used to:
- share guidance, templates and resources with all staff
- centrally store information products from all country missions and rapid deployments
- manage the review and validation process
- monitor views and access to resources for HQ Team evaluation and reporting

Externally, the Resource Centre is used to:
- share resources with external partners and the general public
- provide a single point of access to all IMPACT resources
- channel IMPACT resources into other online data-sharing platforms (e.g. Reliefweb)

Using the Resource Centre

The Resource Centre is accessed via: www.IMPACTresourcecentre.info

Anyone can sign up for an account, through the New User? Register Here link on the homepage.

- Recommended usernames for IMPACT staff take the form: firstname.lastname
- Use of an IMPACT, HQ TEAM or ACTED email address is recommended, in order to easily identify staff members.
- Once a new user has signed up, his/her account is manually activated by the HQ Team. Please contact the HQ Team if this does not happen within a day.

Once signed into the Resource Centre, users are assigned a tier, with differing permissions, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Permission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1</td>
<td>HQ Team</td>
<td>Final validation of all products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 2</td>
<td>Global/regional team</td>
<td>Verification, comment and editing of products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 3</td>
<td>All IMPACT staff</td>
<td>Uploading and editing products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 4</td>
<td>External partners and users</td>
<td>Viewing of validated products only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Resource Centre sends automatic notifications:
- a) each time a product is uploaded (to tiers 1 & 2)
- b) once a product is validated (tiers 1, 2 & the person who uploaded)

All materials uploaded to the Resource Centre should have file names following this format:
IMPACT Programme_Country ISO_Resource Type_Descriptive Title_Month Year

e.g.
reach_som_situation_overview_gedo_rapid_needs_assessment-garbahaarey_district_november_2017
Annex 6: Lessons Learned Guidance

This Lessons Learned Guidance note summarises what Lessons Learned are, and why they are important. It also outlines the IMPACT Lessons Learned process and its key output; the Lessons Learned Matrix.

What are Lessons Learned and why is it important to have a Lessons Learned process?

Lessons Learned in this context, is the learning gained from the implementation of the Research Cycle. Lessons Learned focus on problems and best practices that were encountered during the different stages of the Research Cycle, with the aim to promote the recurrence of best practices, while learning from mistakes and identifying ways in which to avoid problems in future IMPACT Research cycles. Although, problems and successes are often relatively easy to identify, it can be challenging to transform these lessons identified into institutional Lessons Learned, which is why the Lessons Learned stage is included in the Research Cycle.

The IMPACT Lessons Learned process

Lessons Learned is part of the seventh and last stage of the Research Cycle (Monitoring & Evaluation / Lessons Learned). During this stage, Country Teams conduct a Lessons Learned exercise in which each stage of the Research Cycle is reviewed. The Country Team discusses issues encountered during the Research Cycle and records key Lessons Learned in the Lessons Learned Matrix. While the finalization of the Matrix occurs during the Lessons Learned exercise, Lessons Learned should be captured throughout the entire Research Cycle, in order to ensure that all key lessons are documented in a timely and accurate way.

During the exercise Country Teams identify recommendations and action points to address the issues encountered during the Research Cycle. Key outputs produced during the Research Cycle are used as a basis for the exercise, in particular the Progress and Issues Logbook and the M&E Matrix. The Progress and Issues Logbook provides a record of issues that arose during the cycle, while the M&E Matrix evaluates the impact of the Research Cycle. The Lessons Learned Matrix is submitted to the HQ team within 6 months after dissemination of the Research Cycle outputs. The HQ team reviews the Matrix, provides feedback and validate the action to be taken. The HQ team also add the Lessons Learned to the IMPACT Lessons Learned Database. The Database can be consulted by HQ and Country Teams to inform future Research cycles.

The Lessons Learned Matrix

The Lessons Learned Matrix should be completed during the Lessons Learned exercise. For each issue that a Country Team identified during the Research Cycle, the following information should be provided:

- The Research Cycle Stage(s) and Step(s) related to the issue.
- Whether the issue entails a problem or a success (best practice).
- A short description of the problem/success.
- The outcome of the issue; i.e. the consequence of the problem/success.
- In the event of problems:
  - Recommendation(s) on how to overcome the problem
  - Action(s) to be taken to address the problem
  - Focal point(s) responsible for carrying out the action

Once the matrix has been reviewed by the HQ team, the action points and responsible focal points specified in the Lessons Learned Matrix are confirmed. The Country Focal Point is responsible for all action points assigned to country level focal points and the HQ team is responsible for any action points assigned to HQ level focal points.

27 The Lessons Learned Matrix can be found in the Toolbox on the Resource Centre.