Mainstreaming Multi-Sector Needs Assessments and Analysis in the Humanitarian Program Cycle
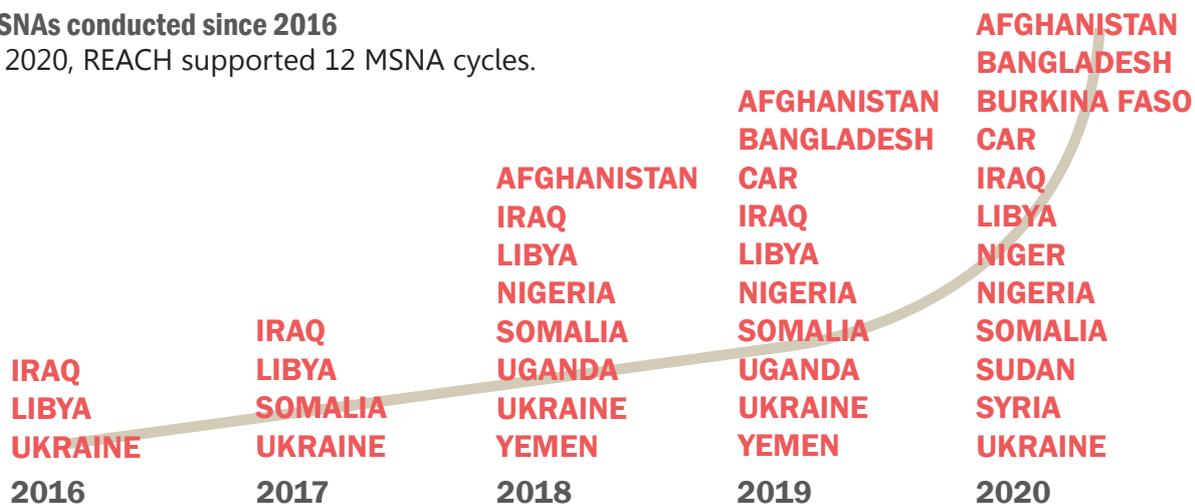
2020 Update

THE GRAND BARGAIN COMMITMENT ON JOINT NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

With the financial support from ECHO and USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and co-funding from other country-based donors, REACH has been working extensively to support the implementation of Multi-sectoral Needs Assessments (MSNAs) across different humanitarian crises since 2016, in the wake of the World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain commitment to "impartial, unbiased, comprehensive, context sensitive, timely and up-to-date" joint needs assessments that can serve as "a sound evidence base for humanitarian response plans." These exercises have been informing consolidated humanitarian appeals since 2016.
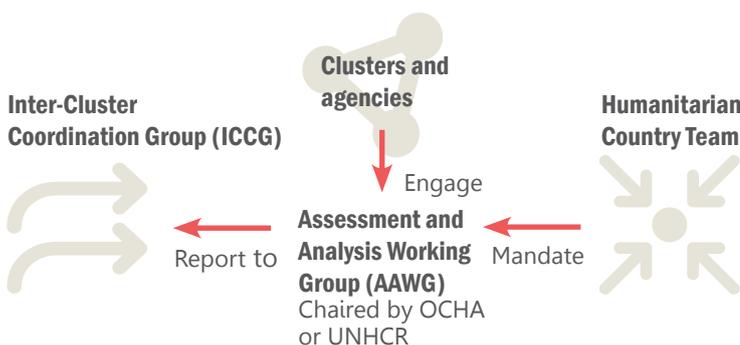
Since 2016, the number of MSNAs supported by REACH has quadrupled; MSNA data continues to influence flagship humanitarian response processes such as Humanitarian Needs Overviews and Humanitarian Response Plans (HNOs/HRPs), **with more than 1,200 references to MSNAs found in 12 HNOs/HRPs and RRPs in 2020**. This indicates that evidence-based decision making is increasingly becoming a cornerstone of effective humanitarian action. In 2020, MSNA data was used to calculate sectoral PiN for all 12 crises in which the exercise was conducted, and informed inter-sector analysis and severity rankings for eight of these.

MSNAs conducted since 2016
In 2020, REACH supported 12 MSNA cycles.

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
				AFGHANISTAN
				BANGLADESH
			AFGHANISTAN	BURKINA FASO
			BANGLADESH	CAR
		AFGHANISTAN	CAR	IRAQ
		IRAQ	IRAQ	LIBYA
		LIBYA	LIBYA	NIGER
		NIGERIA	NIGERIA	NIGERIA
	IRAQ	SOMALIA	SOMALIA	SOMALIA
	LIBYA	UGANDA	UGANDA	SUDAN
IRAQ	SOMALIA	UKRAINE	UKRAINE	SYRIA
LIBYA	SOMALIA	UKRAINE	UKRAINE	SYRIA
UKRAINE	UKRAINE	YEMEN	YEMEN	UKRAINE

A HIGHLY COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG)

Clusters and agencies

Humanitarian Country Team

Engage

Report to

Assessment and Analysis Working Group (AAWG)
Chaired by OCHA or UNHCR

Mandate

Over 130 national and international partners, including UN Agencies, International Organizations and NGOs, have participated in and contributed to MSNAs in 2020. Relevant humanitarian platforms (such as the clusters) are systematically involved in research design and the collection and/or analysis of data to legitimise and operationalise the process of information gathering and production, while REACH and other specialised actors provide the required technical expertise and resources.

FILLING KEY INFORMATION GAPS

MSNAs are geared towards supporting the humanitarian programme cycle by addressing key information gaps, and serve as complementary or main primary data sources on humanitarian conditions of affected populations. Comparable data made available across all relevant sectors, affected territories and population groups is collected through a transparent, collaborative process led by the Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Coordinator with full involvement of the Humanitarian Country Team and the clusters/sectors.
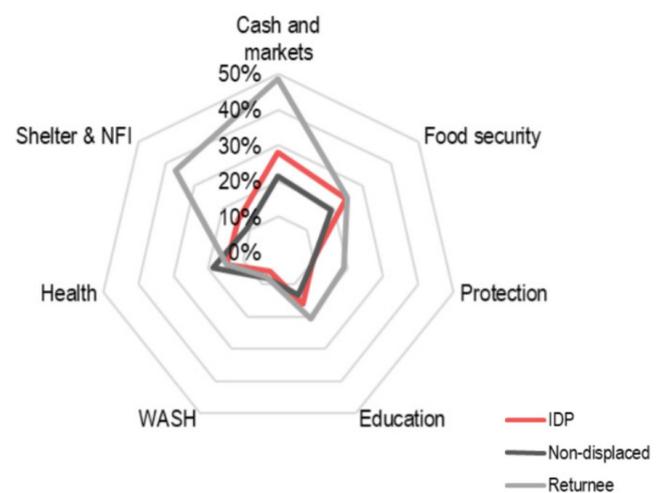
In 2020, within the scope of remote and mixed methodologies developed to face the specific challenges posed by the Coronavirus-2019 pandemic, **107,727 household interviews were conducted, as well as 4,461 individual interviewes, 497 key informant interviews and 13 focus groups discussions**. Data from these was published prior to interagency planning milestones such as the Humanitarian Needs Overviews, Humanitarian Response Plans or Refugee Response Plans, after removal of personally identifiable information and the application of the appropriate data protection measures.

ANALYSIS

The MSNAs capture information required for sector-specific and inter-sectoral analysis, including data requirements for robust and documented People in Need (PiN) calculations as well as severity rankings. Results for such indicators are provided to sectors and humanitarian coordination structures to inform HNO analysis.

Beyond this, MSNA analyses of collected primary data are based on recognized global frameworks and tools developed by humanitarian actors and technical experts. Significant progress has been made since 2018 towards harmonising analyses conducted at the country level, so as to ensure a degree of comparability between different crises, while accounting for contextual specificities.

By collecting and analysing household level data from a unique source (when relevant and possible), MSNAs facilitate inter-sectoral analysis by identifying co-occurrence of sectoral needs across territories and population groups.

Findings from the Libya MSNA on the overall percentage of crisis-affected households with unmet needs, and the proportion of households facing unmet needs in each sector, by population group.

THE WAY FORWARD

Countries in which REACH is planning to conduct MSNAs in 2021

Building upon the achievements and lessons learned in 2020, REACH will continue supporting

1) the roll-out of MSNAs in additional countries; REACH plans to scale up to six additional countries in 2021

2) the testing of reliable cross-crisis analysis methods

3) in-depth analysis for each MSNA