

Assessment and Monitoring Resource Centre

Assessment Concept Note Template

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| EXPLANATORY NOTE |
| The purpose of this concept note is to establish a common understanding and agreement between UNHCR colleagues, and potential partners, regarding any planned or scoped assessment exercise. The Concept Note has two functions:   1. Clarify the assessment exercise objective  * Define the objective of the assessment exercise, ensuring alignment with partners. * Determine the value and benefits that the exercise will bring.  1. Facilitate the decision-making processes  * Facilitate discussions on whether or not to initiate the assessment exercise. * Determine whether it will be implemented by UNHCR and partners or outsourced.   This concept note template is designed to be adaptable to UNHCR-led assessment exercises and joint assessments involving UNHCR and partners. It should be developed collaboratively and tailored to the specific context.  The decision to undertake an assessment exercise is primarily guided by information needs and gaps, the capacity of UNHCR and partners, and risks. This information is captured within the Assessment Concept Note.  A more detailed [Assessment Methodology Template](https://www.unhcr.org/handbooks/assessment/design/developing-methodology/methodology-template) is developed following endorsement of the Concept Note by relevant stakeholders.  The Concept Note should be adjusted to address specific contextual considerations. For instance, in situations where the security environment is highly volatile and poses risks to data collection, highlighting these concerns and prioritizing their discussion in determining the next steps would be relevant.  The concept note should be read alongside [key considerations for developing assessment objectives.](https://www.unhcr.org/handbooks/assessment/design/setting-assessment-objectives) |

Concept Note

Assessment Exercise in [Location]

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Summary

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| **Title** | *Name of the assessment exercise* |
| **Timeframe** | *Expected start date and estimated length of the process* |
| **Target population** | *Population groups that will be the focus of the assessment, such as refugees, internally displaced persons, host community members etc.* |
| **Geographic coverage** | *Relevant locations within the country where the assessment exercise is intended to take place* |
| **Objective** | *The main objective of the assessment exercise* |
| **Organisations** | *Organisations involved in the Concept Note* |
| **Contact details** | *Initial focal point for the assessment exercise* |
| **Budget** | *Resources available and estimate of required budget* |

Displacement Context

*Insert brief introduction to the displacement situation defining the need for an assessment exercise in the context. This could be a recent event that triggered displacement or could describe a longer history of various intersecting displacement or population movements depending on what is most relevant to the current situation. This section may reference key sources of background information.*

Purpose

*Explain why UNHCR, and partners need additional information and for what purpose. This section should summarise whether there is a lack of data or analysis of this data, or why existing data is insufficient. The intended use of the data is important to identify early on, as this will guide the type of information UNHCR, and partners will collect and analyse.*

Objective

*Indicate the main objective as agreed with all those involved. Ensure objectives are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Result-focus and Time-bound).*

*The main objective is the formal and concrete goal that will guide decision-making throughout the process moving forward. It is one clearly stated objective that is often linked to a higher goal beyond the assessment report (see* [*key considerations for developing assessment objectives)*](https://www.unhcr.org/handbooks/assessment/design/setting-assessment-objectives)*.*

*The main objective will be broken down later into specific objectives in the* [*Assessment Methodology*](https://www.unhcr.org/handbooks/assessment/design/developing-methodology/methodology-template)*.* *Agreement on the main objective will ensure that the collected information is relevant and that the purpose and usage of the information is based upon a shared understanding.*

Methodology

*Give a general overview of possible methods that may be used to obtain the information. This is to estimate the budget required for the exercise and to enable a discussion as to whether the exercise will be implemented by UNHCR and partners or be outsourced.*

*Indicate if the assessment will be based on secondary data and observational visits, and if primary data collection is required. If primary data collection is required, indicate whether qualitative or quantitative data is required (or both) and whether representative data will be required, and at what level.*

*The choice on which methods to be used depend on; information needs and the main objective, the capacity of UNHCR and partners, resources available and the situational context (such as the security situation, access to populations, and risks).*

Outputs

*Indicate what deliverables will be produced by listing the deliverables that will be produced so stakeholders will be able to use the data. Deliverables should not be limited to an assessment report, though this is the most common way to present and publish results from an assessment exercise. Depending on the target audience for the results other products such as maps, advocacy materials, vulnerability profiles, may be relevant.*

*It is important to think holistically when considering the* ***target audience*** *when listing outputs. As local communities and displaced populations are often overlooked as stakeholders in a data collection exercise, outputs should be adapted to local communities and displaced populations to promote accountability and transparency.*

Resources available

*Highlight the* *different types of contributions available - both financial and in-kind - since it is not necessarily only financial contributions that are needed. Because of the collaborative nature of the assessment exercises (such as joint assessments) it is important to initiate discussions about shared resources with potential partners early in the process.*

*Types of contributions:*

* *Financial*
* *In-kind, such as human resources and expertise, and materials such as transport, printing, mobile data collection devices*

*If at this point it is already clear that the assessment exercise is going to be outsourced, this section should be replaced with a section called Outsourcing the assessment exercise with information about the process that should be followed to outsource the exercise.*

Estimated budget

*Include a preliminary estimate for the cost of the assessment exercise, to be refined as the process continues. The budget will be revised after the* [*Assessment Methodology*](https://www.unhcr.org/handbooks/assessment/design/developing-methodology/methodology-template) *document has been finalised and agreed upon.*

*See the* [*Assessment Budget Template*](https://www.unhcr.org/handbooks/assessment/collect/defining-budget) *to help identify potential costs.*

Timeline

*Provide a preliminary estimate for the timeframes expected for the exercise for planning purposes. Assessment exercises differ in how long they take. Some exercises can take one week (rapid assessment during emergencies) while others can take months (such as an assessment that includes a representative household survey).*

Risks

*List the different types of risks to be considered in relation to the assessment exercise, including:*

* *Risks to the affected populations (insufficient data protection, lack of protection-sensitive interviewing practices, etc.)*
* *Risks to the staff involved in data collection (difficulty to access certain areas safely, etc.)*
* *Risks to the collaborative process (resource constraints, insufficient capacity or human resources, etc.)*
* *Risks to meeting the assessment objectives (insecure or changing displacement situation, etc.)*

*It is helpful to discuss these potential risks from the outset to manage expectations and to plan the exercise well to minimise risks.*

*Placing the displaced and affected populations at the centre of this data collection exercise that respects their rights and does not expose them to risk is paramount to a protection-sensitive approach. This section should demonstrate that potential risks to populations are considered at every phase in the exercise.*