



*Improving the evidence base on delivering aid in highly insecure environments*

## **INTERIM REPORT**

### **COMPONENT 1: MAPPING HUMANITARIAN ACCESS AND COVERAGE TRENDS**

1 May 2015

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## Executive Summary

The goal of Component 1 of the Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE) study is to produce the first quantitative evidence base for assessing security-related humanitarian access constraints. Although insecurity is a principal impediment to people receiving aid in the most extreme conflict contexts, to date the humanitarian community has lacked concrete information on the extent and dynamics of this phenomenon. Component 1 has sought to objectively measure how humanitarian presence and coverage of needs in some of the worst conflict-driven humanitarian crises – Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan and Syria – have been affected by insecurity.

This report reviews the research activities undertaken by Component 1 to date, and presents some initial indicative findings from field level activities. It also lays out the plan of work for the remainder of the project time period. The Interim Report provides a means to account to the donor, take stock of progress and solicit feedback on the direction and output of the research in order to make any course corrections as necessary.

The research methodology has consisted of data gathering, key informant interviewing and participant observation in the four field settings, plus secondary data gathering and affected population surveying at the global level. The research activities were designed to produce 1) a triangulated set of figures on humanitarian organisations, projects and personnel to serve as a rigorous estimate for humanitarian presence, which would be compared with numbers of people in need in order to calculate a measure of humanitarian coverage; and 2) a body of qualitative information on humanitarian access amid insecurity, from the perspective of aid providers and recipients. While retaining the original objectives and overall research approach, the methodology was adapted through the course of the period to adjust to the exigencies of the different contexts, and the feasibility of different research approaches. The research to date has consisted almost entirely of human information gathering, with a smaller role for technological inputs than the team anticipated, owing to the current state of development and costs of the latter.

The SAVE team recruited field-based Secure Access Monitors (SAMs) who undertook primary research, including quantitative data collection, on the humanitarian response efforts in Afghanistan, South Somalia, South Sudan and Syria over a period of 6-8 months in 2014-2015. These individuals and partner organisations were selected for their context-based knowledge and experience, and their demonstrated ability to access key actors for the purposes of the research. The Component 1 SAVE team designed the data matrices and research guidelines for the SAMs, and oversaw their work through regular communication. Over the course of their assignments the SAMs conducted interviews and consultations, participated in interagency fora and systematically compiled quantitative historical and current data on humanitarian presence. A total of 278 formal interviews were completed for Component 1 research, along with over 200 informal consultations. Each context presented its own set of challenges and limitations for the exercise, with Syria being the most difficult in terms of actors' willingness to share information on their humanitarian activities and deployment. As a general rule, all settings were limited in the extent to which earlier years' data, i.e. pre-2012, could be obtained. This was particularly the case for staffing numbers, which were not systematically kept by most agencies.

Global level research activities were concentrated on gathering general and comparative variables with which to frame and analyse the context-specific information being gathered by the SAMs. This

included general data on humanitarian emergencies, funding flows, demographics and the global population of humanitarian providers. The Component 1 team also designed and commissioned remote surveys of affected people in three countries – Afghanistan, Somalia and South Sudan – using mobile telecoms. Surveys were completed in Afghanistan and Somalia; the survey in South Sudan is ongoing, having met with delays and difficulties in reaching targeted response numbers. Remote surveys were not run in Syria after consultations concluded it would incur a potential security risk for respondents. Household surveys, focus group discussions and key informant interviews have been commissioned to replace remote surveying in Syria.

The data and qualitative evidence from both the field and global levels will be consolidated and analysed as part of the next phase of the research, but preliminary analysis based on the completed field research to date yields some indicative findings that are shared in this report. First, insecurity was seen by humanitarian actors to be the primary determinant of the level and configuration of humanitarian presence in all four countries and dictates operational modalities and locations to a greater degree than levels of need or availability of funding. This dynamic plays out mainly at the subnational level, to the effect that even if the same or greater numbers of humanitarian resources remain in a country as whole, the presence becomes concentrated in more secure areas where access is easier, which makes province level analysis necessary for gauging the affects of insecurity on presence. In South Sudan the initial onset of insecurity was seen to result in a reduction of organisations and programmes, while at the same time funding went up in response to the increased security and logistics costs of operations. Further analysis will determine if the same is true at subnational level for the long-term insecure countries. Prolonged insecurity appears to result in a stable core of international organisations that run fewer, simpler programs, with their international staff concentrated in the capital cities (despite often high numbers of security incidents with significant lethality occurring there) or in neighbouring countries. Finally, donors can play an important role in influencing presence in insecure environments, but it is often perceived as a negative one – potentially introducing partiality by pushing delivery to certain areas and not others, and risk by association for the recipient humanitarian agencies.

With the field research phase concluded, and the affected population nearing completion, the next phase of the Component 1 research will primarily be conducted at the global level, including finalization of the individual country datasets, data consolidation and analysis. This includes addressing data gaps and ensuring consistency in the presence metrics across the four cases, and consulting expert advisors on optimal options for calculating coverage at the sub-national level.

The SAVE research team has invested considerably in building its stakeholder base during this phase of implementation, recognising that early engagement of targeted and relevant stakeholders, will increase opportunities for dissemination and uptake of the findings. This has been accomplished partly through collaboration with key actors, including for the purposes of data-collection and information sharing, as well as through the extensive interviews undertaken by Component 1 researchers in the four case studies. The Component 1 team has held meetings and given presentations on the research at the field and global level, including holding quarterly meetings with the SAVE Advisory Group. Overall, the SAVE programme's stakeholder base has grown by over 250% since the inception phase, to approximately 650 stakeholders. As part of the research engagement process, the Component 1 team will undertake country-level briefings over the next two to three months, in collaboration with the research partners, to solicit feedback on the country-level findings, after they have been further analysed, but before results are finalised. A range of presentations will also be undertaken at the global level, including in New York and Geneva.

The production of Component 1 outputs will be undertaken after a formal peer review process by the Component 1 expert advisors, the SAVE Advisory Group and other key stakeholder experts identified through the research process. The findings will be presented graphically on SAVE's website in the form of security-access mapping products, as well as developed as an article manuscript for submission to a public academic journal. A final report to DFID, to be submitted on 1 May 2016, will summarise the overall research process, including presenting the final methodological approach, and provide an assessment of its longer-term applicability in the humanitarian context. The report will also provide a full summary of the research findings, and document available evidence and impact of its uptake.

## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Component 1 objectives**

The SAVE study is a programme of applied research examining how humanitarian assistance can be securely, effectively, and accountably delivered in insecure places. The purpose of Component 1 is to build the evidence base for this inquiry by concretely documenting and illustrating the current relationship between insecurity and humanitarian action. Specifically, it aims to measure how the size and configuration of humanitarian response is affected by operational security conditions.

In doing so Component 1 will also produce basic quantitative information on the size and shape of humanitarian deployment in the four countries of focus, and thus provide a clearer, more comprehensive picture of the aid response over time than is currently available. For example, to date it has not been possible for humanitarian actors to objectively assess the level of the humanitarian aid presence in most emergencies – in terms of organisations, personnel and programming – beyond the broadest of estimates. Nor have practitioners and policy makers been able to measure and compare the extent to which this presence covers the areas and populations with varying severity of humanitarian needs. And while it is well known anecdotally that insecurity constrains humanitarian access, there has been little empirical analysis into how much, and in what ways. Given that the most insecure operational settings are also often those with the direst humanitarian needs, an evidence-based understanding of the problems is needed to inform solutions to delivering relief assistance.

In order to see how humanitarian presence and coverage are affected by insecurity, the goal of the research was to first devise a means for making rigorous estimates of these two metrics, and then map them against changing levels of security across years. The principal objectives of the research for this component can be summarised as follows:

1. to measure the size, density, and geographical distribution of the humanitarian presence in the four insecure contexts and determine how has it changed over the timeline of the humanitarian response in relation to insecurity;
2. to quantify the level of humanitarian coverage in these cases (programming presence in relation to need) and compare it to non-insecure environments; and,
3. to identify correlations and patterns of changing levels and types of programming to changing degrees of insecurity.

The research has also entailed qualitative inquiry into the determinants of aid programming in insecure environments, and the internal and external factors in decision making around an agency's presence amidst insecurity. Broadly, this encompasses such questions as:

- Under what conditions do aid organisations reconfigure or reduce their field presence?
  - What types of tactics and targets of attacks are most likely to drive changes in operations?
  - Is there a threshold level or tipping point of insecurity (e.g. numbers or severity of incidents) where presence is concerned?
- Which sectors and types of agencies and projects are the most immediately affected by changing security conditions?
- What are the other key drivers of presence in these environments, and how do they interrelate with the security situation?

The research programme has employed a mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative methods, utilising field-based monitoring, interviewing and data gathering, which was augmented by global level research and remote surveying of affected populations. At the time of this writing, the research phase of Component 1 is nearing completion and the data is in the process of being consolidated and analysed at the global level, with a view to identifying gaps and, if necessary, areas for additional research. Some indicative findings at the case level have emerged from this process, which are shared in this report on a provisional basis, with the caveat that final figures and conclusions from the consolidated analysis may differ.

## **1.2 Structure of this report**

This interim report describes the research activities to date, presents the preliminary findings on the effect of insecurity on humanitarian presence and coverage, and outlines the workplan for the completion of Component 1, including anticipated products and research uptake activities. The following section (2) details the research methodology as it has evolved throughout inception and implementation. Because some readers may not have seen the prior Inception and Initiation Reports, portions of the methodology background and definitions are reiterated here in order to give a coherent account. Section 3 reports on the implementation of research activities at the central level and in the four case settings, making note of methodological adaptations, and discusses the programme's accomplishments as well as the challenges and limitations encountered. Section 4 presents a broad summary of emerging findings to date (with the caveat that as analysis proceeds, the indicative conclusions may change). This is followed by a plan and timetable for the remainder of the Component 1 activities, detailed in section 5. Section 6 presents a projected set of consultations, dissemination activities and research products designed to maximise uptake and utilisation of research findings. Depending on the feedback to this report, planned activities and products may be modified or expanded.

## 2 Methodology development

The core elements of the Component 1 research framework and methodology have remained largely consistent with the plan set out in the original proposal for the SAVE programme. During the inception phase, the research team was able to further elaborate methods, and test out different tools and approaches, prior to the start of programme implementation. This section reiterates the research framework and the key points in the methodology development during inception, giving the conceptual outline for what the research programme is seeking to accomplish. Some additional modifications to the methodology were identified after the implementation phase was underway, and these are discussed in section 3.

### 2.1 Original assumptions and proposed methods

The scope of work for Component 1 consists of three principal quantitative tasks: measure humanitarian presence through primary data-gathering, use that measure to calculate the level of humanitarian coverage relative to need, then model the dynamic relationship of humanitarian coverage to insecurity. The Component 1 methodology defined humanitarian presence and coverage as follows:

**Humanitarian Presence** – A measure of the total combined human, material and financial resources of the humanitarian system in a given operational setting at a given time.

**Humanitarian Coverage** – The percentage of the affected population (people in need) reached by the aid provided through the humanitarian international system.

Both presence and coverage can be considered components of humanitarian access, a broader term which the SAVE programme has defined as ‘the degree to which affected people are able to reach, and be reached by, humanitarian aid.’

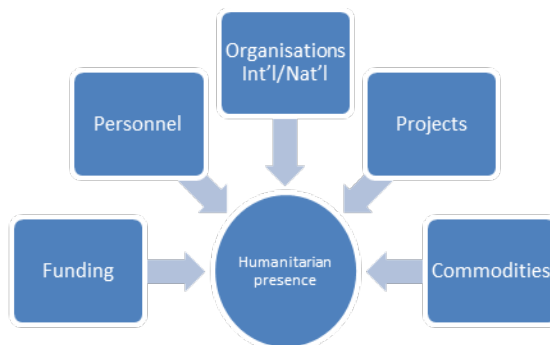
Having defined humanitarian presence as a measure of the combined humanitarian organisations and resources deployed in a given operational setting at a given time, the SAVE team scoped and tested the number of proposed means for getting these numbers during the inception phase of the programme.

A Methodology Conference<sup>1</sup> convened at the start of the inception phase confirmed that ‘no one single methodological approach is likely to provide a complete picture; therefore the research should approach the question from a few different angles, using a mix of methods.’ The group focused on five possible angles for quantifying humanitarian presence, i.e. tracking humanitarian organisations, funding, projects/programmes, personnel and commodities.

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<sup>1</sup> Methodology Conference report, November 2013

## Proposed approaches to measuring humanitarian presence



Obtaining a quantified measure of humanitarian presence would itself contribute to filling a knowledge gap in the humanitarian system, but its ultimate purpose in the research plan is as a means to assess humanitarian coverage (i.e. the level of presence in relation to the level of need). In this calculus, the presence level is the numerator, and the denominator is the estimated number of people in need of humanitarian assistance, based on figures in humanitarian response plans. The Methodology Conference report noted that ‘to address the problem of double counting, [it is necessary to] use a standard formula for estimating the number of beneficiaries from the available sectoral data.’ The team left this to be developed in the implementation phase (discussed in section 3.3.3, below).

## 2.2 Inception period findings and adjustments to the methodology

### 2.2.1 Methods to quantify humanitarian presence

Incorporating the feedback from the Methodology Conference and additional peer reviews, the Component 1 team re-examined and elucidated the central research questions and explored potential partners, methods and tools to assess feasibility, usefulness and cost-effectiveness. Key to this process was an options paper produced by Dr Patrick Meier, technical adviser to Component 1. The paper contained an extensive scoping and feasibility assessment of different tech-based approaches and tools for gathering data along the various lines proposed at the Methodology Conference. In addition to the options paper and global consultations with relevant actors such as OCHA, ACAPS and others, the SAVE Director and Component 1 Coordinator made visits to all four case study settings to get a field level perspective on the methodology and its feasibility, as well as to do some preliminary scoping of research partnerships.

The table below summarises the findings and conclusions around each of the methods assessed. The more technology-dependent methods proposed, such as GPS tracking of aid commodities and social media crowd sourcing were found to be infeasible due to limited penetration of these technologies in the contexts and among the actors being studied. While intriguing, and perhaps showing great promise for research initiatives in the future, they were not practical solutions for the SAVE research objectives at this time. Other technological tools such as data-mining and web-scraping for information were found to be of limited use at best, with all roads leading back to ‘manual’ (human) research methods, both in the field and online.

Separately, a pilot of the remote surveys of affected populations survey conducted in Kandahar and Herat, Afghanistan during the inception period found the instrument yielded interesting data on



perceptions of security and access from the aid recipient standpoint. While it was of limited use as a means for triangulating humanitarian presence (due the large numbers of respondents that would be needed in each province to get a representative sampling), the team determined it to be of qualitative value and as an additional layer of information that could potentially cross-check the operational data gathered from agencies.

Planned research activities and assessment of tools (from SAVE Inception Report, May 2014)			
Objectives	Activities	Data sources and tools	Conclusions
1. Quantify humanitarian presence in the four contexts	Identify and profile all (or critical mass of) operational organisations engaged in aid provision in country.	Web-based organisational data gathered 'manually' by research assistants/interns	<b>Feasible</b> – Will be basis for data research work cycle
		3Ws data from OCHA, clusters, ACAPS	<b>Feasible</b> – Verbal agreements made for information sharing
	Enumerate total 'deployment' of aid workers at national and subnational levels.	Global Database on Humanitarian Organisations (GDHO) created by Humanitarian Outcomes	<b>Feasible</b> – Being migrated to online database format where it will also serve as key output
		Web-scraping/monitoring technology (Scraperwiki, Meltwater, customised scripts for searching resources such as GDELT and ReliefWeb,)	<b>Limited use</b> – Can be helpful for specific data resources and in conjunction with manual data compilation
	Identify numbers, types and locations of projects being implemented.	Field researchers (Secure Access Monitors)	<b>Feasible</b> – Used for compiling and verifying 3Ws data
		Financial Tracking Service (FTS)	<b>Feasible</b> – Contains agency and project information
		Affected population surveying (mobile phone IVR surveys)	<b>Limited use</b> – Can augment information but too costly for significant sampling in all contexts
		Crowd-sourcing via social media	<b>Not feasible</b> – Limited usage among subject populations
2. Calculate humanitarian coverage	Quantify the need levels using estimates of affected population.	Commodity tracking systems using RFID, GPS or SMS platforms	<b>Not feasible</b> – Limited use by humanitarian agencies and no centralised source of data
		Web-based data gathering on population and emergency data	<b>Feasible</b> – 'Caseload dataset' template designed and being populated
	Analyse aid flows by sector and recipient agency type.	Consultation with OCHA/ACAPS	<b>Feasible</b> – Consultations ongoing
		Financial Tracking Service (FTS)	<b>Feasible</b> – Comprehensive figures back to 2001
3. Model humanitarian	Run regression analysis to identify correlations.	Aid Worker Security Database	<b>Feasible</b> – Extensive security data already available, and
		Excel statistical functions,	

access amid insecurity	Map changing security conditions to presence/coverage.	ArcGIS mapping, Google Motion Chart	software already acquired or open-source (free)
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The team also considered the funding metric and determined that while it is possible to calculate total humanitarian funding per affected person, and this can be useful information in assessing humanitarian coverage, it should not be overemphasised. In some cases (for instance logistically difficult environments where it is very costly to operate logistically), relying on funding flows per population alone would overstate the level of actual humanitarian presence.

The findings from the inception phase thus concluded that the humanitarian presence estimate would comprise the numbers of organisations, projects and personnel, with funding as a secondary indicator. With the approach for quantifying humanitarian presence solidified, the Component 1 team elaborated the plan for field and global level research.

### 3 Implementation: Research activities

#### 3.1 Team structure and management

Component 1 research activities are being undertaken by SAVE researchers at the global and national levels. During the field research period, the Component 1 Coordinator, with support from the SAVE Director, oversaw implementation and provided direct management of the Secure Access Monitors (SAMs) conducting field research in each of the four contexts. This was done through weekly Skype calls, continuous email communication and regular progress updates from SAMs. The Component 1 Coordinator and/or the SAVE Director also visited each case context midway through the research programme, and the team additionally benefited from visits of the SAMs from Syria and South Sudan to New York. Additionally, the Component 1 Coordinator, assisted by a Research Associate and Consultant Data Scientist, is leading the global level research and analysis.

#### 3.2 Field-level research

##### 3.2.1 Objectives and approach of the Secure Access Monitor function

The methodology for Component 1 called for ground level research capacity to liaise with operational organisations, humanitarian coordination platforms, OCHA, key donors and other relevant entities to ‘collect, verify, compile and monitor real time information on the humanitarian operational presence and its reach to the affected population’ (SAM Terms of Reference, 2014). Because humanitarian response consists of numerous autonomous agencies making individual decisions regarding where and how to program, it is inherently difficult to construct a clear and accurate picture of humanitarian deployment. The ‘Who’s Doing What Where’ (3Ws) operational mapping is useful as a general outline, but it does not show geographical or organisational depth of presence and can lead to both overestimates of presence (e.g. an agency showing programming in an area where their staff and activities are minimal or is still in the planning phase) and underestimates (e.g. by failing to capture the work of locally-based organisations). For that reason, a sustained field research presence in each context was essential to investigate presence first-hand. Having a full-time field researcher on the ground allowed for building relationships with actors, obtaining more specific and quantified operational information and the ability to verify it on the ground (although this was not possible inside Syria). The SAM model also afforded a first-hand understanding of the humanitarian operational environments and the specific access challenges.

The SAMs were tasked with:

- Working with operational agencies through relevant forums and channels to establish trust and agree on protocols for information sharing, including protection and anonymisation of data
- Participating in relevant coordination fora as a means to brief relevant stakeholders on the research tasks, avoid duplication of information asks to organisations, scope existing data available, identify information gaps and undertake ongoing assessment of aid access, quality and accountability
- Scoping, collecting and compiling existing operational data across the range of relief actors in the context, including the UN (OCHA, cluster leads and CHF, as relevant), Red Cross/Crescent movement, INGOs and other international organisations and national NGOs. Tracking instances of programme contraction, relocation, withdrawal, or expansion, depending on security changes or other external access factors
- Cross-checking and updating/expanding this information through key informant interviews and participant observation (e.g. in coordination meetings), maintaining written notes from all interviews and meetings in accordance with information security protocols

### **3.2.2 Selection and deployment of field researchers**

The SAVE programme recruited field researchers for the SAM function in each of the four case study contexts following successive visits undertaken by the SAVE Director and Component 1 Coordinator. In the inception visits the SAVE team scoped potential research partners and met with key interlocutors to introduce the research programme and lay the groundwork for collaboration. After reviewing proposals and consulting with references to select the individuals and entities best suited to undertake the research, the team visited each context again to finalise the contracts as well as the hosting and facilitation arrangements. The research partners selected were as follows:

#### ***Afghanistan – The Liaison Office***

Afghanistan has a relatively large pool of local research organisations that can undertake deep field research securely. Following meetings and assessment of three different Kabul-based research entities, SAVE contracted The Liaison Office (TLO) as the Afghanistan research partner for Component 1. The decision was based on TLO's track record of primary research for other international organisations, including on access-related issues, their reach across a wide geographical scope and their well-established knowledge and network of contacts in the provinces of interest, as well as within the humanitarian community and Kabul-based key actors. It was agreed that research would be carried out in the provinces of Kandahar, Khost, Kunar and Uruzgan. These provinces, representing the south, north and north-eastern regions of the country, were selected for their combination of high humanitarian needs and volatile security conditions. As it was not feasible for the field research to cover all 34 Afghan provinces, these provinces serve as a reference point for humanitarian operations in the rest of the country. The data collection exercise however covered the entire country. TLO and the SAVE programme maintained informal relationships for research support and specific data inputs from OCHA Afghanistan, amongst others.

#### ***Syria – independent research consultant, hosted by OCHA***

For Syria, Amman, Jordan serves as the principal coordination hub for the regional humanitarian response to Syria (and Syrian refugees), and many organisations maintain regional headquarters

there. For reasons of ease of access to the major players, therefore, the SAVE team recruited the Syria SAM to be based in Amman, with travel to other countries in the region. The independent consultant recruited for the SAM role had prior experience researching access information in the region (Turkey), and already had familiarity with the humanitarian response activities and actors. Through an agreement between the SAVE programme and the Office for the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator, the SAM was hosted in OCHA's Amman regional office.

### ***South Central Somalia - Axiom***

As in the Afghanistan context, the team determined it would be more useful to contract with an institution capable of fielding local personnel in southern Somalia, with a Nairobi-based focal point coordinating the research. SAVE contracted with Axiom Consulting, a Nairobi-based research group, specialising in Somalia field research. It was agreed that the field-based information gathering and triangulation would be carried out by Axiom's Somali researchers in the regions of Banadir, Afgooye, Baydhaba, Belet Weyne, Kismaayo and Jowhar, while the focal point directed their work and conducted interviews and data gathering with agencies at the Nairobi level. Throughout the assignment the SAVE programme maintained informal relationships for research support and specific data inputs from the Somalia NGO Consortium, the NGO Safety Program (NSP) and the OCHA Nairobi office, as well as inputs from a wide range of operational agencies.

### ***South Sudan - independent research consultant, hosted by Care International South Sudan***

Recruitment for the South Sudan SAM took longer than the other contexts due to the relatively small pool of available, qualified individuals with appropriate research skillsets. In October 2014 the position was filled by a qualified individual with two years of highly relevant experience (interagency humanitarian coordination) in the country. The 12-month position, based in Juba, covers all three of the SAVE research programme's components and is hosted under an agreement between SAVE and Care International South Sudan. Additional support and facilitation as well as specific data inputs have come from OCHA and the South Sudan NGO Forum, as well as the operational agencies in South Sudan.

### **3.2.3 Progress of field research during reporting period**

For their final deliverables, each SAM was responsible for producing a populated data matrix (spreadsheet) with quantitative data on presence (per location/per year), and a final report with country level analysis on trends and issues in humanitarian coverage amid operational insecurity. At the time of this writing, all four SAMs were in the concluding phases of their Component 1 field research activities and had produced their populated presence data matrices and a first draft final report. Timelines for completion required extensions for various reasons in each location, described below, with the end result being that field level analysis and outputs were delayed by approximately two months. While this has not incurred additional costs for the SAVE programme (as field researchers were paid on the basis of deliverables), it has meant a longer overlap between Component 1 and the work of Components 2 and 3.

As one of their initial outputs for the assignment, all SAMs adapted an Information Sharing and Anonymisation protocol as a means to assure agencies that the SAVE programme would be keeping their data secure and not publishing any detailed information that could potentially create a security risk (see sample, attached as Annex 1). The protocol was shared with interviewees as a

confidence-building measure and general reference on the SAVE project objectives and confidentiality policy.<sup>2</sup>

Building on the SAVE contact list in each context, each SAM designed a workplan intended to systematically target humanitarian agencies for data and conduct interviews. In order to have common approach across the four countries, the SAMs were provided with a data matrix (spreadsheet) to undertake the quantitative data gathering on presence (per location/per year), as well as an interview guide (see Field Case Study Interview Guide, attached as Annex 2).

Each SAM was directed to gather baseline information for the data collection exercise, including from the Financial Tracking System (FTS), as well as specialised UN data from the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), and where possible, OCHA's 3Ws country dataset. In three of the four countries OCHA's 3Ws data was shared..

The fieldwork encompassed a total of 273 interviewees, including Afghanistan (82), South Central Somalia (25, Nairobi-based), South Sudan (85)<sup>3</sup> and Syria (81). Approximately 35 per cent of interviewees were female respondents. In Afghanistan, 40 per cent of interviews were conducted in the capital, Kabul, and the rest were undertaken in the four focus provinces, including Kandahar (22), Khost (9), Kunar (8) and Uruzgan (8). In South Sudan all interviews were undertaken in the capital, Juba. In Syria, approximately 30 per cent of interviews were conducted in Amman, Jordan the rest were undertaken in Turkey (44), Lebanon (9), and smaller number by-phone with organisations in Damascus, Iraq, and New York (6). In Afghanistan, South Sudan and Syria, the interviews also involved the data collection and/or verification process where an organisation's presence data was requested or compared to available information. In the case of South Central Somalia, a separate process was undertaken, involving 252 separate organisations consulted regarding their presence for the purposes of verification, including 200 LNGOs, 41 INGOs, 2 IOs and 9 UN agencies.

### ***Afghanistan***

The Afghanistan research was delayed from the outset due to a series of staff turnovers at TLO, coinciding with work slowdowns during the Ramadan period. Initially the Program Director for TLO took responsibility for the SAVE research, including introductory meetings with Kabul-based actors while a permanent focal point for the SAM-Afghanistan was identified. As a result of the delays the contract timeline was extended through March 2015, an additional four months.

#### **Data-collection and interviews**

For the purposes of data collection of humanitarian presence, the SAM-Afghanistan, based in Kabul, focused on obtaining consolidated lists of agencies and activities, followed by direct agency interviewing to verify the data and seek additional detail. During the inception period, OCHA Afghanistan agreed to share its operational presence information as part of its expanded 3Ws exercise. This initiative by OCHA, and the relative openness of humanitarian agencies to consult with SAVE and to share information, benefitted the work of the SAM-Afghanistan. In all, 35 formal interviews were conducted in Kabul.

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<sup>2</sup> One agency requested and was provided a further signed confidentiality commitment from the SAVE programme leadership.

<sup>3</sup> The SAM-South Sudan undertook many of these interviews based on a combined (component 1 & 2) interview template. Component 2 findings will be reported on in the Interim Report due 1st August 2015.

### **Field level triangulation and interviews**

An Afghan staff member of TLO coordinated research at the field level for the four provinces of Kandahar, Khost, Kunar and Uruzgan. A total of 47 interviews were conducted. Because the Kabul-based research was delayed, SAVE agreed with TLO to move forward with the fieldwork in parallel, rather than as a second phase as originally planned. The field results were thus used for comparison/triangulation as opposed to after-the-fact verification. The Kabul-based focal point and field research coordinator adapted the interview guide for use in the provinces, and contacted the humanitarian agencies using a prioritised list that was developed for each setting. TLO's contingency staff conducted interviews in each of the provinces (local inhabitants trained to conduct surveys). The research in the provinces was completed at the end of February 2015, and information transmitted to Kabul for consolidation/comparison with the data matrix.

### **Key challenges**

In addition to the delays, the key challenges in Afghanistan relate to capturing indicators agencies have not consistently tracked, such as staffing, particularly for years before 2012 (the targeted timeline for Afghanistan data is 2006-present). In addition, at the provincial level, Kandahar proved more difficult than the other provinces in terms of reluctance to share information. The field research coordinator found this to be partly owing to security concerns, and partly reputational concerns of agencies not wanting to reveal their organisation is actually doing less than it appears on paper. Overall, the biggest sensitivity found among all contacts in Afghanistan, however, was around sharing budgetary information.

### ***South Central Somalia***

The Director of the Axiom research group served as the SAM-Somalia focal point was based in Nairobi, where many of the humanitarian agencies responding to Somalia have offices. The SAM made a number of trips to Somalia during the course of the assignment for information gathering and in-person meetings with the team of Somali researchers who undertook the field level verification.

### **Data-collection and interviews**

As in Afghanistan the planned approach was to first scope and compile consolidated information sources, such as OCHA Somalia's 3Ws, and implementing partner lists from the major international donors, as well as INGOs and ICRC/Somalia Red Crescent, then cross-check this data with field verification and interviews. Delays in the finalisation of OCHA's data meant that interviews and fieldwork needed to be conducted in parallel, however the 3Ws and CHF databases proved very useful for cross-checking once received. In addition, the SAM-Somalia compiled public available information from various online sources to augment and triangulate the primary information gathered. The SAM-Somalia conducted 25 formal interviews in South Central Somalia from Nairobi. The formal interviews included qualitative inquiry as well as quantitative requests.

### **Field level verification and interviews**

The Somali team members are based in different locations in the regions of South Somalia including, Afgooye, Banadir, Baydhaba, Belet Weyne, Jowhar and Kismaayo. They were selected for their networks of contacts in different and trained by Axiom in field research techniques. The Somali team conducted 252 consultations with separate organisations (involving 363 separate inquiries, due to the need to contact multiple sub-offices of the same organisation) in the regions for the purposes of verification (these were not formal interviews, but rather for cross-checking and verification). The modality involved contacting the organisations working in the region to get



official information on presence, following which they consult with their local contacts in the community to verify it. Each researcher was tasked with populating blank templates, which were then exchanged between them for data triangulation and consolidation. Depending on the level of programming activity in a certain region, the spreadsheet may be passed back and forth multiple times.

### **Key challenges**

Data management is a sensitive issue in Somalia and, like in Afghanistan, the inclination of many organisations is to avoid disclosing much information either for security reasons (most often cited) or because the real level of performance or presence is lower than expected and therefore the detailed information is not to be shared externally.

Other limitations include high turnover of senior staff of humanitarian agencies and the consequent loss of some institutional memory. In particular, humanitarian organisations have not consistently tracked human resources deployment figures, particularly those that have been working under a remote management or partnership model due to the extreme insecurity in South Central Somalia. Nevertheless, the SAM-Somalia researcher was able to collect and consolidate a large amount of data, with a considerable degree of sectoral and geographic granularity.

### **South Sudan**

As mentioned in the previous section, the research in South Sudan began later than the three other cases (in November 2014) owing to the difficulty identifying a skilled and experienced researcher based in Juba. Once the researcher was recruited, however, the work proceeded quickly, thanks to a fairly close-knit community of humanitarian actors headquartered in Juba (in large part already well-known to the SAM-South Sudan) and their relative openness in terms of information sharing. With the 2-3 month timeline extensions afforded to the other case assignments, therefore, the SAM-South Sudan is now in the concluding phases of Component 1 research, at roughly the same time as the other contexts.

### **Data-collection and interviews**

The SAM-South Sudan position received considerable support and cooperation from the South Sudan NGO Forum and OCHA, including consolidated data from OCHA's 3W database, the NGO Forum's membership database, and several donor mappings that had been provided. While the information was more readily available in South Sudan than it was in the other contexts, it too did not contain the full depth of detail sought by the SAVE programme. The SAM therefore complimented the data-collection with substantive interviews with 85 representatives of operational agencies to confirm or correct information specific to their organisations in the database, and to get qualitative information on organisational decision making, perceptions of insecurity and the overall humanitarian response. The humanitarian actors with larger in-country presence were prioritised for the initial meetings, given their larger amount of presence data to collect, following which smaller organisations and local partners were approached. Finally, for the purposes of the SAVE research, the SAM-South Sudan also attended in an observational capacity a regularly scheduled set of security and coordination meetings in Juba.

### **Field level verification and interviews**

During the assignment, SAM-South Sudan travelled to conduct field research in Jonglei and Unity, two of the three conflict states. While this was for the purposes of Component 2 and 3 affected population consultations, Component 1 will benefit from these field level insights as part of the next phase of analysis.

### **Key challenges**

The greatest challenge to mapping programme presence in South Sudan has been physically verifying ground presence across large, remote areas while humanitarians operate to a large extent in a rapid and mobile response modality, meaning staff are often only in a location for a short period of time. The team will consider this in relation to the methodology during the next phase of analysis to determine an alternative way to map the rapid response presence. Conversely, static (often more developmental) programs may still be running but have limited human resources and supplies to create impact (predominantly in opposition areas) and will therefore appear on the map to be implementing as usual. The team will also consider ways to distinguish this in the data so as not to skew the picture, greatly overstating the level of presence and coverage.

In addition, due to frequent staff turnover, the SAM–South Sudan found institutional memory at most humanitarian agencies to be low. While there were far fewer concerns about security of information compared to the other case countries, challenges remained in terms of locating the data. For some organisations, historical data from 2012 was difficult to provide.

### **Syria**

The SAM–Syria began work in mid-August 2014. During the assignment, in November 2014, the SAM–Syria travelled to conduct field research in Southern Turkey (Gaziantep and Antakya) and Beirut, Lebanon, two of the major hubs for cross border relief operations into Syria. The six-month contract for the SAM–Syria, originally planned to conclude in late February, was extended to April to allow for final attempts to obtain data from a number of agencies that had been solicited.

### **Data-collection and interviews**

With the support of OCHA Amman, the SAM started analysis by having some access to existing operational mapping and presence information, as well as the opportunity to participate as an observer-analyst in interagency humanitarian access initiatives, including the Needs, Response, Gaps (NRG) System. The objective of the NRG, which consisted of both INGOs and UN agencies, was to provide humanitarian organisations and coordination groups with a regional and Whole of Syria (WoS) overview of the needs, response and gaps in relief aid by sector and geographic sub-district. Consequently this initiative was dealing with many of the same research and information issues addressed by the SAVE project, and made for a useful collaboration.

Through OCHA, SAVE was able to collect information on UN activities, but information gathering from NGOs, ICRC and the national societies, including the Syria Arabic Red Crescent has proven more challenging. Even with assurances that SAVE would keep information secure and anonymised, many agencies were reluctant to share specifics on their areas of operations at district level, their staffing and the types of activities they were conducting from different hubs. The SAM–Syria made contact with 40 INGOs, comprising the majority (90-95%) of the INGO response. Ultimately 63 per cent of those solicited agreed to share quantitative data, and of those only 8 per cent (just three organisations) provided it at the requested level of granularity.

### **Key challenges**

Of all the contexts studied, Syria proved most difficult to collect reliable and comprehensive operational information from humanitarian actors. As an extension of agency reticence for information sharing, donors, including DFID, were unwilling to share lists of their implementing partners and activities – information requested by SAVE as a means of triangulating the 3Ws data, despite assurances of strict confidentiality and anonymisation. As a result of these challenges, SAVE



anticipates a higher level of extrapolation and proxy estimates will be needed for the Syria case when the quantitative analysis is finalised.

As reported by the SAM-Syria, there are a few reasons why humanitarian actors responding to Syria are so reluctant to share information. First and foremost is concern for the security of their national staff and partners inside Syria. In addition, a general atmosphere of mistrust, reinforcing and reinforced by weak coordination, pervades the humanitarian community responding to the Syria crisis, particularly but not exclusively among those engaged in cross border operations. Finally, there are problems with weak capacity of organisations to track and/or consolidate their own information, and for some, simple lack of information on their remote programming owing to monitoring challenges. It was often the case that repeated inquiries and information requests by the SAM-Syria were met with noncommittal responses rather than direct refusals, making it difficult to know when to conclude the attempts.

### **3.2.4 Issues and lessons to take forward in Component 1 analysis**

In terms of process for undertaking the comparative country analysis, certain data gaps in the presence metrics – organisations, projects and personnel – are inevitable, with the personnel data being the patchiest of the three. While the aggregate statistics can still be used to accurately indicate overall trends, these data gaps will need to be carefully addressed in a manner that is consistent across cases. The first step will be for the research to assess the size of the gap areas in each country dataset and determine what can be imputed using a standard formula for a consistent approach across cases. If it is determined that this is not possible, for instance if the staffing data prove too sparse or unreliable to derive an accurate measure or reasonable proxy, the presence measure may be recalibrated. This could involve basing the measure on the numbers of organisations and projects alone, without including the staffing metric, or finding a viable alternative presence, such as the numbers of field offices, for example, if available. In making these decision the researchers will consult with SAVE technical advisors and outside data experts (i.e. statisticians).

In addition, the funding variable needs to be looked at separately rather than as a coefficient of presence. Programming in insecure places is inherently more expensive, and the level of contributions is not a reliable indicator of programming presence or the even ability to deliver. Similarly, counting overall numbers of organisations and projects in a country may present a skewed picture, because it does not indicate where this presence may be concentrated. The analysis and presentation of findings will therefore need to focus on the sub-national (provincial) level.

## **3.3 Global level research**

In addition to backstopping and overseeing the work of the SAMs, the SAVE Component 1 team at the global level has been coordinating the affected population surveys, gathering and consolidating secondary data on humanitarian organisational presence, funding and demographics in the case study countries operational data of humanitarian organisations, developing a methodology for estimating people in need, maintaining data collection on security incidents for mapping against humanitarian coverage and performing programme support activities such as instituting information technology (IT) security measures.

### **3.3.1 Affected population remote surveying**

The SAVE programme methodology included the use of remote surveying of local populations over mobile phone networks in the case study countries. The interactive voice response (IVR) surveys had the dual objectives of serving as an additional piece of evidence to triangulate humanitarian presence information, and obtaining the local inhabitants' perspectives on security in their area and the barriers to humanitarian access (see sample IVR survey script, attached as Annex 3). In environments of severely constrained access like the four case countries, remote surveys have certain advantages over face-to-face surveys, including: being much less time- and labour-intensive to carry out; incurring no risk to surveyors and potentially lower risk to subjects; a lower risk of fraud/falsified data; less incidence of biased, repeated sampling of more accessible populations; and potentially better access to female respondents in areas with cultural constraints to surveying women (although the gender imbalance could persist in areas where the majority of mobile phone users are men). The drawbacks to the technology are the expense (IVR surveys can cost upwards of \$60 per respondent) and the dependence on cellular networks, which in underdeveloped and war-affected locations can result in very low response rates if cell coverage is limited or disrupted.

During the inception phase the SAVE team consulted with the two primary providers of IVR surveying in the regions being studied – GeoPoll and SoukTel – and piloted the survey instrument with GeoPoll in two provinces in Afghanistan, Kandahar and Herat. The pilot results (100 responses, 50 from Kandahar and 50 from Herat) indicated that the survey was feasible to obtain the number and balance of responses sought. The team also solicited input on the questionnaire and pilot results from field-based contacts in all the case countries, in order to ensure that scripts were properly translated and clear, and that the questions were unambiguous and appropriate for the targeted population.

For the implementation phase, SAVE chose to contract with GeoPoll for the Afghanistan survey and SoukTel for Somalia and South Sudan, based on their respective reach and experience in those contexts. After conversations with GeoPoll and regional contacts regarding the Syria context, it was decided that the potential for surveillance of mobile phone communications represented an unacceptable risk for respondents, and would therefore not be run, and in this context the SAVE programme is undertaking direct consultations with affected populations (see Syria section below).

#### **Somalia**

In October 2014 SoukTel ran the survey for South Central Somalia and reached the target number of responses: 267 (the sample size required at 95% confidence level). To ensure that the population in and around Mogadishu (more likely to have cell phones) was not oversampled, the SAVE team requested SoukTel to run an additional 'callout' to the respondents to confirm their locations. The results showed the survey to be acceptably dispersed, and the lesson learned to include more specific location information in the South Sudan survey.

#### **Afghanistan**

Afghanistan survey from the four regions were completed by GeoPoll in March 2015, having garnered 771 responses from the provinces of Kandahar, Khost, Kunar and Uruzgan (to augment Component 1 fieldwork in those provinces), as well as the provinces of Helmand and Paktika (to afford a broader capture of perspectives and to augment the fieldwork of Component 2, which will cover those two provinces in addition). The Afghanistan survey allowed for larger numbers to be gathered than the minimum sample size of 267 due the relative ease of this method due to larger and more consolidated mobile phone network coverage throughout the country. The approach taken, therefore, was to use an 'opt-in' question to determine if the respondent or anyone in his/her local community had received humanitarian assistance. If the answer was no, the survey would

conclude at that point, and calls would continue until reaching the target number of yes responses, wherein respondents went on to answer a series of questions about humanitarian assistance in their area. The total 'no' responses were also made available to the research team at no cost to the SAVE programme, which allow for another piece of evidence for triangulation on humanitarian presence. This revealed that 70% of the survey respondents (541 out of 771) had not received or witnessed humanitarian assistance delivered in their area.

### **South Sudan**

The South Sudan survey has faced delays due to a low response rate. SoukTel and in-country contacts consider the main factors hindering response to be cellular network disruptions caused by the government, including periodic intentional shut-downs of cell towers; weak network coverage generally; limited English skills among much of the population outside Juba (it did not make sense to translate the South Sudan survey into a language other than English, the country's official language, because there are over 60 indigenous languages spoken in the country); and unfamiliarity with or fear of the IVR survey tool among those whose phones were randomly called. At the time of this writing the survey is ongoing and attempting to reach the target number of 267, with the majority of respondents targeted from the worst conflict states of Unity, Upper Nile and Jonglei. To do so the survey will also be disseminated to IDPs currently in Juba, with an additional question included to determine their place of origin.

### **Syria**

In addition to the research undertaken with humanitarian actors, the SAM-Syria performed an initial scoping of research entities that could undertake consultations (focus groups and surveying) with affected populations inside Syria. Because of the relative difficulty of such an undertaking amid active civil war, the SAVE team decided that this will take place in tandem with Component 2, merging the two sets of research questions. A call for proposals resulted in three organisations interviewed and referenced checked. Proximity International, a research consultancy based in Gaziantep, was selected as the entity best suited to undertake the combined research. Members of the Component 2 team visited Gaziantep in April to finalise the contract and agree arrangements for the research. The affected population surveying will involve 500 household surveys, as well as 60 focus groups and 50 key informant interviews. It will start in early May and be completed by mid-September 2015 (see sample Household survey script, attached as Annex 4).

### **3.3.2 Secondary data gathering on contexts, operations, and security incidents**

A principal research task of the SAVE team at the global level has been to collect and consolidate the background data that will augment and frame the information gathered by the SAMs, as well as data on the independent variables that will be used to identify security related affects on coverage. This includes information on:

- humanitarian responses 2006-2014 (case studies and contemporaneous emergencies for comparison): location and type of emergency, people affected, and funding contributed
- general population figures for the four case countries, disaggregated by subnational region
- security incidents (attacks on aid workers) by location
- general violence level (combat-related and 'terrorist' incidents)

The Component 1 researchers have been drawing the figures from publicly available sources and Humanitarian Outcomes' databases, and entering them to a consolidated dataset for analysis that includes the information from the SAMs' field research.

### *Data on humanitarian emergency response and demographics*

General figures on emergency responses and global funding contributions have been drawn from the UN's Financial Tracking Service. FTS is also a useful resource for cross-checking agency-specific reported funding, projects and sectors of operation in the case study countries. CRED EM-DAT and World Bank datasets provide data on people affected and general population figures. The SAVE project methodology includes a standard formula for systematically imputing population figures for the 'gap years' where no data is available.

In addition to the above 'humanitarian caseload' dataset, Component 1 makes use of Humanitarian Outcomes' Global Database of Humanitarian Organisations ([www.humanitarianoutcomes.org/gdho](http://www.humanitarianoutcomes.org/gdho)), which tracks basic information on local and international humanitarian operational agencies worldwide, including programme expenditures, staffing and countries of operation. This data will be useful for overall comparison of response levels between the case study countries and more secure operational environments.

### *Security data*

The SAVE project also benefits from another comprehensive database run by Humanitarian Outcomes that tracks security incidents affecting civilian aid operations, called the Aid Worker Security Database ([www.aidworkersecurity.org](http://www.aidworkersecurity.org)). Incidents are coded by tactic, target (type of aid agency affected) and location, which will allow the research team to identify correlations between incidents and changes in presence.

In addition to incidents specifically affecting aid organisations, which SAVE determines to be the ones that most directly affect decision making around aid agency presence, the team is also compiling statistics on other forms of deliberate violence occurring in the locations, using sources such as the Global Terrorism Database and the Upsala Conflict Data Program to compare trends of aid worker attacks to overall violence as related to presence outcomes.

### **3.3.3 Calculating coverage: PIN methodology, and case-based data gathering on demographics, emergencies.**

As outlined in section 2, above, the SAVE research programme will estimate humanitarian coverage by looking at the number of organisations, projects and personnel against number of people in need in a given locality.

$$\text{Coverage} = \frac{(\text{organisations} + \text{active projects} + \text{personnel})}{\text{People in need}} = \frac{\text{Aid presence}}{\text{Need}}$$

While the SAMs were working to get the organisational presence data that would form the numerator for this equation, the challenge facing the Component 1 team was how to get the denominator figure in the absence of any rigorous, agreed-upon standard for how the total number of people in need of humanitarian assistance is calculated. The difficulty in obtaining quality information in volatile settings, combined with political interests that can influence how the numbers are derived, has meant that the 'people in need' (or PIN) estimation has been a particular information coordination challenge for humanitarians for some time.

Recent improvements in coordinated planning and assessment, reflected in the Humanitarian Programme Cycle mechanism, now provide PIN numbers broken down by total people in need per sector. However, this creates a problem of double counting, since recipient groups for different sectors overlap. As a result, many of the humanitarian Strategic Response Plans (SRPs) do not attempt to derive a consolidated figure of people in need or targeted recipients, but simply present

the numbers and targets for each sector. The fact that this is done inconsistently across emergencies makes comparing PIN coverage ratios across emergencies problematic.

To tackle this problem the SAVE team drafted a methodology paper (12 December 2014) on options for a standard approach/formula for deriving PIN numbers. It examined a few different options, including:

1. 'Using a sectoral approach to our calculation of coverage, to match the sectoral breakdown of available figures. I.e., instead of looking at overall aid presence relative to total people in need, we would go sector by sector looking at aid resources devoted to specific interventions. Although this would have the benefit of numbers being already available in CAPs/SRPs, it would add complexity. Moreover, despite the CAP/SRP sectoral categories for needs and funding, most aid organisations do not have clean sectoral divisions, so the breakdown would be in many respects artificial and leaving greater room for error.
2. Using the largest single sectoral total of people affected cited as a minimum number. For instance, if there are 500,000 people in need of shelter after a flood, and that number exceeds those in need of any other intervention like food or health care, we know that 'at least' 500,000 people are in need of humanitarian assistance. While this gets around the double counting problem, it will not capture the total people in need in the country (e.g. there will be some people whose homes are intact but they have lost access to food or health care).
3. Using a proxy figure for 'scale' based on pre-crisis population density in emergency-affected areas. This would be the simplest option, but would mean accepting a very broad and imprecise measurement, which would necessarily sweep up many people who live in affected areas but are not in need of aid. It would also make it difficult to defend comparisons between emergencies that are very different in scope and scale of impacts.
4. Using selected data categories as indicators. For instance, the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters' Complex Emergency Database (CEDAT) combines the global acute malnutrition rate (GAM) and the crude mortality rate to determine the threshold for the definition of a complex humanitarian 'emergency'.<sup>4</sup>

*Minimum Affected Population = #Global Acute Malnourished + Internally Displaced Person*

This uses two relevant and relatively reliable data sources that are non-overlapping and can be compared across emergencies to define severity. For the purposes of the SAVE Component 1 analysis, since we are seeking to determine the number of (surviving) people in need of aid, the crude mortality rate is not useful, but the basic approach makes sense for the objectives of our analysis.'

The SAVE team originally proposed to use the basic approach outlined in above Option 4, substituting the crude mortality rate with the number of internally displaced persons, to yield a rough estimate of the minimum number of people in need in a humanitarian crisis. After sharing

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<sup>4</sup> GAM is defined as 'all children falling under 80% of the median ... of weight-for-height ... and/or having Oedema, as compared to the median weight of children of the same height in the reference population.' (<http://cedat.be/glossary>)

this proposed methodology with the SAVE Advisory Group (AG) and other peer reviewers for critique and feedback, this approach was abandoned. The feedback from the AG and other experts indicated that data on Global Acute Malnutrition was not sufficiently available across countries to use as a consistent, reliable metric to calculate people in need. As a result the team has decided to proceed with the above Option 2, maximum value of people in need per sector (i.e. the sector that counts the largest number of people needing that form of aid) as the best available proxy.

### **3.3.4 Ancillary activities: IT security and data visualisation planning**

During the inception phase, the SAVE team commissioned an IT security audit for Humanitarian Outcomes to identify vulnerabilities and recommend new measures to ensure that any sensitive information collected by the SAVE programme could be securely communicated and stored. This exercise resulted in the following security improvements, instituted during the implementation phase:

- website vulnerabilities were identified and eliminated
- the entire suite of Humanitarian Outcomes websites are now covered by the HTTPS secure protocol
- SAVE programme staff use an encrypted email programme to relay sensitive communications
- shared files containing data collected by the SAMs have an additional encryption layer
- organisation and programme-wide IT and information sharing protocols have been instituted

Additionally, the Component 1 researchers are scoping the various methods and tools for data mapping and visualisation for possible use in the Component 1 outputs. As part of this process they are consulting with external experts and with ongoing humanitarian information management initiatives, such as OCHA's Humanitarian Data Exchange.

## **4 Emerging findings from the field research**

As of late April 2015, the field research phase of Component 1 was near completion. Country background reports<sup>5</sup> and individual data matrices are anticipated to be finalised by the SAMs as of 1 May, at which point the Component 1 team will be consolidating and analysing the data within and across cases, as well as addressing the gaps in the country datasets where hard numbers were not possible to obtain (see section 4.4).

The emerging findings presented in this section are partial and preliminary, and should be read with the caveat that the interpretations and conclusions may change after the consolidated analysis, and pending consultation and peer review feedback.

### **4.1 Initial summary findings across cases**

Although the four countries differ in their patterns of violence and in the nature of the threats to humanitarian operations, insecurity represents the primary determinant of and impediment to humanitarian presence in each of them. This is manifested both directly, as in Afghanistan where

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<sup>5</sup> The SAMs were encouraged to provide as much detail as possible, including non-anonymised data in the background reports in order for the Component 1 team to fully understand and analyse the findings. For confidentiality reason they will remain as background documents and not be shared beyond the project team.



the direct targeting of aid workers prevents agencies from expanding to new areas, and indirectly, as in South Sudan where ambient security concerns (i.e. the fear of combat ensuing/recurring) has prevented humanitarians in investing in the logistics capacity necessary to maintain a sustained presence.

The effects of insecurity on humanitarian presence is often obscured at the national level, because financial flows and sometimes the number of responding organisations tend to increase to the country as a whole in response to conflict-related humanitarian crisis. At the subnational level the effects of insecurity become more visible, revealing low or no presence in some heavily affected areas as the response becomes increasingly configured according to ease of access more than need.

At the onset of insecurity in contexts like South Sudan, the types/sectors of programming are seen to change, often reflecting a lessened ability to sustain more complex technical programming that may require stable access, ability to monitor closely or to bring in technically skilled staff from parts of the country. In that instance, the numbers of projects in food security/livelihoods, WASH and health sectors went down over all. The next phase of analysis will examine whether similar affects can be measured at a subnational level in other countries (for instance in response to a spike in insecurity in a specific Afghan province).

The overall aid presence at the country level does not fluctuate sharply in response to security incidents, and some aid agencies have remained in or returned to countries even after major attacks entailing fatalities. More common is for an agency to withdraw from a particular locality, without leaving the country. Instead the high insecurity environments tend to evolve a fairly stable core of international organisations and local partners that have been operating for years in the setting, but with fewer, simpler programs, and their international staff concentrated in the capital city (as in Afghanistan and South Sudan) or staying mainly across a border (as in Syria and Somalia). This is despite the fact that capital cities themselves have often been the locus of violence, including significant numbers of attacks on aid workers.

The implications of insecurity for national staff and local partner organisations differ in each context, but are particularly divergent in South Sudan. The ethnic nature of the violence there has meant that unlike in the other countries, nationals are considerably more at risk for direct targeting than internationals, hence international staff have safer access and more freedom of movement to field locations. In the other settings, although ethnicity and mistrust of nationals from other parts of the country can still be a risk factor for national staff, remote management through highly localised national staff and partner organizations is much more feasible and widely used than in South Sudan.

Finally, donor governments have played a complex and at times problematic role in the humanitarian presence calculus. For example, agencies have raised concerns about security implications when donors apply funding pressure to steer them to higher-need, but higher-risk, areas in Afghanistan. Impartiality and independence is threatened – and there are attendant security risks –when donors discourage programming in opposition held territories in Somalia and Syria, for instance, and in general agencies fear the association with donors' political agendas, which can mark them as legitimate targets in the eyes of opposition forces in these settings.

## 4.2 Case contexts, humanitarian needs and presence

### 4.2.1 Afghanistan

Decades of conflict in a chronically poor and underdeveloped country, punctuated by periodic natural disasters, has resulted in severe humanitarian needs across Afghanistan and a highly constrained operating environment. At present, an estimated 683,000 Afghans are internally displaced, and there are significant humanitarian needs across all sectors.

Three years after being toppled by the US-led invasion, the Taliban re-emerged in Afghanistan as an insurgent force and began retaking some territory and challenging the Kabul government, particularly in the South and East regions of the country. Other armed militant groups such as the Haqqani Network and the Pakistani Taliban, along with many local armed factions, operate in parallel, with ambiguous affiliations to each other and to global insurgent movements like Al Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS). Additionally, many nominally pro-government power-holders maintain their own armed forces that are effectively outside of state control, adding to the general instability and violence.

The NGO presence has contracted from its high point in the first few years after the initial rout of the Taliban government. As the civil conflict gradually intensified in the middle of the last decade, with the insurgents gaining ground and mounting attacks against aid operations along with government and military targets, many INGOs have reduced their staff size and activities. These remain largely clustered in the north of the country, where it is relatively more secure, despite greater levels of conflict and needs in the southern provinces.

### 4.2.2 South Central Somalia

Somalia's state failure and long-running humanitarian crisis is rooted in inter-clan conflict, and the emergence of the al-Shabab (AS) militant group (a wing of the former Islamic Courts Union government that was deposed with the help of Ethiopian forces in 2006) has introduced an international Islamist element to the insecurity dynamics.

Since the rise of AS, the main focus of the conflict in Somalia, chiefly affecting the South Central region, has been between AS on one side and the Somalia National Government supported by the African Union 'AMISOM' mission on the other. In addition to this larger scale fighting, there is ongoing localised, clan-based violence. Without a functioning government or rule of law, Somali civilians have armed themselves for protection, and small conflicts can quickly escalate.

In addition to the humanitarian impacts of conflict, including a significant number of IDPs, South Central Somalia is regularly affected by drought and flooding, the effects of which are exacerbated by the weak infrastructure and the high vulnerability of the population who have little access to essential services. These repeated shocks from natural disasters are another driver of displacement and loss of livelihoods among the Somali population. In 2011, the progressive deterioration of the situation during the drought seasons led to the declaration of famine in July 2011. This led to a major increase in funds available for the region.

Humanitarian aid presence in South Central Somalia has been low for very many years due to insecure conditions, with the majority of international organisations running their programmes remotely through partner organisations. Humanitarian presence inside Somalia did increase in 2012 in response to the famine, but this was mainly concentrated in Mogadishu, whereas the epicenter of the famine was in Bay, Bakool and Lower Shabelle. Cash transfer distribution was also



scaled up at this time, and to an extent enabled programming in less accessible areas since it requires lighter field presence to implement than other types of programming. The presence increase was overall dampened by al-Shabab's expulsion of 16 aid groups from South Central Somalia in 2011, including UN agencies and major INGOs. For the UN agencies the famine was a brief uptick in presence in an overall trend of decline since 2007. INGO presence has continued to increase between 2012 and 2014, but increasingly concentrated in Mogadishu and the other significant humanitarian hubs. Remote management arrangements have reduced the level of confidence in programming, both within organisations themselves and in relation to donors and counterparts, which has also had the effect of generally discouraging transparency and information sharing.

Confronted by recurrent spikes in acute emergency needs within the overall humanitarian crisis, the aid community has also progressively attempted to change its strategy from emergency response to longer-term, resilience-oriented interventions, with the aim of addressing the underlying vulnerability of the population. The limited access in many areas of South Central Somalia, however, makes the provision of targeted, comprehensive intervention strategies highly challenging.

#### **4.2.3 South Sudan**

In South Sudan, long simmering conflict between political rivals broke out into violence in the capital city of Juba in December 2013. The crisis has affected all 10 states in South Sudan, although fighting has been primarily in the Greater Upper Nile states of Jonglei, Unity, and Upper Nile. In this north eastern region of the country there has been fierce fighting and civilian atrocities have been committed along ethnic lines.

An estimated 1.9 million South Sudanese were displaced by the violence, and tens of thousands of them sought refuge at the bases of the UN peacekeeping mission (UNMISS), which took them in and came to be known as Protection of Civilian (PoC) sites. In all, 6.4 million people are estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance, with the most severely affected in the Greater Upper Nile region.

Already host to a large number of humanitarian and development actors due to extreme poverty and years of conflict prior to independence, South Sudan's needs profile shifted from chronic crisis support to more acute humanitarian relief and protection. The dynamics of this shift led to significant challenges for both affected populations and aid operations. The initial fighting and fears of insecurity led development and humanitarian programs to pull out of many areas. INGOs and NNGOs reduced humanitarian programs in Greater Upper Nile by a combined almost 24% in 2014. The withdrawals meant for a loss in some of the gains that had been made to build the country's struggling health and education systems.

Only a few organizations ran programs in affected areas throughout the initial months of conflict, and the majority of the humanitarian community was largely confined to PoCs and peripheral areas. As frontline positions in the conflict settled, a larger number of humanitarian organisations attempted to reach populations outside of the PoCs, where the vast majority of the affected and displaced population is located. This effort was supported by the creation of a Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), funded through the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF), focusing on food security, nutrition, WASH and health. Several parallel rapid/mobile response structures were established by other humanitarian actors in addition to the RRM. While there has ostensibly been a significant scale up of activities, the myriad of 'in-and-out' responses to serve populations often

scattered in remote pockets, or moving between distributions, has made the tracking of presence and coverage is increasingly difficult. While there were attempts to coordinate these mobile responses, through for example, the Operational Working Group (OWG), there were challenges in the process. The emergency scale-up has been most noticeable among organizations with the largest budgets pre-crisis, as funding channels prioritized those with capacity to respond across multiple sectors in multiple areas.

#### 4.2.4 Syria

Syria's brutal civil war has caused the displacement of an estimated 7.6 million people, wreaked major damage to public infrastructure and services and divided the country up between four main warring factions: the government of Syria, the Islamic State (IS), the opposition forces (including primarily the Free Syrian Army) and Kurdish fighters.

Humanitarian needs in Syria have continued to rise, with an estimated 12.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance as of late 2014. Often labelled a 'protection crisis', the Syria conflict has been characterized by intense fighting and widespread targeting of civilian populations and facilities, the latter largely after indiscriminate aerial shelling from Government forces in opposition areas. While humanitarian needs exist across the whole of Syria, the areas most heavily affected by conflict such as Aleppo and Idlib Governorates, have higher numbers of IDPs and affected people.

The humanitarian response to Syria is highly politicised, and has been divided from the start between the internal and cross border relief operations. The UN-led aid response is coordinated from Damascus and mainly implemented by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), while the cross-border relief efforts (officially illicit until the 2014 UN Security Council resolutions endorsing them) come mainly from NGOs in Turkey, with some smaller-scale activity from Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq.

Unlike the other contexts, before the current crisis Syria was not already host to a large number of aid organisations, so the humanitarian presence was established in response to the conflict. The SAVE programme's analysis indicates that in addition to the ICRC and SARC, the number of known international humanitarian agencies operating in Syria has increased from an estimated 15-20 agencies to at least 52 between 2011 and 2013, before stabilizing at at least 54 agencies in 2014. The majority of these operate cross-border from Turkey into parts of northern Syria. The humanitarian response conducted by local organisations has become increasingly important over time, but is particularly challenging to capture. Overall, there is an estimated 15-20 diaspora NGOs operating on the Syria crisis. Their number has grown since 2011 before stabilising in early 2013. As well as approximately 150-200 Syrian or Turkish NGOs operating primarily in partnerships with INGOs based in Turkey or UN agencies based in Damascus.<sup>6</sup> Direct implementation by international organisations with international staff is now virtually non-existent with the majority of agencies programming through local staff and/or local entities, whether cross-border or from Damascus.

### 4.3 Patterns of insecurity and how it impacts on presence

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<sup>6</sup> Some reports have put the total number of diaspora and Syrian local organisations as high as 600-700 (Svoboda & Pantuliano 2015), but this was not the finding of the field research. The discrepancy will be investigated in the global analysis.

As stated in section 1, the SAVE programme defines humanitarian presence as ‘a measure of the total combined human, material and financial resources of the humanitarian system in a given operational setting at a given time.’ This is different from access, which is, more broadly, the ability for people in need to reach/be reached by humanitarian assistance. To measure presence, the SAVE programme analysis distinguishes between ‘sustained’ programming, where staff and materials remain in situ, providing aid to people in a given location, and ‘one-off’ or ‘mobile’ interventions, which are used as a secondary (last resort) and opportunistic means to get aid to people in extremely hard to access areas. This latter modality has been the principal means of delivering aid inside Syria, and was increasingly practiced in South Sudan after the outbreak of conflict.

The four cases being studied were selected primarily because they represent the world’s most insecure humanitarian operational environments, as measured by numbers of attacks against civilian aid operations in recent years. The types of patterns of insecurity are unique to each context, however, and as such have different impacts on operational decision-making and presence. The combination of heavier weaponry used (including explosives) and higher numbers of kidnappings in the Afghanistan, Somalia and Syria contexts contribute to a policy atmosphere of highly restricted movement of international staff. South Sudan has smaller scale (small arms) incidents, kidnappings are rare and as previously noted, international staff are not seen to be targeted, as compared to their national colleagues, creating a different security dynamic.

#### *Attacks on humanitarian operations by case country, 2013*

Country	Total incidents	Total victims	International staff victims	National staff victims	Shooting	Kidnapping	Bombing	Other
Afghanistan	81	167	16	151	17	32	23	2
Somalia	19	40	6	34	12	1	4	0
South Sudan	35	46	7	39	12	0	0	5
Syria	44	69	10	59	1	17	11	15
Total	179	322	39	283	42	50	38	22

*Source.* Aid Worker Security Database, April 29<sup>th</sup> 2015, [www.aidworkersecurity.org](http://www.aidworkersecurity.org)

#### **4.3.1 Afghanistan**

The large and complex constellation of threat sources in Afghanistan has made negotiated access for humanitarian operations difficult, and the association of aid efforts with the West’s stabilisation campaign has created very dangerous conditions for humanitarians, as witnessed by the highest numbers of attacks on aid workers in Afghanistan than in any other country in the world, for seven years running. Aid organisations have been specifically targeted by the Taliban and other armed groups seeking to control of territory or to weaken and discredit the Kabul government and its Western allies. Nearly all agencies interviewed (save only for those working exclusively in the country’s Central Highlands) cited insecurity as the main obstacle to moving or expanding their programming presence in the country. Most commonly, aid workers are attacked as targets of opportunity during travel, when they are moving through areas as outsiders, but smaller numbers of agencies have also experienced insecurity at the project sites themselves, when armed groups have targeted the project or its staff. Short of a staff member being killed, security incidents rarely result in organisations withdrawing from an area, rather, as the geographical space in which they

perceive they can safely operate decreases, they tend to remain in areas where they are known and have been operating for years, rarely starting projects in new locations. The resulting situation has the majority of agencies and programs concentrated in the relatively more peaceful north of the country, while greater areas of need go un- or under-served in the rest of the country.

The overwhelming majority of international personnel are based in Kabul. Most NGOs reported no international staff permanently present outside of Kabul. UN agencies likewise have a small international staff presence outside of Kabul. In a typical pattern, roughly 90% of agency staff are Kabul-based, with one or two international staff then based at major regional centres such as Herat or Jalalabad. Only the Afghan Red Crescent reports having access approximately 95% of the country, but unlike in Syria (where it is required by the government) international aid resources have not been channelled through this national entity to any significant degree.

Aid agencies in Afghanistan cite security as the primary factor influencing their presence decisions, with funding being a secondary, though still notable, factor. Nearly all interviewees noted that extensive community consultation and negotiation would need to precede expansion to any new area, which naturally creates delays. Negotiations to assure safe entry to an area, even for emergency response, might last from several weeks to several months, if they can be completed at all. Interviewees also stated that the limiting factor would not be insurgent-control of the area, but rather contestation between government and insurgency control, i.e. active and ongoing fighting. This stands to reason, as a local command would have an incentive to allow aid to inhabitants within their area of control. Nonetheless, most organisations in Afghanistan have not evidenced a willingness to test this proposition, as they have proven generally reluctant to move into new areas, insurgent-controlled or not.

Not all agencies in Afghanistan are immune to the influence of funding on decision-making, however, and this was cited as the second major driver of presence decisions. Although recent pressure by the UN and donor governments for agencies to increase programming in underserved areas like the south has not had a significant effect on agency presence, a small number of agencies did report being persuaded by the prospect of funding to undertake new interventions in the southern region, and in Khost in the southeast, where a refugee crisis from Pakistan prompted a surge in funding for relief aid. Still this has not done much to address the imbalance between the areas with the largest aid presence and the areas with the greatest need.

#### **4.3.2 South Central Somalia**

In Somalia, years of extreme insecurity have resulted in an extremely light presence of international agencies, to the extent that numbers of attacks understate the actual rate of violence affecting aid operations. That said, the majority of AS attacks have targeted government and AMISOM staff and assets (by assassination, road ambushes and suicide attacks on infrastructures or convoys.) UN agencies have also been specifically targeted for attack by AS, owing to their political identity and allegiance in the conflict. Interestingly, the current humanitarian deployment remains concentrated (and highly 'bunkerised') in and around urban centres where Somali National Government and AMISOM are present, placing humanitarians in direct proximity to AS targets.

The main risks to both local and international organisations in Somalia in recent years have been mostly related to local clan dynamics and criminality. A greater percentage of violent incidents affecting operations in Somalia redound to employment and local contracting disputes than in other countries, according to the Aid Worker Security Database statistics. While many aid actors seem to overemphasise the centrality of AS to their perceptions of physical risk, it does pose a legal and

financial risk to humanitarian actors. With AS designated as a terrorist group in February 2008 and with the large proportion of south Somalia under AS control, the risk for aid organisations operating in such areas became much higher. Donors reduced the level of funding for aid delivery in AS-controlled areas and passed sanctions and counter-terror legislation effectively compelling aid organisations to work only in non-AS territories regardless of needs. The push from donors to also fund activities in the so-called 'liberated areas' with or without the 'stability funds' increased the perception that the Western aid organisations were working to support the government.

### 4.3.3 South Sudan

In the case of South Sudan, operational insecurity derives from the ambient violence of ethnic civil conflict and territorial struggles far more than direct targeting aimed to strike at the aid operations themselves. Humanitarian actors in South Sudan view insecurity more in terms of large-scale instability, and are particularly concerned with military movements as presenting a threat to staff and assets. As a result there are entire counties remaining sparsely served by aid, not due to perceived direct threats to personnel, but due to fear that the areas are, or could be, contested. In terms of direct threats, the most at risk of attack are Sudanese national staff from outside of their local area/ethnicity, while violent criminality in densely populated areas like Juba and the Maban County refugee camps affects national and international staff alike.

Insecurity and the lack of infrastructure to confidently manage the security risk has limited presence in the three worst-affected states of South Sudan in direct and indirect ways. In the first few months of the conflict, the majority of the humanitarian response was confined to working in the UNMISS-controlled Protection of Civilian (PoC) sites and peripheral, less affected states, despite this representing only around 4 per cent of the displaced population.<sup>7</sup> For several months into 2014, during which key territories were repeatedly changing hands, the humanitarian response remained limited to a few locations with consistent access and relative safety to operate. Once frontline positions mostly settled, organisations began to reopen their field offices in the region, many of which had been looted and stripped of vehicles and other assets.

A push among the humanitarian community to get aid to the hard to reach areas resulted in a greater use of mobile deliveries and air-drops as opposed to sustained programming presence. As an example of the indirect affects on insecurity on presence, agencies have been unwilling to re-establish sustained programme presence even in areas where there is no active fighting. The reason most of them cite for this is not insecurity per se, but rather lack of logistics capacity in those areas. However, the reason they are unwilling to build (or rebuild) this capacity is because of the concern that fighting will resume and they don't want to make the investment of staff and assets that might soon be at risk again.

Humanitarian presence in Greater Upper Nile as a result is measurably lower and configured according more to ease of access (including the presence of landing strips) than need. As quantitative data collected by the SAM-South Sudan shows, overall humanitarian programming in the Greater Upper Nile region reduced by 12% in terms of organisations and projects between 2013 and 2014, and the programming that is taking place has shifted to the mobile, in-and-out modality of aid delivery, alongside the PoC camps. This is likely due to the variety of programs and

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<sup>7</sup> The exceptions were Red Cross, MSF, and WFP who maintained some programming presence in affected areas throughout the initial months of conflict

agencies present before the crisis, including many development-gearred with lower thresholds for risk.

The costs and difficulty of physical access into conflict-affected areas in South Sudan has been a major factor in operational decision making, particularly now that so much of the aid response relies on air transport for security reasons – even where road conditions are passable. Donor funding shifted away from the PoCs to prioritize hard-to-reach areas, and so largely went to fewer, larger organisations with the capacity to respond to priority sectors and locations. Human resources factors also affect presence. South Sudan is a hardship posting, and seasoned international aid workers have resisted being deployed in the field for more than a few months because of the rough living conditions. Moreover, the national recruitment pool was perceived depleted of qualified hires. While organisations seek to hire locally when possible, the capacity of candidates in field locations are typically very low.

#### **4.3.4 Syria**

In Syria there is virtually no sustained programming presence and the majority of aid coming into the country is implemented in one-off, mobile deliveries. Across all hubs for humanitarian operations, insecurity writ large has been the main factor limiting humanitarian access. The proliferation of rogue militias, IS consolidation of territory and the lack of unified control in north-western opposition areas during the course of 2013 and 2014 created new threats for humanitarian cross-border activities from Turkey in particular. INGOs working from Turkey have since 2013 therefore curtailed international staff movement into Syria and adopted remote management strategies, using national staff and local partners in 2013. In 2014, they have used additional strategies, such as relocating of activities to safer areas in the northwest, using private companies to transport good inside Syria, and moving toward increased voucher and cash-based programming.

Insecurity-driven constraints comprise purely conflict-related insecurity (bombardment, ground-fighting and cross-fire) and targeting of aid operations (including diversion of aid and violence/kidnapping of personnel). Targeting of aid increased after the consolidation of IS, which is seen as a particular threat to humanitarians, having kidnapped and publicly executed aid workers engaged in the response. The areas that have had the most constrained access are in the northeast of Syria – in parts of Aleppo, Homs, Hama and Al-Hassakeh Governorates, as well as almost in the entire Deir-Ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqah Governorates, and parts of southern Damascus, Rural Damascus and Quneitra Governorates. As of January 2015, parties to the conflict continued to regularly block access across conflict-lines. These are the sign of a wider trend in northern areas of reciprocal blocks on access between IS and its opponents, rendering IS-controlled areas particularly hard to reach. For the humanitarian response, it reinforces the importance of cross-border access to these areas.

#### **4.4 Preliminary affected population survey results**

To date, surveys have been completed in Afghanistan and South Central Somalia, and one is ongoing in South Sudan. As noted in the previous section on methodology, the surveys are intended to serve as an additional piece of information in the country case level analysis, both to support the triangulation of humanitarian presence data to the extent possible, and also as qualitative evidence from the perspective of the affected population recipients of aid. As such, their main value is in country and location specific results, and they were not designed to produce overall, cross- case



findings on civilians in insecure environments. However, some preliminary and partial findings, shared below, can be interesting to note:

- A plurality of the Afghan respondents (42%), echoing the humanitarian actors interviewed, cited **insecurity** as the most significant barrier to humanitarian assistance in their area. Corruption and insufficient quantity of aid coming in were rated the second most important barriers (24% each)
- In South Central Somalia, conversely, the overwhelming majority (83%) cited **corruption** as the biggest impediment to receiving aid.
- In the past three years, the Afghans reported a decreasing number of aid organisations working in their areas, while Somalis reported an increase (note: a majority of respondents were located in Beledweyne).
- Majorities in both countries said that food assistance was the most pressing need in their areas. However, only 37% of Afghans said food aid had been provided in their area, compared to nearly all (95%) of Somali respondents who answered the positive.
- In both countries, most respondents did not perceive aid organisations to be in specific danger of violence (the exception was in the Afghanistan province of Helmand).

The seeming contradiction of the last point in relation to most Afghans citing insecurity as the main aid impediment could perhaps be explained by the respondents making a distinction the generalised insecurity of their contested areas from belligerents specifically targeting aid operations.

## 5 Workplan for Component 1 completion

The key tasks for the remainder of Component 1 will be finalization of the individual country datasets, data consolidation, analysis and production of outputs. The findings report will be drafted in the format of an article manuscript with the plan to submit it for consideration in a public journal. The findings will also be presented graphically on SAVE's website in the form of security-access mapping products. Peer review will take place first among wider SAVE research team and Component 1 expert advisors (one or two of whom may be invited as co-authors), then AG and additional external experts to be identified.

A final report to DFID, to be submitted on 1 May 2016, will summarise the overall research process, including presenting the final methodological approach, and provide an assessment of its longer-term applicability in the humanitarian context. The report will also provide a full summary of the research findings, and document available evidence and impact of its uptake.

	Tasks	Month
<b>1</b>	<b>Data synthesis/analysis</b>	
1.1	Finalise matrix template for consolidated dataset	May, 2015
1.2	Review and input all field presence data	
1.3	Additional data queries: ICRC/SARC, OCHA	
1.4	Input population data	
1.5	GDHO data review and input where useful	
1.6	Input FTS reference data (funding and projects)	
1.7	Input security data from AWSD and GTD	
1.8	Gap assessment and consultation with data scientist	
1.9	Finalise approach and undertake data analysis	June, 2015
1.10	Completed consolidated analysis of survey responses	
1.11	Complete consolidated interview summary	
1.12	Final qualitative evidence synthesis	
<b>2</b>	<b>Article and mapping products</b>	
2.1	Findings summary and article outline to SAVE expert advisors for feedback, including submission targets	September, 2015
2.2	Gather recommendations on data visualisation tools and designs	June, 2015
2.3	Design/commission of static and dynamic maps and infographics	June-August, 2015
2.4	Draft article manuscript and submit to journal	November, 2015
<b>3</b>	<b>Reporting and workshops/briefings</b>	
3.1	Interim Report to DFID	May, 2015
3.2	Report to Advisory Group & C1 technical advisors	June & September, 2015
3.3	Workshops in four countries	June, 2015
3.4	Final Report to DFID	May, 2016

## 6 Research uptake

This section presents the overall SAVE programme stakeholder engagement, the launch of the SAVE blog, as well as specific plans for research engagement and dissemination of Component 1 findings, including country and global level briefings.

### 6.1 Stakeholder engagement

The SAVE research team has invested considerably in new stakeholder engagement during the implementation phase, as well as deepening engagement with stakeholders identified during the inception phase. This has been accomplished partly through collaboration with key actors, including for the purposes of data and information gathering, as well as through the extensive interviews undertaken by SAVE researchers in the four case studies. The SAVE team has also presented on the goals and methods of the SAVE research at the field and global level in a wide range of forums, as well as actively engaged in a range of related policy initiatives.

Overall, the SAVE programme's stakeholder base has grown by over 250% since the inception phase, to approximately 650 stakeholders.



In addition to approximately 120 stakeholders based at headquarters locations, the SAVE team has engaged with a wide range of aid actors and donors in the case study contexts including in Afghanistan (125), Somalia (129) , South Sudan ( 85) and Syria (203). The SAVE stakeholder database is divided by country and organisation type and disaggregated by sex, amongst other criteria. Approximately one third of SAVE stakeholders are female.

### **6.1.1 SAVE Blog**

As part of the SAVE research team's effort to reach a wide and diverse audience, a SAVE blog will be launched in mid-May. The blog will share the results of SAVE research as it progresses. The blog will be located on the SAVE website and updated regularly. Both Humanitarian Outcomes and GPPI will share the posts on the organisations' social media and, as with other SAVE products, the posts will be shared across multiple platforms.

## **6.2 Quality assurance**

### **6.2.1 Research Advisory Group**

At the outset of the implementation period, the SAVE programme constituted its Advisory Group (AG), bringing together advisors from the key humanitarian stakeholder groups including the UN (OCHA and UNICEF), INGO (IRC, NRC, EISF), the Red Cross/Crescent movement (ICRC), donor (DFID) and research/academic communities (HERE-Geneva, Columbia University). The group has held three meetings to date, the first of which gave special focus to Component 1 methodology and planned activities, and the following two meetings provided an opportunity to review progress. The next meeting to be held in early June will discuss Component 1 interim findings.

Outside of formal meetings, AG members have provided the SAVE team with direct feedback on methodological questions, as well as practical advice on field programming issues, and referrals from their networks. This ongoing consultation has been invaluable to the research.

All AG meetings have been hosted by the UK Mission to the UN in New York, with videoconference link to colleagues in London and teleconference link to Geneva.

### **6.2.2 Peer Review**

A peer review group for each component was established during the inception phase. Component 1 peer reviewers and technical advisers, consist of experts, particularly from the epidemiology and technology fields. These individuals have critically input to the methodology for the component, and provided advice on approaches to data gathering and analysis for this research. The peer review team will be engaged to review the interim findings and their inputs will be reflected in any public outputs.

## **6.3 Component 1 interim findings briefings/ workshops**

The Component 1 team will undertake country and global-level briefings over the next two to three months, in collaboration with the research partners. These briefings and structured discussions will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to provide feedback and input after findings have been analysed, but before results are finalised. It will also offer an opportunity for Component 1 stakeholders to discuss the comparative findings from across all four contexts, which will serve to facilitate cross-country learning as it emerges from this research.

At the country level, briefings will be arranged in collaboration with the research partners and hosts, and in coordination with OCHA and/or NGO consortium in each country. Component 1 Coordinator will lead each briefing, alongside the local researcher/research partner. Bilateral briefing sessions with DFID's Country Office and OCHA will also be conducted in these countries.

Briefings are tentatively schedule as follows:

- South Sudan: Juba, 15-16 June
- Somalia: Nairobi, 11-12 June or 17-19 June
- Afghanistan: Kabul, late June/early July
- Syria: Amman (Jordan) and Gaziantep (Turkey) late June/early July

At the global level, in addition to seeking opportunities to provide briefing to DFID's humanitarian advisers, briefings will also be conducted in New York and Geneva, including with OCHA and key actors of the secretariat to the World Humanitarian Summit, and to a donor group through the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative, amongst other stakeholders.

## **6.4 Products**

Based on feedback from the Advisory Group, peer reviewers, plus country-level stakeholders, and the after completion of the analysis outlined in section 5, Component 1 will develop the core outputs of the component.

This includes data visualization products, including dynamic security-access maps, and the drafting of a manuscript for submission to an academic/technical journal. Peer reviewers will provide further guidance about possible journals for submission. The average timeframe to be expected for publication is almost one year, thus SAVE expects this article to be published in 2016.

## **6.5 Monitoring research uptake**

The SAVE programme tracks all aspects of research engagement and dissemination. The SAVE research programme also adheres to DFID 'green' open-access policy and all outputs will be distributed and made available without cost.

The SAVE programme has created a research uptake and dissemination log. The document is used to track all instances of engagement and uptake of SAVE research. The log includes all SAVE presentations and inclusion of any SAVE material in events or materials as well as inquiries on the SAVE programme. Dissemination of outputs, including all SAVE blogs, will also be monitored on the tracking document. This includes categories on output type, number of views (or attendees, where applicable), and where it was distributed.

Dissemination and impact analyses will be undertaken after selected outputs and events, including through a short five-question evaluation for all stakeholder at the end of workshops and briefings. This questionnaire will serve to evaluate both logistical elements (location and time of meeting), as well as interest in and applicability of SAVE research findings to participants. The results of these assessments will be presented in SAVE's Annual Reports. As described in the SAVE logframe, stakeholder interviews will also be conducted in the final quarter of the SAVE programme.

# Annexes

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***Annex 1: Information Sharing Protocol***

***Annex 2: Field Case Study Interview Guide***

***Annex 3: Affected Population Remote Survey Instrument***

***Annex 4: Syria: Affected Population Household Survey Instrument***