IMPROVING THE EVIDENCE BASE ON DELIVERING AID IN HIGHLY INSECURE ENVIRONMENTS

SUMMARY INCEPTION REPORT

28 March 2014

By

HUMANITARIAN OUTCOMES LIMITED

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

THE GLOBAL PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE (GPPi)
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<td>3Ws</td>
<td>Who, What, Where</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACAPS</td>
<td>Assessment Capacities Project</td>
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<td>ALNAP</td>
<td>Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance</td>
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<td>AWSD</td>
<td>Aid Worker Security Database</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>UK Department for International Development</td>
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<td>EISF</td>
<td>European Interagency Security Forum</td>
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<td>FSNAU</td>
<td>Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit</td>
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<td>FTS</td>
<td>Financial Tracking Service</td>
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<td>GDHO</td>
<td>Global Database on Humanitarian Organisations</td>
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<td>GPPi</td>
<td>Global Public Policy Institute</td>
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<td>GTD</td>
<td>Global Terrorism Database</td>
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<td>HLWG</td>
<td>Humanitarian Liaison Working Group</td>
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<td>HO</td>
<td>Humanitarian Outcomes Ltd.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HQ</td>
<td>Headquarters</td>
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<tr>
<td>IASC</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Standing Committee</td>
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<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
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<td>ICTs</td>
<td>Information Communication Technologies</td>
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<td>ICVA</td>
<td>International Council of Voluntary Agencies</td>
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<td>IDS</td>
<td>Institute of Development Studies</td>
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<td>IFRC</td>
<td>International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies</td>
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<td>IM</td>
<td>Information Management</td>
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<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>International Peace Institute</td>
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<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>Research for Development</td>
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<td>RAND</td>
<td>Research and Development</td>
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<td>RDWTI</td>
<td>RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents</td>
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<td>SAM</td>
<td>Secure Access Monitor</td>
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<td>SAVE</td>
<td>Secure Access in Volatile Environments</td>
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<td>SCHR</td>
<td>Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMS</td>
<td>Short Message Service (text messaging)</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
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Executive summary

Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE) is a three-year programme of applied research on maintaining humanitarian access in the world’s most challenging operational contexts. The overall goal of the programme is to contribute to solutions for providing effective and accountable humanitarian action amid high levels of insecurity. This will be achieved through improving the evidence base with primary research and producing new practical guidance.

The research programme will be implemented through three linked components:

1) **access**: quantifying and mapping humanitarian coverage in relation to security conditions;
2) **effectiveness**: identifying the key determinants for enabling quality aid interventions amid insecurity; and
3) **monitoring and evaluation**: providing practical lessons and guidance for improved learning and accountability in the most challenging environments.

The research programme will be sequenced with the research on access and security (Component 1) initiated first. The goal of Component 1 is to derive quantitative measures of humanitarian presence and coverage and to model how these change in relation to changing levels of insecurity, as defined by the incidence of targeted attacks on civilian aid operations. The evidence base constructed in Component 1 will help inform Components 2 and 3. The latter two components will be initiated in parallel within six months of the start of implementation.

The goal of Component 2 is to comparatively assess the practical modalities by which different types of humanitarian actors seek to most effectively and responsibly deliver aid to needy populations in highly insecure settings. It will examine the range of aid agency types, approaches and delivery models. The component will explore two over-arching research questions: what works best in obtaining access in the most insecure environments, and what works best in delivering quality aid in situations of reduced oversight and control.

The third area of research, monitoring and evaluation, acknowledges that insecure environments pose a number of interrelated challenges to the goals of assessing performance and increasing accountability to beneficiaries and donors. Component 3 will work with a small number of aid organisations and/or joint monitoring initiatives (‘learning partners’) as well as conducting wider global analysis, to identify priority monitoring and evaluation challenges. It aims to contribute to donors’ and aid organisations’ decision-making regarding the principles and good practices for monitoring and evaluation in highly insecure environments, including strategies to increase the sharing of findings and lessons learned.
Humanitarian Outcomes, in partnership with the Global Public Policy Institute (GPPI), will work with technical experts, research partners and aid agencies to conduct operationally driven and field-based research. Field research will be carried out in four case study countries: Afghanistan, Somalia (focusing on South Central Somalia and northeast Kenya), South Sudan and Syria. These represent the four most violent contexts for aid workers in 2012, where humanitarian actors have faced major access challenges in attempting to respond to severe humanitarian needs (AWSD, 2013). The field research will be complemented by a global-level contextual analysis, covering a large number of humanitarian settings with varying degrees of insecurity.

The research will address a significant deficit in quantitative data and methodological rigor in the debates around humanitarian access in highly insecure environments. The methods to address the research questions build on the study team’s long experience in conducting mixed methodology research on aid and security dynamics, as well as in establishing and maintaining functional datasets. Innovative methods, including new technologies, will also be used to quantify humanitarian coverage and develop models to show relationships between insecurity and humanitarian reach. To address a significant gap in knowledge on how crisis-affected populations’ access to aid may be changed or compromised by insecurity, the team will conduct in-person consultations as well as remote surveying with telecommunications networks and interactive voice recording.

The SAVE research programme is complemented by an engagement, dissemination and uptake strategy. The strategy recognises operational aid organisations and humanitarian donors as key stakeholders and seeks to engage them throughout the research process. These stakeholders will inform and enhance the research as participant observers, and their input will be sought through a series of in-country workshops and global briefings. Component 1 will develop collaborative approaches to data collection, Component 2 will develop guidance by working with operational partners and Component 3 will engage in lesson learning with aid agencies and joint monitoring initiatives. Building from this engagement, the research team will produce rigorous evidence, to be released in 2015 and 2016. This evidence and related guidance will deepen the aid community’s understanding of how to practically address the challenges of access, aid effectiveness and accountability in the most insecure environments.
1 Introduction

The Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE) research programme is at the end of a six-month Inception Phase. This summary Inception Report covers the findings of the inception period and presents the strategy for the Implementation Phase, commencing in May 2014 and to be implemented over a 30-month period ending in November 2016.¹

The main goal of the Inception Phase was to develop the research agenda of the three components, including refining the research questions and piloting methods and approaches. A core research team did this with considerable input from peer reviewers, technical advisers and a wide range of stakeholders.

In addition, the Inception Phase provided the opportunity to conduct an extensive consultation process and build stakeholder engagement globally and in the focus countries. The team interviewed 178 stakeholders, 90 of whom were in the focus country settings, and the remainder of whom were at headquarters level. The consultation process provided the opportunity to solicit feedback on the research questions, inform the approach to the country case studies, and assess opportunities for research collaboration and partnership. It also contributed to the development of the research uptake strategy.

Lastly, the Inception Phase allowed the team to develop structures and strategies to deliver an integrated approach to the research. This included establishing a management structure, internal communications, and mechanisms for collaborative ways of working. Four areas will be consistently applied across the three research components: risk management, research ethics, a research uptake strategy and a gender mainstreaming approach.

The Inception Report is structured as follows: Section 2 describes the research agenda and the overall goals and objectives of the research programme. Section 3 sets out the research programme of the three components, including research questions, methodology and activities for each. Section 4 provides an overview of the country case studies. Sections 5 - 7 outline the specific strategies to be applied consistently across the three research components, including gender, research uptake, and risk management and research ethics. Section 8 includes the budget and project milestones.

¹ The full Inception Report is available on request: adele.harmer@humanitarinaoutcomes.org
2 Research programme

The overall goal of the research is to contribute to innovative, practical solutions for maintaining effective and responsible humanitarian aid amid high levels of insecurity. Specific objectives toward this goal (listed below) respectively form the basis for each of three linked and mutually reinforcing components:

1. strengthening the evidence base for decision making, by producing concrete, empirical measures of how insecurity (e.g. violent conflict, high levels of criminal violence) affects the provision of humanitarian assistance to affected populations;
2. comparatively assessing the practical modalities by which different types of humanitarian actors seek to most effectively and responsibly deliver aid to these populations; and
3. identifying and piloting options for addressing the challenges to monitoring and evaluation in insecure environments to help optimise the quality, quantity and accountability of aid delivery, with minimal negative externalities.

Component 1 will be initiated first, with a view to informing the other two components as they are phased in. The evidence base on aid coverage and access dynamics constructed in Component 1 will be an important element for objectively considering the issues of effectiveness and monitoring and evaluation in Components 2 and 3.

The research will encompass a global-level contextual analysis, covering a large number of humanitarian settings with varying degrees of insecurity. Focused research and field work will be undertaken in four of the most challenging of these contexts: Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan and Syria. These cases represent the four most violent contexts for aid workers in 2012 (AWSD, 2013), creating major access challenges for humanitarian responders, as well as being among the settings with the most severe humanitarian needs.

This section outlines the principal work of the three components.

2.1 Component 1: Mapping humanitarian access and coverage trends in insecure contexts

2.1.1 Problem Statement

Fundamental information on humanitarian operations in insecure environments is currently lacking. Context-specific hard numbers on humanitarian presence, even in secure environments, are hard to come by, and there is no objective understanding of the ‘normal’ or needed scale or scope of humanitarian coverage per size of affected population and identified needs. There is also no firm sense of the degree to which that coverage shifts, reduces, or reconfigures in insecure environments and how this impacts the quantity and quality of humanitarian aid.

It is imperative for donors and policy makers to understand and be able to predict how humanitarian programming is affected by insecurity; in what ways the access of crisis-
affected people to aid may be changed or compromised; and how this impacts on the quality, quantity, and accountability of the aid provided by the international community. Without knowledge of these basic facts or an understanding of these dynamics, it is not possible to identify optimal alternative approaches and mitigation measures. Providing the objective basis for this understanding is the goal of the Component 1 of the SAVE research programme.

2.1.2 Objectives and principal research questions

The goal of Component 1 is to quantify and measure the relationship of insecurity to the reach of humanitarian aid and to track this relationship over time and changing security conditions.

To understand and predict how insecurity-driven access constrains humanitarian delivery, it is necessary first to be able to measure the level of humanitarian presence and coverage. In other words, how many humanitarian actors are responding to an emergency, where, and with what activities and level of resources?

Component 1 will derive quantitative measures of humanitarian presence and coverage and model how these change in correlation with changing levels of insecurity, as defined by the incidence of targeted attacks on civilian aid operations as well as generalised violence in the settings. To do so it will compare data from the case study countries during the relevant years of the current crisis up to and including 2014 data, which will be tracked prospectively during the project implementation period, and sets out to answer the following questions:

1. What is the actual size, density, and geographical distribution of the humanitarian presence in the four insecure contexts (quantified) and how has it changed over the timeline of the humanitarian response? ²
2. What is the level of humanitarian coverage in these cases (presence in relation to need) compared to other emergencies with different levels of insecurity and across emergencies generally?
3. Are there identifiable correlations and patterns of changing levels of presence and coverage as insecurity rises or falls?
   • Under what conditions do aid organisations reconfigure or reduce presence?
     ▪ What is the degree of correlation between incidence of violence and changes in personnel, projects and geographical locations
     ▪ What is the degree of correlation between level of humanitarian need (numbers affected, level of UN emergency designation, etc.) and aid organisation presence?

² The starting points are defined as 2011 for Syria and South Sudan, 2001 for Afghanistan and Somalia. The Somalia starting point is somewhat arbitrary, and can arguably be placed further back, but data is weaker prior to 2001, and the 13 years are expected to show sufficient changes in security and presence to illustrate the dynamic.
• What types of attack and targets of attacks, if any, correlate most closely to coverage changes?
• 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?

2.1.3 Research approach
Component 1 has three principal tasks: quantify humanitarian presence, calculate the level of coverage relative to need, and model the dynamic relationship of humanitarian access to insecurity.

Presence: Measuring the humanitarian footprint
No one single methodological approach is likely to provide a complete picture; the research will obtain a mix of direct and proxy measures that together will triangulate an assessment that is as close as possible to an accurate accounting of the humanitarian presence, defined 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. The research team used the inception period to determine assess how each of these components of presence could potentially be measured, and constructed a workplan encompassing following the activities and approaches.

Web-based research and data-mining for organisational/operational information
Over the course of a few years, Humanitarian Outcomes has been building a Global Database on Humanitarian Organisations (GDHO). The database compiles or systematically imputes basic organisational and operational information by year (including budget and staff size, countries of operation and other data) on roughly 4000 humanitarian providers, including international and national NGOs, UN humanitarian agencies, and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. The database originated under Humanitarian Outcomes’ long-running programme on aid worker security, and supplied the descriptive-statistics component of the State of the Humanitarian System research for ALNAP. The GDHO is expected to be an important part of the triangulation of organisational presence data, and in addition will serve as a concrete deliverable of the project.

Remote surveying and social media analysis
Remote surveying offer some advantages to traditional, in-person surveying in insecure areas:
• no security risk to researchers and lower risk to research subjects;
• less labour- and time-intensive to carry out, with no need for recruiting and training enumerators, or manually compiling, entering and analysing responses;
• potentially less susceptible to survey fatigue, and resentment or mistrust of surveyors, among the population;
• no risk of fraud or falsified response data;
• less incidence of skewed, repeated sampling of the more accessible populations; and
• circumvents cultural constraints to surveying women in some areas.

During the Inception Phase, the research team worked with GeoPoll to pilot a draft survey instrument in two provinces in Afghanistan to test the feasibility and usefulness of the instrument and to gauge potential response rates. Based on the pilot results, consultations with GeoPoll on its capacities in the four countries, and projected costs, the team decided to plan on more extensive surveys for four or five selected provinces in Afghanistan (1,000–2,000 responses) and snapshot surveys (200–300) for South Sudan and Syria. Somalia was deemed not feasible based on costs and capacities.

Field research: Secure Access Monitors

In addition to the global web-based research and data mining, and the ground-level reports from surveying affected populations, a third leg of the triangle is the country-level researchers for the project, or Secure Access Monitors (SAMs).

The principal objective of the SAMs will be to provide eyes on the ground to collect, verify and monitor real-time information on the humanitarian operational presence and its reach to the affected population. Specific tasks will include:

• Scoping, collecting and compiling existing data of ‘3Ws’ information from UN (OCHA and cluster leads), government, ICRC and Red Cross/Crescent societies, NGOs, and other sources. Cross-checking and updating/expanding this information through key informant interviews and participant observation (e.g. in coordination meetings).
• Tracking instances of programme contraction, relocation, withdrawal, or expansion, depending on security changes or other external access factors.
• 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 as necessary.
• Gathering beneficiary information and perspectives on the aid presence and coverage through in interviews and surveys.

Coverage: Calculating the level of humanitarian presence against needs

Knowing the number of organisations and projects and their distribution throughout a country is an important first step, but does not demonstrate humanitarian coverage, which is a measure of presence against needs. The research must therefore calculate the extent of humanitarian coverage in a way that can be compared to other settings, at different levels of insecurity. Consulting with current research in this area, including methodologies developed by ACAPS and the IASC Guidelines on the Humanitarian Profile Common Operational Dataset, we will derive estimates for numbers of people in need of humanitarian assistance for each year. The affected-persons estimate will form the denominator of the humanitarian coverage calculation. The numerator will be derived using the following presence measures:

• Organisations operating in country (FTS, registries, and data mining)
• Total active projects (from OCHA Information Management Units, FTS)
• Total project personnel (agency information and imputed from average funding/staff ratio)

Resulting calculations can be made for the overall country and per province (or equivalent subnational level), as follows:

\[
\text{Coverage level} = \frac{\text{orgs} + \text{active projects} + \text{personnel}}{\text{Estimated affected population}} = \frac{\text{Aid presence}}{\text{Need}}
\]

Total aid funding per affected person can also be useful information (and will be calculated for each setting), but is not necessary or sufficient to determine humanitarian coverage. On the contrary, it may obscure the actual level of coverage and extent of access, because in insecure environments often much greater operational costs are involved with each project activity, which can skew the numbers. Where funding numbers will be important, however, is in comparing the level of aid flows directed at more and less insecure areas within the case study countries.

Determining coverage level by country, province and sector in this way will be one principal means of mapping humanitarian reach in insecure environments. It can then be tracked over time and against changing environmental variables, including insecurity.

**Background data collection**

During the Inception Phase, the research team created a humanitarian ‘caseload’ dataset and began populating it with the necessary background data for each of the four cases as well as all other major humanitarian emergencies that took place in the period 2001-present, with the intention of keeping it current and completing data entry during the Implementation Phase. Data categories include:

• Year of emergency (or emergencies)
• Type of emergency (natural disaster or conflict related)
• Funding flows (overall and by sector, and against stated requirements needs)
• Total population of the country (per year)
• Population by province/subnational level
• Affected population (national and by province)

Humanitarian emergencies in relatively secure settings will be used for the purpose of comparison with the extremely insecure environments chosen as case studies. These will be chosen based on similar appeal sizes but low incident numbers during the same period. Apart from the affected population figures, which must be derived from overlapping estimates, data are available for compilation and only require team personnel time for gathering and entry.

**Access impacts: Modelling the relationship between insecurity and humanitarian reach**

Data on insecurity will be easier to source than the data on humanitarian presence and coverage, as described above. Major attacks against aid workers are already being tracked
by Humanitarian Outcomes’ Aid Worker Security Database (AWSD, www.aidworkersecurity.org), which under this study has begun to attach geocodes to incident data to map violence at a subnational level. Attacks against aid operations are considered the most relevant security data for the purpose of this exercise, but will be complemented by broader measures of insecurity in each setting, which can be obtained from several different databases, including those compiled by PRIO, iMMAP (Afghanistan), RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents (RDWTI), the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), and others.

Dynamic mapping and data visualisation tools like Google Motion Chart will allow the study to illustrate the changing physical relationship between the configuration of aid presence and insecurity, while statistical regression analyses can confirm significant correlations. The team will also run regressions to determine the effects of insecurity on overall coverage, sector-specific activities, and funding.

In all the data-gathering initiatives and products under Component 1, the research team will maintain continual consultation and sharing of ideas with focal points at OCHA, who are undertaking a number of IM initiatives at the moment aimed at improving the collection, storage and searchability of humanitarian data.

2.1.4 Implementation and outputs

Based on the findings of the Inception Phase, and depending on continued discovery and refinements in the Implementation Phase, the work of Component 1 will proceed using the research framework outlined above. Humanitarian presence measurement will be accomplished using manual research methods supported by limited customised web-crawler and data-scraping technologies to populate the GDHO and caseload databases. Affected-population surveys and field monitors will augment this information. We will then calculate humanitarian coverage by comparing presence data to (systematic estimates of) the affected population surveys. Finally, we will model the humanitarian coverage-to-insecurity relationship, using correlation (regression) analysis and dynamic access mapping/data visualisation. These findings will be initially shared not only with the expert peer reviewers, but also a broader stakeholder group (aid practitioners and other relevant actors in each country context) for a ‘reality check’ exercise, to determine if they match perceptions and experience at the field level. This will also provide an opportunity to ensure field actors’ confidence and comfort level with the types of data the SAVE programme will be making public. The team will consult with DFID on the composition of this group within the first year of implementation.

The outputs of Component 1 are as follows:

- Global Database of Humanitarian Organisations (GDHO) launched online, linked to SAVE programme site and Aid Worker Security Database (AWSD);
- Data visualisation products, including dynamic security-access maps (anonymised), also posted and disseminated online;
- Research findings published in scientific article, submitted to a peer reviewed journal; and
- Initiation, Interim and Final Reports.
2.2 Component: Effective and responsible aid in insecure environments

2.2.1 Problem statement
Over the past decade, international aid actors have struggled to maintain programming in insecure environments. They have had to increase their reliance on national partners and the use of remote management, which has potential implications for quality and accountability. Overall, there is a limited evidence base around what are the key determinants for enabling quality aid interventions amid insecurity. The main evidence gaps concern: which kinds of assistance – including sectors, types of interventions, transfer modalities and delivery mechanisms – work best in insecure environments, including remote management, particularly at scale; how to manage programme risks (quality, accountability) and fiduciary risks (corruption, diversion) in insecure environments, particularly during remote management or when working with partners; whether assistance in insecure environments builds on capacities and coping strategies; whether appropriate assistance is received by both women and men as well as marginalised groups; and whether it is perceived to be delivered impartially, and/or seen to be contributing to conflict dynamics.

Much of the existing research on these topics has relied on interviews with a core set of aid actors, mainly international and particularly Western actors, drawn from short visits to insecure contexts. Little systematic analysis has been done of approaches based on data collected in standardised ways across multiple contexts, which could more reliably suggest connections between various measurable approaches, intervention types, delivery mechanisms etc., and humanitarian access and aid quality. The views of host governments and local/national actors are not typically well represented, despite their importance to access. Independent research on populations receiving assistance in insecure contexts remains scant, especially in the most insecure environments.

2.2.2 Objectives, research questions and approach
Component 2 will examine the range of aid agency types, approaches and delivery models in insecure environments. Its objective is to produce evidence-based analysis and practical guidance on how humanitarian aid can be most effectively and responsibly delivered in highly insecure environments. There are two over-arching research questions:

- What works best in obtaining access in the most insecure environments?
- What works best in delivering quality aid in situations of reduced oversight and control?

Using a mix of methods, Component 2 will examine a series of factors to determine whether and how they influence access and/or quality of humanitarian aid. One set of methods will involve collecting data against specific and measurable indicators in order to look for patterns and relationships between (1) approaches, delivery mechanisms, types of assistance, modes of partnership, etc. (see Table 1) and (2) indicators of aid access and quality (found in a separate document). Another set of methods will examine these factors
more qualitatively, through interviews, focus groups, workshops and other consultations with affected populations, aid agency representatives, and other relevant actors.

**Definitions**

**Access**, as defined in Component 1, is the degree to which affected people are able to reach, and be reached by, humanitarian aid.

A **quality aid intervention** can be defined broadly as one that addresses the priority needs of the greatest possible number of crisis-affected people in greatest need, and reaches them quickly, with a reasonable standard of quality and a minimum of negative externalities.³

**Remote management** is an approach that can allow organisations to continue some activities in situations where access is limited by transferring management and monitoring responsibilities to less experienced national or local staff members and/or external partners (Steets et al., 2012).

**Transfer modality** refers to whether the assistance provided is cash-based (including vouchers) or in-kind; applies across a variety of sectors, objectives and delivery mechanisms.

A **delivery mechanism** is the means by which assistance and/or protection (i.e. goods, people, services, assets, cash, vouchers, etc.) are delivered or provided to recipients. The concept relates to the form in which assistance is transferred (physically or electronically) from one place to another; in some cases this is connected to modes of partnership (e.g. the use of a local private trucking company). Partnership issues will also be examined separately from delivery mechanisms.

| Table 1. Factors that may influence access and/or quality in highly insecure environments |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Element** | **Factor** | **What it may influence**³ | **Unit of analysis** |
| Agency identity and background | Country of origin | Access | Agency³ |
| | Religious mission or values | Access | Agency |
| | Previous country experience | Access | Agency |
| | Base of financial support | Access, | Agency |

³ “Negative externalities” can include inadvertently endangering recipients or fueling conflict (Do No Harm), becoming instrumentalised by political interests (NGO/Red Cross Code of Conduct) and creating inefficiencies and bottlenecks due to lack of coordination.

⁴ This is indicative only. Factors thought to influence only ‘access’ may also relate to quality issues, but we will be primarily looking at how this factor influences access.

⁵ At the country level, not globally.
<table>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>[\text{Informed acceptance of programme risk}]</td>
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<td>[\text{Adherence to impartiality}]</td>
<td>[\text{Access, quality}]</td>
<td>[\text{Project}^6,\text{ agency}]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[\text{Use of an active acceptance approach}]</td>
<td>[\text{Access, quality}]</td>
<td>[\text{Project, agency}]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[\text{Use of negotiated access with armed actors}^7]</td>
<td>[\text{Access}]</td>
<td>[\text{Project, agency, inter-agency}^8]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[\text{Use of public and private advocacy}^9]</td>
<td>[\text{Access}]</td>
<td>[\text{Agency, inter-agency}]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[\text{Level of engagement with the host government}]</td>
<td>[\text{Access}]</td>
<td>[\text{Project, agency, inter-agency}]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[\text{Level of collaboration with other aid actors on negotiating access and managing security risks}]</td>
<td>[\text{Access}]</td>
<td>[\text{Agency, inter-agency}]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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6 Different units of analysis (agency or project) will be used depending on the extent to which practice on this factor differs within a given agency in a particular country. ‘Programme’ may be more accurate than ‘project’, depending on how the agency structures its work.

7 To focus on negotiations inside the area of operation.

8 This means that inter-agency dynamics/collaboration will be particularly relevant for this factor and will be looked at alongside individual agency practice.

9 To focus on advocacy outside the area of operation.
2.2.3 Method of implementation

Component 2 activities are expected to start in two countries (most likely Afghanistan and Somalia) in October/November 2014, and in the other two countries (Syria and South Sudan) by December 2014. The field work will be completed by April/May 2016, leaving six months for analysis, drafting and dissemination. The findings of Component 1 from May to October 2014 in the four countries will inform and build Component 2’s field-level research. The same entity that hosted Component 1 may host the field researcher, or alternative arrangements may be explored.

Component 2 will use four main methods:

- **Interviews with aid actors, government, donors and others:** Approximately 75-100 face-to-face, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with relevant personnel from aid agencies, government and donors, as well as other relevant actors (e.g. private sector contractors involved in aid delivery, national researchers, technology specialists) in each of the four contexts. For each country, the team will systematically construct a sample of different types of actors to be interviewed,
based in part on the findings from Component 1, namely a more accurate 3W. There will be priority on ‘non-traditional’ actors, and/or others who are not typically well consulted during research (e.g. diaspora groups, non-Western entities, private sector contractors, community councils, etc.). Emphasis will be given to ensuring representation of interviewees among national staff in the ‘deep field’, close to communities, including female staff separately as appropriate. A modest number of telephone or in-person interviews (up to 100) will also be done with relevant aid agency actors, governments, donors and others located outside the country context (i.e. at headquarters or regional levels).

• **Project coding:** The project coding will seek to determine, within a limited sample at the country level, which factors tend to be correlated with quality aid that achieves good access. The resulting data will be analysed using statistical methods (regression analysis), taking into account limitations in sampling, measurability, reliability, etc. It will involve collecting data on at least 100 on-going or recently completed projects in each of the four contexts. The data will be collected through in-person meetings with aid agency field personnel. Information gathered during interviews with agency field personnel will be complemented and triangulated through consultations with affected populations. The project coding will rely on relationships of trust with key operational agencies so that they understand the data collection process and how the information will be used, and how they may benefit. The data will be kept secure and will only be shared in anonymous form.

• **Consultations with affected populations:** In Afghanistan, Somalia and South Sudan, in-person focus groups and individual interviews will be conducted with affected populations in three different locations in each country. For Syria, several research entities and operational agencies have been conducting interviews with recently arrived refugees (e.g. in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon); this alternative method will be pursued should interviews inside Syria prove not possible. As an alternative way to understand the views and experiences of affected populations, the team will undertake diaspora-led telephone or Skype-based research with Somalis and Syrians living in the country. The interviews and focus groups will explore the concerns people have related to the quality of aid in areas where oversight and control are weak.

• **Workshops with aid actors:** In each country, two one-day workshops per country will be held with participants from 15–20 interested aid agencies. Each workshop will include a summary of research methods and preliminary findings; specific sessions on factors that likely influence quality and access; and brainstorming and sharing ideas for good practice. At the global level, analytical briefings – to present findings, solicit feedback and promote dialogue – will be done with operational agencies and relevant forums of policy-makers/decision-makers. These could include the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, OCHA headquarters, ICVA and SCHR.
membership, the European Interagency Security Forum (EISF), and working groups of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

2.2.4 Outputs
The outputs of Component 2 are:

- **Initiation Report**: 10-15 page report outlining the establishment of the initial activities in the Workplan, including findings from initial field visits, identification of field researchers, and framework agreements with partner organisations.
- **Interim Report**: 30–40 page report summarising: the findings to date for all of Component 2, any challenges in conducting the research and how they will be addressed going forward, and any changes to the methodology or approach.
- **Final report**: 40–50 page report summarising the findings for Component 2.
- **Toolkits for humanitarian practitioners**: Toolkits will present practical implications for operational agencies on specific topics. These will be translated into Arabic, French and Spanish. The topics will emerge from the most salient research findings as well as the needs of operational actors as discussed during the field workshops and other meetings. Possible topics include: decision-making on intervention types and delivery mechanisms; the use of cash and vouchers at scale; the use of ICT in humanitarian protection activities; and how to better understand the perspectives of affected populations and how this might lead to more access and better quality aid.
- **Workshops and analytical briefings**: See above.

2.3 Component 3: Monitoring and evaluation in insecure environments

2.3.1 Problem Statement
In contexts where humanitarian organisations and communities are exposed to high insecurity, it is extremely challenging not only to deliver assistance, but also to assess its reach and effectiveness. The challenges of insecurity hamper every aspect of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), from the collection of evidence, its interpretation, to the sharing and dissemination of findings and M&E information.

Access to conflict zones is oftentimes severely restricted and not all parties can be trusted to provide reliable information. Methodological challenges for M&E arise where interviews and assessments cannot be done in person. Lacking baseline information and the unpredictable nature of insecure environments also make applying standard metrics of effectiveness more difficult. Furthermore, organisational and systemic constraints such as competition over limited funding can create incentives against gathering data where it could reveal negative results. As a result, critical information is not always shared and acted upon by aid actors.
M&E information is critical to understand the performance of aid, ensure accountability to beneficiaries and donors and to allow effective continuation of programs amid insecurity. Yet, existing options for monitoring and evaluation entail tradeoffs, such as risk transfer to national staff and third parties, or risks from the application of technological M&E solutions in conflict contexts. Against this background, donors and aid agencies are struggling to determine what level and type of M&E is realistic and appropriate under the constraints of insecurity.

2.3.2 Objectives and principal research questions

As part of the three-year research project “Secure Access in Volatile Environments” (SAVE), this component investigates how aid organisations can track and assess their work in insecure environments. Taking a collaborative and context-specific approach, the research seeks to understand the particular challenges that organisations face in four focus countries: Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan and Syria (focusing on the cross border response from Turkey). It explores good practice and potential innovations to contribute to developing concrete M&E solutions for insecure locations. The research component has two main goals:

- To help donors and aid organisations decide on appropriate M&E approaches given the constraints in insecure contexts.
- To identify practical solutions to monitor and evaluate there, including strategies to increase the sharing of findings and lessons learned.

To achieve these objectives, the project component will address three main research questions:

1. What is the status of M&E practice in the focus countries?
   - What do donors and aid agencies involved in aid provision expect from M&E information and processes?
   - What are the particular internal and external challenges that prevent these expectations from being met in insecure environments? How do they vary between contexts?

2. What are ways to address major challenges and blockages affecting M&E?
   - What promising measures have aid actors (including donors) already applied to address priority challenges? Which ones have been counter-productive?
   - What solutions exist in other sectors (development, peacebuilding, private sector) and what potential do they hold?
   - What trade-offs and risks do these measures imply and how can stakeholders mitigate them?

3. What good practices and principles can the research offer for the humanitarian community in insecure environments?
• What good practices or promising approaches can be identified to improve M&E practice in insecure environments?
• What principles and lessons can we derive that would allow aid actors to take more structured decisions on what kind and what level of M&E is necessary?
• What are the implications for donors and aid organisations in the four countries studied by this research and globally?

2.3.3 Research approach

Inception phase and conceptual background
During a six-month inception phase, the team identified relevant M&E initiatives, reviewed some 200 documents, and analysed M&E literature and 49 evaluation reports to generate an overview of key challenges and existing approaches. We built a database of some 100 specific tools and case studies pertaining to technological solutions of gathering, analysing and managing information - as a source of potential innovation during the project. Key informant interviews further helped to refine our research approach.

The inception phase concluded with a number of initial insights: First, organisational and internal challenges often inhibit effective M&E in insecure contexts, for example through poor planning and decision-making or inflexible programme management. The search for innovative solutions and M&E approaches for insecure contexts thus needs to take into account both external challenges (directly stemming from insecurity) and internal challenges (stemming from aid agencies themselves or the broader humanitarian system). Second, in light of the diverse contexts covered by this study, there cannot be a “one-size-fits-all” solution to facilitate better M&E. What results monitoring and evaluation can be expected to deliver is highly context-specific. Third, M&E can serve different purposes such as learning, ensuring accountability to donors and affected populations, informing operational decisions, measuring and managing progress, preventing aid abuse, or documenting results. These purposes may require different approaches. Finally, no M&E solution is without trade-offs and applied, collaborative learning amongst a range of agencies is needed to help address these trade-offs in a practical way.

A cooperative research design...
The research design is cooperative and applied including all key stakeholders such as humanitarian donors, partners, third parties and beneficiaries. The research team will work with a small number of aid organisations, or joint monitoring initiatives in each of the focus countries. Together with these “learning partners” we will study their M&E practices in detail and try to help address priority M&E challenges. The research also will facilitate learning and exchange of lessons between learning partners.10 The SAVE research

10 Any information will be treated in accordance with confidentiality requirements of all stakeholders.
team will combine this in-depth analysis of individual partners with a broader review and assessment of good practices in focus countries, and at the global level.

Throughout the project, **country-based researchers** in all focus countries will ensure a continuous research presence supporting learning partners in their work and conducting embedded research, observing and documenting M&E practice.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the responsibilities of research team members and learning partners. The precise details of the cooperation will be determined during the Implementation Phase.

**Figure 1. Overview of responsibilities**

...to be implemented in 12-month country case studies

The research component will implement four country case studies that will each follow a generic cycle:

- Desk-based research on M&E challenges and existing approaches, including an **online survey** with key stakeholders in the country and relevant actors at the global level.
- **Assessment of the M&E systems of the learning partners** to document good M&E practice and **identify priority challenges**.
- **Review of options and solutions to improve the M&E practice** of partners.
- **Workshops** involving the learning partners, as well as potentially other stakeholders such as donors and partners to develop a **Menu of Options**. Options included in this “Menu” can pertain to all aspects of M&E, from gathering information, to validating and interpreting it, to adequate use and sharing of information.
• Support to learning partners in implementing selected options and other changes to their M&E practices.
• Development of a principles and options for good practice paper based on in-country collective learning as well as other country-related and global lessons.

Responsibilities and benefits of learning partners
Learning partners can be national or international NGOs, UN organisations, or Red Cross / Red Crescent organisations active in the provision of humanitarian aid (including multi-mandate organisations delivering humanitarian and development assistance). Learning partners should demonstrate willingness to engage with challenges to M&E in their working environment and commit capacity to contribute innovative solutions, ideas, information and staff time during 12-months of this research project.

Table 2. Learning partners: Responsibilities and benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Nominate a focal person (e.g. M&amp;E or program manager) to act as primary interlocutor for the project.</td>
<td>• Targeted research by SAVE team and country-based researchers, according to your M&amp;E needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Invest up to 2-3 days/month, either by appointed focal person or for combined engagement in the research process (meetings, info sharing, commenting on draft results, discussing M&amp;E options, etc.).</td>
<td>• Opportunities to better serve affected populations through increased evidence base of good practice and mitigation of M&amp;E challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Agree to terms of cooperation as developed in the early phases of the project and discussed/finalised during initial meetings in countries.</td>
<td>• Research capacity for field-level data collection (time of country-based researchers, budget for additional field trips, small field-level studies, surveys, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide explicit backing/support from senior management, including the willingness to explore potential innovations to M&amp;E practices.</td>
<td>• Increased visibility as innovative, learning organization with M&amp;E expertise in insecure contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Commit to openly share information on ongoing activities, such as monitoring and reporting information, evaluations, as well as major M&amp;E challenges.</td>
<td>• Chance to exchange and network with technical experts and other aid agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allow for field observation of their organisation’s work by country-based researchers.</td>
<td>• An opportunity to pilot new M&amp;E approaches as a result of collective learning from the SAVE research.</td>
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</table>
2.3.4 Methods of implementation and outputs

The proposed research design will rely mostly on qualitative data gathered through methods such as interviews, desk research, structured surveys, interactive workshops and embedded research. It will analyse fundamental questions that practitioners working in crisis contexts can frequently not afford to review in depth and it will synthesise findings into practically applicable options. It will use quantitative data analysis where feasible, e.g. when analysing survey results or budgetary and financial information.

The main methods for the research will include a review of agency documents, surveys with aid actors in all four countries, key informant telephone and in-person interviews, in-country workshops as well as embedded research and direct observation. In some locations, beneficiary surveys will be conducted with the use of mobile technology such as SMS or recorded surveys.

Based on the above objectives, the outputs of this research component will include:

- **Initiation report:** outlines the establishment of initial activities in the workplan, including findings from initial field visits, identification of field researchers and learning partners, and framework agreements with partner organisations.

- **Interim report:** describes progress and includes country-specific findings on major challenges to M&E as well as an overview of the options and good practices identified in countries.

- **Paper on principles of good practice and options for M&E in insecure environments:** synthesises conclusions from the research, including principles and compiled options; additional publications may evolve.

- **Final report:** summarises the findings according to the major research questions.
3 Focus countries

The four case study countries – Afghanistan, Somalia (focusing on South Central Somalia and northeast Kenya), South Sudan and Syria – were chosen for their high incidence of violence against aid workers, for the diversity of threats and challenges they represent for aid operations, as well as the severity of humanitarian needs among the affected populations.11

In the past ten years, nearly two thirds of all aid workers killed, kidnapped or seriously wounded in deliberate attacks were working in Afghanistan, Somalia, or the Sudans. In 2012, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Somalia and Syria ranked among the top five most-violent contexts for aid operations (AWSD, 2013). Although Afghanistan and Somalia have long been identified as some of the most-dangerous operating environments for aid workers, South Sudan (due to its new independent status),12 and Syria (due to a large number of aid workers caught in the cross fire or targeted by parties to the conflict), are relative newcomers.13 In addition, all four countries suffer from internal conflicts involving armed insurgencies with varying degrees of fragmentation. They all also face significant levels of criminality and banditry (Ibid).

During the Inception Phase, the research team visited Afghanistan, Kenya (for Somalia) and Turkey and Jordan (for Syria). Telephone interviews were conducted with key informants and potential partners in Juba, Mogadishu, Beirut and Damascus. These missions were complemented by background literature reviews for each of the countries, as well as a review (conducted by an Arabic speaker) of publicly available documents related to the work of Arab and Islamic humanitarian organisations in Somalia and Syria. The field missions had two primary objectives: consultation and engagement on the research programme to better contextualise our approach in each country; and an assessment of suitable hosting partners, local researchers and learning partners. In total, 90 country-level interviews were conducted.

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11 Two of the four countries, Syria and South Sudan, are currently designated by the IASC as Level 3 emergencies, defined as, ‘major sudden onset humanitarian crises triggered by natural disasters or conflict which require system-wide mobilization’ (IASC, 2012).
12 Prior to independence incidents were reflected for the whole of Sudan.
13 Both entered the top five most violent aid contexts for the first time in 2012.
4 Gender mainstreaming approach

During the Inception Phase, the research team worked with a gender adviser on the methodological design of the components to ensure the analytic work takes appropriate gender considerations into account. During the Implementation Phase gender specialists will advise the research programme in each of the four countries to contextualise the gender dimensions in each country.

Component 1

Qualitative evidence has shown clearly that female and male staff face different types of risk, which require specific attention in risk assessment and mitigation strategies (Egeland et al, 2011; Wille and Fast, 2011). However, to date the ability of researchers to perform rigorous quantitative analysis of gender implications on attack rates, for instance, remains limited. The AWSD collects sex-disaggregated victim data, and seeks to specify and record this information whenever it is available. However, knowing the number of female aid worker victims reveals little of significance unless the proportion of females in the aid worker population is known, and here the data tends to be very weak. Because of the greater attention to gender considerations and the fundamental need for sex-disaggregated information in a variety of areas (personnel as well as beneficiary populations), the humanitarian sector has recently seen a noticeable improvement in record keeping to this level of specificity in recent years. It is still far from universal, however, and is not retrospective of past years. The research team will continue to seek out, collect and track sex-specific data whenever possible, but acknowledges the limitations for an in-depth gender analysis at this time.

Component 2

Component 2 will include gender-sensitive indicators in the project coding exercise. In advance of field work, a consultation process with the gender advisers/experts in country regarding the methodology and approach for soliciting the views of affected populations will be undertaken\(^\text{14}\). In addition, when interviewing national staff in the deep field, female staff will be interviewed separately, as appropriate.

Component 3

In line with the analysis in Component 2, the team will consider the challenges of getting data which is representative of all segments of the affected community in insecure contexts\(^\text{15}\). Where collecting this data and/or other gender issues are identified as a particular challenge for learning partners, the team will draw on country-level gender expertise in the workshops to identify good practice and potential solutions. The team will

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\(^{14}\) This may involve interviewing groups of women, men, and possibly boys and girls separately during consultations (both focus groups and individual interviews) and utilising female researchers for women.

\(^{15}\) These are challenges faced by monitoring exercises in many stable environments as well (Mazurana et al., 2011).
also explore the findings of the UN Women ‘Study of the impact of Gender Equality Programming on Humanitarian Outcomes’ at IDS.\textsuperscript{16}

5 Research engagement, dissemination and uptake strategy

The SAVE research programme is complemented by an engagement, dissemination and uptake strategy. The rationale of the strategy is that by identifying relevant stakeholders in the inception period, building their awareness of the research objectives and engaging stakeholders in all facets of the research, including consultation on the research methodology, joint development of guidance with operational partners, early sharing of research findings for operational feedback, and through active dissemination, uptake is enabled.

Research engagement, dissemination and uptake will be undertaken by the core research entities: Humanitarian Outcomes and GP Pi, supported by the organisations’ respective research uptake officers/advisers, as well in partnership with the International Peace Institute (IPI) in New York and our field partners.

5.1 Objectives

There are three objectives of the research engagement, dissemination and uptake strategy:

1. To map and engage stakeholders and potential users of the research outputs, and continue engaging these stakeholders throughout the research programme, including building partner relationships.
2. To produce solid, peer reviewed, rigorous evidence that is both presented in varied outputs appropriate for the target audience as well as disseminated through varied and appropriate channels.
3. To regularly monitor the effectiveness of the engagement, dissemination and uptake strategy.

5.2 Stakeholder mapping and engagement

During the Inception Phase, the research team carried out wide-ranging stakeholder consultations with aid agencies, donors, academics, national-level research institutes and aid/security consortia related to the four focus countries as well as in other relevant capitals including London, New York, Washington DC, Rome and Geneva.

From this consultation exercise, we developed stakeholder groupings. We identified operational aid agencies, humanitarian donor governments, and the relevant policy and coordination forums that support those entities, as the major focus of our engagement, dissemination, and uptake efforts. Other groups, such as the affected populations themselves, host governments and national research organisations in the four countries, as well as international academia and think tanks form part of a wider stakeholder group, as outlined below:
Table 3. SAVE key stakeholder groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humanitarian donor governments</th>
<th>Operational aid agencies</th>
<th>Other key stakeholders</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| - DFID and other humanitarian donor governments  
- Intergovernmental forums such as the Humanitarian Liaison Working Group (HLWG) and the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative | - IASC full members and standing invitees (UN and NGOs)  
- National and international NGOs  
- Red Cross/Crescent organisations  
- Regional/Humanitarian Coordinators  
- Coordination forums such as the IASC Task Team on Principled Humanitarian Action  
- Field level NGO aid and security consortia | - Affected populations  
- Host governments in the four focus countries  
- National research organisations in the four focus countries  
- International academia and think tanks  
- UN peace keeping/political mission personnel  
- Media |

During the Implementation Phase, the research team will continue stakeholder engagement at the global level, as well as narrowing and deepening of engagement at the field level. Field-level engagement will take place through the work of each component supported by the relevant national researchers and research entities in our countries of focus.

5.3 Quality assurance and active dissemination of outputs

**Quality assurance**
A peer review group for the research programme was established during the Inception Phase, consisting of experts from different disciplines both inside and outside the humanitarian sphere to critically input to methodology for the three components, and assist in adapting outside models and innovating new approaches to data gathering and analysis for this research. Peer reviewers will assess all outputs during the Implementation Phase.

**Active dissemination of outputs**
In addition to informing DFID’s approach to partnering in insecure environments, the key goal of the outputs from the SAVE research programme will be to inform the policy and practice of operational agencies, and to enhance the dialogue between donors, host governments, aid agencies, and aid recipients on these issues. The research outputs are also intended to be accessible for a wider public.
The SAVE research programme will engage its audiences using a tailored combination of tools that include both traditional and new media methods.

**Country- and regional-level briefings**
At country level we will develop dissemination events as findings from Component 1 emerge, and at the end of the research process for all components. We will collaborate with our local researchers and research partners to determine the most useful ways to engage humanitarian donors, practitioners and broader audiences, and the format of events that would yield the widest interest, including closed-door small roundtable events and specialised briefings, as well as wider public events.

**Global-level events**
Dissemination events will be held at headquarters, including with DFID and the wider humanitarian community in London, with the humanitarian and diplomatic communities in New York through our research dissemination and uptake partner, the International Peace Institute (IPI), and replicated in a similar form in Geneva.

In addition, the research uptake officers will map key points of potential intervention (i.e. key dates for research dissemination and engagement) and strategise approaches to foster influence. We will also take advantage of openings in debates, peaks in media interest in our countries and issues of focus, as well as current events to present research.
6 Risk Management and research ethics

6.1 Risk management

The approach to risk management and research ethics for the SAVE research programme will be consistently applied across the three components, and for this reason it is addressed here in a comprehensive manner, not divided by component.

Using standard risk assessment practice, during the Inception Phase the project team collected information on potential threats/hazards, considered the likelihood and potential impacts of each, and identified mitigation measures. Information on threats was gathered through the following activities:

- field missions to each country and/or telephones interviews with stakeholders, and specific briefings with the NGO security consortium in each country; and
- detailed discussions with research partners and local researchers on the challenges to research in each context, as well as assessment of their own security plans and a discussion of their institutional and individual risk profiles.

The four areas of operational risk specific to this programme of research working in highly insecure environments are physical security risk, information security risk, programme risks and financial risks. A risk assessment matrix showing specific threats or hazards in each of these risk areas, the extent of impact (severity) should they occur, the likelihood of occurrence, the assessed risk level, and the proposed mitigation measures, can be found in the full Inception Report.

6.2 Research Ethics

Humanitarian Outcomes’ research policies and procedures accord with the WHO guidelines for research with human subjects.

Programme management will employ additional ethical safeguards necessary due to the nature of this research in areas where considerable security risks are extant. Humanitarian Outcomes adheres to the following protocols in its programming in insecure contexts and on security issues generally (from Humanitarian Outcomes Policies and Procedures Handbook, updated 2013).

Equivalence of support: While different types of personnel and partners require individualised risk assessments, there will be no differentiation in levels of security support in terms of training and other inputs.

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Informed consent: The SAVE project team, contracted consultants and operational partners shall be informed of the risks as assessed prior to the programme activities, and explicitly provide their consent to the terms of reference of the assignment or partnership agreement. Interview and survey subjects will also give informed consent through an introductory opt-in/opt-out question.

On-going discretion: Anyone working for or partnered with the programme will be afforded the discretion to suspend activities if they have any reason to feel insecure. Security decisions made by programme management will err on the side of safety and security, and take individual comfort-levels of personnel in strongest consideration.

Confidentiality and anonymity: As a rule, research interviews are considered ‘on the record, but not for attribution’, meaning specific individuals will not be named against their opinions and quotes (unless approval is explicitly given), but with their permission will be listed as interview subjects in published reports. Any key informant interview subject wishing to remain anonymous for security or other reasons will be offered the opportunity to do so. All surveys, particularly of local affected populations, community members and aid recipients will be anonymous (by individual name and organisational affiliation) as a standard precaution and protective measure.

Preventing and addressing mental/emotional trauma or distress: When dealing with potentially traumatising or distressing subject areas programme personnel will take care to avoid causing emotional harm to subjects. The informed consent function will be used to screen for this risk, and the activity will cease if it becomes apparent that this is the result. In addition, the IASC and People in Aid guidelines on mental health in emergency settings will guide research activities.

Protection of sensitive information: Researchers will keep records of interviews (written notes) to ensure accuracy and enable accountability and evaluation. Notes will not be shared outside the programme management team, and will be kept secure in password-protected digital files. Hard copies will be destroyed once notes are entered digitally, and will not be transported unnecessarily.