

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

Multi-Sectoral Humanitarian Needs Assessment in Somalia to Inform 2027 Response Planning

Organisation: ActionAid International Somalia (AAIS)

Item	Details
Locations	Jamame and Baardhere (Jubaland State); Beledweyne and Jowhar (Hirshabelle State), subject to confirmation
Consultancy / Duration	National consultant or firm; approximately 30 calendar days
Reporting Line	AAIS Area Manage, with technical supervision from the MEAL Coordinator

1. Introduction and Background

ActionAid International Somalia (AAIS) has operated in Somalia since 1992, supporting women, young people and marginalised communities through humanitarian and development programming. Its human rights-based approach promotes local leadership, feminist principles, gender equality, accountability and resilience. AAIS works with Somali civil society, national NGOs and community structures to address food insecurity, displacement, climate shocks and barriers to essential services.

Somalia's humanitarian crisis is driven by recurrent droughts and floods, armed conflict and insecurity, displacement, food insecurity, disease outbreaks, economic shocks and limited access to essential services. These interconnected pressures disproportionately affect displaced populations, women and girls, children, minority and marginalised communities, older people and persons with disabilities. Funding constraints further underscore the need for evidence-based prioritisation and context-specific responses.

AAIS will commission a Multi-Sectoral Humanitarian Needs Assessment (MSNA) across selected districts to generate a credible evidence base for humanitarian planning and potential 2027 funding proposals, including opportunities under DG ECHO's Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) 2027. Official HIP priorities and requirements will be verified once published; anticipated themes will not be treated as confirmed donor requirements. The assessment will build on existing inter-agency evidence and avoid duplication. National partners, including NAPAD, SSWC and DAN, where relevant to their geographic presence, will support contextual engagement and safe access planning.

2. Purpose and Objectives

The assessment will independently and rigorously examine the severity, distribution and interrelationships of humanitarian needs across the target districts, informing geographic and population prioritisation, integrated response design, programme development and coordination for 2027.

The specific objectives are to:

- Assess the scale and severity of needs across food security and livelihoods, health, nutrition, WASH, protection, education and shelter/NFI.
- Identify priority locations and population groups based on displacement, vulnerability, shock exposure, service gaps and barriers to assistance.

- Analyse how conflict, drought, flooding, displacement, livelihood losses, disease and service disruptions compound humanitarian needs.
- Examine protection risks, gender- and disability-related barriers, safe access to services, and community priorities and preferences.
- Assess market functionality and the feasibility and appropriateness of multipurpose cash, sectoral cash/vouchers, in-kind assistance and service-based responses.
- Review early-warning information, preparedness and opportunities for anticipatory action where supported by evidence.
- Map existing actors and interventions, identifying response gaps, duplication risks, coordination opportunities and pathways for meaningful localisation.
- Recommend feasible, integrated and accountable response options for 2027, clearly distinguishing evidence-based findings from unconfirmed donor priorities.

3. Scope and Thematic Coverage

Geographic scope: Jamame and Bardhere districts in Jubaland State, and Beledweyne and Jowhar districts in Hirshabelle State. AAIS will confirm final coverage and the sampling frame during inception, considering population data, access, security and operational feasibility.

Target populations: Newly displaced and protractedly displaced households, vulnerable non-displaced households, returnees, host communities, and pastoralist, agro-pastoralist and farming households. Particular attention will be given to groups facing heightened exclusion, including female-headed households, children, women and adolescent girls, older people, persons with disabilities and minority groups. Findings should be disaggregated by sex, age, disability and displacement status where sampling and data quality permit.

Sector / Theme	Key Assessment Dimensions
Food Security and Livelihoods	Food consumption, coping strategies, income, productive assets, crop and livestock losses, market conditions, prices and livelihood recovery.
Health and Nutrition	Service functionality and access, maternal and child health, disease risks, medicine availability, nutrition services and barriers to screening and treatment. Household proxies must not be presented as clinical diagnoses.
WASH	Safe water access and quality, sanitation, hygiene, water-point functionality, menstrual hygiene, facility WASH, flood-related contamination and safety during water collection.
Protection	Safety, GBV-related risks and service access, child protection, housing, land and property (HLP) concerns, exclusion, movement restrictions and barriers to protection services, using safe and non-intrusive methods.
Education	Access, attendance, teacher availability, learning continuity, school safety, WASH and barriers affecting girls, displaced children and children with disabilities.

Shelter/NFI	Shelter adequacy, overcrowding, hazard exposure, privacy, tenure concerns and access to essential household items.
Cash, Markets and Preparedness	Commodity availability and affordability, financial access, transfer feasibility and risks, seasonal hazards, early warning, response capacity and access constraints.
Cross-Cutting Issues	Gender equality, age and disability inclusion, conflict sensitivity, localisation, accountability to affected populations (AAP), safeguarding, environmental risks and data protection.

4. Methodology

The consultant will propose a mixed-methods design combining secondary data review, quantitative and qualitative research, service and market assessments, spatial analysis and triangulation. The inception report must justify the sampling design, sample size, precision assumptions, disaggregation, non-response and limitations. Probability sampling should be applied where reliable sampling frames and safe access permit. Where representative sampling is infeasible, the alternative approach must be justified and findings clearly labelled as indicative rather than statistically representative.

The assessment will include:

1. Secondary data review: HNRP/HNO, OCHA and cluster products, IPC/FSNAU, DTM, health and nutrition surveillance, climate and early-warning information, and relevant partner assessments.

2. Primary Data through :

- **Household survey:** A structured digital questionnaire covering demographics, displacement, food security, livelihoods, service access, WASH, shelter, assistance and priority needs.
- **Key informant interviews and focus group discussions:** Engagement with local authorities, service providers, humanitarian and market actors, community representatives and appropriately separated groups where safe and useful.
- **Facility and market assessments:** Checks of selected health/nutrition, WASH, education and protection services, alongside market functionality, commodity availability, access, affordability and service performance.
- **GIS and direct observation:** Mapping of relevant services and geographic patterns where data are reliable and safe to disclose, protecting sensitive locations and respondent identities.
- **Quality assurance and analysis:** Enumerator training, piloting, field supervision, daily data checks, secure handling, cleaning logs and triangulation. Severity criteria must be transparent; incompatible indicators must not be combined into a single score without justification.
- **Response-modality analysis:** Comparison of cash, vouchers, in-kind and service-based options by location, considering market conditions, access, community preferences, protection risks and operational feasibility.

5. Guiding Principles, Ethics and Safeguarding

The assessment will adhere to ActionAid’s Human Rights-Based Approach, Humanitarian Signature, feminist principles and values, the Core Humanitarian Standard, and applicable safeguarding, child protection, PSEAH and data protection policies. The consultant must obtain informed and voluntary consent, explain the assessment’s purpose and intended use, minimise personal data collection, maintain confidentiality, use secure storage and transfer procedures, and avoid creating expectations of assistance.

An ethics and risk management plan must be approved before fieldwork. Sensitive protection information may only be collected where justified and by trained personnel following safe procedures. General surveys must not solicit detailed GBV disclosures. Appropriate referral pathways must be established before data collection; child participation requires suitable safeguarding, age-appropriate assent and required consent. Field methods must be conflict-sensitive and accessible, and findings must not expose respondents or communities to harm.

6. Deliverables and Indicative Schedule

The selected consultant/Firm will be expected to produce a high-quality, comprehensive, and evidence-based final report that presents clear, actionable findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The report should be accompanied by concise and visually engaging fact sheets highlighting key findings disaggregated by geographical location and sector, enabling stakeholders to identify geographic disparities, sector-specific challenges, emerging trends, and priority areas for intervention. In addition, the consultant shall provide a well-structured, cleaned, and properly documented dataset, including relevant data dictionaries and supporting documentation, to facilitate further analysis, validation, and evidence generation by ActionAid Somalia and its partners. All deliverables should meet agreed quality standards and support evidence-informed programme planning, strategic decision-making, advocacy, resource mobilization, and continuous learning.

Deliverable	Minimum Content	Indicative Timing
Inception Report	develop a comprehensive Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) framework outlining the proposed methodology, geographical coverage, sampling strategy, and data collection approaches.	Days 1–3
Tools, Training and Pilot Report	English/Somali survey and qualitative tools; training, pilot findings and revisions.	Days 4–7
Fieldwork Updates and Dataset	Coverage, access and quality updates; cleaned, anonymised dataset, codebook and cleaning log, subject to data safeguards.	Days 8–21
Draft Report	Sectoral and intersectoral findings, district comparisons, limitations, maps and recommendations.	Days 22–24
Validation Workshop	Presentation of findings and documented stakeholder feedback.	Days 25–26

Final Report and Products	Final report, four district factsheets, at least three thematic briefs (protection/inclusion; cash/markets; food security/nutrition/WASH), presentation, maps and agreed data package.	By Day 30
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Proposed Structure of the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) Final Report

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction and Humanitarian Context
3. Assessment Objectives and Scope
4. Assessment Methodology and Limitations
5. Demographic and Vulnerability Profile
6. Sectoral Needs Assessment Findings
7. Intersectoral Analysis and Severity of Needs
8. Priority Population Groups and Geographical Locations
9. Humanitarian Access Constraints and Essential Service Gaps
10. Protection, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
11. Cash and Market Feasibility Analysis
12. Emergency Preparedness and Anticipatory Action
13. Humanitarian Response and Service Mapping
14. Localisation, Community Participation and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)
15. Key Conclusions and Strategic Implications
16. Prioritised Recommendations and Response Options
17. Annexes and Supporting Documentation

7. Management and Reporting

The consultant will report to the AAIS Area Manager, under the technical supervision of the MEAL Coordinator. AAIS will provide available relevant information, facilitate agreed stakeholder engagement, approve tools and methodology, and consolidate feedback. The consultant will lead technical design, fieldwork, analysis and reporting; coordinate with partners as agreed; submit weekly progress updates; and promptly report significant security, access, safeguarding or data-quality concerns. Schedule changes require written agreement.

8. Qualifications and Experience

Qualifications and Experience Requirements for Consulting Firms

1. Institutional Experience

- Minimum of five (5) years of experience conducting humanitarian and development assessments, preferably MSNAs, in Somalia or the Horn of Africa.
- Proven track record of delivering similar assignments for NGOs, UN agencies, or other humanitarian organisations.

- Demonstrated ability to produce high-quality, evidence-based reports and actionable recommendations.

2. Technical Expertise

- A multidisciplinary team with relevant humanitarian sector expertise.
- Strong experience in mixed-methods research, sampling, data collection, analysis, and triangulation.
- Proficiency in digital data collection, statistical analysis, GIS mapping, and data visualisation.

3. Operational Capacity

- Experience conducting assessments in fragile, insecure, and hard-to-reach locations.
- Good understanding of Somalia's humanitarian context and operational challenges.
- Capacity to manage field teams and deliver assignments within agreed timelines.

4. Quality Assurance and Safeguarding

- Established procedures for data quality assurance, safeguarding, PSEA, and data protection.
- Commitment to gender equality, disability inclusion, conflict sensitivity, and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP).

5. Legal Compliance

- Valid business registration and authorisation to operate in the assessment locations.
- Compliance with applicable tax and statutory requirements.

6. Desirable Experience

- Previous experience with DG ECHO, EU, or other institutional donor-funded assessments.
- Familiarity with humanitarian standards, donor requirements, and evidence-based response planning.

Qualifications and Experience Requirements for Individual Consultants

1. Academic Qualifications

- A Master's degree or higher in Humanitarian Affairs, Public Health, Development Studies, Social Sciences, Statistics, MEAL, or a related field.
- Additional training in humanitarian assessments, research, or data analysis is an asset.

2. Professional Experience

- Minimum of seven (7) years of relevant experience in humanitarian assessments, MEAL, or applied research.

- Proven track record of completing at least three (3) similar assignments, preferably MSNAs, baseline studies, or evaluations.
- Experience working with NGOs, UN agencies, or other humanitarian organisations, preferably in Somalia or similar contexts.

3. Technical Expertise

- Strong skills in mixed-methods research, sampling, data collection, analysis, and triangulation.
- Proficiency in KoboToolbox, ODK, statistical analysis, GIS mapping, and data visualisation.
- Ability to conduct sectoral and intersectoral analysis and produce high-quality reports with actionable recommendations.

4. Humanitarian Principles and Safeguarding

- Good understanding of humanitarian principles, gender equality, protection, disability inclusion, and conflict sensitivity.
- Knowledge of localisation, Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), safeguarding, PSEA, and ethical data management.

5. Contextual Knowledge and Field Experience

- Strong understanding of Somalia's humanitarian context, including conflict, displacement, climate-related shocks, and service delivery gaps.
- Experience conducting assessments in insecure and hard-to-reach locations and engaging with affected communities and relevant stakeholders.

6. Team Composition and Capacity

- Applicants proposing a team must clearly identify team members, their roles, qualifications, and relevant experience.
- The proposed team must demonstrate adequate sectoral, research, data analysis, GIS, and field coordination expertise.
- The lead consultant shall ensure technical quality, effective coordination, and timely delivery of the assignment.

7. Language and Communication Skills

- Excellent written and spoken English is required, including strong analytical and report-writing skills.
- Strong communication, facilitation, and stakeholder engagement skills.

8. Desirable Experience

- Previous experience with DG ECHO, EU, or other institutional donor-funded assessments.

- Familiarity with humanitarian standards, donor requirements, and evidence-based response planning.

9. Application Requirements and Submission

Required Application and Submission Documents

Interested consulting firms and individual consultants are required to submit the following documents as part of their application for the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) assignment.

1. Technical Proposal

- Understanding of the assignment, objectives, and expected deliverables.
- Proposed methodology, sampling approach, data collection methods, and analysis plan.
- Work plan outlining key activities, timelines, and deliverables.
- Proposed quality assurance, safeguarding, and data protection measures.

2. Financial Proposal

- Detailed financial proposal in USD, including professional fees, fieldwork, travel, logistics, data collection, analysis, and reporting costs.
- Clear breakdown of costs by activity or budget category, including applicable taxes.

3. Institutional Profile / Consultant CV

- Consulting firms: Updated company profile highlighting relevant expertise, operational capacity, and previous assignments.
- Individual consultants: Updated CV highlighting academic qualifications, professional experience, and relevant technical skills.

4. Evidence of Relevant Experience

- Details of at least three (3) comparable assignments completed, including client names, assignment descriptions, locations, and dates.
- At least two (2) samples of relevant assessment or evaluation reports previously produced.
- Contact details of at least two (2) professional referees.

5. Proposed Team Composition

- CVs of key personnel, including the team leader, sector specialists, data analysts, and GIS experts, as applicable.
- Clear description of team members' roles and responsibilities.
- Confirmation of team availability for the assignment period.

6. Legal and Administrative Documents (Consulting Firms Only)

- Valid business registration certificate.
- Relevant tax registration or compliance documentation.
- Applicable operational licences or authorisations.

7. Safeguarding and Ethical Compliance

- Evidence of safeguarding, PSEA, and data protection policies or procedures, where available.

- Brief statement outlining the applicant's commitment to ethical research, confidentiality, informed consent, and Do No Harm principles.

Submission Requirements

Applicants must submit their technical and financial proposals as separate documents, together with all required supporting documentation, by the deadline specified in the Terms of Reference (ToR).

All proposals must be prepared in English. Only complete applications that meet the minimum eligibility and qualification requirements will be considered for technical and financial evaluation.

AAIS reserves the right to request additional documentation or clarification during the evaluation and selection process.

Applications should be emailed to admin.somalia@actionaid.org, with the subject line: **"Application – Somalia Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment Consultancy 2027"**. Interested firms and individuals should submit their applications no later than **October 31st, 2026**. Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted. Proposals will be evaluated in accordance with AAIS procurement procedures, considering technical quality, methodology, relevant experience, team capacity, safeguarding, feasibility and value for money.

10. Ownership and Confidentiality

All outputs will be managed in accordance with the consultancy contract and AAIS policies. The consultant may not publish or disclose data or findings without prior written authorisation. Identifiable or sensitive information must be excluded from external outputs, and all data handling must comply with agreed confidentiality, retention and deletion arrangements.