



SITE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

December 2019 v6

NEEDS AND POPULATION MONITORING (NPM)

IOM Bangladesh Needs and Population Monitoring (NPM) is part of the IOM's global Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) programming. DTM is IOM's information management system to track and monitor the displacement and population mobility. It is designed to regularly and systematically capture, process and disseminate information to provide a better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of displaced populations, whether on site or en route.

Conceptualized in 2004 in Iraq, for the IDP assessments and monitoring exercises, the DTM has been continuously refined and enhanced through years of operational experience in countries in both conflict and natural disaster settings. It delivers essential role in providing primary data and information on displacement, both in country and at the global level.

IOM Bangladesh NPM was first launched in Cox's Bazar district, Bangladesh in Spring 2017.

CONTEXT

Following an outbreak of violence on 25 August 2017 in Rakhine State, Myanmar, a new massive influx of Rohingya refugees to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh started in late August 2017. Most of the Rohingya refugees settled in Ukhia and Teknaf Upazilas of Cox's Bazar, a district bordering Myanmar identified as the main entry area for border crossings.

Previous inflows were recorded in October 2016, when approximately 87,000 crossed into Bangladesh, and other waves were registered during the previous decades. The number of Rohingya refugees, both registered and unregistered, residing in Cox's Bazar prior to August 2017 is estimated to be around 213,000 individuals.

1. NPM SITE ASSESSMENT (SA)

The NPM Site Assessment (SA) routinely collects information on locations, multi-sectoral needs of Rohingya refugees in all areas most recently affected by the sudden influx.

The SA was launched in February 2017 and four rounds of data collection were completed before the mass influx of August 2017 (March, April, June, July).

The NPM SA collects information about the overall Rohingya population, including refugees who arrived before 25 August 2017. It does not collect information on the entire Rohingya population in Bangladesh, but in Cox's Bazar district only. The NPA SA covers all sites where Rohingya refugees have been identified irrespectively of the location type, including makeshift settlements, spontaneous settlements, host communities, and formal refugee camps.

Information is collected by a team of up to 110 enumerators through a mixed-methods approach: Field level key informant (KI) interviews using a closed-ended KoBo questionnaire are conducted. The findings of the KI interviews are then triangulated and supplemented through direct observations, community group discussions and KI interviews with a variety of sources. Enumerators are locally recruited and thus able to conduct interviews in Bengali, Rohingya, and Chittagonian. The latter, Chitaggongian Bangla, is highly similar to the Rohingya language.

On average, during a four week data collection period a single round of the NPM SA collects approximately 2000 interviews with individual KIs.

1.2 MULTISECTORAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The multisectoral needs assessment gathers information on the living conditions, needs of populations residing in the locations pre-identified by the NPM baseline. The data collected by the assessment focuses primarily on displacement trends and figures, multi-sectoral vulnerabilities, priorities of assistance, and future objectives.

The questionnaire has been compiled to support the Inter Sector Coordinating Group (ISCG) with sectors leaders and their information managements teams engaged throughout. Inputs from the sectors are received frequently, and thus, regularly contribute to the revision of the tool.

The purpose of the NPM multi-sectoral needs assessment is not to replace the role or need for in-depth, sector specific investigation. Rather, the NPM SA aims to provide a regular updated multi and cross-sectoral overview of refugees' needs. More specifically, it allows for the identification of redflag issues, which supports sectors ability to more precisely target specific geographic locations with more in-depth assessments, tailored to the specific issue that NPM SA managed to highlight. The SA is comprised of two sections sets of information; population figures and multi-sectoral needs.

1.2.1 GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The SA collects information about the composition of population settled in the assessed location. Core information routinely collected includes:

- Geographical information (division, district, upazila, union, location and GPS coordinates of the location);
- State, district and township of origin of refugees from Myanmar;
- Secondary displacement;
- Time of arrival (before or after 25 of August 2017);
- Presence of vulnerable groups.

1.2.2 MULTI-SECTORAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The SA collects information about the needs of population settled in the assessed location.

The NPM SA covers the following sectoral areas:

- Shelter & NFI
- WASH
- Food Security and Livelihoods
- Nutrition
- Health
- Education
- Protection
- Communication with communities (CwC)

1.3 SETTLEMENTS TYPES

The Rohingya populations is settled across different settlement types. The settlement types are defined by the ISCG in close cooperation with the Site Management Sector.

Up to February 2018 (NPM SA Round 8), the agreed settlement types were the following:

- **(Formal) Refugee Camps** were the two formal refugee camps established in the early 1990s. They are run by UNHCR and are home to the only registered and recognized refugees in Bangladesh. The two camps are Kutupalong and Nayapara Refugee Camps. These two camps also receive new arrivals, but they are not formally registered as refugees.
- **Makeshift Settlements (MS)** were the settlements established by the Rohingya refugees who arrived after 1991 and prior to 25 August 2017. There are four primary makeshift settlements: Kutupalong MS, Balukhali MS, Leda MS, and Shamlapur MS.

However, the first two have now been subsumed into the Kutupalong Extension site. For the purpose of NPM data collection exercise, each Makeshift Settlement is considered separately.

- **Spontaneous Settlement** referred to refugee encampments that sprung up as a result of the new influx since 25 August 2017. The number and size of spontaneous settlements changes regularly, with many of the smaller sites emptying as the Government encourages people to move toward the Kutupalong Extension site.¹
- **Host Community Locations** referred normally to Bangladeshi villages where Rohingya refugees are currently settled.

The line between spontaneous settlement and host community can at times be difficult to ascertain. These locations include Rohingya populations who might be fully assimilated into a Bangladeshi village and thus are difficult to identify whilst in other cases an influx of new arrivals might have settled surrounding an existing village, but have not been integrated into it.

To clarify the distinction between Spontaneous Settlements and Host Community Locations, from March 2018 (NPM SA 9) the ISCG and Site Management Sector revised the settlement types as follows:

- **Collective site** refers to camp-like settings where only Rohingya refugees live. This category encompasses the previous Formal Refugee Camps, Makeshift Settlements and part of those Spontaneous Settlements where no Bangladeshi communities live.
- **Collective site with host community** refers to those collective camp-like settlements that developed around existing Bangladeshi communities, and hence present a mixed population.
- **Dispersed site in host community** refers to villages and dispersed locations where Rohingya refugees reside among Bangladeshi host communities.

This categorization is periodically reviewed together with the site management sector and ISCG.

1.4 GEOGRAPHIC UNIT OF REFERENCE AND KEY INFORMANTS

Depending on the settlement type, the geographic unit of reference and the source of information change within the NPM methodology, which is adapted to different contexts. However in order to maintain ease of reference the term 'location' is used throughout the tool in order to refer to the key informants area of influence and the area about which they are answering questions.

- **Collective sites:** the unit of reference is the *majhee* block. A *majhee* is a community leader, belonging to the Rohingya refugee population. A block is the portion of a settlement for which he/she is responsible. *Majhees* tend to be used as a focal point to deliver services in each block, and are NPM's main key informants.
- **(Formal) Refugee Camps:** as formal refugee camps were established in the 90s, a former block system coexists with a new block system, developed with the new influx. NPM was given access by UNHCR to the *majhees* inside the two formal refugee camps during NPM SA Round 7. From NPM SA Round 1 to 6, NPM reported solely the figures of registered refugees provided by UNHCR, including pre- and post- August 2017. The figure was then reported on a site/camp level and no further breakdown was provided. From NPM SA Round 1 to 6 no needs assessment was conducted.
- **Host Community Locations:** the geographic unit of reference is the village. Enumerators collect and triangulate information collected from multiple key informants belonging to the community.

The adoption of the *majhee* block system as a geographic unit of reference presents advantages and limitations:

Advantages

- Formal refugee camps, makeshifts and spontaneous settlements host a highly-concentrated population that settled in open country side or forest, where no pre-existing official geographic unit of reference could be applied.
- Despite the various efforts from local authorities, UN agencies, army etc. as of January 2018, no unequivocal universally recognized system of reference was in place. Especially not one that could allow such a level of granularity.
- For operational purposes, the *majhee block* system adopted by the army on the ground was identified as the most reliable unit of reference for population counting and needs assessment.

¹ Kutupalong Extension site refers to land provided by the Government to house the new arrivals. It now encompasses Kutupalong makeshift, Balukhali makeshift and Mainnerghona.

- The *majhee* block is the smallest geographic unit among those proposed by other actors (i.e. zones, camps), it is small enough (approximately a hundred families) to be easily aggregated further, hence it is very flexible.
- The *majhee* block has identifiable block leaders (*majhees*) appointed by the army, who are tasked to keep track of the population of his/her area of responsibility, and are directly in contact with the army or humanitarian actors for the delivery of services and aid.
- Refugees are aware of what block they belong to and who their *majhee* is, while they are not familiar with any other geographical references.

Limitations

- The block as a geographic unit is bound to the *majhee* who supervises it. The system is not formalized - blocks do not always present intuitive, clear borders on the ground, the system does not have a linear hierarchy, it is not standardized across different sites, and it is susceptible to changes depending on the influx of new arrivals or the decision of the army or other authorities.
- There is concern about the power dynamics involved in the *majhee* system, particularly affecting the collection of sensitive or protection-related data
- *Majhees* were originally nominated by the army and not elected/selected by their community. *Majhees* are informed about the needs of their areas of responsibilities and involved in the delivery of services. Thus *majhees'* opinions are indicative of the populations of their block and cannot be considered as representative. Furthermore, as they are heavily involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, *majhees* can be biased and susceptible to manipulate information for their own interest.

Despite its limitations, among all the possible options the *majhee* block system was considered the most solid and reliable system to collect granular geo-referenced data across a large area that could be crosschecked and compared with information coming from other sources or actors, be they engaged in operational or data collection activities.

The *majhee* identification exercise conducted by NPM to identify blocks and key informants was an explorative effort that aimed to be descriptive and not prescriptive.

Efforts to establish an alternative governance system have been carried out by the Site Management Sector (please see below for further details).

Finally, data collection through KIs is extremely flexible and in the event that new geographical units of reference were suggested and implemented by local authorities or other actors (such as Site Management Sector for instance), the methodology can be easily adapted to cover a newly created management system while continuing to monitor the pre-existing one.

Developments after August 2018 (Round 12)

NPM significantly revised its SA methodology, and formalized and systematized its qualitative approach, shifting from a mostly quantitative to a mixed methods methodology.

This included incorporating interviews with different categories of KIs, some of which were previously interviewed in an ad hoc or sporadic manner, but moving forward are carried out systematically:

- **Site Management Focal Points:** All site managers are interviewed to triangulate and confirm findings captured through the quantitative tool. Site Managers were chosen because they have a great overview of the situation and needs in their respective camps and a privileged position in their relationship with the CiC's and local authorities.
- **Committees and Governance systems:** Governance systems, such as the Para Development Committees (PDCs) in the Teknaf camps (collective sites with host communities), were developed in April and May 2018 and were incorporated into the NPM SA methodology in round 10 (May 2018). Similarly, from August/September 2018, NPM worked closely with the Site Management Sector in mapping new blocks and sub-blocks, which will eventually be established as a new form of governance structure that replaces the current *majhee* system. As part of the proposed governance system, block and sub-block committees will be established that will be composed of two men, two women and one third category representative (of persons with specific needs).² In addition a "Block Representative" will be elected and will represent the residents of a particular block. Once this system is fully established, NPM will switch to the new geographical unit of reference and the new Key Informants (block and sub-block committees). During the transition phase, NPM will cover both systems (*Majhee* and Block committees/representatives, until the latter is finally established).
- **Female Key Informants:** Significant efforts were also made to identify female KI's to further supplement findings. While efforts had been made in the past, the challenges associated with identifying reliable female KI's were significant. This was largely due to cultural and governance structures whereby Rohingya women were/are not represented in public

² Governance Task Force (Site Management Sector) Proposed Guidelines for a two-phased approach to establish a Governance system in the Rohingya refugee camps (Procedures, Responsibilities, and Code of Conduct), 29-09-2018

positions of responsibilities, nor have been in representative positions where they have been requested to speak on behalf of the community. Through liaising closely with UNFPA, UNICEF, Community Working with Communities (CWC), and the IOM Protection Unit, NPM has been able to reach out systematically to female Rohingya community volunteers who engage directly with the community.

- Through the support of UNICEF, NPM conducts interviews in UNICEF C4D supported IFCs. Each interview involves a “Model Mother”, a female “Youth Volunteer” and an IFCs staff member.³
- In addition, through the support of UNFPA, NPM conducts interviews in UNFPA Women Friendly Spaces (WFS). Each interview included a UNFPA case worker and a Rohingya female beneficiary.⁴
- All interviews are conducted by female staff members
- Through this process, NPM has been able to incorporate Key Informant Interviews with Rohingya women to its pre-existing methodology, providing a crucial female specific lens to the findings.

Developments after March 2019 (Round 15)

As of round 15, in order to incorporate female perspectives into the Site Assessment in a systematic manner efforts were made to conduct female key informant interviews in each of the 1956 locations in refugee camps.⁵ This process and the design of the data collection methodology involved extensive field level design and piloting with female field staff. During round 15, female enumerators identified and interviewed female KI’s in all locations in refugee camps, reaching 100% coverage)

So as to maintain transparency, remove suspicion, and protect the respondent, *Majhee’s* were informed at the field level of the plan to interview a female key informant. They were asked, if available, to identify any female in a position of authority (eg. female *Majhee* assistant) or who holds knowledge of the location due to their role (eg. teacher, health worker, humanitarian volunteer). If reported to be unavailable, female enumerators on the ground attempted to identify the same characters through interactions with Rohingya women in the location. Failing this, female enumerators tried to identify women in a position of trade (eg. shopkeeper, tailor), and as a last effort tried to find a local Rohingya woman (eg. housewife) who was willing to be interviewed and give information on the community in her location. Interviews were conducted as best as possible in private, with the respondent predominantly inside her own shelter. A male enumerator remained out of earshot but nearby, in order to monitor the area and, if necessary, steer away any unwanted attention.

As a result of this exercise, NPM, now has a comprehensive dataset which can be used for analysis against the *majhee* KI dataset. Points of comparison and differences between male and female KI’s will be presented in reports, disseminated and used to highlight key issues that women may be facing in the refugee camps.

1.5 TIMEFRAME AND DATA COLLECTION CYCLE

The SA collects information on the total number of families identified in the assessed location at the time of data collection. Therefore, at the end of every round of updates, the new count replaces the old count. The new count can be lower/higher than the previous count if the inflow is smaller/bigger than the outflow, or it can be zero if all refugees left the place where they were previously identified. However, the increase/decrease between two rounds should be read as a net increase/decrease, as the SA does not capture the fluctuations between two different updates.

- A full NPM Site Assessment is conducted on average on a Quarterly basis (every 3 months)
- On average, during a four week data collection period a single round of the NPM SA collects approximately 2000 interviews with individual KIs.
- With the inclusion of female KI’s the data collection period extends to approximately 8 weeks as the number of interviews are essentially doubled.

1.6 DISSEMINATION

SA data and reports are published regularly after validation by the ISCG. Reports, site profiles, and the full clean dataset are shared publicly online alongside the report if not before. Protection-sensitive data such as contact details are not publicly accessible but can be privately requested by relevant actors.

³ “Model Mothers” and “Youth Volunteers” are UNICEF community mobilizers comprised of Rohingya women and youth. These volunteers conduct household visits in the camps and deliver key lifesaving messages around topics such as nutrition, reproductive health, but also monsoon and cyclone preparedness.

⁴ UNFPA currently runs 19 Women’s Friendly Spaces where women and girls can access psycho-social educational programs as well as vocational training opportunities, such as sewing. In addition, UNFPA conduct outreach sessions throughout the camps using female Rohingya volunteers and Bangladeshi caseworkers. These outreach sessions include topics such as nutrition, counter trafficking, hygiene and sanitation.

⁵ During round 15, identifying female KI’s in host community locations was not attempted due to time constraints.

NPM Data and information products are made available on:

- **NPM Portal** : <https://bit.ly/NPMPortal>
- **Displacement.iom.int** : <https://displacement.iom.int/regions/asia-and-pacific>
- **Humanitarian Response** : <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/bangladesh>
- **HDX**: <https://data.humdata.org/group/bgd>
- **OperAerialMap**: <https://openaerialmap.org/>