

Terms of Reference

REACH SENIOR ASSESSMENT OFFICER IN AFGHANISTAN (CASH AND MARKETS FOCAL POINT)

Reference: 22/AFG/SA002

BACKGROUND ON IMPACT AND REACH

IMPACT Initiatives is a humanitarian NGO, based in Geneva, Switzerland. The organisation manages several initiatives, including the REACH Initiative. The IMPACT team comprises specialists in data collection, management and analysis, GIS and remote-sensing. IMPACT was launched at the initiative of ACTED, an international NGO whose headquarter is based in Paris and is present in thirty countries. The two organizations have a strong complementarity formalized in a global partnership, which allows particularly IMPACT to benefit from ACTED's operational support on its fields of intervention.

REACH was born in 2010 as a joint initiative of the two International NGOs ([IMPACT Initiatives](#) and [ACTED](#)) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Operational Satellite Applications Programme ([UNOSAT](#)). REACH's purpose is to promote and facilitate the development of information products that enhance the humanitarian community's decision making and planning capacity for emergency, reconstruction and development contexts, supporting and working within the framework of the humanitarian reform process. REACH facilitates information management for aid actors through three complementary services: (a) need and situation assessments facilitated by REACH teams; (b) situation analysis using satellite imagery; (c) provision of related database and (web)-mapping facilities and expertise.

ACTED is a French humanitarian NGO, founded in 1993, which supports vulnerable populations, affected by humanitarian crises worldwide. ACTED provides continued support to vulnerable communities by ensuring the sustainability of post-crisis interventions and engaging long-term challenges facing our target populations, in order to break the poverty cycle, foster development and reduce vulnerability to disasters. Their interventions seek to cover the multiple aspects of humanitarian and development crises through a multidisciplinary approach which is both global and local, and adapted to each context. Their 3,300 staff are committed to responding to emergencies worldwide, to supporting recovery and rehabilitation, towards sustainable development.

We are currently looking for a Senior Assessment Officer to lead our Cash and Markets programming Afghanistan.

Department: REACH

Position: Senior Assessment Officer

Duration: 12 months

Starting Date: ASAP

Location: Kabul, Afghanistan

COUNTRY PROFILE

Forty years of war, recurrent natural disasters, chronic poverty, drought and the COVID-19 pandemic have devastated the people of Afghanistan. At the same time, the recent economic upheaval and ruptures in basic services, financial systems and civil service are transpiring and exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation. Even prior to the events of 15 August, the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan was one of the worst in the world. By the mid-year mark, nearly half of the population – some 18.4 million people – were already in need of humanitarian and protection assistance in 2021; more than 22 million are projected to be in need in 2022.

While the full impact of recent events will take more time to manifest, aid organisations have already witnessed a dangerous deepening of humanitarian need amongst a greater number of people. In addition to the collapsing capacity of basic services, sharp drops in income, surging food and other commodity prices, growing unemployment, and severed remittances are expected to contribute to the deterioration of food security among other sectoral and cross-sectoral needs. This is increasingly concerning as food basket costs are steadily rising; while markets continue to function, prices for key commodities remain well above pre-pandemic levels and the purchasing power of casual labourers and pastoralists remains significantly reduced. It is anticipated that current political uncertainty, devaluation of the Afghan currency, import challenges and cash availability may lead to further inflationary impacts.

In light of the political turmoil and economic crisis facing Afghanistan after the events of 2021, the humanitarian response is implementing an unprecedented scale-up in implementation to meet such critical and rapidly worsening need across the country. As such, the needs for evidenced-based humanitarian aid and information on populations in both accessible and inaccessible areas is paramount to an effective, accountable, and coordinated response.

IMPACT has been present in Afghanistan since 2016, providing a growing evidence base for humanitarian response planning through sectoral, multi-sectoral and area-based assessments as well as information management services across the entire country, with bases in all regions of Afghanistan. The mission is structured around three units, each with key objectives to support different aspects of the response. This includes (1) supporting strategic planning and prioritization through the Inter-Sectoral Research Unit (ISRU), (2) emphasizing localization agendas through area-based early recovery and development through the Resilience and Recovery Unit (RRRU), and (3) providing programmatic and operational support to key actors and partners in the aid response to ensure effective, appropriate, transparent, and accountable delivery of assistance to the people of Afghanistan through the Programming and Accountability Research Unit (PARU).

This third unit includes already established research focusing on: information management support for cash implementing actors through the Emergency Response Mechanism; price tracking and market functionality assessment through the Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI); dedicated information management and response evaluation for the ESNFI Cluster. REACH Afghanistan is looking for a Senior Assessment Officer to lead the Cash and Markets programmes under the PARU, overseeing both the ERM and JMMI research cycles and supporting the RM in shaping its new strategic direction, as of January 2022.

POSITION PROFILE

REACH Initiative Afghanistan is currently seeking a young professional with experience in research to lead the Cash and Markets (C&M) Programming in Afghanistan as a Senior Assessment Officer (SAO).

In coordination with the ECHO-funded Emergency Response Mechanism (ERM), and the Cash and Voucher Working Group (CVWG) of Afghanistan, REACH conducts regular and ad hoc C&M-focused assessments, and provides information management support to the humanitarian cash response in Afghanistan. This includes daily processing of beneficiary vulnerability assessments, third party post-distribution monitoring, and facilitating the implementation of the CVWG-led Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMIMI) to conduct market price and supply chain monitoring.

Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMIMI)

The Afghanistan Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMIMI) was launched by the Afghanistan Cash and Voucher Working Group (CVWG) and partners, in collaboration with REACH Initiative (REACH), and funded by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). It is implemented through partners' data collection, as a joint effort to align, harmonize, and streamline existing partner data collection for analysis. The SAO's role, with the support of the JMIMI AO, entails overall coordination and support to 20 international and national partner NGOs, as well as the management of the overall assessment cycle (including updating research design regularly, updating the tool when needed through coordination with partners and LL workshops, managing data, producing monthly factsheets, and disseminating products to the CVWG's partners and external stakeholders upon request).

Information Management support within the Emergency Response Mechanism (ERM)

The ECHO-funded Emergency Response Mechanism relies on the coordination of key cash implementing partners providing rapid response emergency multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) across Afghanistan. To streamline the mechanism and improve efficiency, REACH provides centralised information management support to all ERM partners, including processing and management of household-level assessment data to evaluate the eligibility of conflict and shock-affected households for one-time multi-purpose cash, WASH and winterisation assistance, and – where needed – protection referrals. The SAO, with the support of the ERM AO, is responsible for acting as the external focal point with partners for all project activities, updating tools and SOPs when needed, closely managing caseload data, and producing monthly factsheets.

This position sits within REACH's newly established Programming and Accountability Research Unit (PARU). In partnership with all Clusters and other stakeholders, these programmes are integral to Afghanistan's humanitarian needs analysis and response planning process. The C&M SAO will be responsible for overseeing all research streams within the project portfolio. This includes meeting contractual deliverables, including coordination of trainings with partners, and production of datasets, tabulated analysis, factsheets, situation overviews, and narrative reports.

The ideal candidate will be eager to work in a dynamic organization with opportunities to build upon existing data analysis and external coordination skills. Technical backstopping and support is provided by the Research Manager for the REACH PARU, and REACH Afghanistan Data Specialist, and the IMPACT Geneva HQ team. Past experience in the aforementioned areas is not essential although highly desirable. At minimum, experience with the subject matter, familiarity with the development and/or humanitarian sector, quantitative analysis skills, and effective communication skills are required.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the supervision of the (Deputy) Country Coordinator in Afghanistan, direct line-management of the PARU Research Manager, and with direct coordination with IMPACT HQ as well as the donors and partners involved in the research cycle, the REACH SAO responsibilities include:

1. Research Cycle Implementation and Management

- Oversight and implementation of all stages of the research cycle, including:
 - Research design: indicator drafting and review, assessment methodology and sampling strategy review, data collection tool development
 - Planning and coordination of data collection activities, in close collaboration with the in-country operations team
 - Oversight of data processing, including development of data cleaning and analysis plans, and conducting analysis, in close collaboration with the in-country data team
 - Output production and development, and presentation of findings
 - Conducting lessons learned workshops and compiling best practices for future assessments
- Regular communication and collaboration with IMPACT HQ Data and Reporting Units to ensure implementation of global standards, guidelines, and best practices, for C&M and of REACH and IMPACT more generally
- Ensuring that activities are planned and implemented in a structured and coherent manner, in line with project and program objectives, and assuring that deadlines are met.
- Ensuring regular reporting on assessment progress and participating in internal coordination meetings.
- Developing research TORs and tools, ensuring these are validated and approved by management and external partners, and making sure these are also understood and used by assessment staff and stakeholders, and updated as required.
- Managing and coordinating data collection and processing whilst providing quality control to ensure data is clean and of acceptable standard.
- Leading quantitative analyses with the support of the data unit, as well as providing technical input, guidance, and review of data analysis conducted by other team members.
- Conducting and overseeing the writing of timely and accurate assessment reports and other outputs, which comply with HQ guidelines and meet global REACH standards.

2. Team, Project, and Grants Management

- Managing junior staff dedicated to the portfolio across assessment, data, and project/operations teams.
- Participating in general project management including review of budgets, grants reporting, and project-related logistics.
- Supporting the RM and Senior Management Team (SMT) with grants management, including donor reporting, proposal drafting, and project monitoring and evaluation

3. External Engagement

- Close coordination with all relevant external stakeholders within the humanitarian coordination structure, throughout the research cycle, and supporting the incorporation of findings into strategic planning, programmatic, and operational documents as relevant
- Functioning as focal point for the CVWG – supporting the group and its partners with data analysis, ad-hoc presentation, and revision of draft SOPs upon request

- Developing and maintaining strong relationships and regular coordination with JMMI partners, and ECHO, as well as key humanitarian programme cycle (HPC) stakeholders in country, such as OCHA
- Providing technical and information management support to humanitarian stakeholders to inform strategic humanitarian planning documents.

4. Support to the Research Manager and SMT on Strategy Development and Implementation

- Under the guidance of the (Deputy) Country Coordinator and Unit RM, contribute to the development of the PAR Unit's strategy, engagement and involvement with various technical and coordination forums, particularly as relates to Cash and Markets programming ;
- Support the RM to work with key clusters and partner organizations and working groups to understand the various relevant information gaps within Afghanistan and identify how the Cash and Markets team can fill these gaps.
- Coordinating with IMPACT HQ, and CVWG on global and in country approaches to improving cash programming

Other tasks falling within his/her functions as requested by supervisors

The REACH Assessment Officer will maintain the strictest confidentiality on all data collected and related processes. He/she will actively take measures to prevent the unauthorized sharing of any information and data belonging to IMPACT and its partners, or collected during his/her assignment with IMPACT.

In his/her mission, the REACH SAO will be hosted by ACTED and will fall under the responsibility of ACTED's Country Director and his/her delegates. S/he and will fully abide to ACTED's Security, HR, Administration and Logistics rules and regulations.

REQUIREMENTS

- Excellent academic qualifications, including a Master's degree in relevant discipline (international studies, development, humanitarian response, political science, monitoring and evaluation, etc);
- At least 3 years of relevant working experience in humanitarian or development settings, such as program management, evaluation and assessments;
- Knowledge of cash and markets programming in humanitarian contexts;
- Excellent analytical skills;
- Good experience with quantitative and qualitative research and tool design, data collection, and data analysis required;
- Experience managing staff in a small team desirable, including remote management
- Excellent communication and drafting skills for reporting and external coordination;
- Strong coordination and organizational skills, including the ability to proactively problem solve;
- Demonstrated ability to write analytical research reports including critical analysis of data;
- Proven knowledge of the Microsoft Office Suite, to include Word, Excel, and PowerPoint;
- Excellent ability to operate Adobe InDesign Software for output production;
- Knowledge of statistical analysis software such as SPSS, STATA, and/or R;
- Knowledge of qualitative assessments, methodologies, and analysis and related analytical software (e.g. NVivo) an asset;
- Experience with GIS software is an asset.
- Prior field experience required;

- Written and spoken fluency in English required;
- Ability to multitask with tight deadlines;
- Ability to work independently and manage people remotely;
- Ability to operate in a cross-cultural environment requiring flexibility;
- Ability to operate in a complex and challenging security environment.

CONDITIONS

- Salary defined by the IMPACT salary grid; educational level, expertise, hardship, security, and performance are considered for pay bonus
- Additional monthly living allowance
- Free lodging provided at the organisation's guesthouse or housing allowance (depending on contract length and country of assignment)
- Transportation costs covered, including additional return ticket + luggage allowance
- Provision of medical, life, and repatriation insurance + retirement package