

Field Guidelines

for Assessing the
Humanitarian Implications of
Sanctions



United Nations

IASC

Inter-Agency Standing Committee

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1. Introduction

1.1 Objectives and application of the Field Guidelines

*Partner to IASC
Sanctions
Assessment
Handbook*

This set of Field Guidelines is intended to provide guidance to humanitarian practitioners in identifying and measuring possible humanitarian consequences of sanctions. This document is a concise, field-oriented version of a partner publication—an IASC handbook entitled “*Assessing the Humanitarian Implications of Sanctions*”—which provides more detailed information on how to assess potential impacts of sanctions on living conditions.

The Guidelines presented here are relevant to a **range of sanctions, including: arms embargoes, financial sanctions, travel-related sanctions and targeted trade sanctions**. At the core of these Guidelines is a sanctions assessment methodology, which facilitates evaluation of possible humanitarian consequences of sanctions. The methodology can be applied **in advance of, during or following sanctions**, and aims to address two key challenges associated with humanitarian assessments under sanctions: (I) accurate evaluation of the current status of humanitarian conditions, and (II) separation of the effects of sanctions on health and well-being from those due to other causes.

*Methodology
does not
presuppose
impact*

The **sanctions assessment methodology** does not presuppose a particular type of impact due to sanctions, which may be positive, neutral or negative depending on the specific context.

1.2 Conceptual framework

*Two clusters:
“4+4” human
security subject
areas*

The conceptual framework underpinning the sanctions assessment methodology is based on the concept of human security. This approach operationalizes human security by defining two clusters of humanitarian and socio-economic conditions, each of which contains four subject areas. These are referred to as the **“4 + 4” human security subject areas**.

*Core cluster:
health, food
and nutrition,
WATSAN,
education*

The core cluster of four subject areas comprises groups of indicators of conditions related to immediate survival and development of humans. The subject areas in this cluster are: (1) health; (2) food and nutrition; (3) water and sanitation; and (4) education. Taken together, these four pillars represent the “vital core” of human security.

Systemic cluster: governance, economic status, physical environment, demography

The second cluster deals with the systems and social context in which people strive to secure core human needs. The subject areas of this systemic cluster are: (1) governance; (2) economic status; (3) the physical environment; and (4) demography. Most of these data will be at the level of groups of persons or communities.

These two clusters of subject areas—the “core” and “systemic” clusters—provide a template covering most of the essential sectors and indicators for assessing and tracking humanitarian conditions.

2. Causal modelling

Causal modelling identifies how one thing causes another to occur. In the realm of humanitarian assessments, this type of modelling is necessary to understand better the effects of one possible cause in the context of other factors that may also influence humanitarian conditions.

This chapter provides guidance on how to identify **whether a causal relationship exists between two factors** and on **how to build causal models**.

2.1 Types of causes and the chain of causation

Types of causes used to identify relationships between variables

There are several different types of causes that can be identified when building models of cause and effect. Becoming aware of these different types of causes and their interrelationships assists in exploring possible linkages between social, political and economic factors, and changes in humanitarian conditions.

Proximal cause

A proximal cause is a cause that immediately precedes the outcome of interest. There may be prior events that lead to the proximal cause (see figure 1). Such events that are more removed in the sequence of causal steps are referred to as distal causes. Causal pathways can be illuminated by tracing through intermediate steps, working backward from an outcome or forward from an initial event. The steps from distal and proximal causes to an outcome of interest are collectively referred to as a chain of causation.

Distal cause

Chain of causation

Direct and indirect cause

The simplest models are composed of direct causes, where event A leads straight to outcome B. Indirect causes are those that operate through other, parallel causal mechanisms, or through additional intermediate steps. By building models and examining data, investigators can determine how direct and indirect causal variables relate to one another and act through a step-by-step chain, and which links in the chain are most susceptible to change.

Necessary and sufficient conditions

An event is sufficient to cause an outcome if no other events are required for the outcome to occur. There may be many sufficient events, any one of which could cause the outcome. Among a group of events, there may be one factor that must always be present for an outcome to occur. This is termed a necessary condition, in that the outcome cannot occur without this factor.

Any variable can be examined to determine if it is a proximal or distal cause of an outcome, and sufficient and/or necessary for the out-

come to occur. This process assists in identifying where the variable acts in the chain of causation, and the importance of the variable to the observed outcome.

2.2 Inferring cause using criteria of causation

Criteria of causation

There are several criteria that can be used to identify whether there is a causal relationship between two variables. These are referred to as criteria of causation and can be used to identify successive “links” in a chain of events linking cause and effect. Criteria of causation include:

Temporality—The cause must always occur before the outcome.

Strength of association—How much do the causative variable and the outcome move together?

Consistency—Is the relationship between cause and outcome found over and over, among different groups or countries?

Specificity—Does the cause lead to the same particular outcome over and over, or does it instead lead to different outcomes?

Plausibility—Is there a *reasonable* explanation available as to how the variable is linked to the outcome? Is it a plausible linkage?

2.3 Building a causal model

How to build a causal model

A step-by-step approach to developing a causal model is presented in box 1. This procedure includes the use of the different categories of causes and the criteria of causation identified above to construct a causal model working through successive levels.

Multilevel approach used by UNICEF

The identification of several “layers” of causes is similar to the multilevel approach to causal analysis used by UNICEF. This approach uses three levels of causes to assess changes in humanitarian conditions:

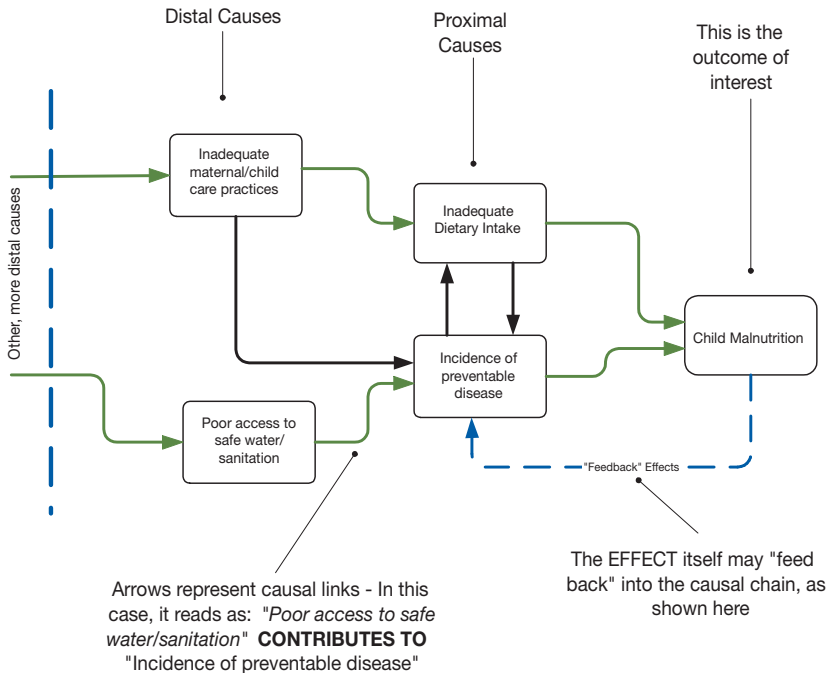
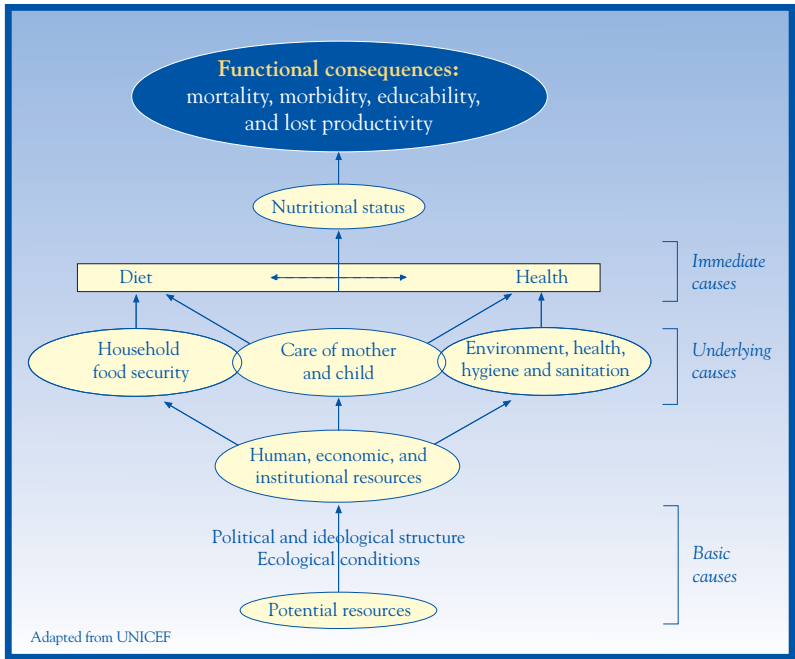
Immediate causes: such as disease and inadequate nutrition, which directly relate to life, survival and development;

Underlying causes: such as the status of household food and nutrition, as well as social services like water, sanitation, health and education;

Basic causes: which relate to issues such as control and distribution of national resources, institutional arrangements and social organization.

Two examples of causal models to identify some of the causes of child malnutrition are presented in figure 1.

Figure 1—Two examples of causal models used to explore the causes of child malnutrition. The causal model on top illustrates the multilevel approach used by UNICEF.



Box 1—A step-by-step approach to building a causal model

Building a causal model

1. Be clear about the problem statement before starting.

Action/questions:

—Identify the particular actions and outcomes of interest.

2. Associate variables that MAY belong in causal chains.

Action/questions:

—Are there variables that appear to be related to one another in a common process?

—Identify possible direct/indirect causes.

—Identify potential necessary/sufficient conditions.

3. Identify potential causes.

Action/questions:

—Do the variables satisfy many of the criteria of causation?

—Discount alternative explanations/causes.

—Identify the causal mechanisms (how exactly does one factor cause another to occur?).

—Measure key variables in more detail.

—Check for association by chance.

4. Identify likely causes.

Action/questions:

—For each variable, think what could be its causes.

—Are there other likely causes?

—Is there evidence of a specific chain of events?

5. Construct the causal “pathways” linking cause and effect.

Action/questions:

—Identify which causal links or inputs are most important.

—To what degree does a variable contribute to an effect?

[Note: As a starting point, identify the links immediately preceding/following the outcome/ action, respectively.]

3. Humanitarian indicators and data sources

*PROCESS and
OUTCOME
indicators*

Humanitarian indicators measure people's conditions of life. They may take the form of measures of **PROCESS**—such as the number of children treated for malnutrition; or measures of **OUTCOME**—such as the percentage of children that are malnourished. The essence of the sanctions assessment methodology is to determine whether there are changes in humanitarian conditions (as measured by indicators) that may be due to sanctions.

This chapter provides guidelines on **sources and availability of information and the use of humanitarian indicators in causal models**.

3.1 Sources and availability of information

*Primary versus
secondary data
collection*

Most of the data used in **determining baseline conditions** and assessing the possible effects of sanctions are garnered from existing sources, whereas original data are usually generated sparingly, to fill gaps. Existing sources of data are referred to as **secondary** data sources, while the collection of original data is referred to as **primary** data collection.

3.1.1 Collecting original information

*Primary data
collection*

The advantages of original, or primary, data collection are: (1) the timeliness of the data can be controlled; (2) it can help ensure that the data gathered in the survey group is representative of conditions in the larger population; and (3) careful design of the survey can result in data/information specific to the investigator's area of interest. Three types of studies are frequently used to gather original data on humanitarian conditions: cross-sectional studies, panel studies and longitudinal studies.

*Cross-sectional
studies*

The simplest type of primary data collection is a one-time survey, often called a cross-sectional study. This serves to collect information characterizing the humanitarian situation at a point in time. It can provide useful information about differences between groups but cannot capture patterns of change over time.

Panel studies

A better approach than a cross-sectional study is a panel study, where cross sections are taken periodically using a common, systematic method. Panel studies that do not follow up with the same individuals during each panel have to examine whether the people in the

different panels are indeed comparable. Sometimes panel studies put too much emphasis on collecting information on the outcomes of interest rather than relevant process information.

Longitudinal studies

While a cross-sectional study looks only at one point in time and a panel study repeats periodic cross-sections, sometimes it is possible to do ongoing monitoring in a continuous manner. This is a longitudinal study. When longitudinal studies are properly controlled and track the same individuals over time, they provide statistically powerful results.

3.1.2 Sources and availability of existing information

Using existing (reliable) data

When undertaking assessments of the humanitarian implications of sanctions, investigators should make maximum usage of existing (reliable) information and data sources. Humanitarian indicators may already be available across a number of sectors in the form of the **UN Common Country Assessment (CCA)** Indicator Framework (see table 2), or in compilations of indicators from individual UN agencies and international organizations (e.g., the United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report).

Sources of secondary data

Existing, or secondary, sources of data include international, national and local institutions. National governmental agencies are usually the dominant source of information, upon which many international (UN etc.) publications depend.

UN system data sources

UN organizations and international financial institutions, often in concert with national governments, occasionally undertake large-scale surveys of economic and social conditions in many countries. Prime among these organizations are: the World Bank (WB), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Health and demographic indicators

Outside the UN system, a broad range of humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs), human rights organizations and civil society monitoring agencies—such as the Human Rights Watch

and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)—collect information on many countries.

There are currently two widely available sources of representative sample information from surveys about important health and demographic indicators in most developing countries. The first is UNICEF’s Multiple Indicator Cluster Sample Survey (MICS), which measures conditions of child and maternal health and well-being in more than 60 countries. The second is the series of Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), which are nationally representative household surveys. Table 1 provides a select listing of sources of information for humanitarian assessments.

Table 1—Potential sources and types of information for humanitarian assessments related to sanctions

Potential sources of information	Types of information
Armed forces	Change in health of inductees
International organizations: “in country”	Survey on child-feeding practices
International organizations: regional or central sites	Regional comparisons and national projections of social and demographic indicators. Web sites include: ILO, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, Relief Web, the UN Statistics Division, UNAIDS, WHO, PAHO’s Disaster library in Costa Rica, UNFPA
International donors and think tanks	Funding of humanitarian assistance across various sectors; programme-specific indicators and changes in those indicators; funding levels for Overseas Development Assistance (ODA)
Individual institutions, such as schools, hospitals or workplaces	Service statistics and data on costs
Government finance or planning offices	Imports, contract cancellations, trade barriers, demographic surveys
The Central Bank or equivalent	Exchange rates, financial reserves
Local NGOs	Changes in need among service users
Universities	Sociologic survey on women’s coping methods in the light of crisis
Consulting groups	Demographics, household economy and other surveys
Local firms	Changes in production levels, economic inputs
Western Union	Trends in fund transfers, exchange rates

3.2 Use of qualitative information

Qualitative information in causal models

The term “qualitative” refers to conditions or information that can at most be only partially enumerated. Qualitative information is essential for developing useful causal models. It captures the contextual setting associated with information or situations affecting people’s lives, and so can assist in characterizing the relationships of one variable in the **chain of causation** to the next. Qualitative information is derived mainly from:

- In-depth interviews with key individuals;
- Focus group discussions (that are semi-structured) with small groups;
- Casual meetings with communities of interest;

Sources of qualitative information

- Participant observation, to see what people do, how and why;
- Site visits, to see the context in which they do it and to collect observations;
- Reviews of public records, archives or official transcripts;
- Critical incident questionnaires;
- Snowball interviews, where the first interview leads to a second, more focused interview with another individual.

3.3 Comparisons across population groups and time

Control groups

In many cases, sanctions are national in scope with the result that it may prove difficult to identify control groups (people within the country not affected by sanctions) with which to make comparisons. Control groups are the main way that different outcomes can be attributed to a particular cause. It is likely that “external” control groups (i.e., outside the country/territory) will also be lacking.

Possible control groups to use as comparison

Possible comparison groups that may highlight the impact of sanctions include: military versus civilians within a country, women versus men, those receiving rationed food versus those who do not, or employees in the public sector versus those in the private sector.

Cross-time comparisons

Changes in conditions experienced by the **same** population group over time can be used to assess the impact of sanctions. The key principle in undertaking comparisons across time is to ensure that the analysis takes into account factors other than sanctions that may have come into play, or changed in their intensity, over the same time period.

3.4 Using indicators in causal models

Priority PROCESS and OUTCOME indicators

Table 2 provides a list of priority humanitarian indicators across the “4 + 4” human security subject areas. These indicators have been cross-referenced with the indicators used in the UN Common Country Assessment (CCA) framework to ensure maximum compatibility with existing assessment processes. Indicators of PROCESS and OUTCOME have been identified in each human security subject area.

PROCESS indicators for intermediate steps in causal models

When **constructing causal models**, the PROCESS indicators will generally relate to measurement of the intermediate steps in the chain of causation (**proximal or distal causes**), while the OUTCOME indicators will be used to measure humanitarian conditions.

For both categories of indicator (PROCESS and OUTCOME) some can be used as reference benchmarks with which future changes can be compared (i.e., a “**Baseline**”, see section 4.1), while others will be more suitable for measuring **change** during sanctions. Examples of the types of indicators that can be used for measurement of baseline and changes in conditions include:

*Indicators for
baseline
conditions and
for measuring
change*

- **Infant mortality rates** change slowly over time in most countries. They are frequently used to characterize the overall conditions of life in a country because they are influenced by many variables. For humanitarian assessments in crisis situations, measurement of **changes in the weight at time of birth** is usually more useful, as it changes quickly in a population as access to food during pregnancy changes.
- **Access to or lack of access to piped (indoor) water and sanitary waste disposal** improves or deteriorates slowly, whereas **the amount of water pumped or the bacteriologic quality of water** changes quickly, depending on inputs of electricity and chlorine.
- **Household assets** (wealth, land, investments) accumulate over a long period of time and also change slowly in crises, whereas **household income** responds much more quickly to changes in employment, productivity and rates of exchange.

Table 2—Priority humanitarian indicators in each of the eight human security subject areas, categorized as indicators of PROCESS or OUTCOME. These indicators are drawn from the UN Common Country Assessment (CCA) indicator framework to ensure maximum compatibility with the CCA process.

Human security subject area	OUTCOME indicators	PROCESS indicators
Health	Under-five deaths (UNICEF-WHO) Infant mortality rate (UNICEF-WHO) Maternal mortality ratio (UNFPA) HIV prevalence among 15-to-24-year-old pregnant women (UNAIDS-WHO-UNICEF) Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria (WHO) Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis (WHO)	Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles (UNICEF-WHO) Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (UNICEF-WHO) Condom-use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate (UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNFPA) Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis (WHO) Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption (FAO)
Food and nutrition	Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age (UNICEF-WHO)	—
Water and sanitation	Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source (UNICEF-WHO) Proportion of urban population with access to improved sanitation, urban and rural (UNICEF-WHO)	—
Education	Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 (UNESCO) Literacy rate of 15-to-24-year-olds (UNESCO) Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education (UNESCO)	Net enrolment ratio in primary education (UNESCO) Personal computers in use per 100 population (ITU) and Internet users per 100 population (ITU)
Governance	Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (IPU)	—
Economic status	Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day (World Bank) Poverty gap ratio (incidence x depth of poverty) (World Bank) Share of poorest quintile in national consumption (World Bank) Unemployment rate of 15-to-24-year-olds, each sex and total (ILO)	Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (ILO)
Environment	Proportion of land area covered by forest (FAO) Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita) (UNFCCC, UNSD) and consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs (ODP tons) (UNEP-Ozone Secretariat)	Proportion of population using solid fuels (WHO)
Demography (and community)	Proportion of households with access to secure tenure (UN-HABITAT)	—

4. Sanctions assessment methodology

This chapter describes specific requirements for **undertaking baseline assessments** of humanitarian conditions, and presents five steps that constitute the sanctions **assessment methodology**. This chapter also includes guidelines on **applying the methodology to assessment of four categories of targeted sanctions**.

4.1 Undertaking a baseline assessment of humanitarian conditions

Baseline as reference point to measure changes

A baseline assessment of humanitarian and socio-economic conditions around the time of the onset of sanctions provides a reference point against which future changes in humanitarian conditions can be measured. A baseline assessment should include:

- Levels and rates of change of key humanitarian indicators in each of the “4 + 4” human security subject areas (see table 2) over recent years and the relative stability of these conditions;
- Factors influencing these conditions in the particular context of the country;
- Regional variations in key indicators;
- The role of the industry/service sectors likely to be affected by sanctions;
- Monetary and non-monetary contributions of various industry and service sectors to the national economy, government revenue and local society.

Baseline “checklist”

A checklist of actions required to conduct a baseline assessment is presented in box 2.

4.2 Assessing humanitarian vulnerability during baseline assessment

Vulnerability assessment key to baseline and ongoing monitoring

Humanitarian vulnerability is characterized by decreased access to essential goods and services relative to the needs of the individual. Assessing the vulnerability of population groups to changes in humanitarian conditions as a result of sanctions is critical in order to establish an effective baseline and to monitor the possible impact on these groups over time.

One technique employed to analyse and catalogue vulnerability is the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) approach used by the **UN World Food Programme (WFP)** and other humanitarian agencies.

Using this technique, vulnerability can be analysed and mapped in four steps.

Four steps for
Vulnerability
Analysis and
Mapping
(VAM)

First, indicators are identified in each of the subject areas of interest across three dimensions: availability, access and utilization. Indicators can be selected from the “4 + 4” human security subject areas (see table 2). **Second**, the investigator must ensure that the “direction” of all indicators is the same: that is, ensure that a high value across all indicators represents a consistently favourable or unfavourable indicator. **Third**, weighting factors are defined to rank the relative importance of the chosen indicators to overall vulnerability. **Fourth**, an overall vulnerability index is calculated using the indicators and weighting factors.

Box 2—Checklist for undertaking a baseline assessment

Task	Description	Where to find more information . . .
1	Gather Information on humanitarian conditions: → Using primary and secondary sources , gather data/information for humanitarian indicators → Start with data already collected for other processes/assessments (CCA etc.)	IASC “Sanctions Assessment Handbook” (HBK) Section 4.3
2	Assess current conditions and recent trends in each of the “4 + 4” human security subject areas: → Use select humanitarian indicators in each of the “4 + 4” subject areas to develop an image of humanitarian conditions → Use indicators of PROCESS and OUTCOME to provide a basis for identifying factors that influence those conditions → Establish recent trends in those conditions	HBK Annex II Field Guidelines (FG), Table 2
3	Identify possible factors influencing those conditions: → Identify proximal and more remote causes influencing the humanitarian conditions → Identify the sensitivities of particular indicators to changes in the influencing factors	HBK Section 3.4
4	Establish a profile of vulnerability within the population: → Identify vulnerable groups within the population (type, size, extent of vulnerability etc.) → Undertake a mapping of vulnerable groups	HBK Section 5.3 FG Section 4.2
5	Identify “gaps” or deficiencies in existing data/information	HBK Section 4.3
6	Prepare to use baseline as reference for future assessment of changes in conditions: → Identify those indicators best suited to measurement of change over time → Identify the existing capacity for information collection and the needs/opportunities to strengthen it → Identify the frequency with which ongoing assessments should be performed	HBK Section 4.2

4.3 Methodology for assessing humanitarian implications of sanctions

The sanctions assessment methodology is presented here in **five steps**, and is summarized in schematic form in figure 2.

Step I: Clearly identify the sanction measures (types of sanctions proposed or in place) and outcome (humanitarian conditions) of interest

Identify the measures covered by sanctions, the nature and scope of humanitarian exemptions, and provisions for selective approval of exempt goods. These measures—for example, a prohibition on air travel for a particular country, or a ban on the sale and export of diamonds—constitute a starting point for the assessment.

To monitor humanitarian conditions, investigators must identify potential indicators and **associated data sources**. Indicators of humanitarian conditions should span the “4 + 4” human security subject area. Table 2 outlines some priority indicators of process and outcome in each of the human security subject areas.

Step II: Undertake a baseline” assessment of conditions prior to sanctions

Using the indicators of humanitarian conditions identified above, **conduct a baseline assessment** of conditions prior to, or at the onset of, sanctions (see section 4.1 and box 2). For assessments prior to the imposition of sanctions, current and historical conditions serve as a baseline. If the assessment is being undertaken **during** sanctions, and a previous baseline does not exist, then a retrospective baseline drawing on historical data sources should be elaborated.

Step III: For each of the “4 + 4” human security subject areas, construct causal models to identify possible linkages between sanctions measures and humanitarian conditions

Identify possible causal pathways and intermediate variables that may link the sanctions measures to the potential effects (changes to humanitarian conditions as measured by indicators selected in Step I) in each subject area.

Begin with the four core subject areas (**health; food and nutrition; water and sanitation; and education**), as this will assist in identifying intervening variables for other subject areas. The **PROCESS** indicators in each of the subject areas in table 2 represent possible intermediate variables. **Construct causal models** tracing forward

from individual sanction measures and tracing backwards from humanitarian conditions (to identify intermediate causes).

Step IV: Identify potential sources of information for each of the PROCESS and OUTCOME indicators identified in the causal models, and gather the necessary information to complete the models

Once the causal model associated with each human security subject area has been constructed (step III above), **identify sources of quantitative and qualitative information** for each of the PROCESS indicators associated with the intermediate steps in the chain of events, and for the OUTCOME indicators that have been identified as possible areas of humanitarian impact in the causal models. Some of these OUTCOME indicators may be the same as those identified in step I. Previously they were used for identifying baseline conditions, and now they will be used to measure changes in those conditions.

Collect the information and data from the identified sources, ensuring that the resulting PROCESS and OUTCOME indicator values reflect the vulnerabilities of particular population groups to changes due to sanctions.

Following completion of this step, the investigator should have data sources and information available for each “node” or step in the causal models.

Step V: In each human security subject area, identify and extract the contribution of sanctions to the observed effects, separate from effects due to other causes

The causal models and associated indicators and data sources that have been constructed in the preceding four steps provide the basis for extracting the contribution of sanctions to changes in humanitarian conditions, which is the final step in the methodology. To do this, **repeat the following process for each of the eight causal models** (one for each human security subject area):

- A. Starting with the sanction measure(s), **trace a path through the causal model** for a human security subject area, one intermediate step at a time. Identify additional intermediate variables as necessary if they are not present in the list of indicators in table 2.
- B. **At each intermediate step**, use the quantitative and qualitative information associated with the PROCESS indicators (gathered in step IV) to **identify how much of an influence the sanction(s) has/have on that particular intermediate step**. In some instances, it

may indeed be possible to calculate the contribution of sanctions to the intermediate effect in a **quantitative** manner. However, in many cases, the investigator must make an informed estimate about the contribution of sanctions to the variable of interest based on available data.

- C. At each of these intermediate steps, take measures to **enhance the reliability of the assessment** by: (i) assigning a level of confidence to the assessment of the impact of sanctions; and (ii) using qualitative information to better inform judgements of how much sanctions impact the particular step.
- D. Proceeding along the intermediate steps in each causal model, **catalogue the contribution of sanctions**, at each intermediate step in the causal model. This can be done by simply compiling a list of the assessed impact of sanctions at each intermediate step.
- E. When this process of tracing terminates at the outcomes indicators of humanitarian conditions (the final step in the causal model), **the impact of sanctions on those conditions can be expressed as the cumulative impact of sanctions at each of the intermediate steps** leading to that outcome;
- F. **Present the findings as a direct sanction-outcome relationship, and also as a linked process.**

Once these five steps have been completed, the results of the assessment are compiled and explained in an assessment report (see section 5.2).

4.4 Applying the assessment methodology

This assessment methodology can be used prior to sanctions, during sanctions and following the termination of sanctions.

Existing conditions constitute baseline

Assessments prior to sanctions: Prior to the imposition of sanctions, existing conditions constitute the baseline, and assessment of the impact of proposed or pending sanctions will require that causal models be constructed tracing forward from the proposed sanction measures to the likely effects. For this, the investigator must pose the question: “*What **would be** the effect of sanctions imposed on _____?*” Pre-assessments should identify the **likely** capacity of the sanctioned state/region to mitigate the effects of sanctions.

Likely capacity to mitigate effects

Assessments during sanctions: In assessments undertaken during sanctions, practitioners can develop causal models by tracing forward from the sanctions measures, and also by tracing backwards from the observed humanitarian conditions. During sanctions, assessments should be undertaken on a regular basis (3-6 months).

Ongoing monitoring

Assessments following sanctions: For assessments following sanctions, investigators assess the impact of the prior measures, and must construct a retrospective baseline if one is not available from previous assessments. Following sanctions, investigators may actually have increased access to the previously sanctioned area, and to quality up-to-date information.

4.5 Humanitarian assessments for particular types of sanctions

Assessments under targeted sanctions: “areas of interest”

The shift towards more targeted sanctions in the mid- to late 1990s has highlighted four categories of sanctions that will most likely be applied in the future (rather than comprehensive economic sanctions): (1) arms embargoes; (2) financial sanctions; (3) travel-related sanctions; and (4) targeted trade sanctions. Table 3 summarizes areas of interest, indicators and data sources for these four categories of targeted sanctions.

Figure 2—Flow chart depicting the five steps in the Sanctions Assessment Methodology

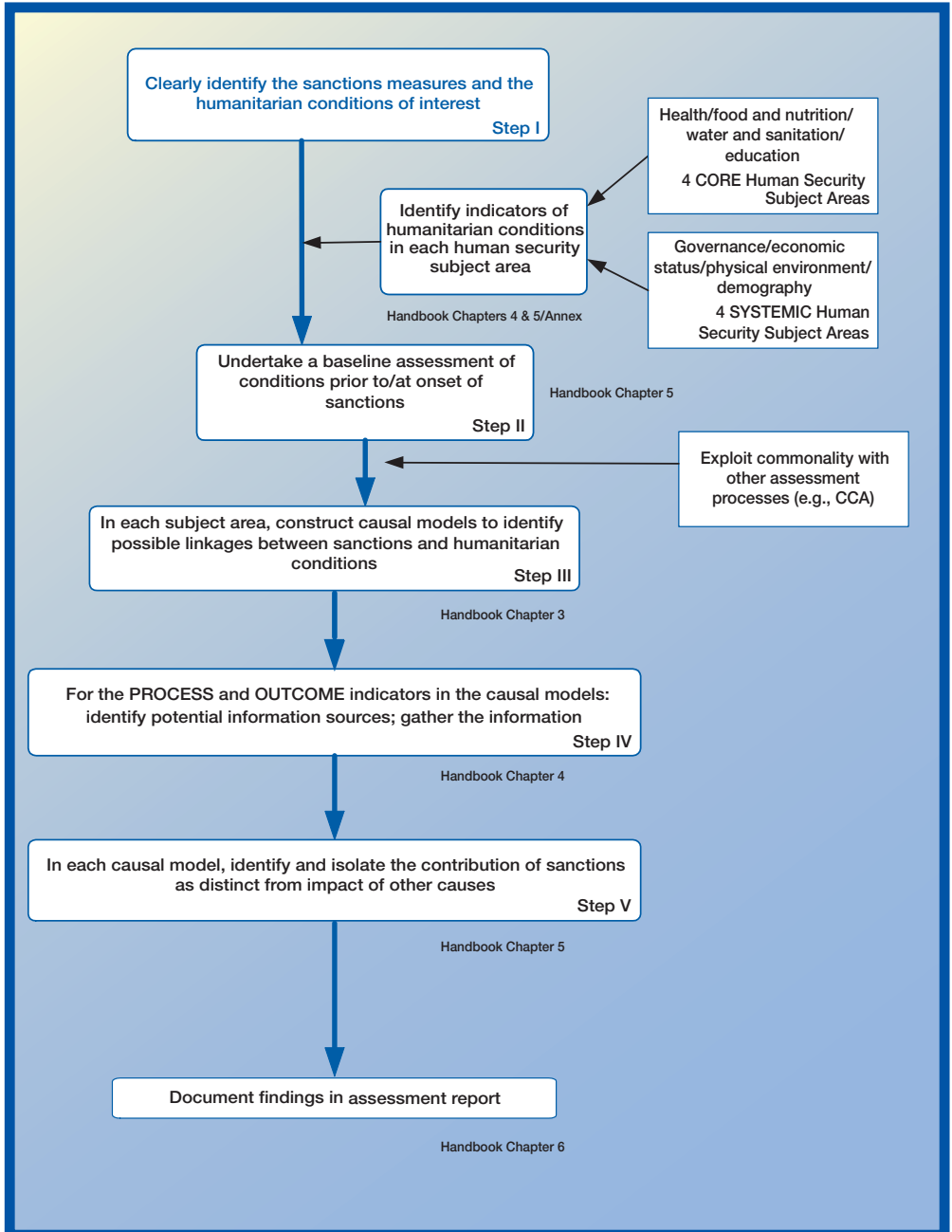


Table 3—Summary of “areas of interest”, indicators and data sources for four categories of targeted sanctions

Type of sanctions	Characteristics/ what to look for ...	Indicators	Data sources
Arms embargoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Generally have minimal humanitarian impact → May result in reduced employment in domestic defence industries → Governments may divert more resources to procure banned weapons → May reduce potential for one/more belligerents to sustain hostilities, thereby resulting in improvements in humanitarian conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of employees in domestic arms industry Export value of conventional weapons Contribution of arms industry to State revenue Contribution of arms trade to sustaining conflict Impact on trade in protective equipment for humanitarian operations 	<p>Databases on arms transfers (U.S. Dept. of State; SIPRI Yearbook; IISS “Military Balance” publication)</p> <p>National statistics</p> <p>Arms industry journals/databases (e.g., Jane’s Information Group)</p> <p>Small Arms Survey project</p>
Financial sanctions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → May increase inflation and reduce trade, depending on the extent of prohibitions → May impact sharply on local currency exchange rates, and hence on commodity prices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue flows to/from targeted group/state Revenue flows to targeted individuals Financial assets held outside the targeted country Reliance of targeted entity on sanctioned funds Impact of financial sanctions on trade 	<p>International Monetary Fund (IMF)</p> <p>Economist Intelligence Unit</p> <p>The World Bank</p> <p>National financial institutions</p> <p>Institutions dealing with foreign remittances (e.g., Western Union)</p> <p>Local currency exchange rates</p>
Travel-related sanctions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → If targeted to specific individuals/groups, travel-related sanctions will likely have minimal humanitarian impacts → If targeted against a particular “mode” of transport (e.g., ban on all air traffic), access to critical medical supplies and urgent medical care outside the country may be impacted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliance on particular modes of transport for importing critical medical supplies Number of medical patients transported per month/year Impact of air/sea cargo on key industry sectors Number of tourists arriving by air/sea 	<p>National trade statistics</p> <p>IMF, World Bank, Economist Intelligence Unit</p> <p>International travel/aviation organizations</p> <p>International Maritime Organization</p> <p>American Bureau of Shipping</p> <p>Lloyd’s Registry of Shipping</p>
Targeted trade sanctions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Most likely to have impact on humanitarian conditions, depending on sectors targeted → May result in reduced employment in the targeted sector → Secondary employment and service industries may be affected → Attempt to identify alternative employment opportunities → Assess impact on government revenues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of government revenue derived from trade and service sectors Number of employees supported directly and indirectly by particular sector(s) Number of dependants of industry sector workers Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inwards in sector Salaries/wages in targeted sector 	<p>International trade organizations (sector specific)</p> <p>IMF, Economist Intelligence Unit</p> <p>ILO</p> <p>Commodity import/export databases (e.g., Global Trade Atlas, www.gts.com)</p> <p>International auditing firms</p>

5. Standards for humanitarian assessments

5.1 Key elements of a humanitarian assessment

Must present some determination of the degree to which sanctions affect humanitarian conditions

A sanctions assessment **must** present some determination of the degree to which sanctions are affecting humanitarian conditions, separate from the effects caused by other factors. In some circumstances it may only be possible to provide a qualitative assessment of the degree to which sanctions influence humanitarian conditions, or indeed it may be impossible to isolate the discrete effects of sanctions. In such cases, the investigator should highlight the indeterminacy of the situation.

A **credible** assessment of the humanitarian implications of sanctions must include the following elements:

Baseline assessment

1. Characterization of the humanitarian conditions prior to the initiation of sanctions—“*baseline*” conditions—including a **vulnerability assessment**;

Sources of information

2. Specification of the **sources of information used**, the quality and limitations of those sources;

Vulnerability

3. Specification of the components of the sanctions regulations that could affect humanitarian conditions;

Indicators sensitive to change

4. Identification of the **indicators likely to be most sensitive to changes** in humanitarian conditions;

5. Identification of factors other than sanctions that are likely to have an important influence on those indicators;

Causal pathways

6. Specification of the pathways by which sanctions or other factors would influence humanitarian conditions;

7. Examination of process and outcome information, both quantitative and qualitative, regarding actual changes brought by sanctions through time and the changes in humanitarian conditions that follow;

Relative influence of sanctions

8. Examination of the relative influence of sanctions and other factors in influencing changes in those conditions;

Ongoing monitoring

9. Discussion of weaknesses in information available;

10. Recommendations for ongoing monitoring of sanctions’ impact, and on how to minimize any unintended humanitarian impacts.

5.2 Writing a humanitarian assessment report

Assessment report
“template”

Any written assessment of the humanitarian implications should include the sections outlined below. This can be used as a template or document outline for people who are conducting humanitarian assessments under sanctions.

Introduction: Background to current study | Decisions by the sanctioning authority (e.g., UN Security Council) relevant to current assessment | Brief description of timing of assessment mission;

Procedure and methodology: Actual sequential procedure followed by investigators (e.g., literature review, interviews, field mission) | Overview of methodology used along with the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology in the particular context | Main challenges in implementing methodology in the context of the current assessment;

Baseline and prior assessments: Assessment of humanitarian conditions (using indicators across multiple sectors) prior to sanctions | Results of prior assessments | Trends in conditions at baseline;

Assessment of current conditions: Assessment of current conditions (point values and trends) across multiple sectors using humanitarian indicators | Description of data/information sources | Overview of techniques for original data collection (if applicable);

Results of causal modelling: How causal models were constructed to identify causes of humanitarian conditions | Identification of causal pathways;

Humanitarian implications of sanctions: The impact of sanctions on humanitarian conditions (separate from other causes) | Identification of other factors influencing humanitarian conditions (and their relative importance compared to sanctions);

Findings: Summary of main findings, including concise statement of the humanitarian impacts of the sanctions measures on discrete humanitarian conditions.

These *Field Guidelines* and the companion *Sanctions Assessment Handbook* complement the reference documents produced under the three international processes on more effective and targeted sanctions—the Interlaken, Bonn-Berlin and Stockholm Processes—undertaken between 1998 and 2003.

The final report of the Stockholm Process on the Implementation of Targeted Sanctions (2003) noted:

“...[T]he routine undertaking of periodic assessments of humanitarian, social, and economic impacts on third parties during the course of sanctions implementation is desirable and often more feasible [than pre-assessments]. Aside from providing an additional way of evaluating the overall impact of sanctions, well-designed on-going assessments would be useful in distinguishing the impact of sanctions from other causes of humanitarian suffering and economic hardship, thereby reducing one of the main sources of opposition to sanctions generally.”

The Report went on to recommend:

“These [regular humanitarian, social, and economic impact] assessments should proceed under an established methodology . . . taking into account the specificities of each sanctions situation.”

The methodology presented here, developed by OCHA in conjunction with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, serves to fulfil the need for a standardized methodology to assess the potential humanitarian implications of sanctions, with a view to making sanctions more effective.

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