

Monitoring Needs Assessments – June 2014

Central African Republic



1. Introduction

This report presents the results of an exercise to collect and analyse the humanitarian needs assessment reports conducted in the Central African Republic (CAR) since December 2013. It aims to reinforce humanitarian actors' understanding of the CAR crisis by:

- analysing the humanitarian needs assessments landscape;
- identifying the limitations of these assessments; and
- presenting courses of action to reinforce practices and minimise constraints.

This monitoring needs assessments (MNA) exercise does not cover all the information available and required for an analysis of the crisis. It focuses on the assessment of humanitarian needs over a set period: 1 December 2013 to end June 2014. It therefore does not include assessments made prior to this period, nor works on the CAR and the crisis in the country such as thematic or analytic reports. The present report and its recommendations must furthermore be read in the light of Annex 1, Methodological Limitations.

Context of the Crisis

The crisis in the CAR, where indicators often have exceeded emergency thresholds, has been overlooked for decades.

The events which have rocked the country since 2012 have significantly changed the reading of the situation. A political and civil identity crisis has been superimposed over the chronic emergency situation stemming from the country's underdevelopment and the activities of foreign militias and various criminal groups.

Humanitarian actors in the field have seen a sudden increase in the volume of need. This has been accompanied by a return to emergency intervention

methods and an increase in staff in the capital, and progressively in the field. Humanitarian coordination has likewise had to adapt to this new situation and was reinforced with the transition to a level 3 crisis. Clusters have been formed but understanding of the humanitarian situation in the field has sometimes been blurred by difficulties in information sharing between actors and the security situation hindering regular access to affected populations. Consequently, the conventional sequence of assessment phases (Phase 1, 2, 3 and 4 of assessments) with increasing level of details for each phase, has been disrupted.

The Central African situation is characterised by multiple, overlapping crises. The types of humanitarian responses, emergency and more long term, also are overlapping. In one prefecture, a NGO may continue to address chronic problems rooted in the ongoing crisis that existed before conflict erupted at the end of 2012. In another, sometimes in the same locations, another NGO may be implementing emergency programmes for displaced people. The reading of the situation and assessment activities are thus rendered more difficult and require an approach adapted to this type of crisis.

Existing Information on Humanitarian Needs: An Overview

At present, it is difficult to identify how much information on humanitarian needs exists, but even more difficult to determine whether the information is reliable. It is also difficult to identify the sources of the information used. OCHA compiled a significant number of documents, which are available through an e-library (<http://sdr.ocharowca.info/SearchDocument.php>) and on the *Humanitarian Response CAR* website (<https://car.humanitarianresponse.info/fr>).

Nonetheless, difficulties persist for the following reasons:

- The difficulty of locating specific information within the existing body of information, requiring major librarian and archivist work.
- The profusion of documents based on different methodologies, responding to different objectives, and covering diverse crises.
- The highly volatile, complex, and changing dynamics of the crisis, which limit the durability of information.

- High turnover among humanitarian staff, loss of knowledge, and capitalisation difficulties.
- A lack of regularly updated, detailed analysis (crisis profile, monitoring and evolution of figures, and projected timeframes).

The quality of the information gathered can also be questioned:

- Is it usable and reliable?
- How was it collected and by whom?
- Is it still up to date?
- Can it be compared with other existing data sets to enable a comprehensive analysis?

Monitoring Assessments

In monitoring assessments, it is just as important and as possible to identify what exists as well as what does not. It is a valuable analytical tool, making it possible to look ahead and determine what information should be collected in the future.

Monitoring permits responses to the following questions:

- Who knows what, about which affected population group where?
- What are the characteristics of the assessments that have been conducted, and what crises do they cover?
- Is assessment work conducted on an ongoing basis?
- Is it evolving towards more reliable information and does it help improve the quality of assistance given to populations?
- What field research should be conducted in the future and for what purpose?

To answer these questions, ACAPS decided to work with actors in the field who collect primary data and who are the source of information. This work of monitoring assessments, adapted to the crisis in the CAR and to the specific needs of humanitarian actors, is considered a support tool for humanitarian organisations in their efforts to assist the Central African people. It also helps to support decision-making about future assessment strategies, and is a tool for humanitarian coordination.

2. Definition and Objectives

Monitoring needs assessments (MNA) consists of collecting and analysing diagnostic studies made by humanitarian organisations who gather primary data. These organisations are considered to be the most reliable source of information regarding the crisis and its consequences for the Central African people. The results are presented in this report using figures and maps. MNA primarily aims to overcome certain problems such as human resource turnover and insufficient capitalisation.

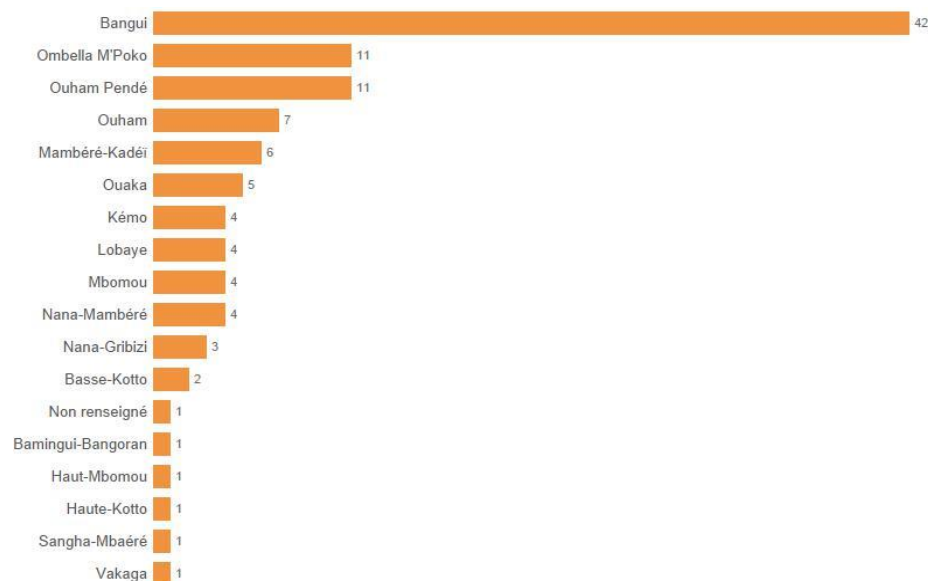
MNA Objectives

To identify, compile, and analyse the diagnostic work of humanitarian actors conducted in the CAR since 2013, and to disseminate conclusions, in order to:

- Enable a shared and clearer picture of the crisis and its consequences.
- Facilitate the identification of information gaps in the monitoring of populations and the deployment of humanitarian actors.
- Propose better coordination of assessments and information sharing at the national level and between humanitarian actors.
- Allow a better reading of assessment methods and tools, and facilitate their sharing and harmonisation.

3. Results

Geographic Coverage of Assessments



- Nearly 40% of the assessments cover the Bangui subprefecture.
- Outside Bangui, assessment activity is most concentrated in the Ombella M'Poko and Ouham Pendé prefectures. This corresponds to a north-west axis towards the Chadian border and Cameroon.
- Prefectures in the northeast and east of the country, as well as Sangha-Mbaéré, are the least assessed.

Problems related to geographic coverage:

- For the least assessed prefectures, situational and field knowledge is mainly operational and depends on individuals and organisations. It is thus highly sensitive to changes in the situation and staff rotations.
- The disparity between the east and west of the country with regard to assessments could reinforce a sense of abandonment among certain populations.

¹ An assessment is event-related when it is systematically triggered by a particular event. This is, for example, the case of RRM, which is triggered as soon as population movements are observed.

- The limited coverage of needs assessments and a lack of regular information updates make efforts to prioritise at the national level nearly impossible. At present, it is impossible to determine whether the humanitarian situation in Vakaga is more or less severe than in Ouham Pendé.

Frequency and Timing of Assessments



- Nine of the 83 assessments are conducted monthly, weekly, or daily and correspond to situation monitoring. They cover the IDP sites in Bangui, monitoring of protection (cases of violence, hotline), and monitoring of market commodity prices.
- Nearly 90% of assessments are ad hoc or event-related.¹

Problems related to the frequency of assessments:

- Monitoring and regular updating of the humanitarian situation outside Bangui is absent (outside the monitoring of field organisations' activities).
- As the crisis is dynamic, the lack of regular monitoring renders information rapidly obsolete. There is a risk that many strategic and programming decisions will be based on situations and figures that already will have changed several times by the time these decisions are made.

Number of Needs Assessments December 2013 – June 2014

Number of security incidents Dec-May 2014

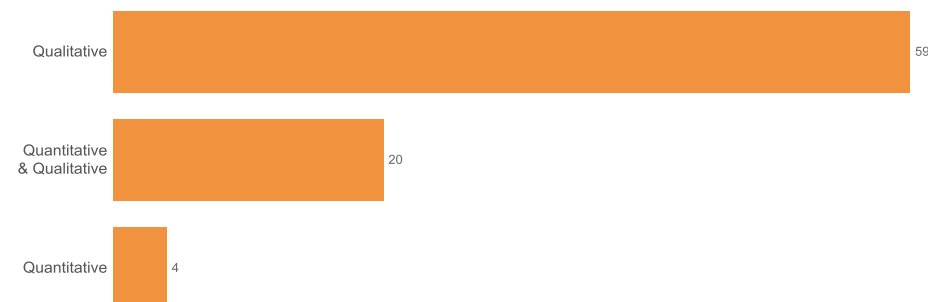


Number of assessments Dec-May 2014



The link between recorded security incidents (OCHA, Dec. 2013–May 2014) and the triggering of assessments is generally coherent. Insecurity peaks are followed by the displacement of civilians and assessments. There has been an overall link between assessment and insecurity since the end of January 2014, which indicates that humanitarian actors generally are reacting rapidly.

Assessment Methods



- 59 of the 83 assessments collected qualitative data, mainly through interviews with key informants and direct observation.
- 24 of the 83 assessments used quantitative or mixed methods, reinforced by:
 - new mixed RRM methods since March 2014 (previously qualitative);
 - monitoring (notably of protection).
- Although 40% of the assessments conducted since December 2013 have focused on the Bangui subprefecture, only two assessments there were quantitative or mixed.
- The monitoring of the Bangui IDP sites is qualitative.

Problems related to methods:

- Security and access problems may explain the difficulty in deploying assessment teams, but the example of Bangui, where access to populations is often easier, shows that these are not the only reasons for the delay in moving to systematic and quantitative assessment at the household level.
- Overall, data is collected at the community level. Six months after a level 3 crisis was declared, the assessment process has not evolved towards a more representative collection mode.
- No one method, approach, tool, or field assessment coordination has been established or accepted by everyone involved in the process.

Sectoral and Geographical Coverage of the Assessments

	Shelter/NFI	CCCM	WASH	Health	Food Security	Education	Protection	Safety	Logistic	Nutrition	Livelihood
Bangui	31	41	30	24	26	6	6	8	1	1	8
Ouham Pendé	25	25	25	31	25	26	10	3	3	3	0
Ombella M'Poko	25	14	15	14	15	8	7	3	3	3	0
Ouham	11	11	11	11	11	12	5	5	5	5	0
Ouaka	7	7	8	8	8	9	0	0	0	0	0
Nana-Mambéré	5	5	5	5	5	6	2	1	1	1	0
Nana-Gribizi	1	1	3	3	3	4	0	0	0	0	0
Kémo	3	2	2	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0
Lobaye	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	0	0
Mambéré-Kadéï	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	1
Mbomou	2	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Non renseigné	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bamingui-Bangoran	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Basse-Kotto	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Haut-Mbomou	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Haute-Kotto	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Sangha-Mbaéré	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Vakaga	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

- In general, sectoral assessments are barely covered in the following prefectures:
 - Bamingui-Bangoran
 - Basse-Kotto
 - Haute-Kotto
 - Ouaka
 - Sangha-Mbaéré
 - Kakaga
 - Mbomou
 - Haut-Mbomou
- The relatively homogeneous data for the basic sectors (Shelter & NFIs, Food security, and WASH) comes from the fact that the majority of the evaluations are multi-sectoral.
- Very little information is available in evaluations collected on the nutritional situation of populations. This could be mitigated by the lack of transmission of the medical and nutritional data from MSF and other nutrition actors, like Save the Children or IMC.
- Protection is little represented here as the information must be interpreted in the light of the limitations of the MNA database. Actually, protection is generally monitored at the prefecture level by certain

actors (monitoring, hotline). Protection is therefore more thoroughly and better monitored than the figures lead one to believe.

- Education was assessed at the national level by the cluster and it can be estimated that, despite the possible bias due to collection of information remotely, it is certainly one of the areas where the information is best known and the most representative.
- The data concerning health cannot be interpreted without information from the medical NGOs that carry out the vast majority of the health and medical monitoring services for the populations.

Problems linked to the geographical coverage of the sectoral evaluations:

- Cover of sectoral evaluations clearly shows two distinct groups of prefectures: the east of the country is the subject of no attention in terms of evaluation.
- The geographical coverage of the sectoral evaluations is insufficient. With the exception of the Education Cluster, any inter-prefecture prioritisation will be biased by the effect of selection.
- This means that it is not possible to give prominence to priority sectors and zones of intervention at the national level.

Coverage of the Affected Population Groups

- Outside of Bangui, homogeneity can be observed in the population groups evaluated (displaced persons, residents and returnees). Returnees are less represented because of the evaluations launched after crises, at times when displaced persons had not yet returned to their villages.
- Outside of Bangui, there are no evaluations which involved a particular population category.
- In Bangui, the evaluations mainly involve displaced persons. The resident or host populations are barely taken into account.

	IDPs	Residents	Returnees	Refugees
Ouham Pendé	34	26	18	0
Bangui	48	9	4	0
Ombella M'Poko	12	23	19	0
Ouham	12	11	10	0
Ouaka	9	7	6	0
Non renseigné	0	6	6	0
Mambéré-Kadéï	6	5	1	0
Nana-Mambéré	7	3	2	0
Mbomou	4	4	3	0
Kémo	3	4	3	0
Lobaye	3	4	1	0
Nana-Gribizi	2	4	2	0
Basse-Kotto	2	2	1	0
Bamingui-Bangoran	1	1	1	0
Haut-Mbomou	1	1	1	0
Haute-Kotto	1	1	1	0
Sangha-Mbaéré	1	1	1	0
Vakaga	1	1	1	0

Problems linked to cover of the groups affected:

- The fact that specific evaluations targeting returnees outside of Bangui have not been done may indicate a lack of quantitative and specific evaluation to find out the particular conditions which these populations must face, and differentiate programming accordingly.
- In Bangui, the evaluations do not sufficiently target IDPs in host families. The humanitarian conditions of this population group are little known and/or underestimated.

4. Lessons Learned and Good Practices

The data analysis indicates that certain evaluation practices have enabled the gathering of crucial data for understanding humanitarian needs:

- Certain organisations have begun the move to quantitative methods (from the qualification of the problems to their quantification).
- Specific evaluations are underway such as the evaluation of sites for IDPs of Bangui to obtain disaggregated data and a more precise estimate of the overall number of IDPs in the capital.

- The data collected by telephone with key interlocutors have given encouraging results. This may help to ease the complexities of access and support continuous monitoring of the humanitarian indicators.

5. Recommendations

General Recommendations

Replacing the method as the foundation of action may enable better understanding of the crisis and its response: crisis profiling (instability, dynamism, moving borders, etc.) entails difficulties in planning and monitoring. So as to limit the lack of readability, it is essential to develop an evaluation strategy adapted to the CAR context.

After months of crisis, **evaluation methods must evolve on three levels:**

- At the level of **function**: distinguish between evaluations which must provide information on strategic decisions (light measures for multisectoral evaluations to complete and regularly update the severity and priorities in different prefectures and subprefectures) and those which must inform the programming and operations (more detailed sectoral evaluations enabling the sizing-up of projects).
- At the level of **precision**: steer evaluations to the quantitative and representative collection at the level of households in the localities or sites which are not undergoing rapid changes of situation.
- At the level of **coordination**: adopt a coordination approach for needs assessments and promote sharing of information between actors. To do so, the harmonisation of evaluation tools and their acceptance by all partners is necessary, as is the establishment of a task force around these themes.

It is equally important to **define the analysis process** (who, when and how often) for the results of the evaluations. In order to make the sharing of information relevant and thus enable a better adapted, better coordinated and more effective response, the analysis must be considered as an important step at the evaluation level as well as at the level of interpretation of all of the available resources. In that respect, ad hoc meetings and key

documents, such as the MNA and analyses of secondary data, must be defined and planned.

It is important to better **cross-tabulate information on movements** of population at the regional level. So as to better understand population movements and their profile since the start of the crisis it is important to triangulate the information collected at the regional level. This requires precise awareness of the profile of the refugee populations in the countries neighbouring CAR and at the same time proper evaluation of displaced populations in and outside Bangui at the most representative level possible.

Specific Recommendations for Better Monitoring Needs Assessments in CAR.

- Taking into account the security and access constraints, it is preferable to aim at more comprehensive geographical cover so as to achieve a global understanding of the situation.
- Ensure consistency of terminologies between organisations as regards evaluation as well as the official administrative divisions.
- Evaluation reports, but also collection tools, must systematically contain the following information:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation start date - Evaluation end date - Date of the report - List of the localities and place visited: region/prefecture/sub-prefecture/town/borough-village/district-place - List of groups visited: displaced persons, returnees, etc. |
|--|

- Harmonised and/or joint evaluations must be developed in order to plan more broadly the evaluation of humanitarian needs in the Central African region.
 - A light measure for data collection at the prefecture or sub-prefecture level must be developed and implemented to enable prioritisation between administrative divisions, groups and sectors, updated regularly and interpreted using the secondary data available.
 - Systematically build on good evaluation practices. The telephone work must be encouraged and assessed regularly for regular and continuous monitoring of the humanitarian situation.
 - It is necessary to capitalise on key informants so as to diversify sources, and triangulate and improve the quality of the information collected.
 - Ensure regular exchanges of information on needs assessment, which includes the actors operating in CAR. Enable a shared vision of the evaluations underway, capitalise on the feedback, and improve the methods applied.
 - Regularly continue the task of monitoring assessments so as to measure the progress made.
- All evaluation reports must include a section on the method used and its limitations.
 - A major effort must be made for the evaluations of IDP sites in Bangui to be systematically quantitative and representative. Evaluations must be conducted on IDPs in host families and host populations in Bangui.
 - An evaluation and monitoring tool of the IDP populations outside Bangui must be drawn up and implemented.

APPENDIX 1 - Methodological limits

Representativeness: The document does not compile evaluations of an exhaustive number of organisations. But those which are integrated are representative by their number, and the different sectors also covered by the operational volume that they represent. On the other hand, the lack of certain evaluations and monitoring, such as for example epidemiological or nutritional monitoring by MSF, biases certain analyses in particular in the medical domain. The contribution of the RRM assessments of May and June 2014 improved the ratio of quantitative needs assessment but the representativeness may be questioned due to the low response from other humanitarian actors on their evaluations covering the same period.

Period covered and understanding of the context: The report only covers evaluations conducted from December 2013, and in this respect does not claim to have exhaustive comprehension of the crisis. It therefore does not have the authority to express the state of global knowledge of the crisis. Some very complete evaluations exist prior to December 2013 and remain relevant and necessary for the comprehension of certain humanitarian challenges. Certain detailed assessments on food security are a necessary addition to the analysis of the problems present in this field. There are also a number of theme-based reports and analyses which are necessary for general understanding, such as a recent rapport from the International Crises Group on pastoralism. We are therefore limited in MNA to the area of needs assessments over a determined period with all the limits that this comprises.

Quality of the information: The report does not make a qualitative distinction between the evaluations collected, despite major variations in terms of quality and density of information in these evaluations. An evaluation is classed in the same rank whether it is representative (e.g. quantitative evaluation in households) or qualitative (e.g.: field visit and observation of several hours). The reports produced, and therefore the available information, are by their nature very different. MNA does not enable us to assess the quality of information available. It enables general recommendations on this disparity and highlighting of gaps.

Choice of classification: Without going into detail, certain choices have had to be made regarding the classification of evaluations in order to avoid false information.

- Example 1: nutrition was not taken into account in the sector covered by the evaluation if it was not the subject of a clearly identified method or was not referring to reliable information (epidemiological assessment etc...)
- Example 2: certain evaluations not mentioning any method applied, even the most qualitative method, had to be classed according to Acaps' assessment.

Missing information (evaluation to come, reports not supplied...): This is not included. Certain villages assessed were not found in the list given by OCHA of the administrative divisions of CAR and are therefore not represented on the maps, which explains certain differences in figures between the maps and the graphics.

Geographical representativeness: Maps by sector, by target populations and by localities mark the administrative divisions visited but do not represent the evaluations targeting a more general geographical level such as a prefecture or sub-prefecture.

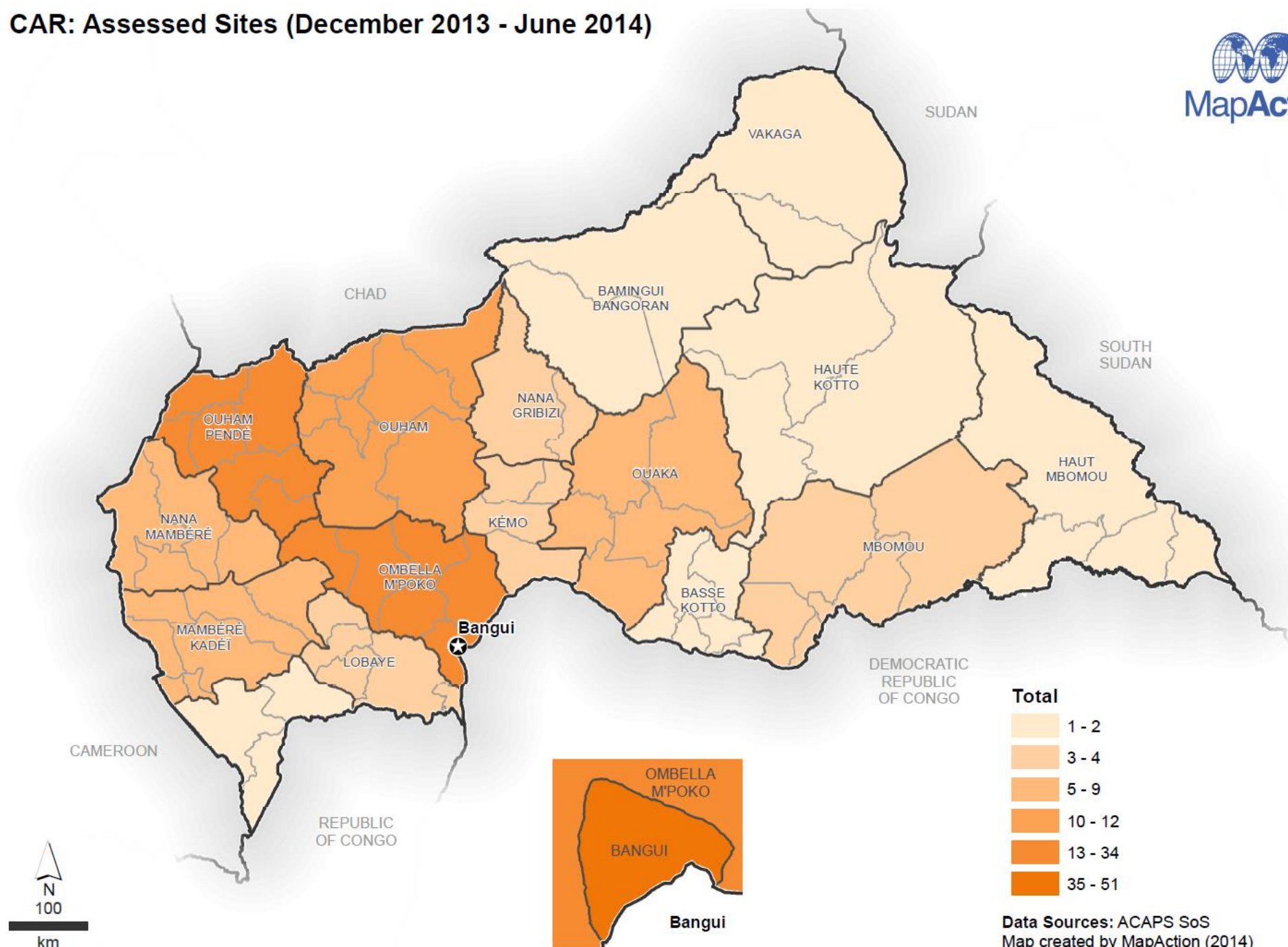


3W of Assessments (December 2013 – April 2014)

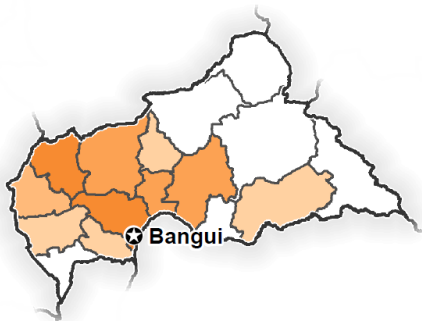
Aéroport M'poko			
PU-AMI	Dynamique de déplacements: IDPs de M'Poko 1		
Coopi	Evaluation rapide, site de l'aéroport, Bangui		
PU-AMI	Enquête CAP Initiale "pratiques liées à l'eau/hygiène/assainissement "		
	Enquête de situation générale		
	Evaluation multisectorielle Mars 2014 Site Mpoko		
	Evaluation rapide de la situation des sites IDPs pendant les pluies 1		
	Evaluation rapide de la situation des sites IDPs pendant les pluies 2		
	Evaluation rapide, zone d'extension de l'aéroport et zone de transit		
Bangui 5e		Bangui 8e	
Bangui Mpoko		Gabaladja	
Acted	RRM: éval des PDI's église Elimes, Bangui Mpoko, 5ème arrondissement	ACF	RRM: ACF-diagnostic IDP de St Bernard/BoyRabe, St JeanGalabadja et St PierreGobongo
Malimaka		Gobongo	
MDM	Evaluation du centre de santé de Malimaka	ACF	RRM: ACF-diagnostic IDP de St Bernard/BoyRabe, St JeanGalabadja et St PierreGobongo
Mosquée OumouMumbarak Ba		MDM	Evaluation du centre de santé de Gobongo
Solidarités	Evaluation rapide shelter/douche/latrines	Autres évaluations	
PK5 - Mosquée Mali Maka		NRC	Evaluation initiale moyen de subsistance, Bangui 8ème arr
Solidarités	Evaluation rapide shelter/douche/latrines	Bangui 4e	
Autres évaluations		Boy Rabe	
Cluster Wash	Evaluation wash des 8ème et 5ème arr de Bangui	ACF	RRM: ACF-diagnostic IDP de St Bernard/BoyRabe, St JeanGalabadja et St PierreGobongo
Bangui 3e			RRM: diagnostic des PDI's Lycée AMA, Boy Rabé, Bangui
Mosquée Ali Babolo + PK5 - Ecole Islamique/coranique Nasraddin		Jupedec	Evaluation rapide des déplacés à Bangui
Solidarités	Evaluation rapide shelter/douche/latrines	Gobongo	
Mosquée centrale		Jupedec	Evaluation rapide des déplacés à Bangui
Solidarités	Evaluation rapide shelter/douche/latrines	Roy Rabe	
Mosquée Rue Madou		Acted	RRM:éval des PDI's à St Bernard / Boy Rabe, Bangui
Solidarités	Evaluation rapide shelter/douche/latrines	Bangui 7e	
PK5		Bimbo Grand séminaire et Saint Marc de Bimbo	
ACF	RRM: diagnostic des IDPs PK5, Bangui	Jupedec	Evaluation rapide des déplacés à Bangui
Bangui 6e		Ouango, St Paul	
Petovo		Coopi	Evaluation rapide, site de l'aéroport, Bangui
MDM	Evaluation du centre de santé de Petovo	Bangui	
Apôtres de Jésus Crucifié / Centre de santé Padre Pio		Lycée Ama	
Solidarités	Evaluation rapide shelter/douche/latrines	Solidarités	Evaluation rapide shelter/douche/latrines
Begoua PK12		Mission carmel	
Jupedec	Evaluation rapide des déplacés à Bangui	Solidarités	Evaluation rapide shelter/douche/latrines
Bimbo, Carmel		Mosquée PK 13 (Bégoa)	
Jupedec	Evaluation rapide des déplacés à Bangui	Solidarités	Evaluation rapide shelter/douche/latrines
Bimbo, Padre Pio		Saint Antoine de Padoue	
Jupedec	Evaluation rapide des déplacés à Bangui	Solidarités	Evaluation rapide shelter/douche/latrines
Ceca (siège Caritas)		Saint Charles Luanga	
Solidarités	Evaluation rapide shelter/douche/latrines	Solidarités	Evaluation rapide shelter/douche/latrines
Centre de formation Les capucins		Saint Jacques de Kpetene	
Solidarités	Evaluation rapide shelter/douche/latrines	Solidarités	Evaluation rapide shelter/douche/latrines
Tous les sites PDI		Begoua PK13	
IOM	Evaluation des intentions de retour des déplacés, Bangui	ACF	RRM: diagnostic des IDPs du site de St Charles de Luwanga
	Evaluation facilitation des sites de déplacés de Bangui	Autres évaluations	
	Evaluation profil des sites de déplacés de Bangui	ACF	Bulletin information: monitoring de suivi des prix du marché, Bangui

Data Sources: SIGCAF, ACAPS SoS
Map created by MapAction (2014)

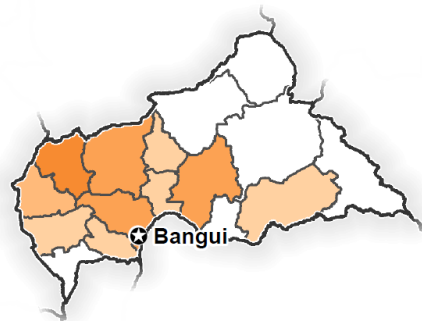
CAR: Assessed Sites (December 2013 - June 2014)



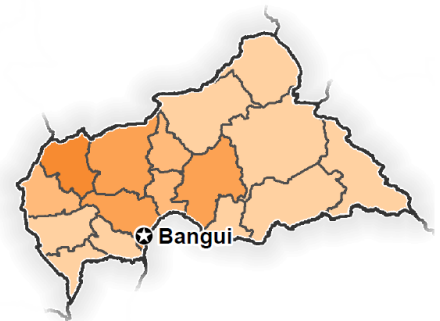
CAR: Assessed Sectors (December 2013 - June 2014)



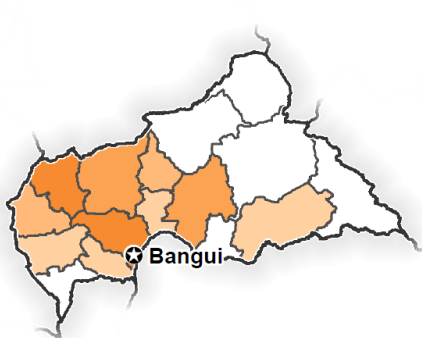
Shelter & NFI



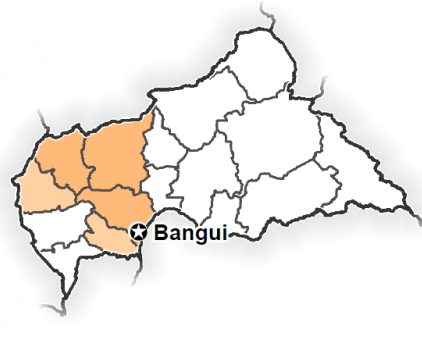
CCCM



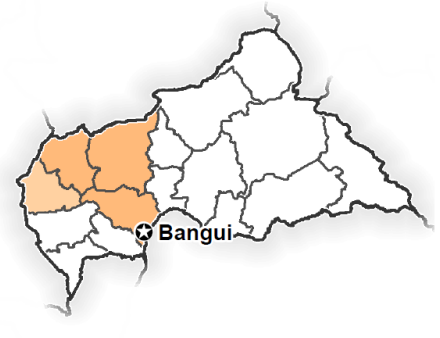
Education



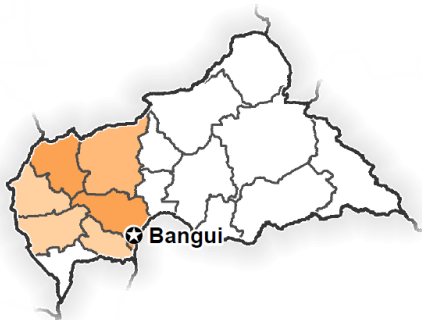
WASH



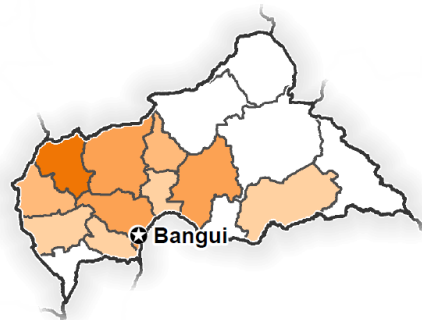
Logistics



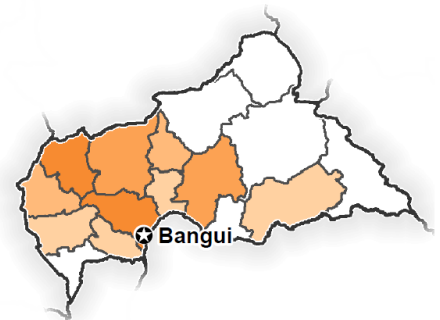
Nutrition



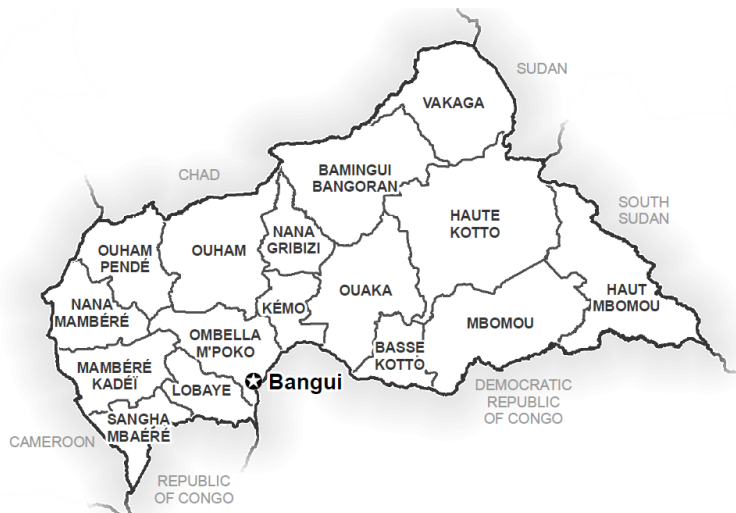
Protection



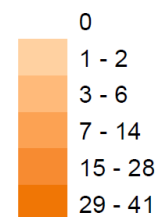
Health



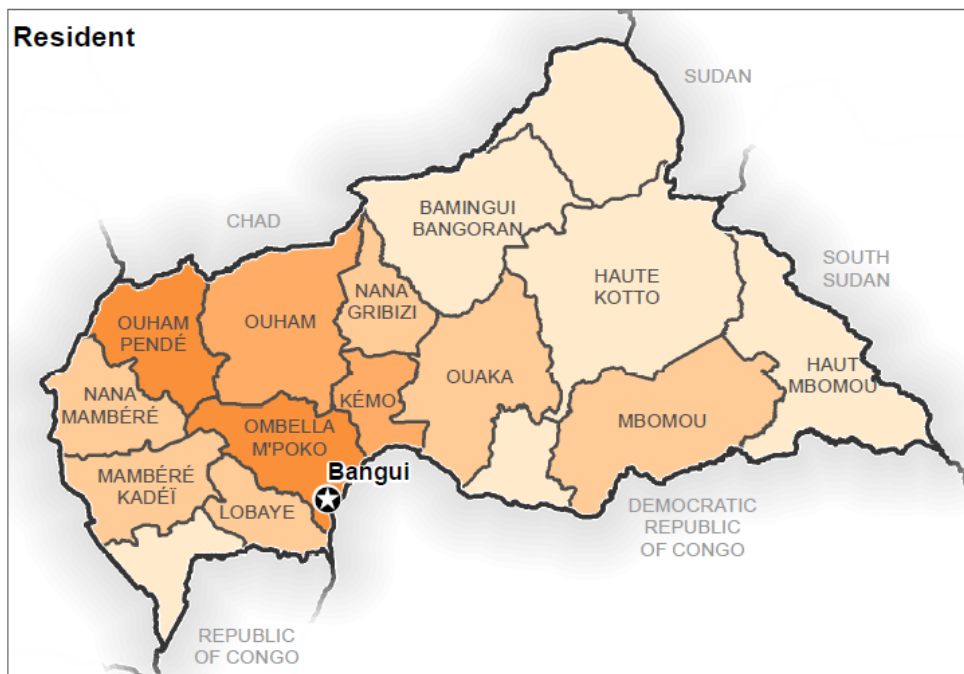
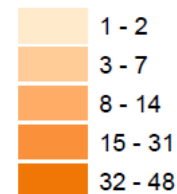
Food Security



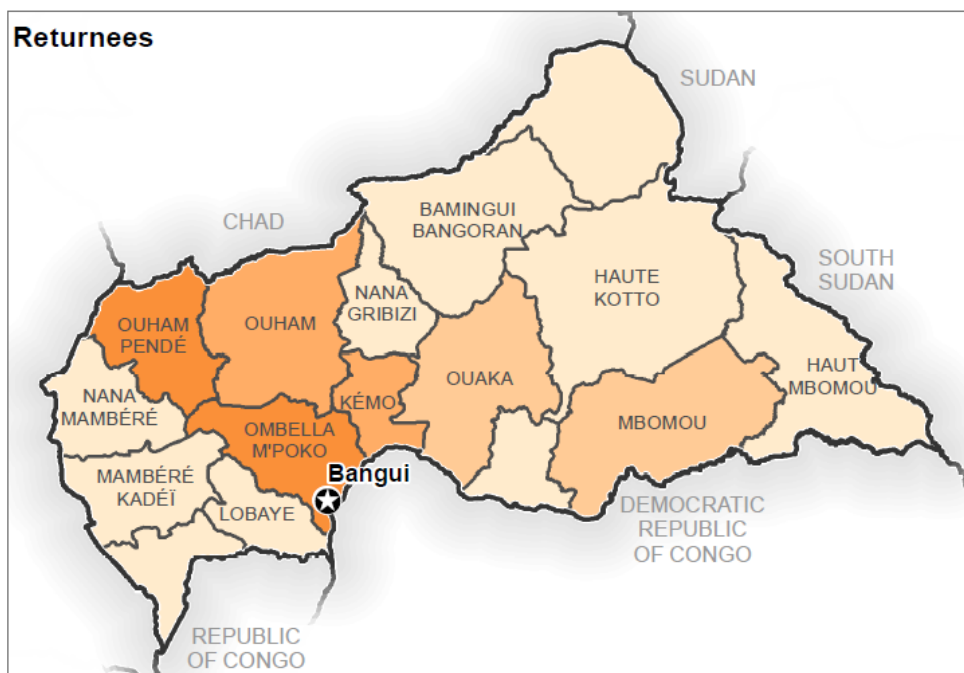
Number of Assessments



Data Sources: SIGCAF, ACAPS
Map created by MapAction (2014)

Resident**CAR: Assessed Populations
(December 2013 - June 2014)****Number of Assessments**

Data Sources: ACAPS SoS
Map created by MapAction (2014)

**Returnees****Displaced**