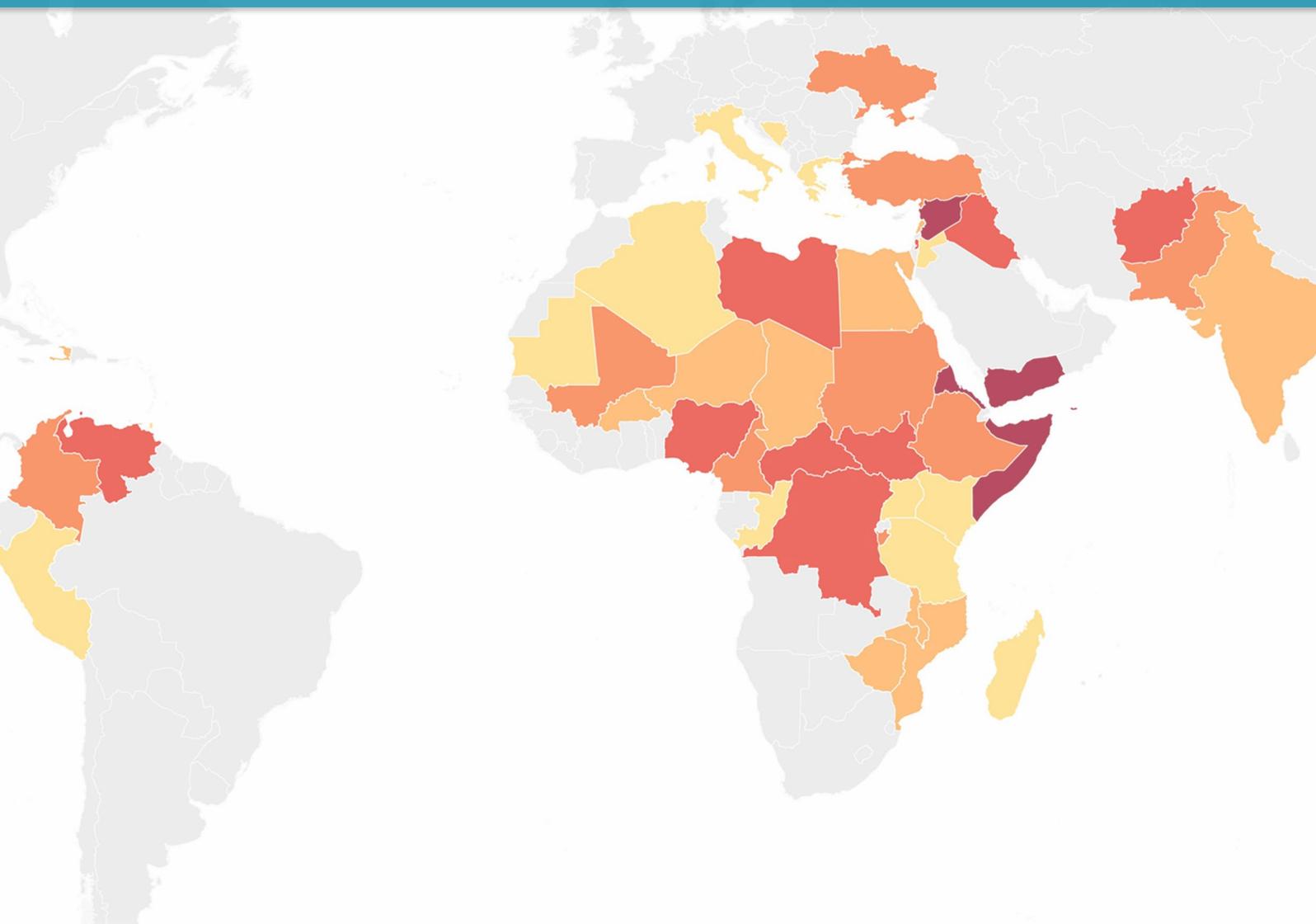


# HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

**METHODOLOGY NOTE**

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## Introduction

This technical brief details ACAPS method of assessing humanitarian access on a global level. The primary objective of ACAPS analysis of humanitarian access is to inform humanitarian decision makers by presenting a summary of the access situation in different countries that face humanitarian crises, both recent and protracted.

The Humanitarian Access methodology uses a range of qualitative information sources together with relevant datasets and collates these in a structured way in order to quantify the level of humanitarian access, and therefore it carries the limitations associated with the information used. The main objective is to assess access for international humanitarian organisations and the analytical framework, has been developed based on the FDFA access manual<sup>1</sup> as well as OCHA's access monitoring framework<sup>2</sup>. It adopts a holistic approach covering access of the populations affected by a crisis to humanitarian services, access of the humanitarian actors to the affected population as well as other constraints that relate to the physical and security environment in the country.

ACAPS approach to measuring the level of access is most applicable to international organisations including INGOS and UN agencies. Local response may be impacted by some of the indicators differently therefore applying the same analytical framework to international and local response is not always appropriate. ACAPS is in the process of exploring ways to apply our access methodology to the crisis level in addition to the national level to allow for a more granular level of analysis.

## Humanitarian Access Analytical Framework

Humanitarian access is divided into three core dimensions: access of people in need to aid, access of humanitarian actors to the population in need, and physical and security constraints. These dimensions together are broken down into nine indicators.

### 1. Access of People in Need to Aid

- 1.1 Denial of existence of humanitarian needs or entitlements to assistance
- 1.2 Restriction and obstruction of access to services and assistance

### 2. Access of Humanitarian Actors to Affected Populations

- 2.1 Impediments to entry into the country (bureaucratic and administrative)
- 2.2 Restriction of movement within the country (impediments to freedom of movement and/or administrative restrictions)
- 2.3 Interference into implementation of humanitarian activities
- 2.4 Violence against humanitarian personnel, facilities and assets

### 3. Physical, Environmental and Security Constraints

- 3.1 Ongoing insecurity or hostilities affecting humanitarian assistance
- 3.2 Presence of landmines, improvised explosive devices, ERW or UXO
- 3.3 Physical constraints in the environment (obstacles related to terrain, climate, lack of infrastructure, etc.)

<sup>1</sup> Humanitarian access in situations of armed conflict: Practitioners' manual, FDFA, December 2014, available at: [https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/eda/en/documents/aussenpolitik/voelkerrecht/Human-access-in-sit-of-armed-conflict-manual\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/eda/en/documents/aussenpolitik/voelkerrecht/Human-access-in-sit-of-armed-conflict-manual_EN.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> OCHA's access monitoring and reporting framework, May 2012

[https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/OCHA\\_Access\\_Monitoring\\_and\\_Reporting\\_Framework\\_OCHA\\_revised\\_May2012.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/OCHA_Access_Monitoring_and_Reporting_Framework_OCHA_revised_May2012.pdf)



## Pillar 1 - Access of People in Need to Aid

“Access of People in Need to Aid” pillar refers to the constraints imposed to the population in need in their access to services and assistance.

### 1 - Denial of existence of humanitarian needs or entitlements to assistance

This indicator takes into account statements that demonstrate a recognition or denial of needs of a population or the rights of minorities, and any discrepancy between the reported humanitarian needs and official statements.

*Example from secondary source:*

*“The Rohingya crisis is a human rights crisis with serious humanitarian consequences. In Myanmar, the Rohingya have very limited access to basic services and viable livelihood opportunities due to tight movement restrictions. Government policy renders the Rohingya stateless denying them of basic rights. Their lack of legal status must be addressed.”*

### 2 - Restriction and obstruction of access to services and assistance

This indicator refers to the affected population’s perspective. It assesses whether people are prevented from reaching aid or services – through various restrictions, such as prevention of the crossing of borders to seek refuge, administrative barriers, or requirements to have specific documents. Sieges, roadblocks, curfews, and harassment are to be considered.

*Example from secondary source:*

*“Turkey has tightened its visa rules for Iraqi citizens as a sign of its “determination to fight illegal immigration,” the foreign ministry said Saturday. Under previous rules, Iraqi citizens were able to enter Turkey by obtaining sticker-type visas at Turkish borders, valid for 30 days. Now Iraqi nationals will have to pre-apply for either an electronic or a paper visa to enter the country, the ministry said in a statement.”*

## Pillar 2 - Access of Humanitarian Actors to Affected Population

“Access of Humanitarian Actors to Affected Population” pillar refers to the constraints imposed to the humanitarian actors in reaching the population in need.

### 3 - Impediments to entry into the country

This indicator refers to the general access of international actors into the country. It refers to registration, accreditation and visa policies, provision of taxes or fees on activities or goods; policies related to import and logistics; visa or accreditation delays or denial; discretionary registration or visas by authorities, and presence of humanitarian organisations and workers in the country being allowed to operate.

*Example from secondary source:*

*“Access of humanitarian actors to people in need and affected people’s access to assistance and services have been consistently challenged in Yemen. Access constraints range from authorities not granting visas to import permissions for equipment.”*

### 4 - Restriction of movement within the country (impediments to freedom of movement and /or administrative restrictions)

This indicator refers to the in-country mobility of humanitarian workers in order to reach the affected population and transport relief items. It includes presence of taxes and fines on passage of goods and people, quotas and limits on relief items in specific areas, assistance seized, agencies on hold despite being ready to intervene, checkpoints, or closure of border crossings.

*Example from secondary source:*

*“Checkpoints along the contact line in Ukraine are insecure despite mutually agreed ceasefire around those points.”*

## 5 - Interference into implementation of humanitarian activities

This indicator refers to factors such as conditions imposed on the type of aid, or the modality of aid delivery. It includes operational restrictions imposed by government as well as confiscation or diversion of aid.

*Example from secondary source:*

*"In Sumprabum township of Kachin state, where 1,200 IDPs have been taking refuge since mid-2015, access is restricted to ground routes despite the risk of possible hostile interference en route. Requests by humanitarian organisations for waterway access were rejected at state level."*

## 6 - Violence or threats against personnel, facilities and assets

This indicator takes into account security incidents involving humanitarian organisations. Incidents include attacks, abduction, execution, kidnapping of workers, and looting of humanitarian warehouses or humanitarian assets.

*Example from secondary source:*

*"In 2015, 78 access constraints were recorded in Mali, more than triple the number of constraints recorded in 2014. More than half (61%) of the constraints were related to violence against staff or humanitarian infrastructure."*

## Pillar 3 – Physical, Environmental and Security Constraints

"Physical, Environmental and Security Constraints" pillar refers to the constraints of the operational environment.

## 7 - Ongoing insecurity/ hostilities affecting humanitarian assistance

This indicator takes into account the presence of ongoing hostilities or violence that affects humanitarian operations, leading to decisions to divert or suspend aid, or to evacuate or modify operations.

*Example from secondary source:*

*"Intensified fighting and airstrikes in and around Aleppo City in Syria have cut off the main – and most direct – humanitarian route into that city. Since Wednesday, Mercy Corps' operations in northern Syria have effectively been sliced in half."*

## 8 - Presence of mines, UXOs and Improvised Explosive Devices

This indicator looks into how the presence of landmines or Unexploded Ordnance (UXOs) might hinder humanitarian access.

*Example from secondary source:*

*"Iraq: Al-Qasr camp is already over capacity and a new camp location is being considered. Health facility assessments have been conducted in various secure cleared areas of the city but there remain many areas where assessments cannot be undertaken due to the fear of mines and booby traps."*

## 9 - Physical environment (obstacles related to terrain, climate, lack of infrastructure)

This indicator looks into seasonal events or weather conditions as well as preexisting infrastructure. Status of roads, bridges, and airfields are also considered, along with communications and logistical constraints such as lack of fuel or assets hampering physical accessibility to people in need.

*Example from secondary source:*

*"The onset of winter in Ukraine has resulted in extremely harsh road conditions, with snow and ice making convoy movements very difficult. These conditions are expected to continue throughout February-March 2016."*

## The scoring system

**Step 1:** Secondary data collected are assessed under the relevant indicator. The analysts use a data collection spreadsheet to assemble different sources and information.

**Step 2:** Each indicator is assessed separately in the Humanitarian access database. Different methods are used for the majority of the indicators, including checklists and a mixed approach combining quantitative and qualitative information. For each indicator where a checklist was used the weight of each sub indicator was decided after consultations with the analysts participating in the methodology development utilizing “expert judgement”<sup>3</sup>. The different weight attributed to the sub-indicators reflects the different impact each has on access. See more in the Annex.

**Step 3:** Each indicator is scored on a scale from 0 to 3, in order to weight the different impact that an indicator might have over time or how this may be different across countries. The score reflects the following guidelines:

0	This variable does not apply in this context. No impact on access.
1	The impact of this indicator is creating some constraints.
2	The impact of this variable is creating high constraints.
3	The impact of this variable is blocking access.

x Information gaps: Limitations on the information available do not allow the scoring of this indicator.

**Step 4:** The overall score for humanitarian access in a country is the rounded average score of the three dimensions. The scores of the dimensions are transposed to a scale from 0 to 5 according to these thresholds:

Score	Access of People in Need to Aid	Access of Humanitarian Actors to Affected Population	Physical and Security Constraints
Level 0	No access constraints or incomplete data	No access constraints or incomplete data	No access constraints or incomplete data
Level 1	Sum = 1	Sum = 1	Sum = 1
Level 2	Sum = 2	Sum = 2-5	Sum = 2
Level 3	Sum = 3	Sum = 6-7	Sum = 3 - 4
Level 4	Sum = 4	Sum = 8-9	Sum = 5-6
Level 5	Sum = 5-6	Sum = 10-12	Sum = 7-9

**Exception:** when the variable ‘Impediments to entry into country’ is assigned a score of 3, the crisis is automatically categorised as Level 5: Inaccessible.

<sup>3</sup> Benini, A., P. Chataigner, N. Noumri, N. Parham, J. Sweeney and L. Tax (2017): The Use of Expert Judgment in Humanitarian Analysis – Theory, Methods, Applications. [August 2017]. Geneva, Assessment Capacities Project - ACAPS.

The 5 levels of severity are defined as following:

Status	Access Level	Classification
No access constraints or incomplete data	0	No significant impediments to humanitarian access in the area. If a country does not have an active humanitarian crisis it appears as a 0 and data has not been collected.
Low access constraints	1	Humanitarian access conditions are normal and regular, some sporadic and time limited interruptions.
Moderate access constraints	2	Humanitarian access conditions are regular. However monitoring and specific resources or activities are required to manage or overcome access issues. Time limited interruptions of humanitarian activities or obstacles to access goods and services.
High access constraints	3	Access conditions are regular. However, it requires constant monitoring or specific ad-hoc resources, and prevention and mitigation activities to manage or overcome access issues. Time limited interruption of humanitarian activities or obstacles to access goods and services.
Very high access constraints	4	Access conditions are irregular, situation is volatile and requires constant monitoring or specific and dedicated resources, and prevention and mitigation strategies to manage or overcome access issues. Frequent interruptions of humanitarian activities or obstacles to access goods and services.
Extreme access constraints	5	Access conditions may be highly irregular, situation is volatile, dynamic, and unpredictable and requires constant monitoring and specific resources. Humanitarian activities may face extreme constraints, not be permitted, indefinitely suspended, or in hibernation.

**Step 5:** Once the process described above is completed, a joint analysis meeting is held in order to harmonise different approaches and overrule scores if necessary.

## Main sources

ACAPS analysts collect information from a range of credible, publicly available sources, including UN agencies, governments, international and local NGOs, international and local media, and conversations with humanitarians in the field. Expert judgment is involved in deciding what data to include.

Some of the most relied upon sources are:

- Aid in Danger project by Insecurity Insight - <http://insecurityinsight.org/projects/aid-in-danger>
- Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) - <https://www.acleddata.com>
- Humanitarian Outcomes (year), Aid Worker Security Database - <https://aidworkersecurity.org/>
- OCHA's Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs) and situation reports
- Landmine and cluster munitions monitor – <http://www.the-monitor.org/>

## Annex: Scoring the indicators

### Pillar 1 - Access of People in Need to Aid

#### Indicator 1 (I1) - Denial of existence of humanitarian needs or entitlement to assistance

This indicator is scored through a checklist of sub-indicators, formulated as negative conditions.

Sub-indicator	Weight
S1.1 Public statements denying needs of people in need	30%
S1.2 Discrepancy between humanitarian needs and public statements	30%
S1.3 Denial of entitlement to assistance to certain groups or areas	40%

The thresholds of this indicator that assign a score from 0-3 are:

0	0
1	$0 < x \leq 30\%$
2	$30\% < x \leq 70\%$
3	$x > 70\%$

#### Indicator 2 (I2) - Restriction and obstruction of access to services and assistance

This indicator is scored through checklist of sub-indicators, formulated as negative conditions.

Sub-indicator	Weight
S2.1 Physical obstruction to access and services (besieged areas, impediments to cross borders to seek safety, restriction to travel)	40%
S2.2 Bureaucratic and administrative requirements to access assistance (specific documents required to access services)	30%
S2.3 Forced displacement of people in need away from services	30%

The thresholds of this indicator that assign a score from 0-3 are:

0	0
1	$0 < x \leq 30\%$
2	$30\% < x \leq 70\%$
3	$x > 70\%$

## Pillar 2 - Access of Humanitarian Actors to Affected Population

### Indicator 3 (I3) - Impediments to entry into the country (bureaucratic and administrative)

This indicator is scored through a checklist of sub-indicators, formulated as negative conditions.

Sub-indicator	Weight
S3.1 Complex, costly and time-consuming registration process for the organisation	10%
S3.2 Registration approval denied or randomly assigned	25%
S3.3 Constraints on imports of relief items, equipment, or visa/permits for staff	10%
S3.4 Humanitarian agencies systematically not allowed to operate	55%

The thresholds of this indicator that assign a score from 0-3 are:

0	0
1	$0 < x \leq 25\%$
2	$25\% < x \leq 45\%$
3	$x > 45\%$

The high percentage attributed to sub-indicator 3.3 (S3.3) “Humanitarian agencies systematically not allowed to operate” means that if this indicator is selected it assigns a score of 3 to the country or crisis. This option was put in place to enable a description of the situation in countries, where there are major info gaps due to the high access constraints imposed by the authorities. When this is applicable, the reasoning behind it is explained in the narrative that accompanies the analysis.

### Indicator 4 (I4) - Restriction of movement within the country (impediments to freedom of movement and/ or administrative restrictions)

This indicator is scored through a checklist of sub-indicators, formulated as negative conditions.

Sub-indicator	Weight
S4.1 Country/ territory not entirely controlled by the same authority	30%
S4.2 Administrative impediments: taxes, fines or quotas on passage of goods or people to reach people in need	20%
S4.3 Presence of checkpoints toward or in the affected areas	10%
S4.4 Closure of crossing to the affected areas	20%
S4.5 Agencies on hold despite being ready	20%

The thresholds of this indicator that assign a score from 0-3 are:

0	0
1	$0 < x \leq 30\%$
2	$30\% < x \leq 70\%$
3	$x > 70\%$

### Indicator 5 (I5) - Interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities

This indicator is scored through a checklist of sub-indicators, formulated as negative conditions.

Sub-indicator	Weight
S5.1 Conditions on delivery of aid to affected population, imposed by authorities or other groups	30%
S5.2 Politics and humanitarian issues are overlapping in the country	30%
S5.3 Aid is diverted or confiscated	40%

The thresholds of this indicator that assign a score from 0-3 are:

0	0
1	$0 < x \leq 30\%$
2	$30\% < x \leq 70\%$
3	$x > 70\%$

### Indicator 6 (I6) Violence against personnel, facilities and assets

This indicator is calculated quantitatively, scoring on the basis of number of violent incidents perpetrated against aid workers. To set the score threshold, data from April 2017 were collected for 21 test countries and scores were set according to the level of violence calculated on a 6-month basis. Each violent event is counted as 1.

Thresholds were set by excluding the high outliers on the first data distribution, including all the violent events recorded on a 6-month basis for the testing countries. Therefore, quartiles (Q1, Q2, Q3), were calculated on the next data distribution. Quartiles were used to determine the scores thresholds.

The thresholds of this indicator that assign a score from 0-3 are:

0	0
1	$2 < x \leq 4$
2	$4 < x \leq 9$
3	$x > 9$

The source of this indicator is the dataset from the Aid in Danger project of Insecurity Insight.<sup>4</sup>

The Aid in Danger project, by Insecurity Insight, contributes data to the ACAPS Access Map on aid workers killed, kidnapped and arrested (KKA), crime and road safety accidents (RSAs). The data is based on open-source events reported in the Aid in Danger Monthly News Brief and verified reports submitted by 30 Aid in Danger partner agencies. You can access the dataset [here](http://www.insecurityinsight.org/aidindanger/).

<sup>4</sup> Aid in Danger Project by Insecurity Insight: <http://www.insecurityinsight.org/aidindanger/>

## Pillars 3 - Physical and Security Constraints

### Indicator 7 (I7) - Ongoing insecurity/hostilities affecting humanitarian assistance and people in need

This indicator is scored through a checklist of sub-indicators, formulated as negative conditions.

Sub-indicator	Weight
S7.1 Ongoing violence inhibits the affected population from moving freely and safely to the where humanitarian assistance is available	25%
S7.2 Public services, such as hospitals, schools and other civilian facilities are targeted or attacked	25%
S7.3 Ongoing violence leads to the relocation of humanitarian staff, and/or humanitarian activities are (temporary or permanently) suspended.	50%

The thresholds of this indicator that assign a score from 0-3 are:

0	0
1	$0 < x \leq 30\%$
2	$30\% < x \leq 70\%$
3	$x > 70\%$

### Indicator 8 (I8) Presence of mines, improvised explosive devices, ERW and UXOs

This indicator is composite and takes into consideration two different components: the km2 of contaminated land of the countries and the number of casualties of landmines and improvised explosive devices.

The contaminated land component is calculated using the ratio of km2 contaminated in a country. Thresholds were set by excluding the high outliers. Quartiles were used to determine the scores thresholds, using a scale from 0 to 4, in order to include the non-contaminated countries in the ranking.

Thresholds of the first component were set as follow ( $x = \text{km}^2 \text{ contaminated} / \text{total km}^2$ ):

0	= 0
1	$0 < x \leq 0.010654647$
2	$0.010654647 < x \leq 0.121500066$
3	$0.121500066 < x \leq 0.399262958$
4	$x > 0.399262958$

The source for the baseline landmass information is the World Bank database<sup>5</sup>, and for the percentage of contamination is the Landmine Monitor website<sup>6</sup>.

The second component takes into account the number of casualties. The source of the dataset is the Landmine Monitor report<sup>7</sup>, which scores the number of casualties on a scale from 0 to 5.

To get the final score for this indicator, the first component "contaminated land" is given a weight of 70% and the second component "casualties" is given a weight of 30%.

Sub-indicator	Weight
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<sup>5</sup> The World Bank Open Data, <https://data.worldbank.org/>

<sup>6</sup> Mine Action Review, <http://www.mineactionreview.org/>

<sup>7</sup> Landmine and cluster munition monitor, <http://www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/home.aspx>

S8.1+S8.2 Landmass contaminated (suspected + confirmed)	70%
S8.3 Casualties	30%

The thresholds of this indicator that assign a score from 0-3 are:

0	$X < 0.3$
1	$0.3 \leq x \leq 1.3$
2	$1.3 < x \leq 2.4$
3	$x > 2.4$

### Indicator 9 (I9) - Physical environment (obstacles related to terrain, climate, lack of infrastructure)

This indicator is scored through a checklist of sub-indicators, formulated as negative conditions.

Sub-indicator	Weight
S9.1 Rainy season (snow, monsoon, seasonal impediments – since last Access Map)	25%
S9.2 Severe disruptions of infrastructure	25%
S9.3 Logistical constraints – consumable goods (i.e. scarcity of fuel)	25%
S9.4 Logistical constraints – infrastructure (remote locations in need, difficulties to travel)	25%

The thresholds of this indicator that assign a score from 0-3 are:

0	0
1	$0 < x \leq 30\%$
2	$30\% < x \leq 70\%$
3	$x > 70\%$

### Information Gaps

Information Gaps are flagged and they are considered as a “non applicable condition”, starting with the assumption that access is not constrained unless a clear information flagging access issues is found. However, for transparently purposes, information gaps are logged at “sub-indicator” level, and they are weighted mirroring the weight of the relative sub-indicator. The final percentage, is the expression of how many information gaps were logged according to the relative information weight.