



Shelter Severity Classification FAQ

(2024 Refresher Session Notes)

Reminder: All training refresher sessions, including simulations from 2023, are available [here](#). While the 2024 SSC training series did not include new simulations of the SSC calculation tool, the recordings from last year's sessions are accessible in both French and English under the Technical Deep Dive Sessions.

1. Modification in the SSC tool

Q: What is the rationale behind the decision tree and how are the scores determined?

A: The decision tree final scores are based on the shelter severity phases definitions, going from minimal to catastrophic. For example, a phase 5 (catastrophic) in pillar 1 indicates no shelter, meaning no domestic functions can be performed. The scores in the decision tree were defined for each situation, and it is usually recommended not to modify the scores. If changes are made, it is important to ensure that justification can be provided to GSC and more importantly, to OCHA.

Q: Can modifications be made to the decision-tree?

A: Regarding the decision tree, it is recommended not to change the scores. If changes are made, they should be justified, as the scores were decided based on shelter severity phases definitions and how different conditions influence the scores. Changes should be documented and discussed with the GSC and will also need to be justified to OCHA during the JIAF.

Q: How will the final score be affected if Pillar 3 is not considered?

A: Pillar 3 is about community and access to services, it still influences some severity scores within the decision-tree, and although its impact on other severity levels is minimal, it should still be justified if not used. If you decide to remove it, consider defaulting the Pillar 3 in the decision-tree to a score of 1 and observing the impact on the result. It is important to always document each change that is made and to discuss these changes with GSC, later these changes will also have to be justified to OCHA as the shelter severity definitions are part of the JIAF.

Q: Can formulas in the HH severity be changed to pull data for the household severity calculations?

A: The first step is to format the MSNA Household dataset, as some indicators may differ due to contextualization. Formulas will need to be adjusted in the household severity calculations, however coloured columns in the HH dataset tab should remain unchanged.



2. Availability of data

Q: Is it important to verify that the data has been cleaned properly?

A: Generally, data is cleaned by data collection partners. However, it is important to verify shelter data and report any errors to the data collection partner for discussion.

Q: What should we do when the MSNA does not cover all administrative areas, and we have different data sources for different regions?

A: If the MSNA does not cover all areas included in the HNRP, the best approach is to create one tool using the available MSNA or other household-level data for the areas it covers, and to develop another tool that incorporates secondary data analysis. The SSC tool is designed to be flexible and adaptable to various data sources, although additional preparation might be necessary depending on the secondary data available. However, it is essential that the scoring and criteria remain consistent across both tools and for the entire country.

Q: What if the information is partially incomplete in the same area, and we have different data sources from the same region?

A: It is important to compile an evidence list of any available data sources within the country throughout the year (e.g., IOM-DTM, IPC data, flash appeals, partners' reports, etc.). The SSC tool is flexible and allows for the use of multiple data sources for the same area. You can combine partial household-level data with geographic area data, and, where no data is available, secondary sources or expert judgment can be used. Another option is to rely on the PiN calculations from the previous year and adjust them based on expert judgment.

Q: Are environmental factors considered? For example, if shelters are built in flood-prone areas, how is PiN calculated in such cases?

A: While climate indicators are not currently included in the standard MSNA questionnaire, some MSNAs or other household-level assessments may have already integrated climate-related questions. Environmental factors can also be added to Pillars 1 and/or 3.

If these indicators are not included in the MSNA, community-level information on environmental risks can serve as evidence to adjust the PiN calculations. For instance, even if the severity in an area is not currently high, knowing that the monsoon season is approaching or that the area is prone to flooding can be used to adjust the PiN based on these risks.

Q: What are the expectations regarding information collection from partners?

A: The SSC process is not limited to a single data collection exercise and serves as a tool for the continuous collection of evidence from partners throughout the year, which can be added to the SSC evidence list. Therefore, partners should not be viewed solely as a resource for a one-time data collection effort but can contribute to gathering information consistently throughout the year. The type and frequency of information collected from partners are determined through an agreement between the cluster coordination team and the partners, based on their capacity to collect and analyze data.



3. JIAF and the SSC

Q: What administrative level is recommended for the analysis?

A: The appropriate administrative level and populations groups to be assessed are decided during the JIAF.

Q: What is the link between JIAF and SSC?

A: The SSC and JIAF processes evolve in parallel and inform each other in several ways:

- The SSC feeds into the JIAF by ensuring that severity and PiN interoperability needs are met between clusters. This involves establishing common thresholds and definitions for severity levels to facilitate a unified understanding of PiN across clusters. It provides agreed-upon calculations and PiN figures at both the administrative and population group levels, which are utilized during the Joint JIAF analysis.
- The contextual analysis and background information from the JIAF can be utilized during SSC workshop analyses.

Q: What information or data should be shared in the JIAF and with OCHA?

A: In the context of the JIAF, it is important to share the methodology, which includes the three pillars, key sub-indicators, decision tree and scores, as well as PiN calculations and figures with OCHA. Any changes from the standard SSC tool should also be justified to maintain interoperability across sectors. Additionally, accessing the JIAF platform will also help to understand its functioning and view submissions from other clusters, which can inform on data sharing.

4. PiN and Prioritization

Q: What is the recommended approach to calculate the overall severity in an area?

A: There is no standardized approach to calculating the overall severity of an area, as this heavily depends on the context and existing vulnerabilities. Depending on the situation, the decision may be made to take the average, the maximum, or to prioritize one population group. For example, if an area includes hosts, returnees, and IDPs, and it is known that IDPs are more vulnerable, using the IDP severity for the entire area may be more appropriate than calculating the average severity across all groups.

Q: Are trend analyses possible from one year to another?

A: With the SSC, trend analyses are possible and recommended. Comparisons can be made by comparing the total PiN and percentage in each severity phase between the current year and the previous year. However, it is important to ensure that trends are coherent with the previous year, as changes in PiN numbers may result from modifications in the analysis grid scores or adjustments made after PiN calculations based on expert judgment. Therefore, it is crucial to document changes while also understanding the context through evidence collection and data exploration.



Q: When we have two areas with the same severity but different scales of PiN, which area should be prioritized for shelter action?

A: Different factors need to be considered: while actions may be oriented toward areas with higher PiN, other factors, such as accessibility, partner capacity, and response type, also need to be considered. This prioritization process has not yet been integrated into the SSC but will be incorporated in the future.

Q: In contexts where the situation changes rapidly, how should we decide on prioritization? Is it relevant to send updated classifications to OCHA?

A: The HNRP is a snapshot of the situation at the time of analysis, which means that to capture changes, the evidence list can be updated and utilized throughout the year. For significant changes, the SNO can be adjusted based on new information, such as increased violence, a sudden onset, and other relevant factors, and then presented to partners for further discussion. The important aspect is to document and publish updates based on thorough analysis.