
PROTECTION ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction to the PAF

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	1
Table of contents	3
Table of figures	3
Protection Analytical Framework.....	4
INTRODUCTION TO THE PAF.....	4
1. Introduction.....	4
1.1. What is the PAF: SCOPE.....	4
1.2. Purpose of the PAF.....	4
1.3. Guiding Policies and Initiatives.....	5
2. The Framework.....	6
2.1. Core Principles.....	6
2.2. Core definitions.....	7
2.3. Core Logic.....	8
2.3.1. PAF Theoretical Framework.....	8
2.3.2. PAF Concepts and Structure.....	8
2.4. How to use the protection analysis framework	10
2.4.1. PAF Basics.....	10
2.4.2 The Analysis Workflow.....	11
Annex i) Description of pillars, subpillars and catagories.....	13

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1 // PAF analytical conclusions	5
Figure 2 // Protection Risk Equation.....	8
Figure 3 // PAF Concepts and Structure.....	9
Figure 4 // Roles Protection Analysis.....	10
Figure 5 // PAF Workflow Steps	11
Figure 6 // PAF Workflow guiding questions.....	12

PROTECTION ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION TO THE PAF

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. What is the PAF: SCOPE

The **Protection Analytical Framework** (hereafter the **PAF**) guides the undertaking of robust, context-specific protection analysisⁱ. The PAF helps colleagues undertaking protection analysis to answer the following questions:



What information is needed to undertake a protection analysis?



How should data and information be organised and structured to support an in-depth and integrated analysis?

The **PAF** design and logic aims to ground decision-making in two core ideas: 1) Protection outcomes should manifest as reduced risk; 2) Protection outcomes should be pursued through collective action.

The **PAF** guides a process of in-depth and ongoing protection analysis of the crisis environment to inform multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary strategies geared towards reducing and preventing protection risks that may constitute violations of international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law. It is suitable for use **across humanitarian contexts** (including IDPs, Returnees, Refugees, Mixed situations and other types of crisis).

1.2. Purpose of the PAF

The analytical conclusions are to guide the development of strategies for protection risk reduction. The PAF should be used at the outset of a crisis and during a crisis to ensure continuous analysis and adaptation of interventions accordingly.

It guides **protection-specific situation analysis** and the organisation of data and information to provide a protection-specific “[...] *evidence-base for programming, advocacy and dialogue for the purpose of influencing behaviors and policies in support of a more favorable protection environment*”ⁱⁱ. The PAF is intended for use by all protection colleagues wishing to undertake a protection analysis.

The analysis should help actors to put together a context-specific theory of change that articulates the strategies and priority actions to support protection outcomes. The process of analysis should underlie all actions to achieve the desired outcome¹, while considering what already exists or where there are gaps.

The **PAF supports the identification of top protection risks that are to be monitored over time. To identify protection risks it is necessary to consider:**

1. **Current harmful, discriminatory and/or protective contextual factors**
2. **Situation of violations and abuse across geographic locations and population groups**ⁱⁱⁱ.

¹ “[...] including the various sectors and disciplines that may need to be mobilized to contribute to the desired outcome, and to identify the roles of different actors.” (ICRC: 7).

3. **The priority effects on the population** (affecting the dignity, safety and well-being of the population) arising from the degree of negative consequences of specific violations and abuses for each population group and geographic location affected.
4. Current combination of **individual capacity, local mechanisms and national institutional capacity, as well as humanitarian response capacity** to address violations and abuses.

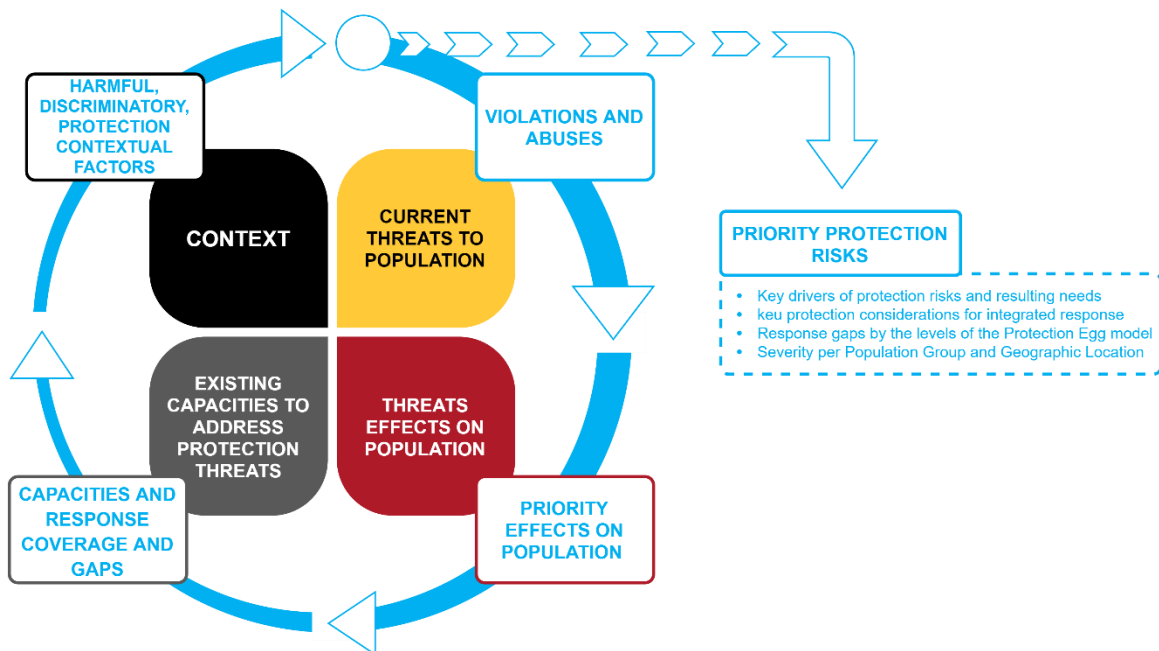


Figure 1 // PAF analytical conclusions

Protection actors are encouraged to use the analysis guided by the PAF to contribute to discussion amongst non-protection actors, to jointly suggest and identify “[...] pathways and milestones to address specific risk factors and achieve the desired outcome of reduced risk. [...] Protection actors should aim to maximize complementarity with other actors, as well as between different activities and programmes within the same organization, in order to address the various risk factors.”^{iv}.

The PAF was initiated by the USAID BHA-funded IRC-DRC Results-based Protection Analysis Project to contribute to collective efforts of improving and streamlining protection analysis. It was developed together and with the full support of the **Information and Analysis Working Group** of the **Global Protection Cluster**. It has been endorsed by the Global Protection Cluster.

1.3. Guiding Policies and Initiatives

The **PAF** aligns with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) definition of protection: *all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law, including International Human Rights Law (IHRL), International Humanitarian Law and International Refugee Law (IRL)*^v.

The language in the **IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action**^{vi} and **Centrality of Protection Statement**^{vii}, together with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) **Professional Standards for Protection Work**^{viii} informs the basis of the logic of the PAF and helps to set the parameters for the understanding and use of the framework.

The **Protection Information Management initiative (PIM)**^{ix} encompasses the core set of resources to guarantee the appropriate process to ensure that protection analysis is informed by quality data and information. The **PAF** should be used in accordance with the PIM principles. The **PAF language and logic** is also aligned to the Global Protection Cluster **Humanitarian Country Team Protection Strategy Provisional Guidance Note**^x.

The **PAF** supports context-specific protection analysis, multi-disciplinary strategies and the use of methods for protection outcomes, in line with elements of Result-based Protection^{xi}.

2. THE FRAMEWORK

2.1. Core Principles

The PAF must be adapted to the context and used to reinforce existing processes and activities, rather than be understood as a new process and set of tools. **The use of the PAF should be adapted according to specific characteristics of the geographic area it is applied to, with clarity on the types of decisions the analysis aims to inform.** While building on PIM, the following principles must underlie the process of protection analysis.



2.2. Core definitions

The structure of the PAF and conceptual definitions have been informed by existing policies and initiatives, including PIM resources and guiding materials. The set of agreed definitions were finalised with the support of experts and peer-review involving multiple stakeholders.

PAF CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

PROTECTION ANALYSIS *a process undertaken to identify protection risks with the aim of informing strategies and responses.*

THREAT *a human activity or a product of human activity that results in a form of violence, coercion, or deliberate deprivation. Threat can be seen as the perpetrator (agent of the threat) or a policy or an ethnicity norm (source of threat) that is causing harm.*

VULNERABILITY *certain characteristics or circumstances of an individual or group, or their surrounding physical environment, diminish ability to anticipate, cope with, resist or recover from the impact of a threat. People differ in their exposure to a threat depending on their social group, gender, ethnicity, age, and other factors. Vulnerability is not a fixed or static criterion attached to specific categories of people, and no one is born vulnerable per se.*

CAPACITY *the resources and capabilities that are available to individuals, households, and communities to cope with a threat, or to resist or mitigate the impact of a threat.. Resources can be material or can be found in the way a community is organised. Capabilities can include specific skill sets or the ability to access certain services or the ability to move freely to a safer place.*

VIOLENCE *the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.*

COERCION *forcing someone to do something against their will.*

DELIBERATE DEPRIVATION *intentional action to prevent people from accessing the resources, goods, or services they need and have the right to access.*

PROTECTION RISK *refers to actual, as well as potential, exposure of the affected population to violence, coercion, or deliberate deprivation.*

PROTECTION NEED *arises when victims of violations are unable to defend their basic interests and no longer benefit from the basic respect they are entitled to from authorities and other actors who have control over them or on whom they depend*

PROTECTION OUTCOME *A reduction of the risk, including through improved fulfilment of rights and restitution, for victims / survivors. It includes reducing the threats people face, reducir*



2.3. Core Logic

The PAF is built upon a core logic guiding the process of analysis that draws upon the Protection Risk Equation.

2.3.1. PAF Theoretical Framework

The PAF is based on the **Protection Risk Equation** theoretical framework. Within the PAF ‘protection risk’ is defined as the actual or potential exposure of the affected population to violence, coercion, or deliberate deprivation.

A Protection Risk has three components and the equation is a non-mathematical representation that describes the factors that contribute to risk: **Risk = Threat x Vulnerability / Capacity**. A protection risk is the result of the combined effect of the threat and the vulnerability (of an individual or a community) being greater than the capacity to prevent, respond and recover from that specific threat.



Figure 2 // Protection Risk Equation (adapted from InterAction)

In a specific context, *protection threats* must be identified, with an understanding of how they impact different population groups (individuals and communities) in different geographic locations, by looking at the *vulnerabilities* and *capacities* related to each identified threat.

2.3.2. PAF Concepts and Structure

The PAF structure adapts terminology and definitions from existing frameworks^{xii}, to avoid duplication, ensure interoperability between frameworks, and to encourage use of existing data and information.

The PAF consists of **4 pillars**, each of which contains 3 sub-pillars, and a set of categories by which to organize information. For each component there are a list of suggested information needs suggested analytical questions to help structure the analysis.

PILLAR	SUB-PILLARS	CATEGORIES	ANALYTICAL QUESTIONS	DATA and INFORMATION NEEDS
Broadest category of analysis to organize all data and information needs collected under an essential dimension for protection analysis.	Sub-dimensions of each pillar helpful to organize data and information to guide the understanding of the dimension capture by the Pillar.	Categories are the minimum suggested aspects to analyse information and data in a structured manner to ensure the PAF logic.	Initial suggested key questions to guide the adaptation of the PAF in the context, identify data sources and collaboratively elaborate indicators and detailed analysis plans	Initial suggested data and information needs to answer to the proposed analytical questions and capture the essential factors to elaborate the protection analysis.

The visual presentation of the PAF is illustrated below:

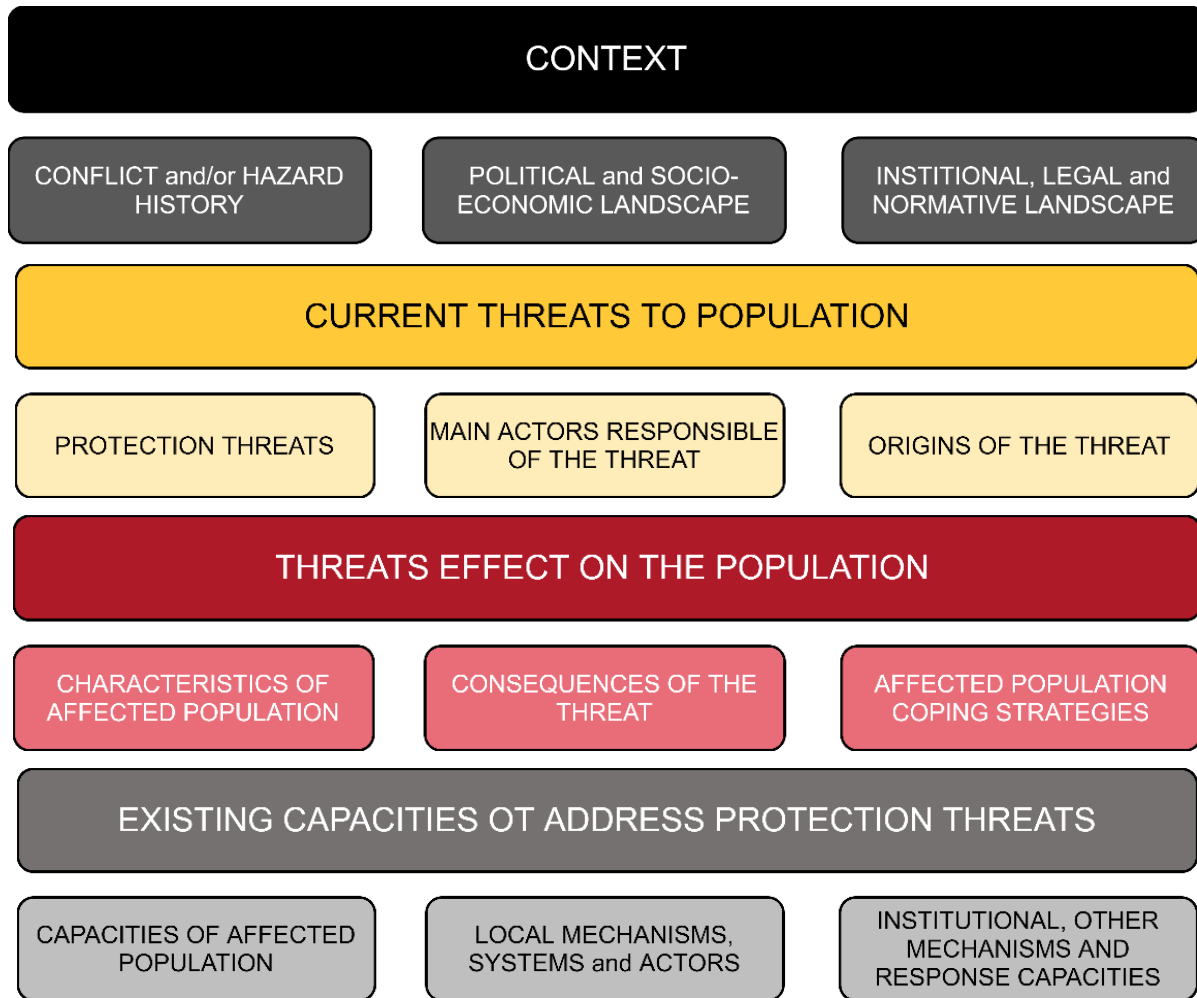


Figure 3 // PAF Concepts and Structure

A detailed description of the **PAF pillars** and *sub-pillars* can be found in Annex i of this document. Additional guidance on each Pillar is provided in the document *PAF Analysis Process Explained*.

By following the logic of the protection risk equation, the pillars of the PAF encourage analysts to focus on **four key areas of information** in order to **deduce the top protection risks** in the selected geographical area.

Context: Thorough context analysis is important as it helps us to understanding specific contextual factors that influence the crisis dynamic and resultant protection situation.

Current threats to population: It is important to identify the types of threats that are currently occurring, the responsibility of the actors involved and the origins of the threats.

Threat effect on the population: It is important to identify the population groups that are affected by the threats, how or why are they vulnerable to these threats and how the consequences may be different across different population groups and geographic areas.

Existing capacities to address protection threats: It is important to identify how existing capacities at the individual, and local level, as well as institutional response and other capacities (both national and international) can address the protection threats, either by mitigating the consequences or addressing the driving factors of the threat.

2.4. How to use the protection analysis framework

The PAF is not prescriptive, but provides a guiding structure for analysis to enable collaborative reflection and participatory design of action for protection outcomes.

2.4.1. PAF Basics

The **PAF** can be used to support analysis at different geographic levels (community, area, country, cross-border, etc.). It is to **organise data and information** from multiple sources and existing mechanisms. The **PAF** is therefore not a tool or approach for data collection, itself. However, through defining the analysis purpose and data and information needs, the PAF can support the identification of information gaps and therefore inform decision making on the most appropriate approaches, methods, and tools for acquiring additional data and information required.

The first use of the PAF may require an intense process of adaptation, and secondary data collection. In order to avoid confused meetings, frustration and limited results compared to invested time and resources, it is recommended that:

- ✓ A clear Protection Analysis **Lead** of the analysis process is defined
- ✓ The structure of the process and roles are **clear** to all members included in the analysis process.
- ✓ **Roles and responsibilities are assigned** according to different skillsets (ensuring that those closest to protection problems are able to play a meaningful role in the analysis process)

Who does the analysis?

The intended target audience for the PAF are protection colleagues undertaking a protection analysis, including protection colleagues at both area or country levels and within coordination structures. **It is a framework for joint and collaborative analysis.**

The *Tools to Ensure Data is Useful and Usable for Response^{xiii}*, provide a useful indication to of who should be involved in the analysis process. Often a lack of human resources hinders the ability to carry out a comprehensive protection analysis. This guidance helps highlight whose contributions may be needed, internally or externally, to support a more in-depth and integrated analysis.

The voice and knowledge of the affected population, local staff, partners on the ground and first line workers is essential. The Protection Analysis Lead must ensure this happens, either with their direct participation to preparation meetings, through bilateral conversations or joint analysis sessions.

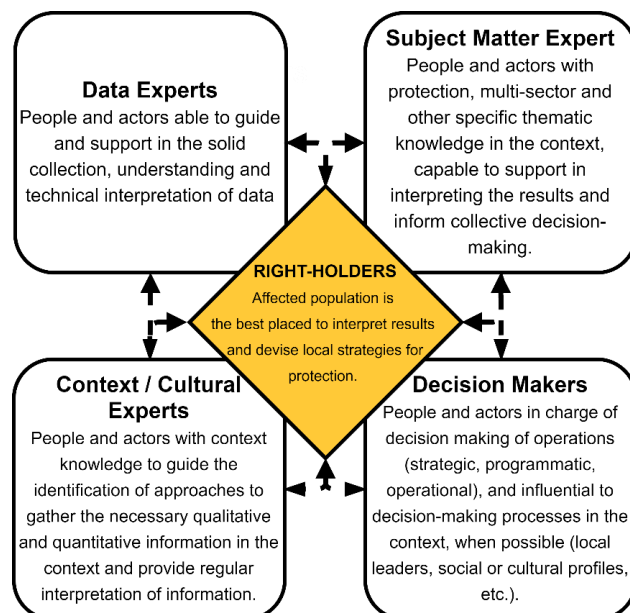


Figure 4 // Roles Protection Analysis

When to do the analysis? And how often?

The use of the **PAF** does not necessarily have a specific starting point and it may be triggered by a specific occurrence, shock or event. Once an actor or multiple actors decide to use the **PAF**, two processes should be considered:

- **First iteration.** The first use of the PAF requires a solid process of identification and organisation of available secondary data as well as an adaptation of the suggested analytical questions, identification of indicators and methods of any additional data collections required. The PAF can also be used to help build upon existing analyses, identify information gaps, and suggest additional information needs and questions to support colleagues with a more in-depth and integrated protection analysis.

Regular update: Subsequent iterations of analysis supported by the PAF require the identification of information that may have changed due to contextual development. . Depending on the objectives of a particular piece of analysis components of the PAF can be selected, rather than applying the whole framework to the analysis process. This might mean only focusing on specific pillars of information and collating specific pieces of data to support specific purposes. The PAF should be carried out regularly^{xiv}. When defining the analysis timeframe it is important to consider contextually relevant events or seasonal dynamics affecting the population, possible humanitarian programming, and key moments or deadlines generated through coordination mechanisms.

2.4.2. The Analysis Work Flow

The PAF Pillars and Sub-Pillars help benchmark existing data collection processes, indicators and secondary data to elaborate a protection analysis. The PAF Workflow provides the four main Steps (adapted from ACAPS^{xv}) and the associated processes required to achieve timely, quality and credible protection analysis.

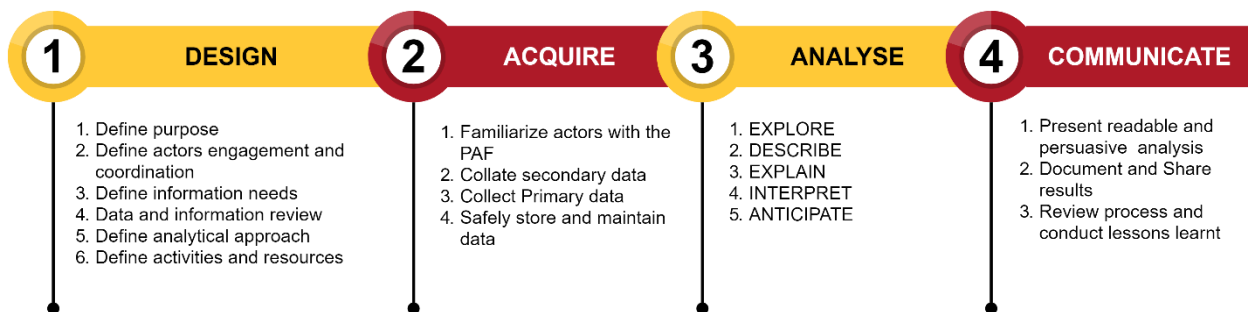


Figure 5 // PAF Workflow Steps

The processes for each step can be adapted to given characteristics and elements of the context, according to a set of basic questions to guide the adaptation of the PAF. *Figure 6* provides an illustration of each step and suggested basic questions. Further details are described in the **PAF Analysis Tools**.

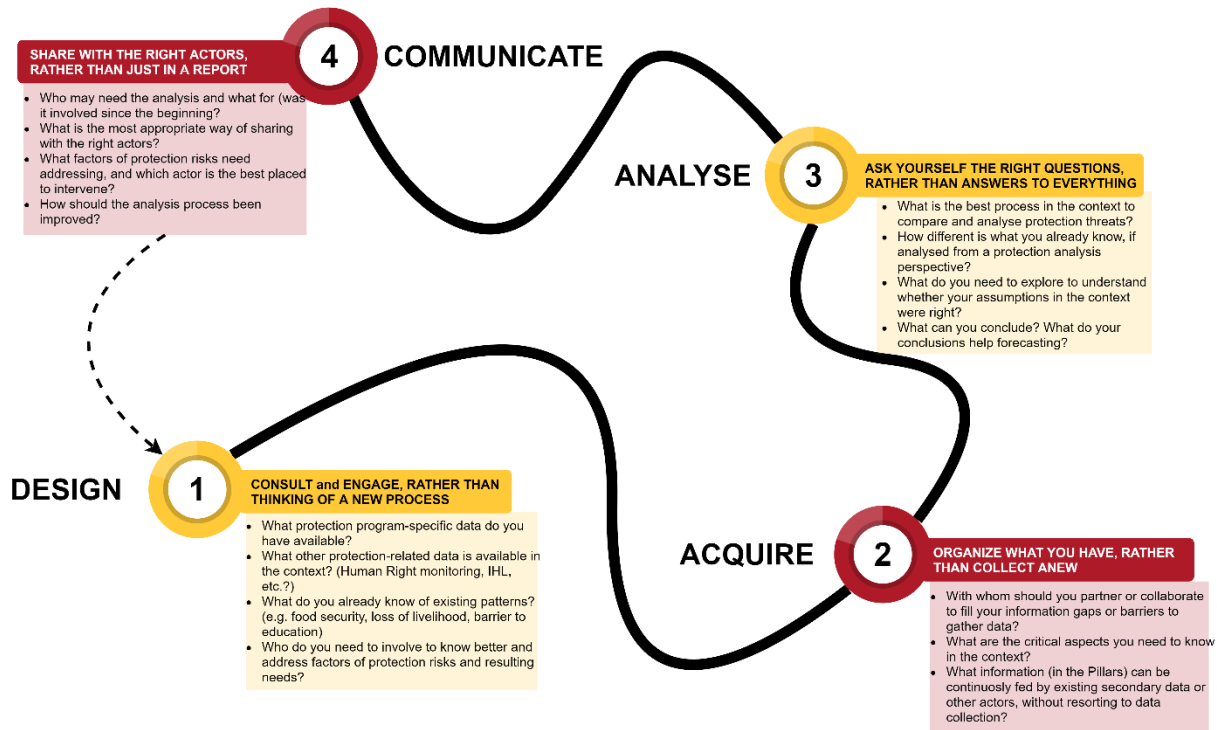


Figure 6 // PAF Workflow guiding questions

ⁱ PIM, Protection Information Management Common Terminology, 2018, p.45, <https://bit.ly/3bbzEpf>

ⁱⁱ IASC Protection Policy (2016:3)

ⁱⁱⁱ Population groups are not predetermined categories. They must be identified relevantly to the context, ensuring that different types of characteristics are not studied separately. The characteristics to define population groups can include age, gender, diversity and sex and other ethnocultural characteristics (<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/popchar/popcharmethods.htm>).

^{iv} ICRC Professional Standards (2018:43)

^v IASC, 2016, <https://bit.ly/2NAwljC>

^{vi} IASC, 2016, <https://bit.ly/2NAwljC>

^{vii} IASC, 2015, <https://bit.ly/3prEd41>

^{viii} ICRC, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2Zm7OBu>

^{ix} <http://pim.guide>

^x Specifically, it can be used to support interagency processes to collectively undertake a protection analysis by providing guidance for mobilizing a comprehensive, system-wide and multisector effort to prevent or respond to the most serious protection risks facing affected populations as well as to prevent and stop recurrences of violations^x. GPC, 2016, <https://bit.ly/2LUjQPp>

^{xi} InterAction, <https://www.interaction.org/blog/what-is-results-based-protection/> (2019)

^{xii} The information and data needed to elaborate a protection analysis according to the PAF is the same that may be used or is in use to conduct data activities and processes in relation to the Joint Inter-Sectoral Analysis Framework (JIAF), Global Information Management Assessment and Analysis Cell for COVID-19 (GIMAC), GBV Area of Responsibility AF, Needs and Identification Analysis Framework for Child Protection (NIAF), Mine Action Area of Responsibility AF. The concepts and structure draw upon these analysis framework, in addition to other analysis frameworks and initiatives (National Protection Cluster Iraq Analysis Framework, , MIRA and PIM).

^{xiii} See: *Tools to Ensure Data is Useful and Usable for Response*: <https://bit.ly/3bXP6Hf>

^{xiv} “Protection analysis should not be treated as a one-off exercise; instead, it should be carried out continually throughout the response. An initial protection analysis can serve as the basis for an initial and interim response. Interim or initial response activities can then provide a basis for further dialogue and deeper analysis with the relevant stakeholders, in order to clarify assumptions, develop partnerships and develop strategies to more comprehensively address the risk patterns.” ICRC Professional Standards (2018:42).

^{xv} https://www.acaps.org/sites/acaps/files/resources/files/acaps_analysis_workflow_poster.pdf

ANNEX i)

Description of Pillars, Sub-pillars and Categories

The **CONTEXT** pillar refers to relevant information specific to the area covered by the protection analysis, complemented by macro-level data.

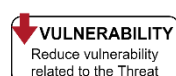
Pillar	Description	
CONTEXT	Factors to understand what is provoking and shaping the crisis dynamics and resultant protection situation by looking at specific characteristics of the context and environment.	
Sub-pillar	Description	Categories
CONFLICT and/or HAZARD HISTORY	Contextual historic elements that influence the existing violations and show past occurrence of protection threats and concerns , including tensions, conflict and hostilities, natural hazards, other past trends, stability and peace processes.	LOCATION
		TENSIONS, CONFLICT and HOSTILITIES
		NATURAL HAZARDS
		PAST TRENDS
POLITICAL and SOCIO-ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE	Contextual elements that can be drivers or enablers of current protection threats and concerns , including current political fragility, status of voice and accountability, power dynamics and other political enablers and barriers to humanitarian, developmental, institutional or peace-related actions.	POLITICAL FRAGILITY
		VOICE and ACCOUNTABILITY
		POWER DYNAMICS
		POLITICAL ENABLERS AND BARRIERS
INSTITUTIONAL, LEGAL AND NORMATIVE LANDSCAPE	Factors that contribute to current discriminatory, harmful or protective regulatory landscape , including institutional, legal, normative and international mechanisms, both formal and informal.	INSTITUTIONAL
		LEGAL
		NORMS
		INTERNATIONAL



The **CURRENT THREATS TO POPULATION** pillar refers to data and information that illustrates the human activities or product of human activities that cause harm to the population (in the form of violence, coercion and/or deliberate deprivation).

Pillar	Description	
CURRENT THREATS TO POPULATION	Refers to threats that are currently occurring and how these are affecting different population groups and geographic areas, as well as information that pertains to the responsibility of actors involved and the origins of the threats.	
Sub-pillar	Description	Categories
PROTECTION THREATS	The level of current harm, as a form of violence, coercion or deliberate deprivation to the population , identified as a	THREATS

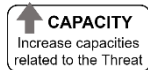
	protection threat, and information on whether it is the result of a particular behaviour/action, organisation/group practice or government or non-government policy.	TYPE
		MODALITY
MAIN ACTORS RESPONSIBLE OF THE THREAT	The responsibility of the actors involved including identification of groups or individuals directly committing the action causing harm, their affiliation and relation with affected person/people, and role of the actors/bodies holding specific duties.	TYPE
		AFFILIATION
		RELATION WITH AFFECTED PERSON/PEOPLE
		ACCOUNTABILITY
ORIGINS OF THE THREAT	Factors that pertain to the origin to the threat. This includes the primary motivation(s) of the perpetrator to commit an act or of the actor/body failing to uphold its duty to protect, as well as socio-economic, environmental, ethnic or political drivers and norms that help to sustain the threat, both national and international.	NATURE
		DRIVERS
		NORMS



The **THREAT EFFECTS ON AFFECTED POPULATION** pillar contains information to understand specifically which Population Groups in which Geographic Locations are affected and how.

Pillar	Description	
THREAT EFFECTS ON AFFECTED POPULATION	The population groups that are affected by the threats and how or why are they vulnerable to these threats and how the consequences may be different across different population groups and geographic areas	
Sub-pillar	Description	Categories
CHARACTERISTICS OF AFFECTED POPULATION	Characteristic of the population directly affected by the threat illustrating their vulnerability vis-à-vis the threats , including demography, population groups, geographic locations, movements and level of exposure to the threat.	DEMOGRAPHY
		LOCATION
		EXPOSURE
		MOVEMENTS
CONSEQUENCES OF THE THREAT	Primary and secondary physical, social and psycho-social and material consequences of the threat for each population groups and location affected.	PHYSICAL
		SOCIAL and PSYCHO-SOCIAL
		LEGAL and MATERIAL
AFFECTED POPULATION COPING STRATEGIES	Factors linking the coping strategies (positive/negative) of the affected population to the consequences identified , including evasive, adjusting, action, confronting and other strategies as well as how the perceptions of threat influence these decisions.	EVASIVE
		ACTION
		ADJUSTING

		CONFRONTING
		OTHERS
		PERCEPTIONS OF THREAT



The **EXISTING CAPACITIES TO ADDRESS PROTECTION THREATS** pillar contains information to specifically help to understand the available capacities related to each threat identified, at individual, community, proximate area and structural level (national and international).

Pillar	Description	
EXISTING CAPACITIES TO ADDRESS PROTECTION THREATS	Factors to help understand how existing capacities at the individual, and local level, as well as institutional response and other capacity (both national and international) can address the protection threats, either by mitigating the consequences or addressing the driving factors of the threat.	
Sub-pillar	Description	Categories
CAPACITIES OF AFFECTED POPULATION	The physical, social and psycho-social and material capacities (including skills, resources and knowledge) of individuals and within the household and/or family to withstand the threat and its consequences.	PHYSICAL
		SOCIAL and PSYCHO-SOCIAL
		LEGAL and MATERIAL
		AVAILABILITY
LOCAL MECHANISMS, SYSTEMS AND ACTORS	The combination of strengths and resources available to individuals, households and families in the affected geolocation (community, municipality, area) to mitigate or respond to the consequences of the threat in theory (capacity) or mechanisms that are actually being deployed to mitigate or respond to the ongoing threat (response). This includes identifying the extent to which these capacities are functioning, available and used by the population.	PROTECTION
		SAFETY and SECURITY
		SERVICES
		CULTURAL AND SOCIAL
INSTITUTIONAL, OTHER MECHANISMS and RESPONSE CAPACITIES	Refers to Actors who have the duty to protect and the level of willingness and capacity to hold perpetrators to account, and overall institutional capacities to protect and respond including justice and security institutions, ethnic, national and international actors and systems.	ACCESSIBILITY and AVAILABILITY
		DUTIES
		GOVERNAMENTAL
		OTHER
		INTERNATIONAL
		DETERRENTS