

**METHODOLOGY – MEASURING THE
ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MINE
CLEARANCE**

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OPTIMUM ANALYSIS

Established in 2019, Optimum Analysis is a research company that operates throughout the Middle East. Its mission is to contribute to improving humanitarian and development programming, positively impact economic development, and build the capacity of national researchers. By combining the technical skills of international staff with the contextual knowledge of national researchers and adhering to international social science standards, Optimum Analysis can ensure that the highest quality data and analysis are delivered. Core services include research design, data collection, and report writing.



DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is a humanitarian organization that assists refugees and internally displaced persons in 40 countries affected by conflict. DRC began its operations in Yemen in Aden in 2008, primarily to respond to the needs of migrants in the country. DRC scaled up its response in 2015 in response to the outbreak of conflict and is now one of the largest INGOs working in Yemen. DRC's activities in Yemen include emergency response, protection services, camp coordination and camp management, economic recovery programming, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, shelter & non-food items, and humanitarian disarmament and peacebuilding.



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ABBREVIATIONS

DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KII	Key Informant Interview
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance



1. INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this methodology document is to provide a comprehensive and detailed framework for measuring the economic impact of mine clearance activities, specifically within the context of the Danish Refugee Council's (DRC's) operations in Yemen. The importance of a robust methodology stems from the significant and often devastating economic effects that landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) have on affected communities. By obstructing access to essential services, disrupting livelihoods, and posing ongoing threats to safety, these explosive remnants of war (ERW) have a long-lasting impact on the economic development of affected communities.

The proposed methodology aims to overcome the challenges associated with existing tools for assessing the economic impact of mine clearance. Traditional methods often rely on outdated information and rough estimates, leading to highly inaccurate calculations. Consequently, mine action actors often do not use this data for decision-making and resource allocation.

The presented methodology is a pre-post study with a comparison group to assess changes in economic indicators over time. This methodology can isolate the impact of clearance activities from other external factors. However, while using a comparison group helps to control for external factors, it may not account for all complex interactions and influences on economic indicators, such as local cultural practices or unmeasured policy changes. Therefore, contribution analysis is employed to understand and attribute the extent to which observed changes can be linked to the intervention while acknowledging the influence of other external factors and complex interactions. The proposed approach emphasizes robust, evidence-based techniques that provide a clearer and more precise understanding of the economic benefits of mine clearance. Moreover, the approach is designed to be both accessible and effective, requiring only a moderate level of research experience to implement.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

The proposed research design combines a pre-post study with a comparison group (quantitative survey) with contribution analysis (qualitative interviews). A pre-post study with a comparison group is a research design used to evaluate the effects of an intervention by comparing outcomes before and after the intervention in both the intervention/treatment group (those receiving the intervention) and a comparison/control group (those not receiving the intervention). This method helps to isolate the specific impact of the intervention by controlling for external factors that could influence the results.

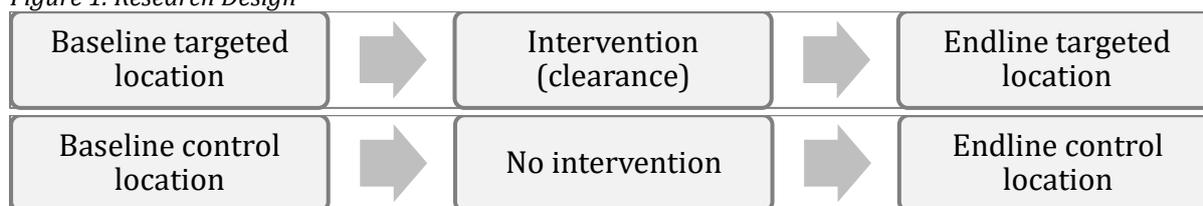
Contribution analysis, furthermore, will be employed to account for possible complex interactions that cannot be identified through the pre-post study with a comparison group design alone. Contribution analysis is a method used to assess the extent to which an intervention has contributed to observed outcomes by systematically considering the influence of other external factors and complex interactions. It provides a structured approach to attribute changes to the intervention, enhancing understanding of its specific impact amidst various influencing elements. This combination of a pre-post study with a comparison group and contribution analysis enhances the reliability and depth of the impact assessment by providing a structured framework for assessing the specific contributions of the intervention amidst various influencing factors. The combination of a pre-post study design with a comparison group and contribution analysis can be particularly effective in evaluating interventions or programs where establishing causality and understanding the specific contributions of different factors to observed outcomes are crucial.

Research Design

The pre-post comparison provides quantitative evidence that the intervention has led to changes in the outcome variables, differentiating between changes that can be attributed to the intervention versus those likely resulting from other external factors.

Contribution analysis adds qualitative depth, exploring the mechanisms behind the changes and considering other factors that might have influenced the results. It helps in substantiating the theory of change and provides a narrative that complements the quantitative findings.

Figure 1. Research Design



2.1 ADVANTAGES RESEARCH DESIGN

The main advantage of the pre-post study with a comparison group method is its ability to effectively isolate the economic impact of mine clearance activities from other external factors. This is achieved by comparing changes in economic indicators between the intervention and comparison groups, allowing for stronger causal inferences about the intervention's effectiveness. The two key elements of this methodology that enable these stronger causal inferences are:

- The baseline assessment provides a reference point, enabling researchers to accurately measure and compare changes over time. This helps understand the starting conditions and the extent of economic improvement due to the intervention.
- Including a comparison group helps control for confounding variables affecting economic outcomes, such as local/regional economic changes, policy shifts, or other simultaneous interventions.

The addition of contribution analysis provides a structured approach to understanding and attributing observed changes to the intervention while considering the influence of other external factors and complex interactions that a pre-post study with a comparison group cannot account for. This adds depth to the causal inferences made from the pre-post comparison. Contributing analysis enhances the evaluation's comprehensiveness by systematically considering multiple factors that may influence the outcomes. It acknowledges and assesses the contribution of mine clearance activities within the broader context of other influences, including local policies, local cultural practices, etc.

The data obtained through this methodology can inform decision-making and resource allocation by mine action actors and policymakers, thereby improving the effectiveness of future interventions.

2.2 DISADVANTAGES RESEARCH DESIGN

While a pre-post study with a comparison group method offers several advantages over other research designs, it is important to consider some disadvantages before employing this methodology. Firstly, conducting a pre-post study with a comparison group requires a significant time investment, both for data collection and for allowing the intervention (mine clearance) to take place and impact the community. This method also demands substantial human resources, including trained personnel.

Secondly, several aspects of this research design are complex and require full attention to ensure the validity of the study results. For example, selecting the intervention and comparison communities demands significant attention. If these groups are not well-matched, selection bias may occur, affecting the validity of the results. Tracking the same individuals or households over time for the endline assessment presents another set of challenges. This task is resource-intensive and difficult, especially in areas with high mobility or instability, potentially leading to participant attrition (when individuals drop out of the study). Attrition bias happens when drop-out rates differ significantly between the intervention and comparison groups. To mitigate this, it is critical to carefully plan for both the baseline and endline assessments and implement multiple mechanisms to encourage participants to participate in both rounds of data collection.

Thirdly, several limitations cannot be mitigated through resource allocation and planning. For instance, the results obtained from the study area might not be easily generalizable to other regions with different socio-economic contexts or levels of mine contamination. Additionally, while the



comparison group helps to control for many external factors, it may not account for all complex interactions and influences on economic indicators, such as local cultural practices or unmeasured policy changes. However, this disadvantage is mitigated through contribution analysis based on the collected qualitative data. Contribution analysis provides a structured approach to understanding the various influences on economic indicators, helping to account for unmeasured policy changes, local cultural practices, and other contextual factors.

3. RESEARCH PROCESS

3.1 STEP 1: SELECTION OF COMMUNITIES

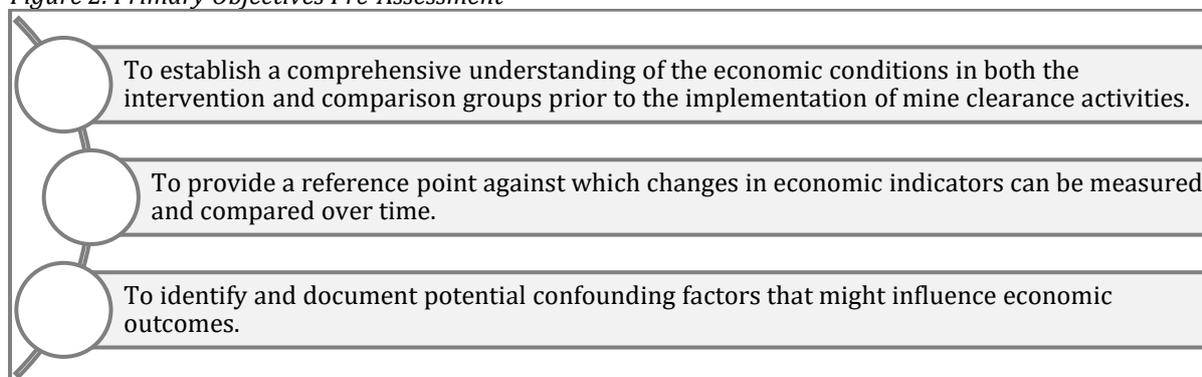
The study must select two comparable communities to generate valid and reliable results. This involves identifying one community that will directly benefit from mine clearance activities (the treatment or intervention community) and another that will not receive mine clearance support during the study period (the comparison or control community). The comparison community accounts for external factors that might affect economic indicators, enabling researchers to isolate the impact of mine clearance activities. Ensuring the comparability of these communities is crucial for the integrity of the study. To ensure that the control community is suitable for inclusion in the study, a survey should be completed in the intervention community and several possible control communities. Based on the result of this assessment, it can be determined which of the possible control communities is most suitable for inclusion in the study. The survey can be very simple (20 to 25 questions). It should focus on the following community characteristics: demographics (household size, age distribution, gender distribution, etc.), socio-economic status (primary sources of income, average monthly income, average monthly expenditure, etc.), employment (employment rate, unemployment rate, etc.), access to services (access to a healthcare center, school, electricity, water, etc.), and land and agricultural practices (contamination of land for farming and herding, farming/herding methods, etc.)

Based on the survey results, determine if any possible control communities are sufficiently similar in demographics, socio-economic status, employment, access to services, and land and farming/herding practices. Select that community only if these key characteristics are comparable, ensuring that any differences observed in the economic impact can be attributed to the mine clearance activities rather than pre-existing disparities.

3.2 STEP 2: BASELINE ASSESSMENT

The pre-assessment is a critical foundational step in the pre-post study with a comparison group design for measuring the economic impact of mine clearance activities. It involves collecting comprehensive data on key economic indicators from the intervention and comparison groups before mine clearance activities commence. This section details the methodology, sampling strategies, data collection procedures, and ethical considerations associated with the pre-assessment. The primary objectives of the pre-assessment can be found in the figure below:

Figure 2. Primary Objectives Pre-Assessment



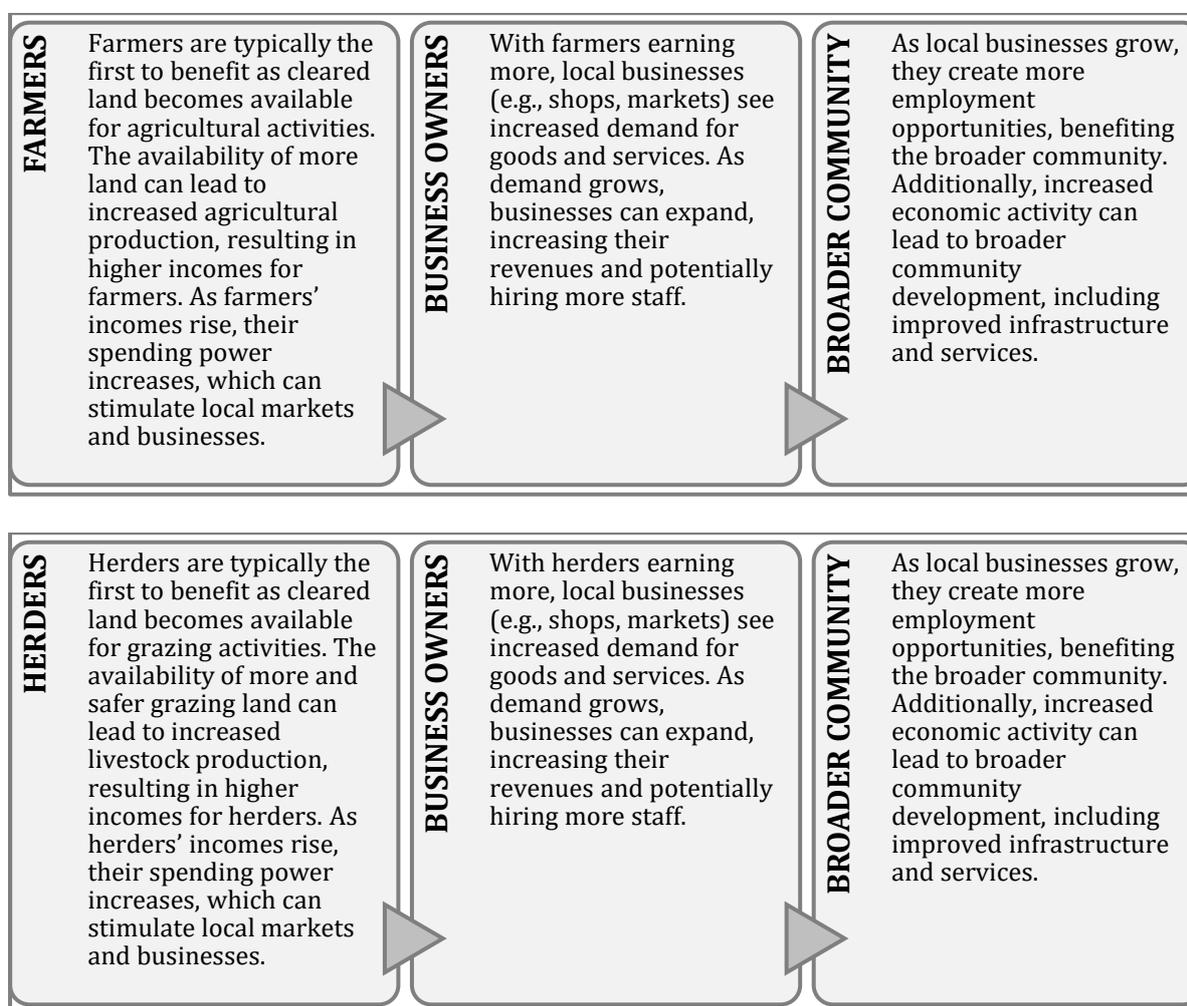
The pre-assessment will employ a mixed-methods approach, incorporating quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to ensure a holistic understanding of the economic context. The key components of the methodology include:

Quantitative Data Collection

The household survey tool should capture key economic indicators such as income levels, employment status, access to resources, household assets, expenditure patterns, and other relevant factors. To ensure comprehensive data collection, it is recommended to include a small set of open-ended questions aside from the closed-ended questions. The survey instrument should be translated into Arabic and pre-tested in a small sample of households to ensure the questions’ clarity, cultural relevance, and appropriateness.

Sampling

Understanding the sequence of economic impacts following mine clearance activities is fundamental to developing an effective sampling strategy. The figure below shows the assumed sequence of economic impact in communities in Yemen after UXO and other ERW have been removed from said communities.



Since the economic impact of mine clearance is expected to first and most significantly affect farmers and herders, targeting farmers/herders during the pre-assessment reduces the resources needed for the baseline (and endline). Moreover, focusing on the group first affected also reduces the overall timeline for implementation of the study. This is because if the baseline (and endline) surveys focus on the broader community, more time should be given for the economic impact to reach the broader community population. This could involve waiting more than two years after the completion of mine



clearance activities, which is not possible for most humanitarian mine action actors due to how funding for mine action works. For farmers/herders, however, it can be expected to see a measurable impact after completing one complete farming/herding season since the area has been cleared. However, It should be noted that focusing on the farmer/herder population also means data collection for the baseline and endline should preferably occur in the same month. Since farmers/herders often have irregular income based on the phase in the farming/herding cycle, completing both the baseline and endline during the same month provides the best possibility to compare income and other economic indicators.

To determine the sample size needed for the baseline assessment, the following steps should be taken:

1: Determine the population size in the intervention and control community. The population is the total number of farmers and herder households in that community. If the exact population is unknown, make an educated estimate, preferably being on the high side to ensure sufficient representation.

2: To determine the sample size needed, use an online calculator (i.e. <https://www.calculator.net/sample-size-calculator.html>). Input the population (i.e., the number of farmer and herder households in the community), the confidence level, and the margin of error. Using a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5% is advisable. However, you may want to change these parameters if resources are limited.

3: Adjust the given sample size for the design effect and drop-out. For the design effect, you multiply the given sample size by 1.5. For drop-out, you need to estimate the proportion of respondents who will drop out between the baseline and the endline and add that to the sample size.

The picture below gives an example of how to calculate the sample size using the online calculator (with a population of 900 farmers and herders). In this example, the sample size to be achieved is 507

Result

Sample size: 270

This means 270 or more measurements/surveys are needed to have a confidence that the real value is within $\pm 5\%$ of the measured/surveyed value.

Confidence Level: 95%
Margin of Error: 5%
Population Proportion: 50% Use 50% if no
Population Size: 900 Leave blank if

Design effect
 $270 * 1.5 = 405$

Drop out 20%
 $405/0.8 = 506.25$

Calculate **Clear**

Qualitative Data Collection

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) should be conducted with stakeholders such as local authorities, community leaders, and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) representatives. These interviews will provide contextual insights into the economic conditions and potential confounding factors influencing economic outcomes. The interview guide will include open-ended questions to explore



stakeholders’ perspectives on the economic influence of government and NGO programmes/policies and other factors that may impact the targeted communities’ economic situation.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) should be conducted with specific community groups, such as farmers/herders and business owners, to gather in-depth qualitative data on economic activities, challenges, and opportunities. Participants for FGDs must be selected purposively to ensure diversity and representation of different economic activities and demographics within the community.

Table 1. Proposed Sampling KIIs and FGDs

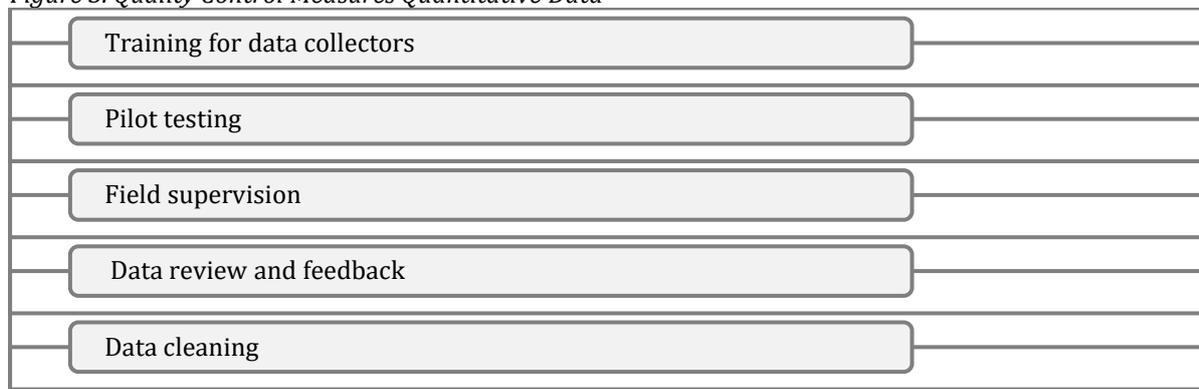
	KII	FGD
Local authorities	3	N/A
Community leaders	3	N/A
NGO representatives	3	N/A
Business owners	N/A	3
Male farmers	N/A	3
Female farmers	N/A	3
Male herders	N/A	3
Female herders	N/A	3
Total	9	15

The table above outlines the proposed number of KIIs and FGDs to conduct per stakeholder and community group. This table is intended to be flexible, as DRC may decide to adjust the number of KIIs and FGDs to complete or add stakeholder and community groups that are particularly relevant to the targeted community.

Quality Control Data Collection

Implementing quality control measures before, during, and after data collection for the baseline assessment is paramount. These same quality control measures can also be used during the endline. The figure below displays the minimum measures that need to be implemented to ensure quantitative and qualitative data quality.

Figure 3. Quality Control Measures Quantitative Data

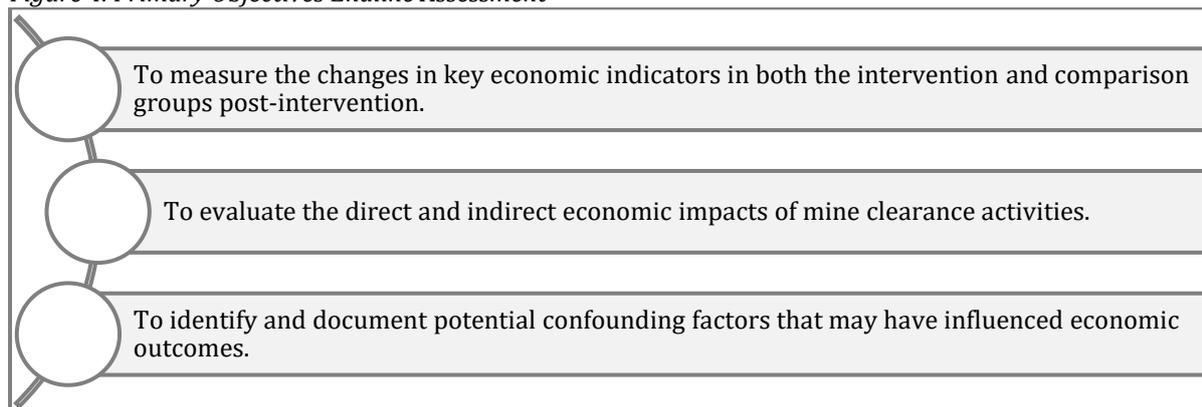


3.3 STEP 3: ENDLINE ASSESSMENT

The endline assessment serves as a follow-up to the baseline assessment, allowing us to measure changes in economic indicators over time following the completion of clearance activities. The primary objective of the endline assessment in both the target and control locations is to conduct a follow-up assessment of the economic situation of individuals surveyed during the baseline assessment after a suitable period following the completion of clearance activities. The primary objectives of the endline assessment can be found in the figure below.



Figure 4. Primary Objectives Endline Assessment

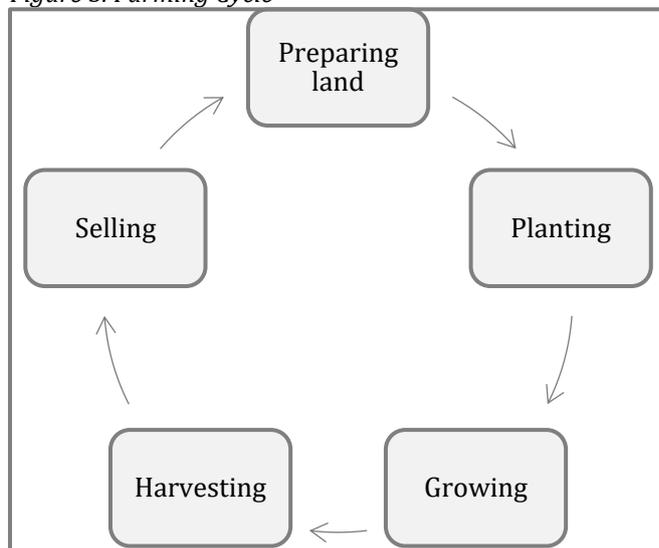


The endline assessment should target the same individuals surveyed during the baseline assessment (in both the treatment/intervention community and comparison/control community). Completing the same survey with those individuals allows for a direct comparison between baseline and endline data to assess changes over time. Additionally, by surveying the same individual twice, it is possible to reduce the sample size significantly. This is because the repeated measures design provides more statistical power by reducing variability within the data, as it controls for individual differences between participants.

Timing

One of the most critical considerations for the endline assessment is the timing of data collection. Previously, it was already noted that since farmers/herders often have irregular income based on the phase in the farming/herding cycle, completing both the baseline and endline during the same month provides the best possibility to compare income and other economic indicators for this group.

Figure 5. Farming Cycle

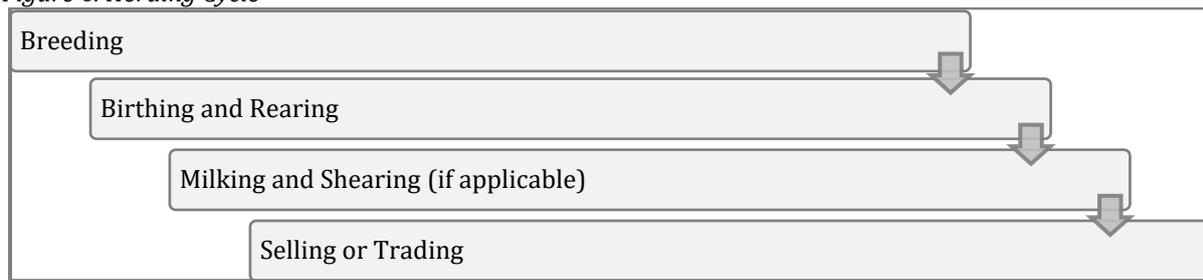


Moreover, it is essential to allow sufficient time for the community to experience the economic impact of the clearance activities before conducting the assessment. Since the study primarily focuses on farmers, at least one farming cycle has been completed since the mine clearance activities concluded. By waiting for a full farming cycle, the assessment can accurately capture the economic changes that result from the additional land being put into productive use. This timing ensures that any increase in agricultural/livestock output, income, and subsequent economic benefits to the community is reflected in the data. Rushing the endline assessment before this cycle is complete may result in an incomplete or

inaccurate understanding of the intervention’s impact, as the farmers/herders would not yet have had the opportunity to realize the full benefits of the cleared land. Therefore, careful consideration of the farming/herding calendar and the time needed for these economic effects to materialize is essential for the success of the endline assessment.



Figure 6. Herding Cycle



Tracking

Conducting a longitudinal study where the same individuals are surveyed twice presents several challenges. These challenges can impact the reliability and completeness of the data, making it essential to anticipate and address them effectively. One of the major challenges is called attrition. Attrition means that participants may drop out of the study between the baseline and endline assessments, resulting in a smaller sample size and potential bias if the drop-outs differ systematically from those who remain. One of the reasons why respondents may not want to be involved in the second survey includes a lack of interest in the study. If this applies to many respondents, it may result in a lower response rate during the second survey than the first. However, drop-out may also result from difficulties tracking the same study participants. This challenge is especially prevalent in areas with high mobility, displacement, or poor infrastructure. Aside from respondents moving to a new location, participants may also change their contact details, making it hard to reach them for the follow-up survey.

Aside from attrition bias, some challenges related to surveying the same individuals twice can also impact the quality of the collected data. One such issue is called recall bias. This occurs when respondents cannot accurately recall information they provided during the first survey or may provide inconsistent responses between surveys. Another issue that can impact data quality is survey fatigue. This happens when respondents feel burdened by the repeated surveys and may be less willing to provide thoughtful and accurate responses the second time.

Before implementing the baseline assessment, a plan should already be in place for tracking and locating respondents during the study. This plan should include different strategies and mechanisms to increase the response rate during the second survey. Some possible strategies and mechanisms to consider are listed below:

1. Keep detailed records of participants' contact information, including multiple ways to reach them (phone numbers, home addresses, email).
2. Check-in with participants periodically to confirm their details and update contact information where needed.
3. Work with community leaders who can help locate respondents and encourage them to stay engaged in the study.
4. Hold community meetings to explain the importance of the study and the need for ongoing participation.
5. Communicate the importance of the study and how participants' involvement contributes to its success.
6. Set clear expectations with respondents about the time commitment required and what the follow-up survey will entail.
7. Offer flexible scheduling options for the follow-up survey to accommodate participants' availability.
8. Provide respondents with multiple methods for completing the second survey, such as in-person, by phone, or online.
9. Reinforce informed consent at each stage, ensuring participants understand their rights and the study's purpose.
10. Continuously assure participants that their responses are confidential and will be used solely for the study's purposes.



11. Implement a tracking system to monitor response rates and follow up promptly with participants who have not responded.
12. Regularly analyze response rates and adjust strategies as needed to improve participation.

4. ANALYSIS AND REPORT WRITING

Quantitative data collected during the baseline and endline assessment should be analyzed to determine economic changes. First, descriptive statistics should be utilized to summarize and describe the characteristics of the data collected from both the intervention and comparison groups. This includes measures such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and frequency distributions for quantitative variables related to economic indicators.

A key aspect of the data analysis will involve calculating a composite measure of the economic improvement attributable to clearance activities. To ensure that only a moderate level of statistical knowledge is needed for the calculation of this number, the calculation will be focused on four economic indicators only:

- 1) Income
- 2) Savings
- 3) Debt
- 4) Assets

The survey tool includes questions that ask for exact numbers for the first three indicators. For the fourth indicator (assets), the survey includes multiple questions that can be used to estimate the total household assets.

The data from the endline can be compared with the data from the baseline to indicate the change over time. For example:

$$\Delta \text{Income} = \text{Endline Income} - \text{Baseline Income}$$

This can be done to determine changes for all four economic indicators. After that, it becomes possible to determine the change across all respondents in the survey:

$$\text{Average } \Delta \text{Income} = \Sigma \Delta \text{Income} / \text{Number of Households}$$

If this is done for all four indicators, it becomes possible to calculate two numbers that indicate individual economic improvement between the baseline and endline. The first would indicate the improvement in purchasing power, which only looks at the average change in income (as displayed above). The second number would look at household assets based on the following calculation:

$$\Delta \text{Household Economic Status} = \text{Average } \Delta \text{Savings} - \text{Average } \Delta \text{Debt} + \text{Average } \Delta \text{Assets}$$

Important: Since there is quite some time between the baseline and endline assessment, it may be necessary to account for inflation to ensure that the measured economic impact is more realistic.

Qualitative Data

The qualitative data collected during the baseline and endline assessments will be analyzed using contribution analysis. The aim is to assess the extent to which changes in economic indicators can be attributed to clearance activities while acknowledging the influence of other confounding factors. While contribution analysis is relatively complex, a simplified contribution analysis process should be completed for this study. An individual with limited data analysis expertise can complete this simplified process. Several steps need to be completed as part of the contribution analysis process:

- 1) Identify key factors that may influence changes in economic outcomes.
- 2) Assess the perceived impact of clearance activities on economic outcomes.



- 3) Assess the perceived impact of other factors on economic outcomes.
- 4) Compare changes in economic outcomes between the intervention and comparison groups.
- 5) Report any confounding factors as limitations of the analysis and discuss their potential impact on the conclusions.

5. RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

Resource efficiency is critical when conducting research studies, particularly those as complex and resource-intensive as the economic impact assessment of mine clearance activities as described in this document. As such, this chapter outlines strategies to optimize resource use in the study without compromising its integrity.

Intervention and Control Locations

One of the most resource-intensive steps in this study is the selection of control locations. Traditionally, identifying a suitable control location requires extensive testing and data collection across multiple communities. However, this process can be streamlined by leveraging existing data. A preliminary review of readily available information about potential control communities can help exclude unsuitable locations early, reducing the need for further data collection. Additionally, if data from previous studies are available, they can be repurposed to assess the suitability of these communities, minimizing the need for new surveys.

Another strategy to reduce resources is to combine the community suitability survey with other planned data collection activities. Since the survey is relatively brief, consisting of 20-25 questions, it may be integrated into other ongoing surveys. This approach saves time and avoids duplication of efforts, thereby reducing the overall resource burden.

Study Design

The study is designed around three key building blocks, each varying in importance: baseline and endline assessments, the control location, and contribution analysis. Of these, the baseline and endline assessments are the most crucial, forming the foundation of the study. However, there are opportunities to reduce the needed resources for this component. For instance, the study could drop-tracking the same individuals between the baseline and endline assessments, which is highly resource-intensive. If this is done, however, it is critical to focus on maintaining the comparability between the two samples to achieve reliable results.

The control location is the next most essential component for isolating the effects of mine clearance from other factors. While the validity of the study relies on the control location, one could opt to reduce the number of surveys conducted in the control community if resources are particularly constrained. However, it is important to recognize that this could affect the study's validity, and such decisions should be made cautiously.

Contribution analysis, while useful for understanding in depth the factors that play a role in the economic changes that occurred, is the least critical component of the study. If resources are tight, this component could be dropped, focusing instead on quantitative data. Alternatively, a limited number of open-ended questions could be included in the quantitative survey to gather some qualitative insights without conducting additional interviews. The table on the next page provides a detailed overview of how the chosen study design will impact the validity and reliability of the study.

Study Focus

Another effective strategy for resource efficiency is to narrow the focus of the study. Concentrating on a specific target area—such as farmers and herders living within one kilometer of cleared land—makes the study population smaller and more manageable. This reduction in scope allows for a smaller sample size, which in turn reduces the number of surveys required for both the community suitability survey and the baseline and endline assessments. For instance, one could focus only on the farmers and herders living within a one-kilometer radius of the cleared land. In some cases, this may even result in a census of the smaller population, further simplifying the study design and reducing the need to track individuals between assessments.



Table 2. Comparison of Study Design Options for Measuring the Economic Impact of Mine Clearance

Study Design	What Can Be Measured	Validity & Reliability	Attribution and Causality	Pros and Cons
Endline	Economic indicators after mine clearance.	Low	No causal conclusions can be drawn. Results only show the economic situation after mine clearance, and changes cannot be confidently attributed to clearance without baseline data.	Pros: Simplest and least resource-intensive. Cons: Cannot establish causality, and results may be inaccurate or misleading.
Baseline and endline	Changes in economic indicators pre and post-clearance.	Moderate	It provides some insight into changes over time, but external factors may still influence results, making it hard to attribute changes to mine clearance definitively.	Pros: Provides insight into changes over time. Cons: External factors could influence results, making attribution difficult.
Baseline and endline with control location	Changes in economic indicators pre and post-clearance in both the cleared and control communities	High	Causal conclusions can be drawn with more confidence. By comparing cleared and control communities, it is possible to attribute changes to mine clearance, controlling for external factors.	Pros: Allows for attribution with control for external factors. Cons: Requires more resources and planning.
Baseline, endline with control location and contribution analysis	Changes in economic indicators pre and post-clearance in both the cleared and control communities, with a qualitative understanding of how mine clearance contributed to outcomes.	Very high	Strongest causal insights. Allows for a clear attribution of changes to mine clearance while also considering other contributing factors and complex interactions.	Pros: The most comprehensive and rigorous approach with both quantitative and qualitative insights into the impact. Cons: Most resource-intensive and time-consuming option.

Validity: How accurately the study design measures what it is supposed to measure. In other words, does the study truly capture the effect of mine clearance on economic outcomes, or are other factors influencing the results?

Reliability: How consistent the results are when the study is repeated. If the same study is conducted again under the same conditions, would it yield the same results?

