

# Mid-Winter Assessment

## Local Authorities' Perspectives

### on the 2024-25 SNFI Winterization Response

January 2025 | Ukraine

#### KEY FINDINGS

- As of early December, **58% of respondents (hromada representatives) indicated that winterization assistance was timely**, either "always on time" (14%) or "mostly on time with some delays" (44%).
- **78% of respondents reporting unmet needs** at the time of data collection, with **solid fuel** (83% of respondents), **winter cash for utilities** (66%), and **winter clothing** (48%) most frequently mentioned.
- **Challenges in assisting vulnerable populations** were reported, including gaps for older persons (69%) and families with young children (63%).
- 30% of hromadas reported **transportation issues** (poor road conditions, destroyed infrastructure, and a lack of specialized vehicles), **access constraints** (19%) and **human resources challenges** (25%, particularly **mobilisation**) as affecting the timely distribution of in-kind assistance.
- **65% reported engaging with implementing partners in coordinating winterization efforts** either strongly (32%) or moderately (35%), while 17% indicated limited and infrequent communication, and 7% reported no engagement at all.

#### Rationale and objectives

The 2024-2025 winter marks the third since the start of the full-scale invasion in Ukraine, bringing continued winter-related humanitarian needs. Displacement, widespread damage to housing, and disruptions to public service infrastructure have compounded vulnerabilities across the country. Winterization activities remain an essential component of the humanitarian response, aiming to mitigate the impact of harsh winter conditions on affected populations.

The [Winter Response Plan 2024-2025](#) outlines 18 key activities spanning five sectors, with a total target of 1.8 million people. With a total funding requirement of \$492 million, the plan emphasizes a coordinated and comprehensive approach to address critical needs. Shelter and Non-Food Items (SNFI) activities are central to this effort, accounting for approximately 94% of people targeted and three-quarters of the required funding. The latest figures on the delivery of Shelter and Non-Food Items (SNFI) assistance for 2024-25 is available on the Shelter/NFI Cluster Winter Dashboard:

[Shelter/NFI Cluster Winter Dashboard](#)

#### This assessment was designed to support the SNFI response in two ways:

- 1. Short-term operational support:** Support a mid-term evaluation of the SNFI winterization response to identify potential gaps and inform adjustments, ensuring that assistance meets urgent needs effectively and equitably.
- 2. Longer-term learning:** Contribute to lessons learned to enhance planning and implementation for future winter responses.

#### The assessment focused on three main topics:

- 1. Effectiveness:** Local perceptions of how well SNFI winterization activities are meeting the needs of vulnerable populations.
- 2. Operational challenges:** Barriers to timely and effective delivery of winterization assistance.
- 3. Coordination and communication:** The level and quality of collaboration between local authorities and humanitarian actors.

By capturing insights from local authorities, this assessment aims to strengthen the response in the current winter season and improve preparedness for winters to come.

## Methodology, data interpretation and limitations

This assessment relies on self-reported information provided by representatives of **local authorities (key informants)** from **377 hromadas** across **12 oblasts** bordering the front line or the Russian Federation. Data collection was conducted **between 25 November and 6 December 2024** through an online questionnaire distributed via email. REACH's enumerators followed up by phone to ensure questionnaire completion and to seek clarifications when needed.

The collected responses were consolidated into a dataset organized geographically and thematically to facilitate analysis. The data was visualized through the maps and charts presented in this report, offering an accessible overview of findings. Key topics are summarized in each section, with qualitative insights from hromada authorities available in the associated dataset.

This report highlights the main findings of the assessment, structured around its core themes. The **full dataset is available upon request** for operational purposes and can be obtained by contacting [impact.ukraine@impact-initiatives.org](mailto:impact.ukraine@impact-initiatives.org) with the subject line "Mid-winter."



Map 1 – Participating hromadas

### Limitations

This assessment primarily focuses on **conflict-affected hromadas near the frontline and the Russian Federation**, meaning the findings may not be representative of winterisation activities across the entirety of Ukraine. The mid-season timing provides a snapshot of the response at a point in time (late November and early December), which may not fully capture evolving needs or emerging challenges as winter progresses. The collected data is self-reported by hromada authorities, introducing the potential for biases or inaccuracies due to subjective assessments, and as such, the findings are not statistically representative but only indicative of the situation. Lastly, this **assessment focuses specifically on Shelter/NFI activities**.

## Findings

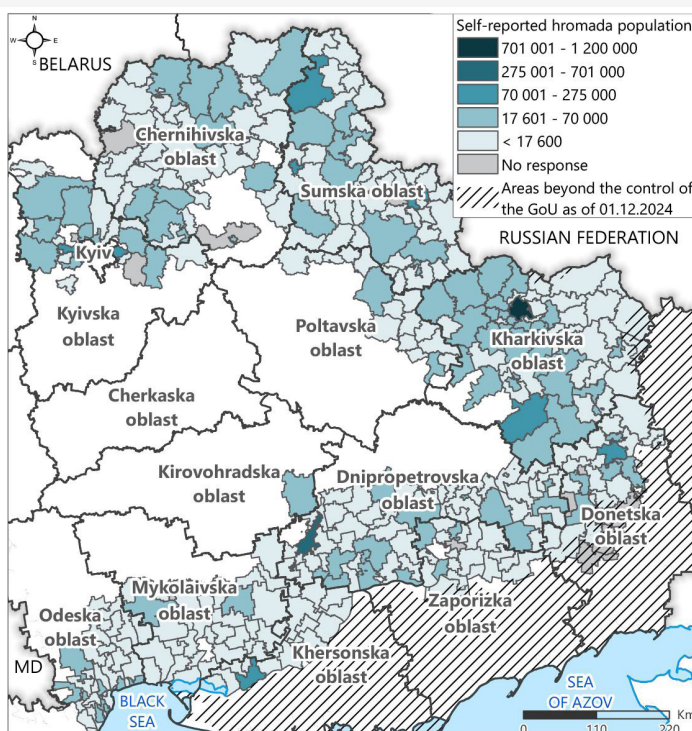
### 1. Overall perception on the effectiveness of winterisation assistance

#### 1.1 – Demographics

Respondents estimated the current population in their hromada, accounting for recent changes such as displacement, returns, or other conflict-related factors. Detailed figures are available in the dataset upon request.

#### 1.2 – Overall perception on winterization's evaluation of the response

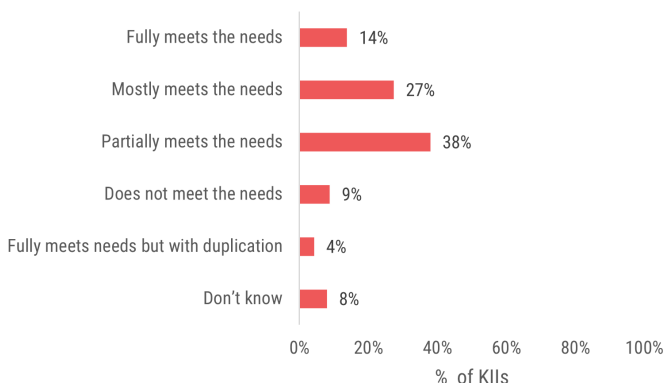
The survey sought to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of SNFI winterisation assistance provided by humanitarian organisations in meeting the needs of vulnerable populations. Hromada authorities were asked to assess



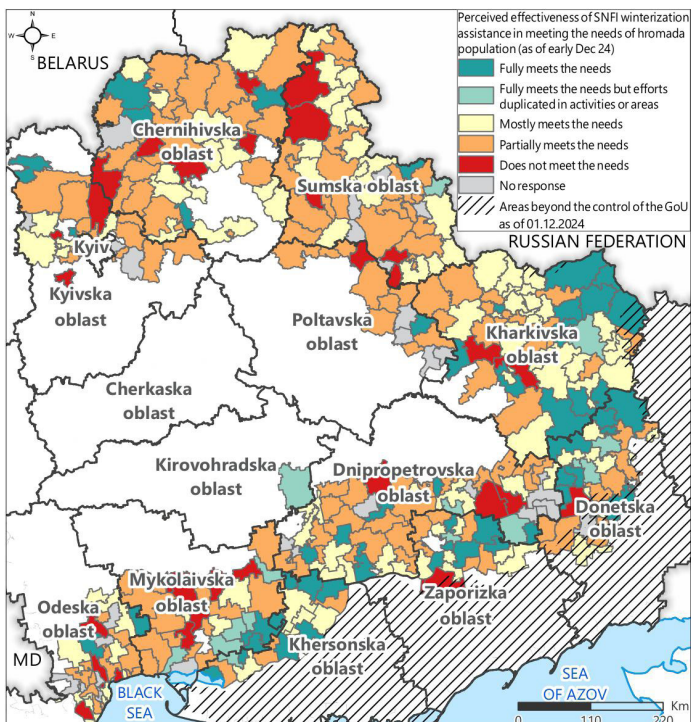
Map 2 – Self-reported hromada population

how well these efforts address the needs of intended beneficiaries, providing insights into the coverage and adequacy of the response at the local level.

How well the overall winterisation assistance in Ukraine meets the needs of vulnerable populations



14% of respondents indicated that the winterisation assistance fully meets the needs of vulnerable populations in their area. Meanwhile, 27% reported that assistance mostly meets the needs, though minor gaps were highlighted in the provision of support. Conversely, 38% of respondents stated that winterisation assistance only partially meets the needs, pointing to possible more significant gaps. Furthermore, 9% reported that the assistance does not meet the needs of their communities. Responses were not available for 8% of hromadas surveyed.



Map 3 – Perceived effectiveness of SNFI winterization assistance

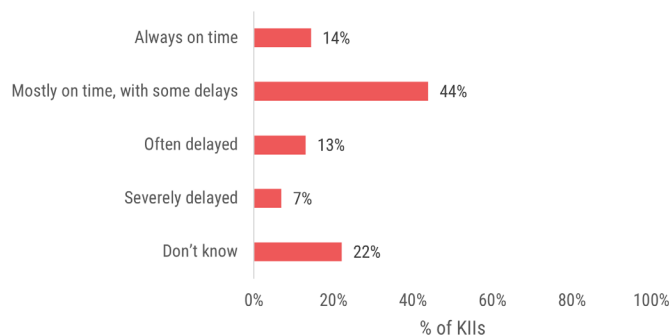
Open-ended responses provide additional insights into the perceived effectiveness of SNFI winterisation assistance. They mention some unmet needs, particularly solid fuel, firewood, heating devices, and winter clothing, with vulnerable groups such as the elderly, persons with disabilities, and families of prisoners of war often

underserved. Duplication of aid and narrow eligibility criteria were noted as issues, leaving some non-categorized vulnerable groups without support. Some communities emphasized the need for improved assistance, such as replacing windows, providing generators, and financial aid for utilities. Access constraints in conflict zones and limited coverage by humanitarian organizations were frequently mentioned, while some areas expressed gratitude for the assistance received but noted that the scale of support often falls short of demand. Several communities also highlighted a need for strengthened engagement with international humanitarian actors.

### 1.3 – Timeliness

The survey assessed the timeliness of winterisation assistance provided by humanitarian organisations, focusing on how promptly support reaches intended beneficiaries in each hromada.

Perceptions on timeliness of winter assistance

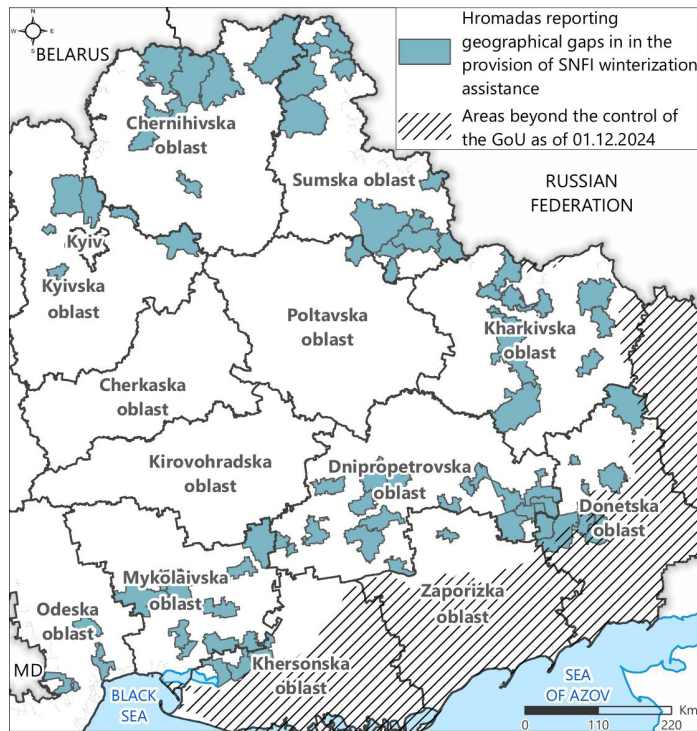


14% of respondents indicated that the assistance is very timely, reaching beneficiaries without delays. Meanwhile, 44% stated that the assistance is somewhat timely, experiencing minor delays that did not significantly impact its effectiveness. In contrast, 13% of respondents reported often and 7% reported severe delays in the provision of assistance, which affected the ability to meet urgent winterisation needs, with these delays most frequently noted in Vasylivskiy, Myrhorodskiy and Romenskiy raions. Additionally, responses on timeliness were unavailable for 22% of hromadas.

### 1.4 – Geographical gaps

The survey explored whether respondents had identified gaps in the geographic coverage of winterisation assistance, focusing on specific settlements that have not been reached. 22% of respondents reported geographic gaps in winterisation assistance, citing specific oblasts, raions, or settlements that have yet to receive adequate support, with these gaps predominantly reported in Kamianskiy, Volnovaskiy and Okhtyrskiy raions. Conversely,

78% of respondents indicated that no significant geographic gaps exist in their area, suggesting adequate coverage.



Map 4 – Geographic gaps in winterisation assistance

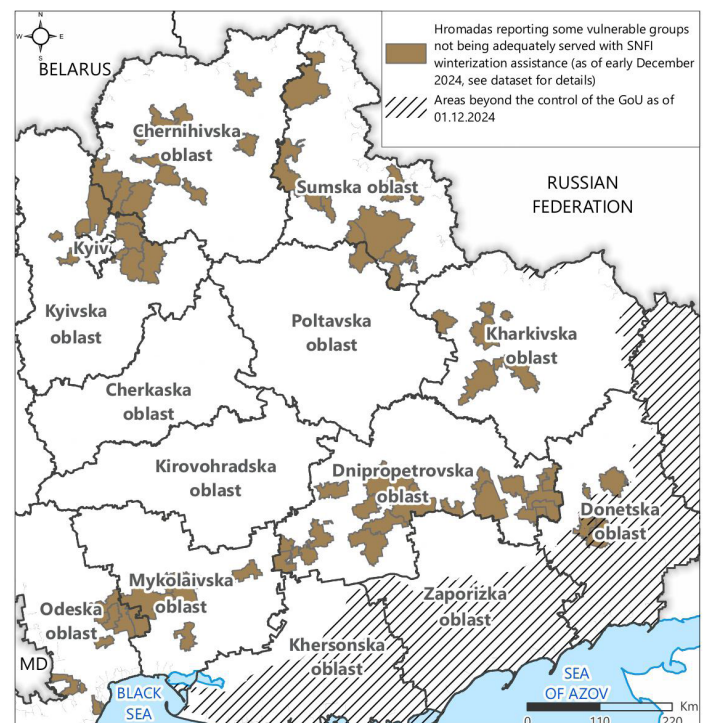
### 1.6 – Vulnerable groups

The survey examined whether specific vulnerable groups in the community are being appropriately served by winterisation assistance. It also sought to identify any unmet winterisation needs in the respondents' areas. Respondents were asked to assess whether the following vulnerable groups are adequately supported by winterisation assistance:

- **Persons with disabilities:** 28% of respondents indicated that this group is adequately supported, while 64% reported gaps in assistance. Qualitative responses highlighted barriers such as insufficient funding, prioritization of Groups 1-2 (leaving others, e.g., Group 3, without aid), and specific unmet needs for items like hygiene products, adult diapers, mobility aids, heating devices, and warm clothing. Additional challenges included delivering aid to remote or conflict-affected areas and exclusion based on income thresholds. The survey did not distinguish between persons with disabilities living in households or in institutions; the latter may fall outside the remit of the SNFI Area of Responsibility.
- **Older persons (60+):** 24% of respondents felt older persons were adequately supported, while 69% highlighted barriers. Open-ended responses mentioned

limited aid and eligibility challenges; assistance, including food, firewood, hygiene products, and heating appliances, often targets specific groups; rural areas and those lacking pensions face greater difficulties; aid was reported as delayed or insufficient in some cases.

- **Single-headed households/women as primary caregivers:** 25% indicated sufficient support for this group, while 64% highlighted gaps. Open-ended responses highlighted some gaps in support for single-headed households and women as primary caregivers. Factors such as limited local budgets, high numbers of beneficiaries, and the need for more targeted programs were mentioned.
- **Families with three or more children (under 18 or under 23 if studying):** 32% of respondents reported that this group is adequately served, while 60% identified challenges related to [e.g., provision of NFIs or heating supplies].
- **Pregnant women and families with children under three years old:** 24% felt that this group was well-supported, whereas 63% reported unmet needs.
- **Persons with chronic illness or serious medical conditions\* (including mental health issues):** 21% reported sufficient support for this group, but 67% highlighted gaps.



Map 5 – Under-served vulnerable groups in SNFI winterisation assistance

\*The survey did not distinguish between individuals with chronic illnesses or serious medical conditions living in households or in medical institutions, the latter potentially falling outside the remit of the SNFI Area of Responsibility.

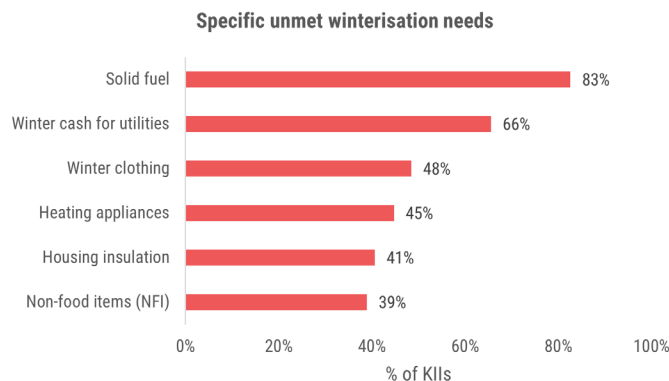
## 1.7 – Feedback from beneficiaries of winterisation assistance

The survey explored feedback received from beneficiaries regarding the adequacy and quality of winterisation assistance provided by humanitarian organisations. Responses were categorised into both positive and critical feedback. While highly indicative – as it reflects what was reported to hromada authorities by beneficiaries in their area – this provides preliminary insights into areas of success and improvement.

- **Positive feedback:** 47% of respondents indicated reports from beneficiaries that assistance to be appropriate, timely, and effectively meeting their needs.
- **Inadequate quantity:** 21% reported that the amount of assistance, such as fuel or clothing, was insufficient to meet local needs.
- **Inappropriate items:** 1% highlighted that some items provided did not meet beneficiaries' needs or were of limited practical use.
- **Delays in delivery:** 8% noted that assistance arrived too late to be fully effective.
- **Quality concerns:** 1% indicated issues with the quality of items provided.
- **Communication issues:** 4% reported that beneficiaries were not well-informed about available assistance or eligibility criteria, impacting their ability to access support.
- **Unfair targeting:** 8% of respondents mentioned that some beneficiaries felt the targeting process was not transparent or excluded those in greatest need.
- **Access challenges:** 7% noted difficulties for beneficiaries in accessing assistance due to factors such as distance or lack of transportation.
- **Duplication in assistance:** 2% reported cases where beneficiaries observed receiving duplicate assistance.
- **No Feedback Received:** 23% indicated that no feedback was received from beneficiaries in their area.
- **Other/Don't Know:** 10% of respondents mentioned receiving other feedback than the options provided in the questionnaire or reported not knowing beneficiary opinions on the adequacy and quality of winterisation assistance.

## 1.8 – Unmet needs

78% of respondents reported unmet needs in their hromada. Out of these, respondents were asked further to identify specific winterisation needs in their communities that remain unmet:



- **Housing insulation:** 41% of respondents indicated unmet needs for insulation of substandard houses, including thermal repairs and window sealing, to improve energy efficiency and warmth.
- **Winter cash for utilities:** 66% highlighted the need for assistance with heating costs, such as payments for gas and electricity.
- **Heating appliances:** 45% reported a lack of heating appliances, such as electric heaters, gas heaters, and stoves.
- **Solid fuel:** 83% identified gaps in the provision of solid fuels, including firewood, coal, pellets, and gas.
- **Winter clothing:** 48% of respondents cited insufficient distribution of winter clothing, such as jackets, gloves, boots, and thermal wear.
- **Non-food items (NFI):** 39% of respondents pointed to gaps in the provision of Non-Food Items, including blankets, sleeping bags, and winterisation kits.

## 2. Operational challenges

### 2.1 – Access constraints, transportation challenges and staff shortages

The survey examined three operational challenges affecting the delivery of winterisation assistance: access constraints, transportation issues, and delays or challenges in the supply of winterisation materials. These shed light on logistical barriers potentially impacting the effectiveness of the response.

**Access constraints:** 19% of hromadas reported access constraints affecting the delivery of winterisation assistance. Challenges include security concerns such as shelling, drone attacks, mine hazards, and curfews, which limit access to beneficiaries. Specific issues include the inability to reach 10-kilometer zones near conflict lines, logistical obstacles like damaged infrastructure, and restrictions on aid delivery to border areas. Several communities, including frontline settlements, report difficulty accessing aid due to ongoing combat, while others cite problems with fuel transport and distribution under dangerous conditions.



Map 6 – Access constraints affecting the delivery of winterisation assistance

## 2.2 – Transportation challenges

30% of hromadas reported transportation issues as a barrier to the delivery of in-kind assistance. Challenges included poor road conditions, destroyed or damaged infrastructure, lack of transport links, and insufficient vehicles. Many roads remain in disrepair or are impassable, particularly during winter or in areas affected by active hostilities. Remote or border settlements face additional difficulties, such as damaged bridges and security concerns, further complicating access. Transportation challenges were primarily linked to the delivery of in-kind assistance, such as solid fuel and heating appliances, highlighting the operational difficulties of distributing physical items.

Given these challenges in delivering in-kind assistance, maintaining functional infrastructure and markets – under the Government of Ukraine's responsibility with support from international partners – is crucial to enhancing the

effectiveness of cash-based assistance and reducing reliance on in-kind distributions in areas facing operational and transportation barriers



Map 7 – Transportation issues affecting the delivery of winterisation assistance

## 2.3 – Delays or challenges in the supply of materials:

21% of respondents observed delays or challenges in the supply chain for winterisation materials.

## 2.4 – Staff shortages and capacity limitations in hromadas

The survey assessed whether hromada authorities are facing staff shortages or capacity limitations that impact their ability to support the delivery of winterisation assistance in their area. This provides insights into institutional challenges that may hinder the implementation of winterisation activities.

25% of respondents indicated that their authorities are experiencing staff shortages or other capacity limitations, directly affecting the planning, coordination, or delivery of winterisation assistance.

The most frequently reported reason for staff shortages was the mobilization of male workers, particularly in communal services and manual labor roles such as drivers, electricians, and stokers. Evacuation and displacement due to active hostilities further depleted the workforce, especially in high-conflict areas.



Map 8 – Staff shortages impacting the delivery of winterisation assistance

Many communities also cited a lack of qualified personnel, including plumbers, welders, and locksmiths, as skilled workers relocated to more stable regions. Economic constraints, including limited financial resources and low wages, hindered hiring efforts, while the increased workload from a high number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) added further strain. Additionally, shortages of support staff such as social workers and psychologists, logistical roles like movers and loaders, and utility staff were common, exacerbated by outdated infrastructure and insufficient resources.

In contrast, 75% of respondents stated that they are not facing any staff shortages or capacity issues impacting the delivery of assistance.

### 3. Coordination and communication

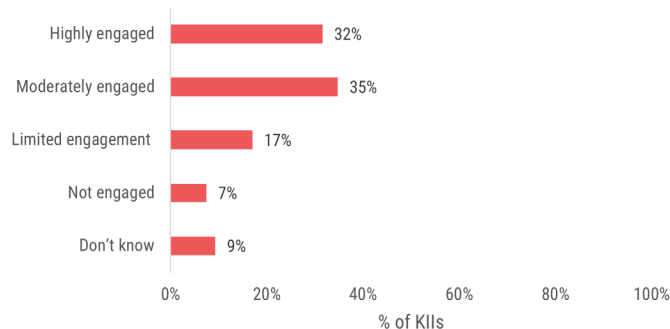
#### 3.1 – Perceptions regarding engagement with humanitarian actors on winterization assistance

The survey examined the level of engagement between hromada authorities and implementing partners, such as NGOs, in the planning and delivery of winterisation assistance. These findings provide insight into the collaboration and coordination dynamics critical for an effective response.

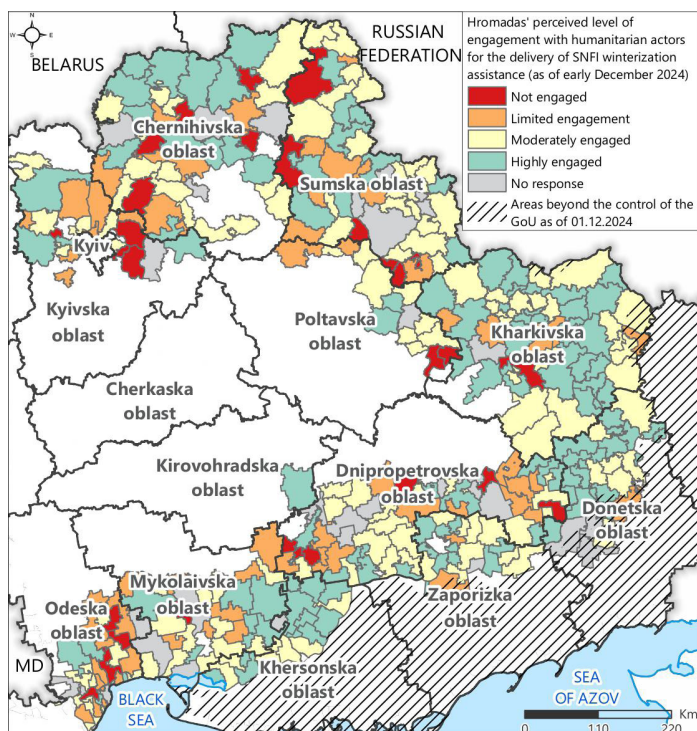
32% of respondents reported strong engagement with implementing partners, highlighting regular communication, joint planning efforts, and active collaboration in delivering

winterisation assistance. 35% indicated moderate engagement, characterized by occasional coordination or partial involvement of implementing partners in planning and implementation. Limited engagement was reported by 17% of respondents, who cited infrequent communication, or minimal involvement of partners in the winterisation response. Additionally, 7% of respondents stated there was no engagement between their authorities and implementing partners.

Authority's engagement with implementing partners



The survey responses regarding coordination with implementing partners highlighted several key themes. Some respondents reported either limited or no interaction with partner organizations, noting that aid was often directed through regional military administrations rather than directly to local communities. A recurring concern was the absence of systematic cooperation or regular engagement, with some respondents emphasizing the need for joint planning and more tailored assistance based on community needs. Positive examples included instances of close collaboration with partners, where assistance was coordinated effectively, and needs were pre-discussed.



Map 9 – Perceived level of engagement with humanitarian actors for the delivery of SNFI winterization assistance

A significant number of respondents expressed a desire for improved communication and direct cooperation with international organizations, rather than relying solely on regional-level coordination. Additionally, some noted that partner organizations were responsive to challenges but lacked consistency in engagement, while others faced barriers such as insufficient aid coverage, logistical constraints, or the absence of reliable contact points.

### 3.2 – Coordination and information on winterization assistance

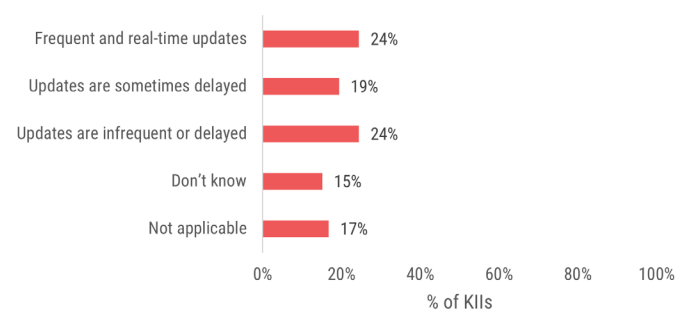
The survey explored the extent to which humanitarian organizations coordinated with local administrations in hromadas, focusing on specific aspects of winterisation activities.

- **Details about winterisation activities:** 52% of respondents reported that humanitarian organizations shared information about their winterisation activities to enable targeted and effective activities.
- **Alignment with government programs:** 43% of respondents indicated that organizations shared information to ensure alignment with and avoid duplication of existing government programs, while 20% noted a lack of alignment efforts.
- **Procurement plans for NFIs:** 17% of respondents reported that information on procurement plans for emergency stockpiling or immediate distribution was shared, whereas 40% reported no coordination on this matter.
- **Strategic stockpile locations:** 17% of respondents indicated that organizations coordinated on plans for selecting strategic locations for emergency stockpiles, while 38% reported no such coordination.
- **Partner engagement:** 31% of respondents reported some partners coordinating and sharing information on their winterisation activities while other partners did not. At the same time, 21% of respondents noted this was not the case.

### 3.3 – Communication and Information Sharing on Winterisation Activities

Local administrations were asked whether they receive real-time or frequent updates from humanitarian partners and coordination bodies regarding winterisation activities in their hromadas.

Perceptions on timeliness of updates from humanitarian partners and coordination bodies



- **24%** of respondents indicated that their administration receives frequent and real-time updates from humanitarian partners and coordination bodies regarding winterization activities.
- **19%** reported that their administration experiences occasional delays in receiving updates.
- **24%** noted that updates are infrequent or significantly delayed.
- **15%** stated they do not know whether their administration receives such updates.

Open-ended responses often reflect a lack of frequent updates from humanitarian partners or coordination bodies regarding winterisation activities. Some noted that updates, when available, typically come from the regional or district state administrations rather than directly from humanitarian organizations. A few respondents expressed a desire for improved communication, joint planning, and access to timely updates. Specific feedback highlighted gaps in receiving information about cash assistance programs, beneficiary lists, and project plans. Others suggested creating centralized platforms or mailing systems to streamline the sharing of information across regions.

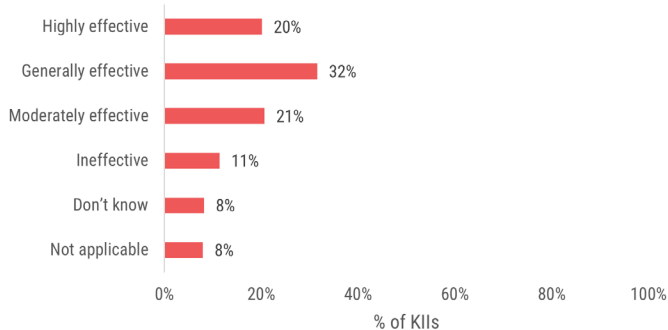
### 3.4 – Perceptions on communication

Respondents were asked to evaluate the overall effectiveness of communication between humanitarian coordination bodies and their local administrations regarding winterisation activities.

- **Highly effective:** 20% of respondents reported that communication was clear, consistent, and timely.
- **Generally effective:** 32% noted that communication was mostly clear and useful, though occasional delays or gaps were observed.
- **Moderately effective:** 21% described communication as somewhat helpful but highlighted issues with inconsistency or delays.

- **Ineffective:** 11% indicated that communication was unclear, insufficient, or rarely timely.
- **Don't know:** 8% were unsure about the effectiveness of communication.

Perceptions on effectiveness of communication



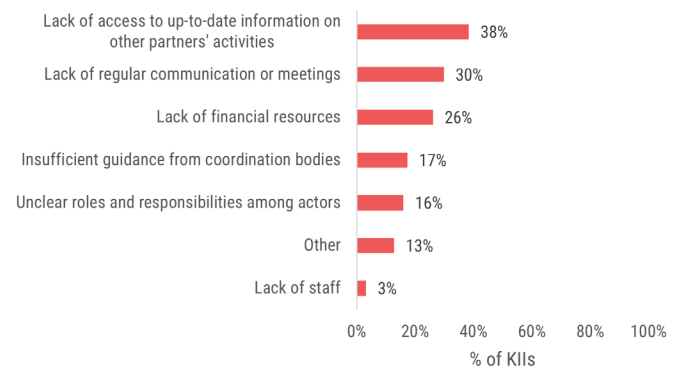
Open-ended responses highlighted some gaps in communication between humanitarian coordination bodies and local administrations regarding winterisation activities were noted. A few respondents reported limited engagement or a lack of communication, occasionally linked to the absence of designated staff or established mechanisms for cooperation. Some inefficiencies, such as duplication of efforts, changes in agreed procedures, or delays in updates and assistance implementation (e.g., cash programs), were mentioned. In some cases, communication was described as situational or inconsistent, with initial information-gathering not always followed by updates or outcomes. Funding challenges for co-financed projects and concerns about transparency in aid distribution were also raised by some respondents.

### 3.5 – Identified challenges in coordinating winterization activities

Respondents highlighted a range of challenges faced by local administrations in coordinating winterisation activities with humanitarian partners. Lack of regular communication or meetings was cited by 29.87% of respondents, while 16% noted unclear roles and responsibilities among actors as a barrier to effective coordination. Insufficient guidance from coordination bodies was mentioned by 17% of respondents, and 38% reported a lack of access to up-to-date information on other partners' activities. Additionally, 26% identified a lack of financial resources, and 15% pointed to a lack of staff as key challenges. Inefficient or difficult internal coordination was reported by 3%, and 13% mentioned other challenges.

Respondents noted that direct communication with humanitarian organizations could be strengthened to better address community needs.

Main reported challenges in coordinating winterization activities with humanitarian partners



Some mentioned challenges related to data-sharing, such as limited information about recipients of aid, which occasionally led to overlapping or unequal distribution. A lack of a joint action plan for the year was mentioned as a factor affecting preparedness. Other feedback included the need for clearer information about available programs and more opportunities to connect with new partners.

### 3.6 Lessons learned

The survey concluded with an open-ended question inviting hromada respondents to share lessons learned from coordinating this winterisation response and their insights on how to enhance future efforts. Their responses highlighted several lessons and recommendations for improving the coordination and delivery of winterisation assistance from local authorities' perspective:

- **Early and proactive planning:** Many respondents emphasized the importance of starting winter preparation efforts earlier, ideally during the summer months, to address logistical challenges and ensure timely assistance.
- **Enhanced communication and coordination:** Improved communication between local authorities, humanitarian organizations, and donors was a recurring theme. This includes regular meetings, clear planning, and better dissemination of information about available assistance programs and partnerships.
- **Targeted support for vulnerable groups:** Respondents stressed the need to expand assistance to cover additional vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Detailed beneficiary lists and continuous monitoring of needs were suggested as critical tools.
- **Leveraging partnerships:** Successful collaboration with charitable organizations, NGOs, and local businesses was highlighted as a key enabler for effective

assistance delivery. However, many communities expressed the need for stronger, more systematic partnerships and direct cooperation between international organizations and local authorities.

- **Resource mobilization and grants:** Several communities noted their reliance on grant applications and partnerships to secure funding for essential resources like fuel, heating equipment, and infrastructure repairs.
- **Addressing challenges in trust and registration:** Some communities reported issues of distrust among residents towards humanitarian organizations due to complex registration processes and concerns about data privacy. Simplified registration systems and improved transparency were recommended.
- **Adaptability and innovation:** Communities with established coordination mechanisms highlighted the value of adaptive strategies, such as using alternative energy sources and integrating social services into preparation efforts, to enhance resilience.
- **Focus on small and remote communities:** Many responses emphasized the need to prioritize small and de-occupied communities hosting large numbers of IDPs, as they often receive less attention from humanitarian partners.
- **Consistent engagement:** The importance of maintaining regular and meaningful engagement with partners throughout the year was underscored, ensuring that assistance aligns with evolving community needs.
- **Capacity building and training:** Local administrations suggested the need for additional training and support to strengthen their capacity in planning and executing winterisation responses effectively.

## CONCLUSION

This assessment provides an initial overview of the successes, challenges, and gaps encountered in delivering SNFI winterization assistance, focusing on the perspective of local authorities during the early stages of winter. While certain aspects of assistance were deemed adequate by many respondents, unmet needs were identified, particularly in heating, insulation, and targeted support for vulnerable groups such as the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Operational challenges, including access constraints, transportation issues, and staffing shortages, also emerged as key factors influencing the effectiveness of the response. The findings underscore the importance of fostering stronger engagement between humanitarian actors and local administrations, particularly in enhancing coordination and information sharing.

It is important to note that this assessment captures only the early phase of winter and focuses predominantly on the perspectives of local authorities, offering a partial view of the broader situation. To address these limitations and provide a more comprehensive understanding, a follow-up phase will explore the experiences of individuals receiving SNFI winter assistance, building on these findings to inform and improve future responses.

## USEFUL LINKS:

1. [Winter Response Plan, October 2024 - March 2025](#)
2. [Lessons Learned For Winterization 2023-24](#)
3. [Winterization Recommendations 2024-2025](#)