

## Annex 4: Evaluation Theory of Change

### Key learning from the Evaluation Theory of Change

#### Overview of the Evaluation Theory of Change (Figure 1 below)

In line with the Evaluation ToR, a theory-based approach to the evaluation<sup>1</sup> using a *Theory of Change* (ToC) was used to guide and inform the evaluative framework for analysis, findings, conclusions and recommendations. In the absence of a pre-existing country strategy ToC, the Evaluation Team worked with the CO (through a participatory workshop) to design a “retrospective” Evaluation ToC. This is presented below in the form of a visual (Figure 1) and narrative in table format (Table 1). This Evaluation ToC helps UNHCR address a number of key strategic questions (see below), focusing on the most recent of the strategic shifts made by the CO in the 2021-22 Transition Strategy, and was hence relevant to the country strategy/portfolio as of October 2021.<sup>2</sup>

**UNHCR Sudan** planned to make progress towards its vision that “*Refugees, IDPs, returnees, and stateless persons are protected, have safe access to essential services alongside hosting communities, contribute to sustainable peace, and progressively attain durable solutions*”, thereby contributing to national, regional and global policy goals and commitments, BY:

1. Employing four complementary pathways to change and related approaches, focused on (1) **Protection + essential humanitarian support** (2) **emergency response/ preparedness** (3) **Durable Solutions** and (4) **Catalysing development-oriented responses**<sup>3</sup>
2. Approaching the needs of its four main categories of People of Concern (POCs) in an increasingly holistic way, including through increasingly integrated area-based approaches, AND
3. Working effectively through multi-sectoral partnerships to catalyse the contribution of other actors and using its unique comparative advantage.....

**Key learning from the Evaluation ToC is highlighted below in Table 1 (Column 2). Highlights of the key reflections to feed into the ToC to be developed for the MYSP (2023 onwards) include the following:**

1. The ToC needs to be underpinned by a clearer context/ problem analysis (using whatever format is prescribed by UNHCR);
2. The ToC needs to clearly align with the Vision and Strategic Objectives for the MYSP, and there is a need to more systematically assess progress towards vision (or impact) level change, to which UNHCR will contribute together with other actors;
3. UNHCR Sudan will also benefit from a strengthened approach to assess outcome level change achieved (e.g. Strategic Objective level). This can build on the RBM system e.g. using outcome mapping or outcome harvesting techniques as part of the recommended strengthening of the MEL system. This can help capture unanticipated outcomes (both positive and negative).
4. Interlinkages between the different Strategic Objectives (e.g. between SO3 Solutions and SO 4 development responses) need to be more clearly identified and synergies maximised, to prevent parallel and potentially duplicative streams of efforts.
5. There is a to build in cross-cutting approaches (i) UNHCR leadership approaches and (ii) partnerships and working to UNHCR’s comparative advantage.
6. There are a range of other important cross-cutting approaches which need to be employed, including AGD, conflict and climate sensitivity.

<sup>1</sup> This is a structured approach to evaluation using a Theory of Change to explain how a strategy/ intervention is expected to produce results.

<sup>2</sup> The evolution of strategic framework which underpinned the previous strategy phases (as set out in Section 2 of the Documentation Review) is contained in the presentation for the participatory ToC workshop conducted with UNHCR Sudan country team (XX)

<sup>3</sup> The Evaluation ToC drafted for the workshop focused on the four pillars of the UNHCR RBM framework (protection, assistance, empowerment and solutions). During the course of the evaluation, it became clear that the Evaluation ToC should rather focus on the 4 Strategic Objectives of the Transition Strategy. It has hence been updated accordingly (See ToC Visual below).

# UNHCR Sudan – Evaluation ToC (Revised)

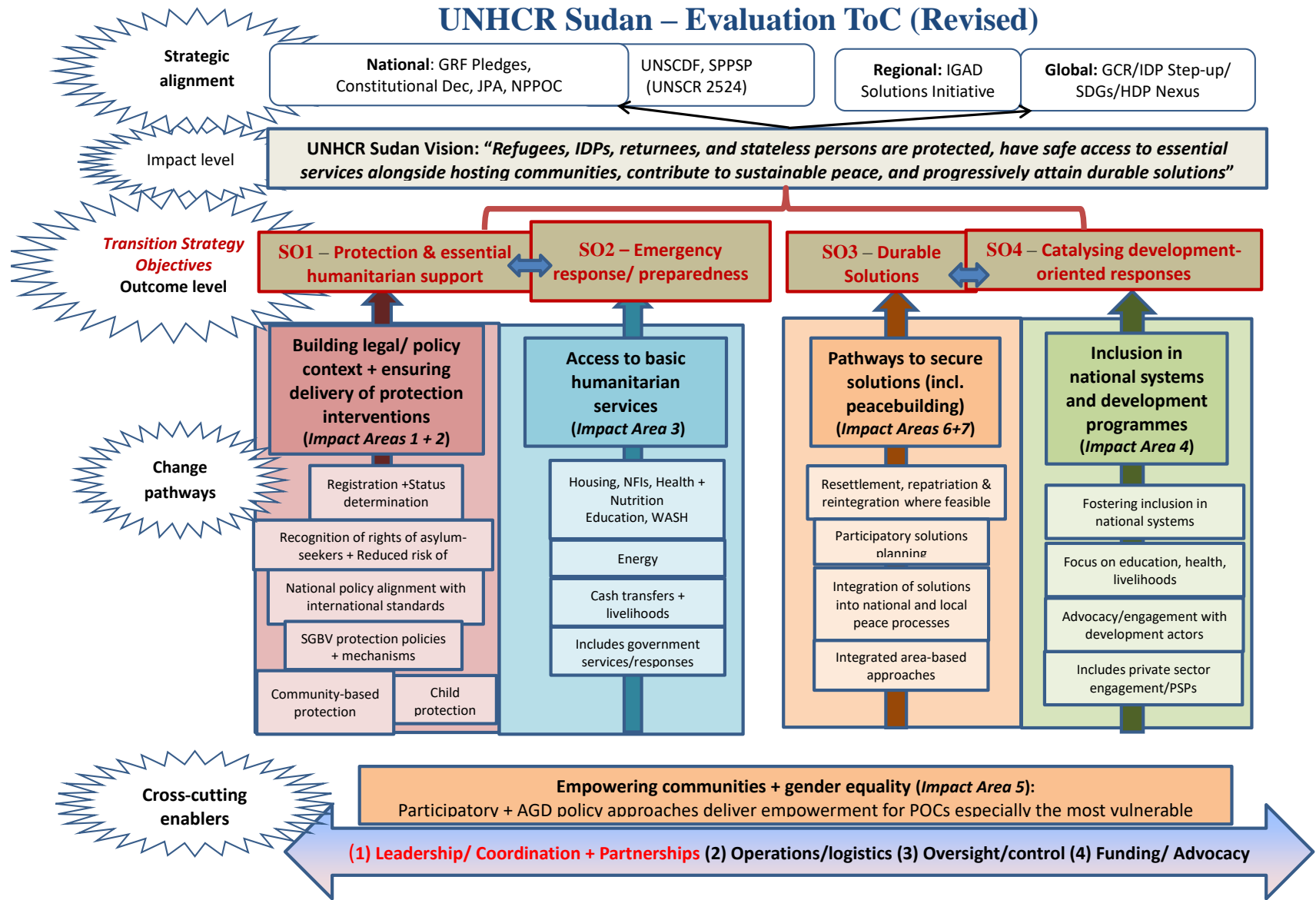


Table 1: Key learning from the Evaluation ToC and Reflections to feed into the ToC for the MYSP (2023 onwards)

| QUESTIONS FOR THE EVALUATION FROM THE TOC  | LEARNING FROM THE EVALUATION THEORY OF CHANGE  | REFLECTIONS TO FEED INTO THE MYSP THEORY OF CHANGE (TO BE DEVELOPED FOR 2023 ONWARDS) <sup>4</sup>  |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Has the context been well-considered</b>  | UNHCR Sudan has implicit context analysis set out in various policy documents, but not coherently pulled together or systematically/ regularly updated. Contextual understanding needs to be deepened and conflict sensitivity needs to be more systematic.  | The ToC needs to be underpinned by a clear context/ problem analysis (using format as set by UNHCR for the MYSP) – to be regularly updated as part of regular review/ updates to the ToC  |
| <b>What contribution to the overall vision/goals and policy objectives has been made?</b>  | UNHCR has contributed to a degree of /partial progress towards the different components of its vision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>POCs protected:</b> partial, many gaps and concerns</li> <li>– <b>Safe access to services alongside HCs:</b> some progress</li> <li>– <b>POCs contribute to sustainable peace:</b> embryonic, working with others</li> <li>– <b>POCs progressively attain durable solutions:</b> at an early stage</li> </ul>   | Reflect on and if necessary revise the vision statement (e.g. to include the importance of integrated nationally-led frameworks and inclusion in national systems).<br>Consider building a framework/process for tracking these strategic changes at the vision (Impact) level, and UNHCR contribution (e.g. through identifying impact indicators and conducting periodic Impact Assessments – note that this could in due course be linked to the wider UN SDCF).               |
| <b>Outcome level change</b><br><b>Have planned changes been achieved?</b><br><b>Have there been any unexpected outcomes?</b><br><b>Is it clear what UNHCR has contributed and what has been contributed by others?</b> | These questions are the focus of <b>Section 5 on Effectiveness</b> , which considers progress against the 4 SOs<br>At <b>outcome level</b> , some progress has been made against each of the SOs, but with particular challenges in respect of SO 1 (protection) and SO 2 (emergency response/preparedness).<br><b>Unexpected outcomes</b> (beneficial ones) include the extent of GoS progress on policy coherence (up to October 2021) e.g. the 2021 National Vision (partially UNHCR supported),<br><b>Unexpected outcomes</b> (more negative) include the extent to which donor relations put under strain by the UNHCR response to the crisis in the east (efforts underway to address)<br><b>Lesson learned:</b> <i>importance of assessing outcomes including policy coherence and political will on the part of GoS; also building/sustaining partnerships with donors (and other partners) as an outcome level achievement</i><br><b>Contribution by others:</b> the RBM does not currently capture this, although enhancements being made should better capture contributions by partners to different Outcomes (at Output level). | Consider broadening the conception of the outcomes which the country strategy is seeking to achieve – as well as setting up ways to measure progress towards these - for example to reflect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy leadership and coherence on the part of the GoS (Whole of Government approach)</li> <li>• Effectiveness of different types of partnerships in delivering desired outcomes</li> <li>• Contribution analysis (UNHCR/others)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Are strategic connections and synergies between the 4 different Causal Pathways being made adequately? (both internally and externally)</b>   | The policy framework across the 4 SOs in the Transition Strategy guided by global and regional policies/strategies is not yet integrated at the national level.<br>There are important interlinkages between different policy objectives (e.g. between SO3 and SO4), but these are not yet formalised/ synergies fully realised.<br>GoS was moving ahead with a more integrated policy framework, prior to Oct 21 coup.  | Find a way to more clearly show and also operationalise the inter-linkages between Strategic Objectives and the related pathways to change – for example between Solutions (SO3) and Catalysing development/ inclusion (SO4) (if the same SO structure is maintained).  |

<sup>4</sup> The extent to which, and way in which, these suggestions can be followed for the MYSP ToC will depend on the exact format for future Theories of Change to be adopted by UNHCR. These suggestions are hence provided as a guide only.

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>How do these 4 Causal Pathways (Impact Areas) link to the 3 Strategic Objectives in the Transition Strategy?</b> | Lesson learned: Causal Pathway 3 (as per the RBM model) focused on <b>Empowerment</b> is not formalised in the strategic objectives of the Transition Strategy. The evaluation found that the <i>Empowerment</i> is not an explicit focus in the UNHCR Sudan approach and the CO is more clearly using the framework of the 4 x Transition Strategy SOs. The evaluation team has hence the adjusted the Evaluation ToC to more clearly focus on the 4 SOs within the Transition Strategy (2021-22)  | The 4 x Transition Strategy Objectives provide a sound framework to guide the MYSP going forward. The proposal to add to these as presented to the October 2021 Senior Management Retreat (e.g. to add a focus on UNHCR leadership and partnerships) is supported by the CSE findings and conclusions.                    |
| <b>In practice, does each of the Causal Pathways have clear intervention logic?</b>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protection &amp; essential humanitarian support: an overarching framework to guide UNHCR's protection approach was not apparent.</li> <li>Emergency responses: there is a clear model for UNHCR engagement globally, but in practice, there has been a tendency to be reactive/more of a crisis management approach.</li> <li>Durable Solutions: this has a clear strategy in theory, but not yet operationalised, and needs to be better tailored to local contexts.</li> <li>Catalysing Development: this has been underpinned by an emerging/ embryonic engagement strategy.</li> </ul> | It will be important to update the intervention/ delivery narrative around each of the 4 x SOs (HOW CHANGE IS ACHIEVED) reflecting learning from implementation to date as well as evaluation findings.   |
| <b>Is there a clear problem identification/ analysis for the different pathways to change?</b>                      | A short problem analysis is built into the Transition Strategy (i.e. for each of the 4 x SOs).  | A more explicit /fuller problem analysis can be developed for each of the Strategic Objectives of the new MYSP  |
| <b>How has change been achieved?</b><br><br><b>What have the barriers to change been?</b>                           | Change has been achieved through a combination of methods: direct implementation as well as delivery partnerships, influencing.<br><b>Lesson learned:</b> <i>More effective advocacy and influencing is needed, and ongoing efforts to leverage the role ad contribution of others.</i><br>Barriers have included: changes in the political context; weaknesses in context understanding; not always having skilled staffing in the right place at the right time   | The MYSP ToC can helpfully set out clearly for each of the strategic objectives what the areas for direct implementation are, and what is to be achieved through delivery partnerships – as well as anticipated barriers, and how these will be overcome.<br>A stronger focus on advocacy and influencing is recommended. |
| <b>Are these the right pathways to focus on going forward?</b>  | Basing the ToC around the 4 x strategic objectives works well, provided that the <b>interlinkages and synergies are clear and operationalised, and that the four pathways are not approached in silos.</b>  | It will be important to align with the planned expanded vision/objectives (as presented to the October SMR)...e.g. to add a <b>cross-cutting objective on leadership and partnerships</b> (this fits with the cross-cutting arrow on the Evaluation ToC diagram) (in BLUE).   |
| <b>Were other key actors adequately identified?</b>   | Multiple forms partnerships are in operation. The role of different actors is mapped out in the Transition Strategy under each objective. In most cases all the key actors are identified and were engaged, although more systematic and consistent engagement with different categories of <b>Local and National Actors</b> (LNAs) will be beneficial, including local civil society, AGD groups etc., as well as expanded engagement with <b>regional actors</b> . Another important lesson has been the key role of <b>donor partnerships</b>  | Consolidate the mapping of key partners and partnerships for each of the main SOs/ causal pathways.<br>Give enhanced priority to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with Local and National Actors</li> <li>Engagement with regional actors</li> <li>Donor partnerships</li> </ul>                        |
| <b>Was the role that other actors needed to play and work to catalyse change identified?</b>                        | To a certain extent yes (in the Transition Strategy) – although this analysis can be deepened.  | Identify the specific contributions that need to be made by different actors – so progress on this can be monitored.  |
| <b>Was UNHCR strategic advantage clearly and correctly identified?</b>  | See Summary Table in the Partnerships Assessment. This was not clearly enough identified e.g. in the Transition Strategy. Across the board, more can be done to sharpen UNHCR comparative advantage, with specific reference to protection work.  | Build a strong/clear assessment of, and plan to deploy, UNHCR comparative advantage in the forthcoming MYSP ToC   |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Were the right assumptions made? Were there any missing assumptions?</b></p>  | <p>Assumptions correctly identified (at the ToC workshop): Assumption that government may not understand its protection obligations adequately; Funding environment will be challenging but government will provide and/or secure at least some funding to support service deliver; Importance of addressing diversity; Importance of capacity of government, which is currently weak.</p> <p>At the macro-level, some of the most important <u>missing assumptions</u> related to political risks (e.g. a potential loss of political stability/the transition trajectory. Another important assumption could be that UNHCR is able to get the right staff to the right place at the right time (which proved challenging).</p>  | <p>It will be important to conduct an exercise to systematically identify the key <u>assumptions</u> underpinning the ToC at different levels/ in respect of the change pathways (this can draw on the assumptions identified in the RBM process). Note that there can be different types of assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contextual: conditions that need to be in place to make the theory work (enablers) or may create obstacles</li> <li>Causal: logic underpinning causal links (A leads to B...)</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Were the key risks relating to each Pathway to Change identified?</b></p>   | <p>There was a good general assessment of the risks which could affect the delivery of the different change pathways/objectives at the ToC workshop – but it is less evident that delivery risks were adequately anticipated and addressed in practice, particularly under SO2 (Emergency Responses)</p>  | <p>It will be important to systematically identify all the main <u>risks</u> associated with the ToC at different levels/ in respect of the change pathways (this can draw on the assumptions identified in the RBM process).</p>   |
| <p><b>Were the key cross-cutting risks identified?</b></p>  | <p>Again, the cross-cutting risks identified at the ToC workshop proved to be pertinent,<sup>5</sup> but it is not evident all of these risks were being identified in the course of UNHCR's work and managed systematically and strategically.</p>   | <p>The analysis of cross-cutting risks pulled together at the Evaluation ToC workshop can serve as a foundation to build on for the MYSP ToC.</p>   |
| <p><b>Were cross-cutting approaches adopted?</b></p> <p><b>Were cross-cutting issues adequately identified and addressed?</b></p> | <p>The four cross-cutting approaches/enablers generally used by UNHCR are identified in the underpinning BLUE arrow in Figure 1, i.e. (1) Coordination and Partnerships, (2) Operations/logistics; (3) Oversight/ control and (4) Funding/ advocacy.</p> <p>Other forms of cross-cutting approaches not explicit within UNHCR Sudan's current ToC approach include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Gender-sensitivity:</b> The AGD policy is implemented, but with some gaps and weaknesses (See <b>Section 5</b> of the CSE report). The AGD policy does not yet appear to be consistently applied as a cross-cutting approach.</li> <li><b>Conflict-sensitivity:</b> this is not systematically applied –an important lesson learned (see <b>Section 4</b> of the CSE report)</li> <li><b>Climate-sensitivity:</b> There is some longer-term adaptation measures (fuel and forestry projects etc.), but not yet systematic. Inadequate planning and preparedness for predictable climate-related emergencies(e.g. flooding) (there is brief analysis of this in Section 5 of the CSE in the sub-section looking at <b>Sustainability</b>)</li> </ul> | <p>Depending on the model which is recommended for the MYSP ToC, <b>UNHCR Sudan can helpfully strengthen its focus on cross-cutting approaches and enablers such as AGD-sensitivity, conflict- and climate-sensitivity, in line with emerging best practice within the UN system.</b></p> <p>Given the major importance of gender dynamics/gender equality approaches, ensure that gender-sensitivity is not subsumed within the AGD policy and approach to the extent that it loses visibility and priority.</p>                             |

<sup>5</sup> An outline of the specific risks identified can be found in the narrative table which accompanied the first version of the Evaluation ToC, as presented in Annex 3 of the CSE Inception Report.