

COUNTRY CHAPTER

ESTONIA



> At a Glance

Country Planned Response (January 2025 - December 2026)



37,000

refugee population planned for assistance



11.7M

total financial requirements in USD



8

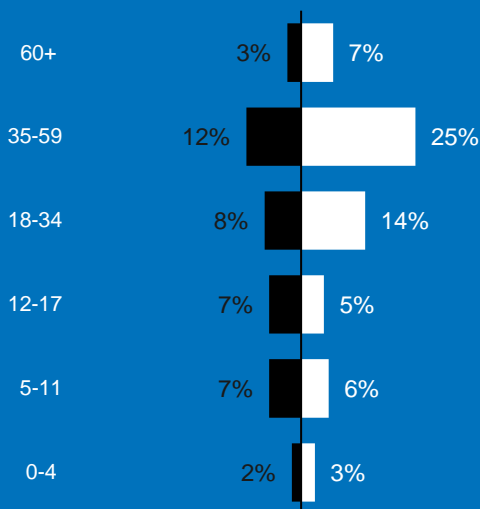
RRP partners

Population planning figures

CURRENT POPULATION AS OF DECEMBER 2024	POPULATION PLANNED FOR ASSISTANCE	
	YEAR 1	YEAR 2
Refugee Population	37,000	37,000

Age and gender breakdown

■ Male ■ Female



5%

People with disabilities



60%

Women and girls



40%

Men and boys



31%

Children

Part 1: Current Situation

Situation Overview

Since February 2022, Estonia has received a relatively high number of refugees from Ukraine with some 55,000 registered for temporary protection with municipalities throughout the country. While some have moved on, there are currently almost 35,000 of these people with valid temporary protection status. In addition, there are more than 6,000 subsidiary protection holders from Ukraine. Together, these numbers represent about 3 per cent of the entire population.

In the Ukraine refugee response, the Government of Estonia aims to mainstream refugees from Ukraine into the national social support and protection framework in Estonia, ensuring that refugees are provided with the appropriate conditions to achieve self-sufficiency and independence, and creating conditions for refugees to integrate into Estonian society while maintaining ties with the Ukrainian language and culture.

While there is a well-coordinated response from Government and civil society, refugees are still encountering difficulties in fully supporting themselves and their families. To address these challenges, RRP partners in Estonia will continue their efforts through 2025-2026, working alongside Government initiatives to support refugees from Ukraine. Given the small number of partners operating in Estonia, there are no specific sectors established. Therefore, key activities will be structured around the four strategic objectives of this plan.

Country Risks and Needs

In 2024, UNHCR conducted a Socio-Economic Insights Survey and led workshops with refugees, NGO and Government partners to assess refugees' key needs in Estonia, revealing ongoing challenges across protection, education, livelihood and healthcare.

Data shows that 93 per cent of refugees from Ukraine feel safe and almost 77 per cent have good relations with the host community in Estonia. Despite that, 39 per cent of households reported that they have at some point experienced hostile behaviour or attitudes from the local population, including verbal aggression and discrimination, particularly in employment and housing. Community fatigue and media coverage contribute to negative stereotypes, which increase tensions between locals and refugees.

Amid the prolonged war, four-fifths of refugees from Ukraine consider staying in Estonia for the next 12 months.⁶³ They put more efforts into learning Estonian (almost 58 per cent have attended Estonian language courses) and are looking for stable and decent employment.

⁶³ SEIS 2024

The majority of school-age refugees from Ukraine, around 9,000, go to Estonian schools.⁶⁴ Education, however, poses challenges for Ukrainian children, many of whom struggle with limited proficiency in Estonian. Older students face pressure to learn the language quickly to continue their studies. Some students are attending school both in Estonia and online in Ukraine, adding to their stress, while incidents of bullying further impact their experience. Education for children is a priority for many families, with more than 10 per cent identifying it as a key need.

Language barriers restrict employment opportunities, confining many refugees to low-skilled roles. Fear of losing current jobs discourages upskilling efforts, and available language courses are often scarce or have long wait times. Refugees, particularly single parents, struggle to attend these courses due to work and childcare responsibilities, while vulnerable groups face additional barriers in accessing online resources. Employment and livelihoods support is a priority for 32.3 per cent of households, while 33 per cent emphasize the need for language courses. Although nearly all refugees have a health insurance (91 per cent), healthcare access remains a critical need with more than one in ten refugees facing constraints in accessing care (12 per cent).⁶⁵ Registration requirements sometimes create barriers. In addition, Estonia's healthcare system faces general issues like long waiting times and limited specialized services. Stigma around mental health also deters many refugees from seeking necessary psychosocial support, though mental health needs are substantial. Overall, 21.7 per cent of refugee households highlight healthcare access as a priority, with 6.5 per cent seeking psychosocial support.

Part 2: Country Response and Solutions Strategy

Strategic Objectives and Cross-Sectoral Responses

Given the small number of partners operating in Estonia, specific sectors are not established. Therefore, the collective cross sectoral response of RRP partner activities will be structured around the four strategic objectives as outlined below and aligned with government priorities. Further details of the specific activities which will be undertaken by each partner are provided in the partner activities table.

Strategic Objective 1: Support Estonia to ensure that refugees have continued access to protection, legal status, and rights, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups, and including age and gender considerations.

In 2025 and 2026, UNHCR and partners in Estonia will conduct a range of protection related activities to support refugees. These will include protection monitoring to identify risks and challenges faced by refugees, alongside advocacy efforts with Government authorities to address

⁶⁴ According to data shared by the Ministry of Education of Estonia in September 2024, a total of 9,020 school-age refugees from Ukraine are registered in the Estonian Education Information System.

⁶⁵ SEIS 2024

systemic issues. By addressing systemic issues identified through protection monitoring and advocacy, partners aim to enhance Estonia's refugee response system, making it more inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of refugees. Community empowerment initiatives will focus on strengthening refugee resilience, while various counselling services will provide consultations and information on protection status, citizenship, work permits, health insurance and children's rights.

Additionally, partners will provide basic needs services, temporary accommodation and multi-purpose cash assistance for the most vulnerable refugees and those transiting through Estonia who are not applying for temporary protection in the country. These efforts will ensure that refugees with specific needs are referred to appropriate services and informed about available resources and the conditions for obtaining and extending Temporary Protection. Legal counselling and information provision will facilitate effective access to legal status, protection and rights for refugees.

Strategic Objective 2: Support Estonia in their efforts to include refugees in national systems – decent work, social protection, health, education, child protection services – with a particular focus on outreach and inclusion of vulnerable groups and including, age gender and disability considerations.

Partners in Estonia will implement activities to promote refugee inclusion in national systems in line with UNHCR's Sustainable Response Strategy for refugee inclusion. These efforts will support labour market integration by providing legal assistance and consultations on work permits, contracts, health insurance and employment opportunities, along with information on the risks of labour exploitation, human trafficking and discrimination. Training programmes will focus on enhancing employability and self-reliance through job-related and digital skills training, language courses and entrepreneurship support for various age groups. To improve healthcare access, partners will provide information on the Estonian healthcare system and implement targeted public health interventions to facilitate refugees' access to necessary care. Community-building events and outreach activities will foster inclusion within host communities and raise awareness among refugees about their rights and available services. Child protection will be prioritized through programmes to prevent violence, maintain safe environments for children and raise awareness of children's rights. Protection monitoring will assess inclusion processes, while advocacy with relevant authorities will address systemic issues that hinder inclusion.

Strategic Objective 3: Strengthen social cohesion between refugee communities and their hosts in Estonia.

UNHCR and partners in Estonia will implement activities to strengthen social cohesion between refugees and host communities. Efforts will focus on enhancing interaction, particularly among young refugees, through civic engagement initiatives involving Estonian youth. These programmes will create opportunities for mutual learning and perspective exchanges to build stronger connections.

Cultural adaptation and integration programmes will support refugee inclusion, with activities aimed at refugee children and youth. Focused inclusion activities with an MHPSS component will address

emotional well-being to facilitate smoother integration of vulnerable groups of refugees, in cooperation with grassroots partners and municipalities.

Youth camps and cultural exchange events will bring together refugee and host community youth, fostering trust through shared experiences. Training programmes for Estonian education workers will equip teachers with materials and knowledge to address refugee-related topics, promoting understanding within schools. Upskilling programmes will enhance human capital development in partnership with Estonian employers, alongside educational trainings, seminars and workshops to support both native and host-country language learning for adults.

These efforts aim to promote social cohesion by building stronger connections between refugee and host communities, and fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and acceptance coexistence.

Strategic Objective 4: Advance the localization of the response in Estonia, by supporting national and local civil society, municipalities and local authorities, and coordination structures, as well as sharing and building capacities and supporting sustainable programming.

The RRP for the Ukraine situation aims to foster a whole-of-society, inter-agency approach to ensure an effective response. In Estonia, UNHCR and partners will coordinate activities that complement Government efforts, emphasizing localization through capacity-building among national and local actors.

UNHCR will empower partners to lead assistance delivery while providing capacity-building support to enhance their ability to respond to the needs of refugees. Partners will work to strengthen legal protection mechanisms, ensuring refugees have access to their rights and available services, while promoting knowledge-sharing with Government authorities to address protection gaps. Additionally, protection monitoring and evidence-based advocacy will be employed to improve access to and quality of services for refugees. Localization efforts will facilitate the economic integration of refugees and support the adaptation of refugee children to the Estonian school system.

By engaging national and local actors through capacity-building activities and consultations, UNHCR and partners aim to advance localization, creating a more sustainable and effective response to the challenges faced by refugees in Estonia.

Cross-Cutting Priorities of the RRP

- Accountability to Affected Populations
- Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD)
- Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)
- One-Refugee Approach
- Sustainability
- Government Ownership

Read more in the Regional Overview p.21

Partnership and Coordination

In Estonia, the Government's aim has been to enable equal access to standard state services for refugees from Ukrainian as for Estonian residents. The RRP has been developed by partners in coordination with the Estonian Government, complementing these services.

Coordination and information-sharing mechanisms developed for the refugee crisis have also been integrated into standard coordination and information sharing practices between Ministries.

NGOs Roundtable of Refugee Organizations, led by the Estonian Refugee Council, will continue to ensure coordination and work towards aligning advocacy messaging among NGOs. In Tallinn, where the majority of refugees are residing, the Tallinn Migration Centre also holds regular meetings between NGOs, the Police and Border Guard Board and other relevant authorities. Given the small number of partners operating in Estonia, one RRP coordination body will continue to coordinate and advance RRP objectives in lieu of establishing specific sector coordination groups. Co-chaired by UNHCR and the Estonian Refugee Council, the coordination body also includes a broad range of representatives of NGOs, relevant state authorities, including the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Social Affairs and the Social Insurance Board.

Through this mechanism, partners' resource mobilisation activities will be supported using information management tools to strengthen visibility and donor engagement on behalf of RRP partners, including refugee-led organizations. UNHCR will also facilitate government and civil society interactions and exchanges as needed on specific topics such as conducting needs assessments and supporting planning activities.

Country Coordination Structure



Part 3: Inter-Agency Financial Requirements

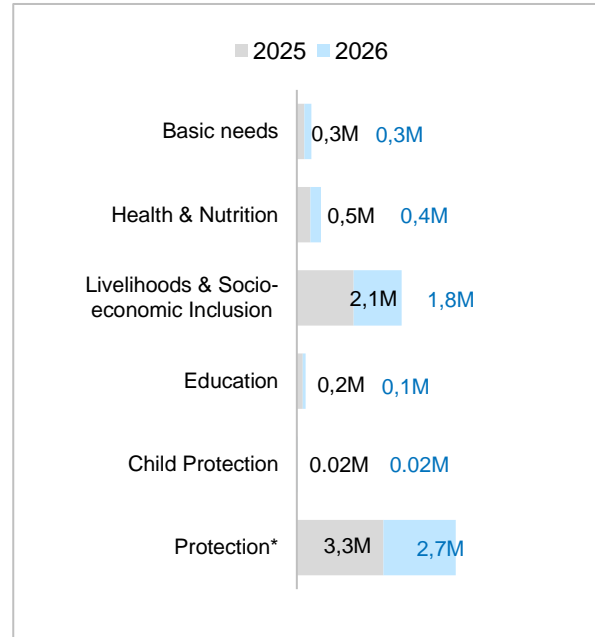
Budget summary by type at country level

PARTNER TYPE	FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS IN USD		
	2025	2026	TOTAL
UN agencies	4,368,185	3,903,813	8,271,998
National NGOs	487,051	160,000	647,051
Refugee-led organizations*	80,000	80,000	160,000
Woman-led organizations*	160,000	160,000	320,000
International NGOs	1,575,721	1,575,721	2,798,518
TOTAL	6,430,957	5,286,610	11,717,567

* One organization can be classified in multiple sub-categories (women-led, refugee-led, faith-based, etc.), the individual sub-categories can therefore not be added to arrive at the total.

Notes: This list only includes appealing organizations under the RRP, many of which also collaborate with implementing partners additional to those listed here.

Budget summary by sector at country level








* Includes Child Protection

Budget summary by partner at the country level

Partner	Year	Protection (excluding CP & GBV)	Child Protection (CP)	Gender-Based Violence (GBV)	Education	Livelihoods & Economic Inclusion	Health & Nutrition	Basic Needs	Total in US\$	TOTAL
UN Agencies										
UN International Organization for Migration	2025	504,477	-	-	-	733,252	269,837	287,434	1,795,000	3,630,000
	2026	572,707	-	-	-	730,493	268,822	262,978	1,835,000	
UN World Health Organization	2025	-	-	-	-	-	100,000	-	100,000	200,000
	2026	-	-	-	-	-	100,000	-	100,000	
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	2025	1,585,177	-	-	-	888,008	-	-	2,473,185	4,441,998
	2026	1,261,902	-	-	-	706,911	-	-	1,968,813	
National NGOs										
Estonia Human Rights Centre	2025	22,219	-	-	62,494	-	-	-	84,713	84,713
	2026	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
NGO Mondo	2025	-	-	-	55,000	61,000	126,337	-	242,337	242,337
	2026	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
SA Ukraina sõjapõgenike psühhosotsiaals e kriisiabi fond	2025	-	-	-	80,000	-	-	-	80,000	160,000
	2026	-	-	-	80,000	-	-	-	80,000	
Ukrainian Center	2025	20,000	15,000	-	25,000	-	20,000	-	80,000	160,000
	2026	20,000	15,000	-	25,000	-	20,000	-	80,000	
International NGOs										
e-Governance Academy	2025	47,225	-	-	-	-	-	-	47,225	47,225
	2026	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Estonian Refugee Council	2025	1,068,496	-	-	-	460,000	-	-	1,528,496	2,751,293
	2026	854,797	-	-	-	368,000	-	-	1,222,797	
Total		5,957,000	30,000	-	327,494	3,947,664	904,996	550,412	11,717,566	11,717,566

RRP Monitoring Framework

Sector	Indicator	Target		
		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	
	Protection	# of individuals who have been supported in accessing protection services	18,525	18,030
	Child Protection	# of children provided with child protection services	100	100
	Education	# of children and youth supported with education programming	950	550
	Education	# of education personnel trained or receiving support to better respond to the needs of refugee learners	100	
	Health and Nutrition	# of individuals supported to access health services	15,896	10,896
	Health and Nutrition	# of health care providers trained to provide services to refugees	100	100
	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support	# of individuals participating in MHPSS services and activities	2,500	50
	Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion	# of individuals who benefitted from livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions	4,385	4,253
	Basic Needs	# of individuals who received assistance for basic needs	824	771

Partner Activities in Estonia

Sector	Partner	Activity Short Description	Contact
Basic Needs 	IOM	Facilitating transit for refugees through Estonia to other European countries. Offering temporary accommodation and multi-purpose cash assistance. Supporting government and NGO centres with essentials for refugee services, anticipating increased inflows.	iomtallinn@iom.int
	Education 	Estonian Human Rights Centre	Conducting training sessions for young Ukrainian refugees to enhance understanding of democracy, human rights, and equal treatment. Fostering integration and exchange with Estonian youth.
	NGO Mondo	Training Estonian educators on refugee matters and developing materials. Delivering Global Citizenship Education activities to promote connections between refugees and Estonian students.	meelis@mondo.org.ee
	USF	Providing educational programmes for Ukrainian refugees, including job skills workshops, language courses, and entrepreneurial training using the EntreComp framework to enhance employability and integration.	info@usf.ee
	Ukrainian Center	Offering educational seminars, workshops, and interest-based programmes for children and youth, supporting both native and host country language skills.	tetiana.podolska@ukrainakeskus.ee
Health 	Ukrainian Center	Conducting regular mental health group meetings and individual counselling. Training healthcare providers to deliver refugee-focused services.	tetiana.podolska@ukrainakeskus.ee
	IOM	Facilitating access to health services and medicines for refugees from Ukraine transiting through Estonia who opted not to apply for international or temporary protection and therefore, are excluded from public health assistance. Ensuring access to healthcare services for refugees from Ukraine.	iomtallinn@iom.int
	NGO Mondo	Providing online mental health consultations for Ukrainian refugees, ensuring access to critical support services.	meelis@mondo.org.ee
	WHO	Implementing targeted public health interventions to expand access to primary and mental health services for refugees in Estonia, enhancing coordination, cultural competency, and emergency preparedness across the health system.	kohlerk@who.int
Livelihoods Inclusion 	NGO Mondo	Implementing a Digital Competency Program for Ukrainian refugees and organizing youth camps and cultural exchange events, fostering connections with Estonian youth.	meelis@mondo.org.ee
	IOM	Organizing socio-cultural activities, including seminars, camps, and excursions, for Ukrainian children in Russian-speaking regions, integrating MHPSS components and offering human capital development.	iomtallinn@iom.int
	E-Governance Academy	The DEUCE programme supports digital literacy among Ukrainians in Estonia. Recruiting digital envoys to assist vulnerable individuals and raise awareness among the broader community of Ukrainian refugees.	kristina.mand@ega.ee
	Estonian Refugee Council	Delivering a livelihoods programme offering entrepreneurship support, employability skills development, and employer assistance to integrate refugees into the labour market.	sigrid.solnik@pagulasabi.ee
	UNHCR	Facilitating inclusion and strengthening social cohesion between refugees and the host community through community-based protection and empowerment activities.	swest@unhcr.org
Protection 	Estonian Human Rights Centre	Providing legal assistance to Ukrainian refugees on labour contracts and offering guidance on labour exploitation, human trafficking, and workplace discrimination.	joosep.nahkor@humanrights.ee
	Estonian Refugee Council	Implementing a comprehensive protection programme with protection monitoring, advocacy, community empowerment, and various counselling activities.	eero@pagulasabi.ee
	IOM	Conducting vulnerability screenings for refugees in Estonia, offering assistance on services, rights, and risks, and providing legal advice on labour market inclusion and starting businesses.	iomtallinn@iom.int
	Ukrainian Centre	Providing legal assistance on temporary protection, citizenship, work permits, health insurance, housing rights, and refugee matters. Offering labour integration, digital literacy training, and cultural adaptation programmes, along with social events, children's camps, and violence prevention initiatives.	tetiana.podolska@ukrainakeskus.ee

Sector	Partner	Activity Short Description	Contact
	UNHCR	Protection monitoring of refugees and advocacy with authorities to improve access and service quality. Individual counselling and referrals for refugees to relevant services. Training for Ukrainian refugee teachers and dissemination of teaching materials to support refugee-related topics.	swest@unhcr.org
