



Evaluation of UNHCR's Level 3 Regional Refugee Emergency Response to the crisis in Ukraine

EVALUATION REPORT
OCTOBER 2023

Conducted by: Key Aid Consulting

UNHCR Evaluation Office

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Table of Contents

Executive summary	8
List of abbreviations	5
1. Introduction	13
1.1. Purpose and scope of the evaluation	13
1.2. Context overview	16
2. Evaluation design and methodology	22
2.1. Evaluation design	22
2.2. Data collection overview	22
2.3. Limitations	23
3. Design – Relevance	24
3.1. Response relevance with regards to the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of refugees ..25	
3.2. Appropriateness of the targeting, enrolment and referral	29
4. Design – connectedness	31
5. Implementation and results – effectiveness	33
5.1. Meeting objectives	33
5.2. Unintended effects	39
6. Implementation – efficiency	41
6.1. Timeliness of the intervention	41
6.2. Data collection and monitoring systems	46
6.3. Support from RBE and HQ	49
7. Coordination and partnerships	51
7.1. Coordination	51
7.2. Partnerships	56
8. Cross-cutting themes	60
9. Conclusions	65
10. Recommendations	69
11. Bibliography	73
12. Annexes	76
Annex 1: Evaluation matrix	76
Annex 2: Detailed methodology	84
Annex 3: Terms of reference	88
Annex 4: Disaggregation of refugee survey	88

List of abbreviations

AAP	Accountability to Affected People
AGD	Age, Gender and Diversity
CBI	Cash-Based Intervention
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
CO	Country Operation
CRI	Core Relief Item
CWG	Cash Working Group
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DESS	Division of Emergency, Security and Supply
DHR	Division of Human Resources
DIP	Division of International Protection
DRS	Division of Resilience and Solutions
ERG	Evaluation Review Group
ERT	Emergency Response Team
ET	Evaluation Team
EU	European Union
FCM	Feedback and Complaints Mechanism
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSP	Financial Service Provider
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HQ	Headquarters
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IMO	Information Management Officer
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organizations
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IP	Implementing Partner
KII	Key Informant Interview
L3	Level 3
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organization
LOMI	Letter of Mutual Intent
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCO	Multi-Country Office
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MPCA	Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance
MSNA	Multisectoral Needs Assessment
NFI	Non-food Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
OA	Outcomes Area
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OL	Operating Level

OTC	Over-the-Counter
PA	Partnership Agreement
PDM	Post-Distribution Monitoring
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PWSN	Person with Specific Needs
PSP	Payment Service Provider
RAC	Refugee Accommodation Centre
RBE	Regional Bureau for Europe
RCF	Refugee Coordination Forum
RCM	Refugee Coordination Model
RRP	Refugee Response Plan
RSD	Refugee Status Determination
RTR	Real Time Review
SCER	Senior Corporate Emergency Roster
SDP	Statelessness Determination Procedures
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TCN	Third Country Nationals
ToC	Theory of Change
TP	Temporary Protection
TPD	Temporary Protection Directive
TWG	Technical Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNASM	Unaccompanied and Separated Minors
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme

Table of Figures

Figure 1 Geographical scope of the evaluation	15
Figure 2 Number of refugees and asylum seekers in Ukraine neighbouring countries	16
Figure 3: UNHCR response timeline - 2022	19
Figure 4: Financial volume allocated to different outcome areas (US\$ in Millions)	21
Figure 5: Funding requirements against the number of refugees per country.....	28
Figure 6 Refugees reached by UNHCR compared with the number of refugees in need (RRP).....	34
Figure 7 Legal assistance – Refugees reached compared with those targeted by UNHCR	39
Figure 8. Emergency deployments per country in 2022	44
Figure 9: Effectiveness of UNHCR coordination role.....	53
Figure 10: Number and diversity of partners contributing to the RRP in 2022 and 2023	56
Figure 11: UNHCR active partnership agreements in 2022	57
Figure 12: Sources of finance	59
Figure 13 Reported satisfaction with UNHCR's protection mainstreaming	61

Table of Tables

Table 1 Key socioeconomic characteristics of focus countries.....	18
Table 2: Funding level per country for the 2022 Ukraine Response RRP	20
Table 3: Ukraine situation Operating Level budget per Outcome in the five countries (US\$ in Millions)	20
Table 4: Primary data collection overview	23
Table 5: Needs assessments and monitoring activities completed in 2022 by UNHCR or under UNHCR leadership.....	25
Table 6: Design of the MPCA programmes in the five countries	35
Table 7 UNHCR Programmatic response to vulnerable groups (2022)	63

Executive summary

In line with its Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response,¹ the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Evaluation Office commissioned Key Aid Consulting to carry out a **centralized evaluation** of UNHCR Level 3 (L3)² Regional Refugee Response to the crisis in Ukraine. The evaluation is formative and summative, and looks at UNHCR's response outside of Ukraine from March to December 2022 in the five L3 countries: Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

The evaluation is framed by **six evaluation questions**:

- **Relevance:** To what extent are UNHCR's interventions contextually relevant and appropriate to the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of refugees?
- **Connectedness:** How well do UNHCR's interventions build on and strengthen the actions of national governments to ensure the inclusion of Ukrainian refugees?
- **Effectiveness:** To what extent are UNHCR's interventions achieving their objectives?
- **Efficiency:** Are UNHCR interventions delivered in a timely manner, with support from HQ, RBE and an enabling M&E system?
- **Coordination & partnership:** How does UNHCR co-lead effective coordination and broker successful partnerships?
- **Cross-cutting themes:** To what extent do UNHCR interventions mainstream gender, AAP and protection?

The evaluation uses a **mixed-method approach**, relying on both secondary and primary data sources. The evaluation design is **non-experimental** and uses a **case study design**.³ The evaluation team formed their judgment using various sources of primary and secondary data including a document review, 200 key informant interviews with UNHCR staff, implementing partners, government representatives and sector members, 52 focus group discussions, and surveys with Ukrainian refugees⁴ and external stakeholders.⁵

KEY FINDINGS

Response Design

UNHCR placed a strong focus on providing multipurpose cash assistance and protection services, which were relevant and aligned with the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of refugees.

Despite the scale and speed of the crisis, which overwhelmed the capacities of all actors, the scale of UNHCR's response was adapted to the needs, the caseload and refugee-receiving states' capacity.

UNHCR's blanket approach to assistance proved relevant overall and reached those most in need, although less so in Poland where resource constraints led to a "first-come, first-served" approach. The

¹ UNHCR, "Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response," 2023.

² Within UNHCR, Level 3 is the highest-ranking level to characterize a crisis situation.

³ Providing a focused examination of UNHCR interventions in five country offices to identify how interventions were implemented and what causal processes and configurations led to the outcomes.

⁴ The final sample size was 1349.

⁵ The final sample size was n =221 (UNHCR staff 159, Implementing partners 22, Sector members 40).

overall shift from a categorical to a vulnerability-based approach is well aligned with the evolution of the crisis.

Enrolment methods used by UNHCR to provide assistance correspond to the nature and scale of the crisis, but they may exclude those with lower digital literacy behind.

UNHCR engaged extensively with governments to coordinate its response, identify existing services and build on existing social protection schemes. This contributed to the complementarity between government-led and UNHCR-led programming.

Implementation and results

As the largest aid provider in the five countries, UNHCR's response has proven effective in meeting the basic needs of refugees as well as in providing information and Legal Aid/Counselling.

In the five countries, UNHCR had an unprecedented operational budget of US\$ 389.5 million, of which UNHCR spent 93 per cent at the end of 2022, demonstrating its capacity to effectively scale up its interventions. UNHCR supported 41 per cent (817,869) of the 2,000,000 refugees in need in the five countries and provided CBI assistance to 473,325 individuals.

Cash-based interventions were effective overall, although inflation reduced refugees' purchasing power. The transfer value was not adjusted based on beneficiaries' housing and health access, which affected the effectiveness of interventions.

Effective in the first weeks, the distribution of Core Relief Items proved less useful in the second half of 2022 for winterization. Information and Legal Aid/Counselling services were effective and of quality but likely insufficient in relation to needs.

UNHCR's involvement in refugees housing has remained limited despite the needs and UNHCR responsibility, as a last resort provider. The Ukraine Refugee Response trickled down broad positive effects on refugees' rights and connections between local actors and governments. The response led to tensions among refugees as per their arrival dates, and between refugees and host communities, which UNHCR intends to mitigate.

Implementation – Efficiency

UNHCR's interventions were timely given its limited prior operational footprint in the region, but with significant country differences due to necessary corporate level geographical prioritization. The L3 protocols, emergency HR rosters and the centralization of some processes, e.g. the Cash Hub, were overall factors that enabled the timeliness of UNHCR's interventions. The PSP, Supply and Fast Track were as well, although unevenly.

The decision to collect refugees' biometric data by default at the beginning of the response in EU-member states and to maintain the MCO were disablers of the timeliness of UNHCR's interventions. Factors that contributed significantly to UNHCR's timeliness included the digitalization of the response and the capacity of local responders.

UNHCR's data collection efforts were valuable to inform the situation analysis and response design but were not systematically used to make iterative programmatic decisions.

Protection monitoring took place and was used for advocacy. However, it was not sufficiently predictive and used to its full potential. This response was a “whole-of-organization” response with critical inputs from HQ and RBE for strategic orientations, resource mobilization, donor engagement and technical backstopping.

Missions from HQ, the RBE and other regions (to a lesser extent) were critical in the design and implementation of the response, given the gaps in the ERT profile and the difficulties in hiring national staff. However, this led to significant turnover and loss of institutional memory in the COs.

Coordination and partnerships

By leading the design of a \$1.8 billion multi-country Refugee Response Plan in a week, UNHCR demonstrated its capacity and maturity as one of the leading emergency actors and its relevance as the co-lead of the RCM. The RCM provided a relevant and effective structure for the coordination of the response.

UNHCR investments in coordination functions and tools have been insufficient, hampering the effectiveness and perceived neutrality of the coordination function. To scale up its response, UNHCR leveraged its historical partnerships and expanded its partner base, through partnering with INGOs and increasingly partnering with local actors as the response unfolded. UNHCR received an unprecedented amount of private sector donations for the response and was able to rapidly scale up and structure its PSP engagements.

Cross-cutting themes

Overall, UNHCR has been successful at mainstreaming protection with particular efforts on PSEA that were especially relevant in light of the refugees' demographics. UNHCR contributed significantly to the capacity-strengthening of the government and sector members on protection approaches and principles.

Age, gender and diversity were mainstreamed across the response but there were some gaps with regard to participation and inclusion as well as attention to People with Specific Needs. UNHCR deployed significant efforts to set up accessible and comprehensive communication channels as well as complaints and feedback mechanisms. The variety and digitalisation of which created some confusions among refugees.

CONCLUSIONS

The full report includes a detailed narrative for each of the [Conclusions](#) and [Recommendations](#) that are discussed below.

Conclusion 1: UNHCR demonstrated its capacity to deliver and steer a timely, efficient and at scale regional response.

Conclusion 2: UNHCR conducted relevant geographic prioritization. UNHCR could have given stronger priority to protection and housing, and should have invested more in coordination.

Conclusion 3: UNHCR delivered contextually relevant interventions as per refugees' needs and capacities, as well as host governments' capacities and willingness to engage.

Conclusion 4: UNHCR did not sufficiently invest in stakeholder mapping and power analysis to guide its strategic engagement.

Conclusion 5: UNHCR's "no regrets" approach was right and supported by fit-for-purpose L3 protocols, yet this approach materialized differently across areas and countries.

Conclusion 6: Data-related challenges hampered UNHCR's efforts to digitalize its response and the systematic provision by UNHCR of predictable data on displacement and refugees' needs.

Conclusion 7: UNHCR staff's commitment and experience have been pivotal to the success of the response. Yet, the scale of the response highlighted structural vulnerabilities in UNHCR's HR capabilities.

Conclusion 8: Partnerships with the private sector were a key success driver of UNHCR's operation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the findings and conclusions, the evaluation has identified six overarching recommendations. The full report includes a detailed narrative and suggested actions, which accompany the six overarching recommendations highlighted below.

Recommendation 1: UNHCR should further invest in organizational preparedness for interventions in urban environments, working with strong governments and a connected and tech-savvy target population.

- **Suggested action 1.1:** UNHCR should clarify its role and value proposition in housing in urban contexts, as a last resort provider.
- **Suggested action 1.2:** UNHCR should build on the best practices,⁶ opportunities⁷ and challenges⁸ of the Ukraine Regional Refugee Emergency Response in terms of interaction with a connected and tech-savvy target population.
- **Suggested action 1.3:** As part of the minimum preparedness actions of the UNHCR emergency policy, UNHCR should consider systematically conducting a detailed stakeholder mapping.

Recommendation 2: UNHCR should invest more resources into the roll-out and awareness of the RCM.

- **Suggested action 2.1:** UNHCR should invest more into human resources for coordination in refugee settings (especially when not mixed settings).
- **Suggested action 2.2:** UNHCR should invest in internal RCM know-how by producing a standardized corporate-level training for intersector coordinators and a toolkit to support the RCM roll-out.
- **Suggested action 2.3:** UNHCR should further raise awareness on the RCM externally.

Recommendation 3: UNHCR could further develop L3 protocols.

⁶ Examples of best practices include rumor tracing, social media communication on Facebook/Telegram/Viber, dissemination of surveys/monitoring tools via social media

⁷ For this emergency response, social media were means of communication that ensured a timely, cost-efficient and widespread sharing of information.

⁸ Example of challenges include the exclusion of some of the older people and PWD from the social media and their need for more traditional communication channels.

- **Suggested action 3.1:** UNHCR should simplify requirements for partners, both IPs and refugee-led organizations, during the emergency phase.
- **Suggested action 3.2:** UNHCR should ensure that all members of its rosters are aware of this principle and of how it simplifies some processes and requirements.
- **Suggested action 3.3:** UNHCR should clarify how the “no regrets” approach cohabits with existing risk management practices.
- **Suggested action 3.4:** UNHCR should invest in diversifying the profiles in the ERT to include more middle managers and administration staff.

Recommendation 4: UNHCR should develop corporate-level predictable policies towards data and monitoring tools.

- **Suggested action 4.1:** UNHCR should clarify the extent to which biometric data are mandatory during an L3 response.
- **Suggested action 4.2:** UNHCR should strengthen its organization-wide monitoring tool that tracks displacements.
- **Suggested action 4.3:** UNHCR should further strengthen programme monitoring by increasing the level of disaggregation and frequency of reporting.

Recommendation 5: UNHCR should strengthen the linkages between CBI and Protection, by better differentiating cash for protection outcomes and targeting for CBI on the basis of protection-sensitive criteria.

Recommendation 6: UNHCR should leverage its newly established partnerships with private sector actors to support future and less well-funded emergency responses.

- **Suggested action 6.1:** UNHCR should work towards the sustainability of the new partnerships to support less visible crises.
- **Suggested action 6.2:** UNHCR could be stricter when accepting in-kind donations, if the timing or content of the donations is not compatible with operational conditions

This report presents the results of the UNHCR’s Level 3 Regional Refugee Response to the crisis in Ukraine evaluation, commissioned by the UNHCR Evaluation Office. The report first introduces the [evaluation and the context](#) and then spells out the [methodology](#) used to conduct the evaluation. Subsequent sections discuss the findings as per the six areas of inquiry: [Relevance](#), [Connectedness](#), [Effectiveness](#), [Efficiency](#), [Coordination and Partnerships](#) as well as the integration of [Cross-Cutting Themes](#).

1. Introduction

1. This section first discusses the [purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation](#), before moving into describing the [context](#) of the evaluation.

1.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

2. In line with its Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response,⁹ the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Evaluation Office commissioned Key Aid Consulting to carry out a Level 3 (L3)¹⁰ **centralized evaluation** of UNHCR Level 3 Regional Refugee Response to the crisis in Ukraine.
3. As per UNHCR Evaluation Policy and Strategy,¹¹ the purpose of this Level 3 emergency response evaluation is twofold. First, it is **summative**, providing an independent assessment of UNHCR’s programmatic performance and outcomes in response to the needs of refugees¹² arriving from Ukraine into Hungary, Moldova,¹³ Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Second, it is **formative**, highlighting good practices, areas of improvement and overall strategic and operational recommendations for UNHCR’s regional refugee response to inform strategies, plans, programmes and policies going forward.
4. The evaluation has **three specific objectives**:¹⁴
 - Assess the extent to which UNHCR’s response in Ukraine’s neighbouring countries (Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) was **coherent** with UNHCR’s mandated responsibilities, government initiatives and comparative advantages within the prevailing country-specific operational contexts and was **relevant** to the most important needs of the refugees.
 - Contribute to improving the **results achieved** for refugees in this L3 emergency response and future ones – through an analysis of the interventions, partnerships, immediate results, **adherence** to Accountability to Affected People (AAP), Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) and protection commitments.
 - Help UNHCR further strengthen its policies, guidance and systems to better respond **across the organization** to large-scale rapid-onset emergencies – drawing lessons from the Ukraine crisis as a rapid-onset emergency affecting high-income and middle-income countries, as well as countries inside and outside of the European Union (EU).

⁹ UNHCR, “Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response.”

¹⁰ Within UNHCR, Level 3 is the highest-ranking level to characterize a crisis situation.

¹¹ UNHCR, “Policy for Evaluation in UNHCR,” 2022.

¹² This includes third-country nationals and stateless persons arriving from Ukraine after 24 February 2022.

¹³ Or The Republic of Moldova, for the sake of brevity, this report uses the official short version: Moldova.

¹⁴ As per the Terms of Reference of this evaluation.

5. **The evaluation is framed around the following four areas of inquiry**, and six overarching evaluation questions, using as a guide subsequent Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee (OECD/ DAC) criteria.

Area 1 Design

6. **Relevance:** To what extent are UNHCR's interventions relevant and appropriate, considering the different operational contexts and the nature of needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of the refugees?
- To what extent do UNHCR interventions consider the context as well as the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of the refugees?
 - To what extent have interventions adjusted to the changing needs?
7. **Connectedness:** How well do UNHCR's interventions build on and strengthen the actions of national governments to ensure the inclusion of Ukrainian refugees?
- How well does UNHCR navigate the political context when designing and implementing the response?
 - To what extent is UNHCR successful, as an operational agency, in advocating for and developing government capacity to ensure the inclusion of refugees from Ukraine?

Area 2 Implementation and results

8. **Effectiveness:** To what extent are UNHCR's interventions achieving their objectives and intended outcomes, including in its contribution to protection objectives and solution-oriented approaches?
- To what extent are UNHCR interventions meeting their intended objectives?
 - What other unintended effects do the interventions cause?
 - What are the overall drivers of the effects of UNHCR interventions?
9. **Efficiency:** To what extent are UNHCR interventions delivered in a timely manner, with support from HQ, RBE and an enabling M&E system?
- To what degree are UNHCR interventions timely?
 - How is UNHCR using its monitoring and evaluation outputs to track quality and make decisions?
 - How does the support of HQ divisions to the RBE and COs serve the efficiency of UNHCR interventions?

Area 3 Coordination and partnership

10. How does UNHCR co-lead effective cross-sectoral coordination and broker successful partnerships?
- To what extent is the UNHCR-co-led Refugee Coordination Model effective and avoids duplication and gaps?
 - How does UNHCR navigate the newly endorsed cash coordination model?
 - How effective and strategic are UNHCR's operational partnerships with the private sector and implementing partners?

Area 4 Cross-cutting themes

11. To what extent do UNHCR interventions mainstream gender, AAP and protection?

12. The evaluation design is formalized in the [evaluation matrix](#), indicating the key evaluation questions, sub-questions, indicators as to how judgment was formed, as well as the plausible sources of data¹⁵ to inform the indicators. The evaluation uses the OECD DAC criteria as an evaluative framework to articulate how the overarching evaluation questions are answered. Indicators as to how judgment is formed derive from a variety of internal¹⁶ and external¹⁷ guidance and standards and 38 preliminary Key Informant Interviews conducted during the inception phase. Divergence with the terms of references is indicated in the [Detailed Methodology](#).
13. **Geographical scope** – The evaluation covers **five countries**, all directly neighbouring Ukraine: Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia are EU countries. Hungary, Poland and Slovakia are categorized as high-income countries, and Romania as upper-middle income.¹⁸ Moldova is a non-EU country categorized as a middle-income country. The declaration of a Level 3 emergency was issued for all five countries on 15 March 2022.¹⁹ The evaluation placed a heavier focus on Moldova, Poland and Slovakia (deep dive countries). These three countries correspond to those receiving an internal audit by UNHCR, those hosting large numbers of refugees and receiving significant investment from UNHCR. The evaluation does not cover UNHCR's response inside Ukraine.

Figure 1 Geographical scope of the evaluation



14. **Programmatic scope** – The evaluation covers the entirety of UNHCR's emergency response and coordination responsibilities, across sectors. The evaluation has a regional focus and intends to draw regional trends, focusing on the regional strategic level. The evaluation does not provide a detailed assessment of output achievement in each of the five countries of focus. The evaluation assesses UNHCR's response across the whole organization from Headquarters (HQ) Divisions, Regional Bureau of Europe (RBE) and Country Operations (CO).

¹⁵ The evaluation team used the evaluation matrix to design a coding matrix where all corresponding data sources were coded according to their type (e.g. Desk review, KII, etc.) and used for the analysis and triangulation. This document was used to list which data sources answer which specific evaluation questions and sub questions.

¹⁶ UNHCR Evaluation Policy, UNHCR Emergency Handbook and Policy, UNHCR Guidance on AAP, UNHCR Policy on AGD, etc.

¹⁷ ALNAP Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide, ALNAP Evaluation of Protection in Humanitarian Action, SPHERE standards.

¹⁸ The World Bank country pages.

¹⁹ The High Commissioner, "Declaration of a UNHCR Level 3 Emergency for Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia (Ukraine Situation)," March 15, 2022.

15. **Temporal scope** – The evaluation focuses on a nine-month period from March 2022 to December 2022,²⁰ which corresponds to the Level 3 scale-up period.
16. The **primary intended users** of this evaluation are the Country Operations in Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia; the Regional Bureau of Europe; the divisions of HQ involved in emergency response (e.g. the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS), the Division of International Protection (DIP), the Division of Resilience and Solutions (DRS) and the Division of Human Resources (DHR)).
17. The **secondary intended users** of this evaluation are the government representatives in each of the five countries, implementing partners, United Nations (UN) agencies, sector members, institutional and private donors as well as refugees from Ukraine. Lessons from this evaluation will serve future L3 emergency responses.

1.2 Context overview

1.2.1 The humanitarian context

18. **Speed and scale of the crisis.** Marking a dramatic escalation of the countries' eight-year-old conflict, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, on 24 February 2022, triggered one of the largest and fastest-growing humanitarian crises of the past 10 years. In its first two months, the war uprooted more than 30 per cent of Ukraine's population and as of December 2022, nearly 18.2 million border crossings from Ukraine have been recorded, creating the largest population displacement in Europe since the Second World War.²¹²²²³
19. Overall, as of December 2022, 7.8 million Ukrainians who fled their home country were recorded as refugees in Europe, while 5.9 million people were internally displaced within Ukraine.²⁴ The three main countries where people registered for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe are Poland, with about 1.5 million persons, Germany (1 million) and the Czech Republic (0.4 million).²⁵ UNHCR and national immigration departments have measured large movements back and forth along the borders. In October 2022, almost one quarter of Ukrainian refugees had gone back to Ukraine at least once since their initial departure.²⁶

Figure 2 Number of refugees and asylum seekers in Ukraine neighbouring countries²⁷²⁸

²⁰ The High Commissioner, "Extension of the UNHCR Emergency Declaration for the Ukraine Situation," September 19, 2022.

²¹ Ukraine's population is estimated at 43.8 million in 2022. Source: World bank data, *Population total- Ukraine*, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=UA>, accessed 5 July 2023

²² UNHCR, "Operational Data Portal: Ukraine Situation," 2023.

²³ The number of border crossings is based on cross-border movements (and not on individuals). The same individual may cross the border several times. The number of people recorded as refugees is therefore lower.

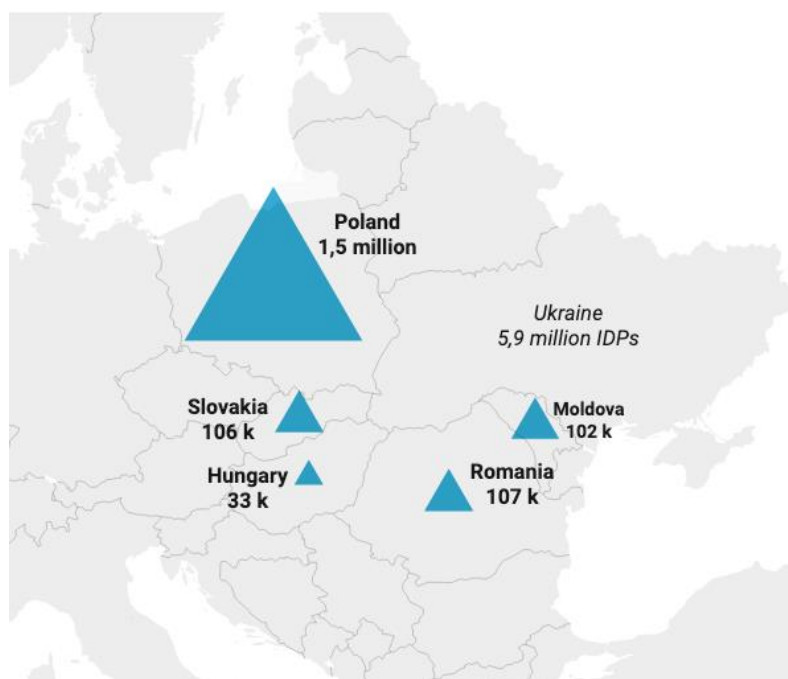
²⁴ UNHCR, "Ukraine Emergency Appeal," n.d., accessed June 8, 2023.

²⁵ Germany and the Czech Republic are not covered by this evaluation as they do not fall under the L3 UNHCR emergency declaration.

²⁶ UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, "Displacement Patterns, Protection Risks and Needs of Refugees from Ukraine," October 26, 2022.

²⁷ The term "refugees", here, refers to people with residence permits for Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. For Moldova, it refers to refugees from Ukraine estimated to have remained in the country. In the case of Hungary, the number of refugees from Ukraine estimated to have remained in the country is much higher than the number of TP holder because of the unique nature of the Hungarian environment.

²⁸ UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, "Ukraine Situation Flash Update #38 (16 January 2023)," 2023.



20. **An unparalleled and historic support in host countries.** Host countries in the European Union have responded with outstanding support. Civil society organizations, volunteer groups and individuals have joined efforts with state authorities and humanitarian partners to provide assistance to refugees, at border entry points and in urban areas, including by supplying goods, accommodation and transport to refugees.²⁹
21. On 4 March 2022, the Council of the European Union activated, for the first time, the EU Temporary Protection Directive (TPD),³⁰ which grants Temporary Protection (TP) to Ukrainians and persons with protection status in Ukraine and their family members residing in Ukraine before 24 February 2022. As of December 2022, about 4.7 million refugees have registered under the European Union's directive or similar national protection schemes. Rights under the temporary protection scheme include a residence permit, access to the labour market, housing, medical assistance, and access to education for children.
22. **The refugee crisis unfolded in mostly high-income environments.** Table 1 provides the key socioeconomic characteristics of the refugee-receiving countries. Four out of five are members of the European Union and categorized as high or upper-income countries. The effects of the war, with soaring food prices, energy price hikes and supply shortages, influence the hosting countries' capacity to provide long-term protection and services to a large and rapidly arriving refugee population.³¹ Among the five countries, Moldova is: "the least resourced country, with social protection policies in-the-making".³²

²⁹ European Economic and Social Committee, "Organised Civil Society Active in Helping Ukrainian Refugees, Turning Solidarity into Action, Grounding Ukrainian Economy," 2022.

³⁰ See Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences, 2001, pp. 12-23.

³¹ J Motte-Baumvol, T C Frota Mont'Alverne, and J Braga Guimarães, "Extending Social Protection for Migrants under the European Union's Temporary Protection Directive: Lessons from the War in Ukraine," n.d.

³² Sarah Blin and Niamh Cahill Billings, "Strengthening Shock-Responsiveness of Social Protection Systems in the Ukraine Crisis" (Social Protection Technical Advice, Assistance and Resources (STAAR) Facility, July 2022).

Table 1 Key socioeconomic characteristics of focus countries³³³⁴

Countries	EU member	Income Categorization	Human Development Index	Population	Refugees
Poland	EU	High	0,88 (35)	37,781,020	1,563,386
Moldova	Non-EU	Upper-Middle	0,75 (90)	2,573,930	102,016
Slovakia	EU	High	0,86 (39)	5,447,250	105,732
Hungary	EU	High	0,85 (40)	9,709,891	33,446
Romania	EU	Upper-Middle	0,82 (49)	19,115,150	106,987

23. **Characteristics of the refugee population.**³⁵ Eighty-eight per cent of the refugees are estimated to be women and children. Due to the martial law (that prohibits male Ukrainian citizens aged 18 to 60 from travelling abroad), family separation is widespread and affects around 78 per cent of households. Most refugees are settled in urban areas and 30 per cent of them are housed in collective accommodation, while the others stay in host families and rental accommodation. It is estimated that about 24 per cent of households include one Person with Specific Needs (PWSN), such as older people, persons with disabilities or serious medical conditions, and persons with specific protection risks (e.g. unaccompanied minors, ethnic minorities).

1.2.2 UNHCR interventions across the five countries

24. **UNHCR-mandated responsibilities.** When a refugee crisis unfolds, UNHCR is the lead UN agency accountable for “the coordination of, provision of, and appeals for protection and assistance and in findings solutions”.³⁶ The Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) is UNHCR’s vehicle to fulfil its responsibilities towards coordination in refugee (and mixed³⁷) settings. As per the Global Compact on Refugees,³⁸ UNHCR also works with the Resident Coordinator and UN Country Team (UNCT) to contribute to the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the latter being only applicable to Moldova.

25. **Level 3 emergency response.** On 25 February 2022, UNHCR declared a Level 3 emergency response for Ukraine and a Level 2 for the refugee situation in Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and other neighbouring countries.³⁹ On 15 March 2022, as the situation continued to deteriorate, the emergency level of Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia was also elevated to Level 3 until 31 December 2022.⁴⁰

26. The figure below presents the timeline of UNHCR’s response in 2022.

³³ The term “refugees”, here, refers to people with residence permits for Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. For Moldova, it refers to refugees from Ukraine estimated to have remained in the country.

³⁴ Figures on GDP per capita and population are from the World Bank’s World Development Indicators, for the Human Development Index from the UNDP Human Development Report, and for refugees from UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, “Ukraine Situation Flash Update #38 (16 January 2023).”

³⁵ UNHCR, Regional bureau for Europe. Displacement patterns, protection risks and needs of refugees from Ukraine, 2022.

³⁶ UNHCR, “Refugee Coordination Guidance,” 2019.

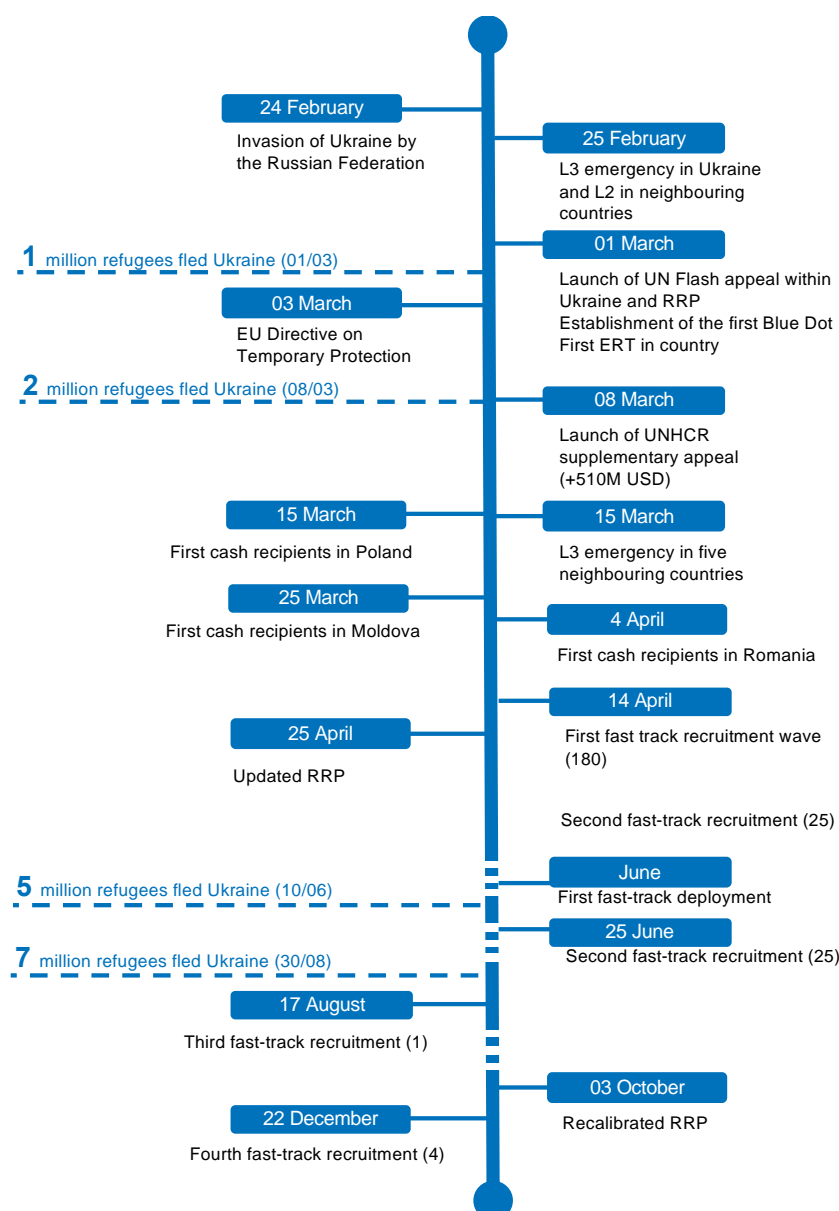
³⁷ UNHCR and OCHA, “Joint UNHCR - OCHA Note on Mixed Situations Coordination in Practice,” 2014.

³⁸ United Nations, “Global Compact on Refugees,” 2018.

³⁹ <https://www.unhcr.org/ukraine-emergency.html>

⁴⁰ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

Figure 3: UNHCR response timeline - 2022



27. **An organization-wide mobilization.** The Level 3 emergency response declaration triggered the set-up of an organization-wide mobilization to mobilize and deploy operational capacities and resources needed to match the scale, complexity and urgency of the crisis. Specifically, the L3 emergency response activates UNHCR's emergency response mechanisms and guides activities that encompass enhanced leadership, coordination and mobilization of resources, including staffing and funding.
28. Less than a week after the start of the crisis, on 1 March 2022, UNHCR launched the Inter-Agency Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP). The RRP was revised on 25 April⁴¹ and recalibrated in October 2022.⁴² Coordinated by UNHCR, the plan brings together 142 partners including UN agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), national and international non-governmental organizations, and civil society to support the host Governments of Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary,

⁴¹ UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan March-December 2022," April 2022.

⁴² UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Recalibration - Regional Refugee Response Plan - March – December 2022," 2022.

Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia in responding to the needs of up to 8.3 million Ukrainian refugees and third-country nationals fleeing from Ukraine.⁴³ UNHCR and its partners set up a US\$ 1.8 billion multisectoral response, 43 per cent of which are dedicated to Poland, 22 per cent to Moldova, 12.5 per cent to Romania, 5 per cent to Slovakia and 4 per cent to Hungary.⁴⁴ RRP partners have supported government-led efforts through a multisectoral approach focusing on protection, reception/shelter and material, as well as cash assistance for the most vulnerable groups and for individuals with specific needs.

29. Eighty-nine per cent of UNHCR's funding requirements in 2022 Ukraine Regional RRP were met, **making it a well-funded emergency response for UNHCR**. Table 2 shows the comprehensive funding coverage in the five countries.

Table 2: Funding level per country for the 2022 Ukraine Response RRP⁴⁵

	Total	Hungary	Moldova	Poland	Romania	Slovakia
Financial requirements (US\$ in millions)	710	20	149	210	145	23
Funds received (US\$ in millions)	632	20.8	137	203	124	23.7
Funding level	89%	104%	92%	97%	86%	103%

30. In each of the five countries, **UNHCR set up the largest response of all the RRP partners**, combining protection and basic needs activities, as per the Table below presenting the different Outcome Areas (OA) of UNHCR response. UNHCR Romania is the only country office to have implemented livelihood activities (job search support activities) under the OA13.⁴⁶

Table 3: Ukraine situation Operating Level budget per Outcome in the five countries (US\$ in Millions)⁴⁷

	Hungary	Poland	Moldova	Romania	Slovakia
OA1. Access to Territory, Reg. and Documentation	10,5	14,2	25,3	21,3	6,4
OA4. Gender-based Violence	0,6	1,6	1,3	2,3	0,5
OA5. Child Protection	0,7	2,9	0,9	3,0	0,5
OA8. Well-Being and Basic Needs	3,3	163,7	75,6	34,6	12,3
OA13. Self Reliance, Economic Inclusion and Livelihoods	-	-	-	1,5	-
Overall	15,1	182,4	103,0	62,6	19,8

31. In the majority of countries, the largest portion of the financial resources was dedicated to addressing basic needs through activities such as Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) and Core Relief Items (CRI) distributions. However, Hungary differs from this pattern as it allocated funding for basic needs through housing activities under OA1, while OA8 is limited.

⁴³ UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan March-December 2022."

⁴⁴ UNHCR, "Operational Data Portal: Ukraine Situation."

⁴⁵ "Inter-Agency Financial Portal for Refugees Aid Programmes," accessed June 8, 2023, refugee-funding-tracker.org.

⁴⁶ The evaluation team is not in a position to explain this difference as it was not an area of enquiry.

⁴⁷ Only the budget for the situation in Ukraine is presented. UNHCR Regional Bureau For Europe, "2022 Budget and Expenditures for 5 Operations in Europe," May 2022.

Figure 4: Financial volume allocated to different outcome areas (US\$ in Millions)⁴⁸


32. **UNHCR's role in EU member states.** The unfolding of the crisis in middle- and high-income European countries with functioning systems and structures, challenged the traditional mandate, programmatic offer and modus operandi of UN agencies and UNHCR in particular. With no or little humanitarian infrastructure (office, staff, partners) prior to the crisis in the five countries, UNHCR also had to start its emergency response operations from scratch, while the scale and speed of the emergency were unprecedented.
33. In addition to assessing the extent to which UNHCR has provided a relevant, timely and effective response to the crisis in Ukraine's neighbouring countries, the evaluation also looks at how UNHCR adapts operationally and strategically to this European context.
34. **Digitalization of assistance.** The unprecedented speed and the scale of forced displacement, along with the high level of digital literacy and internet access among the refugee population, have prompted UNHCR to expand the application of digital technology to support in-person humanitarian assistance and protection services. Innovative applications and services, including the development of secure and trusted online spaces, such as messaging applications, UNHCR's HELP pages, Digital Blue Dots, as well as the wide use of refugees' preferred and trusted digital social networks and platforms, have been deployed to complement physical services. These were used to provide reliable information and facilitate interactive exchanges with refugee communities. The evaluation also examines the extent to which the increased use of digital technology to implement a two-way communication system has contributed to improving the quality of UNHCR's interventions.

⁴⁸ UNHCR Regional Bureau For Europe.22/01/2024 09:12:00

2. Evaluation design and methodology

2.1 Evaluation design

35. The evaluation uses a **mixed-method approach**, relying on both secondary and primary data sources. The evaluation was inductive in its approach, drawing from quantitative and qualitative data sets. Data analysis explored emerging trends and captured potential positive and negative unintended effects of the interventions. The evaluation did not use a deductive approach, and no Theory of Change (ToC) was reconstructed or used during the evaluation. Not reconstructing a ToC was also based on the understanding that UNHCR had no prior operational presence or strategy to respond to this regional refugee emergency, given the unexpected and unprecedented nature of the crisis.
36. The evaluation design was **non-experimental** and used a **case study design**, i.e. providing a focused examination of UNHCR interventions in five country offices to identify how interventions were implemented and what causal processes and configurations led to the outcomes. The variety of the data collection sources (see below) and the triangulation of data allowed the evaluation team to draw findings and conclusions valid⁴⁹ at global and regional levels from country-level findings. The generalization of the findings was made possible through the combination of evaluation methods ensuring external and construct validity. Such a design allowed to substantiate how and in what way UNHCR interventions generated (or failed to generate) results.

2.2 Data collection overview

37. The evaluation team formed their judgment using various sources of primary and secondary data including a desk review, Key Informant Interviews (KII), Focus Group Discussions (FGD), online perception and outcome surveys,⁵⁰ and structured observations (see [Triangulation Table](#)). The detailed methodology is presented in [Annex 2](#).
38. The evaluation team incorporated age, gender and diversity considerations into sampling to show a similar demographic breakdown to the refugee population and ensure a diversity of voices and experiences. A total of 339 participants joined the FGD (82 per cent women and 18 per cent men; 14 per cent aged 18-25, 52 per cent 26-60 and 34 per cent above 60).⁵¹ Survey respondents are 90 per cent women, and an age breakdown relatively close to the target population (see [Detailed Methodology](#)). The data disaggregation in the report is presented selectively, focusing on cases where the evaluation team identified significant differences based on age, gender and specific needs (See [Annex 4](#) for the full disaggregation of data from the refugees). Evaluators selected the key informants purposefully, targeting stakeholders⁵² who were best positioned to respond to the evaluation questions.
39. The diversity of the data collected and analysed (Table 4), allowed the team to triangulate and substantiate findings (see [Detailed Methodology](#)). The evaluation team applied an ethical approach to

⁴⁹ The validity of the findings, especially when trying to determine cause and effect, is derived from agreement among the types of data sources.

⁵⁰ The results of the two surveys are available [here](#).

⁵¹ FGD groups were created based on AGD criteria, i.e. separate groups for women, men, young women and young men, women with disabilities and men with disabilities. The youth groups were aged between 18 and 25 and the groups of older people were over 60. To encourage participation during the FGDs (especially of members that have verbal communication challenges or are soft-spoken), several questions in the guide asked participants to give a rating using their hands from 1 (low/disagree) to 5 (high/agree). This also gave the evaluators the opportunity to identify outlying experiences and encourage individuals to share their unique experiences.

⁵² Out of the 200 key informants, 104 are from UNHCR, 31 from IP, 38 from sector members, 26 from Government, 1 from a Donor.

primary data collection by systematically explaining the purpose of the evaluation to participants, collecting informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and access to all subgroups of refugees,⁵³ and to avoid causing harm to participants. Throughout the evaluation process, the evaluation team followed data protection and responsibility principles and practices that are aligned with UNHCR data protection policies and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Finally, the team produced the analysis and findings presented in this report with independence and impartiality, ensuring systematic triangulation to produce credible findings.

Table 4: Primary data collection overview

Data collection methods	Total	Hungary	Moldova	Poland	Romania	Slovakia	HQ	Regional
Desk review	Extensive desk review of 1,200 documents							
Key Informant Interviews	200	20	40	45	20	40	20	15
Focus Group Discussions ⁵⁴	52	N/A	15	24	N/A	13	N/A	N/A
Refugee Perception Survey	1,349	75	401	70	463	340	N/A	N/A
UNHCR Staff Survey ⁵⁵	159	19	38	31	29	36	N/A	5
IP Survey	22	1	8	1	8	4	N/A	N/A
Sector members Survey	40	7	19	5	5	2	N/A	2

2.3 Limitations

40. Limitations to the evaluation include:

- Despite using similar dissemination strategies,⁵⁶ the uptake of the surveys was different across countries. Seventy refugees in Poland⁵⁷ and 75 in Hungary⁵⁸ responded to the online perception survey for refugees, while the other three countries exceeded their targets (Table 4: Primary data collection overview). The number of respondents for the survey with UNHCR staff, Implementing Partners (IP) and sector members also shows important variations from country to country, with sample sizes varying respectively from [8-29], [1-8] and [2-19]. As a result, the evaluation team could not disaggregate the survey results per country and reported instead on aggregated

⁵³ Via purposive sampling (e.g. Roma, PWSN) and a diverse dissemination strategy for the survey: survey translated in four languages (including Romania), option to take the survey with a surrogate (e.g. for older people).

⁵⁴ The FGDs took place in the in-depth focus country. The total number of FGD participants was 337, disaggregated as follows: 97 in Moldova (79 per cent women), 160 in Poland (84 per cent women) and 80 in Slovakia (81 per cent women).

⁵⁵ One respondent preferred not to disclose his location, which explained why the sum of respondents by country did not correspond to the total number of respondents.

⁵⁶ UNHCR sharing the survey link via their social media and the evaluation team resharing the links on Facebook, Telegram and Viber accounts used by refugees.

⁵⁷ Versus a target of n=150 (deep-dive countries).

⁵⁸ Versus a target of n=100 (light-touch countries).

descriptive statistics. However, when relevant to triangulate or corroborate other data sources, the evaluation team used country-specific data.

- The dissemination strategy for the online perception survey for refugees,⁵⁹ relying almost exclusively on social media, is by design prone to sampling bias. Despite the option for refugees to take the survey on behalf of someone else to include refugees without access to social media, such a dissemination strategy favours refugees that are more knowledgeable about UNHCR or those who are more active on social media, thus creating a bias. Therefore, the findings from the survey should not be extrapolated to the entire refugee population of the five countries, even though the sample characteristics are similar to those of the target population (see paragraph 242). As the evaluation team had to revise this strategy during the data collection phase,⁶⁰ the sampling bias is likely to be more important than initially intended. Cognizant of this limitation, the evaluation team triangulated the survey with other sources of information, such as FGDs, key informant interviews and the desk review.
- The data collected from refugees as part of the evaluation may be biased towards positive feedback for two reasons. First, the evaluation team could not select FGD participants based on availability sampling, as planned in the inception report. Discussions with UNHCR CO led the evaluation team to revise its selection strategy and get the assistance from UNHCR, IP and volunteers. This usually creates a bias towards selecting participants that are known by the organization and satisfied with the intervention. Second, Ukrainian refugees were not expecting to receive any assistance when arriving in country and had therefore no sense of entitlement with getting support from humanitarian organization. In turn, based on the FGDs by the evaluation team, the perception of the quality and speed of the response may have been positively skewed.
- The data collection, i.e. March-April 2023, took place significantly later than the temporal scope of the evaluation, i.e. March-December 2022. As a result, interviewees sometimes suffered from a recall bias and struggled with the sequence or dates of events. This recall bias was exacerbated by the turnover of staff and by refugees moving to various countries. As a mitigation measure, the evaluation team triangulated the primary data with secondary sources of information.
- The lack of a theory of change and intended target limits the extent to which the evaluation team could assess the effectiveness and coverage of UNHCR interventions. The evaluation was nevertheless able to provide an evaluative judgment using the primary and secondary data at hand.

3. Design – Relevance

41. The following section discusses first, the [relevance of UNHCR's response design](#) in light of refugees' needs, vulnerabilities and capacities, before discussing the [appropriateness of the targeting, enrolment and referral strategies](#).

⁵⁹ Aligned with the light footprint approach set out in the ToRs, the evaluation team designed an online dissemination strategy, revolving around the following: 1. UNHCR sharing the survey link via their social media, 2. the evaluation team sharing the links on Facebook, Telegram and Viber accounts used by refugees, and 3. Posters in collective centres with a QR code to the survey.

⁶⁰ The dissemination relied more heavily than intended on UNHCR's social media, because the evaluation team could not directly disseminate the survey on social media due to being suspected of phishing. The evaluation team abandoned the option of disseminating the survey in collective centres with a QR code, due to UNHCR staff's limited availability.

3.1 Response relevance with regards to the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of refugees

Key finding 1: Focus on MPCA and protection was relevant to the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of refugees.

42. **UNHCR regularly assessed refugees' needs, but these efforts were rather clustered and formalized towards the end of the year.** Limited structured consultations took place initially, depending on refugee caseloads, UNHCR's operational presence, existing partnerships and government involvement. This gradually changed and UNHCR led more formal consultations later in the year. As of March 2023, 73 per cent of UNHCR staff who responded to the survey (n=159) and 96 per cent of implementing partners who responded to the survey (IP) (n=22) agreed that the refugees' preferences were assessed and monitored during the response to ensure the intervention corresponded to the needs.
43. The results of formalized needs assessments (MSNA)⁶¹ conducted by UNHCR and its partners⁶² were released between September 2022 (in Moldova), the end of 2022 (Hungary/Poland) and January 2023 (Romania). The Protection strategy⁶³ was released in October 2022, as per Table 5.⁶⁴

Table 5: Needs assessments and monitoring activities completed in 2022 by UNHCR or under UNHCR leadership

Assessments	Poland	Slovakia	Moldova	Hungary	Romania
Refugees border monitoring (start)	March	April	March	February	March
PDM of UNHCR CBI (start)	August	October	May	N/A	July
Protection profiling	May	August	October	August	August
Thematic assessment	RAC Overview -Site Mapping and Monitoring Oct 2022	RAC Overview Site Monitoring October 2022	Winterization assessment October 2022		May
MSNA	December 2022	October 2022	September 2022	November 2022	January 2023
Regional Protection profiling and Monitoring	October 2022	October 2022	October 2022	October 2022	October 2022

44. Without formalized and coordinated needs assessment during the early stages of the influx, the design of the response was mostly informed by bilateral and multilateral discussions with the government and partners, dialogue with refugees, as well as the professional judgment and experience of UNHCR staff (e.g. the Blue Dot Model was replicated from the 2015 European refugee crisis).
45. **UNHCR interventions, largely driven by MPCA and protection activities, were overall relevant to the priority needs and capacities of refugees. Using Cash-Based Interventions (CBI) as the main modality for basic needs coverage, was contextually appropriate.** In line with the RRP⁶⁵ and the

⁶¹ In refugee settings, UNHCR Emergency Handbook refers to these assessments as Needs Assessment for Refugee Emergencies. Nevertheless, multi-sector assessments were published referring to MSNA, a terminology the ET has kept.

⁶² UNICEF in Poland, IOM in Hungary, REACH in Romania and Slovakia, REACH and UNICEF in Moldova.

⁶³ UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, "Regional Protection Strategy: Ukraine Refugee Response (2022 – 2024)," 2022.

⁶⁴ In addition to the assessments captured in the table, a number of thematic assessments were conducted such as for example: the Rapid Risk Assessment conducted by the PSEA Network in Romania in March 2022; and the rapid GBV risk assessment on cash programming conducted by the GBV SWG/Cash WG in Moldova in July 2022.

⁶⁵ UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan March-December 2022."

identified priority needs, UNHCR placed an early emphasis on the provision of CBI and CRIs, reception services at the border crossings, informational and legal services, protection services (mostly child protection and Gender-Based Violence (GBV and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse), and, to a lesser extent, accommodation in Moldova⁶⁶ and Hungary.⁶⁷ UNHCR rightfully did not engage on health as needs were mostly covered by the States and interhealth actors.

46. Overall, 74 per cent of UNHCR staff (n=159) and 100 per cent of IPs (n=22) who responded to the survey agreed that the design and chosen modalities of the intervention reflected refugees' preferences. Across all stakeholder groups, CBI was deemed relevant, enabling the scale and speed of the response, complementing state-led social safety nets and promoting beneficiaries' choices. Refugees also expressed a high level of acceptance of CBIs in UNHCR's Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM)⁶⁸ and FGDs, praising the flexibility of CBIs to meet basic needs (e.g. food, hygiene, clothes and shoes) and health expenses.⁶⁹ Seventy-six per cent of refugees surveyed were satisfied with the delivery of cash assistance, although the level of satisfaction is slightly lower for people with serious health conditions and the elderly⁷⁰ ([AGD-disaggregated data available here](#)). UNHCR, however, offered a limited diversity through using a single delivery mechanism in Poland (Blik code), Moldova (Maib prepaid card), Romania (Smith & Smith and Money Gram) and Hungary (prepaid card). There were two options (bank and post office withdrawal) in Slovakia.
47. **Using in-kind donations and stockpiles in contexts where CBI is feasible and markets well-functioning, proved less relevant.** Among refugees, there is limited preference for in-kind donations: 20 per cent indicate a preference for a combination of cash and in-kind.⁷¹ UNHCR staff share refugees' scepticism about the use of in-kind, highlighting the associated logistical burden. Relevance and acceptance of in-kind tend to be higher among FGDs conducted with older people⁷² and are overall boosted by the reported high quality⁷³ of the commodities handed over.
48. **Given the characteristics of the refugee population,⁷⁴ there is a consensus among stakeholders that protection activities were crucial.** Ninety-nine per cent of refugees interviewed (n=1349) reported having received information at the border crossing/Blue Dots and 16 per cent of refugees received legal assistance ([AGD-disaggregated data available here](#)). Almost all indicated that the assistance was relevant to their needs,⁷⁵ with higher relevance noted among women than men, no significant difference in scoring between people with specific needs and others, and slightly lower relevance among the 18-29 years old ([AGD-disaggregated data available here](#)).⁷⁶

⁶⁶ In Moldova, UNHCR supported the Government in establishing 132 Refugee Accommodation Centres (RACs) ultimately benefiting over 68,000 refugees. Source: MCO Hungary, Annual Result Report, 2022.

⁶⁷ UNHCR Hungary MCO, "Annual Country Report: Hungary MCO 2022," 2023.

⁶⁸ UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation Outcomes of Cash Assistance: Findings from Post-Distribution Monitoring," 2023.

⁶⁹ UNHCR Moldova, "Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) of UNHCR's Cash Assistance in Moldova Round 2, July 2022," July 2022; UNHCR and REACH, "Post Distribution Monitoring of the Cash-Based Interventions Programme in Poland," 2022.

⁷⁰ 69 percent of people with serious health condition and 70 percent (n=113) are completely or mostly satisfied with the quality of delivery of MPCA.

⁷¹ UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation Outcomes of Cash Assistance: Findings from Post-Distribution Monitoring."

⁷² Although FGD participants could not always clearly identify which organization was providing the donation.

⁷³ Where the quality of NFIs was deemed inadequate (e.g. hygiene kits in Hungary), UNHCR took remedial action and adjusted the quality and quantity of NFIs.

⁷⁴ UNHCR, "Regional Protection Analysis: Displacement Patterns, Protection Risks and Needs of Refugees from Ukraine," November 2022.

⁷⁵ Finding based on online refugee survey: between 85 and 89 per cent (for legal assistance) found it relevant.

⁷⁶ 89 per cent (n=216) of refugees interviewed consider legal aid/advice relevant to their needs, while only 78 per cent (n=23) of 18-29-year-olds consider it relevant. Satisfaction is higher among women (51 per cent (n=194) who are completely or mostly satisfied with the relevance of these services than among men (41 per cent (n=22)).

49. Specific protection risks, including the risk of GBV and trafficking of women and children, who made up most of the refugee population, were identified and addressed through the mapping of services, establishment of referral mechanisms and advocacy efforts (particularly in the area of child protection). Key stakeholders also praised UNHCR's support in terms of capacity building and support to partners. However, UNHCR staff identified limitations within the national system with regard to the availability and quality of service delivery and case management (identification, referral and follow-up of people with specific needs, particularly in the case of Unaccompanied and Separated Minors (UASM) and GBV survivors).⁷⁷

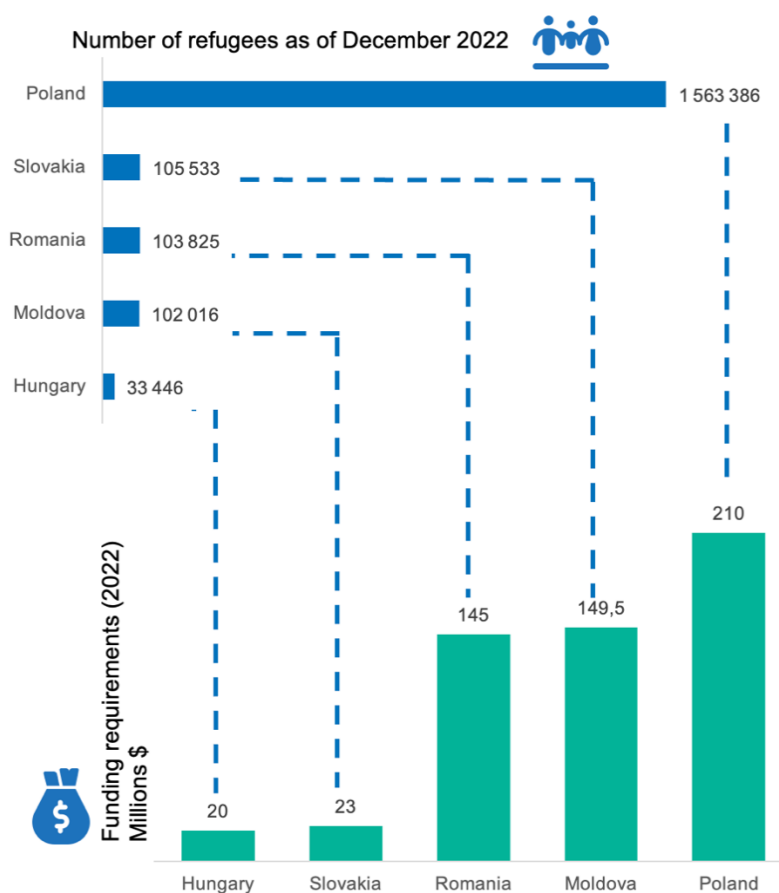
Key finding 2: Despite the scale and speed of the crisis, which overwhelmed the capacities of all actors, the scale of UNHCR's response was adapted to the needs, the caseload and states' capacity.

50. Most key informants agree that the scale of UNHCR's response was overall proportionate to needs, despite significant human resource challenges and the slow start of operations in Slovakia and Poland. FGD participants further reported that they had little to no expectations beyond security and that the assistance had exceeded their expectations.

51. Poland, which hosts, by far, the largest number of refugees, had the highest requirement (\$211.3 million), followed by Moldova (\$149.5 million), where UNHCR activities were the most comprehensive,⁷⁸ as per the Figure below.

⁷⁷ Access to specialized services for person with specific needs, plus referral and follow up for GBV survivors has been pointed out.

⁷⁸ Ukraine Revised Situation Appeal – December 2022.

Figure 5: Funding requirements against the number of refugees per country^{79,80}


52. **The coverage of CBI activities was larger than the coverage of protection services** in Poland, Moldova and Slovakia, as a result of resource mobilization to roll out CBI. This imbalance led to remaining needs among refugees (Section 5.1.3). Further, it is misaligned with the identified protection risks and vulnerability profiles of refugees as also noted by some UNHCR informants and the 2022 Real Time Review.⁸¹

53. **UNHCR adjusted its response to the changing context, capacity and needs.** The initial UNHCR emergency response based on a blanket approach and emergency support shifted as the refugee influx reduced and people settled in the receiving countries. Throughout the year, UNHCR identified thematic and geographical gaps and expanded its partnerships and presence.⁸² UNHCR's response became more comprehensive, promoting social cohesion and integration.⁸³

- In Moldova, UNHCR supported the development of community service centres across the country and initiatives of host and refugee communities (schools and sports events).⁸⁴

⁷⁹ The term "refugees", here, refers to people with residence permits for Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. For Moldova, it refers to refugees from Ukraine estimated to have remained in the country.

⁸⁰ Figure compiled by the evaluation team using UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, "Ukraine Situation Flash Update #38 (16 January 2023)"; "Inter-Agency Financial Portal for Refugees Aid Programmes."

⁸¹ UNHCR, "Real-Time Review for the Ukraine Situation." 2022

⁸² Finding based on KIIs and secondary sources (country operation annual results reports).

⁸³ Finding based on KIIs and secondary sources (country operation annual results reports).

⁸⁴ Finding based on KIIs and secondary sources (Hungary MCO annual results report).

- In Slovakia, Romania and Hungary, UNHCR concluded new partnerships to promote social cohesion and inclusion by supporting refugees' integration into the labour market (employment counselling, qualifications, language courses, etc.).⁸⁵
- In Moldova, host communities were targeted through cash assistance.
- In Hungary, most partnership agreements were amended, to add new locations and scale up the response over the year 2022.⁸⁶ A small cash programme was introduced in the last quarter of 2022 for winterization.

3.2 Appropriateness of the targeting, enrolment and referral

Key finding 3: UNHCR's blanket approach proved relevant to scale up and reach those most in need, although less so in Poland where it turned into a first-come, first-served approach. The shift from a categorical to a vulnerability-based approach is well aligned with the evolution of the crisis.

54. **UNHCR's blanket approach to targeting was relevant to reach all refugees, including those most in need of assistance.** As with the protection activities, which were open to all, the large majority of refugees were eligible for cash assistance, except in Hungary.⁸⁷ Subsequently, close to all (88 per cent (n=1349)) refugees surveyed, received cash assistance from UNHCR.⁸⁸ This broad targeting approach was deemed relevant by 68 per cent of UNHCR staff (n=159) and 73 per cent of IPs (n=22) interviewed online and most refugees.
55. In Poland, however, UNHCR's approach materialized differently. First, UNHCR applied geographical targeting to cash assistance and did not distribute CBI in border areas until November 2022.⁸⁹ Second, as the needs largely outweighed the available resources, there was a first-come, first-served prioritization that did not fully respond to vulnerabilities, beyond households prioritized through the Blue Dots. In July 2022, UNHCR introduced vulnerability criteria to better target those with heightened protection needs.
56. **During the period, for CBI, there has been a gradual shift towards a protection-oriented approach from blanket targeting to vulnerability-based targeting.** Vulnerability-based criteria adjusted to the targeted groups⁹⁰ were introduced in Poland in August 2022. In Slovakia, the "no regrets" approach was applied until November 2022, when UNHCR handed over CBI to the Ministry of Labour. Targeted cash for protection is planned for 2023 in Moldova, Poland, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia. Such a shift was relevant in light of the length of the response, depletion of resources and the progressive integration of refugees into national systems.

Key finding 4: Enrolment methods used by UNHCR correspond to the nature and scale of the crisis, but they risk excluding those with lower digital literacy.

⁸⁵ Finding based on KII and secondary sources (country operation annual results reports).

⁸⁶ Finding based on KII and secondary sources (Hungary MCO annual results report).

⁸⁷ In Hungary, IP Project Performance Reports mention applying vulnerability criteria from the start of the CBI distribution.

⁸⁸ No significant difference was observed between the disaggregated AGD data.

⁸⁹ The aim was to avoid having too many people stationed in the area.

⁹⁰ There were categorical criteria from the start of the response in Moldova, Poland and Romania, however these were based on traditional vulnerable groups (PSN, women-headed household) hence, encompassing close to all refugees as a result of the target group composition being mostly women and children.

57. **The enrolment approach was agile and able to register all refugees.** The registration, which was highly digitalized and carried out on an ongoing basis in parallel with the Government (Poland) or using a common database (Slovakia), corresponded to the nature and scale of the displacement. Establishing Blue Dots in the same physical spaces as the CBI enrolment centres, proved to be a good practice to facilitate access to information and protection services.⁹¹
58. **However, the reported barriers to accessing services were diverse and mostly affected PWSNs and marginalized and at-risk groups.** FGD participants reported difficulties with enrolment in Poland and Moldova, and 20 per cent of UNHCR staff (n=159) considered that the enrolment processes were not really, or not at all, adapted to needs, especially for those with heightened protection needs. Even though the Blue Dots collected data on specific vulnerabilities and mobile teams were deployed to support the registration in Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, 50 per cent of PWSNs have faced issues with registration. Barriers included limited digital literacy, which may have posed a challenge for ethnic Roma, older people, and/or people with disabilities and those living outside urban centres. FGD participants and survey respondents in Poland and Slovakia reported that physical access to enrolment centres, requiring travel from distant locations, waiting times and long queues, added particular strain for the elderly, those with medical conditions or disabilities, and mothers from single-headed households. A minority of FGD participants reported technical issues related to registration (loss of SMS, lack of feedback on the application, etc.).
59. **UNHCR's decision to collect biometric data as the default option at enrolment stage** in EU member states, created challenges with partners and States, such as in Romania, and the relevance of such decision was questioned by Cash Working Group (CWG) members. As this also led to some delay, it is discussed under [Timeliness](#).
60. **Referral strategies reflect the priorities of UNHCR with a focus on GBV, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and legal counselling.** The review highlights contrasting views on existing referral pathways. Sixty-two per cent of UNHCR staff (n=159) and 63 per cent of IPs (n=22) interviewed online believed that the referral strategies were mostly or completely adequate to refer refugees with increased protection needs, while 53 per cent of refugees (n=344) believed the opposite ([AGD-disaggregated available data here](#)). The highest discrepancy can be observed in Slovakia, where 75 per cent of UNHCR staff (n=36) considered the referral strategies in place to be adequate, while 47 per cent of the refugees stated the opposite. Evidence of comprehensive referral pathways for protection, gender-based violence and child protection at the national level was found in Moldova,⁹² and for GBV and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary,⁹³ Romania and Moldova.⁹⁴ The mapping of services has also been developed through local coordination fora (Moldova, Slovakia) and through sectoral working groups but on an ad hoc basis rather than in a systematic way.⁹⁵
61. The difference in views on referral pathways reflects the diverse priorities, as discussed during the FGDs. First, FGD participants reported not being familiar with referral pathways and relying instead on friends, social networks and community centres. Secondly, they expressed needs for support and

⁹¹ 23 per cent (n=1349) of the refugees interviewed online have received information and assistance through Blue Dots.

⁹² UNHCR, "Emergency Inter-Agency Referrals Package for Moldova (April 2022)," April 2022.

⁹³ In Hungary, a referral for multisectoral services has been developed. UNHCR Hungary MCO, "Annual Country Report: Hungary MCO 2022."

⁹⁴ UNHCR, "Operational Data Portal: Ukraine Situation."

⁹⁵ A comprehensive mapping of services is planned for in Romania for 2023 but had not yet materialized at the time of the evaluation.

referral related to accessing health care, childcare, labour market and support in finding accommodation, among others.

62. **In the absence of a global services mapping and formalized pathways outside of protection services, referrals were ad hoc.** According to key informants across countries, enrolment centres and Blue Dots were used to identify and refer PWSNs, but there were limitations within the national system in terms of the quality of service provision. Referrals can only be relevant and effective if the services are established and functional in the country. The lack of referrals reflects bottlenecks in service availability but also the lack of coordination between government-led referral (such as in Romania) and humanitarian-led ones. Overall, referrals were made informally based on networks and partnerships, and relying on organization-specific design and updating of their own mapping, without active follow-up.
63. **Gaps in access to health care services are reported by most FGD participants, particularly those with serious health conditions and/or disabilities and older people.** Overall, 51 per cent of the refugees (n=336), among which 67 per cent of PWSNs (n=95) and 56 per cent of people with serious health problems (n=124) interviewed online, reported that their needs have not really or not at all been identified and that they had not been referred to the appropriate services ([AGD-disaggregated data available here](#)). Difficulties in accessing services varied from country to country:
- In Poland, FDG participants reported long waiting times to access health services.
 - In Slovakia and Moldova, FDG participants reported barriers to accessing free health care for adults, except in emergencies, thus forcing them to travel back and forth to Ukraine for treatments, especially for specialized care (dentistry, ophthalmology), or to forgo treatment altogether.

4. Design – connectedness

Key finding 5: UNHCR engaged extensively with governments to coordinate its response, identify existing services and build on social protection schemes. This contributed to the complementarity between government-led and UNHCR-led programming.

64. Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia were better positioned to receive and protect refugees, compared with responses in other non-European contexts. The four EU nations had a regulatory framework in place, which was rapidly activated (Moldova followed suit).⁹⁶ While the political environment was favourable compared with previous non-European emergency responses, the willingness of host governments to welcome refugees varied, and national laws were more or less favourable depending on the country.
65. As such, **UNHCR needed to account for cross-country differences in operationalizing the regulatory framework and to integrate this into its respective country strategies.** The Poland and Romania country operation interim strategy provided a detailed analysis of the contextual enablers and barriers to the humanitarian response, including an analysis of the legal, political, socioeconomic, human rights, and events, shocks and ongoing conditions.⁹⁷ The context analyses in the Multi-Country Office (MCO) interim strategy were relatively light, with limited to no reference to national plans (when

⁹⁶ European Commission, "Temporary Protection," Migration and Home Affairs, accessed May 29, 2023.

⁹⁷ UNHCR Poland, "Strategy Report: Poland (Interim)," 2022; UNHCR Romania, "Strategy Report: Romania (Interim)," 2022.

they existed and were accessible to UNHCR) and the implications of existing laws on UNHCR's response.⁹⁸ There was, however, less scope for an in-depth country-level analysis in the MCO interim strategy, which covered six operations. The outcome areas were generic across countries and did not illustrate how the context analyses and defined outcomes would translate into activities.

66. Despite these gaps in documented analyses, **UNHCR regularly engaged with host governments to coordinate its response, identify existing services and built-on social protection schemes.** In Slovakia, UNHCR supported the Slovak Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family to offer temporary emergency financial aid between May and September 2022.⁹⁹ In Moldova, individuals who were granted refugee status or humanitarian protection through the government's refugee status were entitled to national health care services and social assistance programmes. However, due to resource constraints, these services were not always available to refugees. In response, UN agencies agreed to reimburse the state medical insurance programme for specific groups (e.g. children, women aged 18-55) and services related to refugees (e.g. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), dialysis, chemotherapy).¹⁰⁰ In Poland, UNHCR provided transitional cash assistance aligned with the government social protection assistance and actively worked towards enhancing refugees' awareness of the social protection mechanisms available to them.¹⁰¹ Despite promises from the State, UNHCR did not gain access to the State's data. In the absence of data sharing or systems interoperability, UNHCR was unable to track actual uptake (on an individual level) of State benefits. As such, it was unknown whether UNHCR's assistance was in fact transitional. In Romania, despite refugees also not having access to social assistance programmes, UNHCR aligned the transfer value of emergency cash assistance with the State assistance and CWG to enable a smooth handover to the government.¹⁰² UNHCR also identified other opportunities to support the government. For example, UNHCR supported the Romanian Government's endeavours to expedite diploma recognition, facilitate the enrolment of refugee children in Romanian schools, and improve the accessibility of the government's national employment agency services for non-Romanian speakers. As part of these efforts, a partner staff member was stationed at the employment services desk at Romexpo, shared with government staff, to offer translation services and guidance to refugees seeking assistance.¹⁰³
67. **Government representatives were satisfied with the format, level and content of information shared by UNHCR. In turn, they showed a willingness to involve UNHCR in their own committees and strategy development.** The Government of Slovakia invited UNHCR to its Steering Committee for Coordination of the Humanitarian Relief Actions to act as a high-level interface between ministries and sector members. UNHCR was also invited to join the Government of Slovakia's crisis board daily meetings, at both the strategic and technical levels.¹⁰⁴ In Moldova, UNHCR was invited to join the Government's Single Crisis Management Centre.¹⁰⁵ In Romania, UNHCR provided technical expertise

⁹⁸ UNHCR Hungary, "Strategy Report: Hungary MCO (Interim)," 2022.

⁹⁹ UNHCR Slovakia, "Cash Assistance 2022," Help Slovakia, accessed May 31, 2023.

¹⁰⁰ UNHCR Hungary MCO, "Annual Country Report: Hungary MCO 2022."

¹⁰¹ This involved conducting targeted outreach activities, establishing a physical presence in refugee communities, and directly providing and disseminating information to refugees, empowering them to access the available resources. UNHCR Poland, "Annual Country Report: Poland 2022," 2022, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/91434>.

¹⁰² Finding based on KIIs with UNHCR staff and government representatives.

¹⁰³ UNHCR Romania, "Annual Country Report: Romania 2022," 2022.

¹⁰⁴ Regional Refugee Response Plan for the Ukraine Situation, "Inter-Agency Operational Update: Slovakia as of 24 May 2022," 2022.

¹⁰⁵ UNHCR Moldova, "Strategy Report: Moldova (Interim)," 2022.

to the Government working groups responsible for developing the National Plan of Measures for the Protection and Inclusion of refugees from Ukraine.¹⁰⁶

68. **Government representatives valued UNHCR's technical expertise, which informed the development of national and contingency plans.**¹⁰⁷ UNHCR actively supported Romania's *National Plan of Measures for the Protection and Inclusion of Refugees from Ukraine* through relevant working groups and advocacy efforts.¹⁰⁸ UNHCR supported the development of the *Odessa Contingency Scenario* in Moldova,¹⁰⁹ the *Refugee Contingency Plan* in Slovakia,¹¹⁰ and *Emergency Response Plans* at border towns in Poland.¹¹¹
69. **Government representatives valued the training and technical support provided by UNHCR.** In Hungary, UNHCR collaborated with the Statelessness Determination Procedures (SDP) authority to enhance the accessibility and quality of the SDP. They organized a workshop on statelessness with 30 case officers across the country. UNHCR also translated guidance documents on statelessness for better accessibility.¹¹² In the majority of countries, UNHCR trained government representatives on protection-related content. For example, in Moldova, UNHCR and its partners conducted a total of 21 training sessions for the Government, focusing on access to territory and asylum procedures.¹¹³ Additionally, training sessions were provided for judges, public defenders, government staff and asylum adjudicators working with the Bureau of Migration and Asylum, specifically on Refugee Status Determination (RSD) procedures.¹¹⁴

5. Implementation and results – effectiveness

70. The following section discusses the extent to which UNHCR interventions in Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia [achieved their objectives](#), with a focus on CBI, CRI and access to information, legal counselling and support. It also identifies any [unintended effects](#) of the interventions.

5.1 Meeting objectives

Key finding 6: As the largest aid provider in the five countries, UNHCR's response has proven effective in meeting the basic needs of refugees as well as in providing information and Legal Aid/Counselling.

71. **UNHCR's response was significant.**¹¹⁵ In the five countries, UNHCR had an operational budget (known as OL) of \$389.5 million, which according to all UNHCR interviewees that previously worked in other emergency responses, was unprecedented given the caseload in the five countries and the

¹⁰⁶ UNHCR Romania, "UNHCR Welcomes Romania's National Plan of Measures for the Protection and Inclusion of Displaced Persons from Ukraine," 2022.

¹⁰⁷ Finding based on KIIs with government representatives.

¹⁰⁸ UNHCR Romania, "Annual Country Report: Romania 2022."

¹⁰⁹ UNHCR Moldova, "Ukraine Refugee Situation: Weekly Update 2 – 14 June 2022 (Republic of Moldova)," 2022.

¹¹⁰ European Commission, "Contingency Plan of the Slovak Republic," 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/contingency-plan-slovak-republic_en.

¹¹¹ Finding based on KIIs with UNHCR staff and government representatives.

¹¹² UNHCR Hungary MCO.

¹¹³ These trainings covered various aspects, including refugee law training for border police, personnel working in detention centres and accommodation facilities, and child protection authorities.

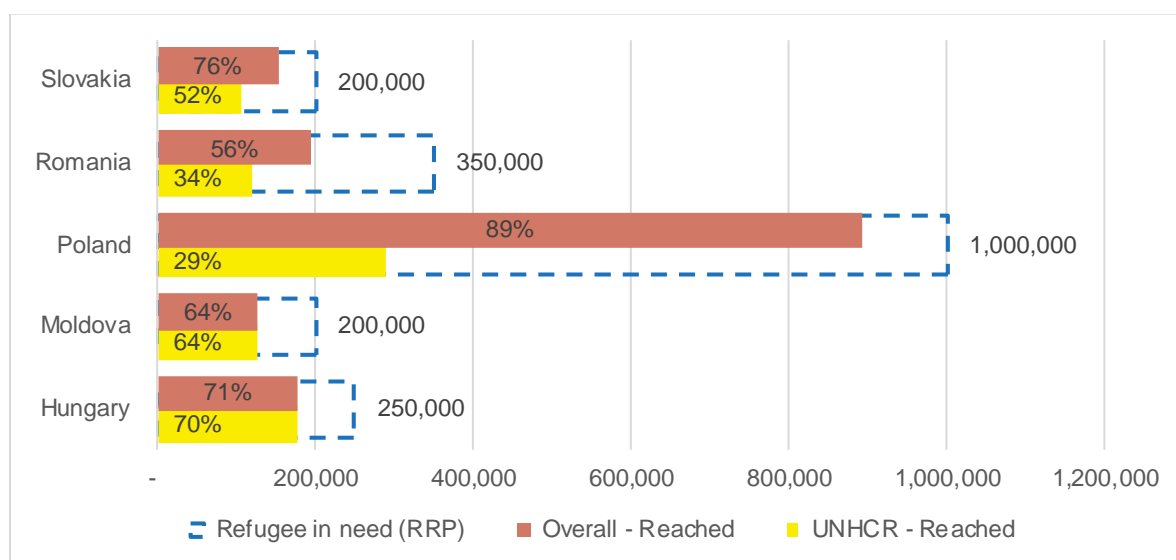
¹¹⁴ UNHCR Hungary MCO, "Annual Country Report: Hungary MCO 2022."

¹¹⁵ As UNHCR did not set any overall output targets for its intervention, the evaluation team could not evaluate to which extent UNHCR met its intended coverage objective. The interim strategies produced in September 2022 for each country do not include any refugee targets. The 2022 annual reports only report on the number of refugees reached and targeted for specific activities, such as CBI or legal counselling, but do not present an overall target of refugees.

response from the host countries (also see [Design – Relevance](#)). Out of this OL, UNHCR spent 93 per cent at the end of the year, demonstrating its capacity to effectively scale up its interventions.

72. Among the 217 RRP partners, UNHCR has been, by far, the largest aid provider. UNHCR supported 41 per cent (817,869) of the 2,000,000 refugees in need, as summarized in the Figure below.¹¹⁶

*Figure 6 Refugees reached by UNHCR compared with the number of refugees in need (RRP)*¹¹⁷



73. Sector-wise, UNHCR engaged in basic needs coverage through MPCA and CRI distribution, in protection, notably via providing information and legal counselling. However, **UNHCR's involvement in covering refugees' housing needs has remained limited,**¹¹⁸ despite its expertise on the matter.¹¹⁹ In Moldova, UNHCR and its IP rehabilitated refugee accommodation centres; in Hungary, UNHCR funded IPs for housing assistance and collective centres; and in Poland, UNHCR rehabilitated 12 collective shelters.¹²⁰ These, however, fall short of meeting needs that were and remain to date quite significant and misaligned with UNHCR accountability, as a last resort provider, to cover refugees' longer-term housing needs. This timid involvement stems from reported limited expertise in providing longer term housing solutions to refugees in developed and urban settings. At the time of data collection, UNHCR had further disengaged from housing by stepping down from shelter coordination (e.g. in Poland). This lack of sufficient corporate-level attention on housing further corroborates findings from other regional evaluations.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation - 2022 Final Report Regional Refugee Response Plan (March – December 2022)," 2023.

¹¹⁷ Calculation from the evaluation team: maximum number of refugees reached in one sector to avoid double counting based on the data from the annual reports.

¹¹⁸ With the exception of Moldova, where UNHCR and its IP rehabilitated the refugee accommodation centres.

¹¹⁹ In collaboration with HQ divisions, RB director is supporting country operations to implement and monitor relevant strategies, programmes and projects by providing guidance, capacity development, technical expertise, strategic advice and any other form of support required, including deployment of technical experts (e.g. on PSEA, GBV, shelter, settlement, child protection and education) to country operations). UNHCR DESS, "Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response," 2019.

¹²⁰ In some countries such as in Romania and Slovakia, shelter needs were already met by the time that UNHCR was operational.

¹²¹ Juillard H., Kennedy J., Minnitt N., Labaume C, "West and Central Africa Regional Shelter and Settlement Evaluation, UNHCR: Dakar," 2022.

5.1.1 Cash-Based Interventions

Key finding 7: Cash-based interventions were effective overall, although inflation reduced refugees' purchasing power. The transfer value was not adjusted based on beneficiaries' housing and health access, which affected the effectiveness of interventions.

74. In 2022, UNHCR provided CBI assistance to 473,325 individuals out of the 627,554 targeted.¹²²

The scale of CBI programmes varied from country to country, with UNHCR being the main countrywide CBI provider for refugees, as in Moldova, or complementing existing assistance (e.g. UNHCR only provided winterization assistance in Hungary via vouchers).¹²³ The design of UNHCR's CBI assistance is summarized in the Table below:

Table 6: Design of the MPCA programmes in the five countries

Country	Value of transfers (local currency)	Value of transfers (EUR ¹²⁴)	Delivery mechanism(s)	Frequency	Duration	Additional information
Hungary	HUF 30,000 - 45,000	EUR 74 - 111	Voucher	One payment per month for 1-3 months	One extra payment (HUF 30,000) was provided	Winter cash assistance
Moldova	MDL 2,200 /per family members	EUR 109	Bank transfer (prepaid bank card)	One payment per month	No set duration	Winterization (MDL +700) ¹²⁵
Poland	Calculated based on the number of family members: PLN 700 per household (EUR 150) PLN 600 for each family member (EUR 128) Maximum: PLN 2500 (EUR 535)		ATM	One payment per month	3 months	The assumption that refugees will then be included in SSN. This assumption was not checked by UNHCR
Romania	RON 568 per family members	EUR 115	Bank, OTC (CashDashUK/Rapyd, MoneyGram)	One payment per month	3 months	Winterization
Slovakia	Calculated based on the number of family members and their age: Adult: EUR 80 Child <3 years: EUR 80 Child >3 years: EUR 60 Maximum: EUR 380		Bank transfer or OTC at any Post Office	One payment per month	4 months	Assistance was taken over by the government.

75. Refugees were overall satisfied with the CBI enrolment and distribution processes set up by UNHCR. Seventy-six per cent of refugees (n=1098) were satisfied with the quality of the CBI, including distribution processes ([AGD-disaggregated data available here](#)), which is consistent with the data from the FGDs and UNHCR's PDM.¹²⁶¹²⁷ The main drivers of satisfaction came from the modality and

¹²² Finding based on secondary sources (country operation annual reports).

¹²³ Given the restrictions imposed by the Hungarian government on UNHCR on the use of cash assistance as a modality of assistance.

¹²⁴ Exchange rates from InforEuro at the December 2022 rate (available [here](#)).

¹²⁵ Cash Working Group Moldova, "Moldova Cash Working Group Meeting Minutes - 13 Dec 2022," December 2022.

¹²⁶ UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, "Ukraine Situation Outcomes of Cash Assistance: Findings from Post Distribution Monitoring," April 2023.

¹²⁷ No significant difference was observed between the disaggregated AGD data.

delivery mechanisms (as highlighted in [Design - Relevance](#)), and from UNHCR's cash enrolment and distribution processes, which were reportedly well organized according to refugees.¹²⁸ The only notable exceptions took place in Poland and Moldova. In Poland, the first-come, first-served approach towards CBI (discussed in [Design - Relevance](#)) led to a distrust with the targeting and enrolment process.¹²⁹ In Moldova, refugees expressed a high degree of satisfaction from May to November 2022. There was a major drop in the level of satisfaction in November and December as a result of inflation, but also due to delays in payment for new arrivals in December 2022 and January 2023,¹³⁰ combined with a perceived lack of professionalism of hotline staff, which has been widely shared on social media.¹³¹

- 76. The effectiveness of CBI varied depending on refugees' access to free or subsidized health care and accommodation.** Overall, refugees were moderately satisfied with the transfer value, and their ability to cover their basic needs. While 62 per cent of refugees (n=1098) were satisfied with the transfer value ([AGD-disaggregated data available here](#)), the data stemming from FGDs show a more nuanced picture. Besides obvious external factors that impact one's ability to meet basic needs, i.e. income or savings, there are other factors that influence one's abilities to meet basic needs. First, living in collective centres effectively meant free rents and often free access to food and other amenities. Second, the coverage of needs in urban centres, notably via additional distributions of cash or CRI by volunteers, local actors and even international humanitarian organizations, means that "urban refugees" had a better coverage of their basic needs than "rural refugees". Finally, PWSNs, persons with serious health conditions and older people were less satisfied with the quantity of CBI to cover their needs, due to higher health costs.¹³² While these findings are neither specific to this response nor specifically attributable to UNHCR, they, however, question UNHCR's blanket CBI targeting approach in 2022, and advocate for a differentiated approach to covering basic needs, via top-ups and referrals, given that accommodation and health are refugees' most significant expenses.¹³³
- 77. Effectiveness of CBI decreased over time as inflation eroded refugees' purchasing power.** Ranging from half to most of the FGDs, participants complained about the insufficient transfer value, especially towards the last trimester of the year.¹³⁴ Although it is common and understandable that refugees would request a higher transfer value, especially when they have not been subjected to displacements before and are unfamiliar with the humanitarian sector's definition of basic needs, there are other factors that explain these claims. First, the transfer value was not revised in 2022, despite soaring inflation. The winterization support, which aimed to mitigate inflation, was insufficient to cover the loss of purchasing power. Inflation was comparatively higher in Moldova than in the other four countries¹³⁵ and also significantly contributed to lower levels of satisfaction with the CBI assistance. Second, the right to health services in the five countries did not imply free access to consultations and medicines. Most women singled-headed household participants in FGDs complained about the high

¹²⁸ Finding based on FGDs in Poland, Slovakia and Moldova and UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, "Ukraine Situation Outcomes of Cash Assistance: Findings from Post Distribution Monitoring," April 2023.

¹²⁹ Finding based on KIIs with UNHCR staff, the online stakeholders survey and in FGDs in Poland.

¹³⁰ As a mitigation measure, UNHCR Moldova and its IP distributed vouchers to refugees.

¹³¹ Finding based on KIIs with UNHCR staff and IPs, the perception survey with refugees (Those aged 60 and over were less satisfied with the transfer value than those aged 30-45, with 53 per cent (n=113) and 65 per cent (n=723) respectively and FGDs in Moldova.

¹³² 48% of older persons (n=109), 49% of PWSN (n=84) and 52% of persons with serious health conditions (n = 134) versus 37% for the overall sample (n=1098).

¹³³ UNHCR, "Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response."

¹³⁴ It is worth noting that in Slovakia, the government had taken over the CBI by then.

¹³⁵ In Moldova, the inflation in 2022 was 28.7% while it was 14.6% in Hungary, 14.4% in Poland, 13.8% in Romania, and 12.8% in Slovakia. Source: World Bank Data.

cost to procure medicines for children, especially during winter, with no alternative other than using the cash assistance to cover these needs.¹³⁶

5.1.2 Core Relief Items

Key finding 8: Effective in the first weeks, the distribution of Core Relief Items proved less useful in the second half of 2022 for winterization.

78. **The CRI support during the first weeks of the response met immediate needs and was effective, with the exception of Slovakia.**¹³⁷ UNHCR, alongside other actors, distributed standard CRI to cover refugees' immediate needs,¹³⁸ while setting up CBI. Distributions took place at border crossing points and in reception centres. For instance, by 30 March, 40,000 refugees had received CRI in Moldova.¹³⁹ UNHCR and IPs also provided standard and non-standard CRI to refugee accommodation centres, based on the needs identified in the assessment conducted via basic needs and accommodation working groups.¹⁴⁰ Overall, refugees appeared satisfied¹⁴¹ with the quality and diversity of assistance received on arrival, though given the multitude of actors providing assistance, this finding is not specific to UNHCR.
79. On the other hand, **the effectiveness of CRI support provided as part of winterization is mixed.** Though needed, there were multiple reports of the assistance¹⁴² coming in too late or that the size of the clothes distributed was not adequate for the recipients in all countries but Moldova.¹⁴³ Quantity- and quality-wise, refugees were generally satisfied. Furthermore, in countries where markets were functioning and UNHCR had existing CBI delivery systems in place, the choice of delivery modality was neither a driver of effectiveness nor relevant, as discussed in [Design - Relevance](#).
80. **CRI distributions were, at times, supply-driven and not need-driven.** Given the displacement scenarios being discussed in some of the countries (e.g. the fall of Odessa in Romania and Moldova) by UNHCR, the government and other actors, it was relevant for UNHCR to invest massively in contingency stocks. However, this has led to some CRI distribution taking place towards the end of the year, as UNHCR distributed additional CRI to empty stocks, as the contingency stocks¹⁴⁴ were no longer needed.¹⁴⁵ As a result, some UNHCR and sector member interviewees in Slovakia and Poland felt the items distributed were not aligned with refugees' needs and preferences (e.g. giving blankets, bed linen and towels to refugees staying in hotels and collective centres where they already received some, was irrelevant).¹⁴⁶

¹³⁶ FGDs in Poland and Moldova. This finding is corroborated by the survey data as well, where single mothers with small children (n=339) show a lower satisfaction with the transfer value compared with the overall average.

¹³⁷ It took UNHCR time to set up their supply pipeline and by then, needs were covered.

¹³⁸ With the exception of Romania where the CO's main focus was to re-position CRIs for contingency.

¹³⁹ UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, "Ukraine Situation Flash Update: #3 (15 March 2022)," March 15, 2022.

¹⁴⁰ UNHCR and REACH conducted formal weekly site and accommodation centres monitoring to identify needs. In the other countries, the working group minutes suggest that this has taken place as well.

¹⁴¹ Finding based on FGDs in Moldova.

¹⁴² Finding based on KIIs with UNHCR staff, IPs and sector members, online stakeholder survey, and FGDs.

¹⁴³ UNHCR Moldova did not provide CRI as part of winterization.

¹⁴⁴ UNHCR developed a contingency stock in warehouses in the five countries in the weeks after the emergency. The stockpiling was to be used in case of a new influx and to assist Ukraine.

¹⁴⁵ Finding based on KIIs with UNHCR staff and the online stakeholder survey.

¹⁴⁶ Finding based on the online stakeholder survey and FGDs.

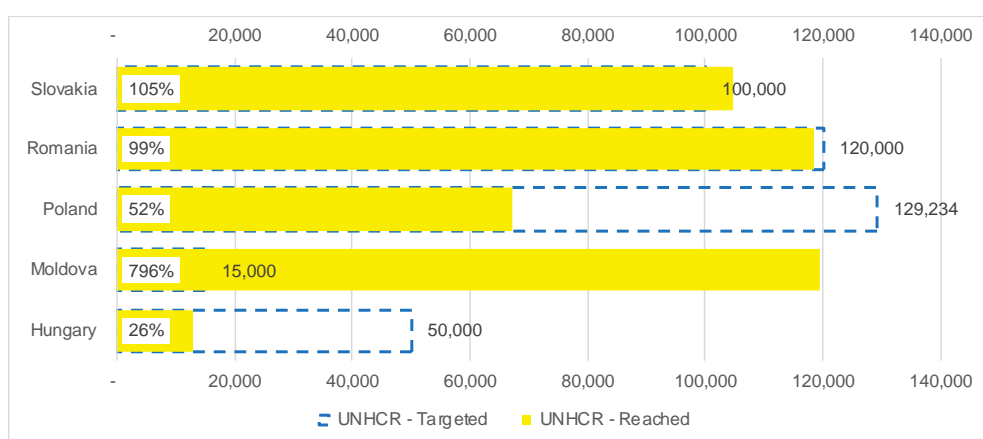
5.1.3 Access to information and Legal Aid/Counselling

Key finding 9: Information and Legal Aid/Counselling services were effective and of quality but likely insufficient in relation to needs.

81. **UNHCR set up several channels to provide refugees with information and ensure maximum coverage.** First, UNHCR, via its implementing partners, ensured a continued presence at the main border crossings so that refugees could obtain critical information about the support available. UNHCR, in coordination with UNICEF, established Blue Dot Hubs where a multifunctional team helped refugees access information on the rights and services they were entitled to. UNHCR and UNICEF opened 19 Blue Dot Hubs by April 2022 and 39 by December 2022. UNHCR also invested in the creation and/or supported existing government hotlines or social media channels. For instance, UNHCR funded and trained staff from the [Dopomoha](#) information website for refugees living in Romania and from the government green line in Moldova.
82. **Refugees who accessed information when crossing borders, are satisfied with the quality and relevance of the information received.** The reach and coverage of information are harder to ascertain. Twenty-three per cent of survey respondents (n=1349) received information at the border from UNHCR and its IPs, and 85 per cent of them (n=305) deemed the information relevant and useful ([AGD-disaggregated data available here](#)).
83. Relatively low coverage can be explained by:
- The limited time refugees remained at the borders,¹⁴⁷ not giving them enough time to search for and receive information.
 - Border crossing at border points without UNHCR presence.
 - Not remembering who provided information. When probed about the information and counselling received at the border, about one third of FGD participants, especially those that arrived between February and April, did not remember which organization they talked to, due to being in shock.
84. **Though UNHCR exceeded its targets in some countries, legal aid coverage may be insufficient in relation to needs.** Although the coverage seems high (as shown in Figure 7), more survey respondents said they had not received this support, but were interested in it, than those who had. This is corroborated by one third of FGDs wherein refugees confirmed this information and mentioned they wanted more regular information. This lack of coverage is, however, location specific. Refugees living in collective accommodation had more access to legal counselling activities than those living outside.

¹⁴⁷ In March 2022, an assessment in Poland concluded that 'most refugees spend between 20 minutes and 7 hours at the sites before taking onward transportation.' UNHCR Poland and UNICEF, "Poland: UNICEF & UNHCR Joint Rapid Assessment: Border and Reception Areas in Eastern Poland (11 — 13 March 2022)," 2022.

Figure 7 Legal assistance – Refugees reached compared with those targeted by UNHCR



85. **The quality of the legal assistance was satisfactory to most of the refugees but limited to basic information.** Eighty-nine per cent of refugees found the legal assistance relevant to their needs (n=216) ([AGD-disaggregated data available here](#)). Nevertheless, satisfaction with the legal assistance seemed to vary based on the complexity of the topic. For instance, the level of satisfaction with the legal counselling decreased at the end of 2022 and in 2023 in Moldova subsequently to the announcement of the TP. About a third of refugees interviewed and surveyed felt that UNHCR's legal assistance was unsatisfactory, because the various actors involved in legal counselling, including UNHCR's IPs, had reportedly limited information to answer their queries (proof of residence, whether or not they could return to Ukraine, etc.). This lack of information of UNHCR and legal actors stems from the lack of information available from the Government of the Republic of Moldova on the TP.

5.2 Unintended effects

86. The evaluation uncovered both positive and negative effects of UNHCR's interventions, stemming from various sources of information: key informants' interviews with UNHCR staff and external stakeholders (government, sector members, implementing partners), surveys (refugees, UNHCR staff and implementing partners). Given the regional nature of the evaluation, this evaluation presents unintended effects that are applicable to two countries or more.

5.2.1 Positive unintended effects

Key finding 10: The Ukraine Refugee Response trickled broad positive effects on refugees' rights and connections between local actors and governments.

87. **The Ukraine refugee situation has widened the protection space for refugees in Europe.**¹⁴⁸ With the activation of the EU Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) on 4 March 2022,¹⁴⁹ the nine EU member States with the greatest number of Ukrainian refugees, which include Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, have granted Ukrainian refugees the right to access labour markets, education, health care and social housing, to varying degrees.¹⁵⁰ UNHCR, and other humanitarian organizations, engaged with the governments of all five countries in delivering emergency response

¹⁴⁸ According to interviewees (20 KIIs).

¹⁴⁹ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/common-european-asylum-system/temporary-protection_en

¹⁵⁰ Throughout 2022, Moldova passed a 60-day renewable state of emergency (prolonged five times in 2022), which among other things, granted access to Ukrainian refugees to labour markets, education, health care and social housing.

and advocating for Ukrainian refugees' rights. In turn, interviewees noted that this had a positive spillover effect on the narrative around refugees' integration and service provision, especially in Slovakia, Poland and Hungary.

88. **Through the scale up, UNHCR is well positioned to advocate on behalf of refugees in the five countries.** UNHCR either created or strengthened relationships with various ministries at technical and advocacy levels. For instance, in Slovakia and Moldova, UNHCR helped the government rapidly draft laws to allow for CBI delivery to Ukrainian refugees. UNHCR's mandate and expertise on refugees are also well recognized by the governments of the five host countries¹⁵¹ and UNHCR's guidance on refugee matters is well accepted by central-level governments.¹⁵² UNHCR advocated for the rights of all forcibly displaced people, which resulted in favourable amendments to legislation. For example, Third-Country Nationals (TCN) who had previously resided in Ukraine were included in the Polish Special Act.¹⁵³ Over time, the Act underwent several amendments, with UNHCR actively advocating to ensure its alignment with international standards and EU guidance, eventually including TCNs.
89. **The set-up of the RCM by UNHCR with representatives of international humanitarian agencies, civil society organizations and government entities strengthened linkages between Local Non-Governmental Organizations (LNGO) and the governments.**¹⁵⁴ The RCM fostered direct collaboration between government entities and national NGOs, which is likely to continue after the dismantlement of the RCM. In Slovakia for instance, the Kosice municipality reported that, inspired by the national RCM, they have established their own internal coordination mechanisms at local level (Steering Committee, Coordination Forum). The Slovak Government included national NGOs into the Contingency Plan and signed an MoU with 11 of these NGOs.

5.2.2 Negative unintended effects

Key finding 11: The response led to tensions among refugees as per their arrival dates, and between refugees and host communities, which UNHCR intends to mitigate.

90. **The level of support varied based on the location of refugees, which led to a feeling of exclusion and, to varying degrees, of inability to meet basic needs.** This materialized on two levels.¹⁵⁵ First, refugees living in (some) community centres in urban areas were better off than refugees in similar socioeconomic and social vulnerability situations living in private accommodation in Hungary, Moldova, Poland and Slovakia. Second, refugees living in urban centres were better off than refugees living in rural areas in Hungary, Moldova,¹⁵⁶ Poland, Romania and Slovakia. In both cases, the service provision (e.g. food or non-food items (NFI) assistance, and access to services) was lower outside of the collective centres and cities.¹⁵⁷ Based on the primary data collected, the combination of the CBI assistance and CRI was one of the drivers behind the effectiveness of UNHCR's interventions to meet

¹⁵¹ This has been unanimously mentioned by interviewees from UNHCR, government and sector members alike in all five countries.

¹⁵² Source: UNHCR senior management staff.

¹⁵³ The Special Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Citizens in the Context of the Armed Conflict in Ukraine guaranteed access to status, documentation, and rights for Ukrainian citizens.

¹⁵⁴ Mentioned by some interviewees (UNHCR, Government and Sector members) in all five countries. In Hungary, it was mentioned by most key informants while only by a few in Romania and Poland.

¹⁵⁵ According to interviews with UNHCR and sector representatives and FGDs in Moldova, Poland and Slovakia.

¹⁵⁶ Regional Refugee Response for the Ukraine Situation, "2023 Refugee Response Plan Local Consultations," October 2022.

¹⁵⁷ The evaluation team corroborated these perceptions from interviews and FGD with the data from the 5W in the five countries.

immediate needs. In other words, UNHCR's interventions are likely to be more effective for refugees in collective centres in urban areas than for those in rural areas and renting/residing with host communities.

91. **There have been reports of growing tensions between refugees and host communities** in Romania, Moldova and Slovakia.¹⁵⁸ These are fuelled by perceptions that the governmental and international support to Ukrainian refugees is more substantial than for nationals. In reaction, UNHCR and others included host communities in their programmes (e.g. the World Food Programme (WFP) cash assistance targeted host communities hosting refugees in Moldova), and aligned transfer value with minimum wages in all countries. Furthermore, the 2023 RRP plans to “address the needs of impacted host populations at the community level, with a view to expanding community resources and services that may be under strain due to the arrival of the refugee population”.¹⁵⁹ However, the RRP does not include direct support to host community households and, according to some interviewees, tensions are likely to increase in 2023, should the most socioeconomically vulnerable households from host communities not be included further.

6. Implementation – efficiency

92. The following section discusses first the extent to which UNHCR interventions in Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia were [timely](#), and which internal and external factors influenced timeliness. Second, it identifies the extent to which UNHCR has fit-for-purpose [data collection and monitoring systems](#) for the response. Third, the extent to which the Ukraine situation response in these five countries was a “[whole-of-UNHCR response](#)”, where “the scale, pace, complexity and consequences of the crisis significantly exceed the existing response capacities of the country operation(s) and relevant regional bureau(x); and thus call for an institutional, whole-of-UNHCR response to prevent the risk of failure to deliver effectively and at scale.”¹⁶⁰

6.1 Timeliness of the intervention

Key finding 12: UNHCR's interventions were timely given its limited prior operational footprint in the region, but with significant country differences due to necessary corporate level geographical prioritization.

93. **Given its limited operational footprint before the war in the five countries,**¹⁶¹ **the set-up of UNHCR interventions was overall timely.** There was a consensus among most of the stakeholders,¹⁶² except in Slovakia,¹⁶³ which is corroborated by various secondary sources,¹⁶⁴ that UNHCR was able to swiftly set up offices, mobilize human and financial resources, roll out the RCM and implement their interventions at scale, especially CBI. UNHCR set up from scratch and officially launched their CBI

¹⁵⁸ FGDs in Moldova, Poland and Romania and key informants with all stakeholders.

¹⁵⁹ UNHCR, “Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan January-December 2023,” 2023.

¹⁶⁰ UNHCR, “Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response.”

¹⁶¹ Before the war, UNHCR had two Representation Offices (Poland, Romania) and one MCO in Hungary (< 20 staff), covering Moldova and Slovakia (no staff presence).

¹⁶² Finding based on KIs with UNHCR staff, IP staff, sector members and government representatives, and in the online stakeholder survey. When removing respondents that replied, “I do not know” or “I do not want to answer”, 74% considered UNHCR interventions were implemented in a timely manner (answers “Yes, completely” and “Yes, mostly”).

¹⁶³ In Slovakia, there was a consensus among all stakeholders that the intervention was late.

¹⁶⁴ UNHCR, “Operational Data Portal: Ukraine Situation.”

programme in Poland, Moldova and Romania on 15 March,¹⁶⁵ 25 March¹⁶⁶ and 4 April 2022,¹⁶⁷ respectively. They conducted protection and border monitoring from March 2022 and set the RCM in all countries in March/April 2022.¹⁶⁸

94. However, **there were country differences, with Poland and Moldova being timelier than Hungary, Romania and Slovakia.** These reported differences come from key informant interviews and surveys with UNHCR staff and external stakeholders, and are partially supported by the desk review. For instance, though the Cash programme was set up in Moldova, Poland and Romania around the same time, the enrolment was faster in Poland and Moldova than it was in Romania. By the end of May, Poland and Moldova had enrolled respectively 155,420¹⁶⁹ and 60,000 refugees,¹⁷⁰ while Romania had enrolled 5,100 refugees.¹⁷¹ According to sources,¹⁷² Poland was prioritized because of its caseload of refugees and Moldova for being a non-EU country¹⁷³ with limited resources.
95. **Refugees were overall satisfied with the timeliness of the response in 2022, although some of them criticized delays in the distribution of non-food items¹⁷⁴ and CBI towards the end of 2022.** Eighty-seven per cent of survey respondents (n=216) were satisfied with the timeliness of the legal assistance/counselling and 63 per cent (n=1098) with cash assistance timeliness ([AGD-disaggregated data available here](#)).¹⁷⁵ There were no significant differences among refugees based on the respondents' sex, age or specific needs. These proportions were consistent with the data from the focus group discussions in Moldova, Poland and Slovakia and the data from the CBI PDM conducted by UNHCR. There were reports of delays¹⁷⁶ with the distribution of CRI during the winterization in Poland, Slovakia and Romania. Refugees' satisfaction with the timeliness of the cash assistance was significantly lower in Moldova than in other countries.¹⁷⁷ The level of satisfaction dropped in December 2022 and in the first trimester of 2023,¹⁷⁸ due to two internal factors (delays in payment and the inability of the cash hotline staff to provide information about payment schedules)¹⁷⁹ and one external factor, inflation.
96. This evaluation has unveiled various **internal and external factors that influenced the timeliness of UNHCR interventions.**

¹⁶⁵ UNHCR Poland, "Ukraine Emergency: Cash Assistance Factsheet," 2022.

¹⁶⁶ UNHCR Moldova, "UNHCR Moldova: Cash Assistance for Refugees," April 2022.

¹⁶⁷ UNHCR Romania, "Ukraine Refugee Situation Operational Update: Romania (01 -15 May 2022)," May 2022.

¹⁶⁸ Based on the meeting minutes data minutes available on UNHCR data portal.

¹⁶⁹ UNHCR Poland, "Ukraine Emergency: Cash Assistance Factsheet."

¹⁷⁰ UNHCR Moldova, "Post-Distribution Monitoring of UNHCR's Cash Assistance in Moldova Round 1, May 2022," May 2022.

¹⁷¹ UNHCR Romania, "Ukraine Refugee Situation Operational Update: Romania (16 -31 May 2022)," May 2022. There is no data for Hungary and Slovakia because UNHCR did not implement in CBI in Hungary (except the winterization) and the Slovak government was implementing CBI in May 2022 in Slovakia (UNHCR took over in July).

¹⁷² UNHCR interviews. UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, "Real-Time Review for the Ukraine Situation."

¹⁷³ As such, Moldova did not receive financial support from the European Union to deal with the refugee influx.

¹⁷⁴ Mostly clothes.

¹⁷⁵ As indicated in the methodology section, the evaluation team did not use the satisfaction data or shelter data from the survey with refugees.

¹⁷⁶ Finding based on FGDs in Poland and Slovakia and KIIs in Romania, Slovakia and Poland. For Moldova, there were similar reports, but it seems that it was not UNHCR's assistance which was targeted by those comments.

¹⁷⁷ 37 per cent and 23 per cent of respondents in Moldova (n= 370) were "not really" or "not at all" satisfied with the timeliness of cash assistance. Given the relative weight of respondents from Moldova in the survey data, this significantly contributes to having 33% not being satisfied with the timeliness.

¹⁷⁸ Finding based on online refugee survey and FGDs.

¹⁷⁹ Finding based on KIIs with UNHCR and IP staff (n=4).

6.1.1 Internal factors of timeliness

Key finding 13: The L3 protocols, emergency HR rosters and the centralization of some processes, e.g. the Cash Hub, were overall factors that enabled the timeliness of UNHCR's interventions.

97. Among UNHCR staff at CO, RBE and HQ-level, there was a **consensus that simplified protocols and processes at CO-level, triggered by the emergency policy, contributed positively to the timeliness of the response.** The processes that were cited the most included: the increased threshold and waivers for procurement (for supply and Financial Service Providers (FSP)), the fast-track recruitment for national staff and the Letter of Mutual Intent (LOMI). However, some L3 protocols were reportedly¹⁸⁰ not fit for purpose for an emergency. For example, LOMI/partnership agreements, which only delayed due diligence and were reported to be burdensome, or missing protocols, such as the grants for refugee-led organizations, whose requirements were identical to those imposed under normal circumstances and too cumbersome to make the grants attractive to such organizations.
98. **The extent to which simplified protocols were used to their full potential, in line with the “no regrets” approach varied country by country:** maximized in Moldova and Hungary but less so in Slovakia, Romania and Poland.¹⁸¹ Such reported variations stem from the different understanding of COs' decision-making power and margin of manoeuvre as a result of the “no regrets” policy and of UNHCR operation staff's risk aversion.
99. **The global HR rosters were the second key enabler of the timeliness of the response. Despite reports of timeframes being longer than what is stated in policies,¹⁸² the deployments¹⁸³ have been overall timely in light of the scale of human resources needs.¹⁸⁴** In 2022, there were 487 emergency deployments for the Ukraine situation, of which 389 were for Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia (see breakdown in Figure 8). The only notable exception to the timeliness of deployments was in Slovakia.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ According to interviewees from country offices.

¹⁸¹ Finding based on KIIs with UNHCR staff.

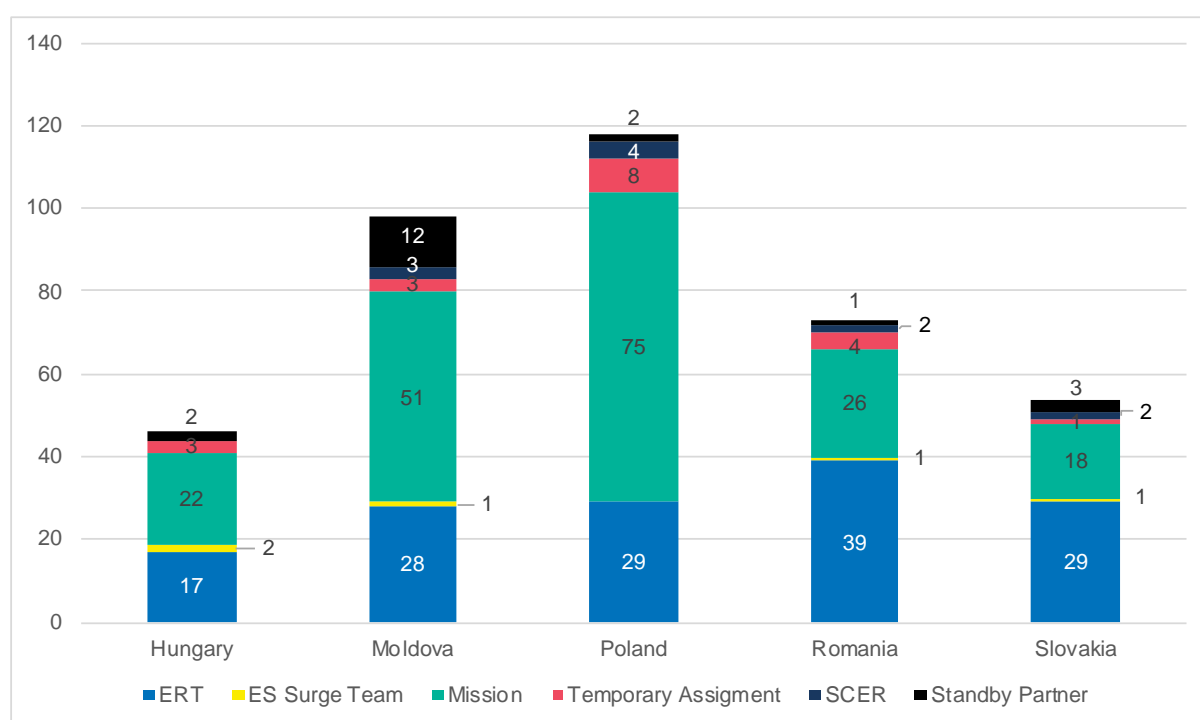
¹⁸² The deployment timeframe ranges from 72 hours (Emergency Services Surge, ERT, SCER, functional rosters) to 2 weeks (functional rosters, missions). UNHCR, “Emergency Rosters and Deployments - Standard Operating Procedures for the Management of Emergency Rosters and Deployment of Emergency Roster Team Members and Standby Partner Staff,” 2020.

¹⁸³ This includes the DESS Emergency Services Surge Team, the ERT, SCER, Standby partners and missions from functional rosters (Admin/Finance, Human Resources, Registration, Supply, IM and Interagency Coordination) and HQ staff.

¹⁸⁴ Finding based on KIIs with UNHCR staff.

¹⁸⁵ UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, “Real-Time Review for the Ukraine Situation.”

Figure 8. Emergency deployments per country in 2022



100. In addition to emergency deployments, UNHCR completed **180 international recruitments**¹⁸⁶ via a fast-track procedure in 2022. To date, 2022 was the year with the highest number of fast-track positions filled, with 372 positions, of which 229 were for the Ukraine Emergency. The first fast track, which was launched on 14 April 2022,¹⁸⁷ was the most important with 150 positions opened.¹⁸⁸ Based on interviews,¹⁸⁹ it took on average two months between the launch of the recruitment and the arrival of the fast track in countries. According to one third of interviewees, the deployments took place when emergency deployments had already left or were about to leave, **which created some turnover and loss of institutional memory**. Other interviewees were satisfied with the fast-track deployments.

101. **The CBI centralization and division of roles and responsibilities between COs and the Cash Hub**¹⁹⁰ was a third enabler of the timeliness (and scale) of the response. These were all the more important considering the lack of prior operational footprint. The CO focused on the design of the CBI response and the enrolment, while the Cash Hub executed the payments. The majority of UNHCR staff acknowledged that the Cash Hub was critical to the timeliness and scaling up of the CBI, as COs had no experience of implementing CBI at scale. Overall, most UNHCR interviewees welcomed this centralization, as it was an enabler of timeliness for the delivery of CBI at scale, but also freed up time for COs. Reversely, the centralization of the Cash Hub meant that it was difficult for COs to track implementation information¹⁹¹ and was a source of frustration for some UNHCR staff at country level.

¹⁸⁶ Hungary (n=13), Moldova (n=31), Poland (n=76), Romania (n=26), Slovakia (n=14), RBE (n=20) via four fast-track: April, June, August and December.

¹⁸⁷ UNHCR, "Memorandum - Fast Track Ukraine Situation (14 April 2022)" (2022, n.d.).

¹⁸⁸ Hungary (n=13), Moldova (n=31), Poland (n=66), Romania (n=26), Slovakia (n=14).

¹⁸⁹ The evaluation team did not have access to UNHCR HR data to triangulate.

¹⁹⁰ Set up in March 2022, this unit executed the payment plans received from the COs on an ongoing basis.

¹⁹¹ It was easy to track who is enrolled as Progress is managed from CO. More difficult to track who has received assistance and what money remained to be disbursed).

102. **There were concerns about the irregularity of the Cash Hub in the last quarter of 2022.**

Some refugees received the payment later than usual, especially in Moldova and Romania.¹⁹²¹⁹³ According to some UNHCR staff, two factors caused this loss of efficiency. First, as the CBI programmes were functioning well and refugees' influxes reduced, the Cash Hub reduced its payment frequency in the last trimester of 2022. As a result, the payment frequency had decreased when new arrivals took place in November and December. Second, with the financial closure, the Cash Hub did not carry any payment between mid-December to mid-January.

103. **Supply and Payment Service Provider (PSP) positively influenced timeliness during the first six months of the response but hampered the winterization effort.**

On the one hand, the COs benefited from the support of HQ supply division and access to pre-existing agreements with suppliers. COs also had access to emergency stocks from other operations (e.g. Pakistan), which had never been done before.¹⁹⁴ Most interviewees praised the timeliness of procurement during the first six months of the response. On the other hand, there were procurement delays, as well as late delivery of in-kind donations, towards the second semester of 2022. Based on interviews with UNHCR, the main reason behind the delays was the combination of late orders coming from COs (when the winterization exercise was conducted) and procurement and partnership timeframes in UNHCR (one to two months, contingent on the availability of supply for procurement and one to three months for corporate partners).

Key finding 14: The decision to collect refugees' biometrics by default at the beginning of the response in EU-member states, and to maintain the MCO were disablers of the timeliness of UNHCR's interventions.

104. **UNHCR decision to collect biometrics by default to enrol refugees led to delays in terms of CBI distribution (Romania) and partnerships (Poland), as a result of discussions on GDPR compliance.**

The decision to collect biometric data to register refugees is questionable considering refugees had passports, which would have been sufficient to verify their identity at least in the first weeks of the response, in a "no regrets" context. While biometrics are functionally more robust than other forms of identification to reduce duplication, the set-up of the system is more cumbersome and thus takes more time. In the case of the Ukraine Refugee Response, this was mitigated by the fact that UNHCR gave organizational priority to this response and provided extensive support (IM, CBI, Registration). However, for future emergency response where UNHCR is not able to give the same organizational commitment to a refugee response, opting for biometrics from the start of a response when there are alternative forms of identification is likely to delay the start of CBI distribution. In that situation, UNHCR should clarify the trade-off between the risk of duplication and a later start of the assistance, which may in turn lead to negative coping strategies for refugees.

105. **Finally, maintaining the MCO hampered the timeliness by reducing available resources and increasing the decision-making layers.**

Before the war, the MCO based in Hungary, with around 20 staff, oversaw Belarus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Slovenia and Slovakia. While Moldova became a separate operation reporting directly to the RBE, the MCO was responsible for the emergency operations in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and Slovakia. Interviewees in Hungary

¹⁹² There has been reports as well for Slovakia, but the evaluation team has not been able to triangulate the information.

¹⁹³ Finding based on FGDs and the online refugee survey.

¹⁹⁴ HQ supply also assisted CO by getting air transport support by Japan to bring UNHCR relief supplies from UNHCR warehouses in other regions to Romania and Poland UNHCR Press release: <https://www.unhcr.org/ro/14719-unhcr-with-the-government-of-romania-and-the-government-of-japan-welcomed-the-arrival-of-crucial-humanitarian-supplies.html>

and Slovakia criticized this set-up because, following this decision, a single team was responsible for operating a MCO while designing and implementing an L3 emergency response (e.g. one emergency coordinator for four countries, when Moldova, Poland and Romania had one each). This set-up also created competition between COs with regard to getting HR in COs, while the MCO did not get enough additional human resources to deal with its additional responsibilities. Second, maintaining the MCO resulted in creating two separate lines of reporting and accountability for Hungary and Slovakia, which had to get the sign-off of the MCO and RBE for some decisions, such as on recruitment and other programmatic decisions.

6.1.2 External factors of timeliness

Key finding 15: The response from local responders and the digitalization of the response contributed significantly to UNHCR's timeliness.

106. **The initial scale of needs was initially met by the scale of the response from local responders.** This meant that UNHCR could focus on setting up its interventions to take over from local responders, who showed notable willingness, timeliness and capacity to respond to the immediate needs of refugees. In turn, it allowed UNHCR to focus on setting up operations and the RCM. However, this scale varied across countries. In Hungary, the response was fully led by local NGOs and volunteers, as no major international organizations joined the response.
107. **The digitalization of the response, which is a key enabler of timeliness, was made possible as a result of the infrastructure in place, the fact that refugees have ID documents and of their financial inclusion.** Indeed, the great majority of Ukrainian refugees had identity documents and were financially literate, which allowed humanitarian actors to use delivery mechanisms, such as bank transfers, mobile money or over-the-counter (OTC), as part of the response. The use of these delivery mechanisms were enablers of scale and speed for UNHCR's CBI response.

6.2 Data collection and monitoring systems

Key finding 16: UNHCR's data collection efforts were valuable to inform the situation analysis and response design but were not systematically used to make iterative programmatic decisions.

108. **All country operations established border monitoring at critical border points, which allowed UNHCR to collect and share data on refugees' needs as they entered the host country** (e.g. a joint rapid assessment of border and reception areas in eastern Poland).¹⁹⁵ UNHCR began monitoring sites at varying times in the response (e.g. March in Moldova and August in Slovakia).¹⁹⁶ From May, UNHCR conducted ongoing protection profiling and monitoring assessments.¹⁹⁷ During Q4

¹⁹⁵ UNHCR Poland and UNICEF, "Poland: UNICEF & UNHCR Joint Rapid Assessment: Border and Reception Areas in Eastern Poland (11–13 March 2022)," 2022, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/91871>.

¹⁹⁶ Site/accommodation centre monitoring began in March in Moldova ([here](#)), in May in Romania ([here](#)), in June in Poland ([here](#)), in August in Slovakia ([here](#)). No site monitoring data were available for Hungary.

¹⁹⁷ Protection profiling and monitoring started in May in Poland ([here](#)), Moldova ([here](#)), Slovakia ([here](#)), Romania ([here](#)), in June in Hungary ([here](#)).

of 2022, UNHCR commissioned MSNAs across operations.¹⁹⁸ Further, UNHCR commissioned ad hoc assessments¹⁹⁹ and used social media to identify rumours and misinformation.²⁰⁰

109. **UNHCR's data collection and coordination efforts were valuable to gain an overview of the situation and develop strategies.** The MSNAs informed the 2023 RRP and ongoing assessments informed contingency planning. Rapid risk assessments carried out in several countries informed inter-agency action plans on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), thus directing the overall programmatic response (not only for UNHCR, but also for partners). Protection monitoring data and direct engagement with refugees and refugee-led organizations were used to develop specific tools based on emerging protection risks (e.g. the adapted Safety Assessment tools adopted a cross-sectoral lens to identify factors contributing to heightened risks of trafficking and GBV, including sexual exploitation and abuse).²⁰¹
110. Monitoring data were also used to develop assumptions about risks and refugees' needs (e.g. a heightened risk of human trafficking for single mothers) and accompanying relevant design decisions (e.g. human trafficking and PSEA awareness messages). The Stay Safe campaign was implemented across the response and reached 1,7 million people, and 46,000 refugees were reached through community outreach PSEA activities in 2022. In Moldova, rumour tracing enabled UNHCR to identify and address issues related to implementing partners' cash hotline. Border monitoring in Poland allowed the country operation to track and follow up on rumours about potential refugee influxes. For example, on 9 November, border guards informed UNHCR that displaced people from the eastern part of Ukraine were hosted in hotels and hostels in the villages near the Polish border, and that they were planning to cross the border if the situation escalated. This enabled UNHCR to anticipate an influx and prepare free transport to move refugees from reception points to other accommodation centres in Poland.²⁰² PDM data led to the expansion of UNHCR's CBI delivery mechanisms in Romania and an adjustment of the quantity and quality of hygiene kits in Hungary.
111. Despite these efforts, UNHCR staff and implementing partners mentioned that, due to time constraints, monitoring data were not consistently reviewed to reflect on the programme design and assumptions to increase the relevance of the response.²⁰³
112. UNHCR carried out an internal real-time review (RTR)²⁰⁴ in June 2022 to take stock and iterate its response based on four key recommendations. The RBE was receptive of the RTR recommendations and provided a management response to onboard the specific recommendations.²⁰⁵ Measures included the recruitment of a senior CBI officer at the RBE-level to support targeting and strengthen AAP capacity; and the provision of RBE social protection and inclusion expertise to the country operations to reorient the protection response towards greater support for inclusion in national and local social protection schemes. With the support of DESS, country operations revised their operational scenarios and accompanying contingency plans in August and October 2022. At the time

¹⁹⁸ Hungary ([here](#)), Moldova ([here](#)), Poland ([here](#)), Slovakia ([here](#)), Romania ([here](#)).

¹⁹⁹ For example: UNHCR Poland, "Poland: Rapid Protection Monitoring Assessment in Poland," March.

²⁰⁰ UNHCR Moldova, "Ukraine Situation – Moldova: Accountability to Affected Population Task Force – Rumour Tracking Monthly Bulletin," 2022, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/97808>.

²⁰¹ This tool was rolled out in Hungary and Poland. UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, "Real-Time Review for the Ukraine Situation."

²⁰² UNHCR Poland, "Field Office Lublin: Border Monitoring Report," November 2022.

²⁰³ Findings based on KIIs with UNHCR staff.

²⁰⁴ UNHCR, "Real-Time Review for the Ukraine Situation." 2022

²⁰⁵ Country Operation-level management responses were not shared with the evaluation team.

of the evaluation, the country operations had not drafted management responses to the Real Time Review (RTR) recommendations.²⁰⁶

Key finding 17: Protection monitoring took place and was used for advocacy. However, it was not sufficiently predictive and used to its full potential.

113. **Protection and border monitoring were regularly conducted by UNHCR or its partners, but it was not sufficiently consolidated and predictive.** According to key informants, the effectiveness of protection by presence depended on several factors: access authorization, length of the border, presence of partners and staff capacity. In Poland, seven border monitoring in April and May and seven protection monitoring were carried out between 13 March and November 2022.²⁰⁷ In Moldova, six border monitoring (except for Transnistria where UNHCR did not have operational presence) were conducted between March and April. Two protection profiling took place in March and August.²⁰⁸
114. In Romania, a daily presence and monitoring was carried out from March to May 2022, and three border monitoring reports were published between March and April 2022, followed by regular protection profiling reports.²⁰⁹ In Slovakia, partners were present at all border crossing points and at least one border monitoring was conducted per week.²¹⁰ In Hungary, staff were present at the border seven days a week since the onset of the crisis and protection profiling was conducted in August, November and December.²¹¹ However, it is difficult to assess how data were used to predict the trends and inform any decision, as there has been little consolidation.
115. **UNHCR advocated to the governments on several issues arising from the border and protection monitoring.** UNHCR monitored access to entry and reported difficulties and obstacles faced by refugees, advocated for and supported refugees to access territory, including stateless people, TCN, or people married to Ukrainian nationals. Training sessions were provided to governments in all L3 countries on access to territory and asylum procedures, the identification of vulnerable groups, refugee law for border police, as well as child protection.
116. There are opportunities to increase the added value of UNHCR's data collection and monitoring processes. **Data reporting was considered overly descriptive, highlighting refugee demographic profiles and sectoral needs at the country-level.** Further, data were not representative of the refugee population; rather they were weighted towards those living in collective centres and visiting reception or Blue Dot centres.²¹² Consequently, some stakeholders felt that the data did not translate into clear objectives for sector members on the most urgent needs. Data were presented as a snapshot or as a cumulative figure, which made it challenging to track needs and displacement over time. Further,

²⁰⁶ No specific reasons were provided to the evaluation team.

²⁰⁷ UNHCR, "Operational Data Portal: Ukraine Situation."

²⁰⁸ UNHCR.

²⁰⁹ UNHCR.

²¹⁰ UNHCR.

²¹¹ UNHCR.

²¹² Finding based on KII with UNHCR country operation staff.

despite efforts to collect anticipatory data, such as refugees' intentions²¹³ and population forecasting,²¹⁴ UNHCR does not have data collection tools and systems to provide predictive refugee information.²¹⁵

6.3 Support from RBE and HQ

Key finding 18: This response was a “whole-of-organization” response with critical inputs from HQ and RBE for strategic orientations, resource mobilization, donor engagement and technical backstopping.

117. **All interviewees from UNHCR felt the Ukraine Refugee Response was a “whole-of-organization” response.** There was no/limited operational footprint in country, which meant that the inputs from HQ and RBE in terms of the design of the response were numerous, needed and effective. The HQ and RBE stepped in at design and resource mobilization stages for the supply, PSP, Cash Hub and Blue Dots. They provided support to the implementation stage by sharing tools, guidance, etc. Finally, the RBE supported the roll-out of the RCM as further described in [Section 7 Coordination](#).
118. **The RBE took an important role in terms of technical backstopping:** validating protection monitoring, communication support with the government, inputs on child protection, community-based protection, GBV and PSEA. Overall, UNHCR staff in the country felt that these inputs were useful, especially at the beginning of the response, while the COs were forming their capacity, and due to staff's lack of context knowledge. There has been an efficient centralization of some of the processes, with the set-up of the Cash Hub, centralized payment entity and the use of global procurement services for the Ukraine response.
119. **Given the regional nature of the response, the RBE and HQ took a prominent role in terms of government and donor engagement and resource mobilization at a regional level.** The RBE led on communication, advocacy and resource mobilization, with support from the HQ, to ensure consistency and to allocate resources to different countries. The RBE consolidated information for internal and external stakeholders. The RBE took a prominent role in donor reporting, representation and communication, while HQ led on PSP.
120. **At first, the RBE played more of a front-line role than a supporting role, as may be the case in traditional emergency response.** Though needed in the first weeks and beneficial to the timeliness of the response, it also led, as the response unfolded, to a high degree of centralization and a perception of the RBE acting as a bottleneck.²¹⁶ The RBE was not necessarily staffed and structured to be a front-liner.²¹⁷ The HQ supported the RBE to take on such a driving role; geographical proximity between HQ and RBE reportedly contributed to the effectiveness of the collaboration. Anecdotally, key informants reported a lack of trust and alignment between certain HQ and RBE departments, which in turn led to inefficiencies. Also, CO staff reported receiving contradicting information on the scale of CBI to be distributed from HQ and RBE.

²¹³ Refugees themselves were uncertain about the future, which prevented them from making long-term plans. UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, “Lives on Hold: Profiles and Intentions of Refugees from Ukraine (July),” 2022.

²¹⁴ Using current population figures and ongoing refugee intention data, the RRP included assumptions on the projected refugee population entering and remaining in each country by July 2022 and December 2022.

²¹⁵ Finding based on KIIs with UNHCR staff at RBE and implementing partners.

²¹⁶ Finding based on KIIs with UNHCR staff (approximately half).

²¹⁷ The lack of resources at the RBE was partially solved with 20 additional fast-track hires. Some interviews reported that the RBE continued to act as a bottleneck, as they were involved in day-to-day operations throughout 2022, which led to reporting delays.

121. Furthermore, at country levels, there has been some criticism with regard to the number of reporting requests coming from UNHCR as a whole, and from the bureau specifically. For around half of UNHCR interviewees, the RBE was considered very demanding in terms of operational details and reporting on the response, which was challenging to provide in an emergency context. According to interviewees, their demands could have been streamlined to allow staff to focus more on the actual implementation.

Key finding 19: Missions from HQ, the RBE and other regions (to a lesser extent) were critical in the design and implementation of the response, given the gaps in the ERT profile and the difficulties in hiring national staff. However, this led to significant turnover and loss of institutional memory.

122. **From an HR perspective, though timely, there were gaps in the deployed Emergency Response Team's (ERT) skill sets in terms of emergency experience, seniority, context exposure and specific expertise.**²¹⁸²¹⁹ This came from the magnitude of the human resources needed to respond to the Ukraine situation, and from the depletion of some rosters, despite sufficient numbers being reportedly readily mobilizable in February 2022 (e.g. the Senior Corporate Emergency Roster, the Information Management Roster, the Interagency Coordination Roster). These gaps materialized at various levels. First, some deployees lacked emergency exposure and were risk-averse in a "no regrets" context, which had a negative impact on the timeliness of specific tasks (e.g. procurement in Romania). Second, some deployees lacked the seniority to make decisions at country level, given their rank in their organization. Third, specific skill sets were high in demand and were not sufficiently available in the ERT: registration, information management, CBI, intersector, programme, human resources, and administrative/finance skills.²²⁰ Finally, some deployees struggled to navigate the context and to propose contextually appropriate solutions. For instance, various government representatives complained about the contextual expertise of shelter experts who had emergency shelter expertise but lacked accommodation expertise.
123. According to key informants, **missions were instrumental to bring specific expertise to the operation, but also to compensate gaps and delays.** The technical support of missions from HQ and RBE to set up critical aspects of the response (e.g. CBI, registration, inter-agency or CBI) were put forward as critical in many interviews with UNHCR staff. It is worth noting as well that the Ukraine response was the first emergency in which UNHCR deployed dedicated PSEA Coordinators to all L3 countries from the onset of the emergency. The level of support from missions varied from country to country. Poland (80) and Moldova (56) received significantly more support than Hungary (24), Slovakia (22) and Romania (31). While interviewees understood that Poland was an organizational priority due to the caseload of refugees and Moldova because it was a non-EU country²²¹ with a close border proximity with Ukraine and Russia, some interviewees in Hungary, Romania and Slovakia also acknowledged that these missions were critical for the timeliness and robustness of some activities.

²¹⁸ Finding based on KIIs with UNHCR staff (approximately half at CO, RBE and HQ level), online stakeholder survey and the RTR.

²¹⁹ It is important to note that since the DESS put measures in place to address some of these reported shortcomings, such as "streamlining internal deployment mechanisms and strengthening the ERT roster, increasing managerial capacity on the roster through launching special ERT calls for middle managers, reviewing the emergency trainings.

²²⁰ This list comes from the interviews with UNHCR staff. The list of profiles may not be exhaustive.

²²¹ As such, Moldova did not receive financial support from the European Union to deal with the refugee influx.

The imbalance in support appeared at odds with the timeliness objective, which was the same for all countries.

124. **An extensive number of missions led to significant turnover and loss of institutional memory and efficiency in the COs.** In all countries, external stakeholders (implementing partners, government representatives, sector members) complained about the high turnover during the first four months of the response, which led to loss of efficiency due to a lack of handover (e.g. by having to rediscuss topics previously covered and agreed upon), conflicting information/guidance and even tensions. In some cases, this reportedly affected UNHCR's credibility, as reported by some interviewees in Hungary, Romania and Moldova.
125. UNHCR's lack of a pre-existing operational footprint in the five countries, combined with the lack of competitiveness of its national salary grid until May 2022, meant that **UNHCR could not rely on national staff to ensure context expertise and continuity.** In most cases, UNHCR's national hires lacked humanitarian experience. They were also scarce because UNHCR's salary grid was not competitive for the job markets of those countries. Like other UN agencies, except for IOM,²²² which revised its salary grid at the start of the response, UNHCR was only able to revise the salary grid in 2023 in some countries. As a result, the lack of competitiveness of UNHCR's salary grid continued. In some country like Romania, UNHCR was able to partially overcome this shortcoming by hiring Ukrainian UN volunteers. Furthermore, it is worth noting that in Hungary and Slovakia, there were multiple reports of national staff's workload being excessive, leading to burn out.

7. Coordination and partnerships

126. The following section discusses the UNHCR co-led [Refugee Coordination Model](#) and the [partnerships brokered by UNHCR](#) with Implementing Partners and private sector actors.

7.1 Coordination

7.1.1 The Refugee Coordination Model

Key finding 20: The RCM provided a relevant and effective structure for the coordination of the response.

127. At regional level, the UNHCR Regional Director for Europe was appointed as the Regional Refugee Coordinator for the Ukraine situation by the High Commissioner as early as March 2022 to lead the development and implementation of the refugee response.²²³
128. **Rolling out of the RCM was timely.** Coordination was rolled out rapidly, and acknowledged as such, in Hungary, Moldova and Poland. For example, in Moldova, where UNHCR had no operational footprint at the start of the war, coordination meetings and the UNHCR data portal were active as early as March 2022.²²⁴ In Romania and Slovakia, despite the first coordination meetings taking place from March and early April 2022,²²⁵ stakeholders have mixed perceptions on the timeliness of coordination.

²²² Which does not depend on the UN Compensation and Classification Section.

²²³ UNHCR, "Refugee Coordination Guidance."

²²⁴ As per the minutes available on UNHCR data portal.

²²⁵ Romania's first Inter Sector Working group meeting took place on 18 March 2022 and Slovakia's Refugee Coordination Forum meeting on 4 April 2022, as per the meeting minutes available on the UNHCR data portal.

In Slovakia, this is most probably due to the perception that UNHCR interventions were not as timely as they were in other countries (see [Timeliness Section](#)). In Romania, this was driven by the set-up of the Cash Working Group in April,²²⁶ when partners had already started delivering CBI.

129. The Refugee Coordination Model is flexible and not prescriptive of a given architecture.²²⁷ **The RCM operationalization led to mostly contextually relevant coordination architectures** that took into account the pre-existing UNHCR footprint as in Poland and Hungary, or the presence of a Resident Coordinator and pre-existing coordination as in Moldova. Sector members were further able to influence the overall coordination architecture. For example, in Moldova, UNHCR rolled out two Task Forces (on PWSN inclusion and on Roma) based on members' requests,²²⁸ and in Romania one on adolescent and youth, led by UNICEF and technically supported by the National Youth Network, a coalition of local organisation.²²⁹ UNHCR made successful efforts not to duplicate existing architectures. Romania is the CO where the coordination structure is the most complex, primarily as a result of strong Government led. The Government led two coordination fora (one under the Department of Emergency Services and one under the Prime Minister Office) and UNHCR rolled out the RCM. This was launched by the Prime Minister as complementary "two plans (i.e. the Governmental one and UNHCR's), one response". Interviewed sector members however highlighted the perceived duplication of efforts and high number of meetings.

130. **Comprehensiveness of coordination coverage is country specific.** Gaps were highlighted in Poland, especially at the start of the response, when coordination took place only in Warsaw, and in Moldova, where around ten key informants highlighted a gap in the coverage of Transnistria, which was coordinated pre-crisis by IOM.

131. **In country, the articulation between different coordination layers and stakeholders improved during the period.** Gaps and duplicates hampered the effectiveness of the coordination at times.

- In Poland, the interactions and accountability lines between national and provincial level coordination were not yet formalized as of December 2022. As per provincial level informants, this created parallel communications, sometimes inconsistent information and missed opportunities to cascade information, which would have helped the coordination and synergies between sector members.
- In Moldova, the 2022 Refugee Response Plan²³⁰ highlights ongoing coordination with the UN Resident Coordinator and UN Humanitarian Country Team (UNHCT) in Moldova. Two key informants in Moldova, from the UNHCT, reported frictions and lack of understanding on how both coordination structures could collaborate, which led to inefficiencies and reduced effectiveness. These issues have reportedly been ironed out over time.

²²⁶ First CWG meeting minutes available in Romania are from 19 April 2022.

²²⁷ UNHCR, "Refugee Coordination Guidance."

²²⁸ Finding based on KIIs and secondary sources (Regional Refugee Response for the Ukraine Situation, "Refugee Coordination Forum - Moldova (Updated on 01/08/2022)," August 2022.)

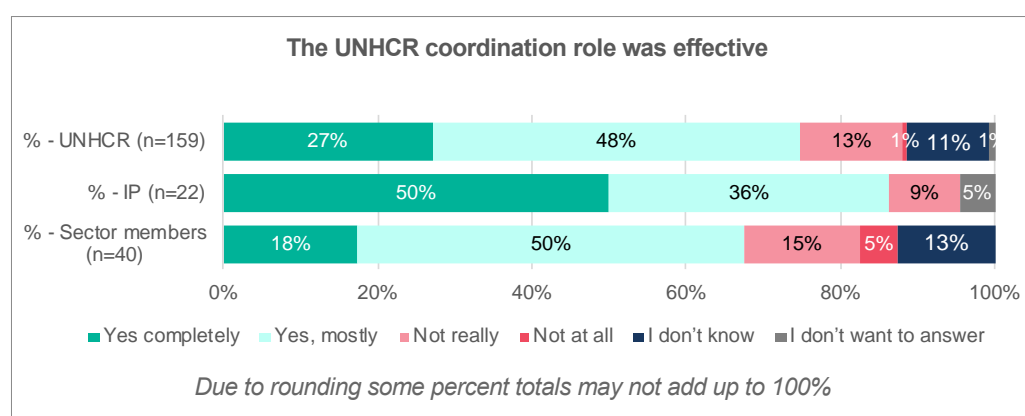
²²⁹ Finding based on one KII with UNHCR.

²³⁰ UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan March-December 2022."

- In Romania, to enhance the connection between national and local coordination, UNHCR supported the establishment of six local coordination networks (in the six counties hosting large numbers of refugees from Ukraine).

132. **Sector members appreciated UNHCR's co-chairing role within the model.** Government stakeholders in Poland, Slovakia and Moldova also shared appreciation of the coordination expertise UNHCR brought.²³¹ There is an overall sense of satisfaction from internal and external stakeholders with both the coordination role and the content of the coordination meetings, emerging from key informants and survey. As shown in the figure below, 75 per cent of survey respondents, across all categories, deemed UNHCR's coordination role completely or mostly effective.

Figure 9: Effectiveness of UNHCR coordination role



133. **The effectiveness of UNHCR's coordination role increased over time as UNHCR staff turnover reduced and meeting frequency was adjusted. The novelty of the model, coupled with UNHCR's multiple responsibilities, required significant efforts from UNHCR to raise awareness around the coordination architecture.** Across the five countries, sector members and IPs reported not being familiar with the RCM and the role of UNHCR within it. At the start of the response, the rapid UNHCR staff turnover made it more challenging to build trust, a necessary component of effective coordination. The turnover also meant that co-chairs and sector members had to repeat the same information multiple times to UNHCR coordination staff. In Hungary, Slovakia and Poland, several IPs reported an overwhelming number of meetings during the first weeks of the response. Over time, meeting frequency and focus adjusted to the needs and members' capacity to attend.

134. **UNHCR took early and concrete measures to encourage diversity in coordination meetings and government leadership. However, these efforts and the effectiveness of coordination overall were hampered by a lack of country-level stakeholder analysis.** Government participation and leadership differed between countries and administrative levels, depending on their willingness, capacity to engage in coordination and on their overall attitude towards refugees. UNHCR consistently made efforts to support and encourage other organizations to co-lead sectors, for example, all the PSEA networks across the response are co-chaired by NGOs or local organizations. To encourage the participation of local actors, including refugee-led organizations, UNHCR provided simultaneous translation during coordination meetings early on. UNHCR further supported the National Congress for Ukrainians

²³¹ In Hungary Government stakeholders did not share appreciation, either negative or positive. In Romania, Government stakeholders were more critical of UNHCR coordination role, highlighting the overlap between UNHCR led and Government led coordination.

financially, a refugee-led organization in Moldova, to take the co-leadership of the AAP working group. The participation of local actors in coordination did not necessarily contribute to increasing their decision-making power. As reported by an LNGO in Slovakia: “We are not always listened to, even when we are encouraged to speak.” Similar feelings were shared by several LNGOs in Hungary.

135. **Overall, the content of coordination meetings was deemed appropriate, with some disparities depending on the country.** Across countries, informants from LNGOs often referred to coordination meetings as capacity-strengthening opportunities. In Moldova, Government representatives felt that coordination meeting content was not strategic enough and too much about information-sharing, a perception that also emerged from certain IPs in Romania.

136. Thematically speaking, UNHCR's global mandate and expertise emerged as part of its coordination role in the protection sector, but less so for shelter and camp coordination and camp management (CCCM),²³² which were highlighted as a gap in coordination (and implementation, see [Implementation – Effectiveness](#)).

137. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) endorsement of the new cash coordination model²³³ was concomitant with the start of the crisis. The model was rolled out by UNHCR in a refugee setting for the first time during this response. The new model, however, did not trigger any major discussions or changes noticeable by key informants. The cash response features a high degree of alignment with the government-led social protection (see [Design – Connectedness](#)), which is part of the CWG's responsibilities in the new model.²³⁴ However, this alignment can hardly be attributed to the new model and is most likely a result of the context and the maturity of social protection schemes in the five countries.

Key finding 21: UNHCR investments in coordination functions and tools have been insufficient, hampering the effectiveness and perceived neutrality of the coordination function.

138. **UNHCR resources allocation to coordination remains limited in light of the scale and nature of the response.** As of December 2022 in the five countries, UNHCR deploys fewer than six full-time intersector coordinators.²³⁵ All sector coordinators across the five countries are double hatting, assuming coordination responsibilities for which they are accountable to the sector members and, in parallel, operational responsibilities within UNHCR to which they are accountable. The quick depletion of the inter-agency coordination roster²³⁶ further illustrates the lack of sufficient corporate investment in coordination.

139. **The lack of investment and double-hatting staff are detrimental to the effectiveness and perceived neutrality of coordination.** About half of the external actors interviewed reported feeling confused about UNHCR's roles as a coordinating and implementing agency, and felt decisions were made in coordination meetings by UNHCR, with its own operational interests in mind. Similar concerns emerged for the technical coordination functions, such as PSEA, where the PSEA coordinator is also UNHCR's PSEA focal point.

²³² There were no camps but some refugees lived in community shelters and the lack of coordination and connections in between shelter managers was highlighted as a gap in the response, creating discrepancies in services received between shelters and a different understanding of shelter managers' role.

²³³ IASC, “Cash Coordination Model,” 2022.

²³⁴ IASC.

²³⁵ Inter-sector coordinators: two in Poland, one in Hungary (also covering Czech Republic), Moldova, Romania and Slovakia.

²³⁶ UNHCR, “Real-Time Review for the Ukraine Situation.” 2022

140. **The absence of systematically rolled out standardized corporate-level training for intersector coordinators and of a toolkit to support the RCM roll-out is detrimental to the effectiveness of coordination.** Contrarily to the IASC model, the RCM does not outline, “activation protocols, timelines, deliverables, monitoring mechanisms or responsibilities for country operations, regional refugee coordinator role and HC interlocutor principal interface”.²³⁷ Further, the current RCM guidance does not adequately reflect UNHCR’s coordination role on PSEA. At the start of the crisis, the RBE developed and shared some tools across the five countries, but as a result of turnover, these were not used consistently. Finally, UNHCR has developed a training for Information Management Officers (IMO) but not yet for the intersector coordinators.²³⁸ In November 2023, the Romania CO organised a face to face training on RCM and good coordination practices with other working groups and sector co-chairs, a good practice that could be replicated.

7.1.2 The Refugee Response Plan

Key Finding 22: By leading the design of a \$1.8 billion multi-country Refugee Response Plan in a week, UNHCR demonstrated its capacity and maturity as one of the leading emergency actors and its relevance as the co-lead of the RCM.

141. Over the period from March to December 2022, UNHCR facilitated four processes related to the Refugee Response Plans. The initial RRP was published as early as 1 March 2022,²³⁹ revised on 25 April 2022²⁴⁰ and recalibrated in October 2022.²⁴¹ Consultations for the 2023 RRP²⁴² also took place during this period. The RRP, in turn, informed the development of other strategies including the Regional Protection Strategy (led by UNHCR)²⁴³ and interim country strategies.
142. **UNHCR has been very efficient in publishing a first RRP a few days after the start of the crisis²⁴⁴** and has been recognized as such by others.²⁴⁵ However, this first RRP quickly became outdated as the crisis was unfolding, which led to its revision in April and October 2022, immediately followed by the consultation for the 2023 RRP. Such rapid sequence contributed to the relevance of the RRP, but also led to self-reported fatigue from sector members, who, for the most part, were new to the process. Local organizations also reported misunderstandings about the possible funding allocation, as a result of participating in the RRP. Nevertheless, the number of partners contributing to the RRP between the 2022 and 2023 editions increased, as shown below, which demonstrates sector members’ interest in the process.

²³⁷ UNHCR, “Real-Time Review for the Ukraine Situation.” 2022

²³⁸ Finding based on a KII with UNHCR HQ interviewee.

²³⁹ UNHCR, “Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan Summary and Inter-Agency Funding Requirements March-August 2022.”

²⁴⁰ UNHCR.

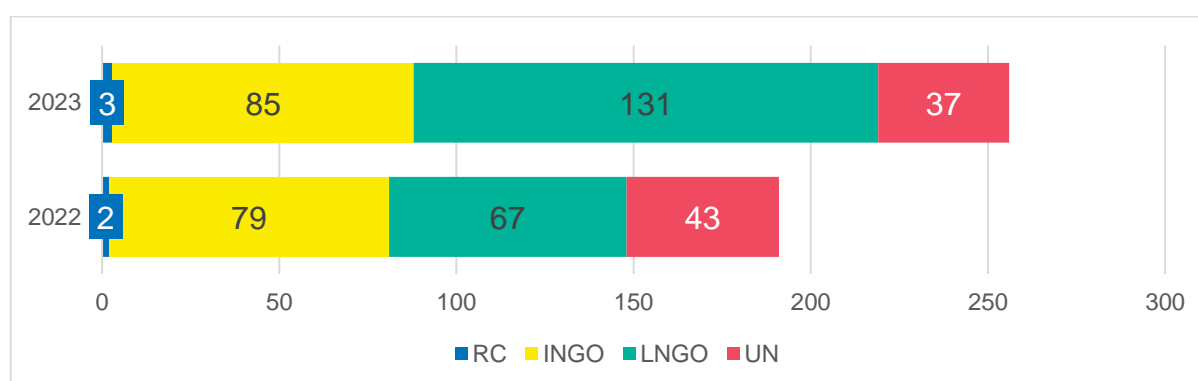
²⁴¹ UNHCR, “Ukraine Situation: Recalibration - Regional Refugee Response Plan - March – December 2022.”

²⁴² UNHCR, “Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan - January-December 2023,” 2023.

²⁴³ UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, “Regional Protection Strategy: Ukraine Refugee Response (2022 – 2024).”

²⁴⁴ By comparison the first RRP for the Syria crisis that started in March 2011, was published in 2012.

²⁴⁵ For example, UNICEF’s response to support the influx of refugees from Ukraine, 2023, notes that the first RRP was published: “on March 1st, 2022, just a week after the crisis began.”

Figure 10: Number and diversity of partners contributing to the RRP in 2022 and 2023²⁴⁶

143. **RRP processes have been participatory, more so for the 2023 edition**, which included 256 partners²⁴⁷ across the five countries (191 partners²⁴⁸ in 2022). In Moldova, the results of such consultations were published²⁴⁹ and shared widely. Host governments were also invited to provide input on the RRP and co-launched the plan in some countries (e.g. in Moldova, the plan was launched at the Ministry of Interior). Most survey respondents completely agreed (38%) or mostly agreed (39%) that UNHCR engaged sufficiently with host governments and partners to design the RRP.²⁵⁰
144. **Sector members mostly used the RRP as a source of information on needs and the response plan.** Five informants also commented on using the RRP to raise or allocate funding and one to hold itself accountable.
145. **The early incorporation of the needs of the host communities in the 2022 RRP is relevant and demonstrates considerations of social cohesion** in response to existing tensions (See [Unintended Effects](#)). In Moldova, the 2023 RRP²⁵¹ includes the host communities in the target population figures, acknowledging the peculiarity of the context.

7.2 Partnerships

146. The following section discusses UNHCR's partnerships for implementation purposes, including the selection of partners and the accompanying partnership agreements. Next, this section discusses UNHCR's private sector engagement for resource mobilization purposes.

7.2.1 Partnerships for implementing purposes

Key Finding 23: To scale up its response, UNHCR leveraged its historical partnerships and expanded its partner base, through partnering with INGOs and increasingly partnering with local actors as the response unfolded.

²⁴⁶ This figure presents the number of unique contributions per country, not the unique number of contributors across the five countries (as some organizations have contributed to the RRP in more than one country). The number of partners involved in the recalibration exercises is not included in the document. UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan March-December 2022.," UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan - January-December 2023."

²⁴⁷ The category: Faith-Based Organisations has been split between Local and International Organisations. UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan - January-December 2023."

²⁴⁸ UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan March-December 2022."

²⁴⁹ Regional Refugee Response for the Ukraine Situation, "2023 Refugee Response Plan Local Consultations."

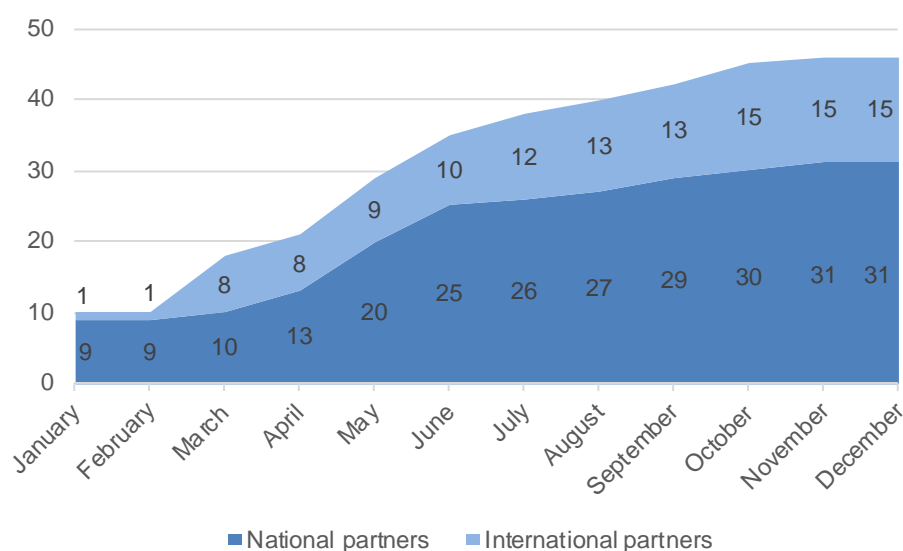
²⁵⁰ Finding based on the online stakeholder survey with sector members (n = 40), IP staff (n = 22) and UNHCR staff (n = 159).

²⁵¹ UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan - January-December 2023."

147. In the initial stages of its response, UNHCR collaborated with multiple International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO) as a strategic approach²⁵² except in Hungary, where UNHCR only partnered with LNGOs. Since UNHCR had a limited operational presence, it needed to swiftly partner with organizations to carry out its activities effectively. Consequently, UNHCR opted to partner with INGOs, which acted as intermediaries and subsequently subcontracted local NGOs. This arrangement expedited the contracting process and allowed UNHCR to mitigate risks.²⁵³ However, it also introduced an additional layer to the partnership model, which presented financial inefficiencies. As the response progressed, UNHCR established more direct partnerships with NGOs across countries (Figure 11).

148. By the end of 2022, UNHCR partnered with 68 organizations across the five countries, of which 50 were national organizations. National partnerships were diverse, including refugee-led organizations, community-based groups, women-led organizations and government partners. For example, in Moldova, UNHCR expanded its partnership from two long-standing partners to include six NGOs, four INGOs, two government partners and one refugee-led organization.²⁵⁴

Figure 11: UNHCR active partnership agreements in 2022²⁵⁵



149. Of the \$364 million allocated to the implementation of activities, \$41 million (11 per cent) were allocated to implementing partners.²⁵⁶ **While the volume of financial allocation to implementing partners was proportionally small,²⁵⁷ these partnerships were critical for UNHCR to achieve its objectives.** With its partners, UNHCR provided a range of services and assistance, including information dissemination related to protection, reception, documentation and RSD procedures; service referrals; medical assistance; targeted support for Unaccompanied and Separated Minors and survivors

²⁵² Including DRC and PIN in Poland, InterSOS in Moldova and PIN in Slovakia.

²⁵³ UNHCR collaborated with INGOs to delegate the tasks of contracting, capacity-building and management to organizations with established expertise in humanitarian work.

²⁵⁴ UNHCR Hungary MCO, "Annual Country Report: Hungary MCO 2022."

²⁵⁵ Note that this figure is based on the Partnership Agreements shared with the evaluation team (46 out of the 68 partnerships). Country breakdown: Hungary (national 6, international 2), Moldova (national 6, international 5), Poland (national 5, international 6), Romania (national 5, international 2), Slovakia (national 5).

²⁵⁶ The remaining 64 per cent was allocated to direct implementation (\$284 million) and 17 per cent was marked as other allocations (\$37 million). UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, "2022 Budget and Expenditures for 5 Operations in Europe," May 2022.

²⁵⁷ As UNHCR directly implemented the CBI component with a financial volume of \$195 million.

of GBV; support for job inclusion; transportation; material support for Refugee Accommodation Centres (RAC) and capacity-building for their management structures; distribution of CRIs; and facilitating refugee access to national social security schemes. **To achieve these objectives, UNHCR provided capacity support**, including training on GBV risks; two-way communication feedback mechanisms; and training on services, legal assistance and PSEA.²⁵⁸

150. Although implementing partners played a crucial role in achieving UNHCR's objectives, there was a perception among these organizations that the partnership placed a disproportionate emphasis on implementation outcomes compared with mutual strategic engagement. **National partners particularly expected to engage in a collaborative partnership with UNHCR, which entailed active involvement in the response design and the exchange of data.** However, the partnership primarily served to implement and accomplish UNHCR's pre-defined objectives. This misalignment with national partners' own strategic directions created some dissatisfaction within the partnership. The Hungary MCO report noted that the availability of funding for LNGOs made it challenging to find partners with whom to roll out UNHCR's response, as these LNGOs were focused on implementing projects with the funding already available to them.²⁵⁹

151. UNHCR fast-tracked partnerships: Registration through the UN Partner Portal was not mandatory before signing the partnership agreement (PA) or LOMI, and the selection process was expedited within two weeks instead of the usual three months. Additionally, the discretionary ceiling has been increased to \$200,000 without requiring the selection process, and the waiver approval process has been decentralized to field operations for the first six months of the L3 response. Nonetheless, **both national and international organizations were hesitant to partner with UNHCR.**²⁶⁰ The short duration of the partnership agreements, such as the LOMI or PAs, created difficulties for partners to hire and retain staff.²⁶¹ Further, organizations felt that UNHCR's data approaches (i.e. the collection of biometric data as a default option) were not compliant, in EU countries, with GDPR regulations.

7.2.2 Partnerships for resource mobilization

Key finding 24: UNHCR received an unprecedented amount of private sector donations for the response and was able to quickly scale up and structure its PSP engagements.

152. The Private Sector Partnerships division proactively mobilizes resources to achieve UNHCR's outcomes. This could involve fundraising; delivery of goods and services; advocacy for refugee/forced displacement issues; employment of refugees; product development/technology investments.²⁶²

153. In the context of the Ukraine response, and unlike any other emergency response, the Private Sector Partnerships division was overwhelmed by the private sector donations, placing the division in a unique reactive position. The Ukraine emergency response was 94 per cent funded (\$1,4 billion). By 14 March 2022, ahead of the L3 announcement, the private sector donated over \$200 million to UNHCR's Ukraine emergency response.²⁶³ By 31 December 2022, the private sector contributed

²⁵⁸ UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, "2022 Budget and Expenditures for 5 Operations in Europe."

²⁵⁹ UNHCR Hungary MCO, "Annual Country Report: Hungary MCO 2022."

²⁶⁰ Based on KIIs with UNHCR staff and IP staff.

²⁶¹ Based on KIIs with IPs in Poland and Slovakia.

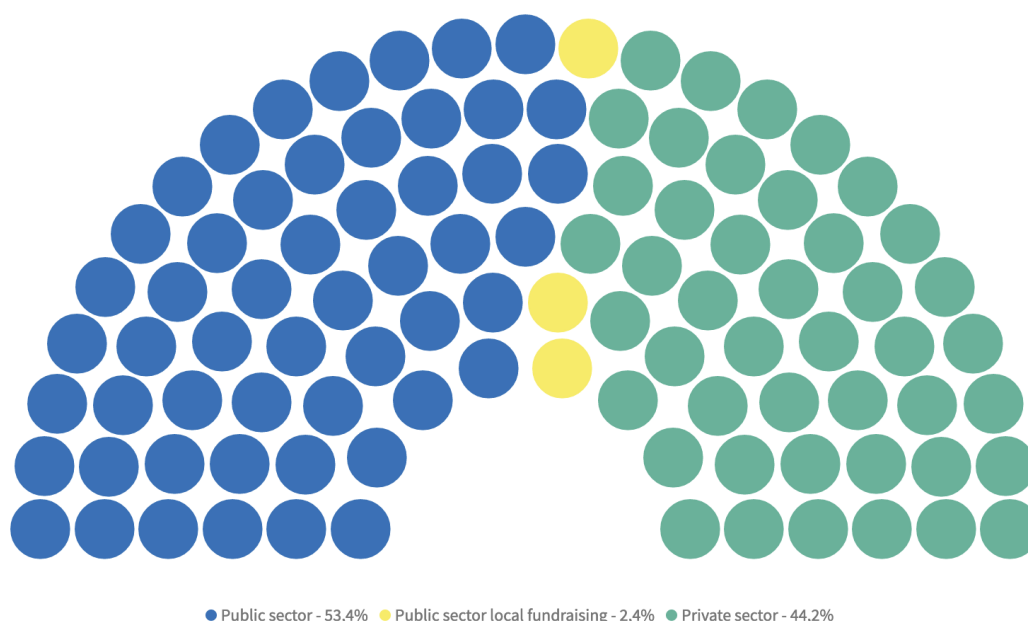
²⁶² Moira Faul et al., "Evaluation of UNHCR's Engagement with the Private Sector" (UNHCR Evaluation Service, 2019).

²⁶³ HQ news, "UNHCR Press Release - 14 March 2022 - Private Sector Donates over US\$200 Million to UNHCR's Ukraine Emergency Response," March 14, 2022.

\$599 million (44 per cent of the total contribution). The largest private donations were received from the US (\$98,65 million), Japan (\$85,4 million) and Sweden (\$78,6 million).²⁶⁴

154. Across the five countries, the Private Sector Partnerships division of UNHCR accepted a total of 499 financial contributions and 96 in-kind contributions from 447 unique donors. The average value of financial donations was \$1.1 million, ranging from a minimum of \$18 to a maximum of \$52 million. Regarding in-kind contributions (goods and services), the average value was \$387,528, with a minimum of \$451 and a maximum of \$3.8 million.²⁶⁵ Accepting financial contributions was relatively straightforward. The division advocated for softly earmarked financial contributions, rather than country-specific financial contributions. This enabled the division to allocate financial contributions based on needs. By contrast, accepting in-kind donations (goods and services) was more challenging.²⁶⁶

Figure 12: Sources of finance²⁶⁷



155. **The division had limited visibility of the actual needs of refugees and of the capacity of the country operations to absorb in-kind contributions.**²⁶⁸ Considering the volume of private sector offers, the division was concerned about accepting more contributions than the country operations could absorb or needed. The division's limited visibility of needs on the ground is not specific to this response, but was highlighted by key informants as a systemic challenge. Country operations were reluctant to share preliminary data due to concerns about their accuracy, indicating a lack of a "no regrets" approach to the emergency. Consequently, the division collaborated with other humanitarian organizations and the private sector to gather data on emergency needs. The division drafted a situation-specific list of needs based on emerging data and adapted the list as data emerged.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁴ UNHCR Top Ukraine donor overview as of november 2023.

²⁶⁵ Findings based on KIIs with UNHCR staff.

²⁶⁶ The findings are based on KIIs with UNHCR staff of the Private Partnerships division.

²⁶⁷ Due to rounding, the graph may not perfectly represent reality. Source : UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Country Financial Reports."

²⁶⁸ The findings are based on KIIs with UNHCR staff of the Private Partnerships division.

²⁶⁹ This was the first time that the division drafted a situation-based list of needs for private sector contributions. Usually, the division relies on a generic global list.

156. **UNHCR has relatively limited experience partnering with the private sector to accept in-kind contributions.**²⁷⁰ For the division, evaluating the relevance of the non-financial offers while maintaining the interest and engagement of private donors was challenging. For example, Hilton Worldwide offered \$1 million worth of nights at their hotels, similar offers came from Booking.com and AirBnB.²⁷¹ The division did not have the experience or guidance to accept these offers. Similarly, airline companies, such as Air France and Lufthansa, offered free airline tickets for the relocation of refugees. Again, while helpful and financially valuable, UNHCR did not know how to translate these offers into a response.²⁷²
157. **The division did not have fit-for-purpose systems to process the volume of in-kind contributions.**²⁷³ During the first months of the emergency, the division received more than 2,500 in-kind offers. The process for submitting a private sector contribution was not automated (contributors are requested to contact via email or call a provided mobile number). The absence of a structured form for offers meant that the teams had to filter through the content manually.²⁷⁴ Further, the division did not have a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on how to process these offers, and at first, they were processed on a case-by-case basis in an ad hoc matter. During Q2 of 2022, the division developed a simplified decision matrix to facilitate the processing of contributions.
158. **During an L3, there are no changes to UNHCR's ways of working with private sector partnerships.** However, given the private sector interest in the Ukraine situation, the division increased the threshold of their donations from \$10,000 to \$100,000. Donations below \$100,000 were accepted, yet not prioritized (unless it was from an existing partner). Of the 96 in-kind donations, 44 per cent were valued at less than \$100,000. The division also identified procedures that were at odds with a "whole-of-society" approach. For example, donors were disqualified if they offered a good or service that UNHCR planned to procure.²⁷⁵
159. **The Ukraine situation allowed UNHCR to revamp its private sector engagement and leverage these partnerships for other global crises.**²⁷⁶ The division facilitated an internal lesson-learned workshop and updated their SOPs. These learnings were already translated into a more proactive response to the earthquake in Türkiye and Syria. Further, a few private sector organizations agreed to match the funds provided for the Ukraine situation and donate them to another neglected global crisis to which UNHCR is responding.

8. Cross-cutting themes

Key finding 25: Overall, UNHCR has been successful at mainstreaming protection with particular efforts on PSEA that were especially relevant in light of the refugees' demographics.

²⁷⁰ The findings are based on KIIs with UNHCR staff of the Private Partnerships division.

²⁷¹ UNHCR, "Ukraine Emergency Coordination Task Force Meeting – 22 March – Notes," March 2022.

²⁷² Airline offers were transferred to IOM.

²⁷³ Finding based on KIIs with UNHCR staff of the Private Partnerships division.

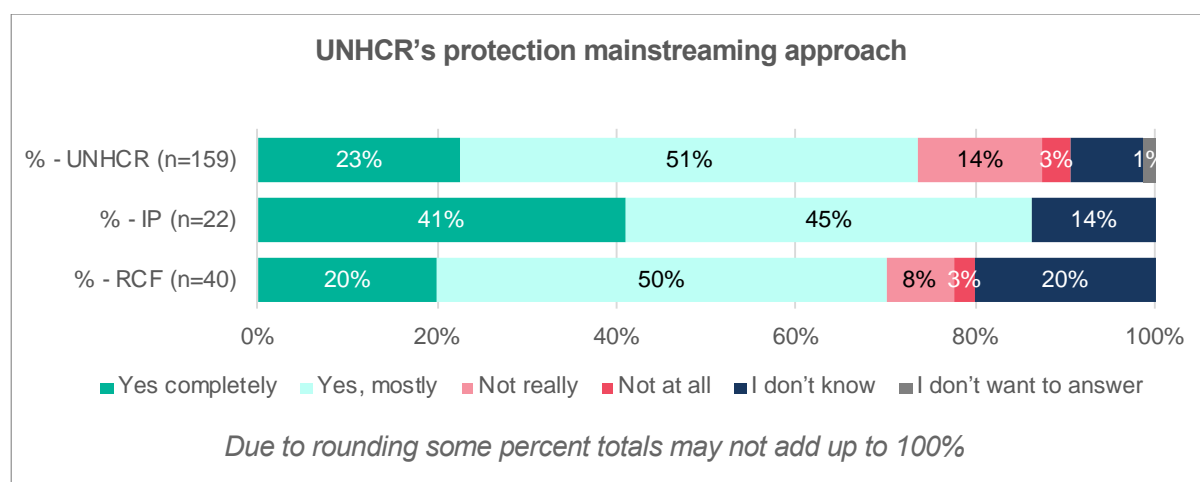
²⁷⁴ UNHCR, "UNHCR Private Sector," accessed June 1, 2023, <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/our-partners/private-sector>.

²⁷⁵ Finding based on KIIs with UNHCR staff of the Private Partnerships division.

²⁷⁶ Finding based on KIIs with UNHCR staff of the Private Partnerships division.

160. **Overall, UNHCR's protection mainstreaming²⁷⁷ was effective.** Of the 221 respondents, 74 per cent of interviewees (n=221) were mostly or totally satisfied with the added value of UNHCR's protection mainstreaming approach, including 74 per cent of UNHCR staff members, 70 per cent of sectors members (n=40) and 86 per cent of IPs (n=22).

Figure 13 Reported satisfaction with UNHCR's protection mainstreaming



161. **UNHCR contributed significantly to the capacity-strengthening of the government and sector members on protection approaches and principles.** According to most stakeholders, UNHCR invested significantly in the development of partners and governments' capacities, ensuring the centrality of protection, developing effective AAP mechanisms and AGD-sensitive approaches through inter-agency coordination and capacity-building provision. Targeted training on GBV and SEA²⁷⁸ risk mitigation, prevention and response were offered widely throughout the response. Some relevant examples include:

- Government officials in Moldova and Slovakia were satisfied with UNHCR's added value in training on human trafficking, refugees' rights and child protection.
- Advocacy was particularly strong on child protection in Slovakia, Hungary, Moldova and Poland, drawing the attention of authorities to the identification and support of unaccompanied and separated minors, the risks of trafficking and other forms of exploitation.
- In Slovakia, when comparing the original contingency plan²⁷⁹ called Crisis Situational Plan with the new Contingency plan, there was a new full chapter (n°7) on PWSNs, split into sub-chapters: people with disability, human trafficking, unaccompanied minors and victims of violence.
- UNHCR contributed to the development of SOPs for inter-agency multisectoral GBV response, including confidential complaints and referral mechanisms.
- UNHCR developed regional recommendations for governments on the vetting and registration of volunteers and volunteer organizations.

²⁷⁷ The Evaluation focuses on accountability, participation, community and response feedback mechanisms. The other aspects of protection mainstreaming, i.e. safety, dignity, meaningful access, participation and empowerment, were not included in the evaluation matrix and are therefore not evaluated in this section.

²⁷⁸ More than 4,500 humanitarian workers were trained on PSEA in Ukraine and neighbouring countries in 2022.

²⁷⁹ European Commission, "Contingency Plan of the Slovak Republic."

162. **UNHCR placed a particular emphasis on PSEA during this response, which was especially relevant in light of the refugee demographics but also the level of digitalization of the response** and the number of (sometimes fraudulent) information shared. UNHCR established PSEA networks in each of the five countries, conducted SEA risk assessments in Romania and Poland, and a GBV safety audit in Moldova. In 2022, UNHCR also rolled out a "stay safe" campaign, targeting 1.7 million people on SEA risks and mitigation measures, PSEA messages were also included on UNHCR Help pages.²⁸⁰

Key finding 26: AGD was mainstreamed across the response, but the needs identified did not always translate into programme design adjustment or partnership brokering to address these needs.

163. **In relation with the unique gender dimension of the crisis,²⁸¹ AGD was mainstreamed across the response.** Overall, 71 per cent (n=221) of interviewees were satisfied with UNHCR's AGD mainstreaming. Participatory methodologies using an age, gender and diversity lens were used throughout the response. UNHCR conducted protection analysis and external advocacy (refugee situation reports, promotion of AGD accountability to partners and governments, and partnerships). The needs of persons with disabilities, serious health conditions, older persons, unaccompanied and separated minors, other at-risk or marginalized groups (e.g. ethnic Roma) and the challenges they faced (e.g. access to shelter for Roma people in Hungary and Moldova, access to health care in Moldova and Slovakia among others)²⁸² are highlighted and broadly described in the RRP and all key UNHCR documents. Programmes were adjusted to address the specific needs of women and children (e.g. child-friendly spaces and children's groups, gender-sensitive accommodation), who form the majority of refugees supported by UNHCR.

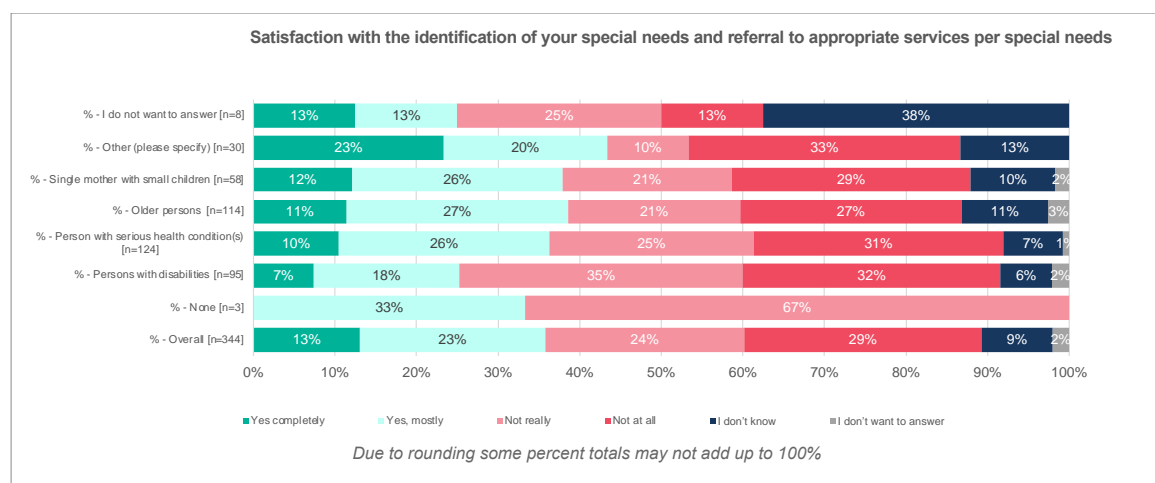
164. **However, the needs assessments and the identification of PWSNs did not always translate into specific programme design or into brokering partnerships to address those needs.** PWSNs' early identification and access to services, particularly Unaccompanied and Separated Minors (UNASM) and people with disabilities, remain challenging as corroborated by the literature.²⁸³ Fifty-three per cent (n=344) of surveyed refugees and most of the FGD participants with specific needs felt that their priorities had not been taken into account ([AGD-disaggregated data available here](#)).

²⁸⁰ UNHCR. 2023. Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse – Thematic update.

²⁸¹ UNHCR, "Regional Protection Analysis: Displacement Patterns, Protection Risks and Needs of Refugees from Ukraine."

²⁸² See 'Relevance.

²⁸³ UNHCR, "Regional Protection Analysis: Displacement Patterns, Protection Risks and Needs of Refugees from Ukraine."



165. Operational changes²⁸⁴ were mostly made on a case-by-case basis rather than systematically (e.g. development of mobile cash collection teams, hotline), it is unclear how the data collected from assessments and protection profiling were used to inform programme design.

Table 7 UNHCR Programmatic response to vulnerable groups (2022)

PWSNs	Programmatic response
Person with disability or serious health condition	Moldova: Partnership with disability rights organization from Transnistria and support of the disability task force. Romania: Partnership with disability rights organization.
Older person	N/A
Unaccompanied and Separated Minors (UASM).	Moldova-Poland-Romania: Targeted services (identification, referral, assessment). Slovakia-Poland: Advocacy efforts to mitigate child protection risks.
Other vulnerable groups Third-country nationals, Roma communities, LGBQ+	Moldova: establishment of the Roma Task Force, partnership with LGBTQ+ organization. Hungary: partnership with Roma-led organization. Partnership agreements with Roma-led/experienced organizations; advocacy for inclusion of third-country nationals in the national social system in Hungary and Slovakia.

166. **Good efforts were made to involve refugee-led organizations.** For example, Hungary had the second-highest number of refugee-led grants in UNHCR in 2022; in Poland, UNHCR supported the establishment of the Razem forum within the RCM; and UNHCR partnered with the refugee-led organization Sme Spoulo in Slovakia.²⁸⁵ However, a number of key informants pointed to further margin of improvement with regard to refugee-led organization involvement in planning and coordination processes (working groups and clusters), and to the simplification of UNHCR administrative processes to ease refugee-led organizations becoming UNHCR IPs.

Key finding 27: UNHCR deployed significant efforts to set up accessible and comprehensive communication channels as well as complaints and feedback mechanisms. The variety and digitalisation of which created some confusions among refugees.

²⁸⁴ Finding based on KIIs and secondary sources (Hungary MCO annual report).

²⁸⁵ See Refugees Coordination Forum Model in Poland.

167. **Complaints and feedback mechanisms (CFM) are part of the RRP and widely disseminated.** UNHCR and its partners – for whom FCM was a mandatory requirement – developed a wide range of mechanisms (e.g. social platforms, help pages, QR code, complaints/feedback boxes, leaflets/posters at key points and locations, posters, phone, email) and innovative approaches (chat bots in WhatsApp and Telegram,²⁸⁶ the Digital Blue Dots and the Regional Call Centre), on the basis of the preferred channels shared by refugees. Yet, 36 per cent of the refugees (n=1349), regardless of their age and sex, reported that they did not know where and how to share feedback or complaints ([AGD-disaggregated data available here](#)).²⁸⁷ Beyond phone calls (hotline), there is little knowledge of other mechanisms (face-to-face, email, social media). UNHCR staff and IPs confirmed underreporting on SEA, with a handful of allegations, and specific contextual barriers to reporting incidents, ranging from concerns about denunciations, perceived risks of losing entitlement, being seen as ungrateful and a feeling of guilt in comparison to what is happening in Ukraine.
168. **Although there is no shortage of complaints and feedback mechanisms, there are mixed views on their use.** Very few FGD respondents provided feedback or complaints, and those who did, reported complaints about cash targeting or delivery. They also reported a lack of consistency in the hotline's response (Moldova, Slovakia), although they were ultimately satisfied with the way it was handled. Thirty per cent (n=1349) of refugees believed that the complaint they or other refugees had made had been responded to, and 23 per cent did not believe it had been responded to at all ([AGD-disaggregated data available here](#)).²⁸⁸ Once used, the FCMs were used to serve other goals such as complaining about cash targeting or delivery, particularly in Poland and Slovakia.²⁸⁹
169. **The implementation of AAP with partners (IPs, governments) proved difficult to operationalize.**²⁹⁰ Indeed, there were mixed views among stakeholders on UNHCR's fulfilling of its AAP commitments. Out of 181 respondents, 74 per cent (n=181) of UNHCR staff and IPs considered that UNHCR fulfilled such commitments.²⁹¹ However, 33 per cent of sector members and 23 per cent of IPs admitted their ignorance about it, which calls into question the level of understanding or awareness about the mainstreaming of AAP commitments in the response. Statements by IPs and sector members on the AAP, mostly refer to the feedback and complaint mechanisms without referring to the other core commitments.²⁹² There is a common perception across all groups of stakeholders in Slovakia, Moldova and Poland²⁹³ that AAP has been given lower priority, with little guidance and a lack of contextualized tools adapted to EU countries with legal and institutional frameworks for the protection of human rights. Some respondents also pointed to the limited meaningful involvement and participation of the community in designing the response (Moldova, Romania, Slovakia), the lack of stakeholder mapping and analysis, the standardization of training packages (in relation to an EU environment) and staff's approximate understanding of the EU system. A cross-sector AAP task force in the Refugee

²⁸⁶ Telegram channel in Romania has more than 10,000 followers.

²⁸⁷ No significant difference was observed between the disaggregated AGD data.

²⁸⁸ No significant difference was observed between the disaggregated AGD data.

²⁸⁹ Finding based on online refugee survey and FGDs.

²⁹⁰ As per UNHCR, AAP commitments also include participation and inclusion, communication and transparency and organizational learning and adaptation. <https://www.unhcr.org/aap-operational-guidance>

²⁹¹ Responded "Yes, completely" or "Yes, mostly" to the question, "As part of the refugee response in which you have been involved, how satisfied are you with the added value of UNHCR's AAP (Accountability to Affected Populations) commitments?"

²⁹² As per UNHCR guidelines, activities designed to ensure accountability include a) participation and inclusion in line with Age, Gender and Diversity principles; b) communication and transparency, including access to information; c) feedback and response; and d) learning and adaptation.

²⁹³ UNHCR Moldova, "AAP PSEA Mission Report," 2022.

Coordination Forum (RCF) to coordinate the response only exists in Moldova, Romania and Poland. In Hungary, some key stakeholders reported that the AAP approach was too directive, given the context.

170. **Comprehensive digital tools in all countries combined with face-to-face communication (through social workers and centres) were quite critical.** Overall, there was a fairly comprehensive range of communication channels (social platforms, posters, face-to-face), which also act as feedback and response mechanisms. In line with refugee preferences,²⁹⁴ digital channels have been developed extensively, and most FGD participants reported being satisfied with the level, format and content of information. Twenty-three per cent of the refugees (n=1349) received information at the border crossing point/Blue Dots, and 85 per cent of them were satisfied with it (n=295) ([AGD-disaggregated data available here](#)).²⁹⁵ However, FGD participants also reported challenges finding the right information given by multiple, and sometimes, contradictory sources, and 40 per cent of the responders interviewed online, regardless of their age and location, stated they preferred in-person communication and praised direct relationship with social workers.²⁹⁶

171. **While some refugees have faced an information overload, others have been left behind by the hyper-digitalization of the response.** The information overload has been greater for some specific refugee groups, depending on their digital literacy and access, living conditions (urban/rural settings/RAC/private accommodation).²⁹⁷ The data analysis²⁹⁸ identified connectivity as a barrier to accessing services (education, information and accessing employment services) and points out that elderly people,²⁹⁹ the ethnic Roma, and refugees living in rural areas in host communities, suffered from lower access to information.³⁰⁰ The data from FGDs demonstrate that refugees living in collective centres usually had access to better information than refugees living in host communities, thanks to volunteers, social workers, centres' management and humanitarian organizations' staff. In some areas, the lack of equipment, as well as the absence of Wi-Fi or a poor network, made it difficult to take online courses, language lessons, look for job opportunities, or stay informed, given that most information is shared digitally.³⁰¹ In line with UNHCR's protection strategy,³⁰² FGD participants also reported a need for updated information on employment (job search, taxes) and, for older people and people with disabilities, access to health care and specialized equipment (hearing aids, spectacles).

9. Conclusions

Conclusion 1: UNHCR demonstrated its capacity to deliver and steer a timely, efficient and at scale regional response.

172. Within a few weeks of the start of the crisis, UNHCR organized a \$1.8 billion response plan with more than 140 partners across five countries and set up an operational Cash Hub. Across countries,

²⁹⁴ UNHCR, "Regional Protection Analysis: Displacement Patterns, Protection Risks and Needs of Refugees from Ukraine."

²⁹⁵ No significant difference was observed between the disaggregated AGD data in terms of receipt of information.

²⁹⁶ UNHCR.

²⁹⁷ Finding based on KIIs and FGDs. Regional Refugee Response for Ukraine Situation, "2023 Refugee Response Plan Local Consultations - Moldova," 2023.

²⁹⁸ Finding based on FGDs and secondary sources.

²⁹⁹ UNHCR Displacement patterns, Protection risks and needs of refugees from Ukraine. Regional protection analysis. RBE. September 2022 page 17.

³⁰⁰ Finding based on KIIs and FGDs.

³⁰¹ Finding based on FGDs and UNHCR RRP 2023 consultations.

³⁰² UNHCR Displacement patterns, Protection risks and needs of refugees from Ukraine. Regional protection analysis. RBE. September 2022 - Pages 9 and 10.

UNHCR was by far the largest aid provider, in keeping with its mandate to provide international protection to refugees.

173. This unprecedented scaling up was made possible by a “whole-of-house” response that was clearly prioritized at corporate level. HQ Divisions mobilized their expertise and the RBE gave early on directions and impetus to the COs while all working around the clock to design and implement the response. The significant level of funding of the response and the capacity of UNHCR’s HR and DESS team to mobilize staff were key enablers of the response.

Conclusion 2: UNHCR conducted relevant geographic prioritization and protection mainstreaming. UNHCR could have given stronger priority to protection and housing, and should have invested more in coordination.

174. Considering the magnitude of the response, UNHCR prioritized certain areas. Geographically, Poland and Moldova were appropriately prioritized based on case load and state capacity.
175. UNHCR’s efforts in relation to PSEA and protection mainstreaming overall were relevant and appropriate to the context and overall refugee demographics.
176. Thematically, the precedence CBI took over protection in the early days of the response, is misaligned with the identified protection risks and vulnerability profiles of the refugees. There is confusion among UNHCR staff between sectoral cash for protection, the transfer value of which is specifically calculated to meet protection outcomes, and cash assistance targeted at people with heightened protection risks.
177. UNHCR engagement with housing remained too limited in light of the needs. Finally, UNHCR dedicated limited resources to coordination, both in terms of human resources and systems, procedures and toolkits. As a result, individual intersector coordinators had to invest significant time and energy to fill this gap, leading to inefficiencies and a perceived lack of neutrality in coordination efforts.

Conclusion 3: UNHCR delivered contextually relevant interventions as per refugees’ needs and capacities, as well as host governments’ capacities and willingness to engage.

178. UNHCR extensively engaged with all stakeholders, both as the co-chair of the RCM and as an implementing organization. UNHCR adjusted the scale and breadth of its response to the varying host governments’ capacities and willingness to engage, from a substantial and comprehensive response in Moldova to a tailored complementary response in Hungary.
179. The five countries offered a largely conducive protection environment. UNHCR took some time to find its added value and define its complementary protection role in support to the host governments’ response. UNHCR’s choice to position itself as a platform of reliable information was the right one and could have been pushed even further through an enhanced presence on social media.
180. The EU, donors and civil society actors demonstrated a strong and meaningful response, which UNHCR has largely leveraged to steer a coordinated regional response.

Conclusion 4: UNHCR did not sufficiently invest in stakeholder mapping and power analysis to guide its strategic engagement.

181. To support its staff engage and coordinate a contextually relevant response, UNHCR did not sufficiently invest in stakeholder mapping and power analysis, and insufficiently leveraged its pre-existing presence in COs to do so.

182. UNHCR staff lacked stakeholder mapping and power dynamic analysis to facilitate strategic engagement with civil societies and government bodies, some having very polarized views on refugees. Additionally, most international staff lacked contextual exposure and UNHCR faced initial challenges to recruit national staff. This led to inefficiencies in UNHCR's engagement. These were gradually overcome through the commitment and willingness of UNHCR staff to engage and adapt to the situation.

Conclusion 5: UNHCR's "no regrets" approach was right and supported by fit-for-purpose L3 protocols, yet this approach materialized differently across areas and countries.

183. From the start, UNHCR articulated its willingness to deliver its response on a "no regrets" basis. The RBE gave early on strategic directions to pivot interventions from advocacy to emergency response. UNHCR's corporate commitments to proactively deliver CBI at scale were evident and acknowledged as such. UNHCR has relevant L3 protocols and systems in place, and benefits from the experience of its Emergency Division. These created a conducive environment for the delivery of the response.

184. The implementation of a "no regrets" approach varied across countries, driven by staff seniority and past exposure to UNHCR emergency policies and fast-track procedures. There is room for further simplification of UNHCR's L3 protocols (e.g. on partnership procedures) and in ensuring greater clarity on the L3 protocols and the risk appetite of UNHCR in a "no regrets" response. The adoption of UNHCR's new Emergency Policy in March 2023 tackled some of these lessons learned, for example, through the description of acting on "no regrets" principles and revised simplified procedures on partnership.

Conclusion 6: Data-related challenges hampered UNHCR's efforts to digitalize its response and the systematic provision by UNHCR of predictable data on displacement and refugees' needs.

185. The digitalization of the response has been a catalyser of scale and speed, while relevant to the refugees' digital literacy and infrastructure maturity in the five countries. However, the volume of data collected and the system-strengthening approach highlighted existing data-related challenges, despite an existing global data strategy and digital transformation strategy.

186. The response unveiled three key data-related issues that require attention:

- Lack of a standardized data tool: UNHCR lacks a universal data tool to track displacement and refugees' needs. Such a tool would inform UNHCR's response design and contribute to sector-wide needs assessments and government response plans.
- Interoperability with government databases: ProGres, UNHCR's database, is compatible and interoperable with government databases. Yet, for the first months of the response, UNHCR used ProGres distinctly from governmental databases. In light of its ambition to align and build upon

government-led social safety nets, UNHCR needs to determine how to contribute and build on government databases.

- Contextual considerations for biometrics collection: The decision to collect biometric data from refugees as part of the enrolment process was not context specific enough. It did not account for the regulatory framework (GDPR) and the existence of alternative unique identifiers for refugees to complete the deduplication exercise.

Conclusion 7: UNHCR staff's commitment and experience have been pivotal to the success of the response. Yet, the scale of the response highlighted structural vulnerabilities in UNHCR's HR capabilities.

187. Given the scale of the response, surge capacities were understandably overwhelmed, and no organization can expect to be prepared for such a large and rapid response. In the absence of prior programmatic presence, UNHCR had to start from "scratch" and recruit hundreds of staff from competitive labour markets.

188. UNHCR staff, at all levels, demonstrated exceptional commitment and willingness to work around the clock to deliver the best possible response for refugees. However, the response also exposed four main vulnerabilities in how UNHCR identifies, deploys and guides its staff:

- Lack of familiarity and risk appetite to use L3 protocols and fast-tracked procedures to their fullest potential.
- Limited experience of working through national systems, as opposed to the standard emergency approach of setting up parallel mechanisms.
- Depletion of certain rosters, particularly in support functions, middle management and intersector coordination.
- Dual responsibility, with some UNHCR staff having dual roles and accountability lines in their responsibilities to coordinate and implement UNHCR interventions.

Some characteristics of this response are likely to recur in parts, hence the importance of reviewing matters of HR mobilization, deployment and retention.

Conclusion 8: Partnerships with the private sector were a key success driver of UNHCR's operation.

189. The level of funding coverage for the response was exceptional. This is, in part, driven by UNHCR's success in engaging with the private sector on an unprecedented scale, making up to 44 per cent of total contributions. UNHCR rapidly set up a swift decision-making process to triage the offers from the private sector. However, the limited visibility of on-ground needs made it challenging for the Private Sector Partnerships division to effectively manage and utilize the private sector in-kind contributions. The division lacked adequate systems and procedures to process such large numbers of in-kind offers.

190. Despite these challenges, the Ukraine situation served as a catalyst for improving private sector engagement, leading to the revision of standard operating procedures and the establishment of proactive partnerships for addressing future crises.

10. Recommendations

191. The following section includes actionable recommendations that were developed in collaboration with UNHCR country-level stakeholders, UNHCR regional-level stakeholders and the Evaluation Review Group (ERG).

#	Recommendations	Corresponding conclusions and key findings	Responsible person	Anticipated timeframe
1	Recommendation 1: UNHCR should further invest in organizational preparedness for interventions in urban environments, working with strong governments and a connected and tech-savvy target population.	Conclusions 2, 3, 4 & 6	HQ	1 year
	Suggested action 1.1: UNHCR should clarify its role and value proposition in housing in urban contexts, as a last solution provider.	Findings 120 & 169	Division of Resilience and Solutions (DRS)	1 year
	Suggested action 1.2: UNHCR should build on the best practices, ³⁰³ opportunities ³⁰⁴ and challenges ³⁰⁵ of the Ukraine Regional Refugee Emergency Response in terms of interaction with a connected and tech-savvy target population.	Findings 158, 213 & 217	RBE (with the support of CO)	6 months
	Suggested action 1.3: As part of the minimum preparedness actions of the UNHCR emergency policy, UNHCR should consider systematically conducting a detailed stakeholder mapping to understand how actors in country, especially local actors, work on specific issues, and to understand their needs, capacity and expectations. In turn, this would inform programme design, advocacy and partnership when working in a new environment.	Findings 215	RBE and DESS ³⁰⁶	6 months

³⁰³ Examples of best practices include rumor tracing, social media communication on Facebook/Telegram/Viber, dissemination of surveys/monitoring tools via social media?

³⁰⁴ For this emergency response, social media were means of communication that ensured a timely, cost-efficient and widespread sharing on information.

³⁰⁵ Example of challenges include the exclusion of some of the older people and PWD from the social media and their need for more traditional communication channels.

³⁰⁶ If added as part of Annex 7 - List of Preparedness Actions, which is part of UNHCR, "Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response."

2	Recommendation 2: UNHCR should invest more resources into the roll-out and awareness of the RCM.	Conclusions 5 & 7	HQ	1 year
	Suggestion action 2.1: UNHCR should invest more into human resources for coordination in refugee settings (especially when not mixed settings). First, the intersector coordinator should be systematically working full time on the coordination, without additional responsibilities. Second, UNHCR should consider budgeting for full-time protection working group coordinators where operations exceed a certain threshold.	Findings 99, 185 & 186	Division of External Relations (DER)	N/A
	Suggestion action 2.2: UNHCR should invest in internal RCM know-how by producing a standardized corporate-level training for intersector coordinators and a toolkit to support the RCM roll-out.	Findings 186 & 187	DER	1 year
	Suggestion action 2.3: UNHCR should further externally raise awareness on the RCM by contextualizing the external RCM guidance ³⁰⁷ with country case studies, to illustrate how the RCM operate.	Findings 186 & 187	DER	6 months
3	Recommendation 3: Although L3 protocols were a key enabler of the timeliness and effectiveness of UNHCR's interventions, UNHCR could develop them further.	Conclusions 5 & 7	HQ	6 months
	Suggested action 3.1: UNHCR should simplify requirements for partners, both IPs and refugee-led organizations, during the emergency phase. The emergency policy temporarily pauses requirements but do not lift them. Similarly, UNHCR should consider simplifying procurement and administrative procedures.	Findings 145 & 212	DESS	6 months
	Suggested action 3.2: Building on the new emergency policy, which provides greater clarity on the “no regrets” principle, UNHCR should ensure that all	Finding 146	DESS	3 months

³⁰⁷ <https://emergency.unhcr.org/coordination-and-communication/refugee-coordination-model/refugee-coordination-model-rcm>.

	members of its rosters are aware of this principle and of how it simplifies some processes and requirements.			
	Suggested action 3.3: UNHCR should clarify how the “no regrets” approach cohabits with existing risk management practices, e.g. compliance risks, specifically if it supersedes them, in which situation and how.	Finding 146	DESS	6 months
	Suggested action 3.4: While HR needs were unprecedented given the absence of operational presence around Ukraine, which is unlikely to present itself again, UNHCR should invest in diversifying the profiles in the ERT to include more middle managers and administration staff.	Finding 169	DESS	6 months
4	Recommendation 4: UNHCR should develop corporate-level predictable policies towards data and monitoring tools to fill gaps observed during the Ukraine Refugee Response.	Conclusion 3	HQ	1 year
	Suggested action 4.1: UNHCR should clarify the extent to which biometric data are mandatory during an L3 response (“no regrets” policy) to register refugees with identification documents, such as passports. Specifically, when a timely response is required at scale and that UNHCR cannot deploy as many CBI and Information Management staff, as it was the case for this response due to competing priorities, what is the acceptable trade-off between duplication and efficiency?	Finding 152	Global Data Service (GDS)	1 year
	Suggested action 4.2: UNHCR should strengthen its organization-wide monitoring tool that tracks displacements and intentions, in order to make it more predictive. This would be beneficial both for reporting and decision-making.	Findings 161 & 163	GDS	1 year

	Suggested action 4.3: UNHCR should further strengthen programme monitoring by increasing the level of disaggregation (e.g. PWSNs) and the frequency of reporting.	Finding 210	COs	6 months
5	Recommendation 5: UNHCR should strengthen the linkages between CBI and Protection, by better differentiating cash for protection outcomes and targeting for CBI on the basis of protection-sensitive criteria.	Conclusion 2	RBE (with the support of CO)	6 months
6	Recommendation 6: UNHCR should leverage its newly established partnerships with private sector actors to support future and less well-funded emergency responses.	Conclusion 8	HQ	6 months
	Suggested action 6.1: UNHCR should work towards the sustainability of the new partnerships to support less visible crises.	Findings 201 & 202	DER	6 months
	Suggested action 6.2: While it is understood that in-kind donation is sometimes the only type of support that a partner will provide or a segue into getting a financial donation, UNHCR could be stricter when accepting in-kind donations if the timing is not compatible with operational conditions (e.g. winter clothes arriving in the middle of winter).	Findings 203, 204 & 205	DER	6 months

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12. Annexes

12.1 Annex 1: Evaluation matrix

The triangulation of data sources is available [here](#).

Areas of inquiry	Sub Questions	Indicators/how judgment will be formed	Number	Data Sources
DESIGN – RELEVANCE I. To what extent are UNHCR’s interventions relevant and appropriate, considering the different operational contexts and the nature of the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of the refugees?	I.1 To what extent do UNHCR interventions consider the context as well as the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of the refugees?	UNHCR direct services are relevant to refugees’ collective priorities and capacities as formalized and monitored in regular assessments	I.1.a	Desk review: Need assessment (HNO, IP needs assessment), PDM reports
		Direct services design & chosen modalities are appropriate towards refugees’ preferences and views as identified and monitored during regular assessments	I.1.b	Desk review: Need assessment (HNO, IP need assessment), PDM reports, operation strategies KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and external stakeholders FGD with target population (men & women; older & younger) Online survey disseminated to UNHCR staff, IP & Sector Online survey disseminated to target population
		Scale of UNHCR direct services corresponds to the scale of needs	I.1.c	Desk review: Need assessment (HNO, IP need assessment) and UNHCR project documents and funding allocation provided to the different countries from UNHCR appeal KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and external KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and external stakeholders

		Targeting, enrolment and referral strategies are relevant to target the refugees who are the most in need of assistance and those with heightened needs of protection	I.1.d	Desk review: Needs assessments, PDM reports, lessons learned papers, annual report KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and external stakeholders FGD with target population (men & women; older & younger) Online survey disseminated to UNHCR staff, IP & Sector Online survey disseminated to target population
	I.2 To what extent have interventions adjusted to the changing needs?	The targeting criteria were adjusted as per the changing needs and the enrolling mechanisms were able to enrol new refugees	I.2.a	Desk review: Annual report, midterm reports, log-frame, M&E reports KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and external stakeholders
		Breadth and type of modifications to the interventions' objectives and activities made during the period and their rationale	I.2.b	Desk review: Annual report, midterm reports, log-frame, revised operation and strategy documents, lessons learned papers, M&E reports KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and Sectors
		Breadth and type of changes in modalities (i.e. in-kind, cash, vouchers) to deliver interventions during the period and their rationale	I.2.c	Desk review: Annual report, midterm reports, log-frame, revised operation and strategy documents, lessons learned papers, M&E reports KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and Sectors
		Learning events to which UNHCR participated & led allowed to adjust the interventions	I.2.d	Desk review: Meeting agendas and minutes, annual report, M&E reports KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and Sectors
DESIGN - CONNECTEDNESS II. How well do	II.1 How well does UNHCR navigate the political context	Government representatives have a view of UNHCR roles & responsibilities that matches the ones of the RRP	II.1.a	KII with the government

UNHCR's interventions build on and strengthen the actions of national governments to ensure the inclusion of Ukrainian refugees?	when designing and implementing the response?	Government representatives are satisfied with the format, level and content of the information received from UNHCR	II.1.b	KII with the government
		Country-level UNHCR strategies refers to national plans and regional strategies and explain how they will contribute to them	II.1.c	Desk review: Country-level operational strategies, government operational response plans
		Participation of Government to the design of UNHCR strategy and interventions and vice versa	II.1.d	Desk review of UNHCR-Government MoUs, joint strategy statements, mission reports KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and external stakeholders Online survey disseminated to UNHCR staff, IP & Sector
		Government representatives share qualitative accounts of how UNHCR interventions contributed to their own response plans	II.1.e	KII with the government
		UNHCR's protection strategy objective to "strengthen the government's leadership and coordination role in refugees' protection" translated into concrete interventions or improved access to government services	II.2.a	Desk review: UNHCR protection strategy KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and external stakeholders
	II.2 To what extent is UNHCR successful, as an operational agency, in advocating for and developing government capacity to ensure the inclusion of refugees from Ukraine?	Qualitative account of technical/strategic support from UNHCR to Government representatives and the effects of this support	II.2.b	KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and external stakeholders
		Government representatives attribute some of their successes to technical and organizational support they received from UNHCR	II.2.c	KII with the government
		When designing its CBI response, UNHCR assessed and accounted for the	II.2.d	KII with UNHCR staff and sector

		maturity of social protection schemes in country		
<p>IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS-EFFECTIVENESS</p> <p>III. To what extent are UNHCR's interventions achieving their objectives and intended outcomes, including in its contribution to protection objectives and solution-oriented approaches?</p>	<p>III.1 To what extent are UNHCR interventions meeting their intended objectives?</p>	<p>Proportion of interviewed UNHCR staff who consider that activities allow meeting the set objectives</p>	III.1.a	<p>Online survey disseminated to UNHCR staff, IP & Sector</p>
		<p>Level of attainment of expected results reached over the period by interventions</p>	III.1.b	<p>Desk review: Project documents between UNHCR and donors, M&E reports</p> <p>Online survey disseminated to UNHCR staff and IP staff</p>
		<p>Targeted refugees, UNHCR and IP staff who consider the outputs (CBI and in-kind –standard CRI and non-standard CRI) received were of quality and in the right quantity</p>	III.1.c	<p>Desk review: PDM, monitoring report</p> <p>FGD with target population (men & women; older & younger)</p> <p>Online survey disseminated to UNHCR staff, IP & Sector</p> <p>Online survey disseminated to target population</p>
	<p>III.2 What other unintended effects do the interventions cause and what are the overall drivers of these effects?</p>	<p>Type and magnitude of the unintended positive effects of UNHCR interventions</p>	III.2.a	<p>KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and external stakeholders</p> <p>FGD with target population (men & women; older & younger)</p> <p>Online survey disseminated to target population</p>
		<p>Type and magnitude of the unintended negative effects of UNHCR interventions</p>	III.2.b	<p>KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and external stakeholders</p> <p>FGD with target population (men & women; older & younger)</p> <p>Online survey disseminated to target population</p>
	<p>III.3 What are the overall drivers of the effects of</p>	<p>Identification of the internal and external enabling factors for UNHCR to achieve its intended outcomes</p>	III.3.a	<p>Online survey disseminated to UNHCR staff, IP & Sector</p> <p>Online survey disseminated to target population</p>

	UNHCR interventions?	Identification of the internal and external inhibiting factors for UNHCR to achieve its intended outcomes	III.3.b	Online survey disseminated to UNHCR staff, IP & Sector Online survey disseminated to target population
<p>IMPLEMENTATION - EFFICIENCY</p> <p>IV. To what extent are UNHCR interventions delivered in a timely manner, with support from HQ, RBE and an enabling M&E system?</p>	IV.1 To what degree are UNHCR interventions timely?	Adherence to implementation plans by UNHCR and by IP and financial execution levels	IV.1.a	Desk review: Operation plans, annual reports, financial figures
		Time needed for funding mobilization and partner contractualization	IV.1.b	Desk review: Operation plans and annual reports, partnership agreements, budgets and actuals
		Time between surge (ERT and Fast-Track), staffing requests and deployment of staff with skill set matching job description/technical requirements	IV.1.c	Desk review: Operation plans and annual reports, partnership agreements, mission reports, staffing organization chart KII with UNCR staff
		Perceived influence , by UNHCR staff, of L3 protocols on timeliness of the interventions	IV.1.d	Desk review KII with UNHCR staff
		Influence of the CBI enrolment process on the timeliness of the CBI distribution	IV.1.e	KII with UNCR staff
		Other internal and external factors that influenced timeliness	IV.1.f	KII with UNCR staff
		Effects on refugees of UNHCR timeliness (or lack thereof)	IV.1.g	FGD with target population (men & women; older & younger) Online survey disseminated to UNHCR staff, IP & Sector Online survey disseminated to target population
	IV.2 How is UNHCR using its monitoring and evaluation outputs to track quality and make decisions?	Number and type of monitoring tools, systems and processes that had to be developed for the L3	IV.2.a	Desk review: COMPASS generated reports, M&E reports KII with UNHCR staff
		Frequency and type of programmatic and strategic decisions made on the basis of monitoring data	IV.2.b	Desk review: M&E reports, lessons learned papers, revised strategy documents KII with UNHCR staff

		Interoperability of UNHCR data collection systems with existing data sets in country	IV.2.c	Desk review: M&E reports, lessons learned papers, revised strategy documents KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and external stakeholders
		Uptake of RTR recommendations and rationale as to why	IV.2.d	Desk review: Annual report KII with UNHCR staff
	IV.3 How does the support of HQ Divisions and RBE to the COs serve the efficiency of UNHCR interventions?	Inputs from HQ and RBE on the design of the response and perceived added value of such inputs	IV.3.a	KII with UNHCR staff
		Inputs from HQ and RBE on communication, advocacy and resource mobilization and perceived added value of such inputs	IV.3.b	KII with UNHCR staff
		Inputs from HQ and RBE on HR mobilization and perceived added value of such inputs	IV.3.c	KII with UNHCR staff
		Inputs from HQ and RBE on technical backstopping and perceived added value of such inputs	IV.3.d	KII with UNHCR staff
	COORDINATION & PARTNERSHIPS V. How does UNHCR co-lead effective cross-sectoral coordination and broker successful partnerships?	V.1 To what extent is the UNHCR co-led Refugee Coordination Model effective and avoids duplication and gaps?	Proportion of sector members who consider UNHCR coordination role (including during the roll-out of coordination structure) timely and effective and rationale as to why	V.1.a
Proportion of UNHCR chairs and sector co-chairs who deem UNHCR's guidance suitable to the context and rationale as to why			V.1.b	KII with IP staff and external stakeholders Online survey disseminated to UNHCR staff, IP & Sector
Proportion of sector members who contributed to the RRP design and contributes to its implementation			V.1.c	KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and external stakeholders Online survey disseminated to UNHCR staff, IP & Sector

		Diversity and number of participants in the sector meetings (incl. Participation of Government)	V.1.d	Desk review: Meeting minutes and attendance lists
	V.2 How does UNHCR navigate the newly endorsed cash coordination model?	Proportion of CWG members who consider UNHCR-led cash coordination timely and effective and rationale as to why	V.2.a	KII with IP staff and KII with sector
		Diversity and number of participants in the CWG meetings	V.2.b	Desk review: Meeting minutes and attendance lists
		Inputs received from the Global Cash Advisory Group (CAG) to document the lessons learned	V.2.c	
	V.3 How effective and strategic are UNHCR's operational partnerships with the private sector and implementing partners?	Diversity and number of partnerships with local organizations established by UNHCR (including with community-based groups, refugee-led organizations, women's organizations)	V.3.a	Desk review: Partnership agreements
		Implementing partners' perception of value added by UNHCR and UNHCR staff's perception of value added by implementing partners	V.3.b	KII with UNHCR staff and IP staff Online survey disseminated to UNHCR and IP staff
		Diversity and number of partnerships with private sector organizations established by UNHCR	V.3.c	Desk review: Partnership agreements
		UNHCR staff's perception of the effectiveness of the private sector partnerships (incl. risk mitigation and relevance to the needs)	V.3.d	KII with UNHCR staff Online survey disseminated to UNHCR and IP staff
		Proportion of IP who are clear with UNHCR's multiple responsibilities (coordination, donor, operational partner)	V.3.e	KII with IP staff Online survey disseminated to IP staff

<p>CROSS-CUTTING THEMES</p> <p>VI. To what extent do UNHCR interventions mainstream gender, AAP and protection?</p>	<p>VI. To what extent do UNHCR interventions mainstream gender, AAP and protection?</p>	<p>UNHCR interventions operationalize the age, gender and diversity (AGD) approach across all steps of its response</p>	<p>VI.1.a</p>	<p>Desk review: AGD strategy</p> <p>KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and external stakeholders</p>
		<p>Crisis-affected refugees are satisfied with the format, level and content of the information received from UNHCR and its IPs</p>	<p>VI.1.b</p>	<p>FGD with target population (men & women; older & younger)</p> <p>Online survey disseminated to target population</p>
		<p>Accountability mechanisms (communication, feedback, participation, complaints mechanism) are used effectively: analysis of feedback and complaints translates into actions and response, and informs adjustments to programming and strategic planning</p>	<p>VI.1.c</p>	<p>Desk review: CFM data, revised strategy documents</p> <p>FGD with target population (men & women; older & younger)</p> <p>KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and external stakeholders</p>
		<p>Protection & border monitoring are regularly conducted to analyse the situation of refugees from Ukraine, including their ability to access territory, legal status and rights</p>	<p>VI.1.d</p>	<p>KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and external stakeholders</p> <p>FGD with target population (men & women; older & younger)</p>
		<p>UNHCR has assessed and strengthened the capacity of its staff and national stakeholders (authorities, NGOs, community-based groups, refugee-led organizations) on protection mainstreaming</p>	<p>VI.1.e</p>	<p>Desk review: Partnership policy and guidance, capacity strengthening action plans, mission reports</p> <p>KII with UNHCR, IP staff, sector and government</p>
		<p>Perceived and measured added value of UNHCR protection mainstreaming, promotion of AAP commitment, community-based and AGD-sensitive approaches</p>	<p>VI.1.f</p>	<p>Desk review: UNHCR protection mainstreaming guidance</p> <p>KII with UNHCR staff, IP staff and external stakeholders</p> <p>Online survey disseminated to UNHCR staff, IP & Sector</p> <p>FGD with target population (men & women; older & younger)</p> <p>Online survey disseminated to target population</p>

12.2 Annex 2: Detailed methodology

12.2.1 Detailed data collection approaches

192. **Inception phase:** The evaluation team (ET) conducted 38 preliminary interviews with UNHCR's HQ, RBE and CO staff, and external stakeholders.³⁰⁸ These interviews informed the development of the evaluation matrix (see Annex 1: Evaluation matrix) and the data collection tools. During an inception visit to Geneva, the evaluation team conducted preliminary KIIs and presented a draft evaluation matrix and timeline, which were discussed and revised.³⁰⁹ The evaluation team undertook a two-day inception visit in Warsaw, Poland to refine data collection tools and approaches. This visit allowed the ET to discuss in depth the piloting and dissemination strategy of the refugee perception survey.³¹⁰
193. **Desk review:** The desk review was an iterative process, which started during the inception phase and continued during the data collection and analysis phases. More than 1,300 documents were reviewed and referenced. The evaluation team developed a desk review summary before the start of the in-country data collection. The summary made it possible to identify the available information that needed to be triangulated with the primary data and to identify the gaps in the secondary data to be obtained by the COs. During the analysis phase, the evaluation team completed the desk review summary with a desk review of documents available online (on UNHCR's data portal) and collected during the country visits.
194. **Key informant interviews:** The evaluation team conducted 125 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) in the deep-dive countries (Moldova, Poland, Slovakia), 4 KIIs in the light-touch countries (Hungary and Romania) and 35 KIIs with HQ and RBE.³¹¹ Key stakeholders will include country-level UNHCR staff members, implementing partners, government institutions, sector representatives and other humanitarian actors involved in the response. This distribution enabled a good breakdown of the points of view and positions of those mobilized during the response.
195. **Focus group discussions:** The evaluation team conducted 52 FGDs with 337 participants in the field countries visited, with refugees benefiting from UNHCR's interventions.³¹² The evaluators facilitated separate FGDs for women, men, youth groups, older people and people with specific needs to obtain their input. Facilitation of the FGDs included Participatory Learning for Action tools such as preference ranking to encourage participants to take part in the evaluation.
196. **Online perception survey for UNHCR, IP staff and sector members:** UNHCR internal and external stakeholders completed an online perception survey (n=221). The perception survey allowed the evaluation team to consider the opinion of all staff, partners and sector members that were not interviewed during KIIs and to reach staff that left the operations as well.³¹³
197. **Online perception survey for refugees:** An online perception survey targeted refugees that benefited from UNHCR response in the country. The survey was available in English, Russian, Ukrainian, and Romani.³¹⁴ It collected qualitative and quantitative data on the observed outcomes, success stories and challenges from 1,349 refugees distributed in the five countries of interest. The survey was disseminated via UNHCR's

³⁰⁸ External stakeholders included IP staff, sectors co-chairs as well as representatives of other UN agencies.

³⁰⁹ The inception visit in Geneva was conducted by the evaluation lead and research assistant on 23-24 January 2023.

³¹⁰ The inception visit in Warsaw was conducted by the evaluation lead, co-lead and country expert on 13-14 February.

³¹¹ Key Informant Interview guides are available [here](#).

³¹² The FGD guide is available [here](#).

³¹³ Forty-eight per cent of the UNHCR staff questioned had ended their contract when they completed the survey.

³¹⁴ The survey was translated and back translated into Russian, Ukrainian and Romani to ensure the accuracy of the translation. The translation were then field tested in Poland to ensure further contextualization.

Facebook and Telegram pages in each of the countries, as refugees use these media extensively, according to interviews during the inception phase and the desk review.³¹⁵ The structure of the respondent sample is relatively similar to the survey population, which ensures that the data can be used in the analysis. After data cleaning, 90% of respondents were female, while the UNHCR estimates this percentage at 85 per cent. The sample is therefore representative. Older people were slightly under-represented in the sample, with 10% aged over 60, compared with an estimated 17 per cent in the country. This slight discrepancy may be explained by the fact that older people use social media less and have therefore been reached less effectively by the dissemination strategy.³¹⁶

Table 8: Survey sample demographics

Overall	Male	Female	Other	18–29	30–45	46–59	60+	Persons with disabilities	Person with serious health condition(s)	Single mother with small children
1349	130	1213	1	118	862	229	137	100	161	404

198. **Field visit debriefs:** At the end of each field visit, the visiting evaluation team members conducted a two-hour debrief with in-country UNHCR stakeholders. The debriefs were an opportunity for the team to present the activities conducted during the field visit and the first emerging trends at country level.

12.2.2 Data analysis and report writing

199. **Data cleaning and coding of survey data:** Following the closure of the survey, the ET undertook a thorough cleaning of the survey data. The team ensured the final data set is consistent with the sampling strategy and that there is logical coherence between the different responses within a record.³¹⁷ They kept a clear and comprehensive cleaning log during the data cleaning process. All changes made to the data set are evident in the logbook. A Ukraine contextual expert translated the qualitative statements from the survey. The statements were recoded where necessary and analysed.

200. **Data analysis and triangulation:** Qualitative disaggregated data were coded in Excel to analyse emerging trends against the evaluation matrix indicators. Primary and secondary quantitative data were also analysed using Excel. Evaluators triangulated data sources, and where relevant, they disaggregated by country, stakeholder type and position (for UNHCR, IPs and sector respondents) and sex and age (for refugee respondents). To ensure the rigour of the findings, the ET ensured that multiple sources inform each indicator of the evaluation matrix, so that the data are triangulated.

201. **Validation workshops/presentation:** Following data analysis and the submission of a first draft of the report, the evaluation team facilitated three validation workshops involving relevant internal UNHCR stakeholders. The workshops presented and sought the validation of the key analytical outcomes.

202. **Evaluation report:** The evaluation team produced a draft integrated evaluation, which incorporated the feedback from the validation workshops. The report includes a detailed evaluation methodology and limitations, findings and conclusions to the key evaluation questions, good practices and lessons to be learned, and specific

³¹⁵ Displacement patterns, protection risks and needs of refugees from Ukraine -UNHCR- regional bureau for Europe, 26 October 2022

³¹⁶ Estimates for sex and age extracted from UNHCR, “Regional Refugee Profiling and Monitoring Factsheet: Profiles, Intentions and Needs of Refugees from Ukraine,” 2022.

³¹⁷ The evaluation team removed respondents who were not part of the target populations from the final data. For example, of the 1,799 records collected in the refugee perception survey, the evaluation team retained 1,349 records (75 per cent).

examples from field visit countries. Three rounds of comments and revisions were organized to gather feedback from the ERG and other stakeholders, as well as the results of the workshops to co-create recommendations.

203. **Recommendations co-creation workshop:** The evaluation team facilitated a recommendations co-creation workshop with internal and external stakeholders to identify actionable recommendations collaboratively. The ET incorporated into the final version of the evaluation report the feedback provided on the draft integrated evaluation report by the ERG and the outputs of the recommendations co-creation workshop.

204. **Presentation of the evaluation findings:** In a one-hour webinar, the ET presented the evaluation approach, findings and key recommendations to UNHCR and external stakeholders as part of the dissemination of the evaluation findings.

12.2.3 Ethical considerations

205. Several ethical considerations were incorporated into the evaluation. The evaluation team systematically explained the purpose of the evaluation during KIIs and FGDs, following which, the team systematically obtained verbal consent from interviewees and participants. The ET conducted all non-UNHCR staff interviews without a UNHCR staff member present. Field data collection was planned in collaboration with community-based protection staff to ensure that the timing of the FGDs was as convenient as possible.

206. To ensure data privacy, the reports do not include names or other personal identifying information of key informants or beneficiaries. Raw data containing personal data will be archived at the end of the evaluation by the Key Aid data protection officer and safely disposed of after one year.

12.2.4 Quality assurance

207. To ensure the quality of the evaluation deliverables, an ERG and a Technical Working Group (TWG) were formed.³¹⁸ These two groups serve to increase the credibility, utility and impartiality of the evaluative process and evaluation outputs. About 20 high-level external (UN and Government Representatives) and internal UNHCR representatives from the RBE, HQ Divisions and the five COs (Representatives or Deputy Representatives) composed the ERG. The TWG gathers about 10 technical experts from five COs, RBE and HQ Divisions. The ERG and TWG were given the opportunity to review the outputs of the consultancy at critical steps (i.e. inception report, validation workshops and draft evaluation report). Second, designated country focal points ensured the quality of the data sources and analysis at the country level by supporting the evaluation team with relevant contextual insights and sources. Third, UNHCR has a Senior Evaluation Officer and an external consultancy firm contracted to undertake additional quality assurance, both from a methodological and content perspective.

12.2.5 Rationale for any adjustments to the ToR

208. During the inception phase and while developing the evaluation matrix, the ET and UNHCR agreed on the following changes to the evaluation questions:

- Evaluation questions were reorganized so as to a) make a clear distinction between UNHCR's role as an operational organization and as a coordination body; b) mirror the future structure of the evaluation report.

³¹⁸ The Technical Working Group comprises the Key Aid team, UNHCR Evaluation Manager and UNHCR Evaluation Focal Points in the five countries and in the Regional Bureau for Europe.

- The question: *What lessons can be learned, with regards to the UNHCR decentralization strategy?* has been excluded as UNHCR Decentralization strategy could be the topic of an evaluation in and of itself. Decentralization could, however, emerge as a driver under the evaluation sub question: *How does the support of headquarter divisions to the RBE and COs serve the efficiency of UNHCR interventions?*
- Looking at the cross-cutting theme in the Terms of Reference, protection was considered under connectedness. Considering the nature of the crisis and people in need, the ET suggested to also make explicit reference to gender and Accountability to Affected Population (AAP), and do a review of the extent to which these were included in the response.
- The ET suggested to also include a question on *How is UNHCR using its monitoring and evaluation outputs to track quality and make decisions?*
- During the inception phase, while developing the evaluation matrix, the Evaluation Team ensured the evaluability of the different evaluation questions. Questions related to the effectiveness of the interventions were rephrased to remove mention of partners. Considering the lack of availability of outcomes and output data, it did not appear possible to distinguish between UNHCR and IP activities.

209. Further, the following changes to the evaluation methodology were proposed, following consultations with the focal points for this evaluation in the five countries:

- During the data collection phase, face-to-face primary data collection with UNHCR staff took place in Hungary and in Romania, two light touch Country Operations (COs). Face-to-face data collection helped the uptake of certain stakeholders. No primary data collection with refugees took place, in order to maintain a light footprint.

12.3 Annex 3: Terms of reference

210. The Terms of reference for the evaluation are available [here](#).

12.4 Annex 4: Disaggregation of refugee survey

Paragraph 45:

Level of satisfaction with the relevance of the legal assistance/counselling received.

- Male (86%, n=22), Female (90%, n=194)
- 18-29 (78%, n=23), 30-45 (94%, n=123), 46-59 (86%, n=35), 60+ (85%, n=34)
- With at least one specific need (86%, n=135), without specific needs (95%, n=81)

Paragraph Error! Reference source not found.:

Level of satisfaction with the delivery of cash assistance received.

- Male (75%, n=99), Female (76%, n=995)
- 18-29 (70%, n=84), 30-45 (78%, n=723), 46-59 (75%, n=178), 60+ (70%, n=113)
- With at least one specific need (75%, n=657), without specific needs (78%, n=441)

Paragraph 48:

Reception of information at the border crossing points/help desk/ phone/ "Blue Dot" centres/other.

- Male (18%, n=130), Female (23%, n=1213)
- 18-29 (15%, n=118), 30-45 (22%, n=862), 46-59 (25%, n=229), 60+ (26%, n=137)
- With at least one specific need (21%, n=794), without specific needs (25%, n=555)

Reception of legal assistance or counselling.

- Male (17%, n=130), Female (16%, n=1213)
- 18-29 (19%, n=118), 30-45 (14%, n=862), 46-59 (15%, n=229), 60+ (25%, n=137)
- With at least one specific need (17%, n=794), without specific needs (15%, n=555)

Paragraph 60:

Level of satisfaction regarding the identification of specific needs and the appropriate referral process to address them.

- Male (29%, n=62), Female (37%, n=281)
- 18-29 (44%, n=16), 30-45 (37%, n=131), 46-59 (27%, n=84), 60+ (40%, n=113)
- With at least one specific need (36%, n=338), without specific needs (17%, n=6)

Paragraph 63:

Level of satisfaction regarding the identification of specific needs and the appropriate referral process to address them.

- Same as Paragraph 60 above

Paragraph 75:

Level of satisfaction with the delivery of cash assistance received.

- Same as Paragraph **Error! Reference source not found.** above

Paragraph 76:

Level of satisfaction with the transfer value of the cash assistance received.

- Male (55%, n=99), Female (63%, n=995)
- 18-29 (62%, n=84), 30-45 (65%, n=723), 46-59 (56%, n=178), 60+ (63%, n=113)
- With at least one specific need (58%, n=657), without specific needs (68%, n=441)

Paragraph 82:

Reception of information at the border crossing points/help desk/ phone/ "Blue Dot" centres/other

- Same as Paragraph 48 above

Level of satisfaction with the relevance of the information received at border crossing points.

- Male (96%, n=23), Female (84%, n=271)
- 18-29 (83%, n=18), 30-45 (86%, n=188), 46-59 (82%, n=55), 60+ (88%, n=34)
- With at least one specific need (83%, n=162), without specific needs (87%, n=133)

Paragraph 85:

Level of satisfaction with the relevance of the legal assistance/ counselling received.

- Same as Paragraph 45 above

Paragraph 95:

Level of satisfaction with the timeliness of the legal assistance/ counselling received.

- Male (86%, n=22), Female (87%, n=194)
- 18-29 (78%, n=23), 30-45 (92%, n=123), 46-59 (80%, n=35), 60+ (85%, n=34)
- With at least one specific need (83%, n=135), without specific needs (94%, n=81)

Level of satisfaction with the timeliness of the cash assistance received.

- Male (64%, n=99), Female (63%, n=995)
- 18-29 (52%, n=84), 30-45 (66%, n=723), 46-59 (60%, n=178), 60+ (58%, n=113)
- With at least one specific need (61%, n=657), without specific needs (66%, n=441)

Paragraph 164:

Level of satisfaction regarding the identification of specific needs and the appropriate referral process to address them.

- Same as Paragraph 60 above

Paragraph Error! Reference source not found.:

Level of satisfaction regarding the identification of specific needs and the appropriate referral process to address them.

- Same as Paragraph 60 above

Paragraph 167:

Lack of knowledge of the feedback and complaints mechanisms available.

- Male (41%, n=130), Female (36%, n=1213)
- 18-29 (31%, n=118), 30-45 (38%, n=862), 46-59 (38%, n=229), 60+ (28%, n=137)
- With at least one specific need (38%, n=794), without specific needs (33%, n=555)

Paragraph 168:

Feeling that complaints submitted by themselves, or other refugees have not been answered.

- Male (25%, n=130), Female (22%, n=1213)
- 18-29 (26%, n=118), 30-45 (21%, n=862), 46-59 (23%, n=229), 60+ (26%, n=137)
- With at least one specific need (26%, n=794), without specific needs (17%, n=555)

Paragraph 170:

Reception of information at the border crossing points/help desk/ phone/ "Blue Dot" centres/other.

- Same as Paragraph 48 above

Level of satisfaction with the relevance of the information received at border crossing points.

- Same as Paragraph 82 above