

UNHCR Evaluation Management Response			
Evaluation title:	Evaluation of UNHCR's Level 3 Regional Refugee Emergency Response to the Crisis in Ukraine		
UNHCR evaluation reference:	EvO/2023/12		
Entity that commissioned the evaluation:	Evaluation Office		
Due date of Management Response:	3 January 2024		
Coordinator of Management Response:	George Woode	Senior Transition Coordinator, EDM	Geneva, Headquarters
Management Response approved by (<i>senior manager in commissioning office</i>):	Raouf Mazou	Assistant High Commissioner for Operations	Geneva, Headquarters
Date:	22 March 2024		

General comments on the evaluation:	<p>UNHCR welcomes the 'Evaluation of UNHCR's Level 3 Regional Refugee Emergency Response to the Crisis in Ukraine'. The Evaluation provides useful recommendations and reaffirms some of the decisions that have been taken, notably with regard to improving monitoring, updating and enhancing guidance, and expanding training and tools accessibility, among others.</p> <p>UNHCR agrees with recommendations 2 and 5, and overall acknowledges the calls for improvements mentioned in the evaluation and action is ongoing to address them. However, UNHCR partially agrees with the 4 other recommendations given that many developments and initiatives were happening around the time of the evaluation and since, and it is believed that they address many of the issues highlighted by the recommendations.</p>
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RECOMMENDATION 1:	<p>UNHCR should further invest in organizational preparedness for interventions in urban environments, working with strong governments and a connected and tech-savvy target population.</p> <p>a. UNHCR should clarify its role and value proposition in housing in urban contexts, as a last resort provider.</p>
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	<p>b. UNHCR should build on the best practices, opportunities and challenges of the Ukraine Regional Refugee Emergency Response in terms of interaction with a connected and tech-savvy target population.</p> <p>c. As part of the minimum preparedness actions of the UNHCR emergency policy, UNHCR should consider systematically conducting a detailed stakeholder mapping.</p>					
Management response:	Agree Partially agree Disagree					
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):	With regard to systematically conducting a detailed stakeholder mapping, it should be noted that the guidance on Emergency Preparedness no longer distinguishes between minimum and advanced preparedness actions. As part of contingency planning, country operations identify key preparedness actions that will need to be implemented to enable the planned emergency response. These are actions that a country operation implements to enhance the level of preparedness when a scenario is assessed as high risk. DESS has updated the preparedness actions in consultation with other divisions. Stakeholder mapping is included as one of the key preparedness actions.					
Unit or function responsible:	DRS, Regional Bureau/CO					
Top-line planned actions	By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress		
				Status	Comments	
1	A Policy on Protection, Inclusion and Solutions in Urban Areas is being developed.	DRS	The new policy will provide further clarification of the role of UNHCR in urban contexts.	Sept 2024		
2	Enhanced use of social media and other channels of communication to target displaced populations.	RBE Protection and country operations	RBE, working with country offices, will use the social media channels mapping that has been conducted to continue to share relevant, timely information through the digital channels preferred by refugees from Ukraine, while at the same time ensuring that	N/A	Ongoing	

			information is also provided through non-digital channels, such as helplines, in-person events, the Blue Dots (including mobile Blue Dots), and in the context of community outreach.			
RECOMMENDATION 2:		<p>UNHCR should invest more resources into the roll-out and awareness of the RCM.</p> <p>a. UNHCR should invest more into human resources for coordination in refugee settings (especially when not mixed settings).</p> <p>b. 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.</p> <p>c. UNHCR should further raise awareness on the RCM externally.</p>				
Management response:		Agree Partially agree Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		<i>[add only if partially agree or disagree was selected]</i>				
Unit or function responsible:		DER/Partnership and Coordinaton Service (PCS) as facilitator				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Continuous review of staffing structures.	CO/DHR/DSPR	Every year, when required, and following emergences, UNHCR undertakes a strategic review of operational objectives and staffing structures related thereto.		Ongoing	

2	<p>PCS with the support of the GLDC developed an extensive learning course on inter-agency coordination, including dedicated modules on the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) and Refugee Response Plans (RRPs). A dedicated inter-agency roster is also maintained yearly, where colleagues are trained in-person by PCS, and for 2024 this will be done with the support of the IIHL/San Remo.</p> <p>An RCM toolkit is being developed to support the operationalization of the model and to support colleagues to implement it in practice when deployed to a new emergency or are new to aspects of the RCM and developing RRP.</p>	DER/PCS with the support of relevant divisions	<p>The modules and in-person training cover the main aspects of the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM), and contain detailed information on what is included in the model as well as cover soft skills for inter-sector/inter-agency coordinators.</p> <p>The in-person training for staff on the inter-agency roster includes a simulation exercise around setting up the RCM and a RRP. The training materials and call for roster candidates are updated and launched each year. Training materials can be accessed and used by anyone through the Workday learning portal. PCS orients new interagency colleagues and deployees towards this resource.</p> <p>PCS has been coordinating the organization's update of the Refugee Coordination Model Guidance, and the new version will be accompanied by a detailed tool kit containing specific and practical guidance</p>		Ongoing	
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			documents, tools, templates, TORs and examples for putting in place a RCM, etc. This will be available on a user-friendly RCM dedicated site.			
3			<p>DER, through PCS coordination, has been working on an update of the Refugee Coordination Model Guidance with the divisions, bureaux and country offices. The revisions will strengthen the previous guidance and ensure alignment with changes in the inter-agency landscape. In particular, the revised guidance will clarify and expand on coordination responsibilities in refugee situations, mixed situations and mixed movements. It will also emphasize the engagement of development actors from the onset, nexus linkages and transition/ stabilization considerations. The guidance will be publicly available.</p> <p>Along with the guidance and protocol, a RCM toolkit (featuring standard TORs for sector coordination,</p>			

			<p>coordination structure, protection and durable solutions strategy templates, and RRP templates), is being developed as a repository of practical tools. DER is also creating an online RCM platform on the UNHCR.org website, where all documents and tools will be accessible for both internal and external audiences.</p> <p>As part of this RCM update, DER conducted consultations with UN agencies and NGOs to understand their needs, suggestions and recommendations, including for ensuring better external understanding of the RCM strategy. DER is finalizing a dissemination strategy and plan to ensure awareness is raised around the RCM and that it is made available to all relevant participants and stakeholders to inform and capacitate them on the updated model and be able to address frequently asked questions.</p>			
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<p>RECOMMENDATION 3:</p>	<p>UNHCR could further develop L3 protocols.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. UNHCR should simplify requirements for partners, both IPs and refugee-led organizations, during the emergency phase. b. UNHCR should ensure that all members of its rosters are aware of this principle and of how it simplifies some processes and requirements. c. UNHCR should clarify how the “no regrets” approach cohabits with existing risk management practices. d. UNHCR should invest in diversifying the profiles in the ERT to include more middle managers and administration staff.
<p>Management response:</p>	<p>Agree Partially agree Disagree</p>
<p>Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):</p>	<p>With regard to UNHCR simplifying requirements for partners during the emergency phase, for both IPs and refugee-led organizations, kindly note the following actions:</p> <p>The UNHCR/AI/2023/05 Administrative Instruction on Procedures on Partnership Management came into force on 1 September 2023, effective for 2024 onwards partnership agreement contracts. This superseded numerous previous AIs, all of which highlighted waived conditions during emergencies, in order to clarify and consolidate partnership management procedures. Each section of the end-to-end management of funded partnerships highlights simple conditions applicable during emergencies within a simple table for ease in order to provide clarity for operations. The new AI and contingency planning guidance also included a pooled partner approach for competitively selecting potential funded partners in case of emergencies, for better planning.</p> <p>These procedures enabled the effective implementation of modernized partnership management as part of PROMS, COMPASS and Cloud Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP).</p> <p>Furthermore, a multi-year partnership framework agreement was introduced from 2024 onwards for funded partnerships to allow further continuity after UNHCR successfully completes due diligence every 3-5 years. This already includes all Partnership Terms. During emergencies this facilitates a shortened project workplan (project activities and financial plan) to be negotiated and signed, for an initial instalment to be released.</p> <p>The new Partnership Management for Emergency Preparedness and Response within the new Emergency Handbook was overhauled and made available from November 2023, applicable for 2024 and beyond partnerships.</p>

	<p>The Programme Handbook was launched in August 2023, impacting again 2024 agreements onwards, with a specific consolidated section now on Emergencies Preparedness and Response.</p> <p>Finally, A Summary on Partnership Management in Emergencies helps provide details on all the above, and was published in December 2023, focusing on 2024 onwards.</p>				
Unit or function responsible:	DESS				
Top-line planned actions	By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
				Status	Comments
1	Simplified, expedited procedures known to roster members	DESS	DESS will ensure that in its WEM/Snr roster trainings that all roster members are aware of expedited processes		Ongoing
2	“No regrets” as linked to Risk/ERM will be articulated	DESS	DESS is developing an articulated position linking “no regrets” with ERM		Ongoing
3	Middle Management and diverse profiles included in rosters	DESS	DESS has further developed criteria to ensure more diverse profiles in the ERT and has developed a middle management cohort		Ongoing
RECOMMENDATION 4:	<p>UNHCR should develop corporate-level predictable policies towards data and monitoring tools.</p> <p>a. UNHCR should clarify the extent to which biometric data are mandatory during an L3 response.</p> <p>b. UNHCR should strengthen its organization-wide monitoring tool that tracks displacements.</p> <p>c. UNHCR should further strengthen programme monitoring by increasing the level of disaggregation and frequency of reporting.</p>				
Management response:	Agree Partially agree Disagree				

Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		<p>With regard to strengthening programme monitoring by increasing the level of disaggregation and frequency of reporting, kindly note that data collection tools were harmonized among countries (at regional level) from the beginning of the crisis. The regional protection monitoring tool was finalized by mid-March based on prior experiences with similar exercises in Europe and colleagues in all neighbouring countries had been trained and were using the tool by end of May. The recommendation for more frequent indicator reporting risks overburdening an emergency response. Instead, the focus of improved monitoring should be on harmonization, quality of data and the type of questions rather than on frequency or disaggregation.</p> <p>At the corporate level, the organization has established the UNHCR Assessment and Resource Monitoring Centre. (Link) The centre provides user-friendly and customizable tools and templates based on best practices and aims to simplify and harmonize data collection and analysis. A clear data collection methodology is provided to help generate more insightful data and facilitate evidence-based planning. Also, the UNHCR Programme Handbook and UNHCR Needs Assessment Handbook provide clear guidelines on tools and data monitoring.</p>				
Unit or function responsible:		GDS, DIP, CO				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Registration and Biometrics Policy	GDS / DIP	A policy framework is being developed to clarify the extent to which biometric data are mandatory during an L3 response.	31 Dec 2024	Ongoing	Broad consultation and technical assessments completed.
2	Delivery of guidance and support to individual countries when required	GDS	UNHCR is exploring the most efficient means to provide support when required.	31 Dec 2024 (for the guidance)	Ongoing	A non-official version of the guidance has already been released and pilots have been conducted.
3	Monitoring tools developed	CO	Assessments: in 2024 all country operations will ensure the continued use of Multisectoral Assessment	28 February 2025	Ongoing	

			<p>(MSNA), Participatory Assessment (PA), Area Based Assessment (Romania) and Focus Group Discussion (FDG) to complete individual profiles with an element on PWSN (persons with disabilities of varying degrees; individuals belonging to Roma minority; LGBTIQ+ and refugees aged 60+, including those with serious medical conditions) to better understand the needs and profiles of refugees, as well as to assess the refugee-host community dynamic based on the profile and location.</p> <p>On protection monitoring: Supported by the data collected through the different assessments and calibrated scorecards (Romania), protection monitoring will continue to inform; evidence based programmatic priorities (Slovakia will operationalize specific programmes for persons with disability through selected specialized partners to assist persons with disability); refined and</p>			
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			<p>targeted advocacy messages will be shared in the interagency context e.g. Refugee Coordination Forum series (Hungary). In Multi Country Office, the MCO and partners will report on disaggregated mandatory data, they will further be encouraged to disaggregate data by vulnerability when available.</p> <p>On CBI: In 2024, rapid socio-economic profiling (Moldova), FGD and Key Informant interviews (Slovakia), score-cards (Romania), etc. will be used to target and determine the eligibility of beneficiaries based on vulnerability criteria and indicators for the Cash for Protection programme.</p>			
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.					
Management response:	Agree Partially agree Disagree					
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						
Unit or function responsible:	RBE/CO/DRS					
Top-line planned actions	By whom	Comments		Progress		

			Expected completion date	Status	Comments	
1	UNHCR has developed a document clarifying UNHCR's definition of and approach to cash assistance and protection	DIP/DRS	UNHCR has developed a paper that articulates an organization-wide awareness on the relation between cash and protection, ensure protection-sensitive approaches to cash, maximize the protection outcomes of multi-purpose cash, and harmonize the understanding of "Cash FOR Protection".	February 2024	Completed	Action completed
RECOMMENDATION 6:	<p>UNHCR should leverage its newly established partnerships with private sector actors to support future and less well-funded emergency responses.</p> <p>a. UNHCR should work towards the sustainability of the new partnerships to support less visible crises.</p> <p>b. UNHCR could be stricter when accepting in-kind donations, if the timing or content of the donations is not compatible with operational conditions.</p>					
Management response:	<p>Agree Partially agree Disagree</p>					
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):	<p>DER made significant efforts to ensure measured visibility – critical for this context, deployment of key staff and managing donor missions. To leverage the new and revamped partnerships, immediately after the peak of the Ukraine emergency and faced with critical underfunding for many forgotten crises, DER was deliberate in riding the high levels of solidarity for the Ukraine crisis and transforming it into a broader movement of support towards all people forced to flee. In addition to more traditional public donors, DER estimated that 1 million new individual donors and over 500 companies were acquired as first-time donors to UNHCR through the Ukraine emergency and could be stewarded to increase donor retention in support of silent/underfunded crises and help UNHCR be better prepared for future emergencies. For this reason and as part of the broader thematic fundraising efforts for underfunded crises, DER in collaboration with DESS and DSPR, developed the "UNHCR Emergency Action" – a</p>					

		<p>donor funding proposition – and its related toolkit – for individual giving (IG), corporations, foundations, private philanthropists (PPH) and public donors. Its aim is to entrench UNHCR as the leading emergency preparedness and response organization, and raise more flexible funds for new emergencies and silent/underfunded crises.</p> <p>DER launched the underfunded report and continues to explore and a more sustainable approach to funding for refugee protection, noting the severe funding gap, and highlighting 13 of the most at-risk operations.</p> <p>UNHCR has a robust and strict criteria in place for accepting Gift-in-kind contributions (GIK) - including technical clearance - where items need to pass UNHCR’s minimum requirements, and donors have to commit to arrange transportation. The Ukraine emergency however resulted in operations accepting more GIK contributions than they were able to absorb at the time when operational capacity was still being built. There is room for improvement in the process of identifying and articulating GIK needs.</p>				
Unit or function responsible:		DER, Regional Bureau				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Development and launch of Emergency Action (Fund) donor proposition	DER - Emergency Coordination	Including toolkit for donors – in partnership with DSPR, DESS.	May 2023	Completed	
	IG emergency donor retention framework	DER - PSP	Continues as per established protocol.		Ongoing	
2	Guidance to steer donors, inclined to support with in-kind at the onset of an emergency, to instead support the second phase of an emergency when infrastructure and capacity are in place to	DER - PSP			Ongoing	

	accept the needed in-kind.					
	A review of the GIK process in the field with a view to address ways to accurately identify PSP support, strengthen the capacity of field colleagues on the acceptance of in-kind.	DER-PSP/ Regional Bureaux			Sept 2024	