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## Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme

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**Consideration of reports relating to programme  
and administrative oversight and evaluation**

## Report on evaluation

### Report of the High Commissioner

#### *Summary*

This report, covering the period from July 2018 through June 2019, is provided pursuant to the decision of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme to consider reports relating to programme and administrative oversight and evaluation during its annual plenary session (A/AC.96/1003, para. 25(1)(f)(vi)).

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## Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction .....	1-6	3
II. Management of the Evaluation Service .....	7-15	4
III. Increasing evaluation coverage and quality .....	16	6
IV. Using evaluations to inform policy and programming .....	17-33	9
V. Building UNHCR's evaluation capacity .....	34-36	13
VI. Linkages with internal entities on efforts related to evaluation .....	37-38	12
VII. Inter-agency, system-wide and joint evaluations .....	39-42	13
VIII. Supplementary activities.....	43-45	15

## I. Introduction

1. During the period covered in this report (July 2018-June 2019), UNHCR's Evaluation Service completed 12 evaluations and initiated another 22 in relation to strategic priority areas of UNHCR.<sup>1</sup> These centralized and decentralized evaluations have been utilized by divisions, regional bureaux, country offices, and senior management to strengthen accountability to stakeholders, including member States, partners and persons of concern - and contribute to the objective of building a learning organization as outlined in the 2016 evaluation policy.<sup>2</sup>

2. All UNHCR evaluations are designed in line with the key evaluation principles of independence, impartiality, credibility and utility.<sup>3</sup> Evaluations are undertaken by individual consultants or firms and managed by the Evaluation Service in close collaboration with relevant regional bureaux, divisions and country offices. All evaluations and reviews are placed in the public domain and include management responses.

3. In line with the 2016 policy, which will be reviewed at the end of 2019, the Evaluation Service is dedicated to its independent function, and its work is further guided by the Evaluation Strategy (2018-2022) and annual workplans.<sup>4</sup> Themes and topics for the 2019 workplan were selected and prioritized by the Head of Evaluation based on discussions with UNHCR's senior management and a field survey, as well as individual meetings with staff from country offices, regional bureaux and divisions.<sup>5</sup>

4. This paper reports on progress towards achieving the objectives set out in the five-year Evaluation Strategy, which are: i) increasing evaluation coverage and quality; ii) improving the relevance and utilization of evaluation findings; iii) building capacity to undertake and use evaluations; and iv) strengthening an evaluation function that is linked to other complementary functions, such as oversight, strategic planning, monitoring, data and analytics, and results-based management (RBM). It also looks at the implementation of the programme of work from July 2018 through June 2019 and on major emerging findings and lessons learned from the evaluations, and how these have been utilized by the organization.

5. UNHCR's 2019 evaluation workplan continues to be ambitious, aiming to commission approximately 25 new evaluations in 2019, a steady increase in coverage from 2018. This increase in coverage is in keeping with recommendations issued by the Board of Auditors in 2013, the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the Joint Inspection Unit, which noted that the quality and coverage of evaluations in UNHCR needed to be enhanced in line with United Nations standards.

6. Utilization-focused evaluations are one of the primary underpinnings of the Evaluation Strategy (2018-2021). They are critical to UNHCR's shift towards more evidence-based decision-making and course correction based on lessons learned. The Evaluation Service works closely with relevant bureaux, divisions and field offices to ensure that evaluation findings and recommendations have an impact on decision-making and course correction.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.unhcr.org/evaluation-and-research.html>.

<sup>2</sup> See UNHCR (2016) Evaluation Policy, available at: [www.unhcr.org/3d99a0f74](http://www.unhcr.org/3d99a0f74).

<sup>3</sup> See the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation, [www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914](http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914).

<sup>4</sup> UNHCR Evaluation Strategy (2018-2022) available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/5a93c8637.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> 2019 Evaluation work plan available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/research/eval/5c5984784/evaluation-workplan-2019.html>.

## II. Management of the Evaluation Service

7. UNHCR's expanded evaluation coverage requires greater commitment and further efforts from senior leadership and country teams, in addition to the work and dedicated resources of the Evaluation Service. The support of senior managers and representatives in operations around the world has been notable in this regard. Thirty-three countries have participated in either decentralized or centralized evaluations during the period reported.

8. In 2018, expenditure by the Evaluation Service was \$3.9 million, which amounts to just under 0.1 per cent of total programme expenditure for UNHCR in the same year. The Office continues to increase its evaluation related expenditures in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards and with those of other agencies. UNHCR's current evaluation budgets stand at \$7.8 million for 2019.

9. Given the organization's move to regionalization and decentralization, the Evaluation Service plans to expand evaluation expertise in the field by posting two Senior Evaluation Officers in regions in 2020. These field-based positions will allow the Service to give prompt, focused and timely assistance to regional bureaux and operations, and build capacity among field-based colleagues. This is consistent with other United Nations entities, including the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which have positioned dedicated evaluation staff in regional offices. UNHCR has reclassified the P5 Standard Specific position into an expert post, reflecting the higher requirements for evaluation capacity building and technical guidance on methods and evaluation approaches. The Headquarters team comprises five professional staff, three of whom are external experts and two are UNHCR staff. This helps ensure that a range of technical expertise and familiarity with UNHCR's mandate and programmes is available. The Head of Service, long-term consultants, and support staff complete the team.

10. Since last year, the Evaluation Service has introduced two methodological approaches, primarily to promote greater utilization of evaluations. The first is the introduction of longitudinal evaluations designed to accompany a programme or intervention as it is being carried out. Such evaluations gather evidence as a programme unfolds and allow external evaluators to contribute to course corrections, insights and recommendations on an interim basis. The longitudinal evaluations of the humanitarian-development nexus and the Bangladesh level-3 response to the Rohingya influx are two very different examples of this approach.

11. The second methodological approach helps inform strategy development through formative analyses aimed at improving organizational effectiveness and efficiency. These forward-looking evaluations include contextual analysis, establishing benchmarks set against the standards of other, similar agencies and literature reviews. The evidence generated, along with analysis of UNHCR's programming, is then expected to be used to develop recommendations for the Office's strategic directions. In 2019, five country operation evaluations that utilize a forward-leaning approach to inform country strategic thinking are being implemented.

12. Management responses have been completed for all finalized evaluations and placed in the public domain.<sup>6</sup> As per the Evaluation Policy, one member of the Senior Executive Team, assigned by the High Commissioner, is accountable for the management response of all centralized evaluations, while directors or representatives are accountable for the management responses for all decentralized evaluations.

13. Findings and recommendations from UNHCR evaluations are discussed with staff and management at various points in the evaluative process. During the process of conducting

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<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.unhcr.org/evaluation-and-research.html>.

an evaluation, the Service is in close contact with relevant offices and teams. Debriefings and workshops provide opportunities for immediate course corrections and shifts in programming. In 2019, the Evaluation Service held multi-stakeholder meetings and workshops in country offices and at headquarters, in order to promote learning, disseminate findings and prioritize recommendations at the operational and organizational level. These workshops offered external evaluators an additional opportunity to validate findings and develop recommendations through a consultative and participatory process.

14. UNHCR's Evaluation Service is committed to ensuring that evaluations provide evidence that can be incorporated into ongoing work, both within country operations as well as organizationally. In the context of current reforms, evaluations are designed to generate learning that informs the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees, follow-up to the "grand bargain" commitments, and other significant efforts carried out to address forced displacement challenges. The Evaluation Service therefore looks across evaluations to identify systemic trends and recurring themes related to impact, effectiveness, learning, knowledge management, and organizational culture, and shares these with senior management on a regular basis.

15. Although the Evaluation Service is a stand-alone, independent service, it coordinates with several other oversight functions such as audit, strategic oversight and the Inspector General's Office in order to be relevant and effective. It also works with data and analytics, resource-based management, and strategic planning and programme design functions (such as the multi-year, multi-partner efforts) since these functions generate evidence that can be used to enhance their own efforts.

### III. Increasing evaluation coverage and quality

16. Between July 2018 and June 2019, the Evaluation Service completed 12 evaluations and initiated an additional 22 evaluations, reviews and evaluation syntheses in relation to strategic priority areas, such as: emergency response; protection from sexual- and gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse; and the humanitarian-development nexus; among others. This number of evaluations represents a significant increase in the coverage of evaluations when compared to previous years. Furthermore, the Evaluation Service prioritized joint evaluations and system-wide evaluations, in line with the commitments made through the process of the Secretary-General's UN Development System Reforms.<sup>7</sup> Table 1 below provides an overview of evaluations.

**Table 1: Overview of completed, ongoing and planned evaluations**

<i>Evaluations</i>	<i>Countries concerned</i>	<i>Completion</i>
<b>Completed evaluations</b>		
<i>Centralized</i>		
Evaluation of UNHCR's Global Fleet Management	Chad/Colombia/Kenya/Lebanon	Sep-18

<sup>7</sup> See Commitments on System-Wide Evaluation on page 42 of Report of the Secretary-General on Implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, 2019 <https://undocs.org/A/74/73>.

<i>Evaluations</i>	<i>Countries concerned</i>	<i>Completion</i>
Two-year progress assessment of the comprehensive refugee response approach	14 countries applying the comprehensive refugee response framework	Dec-18
Evaluation of the first year of the level-3 emergency response in Bangladesh	Bangladesh	Dec-18
Evaluation of UNHCR's Response to the level-3 Emergency in the Democratic Republic of Congo	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Dec-18
Impact and effectiveness of UNHCR's global livelihoods strategies and approaches	Costa Rica/ Ghana/India/Rwanda/Turkey	Dec-18
Evaluative review of UNHCR's policies and procedures on the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse.	Pakistan/Ethiopia/Ukraine/ Lebanon	May-19
<i>Decentralized</i>		
Evaluation of our livelihoods programmes in 3 countries	Guinea, Benin and Chad	Aug-18
Evaluation of UNHCR prevention and response to SGBV in the refugee population in Lebanon (2016-2018).	Lebanon	Sep-18
Evaluation of the effects of cash-based interventions on protection outcomes in Greece	Greece	Jan-19
Evaluation of effectiveness of the protective transfer agreements for refugees in Central America	Costa Rica/El Salvador/ Guatemala/Honduras	Feb-19
Effectiveness of training programmes on cash-based interventions	Global	Mar-19
Effectiveness of the Kalobeyi Integrated Social and Economic Development Programme	Kenya	Jun-19
<b>Ongoing Evaluations</b>		
<i>Centralized</i>		
Evaluation synthesis of UNHCR's prevention and response to SGBV	Global	Jul 19

<i>Evaluations</i>	<i>Countries concerned</i>	<i>Completion</i>
Utility and relevance of current data and information management approaches	Pakistan/Zambia/Syria Regional Refugee Response/ Regional Office in the Americas	Sep 19
Relevance and effectiveness of our engagement with the private sector	To be determined	Sep 19
Longitudinal evaluation UNHCR's engagement in humanitarian-development cooperation	Bangladesh/Ethiopia/ Jordan/ Niger	1 <sup>st</sup> Report: Sep 19 2 <sup>nd</sup> Report: Sep 20 Final Report: July 21
Country portfolio evaluations (5)	Afghanistan, Angola, Egypt, Iraq, Morocco	Q1 2020
Effectiveness of approaches and strategies deployed by the Global Learning Centre to build staff capacity	To be determined	Q2 2020
Evaluation of the UNHCR Regional Refugee Response to the Venezuela Situation.	Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru	Q2 2020
Multi-Year Evaluation of the implementation of UNHCR's 2018 Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) Policy	Chad, Greece, Kenya, Mexico and Thailand	1 <sup>st</sup> Report: Sep 20 2 <sup>nd</sup> Report: Sep 21 Final Report: July 22
<i>Decentralized</i>		
Evaluation of UNHCR prevention and response to SGBV in the Venezuelan population of concern in Brazil (2017-2018)	Brazil	July 19

<i>Evaluations</i>	<i>Countries concerned</i>	<i>Completion</i>
Evaluation of the effects of cash-based interventions on protection outcomes in Rwanda	Rwanda	Dec 19
Country-specific livelihoods programme evaluation	Malaysia, South Sudan, Senegal, Mauritania, Djibouti	Jan 20
Ikea Foundation: "Towards Sustainable and Life Changing Refugee Protection Environments in Dollo Ado"	Ethiopia	Dec 19
Ikea Foundation: Melkadida Renewable Energy and Livelihoods Programme Baseline Evaluation	Ethiopia	Dec 19
<i>System-wide/joint evaluations</i>		
Evaluation Synthesis of agency-specific Rohingya Response Evaluations (UNHCR/IOM/UNICEF)	Bangladesh	Sep 19
Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Thematic Evaluation on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls (GEEWG)	To be determined	May 20
Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on Cyclone Idai Response in Mozambique	Mozambique	Mar 20
Joint UNAIDS Programme Evaluation: Strengthening Public Health Capacity and Strategic Information Systems	Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, India, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia	Dec 19

### **Planned evaluations**

#### *Centralized*

Evaluation of UNHCR's approach to Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)	To be determined	Mar 20
A review of UNHCR's responses in Internal Displacement situations	To be determined	Q2 2020



<i>Evaluations</i>	<i>Countries concerned</i>	<i>Completion</i>
<i>Decentralized</i>		
Decentralized Evaluation of Alternative to Detention Pilot Programmes in the United Kingdom	United Kingdom	

#### **IV. Using evaluations to inform policy and programming**

17. The utilization of evaluation as a tool to inform decision making and course correction has increased in parallel to the expansion and deepening of UNHCR's evaluation practice. Nearly all recommendations have been accepted by management, and the Evaluation Service intends to monitor implementation of recommendations through an inquiry in 2020 or 2021.

18. Below are the most significant takeaways from evaluations conducted during the period of reporting. Many of these have been incorporated into UNHCR's plans and policies, and formal management responses to each evaluation can be found on UNHCR's website.

*Lessons Learned on Emergency Preparedness and Response:*

19. The evaluations of UNHCR's response to the emergencies in Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and White Nile State in Sudan,<sup>8</sup> revealed its strengths in delivering effective life-saving assistance. In Bangladesh, there is clear evidence that UNHCR's assistance ensured that mortality and morbidity levels remained well below emergency thresholds. The Office is further credited with providing timely registration and identity documentation services. The evaluations noted that there were opportunities for UNHCR to strengthen preparedness and early response at the onset of an emergency, and to bring greater consistency and quality in how emergency responses advocate for and mainstream protection in all sectors. These evaluations have contributed to efforts to further bolster UNHCR's emergency response in these specific operations and globally.

*Lessons learned on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, and prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence:*

20. The independent evaluative review on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) analysed how current policies and procedures on PSEA are being interpreted and implemented by UNHCR staff in Headquarters as well as in field operations. The review noted that there is a clear vision and a genuine commitment by leadership and staff to the elimination of sexual exploitation and abuse of persons of concern. As a result, the foundations of culture change on PSEA are well established in the organization. The review recommended further efforts be made to strengthen mainstreaming of prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse, and ensure that the multi-disciplinary approach to PSEA is maintained, with appropriate and clarified structures, roles and responsibilities of staff, including managers. The review recommends actions that UNHCR can take to increase involvement of persons of concern in the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

<sup>8</sup> See report: and the management response at <https://www.unhcr.org/research/evalreports/5c811b464/independent-evaluation-unhcrs-l3-emergency-response-bangladesh.html>.

Finally, the review recommended concrete actions for the consideration of the Inspector General's Investigations Section, in line with steps already being taken.

21. The independent synthesis of the evaluations in relation to the prevention and mitigation of and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in refugee populations in Brazil and Lebanon,<sup>9</sup> as well as SGBV-related findings from the multi-sector evaluations of UNHCR response to L3 emergencies in Bangladesh and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, provides a number of good practices, emerging patterns and recurrent issues. UNHCR operations have demonstrated the ability to adapt the SGBV approach to different contexts, for example the increased use of community-based networks and social media has shown positive results in the prevention of, as well as the response to SGBV. Further, UNHCR was credited for supporting the inclusion of men and boys as survivors in the development of activities and programmes. The use of cash assistance to reduce survivors' vulnerability showed positive results in different operations. Identified challenges included inconsistencies in the level and quality of the SGBV responses across operations, with opportunities to strengthen the mainstreaming of the SGBV-prevention activities among sectoral activities.

*Lessons learned on engaging across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus:*

22. Between July 2018 and June 2019, the Evaluation Service commissioned several evaluations that examined the effectiveness of UNHCR's engagement with development actors on economic inclusion, livelihoods and durable solutions, particularly in relation to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and the Global Compact on Refugees. In December 2018, the Evaluation Service completed a two-year progress report on the application of the CRRF.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, UNHCR is completing the first year of a three-year study on its engagement with development partners, the private sector and other civil society partners to strengthen refugee responses. In 2018, UNHCR completed a (centralized) evaluation of its global livelihood strategy by using country case studies to determine the effects on economic inclusion of persons of concern.<sup>11</sup> More recently, UNHCR partnered with the Evaluation Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark on an evaluation of the Kalobeyei Integrated Social and Economic Development Programme in Kenya. Many lessons learned about the shift in UNHCR's role as that of a facilitator and catalyst between humanitarian and development actors, as well as building self-reliance for refugees and others of concern to the Office are being incorporated into future strategies and policies, as they require a long-term approach. For example, UNHCR's new strategy for economic inclusion (2019-2023) incorporates lessons and recommendations made by this centralized evaluation.

23. The two-year progress assessment of comprehensive refugee responses provided some useful insights into emerging results on collective efforts from the application of this approach in 14 countries. The report noted that national ownership and leadership is central to its success, particularly when supported by a 'whole-of-government' approach that links activities of humanitarian and development actors to national priorities. Shared longer-term perspectives on displacement underpin efforts to improve economic inclusion of refugees, and ensure that both refugee and host communities benefit from development gains.

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<sup>9</sup> See report: <https://www.unhcr.org/research/evalreports/5c4afb4d4/evaluation-unhcr-prevention-response-sgbv-refugee-population-lebanon-20162018.html>.

<sup>10</sup> See report: <https://www.unhcr.org/5c63ff144.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> See report: <https://www.unhcr.org/research/evalreports/5c51a0774/evaluation-unhcrs-livelihoods-strategies-approaches-2014-2018.html>.

24. Evaluations consistently found that UNHCR had increased its engagement and partnerships with government and development actors, including other UN agencies. UNHCR's engagement in humanitarian-development cooperation focused on efforts to increase advocacy and improve coordination with development partners, in particular with a view towards linking services for refugees to national systems. Emerging findings from evaluation suggested that UNHCR's operational platform and direct access to persons of concern provided valuable practical support in joint efforts to include them in national services and to enhance self-reliance.

25. The centralized evaluation of UNHCR's livelihoods programming documented that refugees and others of concern have been able to access food or cash services, health care, primary schools, security services, shelter, natural resources, as well as employment and markets as a result of UNHCR's advocacy for policy changes and capacity building of partners to create a more enabling environment for refugees. It also showed that UNHCR has contributed to the development of informal safety nets, asset ownership, savings groups and refugee participation in local/municipal disaster preparedness plans. In many country operations, protection and livelihoods teams are working together to promote livelihoods for vulnerable refugees. As the livelihoods sector of UNHCR moves more towards operational partners and capacity building and as improved monitoring continues to develop, new outcome and impact indicators will be more useful to measure systems-level changes.

*Cash-based interventions:*

26. The ongoing decentralized evaluations on cash-based interventions (CBI) are examining how protection outcomes can be improved in UNHCR's response to refugee and internal displacement situations.

27. Building on findings from the 2017 evaluation synthesis of its cash-based interventions in Jordan, UNHCR has commissioned two country-level evaluations to explore the effects of UNHCR cash-based interventions on protection outcomes. The first of these was conducted in Greece and completed in 2018,<sup>12</sup> whilst the second has been commissioned in Rwanda and will be completed by the end of 2019. The evaluation in Greece found that the design of the CBI programme in country - providing blanket assistance to all eligible persons of concern - was appropriate to the context, but recommended that future programming take into consideration varying levels of economic vulnerability when targeting CBIs. The evaluation also found that while multi-purpose cash allowed many refugees in Greece to meet their basic needs and helped some refugees engage in the Greek labour market, future CBI programming should do more to encourage sustained livelihoods activities and financial independence in order to improve linkages to protection outcomes.

*Effectiveness and efficiency*

28. In selected areas, UNHCR's effectiveness and efficiency as an organization have been evaluated in the course of 2018. These include: a) a completed evaluation of the global fleet management effort to manage light vehicles in the organization; b) an ongoing evaluation of private sector engagement (to be completed in September 2019); c) an ongoing evaluation of the data and information management approaches used at UNHCR, especially at field level (to be completed in September 2019); d) a planned evaluation of the approaches used by UNHCR's Global Learning and Development Centre (GLDC) to build staff capacity (to be commissioned in Q3 2019); and e) an ongoing independent desk review of UNHCR's leadership and coordination in refugee operations. These five evaluations are yielding

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<sup>12</sup> See report: <https://www.unhcr.org/research/evalreports/5c9217c87/evaluation-effects-cash-based-interventions-protection-outcomes-greece.html>.

evidence on how UNHCR can be more efficient and cost effective in managing resources and internal capacities and in working with others.

29. The Global Fleet Management (GFM) evaluation assessed the extent to which the scheme provides UNHCR field offices and operations with appropriate, cost-effective and safe vehicles and professional fleet management services.<sup>13</sup> The evaluation estimated that GFM procurement of light vehicles saved UNHCR approximately \$8.8 million in 2017 and approximately \$9.5 million in 2018. The evaluation furthermore estimated that the auction process used by GFM brought in revenues of approximately \$6.3 million in 2017 alone. The benefits of a centrally procured all-risk insurance through GFM included savings of \$2.4 million. The vehicle standardization achieved through GFM increased efficiency; reduced costs related to management, training, maintenance and repairs; and increased staff security through a reduction in the average age of vehicles. The evaluation recommended that, since UNHCR's fleet represents a large proportion of UNHCR's assets, GFM should continue to raise awareness about the importance of fleet management and disseminate related policies and procedures across the organization.

30. The ongoing private sector engagement evaluative review examines how UNHCR can strategically engage with the private sector beyond fundraising purposes to bring benefits to refugees and other persons of concern. Preliminary analysis indicated that UNHCR has over 300 engagements with the private sector in 62 countries: some 30 per cent with local companies and 70 per cent with multinational corporations. In these engagements, UNHCR plays a diverse array of roles depending on the context, such as: advocacy to government in partnership with the private sector; connecting persons of concern with markets and employment opportunities; and providing incentives to the private sector to invest in refugee settlements. Such engagement provides a range of benefits, including improved economic inclusion/livelihood opportunities; additional 'voice' and representation of needs; and increased protection and services for persons of concern. The evaluation is identifying organizational factors that enable, inhibit and affect the sustainability of such efforts, drawing on external benchmarking and making recommendations to UNHCR on how best to formulate partnerships with strategic priorities and targeted results.

31. The evaluation of data and information-management approaches found that while UNHCR has a wealth of operational data, more could be done to optimize the use, availability and protection of data. In response to these findings, UNHCR has developed a strategy that will focus on data integration to maximize and facilitate its analysis, visualization and use. It will also address capacity gaps at various levels in the organization, and strengthen data governance and responsible data management that facilitates sharing and use of data internally and externally.

32. The evaluation of approaches used by the GLDC to strengthen staff capacity will examine the extent to which that function is fit for purpose in terms of promoting and enhancing learning at the individual, team and organizational levels. Based on the Human Resources Review conducted in 2018, the Division of Human Resources is making adjustments to strengthen the professionalization of job functions along with talent development and retention. As a result, this evaluation will provide timely information on learning approaches that can inform the GLDC's future learning strategy.

33. The ongoing independent desk review of UNHCR's leadership and coordination of refugee responses is examining coordination structures in refugee response situations, as well as how UNHCR engages with coordination structures across the range of contexts in which it works. The review also explores the predictability, transparency and accountability of

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<sup>13</sup> See report: <https://www.unhcr.org/research/evalreports/5c4f26f7fc/evaluation-unhcrs-global-fleet-management-report.html>.

coordination structures in different response settings and across the timeline of a response, and examines the factors that contribute to or constrain effective and efficient refugee coordination.

## **V. Building UNHCR's capacity to conduct and learn from evaluations**

34. Between July 2018 and June 2019, the Evaluation Service focused on improving capacity by: i) collaborating with the GLDC to develop evaluation-focused learning material; ii) developing a video about evaluation in English, Spanish and French;<sup>14</sup> and iii) developing field proficiency in undertaking decentralized evaluations.

35. During the reporting period, an annual consultative process supported discussions about evaluation among senior managers and staff with various functions and at different grade levels, both in the field and at Headquarters.

36. The service is now developing a communication and dissemination strategy to strengthen the awareness and uptake of evaluation and evidence-based decision making among UNHCR staff across functions and grades. Products and approaches will need to be differentiated. For some, building awareness of what evaluation entails and how evaluations are used for decision making, advocacy and accountability will be prioritized. For others, the focus will be on developing knowledge and skills on how to plan and manage different types of evaluations, internally or together with other agencies. Relevant existing efforts in other UN entities have been reviewed and are being used by the Evaluation Service in developing UNHCR's approach.

## **VI. Linkages with internal entities on efforts related to evaluation**

37. The Evaluation Service and the OIOS UNHCR Internal Audit Service collaborated on annual workplans to explore synergies and ensure that there was no unnecessary duplication or burden placed on operations during missions. Furthermore, the two functions, while drawing on very different disciplines and methodologies, exchange documents and consider sequencing efforts when examining similar issues or areas, along with other oversight functions such as risk management and the Inspector General's Office. In order to leverage these oversight functions, the different entities meet informally to exchange lessons learned and work on common themes related to organizational effectiveness, strategy and efficiency.

38. The Evaluation Service offered advisory support to both the data team and the RBM revision project team to ensure that evaluation was an integral part of the overall efforts to link evidence with planning, course correction and strategic thinking. These are ongoing efforts and are undertaken at the operational, as well as the organizational levels. The Service also offered support on indicators and data collection approaches, particularly on impact and outcome data, which are often required in evaluations.

## **VII. Inter-agency, system-wide and joint evaluations**

39. The United Nations reforms include greater commitments to system-wide and joint evaluations, and UNHCR has been fully engaged in these efforts. In 2018 and 2019, UNHCR's Evaluation Service played an active role with inter-agency and external evaluation

<sup>14</sup> See English version <https://www.unhcr.org/evaluation-and-research.html>.

bodies. It is one of the lead members of the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) Steering Group, under which three inter-agency humanitarian evaluations are ongoing or planned. These include: an evaluation of the drought response in Ethiopia; the first thematic evaluation of the IAHE on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls; and an evaluation of the response to Cyclone Idai in Mozambique. UNHCR is also an active member of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), and participated in the evaluation practice exchange and UNEG annual general meeting in May 2018. Through the Evaluation Service, UNHCR together with UNICEF and UN-Women, is a co-lead on the Humanitarian Evaluation Interest Group (HEIG) which brings together multiple member agencies to ensure humanitarian interests are represented in the work that UNEG undertakes. In addition, the Evaluation Service served as UNHCR's focal point in the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), participating in its annual meeting and liaising with the network on relevant issues.

40. During the reporting period, the Inspection and Evaluation Division of OIOS conducted an evaluation of UNHCR's public health programming, with the support of the Evaluation Service. Results were presented in June 2019 to the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Committee expressed support for UNHCR's leadership and the work that it has undertaken, in addition to accepting UNHCR's management response to the evaluation. While OIOS previously conducted programme evaluations of UNHCR, in 2018, it informed UNHCR of its recommendation to the CPC to stop conducting UNHCR programme evaluations in recognition of the stronger independent evaluation capacity within UNHCR. In this context, OIOS formally presented its plan to inspect UNHCR's evaluation function in lieu of undertaking programme evaluations of UNHCR to the CPC in June 2019, which was endorsed.

41. The Evaluation Service provides technical guidance and quality oversight on evaluations led by donors or partners working with UNHCR's divisions. The ongoing impact evaluation of the Melkadida programme conducted by the Ikea Foundation, as well as the planned baseline evaluation and upcoming midpoint (2020) and endline (2022) evaluations are examples of such support. In addition, the Evaluation Service contributed to the strategic evaluation of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS to be completed in Q4 2019.

42. The Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) has completed the 2017-2018 assessment of UNHCR. In this regard, the Evaluation Service provided full support and input, and the evaluation function is mostly satisfactory, with some areas for strengthening the use of evaluations.

## **VIII. Supplementary Activities**

43. The Evaluation Service remains committed to supporting independent research on a wide-range of themes relevant to decision-makers, UNHCR staff and partners, and to refugees on issues concerning persons of concern to UNHCR and forced displacement. The Evaluation Service will continue to cooperate and support independent research and research publications such as the Forced Migration Review. In addition, the Evaluation Service continues to engage with academic institutions, individuals and networks, as well as think tanks and other thought leaders, with a view to complementing UNHCR's own publications, such as the New Issues in Refugee Research series. These initiatives feed into the global efforts set out in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the Global Compact on Refugees.

44. During the period from July 2018 through June 2019, UNHCR supported the issuance of several issues of the Forced Migration Review, including on: root causes of displacement, rights and access to work, and education.

45. In conclusion, the Evaluation Service's expanded scope of work reflects the strong leadership commitment towards increased accountability and enhanced learning.

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