

**UNHCR**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

EVALUATION SERVICE TERMS OF REFERENCE

COUNTRY STRATEGY EVALUATION FOR MEXICO

Key Information at glance about the evaluation	
Title of the evaluation:	Country Strategy Evaluation for Mexico
Proposed Countries:	Mexico
Time-frame covered:	2017-2020
Type of evaluation:	Country Strategy Evaluation
Evaluation commissioned by:	UNHCR Evaluation Service
Evaluation manager:	Susan Bird bird@unhcr.org
Date:	22 February 2021

1. INTRODUCTION

1. UNHCR's country operations around the world aim to work effectively to pursue protection and solutions, to support the inclusion of internally displaced, refugees and stateless people in national and local services, and to contribute to societies and economies, especially in refugee hosting countries. Such efforts require documenting lessons from implementation on the ground. These lessons inform UNHCR's strategic thinking, programme design and programme implementation both at the global and country operation level, as well as ensure that UNHCR country operations are supported in both practically applying and seeing impact in their specific contexts.
2. The Country Strategy Evaluation (CSE) will provide input into UNHCR's three to five-year Multi-Year, Multi-Partner Protection and Solutions plan (MYMP¹) for 2022 at the country level, aimed at deepening UNHCR's approach to innovative long-term programmes with partners which are complementary to ongoing national and regional development efforts. The MYMP will help UNHCR Mexico leverage comparative advantages to tackle and resolve protection and solutions challenges for refugees and other forcibly displaced people and stateless persons in a sustainable way.
3. The CSE for Mexico is one of a series of CSEs designed to help inform learning and planning processes. Other CSEs planned for the 2020-2021 period are: Uganda and Zambia with the possibility for others.
4. These Terms of Reference (TOR) provide key information to UNHCR staff and external stakeholders about the proposed evaluation, as a central component of the Request for Proposals for hiring a suitable evaluation team, and to guide this team on the expectations that the evaluation should address. It outlines the operational context globally and in the country of study; the purpose, specific objectives and key questions that the evaluation seeks to address; the approach, management and timeline for the study.

2. UNHCR GLOBAL BACKGROUND

5. There are more than 70 million people of concern to UNHCR —refugees, stateless persons, returnees, and IDPs affected by conflict —a number which has doubled over the past two decades. These historic levels of displacement have highlighted the need to revisit some of the

¹ UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2017–2021 (<https://www.unhcr.org/5894558d4.pdf>) call upon operations to “build a multi-year perspective in our planning and budgetary processes; this is indispensable to support planning for inclusion and solutions and our ability to work with development actors.”

traditional approaches to protection and assistance as well as the search for solutions.² UNHCR is committed to taking a strategic, evidence-based approach to identifying those areas where UNHCR can have most impact,³ and where we can most effectively leverage others in securing protection and solutions.

6. The adoption of the [New York Declaration](#) in September 2016 ushered UNHCR and partners into a new era of collaboration as States agreed to address and resolve refugee flows through a new model—the [Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework](#) (CRRF)—that places the rights, interests and potential of refugees and of their hosts at the heart of a multi-dimensional response extending beyond humanitarian action. Building on lessons learned through the practical application of the CRRF, the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) (GCR) provides a platform through which UNHCR can reinforce existing, and build new partnerships, to improve response to refugee situations. Important developments linked to UN Reform, the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 are also fundamentally reshaping the way in which UNHCR works.
7. Linked to the four key objectives of the GCR, UNHCR's [2017-2021 Strategic Directions](#) guides action on protection, emergency response, inclusion, empowerment of the people UNHCR serves, and opportunities for solutions. MYMPs at the country level are informed by participatory planning exercises which include needs and priority assessments with partner organizations and key stakeholders such as governments, donors, and people of concern. The planning process further defines country priority actions and allocates resources against these priorities in line with global and regional priorities. Mid-year reviews are carried out in each country to review progress and recommend course correction actions.
8. UNHCR has undertaken an internal transformation process to better deliver actions committed under the Strategic Directions.⁴ The change process seeks to better position UNHCR to protect and assist populations of concern, work with others to promote solutions, address future challenges and take advantage of emerging opportunities. It includes regionalization and decentralization in an effort to strengthen country operations with enhanced authorities and additional capacities. Regional Bureaux have shifted from Headquarters to regionally based hubs and will cover activities including setting regional strategies and priorities, managing performance and compliance, identifying and monitoring emerging issues and risks, and providing technical support and guidance to country operations. Under this process, staff and decision-making authority lies closer to the field and beneficiaries, allowing for a faster and more effective response. Decentralization is a central component of fulfilling the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) and the broader UN Reform efforts, allowing for greater collaboration with host countries and development actors, promoting national ownership, and focusing more on people over process.
9. Also aligned with the shift in UNHCR's approach, a Results-Based Management (RBM) system is under development across all operations. The goal is to revise UNHCR's entire approach to RBM in a way that drives country-based planning and evidence-based decision-making, and that enables a greater focus throughout the organization on collective outcomes and impact.⁵ Monitoring and reporting tools are being revised which will shape the organization's future approach to assessment, planning, implementing and reporting. Priorities for the project include providing a revised results framework structure, defining organizational result areas at impact and outcome levels, proposing core indicators for the purpose of global aggregation and increasing user-defined elements in the framework to enable context specific operational planning at the country level. These measures should help support UNHCR country operations to be more agile and responsive to evolving contexts and emerging opportunities as the organization engages more deeply with governments, partners, UN Country Teams and other stakeholders towards collective outcomes. UNHCR's ability to deliver on expectations in the

² UNHCR's Global Appeal 2020 – 2021 available at:

https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/ga2020/pdf/Global_Appeal_2020_full_lowres.pdf

³ UNHCR Strategic Directions 2017 – 2021

⁴ See document EC/70/SC/CRP.22, Update on UNHCR reform <https://www.unhcr.org/5d81f9620.pdf>

⁵ Ibid.

context of the GCR is dependent upon a more responsive and integrated means of managing and demonstrating results.

3. UNHCR MEXICO BACKGROUND

10. Mexico is party to both the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, and the legal framework pertaining to refugees and asylum-seekers largely reflects international standards of protection.
11. Mexico's geographic position between the U.S. and Central America makes it a country with mixed, dynamic and complex migration and displacement flows. While in the past, many people on the move sought better opportunities in North America or family reunification, there is now an increasing number of people from Central America who are articulating their intention to remain in Mexico, seeking international protection as refugees. This is due in large part to better opportunities available in Mexico as well as the limitation in reaching the US and accessing the asylum system.
12. In late 2018, the Government of Mexico announced a human rights-based migration policy. The Government faced numerous challenges in implementing the policy as a result of regional dynamics and a series of policies from the US aimed at reducing irregular migration. Migration enforcement actions were stepped up beginning in the second quarter of 2019, this includes the increase of detention, including of children, and expedited returns. This had a significant impact on asylum-seekers. While detention has been always used, in mid-2019 there was an increase of control measures.
13. The National Refugee Commission (COMAR) oversees assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers in accordance to human rights law, including Refugee Status Determination (RSD) and protection. Despite progress in many areas and significant support from UNHCR, COMAR does not have yet sufficient capacity to carry out high quality, timely RSD for the increase of claimants now arriving in the country. This must be considered in conjunction with the 3,500 % increase of claims from 2015 to 2019.
14. Similarly, the National Migration Institute has major backlogs in processing documentation for asylum-seekers and newly recognized refugees.
15. UNHCR has been active in Mexico through different waves of displacement. Working with both the Mexican and Guatemalan governments, UNHCR assisted in the voluntary repatriation of more than 43,000 refugees from 1984 until 1999.⁶ UNHCR also helped with local integration in Southern Mexico, naturalization and migratory residence assistance, self-sufficiency, and specialized services for vulnerable refugees. Over the next few years, the refugee population in the region remained relatively stable. Migrant and refugee flows from Central America once again increased in the 2000s with the rise of criminal organizations and some of the highest levels of violence outside of a war zone.
16. In the period from 2000-2010, UNHCR focused on promoting the naturalization of long-staying refugees and ensuring the protection of refugees within broader migratory flows, in particular by monitoring the southern border of Mexico and strengthening national asylum systems.⁷ UNHCR also supported the Mexico Plan of Action, a regional strategic framework approved by 20 countries in 2004 to promote durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons under three main axes: Protection, Durable Solutions and Borders of Solidarity.⁸
17. As levels of violence and crime in the Northern Triangle of Central America continued to increase, Mexico experienced an uptake in irregular mixed migration movements and asylum claims as of 2014. This created considerable political, logistical, financial and human rights-related challenges for Mexican asylum officials. UNHCR continued to pursue a strategy of

⁶ UNHCR Global Report 2000

⁷ UNHCR Global Appeal 2007

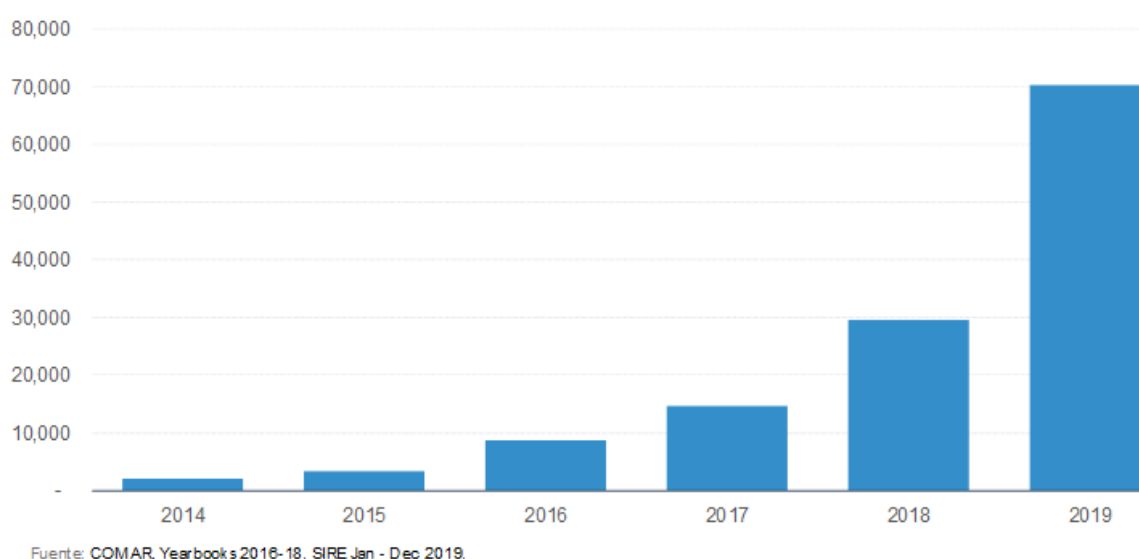
⁸ The Mexico Plan of Action to Strengthen International Protection of Refugees in Latin America: Main Achievements and Challenges During the Period 2005-2010, UNHCR

strengthening Mexico's asylum system, notably through the Asylum Quality Assurance Initiative (QAI) aimed at improving the quality and consistency of RSD decision-making by Mexican officials.⁹

4. UNHCR'S CURRENT AND PLANNED OPERATIONAL RESPONSE IN MEXICO

18. As of Dec. 2019, there were 291,708 persons of concern (POCs) to UNHCR in Mexico.¹⁰ This represents a 76% increase over 2018. Most POCs are from Central America, particularly Honduras and El Salvador. Significant numbers also come from Cuba, Haiti, and Venezuela. At least 150,000 of these are people with possible international protection needs who do not access the asylum procedure, either because they are in transit or because they have an alternative legal stay arrangement. From January to October 2019, at least 31% of the population registered were children and adolescents, and 34% were women and girls.¹¹

Asylum claims in Mexico



19. Starting in 2019, UNHCR Mexico began working towards developing new multi-year proposals, some jointly with other development actors and UN agencies. Five projects have been awarded and are currently being implemented, reflecting the three pillars of the [Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework](#) (MIRPS¹² in Spanish): 1. Reception and admission- a UNHCR project in the North of Mexico and a joint project with UNICEF on child protection and alternatives to detention; 2. Support to host countries and communities- a joint project with GIZ on enhancing public services in host communities in the South of Mexico; and 3. Expanding opportunities for durable solutions- a joint project with ILO on promotion of employment and social protection and a joint project with ILO and IOM under the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund.
20. Mexico's commitments globally (GCR and Global Compact on Migration – GCM) as well as a leadership role in the MIRPS process reflect a willingness to work towards solutions for migrants and refugees. UNHCR Mexico's current plan is aligned with the MIRPS and the GCR, and includes the following four strategic directions:

⁹ UNHCR Operational Update: Central America and Mexico April 2015

¹⁰ 2019 Year-End Report, UNHCR 2010

¹¹ UNHCR progress registration data

¹² Marco Integral Regional Para la Protección y Soluciones (Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework), the regional application of the CRRF (Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework) adopted following the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. The CRRF and MIRPS guide practical application of the vision for a more predictable and comprehensive response to refugee crises. The MIRPS includes Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico and Panama, with technical support provided by UNHCR and the OAS (Organization of American States.)

- 1) **Access to the territory and to a fair and efficient RSD procedure.** UNHCR advocates for a legislative reform enhancing the asylum system to permit claims at border entry points without being detained, border monitoring and identification of people with protection needs. UNHCR also advocates for changes in RSD to increase efficiency through the implementation of accelerated, simplified and merged procedures. UNHCR is funding more than 140 staff seconded to COMAR. The secondees support COMAR's work both at central level and in the field delegations. In 2019, UNHCR funded the opening of COMAR offices in Palenque (Chiapas), Monterrey (Nuevo Leon) and Tijuana (Baja California). Those offices are about to be recognized as COMAR official delegations. In 2021, additional offices will be established in Saltillo (Coahuila) and Guadalajara (Jalisco). UNHCR is also supporting COMAR through the QAI (Quality Assurance Initiative) to improve the quality of application registration and processing, in the clearance of backlog applications, and through a series of training and capacity development initiatives. The plan for the next years is to progressively reduce UNHCR's direct support and to ensure long term sustainability through the increase of the federal budget allocation to COMAR.
- 2) **Response to immediate and basic needs through a multi-partner approach including civil society, authorities and other agencies.** UNHCR works to strengthen a protection network for people with specific needs and ensure appropriate responses. This includes a systematic protection and humanitarian assistance plan including cash assistance, referrals to shelter, psychosocial support, legal assistance, and counselling on access to state services. People targeted for assistance include SGBV survivors, LGBTI, people with disabilities, people with critical medical needs, and older people. UNHCR and partners identify available services around the country, as well as adequate referral pathways to help refugees and migrants receive the support they need from specialized public and private agencies and organizations.

Refugees and migrants targeted for support receive multi-purpose cash grants and may also be provided with complementary protection top ups in cases of specific health, transportation, housing, or legal and physical protection needs. Regarding cash, UNHCR established a Cash Working Group (WG) with the goal of enhancing collaboration with other organizations implementing cash-based interventions in Mexico. The WG is in the process of launching a joint project to leverage the aggregated demand for financial services and provide more harmonized financial solutions to clients across the country. In addition to the WG, IOM and UNHCR coordinate interventions to improve services and avoid duplication of assistance in the North where both are present.

- 3) **Support to host communities to meet their most pressing needs, while facilitating social cohesion and peaceful coexistence between communities.** UNHCR's programme ensures that local communities as well as asylum-seekers and refugees enjoy better access to public services. UNHCR is in the process of implementing 35 community-based projects. The interventions include a variety of projects including restructuring cultural and education centers, health facilities, and community centers. In response to the COVID pandemic, UNHCR has donated ventilators and health equipment to health facilities located in the main reception area of refugees and migrants. Projects are selected and prioritized together with authorities and host communities. This contributes to peaceful coexistence between refugee/migrant and host communities, with the overall aim to promote durable solutions for persons of concern. Furthermore, community-based projects promote a favorable environment for reception, protection and local integration.
- 4) **Widen opportunities for durable solutions through local integration.** UNHCR works to expand access to public and private services and programmes, including replicating a successful relocation programme in Saltillo, Coahuila (Northern Mexico) and increasing naturalization opportunities. Under the relocation programme, refugees move to industrialized zones in the North and are provided with support to find jobs and integrate into the local community. Refugees willing to participate in the programme are identified in the south, mostly Chiapas and Tabasco, and provided with transport to one of the locations in the north where the programme is being implemented. Upon arrival, they are provided with accommodation and induction on the integration scheme and services available. During the first days of stay, they go through a detailed induction and are provided with

needed documentation. At the end of the first week, companies carry out job interviews and successful applicants are offered a job. Within two weeks of arrival, refugees move to a rented accommodation and children access school. UNHCR then follows the case for up to one year to monitor the progress towards integration. The scheme is a collaboration between authorities at the central, state and local levels, private enterprise, civil society and UNHCR. Chambers of commerce in other cities in the State of Coahuila as well as Jalisco, Aguascalientes, Nuevo León and Baja California report thousands of vacancies and express willingness to cooperate with UNHCR for refugee relocation and job placement.

Mexico offers a favorable legal framework for the inclusion of refugees in public services and their local integration, both in socioeconomic and legal terms. Refugees are issued a permanent residence card, a social security number and a population registration number (CURP¹³), which provides access to a range of public services. Refugees have access to the national education and health system and enjoy the right to work. Access to nationality is a possibility after two years of permanent residence. The procedure takes six months, is affordable and efficient – simplified criteria apply to refugee applicants.

While local integration will remain the most suitable solution, UNHCR will continue to advocate for resettlement to offer a solution to those who are not able to integrate and are at risk in host communities, in particular LGBTI profiles. At the advocacy level, UNHCR's durable solutions strategy aims at ensuring unrestricted access to rights across the entire country, in particular formal employment, social protection, education and health. The advocacy strategy aims to engage ministries at the federal and state levels to train civil servants to be able to recognize documentation issued to asylum-seekers and refugees and thereby facilitate access to public and private services in accordance with the legal framework.

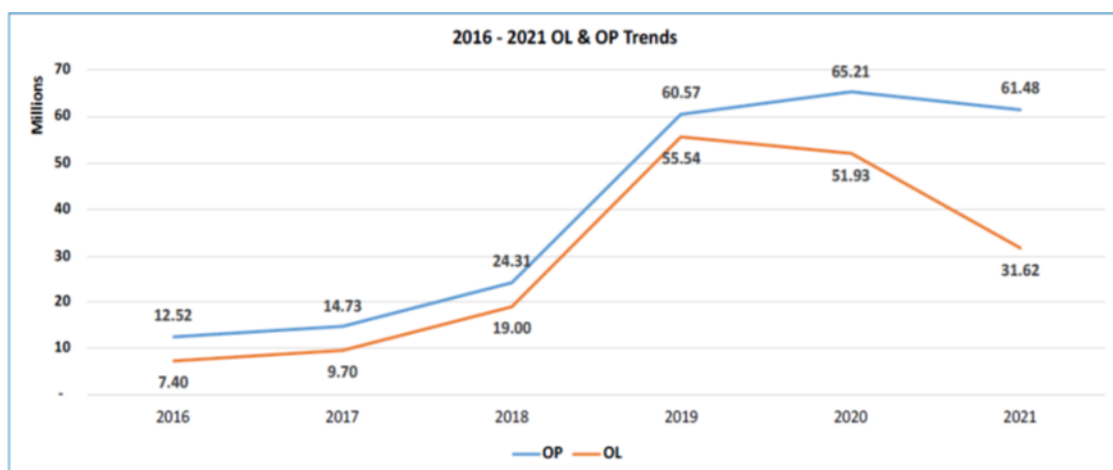
21. UNHCR aims to prioritize coordination with national, state and municipal agencies, as well as other stakeholders. The MYMP will be designed to ensure a transition of humanitarian assistance to self-reliance, socio-economic inclusion and full integration of UNHCR persons of concern in governmental services and programmes where necessary. It will include an appropriate exit strategy to strengthen sustainability of services or outcomes. UNHCR also expects to expand and consolidate a partner network with a range of civil society organizations and the private sector to provide information and assistance to 30,000 people per year.
22. UNHCR plans to continue to support the Government of Mexico in strengthening the asylum system, and stimulate expanded reception, protection and local integration. UNHCR will assist COMAR to increase its regional presence through opening new offices in key locations and improving internal practices to ensure fair and efficient RSD procedures. UNHCR aims to boost internal capacity and partnerships to prevent SGBV, to assist survivors of SGBV, and ensure referral systems to public services that will assist survivors are in place. UNHCR also plans to improve reception and protection of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) at risk, by enhancing internal capacity and partnerships for case management of children at risk. UNHCR will also expand UASC alternative care arrangements to ensure that UASC in need of international protection are not detained, are provided with alternative care and can access the asylum system.

5. OPERATIONAL RESOURCES AND EXPANSION

23. In line with aforementioned growth, UNHCR's operations from 2007, with an overall budget of USD10M, increased steadily until 2019 when the budget grew to USD56M. In 2020, UNHCR's budget for Mexico is USD53m. Since 2018, the U.S. (Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration) has been the main donor, with contributions that accounted for between 77% of the total budget in 2018 and 94% in 2019. In 2020, the operation managed to decrease the share of U.S. funding by diversifying the donor base, both governmental and through private partnerships and philanthropy.

¹³ Clave Única de Registro de Población

Evolution of UNHCR Mexico funding¹⁴



To note that a carry over of 11 M was recently approved bringing the IOL for 2021 to 42.6 M USD.

24. Since 2018, when an L2 Level Emergency was declared for Mexico, the Operation has gone through a continuous expansion of the staffing structure. This has required various revisions and prioritization of the staffing needs as per the operational requirements. The table below shows the number of regular staff (Fixed-Term Appointment and Temporary Assignment or Appointment) and Affiliate Workforce¹⁵ (AWF) per year:

Year/Category	FTA posts	TA positions	AWF	Total	
2018	84	25	87	196	* AWF includes 43 individuals hired for COMAR
2019	136	21	200	357	* AWF includes 128 individuals hired for COMAR
2020	123	112	126	361	
2021	128	74	93	295	

In 2018 and 2019, UNHCR provided financial support to COMAR to hire Individual Contractors and UNOPS consultants to strengthen the Government's capacity to respond to the needs of PoCs. In April 2020, after careful analysis of the liabilities that these contractual modalities could imply for UNHCR, personnel under these contracts were transferred to an outsourcing company.

25. UNHCR revised the office structure in 2020, opening 10 new Field Units:

Existing Offices: Acayucan, Aguascalientes, Mexico City, Monterrey, Palenque, Saltillo, Tapachula, Tenosique and Tijuana

Field Units created in 2020: Cancún, Ciudad Juárez, Guadalajara, León, Mexicali, Puebla, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, Torreón and Tuxtla Gutiérrez.

Sustained interest by donors, which resulting in budget Operating Levels above USD50m in 2019 and 2020 and similar levels expected for 2021, implies the need to further review the staffing and overall workforce structure to ensure that UNHCR has sufficient capacity to manage and deliver programmes of the size and scope required.

¹⁴ OP refers to the Operations Plan, it includes all resources necessary for the operation to be able to meet the needs of Persons of Concern. OL refers to the Operating Level, the actual resources allocated to the operation.

¹⁵ The Affiliate Workforce includes contractors under arrangements with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), United Nations Volunteers (UNVs), individual consultants or contractors, employees, interns and other persons with contracts under UNHCR's affiliate workforce arrangements.

UNHCR Mexico's OL is fully funded by earmarked contributions. Although the U.S. has been by far the main donor over the past three years and is expected to continue to provide the main part of funding to the operation, UNCHR Mexico has made considerable efforts to diversify its funding support from both public and private donors. The following table shows the expected contributions for 2021.

Contributions by Donor

DONOR	PROJECT TITLE	LOCATION	PROJECT DATES
USA	Conditions of Reception and Legal Assistance	National	2021
CANADA	Refugee Status Determination	National	03/2020-03/2021
EU DEVCO WITH ILO	Costa Rica, Honduras and Mexico (MIRPS)- Employment and Social Protection	National	01/2020-12/2020
EU ECHO (REGIONAL)	El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Costa Rica: Coordination and Protection Information	National	01/2020-12/2020
EU ICSP	Northern Mexico: Socio-Economic Integration, Protection Monitoring, SGBV	States of BN, BS, SO, CI, NL, CH, TA	06/2020-11/2021
EU DEVCO WITH UNICEF	Strengthening of Child Protection Systems	States of VC, CS, TA	10/2020-04/2023
GERMANY (GIZ)	Self-Sufficiency and Livelihoods, Integration, RSD, and Legal Assistance	CS, TB	10/2019-09/2022
DAFI SCHOLARSHIP	Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative: University Scholarships for Refugees	National	2021
UN MPTF WITH ILO AND IOM	Santiago (Chile) and Mexico City: Socio-Economic Integration	Mexico City	11/2020-11/2022
NATIONAL MONTE PIEDAD	Socio-Economic Integration		2021
IOC	Sports and Recreation with Refugee Populations		01/2018-12/2020
EDUCATION A CHILD (QATAR)	Out of School Children under UNHCR's Mandate are Provided Access to Quality Equitable Primary School		06/2020-12/2022
Fondo Unido	Shelters		2020-2021
USA for UNHCR			2021
Soriana	COVID 19		2021
Genera	COVID 19 CBI		2021
Bancomer	COVID 19 Hospitals		2021
Promax	COVID 19 Shelters		2021
Espinosa Rugarcia	COVID 19 CBI		2021
Banamex	COVID 19 CBI and Hospitals		2021

6. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

26. The UNHCR Evaluation Service has commissioned this evaluation upon request from UNHCR's Representative in Mexico to study the relevance, effectiveness and outcomes of UNHCR's interventions. Evaluation results and recommendations will be used to inform the next MYMP process.

27. Objectives of the evaluation are:

- a. Assess the strategic relevance, contribution to regional and national objectives over the period 2017-20.

- b. Provide evidence from UNHCR's interventions, determine how and why they did or did not improve the lives of refugees and asylum-seekers.
 - c. Determine the extent to which UNHCR's own capacity, structures and processes are aligned and fit-for-purpose to carry out the strategy.
 - d. Document lessons learnt and recommendations to improve UNHCR Mexico's actions over the next planning period.
28. The evaluation will cover a four-year period, from 2017-2020. This timeframe corresponds to adoption of the MIRPS in October 2017 and will enable the evaluation to incorporate most of the operation's actions under UNHCR's global MYMP.
29. Recommendations from Country Strategy Evaluations will also help inform future UNHCR guidance for country level operational planning, resource mobilization, and implementation. The Mexico operation is one of the two countries in the Americas, together with Costa Rica, to pilot the multiyear planning and the application of the new RBM process. The operation will fully roll out the new RBM for the 2022 planning period.
30. The primary audience for this evaluation is the senior management of UNHCR Mexico and the Bureau for the Americas. The secondary audience is UNHCR country and bureau staff, and in-country partners, including government agencies, local authorities and the private sector.

7. EVALUATION APPROACH

7.1 Areas of Inquiry

31. These Areas of Inquiry (AOIs) will be further developed during the inception phase of the evaluation to produce key questions that will guide the research.
32. While the AOIs present a broad range of areas of strategic importance to UNHCR, some questions should be covered in greater detail. AOI 2 will require research into the specific transition programmes and analysis of data from a range of stakeholders including persons of concern, government authorities, NGOs and businesses. AOI 4 may need further refinement and will necessitate analysis of needs versus resources in a number of locations. All AOIs should include reflections and analysis of lessons learned, good practices, what programmes or areas should change in the next planning period, and how changes may impact the MYMP.

Area of Inquiry 1: How strategic has UNHCR been in working with the Government of Mexico to support the MIRPS and refugee and asylum-related areas of the Regional Development Plan?

Sub-Areas:

- How relevant/appropriate were UNHCR-led initiatives aimed at ensuring that the Mexico chapter of MIRPS adequately reflects the full range of protection and solutions challenges?
- How **effective** was UNHCR in supporting leadership of the MIRPS process?
- What were the **results** of these initiatives, intended and unintended?
- What **factors**, decisions and actions contributed to or impeded achievement of results?

Area of Inquiry 2: How coherent, effective and sustainable has UNHCR been at ensuring the transition of humanitarian assistance to self-reliance, socio-economic inclusion and full integration of persons of concern, as outlined in the MIRPS and refugee and asylum-related areas of the National Development Plan?

Sub-Areas:

- In what ways are persons of concern integrated into government and NGO services and to what extent has UNHCR **influenced/assisted their transition towards self-reliance**, socio-economic inclusion, and integration?

- In what ways are the needs of women, the elderly, LGBTI, and other persons of concern with specific vulnerabilities taken into consideration in the transition to self-reliance and socio-economic inclusion?
- What key partnerships have been developed under this transition, what role do they play in supporting self-reliance, socio-economic inclusion and integration, and how have these affected persons of concern to UNHCR?
- To what extent are partner activities coordinated, sustainable and able to meet the needs of persons of concern?
- In what ways is the private sector integrated into the transition towards self-reliance, socio-economic inclusion and full integration, what benefits do persons of concern and businesses derive from participating?

Area of Inquiry 3: How effective is the funding model and how did the current funding structure impact the operation?

Sub-Areas:

- How have changes in information management, communication and requests for targeted support to donors and potential donors affected opportunities for increased and diversified funding?
- What lessons can be drawn to assist UNHCR diversify its funding base?
- How effective have fundraising efforts developed jointly with other agencies involved in the MIRPS been at garnering donor interest and support?
- How has the shift towards obtaining multi-year funding affected programmes?
- How effective have individual and private partnerships/philanthropy giving channels been at increasing public awareness and support of UNHCR?

Area of Inquiry 4: How appropriate and effective has UNHCR's staffing and field office/unit structure been in delivering upon its strategy?

Sub-Areas:

- How effective is UNHCR's provision of technical staff support to the government in meeting registration, protection, and solutions needs?
- How relevant and effective is UNHCR's field office/unit structure? What are the most relevant remaining gaps in service delivery among field offices/units?
- How has the significant mid-year increase in Operating Level budget for both 2019 and 2020 impacted staffing of the operation?
- How has COVID-19 affected delivery of the strategy and what are the implications of these changes for future planning?

7.2 Evaluation Methodology

33. The evaluation methodology should use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. UNHCR welcomes the use of diverse and innovative evaluation methods. Considering the limitations of accessing some locations and populations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, evaluators will be asked to include alternative methods to ensure effective engagement of both staff and persons of concern in affected areas.
34. Data from a wide range of sources and a representative range of stakeholders will need to be triangulated and cross validated to ensure the credibility of evaluation findings and conclusions. Data collection should include: 1) desk reviews and content analysis of relevant background as well as programmatic data and documents; 2) focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and rapid surveys (as appropriate) with UNHCR staff, implementing and operational partners, key interagency stakeholders (e.g. WFP, UNDP, UNICEF, etc.), national and local government officials, development partners and donors, persons of concern to UNHCR, and; 3) field data collection involving a mixed-method approach, which in addition to the above may also include paired-interviews, participatory appraisals, outcome mapping and problem ranking exercises.

35. The Evaluation Team will be expected to refine the methodology and final evaluation questions following the initial desk review and data collection carried out during the inception phase. The final inception report will specify the evaluation methodology and the refined focus and scope of the evaluation, including final key evaluation questions, data collection tools and analytical framework.
36. The Evaluation Team will be expected to work with UNHCR to select field site visit locations. This will include development of selection criteria.
37. A Reference Group will be created comprised of members from UNHCR Mexico and the Bureau for the Americas, representatives of partner agencies and organizations, key government ministries, and private sector stakeholders. The main role of the Reference Group will be to provide strategic input and constructive feedback based on their organizational perspective during the inception and report review stages of the evaluation.
38. The evaluation will include at least two validation workshops aimed at helping to strengthen data interpretation, analysis, and validation of the evaluation findings. The first workshop will include UNHCR Mexico and Regional Bureau staff. The second workshop should incorporate feedback from the first workshop and include the Reference Group and other relevant stakeholders. Other opportunities to share key findings externally will be actively sought towards sharing learning and good practices more widely.
39. The evaluation methodology is expected to reflect an Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) perspective in all primary data collection activities carried out as part of the evaluation – particularly with refugees, as appropriate. This includes, referring to and make use of relevant internationally agreed evaluation criteria such as those proposed by OECD-DAC and adapted by ALNAP for use in humanitarian evaluations¹⁶; referring to and make use of relevant UN standards analytical frameworks; and be explicitly designed to address the key evaluation questions – considering evaluability, budget and timing constraints. The evaluation report should provide disaggregated data by sex, ethnicity, age and disability.

8. ORGANIZATION AND CONDUCT OF THE EVALUATION

8.1 Evaluation Management and Quality Assurance

40. The Senior Evaluation Officer based in the Bureau for the Americas will be the evaluation manager. S/he will be responsible for: (i) managing administrative day to day aspects of the evaluation process (ii) acting as the main interlocutor with the Evaluation Team (iii) facilitating communication with relevant stakeholders to ensure evaluators receive the required data (iv) facilitating communication with relevant stakeholders to ensure technical guidance on content, and (v) reviewing the interim deliverables and final reports to ensure quality – with the support of UNHCR Mexico, the Regional Bureau and the Reference Group.
41. The evaluation is expected to adhere with the ‘Evaluation Quality Assurance’ (EQA) guidance, which clarifies the quality requirements expected for UNHCR evaluation processes and products. The Evaluation Manager will share and provide an orientation to the EQA at the start of the evaluation. All evaluation products will be shared with an external QA provider for their comment, in addition to being reviewed by the Evaluation Manager and Reference Group. Evaluation deliverables will not be considered final until they have received a satisfactory review rating and have been cleared by the Head of the Evaluation Service. Adherence to the EQA will be overseen by the Evaluation Manager with support from the UNHCR Evaluation Service as needed.

¹⁶ See for example: Cosgrave and Buchanan-Smith (2017) [Guide de l'Évaluation de l'Action Humanitaire](#) (London: ALNAP) and Beck, T. (2006) [Evaluating Humanitarian Action using the OECD-DAC Criteria](#) (London: ALNAP)

42. UNHCR Mexico will designate a focal point that will assist the Evaluation Manager and Evaluation Team with logistical and administrative arrangements. The Evaluation Manager will remain in close contact with the focal point for UNHCR Mexico.
43. A Reference Group will be established with the participation of the key internal and external stakeholders to help guide the process. Members of the Reference Group will be asked to:
- Provide suggestions to identify potential materials and resources to be reviewed and key contacts to be considered for key informant interviews;
 - Review and comment on the draft inception report;
 - Review and comment on the data collection and data analysis instruments that will be developed by the Evaluation Team;
 - Review and comment on the draft final reports, validate emerging findings and conclusions;
 - Advise on the focus of the evaluation recommendations that will form the basis of the Management Response to the review.
44. Upon completion, the final evaluation report will be shared with the UNHCR Mexico Representative and Senior Management Team with the request to formulate the formal management response, which will also be made available in the public domain.

8.2 Ethical Considerations

45. The Evaluation Team will be required to sign the UNHCR Code of Conduct, complete UNHCR's introductory protection training module, and respect UNHCR's confidentiality requirements. In line with established standards for evaluation in the UN system, and the UN Ethical Guidelines for evaluations, evaluation in UNHCR is founded on the fundamental principles of independence, impartiality, credibility and utility. These inter-connected principles subsume specific norms that will guide commissioning, conducting and supporting the use of the evaluation. This includes protecting sources and data, informed consent, respect for dignity and diversity and the minimization of risk, harm and burden upon those who are the subject of or participating in the evaluation, while at the same time not compromising the integrity of the evaluation.
46. The evaluation should adhere to UNHCR's [Data Protection](#) policy to ensure personally identifiable information is adequately safeguarded.
47. Proposals from prospective evaluation teams should include a description of how evaluators will adhere to international best practices and standards on ethics, and how the need for formal ethical review board approval will be determined.

8.3 Expected Deliverables and Timeline

48. The evaluation should be carried out from February to September 2021 with management response and dissemination occurring September – November 2021. The request for bids will be issued in January 2021, and the selection process and signing of contracts is expected to be completed by February.

49. Indicative Timeline

Activity	Key Deliverable	Indicative Timeline	Payment Schedule	# of Estimated Workdays
Inception phase including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial desk review - Inception visit to country operation and key informant interviews - EQA review on the draft inception report - Circulation for comments and finalization 	Final inception report – including methodology, final evaluation questions and evaluation matrix.	Week 1-6	20%	30
Data collection phase including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key stakeholder interviews and FGDs (in country and remotely as required); in depth document review; field visits as possible. - Validation workshop on preliminary findings, conclusions and possible recommendations - Stakeholder feedback on preliminary findings and emerging conclusions 	Validation workshop on preliminary findings, conclusions and possible recommendations at stakeholder workshop in country.	Week 7-16	20%	60
Data Analysis and Reporting phase including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis and write up - EQA review of draft report, circulation for comments - Stakeholder feedback and validation of evaluation findings, conclusions and proposed recommendations 	Draft final report including recommendations (for circulation and comments)	Week 17-22	40%	40
Finalization of evaluation report	Final Evaluation Report (including recommendations and standalone executive summary)	Week 23-26	20%	20
Total		26 Weeks	100%	150

9. EVALUATION TEAM QUALIFICATIONS

50. The evaluation will be carried out by a team of qualified evaluation consultants, comprised of at least a Team Leader and two or three Team Members. Bidders should propose names/CVs of Team Leaders and Team members in their proposal. Evaluation Teams are expected to demonstrate evaluation expertise as well as expertise in refugee response and humanitarian operations, with excellent understanding of UNHCR's protection mandate and operational platform, and good knowledge of issues pertaining to the humanitarian-development nexus. Teams should be gender balanced, culturally diverse, and comprised of international and

national evaluators if possible. Language skills in Spanish are required. All reports will be in English. Further required skills and qualifications are outlined below:

Evaluation Team Leader

- A post-graduate or Master's degree in social science, development studies, international relations or economics plus a minimum of 12 years of relevant professional experience in humanitarian response settings and/or development interventions.
- Minimum of 7 years of evaluation experience with demonstrated ability in mixed research methodologies, and an excellent understanding of humanitarian/development country operations. Experience in evaluation in humanitarian or development settings preferred
- Proven experience in successfully leading an evaluation team and managing fieldwork in complex environments.
- Technical expertise in refugee assistance, basic-needs, and protection work. With an emphasis on durable solutions and local integration, including relevant analytical frameworks and programming approaches and standards.
- Proven track record in leading (preferable) or participating as a senior team member in previous large-scale evaluations, preferably country portfolio evaluations, commissioned by a large development, donor, or humanitarian agency.
- Institutional knowledge of UNHCR's protection mandate and operational platform.
- In-depth knowledge of and proven experience with various data collection and analytical methods and techniques used in evaluation and operational research.
- Experience in generating useful and action-oriented recommendations to senior management and programming staff.

Evaluation Team Members

- A post-graduate or Master's degree in social sciences, development studies, international relations, or economics plus a minimum of 5 years of relevant professional experience ideally in humanitarian and/or development settings.
- Minimum of 4 years' experience supporting quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis for evaluation purposes (preferable) or operational research in humanitarian and development settings.
- Good knowledge of humanitarian response programming, relevant analytical frameworks and programming approaches and standards.
- In depth knowledge with various data collection and analytical methods and techniques used in evaluation and operational research.
- Proven expertise in facilitating participatory workshops involving different groups and participants.
- Excellent communication and presentation skills.

10. EVALUATION TEAM SELECTION CRITERIA

Technical criteria used to evaluate proposals will comprise 70% of the total score while the remaining 30% is based on the financial offer. The technical offer will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Proposed services: Approach and methodology to the evaluation.
- Team Composition and Strength: Number of people, qualifications, relevant experience, and diversity (gender, nationality, age and other dimensions).

The bid should include the following components:

- Proposed services: A statement detailing the methodology and tools you propose for this evaluation, important constraints/risks to the evaluation study that should be taken into consideration and mitigation strategies, particularly related to the current COVID-19 restrictions on travel, expected level of effort (# of days and team size) and what quality assurance measures would be taken.
- Proposed detailed budget, including estimated travel costs.

- Team Composition and Strength: Bidders should indicate the composition and qualifications of each proposed team member; their role and experience working together in carrying out this type of evaluation. Please submit the names and CVs of all proposed members.
- One example from previous work (evaluation report or other) that demonstrates relevant experience to the requested services in this TOR.