

## CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The purpose of the [Call for Expression of Interest \(CFEI\)](#) is to solicit interest from existing or prospective partners that wish to collaborate with UNHCR to achieve common outcomes and results, to be agreed in a Partnership Framework Agreement (PFA) and a Project workplan (PW).

UNHCR reserves the right to accept a proposal in whole or in part. Conclusion of a PFA and PW with UNHCR is subject to availability of funds. The selection of a partner through this Call for Expression of Interest does not constitute an obligation for UNHCR to conclude a PFA and a PW with the selected partner.

When entering or renewing agreements with partners who work in direct contact with forcibly displaced and stateless persons, all UN organizations should ensure that their partners have the requisite capacity with respect to protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). That capacity should include adequate preventive and risk mitigation measures against sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) while implementing a UN project or programme, ability to investigate allegations of SEA against its personnel or sub-contractors and take corrective actions when SEA has happened. Adequate capacity to prevent, manage the risk of and response to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse is one of the eligibility criteria for the selection of partners by UNHCR and a mandatory part of the due diligence process. UNHCR may only conclude a PF and PW with partners with low PSEA capacity and capability if UNHCR and the partner establish a capacity-strengthening and monitoring implementation plan.

Before entering in a PFA and PW, if selected Partners lack a UN/UNHCR project audit internal control questionnaire (ICQ) or internal control assessment (ICA) from the past three years, UNHCR must complete an ICA aiming at assessing whether the partner has sufficient processes in place to achieve the project's desired results. The ICA examines the partner's legal status, governance structures, financial viability, programme management, organizational structure and staffing, accounting policies, fixed assets and inventory, financial reporting, monitoring, and procurement rules and capacity. The results of internal control assessments, alongside other factors, are used to inform the project workplan risk assessment.

### CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (CFEI)

Project Details	
CFEI ID	CFEI/HCR/ITA MCO/2024/001
Title	Cross-sectoral protection activities at landings, border areas and reception facilities
Project/Programme Focal Point(s)	Barbora Masinova, Programme Officer Maurizio Molina, Senior Protection Associate
Project location	Border areas (sea, land, air) and reception facilities in Italy
Sector(s) and Area(s) of Specialization	
Sector(s)	Protection, cross-sectoral activities
Area(s) of Specialization	Emergency response and management; Access to asylum; Child protection; Gender based violence; Protection advice and support; Protection general
Issued by	UNHCR MCO Italy

## Project background:

Since 2021, MCO Italy has been working with the GoI and other partners towards achieving the following strategic goals:

- (1) Expanding solutions for persons we serve and addressing secondary movements;
- (2) Safeguarding best practices in protection; and
- (3) Enhancing Italy's role as a UNHCR global partner.

Based on the needs assessment, the above strategic goals and the cross-cutting operational priorities of child protection, prevention and response to GBV, refugee and community engagement and improving public perception of refugees and migrants, MCO Italy's interventions in 2023-2025 aim to have an impact in three main areas for persons we serve in Italy, namely:

- (i) improve the protection environment and government protection policies and services to people we serve, in line with international protection standards and Age, Gender Diversity, (AGD) principles;
- (ii) meaningfully engage people we serve and host communities in protection and solutions, and ensure they have access to national systems and an established system for identifying and referring persons with specific needs; and
- (iii) strengthen prospects for complementary pathways and local integration for refugees and stateless persons in Italy.

In the context of improving the protection environment, UNHCR's priorities are to safeguard Italy's open-border policy and to consolidate access to quality procedures while contributing to building good practices in reception and protection mechanisms for persons with specific needs throughout the asylum cycle.

Through field presence, UNHCR provides its technical support to border authorities in upholding protection-sensitive border management and sustains its advocacy for the principle of non-refoulement.

In 2023, the arrival trends have significantly increased, reaching 150,000 new arrivals via sea until late November. The upsurge in sea arrivals has led to the declaration of a State of Emergency at national level on 11 April 2023, initially for a 6-month period (extendable to max two years) with a budget of five-million euros. At the same time, Law 50/2023 (so-called "*Cutro Decree*"), approved on 5 May, introduced significant changes to the asylum and reception system, including accelerated border procedures in detention for nationals of designated Safe Countries of Origin, the creation of additional hotspots, and an increased role of "emergency reception facilities".

Arrivals through Tunisia and Libya as well as through Slovenia are expected to remain high due to the protraction of ongoing conflicts and worsening of humanitarian conditions in several countries in Africa and Asia, impacting on mixed movements towards Italy.

Since 21 October, Italy has reinstated controls at the Slovenia Border following the increasing pressure of arrivals through the Balkan route – 20,000 expected by the end of 2023 – and the recent turmoil in the Middle East.

Limited reception and service provision capacity, particularly for persons with specific needs in first line facilities, increases the critical need for early identification mechanisms and referral pathways to specialized services and support on the territories. Among new arrivals, there are



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high and growing numbers of people with diverse and multiple specific needs and displaying extreme vulnerabilities, including unaccompanied children, persons with disabilities, chronic diseases, GBV survivors and women at risk as well as victims of torture and trafficking, large families with young children and elderly.

In such context, UNHCR envisages to establish a partnership with a humanitarian actor capable to provide cross-sectoral protection services in key border and arrival areas. The partner will provide support and conduct outreach activities, under the technical coordination and operational supervision of UNHCR.

Activities will be primarily aimed at the following:

- Provision of information and counselling on international protection (IP) and Dublin procedures and available services to new arrivals through interventions provided in disembarkation, border areas and reception facilities and informal settlements.
- Identification, counselling and referral of persons with specific needs through outreach to key disembarkation border and arrival areas as well as in reception facilities and informal settlements.
- Support the development of tools for information provision, identification and referrals of persons we serve.

Expected results:

**Impact Area 1: Attaining Favourable Protection Environments:**

*By 2025, persons of concern in Italy have access to territory, fair and efficient procedures and improved access to quality reception systems as well as effective and inclusive national protection mechanisms focused on persons with specific needs.*

**Outcome Area: Access to Territory, Registration and Documentation**

**Cross-sectoral protection services under technical coordination of UNHCR field teams**

- Establish presence through roving teams, operating in an inter-agency context, with strong expertise on identification and protection of persons with specific needs (PSN) and GBV as well as strong cultural mediation background in arrival locations and identified key disembarkation areas as well as reception facilities and informal settlements.
- Provide information, legal and protection counselling on rights and duties upon arrival, relevant asylum and other procedures in particular to women, children, families as well as others with specific needs, including on registration, documentation, birth registration, family reunification, access to services and other issues.
- Identify persons with specific needs, including GBV survivors, women and children at risk, UASC and refer them for further assessment and follow up to available services or other dedicated support spaces, through appropriate channels in collaboration with the local stakeholders and other UNHCR partners.
- Support an overall protection monitoring, also through AGD-sensitive data collection, as well as the set-up of efficient referral mechanisms and prioritized access to services for persons we serve from disembarkation to reception
- Conduct outreach in key transit border and transit areas, reception and transit facilities to identify persons at risk and provide counselling, identify persons with specific needs and refer them to appropriate services.
- Provide psychological first aid (PFA) and basic mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services at needs basis (psychosocial counselling).

- Ensure diversity and inclusion and key language capacities in team composition (e.g. Arabic, French, Tigrinya, Farsi).
- Ensure fast-deployment capacities and turn-over upon needs across different locations.

To ensure the adequate protection of forcibly displaced and stateless persons, UNHCR requires partners to adhere to applicable sector standards outlined within [UNHCR's areas of specialization](#).

Indicative budget (optional):

N/A

Other information (optional):

A minimum of three roving teams are expected to be initially deployed in Southern Italy, namely Sicily, including Lampedusa and Calabria.

Each team composition is made at least of three cultural mediators and one protection and specific needs expert, who will work under the technical coordination of UNHCR field teams. The partner protection experts will be expected to coordinate the work of cultural mediators. The cultural mediators will not only provide interpretation but also carry out info provision sessions and support with identification of persons with specific needs.

Each team will operate within a catchment area of responsibility, covering disembarkation point and reception facilities within. Subject to funding and revised operational needs, UNHCR reserves the right to expand or shift activities in other geographical areas in Italy.

#### CFEI timeline

Request for clarification deadline	Application deadline	Notification of results	Estimated start date	Estimated end date
04 January 2024	19 January 2024	27 February 2024	1 April 2024	31 December 2024

#### Selection Criteria

Criteria Description	Assigned Weighting
<p><b>Sector expertise and experience:</b> qualified &amp; experienced technical staff to deliver the UNHCR project is in place (including knowledge of the operational and institutional context in Italy). In particular, the required specific skills, sector specialists on GBV, MHPSS, child protection and overall specific needs, performance, knowledge, material and human resources are available. Knowledge of relevant protection, humanitarian principles and the approach to Age, Gender, Diversity (AGD). Approach to the participation of persons we serve in the Programme Cycle. Mainstreaming measures to integrate environmental sustainability within proposed activities. Adaptability in emergency context and response. Environmental considerations are aligned to the objectives of UNHCR's <a href="#">Strategic Framework for Climate Action</a>.</p>	<b>30</b>
<p><b>Project management:</b> ability to effectively deliver project objectives with robust human resources management and meet the expectations of all stakeholders, as well as provide</p>	<b>30</b>



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	accountability mechanisms and sound financial management, taking into account the audit results of the previous UNHCR-funded projects, past performance and the external audit of partners' financial statements and pending open audit recommendations (accounts receivables and internal control related recommendations) where applicable. Clear segregation of duties policy, as well as the integration of risk management; adequate control over assets and inventory (if applicable). Organization's legal, technical and operational capacity to process personal data in place. Ensure response capacity to emergency situations and fast-changing needs.	
	<b>Experience working with UNHCR:</b> global and/or local partnerships including knowledge of UNHCR policies, practices and programmes, including an understanding of and ability to work within UNHCR's funding limitations and associated inherent risks. Partners that have three consecutive modified audit opinions (qualified, adverse or disclaimer) for UNHCR-funded projects may not be considered.	<b>15</b>
	<b>Cost effectiveness:</b> Evidence of a methodology for allocation of shared costs to project activities. Evidence of procedures/systems that ensure maximum resources are directed to project outcomes while also ensuring that resources are also directed to activities that ensure project risks are being appropriately managed.	<b>15</b>
	<b>Contribution of resources:</b> evidenced and documented contribution of resources to the Project in cash or in-kind (e.g. human resources, supplies and/or equipment) by the partner that are presently available (or potentially mobilized by the partner) in order to supplement UNHCR resources.	<b>10</b>

Issuing UNHCR Office

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Full name and title, Head of Office

Chiara Cardoletti, Representative

Name of UNHCR Office

MCO Italy

Date

13/12/2023