

*Call for Expression of Interest***Protection and socio-economic inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in Romania***HCR/ROU/2023/001***1 Timeline**

Posted	Jul 26, 2023
Clarification Request Deadline	Aug 11, 2023
Application Deadline	Aug 25, 2023
Notification of Results	Sep 30, 2023
Start Date	Jan 1, 2024
End Date	Dec 31, 2024

2 Locations

- A Romania
 - a Bucharest
 - b Brasov
 - c Constanta
 - d Cluj
 - e Sibiu
 - f Timis

3 Sector(s) and area(s) of specialization

- A Livelihoods
 - a Co-existence with local communities
 - b Self reliance
 - c Technical and vocational education and training

4 Issuing Agency

UNHCR

5 Project Background

The international armed conflict in Ukraine that intensified on 24 February 2022 triggered one of the fastest-growing displacement and humanitarian crises on record, pushing millions into internal displacement and abroad in search for safety. It also generated a sudden and unprecedented influx of refugees into Romania. The country kept its borders open to all persons arriving from Ukraine and its response has been in-line with the European Union solidarity principles, while contributing to the creation of an overall favourable environment conducive to refugee protection and inclusion. The Temporary Protection Directive 2001/55/EC, activated through the Council's Decision 2022/382, on 4

March 2022, was promptly transposed into Romanian legislation through the Government Decision no. 367, on 18 March, providing immediate protection for persons from Ukraine and relieving pressure on the Romanian asylum system. The Government of Romania was the first in the region to adopt a national framework, the National Plan of Measures for the Protection and Inclusion of Displaced Persons from Ukraine and Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection in Romania, aiming for the medium- to long-term inclusion of refugees from Ukraine by adapting existing services and benefits to meet their needs. Since the escalation of hostilities in February 2022, 3,909 228 refugees entered Romania via the Ukrainian and Moldovan borders, while 94,774 were in the country as of 13 July 2023. Over 76 per cent of the people granted temporary protection are women and children. Protection risks remain high as profiles include female-headed households, unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), and the elderly. Newer arrivals who may have been unable to leave Ukraine at an earlier stage of the conflict due to specific needs, such as disability, or a relative lack of financial resources, may be at heightened risk due to exacerbated vulnerabilities because of displacement. The number of refugees who have chosen to stay in Romania remains fairly consistent since the onset of the conflict, with more than half of the employable aged population being women with children. Among all employable refugees, the entire range of services and assistance necessary to help refugees from Ukraine spans from the unique needs of teenage youth who are continuing vocational training once initiated in Ukraine's public schools, to persons of retirement age who require additional income to survive but who might not be able to work traditional full-time shifts. The ability to prepare for, earn and maintain employment is largely contingent on refugees' ability to overcome basic shocks and urgent needs as they navigate the systems of services and resources which are available to them in Romania. The main protection challenges faced by Ukrainian refugees regarding livelihoods and economic inclusion are inter alia access to standardized Romanian language classes at scale, access to vocational training and employment assistance services through the ANOFM/AJOFM (due to the Romanian language barrier), integration into the national social protection system, lengthy processes for recognition of disability status in Romania, and the complication that the first available minimum wage employment is not commonly covering basic needs. Considering that over half of the employable working-age population are mothers with children, key child protection concern impacting a parent or care giver's ability to access barrier-reducing employment assistance services and/or to earn and maintain employment include access to affordable daycare/nursery school/baby-sitting services, assured attendance with meaningful participation in accredited schools, and potential exposure to exploitation, including sexual exploitation and abuse, human trafficking, and violence. As part of its 2024-2026 multi-year strategy, UNHCR is looking to support the socio-economic inclusion and self-reliance of all refugees and asylum seekers, with a specific focus on the most vulnerable individuals. Jointly with partners, UNHCR's efforts will continue the aim of working closely with the national and county-level employment agencies (ANOFM/AJOFM) and other relevant government entities in a complimentary way which avoids creating parallel systems. Significant effort will be made to promote community-led solutions and to strengthen the voices of the refugee community in a harmonized whole-of-society approach which can contribute to the promotion of equitable access to economic opportunities, decent work, and inclusive government social protection systems for all in Romania.

6 *Expected Results*

On the basis of complementarity and subsidiarity of existing services, and aiming to enhance the national response, the following outcomes and outputs are of particular interest to UNHCR: Refugees, asylum-seekers and vulnerable members of the host community achieve access to formal wage or self-employment as a necessary step to achieving economic self-reliance and self-sufficiency as well as access to social protection and socio-economic inclusion through:

Outcome 1: Employment and employability among refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable host communities is significantly improved

Main Activities:

- Support an increase in weekly job applications and measurable engagement between job-seekers and employers to accelerate the earning of employment.
- Formalize in-depth orientations providing a clear understanding of how to register and navigate the service offerings provided by the Government Employment Agency such as vocational trainings, Romanian language courses and employment assistance services.
- Provide job-readiness classes and group events to manage jobseeker expectations, verify their skills and language abilities, pre-screen candidates for employment opportunities and assist with CV building and interview preparation
- Increase awareness of, preparation for, and performance in job fairs through close cooperation and planning with the ANOFM/AJOFM
- Prioritize the strategy of earning the first available and most easily attainable formal employment as a steppingstone towards achieving economic self-reliance and earning better employment opportunities.
- Provide targeted support necessary to develop socio-economic self-reliance, such as childcare support, career coaching and counselling-oriented psycho-social support, job-matching assistance, entrepreneurship support, and assistance with qualification recognition.
- Engage strategically with the private sector to identify employment opportunities and provide relevant guidance/support for both the employer and job seeker throughout the hiring process along with post-employment follow-up support.
- Closely cooperate with and establish job seeker referral pathways among private

sector actors who promote the inclusion of refugees and marginalized groups and offer incentives, trainings or employment initiatives. • Offer advanced employment assistance upskilling, career development and recruiting services to formally employed persons who demonstrate a significant likelihood of earning advanced forms of employment to improve their economic self-reliance. • Develop employment and self-reliance themed refugee-led community networking groups using integrated mentors and a variety of thematic specialists and service providers who strategize the overcoming of barriers to establishing and maintaining employment Outcome 2: Improve access to social protection system and assistance targeting the most vulnerable communities Main Activities: • Identify vulnerable persons in need of employment assistance who may be facing discrimination or have limited ability and prioritize their linkage to available employment and any relevant social protection or cash assistance. • Based on referrals from specialized partners, prioritize support to survivors of GBV and their access to economic self-reliance services. • Identify and support vulnerable refugees, asylum-seekers and host community members who would benefit from participating in an employment or entrepreneurial scheme that resembles an adaptation/iteration of the “graduation model approach” or “economic inclusion” program. • Continue advocating for, and support towards, enhanced access to the social protection system for all refugees, asylum-seekers and vulnerable host community members. Output 3: Improve access to entrepreneurship opportunities and financial services Main Activities: • Work to identify, address and overcome legal and practical barriers to accessing banking and other financial services necessary to earn employment or to start and expand a business. • Provide guidance and financial support to entrepreneurial and social enterprise initiatives and business expansion on a competitive basis prioritizing viability and positive impacts on society namely the creation of jobs for refugees and marginalized community members and the environment. Intended Population Coverage: Refugees and asylum seekers of all nationalities, as well as vulnerable members of the host community. As of 13 July 2023, 3,909,228 Ukrainians and third-country nationals have arrived in Romania from Ukraine, and 94,774 were in the country. In addition, 6,421 asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection were also recorded. It is estimated that the overall population figure in 2024 would be similar to the current situation, while arrivals of third country national asylum-seekers are expected to increase in the coming three years.

7 Indicative Budget

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8 Other Information

Partnership Period [estimated start and end dates of project]: Initially, 1 January to 31 December 2024, dependent on availability of funding. Partnerships may be extended into 2025, in line with UNHCR guidance on selection and retention of partners, subject to continued operational needs, successful project implementation in 2024 and resources’ availability.

9 Selection Criteria

Name	Description	Weight
Sector expertise and experience	The required specific skills, sector specialists, performance, knowledge, material and human resources. Knowledge of relevant protection, humanitarian principles, Minimum Economic Recovery Standards, GBV mainstreaming considerations, iterations of the graduation model approach or economic inclusion programmes for vulnerable communities and poverty alleviation, developing refugee-led community structures and support systems, market- and evidence-based livelihoods interventions, and the approach to Age, Gender, Diversity (AGDM). Approach to the participation of forcibly displaced people in the Programme Cycle.	30

Project management	Ability to effectively deliver project objectives with robust management systems/processes, and meet the expectations of all stakeholders, as well as provide 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).	20
Local experience and presence	ongoing programme in the area of operation; local knowledge; participation in inter-agency coordination fora, engaging refugees and other persons of concern in the programme cycle; trust from local communities; local presence; partner policy on community relations; feedback and complaint mechanisms for persons of concern; self-organized groups of persons of concern; and other factors that would facilitate access to and better understanding of the persons of concern and that would reduce administrative difficulties.	20
Contribution of resource	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.	10
Cost effectiveness	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.	10
Experience working with UN	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.	5
Sustainability of intervention	Measures to integrate environmental sustainability within proposed activities. Environmental considerations are aligned to the objectives of UNHCR's Strategic Framework for Climate Action.	5

10 **Concept Note Template**

[Download the document here](#)

11 **For more information on this partnership opportunity, and to apply, please visit**

[UN Partner Portal](#)