

UNHCR Evaluation Management Response			
Evaluation title:	Sudan Country Strategy Evaluation		
UNHCR evaluation reference:	ES/2022/05		
Entity that commissioned the evaluation:	UNHCR Sudan		
Due date of Management Response:	19 August 2022		
Coordinator of Management Response:	Brian Gray, Principal Risk Mgmt & Compliance Advisor		
Management Response approved by:	Axel Bisschop Kristine Hambrouck	Representative Deputy Regional Director	Sudan Country Office Regional Bureau, Eastern Horn of Africa and Great Lakes
Date:	25 August 2022		

General comments on the evaluation:	<p>Country Operation Sudan: The CSE has provided perspectives and insights into several spheres of the Sudan Operation. Due to COVID and political unrest the evaluation was not able to adequately address many of the points indicated in the TOR. Recommendations are therefore general in nature and could benefit from additional reference to source material. Taking advantage of the external views, following virtual workshops and sessions held with the evaluators on the key findings, the Sudan Operation has already taken action to address many of the recommendations. While limited information in relation to the future planning was provided, the operation's Programme Unit utilised components of the report during its countrywide retreat, and for the agenda and strategic direction of the country's Multi-Year Strategic Plan, MYSP- 2023-2025. These proactive steps are testaments to the due diligence of the Sudan Operation and the willingness to work with the recommendations of the evaluation report. To a very large extent, the operation notes that the recommendations and conclusions are also applicable to other UNHCR operations. Indeed, in the Sudan context, when implemented the recommendations will contribute largely towards improving UNHCR Global as well as Sudan's overall engagement, relationships, and partnerships with outcomes on enhanced adaptability to the context and unfolding events, improved accountability to POCs and donors alike.</p> <p>DESS: While recommendation number six seems to be centred towards the country operation as the point of gravity DESS affirms its readiness to provide technical expertise and contingency planning support, including in-country or in-region workshops to identify preparedness actions and agree on any other anticipatory actions whilst acknowledging that the country operation and Regional Bureau EHAGL has the authority, accountability and responsibility for contingency planning.</p> <p>DESS has taken note of the section 5.3.2 (p28) in the main report, where one of the 'additional learnings' is: "a strengthened procurement and supply chain that is better able to scale up to a rapid-onset emergency." We do not consider that the recommendation 6 applies specifically to supply, we wish, however, to offer broader comments: a) A top priority focus in our ERP design is simplification of the process, including procurement processes, especially for the requesting functions/non-procurement colleagues; b) we will increase the Procurement thresholds applicable during emergencies (in the upcoming Emergency Policy); c) we have increased the GSM capacity and should therefore be able to respond more with CRIs delivered from GSMs, thereby reducing response times; d) we are conducting a supply operating model review, as part of our Service Delivery Model design, and as such will be addressing the adequacy of supply workforce; e) as procurement processes are defined and implemented within an internal and external context, with due consideration of risks, prior audit recommendations, resources allocation and control, as well as evolving market conditions, we plan to conduct a procurement complexity root cause analysis as part of the upcoming organisational review.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, we should highlight the point that procurement is an activity with significant risk of fraud, especially in emergency response contexts where procurement speed and values are increased and standard controls are relaxed, in the interest of expediency and agility.</p>
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RECOMMENDATION 1:		UNHCR should strengthen its adaptability to Sudan’s dynamic political context to remain relevant, and especially its contextual analysis to inform how it should continue to support the GoS in developing and rolling out progressive policies for refugees, IDPs and host communities in line with global and regional frameworks, and in close coordination with other UN agencies.						
Management response:		▫ Agree ✓Partially agree ▫ Disagree						
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		<p>UNHCR has the largest reach of any UN or international organisation in Sudan and is regularly asked to brief experts and other visitors on the political dynamics, especially in the field locations. The UNHCR two Principal Situation Coordinators are considered UN “experts” in their AORs. Our view is therefore that the Representation Office and Sub-Office staff are well-versed with the national and local contexts. To further enhance, UNHCR Sudan will expand engagement with academia to further ensure conflict-sensitivity of Programme and Protection service design and delivery.</p> <p>Further, given the current unstable political environment and the recent Military Coup, UNHCR Sudan does not see it timely to build a “comprehensive” strategic partnership with the Government of Sudan. While good relationships with the government will be maintained, instead, UNHCR Sudan will adapt and focus on assessment and capacity development for key Government partners, such as COR, to transition partnerships from transactional to transformational.</p> <p>UNHCR will further ensure that its strategies are focusing on a refugee and IDP centred protection approach, which is aligned with its UN sister agencies and coordinated with the UN integrated mission UNITAMS.</p>						
Unit or function responsible:		UNHCR Sudan Executive Office and Heads of Sub-Office						
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments		Expected completion date		Progress	
							Status	Comments
1	Conflict-sensitive programming	Programme	1.1.1 Identify international and local partners to support contingency planning and early warning; and 1.1.2 Seek to appropriately support programme and protection service design.		1.1.1 31 August 2022 1.1.2 30 September 2022			

2	Strategic partnership with the Government of Sudan by developing deeper strategies.	Executive Office and Programme Heads of Sub-Office	1.2.1 Develop a clear joint COR-UNHCR action plan to achieve COR's catalytic role for coordinating refugee affairs at national and state level – Executive Office in RO and HOSOs; 1.2.2 Finalize joint project with COR and the National Registry to transfer responsibility for registration to the GoS. This project will include establishing mechanisms with the GoS for refugees to obtain benefits of the refugee ID card mandated by law. 1.2.3 Sub-Offices to highlight specific State-level line ministry engagement and capacity-development, prioritizing humanitarian programming and protection service delivery, M&E, and conflict prevention.	1.2.1 30 November 2022 1.2.2 30 September 2022 1.2.3 30 September 2022		
RECOMMENDATION 2:		UNHCR should prioritise within its expanded portfolio, in a context in which the caseload could well increase further, to address the current sense of overload and provide clearer strategic direction to staff, especially at sub-national level.				
Management response:		☐ Agree ✓ Partially agree ☐ Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		<p>While recognizing the need to improve strategic prioritization based on the complexity of the Sudan's operational environment, which is also heavily influenced by the regional and international dynamics, UNHCR Sudan has been actively engaged in developing a Multi-Year Strategy (MYS) laying out clearer strategic direction and priorities at both national and sub-national levels when the evaluation was being conducted.</p> <p>The strategic direction and priorities of the MYS will be streamlined in all the processes of operational activities and programmes and in our engagement with partners and stakeholders.</p> <p>The need for IDP Protection is a part of its strategy and should not be underestimated as it ensures and also contributes to the protection environment, including refugee protection. The 2023 decreased funding will force UNHCR to prioritize, this will be done together with partners assessing strengths and weakness as well as an analysis, in the current political climate, of government functions. Given the sensitivity of the situation, the Sudan operation will need Regional Bureau and UNHCR HQ support.</p>				
Unit or function responsible:		UNHCR Sudan Executive Office and Heads of Sub-Office				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Strategic prioritization based on the mandate and comparative advantage to enhance the normative role of setting standards and frameworks for refugee and IDP programming.	Programme Administration Administration	2.1 Governed by the Senior Management team, closely assess and monitor progress to enhance UNHCR's advocacy and catalytic role. 2.2 Undertake structural and staffing review to better define the right-size and best-fit staffing capacity to drive its strategic direction to reality; and 2.3 Institutionalise staff orientation, such as preparing standard briefing kit for in-coming staff.	2.1 31 December 2022 2.2 31 August 2022 2.3 31 August 2022		
RECOMMENDATION 3:		UNHCR should develop a strategic approach to partnership-working and strengthen its related internal functions, capabilities, incentives, and systems towards this end.				
Management response:		Agree ✓ Partially agree ☐ Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		The UNHCR RCM is fully functioning in Sudan, the IASC Cluster Model addressing the IDP assistance needs to be further strengthen. UNHCR operations Globally need to be capacitated and fully resourced to carry the duties bestowed on UNHCR as a cluster lead agency. The internal functions of UNHCR are much dependant on the risk appetite towards investing in refugees versus IDPs.				
Unit or function responsible:		Executive Office, Technical Units and Sub-Offices. Will require RB and DRS support to enhance M&E.				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments

1	Strategic approach to partnership by strengthening internal functions, capacities, and systems.	Executive Office, HOSO and Programme	3.1 Prioritize partnerships according to partner's capacity, influence, and ability to deliver.	3.1 30 September 2022		
		Administration	3.2 Optimize and strengthen internal coherence of partnership functions through structural review better utilizing national staff capacities.	3.2 31 August 2022		
		External Relations	3.3 Engage in strategic partnership dialogues with donors on a regular basis on priorities and support modalities to achieve better harmonization of different donor funding streams and reporting requirements.	3.3 30 June 2022		
RECOMMENDATION 4:		UNHCR should enhance effectiveness and gains of its partnerships by reducing transaction costs (both for UNHCR and others) through harmonisation and streamlining of coordination structures and identifying and better utilising the comparative advantage of other agencies.				
Management response:		✓ Agree □ Partially agree □ Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						
Unit or function responsible:		UNHCR Sudan Executive Office and Heads of Sub-Office				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Harmonization and streamlining of coordination structures by utilizing the comparative advantage of different agencies.	Heads of Sub-Office	4.1 Review and adapt humanitarian and development coordination structures to each context/state to reduce duplication of mechanisms;	4.1 31 December 2022		
		Executive Office	4.2 Continue to play a leading role in the UNCT for an optimal architecture for UN integration to implement UNSCR 2524 in Darfur and the Two Areas; and	4.2 30 September 2022		
		Executive Office	4.3 Strengthen key bilateral UN partnerships through MoU/LoUs to clearly identify areas of comparative advantage and complementarity.	4.3 31 December 2022		
RECOMMENDATION 5:		UNHCR should improve its downwards accountability by improving its responsiveness to the priorities and needs of POCs and host communities in line with the AGD policy.				
Management response:		✓ Agree □ Partially agree □ Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						
Unit or function responsible:		UNHCR Sudan Executive Office, Technical Units, and Heads of Sub-Office				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments

1	Accountability to PoCs and host communities by streamlining the AGD policy.	Protection Protection / HOSOs Programme Protection	5.1 Support national roll-out of the joint CFM with WFP and tailor reporting to support Protection and operational decision-making; 5.2 Review refugee leadership structures in all camps, expanding inclusion of vulnerable groups of PoCs in their representation; 5.3 Promote and implement project partnership approaches with POC-led Organisations; and 5.4 Develop and implement enhanced CwC strategy, and mainstream into broader Protection Service delivery.	5.1 31 December 2022 Joint CFM live 5.2 30 September 2022 5.3 31 October 2022 Guidance Note elaborated 5.4 31 October 2022		
RECOMMENDATION 6:		UNHCR should address organisational barriers to its programming effectiveness to create a more enabling environment, with an emphasis on HR and management issues, aspects of business transformation, and strengthened and more collaborative contingency planning.				
Management response:		<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		The specific action points to this recommendation related to decentralization and handover procedures have been implemented, as the issues had been recognized by the operation as priority areas prior to the evaluation. Likewise, UNHCR Sudan has recruited additional staff to support the Executive Office. It is critical that operations like the Sudan operation are timely supported with Fast Track and timely funding to respond to emergencies.				
Unit or function responsible:		HQ and RB, UNHCR Sudan Executive Office, Technical Units, and Heads of Sub-Office				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Address organisational barriers to its programming effectiveness to create a more enabling environment, with an emphasis on HR and management issues, aspects of business transformation, and strengthened and more collaborative contingency planning.	Executive Office	6.1 Include national staffing conditions, including contracts, skills, learning and career progression to attract and retain talented national workforce in the Staffing Review; and 6.2 Strengthen contingency planning as a collective effort including other UN agencies, donors, international and national partners.	6.1 31 December 2022 6.2 31 October 2022		
2	Address organisational barriers to its programming effectiveness to create a more enabling environment, with an emphasis on HR and management issues, aspects of business transformation, and strengthened and more collaborative contingency planning.	DHR	6.1. A comprehensive staffing and structural review (SSR) was conducted in June 2022 and covered all locations in the operation. The review was conducted by a multifunctional team from Sudan operation together with the Senior HR Partner from RBEHAGL. As part of the ToRs of the SSR, the MFT took into consideration the recommendation of the CSE, whereby the contractual modalities of national staff and nationalization of positions were taken into consideration. The final SSR report is currently being finalized by the Sudan operation. 6.2. The recommendations of the SSR will address career progression by creating positions in the national officer category and regularizing the contractual modalities from UNOPS to regular GS positions, especially for Affiliate Work Force who have held UNOPS contracts for extended periods of time. This will open career progression opportunities for local staff and minimize the loss of UNHCR expertise to other UN and international entities.			
RECOMMENDATION 7:		UNHCR should develop and invest in a MEL system that is truly 'fit for purpose' and adequately staffed to support strategic decision-making.				
Management response:		<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				

Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		While this is a UNHCR Organisation wide general recommendation UNHCR Sudan acknowledges that this is important. Action has already been taken and donor confidence has been restored. UNHCR Sudan recognizes the need to significantly strengthen M&E and learning processes and would like to suggest dedicated budget for this purpose.				
Unit or function responsible:		HQ (DSPR, ES) and RB, UNHCR Sudan Executive Office, Programme, Protection.				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	M&E system with adequate staff to support strategic decision-making.	Programme	7.1. A staffing position has been included to ensure UNHCR Sudan M&E is upscaled and systems are strengthened. The Sudan operation will undertake a comprehensive review of the M&E system.	31 March 2023		Concept Note for this exercise has been prepared by Programme