

UNHCR Evaluation Management Response			
Evaluation title:	Country Strategy Evaluation for UNHCR Tajikistan		
UNHCR evaluation reference:	EVO/2024/04		
The entity that commissioned the evaluation:	UNHCR's Evaluation Office		
Due date of Management Response:	01.07.2024		
Coordinator of Management Response:	Ivan Saleyeu	Head of the National Office	National Office Tajikistan
Management Response approved by (<i>senior manager in commissioning office</i>):	Hai Kyung Jun Hans Friedrich Schodder Ivan Saleyeu	Regional Director Representative Head of the national office	Asia Pacific Regional Bureau MCO Central Asia National office Tajikistan
Date of submission:	August 27 th , 2024		

General comments on the evaluation:	<p>MCO Almaty and the National Office of Tajikistan appreciate the comprehensive evaluation of UNHCR's operations in Tajikistan and acknowledge the constructive recommendations provided. We recognize the significant progress made in several areas despite the challenging operational context. The evaluation process highlighted both strengths and areas requiring enhancement, and we are committed to addressing these to improve our strategic positioning, operational efficiency, and the overall impact of our interventions. MCO Almaty and the National Office Tajikistan value the collaborative spirit reflected in the recommendations and are dedicated to fostering closer partnerships between the Tajikistan government, the UNHCR National Office in Tajikistan, the Multi-Country Office in Kazakhstan, and the Regional Bureau, in accordance with the RAF. We are confident that with the continued support and proactive engagement of all involved parties, we can overcome the identified challenges and build on our successes to provide even more robust and effective protection and solutions for those in need.</p> <p>The report concludes that UNHCR has actively supported displaced and stateless individuals in Tajikistan despite the complex context. However, there is a disconnect between strategic intentions and their implementation. Capacity-building initiatives were rightly positioned but lacked cohesive, long-term strategies and links with the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. More close collaboration with the Government and other stakeholders is needed. Noteworthy advances were mixed with reactive approaches, and more proactive responses were demanded. Immediate humanitarian relief should continue, and there is a pressing need for transition to long-term changes, transformative outcomes, innovative approaches, empowerment, and strategies that promote</p>
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	<p>resilience and self-reliance among the displaced populations. Strategic focus of the operation on inclusivity and gender equality is supported, and the report highlights the need for a better data management and linkages with climate and environmental considerations.</p> <p>These findings are useful and will be duly considered, and efforts will be put into their advancement as the complex local and geostrategic context allows.</p>
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RECOMMENDATION 1:		<p>Revamp UNHCR's strategic positioning on protection and solutions issues by fostering closer collaboration and advocacy with the Tajikistan government and other national and international stakeholders to promote rights, protection, and durable solutions for persons UNHCR serves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement a robust Stakeholder Communication Strategy that promotes a culture of collaboration, reducing silos and ensuring that UNHCR's programs and results are clearly communicated and understood by its partners and persons UNHCR serves while considering local norms and traditions. • Refine the Advocacy and Awareness-Raising Strategy, incorporating lessons from successful initiatives like the simulation exercise or the reopening of the asylum process, to effectively address the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. • To underpin these strategic measures, step up the leadership of UNHCR's public presence in Tajikistan through the role of Head of Office to proactively promote UNHCR's work and results, as well as the needs and rights of persons UNHCR serves. 				
Management response:		X Partially agree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		<p>With the National Office Tajikistan now re-merged with the MCO Almaty, stronger support can be provided to reach out to and engage new and existing partners strategically, including through regular exchanges, meetings, and collaborative efforts to clearly communicate UNHCR's priorities both publicly and bilaterally. The recommendation is partially agreed upon as the expected result doesn't entirely fall under UNHCR's control; the results of these efforts will depend on the willingness of the Government and other stakeholders to support the rights of forcibly displaced and stateless people in Tajikistan and UNHCR's strategic priorities.</p>				
Unit or function responsible:		MCO / NO				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	<i>Design and implement a Stakeholder Communication Strategy</i>	<i>NO in close collaboration with MCO</i>	Develop a comprehensive communication strategy and implementation plan that – in line with the UNHCR global communications strategy – leads the narrative, generates empathy, and mobilises action, as well as fosters collaboration, reduces silos, and ensures that UNHCR's programs and results are understood and supported by stakeholders, including	Q1 of 2025	<i>Planned</i>	

			partners and the people we serve, considering international commitments, local norms and traditions.			
2	<i>Refine Advocacy and Awareness Raising Strategy</i>	<i>NO in close collaboration with MCO</i>	Enhance our advocacy strategy by incorporating successful initiatives and learnings – such as the simulation exercise and the reopening of the asylum process – broadening the scope of stakeholders, and maintaining updated advocacy messages, to address the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers effectively in line with UNSDCF and SDG principles.	Q1 of 2025	Ongoing	
3	<i>Strengthen Public Presence and Leadership</i>	<i>NO in close collaboration with MCO</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the visibility of UNHCR's work in Tajikistan through proactive engagement and leadership from the Head of National Office, and Representative for Central Asia, promoting UNHCR's achievements, needs, and the rights of the people we serve. 2. Improve and enhance Tajikistan content, information, products and reports on the existing UNHCR Central Asia website and UNHCR Central Asia social media channels, to disseminate actual and useful information in relevant languages (i.e. English, Russian and Tajik) to defined target audiences. 3. Improve direct information sharing with key stakeholders, including through contributing to and disseminating the quarterly Central Asia Operational Update (prepared by MCO), NO Factsheets, infographics etc. 4. Carry out regular meetings and briefings with major donors and stakeholders and track in established tracking sheets. 	Q2 of 2025	Ongoing	
RECOMMENDATION 2:			Strengthen Capacity Building and Strategic Engagement by realigning UNHCR's strategic approach in Tajikistan to ensure that capacity-strengthening initiatives are in line with regional approaches and are continuous, cohesive, and effective, avoiding fragmentation and focusing on sustainable outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a more structured Capacity Building Strategy, emphasizing practical applicability and alignment with the humanitarian-development nexus, ensuring that initiatives add tangible value to UN engagement in Tajikistan and also respond to the priorities and needs of government institutions. The strategy should provide a framework for needs-based selection of beneficiaries of capacity building support. • Establish a regular and structured training regimen for selected beneficiaries of capacity building support incorporating feedback mechanisms to ensure the relevance and applicability of capacity-building efforts. • Develop a long-term engagement model post-training and capacity-building sessions, ensuring consistent follow-up and feedback, addressing gaps, and refining future training based on evidence of working methods and needs collected through stakeholder feedback 			

Management response:		X Partially agree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		MCO and NO will refine the capacity-building strategy, with long-term strategic follow-up, aligned with the humanitarian-development nexus, aiming at improving national systems towards sustainable enjoyment of rights by forcibly displaced and stateless people, in particular responding to the government's needs. However, some government requests aim at goals outside the UNHCR mandate. Hence, the government's expectations should be carefully assessed and supported only if they align with UNHCR priorities. Changes in government personnel can also disrupt communication and knowledge transfer, which can lessen the desired impact.				
Unit or function responsible:		MCO / NO				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	<i>Develop a structured Capacity Building Strategy</i>	<i>NO in close collaboration with MCO</i>	1. Create a detailed, targeted capacity-building strategy, with defined objectives, focusing on practical applicability. Ensure that initiatives respond to government institutions' priorities and needs. When feasible, sign yearly Workplans with corresponding Government agencies and other stakeholders. 2. Incorporate feedback mechanisms to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of capacity-building efforts. Create a model for consistent follow-up and feedback post-training.	Q1 of 2025	Planned	
2	<i>Redouble collaboration with UN agencies and other stakeholders on capacity-building efforts to promote common goals and rights of persons UNHCR serves</i>	<i>NO in close collaboration with MCO</i>	Maintain regular dialogue with UN agencies and other stakeholders to ensure that partners include relevant issues in their government and other stakeholders' capacity-building efforts. Evaluate progress regularly.	Q1 of 2025	Ongoing	
RECOMMENDATION 3:		Strengthen UNHCR's operational and advocacy frameworks in Tajikistan to proactively address, mediate, and resolve challenges faced by forcibly displaced persons. This can be achieved through the following priority actions: a) Build on UNHCR's corporate tools to design and implement a country specific and robust early warning system to anticipate potential challenges, like mass deportations with consideration of relevant border infrastructure, ensuring timely mediation and				

		<p>safeguarding the rights of forcibly displaced persons in Tajikistan.</p> <p>b) Ensure UNHCR senior management in Tajikistan is supported by the RB to step up protection of forcibly displaced persons and advocacy in case of deportation or other protection issues.</p> <p>c) Find appropriate durable solutions for the cases of mandate refugees. Complementary pathways coupled with Resettlement for the most vulnerable cases should be integrated in the interventions to lead to more sustainable results</p>				
Management response:		X Partially agree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		MCO and NO will proactively address the problems faced by forcibly displaced and stateless people in Tajikistan. However, resettlement options in the region are limited to only life-threatening immediate protection needs and cannot be regularly resorted to. The border with Afghanistan is closed for asylum-seekers, which is considered a security measure, as well as deportations that occurred in the past. UNHCR is committed to taking proactive measures to address such incidents. However, it acknowledges that there may still be negative outcomes due to the government's primary focus on security concerns.				
Unit or function responsible:		MCO / NO				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Implement a Country-Specific Advocacy and Early Warning System	NO in close collaboration with MCO	<p>1. Ensure step up in advocacy to proactively and timely address violations of rights of forcibly displaced and stateless people.</p> <p>2. Linked with advocacy efforts, design and implement a robust early warning system to anticipate potential challenges such as mass deportations, ensure timely mediation, and safeguard the rights of forcibly displaced persons.</p> <p>3. Ensure that senior management in Tajikistan receives robust support from the MCO and Regional Bureau to enhance protection and advocacy efforts, particularly in prevention of refoulement or other protection issues.</p> <p>4. Establish cross-border communication with UNHCR Afghanistan.</p>	Q1 of 2025	Ongoing	
2	Conclude the refugee status determinations for Mandate asylum-seekers.	NO in close collaboration with MCO	There are currently 13 individuals (6 cases) from Afghanistan pending UNHCR Mandate refugee status determination. Those individuals have been denied refugee status in the state procedures.	Q1 of 2025	Planned	

3	Step up efforts to support regularization and local integration of mandate refugees and Complementary Pathways for refugees	NO in close collaboration with MCO	<p>As of April 2024, Tajikistan still hosts 29 families (117 persons), who were recognized as refugees under the global mandate of UNHCR. However, they still lack any legal status and thus access to rights or local integration in Tajikistan. Since 2014, UNHCR has been advocating with the Government and authorities to provide all remaining mandate refugees with an adequate legal status and integration prospects in Tajikistan. UNHCR will step up those efforts.</p> <p>In absence of resettlement available for refugees in Tajikistan, Complementary Pathways are becoming important ways for solutions. In June 2024, NO submitted 3 year proposal to Canada for complementary pathways.</p>	Q1 of 2025	Ongoing	
RECOMMENDATION 4:		<p>UNHCR should develop its livelihoods strategy for Tajikistan, transitioning from immediate, short-term relief to comprehensive, long-term empowerment and self-reliance strategies that align with the local socio-economic context, in partnership with development actors who have more capacity and resources to achieve results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNHCR should diversify its approach to vocational training, including market assessments to ensure alignment with Tajikistan's employment landscape. Building on existing and exploring new collaborative efforts with the government, development partners and private sector will help expand job placement opportunities for the right holders. • Explore good practices of other UNHCR COs that have successful initiatives of refugees' livelihoods and economic inclusion that can be replicated in Tajikistan. • Support labour mobility by including in existing programmes awareness raising campaigns and support to the interested persons through individual and group counselling. Initiatives such as facilitation of links between the employers abroad and people UNHCR serves could also be explored. • Continue close interactions and exchanges with other COs in the region and with MCO and RB to tap on relevant expertise and revise livelihood interventions considering the context. • Strategically scale up basic need support in the context of funding constraints, e.g., through joint programming with UN agencies and other development partners, to ensure more significant response to refugees' needs, specifically in access to health services and education. 				
Management response:		X Partially agree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		The Development and implementation of a comprehensive UNHCR livelihood assistance program will depend on the available budget. UNHCR will refine its livelihoods strategy for Tajikistan as suggested. Regarding findings that suggest increasing the targets				

		of providing basic needs and essential services, UNHCR will be able to advocate with development partners (UN agencies, IFI, and private entities) to include forcibly displaced and stateless people in their programmes.				
Unit or function responsible:		MCO / NO				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	<i>As part of Central Asia Livelihood strategy, develop a comprehensive livelihood strategy Chapter for Tajikistan</i>	<i>NO in close collaboration with MCO</i>	1. Diversify vocational training approaches by aligning with Tajikistan's job market and expanding job placement opportunities through collaboration with the government, development partners, and the private sector. 2. With support from MCO, and RB, refine livelihood interventions, replicating successful livelihood initiatives from other UNHCR country offices to enhance refugee livelihoods and economic inclusion programs. 3. Support labor mobility by providing awareness campaigns and counseling to facilitate links between employers abroad and forcibly displaced and stateless people.	Q1 of 2025	Ongoing	
2	<i>Collaborate with UN agencies and other stakeholders to include people UNHCR serves in their programmes to promote socio-economic opportunities and employment pathways to build resilience and self-reliance of refugees</i>	<i>NO in close collaboration with MCO</i>	In line with the principle of “No One Left Behind”, UNHCR will redouble efforts to advocate with UN agencies and other stakeholders – including donor embassies, development partners, IFIs, private sector – to include forcibly displaced and stateless people to their implementation programmes, and to the plans developed jointly with the Government. Currently, NO engages with JICA, PRM, ESCAP CRVS, KfW, Government of Canada (complementary pathways) to facilitate projects' approval by donors. Additionally, UNHCR submitted its proposals to WB that secured funding from donor, and Joint UN SDG Fund.	Q1 of 2025	Ongoing	
3	<i>Develop and approve the SOPs on CBIs and assistance with partners with</i>	<i>NO in close collaboration with MCO</i>	The following SOPs were recently adopted, and the process continues to adjust the procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none">SOPs for the implementation of Cash-Based Interventions by Refugees, Children and Vulnerable Citizens (RCVC) and UNHCR partnerships, Tajikistan / 2023 – 2024 (signed 1.09.2023)	Q1 of 2025	Ongoing	

	<i>reviewed eligibility criteria and transparency in decision making.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance SOPs – v2, (approved 10.05.2024) SOPs on the Provision of Legal and Financial Assistance to Persons Supported by the “Prevention and Reduction of Statelessness in Tajikistan” Project (IP Chashma, November 2023). SOPs on the Provision of Legal and Financial Assistance to Persons Supported by the “Prevention and Reduction of Statelessness in Tajikistan” Project (IP Rights and Prosperity, 2023). 			
4	<i>Consider addressing psychological needs of the refugee community especially among women, youth and children</i>	NO	As reported, women and youth face depression and anxiety due to difficult living conditions. Other partners, including IOM, are implementing wide and accessible MPHSS assistance to migrants and refugees. UNHCR will establish an effective referral mechanism to forward MPHSS cases to service providers.	Q1 of 2025	Ongoing	
5	<i>Consider enhancing UNHCR's engagement with education support.</i>	NO	There is a declining enrolment rate among refugees (76% in 2019 64% in 2020, and 43% in 2024). UNHCR will collaborate with UNICEF and other partners to provide additional assistance to children refugees to ensure their proper education.	Q1 of 2025	Ongoing	
6	<i>Consider increased allocation of funding to the statelessness pillar to further reduce statelessness.</i>	<i>NO in close collaboration with MCO</i>	NO will identify savings under other budget lines and will consider additional support to destitute stateless people to find solutions of their situation (access to documentation), in particular to cover high expenses necessary during procedures, including travel costs.	Q1 of 2025	Ongoing	
RECOMMENDATION 5:		Integrate considerations of Age, Gender, Diversity, Climate Resilience, and Environmental Sustainability into UNHCR's Monitoring & Evaluation framework in Tajikistan. This will enable informed, data driven comprehensive and sustainable support tailored to the country's unique challenges. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance data collection mechanisms for more in-depth disaggregation in line with AGD principles, for identification of most vulnerable groups ensuring more informed and targeted support. This should revisit the existing real-time feedback mechanism to make it more relevant to current needs in order to refine programs continuously in line with the AAP principles. Develop a framework that inherently integrates Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability considerations into all interventions, and notably in infrastructure (e.g., Environment impact assessments; feasibility studies, etc.), ensuring that the 				

		UNHCR support enables displaced populations to be equipped to cope with changing environmental challenges in their host regions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To achieve this, identify/leverage existing and seek additional resources (financial, human) and capacities for these activities (with implementing partners and UN agencies) 				
Management response:		X Partially agree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		Operation introduced the ProGres v.4 functionality and collects disaggregated data. The introduction of BIMS is pending.				
Unit or function responsible:		MCO / NO				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Enhance Data Collection Mechanisms	NO in close collaboration with MCO	1. Improve data collection to achieve more detailed disaggregation in line with AGD principles, enabling targeted and informed support for the most vulnerable groups during UNHCR monitoring. 2. Advocate with Government to ensure AGD disaggregation of data.	Q1 of 2025	Ongoing	
2	UNHCR will ensure that climate resilience and environmental sustainability will be important factors to integrate in its activities.	NO in close collaboration with MCO	1. Currently, NO does not plan any additional capital investments that would trigger climate resilience and environmental sustainability issues, which will be carefully considered and integrated if such activities foreseen in the future. 2. UNHCR continues to monitor legal and policy changes to ensure legal protection and to address displacement and statelessness risks driven by climate. UNHCR participates in the EW4ALL initiative. 3. UNHCR will develop effective waste management and water control systems for UNHCR's office management and greening its facilities and events. 4. UNHCR will include sustainable procurement considerations in all procurement processes including NFI and CRI for the use of refugees. 5. Develop project proposals aiming climate and environmental activities, taking into consideration current programs, to include work	Q1 of 2025	Planned	

			with refugees and develop innovative sustainable energy, livelihoods and reforestation programmes for refugee-hosting areas.			
RECOMMENDATION 6:		Optimize the efficiency of the Country office through the enhancement of cooperation with partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that partners are selected considering the results of the previous monitoring reviews of UNHCR. Ensure that partners are monitored by project control team in a respectful and transparent way. Provide needed continuous support to implementing partners in regard to programming, management, internal monitoring and reporting. 				
Management response:		X Agree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		[add only if partially agree or disagree was selected]				
Unit or function responsible:		MCO / NO				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Provide Continuous Support to Implementing Partners.	NO	1. Offer ongoing support to implementing partners in programming, management, internal monitoring, and reporting to enhance their effectiveness and alignment with UNHCR's goals. 2. Ensure regular communications with all partners at all levels, including regular meetings, exchange of information, advance notices on changing policies or procedures.	Q1 of 2025	Ongoing	
2	Ensure that selection of partners is made in accordance with all UNHCR procedures in transparent manner.	NO in close collaboration with MCO	Ensure partner selection is informed by results from previous monitoring reviews and that partners are monitored transparently and respectfully.	Q1 of 2025	Ongoing	

3	<i>Regular field MFT monitoring, capacity building, coaching of partners will be implemented according to schedule jointly agreed with partner and ad hoc;</i>	NO	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NO developed a schedule of planned MFT monitoring visits to all partners. Multifunctional approach <i>will inform the Office's decision-making on gaps, adjust programs, and change in modalities of assistance.</i> 2. NO will establish a routine of having regular bilateral meetings between NO and partners 	Q1 of 2025	Ongoing	
4	<i>Taking into account funding constraints and sustainability requirements, UNHCR will compile the pool of potential partners to rationalize program implementation</i>	NO	In 2024, NO issued Call for proposals to expand the pool of partners and identify partners for implementation of the projects related to (1) social assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers and (2) reduction and prevention of statelessness in Tajikistan. As a result of this Call, UNHCR rejected two eligible applications for the project (1), and accepted one application for the project (2). Nevertheless, UNHCR will readvertise the Call for proposals, to ensure, against the background of a trend of decreased funding, that the new selection process should include, as one of the desired parameters, a comprehensive protection response and assistance to displaced and stateless populations and rationalize partner budgets, including through reduced administrative costs by reducing the number of partners.	Q1 of 2025	Ongoing	
RECOMMENDATION 7:		<p>Optimize efficiency of Country office resources through rethinking of its strategy, diversification of resources and recalibration of staffing and communication structures.</p> <p>For diversification of funding sources, it is recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there is a proactive resource mobilization strategy in place, with an emphasis on diversified funding sources <p>For recalibration of staffing and communication structures, it is recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that staff roles are clearly defined, specialized, and avoid too many and/or overlapping tasks per staff member • Design and implement a robust internal Communication Strategy that addresses and mitigates challenges faced due to frequent structural shifts in the office and promotes synergies and coherence <p>For COMPASS, it is recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue advancing its monitoring mechanisms, such as integrating and expanding the utility of COMPASS, that can help periodically assess the effectiveness of resource utilization, partnerships, and local outreach efforts. Feedback from this framework can guide 				

		resource reallocation, ensuring that UNHCR's interventions remain agile and responsive to the dynamic needs of the displaced and stateless populations it serves in Tajikistan.				
Management response:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		[add only if partially agree or disagree was selected]				
Unit or function responsible:		MCO / NO				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Proactive Resource Mobilization Strategy	NO in close collaboration with MCO	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> With support from MCO and RBAP, develop and implement a resource mobilization strategy, emphasizing diversified funding sources and contribution modalities to ensure sustainable financial support. According to the resource mobilization strategy, UNHCR will regularly reach out to donors, IFIs, Embassies, and other stakeholders and respond to the Calls for proposals—where strategically relevant and feasible—proposing activities for the benefit of forcibly displaced and stateless people to ensure proactive resource mobilization. 	Q1 of 2025	Ongoing	
2	Clear and Specialized Staff Role	NO	Clearly define and specialize staff roles to avoid overlapping tasks, ensure complementarity of skills and expertise, and effectively use human resources within the allocated staffing cap.	Q1 of 2025	Completed	
3	Robust Internal Communication Strategy	NO in close collaboration with MCO	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Design and implement an internal communication strategy, with the support of MCO and global Internal Communications team, to inform, engage and unite the National Office Tajikistan team, addressing challenges from frequent structural shifts, and promoting coherence and synergy within the NO and with the MCO UNHCR will ensure regular internal communication exchanges, including through Office's weekly staff meetings, participation of NO's staff in MCO's meetings, open information sharing. 	Q1 of 2025	Ongoing	

4	<i>Fully implement the Business Transformation Tools</i>	<i>NO in close collaboration with MCO</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the Plan Access Control functions up to date at all time ensuring segregation of duties is followed; • Provide access to the relevant colleagues to different tools within BTP, including PROMS, COMPASS, Cloud ERP, etc. • Provide training/refresher training to MFT members on COMPASS to better understand resource allocations and inform the planning. 	<i>Q1 of 2025</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	
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