

Evaluation of UNHCR's L3 Response in Ukraine

EVALUATION REPORT
DECEMBER 2024

UNHCR Evaluation Office

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Published by UNHCR

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Acknowledgements

This evaluation was undertaken by KeyAid Consulting: Andy Featherstone, Iesha Singh, Helene Juillard, Svitlana Fesenko and Pauline Coste under the supervision of Joel Kinahan and Francesca Carini from UNHCR.

The evaluation team would like to thank the UNHCR Representative for Ukraine, Karolina Lindolm-Billing and the country focal point, Mohamed Aly Elkhoshneya for their support and assistance throughout the process. The evaluation team would also like to thank all key informants and FGD participants for their time and their insights. Thanks are also due to the members of the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) for their engagement and inputs.

Suggested citation: Featherstone, A., Singh, I., Juillard, H., Coste, P. and Fesenko, S. (2024), *Evaluation of UNHCR's Level 3 Response in Ukraine*. UNHCR: Geneva.

Evaluation information at a glance

Title of the evaluation:	Evaluation of UNHCR's L3 Response in Ukraine
Timeframe covered:	February 2022 – March 2024
Completion Year:	2024
Type of evaluation:	Corporate Emergency Response (L3) Evaluation
Country covered:	Ukraine
Region(s)	Regional Bureau for Europe
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Commissioned by UNHCR Evaluation Office

Evaluation Quality Assurance provided by UNHCR Evaluation Office

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAP	Accountability to Affected People
ABA	Area-Based Approach
AGD	Age, Gender and Diversity
AOR	Area of Responsibility
CBI	Cash-Based Intervention
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CBP	Community-Based Protection
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
CEA	Community Engagement and Accountability
CLA	Cluster Lead Agency
CO	Country Operation
CP	Child Protection
CPDSRWG	Community Planning for Durable Solutions and Recovery Working Group
CS	Collective Site
CSM	Collective Site Monitoring
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
CWG	Cash Working Group
DESS	Division of Emergency, Security and Supply
DIP	Division of International Protection
DSPR	Division of Strategic Planning and Results
EQ	Evaluation Question
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
ET	Evaluation Team
EU	European Union
EVO	Evaluation Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSP	Financial Service Provider
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GRF	Global Refugee Forum
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HH	Household
HLP	Housing, Land and Property
HNRP	Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	Key Informant Interview
MFT	Multifunctional Team
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPC	Multipurpose Cash Assistance
MSNA	Multisectoral Needs Assessment

MYSP	Multi-Year Strategic Plan
NFI	Non-Food Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NNGO	National Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OL	Operating Level
OP	Operations Plan
PDM	Post-Distribution Monitoring
ProGres	Profile Global Registration System
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PSS	Psychosocial Support
R2P	Right To Protection
RBE	Regional Bureau for Europe
RC/HC	Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator
RTR	Real Time Review
SIDAR	Shelter Information Damage Assessment and Response
SNAP	Office of Social Protection of the Population
SNFI	Shelter/Non-Food Items
SP	Social Protection
SSS	Stabilization Support Services
TOR	Terms of Reference
TPM	Third-Party Monitoring
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

In line with its Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response,¹ the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Evaluation Office (EVO) has commissioned Key Aid Consulting to undertake a Level 3 (L3)² independent evaluation of UNHCR's L3 Response to the crisis in Ukraine.

The evaluation is intended to analyse the extent to which UNHCR provided a relevant, timely and effective response to the crisis in Ukraine, taking into consideration the complex enabling and constraining factors since the escalation of the war in February 2022. The evaluation has three objectives:³

- Inform the development of implementation plans for the 2025–2027 multi-year strategy.
- Contribute to better plan for achievement of results for internally displaced people (IDP), returnees (refugee and IDP) and war-affected people – through an analysis of the engagement, partnerships and results of UNHCR's activities as part of a broad, inter-agency effort.
- Help UNHCR plan for and support, under the leadership of OCHA, the transition towards medium and longer-term solutions for IDPs, and the potential return of large numbers of refugees from neighbouring countries of asylum, under the leadership of the Government of Ukraine.

The evaluation documents the achievements, challenges, lessons learned, and future positions and adaptation required to further strengthen UNHCR's programming, response and advocacy in Ukraine. In addition, given the response's scale in budgetary terms, the evaluation provides external accountability to partners who have funded UNHCR's response inside Ukraine. The period under evaluation is from the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 to March 2024 and has a strong focus on current programming and future scenarios.

Evaluative judgments were informed by a range of primary and secondary data including a literature review from a repository of over 1,200 documents, 147 key informant interviews (KIIs) with UNHCR staff, implementing partners, government representatives and cluster staff, 17 focus group discussions (FGDs), and surveys with UNHCR staff and its partners.

Key findings

Effectiveness of UNHCR's approach to delivering protection and solutions

In its L3 response, UNHCR has been effective in delivering a range of humanitarian assistance and protection to some of the most vulnerable people in Ukraine, at scale. Key factors that contributed to this success have included flexible funding, capable staff, strong partnerships and UNHCR's long experience working in Ukraine.

During the two years under evaluation, UNHCR was overall more effective in meeting its sectoral targets in 2022 compared with 2023, with varying degrees of success across

sectors. This variability was due in part to its appetite to adapt its response to the evolving context instead of rigidly adhering to predetermined targets. In 2023, a greater emphasis was placed on strengthening the quality of its interventions. Of particular note is that, in a context that was highly conducive to cash responses, UNHCR achieved an effective and timely scale-up of its multipurpose cash assistance (MPC).

UNHCR's law and policy work, legal aid and community-based protection have been strengths of UNHCR's response. They have provided an important '*bridge*' that has facilitated its engagement in recovery and solutions. While this is necessarily a collective endeavour in Ukraine, UNHCR has played a pivotal role in piloting approaches and advocating for action in support of sustainable recovery solutions. Its early and sustained engagement to supporting Area-Based Approaches (ABA) has been an important part of this approach, but it is also an area that has lacked coherence from the collective IASC system in Ukraine which has resulted in an approach which is yet to achieve significant scale. The implementation of UNHCR's multi-year strategic plan offers an opportunity for it to review its engagement and determine its priorities which is particularly important given the context of funding reductions alongside continuing high levels of humanitarian need.

Partnerships have been an essential part of UNHCR's response in delivering a complex set of activities, often in highly insecure areas. UNHCR's partners have shown courage, competence and ability in delivering assistance and protection to IDPs, returnees, war-affected people and within these, specific vulnerable groups. UNHCR has provided a supportive environment for these partnerships. However, despite a strategy that places emphasis on national non-governmental organizations (NNGO) and civil society partners, UNHCR's multi-year strategic plan (MYSP) lacks a coherent vision for how UNHCR will seek to strengthen these partnerships in a way that is consistent with its Grand Bargain and Global Refugee Forum commitments.

UNHCR's response in Ukraine remains urgent and necessary two and a half years after the invasion began, however, funding reductions have required that changes be made. The steps UNHCR has taken to understand and articulate its strategic priorities for its humanitarian response, early recovery and solutions approaches will be important if it is to maintain its effectiveness in this complex situation.

Relevance of UNHCR's Response

UNHCR's response to the Ukraine crisis has maintained its relevance by adapting to the changing needs of the population. The agency has met many of its age, gender and diversity (AGD) commitments and has sought to ensure that people have access to information and feedback channels. The evaluation found scope for improvement in identifying and targeting the most vulnerable people, as part of strengthening its intersectional analysis. There are also gaps in the coherence of UNHCR's feedback mechanisms that compromise efforts to analyse, respond to and act on the feedback it receives or that is reported to its partners.

UNHCR has performed well in shifting its focus and adapting its programmes to the changing context. This has been undertaken in response to both large-scale changes in the situation and more specific information from partners. Refining its needs analysis will continue to be important as UNHCR seeks to find long-term solutions for people affected

by the war. Cash assistance has been a valuable resource for people affected by the crisis, and UNHCR has played a lead role in its provision. However, the evaluation found that there is still scope for it to ensure that cash is used as the preferred modality over the provision of goods in-kind.

UNHCR's programmes have been designed to be sensitive to the conflict in Ukraine, and its humanitarian assistance is consistent with its humanitarian principles. The agency has done well to balance the need to work with the government with a need to maintain operational independence. Territories under the Temporary Occupation of the Russian Federation continue to have the greatest unmet needs, and UNHCR has supported collective efforts to advocate for humanitarian access to these areas. Despite the escalation of the situation to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principles at the global level, efforts to gain principled access have, however, ultimately failed.

Coherence of UNHCR's contribution to the government's delivery of social protection and recovery

UNHCR has adopted a collaborative approach in Ukraine that has sought to support and engage the government at all administrative levels despite the challenges posed by the war. It has successfully brokered Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with a range of Ministries (in addition to local authorities at Oblast and Hromada level), which have strengthened the coherence of UNHCR's response with government policy in addition to creating opportunities to advocate for policy changes on behalf of those receiving assistance and protection.

Specific to social protection (SP), UNHCR has supported the Ministry of Social Policy's efforts to expand social protection programmes, both by increasing the number of people who receive benefits and the amount of money they receive. UNHCR has also provided long-standing support to PeReHid, which has provided a forum for strengthening the coherence of support to social protection in Ukraine in the future.

While UNHCR's approach of working collaboratively with the Government in Ukraine has yielded positive outcomes, there is room for improvement in how the collective IASC system engages with the government on issues of internal displacement and solutions. There are many UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) providing support to system-strengthening, but scope remains to strengthen coordination and coherence.

Coherence and effectiveness of UNHCR's engagement in inter-agency coordination

UNHCR has worked hard to navigate the challenges of a rapidly changing context and to scale-up its coordination leadership capacity since the full-scale invasion. This has permitted its clusters (Protection, Shelter and Non-Food Items, and Camp Coordination and Camp Management) to achieve many of their core functions in addition to making efforts to leverage the benefits of tri-cluster coherence, which has been a strength of the response. All three clusters have improved their engagement with local actors over time, with the national NGO, Right to Protection's prominent co-leadership of the protection cluster worthy of particular mention.

Despite the progress that has been made in strengthening humanitarian coordination, there continue to be gaps in planning for the future collective coordination system in

Ukraine. While humanitarian coordination has been the subject of a Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) commissioned consultancy, there continues to be a lack of clarity surrounding the issue of transition to national leadership.

Reaching agreement on a nexus coordination model has also taken time. UNHCR has supported the efforts of the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) through its participation in the Community Planning for Durable Solutions and Recovery Working Group (CPDSRWG), but it should be considered a priority for the government-led and locally rooted coordination mechanism to move from principle to practice.

Conclusions

UNHCR has responded proportionately and in a timely way to an unprecedented crisis in Ukraine. The full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 caused a humanitarian crisis of staggering proportions; UNHCR has been a critical player in addressing this immense challenge.

UNHCR has delivered relevant and effective humanitarian assistance and protection. UNHCR's focus has been on providing essential aid to those affected by the conflict, including shelter, food and other basic needs. Through its diverse partnerships, it has proved agile in the delivery of much-valued protection services. It has also played a leadership role in the provision of cash assistance, albeit with an enduring need to ensure that cash is routinely prioritized over in-kind assistance.

UNHCR has played a key role in advocating for and piloting solutions programmes. In doing so, UNHCR has met its corporate commitments for “*solutions from the start*” and has brokered partnerships with a range of actors to promote and deliver sustainable recovery, albeit with a need to dovetail this with its ongoing humanitarian response.

UNHCR's response has retained a strong and successful focus on collaborative efforts. UNHCR's success draws heavily on strong partnerships. Collaborating with governments, NGOs and other humanitarian organizations has allowed UNHCR, through its partners, to expand its reach and deliver assistance more effectively. This collaborative approach has ensured a comprehensive response that addresses the multifaceted needs of the displaced population.

UNHCR has been diligent in delivering its collective coordination responsibilities. UNHCR has, in large part, met its cluster leadership responsibilities and has been proactive in leading and contributing to a range of other inter-agency forums, both for the delivery of short-term humanitarian response as well as those tasked with the important responsibility of designing and delivering longer-term recovery and solutions.

Recommendations

These eight (8) recommendations suggest ways to build on these strengths to improve UNHCR's own response in addition to how it may contribute to changes that are important for the collective response. Two recommendations are targeted at improving UNHCR's global analysis and guidance.

Recommended actions	Responsible
UNHCR Ukraine Strategy	
1. As part of the implementation of its 2025–2027 Multi-Year Strategic Plan, UNHCR Ukraine should more clearly define the scope of its support to key strategic operational areas, namely Area-Based Protection, Collective sites and Community-Based Approaches <u>Area-based approaches (ABA)</u>: While UNHCR retains a strong commitment to implementing ABAs, as part of its MYSP, it should leverage its catalytic role to focus on promoting the conditions that would ultimately allow UNHCR to reduce its level of engagement. To achieve this, it should define a set of conditions (including triggers) under which it would responsibly handover these duties and/or phase out. <u>Collective sites (CS)</u>: UNHCR should seek to implement a sustainable approach from the outset and outline a set of conditions for responsibly phasing out its existing operational support for CSs. This should include facilitating residents' wider social and economic inclusion in hosting communities as well as active resident engagement for care and maintenance of those sites that remain. In sites with new arrivals, reception support will still be needed. This would be best achieved as part of a broader cluster-led transition.⁴ <u>Community-based approaches</u>: The recent shift in strategic direction will be reflected in an updated protection strategy for UNHCR Ukraine. UNHCR's overarching protection strategy should incorporate a community-based protection strategy that brings together the different elements of UNHCR's approach (working with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and outreach facilitators, IDP Councils and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) staff), as a means of ensuring coherence across the agency's humanitarian response and solutions work in Ukraine. It is anticipated that CBOs will play a key role in the delivery of UNHCR's community-based protection programme, which underlines the importance of ensuring adequate support is provided to them. However, UNHCR should also ensure that expectations are managed in terms of what CBOs can achieve	Ukraine CO Representative with support from the Deputy Representative, Assistant Representative (Protection) and relevant sectoral staff and cluster leads

and the scale at which they can achieve it. UNHCR should further establish clear benchmarks to more consistently monitor and support CBO graduation objectives.

Operations

2. Cash: Internally and across the clusters under its leadership, UNHCR should ensure that the use of Cash-Based Interventions is the default modality and that the use of in-kind is clearly justified (e.g., demonstrated lack of market functionality or lack of financial service providers). At a minimum, UNHCR should rebalance the resources it dedicates to the distribution of Non-Food Items, in favour of greater allocation to its Cash-Based interventions.

Ukraine CO
Representative with
support from the CBI
team and cluster leads

3. AAP: UNHCR should develop a coherent Accountability to Affected Populations strategy that integrates a “*whole-of-house*” approach as part of its wider community-based protection strategy. This should address the gap in effective feedback loops to affected people and to senior management as well as the coherence of underlying evidence streams.

Ukraine CO
Representative with
support from the
Assistant
Representative
(Protection)

Government support and partnerships

4. Government: UNHCR Ukraine should advocate within the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and United Nations Country Team (UNCT) for a more coherent approach to Government System-strengthening across the collective IASC system. If called upon to do so, it should be prepared to actively contribute to a process of review and mapping to determine the best means of coordinating collective system-strengthening efforts in the future.

Ukraine CO
Representative with
support from the Deputy
Representative &
Assistant
Representative
(Protection)

5. Local and national NGOs: UNHCR should further advance localization by investing in the capacity of national NGO partners and Community-based Organizations. The 2025–2027 Multi-Year Strategic Plan offers an opportunity for UNHCR to set out a more predictable basis to support its partners.

UNHCR should more clearly articulate its aspirations for the support it will provide to its local and national NGO partners between 2025–2027, drawing on the tenets of the nascent localization strategy in Ukraine and UNHCR’s Corporate Grand Bargain and GRF commitments.

Ukraine CO
Representative and
Deputy Representative

Collective coordination and clusters

6. UNHCR should support the transition of the clusters to government-led coordination through the following actions:

- In the context of the HCT-mandated Area-Based Coordination consultancy, advocate for a transition of the clusters to a coordination model that places government in leadership roles.
- For the clusters UNHCR leads, UNHCR should identify potential government principals who can assume a leadership role.
- UNHCR should actively contribute, within the UNCT, to the development of a coordination model for the UN's work in the areas of recovery, development and durable solutions, that has a foundation in government leadership and enables a seamless transitioning of the clusters and sustainable, nexus programming.

Ukraine CO
Representative
and Deputy
Representative

UNHCR Headquarters

Global analysis and guidance

7. UNHCR globally should review its application of area-based approaches and amend guidance to ensure that area-based approaches incorporate collective objectives and outcomes for both programming and advocacy. This should clarify UNHCR's contribution as part of a wider collaborative multi-stakeholder effort in which UNHCR has a distinct competence consistent with its mandate.

Division of
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Resilience &
Solutions

8. Drawing on lessons from previous L3 responses, including in Ukraine, UNHCR globally should consider developing a “post L3” road map to support Country Operations in the timely planning for scale-down in a way that protects and sustains dividends from the response. It should include practical guidance on how and when to start prioritizing and planning for responsible drawdown, both geographically and sectorally. The guidance should also include aspects of human resource restructuring and partner management in the context of resource reductions.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction to the evaluation

In line with its Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response,⁵ the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Evaluation Office (EVO) has commissioned Key Aid Consulting to undertake a **centralized evaluation** of UNHCR Level 3 Response to the crisis in Ukraine.

The evaluation is managed by UNHCR's EVO and is intended to analyse the extent to which UNHCR is providing **a timely and effective response to the crisis in Ukraine, taking into consideration the complex enabling and constraining factors since the escalation of the war in February 2022**. This evaluation offers an opportunity for learning from the organizational adaptations and innovations that may be relevant for future regional (and potentially global) emergency responses of such scale, complexity and length. The evaluation documents achievements, challenges, lessons learned, and future positions and adaptation required to further strengthen UNHCR's programming, response and advocacy in Ukraine. In addition, given the response's scale in budgetary terms, the evaluation provides external accountability to partners who have funded UNHCR's response inside Ukraine. The period under evaluation is from the start of the full-scale invasion in **February 2022 to March 2024** with a strong focus on current programming and future scenarios.

1.2 Background⁶

The Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 displaced millions, with many fleeing to neighbouring countries and beyond as refugees, while millions more were displaced within Ukraine. The speed and magnitude of this displacement were extraordinary, with over 1.7 million refugees fleeing within the first ten days.⁷

Although the peak of displacement occurred in the first four months, population movements to and from Ukraine have persisted and have grown increasingly complex.⁸ Over two years later, humanitarian needs remain extremely high. As of December 2022, 7,968,510 individual refugees from Ukraine were recorded across Europe.⁹ The 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) estimates that 14.6 million people inside Ukraine will require urgent humanitarian assistance and protection over the course of 2024.¹⁰ The 2023 Multisectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) identified inadequate access to protection, dignified shelter and livelihoods as key drivers of household vulnerability.¹¹

People in need have different displacement statuses and share a growing uncertainty about their ability to return.¹²

- **Internally Displaced People:** As of December 2023, IOM estimates that 3.5 million IDPs reside in Ukraine. Fifty per cent of IDPs are found in Kyiv City and three oblasts: Dnipropetrovska, Kharkivska and Kyivska.¹³

- **Returnees:** Between May 2022 and September 2023, 4.6 million people (including 22 per cent from outside Ukraine) returned to their homes, mainly in Kyiv and northern parts of the country.¹⁴ Of these, an estimated 1.4 million refugees have returned from abroad.
- **Conflict-affected, non-displaced people:** 9 million people who were not displaced from their homes are directly impacted by the war, of which 8.5 million are in need of humanitarian assistance.

Age, gender and diversity: The war in Ukraine has heightened vulnerabilities among specific groups, especially women, children and marginalized communities. Women often support families while men fight, and children face disrupted education, family separation and new caregiving roles. The limited capacity of disability inclusion mechanisms in humanitarian efforts increases risks for older individuals and those with disabilities. Marginalized groups, including Roma and LGBTQ+ individuals, face discrimination in accessing aid, compounding their challenges during displacement and making it harder to access essential services.¹⁵

A few unique context identifiers have influenced UNHCR's programmatic offer and modus operandi within Ukraine relative to other L3 emergencies:

The humanitarian response in Ukraine since the 2022 escalation has been shaped **by several unique factors**. As an upper-middle-income country, Ukraine had a limited humanitarian footprint prior to the crisis, necessitating a rapid scale-up of capacity by organizations like UNHCR.¹⁶ The response has been well funded, with the 2022 Flash Appeal being the largest in history.¹⁷ Cash-based interventions (CBI) have been central, supported by strong market infrastructure and digital literacy.¹⁸ Additionally, the formation of IDP Councils has enabled a measure of self-advocacy for displaced persons,¹⁹ while Ukraine's robust social protection system²⁰ demonstrates a necessity to align humanitarian aid with government support. Finally, the digitalization of assistance has enhanced service delivery and community engagement generally.

UNHCR has been working in Ukraine since 1994, guided since 2018 by its Multi-Year, Multi-Partner Protection and Solutions Strategy. Prior to February 2022, UNHCR's annual Operating Level (OL) and Operations Plan (OP) budgets in Ukraine amounted to \$17 million and \$22 million respectively, supported by 101 staff members (82 national and 19 international) across six offices.²¹ The day following the invasion, on 25 February 2022, UNHCR declared a Level 3 Emergency in Ukraine and a Level 2 Emergency in neighbouring countries, extending the Level 3 Emergency to Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia on 15 March. On 1 March, UNHCR and partners launched the first Regional Refugee Appeal for \$550 million.

On 5 March 2022, the IASC activated a System-Wide Scale-Up.²² The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) subsequently launched a Flash Appeal for the 2022 Ukraine response, requesting \$1.1 billion for an estimated 6 million affected people.²³

As part of the inter-agency emergency response in Ukraine, UNHCR scaled up its presence and operations. By the end of 2022, UNHCR's operational budget (OL) had reached \$453.4 million, making it the largest UNHCR operation globally. While the OL budget slightly decreased in 2023, it continued to reflect the significant scale of the

response (Table 01). From a staffing perspective, UNHCR created 291 new national staff positions and 73 new international positions for the in-country response.²⁴

TABLE 01. Breakdown of Ukraine's OL budget for 2022 and 2023 by outcome area and as percentage of the overall OL budget

Outcome Areas	2022 OL	% of 2022 total OL	2023 OL	% of 2023 total OL
OA1: Access to territory, registration, and documentation	\$25,807,833	5.7%	\$19,261,582	4.3%
OA2: Status determination	\$1,258,829	0.3%	\$609,384	0.1%
OA3: Protection policy/Law	\$1,722,130	0.4%	\$3,755,406	0.8%
OA4: GBV	\$4,282,454	0.9%	\$4,362,967	1.0%
OA5: Child protection	\$3,444,038	0.8%	\$8,216,339	1.8%
OA7: Community Engagement and women's empowerment	\$10,659,900	2.4%	\$30,370,098	6.7%
OA8: Well-being and basic needs	\$356,325,038	78.6%	\$281,160,352	62.3%
OA9: Housing	\$48,030,171	10.6%	\$96,935,259	21.5%
OA16: Local integration and other solutions	\$1,880,530	0.4%	\$6,300,071	1.4%
Total	\$453,410,923		\$450,971,457	

Source: UNHCR, *COMPASS Budget Data for the Ukraine Country Operation*.

UNHCR's stated priority was to reach the most vulnerable people, where humanitarian access was possible, with protection services, shelter assistance, cash assistance and distributions of essential items.²⁵ UNHCR worked with its operational partners to reach 4.32 million people in 2022,²⁶ 2.63 million in 2023²⁷ and plans to reach a further 2.7 million in 2024.²⁸ The response also sought to lay the groundwork for sustainable and durable solutions, in coordination with state and local authorities, community-based actors and partners.²⁹

TABLE 02. Number of people reached with UNHCR assistance in 2023 by sector

Assistance type	Number of people reached
Protection information, counselling, support	1,480,928
Cash assistance (MPC and/or winter)	899,039
Essential items	575,273
Emergency shelter and housing support	246,160
Safe access to multisectoral services	98,088

Source: UNHCR, 'Ukraine Operational Monthly Update December 2023'.

Development and overview of UNHCR's Protection programming: In the immediate aftermath of the 2022 escalation of war, UNHCR partners provided urgent support using their own funding, flexibly addressing needs such as food and psychosocial assistance for evacuees. Over time, the response expanded and structured itself to include legal assistance, protection case management and child protection services. Efforts were also made to address gender-based violence (GBV) and to strengthen social cohesion.

Concurrently, UNHCR laid the groundwork for early recovery, promoting sustainable protection and assistance programmes while participating in National Recovery platform working groups that focused on refugee reintegration and housing policy.³⁰ In frontline areas, UNHCR facilitated "last mile deliveries" of aid and ensured access to protection for refugees and stateless individuals through collaboration with various government ministries.³¹

A decentralized approach with a localized and humanitarian-development nexus approach: By February 2024, UNHCR operated through eight sub- and field offices, supported by over 360 staff, with a significant portion being national personnel.³² The agency emphasized partnerships with local entities, with a notable percentage of its partners being national NGOs and four national ministries,³³ reinforcing its commitment to the government's recovery goals and aligning with national and international frameworks for recovery and assistance in a context of high political polarization.

2. PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHOD OF THE EVALUATION

This section outlines the purpose and scope of the evaluation and provides a summary of the methods that were employed in the evaluation. [Annex 5](#) provides a detailed overview of adjustments that were made to the evaluation questions (EQ), the data collection and analysis methods, the limitations and mitigation measures that were employed, and issues of ethics and safeguarding.

2.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of this Level 3 emergency response evaluation is largely summative, providing an independent assessment of UNHCR's programmatic performance and outcomes in Ukraine, but it also has a significant formative component, highlighting good practices, areas of improvement and overall strategic and operational recommendations for UNHCR's operation to inform strategies, plans, programmes and policies going forward.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are as follows:³⁴

- Inform the development of implementation plans for the 2025–2027 multi-year strategy.
- Contribute to better plan for achievement of results for IDPs, returnees (refugee and IDP) and war-affected people – through an analysis of the engagement, partnerships and results of UNHCR's activities as part of a broad, inter-agency effort.
- Help UNHCR plan for and support, under the leadership of OCHA, the transition towards medium and longer-term solutions for IDPs, and the potential return of large numbers of refugees from neighbouring countries of asylum, under the leadership of the Government of Ukraine.

The scope of the evaluation is outlined in the table below.

TABLE 03. Scope of the evaluation

Scope	Description
Geographical scope	The geographical coverage was limited to the territories inside Ukraine that are controlled by the Ukrainian Government. ³⁵
Temporal scope	While the evaluation considered the full length of UNHCR's response in Ukraine, the focus of the analysis was on the 2023 response. As outlined above, the formative aspect of the evaluation sought to inform UNHCR's current operation in addition to its 2025–2027 strategy.

The evaluation is framed around **four overarching evaluation questions** and 17 sub evaluation questions that reference the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee criteria. The overarching questions are listed below.

- EQ1: Relevance of UNHCR's implementation
- EQ2: Effectiveness of UNHCR's approach to delivering protection and solutions
- EQ3: Coherence of UNHCR's contribution to the government's delivery of social protection and recovery
- EQ4: Coherence and effectiveness of UNHCR's engagement in inter-agency coordination

Lessons learned and good practices are integrated throughout the findings section of the report.

To improve the flow of this evaluation report, EQ2, the effectiveness of the response, is addressed in advance of the relevance (EQ1), coherence (EQ3) and coordination (EQ4) sections.

2.2 Intended users of the evaluation

The primary users of the evaluation include **the Ukraine Country Operation, the Representative and Senior Management Team, the Regional Bureau of Europe, several divisions in UNHCR Headquarters** (specifically, the Division of Strategic Planning and Results (DSPR), the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS); the Division of International Protection (DIP)).

The secondary users are donors, authorities at central and regional level, implementing partners, and other UN entities.³⁶ [Annex 7](#) includes a summary of the key stakeholders.

2.3 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation adopted a non-experimental mixed method approach. A non-deductive approach was used as such a theory of change was not employed. UNHCR's performance was measured against its mandate, policies and quality standards.

The team made its evaluative judgments using **a variety of sources of primary and secondary, quantitative and qualitative data**. The diversity of the data collected and analysed allowed the team to triangulate and substantiate the findings presented in this

final evaluation report. A detailed outline of data collection approaches can be found in [Annex 5](#).

2.3.1 Secondary data collection

The Ukraine response has generated significant data. The evaluation team (ET) used relevant, reliable and insightful data that had already been collected and analysed by UNHCR and other key actors throughout the response – via interviews, and online and offline surveys. It also reviewed pre-existing data for its relevance to the evaluation questions (population surveys, protection monitoring and post-distribution monitoring (PDM) exercises, intention surveys, evaluations and audits). Documents that were used to inform this evaluation report are listed in [Annex 6](#).

The document review was iterative and continued throughout the evaluation. A set of key strategic documents was provided to the ET by UNHCR in the early stages of the evaluation and the document library was subsequently expanded with documentation obtained during the data collection visit. The review drew from a repository of over 1,200 documents.

2.3.2 Primary data collection

Primary data was collected through a variety of complimentary methods, which included **KIIs, FDGs, field observation in Ukraine and an online survey** that targeted UNHCR and Implementing Partner staff. A summary is provided in the table below.

TABLE 04. Summary of primary data collection methods used during the evaluation

Method	Number	Description
Key Informant Interviews (KII)	147	KIIs with 147 people (57% women & 43% men), including UNHCR, implementing partners, government and local authorities, clusters/Area of Responsibility leads, HCT/UNCT members, Resident Coordinator's Office, UN agencies, national and international NGOs, donors, inter-agency groups (incl. PeReHid, Community Planning for Durable Solutions and Recovery Working Group), IDP Councils.
Focus Group Discussions (FGD)	17	FGDs were conducted in 17 locations with 135 people (99 women & 36 men, 54 people > 60 years of age, 17 people 18-25 years of age, 10 persons with disabilities) in collective sites, multipurpose centres, with IDP Councils and in Hubs.
Surveys	2	Online perceptions survey with participation from 45 UNHCR staff and 9 implementing partner staff.

2.3.2.1 Cross-cutting themes

This evaluation approached age, disability and gender by ensuring both that the data collected and existing data sources were disaggregated by cross-cutting themes (where possible) and that data were analysed with due regard to each. This was achieved through the following means:

- **Primary data collection:** The ET sought to ensure representation of women, where relevant, and tested how UNHCR plans for and considers gender in UNHCR's response. The collective sites in particular provided an opportunity to better understand the experiences of persons with disabilities and older persons. The ET disaggregated data, where appropriate and possible, along these lines.
- **Assessment of UNHCR's strategic alignment and programme design:** The evaluation sought to ascertain how the operation has understood the respective needs of women, people with disabilities and older people, and prioritized each in its response.
- Through analysis of the **secondary data**, including cash data where possible, the ET sought to understand and assess cross-cutting dimensions within the data, e.g., to see if there were any different results for these groups.

2.3.3 Field work, data analysis and report writing

Field work: The evaluation team travelled to Ukraine country operations (CO) for three days for an inception mission; the evaluation visit was undertaken over a two-week period. During this time, the ET conducted programme visits and interviews in Chernivtsi, Vinnytsia, Kyivska, Dnipro, Khersonivska and Kharkivska Oblasts. The findings, conclusions and recommendations were validated during a final three-day trip to Ukraine CO.

Data analysis and triangulation: Qualitative disaggregated data were coded in Excel to analyse emerging trends against the evaluation matrix indicators. Primary and secondary quantitative data were also analysed using Excel. Evaluators triangulated data sources, and where relevant, they disaggregated by country, stakeholder type and position (for UNHCR, IPs and sector respondents) and sex and age (for refugee respondents). To ensure the rigour of the findings, the ET ensured that multiple sources informed each indicator of the evaluation matrix, so that the data are triangulated.

Evaluation report: The ET produced a draft evaluation report, which incorporated the feedback from the validation workshops. Four rounds of comments and revisions were organized to gather feedback from the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) and other stakeholders, as well as the results of the workshops to co-create recommendations.

Presentation of the evaluation findings: Once finalized, the ET presented, through a webinar, the evaluation approach, findings and key recommendations to UNHCR and the ERG, as part of the dissemination of the evaluation findings.

2.3.4 Limitations and risks

Details of the limitations, risks and mitigation measures are detailed in Annex 5 in the separate Annex report.

3. KEY FINDINGS

3.1 Effectiveness of UNHCR's L3 scale-up

This section provides a short summary of key achievements and organizational challenges of the L3 scale-up covering the whole-of-UNHCR response from the IDP emergency declaration in Ukraine on 25 February 2022 until its expiry on 5 March 2023.³⁷

3.1.1 Summary findings on the effectiveness of the L3 scale-up

UNHCR's annual OL in Ukraine was \$17 million in January 2022. By the end of the year, the budget had reached \$453.4 million, making it the largest UNHCR operation globally (see Table 10 in the context annex). **Despite the significant scale-up in needs, UNHCR was effective in delivering a broad range of humanitarian assistance and protection to IDPs, returnees, war-affected people and within these, other vulnerable communities in Ukraine.** The magnitude of its response, demonstrated both through the financial resources deployed and number of people reached, shows UNHCR's intent and ability to scale-up operations and meet the needs of affected people.

In addition to supporting the immediate needs of displaced communities throughout Ukraine, UNHCR was quickly able to deploy to areas closest to the frontlines, where it participated in initiatives that sought to support populations' priority needs for assistance through its own and inter-agency convoys.³⁸ UNHCR also worked with a broad range of government ministries and local authorities to complement services and to provide assistance.

Interviews with both internal and external informants highlighted that UNHCR's long experience of operating in Ukraine³⁹ placed it in a strong position to scale up its operations and deliver on targets early in the response relative to many other agencies; its well-established partnerships were an essential part of this. For example, UNHCR's cash scale-up was enabled by leveraging its pre-2022 in-country UNHCR presence, offices and network of partners,⁴⁰ as well as global organizational systems and tools, such as the Profile Global Registration System, CashAssist⁴¹ and the Cash Hub,⁴² which has been successfully set up for the Ukraine refugee situation in neighbouring countries and further replicated elsewhere.⁴³ Lightly earmarked funding⁴⁴ also enabled UNHCR and partners to respond more effectively to shifting needs, allowing for prioritization in uncertain and evolving contexts.⁴⁵

3.1.2 The expansion of UNHCR's operational footprint in Ukraine

UNHCR swiftly adapted its operational stance to increase the effectiveness of its response.⁴⁶ UNHCR in Ukraine had to scale and expand its field presence while establishing partnerships to deliver assistance and protection. In February 2022, the Ukraine CO counted 115 staff members, comprising 18 international and 97 national staff members. In February 2024, UNHCR operated through eight sub- and field offices and one CO in Kyiv, with the support of over 360 staff.⁴⁷ As of January 2024, more than three quarters of UNHCR's team was national, with two thirds (66 per cent) having less than 2 years' experience with the agency.⁴⁸

The rapid increase in staffing came with a number of challenges, as outlined in the **Real-time Review (RTR)** for Ukraine and the five neighbouring countries where an L3 emergency was activated. The RTR, conducted by UNHCR between June and August 2022, raised concerns about recruitment and onboarding processes, which are summarized in Table 5.⁴⁹

TABLE 05. Challenges faced by UNHCR in surge recruitment and onboarding⁵⁰

Surge and recruitment	Induction and onboarding
Some rosters were not fully functional	Limited capacity to manage induction needs due to the large numbers of staff arriving
Certain role profiles were difficult to find (especially admin, coordination, external relations, HR, PSEA, some protection profiles)	A lack of role-specific skills among some surge staff, which included limited emergency experience
On average, deployments took twice as long as the stipulated 72-hour deployment period	Late arrival of experienced staff
The procedures to request and approve proposed candidates for deployments took twice as long as the actual deployment	Limitations in the quality of handover notes from past emergency missions

Source: UNHCR (2022) Report: *Real-Time Review for the Ukraine Situation - 7-30 JUNE 2022*. Geneva, Switzerland, August 2022. Unpublished.

While there was some criticism of the quality of emergency response training and learning programmes, efforts were made to try to streamline and strengthen the process of inducting new staff into the organization, including through an “*Accompanied Journey*” Approach, which constituted good practice.⁵¹

 **Good Practice – The “Accompanied Journey” approach.** The approach provided an integrated and coordinated learning and development package for staff induction and was driven by the need to rapidly onboard large numbers of new staff into the Ukraine response. It was led by UNHCR’s Global Learning and Development Centre and addressed a range of learning needs from basic inductions to more advanced team and managerial support. It drew on a range of services that included coaching support, webinars, playlists, English language skills and mindfulness sessions.⁵²

3.1.3 Timeliness of UNHCR’s initial response

At both a corporate level and in its operations, UNHCR performed well, activating the L3 swiftly, rapidly deploying its staff (see section 3.1.2 above) and supporting its partners in mobilizing support in areas with evolving needs (see section 3.3.3 on adaptation). Interviews with agencies in the east of the country highlighted the pivotal role that UNHCR played in the early weeks and months of the response as one of the few agencies that had the capacity required to coordinate and deliver a proportionate response.

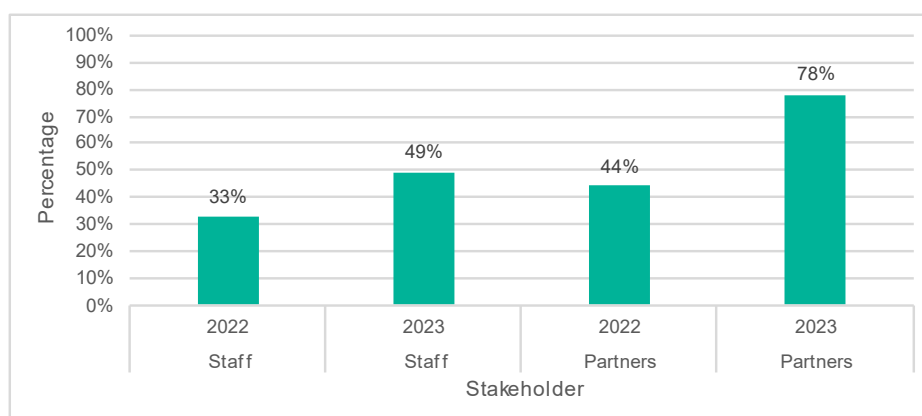
At a sector level, there were disparities in timeliness; while UNHCR’s multipurpose cash (MPC) assistance was considered extremely timely (see section 3.2.2 on MPC), in some sectors that relied on procurement, stakeholders and partner staff identified timeliness as an area where there is scope for improvement (see section 3.2.2). Challenges were attributed to lengthy procurement processes that were considered

ill-suited to emergencies, in addition to the high staff turnover that led to a reduction in contextual knowledge. These factors affected communication and decision-making, consequently delaying the start and completion dates of projects, especially those led by partners.

It should be noted that procurement delays and the challenges of staff turnover during the initial phase of an emergency are not unique to Ukraine; they were similarly highlighted in the recently completed UNHCR L3 Evaluation of the Regional Refugee Response to the Crisis in Ukraine. Corporate efforts are underway to address the causes of these delays, including further simplifying supply, partnerships and human resource procedures.⁵³ While the evaluation could not definitively assess the full impact of these delays inside Ukraine, it was evident that UNHCR took measures to improve timeliness by adapting partnership processes and adjusting human resource procedures in line with recommendations made in the RTR.⁵⁴

The online perceptions survey results show that efforts to improve timeliness have been acknowledged by both UNHCR staff and partners, with an increase in positive perceptions of UNHCR's timeliness between 2022 and 2023 (see Figure 01).

FIGURE 01. Percentage of surveyed staff and partners who agree that UNHCR always met timeliness standards in 2022 and 2023 (n=45 staff, n=9 partners)



3.2 Effectiveness of UNHCR's approach to delivering protection and solutions

This section assesses the extent to which UNHCR's operation in Ukraine has been strategically positioned to contribute and deliver protection and solutions for IDPs, war-affected people and returnees (IDP and refugee) between 2022 and 2024. The focus is on decisions made primarily under the CO leadership beyond the L3 expiration.

3.2.1 Summary assessment of effectiveness and overall assessment of results

UNHCR delivered a large-scale multisectoral response in Ukraine in 2022 and 2023, designing and delivering programmes to address immediate needs, while seeking to strengthen and reinforce national and local capacity. UNHCR worked with its operational partners to reach 4.32 million people in 2022,⁵⁵ 2.63 million in 2023⁵⁶ and planned to reach a further 2.7 million in 2024⁵⁷ through the delivery of cash

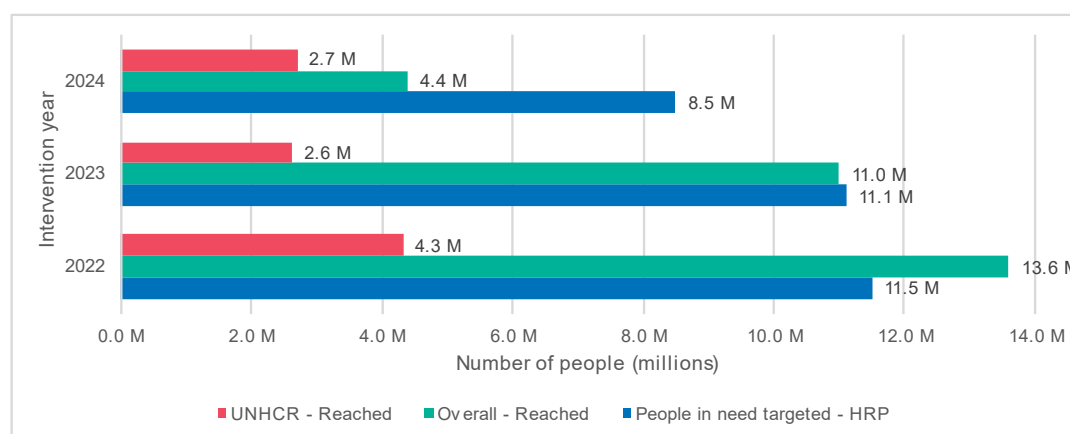
and in-kind assistance to war-affected civilians, providing emergency shelter repair kits to those with damaged homes, carrying out housing repairs, providing protection assistance, and legal support and psychological counselling for those affected by trauma.⁵⁸ Annex 2 provides a breakdown by age, gender and sector of individuals reached by UNHCR between 2022 and 2023.

As indicated in Table 2, of the 2.63 million people reached with humanitarian assistance by UNHCR and its partners in 2023, 1,480,928 received protection information, counselling and support; 899,039 received cash assistance (MPC and/or cash for winter energy needs), 575,273 received essential items, including in areas that were hard to access, and 247,160 were assisted with emergency shelter and housing support, including in collective sites. Finally, 99,008 individuals were supported with safe access to multisectoral services (including winterization support) in collective sites.⁵⁹

In terms of reaching its predefined targets, the evidence indicates that UNHCR was overall more effective in 2022 compared with 2023 albeit with varying degrees of success across sectors. In 2023, a greater emphasis was placed on strengthening the quality of its interventions. In a highly conducive context for cash, UNHCR achieved an effective and timely scale-up of its cash response; despite this, sectoral interventions were found, at times, to have relied too heavily on in-kind assistance and there would have been scope to pivot to cash-based interventions earlier.

Between 2022 and 2024, UNHCR is estimated to have successfully supported 31 per cent⁶⁰ of people in need targeted in the HNRP (Figure 02), which underlines the pivotal role UNHCR has played in the overall humanitarian response.

FIGURE 02. UNHCR reach vs HNRP target



Source: UNHCR delivery updates 26 January 2024, UNHCR delivery updates 18 January 2023, OCHA Ukraine situation report 19 December 2022 (2022), OCHA Humanitarian Response and Funding Snapshot (2023), OCHA Ukraine situation report 12 July 2024.

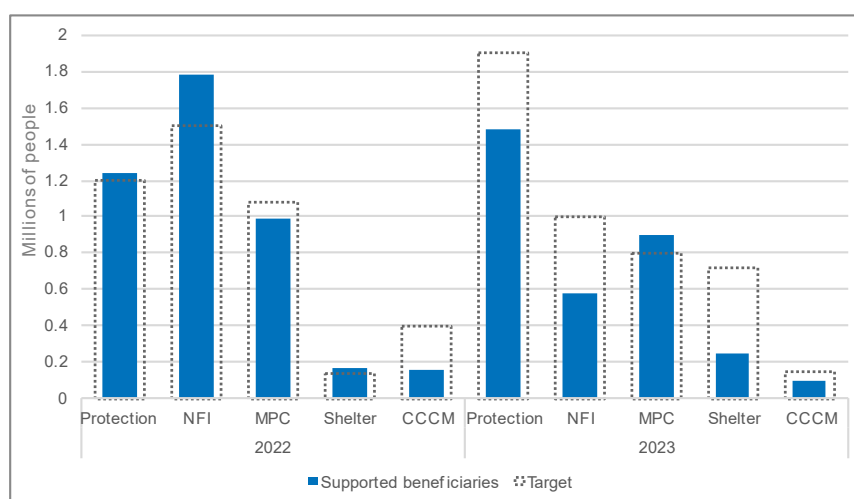
3.2.2 Analysis of UNHCR's results against planned targets

Overall, UNHCR met beneficiary targets with some notable differences between 2022 and 2023. UNHCR set out targets per sector in 2022 and then again in 2023, which guide its overall response. In 2022, UNHCR broadly met its targets in all sectors except for CCCM (see Figure 03 below). In 2023, while UNHCR achieved its goals in Cash, there were gaps in Protection, Shelter, Non-food Items (NFI), and CCCM

(see Figure 03). The gaps in UNHCR's achievement of targets can be attributed to several factors. In particular, the way these targets were set and reported on were not necessarily reflective of UNHCR's achievements on the ground, especially when the budget spent, overall reach, stakeholder perceptions and results are compared against individual output indicators. Interviews with staff revealed that a reason for these gaps was that targets were not systematically set between 2022 and 2023. UNHCR now recognizes this as a shortcoming and has gained insights and lessons over the past two years, which has permitted it to set more informed and achievable targets that better align with the evolving context in 2024.

UNHCR has achieved six of 24 reviewed output indicators in 2022 and 2023⁶¹ across sectors, as illustrated in [Annex 2](#).⁶² Selected indicators for key programme outputs are discussed in more detail below.

FIGURE 03. Number of beneficiaries reached vs planned targets in 2022 and 2023

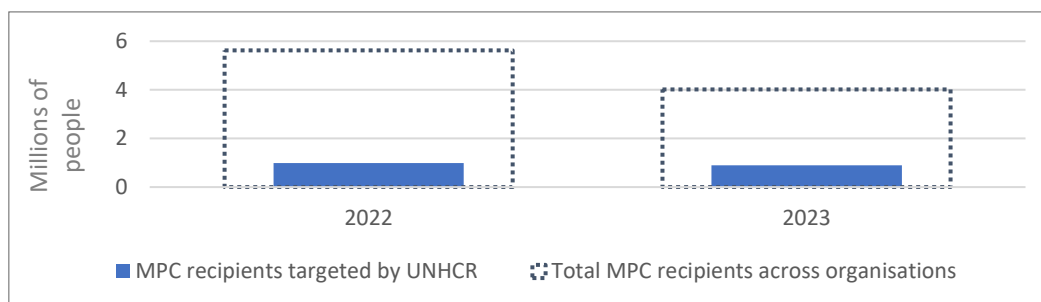


Source: UNHCR delivery update, January 2024 for 2023, and 18 January 2023 operational update for 2022

Effectiveness of UNHCR's Multipurpose cash assistance

UNHCR established itself as a key provider of timely and effective MPC assistance. In Ukraine, the use of MPC across the inter-agency response has been vast, at scale and timely⁶³ with efforts to link these with existing social protection programmes (see [Section 3.4.1](#)). Similarly, MPC represents 60 per cent of UNHCR's OL budget for 2022 and 2023,⁶⁴ and as such, it has been the modality of choice to cover basic needs. Across the response, UNHCR was the third-largest MPC provider in 2022, distributing 22 per cent of the total amount of MPC provided and reaching 18 per cent of the total number of MPC recipients, and the second-largest MPC provider in 2023, reaching 22 per cent of the total MPC recipients (Figure 04).

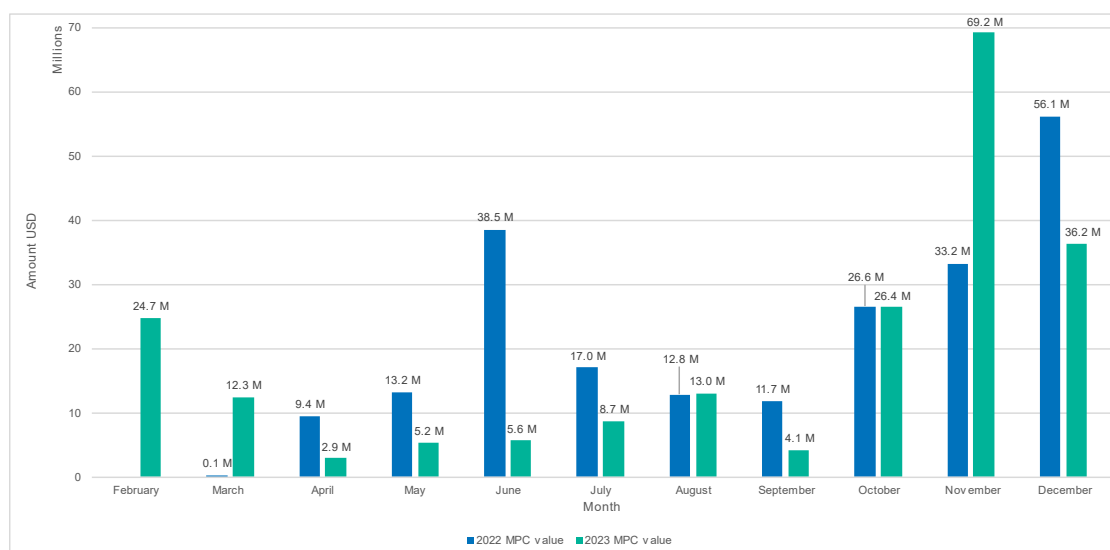
FIGURE 04. Share of MPC individuals reached by the UNHCR response



Source: CWG Dashboards and UNHCR Annual reports for 2022 and 2023

UNHCR was swift to scale its MPC delivery, leveraging its internal systems, tools and resources to do so. In 2022 and 2023, the Ukraine response was the largest multipurpose cash response in the world.⁶⁵ Within it, UNHCR was one of the first humanitarian organizations registering for and distributing MPC, as early as March 2022 (Figure 05). Overall, MPC delivery was timely, with some delays towards the end of 2022.⁶⁶ The 2023 Internal Audit highlighted delays of three to four months towards the end of 2022 and the start of 2023 in the delivery of MPC to 93,000 people. These were linked to Financial Service Providers (FSP) capacity issues that were subsequently addressed by improving systems integration between FSPs' and UNHCR's Cash Assistance.⁶⁷

FIGURE 05. MPC delivery per month since 2022



Source: Data provided by UNHCR entitled: 2022-23_GenFigures.xlsx

Using CBI as the main modality for basic needs coverage was contextually appropriate. The use of MPC at scale by UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations is fostered by high levels of digital literacy, resilient local markets,⁶⁸ a coordinated approach to CBI⁶⁹ as well as strong CBI acceptance among Ukrainians. In 2023, 66.5 per cent of households rated CBI as their preferred modality for assistance, which was a slight decrease from 74 per cent in 2022.⁷⁰ This high acceptance of CBI also consistently emerged during the FGDs conducted as part of this evaluation. The design of UNHCR's MPC response was aligned with the recommendations of the Cash Working

Group (CWG) (on issues such as transfer value, targeting, duration), which contributes to the overall coherence of the MPC response.⁷¹

Beyond MPC, UNHCR struggled to strike the right balance between in-kind and CBI for the delivery of its sectoral interventions. Table 06 below shows that the use of CBI has been largely driven by MPC. Despite a very conducive environment, UNHCR's sectoral response has been heavily weighted towards in-kind assistance (with some progress in the uptake of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) to cover protection needs in 2023). UNHCR's modality choice is not consistently borne out in contextual relevance. Half of UNHCR's winterization recipients for 2023–2024⁷² received in-kind assistance, which is a high ratio in a context like Ukraine, three years into the response.

TABLE 06. UNHCR volume of cash programme - by type and amount distributed

Type of cash programme	2022 total amount distributed (in USD)	2023 total amount distributed (in USD)
MPC for winterization	120,233,000	155,736,000
MPC	98,411,880	52,716,457
Cash for shelter repair	3,194,000	4,060,000
Cash for households hosting IDPs	2,557,000	63,730
Cash for rent	N/A	1,296,000
Cash for protection	N/A	24,000
Cash for livelihood	3,932	N/A

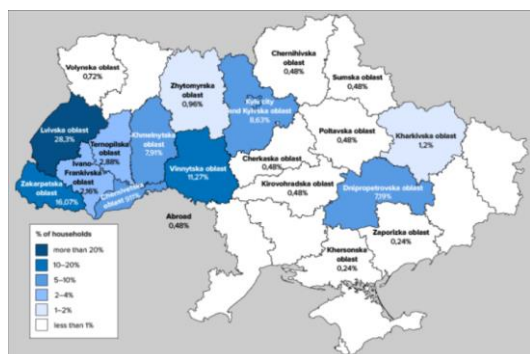
Source: UNHCR 2022-23 GenFigures database

The challenge of prioritizing and maximizing the use of CBI in Ukraine is an inter-agency one,⁷³ which has also placed a strain on UNHCR's cluster lead role (see [Section 3.5](#) on Coherence). Interviews with UNHCR staff suggest that, as a result of internal advocacy, the perceived barriers to greater use of MPC are now being addressed, as the trend is shifting towards a more cash-friendly UNHCR winterization response for 2024–2025.

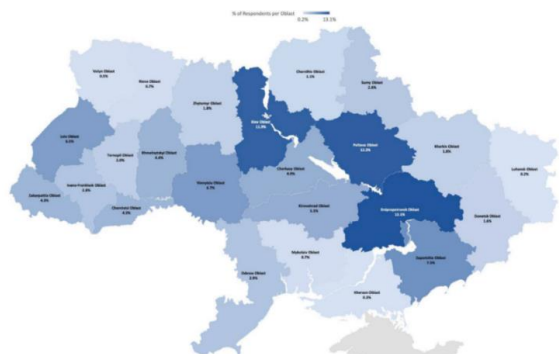
UNHCR effectively used MPC as a rapid response tool for acute crises, with the result that MPC coverage shifted towards the east of Ukraine over time to address immediate needs. The shift is illustrated in Figure 06 below, a trend that continued in 2023 when \$38.6 million was distributed in MPC in oblasts east of Kyiv and \$25.7 million in oblasts west of Kyiv.⁷⁴

FIGURE 06. Overview of coverage of oblasts with MPC in June 2022 and December 2022

June 2022



December 2022



Source: MPC PDM report June 2022 and December 2022.

From the outset of the response, UNHCR strengthened the coverage of its operations by using a variety of delivery mechanisms to increase the accessibility of its CBI (over the counter via Ukrposhta and Western Union; via bank accounts and card-based solutions; or even cash in hand for Russian or Belorussian refugees who were not able to access financial service providers). The delivery method quickly shifted, with the majority of CBI being disbursed through bank accounts or bank cards (these accounted for 89 per cent of the transfers made in 2022 and 96 per cent of those made in 2023),⁷⁵ encouraging financial literacy and inclusion. Illustrative of the accessibility of CBI, in 2022 and 2023, more than 90 per cent of MPC recipients were able to autonomously withdraw and spend the grant.⁷⁶

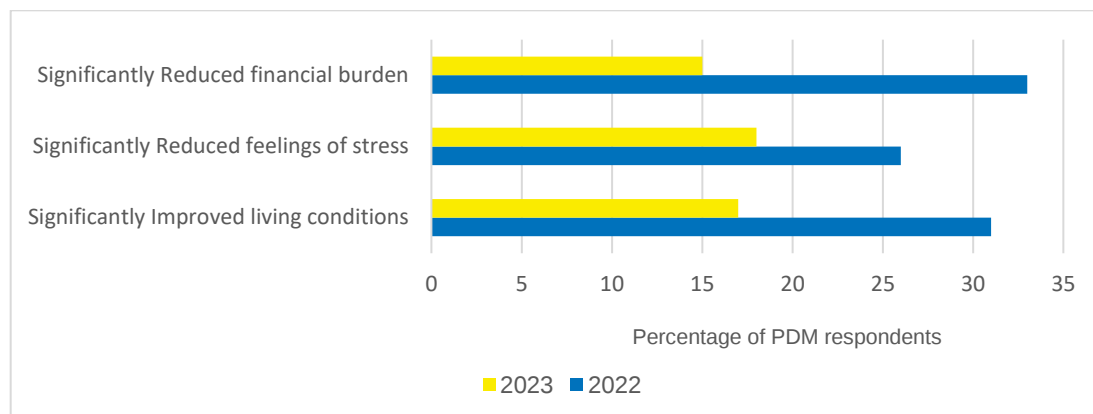
In 2023, UNHCR reached its targets for output indicators for CBI for the number of individuals who received MPC for basic needs. In 2022, UNHCR achieved 91 per cent of the same target and reached 75 per cent of the number of persons newly registered. Given the ambitious target set for the newly established cash response in 2022, these results (Figure 03) should be viewed as an achievement and an illustration of UNHCR's capacity to scale up cash programming where there is an enabling environment.

MPC was effective in covering needs, but its benefits diminished over time. Food, health as well as utilities and rent consistently appear as the top three expenses of MPC recipients.⁷⁷ In terms of outcomes, in June 2022, MPC provided 86 per cent of all PDM respondents with the ability to cover half or more of their priority needs. In December 2022, this figure, however, dropped to 70 per cent and further declined to 55 per cent in October 2023.⁷⁸ This finding is further evidenced by PDMs compiled across humanitarian organizations distributing MPC, which found that by mid-2023, only half of MPCA recipients judged that cash assistance had met most or all of their basic needs.⁷⁹

Alongside the decline in the ability of the MPC values to cover recipients' needs, the evaluation observed a corresponding drop in key well-being related metrics, with recipients of MPC far less likely to report that MPC improved their living conditions in 2023 compared with 2022. Over the same period, MPC was similarly perceived as

less effective in reducing feelings of stress and financial burden between 2023 and 2022. (Figure 07)

FIGURE 07. Households' perception of MPC contribution to needs coverage



Source: UNHCR MPC PDM December 2022 and 2023

The decreased effectiveness of MPC over time is a result of the diminishing purchasing power that it offered recipients, which reduced their ability to meet their basic needs. MPC recipients consistently reported an increase in the prices of items and services (up to 90 per cent of UNHCR PDM respondents in December 2022),⁸⁰ largely driven by the Ukrainian Hryvnia devaluation in July 2022. However, while living costs rose, MPC transfer values remained unchanged.

While the recommended inter-agency MPC transfer value increased towards the end of 2023, the results of this change are yet to be seen. Between March 2022 and September 2023, MPC recipients received an unchanged⁸¹ amount for a three-month period. Following an inter-agency revision led by the Cash Working Group (CWG) and to which UNHCR actively contributed⁸² ([Section 3.5 Coherence](#) for UNHCR involvement in CWG), this amount increased by over 60 per cent in October 2023⁸³ per month over a period of three months. This transfer value was set up to cover 100 per cent of the gap in household resources against the Minimum Expenditure Basket cost per capita.⁸⁴ The ability of households to better cover their basic needs as a result of the adjusted transfer value should be assessed in the next round of PDMs.

Negative coping strategies⁸⁵ may result from numerous factors beyond economic vulnerabilities such as conflict intensification or higher levels of displacement. It is therefore difficult to attribute or ascertain if the diminishing market value of the MPC transfers directly resulted in higher rates of reported negative coping strategies, especially as MPC is distributed for three months only. However, UNHCR PDMs show a higher prevalence of such negative strategies in 2023 compared with 2022.⁸⁶

Effectiveness of UNHCR's CCCM, Shelter and NFIs

While in 2022, UNHCR exceeded its targets for emergency Shelter, CCCM and NFI-related output indicators, fewer were consistently met in 2023. The variability in UNHCR's results was due, in part, to a shift towards focusing on quality and strengthening partners' capacity, which came at the expense of coverage. This evaluation considers the change in approach to be justified. In 2022, UNHCR exceeded

its targets for emergency Shelter, CCCM and NFI-related output indicators by over 100 per cent. These include the number of people receiving core relief items (114 per cent reach), number of people residing at collective sites supported by CCCM services (308 per cent reach) and number of households receiving emergency shelter kits (110 per cent reach) (see [Annex 2](#) for detailed results).

In 2023, targets were less consistently met in Shelter, CCCM and NFI for similar output indicators. It was observed that this does not consider the significant increase in the total number of individuals reached as a result of programme adaptations, suggesting that assessing achievements strictly against targets needs to be conducted with caution. For example:

- In 2023, only 48 per cent of the target for distributing UNHCR standard NFIs was met out of a target of 1,000,000. However, this represents an increase of 400,000 more individuals reached with “*core relief items*” relative to 2022, due to the significantly higher target set for that year.
- The 2.5-fold increase in emergency kit distribution in 2023 highlights the widespread housing damage in Ukraine. However, achieving only 50 per cent of the 2023 target was not due to delivery capacity but rather to lower than anticipated demand and UNHCR's focus on prioritizing more durable shelter interventions, as the target had been set based on 2022 projections.

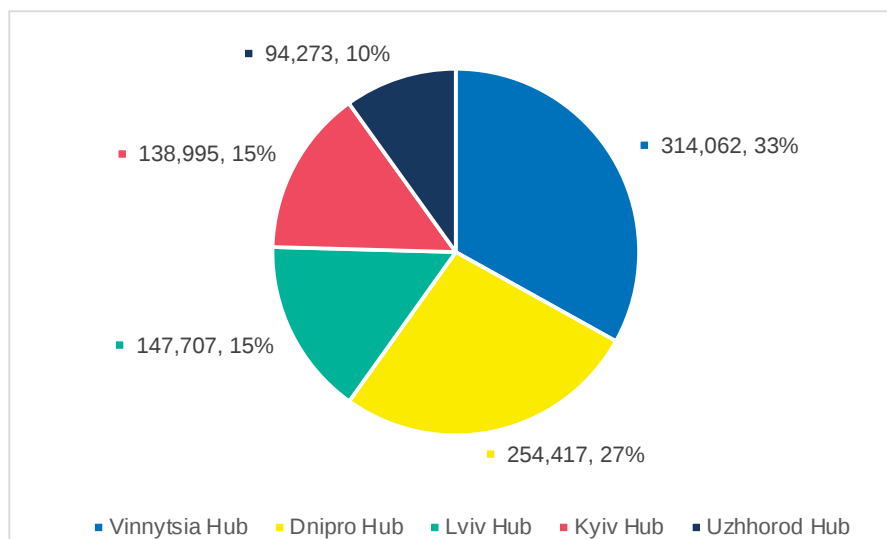
Interviews and data analysis suggest that the variability in UNHCR's results against annual targets, can be attributed, in part, to the organization's flexibility in adapting its response to the evolving context. For example, UNHCR quadrupled its 2022 house repair output, providing durable housing to 22,177 families through mixed modality repair and core-home pilot programmes, achieving a 91 per cent target reach. This was, in part, a consequence of UNHCR's commitment to offering homeowners choice and transitioning towards sustainable shelter solutions.⁸⁷ In 2023, UNHCR fell short of its target for the number of collective sites supported by CCCM services, achieving 74 per cent of its goal.⁸⁸ This shortfall was acknowledged in the 2023 annual results report, with an objective for UNHCR to leverage its Shelter, CCCM and Protection programmes in 2024 to accelerate solutions for IDPs in collective sites.⁸⁹

Effectiveness of UNHCR's protection response

UNHCR and partners' protection programmes played an important role in promoting access to support for the most vulnerable IDPs, war-affected and to some extent (over time), returnee communities in government-controlled areas. In the months that followed the full-scale invasion, UNHCR and partners organized and structured their response in line with the developing protection risks/needs. Over 2022 and particularly in 2023, a noteworthy proportion of investments were directed towards strengthening the quality and outreach of the protection response, with 2023 also witnessing a greater focus on recovery/solutions programming. This reorientation may explain why UNHCR and its partners underachieved the targets for protection activities in 2023, although the total numbers of people reached nevertheless increased. The majority of the 1,480,928 people reached with protection assistance in 2023^{90;91} were across the Vinnytsia and Dnipro Hubs, and accounted for 12 per cent of the collective IASC system's results with variations within this (see below). IDPs were the largest

category of people supported (at 78.8 per cent), followed by non-displaced war-affected (19.8 per cent) and refugee/IDP returnees (1.4 per cent) generally. Most people reached were supported by UNHCR's partners rather than via direct UNHCR delivery, most notably the larger partners Donbas SoS (22.7 per cent of the total), Rokada (18.3 per cent) and Right to Protection (R2P) (18 per cent).⁹²

FIGURE 08. Geographical distribution of individuals supported with protection assistance in 2023 by UNHCR and partners



Source: Ukraine Protection Cluster Achievements Dashboard 2023, Accessed 01/05/24.

UNHCR and its partners demonstrated their adaptability and agility as protection needs/risks evolved; in 2022, they introduced the practice of social accompaniment⁹³ and in 2023, individual protection assistance (cash/NFIs) was provided to the most vulnerable (e.g., older people in remote areas) and at heightened risk of harm. An individual case management approach has now also been adopted as part of efforts to achieve longer-term solutions for IDPs living in collective sites. This initiative seeks to link IDPs to accommodation and re-skilling/employment opportunities. Other activities related to child protection and GBV developed as partner delivery capacity was strengthened. Use of mobile and fixed approaches from the outset strengthened delivery mechanisms, flexibility and complementarity with others. As intimated in various PDMs across the sector (including the User Journey Surveys conducted by Ground Truth Solutions), the use of cash rather than in-kind support as part of case management contributed to enhancing dignity.



Promising Practice – standardized general protection case management information system. UNHCR has initiated a joint project with the International Rescue Committee to develop a Primero-based Protection Case Management Information Management System that will align with the child protection (CPMIS+) and GBV (GBVIMS+) case management systems.⁹⁴ This will be tested over 2024/5. At present, general case management information is agency specific, paper-based, subject to data protection breaches and incompatible with area of responsibility (AoR) case management systems. The system and tools should benefit not just the Ukrainian response but other humanitarian responses in the future.

Legal Assistance has been a key component and value-added of UNHCR's contribution to protection support in Ukraine. Provided uniquely through partners such as R2P, UNHCR's programmatic support accounted for approximately 41 per cent of legal aid assistance across the collective IASC system in 2023. 138,228 people were assisted⁹⁵ in 2022 and 101,540⁹⁶ in 2023, which included those supported with court representation.⁹⁷ Significant numbers of people also required legal services for advice on registering IDP status and establishing a change of address to access social benefits. In 2022, Housing, Land and Property (HLP) issues comprised 16 per cent of all issues including confirmation of damages and inheritance rights,⁹⁸ whilst in 2023, the figure increased to 23 per cent,⁹⁹ demonstrating the high value placed on HLP and its significance.

From the FGDs conducted with affected people during the evaluation, satisfaction with the legal aid provided and the expertise of the lawyers providing it, was highest in Kyiv and Dnipro. In Vinnytsia, some dissatisfaction with the quality was expressed. The cause of this was unclear at the time the evaluation was undertaken, but to better understand these perceptions, a post-service monitoring exercise has been planned to support improvements to UNHCR's legal aid.

Although difficult to measure, UNHCR's engagement with the Office of the Ombudsman, Parliament and other Ministries, has been valuable, as it has contributed to the elaboration of legal initiatives and policies. Ukraine has a very substantial body of laws and an authoritative legal system. Laws concerning the access of IDPs, war-affected people and returnees to national assistance and recovery programmes, such as compensation for housing damaged or destroyed during the war, are instrumental to their well-being. Through joint advocacy with the Office of the Ombudsperson, the CCCM cluster, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Council of Europe, UNHCR contributed to Resolution 930 that mandates the registration of, and minimum standards for, collective sites housing IDPs within a given timeframe. UNHCR was also involved in the initiation of Resolution 812 formalizing the establishment of IDP councils and their participation in decision-making processes at local and regional levels.¹⁰⁰ Other efforts, such as advocacy in support of a simpler out-of-court civil registration procedure for Ukrainian citizens formerly living in occupied areas were less successful.

UNHCR's general engagement in GBV programming was both effective and relevant, given the limited GBV legislation, protocols for service provision and national experience in survivor-centred approaches prior to the conflict, as well as wider IASC GBV leadership issues.¹⁰¹ Delivery of services by UNHCR in Ukraine was expanded between 2022 and 2023; in 2023, UNHCR reached 41,325 people with GBV support.¹⁰² Awareness-raising and the conduct of GBV/CCCM safety audits in collective sites were of particular significance. The support that was provided by UNHCR and its partners to the development of standards and protocols for a quality response and capacity development for their implementation was notable. In 2023, UNHCR trained 1,112 GBV case workers and 858 individuals from Government, NGOs, UN agencies and community groups on GBV response and prevention.¹⁰³

UNHCR's contribution to the achievements of the collective IASC GBV response has been relatively modest (3 per cent) compared with its contribution in other

protection sectors.¹⁰⁴ UNHCR and partner GBV efforts take place in a context where many organizations are providing GBV prevention and response activities albeit at varying scale and with varying quality. By the end of 2023, 121 organizations reportedly contributed to collectively achieving 130 per cent of the GBV Area of Responsibility's overall targets.¹⁰⁵

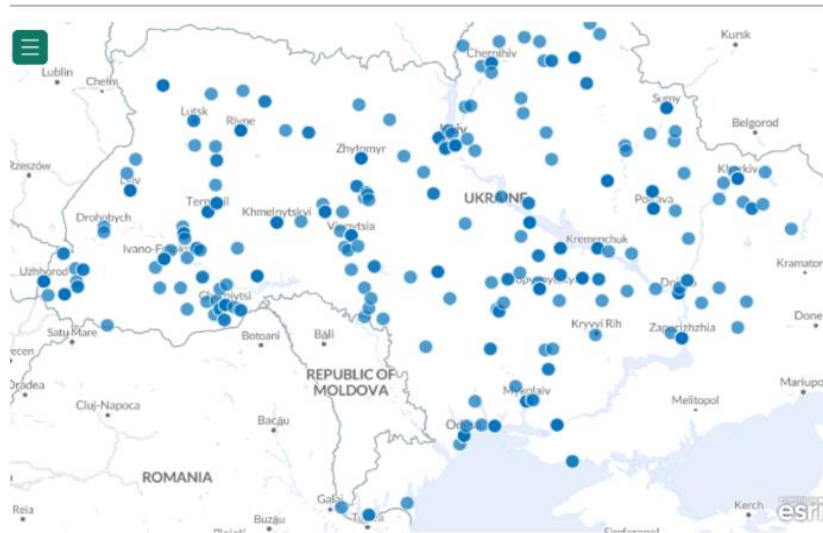
UNHCR and partner support to child protection has also taken place within a relatively crowded space (there were 94 child protection partners by the end of 2023)¹⁰⁶ and at a relatively limited scale (UNHCR delivered 2 per cent of the collective IASC Child Protection response in 2023).¹⁰⁷ **However, its added value lies in its focus on rural areas and neglected families as well as the incorporation of a community-based approach.** In 2022, UNHCR specifically identified and assisted 2,736 children at risk of harm (including unaccompanied and separated children) and their families, increasing this to 8,929 at-risk children in 2023. UNHCR more broadly served 64,809 children and their families through information, counselling, 124 child-friendly spaces and psychosocial support in 2023.¹⁰⁸

UNHCR's engagement to support operational guidance, information management systems and capacity development for humanitarian child protection actors has been very relevant given the limited child protection case management experience, contextual risks and State overstretch. In 2023, in support of the overall AoR under UNICEF, 211 caseworkers were trained on child protection case management and five child protection mainstreaming trainings were conducted by UNHCR for partner CCCM, Shelter and field staff, to help them safely identify and redirect vulnerable/at-risk children and families to child protection actors for protection and assistance, as well as improve their incorporation of children's needs in their activity planning.¹⁰⁹

UNHCR and partners' Community-Based Protection approach encompasses several disparate strands that have yet to be brought together into one coherent and strategic plan. Approaches include working with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and Community Outreach Facilitators,¹¹⁰ support to IDP Councils, Psychosocial Support (PSS) and Accountability to Affected Populations (see [Section 3.3.2](#)).

UNHCR and partner support to CBOs has strengthened flexibility and facilitated several niche responses in remote and urban settings. UNHCR's investment has been significant and, given the scale of the needs in Ukraine, it has also been resource intensive. CBOs have provided important support at community level albeit achieving limited coverage and with modest visibility. In 2022, UNHCR and its partner Crimea SoS supported approximately 200 community groups and 85 community-level projects with mini-grants. By 2023, UNHCR and its partner had grown this network to include 447 CBOs/local initiative groups across Ukraine and 190 projects (Figure 09).

FIGURE 09. Geographical distribution of UNHCR-supported community groups



Source: UNHCR (2023) CBO Mapping, UNHCR 2023.

CBO projects included the creation of information hubs, awareness-raising campaigns, social and cultural events, and psychosocial and recreational activities underpinned by referrals to onward basic services. CBOs also contribute to community engagement and accountability. Training of CBOs was conducted in 2022 and 2023 through two NGO partners. More than 1,000 people from community associations were trained over 2022,¹¹¹ while 10,676 community members benefited from leadership and project management training in 2023.¹¹²

Through its local/national NGO partners and support to CBOs, UNHCR has provided relevant and accessible emotional and practical psychosocial support incorporating support to social networks and advocacy for essential services. As the stigma surrounding PSS reduced over time, demand for services particularly grew in reoccupied and displaced areas. In 2022, UNHCR and its partners reached 114,393 people through mobile PSS services, helplines, community events/recreational activities, group emotional support sessions and/or individual consultations (approximately 76 per cent of the 2022 target). A further 29,347 children were reached through focused and community-based individual and group PSS activities, with the latter allowing them to play, socialize, learn and express themselves. In 2023, UNHCR and partners began to shift towards more scalable group interventions requiring fewer sessions, in line with the Government's National **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)** Road map. These reached 102,128 people (approximately 57 per cent of the 2023 target).

Focusing on basic emotional and practical support (rather than specialized clinical care) has allowed UNHCR and partners to make PSS a significant component of their protection response and maximize outreach. Sectoral regulation and limited professional experience have nevertheless hampered effectiveness. The lack of a dedicated MHPSS focal point (falling under the Child Protection Officer) exacerbated this, although support from the Regional Bureau was clearly invaluable. In recognition, UNHCR Ukraine is recruiting a national PSS Officer to be supported more closely from the RB. Over 2022 – 2023, UNHCR supported training in collaboration with Médecins du Monde (15 Ukrainian psychologists) and Save the Children (156 PSS staff); additional training

and capacity development on PSS approaches and intervention structures are set to continue.

When viewed in their totality, UNHCR's diverse Community-Based Protection (CBP) efforts have achieved some measure of success in strengthening community resilience and in resolving and referring protection issues. However, UNHCR's performance in evidencing this has been limited. Amidst community displacement, social network disruption and expectations about the brevity of displacement, delivery of CBP proved challenging in 2022. Given that CBP tends to be broad and less well defined compared with other forms of assistance, such as legal aid and psychosocial support (PSS), it may also be less well understood and appreciated generally.

Within UNHCR Ukraine, CBP has not received sufficient prominence due to other demands for more tangible assistance (including the need for material assistance in the early phases of the emergency response). Throughout 2022, UNHCR had staffing issues in its CBP work. These were partially addressed in 2023, although double hatting between the Head of Protection and Senior Community-Based Protection Officer persisted until 2024, when workloads and responsibilities were reviewed following the arrival of the new Assistant Representative (Protection).

3.2.3 UNHCR's results monitoring

There are well-established formal monitoring systems that are implemented either by UNHCR or external third parties. These systems have assisted in avoiding duplication and have contributed to monthly reporting. Dedicated monitoring committees and the use of multifunctional teams at field and country office level that perform biannual multisectoral monitoring missions have been particularly effective.



Promising Practice – the value of multifunction teams for programme monitoring:

Monitoring visits are conducted biannually by teams, aligning with the cross-sectoral nature of UNHCR's programming, particularly for protection. These teams, comprising up to 20 people, either visit together or split based on technical specializations. Joint monitoring visits and meetings with authorities are always multifunctional. For example, in social housing projects, the shelter team leads, but protection staff provide significant input to ensure inclusivity and support any relevant referrals. Multifunctional knowledge is critical for mainstreaming protection in shelter and CCCM, effectively reducing risks across sectors.

Monitoring of UNHCR's operation in Ukraine has also posed some challenges for the organization.

- **Outcome measurement:** Assessing UNHCR's contribution to planned outcomes has proven difficult due to the nature of its core indicators, which are predominantly input, process and output-based (they are more focused on strengthening UNHCR's performance and ensuring it is evidence-driven as opposed to tracking change to people's lives per se). This issue is not unique to Ukraine or L3 responses but reflects a broader organizational challenge.¹¹³ Interviews suggested that the CO is exploring means of addressing the lack of relevant outcome measurement, either through the use of third-party monitoring (TPM) and/ or through the use of household-level results monitoring surveys.

- **Quality and accuracy of data:** Despite the monitoring systems in place, the accuracy of monitoring results is also dependent on data input quality. Partner-reported data have, at times, lacked consistency, as documented in the audits for NFIs,¹¹⁴ collective sites¹¹⁵ and Cash.¹¹⁶ Additionally, feedback from the RTR undertaken in June 2022 indicated that monitoring was not sufficiently accurate, underscoring the need to strengthen monitoring for partners and government entities.¹¹⁷ This highlights the need for improved verification and control systems.
- **Sectoral monitoring:** The quality of monitoring between sectors was variable, with the cash sector having robust reports, while not all sectors had the same level of rigour and reporting. Some sectors only have in-depth monitoring biannually, which may be insufficient in a rapidly changing environment.



Lessons learned – the need for early establishment of output monitoring: It is essential that systems are established, at the earliest opportunity in a response, to verify the accuracy of data input into “Activity Info” on the number of beneficiaries reached, particularly from partners, for example by triangulating these data against actual distribution data. Since they are used to report against set targets and indicators, inaccuracies are misleading and can have negative impacts on the management of decision-making.

3.2.4 UNHCR’s partnerships and contribution to localization

Partnerships have been a crucial component of UNHCR's response efforts, with the organization actively fostering an enabling environment for collaboration. However, short-term funding has made it difficult for partners to plan effectively.

UNHCR prioritized forming partnerships with local organizations, particularly national NGOs and community-based organizations, many led and staffed by affected communities themselves. In 2023, 20 of UNHCR’s 29 partners were national NGOs.¹¹⁸ In 2024, UNHCR is working with 20 funded partners, 16 of which are national and four international. Interviews conducted with partners and the online perceptions survey provided positive feedback on the relationship between UNHCR and its partners, albeit with some concern noted in 2022 during the rapid scale-up due to the surge in new UNHCR staff and rapid staff turnover. Interviews also revealed a general concern about the movement of staff from local partners into UN agencies and international NGOs, which has important implications for partner capacity. Partners reported that they considered themselves as both contractors and equal partners, with a largely open and honest dialogue with UNHCR and a sense that generally, their voices were heard.

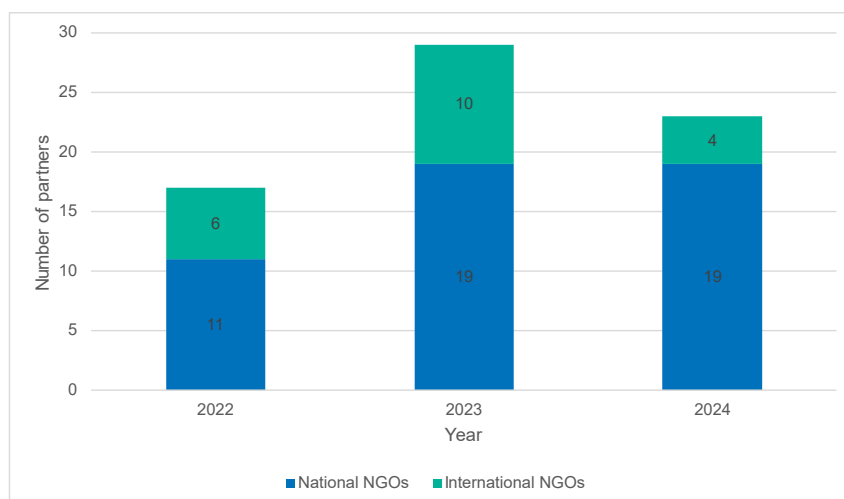
Communications between UNHCR and its partners during the response were considered strong, although some partners reported limited visibility of UNHCR’s annual plans and would like to be more engaged in UNHCR’s multi-year planning. Coordination was largely seen to be effective, although some expressed concerns about micro-management. Short-term funding has, at times, made it difficult for partners to plan and the current generally expected reduction in funding has exacerbated this (e.g. one agency reported having to fire 30 per cent of its staff at short notice as a result). Some preference was also articulated for greater decision-making power over the use of funds. Partners wanted to be able to reallocate funds in an emergency or invest in (rather than

rent) capital equipment like cars. To some extent, these issues are a result of UNHCR's corporate funding conditionalities that limit the scope for the Ukraine CO to make changes.¹¹⁹

UNHCR's partnerships with national and international NGOs

UNHCR was effective in utilizing its existing partnerships to deliver its scale-up. National and local partnerships were at the centre of UNHCR's expanded response.¹²⁰ Partners were both willing and able to considerably scale up their presence and programming. To achieve broader and more effective coverage, while strengthening quality, UNHCR established time-bound partnerships with international NGOs. With support from the Regional Bureau and HQ, external services were engaged to support risk management activities and provide donor assurance. Figure 10 outlines the range of UNHCR's international/national partnerships in each year of the Ukraine response, which, at the peak of the response, numbered 29 in total.

FIGURE 10. UNHCR's international and national NGO partners, 2022–2024



Source: UNHCR (2023) *Ukraine Emergency - UNHCR Delivery Updates*, UNHCR January 2023; UNHCR (2024) *Ukraine Emergency - UNHCR Delivery Updates*, UNHCR January 2024 and; <https://www.unhcr.org/ua/en/ngo-partners> Accessed 26/06/24.

From a funding perspective, at the time the evaluation was conducted, 90 per cent of UNHCR's partnership budget for implementing partners was disbursed to national and local NGOs. The \$34m and \$55m that was dispersed to National NGO and CBO partners in 2022 and 2023 respectively was modest when compared with UNHCR's total expenditure for its Ukraine response of \$387m and \$341m, which, it should be noted, includes direct implementation figures for MPCA and (local) contractor-led agreements related to house repairs.¹²¹

UNHCR's introduction of 4 per cent overheads/indirect support costs for NNGOs (not CBOs) demonstrates its commitment to investing in partner institutional capacity and organizational development. However, this is lower than some agencies and less than the 7 per cent Grand Bargain Workstream recommendation for UN Country-Based Pooled Funds.¹²² Funds can be used to cover support functions that are outside of partnership agreements, including capacity development and training, evaluation and security, with scope for additional security budget upon request. The

disparity in UNHCR's provision for overhead costs, and that of other INGOs and UN agencies, may give rise to tensions in the future.

Interviews highlighted that, while UNHCR's support for capacity development was valued, it was not consistently viewed by NNGO partners as well planned or the most relevant. A gap was identified by partners on humanitarian leadership and the knowledge, skills and tools required to lead teams and to strengthen organizational development. That said, training was credited as having assisted in facilitating access to other donor funding for NNGO partners.

It is worthy of mention that UNHCR's relationships with its international NGO partners appeared to be more challenging. Concerns were raised during interviews about funding timelines, agency prioritization and administrative processes, in a context where UNHCR has shifted the focus of its partnerships to local and national NGOs.

UNHCR's support for civil society groups

UNHCR has further promoted localization through direct partnership agreements and intensified support to six selected CBOs. This includes a graduation approach to facilitate their development into NNGOs. Many of these CBOs were initially informal volunteer networks providing assistance in frontline areas. At the time the evaluation was undertaken, UNHCR was providing mini-grants, the value of which has been gradually increased over time from \$12,000 to \$45,000. Grant increases are dovetailed with capacity development (on risk management, fundraising and technical expertise).

UNHCR has no threshold or benchmarks to monitor movement towards graduation and the potential for these organizations to sustain their development in the future lacks clarity. Working towards graduation is a resource-intensive process and can take many years, as organizations restructure their administrative capacity, technical expertise and government engagement. While the sustainability of CBOs that have graduated will take time to test, the evaluation found that some have developed social enterprises to support members and run events.



Promising Practice – mobilizing and resourcing Community-Based Organizations.

Mobilization of community groups and resourcing of smaller organizations to fill niche gaps (e.g. disability inclusion or excluded groups such as the Roma) have strengthened community empowerment and cohesion, and supported response to protection risks at very localized levels. This has been reinforced by UNHCR's support to organizational capacity development and the mapping of CBOs that has been shared with the Protection cluster as a wider resource. If the expectation is that CBOs assist UNHCR and others to provide Community-Based Protection at scale, then more work is required to understand both the scalability of the approach and the sustainability of investments.

UNHCR's support to IDP Councils has been innovative and strategic, although given the scale and diversity of these groups, the role they play and their capacities across the country have not always been comparable, and positive dividends not always evident. Through the International NGO Stabilization Support Services, UNHCR supported (and continues to support) around 100 IDP Councils (out of 1,000 IDP Councils countrywide), as advisory bodies intended to facilitate the active

participation/influence of displaced persons in decisions affecting them at local and regional levels.

According to the FGDs undertaken by the evaluation team, IDP Councils have assisted in fostering a positive perception of IDPs within host communities by highlighting the contribution they have made to the local economy and revitalization of villages that have been in economic decline. That said, the Councils remain exclusive to IDPs and tend not to incorporate the war-affected, which has the potential to create tensions. While IDP Councils have legal status, they can also lack authority and are instead dependent on their capacity to “influence” Government authorities, which means that their influence has been inconsistent.



Promising Practice – support to IDP Councils as a form of democratic expression and accountability. Given localization trends and EU accession discussions, IDP Councils have the potential to emerge as a powerful voice and agent for IDPs. However, as noted above, many are currently frustrated by their lack of capacity in terms of both resources and meaningful access to people in power and voice. They have yet to find their place in the ecosystem. UNHCR’s early decision to support IDP Councils has played an important role in strengthening their capacity in this respect.

Power in partnerships

While interviews with the CO underlined UNHCR’s intention to maintain programme delivery through partners, and its 2025–2027 MYSP provides a vehicle for longer-term engagement,¹²³ the organization offers little strategic direction for the future of its partnerships and how UNHCR can use the stability provided by the MYSP to continue to realize the aspirations of partners and broader civil society to take on greater leadership of what has been a highly international response. Within the humanitarian sector more broadly, the Grand Bargain has accelerated the discourse on transforming power dynamics between local/national and international actors.¹²⁴ Interviews with UNHCR staff tended to focus on the efficiency gains afforded by working with NNGOs as opposed to international NGOs, although the maturity of its partnerships has also had very tangible benefits for the effectiveness of UNHCR’s response in Ukraine.

A recent multi-stakeholder pledge developed for the 2023 Global Refugee Forum committed signatories, including UNHCR, to further advance localization in situations of displacement and humanitarian situations more generally. While the pledge incorporates actions that UNHCR is already addressing (such as capacity-sharing and funding), it goes a step further in committing the agency to making investments in transformative change¹²⁵ including “*partnerships and power dynamics*”.¹²⁶ This commitment is echoed in a draft localization strategy being proposed to the Ukraine HCT by a coalition of NNGOs and CBOs. The strategy incorporates many of the principles that underlie UNHCR’s Global Refugee Forum (GRF) pledge.¹²⁷

3.2.5 Recovery and solutions approaches, including area-based approaches

UNHCR made an early commitment to solutions in Ukraine and has sustained its engagement throughout the period under evaluation. This commitment is consistent with its corporate prioritization of solutions.¹²⁸ Prior to

the 2022 escalation of the war in Ukraine, solutions had been a significant focus for UNHCR. Using this as a foundation, UNHCR seconded an IDP emergency expert to the UN Emergency Coordinator's Office in April 2022, in support of the former RC/HC, one of whose priorities was to look at "*Durable Solutions from the Start*". This was in line with UNHCR's updated 2023 Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response. Subsequently UNHCR, together with IOM and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), co-chaired the Durable Solutions Steering Committee and agreed to pilot an area-based durable solutions programming approach. Some months later, in mid-2023, UNHCR set out its approach to (durable) solutions.¹²⁹

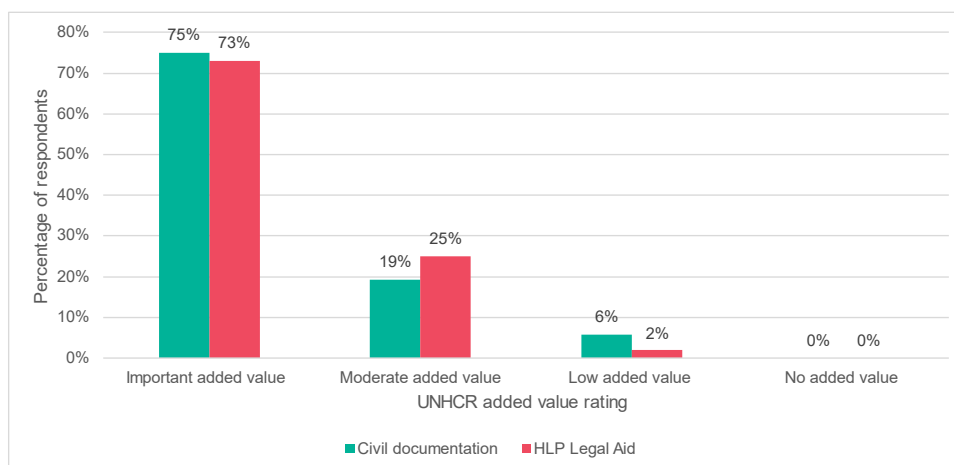
UNHCR has made some important investments in supporting recovery for war-affected populations and bridging the nexus through its contributions to sustainable housing and improvements to collective sites, as well as its efforts to support protection and integration at the community level. Combined UNHCR partner/staff surveys indicate a "*good/fair*" satisfaction with UNHCR/partner contributions to longer-term recovery and solutions efforts over 2023 and 2024 generally. Varying forms of legal aid complemented by advocacy and technical capacity development (authorities, NNGOs, CBOs) to support equitable access to public services were considered by interviewees to be strong programmatic elements where UNHCR had added value.

Legal aid including for housing, land and property

Legal aid provided UNHCR with an important niche in Ukraine; it has been valued by those who required it and received significant praise from peer agencies (see also Section 3.2.2). It has played a key role in unlocking access for those affected by the war to potential solutions. Interviews and the secondary data review show that UNHCR's support to civil documentation has facilitated access to allowances, compensation, pensions and inheritance. It has also assisted the movement of those who have lost their documents and assisted war-affected people by providing access to essential services, transition to social services and access to solutions.

UNHCR's publication of legal updates has assisted in informing humanitarian agencies of contextual changes and strengthened their analysis of operational implications.¹³⁰ The engagement and input that UNHCR has had into the Government's legal framework and policies has assisted in promoting a conducive enabling environment for those affected by the conflict and in laying the foundations for solutions as part of UNHCR's catalytic role. Combined partner/staff survey respondents placed a high level of importance on the added value of UNHCR and its partners' support to people in obtaining civil documentation and HLP legal aid (Figure 12).

FIGURE 11. Perception of staff/ partner survey respondents on UNHCR's added value and partner's support in obtaining civil documentation and HLP (n=52)



Community-based protection

While evidence of the outcomes from UNHCR’s Community-Based Protection initiatives is thin, interviews suggest that they have provided a bridge between early recovery and solutions approaches. For the CBOs that UNHCR has supported, the changes have been very localized, but there is significant scope, for example, for PSS interventions to help people tackle mental barriers to integration and support social cohesion. Plans to direct more attention to issues of bereavement and collective trauma may provide further added value.

As outlined in [section 3.2.2](#), UNHCR’s support to the IDP Councils meanwhile, provides a promising mechanism to empower and assist displaced communities to identify their main protection risks/needs and propose their own solutions through the development of “*Social Passports*”. Social Passports are anticipated to provide information on the demographic make-up of an area and social services available, thereby acting as a potential entry point for community advocacy towards Government planning on early recovery and integration projects (such as schools, hospitals, libraries, etc.). **The participation of local communities in community recovery and solutions aligns with one of the key objectives of the UN’s Transitional Framework** (noted above),¹³¹ **and is all the more important given the limited presence of development agencies at the level of communities** and the limitations in the funding and outreach of the Ukraine Community Recovery Fund.¹³²

Area-based approaches¹³³

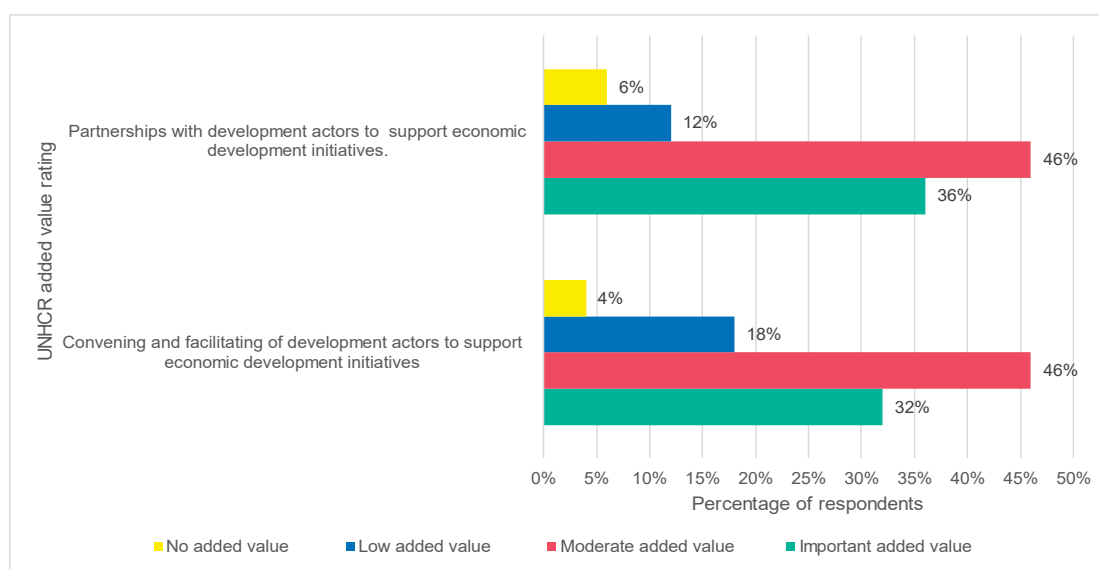
At an agency level, while UNHCR is committed to supporting area-based approaches, it is yet to adopt a “*whole-of-house*” approach to bring in different skill sets and knowledge under a single strategy. At a collective level, there is limited evidence of a formal framework outlining collective outcomes, collective convening/advocacy objectives or roles and responsibilities between organizations.

UNHCR piloted area-based projects incorporating both war-affected populations (e.g. Ivanika) and IDPs (e.g. Apolostov) in both the west/centre and east of the country, and harvested learnings from them. These area-based projects have tended to be relatively small-scale and modest (e.g. a community centre) with relatively fewer meaningful projects developed at scale. Projects are focused on “*joint*” or “*complementary*”

interventions between organizations. In Dnipro, this has become known as “*the Lego approach*”.

Opportunities for handover by UNHCR have, to date, been challenging due to the limited progress that has been made across ABAs, local authority capacity gaps, and the limited field-level presence and capacity of development partners. Replication to additional sites has been affected by a leadership gap at the collective level, which has stymied progress. Perhaps for this reason, combined UNHCR partner/staff survey participants were somewhat less convinced of the added value of the agency’s convening and facilitating or partnering with development actors to support economic development initiatives, as outlined in Figure 13.

FIGURE 12. Perception of combined partner/staff survey respondents of UNHCR's added value in convening, facilitating and partnering with development actors (n=50)



Despite these challenges, under the Community Planning for Durable Solutions and Recovery Working Group, 12 Hromadas have been selected to pilot area-based coordination, planning and programming on durable solutions and recovery (although some of these may require review given the changing context).¹³⁴ While there is enthusiasm for this initiative to gain pace, at present, this is work in progress and will require significant support from all UN agencies including UNHCR, the government and other development partners if collective outcomes are to be fully articulated, operationalized and achieved.

3.3 Relevance of UNHCR’s implementation

This section assesses the extent to which UNHCR’s interventions have been relevant, appropriate and sufficiently agile considering the dynamic operational context and the nature of needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of the IDPs, war-affected people and returnees (IDP and refugee).

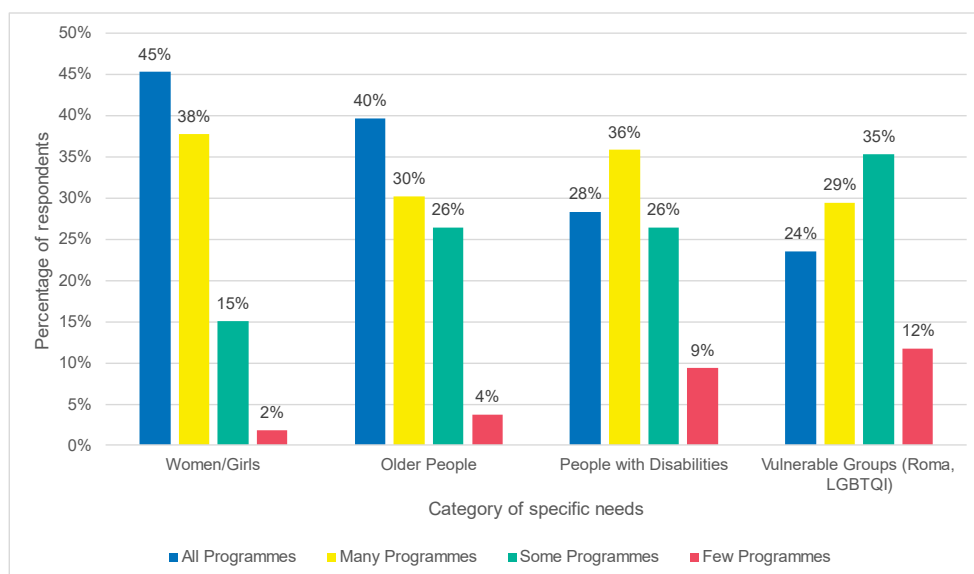
3.3.1 Mainstreaming of age, gender and diversity

Over 2022 and 2023, UNHCR and its partners effectively and consistently tailored assistance and protection to meet the specific needs of vulnerable people, including those with disabilities/older people. While system-wide constraints have sometimes frustrated the full realization of an intersectional lens, UNHCR has quite consistently incorporated AGD-appropriate approaches in its data collection and analysis, engagement with affected communities, partnerships with national and international NGOs, and the design of its interventions and programmes. Notable examples of this include:

- AGD was mainstreamed into cash distributions by employing a wider range of delivery mechanisms to increase accessibility (see [section 3.2.2](#)).¹³⁵
- Social accompaniment was provided for vulnerable groups with limited mobility so that they might access key services. In 2022, 23,349 people were supported.
- Shelter support was adapted to support people's choices between contractor-led house repairs, cash and materials/in-kind to match the specific capacities and agency of the individual and household.
- Ramps, assistive devices for toilets, lifts and wider doors were all taken into consideration to support access to public services/buildings such as schools, health clinics and community centres – although often constrained within collective sites due to structural limitations.

Overall, combined UNHCR staff and partner survey responses indicate satisfaction with UNHCR/partner incorporation of AGD approaches, particularly concerning women and girls. Although generally positive, respondents were a little more circumspect when it came to programmatic consideration of the specific needs of older people, people with disabilities and individuals from LGBTQI+ and Roma communities (Figure 14). These results are further discussed below.

FIGURE 13. Perceptions of UNHCR/partners' effectiveness in tailoring programmes to meet the specific needs of different groups (n=54)



UNHCR's partnership approach has strengthened AGD mainstreaming across its response by ensuring that engagement leveraged partners' existing AGD capacities, as well as ensuring that partners have access to the tools and techniques required to more effectively adopt an AGD lens in the delivery of protection and assistance. UNHCR has also brokered new specialized partnerships, such as Open Heart for people with disabilities, to ensure dedicated knowledge and programming expertise were covered for this group.

The evaluation found that UNHCR incorporated AGD considerations into partnership agreements, thus offering a means to hold partners accountable for their performance on AGD. UNHCR, simultaneously, briefed and trained its partners on AGD and ensured that they were able to take part in the Participatory Assessments that took place in each successive year. These participatory assessments are an important pillar for how UNHCR understands and plans for the differentiated needs, capacities and experiences of displaced persons.

As noted in the perceptions survey conducted for this evaluation, partners indicated that the AGD components of the Participatory Assessments were overall perceived to have been robust. Although the extent to which there has been a systematic approach to incorporating findings from the assessments into planning could not be determined by the evaluation team, partners and staff both reported using these to inform programme planning and design for 2023 and 2024 alike. Furthermore, dissemination of the assessments took place through the Protection and CCCM clusters, thus allowing a wider reach of assessment results.

The deployment by UNHCR in 2022 of a Disability Inclusion Expert split 50:50 between UNHCR and the Inter-Agency Age and Disability Task Force contributed to strengthening both partner AGD capacities as well as those of the broader humanitarian community.

Despite these efforts, a combination of constraints in the humanitarian system and gaps in social services have meant that UNHCR's AGD approach towards older people and people with disabilities has not been without challenges, and the response has fallen short of fully adopting an intersectional approach. Multipurpose cash amounts, for instance, are standardized in Ukraine across agencies, which makes catering to specific needs more challenging and requires recourse to a separate system of cash assistance. In 2022, UNHCR provided guidance on material support for winterization; however, related support for assisted living, assistive devices and the promotion of home-based care/foster care lie outside the agency's mandate and expertise. For these types of support, UNHCR is dependent on coordinating with and referring to the Government and WHO, with the support of the Age and Disability Working Group. An additional challenge has been to provide support in a way that does not expand or prolong institutionalization (in alignment with the Government's long-term objectives on the de-institutionalization of people with disabilities), in a context where the national budget for social services is shrinking and Government capacity is constrained.

Advancing gender equality

UNHCR's approach to Gender Equality in its Ukraine response has largely been articulated around GBV, with only a nascent focus on women's empowerment (this latter finding echoes that of UNHCR's global AGD evaluation).¹³⁶ UNHCR has,

however, been able to foster partnerships both with well-established national NGOs and CBOs, many of which are women led.

In 2022, the agency increased staffing capacity on GBV specifically, and in both 2022 and 2023, UNHCR and its partners undertook Safety Audits in the collective sites to assess and follow up on issues of dignity and safety for women and girls.¹³⁷ The audits are recognized as having brought to light several relevant concerns and changes, such as separate washing facilities for males and females.

UNHCR worked with five national women-led and LGBTQI+ organizations (Rokada, Insight, Neemia, The Tenth of April and Proliska) to implement inclusive GBV services that have become better developed over time.

Supporting diversity

UNHCR's focus on diversity has been embedded in the participatory assessments, its advocacy around law and policy, as well as its growing engagement through specialized CBOs.

Many Roma live in both areas of displacement and potential return (such as Kharkiv), and in December 2023, after advocacy from a number of organizations including UNHCR, the Government adopted Regulation 1197 setting out an Action Plan for its Roma Strategy, which included facilitating access to civil status documents; training for government officials on human rights and anti-discrimination strategies (with monitoring visits to relevant communities); enhancing access to free legal aid; and raising awareness among Roma communities about their rights, the functioning of public institutions and access to services.¹³⁸

UNHCR has, in addition, incorporated intersectional protection vulnerabilities as eligibility criteria for its cash assistance, and its annual participatory assessments have informed adaptation of approaches. Indeed, the assessments are seen as the external reference for integrating Roma and LGBTQI+ concerns. In 2023–2024, UNHCR opened three Roma Hubs (community centres) in western and central Ukraine.¹³⁹ UNHCR's current response is viewed as an opportunity to bring both these excluded communities into the recovery and solutions response, with a broader focus on inclusive services.

3.3.2 Mainstreaming of community engagement and accountability to affected populations

The evaluation found that accountability mechanisms have consistently been put in place across UNHCR's interventions, largely moderated by each of UNHCR's partners' particular approach and resulting in a diverse range of information and communication channels. AAP is one of the High Commissioner's eight strategic priorities for 2022–2026.¹⁴⁰ UNHCR's Partnership Agreements commit funded partners to ensure the participation, voice and ownership of those being served, through constant monitoring and the collection and integration of feedback into programming. UNHCR Ukraine's Risk Register also encompasses a specific risk on AAP and community ownership, underlining its importance.

 **Promising Practice – incorporation of AAP and community ownership in UNHCR Ukraine's Risk Register:** under the responsibility of the Assistant Representative for Protection. The Risk Register outlines a series of actions (treatments) that need to be put in place to mitigate

the existing level of risk around AAP and community ownership. While the actions had not yet been taken by the time of the evaluation, inclusion of a risk requiring formal Senior Management attention, underscores the significance of AAP/ Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) for UNHCR in facilitating relevant and effective protection and assistance programmes in Ukraine.

From a resourcing perspective, in 2023 (extended across 2024), UNHCR Ukraine funded a NORCAP secondment to support inter-agency and UNHCR AAP, but interviews revealed that double hatting and managing two sets of distinct agency responsibilities led to a conflict of interest and inadequate attention to AAP within UNHCR. UNHCR is now seeking to rectify this through the recruitment of a nationally recruited staff member who will also be tasked with providing regular feedback to partners on AAP findings and follow-up.¹⁴¹ **Without adequate dedicated in-house capacity, there has been limited scope to develop and implement a coherent strategy around AAP and mobilize internal stakeholders, both inside and outside the protection team around it.**

Formal hotlines and feedback mechanisms

Countrywide, UNHCR oversees a hotline managed by its partner, Donbas SoS. In 2022, the hotline received 194,183 calls, and in 2023, information and response were provided to 532,494 calls (54 per cent of these were from women 18 to 59 years old).¹⁴² Additional partner hotlines exist in each one's area of operation, publicized on posters, leaflets and material assistance boxes (to support older people) as well as social media.

In 2022, UNHCR launched HELP sites for the Ukraine situation regionally, supporting access to information on the services available for different categories of people (IDPs/ war-affected/ returnees/ refugees/ asylum-seekers) and communication possibilities for people fleeing Ukraine.¹⁴³ Feedback/complaints boxes exist together with social media opportunities for information-sharing and feedback, including a Telegram channel for legal assistance issues (established when it became clear that WhatsApp was not popular).¹⁴⁴ UNHCR was an early adopter of the Chatbot. Across the operation, mechanisms for referral and feedback for people using UNHCR/partner services appear systematized.

Despite the existence of formal AAP mechanisms, the evaluation found that feedback from affected people residing in collective sites was mixed. FGDs and interviews revealed that collective sites, where some of the most vulnerable people are hosted, have lacked effective community engagement and accountability mechanisms. FGD participants noted feeling uncomfortable using feedback/complaints boxes due to their visible location (usually at reception, making anonymity difficult) and fear of repercussion. Building owners manage the sites and few community committees have been established to galvanize residents' voices and influence decision-makers and service providers, and no accountability mechanisms established between service providers and local authorities to call them to account when issues arise.

Less formal channels

Formal accountability mechanisms tend to rely largely on a system of direct written and indirect digital media. Independently of these systems, UNHCR technical officers undertake transect walks; protection colleagues conduct FGDs with people in need and

outreach facilitators act as a bridge between IDPs, residents, local authorities and UNHCR/partners. Support to CBOs and IDP Councils are additional mechanisms through which UNHCR (and its partners) can be held to account and their programme design influenced. UNHCR's PDM for cash and NFIs, together with its Third-Party Monitoring Mechanism introduced in 2023, also contribute to meeting UNHCR's AAP commitments.

Evidence suggests that these less formal approaches are not integrated as either part of UNHCR's approach to AAP or that of the HCT. The latter is much more reliant on formal mechanisms such as inclusion through needs assessments, surveys, complaint and feedback mechanisms, and evaluation/learning exercises.¹⁴⁵ There is no mechanism to connect the different channels.

Analysis and response to feedback

Overarching analysis of the feedback, questions and comments across the full spectrum of accountability mechanisms was not evident and interviews suggest that this does not occur. As observed in the UNHCR staff and partner survey undertaken during the evaluation, the key barriers to AAP were considered by UNHCR staff to be the magnitude of geographical coverage, the volatile security situation/access issues, bureaucratic red tape and institutional capacity.

The multiplicity of channels, both online and offline, and related data management, analysis and visualization are understandably challenging for UNHCR to combine and synthesize, and this underlines the importance of adopting a more systematic process of record-keeping, analysis, management engagement and feedback.

3.3.3 UNHCR's approach to programme adaptation and course corrections

UNHCR Ukraine has demonstrated considerable agility, responsiveness and adaptability, reacting quickly to the evolving needs and contextual changes during the course of the L3 response. UNHCR has made significant improvements in implementing data-driven decision-making over time and has maintained open and flexible relationships with partners, contributing to smoother and informed programme adaptations and course correction processes.

The evaluation examined UNHCR's response by assessing: (i) adaptations to contextual and geographical specificities, (ii) adaptation of programmatic approaches, and (iii) engagement with partners on course corrections.

Adaptations to contextual and geographical specificities

UNHCR adjusted its operational presence to the changing context and capacity. UNHCR demonstrated agility in scaling up and maintaining a constantly evolving office structure that is reactive to the context, in an effort to streamline resources to the most affected population in need of humanitarian and recovery support, and the geographical prioritizations made in the HNRP.¹⁴⁶ Vinnytsia field office scaled up significantly in 2023 with plans to close down in 2024, as the response shifted to respond to increased attacks in the east, with Poltava and Kharkiv being scaled up in turn. These adaptations were based on unpredictable contextual changes that required significant agility. There have been trade-offs to the considerable agility shown by UNHCR. Interviewed staff have reported finding it challenging to manage the trade-offs between staff duty-of-care

obligations and meeting UNHCR's programme requirements. Changes in field locations have also had an impact on relationships with partners and authorities, which take time to build and develop. UNHCR has also shown reactivity to the RTR results by developing new guidance on expanding and contracting in the emergency and post-emergency phase.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, the evaluation team observed examples where **UNHCR and partners have adapted implementation approaches to respond to the differing situations and acute needs across the country.**

UNHCR made use of both cash and in-kind modalities based on the availability and quality of items and services (see [Section 3.2.2](#) for more details on cash versus in-kind assistance).¹⁴⁸ In unsafe areas, NFIs are delivered close to populations and then distributed in small batches. To support legal assistance, broader protection and multipurpose cash assistance in the crescent and west/central areas, UNHCR deployed both fixed centres and mobile teams, based on consultations with local authorities. This strategy enhanced inclusion and accountability by allowing mobile teams to reach war-affected rural communities and vulnerable individuals with limited mobility.

Adaptation of programmatic approaches

Simultaneously, the evaluation team noted that UNHCR has evolved its response where possible and appropriate. Initially, in 2022, the focus of UNHCR response was on saving lives. Over time, UNHCR and partners have adapted their programming in light of new and fuller assessments of needs, as well as to facilitate greater reactivity to individual preferences and choices.

- Initially, information requests were for practical information, but over time, these became more legally focused, leading to greater emphasis on providing legal aid as part of protection programming.
- Enrolment centres transitioned to becoming multipurpose centres as a one-stop shop for MHPSS, protection and referrals to other assistance from agencies/clusters.
- While the GBV programme operates in both rural and urban areas, the Child Protection (CP) programme has focused largely on rural areas and communities with less access to humanitarian hubs.

A standout feature of programmatic adaptations is the endeavour to provide choice to individuals to best suit their needs. Additionally, the UNHCR response has exhibited a willingness to test and innovate, encouraging outside-the-box thinking, less typical of emergency response scenarios.

The shelter programme devised a “*menu of options*” that covers immediate shelter needs to support war-affected people and returnees with durable housing options as well as repairs to some IDP houses and collective sites. The model is regularly tested and adapted according to what works, based on feedback from beneficiaries (continuous PDMs by the shelter team). An innovation brought in over time has been the implementation of the average cost model, which provides flexibility in UNHCR's approach to durable house repair.¹⁴⁹

Further examples of flexibility and creative thinking have been observed in recovery and solutions approaches that were incorporated to differing degrees across operations in

the west/centre and the east, enabled by large-scale and flexible funding. Livelihoods approaches were tested in Kyiv Oblast by supporting businesses with small grants.¹⁵⁰ These were validated as a “*proof of concept*” but deemed too costly and time-consuming for UNHCR to pursue, with careers fairs adopted instead. In Vinnytsia, UNHCR’s partner Medair worked closely with UNHCR to develop a targeted holistic casework approach focused on identifying and resolving barriers to housing.

 **Lesson Learned – UNHCR’s involvement in livelihoods and economic inclusion at a strategic rather than an operational level:** until recently, UNHCR and partners provided support for small-scale businesses and livelihoods initiatives across Ukraine. The programme proved resource-intensive and a stretch for UNHCR’s skill set and funding. It also took place in a context where others, such as GIZ, IOM and UNDP, were already working at scale. As a result, UNHCR has been rethinking its approach more as a facilitator and convenor with a pilot on career counselling in Poltava, support to job fairs in the centre/west and job/skills matching for people in collective sites. A livelihoods and economic inclusion expert has recently joined the Durable Solutions team and should assist UNHCR Ukraine to further refine its approach on the basis of its comparative added value. This approach aligns with recommendations made in a 2018 Evaluation of UNHCR’s Livelihood Strategies and Approaches and further reiterated in the 2023 Evaluation of UNHCR’s Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement.

UNHCR’s use of data to inform adaptations has improved over time. The 2022 RTR pointed out shortcomings in the decision-making process that were not sufficiently needs driven, pressing for increased data and analysis to better articulate where the most pressing needs are. This led to an increase in the variety of data sources to inform decision-making and the DIP developed a population flow monitoring tool.¹⁵¹ For example, during interviews, UNHCR partners reported using participatory assessments to modify programmes and shift programme focus based on the feedback received.

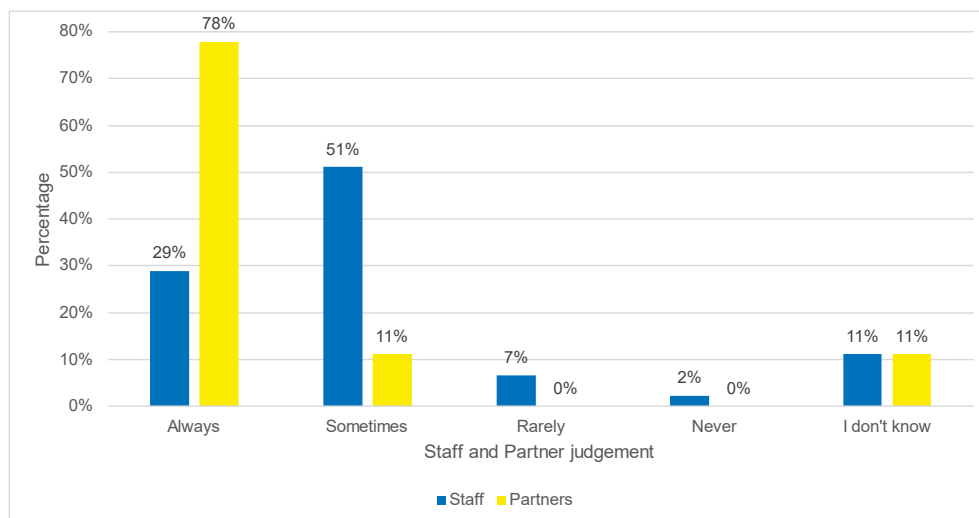
Engaging with partners on course correction

Maintaining open and flexible relationships with partners contributed to smoother and informed programme adaptations and course correction processes. Biannual monitoring visits with partners are an opportunity to propose changes, yet interviews suggest that resource reallocation could occur more frequently, with, for example, changes agreed through email communication. Partner interviews suggested that UNHCR’s flexibility in response to partners’ proposed changes depended on discussions and assessments to determine if the proposed amendments were feasible.

Overall, most surveyed staff and partners agree that UNHCR always or sometimes made course corrections in response to monitoring data or feedback (80 per cent for staff and 89 per cent for partners (see Figure 15)). The positive survey results support the finding that UNHCR has made significant improvements in implementing data-driven decision-making since the beginning of the response. Partners particularly hold this opinion, with 78 per cent indicating that they felt they had the space to modify their approach and that UNHCR listened to their feedback.

FIGURE 14. Extent to which UNHCR adapted its programmes or made course corrections in response to monitoring data and/or community feedback per UNHCR staff and partners (n=54)

3.3.4 UNHCR's delivery of protection mainstreaming



Protection mainstreaming has been largely effective, with evidence of protection mainstreamed across the different UNHCR programmes as well as through the synergies between the agency's shelter, protection and CCCM teams. However, there is scope to further strengthen linkages between UNHCR protection and durable solutions workstreams at the operational level.

Beyond specific (vertical) protection programmes such as for GBV and Child Protection, an evident protection rationale exists across UNHCR Ukraine's programmes generally. Evidenced by interviews with UNHCR staff and partners as well as reviews of programme documents, the ET noted a clear protection logic in UNHCR's response.

The design of the Multipurpose Cash (albeit with limitations discussed in [section 3.2.2](#)) aimed to prevent people from becoming more vulnerable and simultaneously acted as an entry point for people to access PSS. Similarly, Shelter/housing supported people's safety and dignity, while the rehabilitation of public social infrastructure supported community cohesion. Support to collective sites (together with contingent adaptation of the collective sites themselves) was geared to address issues of safety and dignity. A further key cross-programme linkage is UNHCR/partners' Legal Aid programme, which provides a "*chapeau*" for much of the work undertaken and acts as an entry point to further assistance and protection, such as HLP or identity documents.

Much of the success of protection mainstreaming in the response is due to the strengths of UNHCR's pre-existing partners' capacities.¹⁵² Protection mainstreaming has been largely effective in terms of the integrated approaches and synergies between the agency's shelter, protection and CCCM teams. Protection teams contributed to the selection of new partners, the identification of people targeted for support, the definition of Minimum Expenditure Baskets (through the inclusion of transport and communication needs) and integrated referral processes (e.g. shelter teams conduct assessments of people's homes with a social worker who provides complementary protection-related support such as access to HLP, legal advice or PSS).



Good Practice – UNHCR’s multifunctional team field visits in support of protection mainstreaming. There are some good practices on which to build and some limits to UNHCR’s “whole-of-house” approach to mainstreaming protection internally. Multifunctional Team (MFT) visits and relationship-building at the operational level (e.g. for collective sites and area-based programmes) currently act as a cornerstone for protection mainstreaming. The CCCM team now also sits within UNHCR’s Protection Unit. These have clearly been a key element of UNHCR’s integrated approach, encouraging synergy, adaptation and dialogue between shelter, CCCM and protection teams at a tactical operational level that is critical to protection mainstreaming and supporting better results. Greater collaboration is required for the MFT to work effectively at the strategic level.

3.3.5 UNHCR’s efforts to operationalize humanitarian principles in its response

As part of its mandate, UNHCR upholds and promotes the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence in its humanitarian work,¹⁵³ each of which are considered below in the context of UNHCR’s response in Ukraine.¹⁵⁴

Specific contextual challenges

The delivery of these principles in the Ukraine response has presented a challenge to many humanitarian agencies because of the heightened geopolitical and donor context, with agencies working near military actors and volunteer groups. Moreover, the broad definition of “*humanitarian assistance*” in Ukraine, which includes support for both the military and civilians, has been problematic for many international humanitarian organizations.¹⁵⁵ The challenge of maintaining these principles as a framework for decision-making in the Ukraine response has been addressed, in part, by a set of Joint Operating Principles, developed for the purposes of holding humanitarian actors, and their subcontractors, suppliers and those they contract for programming-related services, accountable.¹⁵⁶ These are further discussed in the [context analysis in Annex 2](#).

Humanity

UNHCR’s application of the principle of humanity is evidenced in large part by the preceding sections of this report; in the ways in which UNHCR sought to respect and promote the dignity of those affected by the war and in seeking to understand and address the differential needs of communities by engaging with them.

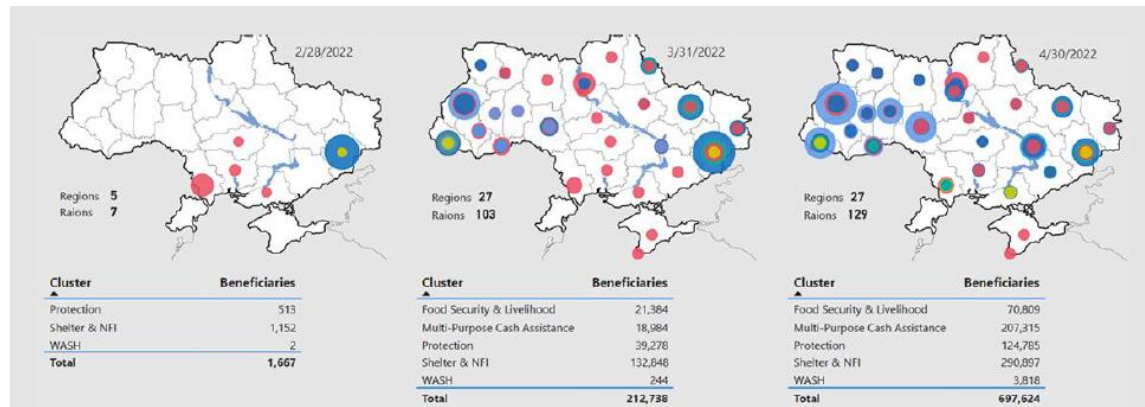
Given the magnitude of the needs in Ukraine, implicit in an assessment of the principle of humanity are the issues of scale and timeliness, which are often at odds with meaningful community engagement. The shift in the scale and scope of needs that accompanied the Russian Federation’s full-scale invasion required that UNHCR significantly expand its presence and capacity. The actions taken by UNHCR to do this highlighted the prioritization that was afforded to the response. By the time that UNHCR triggered its internal L3 Declaration on 25 February, the Regional Bureau for Europe (RBE) had undertaken a rapid assessment of the programme and needs, a series of deployments had already been made to Ukraine, the first allocations had been made from UNHCR’s Emergency Reserve¹⁵⁷ and a series of meetings had taken place between the High Commissioner, Divisional Directors and RBE to agree on the corporate direction and to streamline coordination and support.¹⁵⁸ [Section 3.3.2 on AAP](#) shows that, even with the rapid pace of scale-up, UNHCR has performed well in balancing

the often conflicting needs of working at scale, and engaging with affected people, albeit with some scope for improvement.

Impartiality

On aggregate, though with a small number of caveats, UNHCR worked hard to maintain the agility required to assess needs and has differentiated its delivery mechanisms so it can assist those people located in the areas of greatest need. In the initial phase of its response in early 2022, as it was scaling up, UNHCR had limited capacity to undertake its own assessments and worked with local governments to prioritize and distribute assistance to meet the needs of IDPs across the country. While this approach had limitations in terms of aid targeting, monitoring and assurance, in the view of the evaluation team, this choice was valid as a time-bound approach to assisting communities in need. Moreover, as visible in Figure 16, UNHCR performed well in shifting its delivery mechanism to a more needs-based approach in a timely way, in addition to shifting the focus of its programmes eastwards, closer to the frontline where the greatest needs were. The scale-up of UNHCR’s programme in the first two months of the response shows an indication of the changing focus of the response (Figure 16).

FIGURE 15. UNHCR’s Ukraine response, February – April 2022



Source: UNHCR (2022) UNHCR Operational Monthly Update, Ukraine. April 2022.

Within several months, UNHCR was able to draw on its committed network of established partners to assess needs and monitor programmes. While many of UNHCR’s partners had to adapt their own capacity and organization after the full-scale invasion, they were comparatively swift in expanding their presence in affected areas, which allowed them to strengthen the needs assessment that provided a foundation for an impartial, needs-based response.

The shift to delivering through partners also went some way to addressing the risks to impartiality associated with the sheer quantity of funding that was available. While there were well-founded concerns that the quantity of humanitarian funding made available to humanitarian organizations increased the pressure to spend it, **evidence from interviews, programme monitoring and reporting suggests that UNHCR retained a needs-focused approach throughout the response.**

Table 07 offers examples of how, during the L3 response, UNHCR sought to prioritize the needs of communities most affected by the war by shifting its presence and adapting its programme.

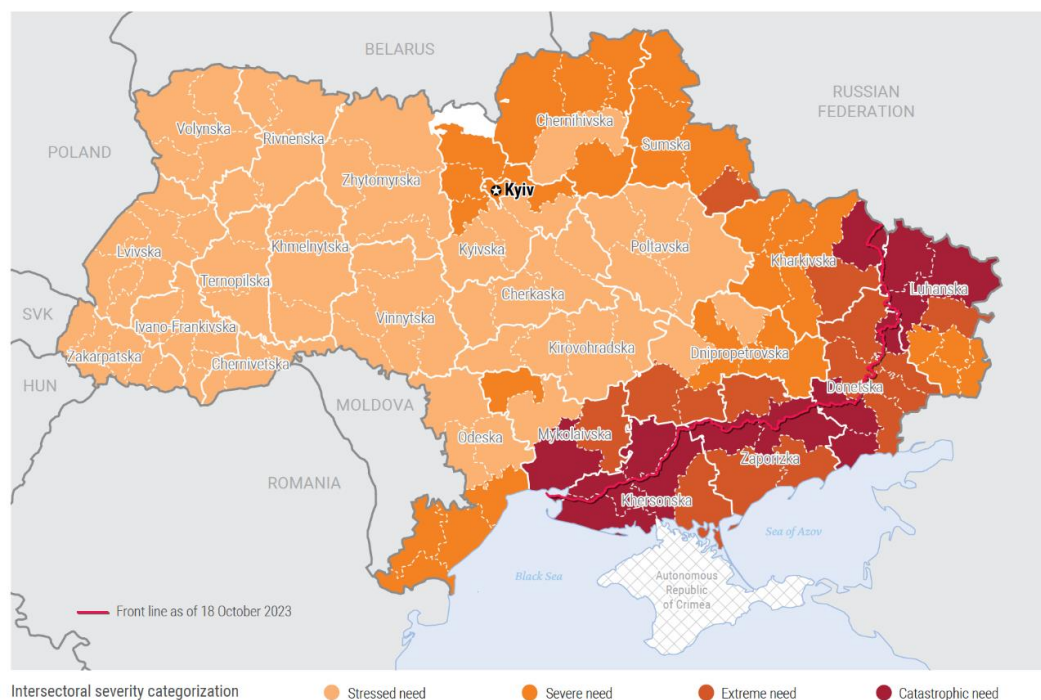
TABLE 07. Examples of UNHCR's prioritization of humanitarian assistance during the L3 response

Attribute	Examples of how UNHCR sought to meet needs
Presence	As the emergency evolved during 2022, so did displacement patterns and the geography of needs, resulting in a picture that was both complex and fluid, with waves of new and secondary displacement taking place alongside return, local integration and relocation, as well as pendular movements. UNHCR sought to address these shifts in context by adapting its own presence, partnerships and operations. Between March – December 2022, UNHCR established 10 new offices in 8 locations; over the same period, its staff increased from 118 to 330 by the end of the year. ¹⁵⁹ UNHCR's partners experienced similar organizational changes, offering presence and proximity to some of the most affected communities.
Programme	UNHCR pivoted its programme during 2022 in order to prioritize support to Oblasts in greatest need of assistance; UNHCR has used a range of modalities to assist front-line communities on the Ukrainian side. UNHCR has worked through several partners, one of the most prominent being Proliska, which, as a consequence of its willingness to take risks and support front-line communities, has been instrumental in providing assistance to some of the most vulnerable communities. In locations that UNHCR's partners have been unable to reach, it has supported Inter-Agency Convoys. ¹⁶⁰ In 2022, UNHCR participated in 27 inter-agency convoys to hard-to-reach areas and delivered 626 convoys on its own, including to frontline areas like Kherson City, assisting a total of 556,971 people. ¹⁶¹ Following the missile strikes on energy infrastructure across the country in October 2022, UNHCR shifted its focus to include the provision of essential items and generators to heating points and " <i>Invincibility Points</i> " ¹⁶² to its response. As of the end of December, UNHCR had delivered 81 generators to areas that included Khersonska, Kharkivska and Donetsk oblasts. ¹⁶³

Additionally, external interviewees reported UNHCR's operational presence and capacity in Dnipro in the earliest stages after the full-scale invasion. During this time, and prior to the launch of the Humanitarian Operations Planning Cell, it was considered to have played a pivotal role in accessing communities in front-line areas.

 **Good Practice – changing modalities to strengthen the delivery of impartial assistance:** Like many agencies, UNHCR was not fully prepared for the scale and pace in the increase of humanitarian needs in Ukraine, but it has retained a focus on ensuring the most effective means of delivering needs-based assistance and protection. While in the early phases of the response, it was necessary to work through local government, this was quickly supplemented by the use of inter-agency convoys, and then through UNHCR's own partners. The focus of these shifts has been on the delivery mechanism that offered UNHCR the greatest capacity to assess needs and to monitor effectiveness.

FIGURE 16. Intersectoral severity of needs



Source: OCHA (2023) 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, Ukraine. December 2023.

While outside the control of UNHCR, a discussion about humanitarian principles must acknowledge that the collective humanitarian system has failed in the provision of assistance to the areas of Ukraine that are occupied by the Russian Federation. In its role as a member of the Ukraine HCT, UNHCR has added its voice to collective advocacy efforts to negotiate access. While the issue has been discussed by the IASC Emergency Directors Group and the Principals, there has not been a breakthrough in addressing the lack of access. As monitoring reports show, this is not a new challenge, but one that existed prior to the full-scale invasion; between January and September 2021, protection cluster monitoring estimated that only seven per cent of targeted residents in these areas were reached.¹⁶⁴ However, the breadth and depth of needs increased significantly since February 2022 and it is these areas that have consistently been assessed as having the most significant and most unmet needs¹⁶⁵ (see Figure 17). An examination of the collective efforts made to negotiate access to Temporary Occupied Territories goes beyond the scope of this evaluation, but it will be important for IASC to take stock of the efforts that were made and to reflect on the prioritization that the issue was afforded.

Neutrality and independence

UNHCR has enjoyed a respectful and productive relationship with the Government; interviews with internal staff and peer agencies suggest that it has performed well in striking a balance that has permitted it to maintain an independent analysis of needs and action. Ukraine has a high-capacity Government that has sought to meet its obligations for the well-being and protection of its people during the war. In Ukraine, the principle of neutrality has required that members of the collective humanitarian community work closely with the Government to support it in leading, coordinating and addressing priority humanitarian needs at the same time as addressing the tensions and dilemmas that this relationship can cause.

During and after the L3 response, UNHCR has worked with the Government to support a range of protection and assistance outcomes, including i) to support its humanitarian coordination role, ii) to assist in the provision of assistance and protection, iii) to influence positive change in the situation of affected people by promoting policy change. As highlighted in section 3.2 and [section 3.4](#) of this evaluation report, a review of MOUs signed with government ministries indicates a shared commitment between the Government and UNHCR to strengthen humanitarian outcomes and pursue durable solutions. Interviews conducted by the evaluation team with local authorities and administrations also emphasized a respectful relationship founded on a mutual understanding of the roles of both Government and UNHCR. While there have been inevitable tensions in these relationships during the response, **the evidence shows that UNHCR has sought to maintain a principled and needs-based focus and has been able to ensure a credible and independent analysis of needs, which has informed decision-making and has been supported by monitoring and oversight.**

A separate issue related to the principle of independence stems from the provision by many western donors of humanitarian and military assistance. Moreover, the issue of European Union (EU) accession has tended to galvanize the political solidarity of western donors with Ukraine. While this led to some fears about the potential it had to pose challenges for humanitarians, including that of instrumentalization of the response,¹⁶⁶ there is little evidence of this in the case of UNHCR. **Interviews and analysis suggest that UNHCR has been able to make independent and evidence-based decisions about how and where to prioritize its funding.**



Good Practice – the inclusion of principled programming as an integral part of UNHCR's risk management approach: UNHCR includes the risk of politicization of its assistance in its risk matrix. This necessitates that the risk manager maintains a continuous assessment of UNHCR's positioning vis-à-vis the Government. The impartiality of UNHCR's assistance and perceptions of the same are also kept under review.

3.3.6 UNHCR's approach to integrating conflict sensitivity and do no harm into its response

UNHCR's approach to the Ukraine crisis focused on ensuring that its humanitarian assistance did not exacerbate existing social tensions, while meeting the needs of the displaced population.

At the macro-level, UNHCR's response in Ukraine has supported a diverse set of affected people – IDPs, returnees (IDP and refugee) and war-affected people. Analyses of the needs of these groups have challenged the utility of relying on status-based assessments and place emphasis on the importance of needs-based assistance. While UNHCR has tailored some of its interventions to specific groups to ensure their relevance, most are based on needs alone.

An example of this is the support that UNHCR has provided, through its partners (R2P, in particular) for legal assistance and support to enable IDPs, war-affected people, returnees and other people without documentation, to exercise their rights by ensuring access to identity documents and registration. Support has also been provided to address HLP rights by improving access to compensation for damaged or destroyed properties and protecting IDPs from later eviction from where they have found shelter.

IDPs, returned and war-affected people have all had cause to draw on these services, which have been in high-demand throughout the Ukraine response.

While a few incidents of social tensions between displaced and host communities have been reported, to date they have been modest in number.¹⁶⁷ Some concerns about exclusion and social cohesion were raised in UNHCR's Participatory Assessment,¹⁶⁸ which found that greater efforts were needed to support the integration of IDPs into their communities and strengthen social cohesion, which has subsequently informed UNHCR's response.¹⁶⁹

During UNHCR's L3 response in 2022, 200 community groups were supported through capacity-building initiatives and the implementation of small-scale projects such as information hubs, awareness-raising campaigns, social and cultural events, and psychosocial and recreational activities.¹⁷⁰ These activities were supported and expanded in 2023. Such initiatives have prioritized people with specific needs and have also sought to strengthen social cohesion among IDPs and host communities in Ukraine.

In addition to practical efforts made by UNHCR to strengthen social cohesion and integration, this objective has also been folded into its approach to risk management, which has ensured that it has remained on the agenda of senior management.¹⁷¹ In its durable solutions and recovery programming, UNHCR has advanced this outcome through its work in Advika (for example), where it has rehabilitated several civic facilities to promote community congregation and integration. UNHCR's complementary support to strengthening community-level protective mechanisms, community outreach and information provision has also contributed to social cohesion.¹⁷²

3.4 Coherence of UNHCR's contribution to the government's delivery of social protection and recovery

This section assesses the extent to which UNHCR's efforts have been coherent in Ukraine and aligned with national and local government recovery plans and the national social protection system.

3.4.1 Alignment and complementarities with existing social protection systems

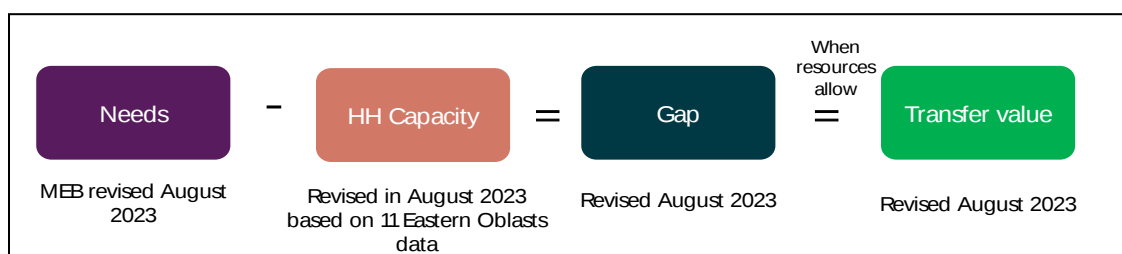
Ukraine has well developed and resilient social protection (SP) systems, which create opportunities for linkages by UNHCR. SP coverage is high, capturing most of the life cycle as well as war-related shocks. Before the war, three out of four Ukrainians benefited from at least one SP allowance,¹⁷³ encompassing both contributory and non-contributory schemes. Since March 2022 social protection systems demonstrated their resilience,¹⁷⁴ creating opportunities with engagement.

Enabling and constraining factors to engaging with and strengthening social protection are more system-specific than UNHCR-specific. Despite its maturity, the SP system in Ukraine is under significant strain; needs have increased, Ministries' capacities are stretched, and there is limited fiscal space for sustainable financing and meaningful transfer values. The SP landscape in Ukraine is also clustered and decentralized in the management and delivery of payment. There are over 45 national and local level contributory and non-contributory SP programmes.¹⁷⁵ One family with children could be entitled to 54 different benefits (including 31 types of cash payments)¹⁷⁶

This fragmentation resulted in challenges in how to map and subsequently create bridges between humanitarian CBI and social protection.

The standardization of the inter-agency MPC response drove the complementarities between humanitarian MPC and social assistance. Humanitarian stakeholders conducted several mappings of SP initiatives to shape the design of the humanitarian response and the linkages between humanitarian MPC and social assistance benefits.¹⁷⁷ The extent to which UNHCR has been able to independently use these mappings to design its response has, however, been limited by the high standardization of the inter-agency MPC response.¹⁷⁸ MPC transfer value is the same across the country, irrespective of the settings (rural or urban, frontline or not). Social benefits are also not included in the quantification of households' capacity to cover their own needs, which contributes to the MPC value calculation (Figure 18).

FIGURE 17. Response level MPC transfer value calculation and its revision milestones¹⁷⁹



Source: External review of the Humanitarian Cash Programme, 2023, Humanitarian Coordinator Office.

UNHCR has been intentional in its willingness to align and connect its MPC with social assistance, yet with limited monitoring. As in Poland and Slovakia,¹⁸⁰ MPC in Ukraine¹⁸¹ was designed as a short-term solution, to cover the lead time for households to transition to State-led social assistance (or (re-)enter the labour market). In addition, much of UNHCR legal support in 2022 and 2023 was dedicated to enhancing awareness of the social protection programmes households are entitled to.¹⁸² However, the assumption that, after three months, during which they receive MPC, recipients either transition to social assistance or find employment, is not cross-checked/verified by UNHCR or any other humanitarian organizations delivering MPC.¹⁸³

UNHCR is actively and meaningfully engaged with PeReHid¹⁸⁴ and has been proactive in the provision of technical, financial and strategic support, the value of which was recognized during interviews for the evaluation internally, among peers and by donors.¹⁸⁵ UNHCR's Representative is a Steering Committee member, providing strategic guidance (including through the participation of UNHCR's CBI expert in the working group for technical inputs). UNHCR's engagement in PeReHid is further aligned with its protection mandate, as it has seconded a protection expert within the Technical Assistance Facility team and allocated funding to contribute to PeReHid research agenda, with a focus on inclusion and access barriers to social protection.

Beyond humanitarian MPC, UNHCR directly engaged with Government-led social assistance, supporting vertical and horizontal expansion, with strong in-country deduplication, but limited cross-border deduplication. From December 2023, UNHCR, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Protection, has been supporting the

Housing and Utilities Subsidy Programme, providing unconditional cash to poor households during wintertime to support heating-related costs. Such support has consisted in both vertical (increasing the benefits) and horizontal (increasing the number of benefiting households) expansion. The Government shares its distribution list with UNHCR once it has obtained individual consent from each household.¹⁸⁶ The assistance is deduplicated through UNHCR's Profile Global Registration System (ProGres) and Cash transfer management system (CashAssist) to avoid overlap with UNHCR's winterization support, and with Building Blocks¹⁸⁷ to avoid overlap with MPC distributed by other organizations. MPC distributed in Ukraine by UNHCR is, however, not deduplicated with assistance distributed by UNHCR in the neighbouring countries.¹⁸⁸

Different United Nations agencies independently engaged with government programmes, thereby increasing the risks of overlapping efforts. Beyond UNHCR support to the Housing and Utilities Subsidy Programme, the World Food Programme and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are also supporting SP schemes with top-ups.¹⁸⁹ Such support is coordinated directly by the Ministry of Social Protection, and each UN agency provides its support to the Ministry independently from one another. Both UNICEF and UNHCR are providing support for winterization (UNICEF by providing top-ups to the Government's Guaranteed Minimum Income and UNHCR through the Housing and Utilities Subsidy Programme). While UNHCR's top-ups are integrated in Building Blocks, it is unclear whether this is the same for all agencies, hence a heightened risk of overlap. Such an approach also risks diffusing the international community's efforts to engage with and support larger social protection reforms.

UNHCR is currently expanding its support to national systems beyond social assistance into social services, thereby leveraging its protection expertise. In 2023, the complementarities with social protection sought by humanitarian actors have primarily focused on social assistance. As of June 2024, in large part due to the discussions on Ukraine's EU accession negotiations ([Section 3.6](#)), stronger focus is placed on supporting social services, and UNHCR, as part of its protection cluster lead role, will support the mapping of humanitarian protection services as they correspond to the social services provided by the Ministry of Social Policy. UNHCR is further supporting a survey among protection partners on social contracting (where partners can apply to provide services in lieu of the Ministry).

3.4.2 UNHCR's support to other parts of the government-led response

UNHCR has provided strong support to the Government, and at national, regional and local levels, appears to be appreciated by the authorities and have maintained strong, respectful relationships with them. In Ukraine, the Government has sought to meet its responsibilities both through the provision of assistance, but also the development of policies to support those who have been most affected by the war. MoUs exist between UNHCR and several line ministries, as outlined in Box 1. Government officials also took the initiative to approach UNHCR to register national staff as qualified social workers to facilitate referrals to State systems and potentially, their longer-term integration into the State system.

Box 1. UNHCR's engagement with the government

Ministry for Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine: On 16 April 2022, UNHCR and the Ministry for Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied

Territories of Ukraine signed an MoU setting out areas of cooperation, including the mapping of abandoned buildings that could be rehabilitated and repurposed to accommodate people who have lost their homes.

Ministry for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development: On 25 January 2023, UNHCR and the Ministry for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development signed an MoU to facilitate access to housing solutions under the ‘Ukraine is Home’ programme for people who have been forced to flee due to the war.

Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine: On 28 August 2023, UNHCR and the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine signed an Addendum to the MoU on cooperation to improve the living conditions of displaced people, including in the recreational centre “S/ava”, and provide them with greater access to social protection services.

Ministry of Education and Science: On 19 October 2023, UNHCR and the Ministry of Education and Science signed an MoU to strengthen cooperation to enable forcibly displaced persons to access dignified accommodation and contribute to education amid the war. UNHCR and the Ministry have agreed on refurbishing educational facility dormitories used as CS for displaced people. The MoU ensures that these dormitories can continue being used as CS until martial law ends, plus one year, to give displaced residents some security of tenure.

Source: UNHCR (2024) Emergency Shelter and Housing Assistance Factsheet, March 2024.

Mindful of State responsibilities, UNHCR has sought to reinforce the State and avoid undermining it. One means of achieving this has been through secondments and/or funding for staff posts in several State entities, as Table 08 indicates. The secondments were largely based on specific requests from the relevant entities. Most are scheduled to end by the close of the year due to funding reductions.

TABLE 08. UNHCR’s support for government institutions, 2022–2024

Gov. Entity	Admin Level	HR Support	Rationale	Time Period
Office of Statistics	Central	1 person		2022
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (consular)	Central	1 expert (hired via a partner)	To support with advice on passport digitalization and assist in access to documentation.	2023
Ministry of Social Policy	Central	3 people	To strengthen policy-making and systematize its approach to both evacuations (particularly for people with limited mobility such as older people, people with disabilities or those in institutions) and assessments for home-based assistance.	2024
Ministry of Reintegration	Central	1 translator	To facilitate the external meetings with foreign delegations, international organizations in refugee-hosting countries, etc.	April 2022 – end 2024
Office of the Ombudsman	Central, Oblast, Hromada	1 person at central level; 5 people at Oblast level;	To monitor human rights and in particular, the collective sites, to help with standards and CCCM adjustments while allowing the	2023 – end 2024

		14 people at Hromada level	Ombudsman time to advocate for more budget and cover the financing gap.	
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Efforts to strengthen State systems have posed challenges for UNHCR and the broader humanitarian community. While many organizations have sought to provide support, there does not appear to be either a shared analysis or a common approach to coordinated system-strengthening across the collective humanitarian system in terms of secondments or funding of posts in different ministries, departments or offices at either national or sub-national levels. This is evidenced, for instance, by the establishment of a range of service centres by the humanitarian community (including Multipurpose Centres and Resilience Centres), that are not always aligned with those already established by the various line Ministries of the Ukrainian State (including SNAPs,¹⁹⁰ Free Legal Aid Centres, and Humanitarian Hubs), all purporting to provide different types of advice and support to a range of population groups. Interviews with internal and external stakeholders revealed a lack of clarity about how different initiatives either do, or will, dovetail and complement, or streamline, each other in the future.

UNHCR and its partners have also supported assistance and recovery by plugging critical gaps and strengthening State capacity, while endeavouring to maintain State referral systems and avoid the establishment of parallel systems that substitute the role of the State. UNHCR and its partners have worked in this way in their support for GBV, legal aid, child protection services and shelter programming, in particular.

UNHCR and its partners' GBV and child protection programmes have performed well in providing targeted capacity development for State apparatus, with a focus on protocols and quality of implementation, while the shelter programme aims to complement Government compensation schemes, thus bridging the gap between the damage to accommodation and the receipt of compensation, or supporting those who cannot enter the scheme or have additional specific needs.

UNHCR's legal aid approach has incorporated training and material support to the Government's free legal aid system. However, there is no mechanism by which the Ministry of Justice might absorb the knowledge and skills of the additionally trained caseworkers and legal specialists. With this in mind, under the auspices of the Global Protection Cluster, the Law and Policy Task Force, which is co-led by UNHCR, has proposed to conduct a legal aid assessment and to hold a legal aid forum to investigate this and further work on the quality of free legal aid and referrals to the State's legal aid system.

UNHCR has contributed to the role and outreach of local/regional authorities at the Oblast and Hromada levels through a range of initiatives. Included among these have been efforts to strengthen linkages with constituents through the NGO Stabilization Support Services (SSS) and support to selected IDP Councils to develop "*social passports*" (see [Section 3.2.4](#)). UNHCR has also supported partner NGOs to act as service providers on behalf of the State, and there are plans to learn from the experiences of agencies, such as Neemia in Uzghorod, to inform the use of social contracting in the future.

UNHCR has further provided support to local authority offices at the Hromada level with furniture, equipment and transport for joint field visits, with the spin-offs of supporting the issuance of civil documentation and building relationships and trust. Interviews with local authorities during the data collection visit highlighted the high value that has been placed on this very practical support, as efforts have focused on the important task of rebuilding state infrastructure.

A challenge has been posed by the Government's decentralization reforms. Significant decentralization occurred some years ago and so, to contribute to coherent results, system-strengthening would ideally need to be replicated or cascaded from national to Oblast and Hromada levels. However, it is not always clear where responsibilities and power lie, particularly in certain frontline areas. Tensions exist between administrative levels, particularly as resources to address the growing needs become scarce and subject to competing priorities. In this context, efforts to provide coherent support to the State have become extremely complex.

More broadly, the effects of State system strengthening have been undermined by State prioritization and the allocation of its own resources to the war effort. Combined with the high turnover in many government departments and overstretch across the various geographical/administrative levels, it is difficult to determine how to make sustainable investments in state system-strengthening. Agencies, including UNHCR, struggle to engage meaningfully with a Government that is willing, but not always able, to respond to all the demands or needs placed upon it in a timely manner, and that is hampered by staff shortages. The implication is that **UNHCR and partner agencies have often worked in a “grey zone” where they must constantly balance the need to support the State system against the need to ensure affected people receive the assistance and protection that they require in a timely manner.**

3.5 Coherence and effectiveness of UNHCR's engagement in inter-agency coordination

This section assesses the extent to which UNHCR has contributed effectively within inter-agency structures in Ukraine. It discusses UNHCR's leadership of the Shelter, Protection and CCCM clusters, and UNHCR's engagement in the Cash Working Group – a key forum in Ukraine given the value of Multipurpose Cash. This chapter also discusses UNHCR's engagement in recovery and durable solutions coordination structures.

3.5.1 UNHCR's leadership of the clusters

In aggregate, UNHCR has provided strong support for its clusters in Ukraine and has contributed to the effectiveness of collective coordination. Partners appreciated the strong and mature leadership UNHCR has shown in the response in general and within the clusters specifically. UNHCR has also supported coherence, through its tri-cluster leadership, across the clusters and found synergies across their individual responsibilities. UNHCR, however, could have more effectively advocated on orienting the delivery of assistance and protection through cash-based interventions and away from the distribution of non-food items.

UNHCR's existing engagement in IDP operations in Ukraine prior to February 2022 meant it was well positioned to assume its cluster leadership function. Considering that at the time of the full-scale invasion, there was limited standing capacity within the clusters (*the shelter cluster was in the process of transitioning, the CCCM cluster had not been mobilized and the protection cluster was activated but had capacity gaps of its own*), UNHCR was required to invest considerable attention and resources.

In the earliest stages of the L3 response, UNHCR endeavoured to facilitate tri-cluster synergies through the deployment of an Inter-agency Coordinator to promote this. Interviews revealed that in practice, at that time, the clusters were still seeking to establish themselves, so it was ambitious to expect them to have the capacity to focus on synergies. However, feedback from interviewees within the cluster was positive, and there is a perception that it added value in contributing to the development of some joint strategies and advocacy papers. The inter-agency post was curtailed in 2023.

A common concern about cluster coordination is the balance that Cluster Lead Agencies (CLA) must play in providing adequate support for clusters to deliver their core functions, while at the same time as promoting their independence from the CLA. While a small number of internal and external concerns were raised about the extent to which UNHCR has achieved this balance, the general feedback received by the evaluation team is that UNHCR had performed well in this regard. An important success factor that was reported in several interviews about cluster performance was the presence of strong and mature leadership in UNHCR and across the clusters.



Lessons learned – tri-cluster coordination: The use of an inter-agency coordinator to promote tri-cluster synergies offers scope for lesson-learning for UNHCR, although it is not without its challenges. The key issue is to determine how, and under what conditions, such a post can achieve the greatest added value. There was a feeling in Ukraine that an opportunity was missed to work more broadly on other areas of inter-agency coordination (clusters, working groups). While the concept appeared to be sound, the timing – early in the response – was imperfect; there are also questions about whether a senior management post might be best placed to promote tri-cluster synergies, as it has the benefit of seniority.

Shelter/non-food items (SNFI) cluster

In shifting from a process of phase-out prior to the full-scale invasion, to one of scale-up in February 2022, the SNFI cluster, under the leadership of UNHCR, has demonstrated both agility and utility in Ukraine. With active conflict across large swathes of the frontline and with winterization planning being initiated in response to the continued destruction of Ukraine's energy infrastructure, the SNFI cluster has maintained its relevance and continues to play an essential role in the response.

The SNFI cluster has broadly met its strategic coordination requirements for the humanitarian response, while engaging in planning for the future. It expanded its presence from Lviv to Dnipro, Vinnytsia and Kyiv and set up technical working groups for collective sites, repairs, damage assessment, winterization, housing land and property, and cash for rent. By 2023, the cluster had established four hubs, located in each geographic region of Ukraine, and had 107 member organizations, which included many national partners. The cluster team, with technical support from UNHCR,

developed a Shelter Information Damage Assessment and Response database (SIDAR) to improve coordination, enhance decision-making and foster transparency and accountability – as well as to ensure alignment and complementarity with Government programmes, such as the Ministry of Restoration's “e-recovery”.¹⁹¹ The SNFI cluster has also been engaged in the Technical Working Group for Resolution 930 and led on standard-setting for issues of safety and implementation.



Good Practice – the approach taken by the SNFI cluster to promote longer-term shelter solutions: The SNFI paper on Adequate Housing aims to identify opportunities that can be used to promote a longer-term approach to addressing the shelter needs of affected populations. It examines the boundaries of the impact of Shelter cluster activities and how stakeholders involved in sustainable solutions and development initiatives can commence and complement their efforts. In the absence of an operational transitional coordination structure in Ukraine, it moves away from the concept of clusters as being “humanitarian” and seeks to pave the way for a longer-term approach to coordination in the shelter sector.¹⁹²

Interviews with its members and with peer clusters revealed broad satisfaction with the role played by the SNFI cluster, both currently and in the years since the full-scale invasion, which is supported by the results of the 2022 Cluster Monitoring Exercise.¹⁹³ At the time this evaluation was being conducted, the cluster had recently published its annual report and a mapping of its inter-cluster engagement,¹⁹⁴ and was delivering in line with its strategic plan.^{195;196}

CCCM cluster

In taking on coordination responsibilities for collective sites, the CCCM cluster successfully navigated a complex, but essential task in the Ukraine response. However, the issue of the sustainability of the collective sites and long-term solutions for their residents remains a key concern that requires the clusters ongoing close attention.

The CCCM cluster was activated in March 2022 to support the Government's response for people living in collective sites, helping to map the sites and improve the coordination of services. It has met its core tasks with a degree of efficiency and effectiveness. At the time it was convened, there was an immediate need for the development of an interim strategy,¹⁹⁷ the organization and the establishment of Task Teams and Working Groups, for training and capacity-building for partner staff, while delivering critical CCCM activities simultaneously. There was also a need to adapt tools and guidance to the unique challenges faced in Ukraine, which appeared in collective sites.

By 2023, the CCCM cluster, comprised of 18 partners¹⁹⁸ and both internal and external interviews, highlighted a high level of satisfaction with its performance. With support from its members, the cluster has sought to identify and document the location and condition of collective sites,¹⁹⁹ it has engaged on issues of site-level GBV through its annual site audits undertaken by its partners,²⁰⁰ and it has engaged in a timely process of preparedness planning²⁰¹ (which occurred just prior to the escalation of the attacks by the Russian Federation along the Kharkiv frontline).

Interviews with residents of collective sites and UNHCR partners highlighted the important role that the cluster has played in enhancing living standards, but also in

advocating for lasting solutions. Of key importance in this was the passing into law of Resolution 930,²⁰² which was supported by advocacy undertaken by the cluster, together with the Ombudsman Office of Ukraine. The law addresses the basic human rights of people in collective sites and establishes mechanisms for a protective environment and minimum standards in the sites. As such, it offers an important foundation for them under government supervision, albeit alongside a concern about the inherent risks this brings of institutionalizing vulnerable people.



Good Practice – monitoring by the CCCM cluster against Resolution #930 compliance:

The Collective Site Monitoring (CSM) is an initiative of the CCCM cluster in Ukraine implemented by REACH and supported by Cluster partner organizations and the Ombudsman Office. It aims to provide a range of stakeholders, including humanitarian agencies and Ukrainian authorities, with essential information regarding the situation in collective sites hosting IDPs. The tenth round of monitoring²⁰³ was modified to add or improve indicators to better assess minimum standards compliance. The inclusion of an annex in the collective monitoring site reporting that focuses on Resolution 930 compliance provides a yardstick for measuring adherence to standards,²⁰⁴ while enhancing accountability to government at a time when the transition of the clusters to government leadership has become ever more important.

While evaluation team visits to collective sites in Vinnitsiya and Kharkiv underlined the important role they played in providing support to some of the most vulnerable people, they also represent a dilemma for the humanitarian community in Ukraine. Growing concern was expressed by internal stakeholders and by external humanitarian agencies about the challenges of finding long-term solutions for the vulnerable residents of the centres.

Protection cluster

UNHCR's leadership of the protection cluster has contributed to an effective overall cluster. UNHCR has performed well in resourcing the Protection cluster and ensuring adequate coverage across Ukraine. Coverage has been supported by active local NGO engagement in the cluster, facilitated by investments made by UNHCR. Strained relationships between the protection cluster and the corresponding Areas of Responsibility in 2022 and into 2023, however, partly undermined the effectiveness and coherence of some of the functions of the cluster.

The Protection cluster was activated in 2014, with the beginning of the armed conflict in Donbas. Following the start of the full-scale war in February 2022, it expanded its activities to cover all of Ukraine, with 204 member organizations and three distinct Areas of Responsibility (AOR): gender-based violence AOR led by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), child protection AOR led by UNICEF and mine action AOR led by UNDP.²⁰⁵ UNHCR actively resourced and invested in the Protection cluster; staffing was increased at national and field levels to strengthen coordination and improve information management through the establishment of five hubs.

UNHCR provided protection training and strengthened the Protection cluster's protection monitoring tool to help improve the understanding of protection risks and strengthen the protection response.²⁰⁶ Through the Protection cluster, UNHCR set up the Legal Aid Working Group to coordinate the work of legal assistance partners and develop

information materials on legal topics to ensure coherence and harmonization. Linkages with the Protection cluster and other UNHCR-led clusters have been made through the focal points, and there have been synergies across a range of issues, which include attacks on civilians and infrastructure, emergency supplies following missile strikes, and on winterization needs. These linkages ensure that cluster responses have been protection informed.

Interviews highlighted that efforts to support local NGO engagement in the cluster were a strength; R2P strengthened the cluster by taking on leadership, and by the end of 2023, UNHCR estimated that national NGOs constituted almost 56 per cent of the members of the cluster.²⁰⁷

Internal and external interviews revealed that the relationship between the Protection cluster and its AORs has not always been straightforward. Over the latter part of 2022 and part of 2023, relationships with two of the AORs were strained, which undermined the effectiveness and coherence of the cluster. These issues have now been addressed.

The Cash Working Group and the implementation of MPC across UNHCR's clusters

UNHCR is actively engaged in the Cash Working Group and has demonstrated technical leadership, including in encouraging the inclusion of a focus on protection into targeting criteria. However, reflecting earlier discussions on multipurpose cash, UNHCR could have been a stronger voice for a shift in modality from the distribution of non-food items to cash-based interventions, both within the clusters it leads and the Cash Working group itself.

The members and chair of CWG recognized UNHCR's substantive role in the CWG, and at HCT level, UNHCR was an ally of the new cash coordination model,²⁰⁸ which was rolled out for one of the first times in the Ukraine response.²⁰⁹ UNHCR has extensively shared its lessons learned and tools (e.g. data protection related) and is perceived by the ET as a strong technical contributor to CWG meetings.^{210;211} While the Ukraine MPC response is a highly standardized, within the overall framework of the response, UNHCR has been able to steer the response by leveraging its protection expertise (e.g. bringing protection considerations into MPC targeting criteria). UNHCR's technical inputs and support on targeting in particular were recognized by CWG members and donors. UNHCR co-chairs the Task Team 1 on targeting since 2023 and has co-chaired the Task Team 3 on deduplication between 2022 and 2023. On deduplication, several external key informants, members of the CWG, felt that UNHCR could have further pushed for the Refugee Assistance and Information System to be used, as it is more multisectoral.²¹²

In its Cluster Lead Agency role, UNHCR has not consistently fostered evidence-based modality selection for the delivery of assistance. Ukraine has the biggest cash response in the world, driven by the use of MPC at scale, yet many cluster responses have been heavily weighted towards in-kind assistance.²¹³ This response-level finding applies to the three clusters UNHCR is leading. This imbalance between CBI and in-kind, in a context that is so conducive to CBI, is especially true of the shelter/NFI cluster. An analysis of the 2024 HNRP shows that 2.5 times more people will receive in-kind NFI than cash to buy NFIs; 2.5 times more people will receive winter clothing in-kind as opposed to receiving cash to buy the clothes they specifically need, at the right size, in a dignified manner. Analysis reveals that a similar (or higher) in-kind ratio applies for

most shelter activities under the HRP.²¹⁴ While there are some explanations for the cash-in-kind imbalance, such as the focus on supporting “*invincibility points*” that are NFI-intensive, the ET observes that there is scope for reflection and change.

Furthermore, having a separate NFI activity (be it in-kind or CBI), when a large portion of NFI needs are already captured within the MPC amounts that households receive, risks being a duplication of effort and is a concern given the context of the overall reduction in the resourcing of the response.

3.5.2 UNHCR’s engagement in recovery and durable solutions coordination structures

Since the initial stages of the Ukraine response, UNHCR was proactive in stressing the importance of complementarity and coordination between humanitarian, early recovery and reconstruction initiatives in Ukraine, to support meaningful solutions for those impacted by the ongoing full-scale war. Interviews highlighted the pivotal nature of UNHCR’s role in establishing the Durable Solutions Steering Committee, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator and in line with the UN Secretary General’s Action Agenda.

UNHCR acted as co-chair for the first six months of the Committee (alongside IOM and UNDP), during which two pilot areas were identified: Mukachevo and Ivankiv.^{215;216} This was followed by a further 12 Hromadas that were selected to pilot area-based coordination, planning and programming on durable solutions and recovery. The pilots coincided with the renaming of the coordination structure to the Community Planning for Durable Solutions and Recovery Working Group (CPDSR WG).

UNHCR’s engagement in seeking “*solutions from the start*” and its early leadership of the Durable Solutions Steering Committee received positive feedback from external interviewees and was broadly considered as forward-looking. Interviews also highlighted the collective challenge that has been experienced in maintaining this early momentum, with a perception that the early energy was lost. While progress continues to be made towards moving from theory to practice in the 12 pilot sites, with the passing of time, budget space is now much reduced across all agencies working in Ukraine, which will undoubtedly affect what can be achieved by the pilots.

The document review and interviews (both internal and external) highlight UNHCR’s commitment to playing its full role in Solutions Coordination. This is consistent with UNHCR’s global IDP evaluation that found, “*UNHCR contributions [to durable solutions for IDP populations] have been enabled by... effective relationship-building with authorities and by its evolving abilities to work collaboratively within multi-agency arrangements.*”²¹⁷ However, this evaluation also elicited considerable concern from across agencies participating in the CPDSR that there is an urgent need for progress to be made if solutions that are to be piloted are to be brought to scale. This echoes an associated finding in UNHCR’s Global IDP evaluation, “*area-based approaches have demonstrated potential benefits, particularly in mixed population settings, but the scale of results of this approach is limited due to cost, which tends to confine them to a small proportion of overall populations in need.*”²¹⁸

3.6 Formative evaluation questions: UNHCR's role in strengthening support for early recovery and durable solutions

This section addresses the formative questions outlined in the evaluation matrix. It is organized consistently with the evaluation matrix, addressing issues of relevance, effectiveness, coherence and coordination respectively.

3.6.1 UNHCR's efforts to maintain relevance in the context of early recovery and durable solutions

As outlined in Section 3.3.1 of this report, while UNHCR's performance against its AGD commitments in Ukraine is relatively strong, there is room for improvement. **In particular, there is scope to strengthen its intersectional analysis to gain a more nuanced and holistic understanding of vulnerability. Specifically, this will require that greater attention is paid to issues of age, gender identity and disability.** This analysis is consistent with the direction that UNHCR is taking, with interviews highlighting existing plans to consolidate and strengthen partnerships to improve analysis and support to older people and people with disabilities in particular.²¹⁹ Older people and people with disabilities do not have a clearly designated accountable UN actor, which reinforces the need for prioritization. EU accession discussions also offer an opportunity to further initiatives on diversity in the light of the EU's Roma Protection and Inclusion Strategy as well as its LGBTIQ Equality Strategy.²²⁰

On AAP (Section 3.3.2), the evaluation found that UNHCR and its partners have consistently adopted a basic package and set of tools to support communication with, participation of and feedback to affected people in their respective areas of operation. However, the approach has been a patchwork of different initiatives and has not maximized the full potential of different formal and informal AAP channels.²²¹ As a consequence, **scope remains for UNHCR to: (i) improve feedback loops, and (ii) strengthen programme adaptation in response to the feedback it receives.** Enhanced community engagement and accountability would further support the agency's solutions efforts (and contribution to the Transitional Framework) through promoting community voices in decision-making on their future.

The recruitment of a position dedicated to AAP for the agency (rather than being shared with the Working Group) is expected to bring together the myriad of contributions both within the Community-Based Protection team and importantly, beyond it. The successful candidate will need to have sufficient credibility to mobilize internal stakeholders so that they contribute to a coherent and well-coordinated strategy and approach across the agency. The withdrawal and downsizing of agencies in the centre/west provides an opportunity for UNHCR to review the coherence (and efficiency) of systems and structures there.^{222;223} As part of this, **there is scope to improve information, evidence and knowledge management with a view to strengthening the coherence of the diverse AAP channels that exist, with a particular emphasis on strengthening the rigour with which UNHCR analyses and addresses the feedback it receives.**

3.6.2 Strengthening the delivery of UNHCR's durable solutions and protection

While it is not possible to predict how the situation in Ukraine will develop, it seems likely that humanitarian needs and nexus requirements will co-exist for some time to come. Attacks in the east/south are likely to perpetuate emergency needs for war-affected and displaced persons, compounding the protracted humanitarian crisis. The centre/west meanwhile, is more likely to be characterized by a level of stability and prolonged displacement with implications for people's resilience and coping strategies, as well as for integration and social cohesion. The centre/west is still likely to be affected by the arrival of new IDPs (who were arriving from Donetsk, Kharkiv and Sumy Oblasts at the time the evaluation was undertaken),^{224;225} with the potential for refugee returnees. The pace and scale of refugee returns will depend on a range of issues, foremost of which will be access to Temporary Protection and/or benefits in refugee-hosting countries.²²⁶ Although large-scale returns may be unlikely, the Temporary Protection regime in the EU, which will be in place at least until March 2026, will play an important factor in determining this.²²⁷

UNHCR has taken a principled stance on maintaining a presence in the centre/west, despite decreasing its footprint.²²⁸ It will be important to sustain this commitment with a view to maintaining its role in solutions programming at the same time as monitoring the situation regarding refugee returns. UNHCR's MYSP has been developed along two axes: (i) the application of a solutions-oriented approach to new displacement and humanitarian needs; (ii) contribution to the creation of conditions that would be conducive to sustainable return and recovery in line with UNHCR's mandate.²²⁹

As funding decreases,²³⁰ and as the 2024 HNRP pivots the humanitarian response towards war-affected parts of the crescent and the most acute humanitarian needs, there has been a general shift of agency presence from the centre/west towards the crescent. UNHCR has been part of this shift and is currently in the process of downscaling and refocusing its programming in the centre/west towards a greater transition and solutions focus for IDPs and host communities (albeit while maintaining an emergency response capability).²³¹ UNHCR's eastern/southern operations are expected to remain on a humanitarian footing interwoven with a solutions approach where the situation is conducive to it.²³²

The shift of agencies away from the centre/west increases UNHCR's exposure at a time when it is already stretched, and heightens the risk of it having to take on additional responsibilities, thus making it harder to exit responsibly. Ongoing discussions about the status of IDPs in Ukraine and the duration for which they will be eligible for humanitarian support adds to the uncertainty.²³³ Interviews suggest that to date, decision-making on this issue is yet to be made. The Ukrainian Government's State Policy Strategy on Internal Displacement Until 2025 does not offer a response.²³⁴ While many Ukrainians are still hoping to return home, many others recognize that this will be difficult and are working towards integration.

Linked to potential changes in the status or situation of IDPs, returnees and war-affected people, UNHCR has a comparative advantage both in terms of its expertise as well as its relationships with Government to support and strengthen legal frameworks, policies and procedures (see [section 3.4](#)), as well as recourse to them (see [section 3.2.5](#) on legal

aid). Together with protection monitoring, this workstream acts as a “*chapeau*” across other UNHCR/partner interventions.

Reforming national laws and policies to align with the EU *acquis* represents an opportunity for UNHCR to support and strengthen the legal framework and policies that affect the people they will serve. This aligns with the institutional capacity development priority articulated in the Transitional Framework for Ukraine.²³⁵

Area-based approaches

Institutionally, UNHCR has made progress in defining and clarifying its engagement in solutions, defining a prioritization blueprint for operations in particular. However, this does not go far enough where it concerns area-based approaches: there is inadequate reference to the concept of “*collective*” objectives and outcomes, be they programming or advocacy.²³⁶ This has implications for the way in which COs conceive, plan and organize their engagement. In Ukraine, this challenge has been compounded by the lack of a formal framework at the collective IASC system-level, which outlines collective objectives and outcomes together with collective advocacy objectives and concomitant roles and responsibilities.²³⁷ As a result, to date, investments in ABAs in Ukraine have comprised a disjointed set of projects implemented by loose coalitions of agencies. Consequently, specific changes in the lives of communities are all the more challenging to evidence. Concerns regarding diminishing funds further underline the need to place greater emphasis on coherence in order to maximize impact. Current plans by the CPDSRWG offer cause for optimism, although they will require adequate resources to be effective.

UNHCR is rationalizing its response in the centre/west to increase efficiency and effectiveness with a proposal to integrate all solutions programmes into the agency’s protection, social protection and housing programmes to be coordinated through an area-based approach.²³⁸ Work is ongoing to take stock of UNHCR’s prior interventions in ABAs in cooperation with the CPDSRWG, and to codify lessons learned and good practices for future improvements.

With the focus on decentralized aid delivery, there is scope for the promotion of Social Passports²³⁹ (through the IDP Councils) to support demand-driven programming and input into the Local Recovery Plans for targeted ABAs.²⁴⁰ Coherent localized AAP mechanisms would facilitate a more locally led and adaptive response, with the potential to strengthen links to CBOs to support the implementation of specific projects that would provide a layered approach to UNHCR’s response.

Drawing on UNHCR’s 2023 IDP evaluation,²⁴¹ the agency’s draft Focus Area Strategy for IDPs underscores the importance of UNHCR’s contribution to ABAs being time bound and not incurring recurrent long-term financial commitments, which are more suited to development actors.²⁴² **The implication of this is that UNHCR in Ukraine should prioritize its catalytic and/or coordinating role to convene complementary actors (Government, humanitarian, development and private sector) across different sectors, with a focus on promoting the conditions for it to reduce its engagement. It will be important for UNHCR to have a set of indicators linked to actor engagement to inform this.**

Collective sites

UNHCR runs the risk of working beyond its mandate in collective sites in the absence of defined agency benchmarks for the responsible handover of programmatic responsibilities to others and/or the phase out of its operational presence and responsible exit. Recent discussions/decisions made by UNHCR following an MFT mission to the centre/west are a step in the right direction to avoid this but may not be sufficient in terms of defining a set of triggers and a road map for the future.

A small number of IDPs live in CS for a variety of reasons, with the most vulnerable among them having few alternative options.²⁴³ People from CS who participated in the FGDs for this evaluation, highlighted a variety of reasons they remain in the sites, which included a sense of safety, comfort and community, provided in the centres, along with moral support and new friendships. They also mentioned challenges including the psychological strain of compact living conditions and lack of personal space.

The challenge to UNHCR of their ongoing engagement with CS, particularly those in schools or hospitals, is that they are generally not sustainable. They consume a disproportionate amount of UNHCR's budget for a relatively small, but vulnerable, number of people. One of the implications of Resolution 930 is that it has become even more costly to meet the standards required for CS,²⁴⁴ which makes their support more expensive and arguably, outside of UNHCR's humanitarian mandate, which tends towards improvements and maintenance rather than large-scale structural investments.

In the centre/west, the local authorities are seeking to consolidate sites, moving residents and closing some, while keeping others open. UNHCR and its partners have employed a two-pronged approach: (i) rehabilitation of key sites with a pilot to convert one into social housing (transferring ownership from the Ministry of Education to local authorities) and catalyse others into doing something similar, and (ii) a case management approach to identify and tackle barriers to housing and employment and help people move.²⁴⁵

The first option remains a form of institutionalized living, and with evacuations continuing due to attacks in the east and south, it will continue to put pressure on resources. The second option offers some opportunities and was considered by online survey respondents as a very relevant approach. However, the rental market approach has had limited success for reasons of culture, security of tenure and access to employment, and risks leaving UNHCR and its partners with responsibilities for a residual population of the most vulnerable, including older persons and persons with disabilities/chronic illness who are unable to support themselves financially.

Legal aid including housing, land and property

UNHCR's support for people to access civil documentation and legal identity through free legal aid provision is of clear value-added, both in the crescent and the centre/west, and cuts across its humanitarian and solutions/nexus work ([Section 3.2.5](#)).

Interviews and survey respondents provided a clear indication that UNHCR should maintain and may need to expand its support for HLP, as it provides an important bridge to engaging meaningfully on recovery and durable solutions across both the war-affected regions of Ukraine and the centre/west or protracted crisis areas. The importance of HLP as contributing to solutions is underlined in the Independent Review of the IASC-led humanitarian response to internal displacement.²⁴⁶

As the Government continues to digitize data and use property ownership as a key mechanism for compensation, there is scope for advocacy for a more simplified process to allow people to register their properties and become eligible for compensation. Eligibility for compensation, however, is only for damaged and not destroyed houses, which leaves a gap in the provision of support for those who need to establish themselves in a new house and/or in areas of displacement. This has been further complicated by challenges around land use (e.g. converting buildings into social housing. A new Housing Institute bringing all the relevant Ministries together may, however, address this). There may also be additional complications in the future, linked to housing in the Temporarily Occupied Territories. The findings of this evaluation show that UNHCR is broadly considered to be one of the most important providers of legal assistance and support to the Government, and that there is significant scope for it in the future to assist in developing mechanisms to manage and address these issues. The Government is currently drafting a new Housing Law, which is supported by a Working Group, of which UNHCR is a member.

UNHCR's protection focus, including community-based protection

At the time of the final visit of the ET to Ukraine, interviews highlighted that UNHCR's protection programme strategy was being revised with an aspiration to increase its focus on legal aid and community-based protection and move away from individual case management.

This evaluation has shown that UNHCR has developed a clear and complementary niche in its contribution to child protection, with results for UNHCR's GBV programme on a smaller scale (see section 3.2.2). Both components have taken and continue to take place in a crowded operational space where many agencies intervene, *particularly* in the east/south of the country. In a context where the risk of domestic violence, family separation and violence against children may increase, child protection and GBV programming will continue to be important components of the *wider* collective response.

The MYSP proposes that by 2027, UNHCR's direct GBV service provision will be transferred to Government/other GBV service providers in the centre/west, retaining some direct service provision/case management capacity in the crescent where gaps exist.²⁴⁷ Lessons from the experience of InterSoS will be instrumental. Interviews undertaken during the final visit of the ET to Ukraine revealed plans for UNHCR to retain GBV response capacity in the crescent through partners' community-based protection activities. Programming results over 2022–2023 suggest that UNHCR's strengths in GBV lie in awareness-raising, prevention and protection monitoring.²⁴⁸ Robust referral pathways will be important. **The shift in focus away from GBV seems prudent from an efficiency perspective, but this evaluation endorses UNHCR's ambitions to retain some capacity through existing CBO networks within an area-based approach in the centre/west. This will permit UNHCR to maintain limited capability in the event of a change in risks and the need to support service provision expansion.**

Interviews also suggested that UNHCR similarly plans to maintain its child protection activities in the crescent through direct/partner service provision in the eastern and southern oblasts, while planning for the handover of direct service provision/case management to State actors and CBOs in the centre/west.²⁴⁹ Discussions are ongoing

within UNHCR concerning the scope that exists to expand the emphasis placed on community-based protection approaches to include child protection. **This evaluation considers that UNHCR's aspirations for child protection are justified given the important niche that the agency occupies in the child protection sector.**

Following a review of UNHCR's protection strategy in Ukraine and its human resource capacity,²⁵⁰ it has been proposed that community-based protection is given greater prioritization, that coherence is strengthened, and that more emphasis is placed on localizing the approach in the process. **This shift in strategic direction should be accompanied by a community-based protection strategy that brings together the different elements of UNHCR's approach as a means of ensuring coherence across its humanitarian response and solutions work.**

As funding diminishes and there is a corresponding reduction in service provision, the role that CBOs play in delivering UNHCR's response and maintaining its presence, as well as offering flex in the event of additional IDP/returnee influxes, will increase. **This emphasis will place increased pressure and expectations on them to deliver. Given the modest scale of some of these organizations and networks, this may present significant challenges.** Acknowledging the resource requirements to achieve success, the constraints that exist on coverage and challenges associated with sustainability, this approach carries with it significant risks that will be important to manage. **Chief among these is the issue of achieving scale and the need to ensure adequate support to CBO partners to contribute to this. Benchmarks to more consistently monitor and support CBO graduation objectives and attainment will be an important part of this.**

3.6.3 UNHCR's investment in partnerships in support of early recovery and durable solutions

UNHCR maintains partnerships in Ukraine with Government, national and local NGOs, civil society organizations and (indirectly) IDP Councils at a range of administrative levels.

Summary of UNHCR's partnerships at administrative levels in Ukraine

As [Section 3.2.4](#) and [Section 3.4.2](#) in this report show, reinforcing the national system and local actors has been the cornerstone of UNHCR's approach to delivering protection/assistance and supporting solutions in Ukraine.

UNHCR's approach to working with the State has recognized the responsibilities of the Government in addition to its capacity limitations that have arisen due to the war. However, capacity gaps and lack of coherence in collective support have resulted in a grey zone that makes it difficult to determine how best to be a proponent of proposals and adding value at the central level in particular, although the challenges are replicated at each administrative level.

UNHCR's future engagement with national NGOs

UNHCR's engagement with NNGOs has advanced its own operational and policy objectives while supporting their capacity development and growth. Multi-Year Partnership Agreements should mean that UNHCR no longer needs to launch a call for expressions of interest when there is a need to scale up a response, therefore making it

more agile. The inclusion of a crisis modifier clause in Partnership Agreements may further facilitate rapid response with minimal bureaucracy to agree or justify changes in action.^{251;252} This would, however, require both donor and organizational policy change.

If underpinned by appropriate strategies, Multi-Year Partnership Agreements may provide partners with a more stable and secure relationship with UNHCR and have the potential to strengthen the delivery of solutions-oriented approaches. However, since multi-year agreements will be decoupled from funding, they do not align with key Grand Bargain commitments on multi-annual funding agreements.

Several NNGO partners referred to their limited visibility on UNHCR's future plans. They were clearly not informed in a timely way about funding cuts in prior years and had to crisis manage the changes that were required, which adversely affected their capacity and programmes.

The decrease in funding for L3 responses is a challenge that UNHCR has faced in other responses, and in this regard, UNHCR's 2022 Sahel L3 evaluation recommendation bears reiterating: that **UNHCR globally should develop a post-L3 road map on how to deal with operational transition and scale-down in anticipation of a reduction in funds.**²⁵³ In this, there is scope to link the mandatory and multi-stakeholder operational review that is conducted towards the end of an emergency declaration with efforts being undertaken elsewhere in the agency to support "sustainable programming". The latter aims to support operations, maximize efficiencies and rationalize operational footprints, in line with projected funding levels post-emergency.²⁵⁴ At country level, sharing subsequent processes and plans with partners would be of mutual benefit.

Despite the prominence of its partnerships, UNHCR's MYSP is silent on this important aspect of its operation. There is scope for UNHCR Ukraine to more clearly articulate its strategic approach and contribution to supporting and strengthening locally led humanitarian action, as part of a broader vision for transition and handover. As funding decreases and considering UNHCR's Grand Bargain commitments and Global Refugee Forum pledge,²⁵⁵ it is important for UNHCR to be purposeful in its national and local NGO partnerships. This is even more important given that they will continue to play a critical role in UNHCR's operational presence and delivery in Ukraine.²⁵⁶

3.6.4 Strengthening alignment with social protection systems

The Ukraine response has demonstrated UNHCR's ability to design and deliver CBI on a large scale, providing timely assistance. UNHCR should continue its active engagement with the CWG, supporting the pivot towards a dual MPC (emergency MPC versus protracted MPC) and a more granular approach encompassing the social benefits households receive and dynamic transfer values based on households' needs. Looking forward, UNHCR can maximize the use of CBI by: (i) using cash as a default modality across the operation; (ii) by role-modelling this "*cash-first*" approach across the clusters it coordinates, especially shelter/NFI.

The EU accession status offers opportunities to intertwine UNHCR's protection mandate and CBI expertise, especially through engagement with social services and legal support services for households to access SP services.

UNHCR's future engagement with social protection should leverage its currently strong relationships with the Ministry of Social Policy and PeReHid, bringing forward UNHCR added value in protection and CBI, focusing on advocacy and technical support.

3.6.5 Enhancing coordination for early recovery and durable solutions

With aid budgets now declining in Ukraine, there is a need for the diverse coordination inputs, pilots and concepts to be integrated and prioritized in support of transition.

While the subject of this evaluation is UNHCR, responsibilities for the provision of assistance and protection, including durable solutions for IDPs, is a collective one. As such, leadership and coordination of the humanitarian and development system have an important bearing on the effectiveness of each of the individual members of the system. In its 2025–2027 MYSP, UNHCR has placed emphasis on increasing its focus on early recovery and durable solutions programming in partnership with government and strategic UN, NGO and private sector partners.²⁵⁷ The next phase of the response will be essential to making this shift more than just rhetoric and there is recognition in the strategy of the leadership role that UNHCR must play.

Two and a half years after the full-scale invasion, clarity about humanitarian cluster transition is still pending (see [Section 3.5.1](#)) and the Area-Based Approaches Pilot has a nascent coordination structure that is yet to be operationalized.²⁵⁸ While this evaluation is cognisant of the significant challenges posed by the Ukraine response, efforts to place the coordination structure in Ukraine on a more sustainable and locally rooted footing have been laboured.



Lessons (un)learned – The enduring challenge of facilitating state leadership of coordination: The IASC reference module for cluster coordination underlines the importance of government leadership or leadership of coordination (where possible).²⁵⁹ Prior to the full-scale invasion, some clusters were transitioning and/or phasing out. However, two years on, while there are examples of cluster engagement with government documented in this report, the clusters remain – with a few exceptions – largely led by agencies that belong to the international humanitarian system.

At the time the evaluation was being conducted, many of the ingredients for a handover/transition of coordination mechanisms had either been put in place or were being put in place. Discussions have started within the clusters about how they might transition from a humanitarian footing, with a number of reports and/or strategies either prepared or under preparation ([Section 3.5.1](#)); a much delayed/anticipated consultancy to develop an area-based coordination model in Ukraine, on behalf of the HCT, has commenced²⁶⁰ (this is a follow-up from a recommendation of the Operational Peer Review that was conducted in April 2023);²⁶¹ a nascent coordination structure for the implementation of the 12 pilots and broader delivery of recovery and durable solutions is in the process of being scaled up for implementation.²⁶² It is important that these feed into a coherent coordination structure that is fit for purpose for the future.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Effectiveness of UNHCR's approach to delivering protection and solutions

In its L3 response, UNHCR delivered a large-scale response in terms of the budget spent and number of people reached, demonstrating its appetite and capacity to scale and reach affected people. While there are many contributing factors to achieving these results, particularly important among them have been flexible funding, capable staff, strong partnerships and UNHCR's long experience of operating in Ukraine.

In terms of reaching its response targets, UNHCR was overall more effective in 2022 compared to 2023 albeit with varying degrees of success across sectors. In 2023, a greater emphasis was placed on strengthening the quality of its interventions. In a highly conducive context for cash, UNHCR achieved an effective and timely scale-up of its cash response.

An essential pillar of UNHCR's response has been its partners, which have demonstrated courage, competence and capacity in the delivery of assistance and protection to IDPs, returnees, war-affected people and other vulnerable communities. UNHCR has provided an enabling environment for partnership, but as it increases its reliance on delivery through NGOs and civil society actors and embarks on its MYSP for Ukraine, it will also be important also to outline a vision for these partnerships and use the opportunity afforded by the plan to deliver this.

UNHCR's law and policy work, legal aid and community-based protection have been strengths of UNHCR's response. They have provided an important '*bridge*' that has facilitated its engagement in recovery and solutions and provide a solid basis for the future direction of UNHCR's work in protection. As part of this, and as funding declines it will be important for UNHCR to finalize its CBP strategy as a core part of determining the sectoral and geographic scope of its work in Ukraine.

UNHCR has played a pivotal role in piloting approaches and advocating for action in support of sustainable recovery solutions in Ukraine and its early and sustained commitment to supporting Area-Based Approaches (ABA) was an important part of this approach. However, it is also an area that has lacked coherence from the collective IASC system in Ukraine which is yet to achieve significant scale. The implementation of UNHCR's multi-year strategic plan offers an opportunity for it to review its engagement and determine its priorities which is particularly important given the context of funding reductions alongside continuing high levels of humanitarian need.

Two and a half years after the full-scale invasion, UNHCR, through its partners, continues to deliver at scale, albeit tempered by a reduction in funding, which has triggered the need for changes. The steps that have been taken by UNHCR through the MYSP to understand and articulate its strategic priorities for its humanitarian response, early recovery and durable solutions approaches, will be ever more important if it is to maintain its effectiveness in such a complex context.

4.2 Relevance of UNHCR's implementation

Given the rapid changes in the external context during UNHCR's L3 response and its subsequent operation in Ukraine, responding to the changing pattern of needs has been essential and UNHCR has performed well in this regard. It has met many of its corporate AGD commitments, which have provided a foundation for its needs-based response. UNHCR has also ensured that people whose needs for protection and assistance it has supported have had recourse to information and feedback channels. It is in continuing to refine approaches to identify and target the most vulnerable, and as part of this, to strengthen UNHCR's intersectional analysis, that there is scope for improvement. There is also a need to bring greater coherence to the multitude of feedback mechanisms that exist to improve analysis and to close the loop on issues that are raised, but also to position UNHCR to respond to evolving programme needs.

Effective needs analysis is a cornerstone of programme adaptation, and this has been an area of strength for UNHCR, which has demonstrated agility in shifting geographic focus and adapting its programmes to maintain their relevance. This has most often been triggered by macro-level changes in the context, or through the more nuanced knowledge of the context and the situation of people affected by the war shared by its partners, and there remains an important need to strengthen the links between AAP and adaptation at the programme level. This is particularly important as the need for adaptation will continue to be essential as efforts to promote durable solutions are implemented alongside life-saving humanitarian assistance.

AAP and AGD also play a key role in the development of conflict-sensitive programmes and the delivery of principled humanitarian assistance, and UNHCR has performed well in applying the humanitarian principles in practice to assist it in navigating the complexities of providing needs-based assistance in a highly politicized context. Of note are the steps that UNHCR has taken to engage appropriately and respectfully with government, while maintaining a level of operational independence. While UNHCR has supported HCT advocacy for negotiated access, the inability of the IASC and the Emergency Relief Coordinator to broker this is indicative of the limits of the humanitarian system – even at the most senior of levels.

4.3 Coherence of UNHCR's contribution to the government's delivery of social protection and recovery

The corporate emphasis placed by UNHCR on "*whole-of-government*" leadership in addressing internal displacement necessitates a broad approach to engagement, and a collaborative approach has been evident in UNHCR's response in Ukraine and is visible at different administrative levels. While the war has posed significant capacity constraints for government and local authorities, UNHCR has brokered a respectful but robust relationship, resulting in positive policy outcomes for vulnerable people.

Specific to social protection, UNHCR has taken a mature approach to engaging with relevant government ministries and departments. Its fruitful collaboration with the Ministry of Social Protection is manifest through UNHCR's support to both vertical (increasing the benefits) and horizontal (increasing the number of benefiting households) expansion and its long-standing support to PeReHid.

There is scope for improvement in the approach of the collective IASC system to engaging with government. While efforts to support government system-strengthening are common across many UN agencies and international NGOs, there appears to be scope to ensure that these are coordinated effectively to maximize their potential.

4.4 Coherence and effectiveness of UNHCR's engagement in inter-agency coordination

The pace with which the context changed after the full-scale invasion required a U-turn from transitioning out of clusters to scaling them up, which posed some challenges. Despite this, UNHCR has performed the key tasks required of its cluster leadership albeit with improvements made over time. Its early efforts to leverage the benefits of tri-cluster coherence are worthy of mention and this has subsequently been a strength of the response. All three clusters have strengthened their engagement with, and relevance to, the local humanitarian system over time. The role that R2P plays as co-lead for the Protection cluster is indicative of the capacity that exists across civil society in Ukraine.

While each of the clusters has engaged with relevant government departments and ministries, significant work still needs to be done by the collective humanitarian system in articulating a transition plan that places humanitarian coordination under national leadership. While small steps have been taken towards this, a clear plan and collective action is urgently required. The same can be said of the nexus coordination forums that exist. While early steps have been taken – which have benefited from UNHCR's leadership and full participation – there is an urgent need to move from theory to practice, and to adopt a coherent and comprehensive approach that folds in the future of the clusters, area-based management and nexus coordination. If there are blockages, these should be more clearly articulated and collective action galvanized to address them; UNHCR has an important role in supporting the RC/HC, HCT and the broader development system in this endeavour.

This evaluation acknowledges that ultimately, responsibility for leading coordination rests with the Government of Ukraine rather than the humanitarian and development system. It is also cognisant of the current challenges that a focus on the war poses to the Government, which affects its capacity, continuity and resources. Despite this, it is now essential that there is a shared vision of the coordination structure for the future.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations propose actions that can improve UNHCR's own response, in addition to offering suggestions about how it can contribute to changes that will strengthen the collective response. Two recommendations are targeted at improving UNHCR's global analysis and guidance.

Recommended actions	Responsible	Timeframe
UNHCR Ukraine		

Strategy

1. As part of the implementation of its 2025–2027 Multi-Year Strategic Plan, UNHCR Ukraine should more clearly define the scope of its support to key strategic operational areas, namely Area-Based Protection, Collective sites and Community-Based Approaches

Area-based approaches: While UNHCR retains a strong commitment to implementing ABAs, as part of its MYSP, it should leverage its catalytic role to focus on promoting the conditions that would ultimately allow UNHCR to reduce its level of engagement. To achieve this, it should define a set of conditions (including triggers) under which it would responsibly handover these duties and/or phase out.²⁶³

Collective sites: UNHCR should seek to implement a sustainable approach from the outset and outline a set of conditions for responsibly phasing out its existing operational support for CS. This should include facilitating residents' wider social and economic inclusion in hosting communities, as well as active resident engagement for care and maintenance of those sites that remain. This would be best achieved as part of a broader cluster-led transition.²⁶⁴

Community-based approaches: The recent shift in strategic direction will be reflected in an updated protection strategy for UNHCR Ukraine. UNHCR's overarching protection strategy should incorporate a community-based protection strategy that brings together the different elements of UNHCR's approach (working with CBOs and outreach facilitators, IDP Councils and AAP staff), as a means of ensuring coherence across the agency's humanitarian response and solutions work in Ukraine.

It is anticipated that Community-Based Organizations will play a key role in the delivery of UNHCR's community-based protection programme, which underlines the importance of ensuring adequate support is provided to them. In parallel, UNHCR should ensure that expectations are managed in terms of what they can achieve and the scale at which they can achieve it. UNHCR should further establish clear benchmarks to more consistently monitor and support CBO graduation objectives.

Ukraine CO Representative with support from the Deputy Representative, Assistant Representative (Protection) & relevant sectoral staff and cluster leads

12 months

Operations

2. Cash: Internally and across the clusters under its leadership, UNHCR should ensure that the use of Cash-

Ukraine CO Representative

6 months

Based Interventions is the default modality and that the use of in-kind is clearly justified (e.g. demonstrated lack of market functionality). At a minimum, UNHCR should rebalance the resources it dedicates to the distribution of Non-Food Items, in favour of greater allocation to its Cash-Based interventions.	with support from the CBI team and cluster leads	12 months
3. AAP: UNHCR should develop a coherent Accountability to Affected Populations strategy that integrates a “whole-of-house” approach as part of its wider community-based protection strategy. This should address the gap in effective feedback loops to affected people and to senior management as well as the coherence of underlying evidence streams.	Ukraine CO Representative with support from the Senior CBP Officer	12 months
Government support and partnerships		
4. Government: UNHCR Ukraine should advocate within the HCT and UNCT for a more coherent approach to Government System-strengthening and Government ownership of the response across the collective IASC system. If called upon to do so, it should be prepared to actively contribute to a process of review and mapping to determine the best means of coordinating collective system-strengthening efforts in the future.	Ukraine CO Representative with support from the Deputy Representative & Assistant Representative (Protection)	6 months
5. Local and national NGOs: UNHCR should further advance localization by investing in the capacity of national NGO partners and Community-based Organizations. The 2025-2027 Multi-Year Strategic Plan offers an opportunity for UNHCR to set out a more predictable basis to support its partners.	Ukraine CO Representative and Deputy Representative	12-18 months
UNHCR should more clearly articulate its aspirations for the support it will provide to its local and national NGO partners between 2025-2027, drawing on the tenets of the nascent localization strategy in Ukraine and UNHCR’s Corporate Grand Bargain and GRF commitments.		
Collective coordination and clusters		
6. UNHCR should support the transition of the clusters to Government-led coordination through the following actions:	Ukraine CO Representative and Deputy Representative	12 months
In the context of the HCT-mandated Area-Based Coordination consultancy, advocate for a transition of the		

clusters to a coordination model that places the Government in leadership roles.

- For the clusters UNHCR leads, UNHCR should identify potential government principals who can assume a leadership role.
- UNHCR should actively contribute, within the UNCT, to the development of a coordination model for the UN's work in the areas of recovery, development and durable solutions, that has a foundation in government leadership and enables a seamless transitioning of the clusters and sustainable, nexus programming.

UNHCR Headquarters

Global analysis and guidance

7. UNHCR globally should review its application of area-based approaches and amend guidance to ensure that area-based approaches incorporate collective objectives and outcomes for both programming and advocacy. This should clarify UNHCR's contribution as part of a wider collaborative multi-stakeholder effort in which UNHCR has a distinct competence consistent with its mandate.

Division of Strategic Planning and Results with support from Division of International Protection & Division of Resilience & Solutions

12 months

8. Drawing on lessons from previous L3 responses, including in Ukraine, UNHCR globally should consider developing a "post L3" road map to support Country Operations in the timely planning for scale-down, in a way that protects and sustains dividends from the response. It should include practical guidance on how and when to start prioritizing and planning for responsible drawdown both geographically and sectorally. The guidance should also include aspects of human resource restructuring and partner management in the context of resource reductions.

Division of Emergency, Security & Supply, Division of Resilience & Solutions, Division of Strategic Planning and Results

12 months

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- 1 UNHCR, 'Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response 2023', February 2023.
- 2 Within UNHCR, a Level 3 emergency signifies an exceptionally serious situation in which the scale, pace, complexity and consequences of the crisis significantly exceed the existing response capacities of the country operation and regional bureau. Therefore, an institutional, whole-of-UNHCR response is necessary for UNHCR to deliver effectively and at scale. See UNHCR (2023) Emergency Management FAQs.
- 3 The objectives proposed in the ToR were revised based on input from the Ukraine Country Office.
- 4 Conditions might relate to the percentage of people supported through solutions approaches, the level of capacity and engagement of community committees with development actors/the State.
- 5 UNHCR, 'Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response 2023'.
- 6 The context section of this evaluation report can be found in Annex 1.
- 7 UNHCR, 'Report: Real-Time Review for the Ukraine Situation - 7-30 JUNE 2022' (Geneva, Switzerland, August 2022).
- 8 UNHCR, 'Ukraine Refugee Situation Population Movements | Factsheet #1', February 2024, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/unhcr-ukraine-refugee-situation-population-movements-factsheet-1-february-2024>.
- 9 <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/98163>.
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- 14 Ukraine ABC, 'Strategy Report - Interim 2024'.
- 15 OCHA, 'Ukraine Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024'.
- 16 OCHA, 2023, Ukraine Humanitarian Response Plan 2023.
- 17 OCHA, 2022, Ukraine Flash Appeal March to December 2022.
- 18 OCHA, 'Ukraine response External Review of the Humanitarian Cash Programme 2022–2023'.
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- 22 The system-wide activation was in place for a 12-month period and was deactivated in March 2023.
- 23 UNHCR, 'Ukraine L3 Response: An Overview - DRAFT'.
- 24 UNHCR.
- 25 UNHCR, 'Ukraine Operational Monthly Update April 2022', April 2022.
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- 27 UNHCR, 'Annual Results Report 2023 - Ukraine ABC - DRAFT'..
- 28 UNHCR, 'Ukraine Situation: UNHCR's 2024 Plans and Financial Requirements'.
- 29 UNHCR.
- 30 UNHCR, 'Ukraine Operational Monthly Update June 2022', June 2022.
- 31 UNHCR, 'Annual Results Report 2023 - Ukraine ABC - DRAFT'.
- 32 Chernivtsi, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, Uzhhorod, and Vinnytsia. Source: List of Personal Ukraine February 2024.
- 33 Ukraine ABC, 'Strategy Report - Interim 2024'.
- 34 The objectives proposed in the ToR have been revised in line with feedback provided by the Country Office.
- 35 An evaluation covering Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia has been completed in 2023. This evaluation will focus on UNHCR's operations and strategic positioning within Ukraine only and will not include the Ukrainian territories under Russian occupation.
- 36 Of note is that several other agencies were conducting independent L3 evaluations of their Ukraine responses concurrently with this evaluation. A jointly managed synthesis exercise of these evaluations is planned in lieu of an Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation.
- 37 As outlined in the ToR, the review of the L3 response was largely conducted from secondary data, albeit validated during interviews with UNHCR staff where possible.
- 38 UNHCR, 'Annual Results Report 2023 - Ukraine ABC - DRAFT'.
- 39 UNHCR formally opened its first office in Ukraine in December 1995; during this time it has developed a long experience of assisting the country deal with challenges related to the multifaceted and complex faces of forced displacement, cooperating with the Government, other UN agencies and international and

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43 Juillard H et al., 'Evaluation of UNHCR's Level 3 Regional Refugee Response to the Crisis in Ukraine' (Geneva: UNHCR, 2023), 3.

44 UNHCR, 'Annual Results Report 2023 - Ukraine ABC - DRAFT'.

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49 UNHCR, 'Report: Real-Time Review for the Ukraine Situation - 7-30 JUNE 2022'. Unpublished.

50 These issues were all reported in the Real Time Review report, which included a management action plan. For this reason and because of the limited scope the evaluation had to review the first year of the response, specific HR recommendations are not made in this report.

51 UNHCR. Accompanied Journey: Global Learning and Development Centre's Continued Support for the Ukraine Situation. N.d.

52 Ibid.

53 Internal Report shared with the Evaluation Team: Emergency Preparedness and Response Recurring issues and Lessons Learned 2021-2023 UNHCR Division of Emergency Supply and Security September 2023

54 UNHCR, 'Report: Real-Time Review for the Ukraine Situation - 7-30 JUNE 2022'.

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56 UNHCR, 'Annual Results Report 2023 - Ukraine ABC - DRAFT', n.d..

57 UNHCR, 'Ukraine Situation: UNHCR's 2024 Plans and Financial Requirements', January 2024.

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59 UNHCR, 'Ukraine Operational Monthly Update December 2023', December 2023, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/ukraine-operational-update-7400>.

60 Percentage calculated as the sum of the targets for 2022 to 2024. Figure 02 shows the breakdown by year.

61 Against a list of 33 selected indicators in cash, protection, shelter, NFI and CCCM for the purpose of this evaluation

62 Some activities grew organically, such as social accompaniment or provision of generators and did not have targets. For some sectors, the indicators are not comparable between 2022 and 2023.

63 Tholstrup S and Juillard H, 'External Review of the Humanitarian Cash Programme.' (Humanitarian Coordinator, 2023).

64 For 2023 data: UNHCR. 2023. 2023 Result framework for Ukraine. For 2022 data: UNHCR. 2022. UNHCR Country Financial Report 2022.

65 Tholstrup S and Juillard H, 'External Review of the Humanitarian Cash Programme.' (Humanitarian Coordinator, 2023).

66 Internal and external Key Informant interviews and Office of Internal Oversight Services - Internal Audit Division, 'Audit of the Management of Cash-Based Interventions in UNHCR Response to the Ukraine Crisis', 21 September 2023.

67 Office of Internal Oversight Services - Internal Audit Division, 'Audit of the Management of Cash-Based Interventions in UNHCR Response to the Ukraine Crisis', 21 September 2023.

68 87 per cent of households reported being able to find key items and services when needed as per UNHCR CBI PDM.

69 Helene Juillard, 'Rapid Reflection on Cash Coordination for the Ukraine Response Ukraine Briefing Paper' (DEC, 2023).

70 UNHCR, 'Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) - Post Distribution Monitoring Report', December 2022. And UNHCR, 'Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) - Post Distribution Monitoring Report', December 2023.

71 Interview with CWG and review of UNHCR programme documents.

72 Out of 900,000 individuals benefiting from UNHCR winterization support, 450,000 received CBI and 417,250 received in-kind in the form of winterized non-food item kits, clothing and generators. Source: UNHCR. 2023. Winterization 2023-2024.

73 Tholstrup S and Juillard H, 'External Review of the Humanitarian Cash Programme.'

74 Source UNHCR 2022-23 GenFigures database

75 UNHCR, 'Ukraine Emergency Cash Assistance Overview', 2023.

76 UNHCR MPC PDM report, June 2022 (food, rent, and hygiene items were the top three expenses), December 2022 (food, health, clothes and shoes, utilities and bills and rent.) and December 2023 (food, health, utilities and bills, hygiene items, and clothes and shoes).

77 UNHCR MPC PDM report, June 2022 (97 percent of MPC recipients not needing help to withdraw and spent the money), December 2022 (92 percent) and December 2023 (91 percent).

78 UNHCR PDM 2022 and 2023.

79 Ukraine Cash Working Group, "Ukraine PDM Analysis June 2022-April 2023," May 2023. - note that this preceded the increase in transfer value to align with inflation, so some challenges in meeting basic needs may now be addressed.

80 UNHCR PDM 2022 and 2023.

81 In September 2022, the CWG suggested a transfer value increase, but this was not endorsed by the HCT and the Ministry of Social Policy not to create misalignment with social assistance.

82 UNHCR has had limited ability to adjust the MPC transfer value, as it is standardized across organizations, across settings and across recipients' status (e.g. short or long-term displacement).

83 The Minimum Expenditure Basket and transfer value revision were finalized in August 2023 and operationalized from the October MPC distribution.

84 Ukraine Cash Working Group, 'Minimum Expenditure Basket', 2023.

85 The most common adopted negative coping strategies were, in December 2023, as per UNHCR Post Distribution Monitoring: i) reduction in spending on hygiene items, water, baby items, health, and education to meet basic needs; ii) spending savings; iii) taking on additional regular work, and skipping paying rent or debt repayments.

86 In December 2022, 63 per cent of PDM respondents had used at least one harmful coping strategy in the last 4 weeks compared with 75 per cent in December 2023.

87 UNHCR, 'Annual Results Report 2023 - Ukraine ABC - DRAFT'.

88 669 sites in 18 Oblasts were supported through partner mobile teams out of a target of 900.

89 UNHCR, 'Annual Results Report 2023 - Ukraine ABC - DRAFT'.

90 UNHCR, 'Ukraine Delivery Updates - 26 January 2024'.

91 73 per cent were female, 27 per cent male (December 2023 monthly operational update), 7 per cent comprised people with reported disabilities and 26 per cent were older persons (2023 Ukraine Protection cluster dashboard).

92 Accessed 01/05/24.

93 Social accompaniment is the practice of accompanying an individual as they seek to access support services and can include transport and translation assistance.

94 Noting that the GBVIMS+ had not actually been officially rolled out in Ukraine at the time this report was written.

95 Data extracted from Activity Info for the Evaluation Team. July 2024.

96 Ukraine Protection Cluster Achievements Dashboard 2023 Accessed 01/05/24.

97 Data extracted from Activity Info for the Evaluation Team. July 2024.

98 UNHCR, 'Annual Results Report 2022 - Ukraine ABC - DRAFT'.

99 UNHCR.

100 UNHCR (2023) Annual Results Report – Ukraine 2023, Global Focus 2023 and UNHCR (2024) and UNHCR (2024) Ukraine – Multi-Year Strategy 2025 – 2027, UNHCR 2024.

101 UNHCR (2021) Strategic Directions 2022-2026; UNHCR 2021

102 Ukraine Protection Cluster Achievements Dashboard 2023 Accessed 01/05/24.

103 UNHCR, 'Annual Results Report 2022 - Ukraine ABC - DRAFT'.

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105 GBV AoR, 'Annual E-Bulletin Ukraine 2023', 2024. The GBV AoR falls under UNFPA's leadership.

106 Ukraine Protection Cluster Achievements Dashboard 2023 Accessed 01/05/24.

107 Ibid. The CP AoR falls under UNICEF's leadership.

108 Ibid.

109 UNHCR (2023) Annual Results Report – Ukraine 2023; Global Focus 2023.

110 In 2022, 190 facilitators were recruited and supported communities across 18 oblasts. In 2023, UNHCR/partners supported a network of 225 outreach facilitators who referred over 25,000 people to legal, social and psychosocial services. UNHCR (2023) Annual Results Report – Ukraine 2023, Global Focus 2023.

111 UNHCR (2022) Annual Results Report – Ukraine 2022, Global Focus 2022; UNHCR (2023) Annual Results Report – Ukraine 2023, Global Focus 2023.

112 Information extracted from ActivityInfo and shared with the Evaluation Team by UNHCR. 15/07/24.

113 Key Aid Consulting has conducted a number of other evaluations for UNHCR, including the L3 evaluation outside Ukraine, which form a basis of evidence behind this finding.

114 Office of Internal Oversight Services - Internal Audit Division, 'Audit of the Management of Non-Food Items in UNHCR Response to the Ukraine Crisis', 25 September 2023.

115 UNHCR, 'Safety Audit Report - Ukraine', September 2022.

116 Office of Internal Oversight Services - Internal Audit Division, 'Audit of the Management of Cash-Based Interventions in UNHCR Response to the Ukraine Crisis'.

117 UNHCR, 'Report: Real-Time Review for the Ukraine Situation - 7-30 JUNE 2022'.

118 Ukraine ABC, 'Strategy Report - Interim 2024' (UNHCR, January 2024).

119 Simplified procedures for changing budgets in 2022 were tightened in 2023 and 2024, changing for example, the procedures for holding contingency stock or fund re-allocation for emergency response.

120 UNHCR's cash programme was implemented directly by the agency. However, local partnerships were critical to upstream and downstream activities including identification, assessment and enrolment, verification, complaints/feedback mechanisms.

121 Source: UNHCR budget and expenditure dataset and Ukraine 2023 expenditure by implementer type dataset. Both accessed 6 June 2024.

122 Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream, 'Country-Level Dialogue on Localisation : Resource Kit', 2021. UNHCR's partner budget could arguably be seen to function in a manner similar to CBPFs which provide funds to partners for humanitarian projects in the given country.

123 UNHCR, 'Ukraine – Multi-Year Strategy 2025 – 2027', 2024.

124 See for example: Localisation of Aid: Are INGOs Walking The Talk? - World | ReliefWeb; Global Embrace of Localization: Changing the Power Dynamics in Development and Humanitarian Aid Systems (globalgovernanceforum.org).

125 The pledge builds on the 2021 High Level Officials Meeting as well as UNHCR-NGO consultations in 2021 and 2022. It is aligned with the Global Compact on Refugees and complementary to Grand Bargain commitments. UNCHR & ICVA (2023) Multistakeholder Pledge: Advancing Localisation in Displacement and Statelessness Responses, Global Refugee Forum 2023.

126 UNHCR and ICVA, 'Multistakeholder Pledge: Advancing Localisation in Displacement and Statelessness Responses' (Global Refugee Forum, 2023).

127 As part of this, it suggests research to create a baseline for the strategic dimensions outlined. Alliance UA CSO (2024) Strategy for Ensuing Local Leadership in Responding to Humanitarian Crises and Setting the Foundation for Recovery Processes in Ukraine, Alliance UA CSO 2024.

128 UNHCR, 'Focus Area Strategic Plan for Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced People: 2024-2030 DRAFT', 2024.

129 UNHCR, 'Ukraine Situation: Supporting an Area-Based Approach to Durable Solutions', June 2023.

130 Both UNHCR and DRC publish these so there is some duplication. UNHCR's bulletins tend to be more timely and contextually embedded.

131 UN Ukraine, 'United Nations in Ukraine Transitional Framework September 2022 – December 2024', 2023.

132 UN Ukraine, 'Ukraine Community Recovery Fund: Annual Narrative Report', 2024.

133 Area-based approaches are a means of facilitating integration and social cohesion in specific geographic localities. They seek to take a holistic approach in terms of services, infrastructure, access barriers and can be a means by which to give voice to local populations and actors to define their own priorities and recovery/solutions. They can, however, be resource intensive. See UN Ukraine (2023) United Nations in Ukraine Transitional Framework September 2022 – December 2024, UN Ukraine 2023.

134 These are to include: (1) Lviv (Drohobyt'ska and Stry'ski); (2) Zakarpats'ka (Mukachevo and Uzhhorod); (3) Kyiv (Borodians'ka and Makariv); (4) Mykolaiv (Voskresenska and Snihuriv'ska); (5) Dnipro (Pavlohrad'ska and Apostoliv'ska); (6) Kharkiv (Chuhuiv'ska and Balakii'ska).

135 In 2022, 15 per cent of recipients of MPC were older women and 7% older men (60+ years). UNHCR (2022) Inclusive, Local and Accountable Engagement – Age, Gender and Diversity Accountability Report, UNHCR 2022.

136 UNHCR (2023) Longitudinal Evaluation of UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) Policy: Final Report UNHCR 2024.

137 UNHCR (2022) Annual Results Report – Ukraine 2022, UNHCR Global Focus 2022 and UNHCR (2023) Annual Results Report – Ukraine 2023, UNHCR Global Focus 2023.

138 UNHCR, 'Ukraine Legislative Update', December 2023, <https://www.unhcr.org/ua/en/61353-legislative-update.html>. Due to gaps in the legislative framework, those without a birth certificate are unable to access Free Legal Aid.

139 UNHCR, 'MFT Mission: Uzhhorod, Chernivtsi, Vinnytsia, Internal Document', May 2024.

140 UNHCR (2021) Strategic Directions 2022-2026; UNHCR 2021.

141 The ToR for the Inter-Agency Coordinator has now also been clarified.

142 UNHCR (2022) Annual Results Report – Ukraine 2022, Global Focus 2022 and UNHCR (2023) Annual Results Report – Ukraine 2023, Global Focus 2023.

143 UNHCR, 'Inclusive, Local and Accountable Engagement: Age, Gender and Diversity Accountability Report', 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/media/age-gender-and-diversity-accountability-report-2022>. UNHCR.

144 UNHCR, 'Inclusive, Local and Accountable Engagement: Age, Gender and Diversity Accountability Report', 2022.

145 OCHA, 'Ukraine Humanitarian Country Team Framework on Accountability to Affected Populations and Action Plan for Its Operationalisation', n.d.

146 UNHCR, 'MFT Mission: Uzhhorod, Chernivtsi, Vinnytsia, Internal Document'.

147 The extent to which these guidelines have been used has not been measured.

148 UNHCR, 'Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) - Post Distribution Monitoring Report', December 2023.

149 UNHCR, 'Emergency Shelter and Housing Programme Strategy 2024', March 2024.

150 UNHCR, 'Support for Durable Solutions – Status Quo - Kyiv Field Office', No date.

151 UNHCR, 'Real Time Review for Ukraine Situation—Recommendations/Status- Internal Document', n.d.

152 This is in addition to UNHCR's formal responsibilities relating to the Protection Cluster and Protection Working Group.

153 UNHCR, 'Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response 2023'.

154 The section drew significantly from UNEG's guidance on the integration of humanitarian principles. See UNEG Humanitarian Evaluation Working Group. 2024. Guidance on the Integration of Humanitarian Principles in the Evaluation of Humanitarian Action. August 2024.

155 The Government of Ukraine's understanding of humanitarian assistance includes 'preparation for armed defence of the state and its defence in the event of armed aggression' See Parliament of Ukraine (2023) in Moallin, Z. et al (2023) HPG Working Paper - Navigating narratives in Ukraine: Humanitarian response and solidarity and resistance, September 2023.

156 OCHA, 'Joint Operating Principles: Ensuring the Delivery of Principled Humanitarian Assistance and Protection in Ukraine', January 2023.

157 UNHCR, 'Ukraine Situation – Chronology. Draft Internal Document', n.d.

158 UNHCR, 'Note For File on Additional Support Instruments for the Ukraine Situation, , Internal Document.', September 2022.

159 UNHCR, 'Ukraine ABC - Annual Results Report 2022. Internal.', 2022.

160 The Humanitarian Operational and Planning Cell (HOPC) coordinates humanitarian assistance to areas characterized by an exceptionally high-risk profile and unpredictable access.

161 UNHCR, 'Ukraine Delivery Updates - 18 January 2023', January 2023.

162 'Invincibility Points' are public shelters equipped with generators, heaters and Wi-Fi so people can ward off the worst of winter's freezing temperatures, charge their batteries and have light and connectivity to work and study. See <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press-releases/unhcrs-grandi-appalled-destruction-after-six-day-ukraine-visit>.

163 Ibid.

164 Ukraine Protection Cluster, 'Ukraine: Protection Cluster Factsheet - October 2021', 15 November 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-protection-cluster-factsheet-october-2021-enuk>.

165 OCHA, 'Ukraine Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024'.

166 The risk being that donors may seek to dictate where and how humanitarian assistance is used.

167 The participatory assessment was undertaken towards the close of 2022 and drew on feedback from more than 1,000 individuals through 113 focus group discussions in 18 oblasts. See UNHCR, 'Participatory Assessment', November 2022..

168 UNHCR.

169 Included in the top 5 'integration challenges' were the lack of connection with the host community, displaced people being seen as competitors by the local population and the stigmatization of Russian speakers.

170 UNHCR, 'Ukraine ABC - Annual Results Report 2022. Internal.'

171 UNHCR, 'Risk Register Extract, Internal Document', February 2024.

172 UNHCR.

173 ILO, 'World Social Protection Report 2020–22', 2021.

174 PeReHid, 'Government Social Protection System (Draft)', 2023.

175 CCD and UCC, 'Alignment Options for Humanitarian Cash with the Ukrainian Social Protection System', 2023.

176 PeReHid, 'Government Social Protection System (Draft)'.

177 STAAR, 2022, Ukraine: A social protection country profile for the Ukraine crisis response. or CCD and UCC, 2023. Alignment Options for Humanitarian Cash with the Ukrainian Social Protection System or PeReHid, 2023, Government Social Protection System (draft).

178 Tholstrup S and Juillard H. 'External Review of the Humanitarian Cash Programme.' Humanitarian Coordinator, 2023

179 HH stands for Household and MEB for Minimum Expenditure Basket

180 Juillard H et al., 'Evaluation of UNHCR's Level 3 Regional Refugee Response to the Crisis in Ukraine', 2023.

181 UNHCR's MPC and the whole of MPC distributed in Ukraine.

182 Interviews with UNHCR staff suggest that

183 PeReHid Transitional Pathways which are under signature in June 2024, plans for a check after 3 months to ensure the linkages are effective.

184 PeReHid was formally set up in May 2023 as a technical assistance facility. It is a “partnership between Government, UN and humanitarian and development stakeholders”. PeReHid focuses on creating complementarities between humanitarian CBI and social assistance to: (i) Reduce lead times for assistance and provide humanitarian cash transfers during the lead time for social protection; (ii) Target humanitarian cash transfer to populations not accessing social assistance and ensure deduplication between humanitarian cash transfers and social assistance; (iii) Mainstream registration and enrolment points and processes; (iv) Use humanitarian assistance as top-ups to social assistance programmes. See United Nations, 2023, Annual Recovery Results Report.

185 Source: key informant interviews.

186 CCD, ‘Effective Collaboration between UN Agencies and the Government of Ukraine’, 2024.

187 Building Blocks is a blockchain powered network used by Cash working group members to prevent overlap and support the de-duplication of MPC.

188 UNHCR, 2023, CBI duplication internal audit

189 CCD, ‘Effective Collaboration between UN Agencies and the Government of Ukraine’.

190 Office of Social Protection of the Population at village, settlement or city council level.

191 UNHCR, ‘Annual Results Report 2023 - Ukraine ABC - DRAFT’.

192 Shelter Cluster Ukraine, ‘Shelter Cluster Position Paper on Adequate Housing, Outcome of the Technical Working Group on Adequate Solutions’, April 2024.

193 A cluster performance monitoring exercise conducted in 2022 provided broad endorsement for the work of the cluster from its members with service delivery, informing HCT strategies, planning and implementing cluster strategies, monitoring and evaluating performance and building national capacity all receiving an aggregate score of over 70 per cent by its members. Promoting AAP received the lowest score of 66 per cent. See Shelter Cluster Ukraine (2023) Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring – Action Plan, April 2023.

194 Shelter Cluster Ukraine, ‘All Inter-Linked Activities with the Shelter Cluster’, January 2024.

195 Shelter Cluster Ukraine, ‘Emergency Shelter and Housing Programme Strategy’, July 2023.

196 Shelter Cluster Ukraine, ‘Annexed Document to Narrative Summary: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024’, 2024.

197 CCCM Cluster Ukraine, ‘Strategic Framework’, March 2022.

198 UNHCR, ‘Annual Results Report 2023 - Ukraine ABC - DRAFT’.

199 See, for example, CCCM Cluster Ukraine (2022) Collective Centres standards in Ukraine, May 2022 and IOM (2023) Overall Findings: Collective Centre Profiling, Dnipro Pretovska, December 2023.

200 See UNHCR ‘Safety Audit Report - Ukraine’.

201 CCCM Cluster Ukraine, ‘Preparedness for Evacuations and New Displacement’, April 2024.

202 See UNHCR (2023) Thematic Legislative Update: Ukraine. September 2023.

203 See CCCM Cluster & Reach (2023) Ukraine Collective Site Monitoring: Round 10. October 2023.

204 The CS monitoring found that, on average, CSs comply with 67 per cent of the indicators related to minimum standards. The macroregional hubs with the highest average compliance score are the Western and Central hubs (68 per cent average compliance), the lowest is the Northern hub (62 per cent).

205 UNHCR, ‘Annual Results Report 2023 - Ukraine ABC - DRAFT’.

206 The Ukraine Protection Monitoring Tool can be accessed at the following link: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrJoiZTYzY2MwYTItYmYwNS00ZTQ1LTlhZjYtZWY4NTQ0OTlhZTE2liwidCI6ImU1YzZM3OTgxLTY2NjQ0tNDEzNC04YTBjLTU1NDNkMmFmODBiZSIsImMiOj9h>.

207 UNHCR, ‘Annual Results Report 2023 - Ukraine ABC - DRAFT’.

208 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), ‘Cash Coordination Model’, 2022.

209 Helene Juillard, ‘Rapid Reflection on Cash Coordination for the Ukraine Response Ukraine Briefing Paper’.

210 Source: review of the CWG meeting minutes by the evaluation team for the period 2022 to 2024.

211 From key informants and CWG meeting minutes.

212 The Refugee Assistance and Information Systems is a web-based assistance management platform used by UNHCR, partners and donors to ensure the effective tracking of assistance and enhanced accountability. See <https://unhcr-mena.github.io/RAIS/>.

213 Tholstrup S and Juillard H, ‘External Review of the Humanitarian Cash Programme.’

214 Insulation, winter clothing, energy, repair, etc. Source: HRP 2024 <https://humanitarianaction.info/plan/1177/article/shelter-non-food-items-cluster-logical-framework> Accessed June 4th 2024.

215 UNHCR, ‘Support for Durable Solutions – Status Quo - Kyiv Field Office’.

216 UNHCR, IOM, and UNDP, ‘Ukraine : Ivankiv Hromada – Interagency Pilot Summary’, 2023.

217 UNHCR, ‘Evaluation of UNHCR’s Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement (2019 – 2023). Final Evaluation Report.’, December 2023..

218 UNHCR.

219 UNHCR, 'Ukraine – Multi-Year Strategy 2025 – 2027'.

220 Roma equality, inclusion and participation in the EU - European Commission (europa.eu) and LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 - European Commission (europa.eu)

221 Different communication channels have been established, both formal and informal, which are not interoperable. As a result, there is no centralized database to deal with feedback and follow-up.

222 UNHCR, 'UNHCR Ukraine Internal Report June 2024'.

223 UNHCR, 'MFT Mission: Uzhhorod, Chernivtsi, Vinnytsia, Internal Document'.

224 UNHCR, 'UNHCR Ukraine Internal Report June 2024'.

225 UNHCR, 'MFT Mission: Uzhhorod, Chernivtsi, Vinnytsia, Internal Document'.

226 UNHCR, 'Lives on Hold #5: Intentions and Perspectives of Refugees, Refugee Returnees and IDPs from Ukraine, UNHCR PPT Presentation February 2024 (Shared with the Protection Cluster)'.

227 Ukrainian refugees: Council extends temporary protection until March 2026 - Consilium (europa.eu) Accessed 12/07/2024. It should be noted that UNHCR is not promoting returns due to the ongoing international armed conflict. UNHCR (2023) UNHCR Position on Voluntary Return to Ukraine, June 2023

228 UNHCR, 'MFT Mission: Uzhhorod, Chernivtsi, Vinnytsia, Internal Document'.

229 UNHCR, 'Ukraine – Multi-Year Strategy 2025 – 2027'.

230 See: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/ukraine/ukraine-humanitarian-response-and-funding-snapshot-january-may-2024#:~:text=The%20overall%20funding%20shortfall%20%E2%80%94%20only,to%20respond%20to%20critical%20needs.>

231 UNHCR, 'MFT Mission: Uzhhorod, Chernivtsi, Vinnytsia, Internal Document'.

232 According to UNHCR's Draft Focus Area Strategic Plan for Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced People 2024-2030, IDPs are said to have obtained a durable solution when they no longer have specific assistance and protection needs linked to their displacement and can enjoy their rights without discrimination on account of their displacement. The IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs sets out eight related specific criteria for this that are also used by UNHCR.

233 See for example, UNHCR, 'Thematic Legislative Update: On Amendments to the Payment of IDP Allowances', February 2024.

234 Marnie Howlett and Daryna Dvornichenko, 'To Return or Not? Ukrainian Women's Experiences of Internal Displacement', Carnegie Europe, 26 June 2024, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/06/to-return-or-not-ukrainian-womens-experiences-of-internal-displacement?lang=en>.

235 UN Ukraine, 'United Nations in Ukraine Transitional Framework September 2022 – December 2024'.

236 UNHCR, 'Focus Area Strategic Plan for Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced People: 2024-2030 DRAFT'.

237 A nascent coordination structure has been proposed and a Hromada profile and planning document template were shared during the evaluation visit, but there was no evidence provided of progress that has been made towards articulating collective outcomes.

238 UNHCR, 'MFT Mission: Uzhhorod, Chernivtsi, Vinnytsia, Internal Document'.

239 A social passport is a reputational document that contains up-to-date information about the resources and social characteristics of a community. It can be used by a community to assess its potential and promote itself, to focus on its needs and develop the necessary social services.

240 See, for example, <https://sss-ua.org/en/news/how-to-develop-a-social-passport-of-a-community-we-explain-at-our-trainings/>.

241 UNHCR, 'Evaluation of UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement (2019 – 2023). Final Evaluation Report.'

242 UNHCR, 'Focus Area Strategic Plan for Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced People: 2024-2030 DRAFT'.

243 CCCM Cluster Ukraine and REACH, 'Ukraine Collective Site Monitoring', October 2023.

244 World Bank, 'Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, February 2022 – December 2023', 2023.

245 CCCM Cluster Ukraine and REACH, 'Outlook and Way Forward : Durable Solutions for People Living in Collective Sites in Ukraine', May 2024.

246 Sida, L. et al, 'Independent Review of the Humanitarian Response to Internal Displacement', March 2024.

247 UNHCR. Working closely with the GBV AoR, UNFPA, UN Women and the Office of the Government Commissioner for Gender Policy.

248 UNHCR (2022) Annual Results Report – Ukraine 2022; Global Focus 2022 (internal) and UNHCR (2023) Annual Results Report – Ukraine 2023, Global Focus 2023.

249 UNHCR, 'Ukraine – Multi-Year Strategy 2025 – 2027'.

250 UNHCR Workshop with the Evaluation Team, Kyiv 3rd/4th July 2024.

251 A crisis modifier might translate into a limited contingency fund (often a proportion of the total budget) provided within a partnership agreement that could be used, based on agreed triggers, to mount a rapid response outside of normal programming.

252 The evaluation is cognisant that this may have implications for UNHCR's agreements with its own donors.

253 UNHCR, 'Evaluation of UNHCR's Response to Multiple Emergencies in the Central Sahel Region: Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali', 2022.

254 UNHCR, 'Sustainable Programming', June 2024.

255 UNHCR and ICVA, 'Multistakeholder Pledge: Advancing Localisation in Displacement and Statelessness Responses'.

256 The important role of civil society organizations in UNHCR's ongoing programmes is reinforced by the emergent Community-Based Protection strategy, which places CBOs at the centre of its protection approaches and investments.

257 UNHCR, 'Ukraine – Multi-Year Strategy 2025 – 2027'.

258 CPDSR, 'Coordination Structure at National, Regional and Local Levels, DRAFT', March 2024.

259 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), 'Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level', July 2015.

260 Danish Refugee Council, 'Terms of Reference for Area Based Coordination Model(s) in Ukraine (on Behalf of the HCT)', 2023..

261 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), 'Ukraine: Operational Peer Review', April 2023.

262 Community Planning for Durable Solutions and Recovery Architecture: Coordination structure at national, regional and local levels.

263 Triggers could include a change in the level of need and/or the active and relevant engagement of development actors/the State.

264 Conditions might relate to the percentage of people supported through solutions approaches, the level of capacity and engagement of community committees with development actors/the State.