

# Readiness Assessment of UNHCR's Focus Area Strategic Plan for Climate Action

*Final Report*



# Acknowledgements

We understand that this assessment took place at a time of great change and challenges, both within UNHCR as an organization, and in the aid and humanitarian sector at large. We would like to thank all staff for participating and giving their precious time and input under such constraints. We would also like to thank the Evaluation Office for working with us flexibly around the shifts in timelines and approach, and in particular for providing some dedicated project support.

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
AGD	Age, Gender, and Diversity
ARC	African Risk Capacity
ARRs	Annual Results Reports
AT	Assessment Team
CA	Climate Action
CATIE	Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIAT	International Center for Tropical Agriculture
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
CO	Country Operation
COLRED	Local Disaster Risk Reduction Committees (Guatemala)
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COMPASS	UNHCR's digital results-based management system
CRI	Core Relief Item
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSVM	Sérgio Vieira de Mello Chair
CVF-V20	Climate Vulnerable Forum – Vulnerable Twenty Group
CoP	Community of Practice
DEPS	Division of Emergency and Program Support
DER	Division of External Relations
DESS	Division of External Support Services
DIP	Division of International Protection
DIPS	Division of International Protection and Solutions
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRS	Division of Resilience and Solutions
DSPR	Division for Strategic Planning and Results
EAC	East African Community
ECAI Fund	Environment and Climate Action Innovation Fund
EHAGL	East and Horn of Africa & Great Lakes
ER	External Relations
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
EvO	Evaluation Office (UNHCR)
FASP	Focus Area Strategic Plan for Climate Action (referred to as the Strategic Plan)
FCAS	Fragile and Conflict-Affected States
FDPs	Forcibly Displaced Persons (or Populations)
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FINCOAHN	Finance for Countries Facing Conflict and Severe Humanitarian Needs
FOCAK	Forum on Africa–China Cooperation
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GTB	Greening the Blue
HQ	Headquarters

ICRAF	International Center for Research in Agroforestry
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INGD	Instituto Nacional de Gestão e Redução do Risco de Desastres (Mozambique)
INTPA	EU Directorate-General for International Partnerships
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRG	Internal Reference Group
KII	Key Informant Interview
MCFs	Multilateral Climate Funds
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MFT	Multi-Functional Team
MIRPS	Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework
MYS	Multi-Year Strategy
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NFI	Non-Food Item
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSACA	Office of the Special Advisor on Climate Action
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo
RBM	Results-Based Management
RBx	Regional Bureaux
REP Fund	Refugee Environmental Protection Fund
RLO	Refugee-Led Organization
ROI	Return on Investment
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SET	Senior Executive Team
SMS	Supply Management Service
SRS	Sustainable Response Service
TSS	Technical Support Section
TECHO	Latin American NGO focused on housing and poverty
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOSAT	United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Program
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
VIEWS	Violence & Impacts Early-Warning System
WCA	West and Central Africa
WFP	World Food Programme
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

# Executive Summary

UNHCR's Evaluation Office (EvO) commissioned a [global strategic and thematic Readiness Assessment \(RA\)](#) to provide a formative assessment of how well-positioned UNHCR is to implement its [Focus Area Strategic Plan for Climate Action \(FASP\)](#); hereafter referred to as [the Strategic Plan](#) (2024–2030). The RA was Phase 1 of a planned longitudinal evaluation. The RA sought to generate evidence, identify lessons learned, and provide recommendations to strengthen UNHCR's approach to climate action (CA); to ultimately support organizational capacity to support forcibly displaced persons, stateless individuals, and host communities in countries that are particularly vulnerable to climate change.

The RA was designed around a set of six 'enabling dimensions': key organizational features and conditions necessary for effective implementation of the Strategic Plan. These dimensions were assessed to determine the extent to which they were in place across UNHCR operations.

The RA provides an [overall organizational-level assessment \(narrative\)](#), supported and informed by: a [regional readiness assessment](#) (including regional readiness scores and drawing from a sub-sample of the 22 priority countries from the Strategic Plan); [five case studies](#) of work under the Strategic Plan's Priority Actions; analysis of primary (Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions at all three organizational levels) and secondary data and documentation. In developing this analysis, the AT responded to the five key assessment questions below:

**AQ1:** To what extent does UNHCR have the necessary enabling dimensions in place to effectively operationalize, monitor, and achieve its four inter-related objectives, priority actions and programming outputs and accelerate climate action?

**AQ2:** Which specific enabling dimensions (or combination thereof), in which contexts, require strengthening in order to accelerate progress towards achievement of these objectives, priority actions and outputs?

**AQ3:** What other actors and factors have hindered or supported UNHCR's ability to leverage the enabling dimensions and operationalize Climate Action so far in UNHCR?

**AQ4:** What conclusions and recommendations can be drawn to support RB and CO implementation of the Strategic Plan? What conclusions can be drawn regarding the relevance and appropriateness of the Strategic Plan?

**AQ5:** Which areas of inquiry should be prioritized in the second phase of the longitudinal evaluation (noting that the second phase is currently on hold)?

In terms of the RA findings, the AT developed findings for each of the enabling dimensions, drawing from the assessment across the six regions sampled. The table below presents the AT's assessment of these enabling dimensions, aligning to AQs 1, 2 and 3 in particular.

## Leadership, Strategic Planning, Governance and Accountability

UNHCR's approach to climate action has been inconsistent across regions and country operations, with progress largely driven by individual champions rather than clear **leadership and accountability structures**. Despite central efforts to define its stance, the restructuring has led to mixed messaging, causing confusion about priorities and risking a slowdown or reversal of progress. **Strategic planning** varies widely by context and leadership, but implementation is threatened by funding and staff cuts, and there is low awareness of the Strategic Plan's details. **Governance** gaps persist, with limited focal points and weak HQ-regional-country connections, while opportunities exist to prioritize actions, strengthen **coherence**, and leverage UNHCR's cluster leadership role to integrate climate into protection and emergency preparedness frameworks.

## Processes and Systems

UNHCR has demonstrated **strong innovation** and good practices in integrating climate action into **risk management, emergency preparedness, and operations**, including the development of a Climate Risk Toolkit and shifts toward anticipatory action in some regions. However, further checks, accountability and consistency are required in terms of the integration of climate or environmental risks (and opportunities) in risk management and emergency preparedness tools and processes. Strong progress has also been made through initiatives like **Greening the Blue and the Green Financing Facility**, though awareness and funding remain limited, and sustainability is not fully embedded across **supply chains**. Operational examples show significant social and environmental benefits, but many initiatives are stalled due to funding cuts and loss of technical capacity. **Innovation** is an organizational strength, supported by dedicated funds and embedded officers, while UNHCR's expertise in **Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD)** offers a cost-effective and influential entry point to ensure inclusion of persons of concern in climate action policies and programs.

## Data & Evidence

While climate-related **data** is widely available, the challenge lies in **tools** and staff capacity to access, analyze, and apply this information, particularly at localized levels. Innovations such as the Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Risk Toolkit show promise, but gaps remain in context-specific insights. Whilst **RBM** compliance is reasonable, climate markers are inconsistently applied and fail to capture the full scope of activities. **Evaluation and learning processes** are limited and largely ad hoc, hindering knowledge sharing, replication of best practices, and evidence generation for funders. **Reporting on climate action** is not mandated at country level and remains fragmented, reducing visibility of progress and opportunities for organizational alignment and resource mobilization.

## People, Capacity & Culture

The greatest risk to UNHCR's climate action is the significant loss of **staff** following funding cuts, which has dismantled many climate teams, eliminated focal points, and eroded **technical capacity**, institutional memory, and partnerships, impacting both implementation and fundraising for large-scale projects. While staff generally show commitment to climate issues, organizational culture varies, often lacking due to an absence of strong leadership, **guidance**, and structure. There is no standardized **training or induction** on climate action, nor role-specific learning, and **performance frameworks** do not include climate indicators. **Regional Bureaux** have played a key role in partnerships and technical leadership, but their diminished capacity means **HQ** will need to provide stronger support, particularly in advocacy, resource mobilization, and technical assistance, as countries express a clear need for increased communication and engagement with HQ.

## Resource Mobilization & Management

**Resource mobilization** for climate action within UNHCR is highly context-dependent, with greater success achieved through integrating climate considerations into traditional proposals such as emergency response and disaster risk reduction, while access to vertical climate funds remains limited due to organizational constraints, accreditation requirements, and systems not suited for projectized funding. Although compliance with climate markers has improved, their inconsistent use and limited scope hinder effective **resource tracking**, fundraising, and reporting. **Innovative financing approaches** like parametric insurance and carbon credits are being explored but remain nascent. Overall, significant opportunities exist to strengthen technical capacity, partnerships, and resource tracking to unlock funding from emerging sources, including multilateral climate funds and private sector contributions.

## Strategic Positioning & Partnerships

**UNHCR's strategic positioning and partnerships** for climate action have only grown in importance, following the hollowing of UNHCR's capacity. Units like OSACA have strengthened external visibility, while **UN and multilateral partnerships** are becoming essential as donors favor joint proposals. **Public sector partnerships** remain strong, offering cost-effective entry points for including persons of concern in national climate policies, while **private sector engagement**, such as carbon finance, is emerging as a critical funding source. **Refugee-led organizations** provide sustainable, locally driven solutions that align with UNHCR's 'sustainable response' approach, and **research partnerships**, notably with CGIAR, have delivered valuable technical support, though broader academic engagement remains fragmented and outcome-limited. Strengthening these partnerships is key to advancing UNHCR's climate objectives in a resource-constrained environment, particularly as the climate funds and other donors look for joint approaches.

## Other Lessons Learned

In terms of lessons learned on UNHCR's journey to implementing climate action, the AT note that despite the resource-constrained environment, **CA remains a strategic opportunity for UNHCR** to advance its mandate if effectively integrated into core operations. CA can deliver **multiple benefits** beyond environmental resilience, including improved protection outcomes, social cohesion, and livelihoods opportunities. Examples include environmental protection projects and disaster risk reduction planning which can foster collaboration between refugees and host communities, strengthening social ties. Initiatives including green jobs can provide income opportunities and integrate refugees into local economies, whilst also enhancing environmental protection, supporting ecosystems and delivering economic benefits. To maximize impact, UNHCR must work closely with national actors to ensure activities align with national policies and market demand

**UNHCR's field presence, protection and AGD expertise and wealth of data** position it well to do this. UNHCR is a trusted partner at global, national, and local levels, offering leverage to influence climate policies and platforms at national level, and at global level such as at the COPs and the Global Refugee Forum. With clearer messaging and mandate clarification, UNHCR could capitalize on this positioning to advocate for refugee-inclusive climate initiatives and support implementation of projects funded through mechanisms like the Green Climate Fund or World Bank's IDA window, ensuring protection and inclusion of displaced populations. This approach offers strong value for money and creates opportunities for refugees to be integrated into national climate strategies, plans, policies, and infrastructure projects.

Success in this will depend on strong **internal and external alignment**. Internally, leadership, governance, and organizational culture are critical enablers, as demonstrated by progress in several regions based on coherent planning and senior management support, despite limited resources. Externally, partnerships at national level with governments, multilateral agencies, and refugee-led organizations offer significant opportunities to embed refugee inclusion in climate frameworks and programs. Clear messaging on UNHCR's mandate and role in climate action is essential, particularly regarding disaster preparedness and response beyond conflict zones whilst legal and policy innovations at global level will be vital as climate change increasingly drives displacement.

## Summary of Key Conclusions in relation to the Assessment Questions

**AQ1)** Due to extensive changes in the external environment, leading to severe funding cuts and subsequently substantive staffing losses, UNHCR is less ready than it was a year ago to implement its Strategic Plan for Climate Action. Senior leadership requires to affirm whether or not climate action remains a priority for the organization, and in turn to specify the key priorities (geographically and operationally) on which to focus extremely limited resources. In order to capitalize on hard work and efforts to-date, there are many good practices and tools

outlined in this report which can support ongoing efforts once priorities are made clear. Improvements are needed to climate monitoring, reporting and knowledge management to ensure better capture of progress, lessons and good practice/tools; and to avoid further related losses related to future staff departure or movements.

**AQ2)** The new context that the organization finds itself in necessitates increased and clearer senior/executive **leadership and accountability** for climate action, and a reprioritization of the Strategic Plan and related activities.

Climate action is not robustly or comprehensively integrated across key **processes and systems**, with opportunities being missed to increase resilience of displacement settings and protect vulnerable populations from climate risks. Key priorities are risk management and emergency preparedness.

**Partnerships** are already a key modality for UNHCR, but will become even more so in order to 'combine forces' with others on various fronts (e.g. ensuring mitigation efforts are not set back or reversed by developing partnerships with peer agencies and the private sector; nurturing key strategic partnerships such as with CGIAR to ensure continued access to key climate data and analysis to inform prioritization and decision-making, and nurturing the partnership with the GCF in terms of increased access to and influence over MCF funding sources and spend).

**AQ3) Enabling factors** internally include strengths in AGD integration into climate activities, innovation and locally led approaches — providing good practice examples and lessons around environmentally, socially and economically sustainable models for climate action in humanitarian settings. Enabling factors externally include increasing visibility and awareness of climate issues due to media interest and key international/global events (e.g. COP), providing UNHCR with a 'license to operate' and public support in terms of climate action, as well as increased profile and influence through attendance at COP and similar events.

**Hindering factors** internally include difficulty in sourcing key technical skillsets for innovative climate projects and MCF proposals, and difficulty in mobilizing at pace to respond to MCF and similar 'alternative funding' opportunities. Externally, a lack of understanding of human mobility specifically in relation to climate change has limited wider engagement with this issue, but this also presents an opportunity for UNHCR in terms of external positioning and influence.

**AQ4)** The Strategic Plan in its current form is no longer fit-for-purpose in the current organizational context. The AT has thus provided some strategic and operational recommendations to support essential prioritization of UNHCR's climate action strategy and activities. Improved senior/executive leadership and accountability is requested by RBx and COs to provide clarity on climate action, with respect to the organizational mandate and the way forward under the current resource-constrained scenario.

**AQ5)** Suggested focal areas for a Phase 2 evaluation against the Strategic Plan include: nurturing and growth of key partnerships to support leveraging and influence of climate-related funding; sustained and improved internal and external leadership regarding climate action for the protection of FDPs; the degree of integration of climate and sustainability considerations across core systems and processes; improvements to knowledge retention, sharing, learning and reporting on climate action. It is also suggested that any Phase 2 evaluation includes case studies regarding key innovations (e.g. parametric insurance with ARC) highlighted in this assessment.

## Recommendations

This readiness assessment has come at a key juncture for UNHCR. 2025 was a turbulent year for the humanitarian sector and global climate action as a whole. UNHCR experienced huge cuts to its funding, and the loss of many key staff as a result. The arrival of the new High Commissioner at the beginning of 2026 will be a pivotal moment as UNHCR decides upon its strategic direction in the years to come.

Despite the substantive global shifts, the impacts that the climate crisis presents remain constant. The numbers of forcibly displaced people will continue to grow, and those that are already displaced will be amongst the most at risk. Therefore, UNHCR cannot ignore the climate crisis. Instead, it must be decisive on where and how it can intervene most effectively and use its reduced resources accordingly.

To support this, the AT have provided two levels of recommendations. The first set are **strategic recommendations** to guide these key strategic decisions that UNHCR will make in the following months (focused on the three pillars of the Strategic Plan: International Protection; Adaptation and Resilience, and Mitigation); and the second set are **operational recommendations** to support implementation of the strategic recommendations — continuing improvements, building on good practice and progress identified, and addressing specific gaps in operational readiness in order to implement a revised Strategic Plan.

The recommendations are presented in order of priority and build on the findings and lessons presented. It is anticipated that the three Strategic Recommendations (presented below) will warrant a Management Response, with the Operational Recommendations (see main body of report) guiding the implementation of that response.

No	Strategic Plan Pillar	Recommendation
1	International Protection	<b>UNHCR should maintain a priority focus on advocacy and Leveraging for Inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in climate action policies, programs, platforms and fora. However, given limited resources and budget, there is a need to revisit the strategy, and ensure that efforts are focused where there is most comparative advantage and potential for impact.</b> This will necessitate continued and increased alignment with other UN agencies and investing in the nurturing and development of key strategic partnerships (e.g. with GCF on Climate Action Coalition in FCAS – directly linking to potential for further funding) in order to combine resources and complementary skillsets. Focus on instruments such as the GRF climate action pledge process with significant leveraging potential, at both global and national levels, will also be key.

2	Adaptation & Resilience	<p><b>A) UNHCR should reduce the number of climate action priority countries and therefore reduce the number of countries with specific adaptation and resilience projects. We also suggest that it would be more appropriate to change the terminology to ‘climate focal’ and ‘climate mainstreaming’ countries.</b></p> <p>A smaller set of priority (or as above ‘focal countries’) countries should be identified where focussed efforts or initiatives will be supported, with two objectives/lenses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Highest climate vulnerability</i> – the forcibly displaced populations and settlements/operations which are most exposed to climate risk should be identified for prioritisation of adaptation, resilience-building and anticipatory action efforts (e.g. tree nurseries/cocooning and greenbelt construction). This will necessitate continued investment in key strategic partnerships (e.g. CGIAR) to access data to inform decision-making, as well as further development of partnerships (including private sector partnerships) to support innovation around and implementation of anticipatory action activities (e.g. as with current examples such as the parametric insurance partnership with ARC in RSA – now part of RB EHAGL).</li> <li>• <i>Highest potential for accessing and influencing the Multilateral Climate Funds</i> – those countries or groups of countries with existing (e.g. Tanzania) or pipeline funding for the MCFs (or high potential for securing or influencing such funding – e.g. Nigeria, Bangladesh) should be identified. This will require close collaboration with DER’s Climate Finance team. This again will require effort and investment in nurturing and developing key partnerships with peer agencies and others, to access complementary skillsets and resources, and also to enable successful proposals and influencing to ensure these funding pots are directed towards forcibly displaced people where possible.</li> </ul> <p><b>B) UNHCR should focus efforts and resources towards further and more comprehensive <u>integration</u> and mainstreaming of climate action considerations (particularly in terms of climate risk identification and preparedness/anticipatory action) across <u>all operations and countries</u>.</b> Therefore, it is proposed that all countries are expected to reach a ‘minimum standard of climate action’, in particular which identifies and mitigates key climate risks to operations and forcibly displaced persons. Note, this will still require some investment and/or strategic partnerships to enable access to technical skillsets and staff resource to guide improved integration, as well as ensuring access to key data to inform decision-making.</p>
3	Mitigation	<p><b>UNHCR should look to sustain and fund mitigation efforts by making this a focus and specific inclusion in funding proposals and looking to sustain the central Green Financing Facility.</b> Again, partnerships with other UN agencies and the private sector are key both to pool resources and skillsets, and to access innovation and additional funding.</p>

# 1 Background

## 1.1 Purpose of the Readiness Assessment

1. UNHCR's Evaluation Office (EvO) has commissioned a [global strategic and thematic Readiness Assessment \(RA\)](#) provide a formative assessment as to how well-positioned UNHCR is to implement its [Focus Area Strategic Plan for Climate Action \(FASP; hereafter referred to as the Strategic Plan\) \(2024–2030\)](#). Specifically, the RA will: inform real-time implementation of the Strategic Plan; establish a baseline for any future evaluation (the RA was originally Phase 1 of a two-part longitudinal evaluation, with Phase 2 on hold due to organizational funding pressures) and contribute to an upcoming strategic review by the Senior Executive Team (SET) (currently scheduled for 2026/27). The assessment seeks to generate evidence, identify lessons learned, and provide recommendations to strengthen the agency's approach to climate action (CA). The RA focuses on UNHCR's capacity to support forcibly displaced persons, stateless individuals, and host communities in countries that are particularly vulnerable to climate change.
2. The evaluation is structured in two phases. Phase 1, this [Readiness Assessment \(RA\)](#), is formative in nature; aiming to assess how well-positioned UNHCR is to implement its [Focus Area Strategic Plan for Climate Action \(FASP\) \(2024–2030\)](#) — informing real-time implementation of the plan, establishing a baseline and informing any future more summative evaluations.
3. The RA is structured around a set of '[enabling dimensions](#)': key organizational features and conditions necessary for effective implementation of the Strategic Plan, underpinning its Theory of Change. These dimensions are assessed to determine the extent to which these are in place across UNHCR operations and initiatives.
4. The RA is supported by five case studies which focus on the Priority Actions from the Strategic Plan. These case studies were drawn from a sub-sample of the 22 priority countries for UNHCR's climate action (selected in close consultation with HQ and Regional Bureaux (RBx)), as well as wider examples and inputs across the organization.
5. While the RA is relevant to all UNHCR divisions, regions, and operations, its primary audiences include the SET, EvO, DEPS (Division of Emergency and Program Support — previously the Division for Strategic Planning and Results - DSPR), Division of External Relations (DER), Division of International Protection and Solutions (DIPS) the Office of the Special Advisor on Climate Action (OSACA), and the RBx<sup>1</sup>.

## 1.2 Climate Action Policy Context

### 1.2.1 Global

6. The global policy landscape for climate action has rapidly evolved over the past decade, driven by the increasing frequency and severity of climate related disasters and the urgent need for coordinated responses. Climate change is now acknowledged as a key underlying driver of displacement and human mobility. Disaster displacement has doubled since the 1970s; with an estimated 203.4 m people displaced by disasters between 2008 and 2015.<sup>2</sup> Over the last decade, weather-related disasters have caused 220 million

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that a significant restructure took place across UNHCR in the middle of the RA timeline. Therefore, the evaluation was commissioned, designed and most data collection completed before the new structure was finalised. This report therefore still contains references to previous teams in the previous structure; however, we have sought to adapt recommendations in light of the new structure.

<sup>2</sup> IDMC (2015) cited in UNHCR (2017). Climate Change and Disaster Displacement: An Overview of UNHCR's role.

internal displacements.<sup>3</sup> In recent years, forced displacement has become more complex, with protracted crises, a diversification of displacement drivers, and the needs of affected people being increasingly multi-dimensional. Climate change is compounding and multiplying the challenges faced by those who have already been displaced, as well as their hosts, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings.<sup>4</sup> For example, in 2023, more than a quarter of displacements related to weather disasters took place in fragile and conflict-affected settings. Climate impacts are prolonging displacement and making durable solutions harder to achieve. Many refugees are returning to highly climate-vulnerable countries, increasing risks of recurrent or secondary displacement.<sup>5</sup>

7. The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, remains the central framework guiding global efforts to limit global temperature rise to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), long-term low-emission strategies, and enhanced transparency mechanisms.<sup>6</sup> However, the UN Secretary-General confirmed that limiting warming to 1.5 °C has failed, although it remains possible by century end with urgent action.<sup>7</sup> The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development positions climate action (SDG 13) as a cross-cutting enabler for all SDGs. It highlights the links between environmental sustainability, poverty reduction, gender equality and resilience.
8. Recent developments have reinforced the urgency of just and inclusive transitions. The Global Stocktake (GST) under the UNFCCC; outcomes from COP28 on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), and growing net-zero and nature-positive commitments by governments and businesses signal a shift from negotiation to implementation and accountability.<sup>8</sup> Other frameworks, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030)<sup>9</sup>, the Global Biodiversity Framework (2022)<sup>10</sup>, and the UN Secretary-General’s Climate Action Agenda<sup>11</sup>, promote integration of climate action with resilience, biodiversity and peacebuilding.
9. Global financing mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Adaptation Fund (AF), Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Loss and Damage Fund (which are referred to as the Multilateral Climate Funds (MCFs)) have become essential tools for adaptation and mitigation efforts in developing countries. The GCF and African Development Bank (AfDB) are leading efforts to increase access to climate finance for fragile countries, focusing on contexts affected by conflict and instability. Significant progress for climate funding in countries affected by fragility, conflict and severe humanitarian needs is also being made through the UNFCCC Needs Based Financing (NBF) work and the Finance for Countries Facing Conflict and Severe Humanitarian Needs (FINCOAHN) project.<sup>12</sup> The Climate Vulnerable Forum and Vulnerable 20 Finance Ministers (CVF-V20) recognize carbon markets as another levers to unlock funding to V20 countries.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> IDMC, NRC (2024). Global Report on Internal Displacement 2024.

<sup>4</sup> [UNHCR \(2025\). No Escape II – The way forward.](#)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> [The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC](#)

<sup>7</sup> Interview by Wajā Xipai and Jonathan Watts, “Exclusive | UN Secretary-General: Indigenous voices ‘indispensable’ to avoid climate catastrophe”, SUMAÚMA, 27 October 2025 (updated 6 November 2025).

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, “Global Stock take”, 2025.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat, Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), 2022.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Secretary-General, Climate Action Acceleration Agenda, 2023.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, *Needs-based Finance Project*, n.d. <https://unfccc.int/NBF-Project>

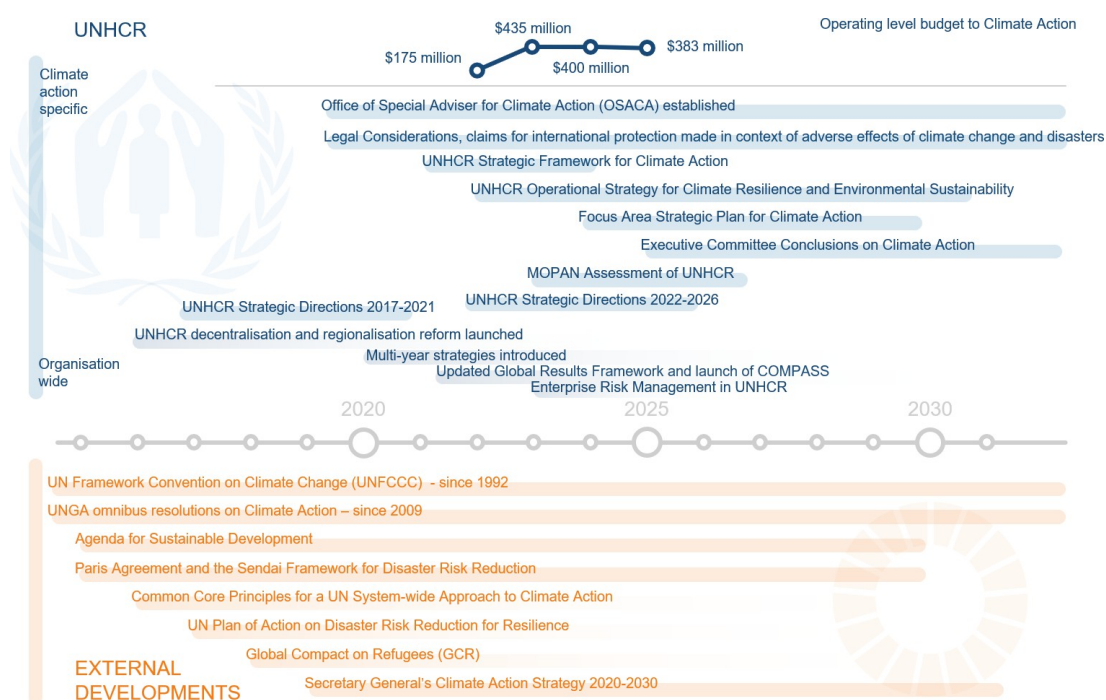
<sup>13</sup> Mohamed Nasheed, “To close the climate finance gap, let vulnerable nations use carbon markets,” *Al Jazeera English*, 20 August 2025

10. COP30 in Belém, Brazil (November 2025) key agenda items include scaling up climate finance through the “Baku-to-Belém Roadmap” to mobilize 1.3 trillion US dollars annually by 2035, advancing forest protection through new financing instruments such as the proposed Tropical Forest Forever Facility, and promoting just transition mechanisms to support communities and workers moving away from fossil fuel dependence.<sup>14</sup> Full details for the GGA are also expected to be finalised. Equity and inclusion are central to these efforts, with a strong emphasis on linking climate justice to poverty reduction and vulnerability.
11. This increasingly interconnected policy environment underscores that climate action is a governance, social and economic transformation agenda as well as an environmental issue. However, recent evolutions in U.S. foreign and national policy as well as a growing global backlash against climate action, diversity, and migration, undermines efforts in international cooperation and funding for inclusive climate and displacement responses and directly challenges UNHCR’s mandate to protect and support people displaced by climate-driven crises.

## 1.2.2 Within UNHCR

12. The timeline below sets out the key moments in UNHCR’s approach to operationalising Climate Action, alongside key external moments.

Figure 1 UNHCR’s climate action timeline<sup>15</sup>



13. UNHCR has substantially increased its CA engagement in recent years, recognizing that climate change is both a driver and amplifier of displacement. The 2021 Strategic Framework for Climate Action marked the first comprehensive plan, structured around three for action (Law and Policy, Operations, and UNHCR’s Environmental Footprint) and five objectives. This was complemented, internally, by [UNHCR’s first Operational Strategy](#)

<sup>14</sup> Brazilian Presidency of COP30, *Fourth Letter from the Presidency*, 20 June 2025; Climate Policy Initiative, *Advancing the Baku-to-Belém Climate Finance Roadmap*, 2025; Vitória Alves, “4 things to know about the COP in the heart of the Amazon,” *Forests News*, June 2025.

<sup>15</sup> Budget figures are as of 11 August 2025, drawing from COMPASS data tagged against the organizational climate marker.

[for Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability](#) (2022-2025). Climate risks were added to UNHCR's Strategic Risk Register<sup>16</sup>, contingency plan templates, and emergency preparedness policy. Practical guidance for staff on IDP protection in climate contexts was also issued, aligned with UN system-wide frameworks and commitments such as the UNFCCC and the Climate and Environment Charter.<sup>17 18 19</sup>

14. In early March 2022, the High Commissioner (HC) launched the [Strategic Directions 2022-2026](#), to guide global, regional and country strategies over five years. Central to the Strategic Directions, the organization identified eight focus areas where results have been uneven or slow, and which would benefit from accelerated effort. Climate action is one of the eight areas, where UNHCR commits to “Proactively act to mitigate the effects of the climate change crisis on displacement and in line with our protection mandate”.<sup>20</sup> Following this commitment, UNHCR launched the “Focus Area Strategic Plan (FASP) for Climate Action 2024-2030” in March 2024 to provide further detail and clarity on the accelerated effort in this focus area. The [2023-24 MOPAN Assessment of UNHCR](#) noted that the organization had made considerable efforts to incorporate climate as a cross-cutting issue, but that performance and results remained uneven. It presented the Strategic Plan as ‘an opportunity for a step change in this area’.
15. The Strategic Plan brings together, for the first time, a global roadmap for operationalising UNHCR's commitment to reduce and manage the effects of climate change on forcibly displaced and stateless people, whilst also addressing the organizational footprint and contributions to global greenhouse gas emissions from operations, facilities, and supply chain practices.<sup>21</sup> The Strategic Plan is based on one common vision:  
*“By 2030, increasing numbers of forcibly displaced and stateless people fleeing from climate-fueled crises and/or living in climate-vulnerable countries find solutions, are protected and resilient to the impacts of climate change, and are living self-sufficient lives”.*
16. The ToC below (Figure 2), illustrates how UNHCR will achieve this vision through four interdependent objectives (protection, adaptation and resilience, and mitigation) supported by internal enablers, advocacy for inclusion, and priority actions. It links assumptions, programming areas, outputs, and objectives to global results frameworks.
17. The Strategic Plan sets out five shifts in how UNHCR works globally on climate action: i) a new corporate results structure for climate action (please see Figure 2 below); ii) clarified UNHCR's role as a global thought leader advocating protection for climate-affected refugees; iii) a differentiated approach to programming and resource mobilization in 22 priority countries; iv) stronger strategic partnerships with UN agencies and other actors; and v) new global programming principles to ensure all work is protection-centered, climate-smart, and environmentally sustainable.<sup>22</sup>
18. The plan shows where there is alignment between the four objectives of the Strategic Plan and the Outcome Areas (as well as some global “Enabling Areas”<sup>23</sup>) from the Global

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<sup>16</sup> Climate is one of the 13 organization-wide risks that all country operations have to consider when conducting risk reviews (without formal obligation to cover the issue in their risk registers).

<sup>17</sup> [UNHCR, Practical guidance for UNHCR staff on IDP protection in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change, 2021.](#)

<sup>18</sup> [UNHCR, Policy for Enterprise Risk Management in UNHCR, 2020 \(UNHCR/HCP/2020/2/Rev.1\).](#)

<sup>19</sup> Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations, n.d.

<sup>20</sup> [UNHCR, Strategic Directions 2022–2026, 2022.](#)

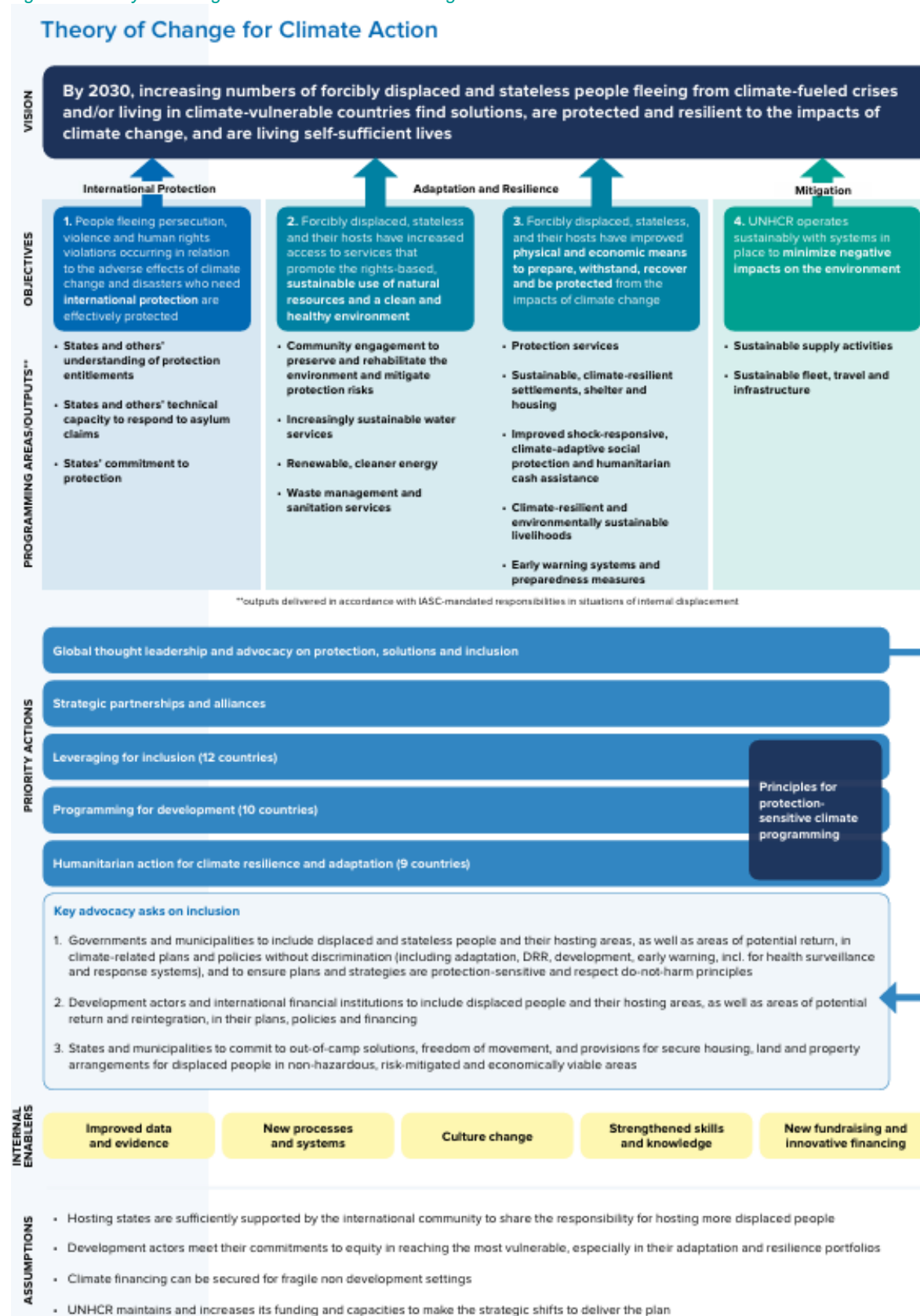
<sup>21</sup> [UNHCR \(2024\). Focus Area Strategic Plan for Climate Action 2024-2030, March.](#)

<sup>22</sup> UNHCR, Protection-centered Climate Action Principles, 2024. UNHCR has developed three protection-centered climate action principles to help guide the Organization delivering its protection mandate while achieving climate resilience and environmental sustainability: Centrality of Protection and AAP, Climate-smart, Environmental Sustainability and Eco-friendly Programming. The Protection-Centered Climate Action Principles help UNHCR show commitment to climate action, while upholding its protection mandate. They also serve as a reminder for operations to mainstream protection, climate and environment in our day-to-day activities.

<sup>23</sup> There are five global Enabling Areas, which encapsulate UNHCR's management work.

Results Framework for Strategic Directions 2022-2026. Outcomes and outputs in the Strategic Plan are specific to climate action, and its indicators are predominately different from the core indicators in the Global Results Framework which does not articulate an outcome area for climate action (such as climate resilience). However, four indicators in the Strategic Plan have been adopted from the Global Results Framework. The results framework for the Strategic Plan articulates the responsible body for reporting on the indicator, either country operations, or Headquarters. COMPASS: UNHCR's digital results-based management system supporting planning, monitoring and reporting, is the data source for the indicators.

Figure 2 Theory of Change for the Focus Area Strategic Plan for Climate Action



19. The Strategic Plan articulates the comparative advantage that UNHCR brings to each objective. For Objective 1, the Strategic Plan affirms UNHCR's global leadership role and mandated years of expertise and field presence in supporting States to ensure refugees, returnees, stateless and internally displaced people are protected. For Objective 2, the Strategic Plan explains that UNHCR already has rich experience providing access to basic, sustainable services; already has relevant competencies, such as disaster analysis skills; and has experience advocating for the inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless people in local plans and budgets. For Objective 3, the Strategic Plan presents UNHCR's longstanding experience and a mandated role to work with governments to strengthen their capacity to provide protection, as well as their experience in programming to address and reduce vulnerabilities and protection risks. For Objective 4, the Strategic Plan highlights that UNHCR is already recognized as a sustainability leader amongst UN agencies.
20. The ToC also outlines the types of climate action programming activities that have been undertaken or are proposed. Throughout this RA report, we refer to 'climate action' using a broad term, but it is implicit that we have examined a range of climate action activities and programming across the organization drawing from this ToC, COMPASS and Climate Action Updates (see Inception Report, Table 1) and taking an 'emergent' approach during data collection.
21. Finally, to operationalize the Strategic Plan, UNHCR has outlined five priority actions that will be implemented across organizational levels. In each given context, actions will be prioritized according to the status of the country on the humanitarian-development continuum.

#### Box 1: UNHCR five priority actions to operationalize the Focus Area Strategic Plan for Climate Action

UNHCR five priority actions to operationalize the Strategic Plan:

1. Global thought leadership and advocacy
2. Strategic partnerships
3. Leveraging for inclusion (12 priority countries)
4. Implementing multi-year development projects in sectors where UNHCR has experience (10 priority countries)
5. Humanitarian action to improve resilience (9 priority countries).

22. This Readiness Assessment looks at how the Strategic Plan has been operationalized, from development of CA strategies at regional and country level, to implementation of operational 'greening' and initiatives to build resilience and adaptation.

## 2 Readiness Assessment Methodology

### 2.1 Readiness Assessment Outputs

#### 2.1.1 Readiness Assessment of UNHCR's regions

24. The AT undertook a readiness assessment of six of UNHCR's regions<sup>24</sup> using six enabling dimensions<sup>25</sup> developed during Inception: (i) leadership, strategic planning, governance and accountability; (ii) processes and systems; (iii) data and evidence; (iv) people, capacity and culture; (v) resource mobilization and management; and (vi) strategic positioning and partnerships.<sup>26</sup> Each dimension comprises specific determinants (e.g., resource mobilization includes resource tracking, fundraising, and innovative financing). Full details are provided in Annex **Error! Reference source not found.** and Figure 3 below provides a graphical representation of the six enabling dimensions.

Figure 3 Graphical representation of the six enabling dimensions



25. Therefore, readiness in terms of this assessment describes: (a) the status of each determinant across the selected regions, based on the evidence collected from the country operations and RBx; and (b) the composite readiness of each of the enabling dimensions, calculated as an average (index score) of its determinants. In terms of scoring, Table 1 provides an overview of the criteria used to assess each determinant and enabling dimension.

<sup>24</sup> RB Europe was included as a stakeholder, but does not undertake any significant work on climate action

<sup>25</sup> Drawing on the FASP, SFCA and Strategic Directions.

<sup>26</sup> The Terms of Reference (ToR) proposed a methodological approach that stems from UNICEF's Evaluation Office RA design. Please refer to Annex V of the Inception Report for rationale of this choice.

Table 1 Scoring criteria, scores and definitions

Score	Criterion	Definition
/	<b>Not Rated</b>	The not rated category was reserved for unanticipated issues and instances where no evidence was available.
1	<b>Beginning</b>	Not at all present/developed or functional. A great deal of adjustment required to be ready.
2	<b>Developing</b>	Limited presence/development. A lot of adjustment required to be ready.
3	<b>Progressing</b>	Partially present/developed and functional. Some gaps remain to be addressed.
4	<b>Consolidating</b>	Largely present/developed and largely functional. Some refinements required to ensure readiness.
5	<b>Exemplary</b>	Fully present/developed and functional. No adjustment required to be ready. Could be used as an example of good practice.

26. Each of the determinants in all six regions was rated using the above scale. Scores are supported by an accompanying narrative and a strength of evidence rating. The scores were adjusted through peer review in participative workshops between the AT and EvO (e.g. based on strength of evidence – see Annex VIII for the Evidence Confidence rubric used), and then again through validation workshops with the six regions. Throughout the RA process, it was emphasized that the accompanying narrative provides greater value than the numerical scores alone, as the scores serve primarily as a high-level and visually accessible measure of readiness.
27. The scoring process for the RA involved multiple steps to ensure a robust and evidence-based approach. It began with the review of documentary evidence, KIIs, FGDs, AI-assisted analysis, and Mentimeter scoring for each country. This evidence was collected against determinants from three purposively selected countries per region (excluding Europe). Based on this, readiness scores were assigned to each determinant under the six enabling dimensions using a five-point scale. These scores were then averaged to calculate index scores for each enabling dimension across all six regions. Finally, these regional scores informed the overall organizational readiness assessment for UNHCR to operationalize climate action. A graphic representation of the scoring thresholds and process can be found in Annex **Error! Reference source not found.**

### 2.1.2 Assessment of organizational-level readiness

28. Finally, a narrative analysis at the organizational level answers the following key Assessment Questions (AQs):
- AQ1. To what extent does UNHCR have the necessary enabling dimensions in place to effectively operationalize, monitor, and achieve its four inter-related objectives, priority actions and programming outputs and accelerate climate action?
  - AQ2. Which specific enabling dimensions (or combination thereof), in which contexts, require strengthening in order to accelerate progress towards achievement of these objectives, priority actions and outputs?
  - AQ3. What other actors and factors have hindered or supported UNHCR's ability to leverage the enabling dimensions and operationalize Climate Action so far in UNHCR?

- AQ4. What conclusions and recommendations can be drawn to support RB and CO implementation of the Strategic Plan? What conclusions can be drawn regarding the relevance and appropriateness of the Strategic Plan?
- AQ5. Which areas of inquiry should be prioritized in the second phase of the longitudinal evaluation (noting that the second phase is now on hold)?
29. This analysis draws from the regional readiness assessment, the five case studies and further analysis of the KII, FGD and documentary evidence across the three organizational levels. Please see Annex VIII for the full Assessment Matrix.

### 2.1.3 Five Case Studies on UNHCR’s priority actions on climate

30. The Assessment Team (AT) developed five case studies (one for each priority action). The focus for the case studies (see summary in Table 2 below) was identified through consultation with UNHCR stakeholders, looking at wider interest and potential for learning.

*Table 2 Five Case Study Focus Areas*

Case Study	Focus
<b>Leveraging for Inclusion</b>	Explores the approaches being implemented in Ecuador but draws on examples from across UNHCR operations.
<b>Humanitarian Action to improve Climate Resilience</b>	Explores examples from Bangladesh and Jordan; but also provides other examples of humanitarian response and preparedness, and of leveraging for inclusion of climate in terms of emergency preparedness and response.
<b>Programming for Development</b>	Explores the approaches being implemented in Cameroon and Ethiopia but draws on examples from across UNHCR operations.
<b>Global Thought Leadership and Advocacy</b>	Focuses on the partnership developed with CGIAR to improve data-driven decision making, advocacy and accessibility.
<b>Strategic Partnerships</b>	Explores the strategic partnership with the GCF and Adaptation Fund as well as examples from the partnerships with CGIAR, CIFOR, African Risk Capacity and UNHCR’s internal Environment and Climate Action Innovation Fund.

31. The case studies largely drew from country and regional level data (with HQ level data and examples featuring more under the Thought Leadership and Partnerships studies). Their purpose was to: add depth and contextualise the RA; provide an overview of key progress in these areas, and to provide further evidence for the RA questions by exploring inhibiting and supporting actors or factors.

## 2.2 Readiness Assessment Design

32. The RA was designed using the following principles: 1) an approach focused on learning and adaptation both for UNHCR and for the assessment itself, the design of which was iterated throughout the process; 2) proportionality and minimizing burden on UNHCR staff, particularly at regional and country level; 3) being a critical friend by providing constructive feedback and actionable lessons; 4) clear, transparent and evidence-based assessment; and 5) clear and regular communication with EvO and other key stakeholders. Figure 4 below summarizes the Assessment’s methodological approach. Please note that the RA design has key differentiations from the ToR, and therefore the Inception Report has also been provided in Annex XII. The RA was supported and informed by the Internal Reference Group of key internal experts and stakeholders (with two workshops looking at Design and Recommendations respectively).

Figure 4 Graphical representation of the methodological approach



33. The following sections detail each of the stages represented in Figure 5 above, and concludes with key limitations and challenges related to the methodology.

## 2.3 Data Collection

34. The RA used a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data from both primary and secondary sources. The team reviewed over 900 documents, coding 360 in MAXQDA against the RA framework. These included strategies, policies, reports, presentations, and risk analysis.
35. The AT engaged a total of 124 stakeholders through a combination of 34 KIIs, and 24 FGDs conducted over a period of 9 weeks. The process included a mix of internal staff and external partners (with a weighting to internal staff due to the organizational nature of the assessment), ensuring representation from selected field and country operations, all RBx, and relevant units in HQ. The full list of stakeholders who participated is provided in Annex IX.
36. FGDs were designed to capture qualitative and quantitative insights. To support this, the AT used Mentimeter as a real-time data collection tool. Participants anonymously rated each determinant and enabler on a scale from 1 to 5, which then provided an average score for each. The live display of results enabled open discussion, allowing participants to reflect on the scores and provide contextual feedback on the rationale behind their ratings. The quantitative scores also fed into the assessment scoring process.
37. KIIs followed semi-structured guides tailored to each interviewee’s role. For example, fundraising staff were asked about resource mobilization and partnerships. KII guide templates can be found in Annex VII.
38. Countries were purposively sampled using: the 22 Strategic Plan priority countries; recommendations from the IRG, HQ and RBx; and criteria such as availability and evaluation fatigue. All priority countries except for Kenya, Rwanda, Central African Republic, Niger and Uganda were included. Pakistan was included but was substituted with China during the RA due to the emergency response in the country. The AT sought to include at least three countries from each region. The AT were unable to secure engagement of stakeholders from the DRC, Afghanistan and Yemen country operations; so in these cases the assessment was restricted to documentary evidence.

Table 3 Sample countries selected for Main Readiness Assessment and Priority Action Case Studies

Regions	Sample Countries	Priority Action Country Case Study
East and Horn of Africa & Great Lakes	Ethiopia	Programming for Development
	South Sudan	
	Somalia	
	Tanzania	Strategic Partnerships
West and Central Africa	Burkina Faso	
	Cameroon	Programming for Development
	Chad	
	Nigeria	
Southern Africa	DRC	
	Malawi	
	Mozambique	
MENA	Jordan	Humanitarian Action for Climate Resilience
	Mauritania	
	Yemen	
Asia and Pacific	Afghanistan	
	Bangladesh	Humanitarian Action for Climate Resilience
	China	
Americas	Ecuador	
	Honduras	
	Brazil	Leveraging for Inclusion

## 2.4 Data Analysis

39. The AT used a structured approach to analyze data against the RA framework. All KII and FGD notes, along with relevant documents, were coded in MAXQDA using a tailored system aligned with the RA determinants. To manage the volume of secondary data, UNHCR's Evaluation Office developed a bespoke AI tool that identified evidence gaps and summarized key documents, supporting triangulation and strengthening the evidence base.
40. Each region's data was systematically reviewed against the RA determinants. Evidence tables were created to summarize findings, assign scores, and rate confidence levels. These scores were adjusted through internal AT and joint analysis workshops with EvO to ensure alignment and consistency. Regional validation sessions followed, allowing stakeholders to verify interpretations, fill gaps, and share additional examples of good practice. A Miro Board was used to visually capture feedback, which informed final revisions.
41. This structured process enabled the team to respond to the Assessment Questions and assess readiness across diverse operational contexts.

## 2.5 Limitations and Challenges

42. As mentioned in the Acknowledgements section, this assessment took place during a time of extreme change both in the wider humanitarian sector and in UNHCR itself as an organization.
43. Substantial funding and staff cuts in UNHCR, largely due to the cuts to US aid, resulted in a restructuring and downsizing process across UNHCR from early 2025 (with a new functional structure in place from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025). This meant that it was challenging for staff to engage during data collection due to competing demands, concerns and priorities.

As a result, the AT were unable to interview any stakeholders from three countries (DRC, Afghanistan and Yemen). These became a limited desk review with some RBx inputs. The restructuring also led to the Southern Africa (SA) region being merged into the EHAGL and WCA RBs during the assessment period, adding complexity and limiting the ability of staff to engage (particularly in SA).

44. Staff were also leaving at a rapid rate and despite flexibility from the AT, we were unable to speak to all key staff before departure, and many were unable to take part in the validation sessions following data collection. A lack of detailed handover or exit material also added to this challenge.
45. The significant organizational changes also led to a 'moving target' in terms of the RA, as the organization was continually in flux throughout. The AT had to make decisions on scoring and assessment, with some significant changes 'pre' and 'post' restructuring, which the team had to account for in the analysis.
46. Due to these significant changes, many aspects of UNHCR's climate action work have been significantly set back, either permanently or at least for the medium term. This has led to a 'moving target' in terms of the RA, as the organization was continually in flux throughout. This has presented challenges for the scoring and overall assessment of organizational readiness, whilst also heightening the importance and relevance of the RA, as the organization seeks to navigate sectoral and organizational change and reprioritise.
47. The restructuring also led to a 'hold' on data collection for over two months, with the data collection period then being extended to ensure flexibility and sensitive engagement with staff. This led to an understandable loss in engagement and focus at times from key stakeholders and also presented challenges for the AT to sustain momentum. In addition, some aspects of the Strategic Plan itself seemed poorly understood or integrated at regional and country level, particularly the priority actions. This made sampling and engagement for the case studies particularly challenging.

## 3 Readiness Assessment Results

### 3.1 Overall Organizational Readiness

48. A high-level assessment of organizational readiness is provided below, against Assessment Questions (AQs) 1-3. As AQs 4 and 5 refer to recommendations and conclusions, and any potential Phase 2 of this longitudinal evaluation, these are covered under Section 3 (alongside an overall summary of conclusions across all AQs). Please refer to Annex VIII for the sub-questions which each broad AQ speaks to.
49. It is vital to consider the assessment and relevant scores below in the context of significant organizational challenge and flux (see Section 2.5). Although the new structure is now 'live', much is still being worked through in terms of the implications for UNHCR's operations and roll-out. The AT has endeavoured to provide a fair, evidence-based assessment and scoring based on the situation at the point of data collection, but the internal and external context continues to evolve and change at a rapid pace.

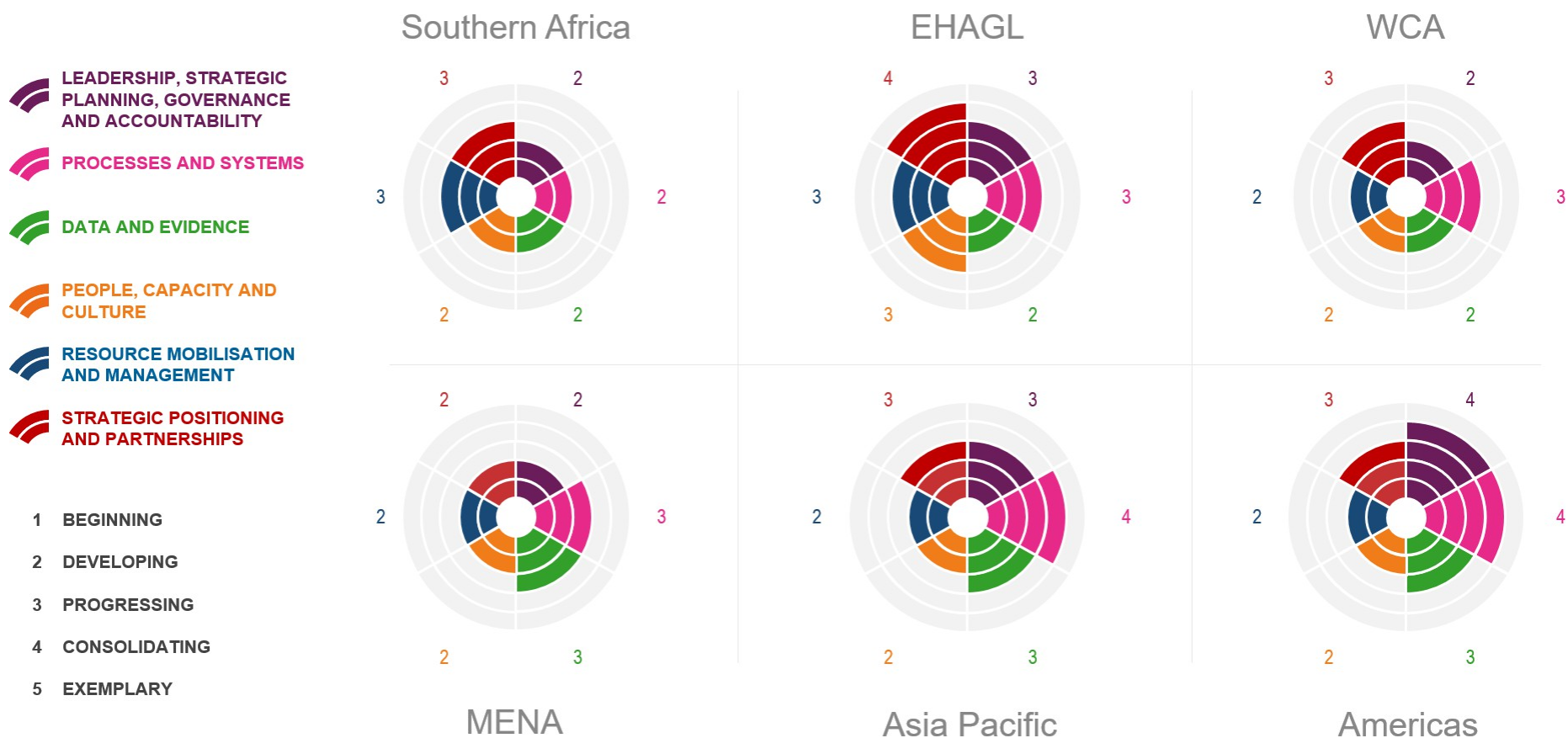
#### 3.1.1 Assessment Questions 1 and 2

**AQ1: To what extent does UNHCR have the necessary enabling dimensions in place to effectively operationalize, monitor, and achieve its four inter-related objectives, priority actions and programming outputs and accelerate climate action?**

**AQ2: Which specific enabling dimensions (or combination thereof), in which contexts, require strengthening in order to accelerate progress towards achievement of these objectives, priority actions and outputs?**

50. In terms of **Enabling Dimensions with the most potential to strengthen UNHCR's value in interagency settings, and CA work overall**, UNHCR is known for its reach and presence in the field, and for expertise and data on protection and mobility. Robust integration of CA into field operations (via **strengthened processes and systems**) and protection data (e.g. via innovations, such as the Climate Vulnerability Assessment toolkit, **strengthening data and evidence**) therefore provide clear entry-points for UNHCR to progress CA work and objectives, demonstrate leadership on CA related to displacement and to influence others to do the same. Partnerships and advocacy are a vital and effective operational modality for the organization, even more so in the current resource-constrained context and amidst calls from key donors and funds for a joint UN approach on climate action. **Identification, building and strengthening of key partnerships at all levels** is thus a key enabler for UNHCR's CA objectives.
51. The People, Capacity and Culture enabling dimension presents perhaps the greatest risk to UNHCR's CA objective attainment presently, with substantial losses of staff and technical capacity related to climate action. There is also a need for strengthened messaging and leadership on CA, particularly in the new organizational context; with stakeholders expressing a lack of clarity and mixed messages on relevance and prioritization.

Figure 5: Overview of the Readiness Assessment Enabling Dimension Scores for the Six Regions



52. Annex **Error! Reference source not found.** provides the full details of the regional readiness assessment. Overall, regions were found to be either ‘**Developing**’ or ‘**Progressing**’ in terms of their readiness for climate action, with four enabling dimensions rated as ‘**Consolidating**’. The following section outlines the key findings under each Enabling Dimension and determinant. An overall evidence rating is provided for each dimension, and against particular determinants where possible and appropriate.

### 3.1.1.i Leadership, Strategic Planning, Governance and Accountability

53. **Leadership and accountability (Evidence Rating: Medium** – good alignment across KII/FGDs at all organizational levels) were found to vary across the regions and depend heavily on invested ‘champions’ at RB and CO level. Questions regarding the relation of climate action to UNHCR’s core life-saving and humanitarian mandate have only intensified following the restructuring, with perceived mixed messaging from UNHCR senior leadership as to whether climate action is simply to be ‘reframed’ or whether it is indeed being deprioritized. This clarity is essential for organizational leaders to be able to provide consistent and aligned messaging and directives around CA. The retention of an, albeit reduced, OSACA team was seen as an important signal regarding continued focus on CA; but there may need to be a rebalancing of efforts and focus regarding this team in light of the restructuring. There was a lack of clarity, both in documentation and in practice, regarding the ownership and accountability for climate action and the implementation of the Strategic Plan (only the Roadmap for the Strategic Plan, which is not well socialized, has a mention of departmental responsibility for high-level milestones).
- **Strategic planning (Evidence Rating: High** – good levels of documentation triangulated by KIIs/FGDs) similarly varied across regions, though the RA found several good practice examples as highlighted in below.

#### Box 2: Best Practice in Strategic Planning for Climate Action - Asia and Pacific Regional Plan and Jordan’s Country Operation Climate Action Plan

As a ‘frontrunner’ the Asia and Pacific RB elaborated a Regional Climate Action Plan ahead of the global Strategic Plan and subsequently retrofitted the regional plan following launch of the Strategic Plan. The plan outlines priority countries as well as strategic focus e.g. programming or operational areas for integration of climate action. It focuses on: climate resilience for displaced/host communities; inclusion in national climate adaptation & DRR plans; green operational delivery; and evidenced-based programming. The plan evolved from a historical narrower energy lens to climate. Furthermore, opportunities were noted to mainstream further across UNHCR’s ‘core’ work. Similarly, the Americas RB regional plan highlights key outcomes and how HQ can support these.

At country level, Jordan’s Climate Action plan is a best practice example. The plan specifically aligns with the FASP ToC. The country operation mapped out key actors, priorities, and roll-out actions such as bespoke staff training to guide implementation in the country. The plan has also been accompanied by awareness-raising and reinforcement of messaging which were found to have helped the plan gain traction.

54. However, with reduced resources and capacity across UNHCR, the question is now whether any, or parts, of the plans can be implemented. In line with a clarified mandate, there needs to be a reassessment of what UNHCR’s key CA priorities are and where these can be taken forward (which this RA seeks to provide some direction on). The plans (and indeed the Strategic Plan itself) cover a whole range of activities, and it may make sense to focus effort on a reduced number of activities, and/or on embedding climate further across key operations. Where RBx have lost all or most of their CA staff, technical and operational support may need to be increasingly provided to COs from HQ (necessitating a reprioritization and refocus of HQ resources and capacity).
55. **Governance (Evidence Rating: Medium** – documentation sparse, but good alignment across KIIs/FGDs) was also a mixed picture at the regional level, with evidence of active multi-functional task teams supported by dedicated country-level focal points in several more advanced regions (e.g. RB AP); and some regions having no clear governance structure or focal points (e.g. MENA). However, overall, interaction and coordination from

RBx was appreciated by CO staff. There was a clear demand (recognizing the value of country missions and engagements around COP30 for example) for more communication and engagement with the OSACA, the Geneva Technical Hub<sup>27</sup> and other HQ teams managing vital CA partnerships, advocacy activities and holding valuable technical expertise. This variable picture on CA governance was seen to stem from a lack of clear and aligned organizational leadership and accountability for CA, with more progressed governance mechanisms depending on champions or the motivations of individuals or small groups of staff.

### 3.1.1.ii Processes & Systems

56. High variance was observed across the organization in terms of processes and systems that support CA work, and integration of CA into key processes and systems. A review of contingency plans for key RA countries found significant gaps and variation in the integration of CA, as one indicator of integration in **emergency preparedness**. Some regions (e.g. SA) demonstrated good practice in shifting to an increased focus on anticipatory response (See below for an example from Malawi).

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<sup>27</sup> The Geneva Technical Hub (GTH), launched in June 2021 under UNHCR's Division of Resilience and Solutions (now under DIPS), is tasked with strengthening the quality of UNHCR's technical programming by bringing together Swiss academia and specialized practitioners to address complex challenges in DRR, energy, environment, shelter and housing, settlement planning, and WASH services. It provides targeted field support, develops operational guidance and tools, collaborates with universities as a think tank to test innovative solutions, and builds staff capacity to improve climate resilience and environmental sustainability. The Hub is composed of eight Swiss technical experts with backgrounds in humanitarian relief, research, and private-sector practice, and works closely with major Swiss institutions, including EPFL, ETH Zürich, and Eawag, to deliver expertise in settlement planning, renewable energy, hydrogeology, and sanitation across UNHCR operations

### Box 3: Best Practice – piloting of parametric insurance in Malawi

Parametric insurance is a key tool for emergency preparedness and response and one of two strategic “tracks” of intervention alongside climate-smart agriculture and community resilience as a mechanism to deliver life-saving support when climate risk thresholds are breached. UNHCR has partnered with the African Risk Capacity (ARC), a specialized agency of the African Union to test a parametric climate risk insurance scheme in Malawi with the aim to strengthen understanding of parametric risk finance and its application in refugee-hosting settings. This strategic partnership allows UNHCR to leverage and plug into an established regional risk-pool mechanism whilst working towards embedding refugee populations into climate risk financing and resilience planning at country level. The partnership brings together a set of committed partners including ARC, public sector partners as well as donors and private sector actors, demonstrating its strategic nature beyond the financial mechanism. Through capacity building workshops organized with ARC, CGIAR, WFP and other actors suggest UNHCR aims to build local and national capacity and coalition to strengthen early warning, emergency preparedness, and data/forecasting capabilities in refugee-hosting areas.

Through this partnership, UNHCR is able to integrate parametric insurance and risk analysis into its broader climate-resilience innovation portfolio, tying it with disaster risk and forecast-based financing, anticipatory action, climate-smart livelihood programming, and protection outcomes in a strategic way. The Environment and Climate Action Innovation Program team, in collaboration with the Southern Africa Regional Bureau, is developing a regional project to scale up the use of parametric insurance. Further pilots are being explored in WCA, in Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Chad to explore transferability across regions and climate hazards including floods. The RA found that although the parametric insurance scheme has shown early successes, it requires further consolidation to ensure its sustainability by leveraging other funding sources to support long term needs such as with climate smart agriculture. In addition, key informant interview and document data highlighted a structural issue around the scaling of parametric insurance which requires specialized staff, technical expertise, and sustained financing, which field operations may struggle to maintain due to decreasing capacity despite strong donor interest.

57. Other regions and country operations found that climate action can actually provide increased scope and entry-points to promote inclusion of forcibly displaced persons and mitigate impacts of climate-related emergency events (see below).

### Box 4: Best Practice – leveraging for the inclusion of forcibly displaced people in Mozambique’s national emergency preparedness plans

In the wake of Cyclone Freddy in 2023, UNHCR together with the INGD Mozambique National Institute for Management and Reduction of Disaster Risk (INGD) to monitor and document protection risk associated with these climate emergencies. Early warning messages were shared with communities at risk, and Local Disaster Risk Committees were trained and supported to identify and refer people with protection and specific needs and vulnerabilities. UNHCR worked with the Government of Mozambique to co-ordinate the protection response, mapping and referral to support services; as well as supporting access to civil documentation and benefits from protection case management.

- **Risk Management** (Evidence Rating: Medium – some gaps for some regions/operations, but a good level of documentation overall and triangulation

through KIIs/FGDs) was more consistent across countries and regions, with a review of country risk registers showing a majority include CA (or environmental) risks - and in some cases such as Bangladesh and countries in MENA, good practice inclusion of climate-related opportunities (versus just risks) was observed (e.g. programming or funding opportunities related to climate). Strong innovation was shown in partnership with CGIAR in RB EHAGL to develop the Climate Risk Toolkit, which is now being trialed in certain countries (e.g. Bangladesh, various countries in the Americas). There are also some promising external systems and tools that UNHCR could engage with and utilize through its partnerships (e.g. INFORM Risk Map Explorer for hazard and coping capacity comparisons).<sup>28</sup>

58. Mitigation and sustainability efforts in UNHCR are understood in 3 distinct but related parts:

- **Greening the Blue (GTB)** – relates to UNHCR only facilities (offices/infrastructure), vehicle fleet and travel emissions
- **Supply chain sustainability** – sustainable supply of products and services (procurement, key partnerships with suppliers, transport of goods, sustainability of products themselves).
- **Operational greening** – sustainability measures related to refugee camps and displacement settings (e.g. shelters, renewable energy and natural resource management (e.g. water))

61. **Evidence Rating: Moderate** – good data on GTB and supply chain at the organizational level (e.g. dashboard of achievements against Ops Strategy in terms of climate resilience and environmental sustainability); documentation/data more variable at the regional/country level. Good alignment and data contributions via KIIs/FGDs.

62. CA and wider sustainability considerations in terms of **Greening the Blue (GTB)** of UNHCR facilities have made significant progress in recent years, with initiatives such as solarization of offices (increasing infrastructure resilience, as well as reducing emissions) and 'ride sharing' vehicle fleet strategies (highlighted in the UNEP Greening the Blue Good Practices Report, 2023-2024). The most recent UNEP Greening the Blue data for UNHCR (up until 2023)<sup>29</sup> shows: total greenhouse gas emissions (from facilities and travel – including air) as staying just above Covid levels for the past few years (at an average of 51,973 tCO<sub>2</sub>eq/year). When compared to the highest levels on record in 2019 of 97,136 tCO<sub>2</sub>eq, this is a substantial reduction of 46%. As part of GTB efforts, the organization has developed a 'Green Box' Dashboard which enables monitoring of energy utilization in real-time through smart meters. However, the central team driving GTB efforts has been reduced to one staff member, and the broader organizational staffing and funding cuts are impacting both greening efforts as well as related data collection. Whilst a reduced staff and activity profile should provide some reduced emissions as a byproduct, there are concerns over pauses or cancellation of greening efforts (e.g. large-scale renewables plans in Afghanistan). Although the Green Financing Facility (a financing mechanism established with donor contributions, and solely for solarization of UNHCR infrastructure) is a welcome support in many countries (e.g. Cameroon, Nigeria), it is insufficient to meet the full organizational demand and funding gap for solarization/renewable energy solutions (and is not designed nor sufficient in size to go beyond this scope).

63. **Integration of climate action and sustainability considerations into supply chain** had strong direction and oversight from the HQ team, with UNHCR establishing itself as a

<sup>28</sup> Others include: FAO Data in Emergencies (food security levels), Danish Refugee Council's Forecasting Future Displacement tool (projected displacement), ACLED and Uppsala Conflict Data (conflict trends), and IDMC's country profiles.

<sup>29</sup> <https://greeningtheblue.org/entities/unhcr>

leading agency in this regard and working increasingly closely with other agencies to support emission control and impact reduction across the sector. Core activities include reduction of virgin plastic use in products; pre-positioning of stock for emergency response – reducing transport emissions as well as material costs due to advanced, well-planned and efficient sourcing and transport of items; optimized ‘palletization’ and loading — reducing transport mileage and increasing efficiencies. Improvement of Core Relief Items (CRIs) through reduced waste and resource use, and goods transportation efficiencies, have led to financial as well as environmental gains. There are also efforts to move towards a more circular approach to CRIs and other supply chain aspects. Reporting for supply chain is based on the environmental impact per item (e.g. blankets using virgin plastic are now 100% recycled PET – providing a 55% CO2 reduction per item). The Supply Chain team has, however, also been substantially reduced by 53%. It is also noted that other agencies (e.g. IOM) have a Chief Sustainability Officer to oversee all sustainability efforts (GTB, Supply Chain and sustainability of operations). UNHCR currently does not have this role to provide clear oversight, coherence and accountability. It is also important to note that UNHCR as yet does not have a robust system for monitoring Scope 3 emissions, and given the significant emissions contribution from supply chain activities, this is important to get in place in the near future (learning from other agencies such as WFP who already have this in place).

64. Roll-out at regional and country level is dependent on various contextual and operational factors, but some strong examples and innovation were observed in terms of both product sustainability (e.g. work with suppliers on sustainability criteria in China, reusable hygiene kits in Bangladesh and tents made from 100% recycled materials in MENA) and sustainable services (e.g. 42% of the vehicle fleet in Jordan is now electric and there is circular supply chain work ongoing in Chile).
65. **Sustainability of operations (i.e. UNHCR’s core work and initiatives in the field)** again varied contextually and operationally, with some innovation and best practice examples e.g. smart energy meters in Jordan camps to combat power surges and outages during temperature extremes; the ‘Cash-for-Gas’ initiative in Mauritania – see Box 5 below that could be shared, adapted and replicated elsewhere.

#### Box 5: Best Practice – Mauritania Cash for Gas Initiatives

UNHCR’s support for the transition toward cleaner household energy in Mauritania is exemplified by its cash for gas cooking solutions in and around Mbera camp, where pressure on fuelwood has long contributed to environmental degradation. A pilot initiative involving Malian refugee gas distributors and local retailers has introduced liquefied gas as an affordable alternative, reducing reliance on fuelwood while stimulating a local market for gas distribution. By providing households with direct financial support to purchase gas, the approach strengthens autonomy, decreases deforestation pressures, and encourages the growth of refugee-inclusive micro-enterprises in the clean-energy sector. This model demonstrates how targeted energy assistance can simultaneously advance environmental protection, livelihood opportunities, and sustainable market development.

66. Some large-scale sustainability projects, such as large-scale solar infrastructure in Afghanistan, have been put on hold due to funding and staff losses (particularly loss of key technical skillsets). Although, the AT notes that Project Flow (solarizing water infrastructure) and REP Fund initiatives are being scaled up where COs have demonstrated interest and feasibility assessments proven positive. More examples of operational sustainability can be found in Annex VI.
67. Key stakeholders and teams expressed that there was significant scope for more collaboration between Greening the Blue, Supply Chain and Operational functions, teams

and processes; to maximize synergies and opportunities for improving climate resilience and sustainability. Integration of climate action and environmental sustainability into key assets and systems, such as supply contract templates and tenders, and contingency plans, could be ensured to be universally applied organization wide.

68. There were some strong **innovations (Evidence Rating: Medium** – innovations are well-documented at an organizational level (e.g. quarterly reports by Innovation Service); variably at the regional/operational level. KIIs/FGDs were well aligned) demonstrated across UNHCR (e.g. use of nature-based solutions in Bangladesh to improve soil stability, reducing risks from landslides and improving water course management; and agroforestry pilots in West Africa supporting re-forestation and refugee livelihoods), and the support of both the Environment and Climate Action Innovation Fund, the Refugee Innovation fund and central Innovation teams was noted and valued. Challenges with innovation seemed to be more related to systems for scaling innovations, with less support (technical and financial) in place for these following pilots. The Innovation Service, with the technical support of relevant divisions, works closely with COs to review and refine pilots, and has recognized this problem, leading them recently to launch an Accelerator Program to help address this.
69. Given UNHCR's mandate and specialism in protection issues, the organization performed strongly in terms of **integration of Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD) (Evidence Rating: Medium** – good alignment and contributions via KIIs/FGDs, documentation had gaps). into climate work across the board; with strong community inclusion and ownership observed. Best practice examples included in Mauritania where community inclusion was ensured from design onwards, with the formulation of several refugee-led organizations (RLOs) taking the role of implementing NGOs; and the Environmental Training School in Ecuador which addresses how emergencies uniquely impact those with disabilities, women and girls. In terms of climate always being considered as a key risk to forcibly displaced persons in broader protection approaches, this requires more attention, using tools such as the [Climate Vulnerability Assessment](#) tool developed by the Jordan CO (see Box 6 below).

#### Box 6: Best Practice – Climate Vulnerability Index developed in Jordan

Jordan provided a good practice example whereby UNHCR and the International Security and Development Center (ISDC) developed a Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI), now a dedicated chapter in the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF). The tool can examine the 'micro-level' (targeting specific family units) whilst also assessing the impact of macro-level variables at the community and wider levels. The index captures refugees' exposure to extreme weather such as heat waves, reflecting refugees' sensitivity and their capacity to adapt. Circa 40% of refugees were found to show some degree of climate vulnerability. The tool will help monitor and inform design and implementation.

#### 3.1.1.iii Data & Evidence

70. Organizational performance was less strong with respect to data and evidence for CA (**Evidence Rating: Medium** – good organizational-level data on RBM marker use, etc. A lack of evaluations, etc. covering climate underlines the finding. KIIs/FGDs were well aligned, particularly at the regional and country levels), with low levels of specific climate-related **evaluations**, reviews or assessments<sup>30</sup>. **Learning and knowledge management**

<sup>30</sup> [Final evaluation report of Phase I climate smart agriculture and market development – Enhancing livelihoods of refugees and their host communities in Rwanda \(EVO/2024/14\)](#) and its corresponding

systems were found to be limited, unstructured and unaligned (despite some good practice examples, such as the Asia Pacific Community of Practice, and clear appetite for examples of good practice amongst UNHCR staff); with many requesting more central direction and organization.

### Box 7: Best Practice – Asia Pacific Climate Action Community of Practice

Prior to the recent funding cuts and restructuring AP was the strongest of the regions in terms of governance. A very active multi-functional team (MFT) was in place at the RB, with representation from Emergency Response, Innovation and led by a very proactive Regional focal point. The team led an active regional Community of Practice (with a defined action plan), where countries shared and discussed climate work and challenges.

71. Compliance with the CA marker (see Annex VIII for more details on the markers) monitoring and reporting and other **Results-Based Management (RBM)** aspects was reasonable (e.g. 67 operations use the original marker, including 21 of the 22 priority countries), but the CA markers are still the least utilized of all organizational markers, with only 55% uptake overall. The system was noted to be flawed and confusing, including the dual purpose of markers for resource and progress tracking (Please see Annex VIII), and lack of alignment with other key systems such as budgeting and planning. **Reporting** on CA is noted to be relatively new, even at the organizational level (e.g. late in data collection the AT received an early draft of the Climate Results Report covering 2024 results; progress reports produced against Operational Strategy for Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability in 2023 and 2024), and few specific reports on climate action initiatives and outcomes were observed. Consideration, however, should be given as to whether specific CA reporting should be required, or whether better integration and visibility in existing reports is preferable given staffing and resource constraints.
72. There was strong innovation around **analytics and digital tools**, with for example the afore-mentioned Climate Vulnerability Assessment tool from Jordan now being trialed in Bangladesh, and the Climate Risk Assessment Toolkit developed at EHAGL RB also now being rolled out across various countries. Work is underway to develop this into an automated dashboard, recognizing organizational limitations to collect, input and access useful/relevant data. There was noted to be an increasing amount of climate-related data publicly available, so the challenge for UNHCR is not quantity of data *per se*, but the ability to access and process this in an appropriate and efficient manner with reduced capacity and resources. Countries also noted the need for more localized and contextualized data.

#### 3.1.1.iv People, Capacity and Culture

73. (**Evidence Rating: Medium** – a lack of documentation/evidence (e.g. performance management objectives) underlined the findings in many respects. Good triangulation across KIIs/FGDs).
74. This dimension has been severely impacted by the recent restructuring, with the loss of **CA staff** (both focal points and technical staff) at all levels (both internally and from key partners)<sup>31</sup>. This aspect presents perhaps the greatest risk to UNHCR's climate action

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[management response](#); [2024 Climate Action Results Report](#); the [2023 Progress Report on Operational Strategy for Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability](#); [UNHCR, Evaluation of UNHCR's Level 3 Emergency Response to Cyclone Idai – Final Report, 2021](#); and [UNHCR, Earth, Wind and Fire: A Review of UNHCR's Role in Natural Disasters, 2010](#).

<sup>31</sup> Almost all RBx and COs consulted during data collection had been, or were going to be impacted in the near future, by staffing cuts. Many RBx (e.g. AP) were left with no CA staff whatsoever. Mauritania was one exception due to funding commitments for the next few years, but beyond that period the picture remains uncertain.

progress going forward, with the loss of institutional memory (compounded by inadequate handover processes), momentum, relationship-holders for key partnerships and **technical capacity**. Whilst CA work can be undertaken in some cases (e.g. integration into existing functions, like disaster/emergency response) with no technical training or experience i.e. integrating CA into existing functions and processes, it was noted that technical staff are still needed in order to: advise, train, direct and provide strategic inputs; provide winning designs and assurance to key funders (e.g. multilateral climate funds) regarding ability to implement climate projects, and to design and implement larger climate and sustainability projects such as large-scale renewables in displacement settings. It was noted that these climate projects require 'development' experience and skillsets alongside technical climate skills.

75. A review of organization-wide training and uptake demonstrated a lack of centralized and universally applied CA training and support, with few UNHCR or function-tailored courses on CA. Training, **guidance and tools** where on the whole *ad hoc* and limited (with some best practice examples noted, such as bespoke functional team training in Jordan, and the RB AP toolkit on climate displacement). Whilst resources such as the Technical Support Team's provisions for Climate Resilience Technical Programs and 'Green Companion'<sup>32</sup> guideline for operational greening are useful, awareness of these was very limited at the country level and they do not cover the full remit of UNHCR's CA work/activities.
76. Organizational **culture** on CA differed across countries and regions, related in part to the varying levels of climate 'leadership' outlined earlier. Staff were generally individually aware and engaged regarding climate as a key risk and vulnerability for forcibly displaced persons and driver of displacement; but they lacked clear direction and support as to how best to integrate climate into their day-to-day work. **Performance management** frameworks across the organization do not explicitly include CA objectives or duties. It was raised that this is particularly important for senior organizational leaders if climate action is to be prioritized and driven forward.

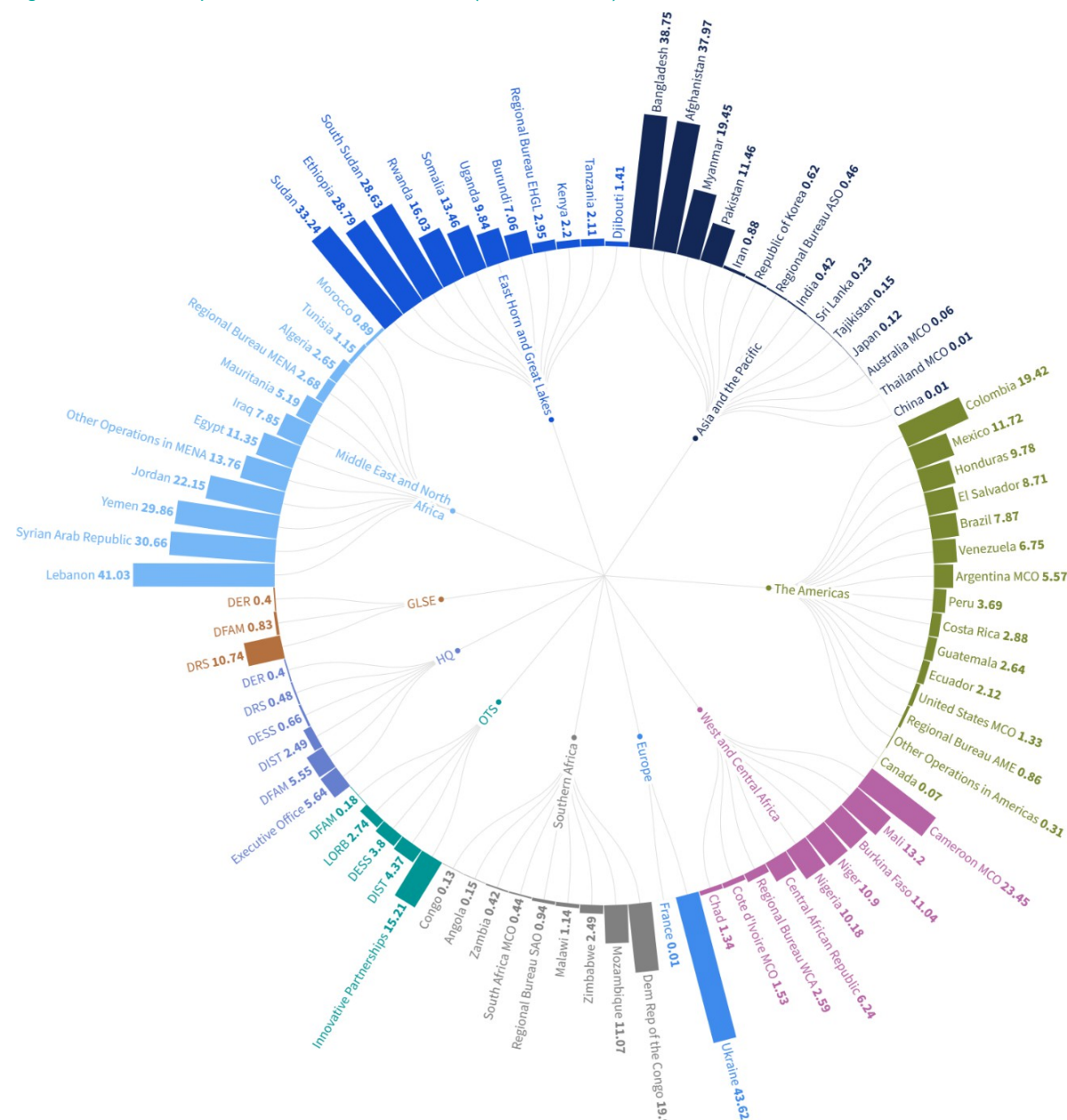
### 3.1.1.v Resource Mobilization and Management

77. (**Evidence Rating: Medium** – some useful data sources at organizational level, but overall, it is difficult to get granularity of detail and the systems do not capture everything well. KIIs/FGDs were well aligned and provided useful examples).
78. **Resource mobilization** again varied across the regions (e.g. a USD 90m budget i.e. estimated funds mobilized and allocated for CA as part of Operating Level costs in EHAGL for 2025/2026, compared with a USD 35m budget in RBA). See Figure 6 below for details.

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<sup>32</sup> [UNHCR, The Green Companion Guide, nd.](#)

Figure 6: Climate Expenditure Overview for 2024 (in million USD) <sup>33</sup>



79. Indicative data on 2025/2026 levels received is also included in the Annex VII, with different contextual challenges and enablers (e.g. the RA found less climate funding as donor's priorities have shifted in the MENA region in response to other emergencies). Some general trends were however observed: more success was achieved with integration into 'traditional' UNHCR work such as emergency response, versus fundraising for specific climate projects. This either points to a need for further integration of climate into UNHCR's 'core' work, as mentioned earlier, and/or the need for more investment in building expertise in multilateral climate fund applications and project implementation (and to better adapt UNHCR systems and processes to support these multi-year projects – it is noted that the organization has recently invested in a Feasibility Study and pilot to explore development of Environmental and Social Safeguards and Standards which are essential for accessing the multilateral climate funds and other development/IFI funding ). It was

<sup>33</sup> OTS stands for (country) Operational Technical Support. From 2024 country and regional programs include a budget line on OTS and it refers to a set of activities that directly benefit operations in the achievement of their intended results and that were previous reported under global programs or HQ.

also observed that CA resource mobilization was wide-ranging and *ad hoc* across the organization, with some suggesting that more prioritization and centralized direction could provide some level of focus and targeted support from HQ to allow for more effective resource mobilization. Funds are mobilized at all levels of the organization for different organizational and operational aspects, but in the main HQ and RBx provides support to countries to fundraise, with the exception of the Climate Finance Team particularly. The Climate Finance Team is responsible for mobilizing resources so that forcibly displaced persons adapt and are resilient to climate change, including leveraging resources for refugee-hosting countries where there is significant climate fragility: either directly through the budget process and contributions to UNHCR, or through leveraging for inclusion of refugees in national CA programming and of funding partners or host governments. The team leads particularly on the global multilateral climate funds: managing these ‘accounts’ and playing a catalytic and support role regarding other partnerships (e.g. private sector, public sector).

80. In terms of **innovative financing mechanisms**, some strong examples were seen (e.g. partnership with the African Risk Capacity (ARC) Group partnership, Humanity Insured and KfW on parametric insurance in the SA region; and carbon credit work around reforestation through indigenous peoples and local communities in Roraima, Brazil, utilizing the support of the Refugee Environmental Protection Fund (REP Fund)), and Project Flow using innovative financing to solarize water and health care infrastructure which is ripe for further exploration. However overall innovative financing is an emerging area for UNHCR.
81. Similar to the comments on the RBM system above, a good level of compliance was observed in terms of **resource tracking** using the climate action markers (see Annex VIII for more detail on the markers); but again, limitations of this system were observed (for example failure to adequately tag all CA-related work and all funds, such as private sector contributions). Aside from the two markers (Organizational-wide and Strategic Plan specific – the latter is only required for use by CA priority countries), UNHCR does not have a dedicated system for tracking climate-specific contributions and funds to date (the RBM system only tracks at outcome level and CA is not a mandatory outcome area at this stage). Current practice involves manual filtering using the climate markers and climate-related keywords, followed by quality control checks.
82. The support of the HQ Climate Finance team and RBx staff was noted (with the latter support reduced by the restructuring) by COs. The afore-mentioned Climate Risk Toolkit includes a link to an important CGIAR resource of note: The [Climate Security Programming Dashboard for Climate Finance](#) (CSPDxCF): an all-in-one solution for preliminary conflict-sensitive assessments and tailored guidance; targeting projects funded by IFIs and climate funds<sup>34</sup>. The dashboard is targeted at IFIs and climate funds but is an important resource for UNHCR to assist project design, particularly in FCAS contexts, in line with key funder criteria (e.g. outlines strengths and weaknesses of different climate initiatives/projects; provides guidance to maximise project efficiency; offers guidance on aligning climate projects with peace-building outcomes).

### 3.1.1.vi Strategic Positioning and Partnerships

83. **(Evidence Rating: Medium** – not all partnerships were well documented – especially in terms of tangible outcomes, but there was good alignment and contributions via KIIs/FGDs).

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<sup>34</sup> Scartozzi, C.M., Climate Security Programming Dashboard for International Financial Institutions and Climate Funds, 2023.

84. Overall, UNHCR demonstrated strong, effective and diverse partnerships for CA at all levels of the organization. The significant thought and advocacy leadership provided by OSACA (see the Thought Leadership and Advocacy, and Leveraging for Inclusion Case Studies) both internally and externally means that the organization is showing visible leadership in integrating protection issues and consideration of forcibly displaced persons into key climate frameworks, policies and processes (e.g. through UNHCR's coordinating role in the GRF pledge for climate action; co-chairing of the Coalition for Climate Action in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States with GCF and others). The annexed case studies also provide more detail on several key partnerships led by OSACA and RBx such as with CGIAR on data, evidence and thought leadership (see Box 8 below).

#### Box 8: Best Practice in Partnership with CGIAR for Climate Data and Analytics

UNHCR and CGIAR have partnered to strengthen climate resilience, adaptation, and protection for displaced and stateless people in the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region. CGIAR (through CIAT) seconded a technical expert to UNHCR's Regional Bureau for 6 months (50% FTE). Through this type of partnership CGIAR brings scientific expertise, data, and tools on climate adaptation and resilience, while UNHCR provides operational reach and protection mandates for displaced and stateless people. In Ethiopia UNHCR-CGIAR joint pilots on climate-exposure analysis combine CGIAR research with UNHCR protection/programming to identify hotspots and tailor agriculture/land restoration interventions for displaced and host communities.

85. UNHCR also has an emerging strategic partnership with GCF (as the fund increasingly focused on fragile and conflict affected contexts), with the commencement for instance of a GCF-funded project in Tanzania. UNHCR has signed separate non-transactional MOUs with the GCF and Adaptation Fund towards increased climate finance for fragile and conflicted affected states.
86. RBx were noted to play a key role in connecting countries with global and national partners and supporting proposals and collaboration whereas OSACA tends to lead on **multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnerships** such as networks and coalitions (e.g. the World Economic Forum's Futures Council for Nature and Security). There are also some strong examples from other divisions (e.g. with FAO and WFP led by SRS, and with IFRC and ICRC led by DEPS and SMS), as well as the regions (e.g. work in RB EHAGL to link with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), or jointly developing a regional climate action plan e.g. in southern Africa with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) or finally RB AP engagement with the UNFCCC regional collaboration center to engage on regional COP contributions and NAP development and implementation).
87. Collaboration with other **UN/Multilateral agencies** is significant, for example: In Mozambique, UNHCR contributes to the UN common country analysis, UNSDCF and UNCT to ensure inclusion of refugees and IDPs in climate financing, energy provision and service access; in RBA, UNHCR collaborates with IOM and ICRC on the Special Humanitarian Visa Program and in EHAGL UNHCR is part of the UN IGAD drought response including collaboration with the Regional Humanitarian Partnership team (see Annex VI for more examples).
88. UNHCR also demonstrates strong alignment and collaboration with **public sector organizations** such as national and local governments. Examples include strong alignment with government frameworks (e.g. NAP, NDCs) and initiatives (e.g. national greening projects) in Bangladesh; COs in WCA assisting governments in collecting and analyzing climate-related data for planning and decision-making (See annex VI for further

examples). **Private sector partnerships** are an emerging modality for UNHCR, but significant foundational work has been undertaken on this for instance in the EHAGL region collaborating with IGAD, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the East African Community (EAC), leading to a trailblazing inclusion of forced displacement in the [African Investment Forum](#) (with UNHCR and AfDB leading the first joint session on forced displacement settings<sup>35</sup>). The central sustainable supply team has also worked closely and secured seconded technical support from private sector partners LONGi and UPS, leading to private sector sustainability experts being embedded in the team to advise on product and distribution sustainability (e.g. solarisation of the logistics hub — a first for UNHCR).

89. Engagement with local organizations on CA differs across regions, but often **NGOs** act as implementing agencies for field work (e.g. reforestation and environmental education in WCA camps and communities; training local organizations in Brazil to promote socio-environmental awareness and policy engagement). There is an increasing emergence of **Refugee-led Organizations (RLOs)** (e.g. in Mauritania – establishing and building capacity of refugees to provide a bushfire management service to increase community resilience) as a modality that strengthens community ownership of resilience activities and management, community capacity-building and aligns with UNHCR’s emerging ‘sustainable response’ approach (See Annex VI for more examples).

### Box 9: Best Practice in Community Engagement for Climate Action

In Latin America, UNHCR demonstrates a strong model of inclusive climate action by actively engaging women, youth, Indigenous peoples, and nearly 300 refugee-led organizations—60 of which are led by women—in shaping environmental solutions. Ecuador’s Environmental Training School and youth-driven initiatives such as Protectors of the Planet highlight how tailored, participatory programming builds climate awareness and leadership across generations. UNHCR has also convened regional consultations and workshops to strengthen community-driven approaches, ensuring that refugee and host communities not only contribute to climate resilience strategies but also hold ownership over them. This broad, representative engagement provides a scalable example of how inclusivity anchors more sustainable, locally grounded climate action.

90. Partnerships with **research institutions or academia** related to CA are more ad hoc and sparse in nature and tend on the whole to be less tangible in nature, more alliances than functioning partnerships. The exception is the organization’s partnership with CGIAR on data, evidence and thought leadership, which was found to support climate action research and work at all levels of the organization — for example providing strategic secondments of CGIAR technical staff to UNHCR, and supporting the development of key tools and analytics (see Case Study on Thought Leadership and Advocacy in Annex VI).
91. **Coherence (Evidence Rating: Medium** – gaps in evidence (e.g. absence of performance management objectives) underline some findings. Good triangulation and alignment across KIIs/FGDs) was assessed in terms of both coherence of internal planning/policies, and coherence with external frameworks. Performance on the latter was strong across the board, with strong awareness and alignment with international and national frameworks (e.g. government policies and initiatives in Mauritania; OSACA’s engagement, visibility and influence in multiple forums such as the UNFCCC and United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) processes). In terms of the former, alignment with the Strategic Plan (e.g. in regional and country specific plans) was reasonably strong across the board. However, alignment of key policies/processes with CA work (or integration of CA into core

<sup>35</sup> [UNHCR, Africa Investment Forum 2024 Market Days: AfDB, UNHCR convene first joint session for private sector investment opportunities in Africa’s forced displacement settings, press release, 2024.](#)

activities/processes) showed more disparate levels of coherence. For instance, not all country-level contingency plans considered CA aspects, and performance management frameworks currently do not explicitly identify CA objectives in any way.

**AQ3: What other actors and factors have hindered or supported UNHCR's ability to leverage the enabling dimensions and operationalize the Strategic Plan so far?**

**Evidence Rating:** Medium – largely supported by aligned KII/FGD evidence, but also a wider document review.

**3.1.1.vii Other Internal Enabling Actors and Factors**

92. **AGD and localized approaches** - Where time is taken by UNHCR country and local teams to invest in **community-centered and owned, culturally appropriate approaches** (e.g. Mauritania – see Box 10 below - and Brazil) as part of AGD-sensitive approaches to CA implementation, this pays win-win dividends in terms of both protection (e.g. building host-refugee cohesion; increasing and diversifying livelihoods and economic wellbeing) and climate action outcomes, as well as supporting UNHCR's sustainable response approach.

**Box 10: Best Practice – Age, Gender and Diversity Integration in Mauritania**

In Mauritania, AGD considerations are systematically integrated into targeting and program design, including climate action-related programs, with refugees and host communities meaningfully engaged in decision-making. In 2025, the introduction of 15 Refugee Grant Agreements enabled Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs) to operate with devolved authority similar to NGOs, strengthening local ownership and sustainability. Women are specifically encouraged and supported to take on leadership roles, reinforcing inclusive governance. While gaps remain in identifying people with disabilities, the team is actively collaborating with partners to improve outreach and data. A strong example of effective, community-driven practice is the “Referral Women” initiative, which combines gender-based violence and child protection response with improved access to farming inputs and skills, highlighting how protection, livelihoods and climate resilience outcomes can be jointly strengthened.

This type of community-led engagement and localized ownership model is of strong interest to donors (including the multilateral climate funds) and plays to UNHCR's strengths in terms of strong local networks.

93. **The Refugee-led Innovation fund** has become an increasingly important resource for countries and regions to fund innovations related to climate action in displacement settings which are led by refugee-led organizations (RLOs). The Innovation Service noted that increasing amounts of climate/environment pilots were being funded through this model. For instance, the Boa Vista sustainability center (Brazil), coordinated jointly by Hermanitos and UNHCR, focuses on training and mobilizing refugees in sustainable practices, including environmental sustainability and climate adaptation. This involves providing green jobs and advocating for refugees' environmental and economic needs, strengthening RLOs' environmental practices and enabling them to disseminate knowledge and skills within their communities through a 'train the trainer' model. Similar models have been implemented in Malawi, Mauritania and Peru. Through these models, UNHCR are able to engage more deeply on climate-related issues particularly with youth, women and the elderly.

### 3.1.1.viii Other External Enabling Actors and Factors

94. **Key global and international events** such as the UNFCCC COPs can provide visibility to climate issues and provide UNHCR with significant opportunities to raise awareness of the links with displacement and the need to consider and integrate forcibly displaced persons into key policies and frameworks. In particular, COP30 offers significant opportunities to highlight civil society and refugee-led initiatives, aligning with the people-centered focus of the Global Compact on Refugees. However, the challenge (as outlined below) is to sustain momentum post-events.
95. There are generally high and **increasing levels of civil awareness and concern** regarding climate change across the world. This provides entry-points to engage with governments, communities and funding entities alike in terms of ensuring inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in climate policies, programs and funding.
96. The **reduction in funding for UN agencies** does provide more scope and impetus for UNHCR to prioritize efforts to access climate funding and innovative climate funding modalities, such as carbon credits. The multilateral climate funds are increasingly interested in working in fragile and conflict-affected states and other key contexts in which UNHCR operates.

### 3.1.1.ix Other Internal Hindering Actors and Factors

97. In light of the recent restructuring, there has been a **deprioritization of livelihood activities in many COs**, where a core part of CA work resides.
98. New and particularly innovative climate initiatives can often need **specialist technical skillsets, which are often (and more so following the restructure) not available internally** and are challenging to source and provide locally in displacement settings also.
99. It was noted that UNHCR is **not able to mobilize fast enough to capitalize on climate funding opportunities** (e.g. not investing in capacity and time to ensure these opportunities can be maximized). This extends to the following:
  - Capacity-building was said to be required for **all staff** (not just those with CA responsibilities) due to the cross-cutting nature of climate change.
  - Internal competition has said to have increased over vastly reduced resources. This points towards increased management by the Climate Finance Team to ensure the organization pulls together on focused efforts, rather than wasting resources and efforts through internal competition.
  - UNHCR internal bureaucracy is not set up as yet (despite shifts in this direction) to administer often heavily projectized development funding, including projects funded by climate funds, which leads to delays and inefficiencies.
  - UNHCR is currently not accredited to the multilateral climate funds and as such, must partner with accredited entities (such as other UN agencies) to access funding which faces delays and challenges. With fast-track accreditation process now open to UNHCR, UNHCR will be seeking accreditation allowing the organization to access funding directly.
  - Global climate funding requires endorsement from key ministries within country/government level (which are often different from regular UNHCR interlocutors).
  - Prioritization and internal investment of time and resources on CA can often be more opportunistic in approach, versus strategic and focused, and this limits progress and stops CA work having sustained momentum. For example, RBA stakeholders were clear that less resources would be available (i.e. allocated/prioritized by the

organization) after the conclusion of COP 30 events in Brazil, rather than more (e.g. closure of Brazil, Belem operation following the COP). This points again to a lack of clarity and consistency on the prioritization of climate action in the organization in terms of it being vital for protection and reduced vulnerability of forcibly displaced persons.

### 3.1.1.x Other External Hindering Actors and Factors

100. **Securing climate funding and projects requires different ways of working.** Securing climate (and other more 'development-orientated' funds) funds can take much longer (often a number of years) compared to more condensed timelines for 'traditional' humanitarian funding. In addition, climate change and associated interventions are long-term in nature and there are challenges for host governments to support anything beyond short to medium term interventions for forcibly displaced and stateless people, due to political pressure and sensitivities. There can also be regulatory challenges for any infrastructure adaptations, for example that seem less 'temporary'. These extended timelines also do not align well with UNHCR's systems such as planning and budgeting processes and adherence to ESS and reporting requirements. Furthermore, climate projects and work often need new partners, which require investment of time to scope and establish (e.g. due diligence). UNHCR is a humanitarian organization and some key adaptations will have to be made to access climate and other more development-orientated funding.
101. The **inaccessibility and contextual variation between displacement settings** can impede the extent of climate action work able to be integrated and undertaken. In many areas and countries where UNHCR works (e.g. Honduras) violence and insecurity can restrict activities and progress and also cause environmental degradation (see also the Humanitarian Action Case Study).
102. There is a **lack of connection between and understanding climate change and human mobility in key external stakeholder audiences** (e.g. governments and local authorities). This emphasizes the importance of advocacy work undertaken at all levels of UNHCR (see advocacy case study).
103. As the effects of climate change worsen, there is an **increased risk and prevalence of multi-hazard disasters and events**. These are even more complex than single-hazard events and will necessitate increased collaboration across sectors and agencies. The UNHCR 'No Escape' report (2024), underlines the increased risks of overlapping climate events, conflict and forced displacement globally.<sup>36</sup> As an example, in Bangladesh, refugee camps are vulnerable to not only flooding but also landslide risks following flooding. In response, the CO developed multi-hazard emergency plans in all camps, in collaboration with community-based emergency response teams. Slope stabilisation, drainage systems, and structural reinforcements were deployed in landslide-prone areas as a result. Similarly, UNHCR's joint research with CGIAR underlines the extent to which climate change, displacement and conflict overlap and the multiple vulnerabilities that communities face as a result.<sup>37</sup>
104. Some CA programming, such as green livelihoods activities, were limited in terms of success due to the **lack of established local markets** (e.g. for key agricultural products). Furthermore, CA interventions such as renewable energy infrastructure can have

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<sup>36</sup> [UNHCR, No escape: On the frontlines of climate change, conflict and forced displacement. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2024.](#)

<sup>37</sup> [CGIAR, UNHCR \(2024\) CGIAR Research Initiative on Fragility, Conflict, and Migration \(FCM\); https://www.cgiar.org/initiative-result/protecting-90-million-refugees-on-climate-crisis-frontlines](https://www.cgiar.org/initiative-result/protecting-90-million-refugees-on-climate-crisis-frontlines)

limitations due to availability of spare parts in local supply chains and technical capacity for operation and maintenance in local communities.

## 4 Conclusions, Lessons Learned, and Recommendations

### 4.1 Conclusions

105. This section addresses the high-level questions asked in the TOR (and reformulated in the IR) of the readiness assessment (with particular emphasis on 4 and 5):

- 1) To what extent does UNHCR have the necessary enabling dimensions in place to effectively operationalize, monitor, and achieve its four inter-related objectives, priority actions and programming outputs and accelerate climate action?
- 2) Which specific *enabling dimensions (or combination thereof)*, in which contexts, require strengthening in order to accelerate progress towards achievement of these objectives, priority actions and outputs?
- 3) What other actors and factors have hindered or supported UNHCR's ability to leverage the enabling dimensions and operationalize Climate Action so far in UNHCR?
- 4) What conclusions and recommendations can be drawn to support regional bureaux and countries' implementation of the Strategic Plan? What conclusions can be drawn regarding the relevance and appropriateness of the Strategic Plan?
- 5) Which areas of inquiry should be prioritized in the second phase of the longitudinal evaluation?

#### 4.1.1.i Leadership, Strategic Planning, Governance and Accountability

##### **Key Conclusions:**

###### Conclusion 1

Leadership & accountability: messaging and overall leadership and accountability regarding climate action across the organization has been inconsistent. This has worsened following the restructuring, with uncertainty around climate action as an organizational priority and relation to mandate. External leadership on the issue is stronger, with, for example, strong influence via the organization's key role in the protection cluster, and many strong examples of advocacy activities (such as the African Climate Summit).

###### Conclusion 2

Strategic Planning: some good practice examples have been collated via this assessment to guide improved planning. However, the main concern is that existing plans are likely wholly or in part redundant in light of large-scale staffing and funding losses. Many stakeholders expressed the need for clearer central direction and decision-making on key CA priorities going forwards. This is even more important in the current resource-constrained context.

###### Conclusion 3

Governance: linkages between key HQ teams and RBx/COs require to be strengthened, to ensure alignment, sharing of learning, and focusing of limited resources. With less MFTs and RB climate focal points, this will only increase in importance going forwards.

106. Leadership, strategic planning, governance and accountability have all varied to a large extent across UNHCR's regions and country operations. **Leadership & accountability** around climate action has been highly dependent on 'champions' to drive it forward. Whilst much work has been done centrally (DIP, DSPR, OSACA, HC/Executive Committee) to clarify UNHCR's stance on and approach to climate action, the process and structure to roll out and embed this messaging and understanding in regions and countries has been lacking; and there is insufficient accountability for climate action progress.
107. Post restructuring, the situation has worsened. Whilst centrally the message remains that climate is a priority, and that there is merely a move to 'repackage' for key funders and donors; countries and regions report mixed messages at best. At worst, many stakeholders have understood that climate action was now deprioritized. This leaves the organization at serious risk of a slowing, cessation or even reversal of progress on climate action to-date.
108. Related to this, despite solid and ongoing work to clarify how climate action relates to UNHCR's core mandate, the question of UNHCR's mandate in relation to climate is repeatedly raised by stakeholders across the board; and again is compounded by the mixed messaging following the restructure. Whilst there is general awareness amongst staff regarding how climate change drives displacement and adds to vulnerability, they are unclear as to how best to embed adaptation and resilience into their work, and particularly protection issues and processes.
109. Externally, UNHCR plays a key role in protection cluster leadership during disasters and emergencies. This provides an entry-point and position of influence to raise awareness of the integral role of climate in protection (as a key risk and vulnerability), preparedness and response; and ensuring climate is thus integrated in planning and response frameworks and mechanisms in the sector at large. There is evidence of good practice in this area that UNHCR can build upon e.g. in Mozambique, the Protection Cluster has been instrumental in mainstreaming inclusion into DRR systems and contingency planning, ensuring that displaced groups are considered in emergency preparedness. These mechanisms also facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration and policy alignment (see Box 4).
110. **Strategic planning** has depended on climate and operational context, as well as on leadership at regional and country level. As previously mentioned, whilst there are now some good practice examples to follow at both the regional and country level, the key risk presented due to the recent substantial funding and staff cuts, is whether these plans can now be implemented to any significant extent.
111. Whilst variation in planning between operations and contexts is to be expected, the range of climate action approaches and activities is extremely wide, and several stakeholders suggested that some level of further prioritization would be useful at all levels to more effectively channel limited resources and capacity. It may therefore be appropriate and in fact necessary to take stock at all levels in terms of the resources and capacity currently available, to determine a narrower set of actions (or contexts) to focus efforts on. This would require some co-ordination, leadership and difficult decision-making from HQ stakeholders. The Strategic Plan, for instance, currently spans four pillars and five priority actions, giving a fairly wide envelope of activities to direct (now severely) limited resources towards.
112. It would be useful therefore for this to include a review of the scope of the Strategic Plan in light of this RA, and whether particular objectives or areas could be prioritized or deprioritized. This also aligns with the point made in Section 2.5 regarding low levels of awareness of certain aspects of the Strategic Plan, such as the priority actions, at country level particularly. This is perhaps an opportunity to have a deeper yet narrower set of priorities and focal areas. Entry points and less complex, more cost-effective 'wins' have been identified in terms of work on advocacy, leveraging for inclusion and integration into all operations, systems and processes (e.g. more robust integration into emergency preparedness and response, integration of the climate markers and sections in all ARRs

on climate). However, there are still significant opportunities for focused projects and initiatives, through key partnerships and funders (e.g. multilateral climate funds); and it is proposed that an increased effort on anticipatory action would reduce emergency impacts for forcibly displaced people. CGIAR's partnership with UNHCR on improving climate data is working to make data more accessible for anticipatory action and key examples including the pilot of parametric insurance with ARC and Humanity Insured highlight what is possible in terms of anticipatory action. Other UN agencies including WFP, FAO, and OCHA as well as the ICRC are also working in this area and several including WFP also have established partnerships with CGIAR.

113. In terms of **governance**, not all regions had established MFTs or country level climate focal points, and some of those that had MFTs were either in the process of, or had already disbanded, due to the restructuring or staff rotation processes. Specific teams at HQ were mentioned as providing support (e.g. Innovation Team; Climate Finance Team; OSACA), but stakeholders mentioned that overall, oversight from and engagement with HQ was lacking and there was a lack of clarity as to who was driving climate action and had overall responsibility.
114. **Internal Coherence** in terms of aligning with the Strategic Plan was relatively strong, albeit recognizing that the Strategic Plan covers a wide range of possible activities and issues and could perhaps be further reviewed as indicated above. Coherence with other internal plans, policies and frameworks varied, with improvements required in terms of emergency preparedness and in aligning sustainability efforts between GTB, supply chain and operations.

#### 4.1.1.ii Processes & Systems

##### **Key Conclusions**

###### Conclusion 4

Risk Management and Emergency Preparedness: better use of available data and tools on climate risks would enable an organizational pivot towards enhanced preparedness and anticipatory action, reducing climate impacts on forcibly displaced populations, and reducing emergency response costs for the organization and overall. Integration of climate risk is currently not consistent or comprehensive across operations.

###### Conclusion 5

Mitigation and Sustainability (GTB, operational and supply chain sustainability): The Green Financing Facility has been a key feature enabling finance for investment in solar infrastructure in many countries, but awareness and remit (i.e. beyond solar) could be widened. Again, the assessment found a need for further integration, in this instance in terms of more comprehensive integration of climate and sustainability considerations across operations and supply chains. Whilst there are strong good practice examples of operational sustainability schemes providing co-benefits for climate/environment and FDPs (and potential for MCF funding), many such initiatives are now being scaled back due to funding and staffing cuts.

115. There are some strong examples of integration of climate action into **risk management** and **emergency preparedness** and response planning and processes, with some obvious synergies between climate action and DRR objectives. There has been some strong innovation around risk management, with a Climate Risk Toolkit being developed by RB EHAGL (in partnership with CGIAR) and now being trialed in certain countries. There is a shift in some regions (e.g. EHAGL) towards more anticipatory action versus response action to climate change (see Box 3), and this is a key area where UNHCR can engage to ensure forcibly displaced persons are included in and benefit from any anticipatory action planning; ensuring in turn that their inclusion is a 'given' before a disaster or emergency even takes place. To avoid the risk of these examples becoming

'exceptions to the rule', all key emergency and risk policies and processes should be required to consider and integrate climate action (e.g. contingency plans and risk registers should include climate considerations, risks and opportunities as standard). There could be a clearer mandate and guidance on integration across all activities.

116. Most regions and countries have explored some element of greening facilities driven by the **Greening the Blue initiative**. The Green Financing Facility has provided essential support in terms of absorbing the upfront costs of green infrastructure (e.g. solar panels for offices), but there is limited awareness across COs of the existence of this facility and how to access it. There are also concerns as to whether this facility is sufficient to meet the needs of all UNHCR regions and countries, for renewable energy (which the fund is focused on), not to mention wider sustainability solutions. There has also been some significant leadership (internally and externally) innovation around **supply chain sustainability**. There is a tension at points here, however, between a localization and sustainability approach: local suppliers can be, but are not always, the most sustainable option (e.g. they may not meet specific sustainability criteria in UNHCR sustainable supply guidelines despite offering reduced transport emissions).<sup>38</sup> Sustainability also was found to not be fully integrated across all supply chain processes and mechanisms (e.g. supplier sub-contracts). In terms of the **greening of operations**, understood as the sustainability of infrastructure and initiatives in displacement settings, several programs/activities have been able to integrate climate action into implementation. These efforts include building resilience to climate-related risks, promoting environmentally sustainable and green livelihoods, and applying nature-based solutions to strengthen infrastructure and site-level resilience. Where implemented, such approaches have generated clear co-benefits for both human wellbeing and environmental outcomes (see the Humanitarian Action Case Study in Annex IV for illustrative examples). These experiences provide concrete case studies, evidence, and practical entry points for accessing climate finance. However, many of these initiatives have been paused or substantially scaled back as a result of shifting priorities, funding reductions, and the erosion of core technical capacity and staffing.
117. **Innovation** regarding climate action can be considered an organizational strength, with significant support provided from The Climate and Environment Innovation Fund and team. The Refugee Environmental Protection Fund (REP) also provides an avenue for support on innovating climate action solutions. Where Innovation Officers have been embedded in regional and country teams (e.g. RB AP MFT), this has been shown to pay dividends in terms of more support of and levels of climate-related innovation.
118. **AGD** can also be considered an organizational strength and core expertise, with some good practice examples observed of integrating AGD considerations into climate action work. This strength is also externally recognized, and puts UNHCR in a position to influence to ensure inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in climate action and adaptation policies, plans, frameworks and programs more widely. Under the current resource-constrained context, this is a cost as well as 'impact' effective modality for the organization's climate action work.

#### 4.1.1.iii Data & Evidence

##### **Key Conclusions**

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<sup>38</sup> [UNHCR, Sustainable supply initiatives, website.](#)

## Conclusion 6

**Data and Evidence:** Access to climate data and evidence, and partnerships with key organizations to access further data and support analysis, are essential to inform decision-making and prioritization in the severely resource-constrained organizational context.

## Conclusion 7

**Evaluation and learning:** Climate-related evaluation and learning is extremely limited, with significant losses in terms of potential for sharing and replication of good practices, and also losses in institutional memory and knowledge following staff departure (or post changes).

## Conclusion 8

**Monitoring and reporting:** Confusion and limitations surrounding the climate markers, and a lack of mandatory climate sections in reporting, mean that vital information on climate action work and progress is being lost.

119. Overall, **data and evidence** concerning climate action is increasingly available, both internal and external to UNHCR. The challenge is in accessing and utilizing that data for decision making in specific contexts, sectors and roles. More localized (e.g. camp/displacement setting specific) data was said to be the main climate data gap (this can be cost and resource prohibitive – as found by a collaboration with UNOSAT and UNHCR HQ (DRS, TSS)<sup>39</sup>. There was also a concern expressed about data validation and verification, for instance understanding the key and most trusted sources. The RA did find several impressive examples of innovative new **tools and analytics** for CA. Secondees and CGIAR as a key partner have provided strong support across the board here. These tools can be used to support integration of climate considerations in protection and core activities, as the data can demonstrate the extent of climate vulnerability and how targeted support can improve wellbeing and outcomes, for example.
120. **Evaluation and learning** tended to be a weaker area across the organization (a review of centralized evaluations yielded few examples (e.g. evaluation of the emergency response to Cyclone Idai<sup>40</sup>; a review of UNHCR’s role in natural disasters from 2010<sup>41</sup>); and only *ad hoc* examples were provided of decentralized evaluations/reviews), including some good practice examples (e.g. RB AP’s Community of Practice; CA intervention evaluations planned in Bangladesh and Mozambique). Given the richness documented in this RA in terms of good practice examples and innovation, there is a clear opportunity to strengthen knowledge management and learning processes and mechanisms to ensure to capitalize on progress already made and ensure internal alignment.
121. Similarly, **reporting** on climate action was found to be limited at the country level particularly (with the new global narrative results report late in 2025 being a welcome addition at the organizational level). However, this report draws from country ARR’s and therefore is limited to that extent, and also by the RBM system, in terms of being unable as yet to present standardized, aggregated data. Specific reporting on CA is not mandatory at the country level and there were few observations of voluntary reporting. Further, the inclusion of a climate chapter in the annual Global Report is a recent development (as is the case with all new Focus Areas). Climate action reporting within ARR’s is not standardized or extensive. There is a need to shed greater light on progress made with climate action work, key challenges and key opportunities to ensure organizational and

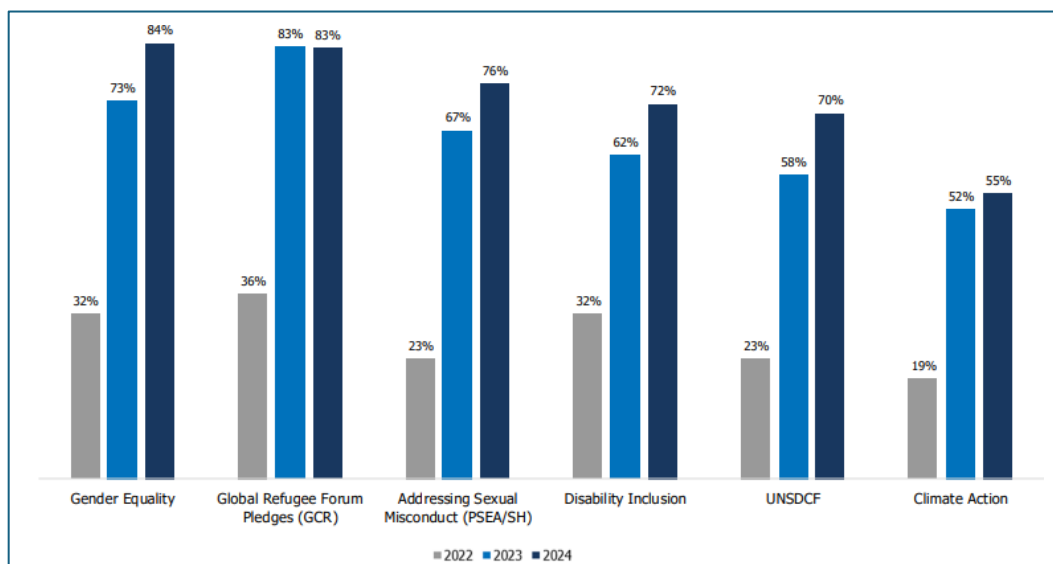
<sup>39</sup> [UNHCR, Insights into climate risk analysis and costing: Geospatial remote sensing in 30 settlements](#), nd.

<sup>40</sup> UNHCR, Evaluation of UNHCR’s Level 3 Emergency Response to Cyclone Idai – Final Report, 2021.

<sup>41</sup> UNHCR, Earth, Wind and Fire: A Review of UNHCR’s Role in Natural Disasters, 2010.

funding support. Reasonable levels of compliance with core **RBM** requirements were observed, but limited additional efforts were noted regarding monitoring climate action work more closely. Issues with the Climate Action markers were noted in terms of their dual use (i.e. for their main purpose in progress tracking, but also are used in absence of other tools, etc. as a proxy for resource tracking), and their limited scope to capture all CA work. Figure 7 below highlights the low rates of climate action marker use across UNHCR operations, albeit growing.

Figure 7: Proportion of Operations with Outputs linked to Organizational Markers (source: DSPR)



#### 4.1.1.iv People, Capacity and Culture

##### **Key Conclusions**

##### Conclusion 9

Staffing resource and technical capacity: following substantive funding losses and the subsequent restructure, several climate action staff (previously 62 staff with CA-related job titles in 2025) and many counterparts in partner organizations have now departed, with some RBx and COs now having no remaining focal points. There have been significant losses in terms of institutional memory, external relationship management and technical skillsets, with many projects and initiatives wound down or ceased. This presents the greatest risk to UNHCR's work on climate action and necessitates a move to further prioritize strategy and activities, alongside investment in partnerships to pool resources and complementary skillsets.

122. Following the funding cuts and restructuring, there have been significant losses of **staff** across all areas. Some climate 'teams' are not now extant, or have been substantially diminished, both in number and influence. This is the most significant risk presented to UNHCR's climate action and Strategic Plan implementation, representing the loss of key **technical capacity**, skillsets, expertise, experience, relationship-holders, knowledge, learning and institutional memory. Even seconded staff, whom have provided significant technical leadership in UNHCR, are leaving due to funding cuts across the humanitarian and development sectors. Partnerships and shared resources with other agencies are therefore likely to be an increasingly important modality for UNHCR going forwards.
123. Stronger **cultures** around climate action were found in offices with climate 'champions' in senior leadership positions, and in contexts where the enabling environment (e.g. government policy) is already favorable towards climate action. On the whole, many staff seem committed to and are aware of the issues, but leadership needs to provide clearer

messaging and support to integrate climate action and drive it forward more robustly. Little **guidance, tools**, materials or evidence on climate action were found (with the exception of the emerging tools noted under Data and Evidence above). There is a clear appetite from UNHCR staff for increased learning about climate action, but there is a lack of standardized and role/sector specific courses and training. Similarly, performance objectives for CA are not included in current UNHCR **performance management** frameworks and processes.

124. In terms of **support to COs through RB/HQ role**, many RBx are playing a key role in facilitating partnerships (regionally and nationally), providing thought or technical leadership and supporting fundraising. Where there have been significant staff losses in RBx, HQ may have to play a stronger role in country support going forwards. This has direct implications for OSACA and the Climate Finance Team particularly, which have suffered their own staff losses and are already stretched across a wide-ranging and intensive remit of advocacy, resource mobilization and partnership work, alongside broader organizational support. In general, countries and regions expressed demand for increased engagement with and communication from HQ to maximize collaboration, synergies and learning. For example, COs expressed little connection with Geneva Technical Hub.

#### 4.1.1.v Resource Mobilization and Management

##### **Key Conclusions**

###### Conclusion 10

Due to the recent substantive funding cuts from 'traditional' sources, emerging partnerships and funding opportunities with the private sector and MCFs present important alternative funding routes (and routes to influence climate spend on FDPs). Innovation is an organizational strength and could be capitalized upon further, exploring new financing modalities, such as parametric insurance and carbon credits.

125. Overall, **resource mobilization** varied widely between regions and countries, dependent on a number of factors, including the enabling environment and operational context (see Figure 8 below). It is also worth noting that tracking of contributions towards CA only started with the establishment of the Climate Finance Team, with specific data only available for 2024.

Figure 8: Forecast Climate Budget for 2025 and 2026

Row Labels	2025	2026
<b>Climate Action</b>	<b>383'630'302.GG</b>	<b>38'5G4'027.75</b>
Asia and the Pacific	86'664'875.02	346'545.99
East Horn and Great Lakes	80'644'372.94	9'913'854.72
Headquarters and Global Programmes	46'388'375.07	13'176'546.39
Middle East and North Africa	46'663'295.82	845'000.00
Southern Africa	29'342'788.81	6'796'608.10
The Americas	31'499'362.17	3'682'508.22
West and Central Africa	62'427'233.16	3'832'964.33
<b>Strategy tracker- FASP for Climate Action</b>	<b>1G2'035'36G.15</b>	<b>20'652'761.GG</b>
Asia and the Pacific	37'828'305.05	346'545.99
East Horn and Great Lakes	61'460'561.67	5'838'228.45
Headquarters and Global Programmes	17'046'812.67	6'014'300.00
Middle East and North Africa	13'321'832.36	
Southern Africa	25'009'397.69	5'475'541.67
The Americas	1'366'588.36	587'216.67
West and Central Africa	36'001'871.35	2'390'929.21
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>575'665'672.14</b>	<b>5G'246'78G.74</b>

126. To date, greater success has been achieved through integration of climate action in ‘traditional’ (i.e. for historical and consistent UNHCR work) UNHCR proposals and activities (e.g. integrating with emergency funding in climate emergencies of 2024). There also has been some progress in mobilizing resources from the GCF (e.g. Tanzania, South Sudan). The private sector is also an emerging contributor to climate action.
127. It is perhaps premature to expect significant progress in terms of **innovative financing** approaches, given the challenges with even more ‘traditional’ fundraising for climate-related work outlined already. Nevertheless, some regions and countries have demonstrated significant efforts in exploring options such as parametric insurance and carbon credits.
128. However, the RA found several barriers to further climate resource mobilization. UNHCR systems and processes for resource allocation are not currently well-suited to support heavily projectized funding, including climate funding, presenting further obstacles to increasing this funding source. UNHCR is also limited by its organizational status and typology with a number of organizations (e.g. AfDB, GCF) and accessing MCF funding directly often requires specific accreditation (although it is noted that UNHCR is pursuing accreditations). Currently, to access funding from the MCFs, UNHCR must work through accredited entities. There is also a missed opportunity in terms of **resource tracking** to better capture CA work, which would support fundraising, reporting and allocation of funds/resources.
129. In light of the above, prioritization of certain funds or donors, and/or towards a core set of CA activities or focal areas, is required from HQ/RBx, especially in the current resource-constrained environment. Key technical and development expertise is required if UNHCR is to exploit the opportunities from the MCFs to any significant extent. This may best be sourced in partnership with other agencies and organizations, on a shared or complementary basis. There is increasing opportunity for UNHCR in this vein to capitalize on existing momentum as GCF implements its FCAS portfolio.

#### 4.1.1.vi Strategic Positioning and Partnerships

##### **Key Conclusions**

###### Conclusion 11

In the increasingly resource-constrained organizational and sectoral context, alignment and joint funding proposals with peer UN agencies will be a key modality for UNHCR going forwards, as well as key multi-stakeholder networks and coalitions (particularly in terms of advocacy goals); and RLO partnerships to enable the sustainable response approach at the community/operational level.

###### Conclusion 12

Public sector partnerships provide tried and tested routes for effective leveraging for inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in climate-related policies and programs.

130. UNHCR’s strategic positioning in climate action is increasingly reliant on partnerships, especially in the current resource-constrained environment. **UN and multilateral** partnerships tend to be reasonably strong at all levels of UNHCR and could be further explored and strengthened towards increased fundraising and complementary partnerships for climate action. As outlined earlier, multi-agency proposals and approaches are increasingly sought after by funders and donors. There are already some strong examples of **multi-stakeholder networks and coalitions** at HQ, regional and country levels. As already outlined previously, this provides a key modality for UNHCR to advance its climate action objectives and work, both for leveraging for inclusion and participation in complementary climate partnerships.

131. **Public sector** partnerships are already a central feature of UNHCR's work, with some strong examples of close alignment with government departments and ministries. These partnerships provide tangible and important (and cost-effective) entry-points for the organization to leverage for the inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in government and national climate plans, policies and strategies. Supporting governments on GCR pledges has also been found to lead to entry-points to subsequent engagement on climate pledges, and has also in some cases unlocked some funding with MCFs.
132. **Private sector** partnerships are an emerging area of engagement and funding for the organization, with some early innovation for example in Mauritania and the EHAGL region. As above, these may be particularly important to explore for new sources and types of funding (e.g. carbon finance).
133. At the local level, **RLOs** are emerging as a key implementation modality for UNHCR, particularly in the current capacity and resource-constrained context. This aligns well with UNHCR's 'sustainable response' approach, increasing longevity of activities and impact, and providing capacity-building and livelihoods for host communities and forcibly displaced persons.
134. In general, **research and academic engagement** is more scattered and low-level, with more 'alliances' or relationships/connections versus formal partnerships linked to any tangible outcomes. It may be more fruitful for the organization to focus engagement on key think tanks or academic centers, for example Chinese Think Tanks and academic centers in the AP region.

#### 4.1.2 Summary of conclusions in relation to the Assessment Questions

**AQ1) To what extent does UNHCR have the necessary enabling dimensions in place to effectively operationalise, monitor, and achieve its four inter-related objectives, priority actions and programming outputs and accelerate climate action?**

135. Due to extensive changes in the external environment, leading to severe funding cuts and subsequent substantive staffing losses, UNHCR is less ready than it was a year ago to implement its Strategic Plan for Climate Action. Senior leadership has not adequately affirmed whether or not climate action remains a priority for the organization, nor specified the key priorities (geographically and operationally) on which to focus extremely limited resources. In order to capitalize on hard work and efforts to date, there are many good practices and tools outlined in this report which can support ongoing efforts once priorities are made clear. Improvements are needed to climate monitoring, reporting and knowledge management to ensure better capture of progress, lessons and good practice/tools; and to avoid further related losses related to future staff departure or movements.

**2) Which specific enabling dimensions (or combination thereof), in which contexts, require strengthening in order to accelerate progress towards achievement of these objectives, priority actions and outputs?**

136. The new context that the organization finds itself in necessitates increased and clearer senior/executive **leadership and accountability** for climate action, and a reprioritization of the Strategic Plan and related activities.
137. Climate action is not robustly or comprehensively integrated across key **processes and systems**, with opportunities being missed to increase resilience of displacement settings and protect vulnerable populations from climate risks. Key priorities are risk management and emergency preparedness.
138. **Partnerships** are already a key modality for UNHCR, but will become even more so in order to 'combine forces' with others on various fronts (e.g. ensuring mitigation efforts are not set back or reversed by developing partnerships with peer agencies and the private

sector; nurturing key strategic partnerships such as with CGIAR to ensure continued access to key climate data and analysis to inform prioritization and decision-making, and nurturing the partnership with the GCF in terms of increased access to and influence over MCF funding sources and spend).

### **3) What other actors and factors have hindered or supported UNHCR's ability to leverage the enabling dimensions and operationalize Climate Action so far in UNHCR?**

139. **Enabling factors** internally have been strengths in AGD integration into climate activities, innovation and locally-led approaches; providing good practice examples and lessons around environmentally, socially and economically sustainable models for climate action in humanitarian settings. Enabling factors externally have been increasing visibility and awareness of climate issues due to media interest and key international/global events (e.g. COP), providing UNHCR with a 'license to operate' and public support in terms of climate action, as well as increased profile and influence through attendance at COP and similar events.
140. **Hindering factors** internally have been difficulty in sourcing key technical skillsets for innovative climate projects and MCF proposals, and difficulty in mobilizing at pace to respond to MCF and similar 'alternative funding' opportunities. Externally, a lack of understanding of human mobility specifically in relation to climate change has limited wider engagement with this issue, but this also presents an opportunity for UNHCR in terms of external positioning and influence.

### **4) What conclusions and recommendations can be drawn to support regional bureaux and countries' implementation of the Strategic Plan? What conclusions can be drawn regarding the relevance and appropriateness of the Strategic Plan?**

141. The Strategic Plan in its current form is no longer fit-for-purpose in the current organizational context. The AT has thus provided some strategic and operational recommendations to support essential prioritization of UNHCR's climate action strategy and activities. Improved senior/executive leadership and accountability is requested by RBx and COs to provide clarity on climate action, with respect to the organizational mandate and the way forward under the current resource-constrained scenario.
142. Please see Section 4.4 for the response to AQ5 regarding Phase 2 of the longitudinal evaluation.

## **4.2 Lessons Learned**

143. Despite the resource constrained environment that UNHCR is now operating in, climate action remains a key opportunity for the organization and its mandate if effectively integrated into ongoing operations.
144. **UNHCR is a valued and respected partner at international, national and local levels.** UNHCR's **field presence, protection expertise, and data** provide leverage for its advocacy on inclusion of forcibly displaced people in national policies and global climate platforms (e.g. COPs, GRF). This is a strategic position that, with clearer messaging and clarification of mandate regarding climate action (see for example Section 3.1.1i), could be utilized more boldly to drive climate action objectives. For example, although UNHCR may often not be able to receive funding through climate finance mechanisms (e.g. Green Climate Fund's FCAS portfolio, World Bank's IDA window) these funds offer new avenues for funding refugee-inclusive climate action. UNHCR can effectively position itself to support on implementation of these funds and ensure protection, leveraging its vast experience and presence as a key comparative advantage. This form of partnering and advocacy represents strong value for money with the potential for inclusion of displaced populations in major national climate strategies, policies or infrastructure or other projects.

145. **Climate action offers opportunities for promoting protection and social cohesion, livelihoods and inclusion and environmental resilience** alongside direct mitigation and adaptation. The programming for development case study highlights numerous examples where joint environmental projects (e.g. mangrove restoration in Colombia, DRR planning in Guatemala) foster collaboration between refugee and host communities, improving relations and social cohesion. Climate initiatives like solar energy training in Ecuador and e-waste recycling in Bangladesh offer income opportunities and integrate refugees into local economies whilst tree nurseries in Cameroon and reforestation in Tanzania show how climate action can simultaneously enhance environmental resilience and provide economic benefits. However, UNHCR must ensure that climate action and activities are aligned with national policies and market demand, collaborating with governments and private sectors to ensure relevance, scalability, and sustainability.
146. **Alignment and partnership internally and externally is a vital pathway for success on climate action** in a challenging and resource-constrained environment. Internally, leadership, culture and governance are key enabling factors for progress on climate action. For example, RBA made significant progress on CA with the least resources of all regions due to a coherent, internally aligned approach driven by strategic planning, key shared objectives e.g. COP30 advocacy, and senior management support. In addition, ensuring internal alignment and sustainment of momentum through sharing and documentation of learning is not a 'nice-to-have', as for example key progress and knowledge can be lost following the exit of relevant staff. As outlined earlier, key external partnerships with government (e.g. in Mauritania) and other agencies and organizations (e.g. via engagement in the SADC) provide significant opportunity to leverage for inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in key climate frameworks, policies, programs and initiatives.
147. **Central to this internal alignment is clear messaging on UNHCR's mandate and role.** For example, there is a lack of clarity around UNHCR's mandate and role in responding to disasters outside of conflict zones remain unclear, even though the organization has a presence in the field and relevant expertise to address urgent needs, as highlighted in the Cyclone Idai evaluation. More broadly, its role in preparing for natural and other types of disasters lacks consensus. Frameworks (building on progress through the Nansen Initiative) such as the Platform on Disaster Displacement and national planning tools (e.g. NAPs, GCR National Action Plans) offer potential entry points for UNHCR's involvement, but further clarification is needed as the boundaries between humanitarian and development work continue to blur. To address the growing and complex impact of climate change, environmental degradation, and disasters on displacement, new legal and policy innovations, such as humanitarian visas for temporary protection and improved coordination across legal and normative systems, are essential to allow UNHCR to increasingly engage in climate action and displacement space. UNHCR's expertise in protection and AGD integration is widely recognized by its partners and can serve as a strong foundation for this work.

## 4.3 Recommendations

148. This readiness assessment has come at a key juncture for UNHCR. 2025 was a turbulent year for the humanitarian sector and global climate action as a whole. UNHCR experienced huge cuts to its funding, and the loss of many key staff as a result. Therefore, the arrival of the new High Commissioner at the beginning of 2026 will be a pivotal moment as UNHCR decides upon its strategic direction in the years to come.
149. Despite the substantive global shifts, the impacts of the climate crisis presents remain constant. The numbers of forcibly displaced people will continue to grow, and those that are already displaced will be amongst the most at risk. Therefore, UNHCR cannot ignore the climate crisis. Instead, it must be decisive on where and how it can intervene most effectively and use its reduced resources accordingly.
150. To support this, the AT have provided two levels of recommendations. The first set are strategic recommendations to guide these key strategic decisions that UNHCR will make in the following months (focused on the three pillars of the Strategic Plan: International Protection; Adaptation and Resilience, and Mitigation), and the second set are operational recommendations to support implementation of the strategic recommendations, continuing improvements, building on good practice and progress identified, and addressing specific gaps in operational readiness in order to implement a revised Strategic Plan.
151. The operational recommendations were finalized following a workshop with the IRG where the focus, prioritization and potential ownership of the recommendations was discussed. It is important to note that the request to provide the strategic recommendations came during report finalization, and there was not opportunity to bring these back to the IRG — but it is anticipated that the IRG will be consulted in any management response to these recommendations. The recommendations are presented in order of priority. The Assessment Team have also provided some suggestions for consideration to further support implementation of the operational recommendations. It is anticipated that the three Strategic Recommendations will warrant a Management Response, with the Operational Recommendations guiding the implementation of that response.

### 4.3.1 Strategic Recommendations

No	Strategic Plan Pillar	Linked to Key Conclusions	Recommendation	Rationale
1	International Protection	1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 12	<p><b>UNHCR should maintain a priority focus on advocacy and Leveraging for Inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in climate action policies, programs, platforms and fora. However, given limited resources and budget, there is a need to revisit strategy, and ensure that efforts are focused where there is most comparative advantage and potential for impact.</b> This will necessitate continued and increased alignment with other UN agencies, and investing in the nurturing and development of key strategic partnerships (e.g. with GCF on Climate Action Coalition in FCAS – directly linking to potential for further funding )in order to combine resources and complementary skillsets. Focus on instruments such as the GRF climate action pledge process with significant leveraging potential, at both global and national levels, will also be key.</p>	<p>This is a priority focus for UNHCR moving forward – representing an area of comparative advantage, as well as being clearly aligned with the organization’s core mandate. This is also an area where the organization can have impact at a lower cost relative to other climate action initiatives, and combine efforts with those of key partners and peer agencies. The case studies on Thought Leadership and Advocacy, and Strategic Partnerships, provided as annexes to this Readiness Assessment provide some examples of where UNHCR has been most effective to-date.</p>
2	Adaptation & Resilience	1, 2, 6, 9, 10	<p><b>A) UNHCR should reduce the number of climate action priority countries, and therefore reduce the number of countries with specific adaptation and resilience projects. We also suggest that it would be more appropriate to change the terminology to ‘climate focal’ and ‘climate mainstreaming’ countries.</b></p> <p>A smaller set of priority (or as above ‘focal countries’) countries should be identified where focussed efforts</p>	<p>The number of adaptation and resilience focussed projects or initiatives in countries/regions will have to be reduced in line with staffing and resource constraints.</p> <p>Focussing efforts on those at highest risk will minimise secondary impacts and displacements on forcibly displaced persons. The Climate Vulnerability Assessment Tool and Climate Risk Toolkit (both</p>

or initiatives will be supported, with two objectives/lenses:

- *Highest climate vulnerability* – the forcibly displaced populations and settlements/operations which are most exposed to climate risk should be identified for prioritisation of adaptation, resilience-building and anticipatory action efforts (e.g. tree nurseries/cocooning and greenbelt construction). This will necessitate continued investment in key strategic partnerships (e.g. CGIAR) to access data to inform decision-making, as well as further development of private sector partnerships to support innovation around and implementation of anticipatory action activities (e.g. as with current examples such as the parametric insurance partnership with ARC in RSA – now part of RB EHAGL).
- *Highest potential for accessing and influencing the Multilateral Climate Funds* – those countries or groups of countries with existing (e.g. Tanzania) or pipeline funding for the MCFs (or high potential for securing or influencing such funding – e.g. Nigeria, Bangladesh) should be identified. This will require close collaboration with DER's Climate Finance team. This again will require effort and investment in nurturing and developing key partnerships with peer agencies and others to access complementary skillsets and resources to enable successful proposals and influencing.

highlighted in this assessment) will be useful assets to this end.

Focussing efforts where there is existing or high potential for leverage and/or influencing of MCFs provides an opportunity to fund the acquisition of technical skillsets via MCF project teams (with wider organizational contributions and benefits enabled), and to provide much-needed sizeable, additional funding for the organization. There are also opportunities via influencing to target general spend towards climate-vulnerable forcibly displaced populations.

		1, 2, 4, 5	<p><b>B) UNHCR should focus efforts and resources towards further and more comprehensive <u>integration</u> and mainstreaming of climate action considerations (particularly in terms of climate risk identification and preparedness/anticipatory action) across <u>all operations and countries</u>.</b></p> <p>Therefore, it is proposed that all countries are expected to reach a 'minimum standard of climate action', in particular which identifies and mitigates key climate risks to operations and forcibly displaced persons. Note, this will still require some investment and/or strategic partnerships to enable access to technical skillsets and staff resource to guide improved integration, as well as ensuring access to key data to inform decision-making.</p>	<p>The RA found that further efforts could be made to ensure climate action is considered comprehensively and robustly across all operations (e.g. in emergency response). This represents an opportunity to focus limited resources on core organizational activities, enhancing their impact (i.e. protection of FDPs) and resilience (e.g. reducing risk to infrastructure from climate related events and natural hazards) through improved climate integration, in a relatively cost-efficient manner compared to standalone climate initiatives. In particular, identifying and mitigating against key climate risks (e.g. using the Climate Risk Toolkit and key evidence/data via the strategic partnership with CGIAR as outlined in this assessment) will provide two-fold benefits: 1) protecting forcibly displaced populations, and 2) protecting key organizational assets and services which are required to achieve the first benefit.</p> <p>Climate will be an increasing risk to all those which UNHCR seeks to protect. Therefore, activities in non-focal, or rather as proposed 'mainstreaming countries', still need to ensure that there is no harm to forcibly displaced persons as a result of any climate or environmental impact from UNHCR operations; alongside seeking opportunities to integrate climate action considerations and maximise climate action benefits for affected populations where possible.</p>
3	Mitigation	1, 2, 5, 9, 10, 11	<p><b>UNHCR should look to sustain and fund mitigation efforts by making this a focus and specific inclusion in funding proposals, and looking to sustain the central Green Financing Facility.</b> Again, partnerships with other UN agencies and the private sector are likely to be key here to</p>	<p>Whilst at the start of the RA this was a strongly performing and well-progressed pillar of the Strategic Plan, the loss of staff and funding presents a serious threat to undermine and potentially reverse efforts and progress to-date (for example, the team which compile the data for the Greening the Blue report, is now one person, and it is not certain if this staff member will be</p>

pool resources and skillsets, and to access both innovation and additional funding.

retained. So, not only will the organization be at risk of worsening climate and environmental performance, but also it may be unable to report accurately regarding this, limiting transparency and lowering standing amongst peer agencies). This is a reputational and operational risk for UNHCR: if the organization is deemed to be causing harm through its operational footprint to the environments which support the populations they seek to protect. The organization should look to examples of peer agencies (e.g. WFP) where mitigation is built in to, and also the focus of, specific funding proposals.

It is important to note that there is high potential here for increased cost efficiencies for the organization (e.g. less energy usage), but that often mitigation schemes require some significant upfront investment, with a ROI (Return on Investment) in the medium to long term. This is where the Green Financing Facility has been particularly supportive, as outlined in this assessment, in providing loans to COs for investment in solar infrastructure which are paid off over time through cost-savings via reduced energy usage.

### 4.3.2 Operational Recommendations

The following are a set of recommendations to assist in operationalizing the revised Strategic Plan in line with the Strategic Recommendations above. These operational recommendations align with the key enabling dimensions for ‘readiness’ to implement the Strategic Plan, as per the RA design.

No	Related Enabling Dimensions	Recommendation	Rationale
4	Leadership, Strategic Planning, Governance and Accountability	<p><b>A) The next planning cycle should be utilized by all three organizational levels to reassess the priority of climate action work, approaches and initiatives.</b> This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <b>review of the Strategic Plan for Climate Action</b> with key relevant divisions OSACA, DEPS, DER and Climate Finance.</li> <li>• A <b>review of CA priority countries</b>, in liaison with the above teams and RBx, to prioritize support and resource allocation (including investment in technical capacity).</li> <li>• <b>Clear organization-wide communication and guidance</b> on where climate action sits in the organizational priorities and relative to UNHCR’s mandate following the restructuring.</li> </ul>	<p>This steps will particularly support implementation of Strategic Recommendation 1.</p> <p>Extensive work has already been undertaken by DIP, OSACA and others to situate climate action within UNHCR’s mandate and Strategic Plan. However, this was thrown into question during the restructuring, with many receiving the message that climate action was a lesser priority and less relevant to the ‘core mandate. In line with the focusing and prioritization of the Strategic Plan, there is a need for clear and unambiguous messaging on a) climate action’s relation to the organizational mandate in the new funding/structural context and b) the key priorities going forwards. There also remains a need to clarify UNHCR’s role in non-conflict disaster response.</p> <p>Key Conclusions: 1, 2, 6, 9</p>
	Systems & Processes		
	People, Capacity and Culture	<p><b>B) UNHCR should reconsider the responsibilities for HQ and RBx teams in providing support to country operations for climate action work.</b> Key profiles and roles that provide significant contributions and support to CA should be considered for retention if climate action remains a priority for UNHCR. UNHCR should also consider a more regional approach to climate action.</p>	<p>The restructuring means that RBx will no longer be able to provide the same, vital support to COs for climate action. Therefore, UNHCR will need to reconsider how it provides support to COs to implement climate action activities and advocacy. The reduction of priority countries and number of initiatives will help to this end, but there may have to be a rebalancing of priorities for key HQ staff also so that their responsibilities include increased country-level support.</p>

			<p>Although the merger of Southern Africa RB into EHAGL/WCA presents challenges, the restructuring also presents an opportunity to consider a more regional approach to climate action. With careful consideration, UNHCR can ensure that the strong regional work that has taken place in SA (e.g. alongside the SADC) is not lost.</p> <p>Key Conclusions: 1, 2, 3, 9</p>
		<p><b>C) UNHCR to consider including objectives for climate action in the performance management framework, particularly for senior staff/leaders.</b></p>	<p>The aim should be to improve visibility and accountability on climate action, and to provide clarity over strategic and operational leadership for climate action at all levels.</p> <p>Key Conclusions: 1, 9</p>

**Further Suggestions from the AT for consideration related to Recommendation 4:**

**Strategic Prioritization of Climate Action**

- The AT suggests that in terms of the **five priority actions**, Programming for Development is deprioritized in favor of (in order of prioritization):
  1. Strategic Partnerships;
  2. Leveraging for Inclusion;
  3. Thought Leadership and Advocacy;
  4. Humanitarian Action for Climate Resilience (achieved through increased integration of climate action in emergency preparedness/response).

This should also be informed by the redefined and differentiated mandates for UNHCR versus other key agencies (e.g. WFP, IOM) in the UN80 process.
- The **HC, AHC-O, AHC-P and Director of DEPS** should take the overall decisions on prioritization, direction, approach and relation to UNHCR's mandate, and clearly communicate and regularly reinforce this messaging across the organization. OSACA, DSPR (now DEPS), DER and Climate Finance should support the HC and AHC with the review of the Strategic Plan, ideally before the end of UNHCR's next planning cycle.
- **RBx**, with guidance and support from OSACA, Climate Finance, TSS and other relevant divisions, should **review and further prioritize the 'priority countries'**, according to assessed levels of climate risk and potential for (or existing) MCF funding (as per Strategic Recommendation 1).
- AHC-O, AHC-P, DEPS Director should agree on any **reconfiguration of HQ team roles** in collaboration with relevant teams/divisions and HR.

**Integrating and Mainstreaming of Climate Action**

- Recognizing this is not cost or capacity neutral, the AT suggests that UNHCR **invest in capacity to further mainstream and integrate climate action across all of UNHCR's work, processes and systems** (as a fundamental issue affecting displacement, protection and vulnerability of forcibly displaced persons; and in line with the global programming principles). This is especially critical and effective in humanitarian response and emergency settings.
- We also **suggest that utilization (through adaptation and roll-out) of existing tools**, such as Climate Vulnerability, Risk Assessment and Environmental and Social Safeguard tools, will provide significant support to integration and mainstreaming efforts. The AT note that the climate vulnerability tool is designed to be a sub-part of the main vulnerability assessment process and tool; and therefore, can easily be adapted for different contexts, as part of the tailored vulnerability assessment tools already used by livelihood and protection staff.
- **Improvement and further development of guidance** for staff will become increasingly important in line with integration and mainstream efforts. The AT suggest embedding/integrating climate further across key manuals, including compulsory CA training as part of the core induction program.

No	Related Enabling Dimensions	Recommendation	Rationale
5	<p>Strategic Positioning &amp; Partnerships</p> <p>Resource Mobilization and Management</p> <p>People, Capacity and Culture</p>	<p><b>A) UNHCR should develop and nurture key transactional partnerships to mobilize much-needed resources (and capacity) for climate action</b>, once priorities and direction are clear under the Strategic Recommendations. The AT thus proposes that UNHCR focus on the inclusion and protection of forcibly displaced persons in multilateral climate fund programs directed through national governments or other actors (non-transactional focus) as well as for direct resource mobilization at all levels, coordinated by the Climate Finance Team.</p>	<p>Given the shifts in key donor funding priorities (such as the US State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM)), the multilateral climate funds will become an increasingly important source of funding for the protection of forcibly displaced persons, especially as the funds increase engagement in FCAS contexts. In addition, mobilized resources need to be well allocated to sustain and increase staffing capacity and technical skills to undertake this recommendation (in particular, technical and development-orientated skillsets required for design and implementation of MCF funding and projects). Strategic partnerships will also be essential in enabling pooling and sharing of complementary technical skillsets (e.g. shared positions/staff can be built into multi-agency bids, which are increasingly in demand from GCF and others; building on existing examples of this in practice, such as the sharing of a staff member between UNHCR and WFP in Mauritania for a World Bank project, and private sector technical support in China). This should include strengthening stand-by partner mechanisms to deploy dedicated expertise in CA.</p> <p>Key Conclusions: 10, 12</p>

		<p><b>B) UNHCR to consider how flexibility could be built into budgeting and planning processes to accommodate new sources and types of funding.</b></p>	<p>The AT note that some steps have been made in the direction of supporting a more projectized approach to resource mobilization, but UNHCR will need to continue to explore all avenues for resource mobilization given the new funding context. Key Conclusions: 8, 10</p>
		<p><b>C) UNHCR should maintain and increase focus on non-transactional partnerships</b> (e.g. influencing and advocacy work) to support large-scale resource mobilization and leverage for inclusion of climate-vulnerable forcibly displaced persons in the wider context (i.e. refugee-hosting countries).</p>	<p>Non-transactional partnerships build on UNHCR's comparative advantages; namely its strong relationships with public sector actors, and its unique perspective on inclusion and protection, which it can add to global and national debate and positioning on climate action. Key Conclusions: 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 12</p>

**Suggestions from the AT to support Implementation of Operational Recommendation 5:**

The AT suggests **prioritization of multi-agency partnerships** (i.e. with peer UN agencies) as a key modality to secure or influence the use of MCF funding.

- As indicated; **investment in thought leadership, advocacy and leveraging for inclusion work** will continue to provide an increasingly (relative to other options) cost-effective and impactful route to protecting climate-vulnerable forcibly displaced persons and securing further funding. At the country level, UNHCR's strong existing partnerships with government and public sector partners will continue to be, and increase in, importance. Investment in retaining and nurturing the thought leadership, data and evidence-based strategic partnership with CGIAR is highly recommended. Therefore, all organizational levels should contribute to development and nurturing of key non-transactional partnerships and leveraging for inclusion, with support and leadership from OSACA.
- The AT suggests that UNHCR invests in **partnerships for innovative CA financing**, including reviewing and learning from the RA identified examples and good practice (to capitalize on learning, progress and momentum); and invests in developing and nurturing key partnerships, particularly with the private sector, to this end. Therefore, all organizational levels should contribute to development and nurturing of key partnerships for resource mobilization; with strong support and oversight from OSACA, Climate Finance and DER. The Climate Finance Team should coordinate the increased focus on MCF funding organization-wide, with a focus on the Priority Countries as per Strategic Recommendation 1.
- In this vein, the AT suggests maintaining fruitful engagements such as the WEF's Global Futures Council on Nature and Security, which has provided opportunities for partnerships with both private sector and established centers of excellence on climate action.
- In terms of implementation, and in line with the organization's sustainable response approach, **establishing and partnering with RLOs** will be an increasingly important modality to sustain climate-resilient solutions and build local (host and displaced community) capacities and economies.

- Over the next financial year, AHC-O and AHC-P should ensure resources are directed to ensure access to core CA capacity and technical skills to support implementation of these recommendations. DRM and DSPR (now DEPS) should work with key divisions/functions in terms of key challenges and needs related to new sources/types of funding.

No	Related Enabling Dimensions	Recommendation	Rationale
6	Data and Evidence Processes and Systems	<b>A) UNHCR should consider widening the climate marker indicators to include a wider range of climate-related work and funding, and simplifying their use</b> i.e. integrating the dual climate markers currently used. Targeted indicators for retained Strategic Plan objectives or actions (e.g. leveraging for inclusion or advocacy) could also be considered.	Currently UNHCR's climate markers do not capture some of the key work on climate action including on livelihoods programming and private sector resource mobilization. The dual climate markers (organizational and strategic plan) have also caused confusion. Key Conclusions: 8, 10
		<b>B) A clearer and more standardized route or vehicle for knowledge management and sharing learning around CA should be established</b> (see suggestions below)	To ensure capitalization on progress already made and to improve internal alignment Key Conclusions: 7, 8, 9
		<b>C) There should be a mandatory section in all Country Annual Results Reports on climate action</b> , with guidance and key sub-sections on key questions and climate results/issues to cover.	Country-level reporting does not currently capture the full range of climate action work and results taking place. Therefore, UNHCR often does not have the necessary data or evidence for resource mobilization or advocacy. Given that climate as per the Strategic Recommendations is to be further integrated across UNHCR's work, reporting on this area should apply to all (priority and non-priority) countries. Key Conclusions: 8

**Suggestions from the AT for consideration related to Recommendation 6:**

- The AT suggests (in relation to Recommendation 6b) developing a specific intranet area or page and/or implementing climate awards (an award for initiatives that have been successful in CA; as an incentive, and for internal communications, to showcase some of the best ideas developed across

the organization). OSACA should work with others in the organization to strengthen and support wider uptake of existing learning systems/knowledge channels, or to consider additional or new approaches.

- In relation to Recommendation 6c, another or additional option would be for DER to ensure a call with each region to capture any additional work which has been unable to be reported on (e.g. if country reporting is limited by resource or contextual constraints), to ensure that the annual organizational-level results report is as comprehensive as possible. DSPR (now DEPs) should consider revision of reporting guidance and templates for UNHCR's next planning cycle.

## 4.4 Potential questions or focal areas for Phase 2 of the Longitudinal Evaluation

152. At this point of time, it is unclear if and when Phase 2 of this longitudinal evaluation will proceed. However, should it do so, the AT have provided a list of potential questions or focal areas for any future evaluation team to consider below:
- Has UNHCR been able to nurture and grow existing; and/or to identify key, effective new partnerships (multi-stakeholder and otherwise) to help leverage increased and new climate-related funds?
  - Has UNHCR demonstrated sustained and improved internal and external leadership of climate action related to displacement?
    - Can clarity regarding mandate and priorities regarding climate action be observed, particularly in non-conflict related disasters?
    - What key outcomes can UNHCR (and importantly their partners and peers) point to in terms of external contributions to climate action related to displacement (e.g. leveraging large-scale resources for refugee-hosting countries and leveraging for inclusion in key climate-related policies and plans)?
  - Can climate action be considered well integrated across key UNHCR assets, policies, processes, functions and activities (particularly in terms of humanitarian response settings)?
  - Can UNHCR demonstrate improvements to knowledge retention, sharing and reporting on climate action?
153. UNHCR could also consider implementing case studies before or as part of the longitudinal evaluation on some of the key innovations highlighted in this RA. For example, the parametric insurance piloted in Malawi and potentially scaled to other countries in Southern and Eastern Africa could offer learning for the wider organization. Another could look at UNHCR's engagement with the GCF in Tanzania and any potential lessons around leveraging for inclusion in this setting.