

Terms of Reference

UNHCR-Syria

Evaluation of UNHCR Syria Vocational Training Programme Annex (A)

Time frame to be covered.	2018 - 2019
Assignment/Study	Evaluation of UNHCR Vocational Training Programme
Expected Start Date:	January 2020
End Date:	May 2020
Location	Syria
Evaluation commissioned by	UNHCR Syria
Evaluation Manager	UNHCR Syria

NOTE: Planned dates are tentative and subject to change.

1 Introduction

UNHCR's Global Strategy for Livelihoods 2014-2018¹ emphasizes the importance of regular evaluation of livelihoods initiatives to 'improve planning, learning and practice on successful approaches to livelihoods development and their impact on self-reliance'. Moreover, the UNHCR Syria Livelihoods Strategy commits the Syria Operation to undertake an evaluation of at least one Livelihood Programme on an annual basis².

UNHCR Syria has been supporting a significant Vocational Training Programme since 2013 with the aim of promoting self-reliance and improved livelihoods for UNHCR persons of concern (PoC) including internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees and returnees. In 2018, a total of 19,070 UNHCR persons of concern across Syria received vocational training relevant to a range of professions and income generating activities (e.g. sewing, electrical installation, carpentry, hairdressing etc.). There are currently approximately twenty (20) Implementing Partners engaged in the delivery of UNHCR-funded vocational training courses across thirteen governorates³. Some of the vocational training is conducted in UNHCR Community Centres (and Satellite Centres) whilst other training is conducted in private establishments as well as in government-owned/managed vocational training facilities (e.g. Ministry of Education). New Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Vocational Training (VT) were introduced on 1 August 2018. A number of market needs assessments have also been commissioned, or are currently being carried out, which also have relevance to the vocational training sector (e.g. growth prospects of particular sectors and professions).

2 OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of this study is to assess the relevance, effectiveness (including impact), efficiency and sustainability of the vocational training being provided to UNHCR PoC through UNHCR partners in Syria.

¹ <http://www.unhcr.org/protection/livelihoods/530f107b6/global-strategy-livelihoods.html>

² Livelihoods Strategy and Plan, UNHCR Syria 2018 – 2019.

³ In 2017, most beneficiaries of vocational training were living in governorates within the areas of responsibility of the following UNHCR Sub-/Field Offices: Damascus (SOD); Homs (SOH) and Tartous (FOT).

3 PROCESS & DELIVERABLES

Based on this TOR the contracted firm and the Evaluation Specialist will draw up a Plan of Action (3-5 pages) within the first two weeks of the assignment. The Plan of Action will include the proposed approach, data collection methods, logistical requirements and time frame. The Plan of Action will also include a clear description of the responsibilities as stated in (phase 1 and 2). The contracted firm selected to undertake this evaluation will, amongst other, be required to coordinate closely with the Evaluation Specialist assigned to this evaluation.

Phase 1: Inception Phase

This will involve attending relevant briefing sessions with UNHCR as well as establishing contact and reaching agreement with selected Partners, collection of background information, obtaining relevant permissions etc. The contracted firm will attend a briefing session with the Livelihoods Unit at UNHCR Country Office, before commencing any field activities. This briefing will provide the contracted firm with more detailed information on the internal UNHCR project reporting/tracking processes (including the 'dashboard') as well as information on the UNHCR Livelihoods Results Framework (e.g. Impact Indicators). During this phase, the contracted firm will be also provided with relevant background documentation e.g. Livelihoods Status Report (2018), SOP for UNHCR Vocational Training Programme (2018), Market Needs Assessment Reports etc.

Based on the Inception Phase a revised Plan of Action will be presented. This plan of action should include an inception report presenting the initial results, evaluation matrix, setting out the progress achieved during the preparatory phase and information gaps and the proposed approach to fill these information gaps.

Phase 2: Fieldwork and Data Collection Phase⁴

The Evaluation will draw on findings from field research and missions conducted in three governorates⁵. This will involve engagement with selected UNHCR Partners (including Livelihood Focal Points) and other key stakeholders (e.g. private sector enterprise engaged in a range of industries and sectors, Chambers of Commerce, relevant government ministries (e.g. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Works and Housing, Ministry of Industry etc.). Feedback from beneficiaries (i.e. those that graduated) of vocational training will also be a priority. The contracted firm will deliver and present the key findings and results to the Evaluation Specialist for secondary review and preparation of draft report.

Phase 3: Data Analysis and Report Preparation

The Evaluation Specialist will review findings and results of the fieldwork and will be responsible for drafting the final report which will be submitted no later than three weeks before submission of the final report. A presentation of the evaluation findings will be made to UNHCR Syria and UNHCR Evaluation Service at HQ before circulation of the final report.

1. EVALUATION APPROACH

1.1. Scope

The evaluation scope – relating to population, timeframe and locations is as follows:

⁴ The International Evaluation Specialist is also expected to provide the contracted firm with needed guidance and technical support including training in relevant methodology.

⁵ There is no possibility to have a national-side detailed evaluation due to the security, approval and access reasons. Therefore, sampling from three different contexts (governorates) has to be used to mitigate this limitation. It is most likely that governorates of Rural Damascus, Aleppo and Homs will be prioritized for this evaluation based on number of beneficiaries, return movement and other factors.

- Timeframe to be covered in the evaluation: 2018-2019.
- Population location and details: primary data collection will involve field work in three governorates.

1.2. Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs)

The evaluation will address the following headline questions. The analysis needed to answer them is likely to touch on other possible Key Evaluation questions and may be further refined during the evaluation inception phase.

KEQ 1: How effective has the UNHCR vocational training programme been in terms of promoting self-reliance and improved livelihoods? This KEQ will also seek to answer the following Sub-questions:

- Does vocational training (including certification received) provide PoC with enhanced livelihood opportunities in terms of access to paid employment or through self-employment?
- Is there any evidence of vocational training contributing to improved livelihood outcomes including increased income, reduced vulnerability and enhanced protection risks etc.?
- Are the Livelihood impact indicators currently used by UNHCR effective - or might other impact indicators be more appropriate?
- Do particular vocational training modalities represent better effectiveness e.g. Community centers vs private establishments.

KEQ 2: To what extent have the vocational training programmes conducted reflected market demand and new or changing livelihood opportunities and what is their likely continuing relevance into the future, taking into account the anticipated UNHCR increased focus on returnees (refugee and IDP returnees) and their reintegration?

This KEQ will also seek to answer the following Sub-question:

- To what extent are the training programmes reflective of findings of labour market assessments conducted by UNHCR and Partners and how robust and realistic are the findings of these assessments deemed to be?

KEQ 3: How efficient is the current model for delivery of vocational training programmes as compared with other, including newly emerging, delivery models?

This KEQ will also seek to address the following Sub-questions, including:

- What proportion of vocational training is actually taking place within the different types of vocational training establishments?
- Do particular vocational training modalities represent better value for money than others (e.g. Community Centre versus Private Establishment), including vis-à-vis possible new alternative modalities for achieving enhanced skills development?
- Are there significant differences in the quality and standard across identical vocational training courses being provided to UNHCR PoC?
- To what extent is there compliance with especially key elements of the new VT SOP and are there particular factors that are most likely engender compliance/ non-compliance?
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- Are there notable differences between the different categories of PoC that are able to benefit from the vocational training programme according to particular circumstances (e.g. location, type of Implementing Partner etc.)?
- What are the likely consequences of a significant shift from informal to formal vocational training (as defined in the VT SOP)?

1.3. Approach and Methodology

The contractor's bid will set out the proposed approach and methodology to be adopted which will be finalized and agreed during the inception phase⁶.

⁶ The evaluation will be undertaken in conformity with [UNHCR's evaluation policy](#), which, *inter alia*, requires evaluations undertaken by the organization to adopt a disaggregated and participatory approach in relation to populations of concern. In line

The evaluation methodology should use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to answer the four Key Evaluation Questions and Sub-questions. The evaluation will comprise the following: 1) desk review and content analysis of relevant background as well as programmatic data and documents; 2) focus group discussions and in-depth discussions with other UN Agencies that vocational training programmes (e.g. World Food Programme) as well as UNHCR partners involved in the delivery of the vocational training programmes as well as other relevant stakeholders and; 3) field data collection in three governorates, involving qualitative interviews with beneficiaries.

UNHCR welcomes the use of diverse, participatory and innovative evaluation methods. The methodology – including details on the data collection and analytical approach(es) used to answer the evaluation questions – will be designed by the evaluation team during the inception phase and presented in an evaluation matrix.

The evaluation methodology is expected to:

- a) Reflect an Age, Gender and Diversity perspective in all primary data collection activities carried out as part of the evaluation;
- b) Employ a mixed-method approach incorporating qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis tools including the analysis of monitoring data – where available;
- c) Gather and make use of a wide range of data sources in order to demonstrate impartiality of the analysis, minimize bias and ensure the credibility of evaluation finding and conclusions;
- d) Be explicitly designed to address the key evaluation questions – taking into account evaluability, budget and time constraints.

The evaluation team is responsible to gather, analysis and triangulate data to demonstrate impartiality of the analysis, minimize bias and ensure the credibility of evaluation findings and conclusions.

1.4. Quality Assurance

The contracted firm is required to sign the UNHCR Code of Conduct and respect UNHCR's confidentiality. The Evaluation is expected to adhere with pilot 'Evaluation Quality Assurance' (EQA) guidance, which clarifies the quality requirements expected for UNHCR evaluation processes and products. An orientation to the EQA at the start of the evaluation will be organized with UNHCR Evaluation Service. The contracted firm will submit at least two rounds of EQA review with the Evaluation Specialist. Details will be provided upon signature of the contract.

1.5. Data and Information Sources

Useful data sources include:

- 4Ws – who, what and where.
- Protection dashboard.
- Planning and budget information (e.g. Country Operation Plan).
- Partner Quarterly Reports.
- Labour Market Assessments (e.g. Damascus & Rural Damascus etc.).
- Centralised evaluation report on UNHCR's livelihoods approaches and strategies.
- UNHCR's Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Concept Note.
- UNHCR Livelihoods Strategy 2014-2018.

with established standards for evaluation in the UN system, and the UN Ethical guidelines for evaluations, evaluation in UNHCR is founded on the inter-connected principles of independence, impartiality, credibility and utility, which in practice, call for: protecting sources and data; systematically seeking informed consent; respecting dignity and diversity; minimising risk, harm and burden upon those who are the subject of, or participating in the evaluation, while at the same time not compromising the integrity of the exercise.

- Partners' financial data

2. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

All suitably qualified institutions registered in Syria are eligible to tender. This includes private consultancy firms and academic institutions. At least 5 years of experience in conducting socio-economic assessments, market assessments, market analyses and other similar research conducted in Syria or elsewhere in the Middle East. Experience of evaluating vocational training or similar skills development training programmes will be a distinct advantage.

- The contracted firm is expected to draw on multiple experts with both quantitative and qualitative research experience. The contracted firm is also expected to demonstrate a track record of successful implementation of humanitarian or development projects in Syria or the Middle East;
- Familiarity with the mandates and activities of different UN agencies operating in Syria.

3. EVALUATION TEAM QUALIFICATIONS

3.1. Evaluation Local Team Leader

- Post-graduate degree in economics or social science plus a minimum of 10 years of relevant professional experience in the humanitarian or development fields.
- Minimum of 8 years of evaluation experience in quantitative and qualitative analysis in humanitarian and development settings; experience of evaluating vocational training or similar skills development training programmes will be a distinct advantage;
- Proven experience in successfully leading an evaluation team and managing fieldwork in complex environments;
- In-depth knowledge of and proven experience with various data collection and analytical methods and techniques used in evaluation;
- Experience in generating useful and action-oriented recommendations to management and programme staff.

3.2. Evaluation Team – Quantitative Analyst/Statistician

- Advanced degree in statistics or economics with a minimum of 4 years of experience relevant to evaluation of humanitarian or development interventions;
- Proven experience with survey design, development, testing and implementation of surveys and analysis;
- Good understanding and experience of survey design methodologies, sampling design procedures, sampling size calculations, variance estimation, compound weights etc.
- Experience with data quality assurance protocols and data collection in the domains of sampling and measurement error, nonresponse and coverage bias to ensure reliable data collection.

3.3. Evaluation Team Member

- University degree (in relevant areas including economics social science and education) plus a minimum of 5 years of relevant professional experience; or a post-graduate degree with at least 4 years of relevant experience to livelihoods
- Proven experience in facilitating participatory consultations and meetings involving a range of different stakeholders.
- Technical expertise in relevant sectoral area including Employment, Entrepreneurship and Job Placement.

EVALUATION SPECIALIST ROLE

The Evaluation Specialist (ES) will provide effective leadership, coordination and management of the evaluation deliverables including the design, analysis, quality assurance and reporting. The local firm Team Leader will report to the Evaluation Specialist.

These are the duties and accountabilities applicable to the ES and are complementary to the specific activities elaborated in this TOR:

- Lead the contracted firm assessment team with UNHCR Syria and provide guidance and technical support as appropriate; including training of the local firm;
- Lead the overall design of the evaluation approach including the plan of action and elements of the inception report based on consultations with UNHCR Syria and Evaluation Service a UNHCR HQ;
- Ensure quality implementation of the required activities as stated in phase 1 & 2 in Annex (A) to achieve the specific objective listed above and the delivery of the expected outputs;
- Discuss the development of the evaluation study with local firm and UNHCR Syria CO Livelihood Unit and UNHCR Evaluation Service at HQ including (methodology, contacts, requirements, etc.) ;
- Review questionnaires and other tools adapted by the local contracted firm, for interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders, partners, beneficiaries, market actors etc;
- Based on findings from local firm, ES will review and process data to prepare a draft report that includes clear key risks, gaps and areas of weakness, impact analysis and recommendations;
- Facilitate one presentation of draft report and feedback to UNHCR Syria and UNHCR Evaluation Service;

4 Submit a final report of no more than 40 pages excluding annexes to be presented to UNHCR Syria and UNHCR Evaluation Service. REPORTING

The findings and results of fieldwork will be submitted to the Evaluation Specialist and UNHCR Syria. In addition to the Inception Report, the contracted firm will also provide regular progress updates during the course of the Evaluation⁷.

5 TIME FRAME

It is estimated that this evaluation will take a maximum of 5-6 months (including time for field work and report writing). The key evaluation deliverables are:

The key evaluation deliverables are:

- A plan of action (Evaluation Specialist and Local contracted firm)
- Inception report (Evaluation Specialist and Local contracted firm)
- Training of data collectors and piloting of tools (Evaluation Specialist)
- Data collection (locally contracted firm)
- A presentation with preliminary findings (Evaluation Specialist)
- A first draft report (Evaluation Specialist)
- A final evaluation report (Evaluation Specialist)

⁷ All material associated with the evaluation will be the property of UNHCR and cannot be used for any purpose without their prior approval.

	Activity	Responsibility	Deliverables	Indicative timeline	Estimated calendar days
1	Kick off meetings clarifying the expectations and scope of work, as well draft plan of action between all parties	Evaluation Specialist and Local contracted firm	Plan of action presenting proposed approach, methods, logistics, and time frame	Two weeks	first two weeks after contracting
2	Inception phase including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Briefing sessions with UNHCR and evaluation firm - Initial desk review/Collection of background information - Methodological approach, including analytical framework, and data collection tools - Refined roles and responsibilities between evaluation firm and Evaluation Specialist - Evaluation Specialist circulation for comments and finalisation - Revised plan of action - Evaluation matrix including refined KEQs, evaluation criteria and means of verification 	Evaluation Specialist and Local firm Team Leader	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft inception report – including refined methodology, sampling, analytical approach, and refined evaluation matrix. 2. Remote of inception report to UNHCR 	31 January 2020	30 days
3	Final inception Report	Evaluation Firm and Local firm Team Leader	Refined Evaluation Inception report integrating comments from UNHCR	10 February 2020	10 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training/Guidance for local firm in relevant methodology - Training delivered 	Evaluation Specialist	Training material and training conducted (remote or in person, TBC)	23 February 2020	13 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Piloting and refining of data collection tools 	Local firm	Pilot implemented and tools revised	28 February 2020	5 days
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fieldwork and Data Collection Phase 	Local firm	Cleaned and anonymized database Data analysis and report preparation Debrief presentation of preliminary findings	30 March 2020	30 days
5	Evaluation Specialist to prepare draft report and circulate it to UNHCR/Evaluation Service for comments	Evaluation Specialist	1 st draft report <i>Comments from UNHCR within 2 weeks)</i>	15 April 2020	15 days
6	Finalisation and submission of a final evaluation report	Evaluation Specialist	Final Evaluation Report (including recommendations and executive summary)	15 May 2020	15 days