West and Central Africa Regional Shelter and Settlement Evaluation

EVALUATION REPORT
NOVEMBER 2022

Conducted by: Key Aid Consulting

UNHCR Evaluation Office

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Acknowledgements

Evaluation information at a glance	
Title of the evaluation:	West and Central Africa Regional Shelter and Settlement Evaluation
Timeframe covered:	January 2017 – December 2021
Expected duration:	December 2021 – October 2022
Type of evaluation:	Decentralized evaluation
Countries covered:	Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Mali, Niger and Nigeria
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Commissioned by the Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa

Evaluation Quality Assurance provided by UNHCR Evaluation Office

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Executive summary

Introduction

1. In the region of West and Central Africa (WCA) covered by this evaluation, shelter and settlement interventions represented 126 million US$[1] for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2020, yet these interventions are largely under-evaluated. The overall objective of this regional thematic evaluation, commissioned by UNHCR's Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa (RBWCA), has been to assess the performance of UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions, including their contribution to protection outcomes and an integrated response across sectors, both internally and externally.

2. The evaluation focused on UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions implemented between 2017 and 2021 in seven focus countries within UNHCR's West and Central region: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Mali. Interventions include those targeting refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), returnees, asylum-seekers and host communities. This report focuses on findings across the region and can be read in parallel with the country reports for the Central African Republic, Nigeria and Niger respectively, and a related *UNHCR feasibility review of using cash for shelter interventions in Far North Cameroon*.

Findings

Relevance and appropriateness

3. Shelter is among the top priorities of persons of concern (PoCs) to UNHCR in the region. The vast shelter needs largely exceed the capacity of the shelter sector and UNHCR (the largest sector partner in the region) to respond. This is, in part, due to the low level of funding of the humanitarian response in WCA. Over the years, between 57 per cent and 62 per cent of funding needs for humanitarian response plans generally across the region have been met; within this, the shelter sector has been similarly underfunded.

4. Shelter needs assessments inform vulnerability targeting criteria at an individual level (e.g. women, children, survivors of gender-based violence, older people and others with specific needs) and household level, although they do not assess collective vulnerabilities per se (which would differ from the sum of households' vulnerabilities). Generally, **shelter needs assessments do not inform decisions on the design and typology of the shelters. These decisions are largely based on the availability and standard suitability of the shelter design and typology.** Similarly, the shelter designs did not make provisions for commonly anticipated modifications, expansions or upgrades made by inhabitants (e.g. adding a kitchen space). Nevertheless, in most places, people have made some adjustments on their own, creating additional spaces such as rooms, roofed verandas for storage and cooking, and plastering.

5. The various shelter interventions implemented by UNHCR and its partners have an overall "good-enough" correspondence to their settings. **The shelter models offer trade-offs between the need**

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[1] As per Indicator Achievement and Global Focus reports. Shelter and settlement-related expenses included shelter and infrastructure, energy, basic, domestic and hygiene items, and camp management and coordination. Countries included in the RBWCA shelter and settlement evaluation were Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Mali.

to provide rapid and large-scale shelter support, to be cost-effective and culturally acceptable, and to ensure that PoCs themselves can construct, maintain, repair and upgrade their shelters. Yet interventions lacked a strategy for providing a continuum of, and/or adaption to, shelter support across all phases of displacement (i.e. there was very little support beyond the two main options of temporary emergency shelter kits at the start of a displacement or semi-durable shelter for returnees).

6. The main set of international standards to which UNHCR staff and partners[2] refer is the standards from the "Shelter and Settlements" chapter of the Sphere Handbook. However, the **alignment of shelter and settlement interventions is described by both staff and partners almost exclusively in terms of numeric indicators** (i.e. the quantitative measures associated with the standards rather than with the qualitative standards themselves). Consequently, outcomes that are inherently qualitative and that capture the lived experiences of PoCs (such as the adequacy of a living space to undertake basic domestic activities such as bathing or cooking) are overlooked. The same emphasis upon quantitative indicators rather than qualitative standards is also present when it comes to discussions regarding settlements interventions. Further, most UNHCR staff members were of the view that there were greater challenges in reaching humanitarian standards at the settlements level than at the single-shelter level.

Achieving objectives – Effectiveness and coherence

7. In 2021, 94 per cent of the shelters provided by UNHCR in the focus countries were emergency shelters. The remaining shelters were transitional (3 per cent) and durable (3 per cent).[3] Consequently, more than half of expenditure in 2021 and 2020 was allocated to an emergency response. **UNHCR's limited transition towards a sustainable shelter and settlement response – considering the protracted nature of the crises – was attributed to insufficient funding, among other things.** Funding, or lack thereof, was overly cited when the evaluators raised questions about unmet targets, unaddressed protection risks and the absence of durable solutions. This was consistent with UNHCR's yearly narrative reporting. However, the evaluation found that it was not necessarily budget limitations that reduced the effectiveness of UNHCR's response**; rather it was the constant shift between emergency and sustainable shelter responses, incoherence between the multi-year planning process and the annual budget cycle, and limited discussion on the impact of shelter responses vis-à-vis protection objectives.**

8. **The funding and staff needed to meet multi-year objectives (such as the construction of long-term shelters or the maintenance of damaged shelters presenting protection risks) were often redirected within the country operation as emergency crises flared up.** Management decisions on how to apportion and redirect funds to ensure a timely, effective and rights-based response were not well documented. As a consequence, the tacit knowledge on what trade-offs were made and why, and any demonstrated attempts to transition towards durable solutions disappeared with staff turnover.

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[2] Key Informant Interviews (n = 132) and Perception Survey (n = 78).
[3] UNHCR, 'Country Annual Narrative Report: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria', 2021; UNHCR, 'Country Annual Narrative Report: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria', 2020.

9. While 70 per cent of UNHCR staff members agreed that shelter and settlement activities were implemented in a timely manner, 30 per cent disagreed.[4] Staff members cited procurement, funding challenges and land access constraints, which resulted in PoCs waiting for extended periods of time for shelter assistance. Another factor that influenced the long waiting period for shelter assistance included the unpredictable influx of PoCs. Similarly, PoCs expressed dissatisfaction with shelter maintenance, particularly for the emergency shelters that were occupied for periods which exceeded their lifespans (six months) and were not adapted to the weather conditions. That said, **PoCs living in shelters labelled as "semi-durable" and made of local materials, such as in the Central African Republic, Niger or Nigeria, rated the quality of the shelter materials as satisfactory. The use of cash-based intervention (CBI) to deliver shelter outcomes is still nascent in WCA.**

10. In the outcome survey,[5] most survey respondents (i.e. UNHCR country staff) agreed that UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions achieved the outcomes outlined in the Theory of Change (ToC) (88 per cent agreement) (see Annex 1: Theory of Change), and a significant minority disagreed (12 per cent). The highest level of agreement was that shelter and settlement interventions have improved the health, safety and security of the targeted beneficiaries of UNHCR's interventions.

11. Similarly, most of the survey respondents agreed that UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions achieved their intended impact (77 per cent agreement), with a significant minority disagreeing (23 per cent). The highest level of agreement was that shelter and settlement interventions have improved social cohesion. Yet, this is only likely when social cohesion is a declared objective of the shelter programming. **It is therefore not the shelter itself that improves social cohesion; rather, it is the selected shelter programming approach. The settlement approach, meanwhile, promotes mutual benefits for the host community (i.e. increased availability and better access to services) and in turn, promotes the acceptance of PoCs.**

12. The evaluation revealed both positive and negative unintended effects of the shelter and settlement interventions. **Durable shelter responses (compared with emergency responses) were found to stimulate the local economy through the creation of livelihood opportunities for both men and women.** Shelter interventions were also found, from time to time, to lead to negative effects on the environment and sustainable use of natural resources such as cooking wood.

13. The evaluation also identified several drivers and inhibitors for change. **Financial and political factors seemed more conducive to implementing shelter and settlement interventions that target refugees rather than IDPs.** This undoubtedly stems both from a UNHCR mandate that has historically focused on refugees, together with governments' distinct attitudes to refugees versus IDPs. Access to land was frequently referenced as an exogenous constraint in shelter and settlement responses, particularly in IDP responses in Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria. As such, UNHCR's strategy of closely coordinating with the governments allowed for a greater degree of access to PoCs in hard-to-reach areas and to land for shelter and settlement development.

14. Operationally, a multifunctional team approach was seen to have improved the effectiveness of the planning, targeting and monitoring of UNHCR's interventions. There was a particular emphasis on

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[4] Perception Survey (n = 78) see Methodology.
[5] Outcome Survey (n = 30) see Methodology.

the role of protection across sectors, acting as the main bridge between sectoral silos. **While the multifunctional team approach boosted the effectiveness of country operations, the different programmes were limited by sector-specific funding approaches (as opposed to multisectoral funding approaches).** UNHCR's focus on protection, shelter and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) in IDP and mixed settings (where IDPs and refugees cohabit in the same geographical area) reinforces these silos. Each sector applied for project funding within the scope of their own activities only and accessed that project funding at different phases of the calendar year. The absence of an integrated multisectoral project approach (with integrated planning) and funding has limited the overall effectiveness of an otherwise multifunctional team approach. The absence of holistic approaches to comprehensive and complementary programming further prevents the development and adoption of harmonized monitoring and indicator systems across sectors, as well as clear agreements and procedures to monitor, report and analyse the attainment of the overarching objectives and protection-related outcomes of interventions.

Institutional capacity – Efficiency

15. UNHCR's shelter and settlement data collection and monitoring systems are not yet fit for purpose. There is no accessible and centralized database with output achievement data across the countries. Rather, each country office, and sometimes sub-office, implements a unique monitoring system as per UNHCR's pillar approach for each PoC group. **Overall, the reporting of achievements against each pillar in the annual narrative reports is inconsistent** as different sub-offices report against different indicators and the same figures are reported under different headings. **The format also makes any analysis within and between countries challenging.**

16. The achievement framework is limited in its breadth as it largely focuses on output data (e.g. the number of households receiving cash grants for construction material for shelters or the number of emergency shelters provided or number of sites plotted) rather than outcome data. Moreover, output indicators are not inclusive of age, gender and diversity (AGD) vocabulary and reporting is not disaggregated accordingly.

17. In 2021, acknowledging these challenges around standardization and breadth, UNHCR introduced a new results-based management (RBM) system, COMPASS, which identifies a set of mandatory outcome indicators (core indicators) and a set of non-mandatory indicators (good practice indicators). While these indicators are less output and more outcome oriented than the prior system, they still fall short of capturing the breadth of settlement interventions specifically, as they do not capture the availability of, and access to, basic services and infrastructure.

18. **A key challenge for UNHCR across the region is the limited number of staff in the various shelter departments** and the clear evidence that operational staffing levels are insufficient for even the current levels of shelter and settlement implementation. Similarly, UNHCR does not have sufficient staff to meet its coordination ambitions in the region. This is a topic on which there is overwhelming consensus, both internally within UNHCR and among partners.

19. Separately, cluster members were all able to mention UNHCR-developed guidance resources that had been shared with them, either directly by UNHCR, or through the cluster. The range of resources listed by key informants was a mix of global resources and resources that were

developed at country-representation level. **Most of the survey respondents used UNHCR's shelter and settlement guidance in their work (79 per cent), with implementing partners reporting the highest use of UNHCR's guidance (91 per cent).**

Coordination and connectedness

20. Most survey respondents agreed that UNHCR has forged strategic partnerships with relevant actors, that coordination and synergies with the actions of other actors are good, and that the shelter clusters (chaired or co-chaired by UNHCR) are effective at coordinating the relevant humanitarian responses in the region and at making the linkage with developmental approaches or actors.

21. The dual role of UNHCR as the shelter cluster lead and as managing shelter and settlement interventions, however, has meant that **there is some confusion between what respectively falls under the coordination of other actors in shelter and settlement, and the management of UNHCR's own shelter and settlement interventions**.

22. The integration of solutions is especially key when it comes to settlement approaches, ensuring dignified living conditions and access to services, as clearly articulated in UNHCR's Handbook for Emergencies. In practice, this integration is not yet systematized. UNHCR coordinates and works together on an ad hoc basis with complementary sectors, including water and sanitation, and to a lesser extent livelihoods, to ensure solutions are integrated.

23. UNHCR is acknowledged as an important partner by the local authority representatives, with whom the agency works in a close relationship. All interviewed local institution representatives (in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Niger and Nigeria) expressed a high level of satisfaction with the information received from UNHCR on their activities. Local authority representatives praised UNHCR's transparency and participatory approach. Where it exists, **local authorities were particularly satisfied with UNHCR's settlement approach, which contributes to their own development plans and improves access to infrastructure and services overall.** Local authorities shared qualitative accounts of the extent to which UNHCR's settlement interventions also had an indirect favourable effect on securing additional funding at the government level.

Conclusions

24. The full report includes a section on [Good practices and lessons ed](#) as well as a detailed narrative for each of the [Conclusions](#) and [Recommendations](#) that are discussed below.

25. **Conclusion 1:** Shelter and settlement interventions are a key defining characteristic of UNHCR's work. Externally, UNHCR is widely recognized as a key shelter and settlement agency, but this key attribute is not always given the proper attention it needs internally, by UNHCR itself, given the scale of its responsibilities and ambitions.

26. **Conclusion 2:** The boundaries of UNHCR's role as an operational agency and a cluster lead agency need clarification in IDP-only and mixed settings.

27. **Conclusion 3:** UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions directly contribute to its protection mandate, but there are missed opportunities for closer collaboration between the shelter and protection teams, both internally and externally across clusters.

28. **Conclusion 4:** Although there is some recognition of the importance of housing, land, and property (HLP), UNHCR, as a lead protection agency, has thus far only paid limited attention to HLP as a key element of shelter and settlement interventions.

29. **Conclusion 5:** UNHCR has forged external partnerships to better integrate solutions, yet these are mostly ad hoc and not yet sufficiently strategic, particularly when taking into consideration UNHCR's commitment to localization.

30. **Conclusion 6:** Shelter and settlement interventions are of primary importance for crisis-affected households in WCA. Resources available to UNHCR and shelter actors overall will always fall short of meeting the breadth of needs. UNHCR locally sourced sustainable initiatives would contribute to maximize the value of existing interventions.

31. **Conclusion 7:** Crises in the region are mainly protracted and displacements long-term. UNHCR does not yet sufficiently facilitate the (almost inevitable) changes that PoCs are likely to make to their shelter and settlements to adapt them to daily life.

32. **Conclusion 8:** UNHCR shelter and settlement interventions are, to date, fit for their context, but lack agility and cash readiness going forward, especially to adapt to more urban non-camp settings.

33. **Conclusion 9:** UNHCR-supported settlements have achieved more than the sum of their parts, but this is not yet captured by UNHCR's monitoring system.

34. **Conclusion 10:** UNHCR staff are fully abreast of the organizational AGD approach, yet the approach is not fully reflected in the design and monitoring of the shelter and settlement interventions.

Recommendations

35. Drawing from the findings and conclusions, the evaluation has identified six overarching recommendations. The full report includes a detailed narrative and sub-recommendations, which accompany the six overarching recommendations highlighted below.

36. **Recommendation 1: Strengthen the formal and informal interactions between protection and shelter/settlement teams, internally and externally, to better contribute to UNHCR's protection mandate (in refugee, mixed and IDP-only settings), and within this, the role of HLP.**

    - **Sub-recommendation 1.1:** Recognize and strengthen the role of HLP as a key component of shelter and settlement interventions, and vice versa, as a key element of protection either directly or through partnerships with others.

      Within each country operation, identify an HLP focal point within the UNHCR protection team to strengthen the intersection internally and engagement externally. Involve the global Area of Responsibility in advocating for, and supporting the development of, HLP capacity within shelter, settlement and protection interventions, and donor support.

    - **Sub-recommendation 1.2:** Create and/or reinforce purposive platforms for regular and substantive exchanges between shelter and protection teams throughout the project cycle

as a means of dynamizing the way shelter/settlement and protection teams work together and providing them with a framework for collaboration.

The formalization of the ToC should include an analysis of external partnerships and their roles and responsibilities (actual/needed) in delivering on shelter and settlement outcomes as well as related protection and solutions' outcomes. The ToC could become a strong advocacy and fundraising tool.

- ▪ **Sub-recommendation 1.3:** Formalize UNHCR's ToC on how Shelter and Settlement interventions contribute to its protection mandate.

37. **Recommendation 2: Recognize the importance of shelter and settlement to UNHCR in the region and better contextualize shelter and settlement interventions within a multisectoral response, both internally and externally, thereby also taking into better consideration the Gobal Compact on Refugees (GCR) and nexus principles. This will require reconsidering the "common" definition of "shelter" as an object only.**

- ▪ **Sub-recommendation 2.1:** Clarify and raise awareness internally and externally on UNHCR's mandate and responsibilities vis-à-vis shelter and settlement as (1) an operational response actor; (2) a tri-cluster lead agency in IDP and mixed settings.

- ▪ **Sub-recommendation 2.2:** Acknowledge the multisectoral nature of settlement and reconsider the rather limiting definition of shelter as an object rather than a process with implications for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health and livelihood teams, etc.

A shelter/settlement is only complete when it comprises related key utilities and facilities (e.g. kitchen, WASH). If UNHCR is not in a position to fund the full scope of shelter interventions, it still has, as the provider of last resort, an obligation to engage other sectors/ clusters/ actors (including for example, the technical departments of the responsible authorities) to add these elements to the housing/settlement. This requires proactive and collective planning before housing projects are conceived, in order to deliver a complete package to targeted PoCs. Area-based initiatives represent a good opportunity to deliver on such integrated package.

- ▪ **Sub-recommendation 2.3:** Clarify and strengthen the governance of the multifunctional teams (MFT), ensuring a designated lead and a ToR with clarity on the roles and responsibilities of members that cut across different settings (refugee, IDP, mixed).

The protection team seems well positioned to lead this kind of MFT, considering its central and cross-cutting roles.

38. **Recommendation 3**: Improve situation analysis and subsequent response design. UNHCR should incrementally shift towards a better-balanced level of investment between emergency and protracted crisis response, taking into consideration temporal, social and physical needs – as well as the scope for cash-based interventions.

- ▪ **Sub-recommendation 3.1:** Further contextualize technical standards and shelter design. Definitions of "adequate" housing need to be more contextually nuanced – which may have implications for shelter design and global supply chains.

- **Sub-recommendation 3.2:** Make the case for durable shelter responses in contexts of protracted displacement.

Future shelter strategies should incorporate assumptions based on the length of displacement, recognizing that in situations where prolonged displacement can be assumed, shelter and settlement should be designed accordingly. Intentionally and explicitly document the value for money of shelter responses to support this shift. In collaboration with protection colleagues, develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) to support ownership and appropriation of shelters and settlements by households and communities.

- **Sub-recommendation 3.3:** Explore the use of CBI as a regular modality or part of a combination of modalities for programme delivery, undertaking similar feasibility studies as for Cameroon and integrating cash-based interventions as a regular tool to deliver shelter and settlement interventions, where appropriate.

39. **Recommendation 4:** Strengthen fit-for-the-future Emergency Preparedness and Response shelter and settlement-specific capacities, including for urban settings.

- **Sub-recommendation 4.1:** Within existing multi-year strategic planning processes, develop scenario-planning and a larger range of interventions as per the setting. The years to come are likely to see more urban responses.

- **Sub-recommendation 4.2:** Strengthen the agility of the supply chain to be able to source local materials and systematically take into consideration environmental concerns.

40. **Recommendation 5:** Better measure the success and concerns of shelter and settlement interventions to inform programming as well as advocate for more durable and integrated solutions.

- **Sub-recommendation 5.1**: Measure the success and challenges of shelter and settlement interventions both at individual and community levels to take into consideration AGD differences and collective experiences.

- **Sub-recommendation 5.2**: Strengthen shelter-related data collection, analysis, and use by making the link with contextual definitions of "adequate" shelter.

41. **Recommendation 6:** Review the shelter and settlement staff structure at country office level against UNHCR responsibilities and ambitions in IDP/mixed contexts as part of any wider programme prioritization exercises.

List of abbreviations

AGD	Age, Gender and Diversity
AOR	Area of Responsibility
BoQ	Bill of Quantities
CAR	Central African Republic
CBI	Cash-Based Intervention
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
CO	Country Operation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DIMA	Data Identity Management and Analysis
DRS	Division of Resilience and Solutions
ERG	Evaluation Review Group
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSP	Financial Service Provider
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCR	Gobal Compact on Refugees
HLP	Housing, Land and Property
HQ	Headquarters
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IMO	Information Management Officer
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	Key Informant Interview
KYC	Know Your Customer
MFT	Multifunctional team
MRRR	Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Nigeria)
MYSP	Multi-year Strategic Plan
NFI	Non-food Items
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OL	Operating Level
PoC	Persons of Concern
RBM	Results-based Management
RBWCA	Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa
RHU	Refugee Housing Unit
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
ToC	Theory of Change
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WCA	West and Central Africa
WFP	World Food Programme

43. This report presents the results of the regional shelter and settlement evaluation, commissioned by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)'s Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa (RBWCA). The report first introduces the evaluation and the context and then spells out the methodology used to conduct the evaluation. Subsequent sections discuss the findings as per the four areas of inquiry: relevance and appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, and coordination.

1. Introduction

44. This section first discusses the purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation before moving into describing the context of the evaluation.

1.1 Evaluation overview

1.1.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

45. Providing shelter is more than providing a roof over one's head and should be linked with related interventions in the area of non-food items (NFI), water, sanitation and hygiene, protection, resilience, livelihoods, and supporting solutions for persons of concern to UNHCR.[6] In the region of West and Central Africa covered by this evaluation, shelter and settlement interventions represented 126 million US$[7] for UNHCR in 2020, yet these interventions are largely under-evaluated.

46. The overall objective of this regional thematic evaluation, commissioned by UNHCR's RBWCA, is to assess **the performance of UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions in WCA specifically, including their contribution to protection outcomes and an integrated response**[8] **across sectors, both internally and externally**.[9]

47. The evaluation focused on UNHCR's shelter interventions implemented between 2017 and 2021 in seven focus countries within UNHCR's WCA[10] region: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Mali. This report focuses on findings across the region and can be read in parallel with the country reports for the Central African Republic[11], Nigeria[12],

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[6] For UNHCR, PoC include refugees, returnees, stateless people, internally displaced, asylum-seekers. UNHCR, "Persons of Concern to UNHCR," n.d., https://www.unhcr.org/ph/persons-concern-unhcr.

[7] As per Indicator Achievement and Global Focus reports. Shelter and settlement-related expenses included shelter and infrastructure, energy, basic, domestic and hygiene items, and camp management and coordination. Countries included in the RBWCA shelter and settlement evaluation were Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, and Mali.

[8] Including a "whole of house approach" in refugee settings and a coordinated response and active advocacy role in mixed and IDP settings.

[9] This is not an evaluation of a programme but rather of a strategy of UNHCR. As such, what is being evaluated is a sum of interventions that do not have a single framework of objectives and indicators. Hence, the report highlights this and gives an account of the different types of shelter interventions, their objectives and outcomes. See Annex 6: Terms of reference.

[10] UNHCR WCA includes operations in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. They are also present in countries that are involved in West and Central Africa crises, such as Mauritania.

[11] James Kennedy and Kessy Ekomo Soignet, "Shelter and Settlement Evaluation: CAR Country Report," 2022.

[12] Temilade Sesan and Natascha Minnitt, "Shelter and Settlement Evaluation: Nigeria Country Report," 2022.

and Niger[13], and the *UNHCR feasibility review of using cash for shelter interventions in Far North Cameroon.*[14]

Figure 1 Evaluation focus countries
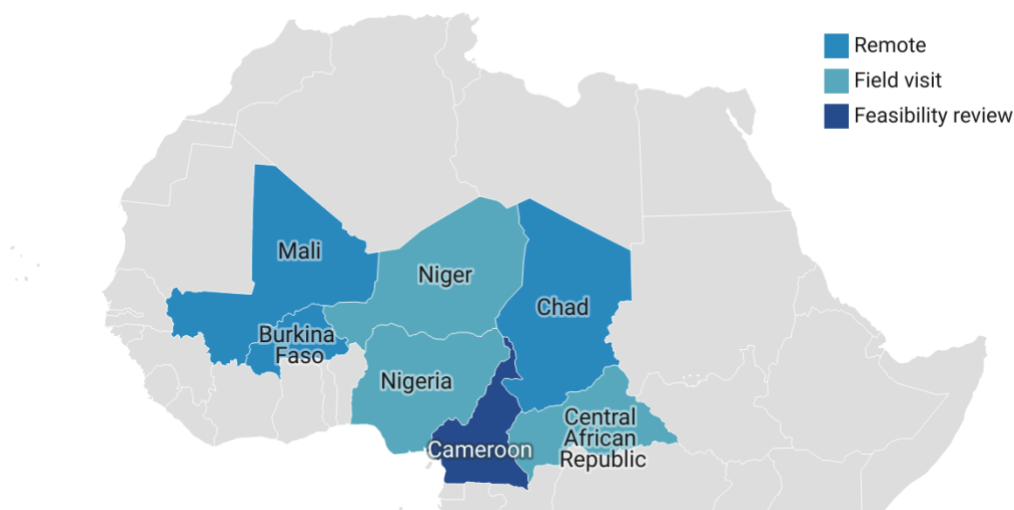
48. The evaluation was commissioned both for learning and accountability purposes, with learning being the primary purpose. To that end, the evaluation serves to highlight good practices and lessons to inform shelter and settlement-related strategic decision-making and the development of regional and country shelter and settlement strategies from 2023 onward.

49. The primary internal users of this evaluation are the country operations, which will use the evaluation findings to develop evidence-based shelter and settlement strategies, and to inform future shelter programmes. The RBWCA will use the evaluation to inform regional strategic priorities vis-à-vis shelter and settlement. UNHCR Headquarters (HQ), including the Division of Resilience and Solutions (DRS) and the Operational Support Services may benefit from the evaluation findings to inform global evidence-based shelter and settlement guidelines.

1.1.2 Specific objectives and approach

50. The evaluation has three specific objectives. **First**, the evaluation assesses the extent to which, and how, the RBWCA's shelter and settlement interventions have contributed to the lives of PoCs and host communities, in relation to the cross-cutting protection and solutions objectives in their respective contexts. **Second**, the evaluation discusses the relevance of the RBWCA's shelter and settlement response against PoCs' needs and contexts as well as its internal and external coherence. **Third**, the evaluation examines the performance of UNHCR resource allocation: shelter and settlement personnel, data management, and shelter and settlement-related guidance.

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[13] Helene Juillard, "Shelter and Settlement Evaluation: Niger Country Report," 2022.
[14] Clement Charlot, Natascha Minnitt, and Jim Kennedy, "UNHCR Feasibility Review of Using Cash for Shelter Interventions in Far North Cameroon," 2022.

51. Using the internationally agreed OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC)[15] criteria as a guide, these three objectives were articulated around the following four areas of inquiry:

- **Relevance and appropriateness:** To what extent were UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions relevant and appropriate, considering the different operational contexts and the nature of the needs and vulnerabilities of the different target populations?
- **Achieving objectives – effectiveness and coherence:** To what extent have UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions been able to achieve their objectives and intended outcomes, including their contribution to protection objectives and solution-oriented approaches, in a timely manner?
- **Institutional capacity – efficiency:** To what extent does UNHCR have sufficient technical shelter and settlement capacity, information/data management capability and fit-for-purpose guidance?
- **Coordination and connectedness:** To what extent are UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions, spatial planning and programmatic orientations aligned with, and contributing to, the interventions of local institutions and international actors?

52. The evaluation included shelter and settlement interventions implemented by UNHCR during the evaluated period (2017–2021). That includes interventions targeting refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, asylum-seekers and host communities. Interventions targeting stateless populations were excluded.[16]

53. Within the scope of shelter and settlement interventions, the evaluation paid attention to the following cross-cutting themes: i) protection and solutions; ii) the use of CBIs; and iii) stakeholder cooperation internally, across sectors (protection, WASH, livelihoods and health) and externally with other shelter and settlement actors, including local institutions and/or State representatives.

54. During the inception phase, the main change made to the evaluation areas of focus was the removal of the cost-effectiveness question due to a lack of consistent data. This area of inquiry was replaced by an assessment of the extent to which internal coordination and integrated approaches contribute to the effectiveness of shelter and settlement interventions.

1.2 Context overview

1.2.1 Shelter and settlement definitions

55. In line with UNHCR's global shelter and settlement strategy 2014–2018,[17] shelter is defined as "a physical structure which provides at least a minimum standard of physical protection from the climate and from attack, privacy, and dignity over time, and which itself is safely constructed". This definition reflects the notion that, from programmatic and coordination perspectives, a shelter is a process rather than just an object. A settlement is defined as a *"*managed group of shelters and

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[15] The OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet) has identified six evaluation criteria – relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability – which provide a normative framework to determine the merit and value of an intervention. The criteria serve as the basis upon which evaluative judgments are made.
OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation, "Better Criteria for Better Evaluation, Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use," 2019.
[16] The inclusion of interventions targeting stateless populations would add a whole new dimension to the evaluation in countries where the size of the stateless population is small relative to other countries in the region.
[17] UNHCR, "Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter 2014–2018 (Expanded until 2022)," 2014.

having access to the basic services that serve these shelters. A settlement can be said to exist as soon as households living in the said shelters consider themselves as living in a settlement".[18]

56. Shelter is a basic human need and a critical determinant for survival and coping during crises. The right to adequate housing is enshrined in international human rights law.[19] It includes sufficient space, protection, as well as availability of, and access to, services. Beyond representing life-saving essentials, shelter and settlement represent key components of recovery from shocks by providing protection, security and dignity, and in promoting economic well-being and securing livelihoods. Adequate **shelter and settlement planning plays an essential role in reducing vulnerability and building communities' resilience, and as such, it contributes to the overarching goal of UNHCR's responses to support households' self-reliance and to strengthen systems towards sustainable outcomes.**[20]

1.2.2   Needs overview

57. Poverty, violent conflict, extremely poor housing conditions, chronic food insecurity and climate change have a dramatic impact on the survival and the well-being of people in the WCA region. Civilians face a dramatic protection crisis in an increasingly volatile context where insecurity and violence are threatening lives, livelihoods and access to vital basic services. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated protection risks and vulnerabilities, disrupted key social services and increased pre-existing inequalities.[21]

58. Some of the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic included reduced access to basic services such as shelter, WASH, education and health care, with women and girls being particularly affected. The pandemic also exacerbated gender-based violence (GBV) and contributed to an increase in the adoption of negative coping mechanisms.[22] For example, the UNHCR Appeal for the Sahel Crisis of June 2020 clearly links overcrowded camps and inadequate shelter to the heightened risk of theft and violence. Such linkages were aggravated by the COVID-19 crisis but were certainly present both before and after the pandemic.[23] The current situation in WCA highlights numerous protection challenges (GBV prevention and response, child protection, self-reliance[24] and social cohesion) that need to be considered in shelter and settlement programming.

59. Most displacements in WCA are caused by armed conflict. Mostly, they also take place in locations that are environmentally fragile, and where natural resources are often restricted. In addition, the scarcity of natural resources and climate change fuel intercommunal tensions and conflicts between herders and farmers. These threaten already fragile livelihoods, affect land and property rights, and social cohesion; one example being the recent population displacement in northern Cameroon,

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[18] During the inception phase of this evaluation, the evaluation team and managers developed working definitions for shelter and settlement, which were both adapted from UNHCR's global shelter and settlement strategy 2014–2018. These working definitions guided the evaluation inquiry, analysis and reporting.
[19] First as part of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
[20] UNHCR, "Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter 2014 - 2018 (Expanded until 2022)."
[21] UNHCR, "Impact of COVID-19 on the Protection of Displaced and Stateless Populations - West and Central Africa," 2020.
[22] UNHCR, "Humanitarian Needs and Requirements Overview: Sahel," 2021.
[23] UNHCR, "Sahel Crisis: Responding to the Urgent Needs of Refugees, Internally Displaced, Returnees and Others of Concern," 2020.
[24] For UNHCR, self-reliance is a protection-related issue in line with UNHCR's primary protection mandate and worldview.

which is affecting central-western Chad as well. Seasonal flooding or other natural calamities (including non-seasonal flooding, drought and non-usual pattern-specific weather schemes) may occasionally also result in secondary displacement. **This causes "pendulum" displacements**[25] **that are both long-term and short-term within the same contexts, which has an impact on the types of shelter support that may be offered.**

60. **For the seven focus countries, the total PoC caseload is approximately 10 million, of which, 75 per cent are IDPs and 9 per cent are refugees.**[26] Nigeria has the highest proportion of PoCs (the vast majority of whom are IDPs), followed by Cameroon and Burkina Faso (the large majority of whom are IDPs).[27]

Figure 2 PoC caseload per focus country[28]
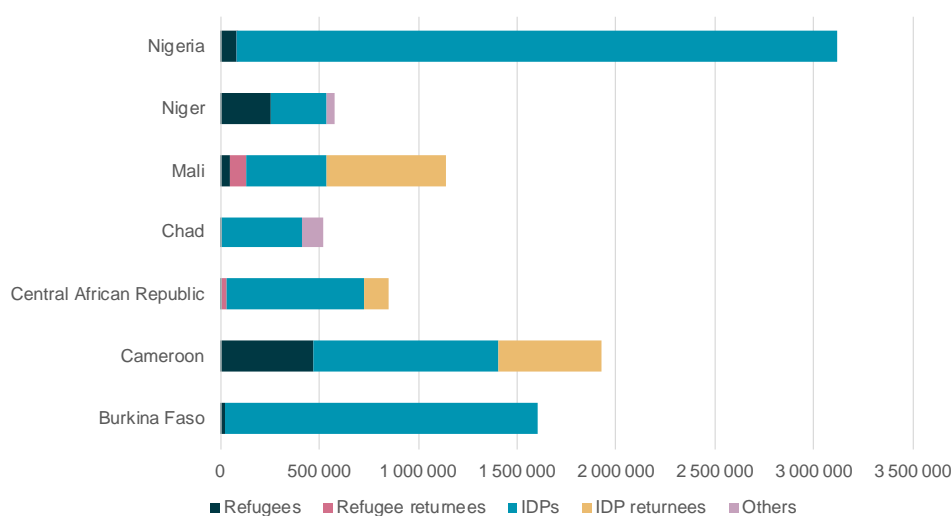
61. All seven countries are classified as "protracted crises"[29] and they are all predominantly characterized by mixed situations where IDPs and refugees in need of humanitarian assistance co-exist in the same geographical location. In all seven countries, there is an overarching national coordination model led by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). Within a number of these seven countries, including Nigeria, the Central African Republic and Chad, there are also specific subnational refugee-only intervention areas characterized by a UNHCR-led refugee coordination model that feeds into the national UNOCHA-led coordination model.[30]

62. The humanitarian response across the seven focus countries is consistently underfunded, with an average of 43 per cent of funding needs unmet between 2017 and 2021.[31] On average, Chad has the highest percentage of unmet funding needs (55 per cent), followed by Cameroon (52 per cent) and Burkina Faso (46 per cent). As a sector, shelter and NFI are similarly underfunded. As a result, the shelter and NFI sector regularly sets its target far below the breadth of the needs. For example,

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[25] That is back and forth movements, between locations of origin and locations of displacement.

[26] The remaining 16 per cent are comprised of refugee returnees, IDP returnees, and others.

[27] RBWCA, "PoC Caseload for WCA," 2022.

[28] 05/09/2023 12:53:00

[29] Since 2004, UNHCR defines a protracted refugee crisis as being, 'one in which 25,000 or more refugees from the same nationality have been in exile for five or more years in a given asylum country'. UNHCR, "Protracted Crisis Refugee Situation" 2004. This definition is irrespective of the levels of vulnerability documented in the refugee population. There is no equivalent definition specifically for IDPs. For the purposes of this evaluation, the same definition will hold true for all PoCs.

[30] UNHCR and OCHA, "Joint UNHCR – OCHA Note on Mixed Situations Coordination Practice," 2014.

[31] OCHA, "Humanitarian InSight: WCA," n.d.

in 2021, the sector aimed to reach only 51 per cent of the beneficiary population in need of shelter and NFI assistance, of which 27 per cent were actually reached.[32] UNHCR's interventions need to be situated within this overarching context.

Figure 3 PoC caseload and Shelter/NFI sector target[33]
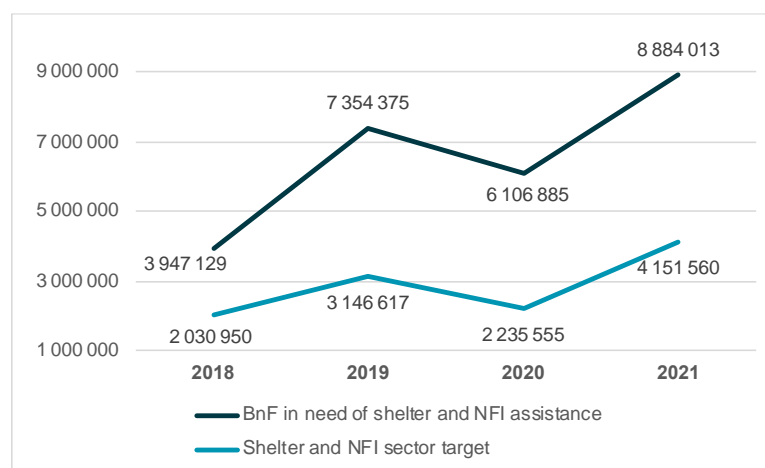
63. The actual shelter and settlement needs of the various PoC communities go well beyond simply having a roof over their heads. Interventions to continuously provide dignified living conditions require differentiating between shelter and NFI responses, and within the shelter spectrum, between unsustainable handouts of materials, kits and/or cash, and the provision or construction of shelters. Whether evinced (through extensive photo documentation) by living thornbush fencing around shelter plots in Chad, or mud brick enclosures defining shelter courtyards in camps, informal sites and urban areas in Nigeria, the displaced populations demonstrate the degree to which their priorities are led by concerns about insecurity and protection, as well as by the need for safe spaces to re-establish livelihoods.

64. Several significant challenges for PoCs remain in their efforts to provide themselves with safe and dignified shelter. The fluidity of many national political situations and the unpredictability of armed conflicts in the region, have sometimes resulted in high uncertainty among both the PoCs themselves and humanitarian shelter actors, about when to initiate anything beyond the most temporary of physical structures. In addition, in many contexts, a combination of land rights issues, competition for natural resources and overlapping "hosting fatigue" has left displaced communities with little or no long-term security in the locations where they are staying. As they remain unable to return to their places of origin, whether in-country or cross-border, this has had a retarding effect upon making greater investments in current shelter. In some contexts, there may also be issues of

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[32] In 2021, the number of PoC targeted and reached by the shelter & NFI sector per country was as follows: Burkina Faso (50 per cent and 43 per cent), Cameroon (47 per cent and 18 per cent), CAR (41 per cent and 32 per cent), Chad (41 per cent and 32 per cent), Mali (27 per cent and 24 per cent), Niger (78 per cent and 21 per cent), Nigeria (62 per cent and 22 per cent).

[33] OCHA, "Humanitarian InSight: WCA." When it comes to the funding of various shelter solutions, data from 2021 indicates that targets for emergency shelter solutions are better funded when compared with transitional or permanent shelter modalities. For example, in Niger, emergency shelter reached 5,2 per cent of its target and transitional or permanent shelter solutions reached 0,5 per cent. In Cameroon, emergency shelter reached 33 per cent of its target and transitional or permanent shelter solutions reached 2,7 per cent. In Burkina Faso emergency shelter reached 6,4 per cent of its target and transitional shelter reached 0 per cent.

hosting government policy and the enabling environment – or lack thereof – to accept the local integration of refugees for instance.

1.2.3   UNHCR shelter and settlement interventions

65. **Irrespective of the setting (refugee, IDP or mixed setting), UNHCR is either de facto or de jure the "provider of last resort" for shelter solutions, either as a result of its refugee mandate**[34] **or IDP shelter cluster co-lead mandate.** As such, the agency has a responsibility to call on all cluster members or all those working within a refugee response, to address gaps in shelter response in both situations. Where this fails, UNHCR may "need to commit itself to filling the gap".[35] This responsibility leads to UNHCR usually being the largest contributor to the shelter sector/cluster. What differs, based on the settings, is UNHCR's responsibility in relation to the provision of complementary interventions.

66. Shelter seen within a settlement's context means a complete housing "complex" including land tenure, WASH, cooking space as well as access to basic public space and services. In refugee contexts, UNHCR assumes such responsibilities to be addressed in collaboration and cooperation with responsible authorities. In IDP contexts, the responsibility of a comprehensive response is a shared obligation between clusters, agencies engaged in clusters, the Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator and the authorities. Therefore, UNHCR's responsibility arises mainly from its cluster and inter-tri-cluster coordination mandate (protection, shelter and CCCM), including the "provider of last resort" responsibility for the clusters it (co-)leads (such that UNHCR is usually also the largest contributor to actual response). However, UNHCR has no formal response role or responsibilities related to WASH, food security/livelihoods, health, or education in such IDP-only settings, although, UNHCR may arguably have an advocacy role to play in these settings.

67. **Throughout the evaluation period, UNHCR was the largest shelter and settlements implementer in the region**, and at the same time, the lead or co-lead of various combinations of shelter or shelter/NFI clusters with camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) clusters, or shelter sectoral working groups, in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Mali and Nigeria.[36]

68. UNHCR's shelter interventions for refugees in WCA have been, in the majority, limited to planned camps. This played a significant role in constraining the scope of shelter interventions, so that for the most part, the range of materials and of shelter typologies were "not permanent", and more aligned with local rural housing than any urban variations. Stereotypically, this sort of shelter programming has been sustained through repetitive cycles of broadly similar "emergency phase" distributions of shelter materials or shelter kits.[37]

69. **In several countries in the WCA region, this situation has started to change quite markedly.** With increased internal displacement, including pendular displacement and movements to areas where populations have had relatives or other tribal/ethnic affiliations, the need for tailored response

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[34] Note on the Mandate of the High Commissioner.
[35] IASC, 2015, Operational Guidance on the Concept of provider of last resort.
[36] 'Shelter Clusters' refer here also to Shelter and NFI Clusters, or joint clusters such as Shelter/CCCM or Shelter/WASH, where UNHCR is the lead or co-lead. In Niger, the shelter working group is co-chaired by IOM, the IRC and the government of Niger.
[37] Source : interactions with shelter practitioners during inception phase.

in non-organized camps/settlements and urban/per-urban areas became more apparent. **Several country programmes (including Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Chad) have focused more on urban and out-of-camp shelter programming for IDPs, as have the Central African Republic and Mali, when settlements for returnees are included.**[38] Some shelter programming now looks to the needs of those who are either returnees, or those who will most likely continue a process of local integration with local communities for the foreseeable future. This broadening of the range of shelter interventions has been mirrored, for instance, by UNHCR's participation in the Durable Solutions Working Group in the Central African Republic, and the inclusion of durable solutions in the shelter strategy for Mali, as part of the four-year strategy for Cameroon and Niger where the overall objective of UNHCR's shelter and settlement intervention is to: "Integrate, in a dignified way, PoCs within the host community or sites while supporting PoC access to land and decent housing, to ensure PoC well-being and safety, while preserving their environment"[39]. In Burkina Faso, it is illustrated by joint initiatives with UN-Habitat to support IDP local integration through access to land, support to local institutions and environmental considerations.[40]

70. **At the same time, those UNHCR projects that provide more long-term shelter support (and the even fewer projects that also provide support at the settlements level), are still small-scale in comparison with other shelter and settlement projects in the region**. And in some cases like the Central African Republic, they are still perceived as "pilot"[41] whether for emergency or longer-term shelter.

Figure 4 Proportion of Shelter and Settlement expenditure per modality[42]

	CBI	Shelter kits	Emergency shelter	Transitional shelter	Long-term shelter
Burkina Faso	17%	6%	60%	5%	12%
Cameroon	0%	31%	16%	7%	46%
CAR	0%	0%	40%	60%	0%
Chad	0%	43%	38%	14%	5%
Mali	4%	15%	4%	15%	62%
Niger	0%	5%	16%	13%	66%
Nigeria	0%	25%	75%	0%	0%

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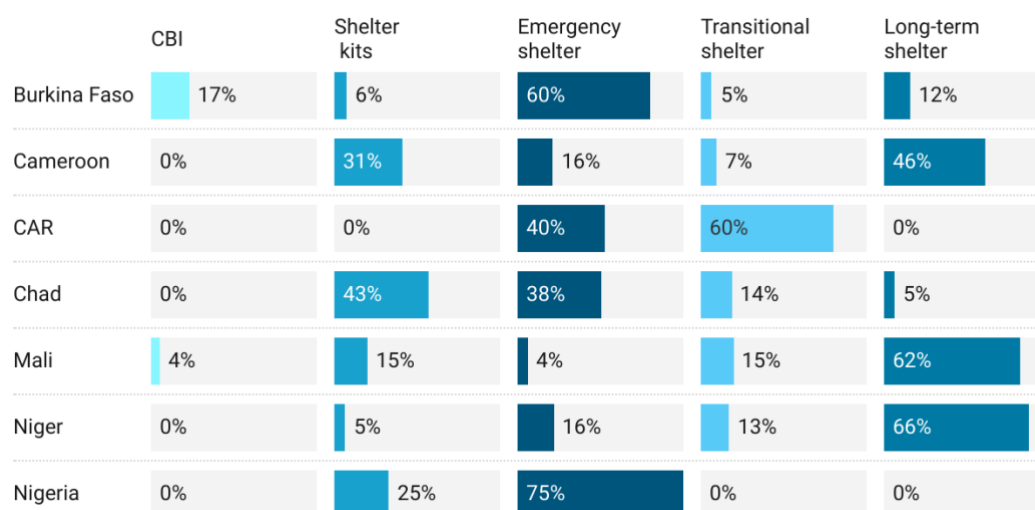
[38] The policy calls for UNHCR to pursue alternatives to camps, whenever possible, while ensuring that refugees are protected and assisted effectively and are able to achieve solutions. UNHCR, "Policy on Alternatives to Camps," 2014.

[39] "Intégration dans la dignité des PoCs au sein des communautés hôtes et zones d'accueil en leur facilitant l'accès à la terre pour le logement et/ou l'accès au logement décent adaptés à leurs modes de vie, afin d'assurer leur bien-être, leur sécurité et la préservation de leur dignité, tout en tenant compte de la préservation de l'environnement dans lequel ils vivent." UNHCR Result Framework 2020–2021.

[40] UNHCR, UN-Habitat, Document de projet Soutien aux efforts d'inclusion des PDI par les collectivités territoriales du Centre-Nord, 2021.

[41] There is no comprehensive UNHCR shelter strategy in CAR, to clearly indicate the degree to which these projects will be integrated in the future into the main country operation strategy objectives.

[42] UNHCR, "Country Annual Expenditure and Budget Report: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria," 2021.

Table 1 Example categories of shelter and settlement assistance modalities from global guidance[43]

Modalities	Examples	Definitions
CBI	**Cash for materials and construction**	Cash for commissioning or contracting labour, and purchasing shelter material to achieve shelter and settlement goals through owner-driven, contractor-driven or agency-driven models.
	Cash for rent	Rental assistance to affected households to rent accommodation and land can include financial contributions, support to obtain a fair agreement or advice on property standards.
In-kind assistance	**Shelter kits**	Construction material, tools and fixtures needed to create or improve living space. Consider whether to supply structural materials such as poles and pegs or if they can be supplied by the households. Consider the need for additional instruction, promotion, education or awareness-raising.
	Emergency shelter	Short-term shelter solutions, which are intended to be removed once the next stage of shelter solution is offered. Usually, these are constructed with limited costs.
	Transitional shelter	Rapid shelters designed from materials and techniques that are designed to transition into more permanent structures. The shelter should be upgradeable, reusable, resaleable or moveable from temporary sites to permanent locations.
	Long-term shelter[44]	Shelters that are adapted and contextualized according to the climate, cultural practice and customs.

71. Going forward, the range of interventions is more likely to include shelter and settlement support in urban areas (as urban populations in the region increase generally[45]), longer-term shelter generally, and a wider range of shelter materials and intervention methodologies (including, but not limited to, HLP support, market-based interventions, and settlement- or neighbourhood-level approaches).

72. At the same time, **UNHCR may expect to be under continued pressure to provide timely and large-scale emergency interventions (including in the context of camps) for PoCs, for whom that phase of interventions is still the most appropriate, and where the volatility of the context and operational environment does not allow solutions beyond emergency**. Very often, both "emergency" and "longer-term" shelter and settlements interventions are needed in the same country, or in the same province or region within one country, at the same time. Some

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[43] Sphere, "The Sphere Handbook on Humanitarian Standards," 2018; UNHCR, "Shelter and Sustainability: A Technical and Environmental Comparative Overview of Common Shelter Typologies Found in Settlements across UNHCR Operations," 2021. The evaluators acknowledge that there are competing definitions within UNHCR, however, for the purpose of this evaluation, we have used definitions that conceive shelter as a process and as a whole package.

[44] The term "durable" is used in both the UNHCR Shelter and Settlement Strategy and in the UNHCR Shelter Design Catalogue. "Long-term shelter" is used for the purposes of this evaluation report, to act as an umbrella term for a range of shelters that have various labels adopted at the country level (e.g. "semi-durable"), and in recognition of some sensitivities around using the term "durable" within the region.

[45] UN-Habitat predicts that the total population in Africa will increase by approximately 60 per cent between 2010 and 2050, with the urban population tripling to 1.23 billion during this period. In the WCA region, Burkina Faso presents the fastest growing displacement (38 per cent increase in IDPs in 2021) with displaced populations resettling in urban areas. UN-Habitat, JIPS, and IIED, "Internal Displacement in an Increasingly Urbanised World," 2021.

contexts can be further complicated by differences in approach (and budgets) for refugees vs. IDPs vs. returnees within the same country.

73. This report comes at a time when there is a growing adoption of more innovative or flexible modalities to respond to the needs of PoCs. The Grand Bargain Commitments[46] encourage the scaling up of CBI in humanitarian response, and accordingly, since 2016, the shelter sector as a whole has seen a global increase in the use of CBI – by more than 10 per cent. Considering the growing importance of CBI, this shelter and settlement evaluation is complemented by a review of the feasibility of using CBI for shelter in the Far North of Cameroon.[47]

2. Methodology

74. The evaluation adopted a mixed-method approach, relying on both secondary and primary data sources. The evaluation was both deductive and inductive in its approach, drawing from quantitative and qualitative data sets, and the expert knowledge and experience of the Evaluation Review Group (ERG). Inductive through iterative data collection and analysis to explore emerging trends and capture potential positive and negative unintended effects of the interventions. Deductive through the set-up of a theory of change (see Annex 1: Theory of Change) against which the contribution was measured and assumptions tested. The structure of the evaluation matrix was guided by the OECD DAC criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Coherence and Efficiency (see Annex 2: Evaluation matrix).

2.1   Data collection overview

75. The evaluation team formed their judgment using various sources of primary and secondary data including a desk review, key informant interviews (KII), focus group discussions (FGD), online perception and outcome surveys, and structured observations (see Triangulation Table). Age, gender and diversity considerations were incorporated into the focus group discussion sampling to ensure a diversity of voices and experiences.[48] The selection of key informants was done purposely, targeting stakeholders best positioned to respond to the evaluation questions. The diversity of the data collected and analysed, in turn, allowed the team to triangulate and substantiate the findings presented in the regional and country reports.

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[46] OCHA, "Inter-Agency Standing Committee: Grand Bargain Agenda," 2020.
[47] Charlot, Minnitt, and Kennedy, "UNHCR Feasibility Review of Using Cash for Shelter Interventions in Far North Cameroon."
[48] FGD groups were created based on AGD criteria, i.e. separate groups for women, men, young women and young men, women with disabilities and men with disabilities. The youth groups were between 18 and 25 years of age. To encourage participation during the FGDs (especially of members that have verbal communication challenges or are soft-spoken), several questions in the guide asked participants to give a rating using their hands from 1 (low/disagree) to 5 (high/agree). This also gave the evaluators the opportunity to identify outlying experiences and encourage individuals to share their unique experiences.

Table 2 Primary data collection overview

	Total	Burkina Faso	Chad	Cameroon	CAR	Mali	Niger	Nigeria	Regional
Key Informant Interviews	132	11	6	5	19	9	45	23	14
Focus Group Discussions[49]	45				11		15	19	
Onsite observations[50]	15				6		2	7	
Perception survey[51]	78	8	9	8	3	11	33	5	1
Outcome survey	30	3	8	0	3	4	11	1	0

2.2 Detailed data collection approaches

76. **Inception phase:** The evaluation team conducted 14 preliminary interviews with regional UNHCR and external stakeholders, to gain a more in-depth understanding of the interventions under evaluation.[52] During an inception visit to Dakar, the evaluation team presented the draft inception report to the RBWCA and co-constructed a ToC with UNHCR WCA shelter, protection and monitoring team members, demonstrating the contribution of shelter and settlement interventions to protection outcomes (see Annex 1: Theory of Change). The country field selection, which was based on several criteria, was also finalized during the inception visit to Dakar (see Annex 3: Country selection).

77. During the inception phase, the main change made to the ToR was the removal of the question on cost-effectiveness due to a lack of consistent data. This was replaced by an assessment of the extent to which internal coordination and integrated approaches contribute to the effectiveness of shelter and settlement interventions. A feasibility review of using cash for shelter interventions in Far North Cameroon was conducted to complement questions on the feasibility of potentially more cost-effective shelter modalities.[53]

78. **Desk review**: The desk review was an iterative process, which continued throughout the inception and data collection phase. More than 300 documents were reviewed, referenced and systematically coded in Excel against the indicators in the evaluation matrix (see Annex 4: Key documentation).

79. **Key informant interviews:** The evaluation team conducted 87 KIIs in the field visit countries and 31 KIIs in the remote focus countries.[54] Key stakeholders included country level UNHCR staff members, implementing and operational partners, and local institutions. The evaluation team also conducted 14 KIIs with global and regional level key stakeholders, including UNHCR RBWCA staff,

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[49] The FGDs took place at the same locations as the onsite observations. The total number of FGD participants was 165 in CAR (59 per cent women), 162 in Niger (53 per cent women) and 162 in Nigeria (53 per cent women).
[50] The evaluators visited two planned settlements, one planned camp and three unplanned sites in CAR; two settlements in Niger; and three camps and four settlements in Nigeria.
[51] Stakeholder groups included government (3), UNHCR (31), implementing partner (22), non-implementing partner (23).
[52] UNHCR stakeholders included heads of operations, senior protection and shelter coordinators, Camp Coordination and Camp Coordination (CCCM), shelter cluster officers, and representatives from Data Identity Management and Analysis (DIMA). External stakeholders included International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN-Habitat, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).
[53] Charlot, Minnitt, and Kennedy, "UNHCR Feasibility Review of Using Cash for Shelter Interventions in Far North Cameroon."
[54] Key Informant Interview guides are available here.

key inter-agency stakeholders (OCHA, International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC/ICRC), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and donors (BPRM, ECHO, BMZ, GIZ)).

80. **Focus group discussions:** The evaluation team conducted 45 FGDs with 522 participants in the field countries visited with beneficiaries of UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions.[55] The evaluators facilitated separate FGDs for women, men, youth groups and people with disabilities to provide their input.

81. *Onsite observations:* The evaluation team conducted 15 structured onsite observations (8 at planned camps and unplanned sites, and 7 at settlements) during the field visit to assess the relevance of various shelter and settlement indicators against an agreed checklist. The choice of the location for such observation was informed by the selection of camps and settlements to visit for the FGDs.

82. **Online perception and outcome survey:** UNHCR internal and external stakeholders completed an online perception survey (n = 78), which assessed UNHCR's technical shelter capacity, information/data management capability and coordination with other UN agencies, humanitarian actors or other clusters. UNHCR staff members also completed an online outcome survey (n = 30), which aimed to collect qualitative and quantitative data on the observed outcomes, success stories and challenges. The focus here was on the stakeholders' experiences at the sub-project level.

83. **Field visits debrief:** At the end of the field visits in Niger and the Central African Republic, the visiting evaluation team members conducted a two-hour debrief with in-country UNHCR stakeholders to present the activities conducted during the field visit and initial emerging trends at country level.[56]

84. **Preliminary findings global stakeholder workshop:** At the end of the data collection phase, the evaluation team held a two-hour remote workshop during which they presented the key preliminary findings in each of the countries visited to global and regional stakeholders. The objective of this workshop was to assess the consistency of findings in a participatory manner and to discuss any information gaps.

85. **A feasibility review** of using cash for shelter interventions in the Far North of Cameroon, took place during the evaluation data collection period, which included 51 KIIs with UNHCR staff and implementing partners (15), external actors (11), financial service provider (FSP) staff (1), local institution and government representatives (5) and market actors (19). The evaluation team also conducted 13 FGDs with 126 community members in the Far North. Following the data collection phase, the evaluators conducted an in-country response analysis workshop with the UNHCR sub-office in the Far North to collectively assess the feasible modality(ies) for addressing shelter needs in the Far North of Cameroon. The results of this review are discussed under Agility of the design and are available in an accompanying report.[57]

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[55] The Focus Group Discussion guide is available here.
[56] The Nigeria field debrief did not take place as key stakeholders were unavailable.
[57] Charlot, Minnitt, and Kennedy, "UNHCR Feasibility Review of Using Cash for Shelter Interventions in Far North Cameroon."

2.3   Data analysis and report writing

86. **Data analysis and triangulation:** Primary and secondary quantitative and qualitative data were analysed using Excel to identify emerging trends against the evaluation matrix indicators. Data sources were triangulated and where relevant, disaggregated by country, stakeholder type and position.

87. **Validation workshop:** Following data analysis and the submission of a first draft of the report, the evaluation team facilitated a validation workshop involving relevant internal UNHCR stakeholders. The purpose of the workshop was to present and seek validation of the key analytical outcomes.[58]

88. **Regional and country reports:** The evaluation team produced a draft integrated evaluation report and three country-based reports for each of the field visit countries, which incorporated the feedback from the validation workshop. The regional report includes a detailed evaluation methodology and limitations, findings and conclusions to the key evaluation questions, good practices and lessons to be learned, and specific examples from field visit countries. The country-based reports provide a focused analysis and reporting of the findings specific to the country visited in the situational context, identifying key lessons learned and examples from operations and countries associated with the situation.

89. **Recommendations co-creation workshop:** The evaluation team facilitated a recommendations co-creation workshop with internal and external stakeholders to collaboratively identify actionable recommendations. Feedback provided on the draft integrated evaluation report by the ERG and the outputs of the recommendation co-creation workshop were incorporated into the final version of the integrated evaluation report.

2.4   Ethical considerations

90. Several ethical considerations were incorporated into the evaluation. The evaluation team systematically explained the purpose of the evaluation during KIIs and FGDs, following which, the team systematically obtained verbal consent from interviewees and participants. To the extent possible, all non-UNHCR staff interviews were conducted without a UNHCR staff member present. Field data collection was planned in collaboration with community-based protection staff to ensure that the timing of the FGDs was as convenient as possible (e.g. in the morning during Ramadan).

91. To ensure data privacy, the reports do not include names or other personal identifying information of key informants or beneficiaries. Raw data containing personal data will be archived at the end of the evaluation by the Key Aid data protection officer and safely disposed of after one year.

2.5   Quality assurance

92. To ensure the quality of the evaluation deliverables, an eleven-member ERG was formed. The ERG included internal UNHCR stakeholders (e.g. a country representative and protection coordinator) and external shelter and settlement stakeholders (e.g. IOM, OCHA, NRC, IFRC, GIZ and ECHO). The ERG was given the opportunity to review the outputs of the consultancy at critical steps (i.e. inception report, validation workshop and draft evaluation report). Second, designated country focal

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[58] The evaluation team set up a custom Google site for the presentation, which included a short recording of the evaluation findings in English, the workshop agenda and discussion points for the workshop.

points ensured the quality of the data sources and analysis at the country level by supporting the evaluation team with relevant contextual insights and sources. Third, UNHCR has a regional Senior Evaluation Officer and an external consultancy firm contracted to undertake additional quality assurance, both from a methodological and presentation perspective.

2.6   Limitations

93. The evaluation encountered several limitations. The evaluation timeframe overlapped with country audits, the evaluation of UNHCR's response in Central Sahel and an evaluation on voluntary repatriation, which led to participant fatigue, and thus low uptake of the online surveys (e.g. only three respondents in the Central African Republic). As a result, survey results could not be disaggregated by country, except for Niger, where there were 33 respondents. Niger's results are presented in the Niger country report.

94. The availability of high-level respondents, particularly protection staff at the regional level and country level, was limited. In other instances, stakeholders made themselves available for less than the allocated interview time, which forced the evaluation team to cherry-pick questions from the guide, thus reducing the breadth of data to triangulate findings.

95. Overall, there was a lack of reliable results and indicator data, which made it challenging to corroborate anecdotal findings. Considering the inconsistency of result framework data, financial expenditure was used as a proxy for achievement of results, although this is considered a weak source of data. Further, the absence of decision logs and the high turnover of staff members made it challenging to corroborate apparent gaps in outcomes and results. The lack of data is discussed in detail in Section 5.1 Data collection and monitoring systems.

96. Security protocols restricted the evaluation team's capacity to collect data in more remote locations, and limited the time spent at selected sites (camps and allocated settlements). For example, the evaluation team travelled to Bama camp in the North East of Nigeria by helicopter and were given a three-hour window to conduct four FGDs and a site visit. Consequently, the discussions and site visit were rushed, leaving limited room to probe. Unsurprisingly, primary data collection was biased towards accessible sites, thus the full scope of needs and experiences of PoCs were not captured for those living in harder-to-reach areas.

97. During two of the field visits, UNHCR staff attended interviews and FGDs, arguing that it was protocol to have a UNHCR staff member present, despite evaluators explaining the importance of not attending. In Nigeria, community-based protection staff were present during all FGDs. In the Central African Republic, UNHCR staff were present during interviews with local institutions. Arguably, in this latter case, the presence of a UNHCR staff member legitimized the evaluation team and enabled them to secure an interview slot. By contrast, however, the presence of the UNHCR staff members introduced likely response biases, especially as UNHCR staff members intervened during the interview to comment on the answers provided by key informants.

3. Relevance and appropriateness

98. The following section discusses the extent to which UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions in WCA were relevant and appropriate in relation to the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of the

different targeted populations as well as the extent to which they adhered to standards and regulations, and pertained to the contexts in which they were implemented. It finally discusses the agility of the shelter and settlement interventions to maintain its relevance over time and adapt according to context.

3.1 Needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of Persons of Concern

3.1.1 Shelter and settlement interventions correspond to the priority needs of Persons of Concern

99. In 2021 alone, close to 6 million people were forced to flee their home in West and Central Africa.[59] Food security, health care and **adequate shelter are the highest-ranking needs** across the region as per UNOCHA's 2021 community perception and satisfaction survey.[60]

100. In line with these findings, sectoral and multisectoral needs assessments undertaken by UNHCR or its partners, have repeatedly confirmed that **shelter is among the top priorities of IDPs and refugees**.
    - In Niger, the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan[61] cites a lack of adequate shelter and housing, land and property as key factors of vulnerabilities. Similarly with the Response Plans in Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Chad, which all have shelter as part of their strategic objectives.
    - In Cameroon, the multisectoral needs assessment[62] demonstrates that 70 per cent of households affected by forced displacement reported living in makeshift and/or damaged shelters. Among self-settled IDPs, the majority currently lives in partially or completely damaged makeshift shelters.

3.1.2 Scale of needs and the scale of UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions

101. **These vast shelter needs largely exceed the capacity of the sector, and within it, of UNHCR, to respond**. This is, in part, due to the low level of humanitarian response funding in WCA.
    - Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger were among the 10 most underfunded humanitarian response plans in 2021.[63] Humanitarian response plans are multisectoral, hence broader than shelter and settlement; nevertheless, an underfunded response is more likely to imply an underfunded shelter sector. Figure 5 below shows the level of funding for the humanitarian appeals over the seven countries included as part of this evaluation. Over the years, it remains fairly consistent with between 57 per cent and 62 per cent of funding needs met.

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[59] Humanitarian Response Plan, "Global Humanitarian Overview 2022," 2022.
[60] Humanitarian Response Plan.
[61] "Plan de Réponse Humanitaire, Niger," 2021.
[62] IOM_MSNA_Presentation_22102021.
[63] Global Humanitarian Overview 2022.

Figure 5 Funding coverage in the seven evaluated countries (2017–2021)
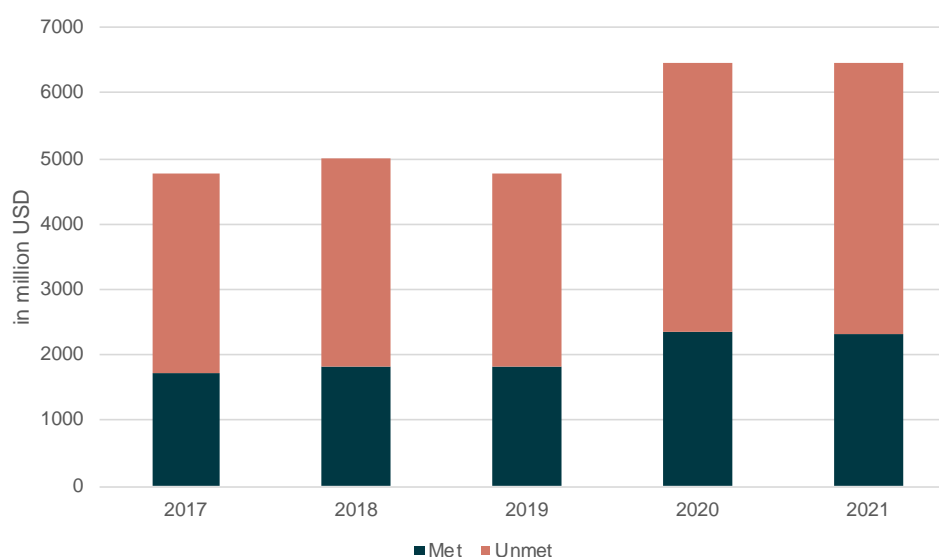
102. Despite a scale-up, **UNHCR shelter and settlement interventions do not correspond to the scale of growing needs** as highlighted over the numerous resources reviewed.

- In 2021 at sectoral level, in Cameroon, only 25 per cent of the identified overall shelter needs were funded,[64] 10 per cent in Chad,[65] while the figures reach an all-time low in Burkina Faso with only 9 per cent.[66]

- Audits conducted in Niger in 2020[67] or in Burkina Faso in 2021[68] highlight similar resource shortfalls for UNHCR specifically. For example, in Niger, the audit mentions: *"For the period January 2018–November 2019, resources allocated to respond to the L2 emergency in Maradi were inadequate to meet the needs of the asylum-seekers."*

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[64] UNHCR Cameroon, "Compte Rendu de La Réunion Entre Le MFT Du Bureau et Le MFT Du Cameroun Sur Les Plans Prioritaires de 2022," 2022.
[65] Shelter Cluster Chad, "Assessment Report on Shelter Construction and Environmental Impact in Lake Chad Province," 2022.
[66] UNOCHA Financial Tracking Services, 2021.
[67] UNHCR, "IOS Audit for Niger," 2020.
[68] UNHCR, "OIOS Audit for Burkina Faso," 2021.

Figure 6 UNHCR Expenditure for Shelter and Infrastructure (2017–2021)[69]
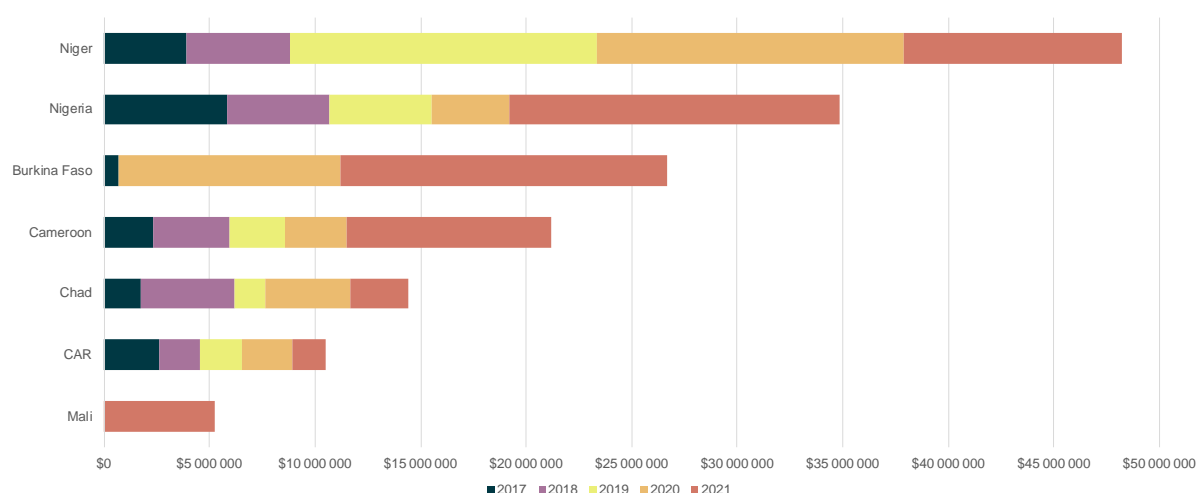
103. **UNHCR budgetary and financial management mechanisms and procedures contribute to this mismatch between needs and resources**.

- In all seven evaluated countries, UNCHR operational plans are multi-year. Funding allocations and financial planning is, on the contrary, still undertaken on a yearly basis. Resources allocated to any given year need to be spent before the end of the year. Even if granted as part of the operating level[70] (OL), financial resources for shelter and settlement are channelled to the country operation (CO) at mostly unpredictably points in time during the financial year. If channelled late in the year, it gives little time to implement shelter and settlement interventions, hence broadening the gap between the needs and the response.

- Certain programme-specific funding, such as the 11 million euro settlement programme in the Tilaberi region in Niger,[71] is deducted from the OL envelope that is allocated by headquarters to the CO. This de facto reduces the envelope available for other interventions, including those aimed at PoC basic needs coverage — a calculation that may deter senior management from actively engaging in fundraising for large-scale settlement and shelter solutions — and further contribute to the gap between needs and response.

104. UNHCR's shelter and infrastructure expenditure per PoC group do not always correspond to the proportional size of each PoC group (see Figure 7). While IDPs make up 75 per cent of the PoC caseload in WCA, 56 per cent of expenditure is allocated to the IDP response. Refugees make up 9 per cent of the PoC caseload in WCA, however, 36 per cent of UNHCR's shelter and settlement expenditure is allocated to the refugee response. One hypothesis is that this apparent mismatch is rooted in UNHCR's historical mandate for refugees. Subsequently, in mixed settings, other shelter actors are more likely to prioritize IDP needs based on the assumption that UNHCR will primarily focus on refugees' needs. This effectively leads to larger gaps in refugee responses, hence a larger UNHCR intervention in favour of refugees.

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[69] Based on available shelter and infrastructure expenditure data. Missing data for Mali (2017–2020) and Burkina Faso (2018–2019). UNHCR RBWCA, "SNFI Correlations, Budgets, Expenditure (2017-2021)," 2022.
[70] Operating level is country level operational budget for prioritized activities based on known available funds.
[71] This programme is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development funded via GiZ UNHCR Niger, "GiZ Project Overview," 2022.

Figure 7 UNHCR Expenditure for Shelter and Infrastructure per PoC group (2021)[72]
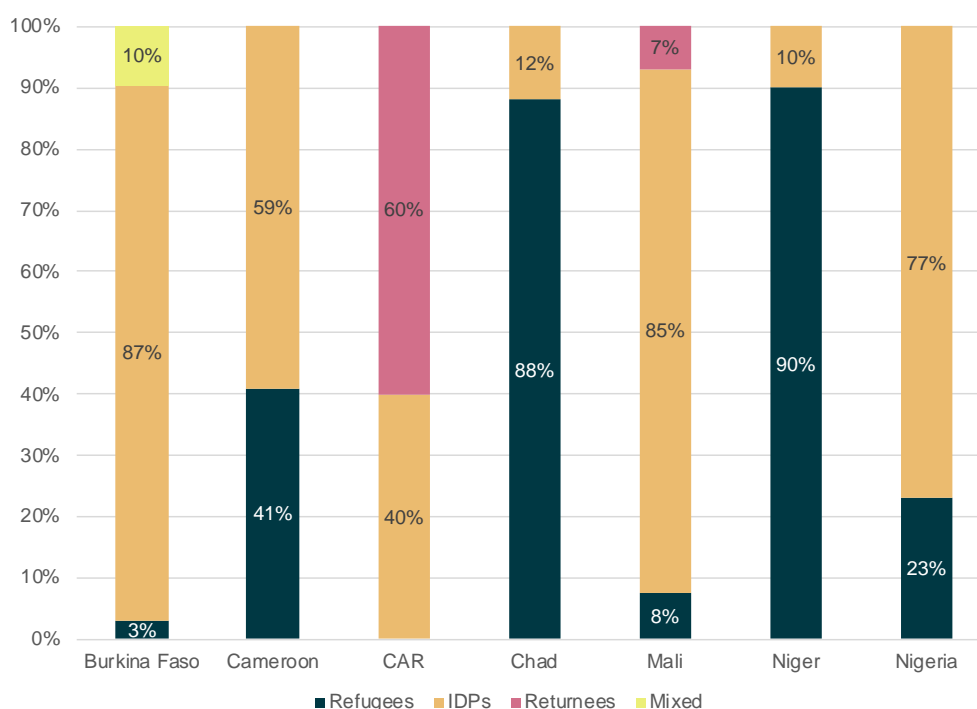
105.   UNHCR shelter and settlement interventions target those with specific vulnerabilities at individual and household level. Women, children, survivors of gender-based violence, older persons, persons with disabilities, are usually cited as the populations most targeted by UNHCR within its shelter and settlement interventions. **There is, however, limited assessment of collective vulnerabilities, vulnerabilities to shocks (such as flooding or land degradation) of a given settlement that would differ from the sum of households' vulnerabilities**.

3.1.3   UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity approach

106.   **Status-based targeting**[73] **is the most frequent way key informants cited as to how UNHCR's AGD approach**[74] **was incorporated into shelter and settlement interventions**. This finding is consistent with that of the Chad AGD evaluation.[75]

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[72] UNHCR, "Country Annual Achievement Report: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria," 2021.

[73] 'Status-based targeting or categorical targeting involves selecting individuals belonging to a certain category of people, using observable characteristics that do not require the collection of a large amount of data' in Cirillo, C., Györi, M., Veras Soares, F. (2017). 'Targeting Social Protection and Agricultural Interventions – The potential for synergies', IPC-IG Working Paper, October 2017.

[74] UNHCR's age, gender and diversity (AGD) policy seeks to ensure that all persons of concern (PoC) fully participate in decisions that affect them and enjoy their rights on an equal footing with others.

[75] "Gender (women and girls), age, and diversity in terms of different degrees of vulnerability categorized under the rubric 'persons with specific needs' appear to be the dimensions most fully taken into account in programming, though with some gaps." Carol Watson, Younous Abdoulaye, Pilar Domingo, and Overseas Development Institute (ODI), "AGD Policy Evaluation," May 1, 2022.

- UNHCR shelter strategies in Burkina Faso,[76] Cameroon,[77] the Central African Republic[78] and Niger[79] specifically reference an AGD approach and/or the distinct needs of women vis-à-vis shelter and settlements.
- The UNHCR Mali[80] strategy commits to promoting gender equality but makes no reference (e.g. to the Shelter and NFI Cluster's Five Minimum Commitment on Gender Equality)[81] as to how this should be done.
- The UNHCR Nigeria[82] shelter strategy does not reference the distinct needs of men or women.

An AGD policy evaluation in Chad cited single men, as a demographic group perceived as less vulnerable in general and thus less likely to receive UNHCR support.[83]

- In the Central African Republic, young men participating in FGD expressed a feeling of inequity. While recognizing the need to prioritize vulnerable groups, some young people expressed their lack of understanding of assistance eligibility: "They [UNHCR] prefer supporting the elderly and the disabled and we feel abandoned."

107.   Contrary to its AGD policy,[84] **not all data collected by UNHCR as part of its shelter and settlement interventions are disaggregated by age and sex**. Notably, none of the shelter or settlement indicators collected by UNHCR or its partners use AGD-inclusive vocabulary and reporting is not segregated. See Section 5.1 Data Collection and monitoring systems. This, in turn, prevents the incorporation of the specific needs of different groups in programme design as well as the capacity to follow the effects of interventions on these groups.

108.   The chosen implementation methodology[85] was the second area cited where UNHCR AGD policy was applied.
- In the nomadic communities of Burkina Faso, women are traditionally more in charge of shelter construction than men. UNHCR therefore engaged more heavily with women to support them in building their shelter.
- In the Central African Republic, UNHCR adopts a communal approach in a few locations so that those who are unable to construct their own shelters (e.g. people with disabilities, single women with childcare duty) may be supported to do so by young men from the same community. A similar approach was also used in Chad at a very small scale (less than 4 per cent of the shelter built).[86]

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[76] UNHCR, "UNHCR Au Burkina Faso Stratégie Abris/AME Personnes Déplacées Internes," 2020.
[77] UNHCR, "Stratégie Abris Cameroun 2020-2024," 2020.
[78] UNHCR, "RCA - Stratégie Nationale Des Abris Pour La Réintégration," 2019.
[79] UNHCR, "Niger Stratégie de Réponse Abris et Établissement 2020-2021," 2020.
[80] UNHCR, "Mali Stratégie Abris et Établissement," 2021.
[81] Shelter Cluster, Mali, 2022, "Engagements Minimum en genre et protection du cluster abri."
[82] UNHCR, "Updated - Shelter Strategy Outline - Cameroon Influx Response - Nigeria-October 2021," 2021.
[83] UNHCR, "AGE, GENDER AND DIVERSITY (AGD) Policy evaluation - CHAD YEAR 2 REPORT."
[84] UNHCR, "UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity," 2018, https://www.refworld.org/docid/5bb628ea4.html.
[85] The decision of using Cash-based Intervention is discussed in Section 3.4 Agility. Also, See Norwegian Refugee Council Urban Shelter Guidelines (2011), pages 35-41 for the complete list of 18 categories of shelter assistance methods. https://www.humanitarianlibrary.org/sites/default/files/2014/02/urban_guidelines_submission_23-11-10_compressed.pdf
[86] Shelter Cluster Chad, "Assessment Report on Shelter Construction and Environmental Impact in Lake Chad Province."

3.1.4 Shelter design in relations to the needs and preferences of Persons of Concern

109. Across all countries, **shelter needs assessments inform the vulnerability criteria to be used for targeting, but less so the design and typology of the shelters to be provided**. Shelter is not just a matter of four walls and a roof, but as stated in the Sphere Handbook, is rather "the household living space, including the items necessary to support daily activities". Sphere goes on to state that shelter is only adequate when it is, "habitable, providing physical safety, protected and adequate living space, access to safe drinking water, adequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, and food preparation and storage."[87] Designs tend to be decided centrally at capital levels by UNHCR (or in some cases a UNHCR Shelter Cluster coordinator may recommend UNHCR shelter typologies to cluster partners) with limited local level consultation, or even globally (e.g. for the refugee housing unit (RHU)). Design is mostly based on availability and supply criteria, as well as standardized criteria (UNHCR/global sector-defined) for suitability and appropriateness – as opposed to being informed by PoCs' shelter solution preferences as identified at the country situation analysis stage. UNHCR's implementing partners in Niger, the Central African Republic and Nigeria, as well as the shelter experts across country operations, have also reported limited involvement in shelter design. Instead, implementing partners received the specific bill of quantities (BoQ) from UNHCR for the pre-identified shelter, which formed the basis of implementing partners' proposals to UNHCR. That said, there were a few examples of PoC involvement in shelter design.

    - In Chad, following discussions with the women, UNHCR added kitchen areas and enclosed verandas for greater privacy to the shelter design.

    - In Mali, in regions such as Mopti and Gao, the design of shelter types is led by the regional authorities (Governors) assisted by regional technical services in consultation with shelter cluster members. Further, in Mopti following heavy rains in 2021, UNHCR and IOM relied on community-led shelter design to provide support.

110. **Compared with shelter, settlement design tends to account more for the needs and preferences of PoCs as well as local government.**
    - In Burkina Faso, shelters for people with disabilities are not built on uneven ground to facilitate mobility. In addition, partners construct mobility aids, such as ramps and handrails, for shelters for people with disabilities.
    - According to UNHCR Nigeria's Shelter Strategy for the Cameroon Situation, shelters for people with disabilities should be planned for within each community's blocks and the location of these shelters should facilitate access to services and infrastructure.[88]
    - In Niger's humanitarian settlements, plots are located near water points and services. Older people's plots are concentrated around the main routes to ease their movements.
    - In Nigeria, the settlement design, including the reception centre and base camp, is reviewed jointly by the host community, local authorities and refugees.[89] A similar recommendation was also made in Chad.[90] Plot allocation in Nigeria is also mindful of tribes and the principles of social cohesion, so that different tribes are represented in the same neighbourhood.

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[87] Sphere, *Sphere Handbook* 2018, pp.240, 244.
[88] Updated - Shelter strategy outline - Cameroon influx response - Nigeria-October 2021.pdf
[89] UNHCR, "Updated - Shelter Strategy Outline - Cameroon Influx Response - Nigeria-October 2021."
[90] Shelter Cluster Chad, 2022 "Assessment Report on Shelter Construction and Environmental Impact in Lake Chad Province."

- In Mali, the 10-hectare site plan in Gao has been validated by the local authorities and technical services, who have paid attention to the location of the different types of basic infrastructure needed.

111. Across all countries, **none of the shelter designs had elements that explicitly included, or facilitated, commonly anticipated modifications, expansions or upgrades by their inhabitants.** It was also unclear from key informants how many of the shelter models could be adapted by the beneficiaries themselves specifically to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, nor the ways in which the shelter designs might support/permit (or not support) any such adaptations. Nevertheless, in most places, people have made certain adjustments on their own, creating additional spaces such as rooms, roofed verandas for storage and cooking, plastering (to protect against the rain and as decoration), as described by focus-group participants in Nigeria, Niger and the Central African Republic. There was limited acknowledgement among UNHCR staff of the sometimes-significant challenges and barriers that beneficiaries face in making any extensions by themselves, in terms of financial and social-debt costs. For example, a new roof in the Central African Republic costs more than a month's local average cash earnings and requires a multi-person team led by a local craftsman. There was also limited discussion of the degree to which a most vulnerable beneficiary household could realistically be expected to overcome these challenges/barriers.

112. Although very limited in the ways in which they can be expanded or upgraded, emergency shelters can still be initially relatively easily adjusted into different physical shapes, as the materials provided by UNHCR can be used in several ways (e.g. to construct a stand-alone shelter, or as part of a lean-to, using some other pre-existing structure) depending on family size and needs. Emergency shelters can also be unbuilt and rebuilt quite easily, which makes them suitable for nomadic household needs. On the contrary, key informants in Mali highlighted the immobility[91] of the RHU.

113. More durable shelters in hydraform[92] as implemented in the Central African Republic, Mali and Niger were deemed less flexible by UNHCR's shelter team, to accommodate modifications, expansions or upgrades. There are significant barriers to making extensions to the hydraform shelters using the same materials (i.e. hydraform blocks). Households would need to access the block-making machine, be trained to use it, be able to assemble a trained team of co-workers, and to access the significant amounts of water and machine fuel necessary to produce the blocks. Moreover, in the model used in the Central African Republic and Niger at least, the block walls were so hard and bound together so tightly that it would be difficult to punch the space needed into the wall for an additional door to connect the extension to the original core shelter.[93]

- All the extensions observed that were added to hydraform shelters in the Central African Republic and Niger were not actually attached to the core shelters, but were entirely external and free-standing (e.g. external kitchens). Such extensions were not made of hydraform blocks,

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[91] According to the UNHCR Shelter Design Catalogue, the RHU weighs 160 kg and requires 4 people for assembly, so therefore has very limited mobility, particularly for many most-vulnerable households.
[92] Hydraform is a technique for producing earth blocks that are compressed (and therefore strengthened and more durable) through water pressure, using a specialized machine. In many cases, the blocks are also further strengthened through the addition of small percentages of cement mixed into the earth before the water-compression process begins.
[93] This might also compromise the structural stability of the shelter.

but of cheaper and more easily accessible local materials (non-hydrocompressed earth blocks and thatch).

- In Niger, families were able to choose the internal design of their shelter: it could comprise of two communicating rooms and one main door or two separate rooms with a door each so as to increase privacy.
- In the Central African Republic, key informants acknowledged that 24 m^2[94] was too small to accommodate a large family. Key informants, however, highlighted that the shelter foundations were designed to be extendable, although the evaluation team saw no evidence to back this claim.

114. Key informants also reported modifications to improve shelter durability (e.g. consolidating walls with clay such as in Burkina Faso and the Central African Republic) or suitability to the climate (e.g. adding an extra vegetal layer on the RHU roof in Niger). These modifications are discussed under Section 3.3 Contextual factors.

115. The possibility to modify shelters is also linked to the settlement design.
- In Niger's humanitarian settlements, houses are positioned in such a way that households could safely add an extension without it crossing over into another plot of land.
- On the contrary in Nigeria, in the North East, provision is not made for any extensions (especially kitchens) in site planning. These extensions, therefore, have had the unintended consequence of blocking access paths and constituting a fire hazard within the camps.

116. Accommodating a larger family was found to be a challenge, and in all three visited countries (Central African Republic, Niger and Nigeria), focus group participants report that **the shelter design does not usually match the needs of larger households, nor take into consideration the evolving needs of the families** for additional space for home-based livelihoods, or for children's educational activities. The lack of space and induced promiscuity, as reported by focus group participants, not only obliged some people to stay outside of their shelter overnight but could potentially also contribute to raising tensions between family members.
- In the Central African Republic, young people who wish to be more independent from their families, repeatedly mentioned that they were underserved and their specific needs of privacy and wish to start a family were not given enough consideration.
- In Burkina Faso and in Niger, UNHCR aimed to allocate multiple shelters surrounding the same yard to large families. This is, however, not always possible given the resource constraints.

3.2 Adherence to standards and regulations

117. **UNHCR staff were able to describe who had decision-making power in terms of permission or allocation of land for sites** but were generally not able to cite which national laws or other norms might frame the decision-making processes.

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[94] The area of 24 m^2 was negotiated with the local authorities, after input through sectoral workshops indicated that the previous 18 m^2 internal area was getting negative reactions from beneficiaries, as being too small for their families. Most often, the area calculation is based on a two-step process of calculating multiples of 3.5 m^2 (Sphere indoor shelter indicator per person), and then 'rounding up' this figure, to whole-metre measurements (e.g. 4 m x 6 m), in order to fit into site planning measurements (which are all measured in whole meters), in order to make it easier for semi-skilled work teams to mark out in the field, and in some cases to reflect the standard lengths of some of the main shelter construction materials.

- A variety of government offices were described as responsible for allocating land, depending upon each country's context. In Chad and the Central African Republic, the decision-making rested with the local authorities, while in Mali, the decision-making authority was held by the local offices of a national department of urbanism, and in Niger, the town hall could allocate some plots of land while the Conseil Régional was the one officially in charge.

- In Chad and Mali, UNHCR staff were also able to describe the more complex situations whereby not only statutory authorities were involved, but also customary authorities such as local chiefs ("chefs de quartier"), who in some cases might be the ultimate arbitrators. A good understanding of both the steps to be taken during such consultation processes, and the time necessary, was also demonstrated by UNHCR staff.

118. **UNHCR staff and implementing partners were also able to describe some of the main drivers for decisions related to land access**.

- Local authorities in Chad and in Cameroon had, in the past, taken into consideration environmental issues, ranging from the likely negative impact upon woodland and land used for gathering firewood, to the potential competition for water resources between host communities and those who might be assigned shelter in a new site.

- In Cameroon and Nigeria, UNHCR staff also described potential livelihoods-related conflicts that might influence permission to construct a site on a specific piece of land, or might threaten a PoC population's continued occupancy of that site. In particular, the negative environmental impacts of keeping or migrating livestock were highlighted.

119. **For the most part, the coordination of guidance related to housing, land and property (HLP), and the actual implementation of programmes focusing on dispute resolution in cases of individual-household threat of forced eviction, was seen as being provided independently by other humanitarian actors**, notably NRC's Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance programme (in Mali or in Niger, where NRC is the chair of the HLP Working Group).

120. UNHCR staff did not proactively provide examples of any specific national or local laws or legal frameworks that might actually inform or constrain the decision-making power of any local authorities concerning the assignment of land for sites, or the granting of permission to use land for sites by UNHCR or other humanitarian partners. It may therefore be assumed that they were not aware of which specific national or local laws might be relevant. It is therefore unclear to what degree UNHCR staff would be able to refer to any national laws or norms, in order to either guide or challenge land-permission discussions with any local authorities. **It is also unclear to what degree UNHCR staff would be able to appeal to any specific national laws or norms, in order to frame any discussions with local authorities within a rights-based approach, with the objective of securing access to land and avoiding forced eviction.**[95]

121. The ways in which UNHCR shelter staff are able to influence land permission for sites is therefore more commonly described in terms of highlighting any physical hazards (flood risk, lack of sufficient water supply). The decisions made by local authorities may also be influenced by UNHCR's provision of incentives, in the form of offers to construct infrastructure projects for the

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[95] This, despite the fact that The UNHCR Global Strategy for Shelter and Settlements has as the first paragraph of its Guiding Principles, 'Protection' and human rights, and the next section in the document is Contextual/ Situational Analysis.

host communities at the same time as the construction of the site for the main PoC population. Again, this has more to do with an alignment with decision-makers, rather than with any set of clearly fixed, non-personalized regulations or norms. This may then limit UNHCR's ability to respond when local authorities do take decisions to close sites (as in North East Nigeria), or openly insist, directly with UNHCR staff, upon the rapid closure of sites (as in the Central African Republic).

122. Regarding standards and regulations that focus on HLP at the single-shelter level, the possession of the necessary documentation was framed in either-or terms. None of the interviewed UNHCR staff members were able to describe ways in which land tenure arrangements might be incrementally strengthened over time, and **none of the interviewed UNHCR staff members indicated any awareness of the HLP Due Diligence standard and its good-enough incremental approach, adopted by the Global Shelter Cluster since 2013**.[96]

123. Although several key informants were able to provide an analysis of the interaction between statutory and customary regulations when it came to land permission for entire sites, no key informant offered the same analysis regarding HLP regulations for individual households.

- In the Central African Republic, UNHCR staff stated that some proof of ownership documentation from the local authorities was necessary for beneficiaries, in order for shelter support to be provided.
- In Niger, despite the settlement approaches implemented, land tenure in the settlement was mostly unclear for UNHCR key informants. This, in part, results from the discrepancies between areas as to who owns the land and after how many years of occupancy. In the same region (Tillabery), land tenure varied from being lent out (for free) to refugees and IDPs for the duration of their stay, to refugees and IDPs gaining land ownership after staying for 7 (or 10) years. This created confusion among interviewed UNHCR staff members and FGD participants.

124. Generally, **HLP is not given the same prominence as other issues (such as GBV or education) within UNHCR's Protection teams, which resulted in UNHCR having limited involvement in HLP-relevant initiatives**. For example, at the time of the evaluation, a major reform of land and property rights was ongoing in Niger, and according to key informants, UNHCR is not involved in this reform.

- The limited involvement of protection team members in this evaluation is a good proxy indicator of the limited prominence given to shelter and settlement topics overall and HLP in particular. Among the UNHCR key informants who declined interviews for this evaluation, half were working in protection.[97]
- When asked, in Niger or in the Regional Bureau, protection teams were not in a position to say who was the focal point for HLP topics, whereas there is an identified focal point for GBV and Education, for example.

125. The main set of international standards to which all UNHCR staff and partners refer, were the standards from the Shelter and Settlements chapter of the Sphere Handbook. However, the

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[96] Global Shelter Cluster, "Land Rights and Shelter: The Due Diligence Standard," 2013. Furthermore, the UNHCR Global Shelter and Settlement Strategy states that HLP considerations are essential and must be prioritized throughout all stages of the planning and response phases.

[97] At a minimum, the evaluators sent an invitation email and two follow-up emails. The evaluators are cognizant of the fact that protection staff may also face capacity constraints that resulted in limited availability to participate in this evaluation.

alignment of shelter and settlement interventions is described by both staff and partners almost exclusively in terms of numeric indicators (i.e. the quantitative measures associated with the standards) rather than with the qualitative standards themselves.

- The language used for listing the programme objectives in many of the UNHCR national shelter strategies in the region are more likely to be qualitative in nature, and to be more closely aligned with the language of both the Sphere standards, and the various clauses of the Right to Adequate Housing, which provide much of the rights-based framework for those standards.

- By contrast, all key informants at the CO-level referred immediately to the spatial measurements (in terms of square metres of internal shelter space, or distance between shelters), and did not refer to any of the qualitative aspects of the standards. (As examples of what could have been referred to in terms of the qualitative rather than quantitative aspects of the standards, there are the first two Key Actions for Sphere Shelter and Settlements Standard 3 (Living Space): "Ensure that each affected household has adequate living space to perform basic domestic activities" and "Provide living space that accommodates the diverse needs of members of the household for sleeping, food preparation and eating, respecting local culture and lifestyles.").[98]

- Nevertheless, the reference to, and usage of spatial indicators, were highlighted by key informants as positive achievements of shelter interventions. In the Central African Republic, several key informants narrated their reference to spatial indicators as part of their successful advocacy within the cluster and with the national authorities, to increase the dimensions of the semi-durable shelters from 18 m^2 to 24 m^2. References to the spatial indicators were also seen in the Central African Republic as the necessary foundational step for redesigning the layout of semi-durable shelters, in order to provide a higher number of internal rooms, and therefore more privacy and dignity for all members of the household.

- Many key informants were also able to discuss the challenges of meeting the spatial indicator for indoor shelter space per person with detailed examples. Indeed, in many contexts, there were significant variations in household sizes. And in many cases, household sizes far exceeded the nominal national average of five people per household, while the shelter space planned for in many of the shelter designs was a standardized one-size-fits-all.

126. **The same emphasis upon quantitative indicators rather than qualitative standards is also present when it comes to discussions regarding settlement interventions**. For the most part, UNHCR staff were of the view that there were greater challenges in reaching humanitarian standards at the settlements level than at the single-shelter level. However, this was described in terms of distances between shelters, or number of people per latrine (i.e. quantitative indicators), rather than in terms of issues such as the availability and functionality of, or the equal and safe access to, infrastructure and services (for instance, access to schools for girls, or equitability of distance to markets). This indicates that WASH has been addressed on a community level (common facilities) more than on a household level.

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[98] The first two Key Actions for Sphere Shelter and Settlements Standard 3 (Living Space) are an example of the qualitative (rather than quantitative) aspects of the standards: "Ensure that each affected household has adequate living space to perform basic domestic activities" and "Provide living space that accommodates the diverse needs of members of the household for sleeping, food preparation and eating, respecting local culture and lifestyles."

127. **Another aspect of the Sphere or other global standards that is missing from discussions in the seven evaluated countries, is the principle of incrementally upgrading existing spaces and achieving settlement standards through participatory processes**, which has been an integral part of Sphere since the 2004 edition.[99]

- Key informants in Chad and the Central African Republic pointed to an increase in population or the encroachment of self-built shelter structures over a period of time as being one of the key reasons why standards were no longer being achieved in sites. However, they did not provide any description of how an incremental/time-based approach to achieving standards might be used in order to counteract those challenges. As a hypothetical example, no key informants made any reference to the possibility of making an initial designation of specific zones within a site to be left open or lightly used in the initial phases of development, so that they could be used for decongestion purposes and relocation of shelters later. As a further hypothetical example, no key informants made any reference to the possibility of inserting surface-drainage channels along pathways in the shelter blocks, as a method for restraining the encroachment of self-built shelters into public pathways, evacuation routes or other public spaces. In the Central African Republic, UNHCR staff sensitize beneficiaries during the awareness phase according to the pre-existing defined plans, to build drainage channels around their shelters, although UNHCR staff noted that this has not always been put into practice by the beneficiaries.

- **The lack of awareness of the scope for an incremental dimension to achieving standards, also means that there is no real discussion about what might be achievable at the settlements level in the many unplanned sites in the region** (beyond the replacement of plastic sheeting or other emergency shelter materials at the individual shelter level), even though these sites probably represent the majority of PoCs living in sites.

128. As described immediately above, the indicators that were most commonly referred to, were those related to spatial dimensions (indoor shelter space, distance between shelters) and, for unknown reasons, some of the indicators that have been present in Sphere for the longest time (mostly, since the first 2001 edition). In contrast, none of the key informants made any reference to the two newest standards from the 2018 Sphere Shelter and Settlement chapter (Standard 6 on Security of Tenure and Standard 7 on Environmental Sustainability), thus reducing the likelihood that either security of tenure or environmental sustainability would be adequately integrated into shelter and settlement programming.

129. Although not a set of standards per se, the other resource most commonly referred to by UNHCR shelter staff in the region, is the UNHCR Shelter Design Catalogue[100] produced by UNHCR at the global level for reference in the field. **Many of the shelter models in the region are, to a degree, adapted from off-the-shelf variants of some of the examples from the Catalogue.**[101] Further, there is an argument to be made that taking such an approach to shelter design – seeing

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[99] UNHCR Emergency Handbook cross reference Sphere standards "To ensure a life in dignity", Sphere Standards and UNHCR Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter 2014-2018 provide practical advice on how best to design different types of shelters and uphold the rights of displaced persons" and "Sphere emergency standards are the key references when designing planned settlements."
[100] Shelter Design Catalogue, UNHCR 2016.
[101] Notably, the variants of the Wooden Gable Frame Shelter, but also the RHU, and to a lesser extent some of the examples of the one-room durable shelters.

shelter as a series of objects as opposed to processes – has also contributed to a point of view that sees **the standards solely in terms of a series of physical dimensions to be measured**.

130. At the same time, many of UNHCR staff and partners were able to provide an analysis of the degree to which various shelter models contributed to an element of protection (i.e. privacy and dignity), and the degree to which the shelter designs and the choices of materials are made in relation to topography, climate, hazard and the environment (discussed in Contextual factors). However, they did not make any linkages between these topics and humanitarian standards, meaning that the impact, in this regard, could not be monitored according to those standards.

3.3 Contextual factors

131. **The various shelter interventions implemented by UNHCR and partners have an overall good correspondence to their settings**. With the exceptions of the RHUs and the shelters labelled by UNHCR shelter programmes as "semi-durable shelters" constructed from hydraform blocks, the shelter models offer trade-offs between the need to provide rapid and large-scale shelter support, the need to be cost-effective, and the need to have shelters that are culturally acceptable, and that the PoCs themselves are able to construct, maintain, repair and upgrade. The selection of shelter models is more often guided by political considerations than differences in climate, or between urban and rural settings. UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions in the region sometimes, but not consistently, flex and adapt to the needs of specific vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities or older persons. The one aspect in which **shelter and settlement interventions do not correspond to their settings**, **is in the lack of strategy for providing a continuum of shelter support across all phases of a displacement**, rather than simply the two main options of temporary emergency shelter kits at the start of a displacement or semi-durable shelters for returnees, but very little support in between.

3.3.1 Emergency shelters and emergency shelter kits

132. Across the region, **the predominant shelter support given by UNHCR and partners, remains the distribution of emergency shelter kits** (as discussed in Section 4.1, these represent 94 per cent of the shelter interventions in the region) – plastic sheeting with rope and some wooden poles to make a basic frame (in Cameroon), or without any additional materials (in the Central African Republic). In some instances, distributions only contained plastic sheeting, which was intended to replace degraded plastic sheeting received during previous rounds of emergency shelter kit distributions. In the Far North of Cameroon, the "Logone-Birni" shelter, composed of a rafter frame, is covered with sheet metal and the facings (wall) made of tarpaulin. This allows for a quicker recovery by the beneficiaries, who can transform the shelter into a durable shelter with local materials. The extent to which emergency shelter kits generally do not correspond to their settings has been discussed extensively in key sectoral resources for several years.[102] Emergency shelters (including emergency shelter kits) lack durability (especially in a region with multiple protracted crises) and structural strength. They also offer little protection against insecurity (the degree to which the plastic sheeting can be cut open, to enable theft or physical attack within the shelter) and against extreme temperatures.

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[102] See for example, IFRC/Oxfam 'Plastic Sheeting' 2007, Section A.

133. **The emergency shelter kits correspond best to settings where there have been large-scale sudden-onset displacements.** They can be distributed rapidly and in large quantities, are physically flexible enough to provide basic protection from the weather, as well as basic privacy, in a wide range of contexts, albeit for a short period of time (sometimes only for a matter of six months). In contexts where it is anticipated that the displaced PoCs will be able to return to their location of origin in a short timeframe, the emergency shelter kits also correspond to the context in that they are relatively lightweight. They are easy to transport, should beneficiaries wish to take them back with them as they return home, or should they move to other locations. Regarding locality (urban vs. rural), emergency shelter kits have a greater correspondence to rural or peri-urban settings, as non-PoC populations in the region commonly use plastic sheeting (from local markets) as a waterproof barrier for the roof of rural or peri-urban housing. Plastic sheeting has also been used in urban or peri-urban out-of-camp contexts in North East Nigeria (e.g. as material for roofs or for wall extensions, for unfinished buildings occupied by PoC). However, given the number of households who receive shelter support in the form of plastic sheeting in larger sites (planned or unplanned) in rural areas in the region, it remains more likely that the use of plastic sheeting is overall higher in rural areas.

134. As the materials in the emergency shelter kits are not sufficient to provide an entire shelter, the assumption is that beneficiaries will need to supplement such kits with other "local" materials (wooden poles, thatch, grass mats), to complete their emergency shelter. Therefore, **emergency shelter kits generally only correspond to contexts where each beneficiary household is able to purchase or harvest those additional materials safely, and without creating significant negative environmental impact or competition for resources with any host communities**. To the degree that this is possible, it is more likely to be so in rural areas with lower population densities, where there are simply fewer people competing for materials that are still, for the most part, gathered by the households themselves.

135. In the Central African Republic and Mali during the 2017–2021 period, there have been distributions of UNHCR's other main model of "emergency shelter": the UNHCR **family tent**. These have been distributed in smaller numbers than the emergency shelter kits. Although in principle, family tents can also be distributed rapidly at scale, have stronger frames and more durability than emergency shelter kits, they share many of the disadvantages of the emergency shelter kits including the fact that they do not offer any thermal comfort in a region like the Sahel, which faces very high temperatures. In addition, family tents require more resources to replace in any setting where PoCs remain displaced beyond the first few months, and they are significantly less flexible to support PoCs' own extensions or upgrades, or to be used in combination with other existing building structures.

136. In Chad and Mali, some shelter models are variously labelled **"local materials shelters", "vegetal shelters", or "traditional shelters"**. Such shelters are made with a wood-pole frame, and the walls and roofs are made with combinations of thatch, woven-reed or woven-bamboo mats. In some cases, this may be supplemented by plastic sheeting as an additional waterproof roofing layer. These are not durable but offer significantly greater longevity than the emergency shelter kit materials. These shelters are provided in their entirety by UNHCR and/or operational partners, so, at least initially, beneficiaries do not need to provide any additional materials themselves.

- The local material shelters correspond much better than the emergency shelter kits to locations with extremely high temperatures, as the thatch and matting provide better thermal control than simple plastic sheeting or tent canvas alone.

- Construction teams are required to build the local material shelters and to fabricate the thatch and matting, which may be less available during some seasons of the year. Therefore, such shelters are not considered to be rapid, first-phase emergency responses. Nevertheless, they can (with enough construction teams) be installed *en masse*, and therefore do correspond to situations where new planned camps for large populations are being constructed.

- As a general principle for procurement, in all responses, there are significant time-resource costs for sourcing the local materials, for quality control and for storage, across long-distance market chains. All materials need to be procured locally following an analysis of local markets functionality. Therefore, the use of these shelters corresponds to rural areas, where such materials are available and where competition for them can be minimized. There are fewer examples whereby the local material shelters had been used in urban areas. In Mali, local material has been used for interventions in Bamako and Mopti.

137. In Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, RHUs have also been constructed for beneficiaries.[103] Although they are more durable than any of the emergency phase shelters (including the local material shelters), issues related to indoor temperature and humidity control, the technical challenges of repairing, maintaining and upgrading or expanding RHUs, and the relatively high cost per-unit, severely limit the contexts to which they could positively correspond. In contexts such as Mali, RHUs also require an additional structural framework made either with mortar-associated blocks or reinforced concrete as a stabilizer against damage by extreme winds, resulting in further costs. Extreme temperatures put a heavy strain on the material, causing the panels to become brittle, to shrink and warp, thus affecting the solidity, tightness and stability of the structure. Hence, the overall lifespan only amounts to three to five years at best. In essence**, among all seven countries assessed, there are no obvious contexts where the RHUs might be said to be truly appropriate.**

3.3.2 Semi-durable shelters and site planning

138. The shelters labelled by country programmes as "semi-durable", of varying designs, have also been implemented in Mali and the Central African Republic, although almost exclusively for returnee and IDP returnee households. These shelters tend to be constructed out of non-stabilized earth blocks, with either thatch or metal roofing sheets for the roofs. In both countries, there have been pilot projects to construct semi-durable shelters out of hydraform blocks.

- The locations for these semi-durable shelters are, for the most part, chosen according to the status of the intended beneficiaries (i.e. land designated for communities of returnees), rather than any consideration of climate, or of differences between rural or urban typologies.

- For the most part, semi-durable shelters for returnees have been constructed together, in small settlements, at the edges of towns or cities. The main programme assumption is that returnee populations will need durable shelters (with the use of hydraform blocks, these are potentially

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[103] In CAR, a very small number of RHUs was also installed into planned camps in 2020, but to be used as COVID-19 isolation units attached to health centres in the camps, rather than as shelters.

more durable in terms of material strength than many of the houses built by host communities) to act as the physical anchor for their permanent return.

139.   The planned sites directly observed in the Central African Republic had been designed and constructed using the basic set of design tools (a hierarchy of shelter clusters and blocks, public facilities either towards the centre or the front of the site, etc.) largely taken from UNHCR's global guidance resources.

- The individual shelter plots corresponded to the setting and to local cultural practices, by generally providing enough space for some small external additions built by the beneficiaries (e.g. external kitchens or cooking areas).

- The sites were laid out using the basic design tools from the global guidance resources, and issues related to the local context were not anticipated, such as the erosion of pathways going up and down slopes during the rainy season, congestion and fire-hazard issues arising from informal markets built alongside main roads adjacent to the edges of the camp, or the likely future environmental impact of large numbers of livestock owned by one particular returnee community.

- One "village integré" for a returnee population in the Central African Republic was constructed in a location designated by the local authority, three miles away from the nearest town centre, which is too far. As a consequence, beneficiaries who participated in FGDs reported that a majority of intended beneficiaries had not yet moved from their current shelter locations into the village integré. Instead, they were primarily still living with host families in the nearest town centre, or else one member of the household lived in the village, while all the others continued to live back in the centre of town. The situation was further exacerbated by the fact that beneficiaries (both those who had made the move to the village, and those who had not) were, at the same time, also waiting for the construction of the WASH facilities planned in the design phase.

3.4   Agility of the design

140.   Most of the modifications to shelter designs noted between 2017 and 2021 have been to either transitional or semi-durable shelters, rather than emergency shelters. The drivers behind the changes have been varied, ranging from adaptation to changing household sizes, to environmental concerns.

- Changes in dimensions to the shelter, with increased indoor space, have been undertaken in Chad and the Central African Republic, with the reason cited being the larger household sizes observed among many PoCs.

- The larger indoor shelter spaces have also allowed them to be divided into different rooms (using mats or block walls), providing greater privacy and dignity to family members, in Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic and Nigeria.

- Changes in the materials used, moving away from wood to earth blocks for environmental reasons, and often at the request of local authorities, has been cited in Cameroon and Chad.

- In Niger, adjustments have been made in how the roof is tied to the walls for the hydraform semi-durable shelters, in order to give greater resistance to high winds.

- Regarding emergency shelters, on the one hand, the complete emergency shelter design has been improved by UNHCR in Nigeria, by adding a raised roof in order to increase ventilation

and internal temperature control. On the other hand, in the Central African Republic, the emergency shelter kit has been reduced, so that it no longer contains any wooden poles with which to create the basic shelter structure.

141. Although one or two key informants mentioned the provision of extra technical training since 2017, **the main change in modality discussed, has been the inclusion of CBI to deliver shelter support**. By expanding the modalities available to implement shelter interventions, the increased uptake of CBI has the potential to improve the agility of the design as households are able to source materials themselves, as per their specific needs, with some level of quality control by UNHCR and its implementing partners. UNHCR successfully delivers cash assistance in all the countries covered by this evaluation to cover outcomes across multiple sectors. However, the use of cash specifically for shelter outcomes is quite limited in the region and varies between countries:

- In Ndjamena, Chad, UNHCR uses CBI to meet shelter needs. Similarly, in 2019, in Burkina Faso, UNHCR used CBI to assist about 2,000 households with emergency shelter and NFI.[104]

- In Niger, UNHCR has not yet used CBI for shelter, although there is a pilot project due to start in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), in Maradi, combining shelter and nutrition.

- In Burkina Faso, Mali and in Cameroon, CBI is used by UNHCR more broadly but not specifically for shelter. Post distribution monitoring results from the above countries show that multipurpose cash assistance for basic needs is often used for shelter: in Cameroon, 13 per cent of households reported using multipurpose cash for shelter repairs, while 23 per cent reported using it for rent; in Mali, 20 per cent used it for rent and 22 per cent for shelter repairs; in Niger, 34 per cent of households used it for shelter repairs and 6 per cent for rent.[105]

- In Mali, CBI is promoted as part of the national cluster strategy, but implementation is more often undertaken by cluster partners rather than by UNHCR.[106]

142. **The use of CBI to deliver shelter outcomes is still nascent in WCA**. This is, in part, due to the limited previous exposure to CBI within shelter interventions. For example, there is a degree of confusion among UNHCR shelter staff as to what constitutes CBI. Indeed, some key informants referred to workmen being paid by UNHCR or implementing partners for days of labour to construct shelters for most vulnerable households, as the primary example of CBI use.

- In the Central African Republic, conditional CBI for shelter[107] was piloted in 2018. Many recipients used the initial cash tranches for purposes other than completing the shelter, resulting in high levels of incomplete shelters. The project was stopped, and the shelter construction modality reverted to local-contractor construction. This example mainly illustrates the challenges encountered when beneficiaries are selected by local authorities, and when the shelter staff have very little opportunity to engage with the beneficiaries and to gauge their intentions regarding shelters before the start of the project. But it also very much speaks to the lack of sufficiently trained shelter staff to undertake all the necessary steps of such a project, including real-time monitoring and technical support to the beneficiaries.

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[104] UNHCR Burkina Faso, "Post Distribution Monitoring Survey: Center North, Sahel," 2020, https://sheltercluster.s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/public/docs/pdm_rapport_-_february_2020.pdf.

[105] UNHCR, "UNHCR Global PDM Dashboard," 2022.

[106] The reasons for this were not explored during the evaluation.

[107] The project consisted in cash grant distribution in tranches, after completion of successive steps of the shelter construction.

**UNHCR Feasibility Review of Using Cash for Shelter Interventions
in Far North Cameroon**

As per UNHCR's policy on cash-based interventions, UNHCR operations in the region have a long track record of using multipurpose cash transfers for basic needs. However, given that CBI for shelter is still nascent in WCA, **a feasibility review**[108] **was commissioned to complement and drill down into the findings of the broader regional shelter and settlement evaluation**. The overall objective of the modality review was to assess and draw learning from previous and current shelter interventions and experiences on the appropriateness of various shelter assistance modalities in the Far North of Cameroon specifically (i.e. to examine the potential use of cash for shelter) in order to inform wider reflection in the region on the scaling up of CBI for shelter and the conditions required for this.

The review found that it is both feasible and appropriate to use cash for transitional shelter in the Far North of Cameroon.[109] As shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**, the scoring is above the average point of the scale. In areas where CBI was considered less feasible, issues of political acceptance, financial access to markets and Know Your Customer (KYC)[110] regulations can all be mitigated, without compromising on the quality of the response.

Figure 8 Overall Cash for Shelter feasibility score[111]
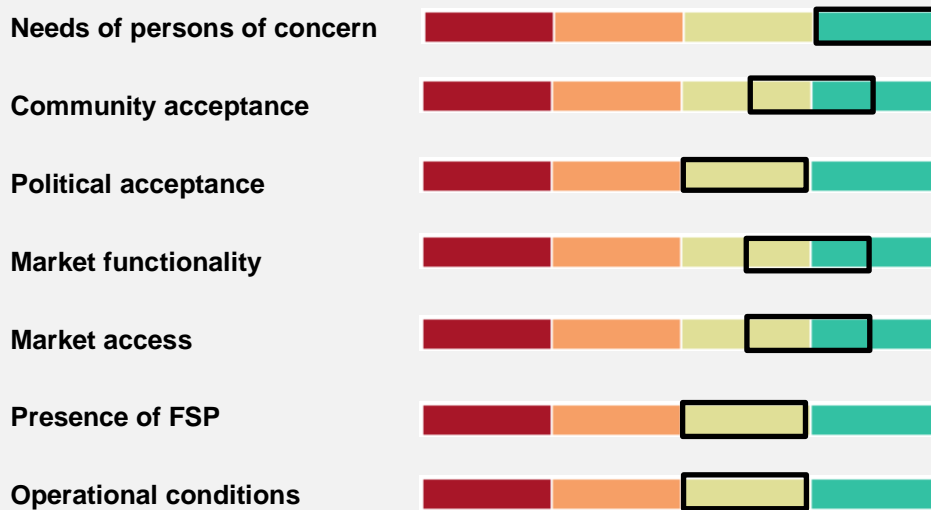
The review found that CBI is feasible for shelter assistance in conflict-affected and remote contexts, and that there are different options for dealing with some of the issues that may be faced:

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[108] Charlot, Minnitt, and Kennedy, "UNHCR Feasibility Review of Using Cash for Shelter Interventions in Far North Cameroon."
[109] The context is, however, dynamic and the feasibility and appropriateness of CBI for shelter would need to be reassessed on an annual basis.
[110] Know Your Customer (KYC) usually refers to the information the local regulator requires Financial Service providers (FSPs) to collect about any potential new customer in order to discourage financial products being used for money laundering or other crimes. Some countries allow FSPs greater flexibility than others as to the source of this information, and some countries allow lower levels of information for accounts they deem to be 'low risk'."
[111] Red = Not appropriate; Orange = Moderately appropriate; Yellow = Appropriate with caution; Green = Appropriate.

> ▪ **Option 1: Cash for shelter materials and cash for services** is feasible when based on a comprehensive calculation of the financial value of the assistance and a transfer value that considers price fluctuations.
>
> ▪ **Option 2: Combining modalities for shelter materials and services** where there are concerns about sustained availability of quality materials at an affordable price. Specific items such as CGI sheets can then be delivered in-kind or through commodity or value vouchers while the rest of the materials, for which supply is ensured, can be covered through cash grants.
>
> To undertake either of these options, UNHCR would need to tackle a number of operational challenges:
>
> 1. The unfavourable perception among UNHCR staff members regarding the time required to set up a cash response during the programmatic design phase.
>
> 2. The limited technical capacity at sub-office level to implement a cash response.
>
> 3. Concerns that "taking risks" could result in reputational damage, such that the unsuccessful implementation of a cash response could damage the Representation's reputation in Cameroon, and regionally.
>
> 4. The limited clarity of Roles and Responsibilities, as outlined in the SOP for direct implementation of CBI.
>
> 5. The availability of resources for monitoring.
>
> See Recommendations 3.3 on how to tackle these operational obstacles.

143. Most key informants noted that there had not been any significant changes in targeting criteria or beneficiary enrolment mechanisms between 2017 and 2021.
    - In general, UNHCR uses status-based targeting, such as female-headed households, for its shelter interventions and category lists have not changed in the last five years.
    - In a number of countries, such as Niger, the beneficiary lists are produced by local community leaders or local authorities and then verified by UNHCR.
    - In Cameroon, the beneficiary lists were produced by UNHCR's Protection team up until 2021, and will, from 2022 onward, combine protection and shelter vulnerabilities.[112]

144. In the Central African Republic, Niger and Nigeria, key informants and PoCs alike confirmed that **beneficiaries can be enrolled and added to the list even after a project has been initiated**. This can happen as a result of new arrivals on the site or through internal referrals. This flexibility allows UNHCR to adapt to the context and possible evolution of needs.

145. The design can also be informed through the sharing of experience and learning. In Burkina Faso, Chad, the Central African Republic and Mali, there have been annual technical workshops, either organized by UNHCR for all implementing partners, or by UNHCR as the cluster lead for cluster partners. In Niger, UNHCR participates in the yearly "retraite du groupe de travail abri" organized by the Government and IOM. These have been regarded very positively by all key

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[112] Global Shelter Cluster, "Assessing Shelter Vulnerability and Severity of Household Needs in Cameroon's Northwest and Southwest Regions: A Scorecard and Ranking System," 2022.

informants who had participated in them. These technical workshops were seen as good opportunities to share lessons learned, and also to discuss potential future adaptations to shelter programming. Key informants were able to give specific examples of changes to shelter designs that had come about due to the discussions in these workshops. However, those changes were typically focused on the dimensions or the choices of materials of certain shelter models. There was no indication that the workshops focused on larger questions regarding, for instance, the overall implementation methodology (e.g. moving towards CBI). There were no reports of workshop discussions that looked at settlement issues.

4. Achieving objectives – effectiveness and coherence

146.   The following section discusses the extent to which UNHCR shelter and settlement interventions in WCA have achieved their objectives, including the contribution to protection objectives and solution-oriented approaches, in a quality and timely manner. It also identifies any unintended effects of the shelter and settlement interventions as well as the main drivers for changes, with a particular focus on working as a multifunctional team.

4.1   Quality and timeliness of the interventions

147.   **PoCs who live in shelters labelled as "semi-durable" by the COs and made of local materials, rated the quality of the shelter materials as satisfactory.** PoCs felt that the use of local materials, such as mud bricks and thatch, is more appropriate to withstand the heat, reduces the spread of fire outbreaks (as mud bricks are less flammable than plastic sheeting) and reduces the prevalence of theft (as plastic sheeting is easily torn). PoCs and stakeholders further stressed that the quality of the building materials, though satisfactory, degraded rapidly over time (e.g. two focus groups in the Central African Republic indicated that earlier distributions of tarpaulins were more satisfactory).

148.   **UNHCR was found to provide limited technical advice on shelter construction and maintenance methods to PoCs receiving CBI for shelter, which impacted the quality and durability of the shelters negatively.** UNHCR Operational Guidance for CBI in Displacement Settings recognizes the importance of such support as it states that CBI for shelter construction should be accompanied by technical advice and support, and provides guidance on the monitoring of shelter outcomes.[113] In parallel, the Global Shelter Cluster, has developed a compendium of examples of information, education and communication (IEC) materials on how to use shelter materials, or construct better shelter.[114]

•   In Burkina Faso, beneficiaries receiving conditional cash for shelter construction were not sensitized or guided on the structure, size and quality of the shelters to be built with the cash support. Consequently, some PoCs built permanent shelters while others did not manage to build adequate ones.[115]

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[113] UNHCR, "Operational Guidance for Cash-Based Interventions in Displacement Settings," n.d.
[114] The Global Shelter Cluster, "The Shelter Compendium," 2021.
[115] UNHCR, "OIOS Audit for Burkina Faso." 2021.

- In Chad, a shelter cluster assessment[116] found that 76 per cent of IDP households that received cash for shelter reported receiving only basic information on maintenance and building materials and 95 per cent of households reported not receiving any technical training in construction and maintenance. Poor shelter construction posed safety risks and led to the rapid degradation of shelter materials, thus compounding the environmental impact of shelter construction.[117]

149. **Overall, PoCs expressed dissatisfaction with shelter adequacy, particularly the emergency shelters that were occupied for periods that exceeded their lifespan (six months) and were not suitable to the weather conditions.**
    - Quantity and spatial adequacy: After a distribution of emergency shelters in Mali, beneficiaries rated the quality of the material as satisfactory. However, 65 per cent of beneficiaries believed that the quantity of shelter provided (one per family of six) was neither sufficient to accommodate larger families nor to store belongings.[118]
    - Typology and design adequacy: Focus group participants in Nigeria and the Central African Republic commonly reported living in fear due to the perceived poor quality of emergency shelters and their vulnerability to seasonal precipitation (e.g. it rained an average of 235 mm in both countries in August)[119] and unprecedented climatic events (e.g. 200,000 people were affected by floods in Nigeria in 2020).[120] The gable roof shelters distributed in Burkina Faso could not withstand wind and rain conditions, and therefore required repairs and/or replacement shortly after construction. By contrast, the RHUs could not withstand the extreme heat of the region, leading to dissatisfaction.[121] In the Central African Republic, focus group participants mentioned that the wood was eaten away by termites and that the low quality of the plastic sheeting made it easily damaged or vandalized.

150. **Shelter interventions were difficult to implement within the timeline initially planned.** While 70 per cent of UNHCR staff agreed that shelter and settlement activities were implemented in a timely manner, 30 per cent disagreed.[122] Staff members cited procurement, funding challenges and land access constraints that resulted in PoCs waiting for extended periods of time for shelter assistance.

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[116] Participating partners included UNHCR, IOM, Red Cross Chad and Commission Nationale d'Accueil et de Réinsertion des Réfugiés et des Rapatriés (CNARR).

[117] Shelter Cluster Chad, "Assessment Report on Shelter Construction and Environmental Impact in Lake Chad Province." 2022. NB: 70 per cent of the shelter assistance examined in the report was provided as a shelter kit, and 30 per cent through cash assistance.

[118] The proportion of households larger than 6 members was not specified in the report, however, the average household size in Mali is 5.7 members, which is on the higher end of the shelter capacity range of 1 – 6 members. UNHCR Mali, "Year-End Report: Mali," 2021.

[119] World Bank, "Climate Knowledge Portal," n.d., https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/nigeria/climate-data-historical.

[120] In the Global Humanitarian Overview, OCHA highlights that severe droughts are more frequent, and rainfall is more irregular and more unpredictable across the region with 1.2 million people in the region affected by flooding in 2021. UNOCHA, "Global Humanitarian Overview," 2022, https://www.unocha.org/2022gho.

[121] UNHCR, "OIOS Audit for Burkina Faso"; Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, "Evaluation of UNHCR's Response to Multiple Emergencies in the Central Sahel Region: Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali," 2022.

[122] This may seem rather low, but the survey results were overall very positive and timeliness was one of the most criticized points.

- For example, the Chad and Nigeria country operations expressed concern that PoCs targeted for shelter assistance (i.e. less than 5 per cent of the total PoCs) have been living in emergency shelters for longer than the shelters' six-month lifespan.[123]

- In 2019, the Representation in Burkina Faso noted distribution delays due to bottlenecks linked to supply, infrastructure challenges and security, which resulted in the distribution of 1,571 RHUs and 480 tents against 22,615 households targeted for shelter assistance. The audit of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) attributed these delays to insufficient planning.[124] This might be explained by the fact that Burkina Faso was considered a development context until a (UNHCR-wide) L3 was declared in February 2020; hence the CO and its partners were not used to emergency programming.

151.   Other factors that influenced the long waiting period for shelter assistance included the unpredictable influxes of PoCs[125] and issues around the political recognition of crises and the subsequent establishment of a mandated humanitarian response. The latter involves negotiations on land allocation for PoCs and their rights to settle, not only for a short duration, but also with a view to possible mid- and long-term perspectives. The results of these negotiations not only determine if and where displaced and host communities live together, they also determine the numbers and types of possible shelter solutions: the scope ranges from temporary emergency models to durable shelter models. Lastly, they determine the speed at which shelter interventions are realized.

- In the North East of Nigeria, initial arrivals targeted for shelter assistance waited up to a year, whereas later arrivals targeted for the same assistance waited up to one month.[126]

152.   Given the multiple crises and thus ongoing displacements in the WCA region, it was **difficult to gauge the average waiting time for PoCs targeted for shelter assistance, which varied between one week and two years** within and across the countries visited. Some PoCs targeted for shelter assistance were satisfied with UNHCR initial response, for example:

- On the one hand, some PoCs targeted in Niger waited less than a week after registration to receive emergency shelter kits.

- On the other hand, some refugees in the "lotissements sociaux" in the Tillabery region of Niger waited for 10 years to receive durable shelters; before then, they had lived in "Sahara-type" emergency shelters.

153.   **Most FGD participants were dissatisfied with the waiting period for follow-up responses (maintenance material or more durable solutions).** Post-occupancy roles and responsibilities were generally not clarified during the shelter hand-over process, as such, there was a high level of expectation among targeted beneficiaries that UNHCR would take responsibility for the maintenance of the shelters. In the meantime, targeted PoCs used available materials to build

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[123] UNHCR Chad, "Year-End Report: Chad," 2021.
[124] UNHCR, "OIOS Audit for Burkina Faso."
[125] The complexity of crises and risk of hazards occurring in the region reduces the predictability of PoC movements (notably forced migration). The complexity of crises is considered high (in Chad, CAR and Nigeria), and medium (in Mali, Burkina Faso and Cameroon) and low (in Niger).
[126] The exact arrival date of "early" arrivals and "late" arrivals was not clear, therefore the evaluators cannot demonstrate the difference in time period or organizational capacity.

makeshift shelters, which introduced protection risks (e.g. vulnerability to structural collapse during rain storms).

4.2 Meeting objectives

154. This section on the achievement of results includes two subsections: Achievement against the result framework, which highlights the extent to which UNHCR achieved its shelter and settlement interventions results during the evaluation period (2017–2021)[127] and Achievement against the ToC, which highlights the level of stakeholder agreement with the ToC (see Annex 1: Theory of Change).

4.2.1 Achievements against the result framework

155. The crises in WCA are both emergency and protracted, requiring differentiated shelter approaches ranging from emergency to transitory and durable shelter solutions. UNHCR shelter and settlement response have been mostly emergency focused, with 52 per cent of the expenditure in 2021 allocated towards emergency shelter activities.[128] In 2021, 94 per cent of the shelters provided by UNHCR were emergency shelters, the remaining were transitional (3 per cent) and durable (3 per cent).[129] Consequently, more than half of the expenditure in 2021 and 2020 was allocated to an emergency response.[130] **While expenditure on transitional shelters increased from 3 per cent in 2020 to 10 per cent in 2021, expenditure on long-term shelters decreased from 29 per cent to 22 per cent.**[131] The use of CBI to deliver shelter interventions decreased from 7 per cent of the shelter budget to 5 per cent, which is inconsistent with regional sectoral trends that saw a consistent increase in CBI.[132] **UNHCR's limited transition towards a sustainable shelter and settlement response**[133] **– considering the protracted nature of the crises – was attributed to insufficient funding, among other reasons.**

156. **Funding, or lack thereof, was overly cited when the evaluators raised questions about unmet targets, unaddressed protection risks and the absence of durable solutions.** This was consistent with UNHCR's yearly narrative reporting. Given the scale of needs in WCA, funding will likely always be insufficient to address the full scope of shelter needs. Within the scope of UNHCR's

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[127] Considering the inconsistency of result framework data, financial expenditure was used as a proxy for the achievement of results, which is considered a weak source of data.

[128] UNHCR defines a protracted refugee situation as one in which 25,000 or more refugees from the same nationality have been in exile for at least five consecutive years in a given host country. Here, we have used the UN definition of protracted crisis: Protracted crisis countries are defined as countries with at least five consecutive years of UN-coordinated humanitarian or refugee response plans as of 2020.

[129] UNHCR, 'Country Annual Narrative Report: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria', 2021; UNHCR, 'Country Annual Narrative Report: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria', 2020.

[130] In 2021, 36 per cent emergency shelters and 15 per cent emergency shelter kits. In 2020, 12 per cent was allocated to emergency shelters and 38 per cent to emergency shelter kits.

[131] UNHCR, 'Country Annual Narrative Report: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria', 2021; UNHCR, 'Country Annual Narrative Report: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria', 2020.

[132] During the scope of this evaluation, a Cash Working Group (CWG) has been established in all seven focus countries. During a recent CWG regional meeting, OCHA highlighted the progress and increased uptake of CBI in the region (across 24 countries). UNHCR, "Country Annual Narrative Report: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria," 2021; UNHCR, "Country Annual Narrative Report: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria," 2020; CaLP Network, "State of the World Cash Report," 2020.

[133] "Policies and programmes should be developed and implemented with sustainability and durable solutions as the ultimate goal, taking into consideration appropriate technology, capacity-building of both refugees and local communities, and use of local skills, materials, techniques and knowledge." UNHCR, "Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter 2014 - 2018 (Expanded until 2022)."

shelter and settlement budget, the effectiveness of the response is reduced by limited discussion on the value for money of various shelter interventions in emergency and protracted settings.[134] This was met by incoherence between the multi-year planning process and the annual budget cycle.

157. **The funding and staff needed to meet multi-year objectives (such as the construction of long-term shelters or the maintenance of damaged shelters presenting protection risks) were often redirected within the country operation as emergency crises flared up.** The absence of earmarked funding for durable solutions resulted in a "Band-Aid" type response, whereby damaged emergency shelters were repeatedly maintained and repaired at a lower immediate financial cost, yet at an evidently higher long-term financial and social cost (as emergency shelters presented protection issues,[135] which maintenance kits did not sufficiently address).[136]

- The country operation in Chad was unable to transform 6,900 emergency shelters into semi-durable shelters due to an absence of sustainable funding.[137]
- An assessment conducted in Nigeria found that 98 per cent of 5,000 households' shelter maintenance needs were put on hold as funding was reallocated to respond to an influx of IDPs, which required emergency shelter support.[138]

158. **Management decisions on how to apportion and redirect funds to ensure a timely, effective and rights-based response were not well documented.** UNHCR was under continued pressure to provide timely and large-scale emergency interventions, given the increasing number of PoCs in need of shelter and NFI assistance, year-on-year.[139] At the same time, each country operation responded to both "emergency" and "longer-term" shelter and settlements needs, often in the same province or region in parallel.

- In the Far North of Cameroon, UNHCR supported refugees from the North East of Nigeria and internally displaced Cameroonians with an emergency shelter response, including emergency tents and RHUs. Also in the Far North, UNHCR supported returnees to reconstruct their damaged shelters or build semi-durable shelters.

159. **One of the many tensions for UNHCR's programming was in knowing how to apportion limited resources between the "emergency" and the "long-term" wings of its programming** (i.e. how to prioritize between them both – with competing policy and humanitarian commitments). As management decisions on resource allocations were not documented, the tacit knowledge on what trade-offs were made and why, and any demonstrated attempts to transition towards durable solutions, disappeared with staff turnover.

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[134] Humanitarian actors are tasked with responding to both emergency crises, for which the region has a high propensity, and protracted crises, given the multiple ongoing crises in the region.

[135] In a regional monitoring assessment on protection risks, theft, looting and extortion of property were the top protection-related incidents reported for the region. Project 21, "Monitoring of Regional Protection," 2021.

[136] A cost-effectiveness analysis was out of the scope of this evaluation, however, qualitative accounts from internal and external stakeholders suggest that the repeated maintenance of emergency shelters in the midst of a protracted crisis was less cost-effective than a long-term durable response.

[137] UNHCR Chad, "Year-End Report: Chad." 2021.

[138] UNHCR Nigeria, "Year-End Report: Nigeria," 2021.

[139] From 3,947,129 in 2018 to 8,884,013 in 2021 in the seven focus countries. These figures only reflect areas within the focus countries where the shelter and NFI sector is active. OCHA, "Humanitarian InSight: WCA." It is also worth noting that UNHCR has competing policy priorities (between refugees and IDPs, and between the three clusters in IDP response), which requires lengthy and judicious decision-making.

160. **The scope of each focus country's shelter results' framework was too limited in breadth and depth to sufficiently capture the successes of shelter and settlement interventions.** Across countries, the overall objective of UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions was to establish, improve and maintain shelter and infrastructure. The objective included a single-impact indicator, which measured the percentage of households living in adequate dwellings.[140] While the components of an adequate shelter are well captured in UNHCR's Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter and in UNHCR's Shelter and Sustainability documents, these components were not systematically measured at country operation level to inform the impact indicator.[141] As such, UNHCR staff and stakeholders could not derive meaningful interpretations from the impact indicator-related data on the effectiveness of the interventions. Similarly, output-related indicators (see Table 3) were limited to quantitative data and did not incorporate AGD vocabulary or Sphere minimum standards to assess the adequacy of the shelters.[142] Consequently, the experience of the interventions, from the perspective of PoCs and against Sphere minimum standards, was not well documented.

Table 3 Country shelter and settlement indicators[143]

	Burkina Faso	Cameroon	CAR	Chad	Mali	Niger	Nigeria
Reception centre infrastructure established and maintained						■	
Emergency shelter provided	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Transitional shelter provided	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Long-term/ permanent shelter provided and sustained	■	■		■	■	■	■
Shelter materials and maintenance tool kits provided	■	■		■	■	■	■
Sectoral cash grants or vouchers provided	■				■	■	■
Land allocation for shelter supported					■	■	
General site operations constructed and sustained						■	■
Capacity development supported		■			■		

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[140] The single impact indicator of adequate dwelling should compound the following elements: Security of tenure, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location, cultural sensitivity, availability of services, materials, infrastructure, specific needs taken into account, proximity to basic services and infrastructure.

[141] UNHCR, "Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter 2014 - 2018 (Expanded until 2022)"; UNHCR, "Shelter and Sustainability: A Technical and Environmental Comparative Overview of Common Shelter Typologies Found in Settlements across UNHCR Operations."

[142] UNHCR, "Emergency Handbook: Age, Gender and Diversity," n.d.; Sphere, "The Sphere Handbook on Humanitarian Standards."

[143] UNHCR, "Country Operation Plan: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria," 2021; UNHCR, "Country Annual Narrative Report: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria," 2021.

161. **PoCs targeted for shelter assistance rated the effectiveness of interventions above the average point of the scale (2.7/5).**[144] Yet targeted PoCs expressed safety concerns regarding the weather conditions, such as the rain and wind (which exposed shelters to leeks and risk of collapse) and the heat (which shelters were not designed to withstand).[145] Targeted PoCs in the Central African Republic and Nigeria mentioned that the absence of partitioning and the overcrowding of shelters over time has reduced their sense of privacy.

162. **The main concern shared by targeted PoCs was that the shelters were overcrowded (i.e. they were smaller than the Sphere minimum standard of 3.5 m² per person), the implications of which, among others, was that a higher incidence of GBV was reported and children were exposed to their parents' sexual engagements.** Women participants in Niger rated the protection issues two points lower than their male counterparts. Targeted PoCs were generally concerned about the theft of their belongings, which is more commonplace in emergency shelters that are relatively easy to cut through. Further, wear and tear, and inconsistent maintenance of the shelters leave them more susceptible to forced entry. Targeted PoCs in Niger expressed the lowest concerns about eviction, yet they mentioned that they lacked documented proof of ownership and would appreciate more communication on their ownership rights.

Figure 9 FGD rating of the quality of the shelters (between 0 (lowest ranking) – 5 ((highest ranking))
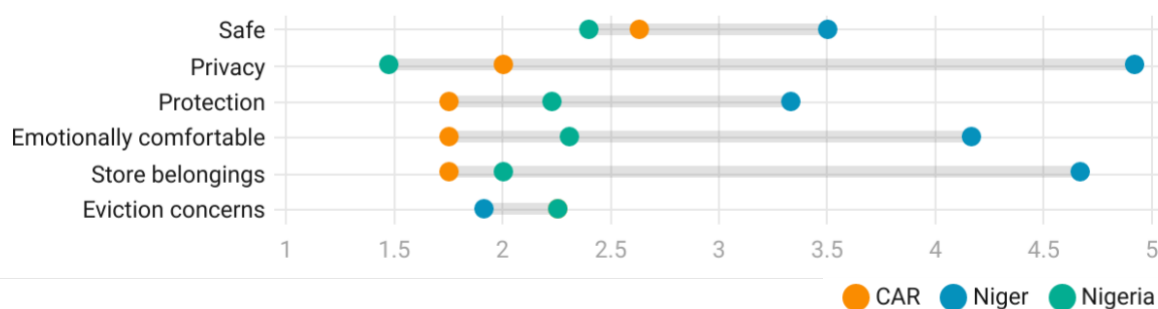
4.2.2 Achievements against the reconstructed Theory of Change

163. As a result of the limited availability of result framework data, the evaluation team used the Theory of Change reconstructed for the evaluation at the regional level as a means to discuss the successes and challenges of UNHCR's shelter interventions. Staff at country level were presented the ToC and showed high levels of agreement with the theoretical construct and the results as operational realities. This level of confidence is to be taken with caution as it is not borne out in any monitoring data, for which collection was limited as further discussed under Section 5.1 Data collection and monitoring systems.

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[144] During the FGDs, participants were asked to rate several quality criteria between 1 and 5, including the extent to which the shelter offers safety, privacy, protection, emotional comfort and a space to store belongings. The last indicator was reversed scored, asking whether the beneficiaries have concerns about being evicted. This table should not serve as a comparison between the country responses as the ones given by PoCs were relative to their experience rather than comparative.

[145] Temperatures in the Sahel are rising 1.5 times faster than the global average. The region has also observed an increase in extreme weather events, such as heavier rains, floods and droughts, which not only exacerbates conflict over scarce resources and accompanying humanitarian needs, but also constrains humanitarian access (e.g. as roads are damaged by heavy rains and landslides). OCHA, "Humanitarian Needs and Requirements Overview: Sahel Crisis," 2022.

Figure 10 UNHCR shelter and settlement ToC[146]
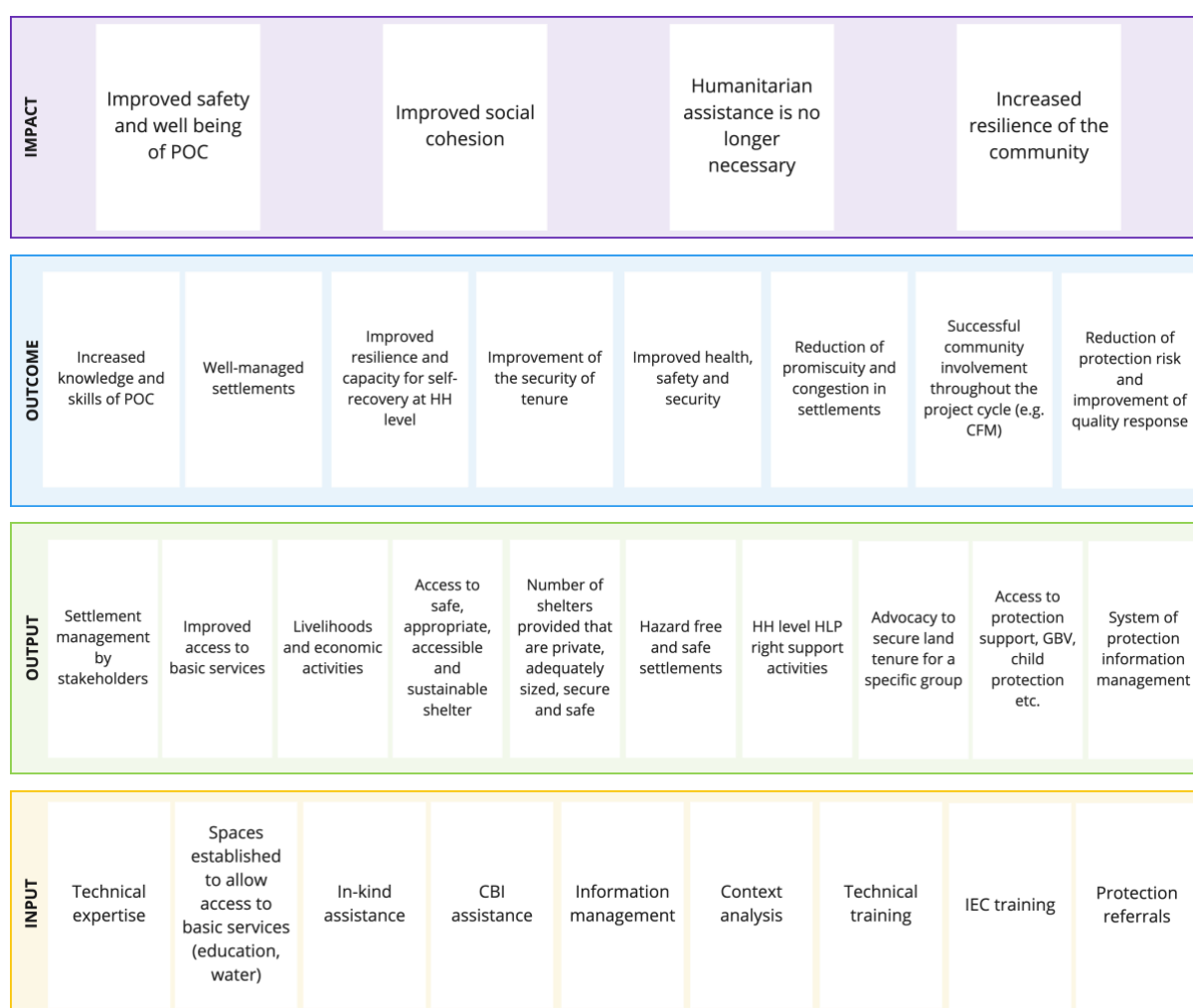
164. UNHCR stakeholders across sectors agreed that shelter programming is a core protection intervention and aligned with the ToC. UNHCR's regional strategy[147] objectives citing protection monitoring, supporting education and self-reliance, and reinforcing social cohesion or peaceful coexistence, were thought to be congruent with the expected impacts described in the ToC (improve safety and well-being, social cohesion, humanitarian assistance is no longer needed and increased resilience). In practical terms, protection standards including meaningful access, safety and dignity, participation and accountability were well known by UNHCR and its partners.

165. **Most survey respondents (i.e. UNHCR country staff) agreed that UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions achieved the outcomes outlined in the ToC (88 per cent agreement)**, and a significant minority did not agree (12 per cent). The highest level of agreement was that shelter and settlement interventions have improved the health, safety and security of targeted PoCs (97 per cent agreement).[148] The highest level of disagreement was that UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions increased the knowledge and skills of targeted PoCs (20 per cent disagreement) and that targeted PoCs have improved resilience and capacity for self-recovery at

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[146] The ToC, demonstrating the contribution of shelter and settlement interventions to protection outcomes, was co-constructed with UNHCR staff at the RBWCA during the inception phase of this evaluation.
[147] UNHCR RBWCA, "RBWCA Regional Strategic Priorities 2021 - 2024," 2021.
[148] In the written responses, stakeholders refer to coordination (with state and humanitarian actors) as a key contributor to a well-managed settlement.

household level as a result of UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions (17 per cent disagreement). By comparison, targeted PoCs in the Central African Republic and Nigeria showed low levels of satisfaction with the shelter and settlement protection components (see Figure 9).

Figure 11 Levels of agreement with the outcome dimension of the ToC

Outcome area 1: Reduction of protection risks and improvement of quality response

23%	67%	10%

Outcome area 2: Improvement of the security of tenure

21%	68%	11%

Outcome area 3: Improved health, safety and security

19%	78%	

Outcome area 4: Reduction of promiscuity and congestion in settlements

19%	68%	13%

Outcome area 5: Increased knowledge and skills of targeted PoCs

17%	63%	17%	

Outcome area 6: Improved resilience and capacity for self-recovery at household level

17%	66%	17%

Outcome area 7: Well-managed settlements

14%	79%	7%

Outcome area 8: Successful community involvement throughout the project cycle

13%	71%	16%

■ Strongly Agree   ■ Agree   ■ Disagree   ■ Strongly Disagree

166.   **Overall, the majority of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions achieved their intended impact (77 per cent average agreement)**, and a significant minority disagreed (23 per cent). The highest level of agreement was that shelter and settlement interventions have improved social cohesion (97 per cent agreement) and improved access to basic services (97 per cent agreement).[149] The highest level of disagreement was that humanitarian assistance was less necessary (82 per cent disagreement) and that there was increased community resilience (20 per cent disagreement).

Impact area 1: Improved safety and well-being

29%	65%	6%

■ Strongly Agree   ■ Agree   ■ Disagree   ■ Strongly Disagree
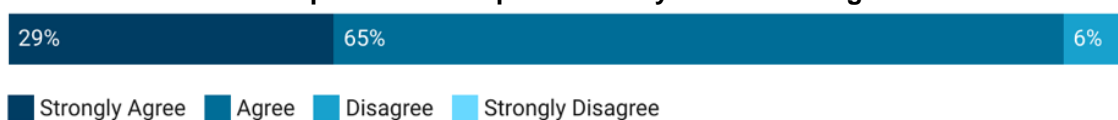
167.   There were numerous examples of good practices related to improved safety and well-being because of UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions. They range from the provision of solar lighting in Mali to the allotment of shelters next to services for people with disabilities in Nigeria, careful consideration given to the location of WASH facilities in Burkina Faso and the Central African

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[149] Respondents' perception of improved social cohesion and improved basic services should be considered within the scope of the intervention targets themselves, rather than within the scope of PoC needs across the region. It is evident that shelter and settlement interventions reaching less than 5 per cent of the PoCs have a limited effect on the social cohesion of communities and overall access to basic services for the entire PoC population.

Republic, and GBV prevention activities in Chad. Nevertheless, some of the operational protection mainstreaming limitations have exposed women and girls to greater risk of GBV. Failure to accommodate the needs of larger households, lack of WASH facilities or secure facilities not only compromise the privacy and dignity of PoCs generally, but also exacerbate exposure to GBV for girls and women. For example, the absence of locks in settlements in Nigeria and the Central African Republic or non-gender-segregated latrines in Niger.

168.   Well-maintained shelters made with more durable construction materials understandably increased PoCs' feelings of safety against, for example, harsh weather conditions or theft. Although modifications were made to improve shelter durability (e.g. consolidating walls with clay such as in Burkina Faso and the Central African Republic) or their suitability to the climate, **one limitation to the effectiveness of protection mainstreaming regarding safety, remained the lack of access to transitional or durable shelter, coupled with the guarantee of not being evicted.** In Niger, most FGD participants admitted that the transitional shelter made them feel relatively safer.

Impact area 2: Improved social cohesion

17%	80%	

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree
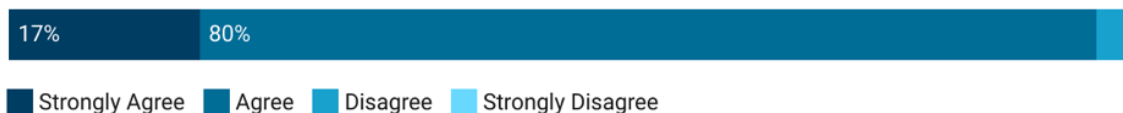
169.   In situations where the integration of PoCs is either a declared objective by local authorities, or where the host communities are accommodating displaced persons, shelter programming has the potential to improve social cohesion. **It is therefore not the shelter itself that improves social cohesion, rather, it is the selected shelter programming approach.** The settlement approach, for example, promotes mutual benefits for the host community (i.e. increased availability and access to services) and, in turn, promotes the acceptance of PoCs. Another programming approach to improve social cohesion is the allocation of land in accordance with AGD principles.

- Social cohesion is illustrated by marriages between host community members and refugees in Nigeria and Niger, and the sharing of graveyards between PoCs and host community members in Niger.
- In Niger and Cameroon, plots of land were allotted to refugees, IDPs and host community members within the same settlement.
- In Nigeria, plots of land were allotted to different tribes within the refugee population.

170.   Limited access to scarce resources and high levels of unmet needs increased tensions between host communities and PoCs or within PoC groups. This was especially the case with the camps that were not well integrated with the local market and therefore did not stimulate livelihood activities (as described across PoC groups in the field visit countries, see Figure 12 below). The distance between the camps and the main markets also introduced protection risks.

- **Social tensions within the same PoC group:** In southern Nigeria, some Cameroonian refugees lived in transitional shelters and others remained in emergency shelters, in the same settlement, due to a deficit in funding. This created tensions among refugee populations. Further in the North East, the installation of reception centres and camps on school grounds meant that host community children could not attend schools, creating tensions between the host communities and IDP populations. In Cameroon, single-person households and

households of up to eight members received the same shelter kits,[150] which also fuelled tension between households.

- **Social tensions between different PoC groups:** In Niger, the absence of areas dedicated to cattle within the settlement created tensions between the agro-pastoralist and non-pastoralist PoC groups.

- **Social tensions between PoC groups and host communities:** In Mali, unmet shelter needs of refugees and returnees placed a financial burden on the host community since they were barely able to secure proper shelters for themselves, and also led to social tensions between host and displaced communities.[151] In Chad, high demand for firewood from the outskirts of the settlements posed a GBV risk, but also created social tensions between community members over the limited resources.[152]

Impact area 3: Humanitarian assistance being less necessary

18%	57%	25%

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree
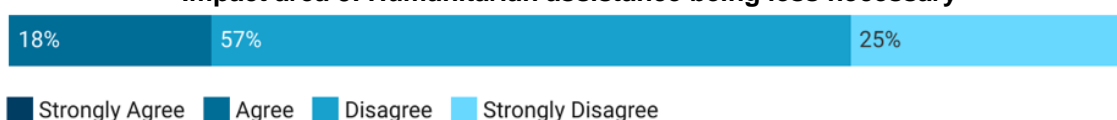
Impact area 5: Ensuring improved access to basic services

23%	74%	

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree
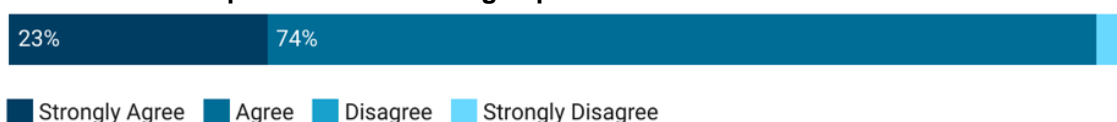
171.   To be no longer dependent on humanitarian assistance requires that, beyond a roof over one's head, PoCs have access to food, water and sanitation services, market access and the ability to restore their livelihoods. All of the above is expected to increase the resilience of the communities in a region where the livelihoods (farming, trade and livestock) of millions of people have been affected. Overall, data indicate that the availability and accessibility of services may vary significantly depending on the location and the extent to which a settlement approach was fully embraced.

172.   **While survey respondents showed a high level of agreement (97 per cent) that PoCs targeted for shelter assistance have improved access to basic services, targeted PoCs themselves showed lower levels of agreement regarding their access and the adequacy of basic services, including WASH (53 per cent agreement), education (47 per cent agreement) and market access (58 per cent agreement).** The highest level of access and adequacy of WASH services was reported in the Central African Republic (65 per cent), yet targeted PoCs in this country reported the lowest level of agreement with market access (13 per cent). Targeted PoCs in Niger reported the highest access to adequate education (86 per cent). The lack of access to WASH facilities not only compromises the dignity and the well-being of people but, along with crowded shelters, contributes to an increased vulnerability to GBV.

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[150] UNHCR, "OIOS Audit for Cameroon," 2019.
[151] UNHCR Mali, "Year-End Report: Mali." With the limited funding, only 1,000 households in 2021 out of the 4,000 neediest households benefited from multipurpose cash assistance.
[152] Shelter Cluster Chad, "Assessment Report on Shelter Construction and Environmental Impact in Lake Chad Province."

Figure 12 PoC agreement that services are accessible and adequate
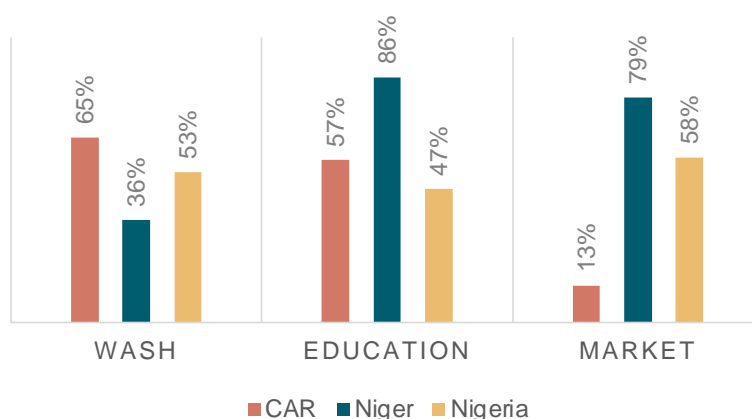
- In Niger, PoCs in the humanitarian settlements of Ouallam and Diffa report good access to services with the "one-stop-service" facilitating access to health centres, schools and administrative services. Access to socio-economic market gardening sites was also reported to contribute, along with shelters, to creating the conditions for "a dignified life" on the sites.
- Higher levels of ownership for the maintenance of infrastructure and functionality of services were also attributed to the implementation of a settlement approach, which was evidenced in the construction of backyard gardens in the refugee operation in southern Nigeria and in Niger.
- In Chad, the settlements were constructed outside the reach of basic services or livelihood opportunities, which limited the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the IDP settlements.[153]

Impact area 4: Increased resilience of the community
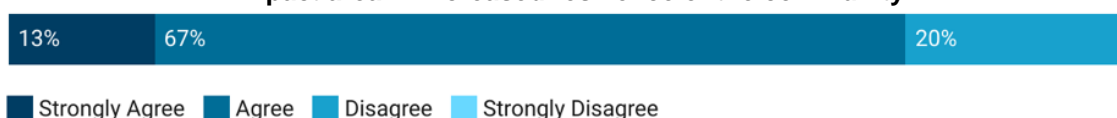
173. Resilience speaks about the possibility of building one's future and is associated with land, property and tenure rights, and security. In Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, property right violations were quoted as the main protection incidents in 2021,[154] while violations of the right to life and physical integrity were the main concerns cited more widely in the Regional Project 21 Protection Monitoring report between May and November 2020. **UNHCR key informants in Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger described various political obstacles from the national to the local level to obtain land for shelter construction for displaced populations.**

- FGD participants in Niger reported experiencing delays in getting property documents. One woman participant mentioned that: "We don't know if we own the house or not. We don't know the boundaries of our yard either." While another woman expressed concerns about her right to keep her house after her husband's death. The question of land rights in widowhood situations was also raised in similar terms among the focus groups in the Central African Republic. Once they obtained the documents, most participants mentioned that they felt relieved knowing that they owned the shelter.

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[153] Shelter Cluster Chad.
[154] UNHCR, "Project 21 Regional Protection Monyoting Analysis," 2021.

- In Nigeria, the tensions regarding land between communities and IDPs were also raised by focus group participants, who described several situations where individuals were swindled over a piece of land. Examples include women who have paid to rent a portion of farmland (for about 5,000 naira a year) from a host community member, for the same piece of land to be sold to someone else. In one instance, a landlord propositioned a woman for sex and denied her access to the land she was renting when she refused his proposition. In another example, a woman was given an ultimatum to pay an additional 5,000 naira to keep the farmland she had rented or to harvest her cassava prematurely.[155]

174. In line with the ToC, local institutions understood UNHCR's objectives as to protect and assist IDPs, refugees, returnees and asylum-seekers considering their life-saving needs, including shelter needs.[156] For host community members, local institutions understood and embraced UNHCR's approach to extend the response to include and benefit the host community, notably through the GCR and nexus approaches, which explicitly encourage area-based interventions that are mutually beneficial for displaced populations and host communities.[157]

175. When asked whether these objectives have been met, local institutions agreed that they have mostly been achieved. However, **local institutions stressed that the primary needs of PoCs are fluid; and while UNHCR has provided initial shelter, maintenance has been problematic. Moreover, their primary needs have shifted towards livelihoods and food needs.**[158]

4.3   Unintended effects

176. The evaluation uncovered both positive and negative effects of UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions. Country operations were able to reflect on the unintended effects of the shelter and settlement interventions to varying degrees. For example, several unintended effects were observed by shelter staff in Niger (which has the largest shelter team), whereas few unintended effects were observed by the shelter staff in the Central African Republic (which has the smallest shelter team). A plausible hypothesis is that it is linked to staff capacity to be present in the field and therefore, their ability to note those unexpected effects.

177. **Durable shelter responses (compared with emergency responses) stimulated the local economy through the creation of livelihood opportunities for both men and women.**
- In Niger, UNHCR set up brick production sites near the settlements. These sites employ both host community members and refugees,[159] creating livelihood opportunities and further boosting social cohesion. Both men and women work in these sites. Having women engaged in construction-related roles is not common in Niger, so this positively challenges the traditional roles attributed to women. Further, the bricks are made using a stabilized soil technique, which is considered more energy efficient than burned clay bricks that require the use of wood.[160]

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[155] The extent to which these examples are isolated, or not, is unclear.
[156] Differences in local institution expectations for different PoC groups (excluding host community members) were not observed. There was a general understanding that UNHCR's objective was to protect and assist with a life-saving response.
[157] United Nations, "Global Compact on Refugees," 2018.
[158] With 18.2 million central Sahelians expected to experience severe food insecurity in 2022, food assistance is considered a primary need of the central Sahel population of 30 million people. OCHA, "Humanitarian Needs and Requirements Overview: Sahel Crisis."
[159] Niger result framework planned for 2,650 trained people.
[160] For more details, see this short video produced by UNHCR.

- In Nigeria, a refugee/host community member duo started a burned bricks production business for the construction of shelters. The use of burned bricks was not common in this region and as such, at the start of the project, the bricks were supplied from across the country. However, the host community came to acknowledge the durability of burned bricks, compared with the previous mud bricks, and started to build their shelters using these. Taking this into consideration, there is potential to scale up brick-making businesses through livelihood support (although the need for support would have to be identified with the community members).

178. Shelter interventions have, from time to time, led to negative effects on the environment. Overcrowding has created a high demand on the natural resources surrounding the camps. **Environmental degradation has been exacerbated by the absence of PoC environmental sensitization sessions and viable alternatives to firewood, which is a common source of energy for cooking in WCA.**
- In Chad, the collection of firewood near IDP settlements was uncontrolled, which risked further accelerating the rate of deforestation and desertification already occurring. Moreover, this practice compounded existing security risks and inter-community tensions.[161]
- In Cameroon, displacement in the Far North and East negatively impacted the environment, due to the over-exploitation of forests, water resources and general environmental degradation through concentrated human presence (75 per cent of refugee sites in the East are near protected zones).[162] That said, in adopting its *Global Strategy for Sustainable Energy,* UNHCR Cameroon introduced activities to replace firewood with a more sustainable cooking stove alternative produced in the camp as well as to source sustainable, locally produced bricks for shelters.[163]

179. UNHCR does not yet have an intentional sustainable and local sourcing policy for the construction materials used in shelter interventions. There were, however, anecdotal examples of good practices.
- In Niger, one of UNHCR partners has successfully advocated for the use of a wood-free shelter design. The shelter is constructed entirely in raw clay, a locally available material that offers good thermal comfort and is easy to maintain.

4.4   Drivers of change

180. **Financial and political factors seemed more conducive to implementing shelter and settlement interventions targeting refugees than IDPs.**
- In Nigeria, considering the government restrictions, key informants considered access to land for shelter to be more favourable in the refugee response, compared with the IDP response.
- Across the region, there appeared to be a higher expectation of IDP rather than refugee returns, which influenced the design of shelter interventions (leaning towards a camp response). The sudden closure of IDP camps in Burkina Faso and Nigeria and the absence of suitable

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[161] Shelter Cluster Chad, "Assessment Report on Shelter Construction and Environmental Impact in Lake Chad Province."
[162] RBWCA, "Mission Report: Cameroon," 2021.
[163] UNHCR, "Global Strategy for Sustainable Energy 2019-2025," 2019.

locations[164] for a settlement response has constrained the effectiveness of UNHCR's response.[165]

- In Cameroon, the government adopted a progressive policy to host refugees in "reception zones", allowing for free movement. The government has adopted a strict stance on IDPs and IDP assistance in the South and North West, as IDPs are perceived as sympathizing with or adhering to "the other side", and hence are subject to harassment and discrimination.[166] This unique situation has influenced the design and implementation of UNHCR's shelter response, such that there is more opportunity for durable and integrated solutions as part of UNHCR's refugee response.

181. **Key informants provided different perspectives on the extent to which shelter and settlement interventions should be provided on the sole basis of shelter needs and social vulnerability.** This is not necessarily discussed in the respective country shelter strategies. Key informants external to UNHCR were, however, quite unanimous about the fact that UNHCR shelter and settlement interventions tend to be more comprehensive and better funded when targeting refugees than when solely targeting IDPs.[167] Funding allocations further reinforce this perspective.

- In Nigeria, in 2021, 77 per cent of UNHCR's shelter and infrastructure expenditure was spent on the IDP response in the North-East, with the remaining 23 per cent spent on the refugee response in the South. This did not correspond to the proportion of IDPs (97 per cent) and refugees (3 per cent) in Nigeria. This unbalanced funding allocation is reinforced by the fact that the situation of IDPs is extremely challenging. It is worth highlighting, however, that there are more than 15 shelter and NFI sector partners responding to the IDP crisis in the North-East, whereas UNHCR is the only partner responding to the refugee crisis in the South of Nigeria, which could counteract the perception of funding imbalance.[168]

- In Cameroon, in 2021, 59 per cent of UNHCR's shelter and infrastructure expenditure was spent on the IDP response in the North-West, South-West and Far North, with the remaining 41 per cent spent on the refugee response in the Far North, East and Adamaoura. This does not correspond to the proportion of the IDPs (75 per cent) and refugees (25 per cent) in Cameroon.[169]

182. **Access to land was frequently referenced as an exogenous constraint in the shelter and settlement response, particularly in Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria.** As such, UNHCR's strategy of pursuing government approval allowed for a greater degree of access to land for shelter and settlement development for PoCs in hard-to-reach areas.

- In the North East of Nigeria (IDP response), UNHCR's partnership with the Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (MRRR) enabled UNHCR to access land

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[164] Location and settlement planning should promote safe, acceptable and accessible living spaces that offer access to basic services, livelihoods and opportunities to connect to a broader network. Sphere, "The Sphere Handbook on Humanitarian Standards."

[165] UNHCR Burkina Faso, "Year-End Report: Burkina Faso," 2021.

[166] RBWCA, "Mission Report: Cameroon." 2021.

[167] The Sahel emergency scale-up evaluation found that there was a lack of buy-in and acceptance of UNHCR's IDP policy across country offices in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, as well as understanding of the policy. Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, "Evaluation of UNHCR's Response to Multiple Emergencies in the Central Sahel Region: Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali."

[168] UNHCR Nigeria, "Country Annual Achievement Report: Nigeria," 2021.

[169] UNHCR Cameroon, "Country Annual Achievement Report: Cameroon," 2021.

effectively and efficiently for shelter and settlement interventions. This partnership does, however, require close technical support and oversight from UNHCR shelter staff, which UNHCR has been unable to provide sufficiently due to limited staff capacity.

183. **The government endorsement of an out-of-camp approach both enabled and constrained change.**
    - The Government of Niger has a strict no-camp policy, which enabled UNHCR to facilitate a preferred settlement approach.
    - In contrast, in Nigeria, the Borno State Authority's recent endorsement of a no-camp policy led to the closure of several IDP camps in the Maiduguri Metropolitan Centre, driving IDPs in these camps to return to their areas of origin in the local governorate area or to find shelter within the host community in Maiduguri. The process of camp closures did not, however, adhere to key humanitarian and protection principles. IDPs were forced to return to areas that lack access to basic services and are considered unsafe by the humanitarian community.[170]
    - Awareness-raising and advocacy missions on the GCR were conducted in Cameroon to inform authorities at regional levels about the content and objectives of the GCR, which allowed for a strong enabling environment.

184. The use of innovative techniques (i.e. hydraform) required specialized machinery that was not widely available in the region. This, in turn, created procurement delays. At a cost of nearly 3,000 US$ per shelter, it will be challenging to implement this solution on a large scale considering the funding constraints vis-à-vis the needs. Further, cluster partners cannot afford to implement similar innovative techniques, which has created discrepancies in the shelter interventions among cluster members in countries where hydraform is used, such as in the Central African Republic, Chad and Niger.

4.5 Contribution of the Multifunctional Team approach

185. At an institutional level, **working as a multifunctional team was recognized by all UNHCR staff as the standard way of working for project design, implementation and monitoring purposes** across all settings. This is also endorsed in institutional documents,[171] though it is likely to have more traction in contexts where the Refugee Coordination Model applies as a result of UNHCR's refugee mandate and subsequent "whole of house approach".[172]

186. Working as a multifunctional team is an asset when it comes to the settlement interventions in which shelter activities need to be contextualized, and which are by nature multisectoral.[173] UNHCR key informants were unanimous that operationally, a multifunctional team approach has improved the effectiveness of the planning, targeting, implementing and monitoring of UNHCR's interventions.

187. There was a particular emphasis on the role of **protection across the sectors, acting as the main bridge between sectoral silos**. In the WCA region over the 2017–2021 period, the protection team contributed, to some extent, to overcoming the shortages of shelter staff, by taking on shelter

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[170] Protection Sector North East Nigeria, "Protection Analysis Update: April," 2022.
[171] UNHCR Field Handbook.
[172] UNHCR, Refugee Response Coordination, Frequently Asked Questions.
[173] This approach has more traction in a refugee-only setting, compared with mixed or IDP settings.

responsibilities. This, however, reduced the technical accuracy of the technical shelter and settlement-related technical advice and monitoring provided. More broadly, UNHCR's key informants were **unclear on the governance of the wider multifunctional team (incorporating WASH, livelihoods/economic inclusion, etc.) and on who was leading and making decisions within it.**

188. **Working as a multifunctional team depends on good individual relationships daily**. These were more challenging to create and leverage during the COVID-19 pandemic, given the more limited social interactions both internally and externally. In addition, physical office space is not always conducive to cooperation between shelter and protection teams within UNHCR.

   - In Niger, the location of the protection team in a different building markedly reduced the involvement of protection staff in the shelter and settlement response.

189. **While the multifunctional approach was found to boost the effectiveness of country operations, the different programmes were also limited by a sector-specific funding approach** (as opposed to a multisectoral funding approach). The absence of integrated multisectoral projects (with an integrated planning process) and contingent funding limited the overall effectiveness of an otherwise multifunctional team approach. Each sector applied for internal project funding within the scope of their specific activities and accessed project funding at different phases of the calendar year. UNHCR's focus on the three clusters of protection, shelter and CCCM in IDP and mixed (refugee/IDP) settings reinforces these silos.

   - For example, the UNHCR team in Burkina Faso explained that, while implementing a shelter response, it is often the case that the WASH sector does not have access to funds to support an area-based response, and vice versa. The absence of a timely integrated response risks unfavourable practices, such as women travelling to the outskirts of the camps or settlements to access a private space for defecation, which potentially exposes them to GBV.

190. **The value-added of a multifunctional team approach did not necessarily materialize in the provision of, or access to, integrated services for targeted PoCs in their camps or settlements.** Targeted PoCs in all three visited countries mentioned gaps in services, including WASH, markets and livelihoods.

   - Markets: In Nigeria and Niger, small mini markets were physically accessible within or on the outskirts of the settlements and camps; however, targeted PoCs lacked cash or income-generating activities to access the markets. Targeted PoCs in the Central African Republic mentioned that the markets are inaccessible physically.

   - Livelihoods: PoCs received cash for income-generating activities in Niger. PoCs in Nigeria attributed theft in camps to the lack of income-generating activities. In Chad, only 7 per cent of the working population received support to develop livelihood activities. Consequentially, refugee women and girls leave the camps in search of livelihoods, exposing themselves to the risks of GBV.

191. **The evaluation did not find any direct correlation between the type of setting (refugee, IDP or mixed settings) and the contribution made by working as a multifunctional team, either internally or drawing upon the inter-cluster mechanism, on the effectiveness of shelter and settlement interventions**. This may be because:

- All seven countries present similar setting types at national level. All seven evaluated countries are mixed settings where there is a country-level IASC-led coordination model (subnational level UNHCR-led refugee situations co-exist within the Central African Republic, Chad and Nigeria).
- Successful settlement interventions will have similar features with regards to durability and access to services, irrespective of the setting. Settlement approaches imply delivering shelter, WASH, education services, etc., side by side. As highlighted in UNHCR's Global Shelter strategy: "Settlement and shelter needs of refugees are integral to nearly all sectors."

192. **The lack of full operationalization of an integrated approach resulted in some activities falling between the cracks.** For example, the energy requirements of households, communities and institutions are linked to several sectors (education, health and nutrition, WASH, environment, livelihoods, shelter and settlement); however, energy was rarely and inconsistently considered in country programmes, projects and budgets.[174] A similar phenomenon was observed for latrines, which were deemed a WASH, protection, shelter and settlement activity.

- For example, segregated latrines in Niger were deemed a WASH or protection, or settlement activity, with each sector expecting the other to take ownership, often leading to a gap in ownership and therefore a gap in services.
- In Chad, the lack of sectoral ownership resulted in poorly secured latrine pits with a high probability of groundwater contamination. A sectoral assessment found that 30 per cent of IDPs practised open defecation, exposing them to environmental health and GBV risks.[175]

5. Institutional capacity – efficiency

193. The following section discusses the extent to which UNHCR has fit-for-purpose data collection and monitoring systems, technical shelter capacity and relevant shelter guidance in WCA.

5.1 Data collection and monitoring systems

194. Data are recognized by UNHCR overall and in WCA as a key element to support decision-making and inform programming and advocacy.[176] To that end, UNHCR created stand-alone Data Identity Management and Analysis (DIMA) units. The one in WCA was created in 2019. Yet, the **access and use of reliable data to inform shelter and settlement were found to be a challenge**. Interviewed UNHCR staff who knew about the monitoring systems consistently highlighted that they are difficult to use. The evaluation team had a similar challenging experience when navigating data monitoring systems to produce an analysis for this report. The way systems are set up does not make it possible to quantify the breadth of shelter activities, and even less so, of settlement activities in the region.

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[174] UNHCR, "Global Strategy for Sustainable Energy 2019-2025."

[175] Open defecation causes environmental health risks for people who come into contact with faeces that contain pathogens. Open defecation can also lead to water pollution when rain water washes the faeces into unprotected surface water. Women and girls are more vulnerable to GBV when defecating in the open, especially during the night. Shelter Cluster Chad, "Assessment Report on Shelter Construction and Environmental Impact in Lake Chad Province."

[176] UNHCR, "West and Central Africa Regional Strategic Priorities (2020 - 2021)," 2020.

195. **There is no accessible and centralized database with output achievement data.** Data are stored in an Excel document that is used as a narrative document (i.e. with merged cells, text and quantitative values mixed, etc.). To be able to make any analysis, teams would need to spend significant time cleaning the data and shaping the Excel document in a way that allows analysis. Similar challenges were noted in the AGD evaluation in Chad: "Most UNHCR staff could not report on statistics related to PoCs in their domains, indicating that while such data may exist in the database, they are not readily accessed or used." [177]

196. **The monitoring system is fragmented within each country operation according to different PoC groups. In addition, different sub-offices report on different indicators**. The yearly narrative reports capture achievements as per those different groups in a non-user-friendly and inconsistent manner that deter any combined analysis. For example:
- The Year-End Country Narrative reports for 2021, reviewed as part of this evaluation, were between 100 and 600 pages long per country, with numerous inconsistencies.
- In Mali's 2020 Year-End Narrative report, the following same data appear five times under different PGG and objectives: "100 per cent of the banco shelters (130) have been rehabilitated, including 50 in Ménaka Ville, 40 in Anderamboukane Ville, 30 in Ansongo and 10 in Gao Ville for Malian returnees living in the regions of Gao and Ménaka."

197. **Over the period from 2017 to 2021, the monitoring system was limited in its breadth as it largely focused on output data.** All the indicators measured by UNHCR as per the indicator achievement report are output-related indicators (e.g. number of households receiving cash grants for construction material for shelters, number of emergency shelters provided or number of sites plotted). As a result, the evaluation team has not been able to measure achievements as per the set shelter and settlement targets in country operation result frameworks. Neither are output indicators inclusive of AGD vocabulary and reporting is not disaggregated. AGD information is somehow captured under the narrative year-end report but anecdotally.

198. For the data that exist, their unreliability makes them difficult to use. Tracking documents reviewed as part of the evaluation[178] show what has been spent over the years across countries against the monitored output indicator as per Global Focus data. Missing output data were reportedly the result of data being unreliable and therefore not included. Similar challenges with data quality are reported in the audits conducted during the period.
- In Niger, the 2020 audit report[179] highlights: "There are multiple issues with the accuracy of the number of shelters reported (e.g. the construction of 265 shelters in Diffa in 2019 could not be reconciled to store records that showed that only 225 doors had been issued)."

199. Monitoring, including output monitoring, is not systematically included as part of the agreement with implementing partners. IP reports therefore cannot be used to reflect the overall activities implemented.

- The 2020 audit report in Niger highlights: "There was no reconciliation between the CRI issued and distributed and the balance held in warehouses; there was no onsite or post-distribution monitoring."

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[177] Carol Watson, Younous Abdoulaye, Pilar Domingo, and (ODI), "AGD Policy Evaluation." 2022.
[178] For example: RBWCA Shelter and NFI expenditures and outputs (2017-2021).
[179] UNHCR, "IOS Audit for Niger."

- The 2021 audit report in Burkina Faso[180] similarly takes note of "unreconciled differences between what was reported by the three shelter partners and what was reported by UNHCR as total output".

- In Cameroon, the shelter cluster coordination highlighted challenges in compiling UNHCR shelter data, as the data arrive inconsistently to the cluster from UNHCR's implementing partners and from UNHCR itself, making it difficult to identify what has been done with the support of partners and avoid double counting. As highlighted in Niger and Burkina Faso, there are also reconciliation challenges between the figures reported by implementing partners and those reported by UNHCR.

200.   Acknowledging these challenges, **UNHCR introduced a new RBM system in 2021: COMPASS. This system identifies a set of outcome indicators** that are mandatory (core indicators) and a set of non-mandatory indicators (good practice indicators). The indicators are less output and more outcome-oriented than in the prior system. Among the core impact indicators, 2.2 focuses on settlements and also captures the availability of, and access to, basic services and infrastructure. Among the 37 core outcome indicators, one relates to shelter: *Core Outcome indicator 9.1 Proportion of PoCs living in habitable and affordable housing* and one to the security of tenure: *Core outcome indicator 16.1 Proportion of PoCs with secure tenure rights and/or property rights to housing and/or land.*[181] **These indicators are not congruent with the predominant type of shelter response in the region (i.e. emergency shelter kits and plastic sheeting).** Emergency shelter kits would not meet those indicators.

201.   COMPASS represents a very valid global standardization effort. The operationalization of COMPASS, to date, is being supported regionally. Regional technical specialists developed guidance on how to measure the indicators related to their area of expertise. The form the guidance should take was not specified, and the format of the guidance varies from one sector to the next and one region to the next. As the system is global but the guidance is regional, there is a risk of creating inconsistencies unless harmonization efforts are made across regions.

202.   Interviewed **local institution representatives in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Niger and Nigeria all reported receiving data from UNHCR and using them**. The data discussed were mostly on the number of refugees and IDPs, and shelter-wise on the number of shelters distributed or constructed. Shelter-related data were mostly shared with local institutions by UNHCR, in its capacity as shelter cluster coordinator, except for Niger where the shelter coordination group is chaired by IOM. In its cluster lead role, UNHCR has made some investments in information management capacity and compiles data from cluster members as reported in Burkina Faso, Cameroon or the Central African Republic. As noted in [Section 5.2 Technical personnel](), such investments are, however, still limited and insufficient.

203.   **Participatory approaches to monitoring are commonly agreed good practices among key informants. They are also planned as part of shelter strategies but operationalizing these plans has proven challenging.**

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[180] UNHCR, "OIOS Audit for Burkina Faso."
[181] UNHCR, "COMPASS Guidance Core Indicators," 2021.

- Niger's shelter strategy[182] plans for post-distribution monitoring for each shelter intervention; however as of 2022, this had not yet taken place, reportedly as a result of a lack of monitoring and evaluation of human resources.
- Nigeria's shelter strategy[183] planned weekly monitoring activities, but these have not taken place yet either, reportedly due to limited staff capacity.
- In Chad, community consultation mechanisms are established, but women's effective participation in decision-making and consultative structures is still limited. Further, no specific discussion group or groups were organized with people with disabilities. Communication methods appropriate for PoCs with different forms of disability were globally lacking. [184]

204.   UNHCR has used monitoring data to take a few operational decisions, but these are not documented and seemed quite ad hoc. This may be due to a lack of data in the first place but also to the limited field presence of UNHCR shelter staff, given the limited human resources, as discussed in Section 5.2 Technical Personnel.
- In the Central African Republic, UNHCR started the construction process by building the roof first and the foundation afterwards, following monitoring visits. In this case, the PoCs demonstrated that if the roofs were built first (using wooden poles to support the roof structure), this would provide a dry area underneath, and therefore, the construction of the mud-block foundations and walls could then continue, even in the rainy season, without any concern that the mud blocks would be eroded by the rain before the walls were finished.
- In Niger, key informants reported using monitoring data to inform supply and purchase orders.

5.2   Technical personnel

205.   One of the key challenges for UNHCR across the region is **the limited numbers of staff in the various shelter departments, and the clear evidence that staffing levels are insufficient for even the current levels of shelter and settlement implementation, let alone any future ambitions for programme expansion.** This is clearly acknowledged by UNHCR shelter staff themselves and has become a point of frustration and criticism among some cluster and implementing partners.
- As of May 2022, the number of staff in country shelter departments ranges from three in the Central African Republic, to nine in Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger, respectively. However, in Burkina Faso (one staff member), Cameroon (four), Chad (one), Mali (three) and Nigeria (one), these numbers include staff members whose primary responsibility is cluster coordination.

206.   Unsurprisingly, there is **a correlation between each country's overall budget and the number of shelter staff members dedicated to UNHCR shelter interventions**. The two countries with the largest shelter-related budgets, Burkina Faso and Niger, have the most shelter staff (eight in Burkina Faso and nine in Niger), and the country with the lowest budget, the Central African Republic, has the smallest number of shelter staff (three). **There is no clear correlation between the financial volume of the overall shelter cluster operation and the number of positions dedicated, by UNHCR, to the shelter sector/cluster coordination**.[185] Cameroon country office,

[182] UNHCR, "Niger Stratégie de Réponse Abris et Établissement 2020-2021."
[183] UNHCR, "Updated - Shelter Strategy Outline - Cameroon Influx Response - Nigeria-October 2021."
[184] UNHCR Age, gender and diversity (AGD) policy evaluation - Chad year 2 report.
[185] As UNHCR is the main shelter organization in all evaluated countries. The size of UNHCR operation is a reliable proxy indicator of the size of the cluster intervention.

which has the third lowest shelter budget, has the highest number of coordination staff spread across the capital and subnational programme areas. This does not demonstrate that coordination is overstaffed in Cameroon but rather that it is severely understaffed elsewhere. Figure 13 presents the comparison between the budget and the number of staff, making the distinction between the total number of shelter staff and among these, who is dedicated to coordination roles and who is dedicated to the management of UNHCR shelter and settlement interventions.

Figure 13 Shelter staff and shelter budget[186]
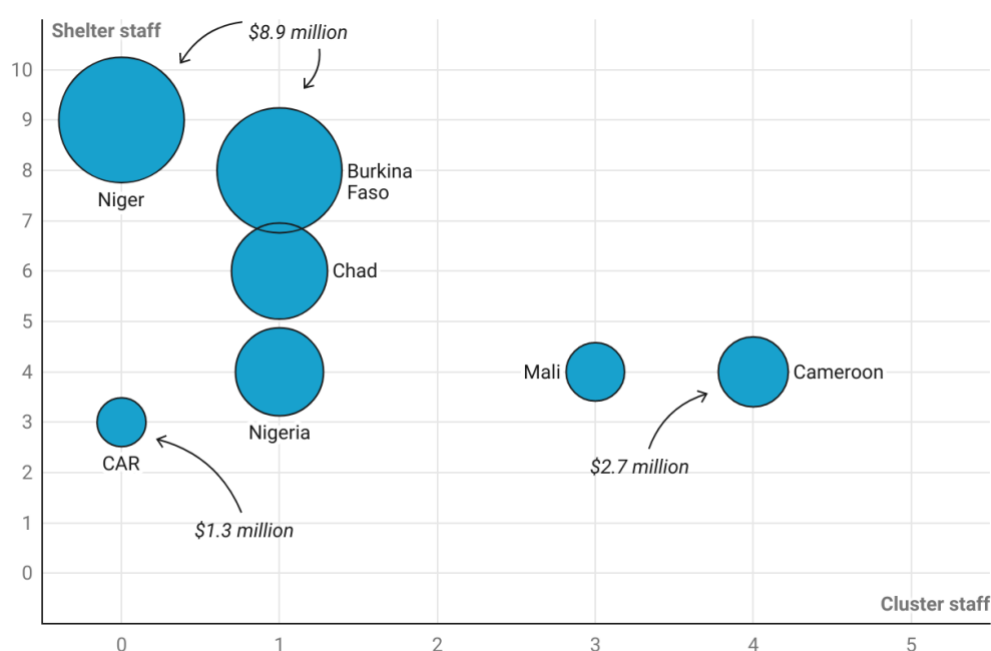
207.   The **staff dedicated to the management of UNHCR shelter and settlement interventions are mostly posted in the sub-offices**, consistent with where interventions are implemented, yet **in very limited numbers**. For example, in Niger, the country with the highest number of staff dedicated to managing UNHCR shelter interventions, out of the five sub-offices, three - Tahoua, Oullam and Agadez – have no shelter staff. Figure 14 shows that, while in Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad, all team members are based in sub-offices, all team members in the Central African Republic are based in the capital, Bangui.

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[186] The size of the circles illustrates the budget size. Niger and Burkina Faso had the largest budget and staff among the seven focus countries. Source: UNHCR. Financial figures are from 2021 and staffing figures are from May 2022. The comparison is nevertheless relevant as the financial figures for 2022 follow the same trends and proportions as the ones from 2021.
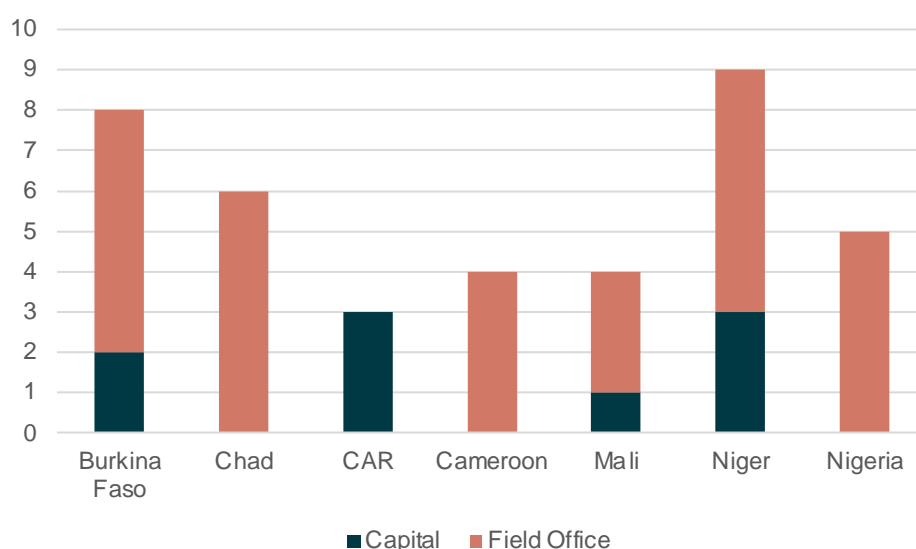
208. Within the online survey results, there was no clear consensus regarding the questions as to whether UNHCR had sufficient technical positions filled at the various levels, with the combination of those replying "disagree" or "strongly disagree" ranging between 42 per cent and 50 per cent. Generally, respondents from within UNHCR were more likely to disagree that UNHCR had sufficient positions, than respondents from other organizations.

Figure 15 Within UNHCR, there are sufficient shelter technical positions filled at country level to meet UNHCR shelter and settlement objectives (n=78)
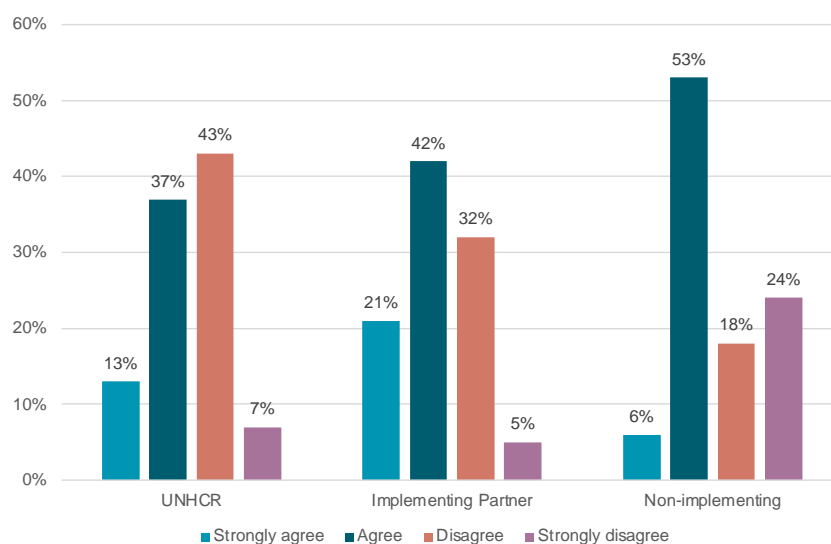
209. **The lack of shelter staff is most acute when it comes to positions with responsibilities for site planning**. While many of the UNHCR staff who were interviewed listed their responsibilities as the management and monitoring of the distribution or construction of shelters, only a small number stated that their responsibilities included either the planning of new sites, expansions of sites or interventions to existing sites that went beyond the individual-shelter level. In fact, two staff members in the Central African Republic, one in Mali and one in Chad stated that they did not have

any site-planning responsibilities, but that the Shelter Officer (who was not interviewed for the evaluation) did.

210. **The low numbers of shelter staff have had a significant and measurable impact on UNHCR's programming in the field**. A tentative correlation might be drawn between the low levels of UNHCR shelter staff field presence, and the inability of UNHCR shelter staff key informants to provide concrete examples of the ways in which beneficiaries have adapted shelters to fit their own needs, as noted in Section 3.4 Agility of the design.

- In the Central African Republic, the one Shelter Field Associate stated that they had not visited a pilot "village intégré" for a returnee project for a number of months and that they had not visited one planned camp with a large PoC population in more than a year due to a lack of time.
- In Southern Nigeria, the absence of technical oversight led to the construction of transitional shelters of below average quality.

At the field level, both shelter programme monitoring, and engagement and advocacy with local authorities, often fall to colleagues from Protection or other departments, many of whom are very committed to their work, but do not have any specific shelter expertise. This is the case across the countries, be it in those with the lower number of staff (Central African Republic) or the highest (Niger). Double-hatted UNHCR staff reported challenges in engaging in the technical oversight of partners' construction and a lack of time to properly engage in HLP and site planning.

211. Although the RBWCA's Regional Strategic Priorities 2020–2021 states that: "The Bureau will keep an up-to-date roster of qualified [shelter] colleagues who could be deployed on a short notice in order to provide the much-needed support in the initial phase of emergencies in the region[187]", there has been no evidence that this goal is actually in effect, and that there are any surge or emergency shelter technical positions or a roster developed. In fact, to a degree, the opposite could be said to be true. In early March 2022, the UNHCR Central African Republic Senior Shelter Officer was required to relocate to support the start of UNHCR's office in Romania due to the war in Ukraine, and did not return to their home base in the Central African Republic for the duration of the evaluation period, subsequently obtaining a post in a third country.

212. **UNHCR does not have sufficient cluster or sectoral working group coordination staff to meet its ambitions for leading effective shelter coordination in the region.** There is overwhelming consensus on this topic, both internally within UNHCR and among partners.

- One key informant in Cameroon noted that, a few years back, UNHCR did not have sufficient coordination staff to meet its ongoing commitments, and that the Resident Coordinator had to step in and assign coordination roles in parts of the country to different agencies.
- These claims are supported by examples from Cameroon and the Central African Republic, where UNHCR COs have felt it necessary to have staff double-hatting. For instance, cluster coordinators were asked to also provide technical guidance to UNHCR's internal shelter programming and UNHCR technical staff were assigned cluster coordination duties alongside their own normal programme implementation work. This has resulted in cluster coordinators and technical staff having their time and resources overstretched even further. This situation also risks placing the affected staff in situations of conflict of interest, which is contrary to IASC cluster principles.

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[187] RBWCA Regional Strategic Priorities 2020-2021, UNHCR 2020.

- One critical role within cluster/sectoral coordination teams that has been highlighted as lacking staff or capacity, has been that of the Information Management Officer (IMO). The lack of an effective IMO affects the availability and quality of shelter data available to cluster members, although the availability and quality of such data is a key tenet of cluster lead responsibilities. In Cameroon, Mali and in Burkina Faso, the IMO staff is shared with Protection, and also worked on the multi-year M&E plan. And in Chad, one IMO splits their work between three clusters.

5.3　Shelter guidance

213.　Cluster members, whether implementing partners of UNHCR, UNHCR Shelter staff, or members of the cluster coordination team, were all able to mention guidance resources that had been shared with them, either directly by UNHCR, or through the cluster. The range of resources listed by the key informants includes a mix of global resources, and in Cameroon specifically, others that have been created locally, at the country level.

214.　**UNHCR staff members and external stakeholders highlighted several key shelter and settlement guidance documents produced by UNHCR that have been useful in the design and implementation of their interventions** (see Table 4).

Table 4 Key UNHCR shelter and settlement guidance

Title	Description
Emergency handbook[188]	The emergency handbook contains a broad range of shelter guidance, including camp site planning against the Sphere minimum standards, shelter solutions and alternatives to camps.
Shelter and Sustainability[189]	A technical and environmental comparative overview of common shelter typologies found in settlements across UNHCR operations.
Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter[190]	The strategy focuses on two mutually reinforcing objectives (shelter and settlements), to improve the living conditions of refugees.
Shelter Design Catalogue[191]	This catalogue presents applied examples of shelter designs to allow for quick reference, comparative analysis and contextual assessment.

215.　Most of the survey respondents used UNHCR's shelter and settlement guidance in their work (79 per cent responded "yes"). Implementing partners reported the highest use of UNHCR's guidance (91 per cent), followed by UNHCR staff (87 per cent) and then non-implementing partners (64 per cent). All survey respondents in Chad and Mali reported using UNHCR's guidance. By contrast, only 33 per cent of survey respondents in the Central African Republic reported using UNHCR's guidance.

216.　Most survey respondents agreed that UNHCR's shelter and settlement guidance was useful for their work (93 per cent agreement). High levels of agreement were reported across stakeholders, implementing partners (95 per cent agreement), UNHCR staff (93 per cent agreement) and non-implementing partners (93 per cent agreement). According to survey respondents, the elements

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[188] UNHCR, "Emergency Handbook: Camp Site Planning Minimum Standards," 2022.
[189] UNHCR, "Shelter and Sustainability: A Technical and Environmental Comparative Overview of Common Shelter Typologies Found in Settlements across UNHCR Operations."
[190] UNHCR, "Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter 2014 - 2018 (Expanded until 2022)."
[191] UNHCR, "Shelter Design Catalogue," 2016.

that make UNHCR's guidance useful were that it is clear, it included the Sphere minimum standards and serves as a technical reference.

- An implementing partner in Niger explained that: "The guidance is useful for understanding what type of shelter to adopt depending on the area, environment and available manpower. It is also useful for understanding the choice of location, the area allocated to each household and the type of subdivision to adopt on the plot plan."
- UNHCR staff members in Niger and Chad mentioned that the guidance was useful during strategy development, to ensure that minimum standards were incorporated.

217. Stakeholders found that, while UNHCR's global guidance provided a useful starting point, a high level of adaptation to the various contexts within WCA was necessary. As such, UNHCR and the respective shelter clusters in Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic and Mali had all developed context-specific guidance and SOPs that incorporated key elements of UNHCR's global guidance.

218. In addition to UNHCR's shelter and settlement guidance, stakeholders used UNHCR's cross-sectoral guidance in the design and implementation of their shelter and settlement interventions. Guidance included the Global Compact on Refugees,[192] Guidance on the Protection of Personal Data,[193] AGD Approach[194] and the Guidance on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.[195]

- Stakeholders in Nigeria attributed the effective uptake of a settlement approach to the sensitization of local institutions on the approach of the Global Compact on Refugees.

6. Coordination and connectedness

219. The following section discusses the extent to which UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions in WCA promoted the capacity of local institutions, were aligned with development plans and contributed to them, and were coherent with other sectors' actions.

6.1 Promoting capacity of local institutions

220. The Global Compact on Refugees, UNHCR WCA's strategy notes and the policies on IDP response all acknowledge the importance of strengthening the capacity of local institutions, as and when needed.[196] Support to local institutions is also a formalized intended objective of the shelter cluster in Burkina Faso.[197] In the other countries, though it is not formalized, key informants from UNHCR and the majority of interviewed local institution representatives acknowledged the importance of developing capacity.

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[192] United Nations, "Global Compact on Refugees." A framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing, recognizing that a sustainable solution to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation.
[193] UNHCR, "Guidance on the Protection of Personal Data of Persons of Concern to UNHCR," 2018.
[194] UNHCR, "Emergency Handbook: Age, Gender, Diversity (AGD)," 2022.
[195] UNHCR, "Emergency Handbook: Guidance on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)," n.d.
[196] Drawing on good practices, and recognizing the importance of national leadership, national arrangements may be established by concerned host countries to coordinate and facilitate the efforts of all relevant stakeholders working to achieve a comprehensive response. The composition and working methods of national arrangements would be determined by host States, as would the need for capacity development for relevant national authorities to undertake such work.
[197] Shelter/NFI Cluster, "Shelter/NFI Cluster Strategy: Burkina Faso," 2020.

221. **The most comprehensive account of technical/strategic support from UNHCR to local institutions came from Niger, because of UNHCR's settlement approaches**. Local institutions acknowledged the financial and logistical support received from UNHCR. The municipality allocates a plot of land to UNHCR, which UNHCR then divides up, plans the site (i.e. where to locate services, shelters, roads, etc.) and hands back a certain percentage of it to the municipality (between 40 and 50 per cent depending on the municipality). The municipality can then sell the land, hence generating income, in the knowledge of the added benefit of services and infrastructure that will be provided by UNHCR, which is an incentive for buyers. Furthermore, the infrastructure that UNHCR set up as part of the settlement approach benefits all those who live there, whether they live on plots they bought from the municipality or on plots allocated to them by UNHCR. This therefore directly contributes to strengthening the municipality's capacity to provide basic services and infrastructure.

222. In the other countries, local institutions' representatives provided diverse accounts of support received by UNHCR (e.g. providing soap during COVID-19 in the Central African Republic, office equipment in Mali, supporting refugee registration in Nigeria or providing training on human resource management in the Central African Republic). These were mostly related to material donations that have little to do with shelter or settlement. **There was no account of technical support provided by UNHCR on HLP-related topics, on construction techniques or site planning.** As a result, beyond the example of Niger described above, **no local institution representatives attributed many of their successes in the field of shelter or settlement to the support they received from UNHCR**.

223. **UNHCR is acknowledged as an important partner by the local authority representatives** with whom they work in a close relationship. All interviewed local institution representatives (in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Niger and Nigeria) expressed a **high level of satisfaction with the information received from UNHCR on its activities**. Local authority representatives praised UNHCR's transparency and participatory approach.

6.2 Alignment with governmental development plans

224. UNHCR's regional strategic priorities document specifically acknowledges the extent to which shifting to multi-year planning is a way to "allow operations to align their planning cycles with national development plans and priorities, as well as with UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and Humanitarian or Refugee Response Planning, all of which are on multi-year cycles".[198]

- In Niger, UNHCR's shelter strategy makes direct reference to the Government of Niger's commitments during the 2019 World Refugee Forum. The UNHCR shelter strategy in Niger explicitly acknowledges that UNHCR has aligned its planning with the national development plan and commitments.[199]
- In Nigeria, UNHCR's strategy outline highlights the need for refugee settlement interventions to align with local development plans. On the other side, key informants acknowledged that the

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[198] UNHCR, "West and Central Africa Regional Strategic Piroities (2020 - 2021)."
[199] UNHCR, "Niger Stratégie de Réponse Abris et Établissement 2020-2021."

governmental development plan for Borno State was set and designed with the support of UNHCR.

225. **Government representatives expressed satisfaction where UNHCR implements a settlement approach and with the extent to which it contributes to their own development plan and improves access to infrastructure and services overall.** Government representatives also shared qualitative accounts on the extent to which UNHCR shelter and settlement interventions have trickled down effects on further funding.

- In Cameroon, the government benefited from World Bank funding to further develop infrastructure, shelter and settlement. UNHCR's intervention, as per the local institution representative's account, was pivotal in obtaining this funding.

- In Niger, local institution representatives shared the extent to which local committees are important in awareness-raising about the different land-related rules and legislation. They highlighted the importance of UNHCR training for committee members to ensure they were able to fulfil their duties.

- In Mali, authorities in Gao, including the governor and its technical services such as the Regional Directorates of Urban Planning and Housing, Civil Protection, Social Development and Solidarity Economy, had collaborated altogether with UNHCR and other humanitarian and development counterparts in a pilot project named "Naata" (City of Hope). They worked on the design and implementation of social housing made of hydraform blocks and settlements incorporating social services. The project's objective was to increase hosting capacity to receive forcibly displaced persons as an alternative to protracted displacement. The project is embedded within the local development plan and aligns with the urbanization framework.

226. Overall, the evaluation found that **local institution representatives are regularly invited to, and participate in, shelter cluster meetings, which provides a more locally grounded coordination system and paves the way for more sustainable and locally owned solutions.** In the Central African Republic, in Chad (with the *Commission Nationale pour l'Accueil des Réfugiés et des Rapatriés*) and in Niger (with the *Ministère des Affaires Humanitaires*), local institutions co-lead the shelter cluster and hence, are very actively involved in the coordination of shelter interventions. In Burkina Faso, CONASUR co-chairs the CCCM cluster, but since the 2021 coup, it does not participate in the shelter cluster. In Mali, government representatives, especially from the National Directorate of Social Development, regularly participate in the shelter cluster at national level. Regional Directorates of Civil Protection (in Mopti) and Social Development and Solidarity Economy (in Gao, Timbuktu and Taoudeni) lead the shelter cluster at regional level. As per key informant accounts, participation is more limited in Cameroon because of the sensitivity of the situation in the north-west and the south-west.

6.3 Coherence and complementarity of action

227. Most survey respondents agreed with the statements that UNHCR has forged strategic partnerships with relevant actors, that there is good coordination and synergies with the actions of other actors, and that shelter clusters (chaired or co-chaired by UNHCR) are effective at coordinating the humanitarian response in the region and making the linkage with developmental approaches or actors. Key informants outside of UNHCR, in Cameroon and Mali, acknowledged the efforts made by UNHCR and the resources allocated to its cluster lead role.

Figure 16 UNHCR has forged strategic partnerships
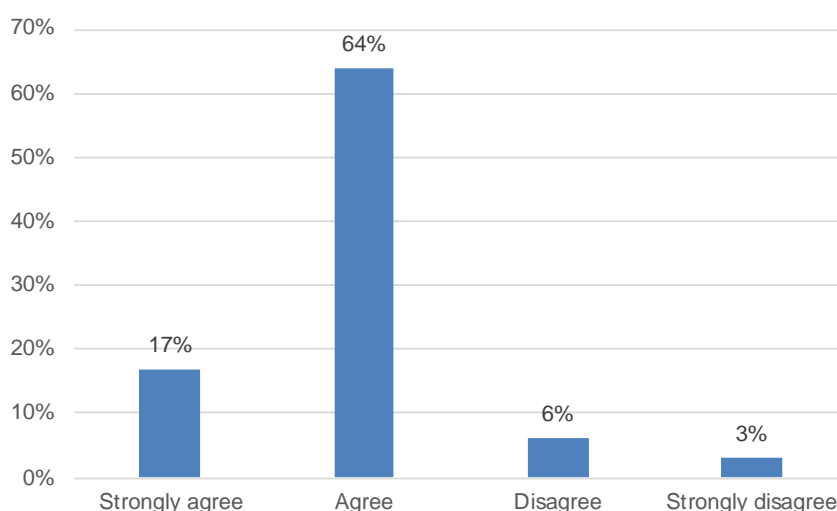
228.   The assessment of effectiveness of UNHCR-chaired clusters or sectoral working groups differs greatly from country to country in the region.

- Nigeria was marked by a higher level of doubt on the effectiveness of the IDP sector coordination and the extent to which UNHCR forged strategic partnerships, both in the survey and as per key informants (internal and external). The perceived limited effectiveness was mainly attributed to the shortage of UNHCR technical shelter staff, which has reduced UNHCR's potential to contribute to the sector meaningfully.

- In Mali, key informants noted challenges in the lack of harmonization of shelter kits, with each organization having its own demands and no consensus among partners, resulting in tensions between different recipient communities in the field.

Some of the reasons given for suggesting that the coordination was not fully effective, included reasons that may be beyond the coordinators' own control. One of the most common criticisms was the lack of participation in coordination meetings by some actors, with the Red Cross movement and local authorities being listed as two primary examples.

229.   Key informants were more likely to list issues related to 3Ws/4Ws as being the grounds for which they considered the coordination as effective. Only two key informants mentioned providing or developing technical resources or training. Only one key informant in the Central African Republic mentioned the presence of technical working groups, and only one of the key informants in Niger mentioned the presence of a cluster strategic advisory group.[200] **No key informant mentioned the possibility of the cluster representing the voice of the Shelter sector in dialogue with inter-cluster coordination**, or bilaterally with other clusters.

230.   Cluster meetings were more likely to be held regularly, and in short cycles (weekly or fortnightly) at the field level. However, in the Central African Republic, the shorter cycles were due to the fact that the field-level coordination meetings were for "mixed" clusters (shelter and CCCM) and were

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[200] The strategic advisory group is a group of agencies participating in the shelter cluster that works to advance the cluster strategic direction, overall priorities and advocacy, in support of country-level shelter coordination. Such group exists within the global shelter cluster as well as in some of the country-level cluster. Global level advisory group ToR are available here: https://sheltercluster.org/global-strategic-advisory-group/documents/tor-gsc-sag

led by CCCM staff rather than shelter staff. This then meant that those coordination meetings were not able to guarantee any shelter expertise support for the participants.

231. Shelter is coordinated in "mixed" clusters (various combinations of shelter, NFIs and CCCM) in all seven countries.[201] **This mixed-cluster approach was seen as facilitating intersectoral coordination,** and there was no criticism of the coordination with the thematic clusters that were grouped under the same cluster umbrella, in the countries concerned. In the Central African Republic and Cameroon, there are also multisectoral coordination groups that contribute to the integration of solutions.

- In the Central African Republic, the Durable Solutions Working Group is intended to be fully multisectoral. It was generally seen as a positive development, although in some cases, key informants saw the Working Group as needing a greater presence in the field, as well as at the national level.

- In Cameroon, the Nexus Task Force, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator in the *Zone de convergence* and the *Comité de Coordination multisectoriel*, under the mayor's leadership, are both primarily area-based coordination groups.

Such area-based approaches to coordination were seen to contribute to the effectiveness of the settlement interventions and the integration of solutions.

232. **Integration of solutions is especially key when it comes to settlement approaches, something clearly articulated in UNHCR's Emergency Handbook.**[202] **In practice, this is not yet systematized**. UNHCR anecdotally coordinated and worked together with complementary sectors, including water and sanitation and to a lesser extent livelihoods, to ensure solutions were integrated. The evaluation found no evidence that the type of setting (refugee, IDP, mixed) that, in theory, influences UNHCR's responsibilities to coordinate with others, had an influence on the systematization of coordination.

- In Chad, the shelter cluster collaborated with the WASH cluster and the protection cluster as well as the livelihoods cluster, particularly at the settlements level.

- In Niger, in order to compensate for limited funding for settlements in Tillaberi, UNHCR reached out to the Spanish Red Cross so that they would construct gender-segregated latrines in the settlement.

233. In theory, the distinct coordination roles of UNHCR in refugee-only and IDP/mixed settings,[203] could have an influence on UNHCR's capacity to coordinate and work together with complementary sectors. In refugee-only settings or in mixed settings where IDPs and refugees live in different geographical areas (e.g. in the Central African Republic or Nigeria), UNHCR leads the overall response and therefore coordinates and is ultimately responsible for the provision of protection, shelter, WASH and livelihoods assistance to refugees. This, in theory, could encourage further multisectoral interventions such as settlement interventions. However, the evaluation team found **no correlation between the type of settings and UNHCR capacity to coordinate and work together with complementary sectors**.

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[201] The Clusters are: Burkina Faso – Shelter/NFI; Cameroon – Shelter; CAR – CCCM/Shelter/NFI; Chad – Shelter/NFI/CCCM; Mali – Shelter/NFI; Niger – Shelter; Nigeria – Shelter/NFI/CCCM.
[202] UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies," 2007.
[203] UNHCR Updated guidance on Refugee Coordination, 2016 and Joint UNHCR – OCHA Note on Mixed Situation, 2014.

234. However, the dual role of UNHCR as the shelter cluster lead and as managing shelter and settlement interventions meant that there was some **confusion between what respectively falls under UNHCR's external coordination role and the management of UNHCR's own shelter and settlement interventions.**

- In the Central African Republic, the lack of water in the site was one of the key reasons for PoCs (refugee returnees) not relocating to live in this site. This lack of coordination with WASH actors at the micro, single-site level was seen as an operational scheduling-of-works problem, rather than something that cluster coordination staff would typically be involved in. However, the problems caused by such situations are probably felt most acutely by the PoCs involved.

7. Good practices and lessons

235. This section highlights a non-exhaustive list of good practices and lessons to take into consideration, which emerged during the evaluation.

Good practices
1. When interventions were designed and implemented with a **social cohesion lens**, they contributed to broader and more sustainable results, often linking shelter interventions to economic livelihoods opportunities for both PoCs and host communities (e.g. the brick-making production in Niger that saw refugees working alongside host community members and involved refugee women). This further underlines the importance of a multisectoral approach and, arguably, area-based approaches where appropriate.
2. **Area-based and multisectoral coordination** has shown much potential as a way forward to implement more effective and coherent interventions, with positive examples of sharing the co-chairing of coordination forums with actors who do not normally engage in shelter programming. For example, in the Central African Republic and Cameroon, multisectoral coordination groups were seen to contribute to the effectiveness of the settlement interventions and the integration of solutions.
3. Shelter designs that made use of **locally sourced materials** and local building techniques were better adapted to the context (e.g. shelters in Niger that were constructed entirely in raw clay, a locally available material that offers good thermal comfort and is easy to maintain).
4. UNHCR is **well regarded by government stakeholders and local institutions**, something that has been achieved through strategic partnerships with government agencies to implement shelter solutions and by aligning UNHCR's strategic approaches with government ministries according to their mandate. The positive attitudes of the local government representatives themselves are unsurprisingly beneficial and enable UNHCR to better respond to shelter and settlement needs (e.g. negotiating access to land for shelter construction).
5. As a result of its **strategic partnerships with government ministries**, UNHCR is privy to negotiating access to land for shelter construction, in some instances on behalf of the shelter sector/cluster. For example, in Nigeria, UNHCR successfully negotiated with government

entities, on behalf of the shelter sector, for access to land for the construction of shelters as part of the sector's IDP response.
6. The integration of **HLP considerations** into shelter and settlement programming is critical to reduce the issues around security of property/land tenure, ranging from increased risk of forced evictions for individual households, to lack of stability and threats of forced closure for entire sites.
7. UNHCR will be better able to create shelter and settlement interventions that address the needs and experiences of PoCs if they see shelter and settlements as having a specific set of **outputs and outcomes at the individual, household and community levels**. Shelter and settlement interventions contribute to outputs (e.g. provision of a shelter) and outcomes (e.g. feelings of safety) at the individual and household levels. However, they also surpass these outputs and outcomes at the individual and household levels by reaching outcomes at the communal level (e.g. a sense of social cohesion). Summing up all outputs and outcomes at the individual or household levels may not always represent the outcomes at the community level. Rather, the latter are a group of outcomes unto themselves. In general, shelter and settlement interventions in WCA miss out on a wide range of outcomes at the individual, household and community levels because they narrowly focus on individual and household level outputs as a measure of success.
8. Formalizing the extent to which shelter outcomes contribute to protection has been valuable to frame shelter and settlement intervention successes in a way that feeds into **UNHCR's protection mandate**. It was also valuable in providing a framework for conducting and giving direction to the field-level and remote key informant discussions. The very high level of agreement of UNHCR staff with the ToC highlights the breadth of the shelter and settlement-related outcomes, which should be captured by the RBM as core indicators, and subsequently by field teams working to achieve and monitor against these indicators.
9. UNHCR's ability to offer technical assistance, maintenance and renovation of existing shelters is negatively impacted by **limited staff capacity** that falls short of the programming ambition and portfolio of shelter and settlement-related responsibilities. UNHCR's ability to coordinate and build effective partnerships also suffers from a shortage of staffing capacity.
10. Shelter and settlement interventions are viewed as compartmentalized outputs that are monitored on the basis of an annual calendar, rather than as a **continuum of support transitioning from emergency to long-term solutions**. As a result, shelter and settlement operations risk becoming mired in endless rounds of emergency response (e.g. providing emergency shelters and maintaining them or offering new emergency shelters the following year due to wear and tear).

8. Conclusions

236.   This section summarizes the evaluation's findings thematically across the four areas of inquiry, namely relevance and appropriateness, effectiveness and coherence, efficiency, and coordination.

237.   **Conclusion 1: Shelter and settlement interventions are a key defining characteristic of UNHCR's work. Externally, UNHCR is widely recognized as a key shelter and settlement agency, but this key attribute is not always given the proper attention it needs internally by UNHCR itself, irrespective of the scale of its responsibilities and ambitions.**

238.   UNHCR is acknowledged as a key shelter and settlement actor by all local institutions and government representatives, who also expressed high satisfaction with the level of information they receive from UNHCR shelter and settlement teams.

239.   UNHCR's technical probity in the area of shelter and settlement is also widely acknowledged. Shelter and settlement guidance documents produced by UNHCR are used in the design and implementation of shelter and settlement interventions by UNHCR, its implementing partners and other shelter and settlement stakeholders across the region. This illustrates the technical reliability of these documents and wide recognition of UNHCR's technical expertise in these domains.

240.   Nevertheless, and despite strong individual commitment from UNHCR shelter staff, UNHCR shelter teams are not sufficiently resourced. This stands true vis-à-vis the scale and ambitions of UNHCR's current shelter and settlement interventions and even more so against UNHCR's future ambitions to expand its operational footprint, particularly in a region where IDPs predominate. In several countries, shelter staff are double hatting, providing both technical guidance to UNHCR's internal shelter programming and cluster coordination functions. Cluster coordinators and technical staff have therefore had their time and resources overstretched even further. This situation risks placing the affected staff in situations of conflict of interest, which is contrary to IASC cluster principles.

241.   **Conclusion 2: The boundaries of UNHCR's role as an operational agency and a cluster lead agency need clarification in IDP-only and mixed settings.**

242.   Irrespective of the context (refugee, IDP or mixed), UNHCR, whether because of its refugee mandate and/or its IASC cluster (co-)lead responsibilities, is effectively the provider of last resort for shelter and settlement solutions (whether de facto or de jure, respectively). This role further reinforces the importance of shelter and settlement for UNHCR at an organizational level. Moreover, in all evaluated countries, UNHCR has been the largest shelter and settlement provider over the period from 2017 to 2021, thereby placing UNHCR in a key position within the shelter and settlement sector.

243.   UNHCR has a rather limited way to operationalize the definition of what a shelter is that does not expand beyond an object composed of a "roof and walls" (i.e. without cooking space or WASH infrastructure). While in itself debatable, this definition does allow for a clear understanding, internally and externally, of what being the provider of last resort for shelter means. However, there are no commonly agreed boundaries as to what settlement means; hence it remains unclear, for UNHCR and others, as to what being the last provider of resort for settlement entails. This is

especially the case in IDP and mixed setting contexts, which are the majority in WCA, where UNHCR's role as the last resort provider entails advocating with other sectors and clusters for complementary service provision. This has hampered UNHCR's shelter and settlement team partnership approach, both internally, as part of a multifunctional team and externally as part of inter-cluster coordination.

244. **Conclusion 3: UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions directly contribute to its protection mandate, but there are missed opportunities for closer collaboration between the shelter and protection teams across the project cycle.**

245. Individual shelters contribute to PoCs' improved safety and well-being, and though not yet formalized, shelter and protection staff revealed high adherence to the theory of change developed, as part of this evaluation, on how UNHCR shelter and settlement contribute to protection. At the community level, shelter and settlement interventions contribute to building resilience, as the construction process contributes to the livelihoods of members of both displaced and host populations and paves the way for durable solutions. UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions have created a breadth of positive unintended outcomes. Access to basic services have improved, shelter construction has provided gender transformative livelihood opportunities and settlement approaches, when mutually benefiting PoCs and the host communities, have tended to improve social cohesion. As an illustration, brick-making production in Niger saw refugees working alongside host community members and involved refugee women.

246. Collaboration between protection and shelter teams is especially relevant for mainstreaming protection across shelter and settlement design: targeting, incorporating PoC feedback into shelter and settlement interventions, HLP support and other protection-related referrals where appropriate. This collaboration is, however, only partial and not systematic or consistent across countries and multifunctional teams.

247. Working as a multifunctional team contributed to UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions to deliver on its outcomes. Yet, without clear governance or a clear division of roles within these multifunctional teams, the added value of this approach did not always materialize in the integration of services available to IDPs or refugees in their camp or settlement. UNHCR's protection team, considering its centrality with regards to the agency's mandate, is not yet positioned as central to the multifunctional team.

248. **Conclusion 4: UNHCR, as a lead protection agency, has paid limited attention to HLP as a key element of shelter and settlement interventions.**

249. Compared with other areas of protection, HLP has been given limited visibility within the protection team, despite the importance and financial volume of shelter and settlement in the evaluated countries. This has led to unclear communication regarding a rights-based approach to land with local authorities and also limited the involvement of UNHCR in land rights reforms during the period from 2017 to 2021, including in contexts with limited HLP capacity among other organizations.

250. Limited HLP involvement by UNHCR has circumscribed PoCs' access to support for their HLP-related rights, limited their sense of ownership and increased their exposure to greater (real or

perceived) risks of forced eviction and loss of shelter. This in turn, has ultimately affected UNHCR's capacity to support solutions.

251. **Conclusion 5: UNHCR has forged external partnerships to better integrate solutions, yet these are mostly ad hoc and not yet sufficiently strategic, particularly when taking into consideration UNHCR's commitment to localization.**

252. UNHCR has coordinated with complementary clusters, such as WASH, to ensure dignity, public health and the integration of a solutions-oriented approach, but this practice is not yet systematized within or across countries, irrespective of the setting (refugee, mixed, IDP). The evaluation found scope for integrated solutions, such as coupling income generating activities with shelter/settlement activities, and the Cameroon CBI study notes the feasibility of including PoCs in the construction of their shelter – with some potential training.

253. The dual role of UNHCR as the shelter cluster lead and as managing/implementing shelter and settlement interventions, has also resulted in confusion between what respectively falls under coordination and operations. This has led to miscommunication or lack of communication with partners about UNHCR's roles, which in turn, has limited the effectiveness of shelter coordination and of UNHCR's partnerships.

254. UNHCR has worked in close collaboration with local institutions, especially as part of its settlement interventions. To date, and as a result of limited human resources, this collaboration has not translated into technical or strategic support from UNHCR. This has been a missed opportunity to strengthen the quality of shelter and settlement interventions delivered or overseen by these institutions.

255. **Conclusion 6: Shelter and settlement interventions are of primary importance for crisis-affected households in WCA. Resources available to UNHCR and shelter actors overall will always fall short of meeting the breadth of the needs, and more locally sourced sustainable initiatives would contribute to maximizing the value of existing interventions.**

256. Shelter, along with food security and health, are ranked as the most urgent needs by PoCs, thus highlighting the continued relevance of UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions and strategic cluster leadership role in IDP/mixed settings. Furthermore, the local sourcing of quality materials for semi-durable shelters has contributed to the effectiveness of UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions across the region. Relevant and local sourcing contribute to the value for money of shelter and settlement interventions, but this value is not yet measured by UNHCR. UNHCR lacks data to demonstrate the value for money of its interventions, hampering its capacity to make the case for more durable shelter and settlement solutions to others.

257. In contexts where shelter and settlement interventions cover less than 10 per cent of the needs, as was the case in some countries during the evaluated period, UNHCR shelter and settlement interventions are yet to be approached as a continuum rather than a sum of independent distribution activities. Such adaptation would boost the effectiveness and sustainability of UNHCR interventions.

258. **Conclusion 7: Crises in the region are mainly protracted and displacements long-term. UNHCR does not yet sufficiently facilitate the (almost inevitable) changes that PoCs are likely to make to their shelter and settlements.**

259. There is limited attention given to what will happen to a settlement over time as PoCs add more structures (e.g. shops, markets) or as pathways erode as a result of time and/or natural hazards. UNHCR constructs planned camps on cleared grounds, where there are no pre-existing buildings, but does not yet have a strategy for re-intervening or re-inserting infrastructure or basic service facilities into already-existing planned camps or into already-existing informal/spontaneous/self-settled sites. Sites are likely to become more overcrowded, more densely encroached upon by additional shelters or other structures, less healthy and more dangerous the longer they are in existence.

260. **Conclusion 8: UNHCR shelter and settlement interventions are, to date, fit for their context but lack agility and cash readiness going forward, especially to adapt to more urban non-camp settings that are on the rise in the region.**

261. Overall, the various shelter interventions implemented by UNHCR and partners, with the predominance of emergency shelter kits, have a "good-enough" correspondence to their context, except for the RHUs, which are ill-suited to withstand the extreme heat of the Sahel. As more and more crisis-affected households live in urban settings, designing and implementing interventions suitable to non-camp, non-rural settings will be a key challenge lying ahead for UNHCR. This challenge spans across UNHCR's programme design, the agility of its interventions and the composition of its teams to date, which have limited site planning and urban planning skill sets. Interventions in urban settings are more complex, irrespective of the organization and the sector. As the organization spearheading shelter and settlement, UNHCR needs to position itself as an urban pioneer.

262. The use of CBI to meet shelter outcomes is still nascent in the region. Despite strong organizational commitment to using "cash first", UNHCR shelter and settlement teams in WCA are not fully cash ready. This de facto reduces the breadth or combinations of modalities to which UNHCR can revert in order to deliver on shelter outcomes which, in turn, may limit the reach and relevance of its interventions.

263. **Conclusion 9: UNHCR settlements have achieved more than the sum of their parts, but this is not yet captured by UNHCR's monitoring system.**

264. Despite its recognized importance, the access and use of reliable data to inform shelter and settlement interventions were a challenge over the period from 2017 to 2021. Overall, the data collected under shelter and settlement interventions were focused on household level outputs, therefore missing the overall outcomes of the interventions at the individual, the household and the community levels. This, in turn, limits the evidence basis that UNHCR can use to make the case for further large-scale durable settlement interventions with shelter stakeholders and donors.

265. The processes to collect data were not sufficiently rigorous or reliable, with limited use of participatory techniques to reinforce these. The introduction of COMPASS, a new outcome-oriented

RBM system, in 2021, represents a valid global standardization effort, the effects of which are yet to be seen.

266.   To date, vulnerability analysis remains mostly at the household level, to the detriment of the analysis of vulnerabilities at the settlement level, including, for instance, any analysis of how a settlement's layout may increase the risk of GBV in certain parts of a site.

267.   **Conclusion 10: UNHCR staff are fully abreast of the organizational AGD approach. Yet, the approach does not fully translate into the design and monitoring of shelter and settlement interventions.**

268.   UNHCR's AGD approach is largely incorporated into the agency's shelter and settlement implementation, yet monitoring activities do not sufficiently incorporate AGD vocabulary and AGD disaggregated analysis to understand what works for different groups and encourage reflection on what could work better. The AGD approach informs vulnerability criteria but less so shelter design and the typology of the shelters to be provided, resulting in shelters that are poorly equipped to optimize protection outcomes and support the needs of persons with specific needs.

269.   Furthermore, low maintenance of emergency shelters and sparse technical support on construction and maintenance methods, have restricted the sustainability, effectiveness and ability of UNHCR to mainstream protection into the design and implementation of these interventions.

9. Recommendations

270.   The following section includes actionable recommendations that were developed in collaboration with UNHCR country-level stakeholders, UNHCR regional-level stakeholders and the ERG.

#	Recommendations	Corresponding conclusions	Responsible person	Anticipated timeframe
1	**Recommendation: Strengthen the formal and informal interactions between protection and shelter/settlement teams, internally and externally, to better contribute to protection outcomes (in refugee, mixed and IDP-only settings) and within this, the role of HLP.**	CCL3, CCL4		
	Sub-recommendation 1.1: Recognize and strengthen the role of HLP as a key component of shelter and settlement interventions, and vice versa, as a key element of protection, either directly or through partnerships with others. HLP rights are not sufficiently integrated as a core component of shelter, settlement and protection interventions. The absence of HLP in shelter and settlement interventions is two-fold. Staff do not have sufficient HLP technical knowledge, and consequently, there is limited recognition of HLP standards as a core component of shelter and settlement. Within each country operation, there should be an identified HLP focal point within the UNHCR protection team who is responsible for reinforcing the role of HLP and the intersection between HLP and shelter, both internally and through partnerships with other organizations (e.g. NRC or UN-Habitat) well placed to do this. The HLP focal point should be involved in programme design to strengthen security of tenure and where appropriate, in policy reforms related to land rights. The global Area of Responsibility (AOR) should advocate for, and support the development of, HLP capacity within shelter, settlement and protection interventions, and conduct direct advocacy towards donors on HLP-related costs.		RBWCA and CO protection teams	Q1 2023

		Regional and CO SMT teams	Q1 2023
Sub-recommendation 1.2: Create and/or reinforce purposive platforms for regular and substantive exchanges between shelter and protection teams throughout the project cycle. Shelter and protection teams have, to date, had limited interaction, which is detrimental to the quality of shelter and settlement interventions as well as to attracting the attention that these interventions deserve within UNHCR. UNHCR should therefore make a dedicated effort to set up platforms to foster such interaction. Platforms could be internal, as part of the multifunctional team architecture or external as part of the inter-cluster mechanism. The process of co-creating and formalizing the above-mentioned theory of change might also be a means to dynamize the way shelter and protection colleagues work together to improve the lives and well-being of PoCs, in line with UNHCR's mandate and strategic priorities.			
Sub-recommendation 1.3: Formalize UNHCR's theory of change on how shelter and settlement interventions contribute to its protection mandate. The extent to which shelter and settlement contribute to UNHCR's protection mandate is not yet formalized or even conceptualized as such within UNHCR. This is detrimental to making the case for the importance of shelter and settlement at household, but also institutional levels, within the agency. Such a theory of change could also support the articulation between settlement and durable solutions, hence becoming a strong advocacy and fundraising tool. Using the evaluation ToC as a starting point, the RBWCA should facilitate a theory of change co-construction workshop with key regional and country-level stakeholders (including shelter and protection stakeholders), to form the basis of strategic and subsequent operational approaches. Country operations could tailor the regional ToC to their context, if necessary. Formalization of the ToC should include an analysis of external partnerships and their roles and responsibilities (actual/needed) in delivering on shelter and settlement outcomes as well as related protection and solutions outcomes.		RBWCA Shelter, Protection and DIMA teams	Dec 2022

	The regional and country-specific ToC should clearly correspond to the output and outcome indicators measured in the result framework and should align with COMPASS, since there is also scope for country-specific indicators.			
2	**Recommendation: Recognize the importance of shelter and settlement to UNHCR in the region and better contextualize shelter and settlement interventions within a multisectoral response, taking into better consideration GCR and nexus principles, both internally and externally. This will require reconsidering the "common" definition of "shelter" as an object only.**	CCL2, CCL3		
	Sub-recommendation 2.1: Clarify and raise awareness internally and externally on UNHCR's mandate and responsibilities vis-à-vis shelter and settlement across settings UNHCR needs to clarify and sensitize staff internally regarding UNHCR's mandate and responsibilities as: (1) an operational response actor; (2) a tri-cluster lead agency in IDP and mixed settings. While doing so, shelter and settlement should be recognized as of primary importance for UNHCR strategically. Given the intrinsic links between shelter, settlement and other areas such as WASH, livelihoods, education and protection, review and clarify the role of shelter technical persons and MFT members (where present) in working and coordinating with others. This should include both internal coordination as well as external coordination through the inter-cluster mechanism in IDP and mixed settings.		Regional and CO SMT and shelter teams	Q2 2023
	Sub-recommendation 2.2: Acknowledge the multisectoral nature of settlement and reconsider the definition of shelter UNHCR uses a rather limiting definition of what a shelter is and mostly considers it as an object rather than a process. This has implications for the planning and implementation of shelter and settlement interventions, which usually see limited involvement of the WASH, health or livelihood teams. This stands true irrespective of the nature of the setting while acknowledging that in a refugee setting,		HQ and regional shelter teams	Q1 2023

	UNHCR is more likely to have the in-house capacity to provide multisectoral interventions and collaborate with others.

UNHCR should reconsider how it uses the definition of a shelter to acknowledge that a shelter is only complete when it also comprises related key utilities and facilities (e.g. kitchen, WASH). If UNHCR is not in a position to fund the full scope of shelter, it still has, as the provider of last resort, an obligation to engage other sectors/clusters/actors (including for example, the technical departments of the responsible authorities) to add these elements to the housing/settlement. This requires proactive and collective planning before housing projects are conceived, in order to deliver a complete package to targeted PoCs.

Emerging initiatives around area-based coordination (e.g. Nexus Working Group) are also good opportunities to explore how each organization can best contribute, based on its expertise. | | | |
| | **Sub-recommendation 2.3: Clarify and strengthen the governance of the multifunctional teams**

The MFT does not have a designated lead, which reduces the systematic formalization of the MFT structure across operational areas and direction. The protection team, considering its central and cross-cutting roles, seems to be well positioned to lead this kind of MFT.

The MFT should be leveraged to plan collaborative area-based responses, and to collectively secure internal project funding.

The MFT also requires a ToR with clarity on the roles and responsibilities of members that cut across different settings (refugee, IDP, mixed). | | RBWCA SMT | Q2 2023 |
| 3 | **Recommendation 3: Improve situation analysis and subsequent response design. UNHCR should incrementally shift towards a better-balanced level of investment between emergency and protracted crisis response, taking into consideration temporal (emergency and perspectives of protractedness), social (people's needs and customs) and physical (structural, tenure) needs. UNHCR should scale up CBI for shelter and settlement purposes where appropriate.** | CCL6, 7, 8 | | |

Sub-recommendation 3.1: Further contextualize technical standards and shelter design Definitions of "adequate housing", while well captured in the Global Shelter Strategy and various international standards, are not sufficiently nuanced for each operational setting. UNHCR WCA should encourage an internal discussion about the definition of adequate housing in each context. This discussion should primarily take place with the protection team, which has a wealth of knowledge and insight on PoC experiences. Contextually nuanced definitions for adequate shelter will have implications for shelter design and supply chains (e.g. globally supplied RHU are not suitable to the heat in the Sahel context, whereas locally sourced mud brick shelters provide more thermal comfort at a lower price).		CO Shelter teams	Q12023
Sub-recommendation 3.2: Make the case for durable shelter responses in contexts of protracted displacement The evaluation evidenced the limited value for money of emergency shelters in contexts of protracted displacement. UNHCR WCA's future shelter strategy should incorporate assumptions based on the "length of displacement", recognizing that in situations where prolonged displacement can be assumed, the shelter and settlement operation should be designed accordingly (i.e. selecting modalities that offer the best value for money over time rather than immediately). In collaboration with protection colleagues working on community engagement and accountability, develop SOPs to support households (and communities) in the ownership and appropriation of shelters (and settlements) to ensure they are able to better manage the maintenance and to support referrals for households requiring livelihood and economic inclusion support to do this. To better make the case for durable solutions, UNHCR should intentionally and explicitly document the value for money of shelter responses, and in doing so, strengthen its data collection process. Specific studies and monitoring efforts could focus on the cost per lifetime of a shelter, on shelter investments that remain in the implementation area and on the positive spillover effect on the local economies. Similarly, more focus could be placed on the possibilities of technology transfer and of supporting local		CO Shelter and M&E teams	Q3 2023

	entrepreneurship, for example with hydraform machines. This could first be documented through small-scale initiatives linking shelter and livelihoods opportunities.			
	Sub recommendation 3.3: Integrate cash-based interventions as a regular tool to deliver shelter and settlement interventions The use of CBI to meet shelter outcomes is nascent in WCA, which is a possible limiting factor to the appropriateness of shelter and settlement interventions and access to certain volatile geographical areas. Building on UNHCR's strong institutional capacity to deliver CBI at scale, the shelter team should further explore the use of CBI as a regular modality or combination of modalities to deliver its programme. Specific recommendations for Cameroon CO to become cash ready are included in the Annex. COs should seek to undertake such similar feasibility studies.		CO Shelter and CBI teams	Q12023
4	**Recommendation: Strengthen fit-for-the-future Emergency Preparedness and Response shelter and settlement-specific capacities, including for urban settings**	CCL7, CCL8		
	Sub-recommendation 4.1: Within existing multi-year strategic planning processes, develop scenario-planning and a larger range of interventions as per the setting The years to come are likely to see more urban responses[204] outside of any camps or delimited settlements. In non-camp urban settings, shelter and settlement interventions are very different from those implemented in rural settings and/or camp settings. While the evaluation overall, found a good enough adaptation of shelters to their settings, the same cannot yet be said about settlement. UNHCR needs to strengthen and develop the intervention options and modalities for settlements. While non-exhaustive, ways to contribute to this could include scenario-planning exercises and exploring further the possibility of using CBI (as highlighted in recommendation 3) and revisiting the definition of shelter and settlement (as discussed in recommendation 2). In protracted crises, shelter		Shelter and CBI teams	Q12023

[204] See for example: World Bank Group. 2018. The Challenges Urbanization in West Africa. AFCW3 Economic Update;. World Bank, Washington, DC.

	and settlements are best approached as a process and not as an activity (such as distributing a kit for example). This would also contribute to addressing the identified gap between emergency shelters and durable shelter solutions.			
	Sub-recommendation 4.2: Strengthen the agility of the supply chain Supply pipelines of shelter material need to be agile so as to be able to source local materials. Further, the supply of shelter materials should encompass environmental considerations as a deliberate institutionalized practice as opposed to anecdotal good practices driven by individuals.		Supply teams	Q2 2023
5	**Recommendation: Better measure the success and concerns of shelter and settlement interventions to inform programming as well as advocate for more durable and integrated solutions**	CCL9, CCL10		
	Sub-recommendation 5.1: Measure the success and challenges of shelter and settlement interventions both at individual and community levels Monitoring indicators are measured at household level, which assumes that the household experience is representative of its individual members and that the community experience is the sum of its individual households. These assumptions overlook the granularity of individual experiences, which differ significantly along AGD lines, and exclude collective experiences (e.g. the experience of camp or settlement congestion). UNHCR's shelter and settlement monitoring indicators should first be disaggregated by individual AGD, to ensure that the subsequent analysis of monitoring data is sensitive to unique experiences within households. Secondly, UNHCR shelter teams should leverage their MFT to identify community-level indicators to inform an understanding of the macro experience of shelter and settlements.		M&E team	Q12023
	Sub-recommendation 5.2: Strengthen shelter-related data collection, analysis and use		M&E and shelter teams	Q12023

	The contextual definitions of adequate housing should be accompanied by specific result framework indicators. There should be a clear link between contextual definitions of adequate shelter as an outcome and methods to measure indicators that inform these outcomes.			
6	**Recommendation: Review the shelter and settlement staff structures at country office level against UNHCR's ambitions and responsibilities in IDP/mixed contexts specifically**	CCL1		
	Acknowledging the importance of shelter and settlement to UNHCR's responsibilities and roles as well as the agency's IDP footprint ambitions, UNHCR representation at country level should conduct an internal review of their staffing structure and reporting lines. This might usefully be integrated into any wider programme prioritization initiatives, where taking place. The review should serve to identify bottlenecks and gaps in the staffing structure (i.e. activities that do not have an allocated staff member, or areas where staff members are double or triple hatting) while being cognizant of concerns about limited resources. While conducting the review, UNHCR should not only place a specific focus on the number of staff members but also on the sustainability of the positions and drivers of retention. Skill set wise, the review should pay particular attention to site planning, urban planning and HLP, but not to the detriment of others. Partnership brokering is also a skill set that UNHCR should encourage among the shelter and settlement teams as UNHCR is not expected to cover all needs through its own implementation, especially in IDP and mixed settings, although it retains a responsibility to advocate with others so that needs are covered and as the provider of last resort. This review should be done in the light of UNHCR's global and regional shelter-related ambitions and cluster coordination responsibilities. It should take into consideration the settings, the CO wider strategies and plausible future contextual changes.		CO SMT and HR teams	Q12023

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11.　Annexes

Annex 1: Theory of Change

271.　The ToC was developed by the evaluation managers, UNHCR protection and shelter staff at the RBWCA and the evaluation team at inception stage. It aims to demonstrate the extent to which shelter and settlement interventions contribute to UNHCR's broader protection mandate and fit into the area-based multisectoral approach. The ToC identifies intended result chain, key assumptions and the context dimensions underlying the ToC.

IMPACT	Improved safety and well being of POC	Improved social cohesion	Humanitarian assistance is no longer necessary	Increased resilience of the community

OUTCOME	Increased knowledge and skills of POC	Well-managed settlements	Improved resilience and capacity for self-recovery at HH level	Improvement of the security of tenure	Improved health, safety and security	Reduction of promiscuity and congestion in settlements	Successful community involvement throughout the project cycle (e.g. CFM)	Reduction of protection risk and improvement of quality response

OUTPUT	Settlement management by stakeholders	Improved access to basic services	Livelihoods and economic activities	Access to safe, appropriate, accessible and sustainable shelter	Number of shelters provided that are private, adequately sized, secure and safe	Hazard free and safe settlements	HH level HLP right support activities	Advocacy to secure land tenure for a specific group	Access to protection support, GBV, child protection etc.	System of protection information management

INPUT	Technical expertise	Spaces established to allow access to basic services (education, water)	In-kind assistance	CBI assistance	Information management	Context analysis	Technical training	IEC training	Protection referrals

PROCESS
Community engagement and accountability
Protection considerations mainstreamed in shelter activities (AGD etc.)
Complementary activities by shelter related actors
Understanding of shelter and a complementary element of comprehensive interventions
Livelihoods and economic opportunities through modalities (CBI, local labour)
Multi-sectoral coordination
Targeting is community based not household based
Case management
Successful community involvement throughout the project cycle (CFM)

ASSUMPTIONS
ToC is aligned with UNHCR strategy
Shelter and settlement are implemented as part of multi sectoral approach
Population remains in the same locations

PRECONDITIONS
Areas are accessible for shelter and settlement assistance
Community takes ownership of the project

Sub-questions	Indicators/how judgment will be formed	Source of information	Data analysis
RELEVANCE **I. To what extent were UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions relevant and appropriate, considering the different operational contexts and the nature of the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of the different targeted populations?**			
I.1 To what extent did the shelter & settlement interventions consider the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of PoCs?	I.1.a Shelter & settlement interventions correspond to PoCs' collective priority needs as formalized in situation analysis	Desk review: Need assessment (HNO, IP need assessment), UNHCR and IP project documents	Qualitative comparison of secondary data: need assessment and project documents per country
	I.1.b Scale of UNHCR shelter & settlement interventions correspond to the scale of needs	Desk review: Need assessment (HNO, IP need assessment) and UNHCR project documents	Quantitative comparison of secondary date: scale of needs versus scale of UNHCR response per country
	I.1.c Shelter design & implementation methodology[205] account for PoCs' preferred shelter solutions as identified during situation analysis (need assessment)	Desk review: Need assessment (HNO, IP need assessment) and IP project design documents KII with UNHCR, IP shelter staff & shelter cluster FGD (men & women; older & younger)	Qualitative comparison of secondary data: need assessment and project documents Qualitative analysis of KII per type of organizations (UNHCR, IP, Cluster) Qualitative analysis of FGD per country & sex
	I.1.d The design of shelters allowed for modifications by its occupants to suit their specific household needs (e.g. family size, people with disabilities)	Desk review: project documents, monitoring report, BoQ, IEC materials	Technical review of the shelter design and BoQ

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[205] See Norwegian Refugee Council Urban Shelter Guidelines (2011), pages 35-41 for the complete list of 18 categories of shelter assistance methods. "GiZ Project Overview," 2022.

Sub-questions	Indicators/how judgment will be formed	Source of information	Data analysis
		KII with UNHCR and IP shelter staff	Visual account of shelters being modified per country and per setting type (urban/rural)
		FGD (men & women; older & younger)	
		Opportunistic discussions with people with disabilities	Qualitative analysis as to how and why the shelters were modified by their occupants and why, per country, per setting type (urban/rural) and per household-related criteria (family size, disabilities)
		Observations	
	I.1.e Shelter interventions incorporated UNHCR's age, gender and diversity (AGD) approach during the design and implementation phases of the interventions[206]	Desk review: UNHCR AGD documents, need assessment, project documents	Qualitative comparison of secondary data: AGD approach and need assessment/project documents
		KII with UNHCR and IP shelter and protection staff	Qualitative analysis of KII per country
I.2 To what extent were country level and international minimum standards and regulations considered in the design of the shelter & settlements interventions?	I.2.a The design of the shelter and settlement interventions was aligned with national standards and regulations with a specific focus on normative aspects (land regulations and HLP)	Desk review: project documents, monitoring report, BoQ, country HLP regulatory documents	Technical review of the shelter and settlement design and BoQ
		KII with UNHCR, IP shelter staff and local institution representatives	Qualitative analysis of primary and secondary data on standard mainstreaming per country per shelter type

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[206] UNHCR Age, gender and diversity approach, i.e. unaccompanied older persons who might have difficulties constructing their own shelters were considered, people with disabilities received specific attentions and their shelter was adjusted to their specific needs, ethnic minorities in unwelcoming host communities were considered.

Sub-questions	Indicators/how judgment will be formed	Source of information	Data analysis
		FGD (men & women; older & younger)	
	I.2.b The design of the shelter and settlement interventions was aligned with international minimum standards[207] with a specific focus on privacy and dignity as well as climate, topography, hazards and environmental risks[208]	Desk review: project documents, monitoring report, BoQ, Sphere standards, UNHCR Global strategy for settlement and UNHCR shelter strategy 2014–2018 KII with UNHCR and IP shelter staff, and with protection staff	Technical review of the shelter and settlement design and BoQ Qualitative analysis of primary and secondary data on standard mainstreaming per country per shelter type
I.3 To what extent were contextual factors considered in the design of the shelter & settlements interventions?	I.3.a Shelter & settlement interventions correspond to the settings they are implemented in: rural versus urban, planned versus unplanned settlements, permitted versus unpermitted	Desk review: project documents, contextual documents KII with UNHCR and IP UNHCR shelter staff, shelter cluster members and local institutions representatives Observations/site visits	Technical review of the shelter and settlement design and BoQ Qualitative analysis of primary and secondary data on per settings type
I.4 During the period 2017–2021, to what extent have shelter & settlement interventions	I.4.a Breadth and type of modifications to shelter & settlement interventions design made during the period	Desk review: project documents, monitoring report, BoQ, IEC materials	Technical review of the shelter design and BoQ

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[207] Including Sphere standards, UNHCR Global strategy for settlement and UNHCR shelter 2014–2018 practical advice on how best to design different types of shelters and uphold the rights of displaced persons. At the beginning of an emergency: Minimum 3.5 m2 covered living space per person in tropical or warm climates, excluding cooking facilities or kitchen. (It is assumed that cooking will take place outside). Minimum height of 2 m at the highest point.

[208] Shelter solutions should take into consideration hazards in the area such as earthquakes, floods, landslides and others. In dispersed settlement and spontaneous camps, persons of concern may find accommodation in high-risk areas and informal settlements that are hazard prone.

Sub-questions	Indicators/how judgment will be formed	Source of information	Data analysis
adjusted to the changing contexts?		KII with UNHCR and IP shelter staff Observations	Quantitative mapping of the changes made as a result of the duration of population displacement, environmental and social impacts Qualitative accounts as to why the changes were made (internal/external drivers) Visual account of shelters per country and per setting type (urban/rural)
	I.4.b Breadth and type of changes in modalities (i.e. in-kind, cash, vouchers) to deliver shelter & settlement interventions during the period	Desk review: Project documents, monitoring report KII with UNHCR and IP shelter staff	Quantitative mapping of the changes made as a result of changes in market functionality, financial service providers availability Qualitative accounts as to why the changes were made (internal/external drivers)
	I.4.c The targeting criteria were adjusted as per the changing needs and the enrolling mechanisms were able to enrol new PoCs	Desk review: Project documents KII with UNHCR and IP shelter staff	Qualitative analysis of the different stakeholders' perception of the targeting criteria agility, per stakeholder type per country
	I.4.d Lessons learned workshops among UNHCR and IP allowed to adjust the shelter & settlement interventions to the changing situation	Desk review (workshops minutes) KII with UNHCR and IP shelter staff	Quantitative mapping of the number of lessons learned workshop and the diversity of their attendance

Sub-questions	Indicators/how judgment will be formed	Source of information	Data analysis
			Qualitative analysis of stakeholders' perception of the relevance of these workshops to adjust interventions
EFFECTIVENESS & COHERENCE			
II. To what extent have UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions been able to **achieve their objectives and intended outcomes, including contribution to protection objectives and solution-oriented approaches, in a timely manner?**			
II.1 To what extent have UNHCR shelter and settlement interventions met their intended objectives within the agreed timeframe?	II.1.a Proportion of UNHCR shelter staff who consider that interventions' ToC allow to meet set objectives	Desk review: ToC Outcome survey	Qualitative analysis of stakeholders' perception per country
	II.1.b Level of attainment of expected results reached over the period by shelter and settlement interventions	Desk review: Project documents between UNHCR and donors, M&E reports KII with local institution representatives Outcome survey	Quantitative comparison between target in project documents and M&E reports per country Quantitative survey results analysis
	II.1.c PoCs who received shelter interventions consider the intervention was timely and of quality	Desk review: PDM, monitoring report FGD (men & women; older & younger)	Qualitative analysis of PoC perception per sex, age and per country
	II.1.d Shelter & settlement interventions have been implemented as per the set calendar	Desk review: Project documents between UNHCR and donors, M&E reports	Comparison between project calendars as set in project documents and M&E reports per country

Sub-questions	Indicators/how judgment will be formed	Source of information	Data analysis
		Outcome survey	Qualitative analysis of the drivers of timeliness per country
	II.1.e Shelter and settlement interventions timeframes were adequate to the objectives to be met	Desk review: Project documents between UNHCR and donors	Technical review of the project timelines in light of the objectives
		Outcome survey	Qualitative analysis of the drivers of timeliness per country Quantitative analysis of survey results
II.2 What other unintended effects did the shelter and settlement interventions cause?	II.2.a Type and magnitude of the unintended positive effects of the shelter and settlement interventions	Outcome survey KII with UNHCR shelter staff, IP, local institution representatives FGD (men & women; older & younger)	Qualitative analysis of the unintended positive effects per country
	II.2.b Type and magnitude of the unintended negative effects of the shelter and settlement interventions (e.g. significant environmental damage, distortion of local markets, etc.)	Outcome survey KII with UNHCR shelter staff, IP, local institution representatives FGD (men & women; older & younger)	Qualitative analysis of the unintended negative effects per country

Sub-questions	Indicators/how judgment will be formed	Source of information	Data analysis
II.3 What are the overall drivers of the intended and unintended effects of the shelter and settlement interventions?	II.3.a & b Qualitative account by stakeholders of the exogenous and endogenous drivers for changes brought by the shelter and settlement interventions *(positive changes II.3.a, challenges II.3.b)*	KII with UNHCR shelter staff, IP, local institution representatives FGD (men & women; older & younger)	Qualitative analysis of the drivers per country
	II.3.c Qualitative account of the added value of UNHCR integrated approach (i.e. collaboration between sectors) to maximize the effects of shelter and settlement interventions	KII with UNHCR shelter, livelihood, WASH and protection staff	Qualitative analysis of the perceived added value per sector
II.4 To what extent have UNHCR shelter and settlement interventions contributed to UNHCR Protection mandate?	II.4.a The shelter and settlements designs and implementation approaches mainstreamed protection (e.g. due diligence to guarantee legal protection against forced eviction, safety of shelter occupants, privacy)	Desk review: UNHCR and IP project documents, M&E reports, protection assessment KII with UNHCR shelter and protection staff	Qualitative analysis of the protection mainstreaming measures per steps of the project cycle
	II.4.b Shelter and settlement interventions outputs contributed to protection outcomes as outlined in the ToC	Desk review: UNHCR and IP M&E reports, protection assessment KII with UNHCR shelter and protection staff	Contribution analysis against the constructed ToC per country

EFFICIENCY

III. To what extent does UNHCR have sufficient technical shelter capacity, information/data management capability and fit-for-purpose guidance?

Sub-questions	Indicators/how judgment will be formed	Source of information	Data analysis
III.1 To what extent do UNHCR shelter and settlement focus data collection and monitoring systems allow for programmatic decision-making?	III.1.a Capacity of the UNHCR shelter staff to describe which shelter-related data are collected and for what use	Desk review: UNHCR M&E framework KII with UNHCR shelter staff and MEAL staff	Comparison between described systems and the existing ones per country Qualitative analysis of primary data per country
	III.1.b Perception of UNHCR shelter staff about simplicity and ease of use of monitoring systems	KII with UNHCR shelter staff	Qualitative analysis of primary data per country
	III.1.c Inter-operability of UNHCR shelter data collection systems with existing data set in country	KII with MEAL staff, with shelter cluster (IMO) and local institution representatives	Qualitative analysis of primary data per country
	III.1.d Number of UNHCR monitoring activities that adopted a participatory approach	Desk review: MEAL reports and guidance documents KII with MEAL staff	Quantitative analysis of the proportion of monitoring activities that adopted a participatory approach per country as captured in secondary data Qualitative analysis as to the reasons why participatory approaches were adopted or not
	III.1.e Frequency and type of shelter-related programmatic decisions made on the basis of monitoring data	KII with UNHCR shelter staff and MEAL staff	Qualitative analysis per country
III.2 To what extent does UNHCR have sufficient technical personnel in place?	III.2.a Sufficient shelter technical positions are filled at national cluster level, country level, or regional level to meet UNHCR shelter ambitions	Desk review: Project documents Outcome survey	Comparison of shelter-related positions as per the organization chart versus the current positions filled

Sub-questions	Indicators/how judgment will be formed	Source of information	Data analysis
		Perception survey	Quantitative analysis of primary data per country per stakeholder type
	III.2.b Sufficient surge or emergency shelter technical positions are filled at national cluster level, country level or regional level to meet UNHCR shelter ambitions	Desk review: Project documents Outcome survey Perception survey	Comparison of shelter-related positions as per the organization chart versus the current positions filled Qualitative analysis of primary data per country per stakeholder type
	III.2.c Sufficient shelter coordination positions are filled, and staff deployed, at national cluster level, country level or regional level to meet UNHCR shelter ambitions	Desk review: Project documents KII with shelter cluster Outcome survey Perception survey	Comparison of shelter-related positions as per the organization chart versus the current positions filled Qualitative analysis of primary data per country per stakeholder type
III.3 Is UNHCR shelter guidance[209] fit for purpose?	III.3.a Proportion of cluster members who have used UNHCR shelter and settlement guidance and rationale as to why	Project documents and guidance KII with IP shelter staff and with shelter cluster Perception survey	Qualitative & quantitative analysis segregated by country and by stakeholder type

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[209] UNHCR Shelter typology, UNHCR emergency handbook, UNHCR shelter policy for refugee.

Sub-questions	Indicators/how judgment will be formed	Source of information	Data analysis
	III.3.b Proportion of IP staff who deem UNHCR shelter and settlement guidance fit for purpose and rationale as to why (e.g. language)	Project documents and guidance KIIs Perception survey	Qualitative & quantitative analysis segregated by country and by guidance

COORDINATION

IV. To what extent are UNHCR's shelter and settlement interventions aligned with and contributing to the ones of local institutions and international actors?

IV.1 To what extent do UNHCR shelter and settlement interventions promote the capacity of local institutions?	IV.1.a Support to local institutions is an intended objective of UNHCR shelter and settlement interventions	Desk review: Project documents	Qualitative analysis of secondary data segregated by country
	IV.1.b Qualitative account of technical/strategic support from UNHCR to local institutions and the effects of this support	Desk review: Partnership policy and guidance, capacity strengthening action plans, mission reports KII with UNHCR shelter staff and local institution representatives	Qualitative analysis of primary and secondary data segregated by country
	IV.1.c Local institution representatives are satisfied with their level of information with UNHCR shelter and settlement interventions	KII with local institution representatives	Qualitative analysis segregated by country
	IV.1.d Local institution representatives attribute some of their successes to technical and organizational support they received from UNHCR.	KII with local institution representatives	Qualitative analysis of primary data segregated by country
IV.2 To what extent are UNHCR's shelter interventions aligned with government development plans in	IV.2.a Country-level UNHCR shelter strategies refer to national development plans and explain how they will contribute to it	Desk review: National development plans and UNHCR country-level shelter strategies	Qualitative analysis of secondary segregated by country

Sub-questions	Indicators/how judgment will be formed	Source of information	Data analysis
the area of shelter and settlements?	IV.2.b Local institution representatives share qualitative accounts of how UNHCR shelter and settlement interventions contributed to their own development plans	Desk review: Government plans and UNHCR country-level shelter strategies KII with local institution representatives	Qualitative analysis of primary and secondary data segregated by country
	IV.2.c Local institution representatives are regularly invited to and participate in shelter cluster meetings	Desk review: shelter cluster minutes KII with local institution representatives and shelter cluster	Qualitative analysis of primary and secondary data segregated by country and stakeholder types
IV.3 To what extent are UNHCR's shelter interventions coherent and complementary with those of UN agencies' other humanitarian actors or other clusters?	IV.3.a Shelter coordination under UNHCR chair is considered effective	Desk review: shelter cluster meeting minutes Key informants interviews with UNHCR shelter, IPs, and shelter cluster Outcome survey with UNHCR shelter staff Perception survey	Quantitative analysis of secondary data: frequency of the meetings and diversity of attendance at the meeting over time per country Qualitative analysis of primary data per stakeholder type per country Quantitative analysis of the survey results
	IV.3.b UNHCR coordinated and liaised with complementary sectors, including water, sanitation and livelihoods, to ensure solutions were integrated	Key informants interviews with shelter, livelihood, WASH and protection clusters	Qualitative analysis of primary data per sector per country

The triangulation of data sources in the evaluation matrix and a map of the evaluation matrix against the Terms of Reference are available [here](#).

Annex 3: Country selection

Table 5 Focus country selection

Focus countries	Situation				Emergency type			Accessibility	Expressed interest	Multi-year Strategic Plan (MYSP)
	Sahel	Nigeria	Cameroon	CAR	Protracted crisis[210]	Severity of crisis[211]	Non-emergency shelter interventions	As per ACAPS humanitarian access overview rating		
Burkina Faso					Yes	Medium	Yes	High constraints	Potentially	MYSP started
Chad					Yes	**Very High**	Yes	High constraints		MYSP started
Cameroon					Yes	**Very High**	No	Very High Constraints	Potentially	MYSP started
CAR					Yes	High	No	Very High Constraints	Yes	Planning for 2024 MYSP in 2023
Mali					Yes	High	Yes	**Extreme Constraints**	Yes	Planning for 2023 MYSP starts 2022
Niger					Yes	**Very High**	Yes	Very High Constraints		Planning for 2023 MYSP starts 2022
Nigeria					Yes	**Very High**	Yes	**Extreme Constraints**	Yes	Planning for 2023 MYSP starts 2022

[210] UNHCR defines a protracted refugee situation as one in which 25,000 or more refugees from the same nationality have been in exile for at least five consecutive years in a given host country. Here we have used the UN definition of protracted crisis: Protracted crisis countries are defined as countries with at least five consecutive years of UN-coordinated humanitarian or refugee response plans as of 2020.
[211] As per global humanitarian assistance report 2020.

Annex 4: Key documentation type

272. The table below summarizes key documentation that formed part of the evaluation desk review. This is a non-exhaustive list of the documents identified as part of the desk review, which contained more than 300 documents shared by the evaluation managers and preliminary key informants.

Table 6 Key documentation

Folder	Sub-folder
General policies, guidance, strategies	Global compact on refugees
	Global Shelter Cluster Strategy
	UNHCR Global strategy for settlement and shelter
	UNHCR policy on refugee protection and solutions in urban areas
	UNHCR Age, Gender, Diversity policy
	UNHCR cash-based transfers policy
	UNHCR policy on emergency preparedness and response
	UNHCR data transformation strategy (2020–2025)
	RBWCA strategic priorities (2020–2021)
	RBWCA strategic priorities (2021–2024)
	IDP and refugee policy papers and initiatives
	Operational guidance
	WCA appeals
	Climate action guidance and policies
Shelter policies, guidance, strategies	UNHCR settlements approach guidance
	Country shelter cluster strategies
	Country UNHCR shelter strategies
Country shelter interventions	Country shelter project information
	Country narrative reports (2020)
	Country objectives and indicators
	Country maps and dashboards
Country background documents	Prioritized plans
	Operational plans (2020)
	Feedback from the RBWCA
	Mission reports

	Evaluations/ case studies/ research pieces
	MYSP Burkina Faso, Chad and Cameroon
Financial audits and budgets	Country audits Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR and Niger
	Country budget trends and expenditure
Evaluations and reports	The State of Humanitarian Shelter and Settlements 2018
	Evaluation of the global shelter cluster partnerships (2013–2017)
	Country Humanitarian Response Plans

Annex 5: RBWCA shelter staffing

273. [Table 7](#) presents UNHCR shelter team composition as of May 2022. The positions dedicated to coordination are highlighted in blue.

Table 7 UNHCR shelter team composition

COUNTRY	LOCATION	POSITION
Burkina Faso	Ouagadougou	Shelter Officer
	Ouagadougou	Info Management Associate
	Dori	Shelter Associate
	Dori	Associate Shelter Officer
	Fada Ngourma	Shelter Associate
	Kaya	**Shelter Cluster Coord Officer**
	Kaya	Shelter Officer
	Kaya	Shelter Associate
	Ouahigouya	Shelter Associate
Chad	Abeche	Settlement Planning Associate
	Bagasola	**CCCM Cluster Coordination Officer**
	Bagasola	Shelter Officer
	Bagasola	Shelter Associate
	Gore	Technical associate
	Gore	CCCM Field Associate
	Iriba	Technical associate
CAR	Bangui	Field Associate
	Bangui	Field Associate
	Bangui	Shelter Associate
Cameroon	Yaounde	**Shelter Cluster Coordination Officer**
	Bamenda	**Shelter Cluster Coordination Officer**
	Bertoua	Assistant Shelter Officer
	Kousseri	**Shelter Cluster Coord Officer**
	Maiganga	Shelter Assistant
	Maroua	**Associate Shelter Cluster Coord Officer**
	Maroua	Assistant Shelter Officer
Mali	Bamako	**Senior CCCM Cluster Coord Officer**
	Bamako	**Senior Shelter Cluster Coord Officer**
	Bamako	Associate Shelter & Durable Solutions Officer
	Gao	Shelter Associate
	Mopti	**Associate Shelter Cluster Coord Officer**
	Mopti	Shelter Associate
	Tombouctou	Shelter Associate
Niger	Niamey	Assistant Shelter Officer
	Niamey	Senior Programme Assistant
	Niamey	Shelter Officer
	Diffa	Shelter Associate
	Diffa	Shelter Officer
	Diffa	Assistant Shelter Officer
	Maradi	Shelter Associate
	Tahoua	Assistant Shelter Officer
	Tillabery	Assistant Shelter Officer
Nigeria	Maiduguri	**Senior Shelter Cluster Coord Officer**
	Maiduguri	Shelter Officer
	Maiduguri	Assistant Shelter Officer

	Maiduguri	Assistant Field Officer
	Maiduguri	CCCM Officer
	Mubi	Senior Shelter Assistant
	Ogoja	Shelter Associate

Annex 6: Terms of reference

274.   The Terms of reference for the evaluation are available [here](). The ERG terms of reference are available [here]().