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| Title | Terms of reference for the independent programme evaluation (IPE) of UNHCR's response to the refugee influx in Lebanon and Jordan |
| Key Objective | To provide an independent assessment of the effectiveness of the response of UNHCR and its partners to the on-going emergency influx of refugees from Syria. |
| Reference | PDES-2014-95801 |
| IPE Timeline (Indicative) | 01 March – 31 May 2014 |
| Reporting to | Evaluation Managers, PDES |

1. Background:

The destruction and suffering wrought by the conflict in Syria has been devastating in scale and scope, involving a level of violence and displacement unmatched in recent years. As the conflict enters its fourth year, one third of the Syrian population are thought to have been displaced within the country. Refugee movements have unfolded on a scale and at a speed not seen since the Great Lakes crisis of the mid -1990s. Over 2.3 million refugees have sought security and asylum in Syria's immediate neighbours – Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey – as well as countries within the region such as Egypt. Although refugee arrivals have declined from the peak period in early to mid 2013, tens of thousands continue to cross into the neighbouring countries on a monthly basis necessitating the maintenance of robust emergency response and contingency planning measures.

Responding to the protection and assistance needs of a large and varied refugee population – the majority are women and children - is complex. All the neighbouring states are classified as Middle Income Countries. Their individual political, economic, and social circumstances produce different operational challenges for humanitarian agencies. In all the affected countries, a large proportion (c. 82%) of the refugees has settled into local communities in cities, small towns, and villages rather than formal camps. Monitoring their circumstances in, and delivering assistance to, the many different locations where refugees have settled is a sharp challenge.

Due to the high numbers of refugees, considerable pressure has been placed on local infrastructure, social service delivery, and labour markets. This has led to concerns about adequate access to essential services like education and health. Social tensions have arisen and in consequence there has been an increasing focus on the needs of local communities whose circumstances have been negatively impacted by the conflict and the refugee spill over.

UNHCR's response to the Syria emergency has required an enormous investment in both human and financial resources with responsibilities as both overall coordinator and humanitarian actor. At the political level, UNHCR has convened important ongoing initiatives such as the High Level Segment devoted to the Syria emergency at its annual Executive Committee meeting. In its role as coordinator, UNHCR has organized the response around a succession of Regional Response Plans with over 150 different organizations including UN agencies, international and national Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and local authorities. The Programme is largely implemented

through these same partner organizations. In 2013 over 2,000 staff were engaged to work on operations in Syria and in the neighbouring countries. Donor contributions to date have exceeded \$2 billion.

The need for a longer term, development engagement to address the scale of the economic and social consequences of the conflict and refugee presence has emerged as a priority. Yet to date the response has been carried predominantly by humanitarian agencies. A range of political, legal and structural issues have emerged to challenge the mobilization of other financing channels. The situation has implications for the sustainability of the humanitarian response.

Given these dimensions, the international community and UNHCR wish to take stock of the way the organization has discharged its coordination, protection and assistance role to date. In early 2013 UNHCR's Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES) conducted a real time evaluation (RTE) of the agency's operations in Jordan, Lebanon, and (northern) Iraq. The outcomes led to a number of changes that have been recorded in UNHCR's management responses to the evaluation. Given the evolution of the operation, UNHCR has further determined that an independent evaluation of the Syria operation should be conducted in 2014, in accordance with the present Terms of Reference.

2. Rationale for evaluation:

The forthcoming Syria Response Programme Evaluation (SRPE) is justified by the operational complexity of the challenges UNHCR is addressing and by the high level of donor support received to date. The operation is entering its fourth year. The security and humanitarian situation within Syria remains of grave concern. The likelihood of further refugee movements into the neighbouring countries remains high. At the same time, UNHCR and its partners need to begin the process of repositioning themselves to manage a protracted refugee situation even while new arrivals continue.

The draft Terms of Reference (ToR) draw upon the results of an evaluability assessment mission conducted in December 2013 that highlighted the importance of additional data collection and document preparation. It is envisaged that this process of data collection (creation of a drop box) will begin before the formal commissioning of the evaluation and that a preparatory analysis of available information will lead to further adjustments to the focus and scope of the evaluation during the inception period.

Evaluation type

In view of the fact that the situation continues to evolve, the evaluation will encompass both retrospective and real time elements. Concretely, it will:

- provide a structured and comprehensive retrospective assessment of UNHCR's funded operations from a multi-sectoral perspective supporting the victims of the Syria crisis from 2013 to 2014 in line with its mandate;

- include elements of a real time evaluation defined as an exercise that provides findings and feedback for immediate use;

- provide practical options and strategic recommendations for future approaches to address the effects of the Syria situation.

3. Objectives and purpose of the SRPE:

- To provide an independent evaluation of the response of UNHCR role as an overall coordinator and humanitarian actor and its partners to the on-going emergency influx of refugees from Syria into Lebanon and Jordan in the period extending from 1 January 2013 to 31 March 2014.
- The SRPE will assess the extent to which pre-determined objectives have been met including reasons for success or failure, taking into account the extent to which factors internal and external to UNHCR including the rapidity with which the emergency unfolded during the period under review, the timing and conditions of funding, availability of human resources, and the partnerships and policies have influenced the effectiveness of UNHCR's protection and assistance programmes.
- Taking account of the different challenges in assisting refugees in a wide variety of mostly non-camp settings, the SRPE will identify protection and assistance gaps for persons of concern to UNHCR including an explanation on causes and reasons and suggest remedial action required to address identified needs.
- Given its particular relevance in the context of the Syria situation, and within the evolving discussions at the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC), an evaluation will be made of the present coordination arrangements.
- The SRPE will assess the relevance and quality of the interface between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation.

The purpose of the SRPE is learning and accountability. Key questions to be addressed will be how well did UNHCR adapt to the challenges posed by the demands of the emergency across the region, what impact has been secured for persons of concern and affected populations, how effectively funds allocated to the Syria operation were spent, and which factors in the project design and implementation led to optimal results? The main findings of the SRPE are expected to feed into the mid-year review of the Regional Response Plan.

4. Scope

The Syria Response Programme Evaluation will focus, at this stage, on Jordan and Lebanon.¹ A list of sectors to be covered by the evaluation is outlined below. It includes a breakdown pertaining to the three countries concerned and is based on two coordination and programmatic documents, the Regional Response Plans (RRP) 5 and 6.

Both are accessible on: <http://www.unhcr.org/51b0a56d6.html> (RRP 5) and <http://www.unhcr.org/syriarrp6/> (RRP 6)

Reference will be made to:

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- Countries/locations
- Camp/non-camp population/host populations
- Registered refugees/ other persons of concern
- Interventions (cash based approach, large scale registration)
- Inter-action with implementing partners (funded through UNHCR) and operational partners (not funded through UNHCR but working towards the same goal)

5. Evaluation criteria, evaluation questions, and sectorial coverage

The overarching evaluation question will be the effectiveness of the protection and assistance activities implemented by UNHCR and its partners in meeting the needs of the persons of concern to UNHCR in the three countries. More specifically, it should assess the efficiency and effectiveness of UNHCR's roles as (i) overall coordinator of humanitarian aid for the neighboring countries (analysis of needs, allocation of means, gap analysis, relations and coordination with implementing and operational partners of UNHCR and between humanitarian and development actors) and (ii) as a principal humanitarian actor. Issues of impact are more challenging inasmuch as the crisis is still ongoing and UNHCR's programmes are largely implemented by partners who may have multiple funding sources.² The effectiveness criterion (the extent to which the protection and assistance activities that constitute the UNHCR programme achieved their intended purposes) will be supplemented by the following Organisation for Economic Development Cooperation (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria and questions:

a) Main cross-cutting evaluation questions according to OECD/DAC criteria

Coordination

- How effective was UNHCR's performance in its role of overall coordinator of the refugee crisis in the countries affected with main stakeholders (humanitarian and development actors, national authorities and donors)?
- Taking into consideration the discussions at the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC), how effective and coherent are UNHCR's current coordination arrangements for refugee emergencies within the UN system?
- How effective was UNHCR in promoting synergies and avoiding duplication, gaps and resource conflicts at the situational/regional, country and sector-specific levels in its work both with its implementing and operational partners and coverage of refugees and unregistered Syrians?
- What were the main coordination products and the quality of those products?
- What was the perception by the main stakeholders of UNHCR's coordination role and performance?
- Did UNHCR demonstrate competent guidance and leadership in its coordination role?

² An evaluation can nevertheless be made of how UNHCR assessed the efficiency of its partners and its operations prior to entering into contracts with them.

- What changes, if any, to UNHCR's coordination role/arrangements should be envisaged in a post emergency phase that could produce better programme outcomes?

Efficiency

- Were resources used efficiently or could alternative approaches been used to achieve the stated objectives?
- Was the planning process timely and adequate?

Coverage

- Did the protection and assistance interventions reach the maximum possible number of persons of concern according to UNHCR mandate?
- Were beneficiaries, in particular vulnerable groups (women and children, disabled, vulnerable host communities, etc.), correctly and fairly identified and targeted?
- What provisions were made for identifying and targeting un-registered persons in need of protection and assistance?
- Describe the quality and impact of any age, gender and diversity mainstreaming (AGDM) assessments carried out.

Appropriateness

- Were assessments/beneficiaries' consultations carried out to identify needs and priorities?
- Has the assistance been appropriate in view of the local context and customs?

Impact

- Is there evidence that interventions made by UNHCR and its partners improved the situation of persons of concern to UNHCR in the respective sectors?
- Have satisfactory humanitarian standards (e.g. Sphere and/or UNHCR) been met?
- Are appropriate systems and indicators in place to monitor, measure, or assess impact?
- What are the beneficiaries' perceptions of the impact of UNHCR's assistance programs as evidenced through different beneficiary feedback mechanisms?
Are any of the interventions doing harm? Is there evidence of impact (positive and negative) on local host communities?

Sustainability and connectedness

- What measures have been taken to guide programme design and interventions for the longer term or to complement existing programmes?
- What links have been established that encourage the eventual absorption of humanitarian interventions into longer term national programmes?
- How has UNHCR's assistance contributed to strengthening the capacities of local government authorities and organizations to manage the effects of the rapid growth in population reflected by the refugee presence?

b) Sector specific evaluation questions

Protection

- Has the evolution of the refugee registration system resulted in quantitative improvements (i.e. reduction of the backlog) and qualitative data to better profile the caseload and sharpen assistance targeting? Are there best practices that can be drawn from this exercise?
- Have reception services been adequate?
- Have UNHCR's interventions helped to avoid instances of *refoulement*?
- Have durable solutions been given due consideration in the planning process?
- Has UNHCR coordinated well with UNICEF and UNFPA in programmes targeting child protection and SGBV?

Food security³

- Has the food assistance met life-saving needs?
- Is the level/form of assistance appropriate?
- Is the beneficiary coverage (targeting approach) correct and regularly monitored?
- Could food support be carried out in a more cost-efficient way?

Non-food items/basic needs

- Has the supply chain functioned efficiently and have the NFIs provided by UNHCR and its partners been appropriate and useful for the refugees?
- Has the winterization package been adequate, delivered in a timely fashion, and on a sufficiently substantial scale to adequately face winter conditions?
- Have vulnerable people been assisted effectively?
- Could NFIs support be carried out in a more cost-efficient way?

Shelter

- Has the range of shelter interventions, i.e. tented settlements, rehabilitation of sub-standard shelter, rental subsidy and other forms of shelter intervention been adequate and appropriate and cost-efficient?
- Have the accommodation needs of out-of-camp refugees been adequately addressed?
- Have the accommodation needs of camp refugees been adequately addressed?
- Have vulnerable refugees been adequately assisted?
- Was there sufficient technical expertise to coordinate and implement shelter sector activities?
- Has camp/site planning (where applicable) been adequate?

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

³ Notwithstanding the significant resources allocated to food assistance for refugees, given the anticipated food security evaluation by WFP in the latter part of 2014, the SRPE will cover this sector to a limited extent only and instead focus on the specific areas of responsibility of UNHCR as specified in the RRP 5 and 6.

- Has the coordination of WASH activities with UNICEF and other key partners been well coordinated? Was there a clear and adequate division of labour?
- Have refugees received an adequate supply of safe water, sanitation services and hygiene promotion in accordance with accepted standards?
- Could WASH support be carried out in a more cost-efficient way?

Public Health

- Is there reliable data/credible evidence available about abnormal morbidity and mortality rates or otherwise?
- Has there been a specific needs assessment of the health situation and possible gaps in the countries covered by the evaluation within a defined strategy for this sector?
- Is the level/form of health assistance to camp and out of camp refugees appropriate?
- Is the beneficiary coverage correct and regularly monitored?
- Is there an adequate referral strategy for complicated cases that go beyond the scope of primary health care and is it cost-effective?
- What measures have been taken since the onset of the crisis to ensure adequate medical coverage for essential health needs?

Education

- How successful has UNHCR been in ensuring that as many school-age children and adolescents/youth as possible gain access to education or appropriate learning opportunities respectively?
- What measures have been taken to explore opportunities for informal education?
- Has there been effective coordination of policy development and interventions among the agencies and organisations participating in the education sector?
- Has there been a clear and adequate division of labour with UNICEF with regard to education interventions?

Community support, social cohesion, and livelihoods

- Was UNHCR's involvement in assisting local authorities and communities well designed and appropriate?
- What measures are in place to take account and track incidences of social tension between local populations and refugees, and what has been the range of responses?
- What steps has UNHCR taken to leverage the engagement of other partners in the delivery of support to local populations affected by the spill over effects of the conflict including the refugee presence?
- How adequately has UNHCR addressed the challenge of engaging with governments, donors and development agencies on the need to secure longer term support and funding to meet stabilisation needs?
- What practical steps have been taken to foster reflection and coordinate policy and interventions in support of mixed refugee and local communities?
- What initiatives have been taken to promote livelihood programmes amongst persons of concern.

Financial assistance/cash response

- Is cash assistance a cost-effective way to replace traditional in-kind multi-sectoral assistance? If so, what steps should be taken and what are the main obstacles to the implementation of cash as the main modality of assistance?
- How effectively have the approaches to provision of different cash interventions by UNHCR and its partners been co-ordinated? Were they provided in an appropriate manner?
- What monitoring measures and indicators are planned or are in place to track the impact that financial assistance/cash response is having on the poverty/welfare of refugee households?

6. Methodology

The SRPE will adopt a mixed methodology consisting of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The qualitative information (mainly from interviews and surveys) and the quantitative information (from document review and data analysis) will be aggregated to form a solid evidence base for the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation report.

- There will be a document and literature review and analysis of UNHCR's programme and protection documentation.⁴
- Interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders within UNHCR, UN and Government Officials, NGOs, Persons of Concern to UNHCR and other stakeholders will be foreseen at Field, Regional and HQ level.
- In view of the large number of operational and implementing partners, the use of custom designed surveys is encouraged.

The review will be undertaken by a qualified institution, company or consortium, organisation, or a team of independent consultants, familiar with UNHCR's mandate, as well as its protection and programme role and functions. The period to be covered by the independent evaluation team includes the 2013 UNHCR programme cycle as well as the first quarter of the 2014 programme cycle. The findings of the mission are expected to feed into the mid-year operational review in 2014 and to assist fine-tuning the 2015 programme.

Norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group will be applied. The guidelines and methods set by the *Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action* (ALNAP) should be followed. Evaluation criteria formulated by the OECD/DAC and widely used in humanitarian evaluations will be included.

7. Evaluation Follow Up

In line with good evaluation practice, effective mechanisms are required to ensure that UNHCR's investment in this evaluation and the recommendations deriving from it will lead to improvements in the quality and impact of the organization's work. In consequence, a formal management

⁴ Including e.g. coordination products (particularly the Regional Response Plans 5 & 6), budget and expenditure reports, statistics, participatory assessments, mission and progress reports.

response will be required to the evaluation recommendations. The procedures and details setting out the requirements for the management response will be detailed in the forthcoming revision of UNHCR's evaluation policy.

8. Roles and responsibilities

The entity awarded the contract will be expected to deploy sufficient expertise to cover the sectors outlined below. Familiarity with UNHCR's mandate for the delivery of refugee protection is of particular importance. Indicatively, this might require two teams comprised of two individual team leaders plus adequate technical expertise to cover the countries subject to the evaluation. Consideration should be given to the importance of Arabic language capability (translation, interpretation etc).

1. REGISTRATION
2. FOOD
3. SHELTER
4. NFIs
5. WASH
6. HEALTH
7. EDUCATION
8. LIVELIHOODS
9. CASH ASSISTANCE

Two PDES evaluation task managers will be at the disposal of the independent evaluation teams and assume responsibility for collecting documents, data, arranging for interviews at HQ levels, making bookings, arranging field visits, liaising with focal points at Field Representations, possibly assisting with surveys, and collecting other data as required. The evaluation task managers will remain in close contact with designated focal points in the field to ensure smooth mission arrangements to all the designated locations.

UNHCR Country offices will designate focal points that will assist the PDES evaluation task managers and the evaluation teams with logistical and administrative arrangements.

9. Outputs

The independent evaluation team will assume responsibility for field debriefings presenting key findings and preliminary recommendations, a main report including recommendations, an evaluation summary, and debriefings at UNHCR HQ. The length and the format of the report as well as the Annexes will be detailed in the Call for Proposals.

Following agreement on fees and charges, the independent programme evaluation team will enter into a standard contract with PDES stipulating terms and conditions regarding payment and travel. Upon completion of the missions of the independent programme evaluation report, three (two-day) workshops will be conducted in Lebanon and Jordan. Separate instructions will be furnished one month before the consultancy relating format modalities.

10. Timeframe

The SRPE should be completed within three months, indicatively March to May inclusive. The first two weeks will be devoted to a literature and desk review with a mission foreseen to UNHCR HQ Geneva at the beginning of the contract period. The third week should be devoted to the preparation of an evaluation plan and finalisation of any adjustments to the Terms of Reference (ToR).

The second phase will be devoted to field work in the countries subject of the evaluation. In principle, there will be two missions conducted in parallel to Lebanon and Jordan. The final phase (one month) will comprise workshops, debriefing and the preparation of the final draft report.

| Activity | Deliverable | Time Frame (INDICATIVE) |
|--|--|-------------------------|
| ToR drafted. | ToR finalised and Call for proposals issued. | January |
| Call for proposal issued. | Consultancy firm/individual consultants (CF) expression of interest. | February |
| Recruitment CF. | Bids evaluated, Tender Awarded. | February |
| Data collection and selection of relevant reports and material. | Dropbox populated. | February |
| Initial desk review and briefing of CF by PDES management team (Telephone conference) . | Draft Evaluation plan with revised ToR, methodology and design of questionnaire, as appropriate. | March |
| Comprehensive desk-based document analysis. | Note on review process and interview frames. | March |
| Focus group discussion/interviews between CF and PDES, MENA management team; Geneva based stakeholder interviews; preparation and reporting of initial findings (3/4 days mission Geneva). | Revised evaluation plan with revised ToR, methodology and design of questionnaire, as appropriate. | March |
| Parallel Field visits to two country offices for independent programme evaluation at country level (Lebanon 2 weeks plus 1 week for formulation and dissemination of key findings and recommendations; Jordan 2 weeks plus 1 week for formulation and dissemination of key findings and recommendations). | Presentation of findings and recommendations for MENA Bureau at Stakeholder Workshop in countries concerned. | April |
| Preparation of the first draft of the report. | Revised draft report and recommendations with country reports annexed. | May |
| Review and analysis to comments. Preparation of revised final report and recommendations. | Final report and recommendations with country and workshop reports annexed. | May |
| Dissemination of final report and recommendations through external stakeholder workshop. | PowerPoint presentation Senior Management HQ. Organisation of workshops and discussion on findings. | June |

11. Submission guidelines

As stipulated above, PDES estimates that the independent programme evaluation can be duly executed by a team of six evaluators/consultants with the right mix of skills and expertise. However, bidders reserve the right to vary team size, with proper justification for allocation of work and cost. To that end, this contract may be offered to a team of individuals, or an institution under institutional arrangements. Telephone interviews may be considered. This section presents guidelines for submission for both routes.

a) Individual submissions

Bidders are required to submit recent copies of their CVs/Resumes. They should highlight the expertise and experience required for conducting the independent programme evaluation. Bidders are further required to provide a minimum of two references from clients for whom evaluability assessments, evaluations or related projects of a similar scope were carried out. Reference information should be organised as follows:

- Name and description of client company/organisation.
- Names of senior individuals in the client companies who were involved in the projects referred to or have knowledge of the project concerned.
- Scope and scale of projects.
- Services provided to clients.

PDES may contact referees for feedback on services provided to them by bidders.

b) Institutional submissions

Bidders are required to provide background information about their institution as follows:

- Date and country of incorporation.
- Summary of corporate structure and business areas.
- Corporate directions and experience.
- Location of offices or agents relevant to this proposal.
- Number and type of employees.
- Financial statements of the two most recent financial years.

Bidders are required to provide a minimum of two references from clients for whom evaluability assessments, evaluation or related projects of a similar scope were carried out. Reference information should be organised as follows:

- Name and description of client company/organisation.
- Names of senior individuals in the client companies who were involved in the projects referred to or have knowledge of the project concerned.
- Scope and scale of projects.
- Services provided to clients.

c) Technical proposals

General issues:

Respondents to this call for proposals may wish to submit a technical proposal emphasizing the conceptual thinking and methods proposed for the independent programme evaluation, minimizing repetition of information stated in the terms of reference.

The methodology should stipulate, as clearly as possible, questions that will be explored at the different levels, global, regional and country level.

There is no minimum or maximum length for the technical proposal. However, sufficient detail and clarity are required. The proposal should stipulate the level of effort to be committed by the different team members in each phase. The same information should be featured in the financial proposal, associated cost data. Bidders may be asked to provide additional information at the proposal assessment stage.

Specific requirements: In addition to whatever other approaches and methods are proposed, the following specific items must be present in the bidding documents:

- Presentation of a work plan in all phases along the time lines presented above.
- Details on the overall design and data gathering methods to be used.
- Details of team members' relevant qualifications and the basic information about the organization submitting the bid.
- The intended participation of any former UNHCR staff.
- The level of effort for all team members in both the technical (without price) and financial proposals (with costs).
- Requirements and /or assurances (e.g. non-use of child labour) must also accompany the submission package.

While all contents of the technical proposal are important, special attention will be paid to the composition and strength of the proposed team, and the rigor of the proposed methodology. These two elements account for 70 percent of the points awarded for the technical proposal. The proposed work plan, proposer's capacity, and sample report will account for the remaining 30 percent.

d) Cost Proposal

General issues

Bidders must submit a firm-fixed price bid in US Dollars. The quotation will not be subject to revision unless officially invited to re-submit by UNHCR. All prices/rates quoted must be exclusive of all taxes as UNHCR is a tax-exempt organization. Bidders will suggest a payment schedule, linked unambiguously to contract milestones. Invoicing and payment will be performed by bank transfer, in US Dollars. All costs will be fixed, except for travel to selected destinations, which will be on a cost-reimbursable basis.

Budget categories and details

The budget should be presented in three categories: personnel costs, project costs, and overhead costs (in the case of institutional submissions). Sub-headings within the categories may be done at bidder's discretion.

Personnel Costs: These should include classification (i.e. job title/function) and rates for team members; duration of work for each. This information may be contained within a table showing expected level of effort per team member, by phase. The level of effort must be visible in both the technical and the financial proposals, albeit without associated cost in the technical proposal.

Other costs: These should include cost of travel, including subsistence allowances, travel by air, train, road, etc., telecommunication and miscellaneous expenses. While, the final selection of sites will be effected after

the desk-review, bidders can use Lebanon and Jordan as the two destinations for in-country consultations in order to permit bid comparison.

12. Awarding the contract and payment

UNHCR will award the contract after considering both technical and cost factors, on the principle of best value-for-money. Payment will be made only upon UNHCR's acceptance of the work performed in accordance with agreed schedule of payment and/or contract milestones. The terms of payment are net 30 days, after receipt of invoice and acceptance of work. Where the need arises, earlier payment may be negotiated between UNHCR and the contracted institution, on the terms indicated in the contract.