UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency | EMERGENCY HANDBOOK

# Evaluations of emergency operations

11 January 2024

## Key points

- In line with UNHCR Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response and the UNHCR Evaluation Policy, an evaluation of all Level-3 (L3) emergency operations is to be conducted within 15 months or earlier of the response
- Evaluations of Level 1 and 2 emergencies may also be commissioned at the request of the Senior Executive Team (SET) or the Regional Bureau(x) or Regional and Country Offices in line with the provisions of the Evaluation Policy
- To the extent possible, Evaluation Officers will participate in the Real Time Review exercises to enable a close synergy with the evaluation
- Emergency evaluations are conducted for learning and accountability purposes. They enable Senior Management and other stakeholders to make informed decisions, demonstrate results to stakeholders, and improve strategies, plans, programs, and policies
- Emergency Evaluation reports are published on the Evaluation Office website together with the management response – with follow up reporting required after 12 and 24 months

## 1. Overview

### 1.1 Purpose

UNHCR applies the following UN definition of evaluation:

"*An evaluation is an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.1 An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely* *incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders"*.

Evaluation informs choices made at all levels of the organization in strategic planning, programming and decision-making based on timely, credible and impartial evidence. This evidence will reflect, directly and indirectly, the views and perspectives of persons of concern to UNHCR and host communities regarding the protection and assistance provided by the organization

Emergency evaluations analyze the extent to which UNHCR (as a whole) is providing a relevant, timely and effective response to a country or regional humanitarian crisis, taking into consideration the complex enabling and constraining factors in the country/region.

The objectives of emergency response evaluations can be broadly categorized as follows:

- ***Strengthening*** *the design of UNHCR's operations as well as its emergency preparedness– through assessing the extent to which UNHCR's strategy in the country was relevant to the most important needs of the refugee and IDP population, corresponded to the agency's areas of strength, and responsibility, and took into consideration the capacities and operations of other partners;*
- ***Improving*** *UNHCR's performance and the results achieved for PoC (Persons of Concern)– through an analysis of the interventions, partnerships, immediate results and potential for longer term impacts of UNHCRs activities;*
- ***Helping*** *UNHCR further strengthen its policies, guidance and systems, humanitarian-development nexus and approaches, to better respond to emergencies – drawing lessons from the whole-of-UNHCR response.*
- ***Providing*** *UNHCR with a credible source of objective information on the organizations performance that can be used to provide assurance and accountability to partners.*

### 1.2 Guiding Principles and Criteria

Evaluation in UNHCR is founded on the fundamental principles of impartiality, credibility and utility. These principles, which are connected and mutually reinforcing, subsume a number of specific norms that guide UNHCR's work in commissioning, conducting and supporting the use of evaluation.

Evaluations, including emergency response evaluations, are guided by gender, equity and human rights considerations, in accordance with UN-wide norms, standards and guidance. UNHCR draws on the criteria of the OECD DAC and ALNAP, adapting these for evaluating humanitarian action. UNHCR does not select or apply the criteria mechanistically but adaptively to ensure that the evaluation reflects good practice standards and the needs of evaluation users.

Evaluations must be conducted in full respect of UNHCR's age, gender and diversity policy and UNHCR's commitment to accountability to affected populations8 to ensure that all groups and identities within the populations of concern have equitable opportunities to be involved, and to contribute to the evaluation, irrespective of age, gender, ethnic, political or religious affiliation, or sexual identity.

# 2. Relevance for emergency operations

### 2.1. Management of an L3 Emergency Evaluation

Level 3 emergency evaluations are commissioned and managed by the Evaluation Office. In line with UNHCR's Evaluation Policy, evaluations shall be conducted no later than 15 months from the L3 declaration. All L3 emergency response evaluations are conducted by independent external evaluators and funded through L3 emergency funding appeals.

Depending on the evaluation objectives and the operational context, the evaluation can start earlier than 15 months to ensure that they can contribute to real-time reflection and help assess the implementation of the Real-Time Review's recommendations.

<u>Main steps:</u>

After the L3 declaration, the Head of the Evaluation Office appoints an Evaluation Manager.

Upon finalization of the Real-time Review, the Evaluation Manager will initiate discussions with the relevant divisions in HQ, the Regional Bureau and the Country Office to agree on evaluation objectives, scope, and timeline.

The Evaluation Office will contract an independent Evaluation firm, the service provider, to carry out the evaluation.

An Evaluation concept note (2 pages) and an evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR) will subsequently be drafted and agreed upon.

The Evaluation Manager will be responsible for managing the day-to-day aspects of the evaluation process. The UNHCR Country Operation/Regional Bureaux will appoint an evaluation Focal Point.

Management at global, regional and country level support the evaluation through all. They are requested to:

1. Inform all relevant parties in advance (UNHCR colleagues, UN and NGO partners, government, donors), introduce the evaluation team, and explain that staff and partners may be approached for interview.
2. Allocate a focal point on substance, as well as for logistical and administrative support.
3. Make available to the evaluation team documents that capture key developments, decisions and results relating to the emergency operation. Assist the evaluation team to set up interviews with key stakeholders.
4. Interviews should include persons of concern and should adopt an age, gender and diversity (AGD) approach. Representative(s) and country office(s) may also be requested to provide logistical support (subject to operational constraints). To safeguard the credibility and objectivity of the evaluation, UNHCR staff may not participate in any of the evaluation team interviews.

Throughout the process, UNHCR Evaluation Office will set up a library of background documents and data to share with the evaluation team, that will be continuously updated.

### 2.2 Scope of the Emergency Evaluation

The operational scope of emergency response evaluations is not fixed, and the Evaluation Office will discuss this in collaboration with the relevant Country Operation(s), Regional Bureau(x) and Headquarters. However, it is important to remember that the operational scope of the evaluations must include all levels of the Organization, since a L3 emergency response triggers a 'whole-of-Organization' response.

The geographical scope should mirror the operational scope. It may focus only on the areas of emergency response, or on the entire country/region. A decision on whether to include regular programs (e.g. non-emergency-related) in the scope of the evaluation can be made on a case-by-case basis and will be defined in the ToR.

All of the above is also applicable for evaluations of L1 and L2 emergency responses, although the time and operational scope will be more limited. Please refer to the UNHCR Policy on Emergency preparedness and response for the key features of the L1 and L2 responses.

In some cases, evaluations of UNHCR emergency responses may be complemented by inter-agency humanitarian evaluations which focus on system wide performance, operational barriers and achievements.

# 3. Main guidance

### 3.1. Terms of Reference / Key Areas of Inquiry

The OECD DAC evaluation criteria are the pre-eminent criteria for evaluating development and humanitarian assistance. As updated in 2019, the six criteria are: effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, impact, sustainability and coherence. ALNAP's 2006 guide interprets the criteria for application in humanitarian action as: effectiveness, appropriateness/relevance, efficiency, impact, coverage, coherence and connectedness.

Additional criteria may include cross-cutting themes, such as coordination, accountability to affected populations, age, gender and diversity. The weight of each criterion will be discussed with the UNHCR Evaluation Manager during the inception stage.

Given time and operational constraints, the evaluation should focus on priority questions that can help to provide evidence of UNHCR's scaled-up response and humanitarian assistance. Indicative Evaluations questions may include:

- How responsive was the UNHCR strategy to the external environment, including the evolving context and role of Government and other humanitarian and development actors (UN, NGO, civil society/local actors)?
- To what extent has UNHCR followed up upon the Real-Time Review (RTR) recommendations to the evolving crisis?
- Given the availability of resources, to what extent is UNHCR's response meeting the needs

of the the most vulnerable? How effective has its targeting strategy been?

- To what extent has UNHCR achieved intended outputs and targets and contributed to envisaged outcomes? Are there any indications of unintended or negative effects of the L3 response?
- How efficient and timely was the response e.g. the extent of scale up across business processes, HR, procurement, funding, technical support, and otherwise? Were internal accountabilities clear?
- To what extent are successes and failures in the response attributable to system-related factors? What role did key UNHCR entities play in this (divisions, bureaux, HQ, operation)?

Areas of recommendation typically consider:

- What more should be done? What should be done differently to enhance UNHCR response programming for refugees, IDPs, and their communities?
- What can UNHCR learn from its preparedness efforts? And what lessons can be used at the regional level and in other regions of UNHCR operations?
- How can UNHCR adapt its emergency response to longer-term recovery and reintegration needs?

Due to the specificity of each evaluation, Evaluation Questions are discussed and formulated at the stage of ToR development. They are presented here for indicative purposes only.

UNHCR encourages the use of a standard Evaluation Matrix. This forms the main analytical framework for an evaluation. It sets out how each evaluation question and evaluation criteria will be addressed. It also breakdowns the main questions into sub-questions, mapping against them data collection and analysis methods, indicators or/and lines of inquiry, data collection tools and sources of information. The Evaluation Matrix serves to indicate where secondary data will be used and where primary data will need to be collected. Furthermore, it guides analysis, ensures that all data collected is analyzed and triangulated, thus helping to increase credibility and reduce subjectivity in the evaluative judgement.

### 3.2. Methodology

For each emergency evaluation, UNHCR’s expectations will be presented in the ToR, and the most appropriate methodology will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

Nevertheless, evaluations should always strive to employ a mixed-methods approach that relies on a variety of primary and secondary sources. Given the nature of emergency evaluations, data collection and analysis methods that are considered time and labor- intensive (i.e., economic modeling, large-scale surveys, systematic reviews) may be less appropriate. The approach should always be participatory, but the number of Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions may be reduced or, where possible, conducted remotely to reduce the evaluation mission footprint.

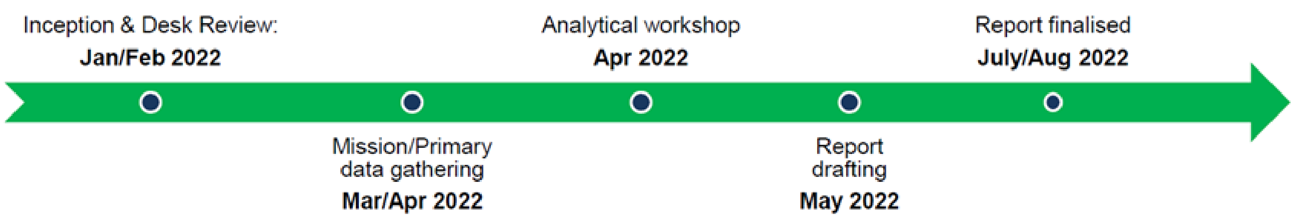
### 3.3. Deliverables and timeline

Key deliverables are indicated below. These are indicative and may change according to the evaluation scope, timeline, and expectations of UNHCR, as indicated in the ToR.

Key deliverables of emergency response evaluations include:

- Inception report (7-15 pages) and a comprehensive desk review (10-15 pages) - confirming the scope of the evaluation, the evaluation questions, methods to be used, all data gathering tools, as well as the analytical framework – and summarizing findings derived from a review of existing documentation;
- Presentations/Debriefs after inception phase, field mission (or remote data collection) and final report submission, including a ppt or aide memoir;
- Workshops with relevant staff in HQ, Regional Bureaux and CO staff, to validate the findings; Draft and Final evaluation reports (30-50 pages), including a 4-6-page stand-alone executive summary;
- Copies of data collection tools, training material, and any other material produced during the evaluation period
- Any communication material planned for this evaluation (e.g. infographic, podcast)

An indicative timeline for an emergency evaluation – from the point at which the external evaluation team has been recruited/contracted:




### 3.5. Management Response

A management response will be prepared within 3 months of the finalization of the evaluation report. The office of the Assistant High Commissioner, Operations is responsible for coordinating and clearing the management response to the L3 emergency evaluation – which will benefit from inputs from concerned COs, RBs and Divisions as relevant and will support reporting after 12 and 24 months on the implementation of actions committed to.

### 3.6. Evaluation Reference Group

The evaluation manager and evaluation team will be supported by an Evaluation Reference Group, which will act in an advisory capacity and comprise a representative panel of primary users of the evaluation. The ERG usually includes several external stakeholders. Representatives of the people UNHCR works with and for should, where feasible, be members of the Evaluation Reference Group.

The Group is expected to assess the quality of the evaluation work and provide feedback, notably during specific meetings and workshops organized during the evaluation process. The collaborative framework of the Evaluation Team and Evaluation Reference Group (as well as its membership) will be specified during the early stage of the Inception phase.

### 3.7. Audiences

The primary audiences of emergency evaluations conclusions and recommendations are Senior Executive Team, Director of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS) and other relevant divisions (DIP, DSPR, DRS etc.) and clusters (GPC, CCCM, etc.), relevant Regional Bureau Director and Country Representative(s)

Secondary audiences include the UN and Government partners, donors, targeted populations, and implementing partners.

## Emergency Operation Evaluation – Management Action Points

- When heading an emergency operation, expect and make time for a real-time review within 3 months and an evaluation within 15 months of the start of the emergency response.
- Nominate a focal point (FP) within the operation to cooperate with the HQ evaluation manager on content and an admin focal point for logistical needs.
- The FP is tasked to compile documents, data and information relevant to the agreed scope of the evaluation.
- The FP will identify stakeholders as key informants for the data collection phase (evaluation team field visit) and alert the KIs of the request to participate.
- Ensure that staff in the operation are informed of the formal initiation of the evaluation, the evaluation team, the timeline and expected contributions.
- Attend briefings/de-briefing with the evaluation team, review the draft report and confirm which recommendations are accepted/partially accepted or rejected and the reason.
- Provide the management response to the report and the agreed follow-up action.

## Annexes

UNHCR Policy for Evaluation, 2022

Evaluation in UNHCR: A quick guide, 2018

## 4. Links

UNHCR Evaluation Office (accessible to UNHCR staff only) UNHCR external website - Evaluation Office Sample L3 evaluation reports UNHCR Guidance Note for the Preparation of Management Responses (accessible to ...

## 5. Main contacts

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# Partnership Management for Emergency Preparedness and Response

03 November 2023

## Key points

- Review existing partnerships and stakeholder mapping, to identify potential gaps during contingency planning to respond to the envisaged emergency scenario
- Pre-select a pool of potential partners, during contingency planning, through an expedited call for expressions of interest where the results are assessed by the multi-functional Implementation Programme Management Committee (IPMC)
- Ensure that partners are registered on the UN Partner Portal (UNPP), no later than three months after signing their project workplans
- From 2024 onwards, create a Partnership Framework Agreement (PFA) for new partners with already incorporated waivered emergency conditions and, in parallel, a project workplan with the mandatory requirement of a financial plan

# 1. Overview

This entry focuses on how UNHCR's engagement and actions, when preparing for and responding to emergencies, advance our delivery of life-saving protection and humanitarian assistance to forcibly displaced and stateless persons through partnerships.

UNHCR's partnership approach is guided by the principles of partnership endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform on 12 July 2007, which emphasize equality, transparency, a results-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity. The UNHCR Procedures on Partnership Management provide a unified framework and overall direction for partnership management processes throughout the three inter-linked phases of the programme cycle: PLAN for, GET and SHOW Results.

Funded partners, who receive financial support from UNHCR, are referred to as "partners" in this document. Non-funded partners are referenced as such. UNHCR disburses a significant part of its annual expenditure through over 1,200 partners, and effective implementation with partners is fundamental to any emergency response.

# 2. Relevance for emergency operations

UNHCR works closely with partners to protect and assist forcibly displaced and stateless people, particularly in an emergency. A partnership agreement is a mandatory instrument whenever UNHCR transfers funds to partners, including in declared emergencies.

Partnerships during emergencies make it possible to:

- Rapidly identify and swiftly respond to the needs of forcibly displaced and stateless persons.
- Collaborate and coordinate in a principled manner with other humanitarian responders, mitigating the risk of duplication.
- Provide essential resources to partners, enabling them to deliver results for emergency programmes.

Demonstrate sound stewardship and accountability to partner organizations, donors, communities, individuals and other stakeholders.

# 3. Main guidance

**Partnership contingency planning**

As part of contingency planning, the existing project workplans and the stakeholder mapping are reviewed to identify potential gaps in expertise, the scope of required results, target population, and the geographical place of delivery during an emergency.

As part of contingency planning, if gaps are identified, a country operation can establish a pool of potential partners. This allows for timely due diligence while ensuring that the best-fit partner is ready to embark quickly in an emergency response when required. This can entail:

- Stipulating within the call for expression of interest the duration for which this contingency pool of partners remains valid. For example, a country operation may mobilize potential partners from the contingency pool until 20XX.
- If a pool of potential partners is recommended by the IPMC via a call for expression of interest, the UNHCR representative (or head of sub-office) may sign an agreement with a partner from the selected pool, whether or not an emergency of any level has been declared.

**Partnering in an emergency**

The representative or director has the authority to decide on the best-fit implementation modalities, without an IPMC recommendation. This decision considers the needs, operational capacity, presence, and availability of other stakeholders, and other context-specific parameters. After the emergency declaration expires, the representative will revisit implementation modalities prior to the next year of implementation.

Once an emergency of any level has been declared, the following partnership management procedures apply for the duration of the declaration, including any extension:

- During an emergency declaration, the head of sub-office, representative or director can expand the scope of an existing PFA (for example, to cover a new outcome or geographical area) without a new recommendation from the IPMC – if the partner has prior experience, proven capacity and is willing to expand.
- The registration of a partner on the UN Partner Portal and all applicable capacity assessment processes are to be completed as soon as possible, and no later than three months after signing the project workplan. See the Programme Handbook for further details surrounding a partner's capacity strengthening and risk management, as well as the applicable capacity assessment processes.
- For new partners, a PFA is generated. In parallel, a project workplan is created with the mandatory requirement of a financial plan. The operation does not need to complete the project description, results plan or risk register ahead of the project workplan signature. The financial plan may be signed with one account code (budget line) per output. The first instalment is released based on the conditions of the project workplan and financial plan only.
- An amendment of the project workplan is then required in case the partnership is extended beyond the emergency declaration period, to include a project description, a results plan, a risk register and any further applicable project workplan components.
- Partners are entitled to special supply procedures, including a ceiling increase for request for quotations and a shortened floating period for formal methods of solicitation. See the Procurement emergency handbook entry for more information on all the special supply procedures that automatically apply to UNHCR when an emergency is declared. See the Programme Handbook for further details surrounding partner's procurement capacity assessed during the internal control assessment or questionnaire (ICA/ICQ).
- The project closure of a project workplan may be completed, within the emergency

declaration period, having only released one instalment, with the PFA, project workplan, financial plan, one project financial report (PFR) and any other reports (as agreed by the operation).

## Monitoring partnerships in an emergency

Monitoring partnerships is a crucial component of an emergency response. There are no reduced implementation and results monitoring requirements during a declared emergency. The frequency of monitoring activities for partnerships may in fact increase.

The humanitarian situation in a country is often fluid and subject to frequent change. Monitoring partnership projects is therefore essential to track and confirm their progress against agreed performance targets, adjust their direction and implementation as needed, and identify measures to improve their impact and quality. UNHCR, its partners and other stakeholders, i.e. local authorities (as applicable), should jointly monitor and review partnership projects, share information and coordinate, to strengthen their collective ownership and joint responsibility for project results.

To ensure effective monitoring of partnerships, it is recommended that a country operation updates (or develops) the annual assessment, monitoring and evaluation workplan as soon as possible, that is revisited on an annual basis, which is informed by the overall M&E plan. This will enable the operation to determine the key M&E activities required for the emergency response. See the Programme Handbook for more information.

During an emergency, the partners' capacity to prevent, mitigate and respond to risks of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) is monitored regularly by the UNHCR multi-functional team and the PSEA focal point. For a partner who is in a high-risk environment and has previously been assessed as having a low or medium PSEA capacity and therefore has a capacity strengthening implementation plan (CSIP), the operation monitors the implementation of CSIP activities after three months and continues checking its progress throughout the emergency declaration and any extension period. Within six months of implementing a CSIP, or nine months in the case of extension, the partner should have reached full capacity. See UNHCR's Procedures on Partnership Management for more information about continuing partnerships with partners that are not able to reach full PSEA capacity for further years/project workplans.

Reasons for signing a project workplan with a partner despite its low or medium capacity during an emergency may include the partner's specialized technical expertise within a particular area, lack of viable alternatives in that sector or location, or a satisfactory risk assessment of the partner. Capacity-strengthening regarding PSEA is a key area of UNHCR's work with these partners.

## Associated risks

Emergency preparedness is critical to be able to respond to the humanitarian crisis, mitigate the impact and reduce human suffering and loss of life.  Risk management will help anticipate risks and opportunities that could impact the achievement of shared objectives. UNHCR and partners need to manage and effectively mitigate risks identified (for further guidance see the Risk Management Toolkit  to help identify critical risks in an operation). There is a need to exercise due diligence as the following risks are heightened during an emergency:

- Significant expansion of the operation with new protection and assistance needs and new priorities.
- Civil society not sufficiently developed and lack of NGO capacity in the operation.
- Partners may lack capacity / unable to upscale to address growing operational needs.
- Security situation or other disturbances impact implementation and access to forcibly displaced and stateless persons.
- Competing priorities for limited staff impacts planning and implementation capacity.
- Fraud or other misconduct may occur as a result of faulty internal control systems (see UNHCR's risk management tool on fraud prevention for further guidance).
- Resources provided may not be used for their intended purpose.
- Funds may be utilized inefficiently, reducing the quality or availability of the services that forcibly displaced and stateless people receive.
- Some partners may not fully account for funds entrusted to them by UNHCR.
- Unethical behaviour of personnel, including risk of SEA.

**Associated mitigating measures**

- Ensure coordination mechanisms with partners and stakeholders.
- Early engagement of partners in contingency planning.
- Engage complementary partner(s) in view of geographic coverage.
- Update annual assessment, monitoring and evaluation plan based on risk.
- Implement monitoring mechanisms, including remote monitoring (if physical access is not feasible).
- Verify partner controls, standard operating procedures, recordings of transactions, and that segregation of duties is followed.
- Raise awareness and conduct training on PSEA as well as fraud and corruption prevention and reporting, among partners, UNHCR personnel and forcibly displaced and stateless people.
- Establish effective complaints/feedback mechanisms in consultation with communities.
- Expand outreach monitoring and remain accessible to forcibly displaced and stateless people.

## Post emergency phase

During an emergency declaration, the country operation should initiate planning for the post-emergency phase. This includes reviewing partnership agreements, together with the regional bureau and relevant HQ divisions, at the end of an emergency declaration, to ensure continuity of the response.

It is at the discretion of the representative to decide when the competitive selection process for partners recommences after an emergency declaration has expired. It is their responsibility to ensure that this decision is clearly documented.

For project workplans that were created during an emergency, if they are extended beyond the emergency declaration period, then an amendment is required. This amendment includes a project description, results plan, risk register and any further applicable project workplan components.

Partnership agreements require partners to provide unhindered access to audit, monitoring and inspection teams, during or post-emergency. The monitoring, verification and audits must provide reasonable assurance that UNHCR funds are spent for the intended purpose and used to provide protection and assistance in the manner intended. Among other safeguards and to remain credible with donors, UNHCR should verify the integrity of and data in partners' reported results and expenditure. All projects that UNHCR funds and implements with partners are subject to audit. Projects due for audit are identified by DSPR/IMAS through a risk-based approach.

## Partnership Management in Emergencies

- Before an emergency is declared, onboard pooled partners during competitive partnership selection as part of contingency planning.
- Ensure new partners register on the UNPP within three months of signing a project workplan.
- Sign a partnership framework agreement and project workplan, entering as much information as is available at the time, with a financial plan only (one account code per output may be applied). The first instalment is released based on the conditions of the contract and financial plan only.
- Assess the partner’s capacity in protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), within three months of signing a project workplan.
- Assess a new partner’s internal controls or retrieve their latest internal control questionnaire risk rating from a UN project audit.
- Update (or develop) the annual assessment, monitoring and evaluation workplan to determine the key M&E activities required for the emergency.
- Verify all reported results and expenditure ahead of releasing instalments.

- Coordinate project audits accordingly.

## 4. Links

UN Partner Portal Procedures on Partnership Management (accessible to UNHCR staff only) Risk management tool on fraud prevention (accessible to UNHCR staff only) Programme Handbook (accessible to UNHCR staff only)

## 5. Main contacts

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# Real-Time Review

14 December 2023

## Key points

- Real-Time Review (RTR) is mandatory for Level 3 emergencies
- RTR is conducted 3 months after a Level 3 declaration
- Takes stock of the timeliness, appropriateness and effectiveness of the emergency response to date
- Identifies areas of the response requiring further support, and proposes course corrections where necessary
- Assesses the extent to which recommendations (i.e. from the Joint Senior Level Mission) have been implemented

## 1. Overview

The Real-Time Review (RTR) is an additional support instrument for Level 3 emergencies. It is an evidence-based review of UNHCR's operational response to date and recommends course corrections and adjustments where necessary.

# 2. Main guidance

Three months after a Level 3 emergency is declared, the regional bureau, DESS and other relevant HQ divisions conduct a Real-Time Review (RTR), in line with the Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response. The key aims of the RTR are to:

1. Take stock of the timeliness, appropriateness and effectiveness of UNHCR's response and engagement, at country, regional and HQ levels;
2. Monitor the application of the Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response; and
3. Recommend adjustments and course corrections, if necessary.

The RTR usually takes the form of a desk review – including mission and situational reports, funding appeals, strategy papers, personnel structure and other relevant documents – followed by a joint mission and/or workshop. Where multiple Level 3 emergencies have been declared as part of the same situation, the RTR may assess the emergency response in all the countries concerned.

The RTR is a participatory exercise involving a broad cross-section of stakeholders; as well as international and national personnel at field locations involved in the emergency response at country-level, the Resident / Humanitarian Coordinator, selected members of the UN Country Team / Humanitarian Country Team, implementing and operational partners, donors, forcibly displaced and stateless persons may also be consulted.

The RTR focuses on the country-level. More specifically, it examines:

- The urgent protection and assistance needs of affected populations;
- How well the response to date has met these needs;
- The immediate emergency preparedness and response gaps;
- Risk analysis and preparedness efforts made prior to the emergency declaration;
- The operation's strengths and weaknesses;
- Measures to ensure and enhance staff welfare;
- The extent to which recommendations arising from the Joint Senior Level Mission (JSLM) and any other relevant processes have been implemented.

Following the desk review, mission and/or workshops, the participants of the RTR draft a report covering the findings, outcomes and recommendations that may have arisen. The draft report highlights achievements, acknowledges constraints and identifies areas for improvement – both in terms of the country operation's response to the emergency, and the organization's procedures, systems and policies more generally. It also sets out recommendations for the transition from the emergency to a more stable operational response.

Once endorsed, the findings and recommendations are presented to the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations (AHC-O), and the report is disseminated to relevant parties. The country Representative(s) should ensure that personnel in the operation are aware of the recommendations, and are engaged in the post-RTR change process. The regional bureau is responsible for ensuring that the recommendations are tracked and implemented by the country operation(s).

NB. For Level 2 emergencies, a similar exercise may be launched in consultation with the regional bureau or at the request of the AHC-O, but this is not mandatory.

Real-Time Reviews are different from evaluations. Evaluations are mandatory for Level 3 emergencies within 15 months of the declaration, and are conducted by the Evaluation Office in line with the Policy for Evaluation in UNHCR.

### Annexes

UNHCR/HCP/2023/01 Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response

# 3. Learning and field practices

Accessible to UNHCR staff only

Emergency Management in UNHCR course