

## Cash Working Group and Accommodation and Transportation meeting

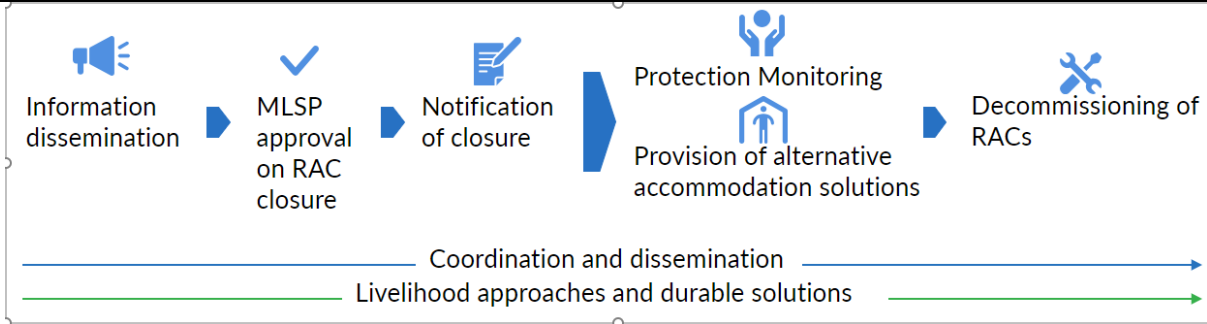
Meeting Details	
<b>Date</b>	28 June 2023
<b>Time</b>	13.00 to 15.00
<b>Co-Chair</b>	<i>Vasile CUȘCA, Secretary of State, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection</i> <i>Yigit Anil Gurer, CBI Officer, UNHCR</i> <i>Andrea Cuisana, Associate Settlement Planning Officer</i>
<b>Reporting</b>	<i>Natalia Postaru, Associate Programme CBI Officer</i>
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:mdachcbi@unhcr.org">mdachcbi@unhcr.org</a>
Agenda	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening remarks and Introduction</li> <li>• Priorities of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection for the Moldovan Vulnerable population (MoLSP)</li> <li>• Presentation of the Refugee Accommodation Centers consolidation strategy (UNHCR)</li> <li>• Common Cash Facility Approach for Assistance for Refugees (UNHCR)</li> </ul>
Information collection and relevant links	
	UNHCR Operational Data Portal Moldova - <a href="https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/MDA">https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/MDA</a> Moldova Cash Working Group - <a href="https://data.unhcr.org/en/working-group/318?sv=0&amp;geo=680">https://data.unhcr.org/en/working-group/318?sv=0&amp;geo=680</a>
Participants:	
Vasile Cușca – Secretary of State, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MoLSP) Svetlana Mirca – MoLSP Teodor Vicol – MoLSP Cristina Ursachi – MoLSP Tatiana Ciumas – General Inspectorate for Migration (GIM) Simon Springett – UN RC Laura Fiorotto – UN RC Celine Brixander – UNFPA Artiom Sici – UNICEF Fadel Daoud – WFP Cristian Slobodeaniuc – WFP	Viorica Bulat – WVI Michel Gerges – WVI Valentina Harovschi – IFRC Jomari Borlongan – IFRC Olga Morozan – Pestalozzi Djavid Paknehad – CCR Maria Pislaras – CCR Andrei Girleanu – ADRA Aliona Curdoglo – local NGO Joanna Jaworska – IMPACT Initiative Wassim Ben Roundhone – REACH Eugenio Carrillo – PIN

<p>Aizhan Mamatbekova – WFP  Ibrahim Marte – IOM  Natasa Omerovic – IOM  Alina Bodrug – IOM  Danielle Pedretti – Help Age  Ilinka Leger – HEKS-EPER  Guillermo Llinas – PIN  Sabine Ebner – UN Women  Eirini Aletra – CRS  Gabriela Georgial – CRS</p>	<p>Xenia Martinov – PIN  Denis Sirbu – Moldova for Peace  Stella Lingens – ACTED  Mariana Leyva - ACTED  Andrea Cuisana – UNHCR  Efratan Gizaw Abebe – UNHCR  Martina Bogdeva – UNHCR  Katie Lampe – UNHCR  Suenanica Anne De Rozario – UNHCR</p>
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### Summary of discussions and agreements/action points

Agenda	Discussion
<p><b>Agenda Point</b> Opening remarks</p>	<p><u>Opening Remark:</u>  The meeting commenced with an opening remark by the State Secretary from the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MoLSP) and the co-leaders of the Cash and Basic Needs Working Groups. The purpose of the meeting was focused on two main issues: (i) Consolidation of the Transitional Refugee Accommodation Centers (RACs) Strategy and (ii) the Coordination of cash assistance programmes for refugees, Moldovan host families and Vulnerable Moldovan families.</p> <p><u>Background:</u>  During the Inter-ministerial meeting -National Committee on Migration and Asylum- on 5<sup>th</sup> of June, led by the Ministry of Internal Affairs with participation of various governmental authorities, donors, national and international organizations two key issues were identified: the need to consolidation of the Transitional RACs Strategy and the improvement of the coordination in cash assistance programme for refugees. The MoLSP requested the Cash Working Group (CWG) to collaborate on developing a common strategy for cash assistance, including those under the Temporary Protection regime. To initiate the process, the UNHCR conducted discussions with the MoLSP, and a matrix was circulated among the CWG partners to gather information about their plans for different target populations, starting with Moldovan Vulnerable Families, families hosting refugees, and refugees themselves. Based on the collected information, the UNHCR conducted an analysis to assess the capacity among the partners.</p> <p>In parallel with the cash assistance coordination, there was also a discussion on the RACs Consolidated Strategy, specifically addressing the cash component for rent. It was agreed to extend the discussion under the CWG and involve partners from the Accommodation and Transportation (AT) sectors.</p>
<p><b>Agenda Point</b></p>	<p>The State Secretary of the MoLSP emphasized the importance and brought his gratitude to all the stakeholders involved in cash support programmes and RACs support programmes for displaced people from Ukraine, as well as Moldovan families hosting refugees and Vulnerable Moldovan families.</p>

<p>Priorities of the MoLSP for the Moldovan Vulnerable population (MoLSP)</p>	<p>The MoLSP reiterated its appeal and request to all partners and donors to establish a unified strategy and approach in providing assistance to the RACs' beneficiaries. The goal is to mobilize and motivate them to leave the centres and integrate into the community, utilizing their full potential, including employment opportunities and access to education for children, while benefiting from community services. This approach is crucial to avoid creating dependence on the RACs. It is desired to have a common support system to motivate individuals and implement shared motivational interventions, such as providing cash for rent - accommodations for a period of time, along with other identified support measures.</p>																																																							
<p><b>Agenda Point</b></p> <p>Presentation of the RACs consolidation strategy (UNHCR)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNHCR as a co-leading the AT sector presented the RACs Consolidation Strategy.</li> <li>• Working with partners to assess the current situation of the RACS, two assessments were done, cost analysis and qualitative analysis to validate the reasons for the consolidations of RACs. For the qualitative analysis, these are some of the components considered during the assessment: financial investment, living conditions, the management quality, which vulnerable groups are in the RACs, the protection concerns in the RACs, occupancy vs. capacity and a timeline for implementation for 2023 was recommended.</li> <li>• <u>RACs closure prioritization:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 34 RACs to remain open;</li> <li>• 8 RACs under consideration;</li> <li>• 10 RACs to be closed.</li> <li>• <u>Timeline for closure:</u></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <table border="1" data-bbox="432 807 1805 1278"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">RACs Group</th> <th colspan="3">Short term</th> <th colspan="3">Mid-term</th> </tr> <tr> <th>July</th> <th>August</th> <th>September</th> <th>October</th> <th>November</th> <th>December</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Group A</td> <td>Notification July 1</td> <td>Closure August 31</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Group B</td> <td></td> <td>Notification August 1</td> <td>Closure September 31</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Group C</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Notification September 1</td> <td>Closure October 31</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Group D</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Notification October 1</td> <td>Closure November 31</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Group E</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Notification November 1</td> <td>Closure December 31</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Group F</td> <td colspan="6">Long- term RACs consolidation starts on January 2024</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Procedure for the consolidation of RACs:</u></li> </ul>	RACs Group	Short term			Mid-term			July	August	September	October	November	December	Group A	Notification July 1	Closure August 31					Group B		Notification August 1	Closure September 31				Group C			Notification September 1	Closure October 31			Group D				Notification October 1	Closure November 31		Group E					Notification November 1	Closure December 31	Group F	Long- term RACs consolidation starts on January 2024					
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Other relevant points discussed:

- MoLSP informed that the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the Social Service Temporary Placement Centre for displaced persons from other countries and the Minimum Quality Standards is currently in counseling with relevant partners.

**Agenda Point**  
Common Cash Facility Approach for Assistance for Refugees (UNHCR)

UNHCR as a co-leader of the CWG presented the Common Cash Facility (CCF) Approach for Assistance for Refugees as a strategic initiative under the CWG coordination efforts. The goal is to enhance coordination, reduce duplication, and improve the efficient use of funds for assisting refugees.

- As a background, under the CWG the partners discussed these issues about coordination, duplication, use of funds in an efficient way. Based on the discussion at the Inter-ministerial meeting, as a strategical approach, UNHCR would like to propose a CCF. This platform is implemented in various operations with participation of many different partners, including UN Agencies, with more than a hundred participating partners and through which the payments are made in a coordinated way.
- The participants were engaged in a detailed discussion regarding the importance of coordination and the advantages it offers. The key coordination matters identified were:
  - Equity of assistance: Ensuring fairness in the aid distribution.
  - Maximizing assistance and available funding: Optimizing the use of resources to reach as many beneficiaries as possible.
  - Avoiding duplicative initiatives: Preventing unnecessary repetition of efforts and services.
  - Transparent communication: Enabling effective planning for all partners through open and clear communication channels.
  - Reducing human error: Utilizing digital processes to minimize mistakes and enhance accuracy.
  - Referral of vulnerable people: Facilitating the identification and support of individuals in need.
- The CCF is a cash assistance platform that allows the increase of coordination, and eliminates duplication of assistance, in addition to ensuring maximum accountability and further reducing overhead costs. The CCF approach is well-adapted to the context when:
  - There is the opportunity for a coordinated approach on targeting/prioritization.
  - There is a need for coordinated support to the cash component of the basic needs of a given population.

- There is a potential of a common financial service provider.
- There is an availability/ability of a common technological platform for managing payments.
- CCF Eco-system includes:
  - Refugee Registry: A database capturing individual data, including unique identifiers and biometrics.
  - Refugee Assistance Information System (RAIS) Platform: A web-based assistance management platform used by UNHCR, partners, and donors, facilitating coordination, tracking of assistance, and enhanced accountability.
  - Financial Service Provider (FSP) Portal: A portal allowing partners to coordinate cash activities and make payments efficiently.
  - Bilateral Contractual Agreement with the FSP: Partners establishing agreements with the common FSP to streamline services and reduce overhead costs.
- Components of the CCF Ecosystem:
  1. UNHCR's corporate registration system, PRIMES:
    - PRIMES consists of a comprehensive database for individual data capture and case management activities.
    - The system includes a biometrics component that captures fingerprints and a photo for identification purpose.
    - Currently, the database records information on over 120,000 individuals based on the UNHCR Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance programme.
  2. RAIS platform:
    - UNHCR has been utilizing RAIS as a web-based assistance management platform.
    - RAIS facilitates coordination and avoids duplication of assistance activities among different partners, including UNHCR, other organizations, and donors.
    - The platform's main objective is to ensure effective tracking of assistance, coordination, and enhanced accountability.
    - RAIS has been successfully deployed in the European region, specifically in Romania and Poland.
  3. Transparent Eligibility Criteria and Coordination:
    - The RAIS platform enables partners to generate lists of beneficiaries based on their respective eligibility criteria.
    - This transparent approach to beneficiary selection ensures coordination and minimizes duplication of cash assistance activities.
    - By utilizing RAIS, partners can allocate their funding exclusively to cash programmes, eliminating the need for extensive beneficiary identification efforts.
  4. Pre-paid Cards and Virtual Accounts for Cash Beneficiaries:
    - Cash beneficiaries receive pre-paid cards and have access to virtual accounts.
    - The utilization of pre-paid cards offers several advantages, including efficient and quick implementation of cash assistance.
    - Additionally, pre-paid cards allow to recover the unspent balances in case when the beneficiaries are leaving the country.
- Way Forward and Next Steps were proposed:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize the Draft Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) after incorporating the inputs received.</li> <li>• Discuss and establish Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the RAIS platform.</li> <li>• Conduct a cost efficiency analysis for the FSP.</li> <li>• Create a temporary task force under the CWG to address the technical details related to the CCF implementation, such as the DSA, SOP, and other relevant aspects. An email invitation will be circulated among CWG partners to schedule the first meeting.</li> <li>• Technical support from other operations that have successfully implemented the CCF for more than 10 years, with a focus on contextualizing the approach for Moldova.</li> <li>• For mid- and long term, explore the possibility of linking the RAIS platform with the Moldovan platform, AID.MD, to enhance verification, deduplication, and coordination with the existing system for easy transition of the refugee assistance to national safety nets.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Next Actions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MoLSP has had successful experiences with partners in creating and implementing the Crisis Module of the AID.MD platform, for vulnerable Moldovan families. This platform was developed in partnership with the MoLSP and the UN Agencies Joint Programme (UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, IOM, UNFPA).</li> <li>• The MoLSP encourages this initiative to establish a unified payment tracking platform for both Ukrainian refugees and vulnerable Moldovan host families. The aim is to maintain a consistent approach, avoid duplicating efforts and payments, and ensure that all vulnerable individuals receive the necessary assistance.</li> <li>• The MoLSP supports the idea of utilizing both the CCF and AID.MD platforms for Cash-Based Interventions (CBI) targeting refugees and vulnerable populations in Moldova.</li> <li>• Partners who have the necessary resources and wish to contribute to supporting vulnerable Moldovan population can join to submit their proposal in supporting the vulnerable Moldovan families (the matrix shared with the CWG partners). The MoLSP will validate partner proposals as soon as possible. The MoLSP is also working on its own proposals to support disadvantaged categories of Moldovan citizens and will present to the partners shortly.</li> <li>• The MoLSP will provide comments and a final position regarding the RACs Consolidated Strategy and CWG partners' proposals for supporting vulnerable Moldovan families.</li> <li>• MoLSP will revise the recommended list of the RACs consolidation and the strategy and will revert the two documents with their inputs.</li> <li>• It was agreed that partners should submit their inputs and feedback by 7<sup>th</sup> of July (one week) in order to have both -the cash assistance concepts, and the finalized and validated RACs strategy presented during the meeting-</li> </ul> <p><b>Next Actions:</b> Partners are requested to submit their inputs and proposals by <b>7<sup>th</sup> of July 2023</b>, with the aim of finalizing the matrix on partners' planned and ongoing activities.</p>