

# 2025-2026 RRP

## Planning Consultation Report

### Republic of Moldova

## Summary

On June 26, 2024, UNHCR held a consultation with selected sectors, partners, and donor representatives to gather inputs for the 2025-2026 Refugee Response Plan (RRP). The session was divided into five discussion blocks, each covering key areas: RRP stocktaking, expectations for the upcoming RRP, objectives for the next two years, characteristics of a successful planning process, and humanitarian-development coordination and transition. Below is a summary of the discussions and key recommendations, which will be used to inform the planning process expected to begin in late July and include government representatives, the UN, national and international NGOs, the Red Cross Movement, the private sector, refugees and host community members. The key recommendations in this document were reviewed by the Refugee Coordination Forum Inter-Sectoral Coordination Group.

**Session 1: Evaluation of the Previous Refugee Response Plan:** Participants assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the previous RRP, noting strong stakeholder engagement and coordination but identifying challenges such as complex project submission processes for NGOs and CSOs and limited usage of refugee funding tracker. The session also highlighted context-specific methodologies used to determine planning figures and targets across the region. Key recommendations included optimizing assessment (MSNA, SEIS) timing, simplifying project submission, improving usage by partners of refugee funding tracker, aligning regional methodologies, increasing visibility of projects supporting host communities, and clarifying RRP processes while managing expectations of local partners.

**Session 2: Expectations for the Upcoming RRP (2025-2026):** Discussions emphasized the need for a responsible transition to government systems, strengthening localization (including sharing capacities with national and local actors), fostering greater linkages between the RRP and development cooperation/actors, and implementing area-based approaches. Flexibility and adaptability in planning were highlighted to respond to evolving refugee situation. Key recommendations included integrating transition plans into the RRP, creating a business case for transition funding and strengthening area-based approaches.

**Session 3: Objectives for the Next Two Years:** Participants focused on supporting the government in implementing ongoing reforms, particularly the RESTART reform, as these are key elements in the pathway for inclusion. These reforms are partially supported through humanitarian and development funds coming to Moldova largely due to refugee presence. Participants stressed the

importance of supporting refugee inclusion across sectors and advocating for an expanded access to rights and services by TP holders, including a clear pathway for local integration which is not currently available for them.

**Session 4: Characteristics of a Successful Planning Process:** Participants identified the need to streamline the planning approach, including reducing redundant meetings and doing targeted consultations, while promoting cross-sectoral discussions. Engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including refugees and host communities, was stressed. The importance of aligning the RRP with broader frameworks like the UNSDCF and EU Acquis was highlighted. Participants also discussed optimizing the current coordination structure, including sector divisions, and working group structures, to maximize coordination and support government and local civil society engagement.

**Session 5: Humanitarian Development Coordination and Transition:** The final session emphasized aligning humanitarian and development efforts with government priorities and developing strategic advocacy to bridge the two approaches. Participants stressed balancing refugee integration with addressing immediate humanitarian needs, while reducing protection risks, and highlighted the value of conducting economic analyses on refugee contributions.

### Key Recommendations:

1. **Transition and Inclusion:** The RRP should prioritize the development and integration of a clear transition plan, focusing on the gradual transfer of responsibilities to the government and national civil society. This plan should support ongoing reforms and mobilize resources for the inclusion of refugees in national systems. A key priority is working closely with the government to expand rights for Temporary Protection holders, which is crucial for facilitating long-term integration and ensuring a sustainable approach to refugee protection and solutions.
2. **Planning and Coordination:** To enhance efficiency and effectiveness, the RRP planning process should be streamlined, with a focus on optimizing sector divisions to minimize duplication. This reorganization should aim to simplify coordination, particularly for government line ministries dealing with multiple sectors and local civil society. It's key to align the RRP with broader frameworks such as the UNSDCF, National and Sub-National Development Plans, and the EU acquis. This alignment will ensure coherence with national development goals and facilitate a more integrated approach to refugee response and long-term development, while mobilizing engagement and support from development actors.
3. **Stakeholder Engagement and Communication:** The RRP should emphasize inclusive planning by engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, including refugees, host communities, local authorities, and the private sector. Communication about RRP planning processes should manage expectations among all parties involved, especially local CSOs. This includes clearer guidelines coupled with information sessions on project submission procedures and funding. The planning process should foster inclusive

consultations, considering all relevant parties, including those in the Transnistrian Region. Cross-border coordination with Ukraine on key issues should be sought.

4. **Funding and Resource Allocation:** To ensure sustainable funding and effective resource management, a strong business case for transition funding should be developed. This should be supported by an economic analysis of refugee contributions to Moldova, which can help justify continued support and demonstrate the benefits of refugee inclusion. Funding levels transparency should be improved through enhanced use of the refugee funding tracker and regular consultations on sectoral funding allocation. These measures will not only provide clearer visibility on resource allocation and gaps but also promote more strategic discussions on funding distribution across sectors.
5. **Data Management and Assessments:** Efforts should be made to support the government to improve data collection and harmonization processes, ensuring that refugee needs are accurately represented in national and sub-national datasets. The timing of needs assessments should be optimized to better align with the RRP planning cycle, ensuring that the most current data informs planning decisions. These improvements in data management and assessment will lead to more accurate needs analysis, more effective targeting of resources, and ultimately, better outcomes for refugees and host communities.
6. **Flexible Planning:** The RRP should incorporate flexible planning mechanisms to adapt to changing circumstances over its two-year period. This includes balancing integration efforts with ongoing humanitarian needs, recognizing that some refugees will continue to require assistance while others move towards self-reliance. Area-based initiatives, such as the "Cities of Solidarity" model, should be strengthened to create more holistic and sustainable solutions that benefit both refugees and host communities. This approach allows for context-specific interventions that can adapt to local needs and opportunities, fostering more effective and sustainable response.

# Detailed Summary of Discussions and Recommendations

## Session 1: Evaluation of the Previous Refugee Response Plan (RRP)

This session focused on assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the previous RRP. Participants highlighted strong stakeholder engagement and coordination but noted different approaches for planning figures across the region and challenges on assessment timing. The project submission process was identified as complex and time-consuming especially for NGOs and CSOs. Misalignment between proposed and implemented projects was discussed, emphasizing the need for adaptability. The session concluded with calls for more realistic planning and clear transition strategies to government systems.

**Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination:** The previous RRP demonstrated strong participation from diverse actors, including government, INGOs, and local organizations. Effective coordination was observed across central and local levels, with significant commitment from various government ministries. The planning process benefited from open feedback channels, particularly with international and national NGOs. However, there's a need to enhance communication on the value of engaging in coordination mechanisms, especially for local organizations.

**Planning and Assessment:** Different approaches across the region regarding planning figures and targeting methodology was noted as an issue. The timing of the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (or related exercise) was identified as an area for improvement to ensure better needs-based planning. The tight 1.5-month timeframe for developing RRP project proposals was identified as a challenge, potentially impacting the quality and thoroughness of submissions.

**Project Submission and Funding:** The project submission process for NGOs and local CSOs was described as complex and time-consuming, often leading to duplication and frequent revisions. The underutilization of the refugee funding tracker by partners was highlighted as a concern, impacting transparency in fund allocation. Participants suggested developing better strategies to link the RRP with fundraising opportunities – following the good example of the monthly compilation of funding opportunities for national and local CSOs - and enhancing the use of the funding tracker for improved accuracy and transparency.

**Project Implementation and Adaptation:** participants noted a misalignment between initially submitted projects and actual implementation, emphasizing the need for ongoing assessment and adaptation. The visibility of activities supporting host communities and peaceful coexistence projects was identified as an area for improvement. Recommendations include implementing a more flexible approach to project adjustments and improving communication about the RRP process, including clarity on project submission and funding mechanisms.

**Realistic Planning:** Given the decreasing availability of humanitarian funds, there's an emphasis on considering realistic funding requests in future planning. This approach would help in optimizing the use of limited resources and setting achievable objectives.

#### **Key Recommendations from Session 1:**

- 1. Optimize assessment timing to better align with the RRP planning cycle:** Adjust the timing of the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment to better align with the RRP planning cycle.
- 2. Simplify project submission for NGOs and local CSOs:** Simplify project submission for NGOs and local CSOs to reduce duplication and frequent revisions. This requires sectors to prioritize activities and indicators.
- 3. Improve funding transparency through improved usage of the refugee funding tracker:** Enhance the use and promotion of the refugee funding tracker among partners to provide clearer visibility on resource allocation and gaps and promote strategic discussions on funding allocation across sectors.
- 4. Increase visibility of host community projects:** Improve the visibility and communication of activities targeting host communities, particularly peaceful coexistence projects.
- 5. Clarify RRP processes, including project submission and funding mechanisms:** Improve communication about the RRP process, including clear guidelines on project submission procedures and funding mechanisms.

## **Session 2: Expectations for the Upcoming RRP (2025-2026)**

The discussion centered on expectations for the 2025-2026 RRP, emphasizing the need for a responsible transition to government systems, strengthening localization (including sharing capacities with national and local actors), fostering greater linkages between the RRP and development cooperation/actors, and implementing area-based approaches. The need for flexibility and adaptability in planning was highlighted to respond to evolving refugee situations. Key recommendations included integrating transition plans into the RRP, creating a business case for transition funding, and ensuring adaptive planning processes considering the two years period.

**Transition and Government Leadership:** Participants stressed the importance of supporting the government in developing and implementing strategies/plans for refugee integration. There was a call for mobilizing RRP funds to support short-term scaling up of the government workforce to facilitate transition.

**Development Cooperation and Area-Based Approaches:** The group highlighted the importance of linking the RRP with development cooperation. Suggestions included leveraging operational functions of key sectors for refugee integration and piloting area-based approaches, such as "Cities of Solidarity", creating more holistic and sustainable solutions that benefit both refugees and host communities.

**Flexibility and Adaptability:** The importance of maintaining flexibility over the two-year period was emphasized, given the potential for changing contexts and the need for adaptive planning. Participants stressed the need for the RRP to be responsive to evolving refugee situations, including potential changes in refugee numbers, shifts in host community dynamics, or changes in the political landscape.

**Funding and Resource Allocation:** Emphasis was placed on developing a business case for funding the transition, particularly by demonstrating how additional financing being provided for Moldova due to refugee presence is positively impacting vulnerable Moldovan populations. Participants discussed the need for a balance between humanitarian aid and development activities, stressing the importance of realistic funding requests.

### Key Recommendations from Session 2:

- 1. Develop and Integrate transition plan:** Integrate into the RRP a clear plan for transitioning responsibilities to the government and national civil society, tailored to different sectors' needs and stages of readiness, ensuring a gradual and sustainable transfer of responsibilities. Ensure alignment with the costed integration mechanism being developed by the government.
- 2. Create a business case for transition funding:** Gather evidence to demonstrate the benefits and spillover effect of refugee inclusion and advocate for continued funding, emphasizing the positive impact of refugee presence on the development of their communities, and mobilizing funds supporting vulnerable populations and the broader community.
- 3. Strengthen area-based approaches:** Strengthen area-based initiatives, such as the "Cities of Solidarity" model, to better connect humanitarian efforts with development cooperation, creating more holistic and sustainable solutions.
- 4. Ensure flexible and adaptive planning:** Design the RRP with built-in flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances over the two-year period, acknowledging the dynamic nature of the refugee situation and allowing for responsive adjustments.

## Session 3: Objectives for the Next Two Years

This session outlined expectations regarding objectives for the RRP over the next two years. Discussions focused on the importance of supporting government capacity strengthening and ongoing reforms, particularly the RESTART reform. Emphasis was placed on meaningful integration of refugees across various sectors. Participants highlighted the need for improved sector coordination, better inclusion of refugees in social assistance programs, and enhanced data management.

**Government Capacity and Reforms:** Discussions highlighted the ongoing government reforms, including the RESTART reform. It emphasized the need for support in capacity sharing and building, strengthening internal mechanisms, and increased engagement with local authorities. The goal is to make the system more efficient and improve services for vulnerable groups, including refugees. This reform is seen as key for the long-term sustainability of refugee support and integration efforts.

**Inclusion Across Sectors:** Participants stressed the importance of meaningful inclusion of refugees in healthcare, education, labor markets, and economic systems, including in rural areas. There was recognition that inclusion levels vary by sector, with some areas like social assistance needing significant improvement/support. The focus shall be on supporting strategies that address the needs of refugees while also benefiting host communities.

**Expansion of Temporary Protection Rights:** Participants highlighted the urgent need to expand rights entitlements for TP holders, which currently limits inclusion into social protection systems and does not provide a legal pathway for local integration, limiting the scope of any transition effort.

**Refugee Self-Reliance:** Participants highlighted the importance of prioritizing support for refugees to become self-reliant, recognizing this as essential for long-term sustainability of the response/transition and reduced dependence on humanitarian aid.

**Social Assistance and Data Management:** The need for better refugee inclusion in social assistance programs was highlighted, with suggestions to categorize refugees based on socioeconomic and protection vulnerability and provide technical guidance to the government to refine existing eligibility criteria for their inclusion. Improving data management and harmonizing statistics, while including refugee in national and sub-national datasets was suggested to ensure accurate representation of refugee needs, particularly in child protection services.

### **Key Recommendations from Session 3:**

- 1. Support government reforms:** Mobilize support through the RRP to provide targeted support for ongoing reform, aiming at refugee inclusion – while benefitting all- and focusing on enhancing the government's capacity to promote refugee protection and solution.
- 2. Advocacy on Legal Framework:** Develop an advocacy strategy to promote expanding rights for Temporary Protection (TP) holders and mobilize support through the RRP.
- 3. Support to inclusion:** RRP shall support government inclusion strategies across healthcare, education, labor markets, and economic systems, with particular attention refugee self-reliance and access to social protection systems.
- 4. Enhance social assistance inclusion:** prioritize refugees' inclusion in social assistance, including refining eligibility criteria to ensure targeted and effective support.
- 5. Improve data management:** Support the government at all levels to enhance data collection and harmonization processes to accurately represent refugee needs in service planning and delivery, facilitating evidence-based decision-making and policy making.

## **Session 4: Characteristics of a Successful Planning Process**

Participants identified key elements for a successful RRP planning process. Emphasis was placed on streamlining the planning approach, including reducing redundant meetings and adopting cross-sectoral strategies. The importance of engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including refugees and

host communities, was stressed. Evidence-based planning and alignment with broader frameworks like the SDGs and EU accession process were highlighted. The session also focused on the need for adaptable planning strategies and clear communication of expectations to all involved parties.

This session focused on identifying the key elements that contribute to a successful RRP planning process, essential components to include, and stakeholders to engage.

**Streamlining the Planning Process:** Participants emphasized the need for a more focused and efficient approach to planning. Suggestions included segmenting the refugee population according to socioeconomic profile and intentions (stay/transit), adopting a stronger cross-sectoral approach, and reducing the number of indicators to streamline reporting. There was a call for utilizing working group meetings more effectively during the planning process rather than adding new workshops.

**Stakeholder Engagement:** The discussion highlighted the importance of engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including high-level government officials, municipalities, donors, the private sector, and refugees themselves. Participants stressed the need for quality over quantity in meetings, suggesting targeted discussions with key decision-makers. The involvement of the RC's office, State Commission on Migration and Asylum, PM's Office and various ministries was recommended to ensure alignment with broader frameworks.

**Alignment with Broader Frameworks:** Participants stressed the importance of aligning the RRP with various frameworks, including the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the National Development Plan (including the Mechanism for the Integration of Foreigners), and the EU accession process. This alignment was seen as crucial for gaining support from both the government and development partners, particularly EU countries.

**Sector Division and Coordination:** There was a discussion on the strategic division of sectors and working groups within the RRP, with some participants suggesting that the current structure might lead to duplication and over-coordination in certain areas, also impacting the ability of the government to follow sector discussions – especially regarding line ministries with responsibilities covering more than one sector. The importance of aligning humanitarian efforts with existing government plans was emphasized.

**Adaptability and Future Planning:** Discussions touched on the importance of considering population movements, particularly regarding returns to Ukraine, and adapting sector plans accordingly.

**Inclusive Consultations:** The suggestion was made to consider consultations with de facto authorities on the Transnistrian region, acknowledging the complexity but recognizing it as a potentially necessary step.

#### **Key Recommendations from Session 4:**

- 1. Streamline the planning process:** Adopt a more focused approach, reducing redundant meetings and utilizing existing platforms more effectively. Implement a cross-sectoral approach to simplify planning for line ministries and the government.



- 2. Stakeholder engagement:** Organize targeted discussions with key decision-makers, including high-level government officials, municipalities, and the private sector. Ensure the involvement of refugees and host communities in the planning process to capture diverse perspectives.
- 3. Align with broader frameworks:** Ensure the RRP aligns with UNSDCF, NDPs, and the EU accession process. Create a separate section in the RRP to clearly outline these alignments, making the process more visible to development partners and enhancing overall coherence.
- 4. Optimize sector division:** Review and potentially restructure the sector/WGs divisions within the RRP to minimize duplication and improve coordination efficiency, streamlining efforts and resource allocation.
- 5. Focus on clear communication:** Simplify tools and clearly communicate submission expectations to improve the quality of inputs and reduce misunderstandings, enhancing overall participation and engagement in the RRP process, especially among local partners.

## Session 5: Humanitarian Development Coordination and Transition

The final session addressed the coordination between humanitarian and development efforts in the context of refugee response. Discussions emphasized the importance of aligning efforts with government priorities and developing strategic advocacy to bridge humanitarian and development approaches. Participants stressed the need to balance refugee integration with addressing immediate needs. The session highlighted the value of conducting economic analyses on refugee contributions and fostering inclusive consultations. Key recommendations included adapting to changing environment and enhancing coordination with development actors.

**Aligning with Government Priorities:** Participants emphasized the crucial importance of aligning humanitarian and development efforts with government priorities. This alignment was seen as essential for effectively engaging development actors, who closely follow government directives. The need for targeted and strategic advocacy to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development mindsets was highlighted.

**Complementary Support:** Emphasis was placed on communicating that humanitarian efforts and funding are meant to complement, not replace, existing government resources. The significant role of development cooperation in Moldova's GDP was highlighted, underscoring the need to identify key pressure points within development cooperation for effective advocacy.

**Balancing Integration and Immediate Needs:** Participants stressed the importance of a balanced approach that focuses on both refugee integration into development frameworks and addressing the immediate humanitarian needs of the refugee caseload - those who will continue to need assistance and cannot transition out of aid.

**Economic Analysis:** The need for an economic analysis of the contribution refugees make to Moldova was highlighted. Drawing parallels with similar discussions in Poland, it was suggested that demonstrating the economic benefits of refugee integration could serve as a powerful advocacy tool.

**Key Recommendations from Session 5:**

1. **Align with Government Priorities:** Ensure that humanitarian and development efforts are closely aligned with government priorities to effectively engage development actors and secure support, facilitating a more integrated and sustainable approach.
2. **Develop Strategic Advocacy:** Create targeted advocacy strategies that bridge the gap between humanitarian and development pillars, focusing on key pressure points within development cooperation agenda that impact refugee protection and solutions.
3. **Balance Integration and Immediate Needs:** Adopt a dual-focus approach that addresses both the integration of refugees into development frameworks and the immediate needs of those who cannot transition out of aid, ensuring comprehensive support for all refugee populations.
4. **Conduct Economic Analysis:** Analyze the economic contribution of refugees to Moldova. Use this data as an advocacy tool to demonstrate the benefits of refugee integration.
5. **Enhance Development Coordination:** Strengthen coordination between RRP sectors and partners with development actors, recognizing their significant role in Moldova's economy and their potential to support long-term refugee integration efforts.