Regional Refugee Response Plan
For the Ukraine Situation

Basic Needs Working Group - Meeting Minutes

Location, Date & Time	UNHCR Conference Room (Alexandrina) and Online, Teams Meeting, Tuesday, 11 October 2023, from 10:30 to 12:00
Facilitator	Ylenia Franco, Operations Associate (UNHCR), Stefan Lorint, Asst Information Mgmt Officer (UNHCR), Paulo Nacif, Operations Director (World Vision)
Participants	UNHCR, World Vision, Save the Children, IOCC, IOM, Plan International
Agenda	• Situational Updates • Winterization highlights • World Vision Basic Needs' operations • Winter cash PDM • AOB
Agenda Topic	**Main Discussion and Action Points in BLUE**
Situational Updates	• The **number of Ukrainians in Romania** has gone down slightly from 85.006 to 83.507 since last week. Nonetheless, the number of arrivals might increase in the upcoming months due to the winter season – to be taken into account also while elaborating our strategy for the RRP 2024. While monitoring the BCP, the main entry points being from Galati, Albita and Siret. We will need to be observing these numbers carefully to see how they fluctuate within the upcoming months. • As for **temporary permits** issued insofar, it was recorded an increase of people registered for TP compared to two weeks ago. We also acknowledge the increase of the male population up to 35.547 adult males, flagging this phenomenon recently in the respective WGs.
Winterization highlights	• As discussed during the last BNWG meeting, we jointly have to review the M&E Framework for Basic Needs in preparation of the RRP 2024. For the RRP 2024, the regional indicator for basic needs remains # of individuals who received assistance for basic needs as per 2023. The indicator should be disaggregated at the country level for basic needs assistance received. • In preparation of the RRP 2024, we have carefully revised the indicators for our sector. We might expect a bigger influx of people in need to arrive in the upcoming months, so **it is essential to keep focusing on specific needs**. As humanitarian actors, it is important for us be ready to respond to this situation. For next year's national indicators, we have taken in account the emergency preparedness as well as most and least reported indicators in ActivityInfo for 2023. The indicators are the following: # of individuals benefitting from hygiene kits and from MHM kits provision; # of individuals benefiting from NFIs support, including clothing, blankets and housing kits (one unique indicator replacing the split two indicators

	on provision of NFIs and blankets); # of individuals receiving food assistance (shall keep this indicator as our partners reported from January to August 2023 in Activity Info like FONSS and World Vision which informed that an upcoming food project will also run through 2024); # of individuals benefitting from temporary shelters and non-cash accommodation assistance (replacing the old # of collective sites improved to provide adequate conditions for emergency accommodation); #of individuals benefitting from temporary shelter provided by RRP partners; # of transit and collective sites supported with updated emergency contingency plans (WASH, waste management, maintenance); #of facilities supported with waste management services; # of individuals assisted with provision of water bottles/cans provided at border, reception, and transit centres; # of individuals receiving multi-purpose cash; • **Emergency preparedness:** The low temperature throughout Romania in the upcoming harsh winter is likely to affect those most in need. UNHCR in coordination with partners and authorities is working on winterization elaboration to support refugees from Ukraine in Romania. UNHCR, along with partners, has identified supplementary facilities for delivery of humanitarian assistance. Winterization plan is to be put in place during this month so as to have a consolidated outcome and this would serve also for the overall planning. We are planning to support national winterization efforts through different interventions including distribution of NFIs and cash-based intervention; • **Winterization plan:** elaborated based on the estimations on the distribution of population by county. The UNHCR model assessment was presented (including item required, quantity, type, gender and age, size, location); • **Strategy for distribution**: Considering the needs of the community and the number of the beneficiaries in each county, we have prepared and established, before the distribution, the criteria for the distribution of the NFIs, while taking into account the vulnerability of family members or other protection factors. This is agreed upon consultation with the partner or operational partner. • **Top priorities for the upcoming season:** boost collaboration with the state institutions and all social actors in providing support; act quickly and to respond to new, unforeseen situations; ensure and verify that people have access to the needed services; ensure adequate heating sources, food support, provision of supplies for winter, hot water and suitable accommodation centres for the cold season; • any funding possibility/NFI donation from UN to be eventually communicated to partners specifically on winterization in case of any upcoming opportunity; • **Winterization assessment** will be run soon between UNHCR and STC;
World Vision Basic Needs' operations	• **WV Ukraine Crisis response** – achievements: reached 290,000 unique beneficiaries. From them 133,000 children; • Basic Needs was 72% of programmatic offer benefiting 116,000 people with food security, 18,000 with multiple purpose cash, 29,000 with temporary shelter assistance and 83,000 with WASH; • Distributing 905 tons of food and disbursing 2,000,000 USD almost to benefit 18,000 people with cash and vouchers; 130,000 hygiene kits were also distributed. • On the last winter WV managed to assist 83,000 people with a winterization;

	• DEC project to be launched in November is presented: for this phase, planning to support the Ukrainian refugees with the food vouchers and hygiene kits distribution (including family ones) through social store (Constanta and Bucharest) and through Happy Bubbles WV centers; • 10,000 food vouchers and 11,531 hygiene kits to HH in six targeted locations; • Value of the vouchers: 50 USD and for the kits 25 USD; • Bucharest social store implementing partner: General Directorate of Social Assistance of Bucharest Municipality (DGASMB) • Beneficiaries will be selected based on vulnerability criteria outlined by WG and adjusted internally, prioritizing the families with a high number of children, solo-parents, elderly, etc.; • The registration of HH will be conducted through LMMS to prevent duplication, as each family will receive the vouchers/kits once; • Budget reduction is 75% for WV of the overall portfolio; • In RomExpo WVI was providing 90% of the food items that were there and will not be doing this anymore. The operation capability is now lower; the distributions shall be completed in eight months; • no direct program for winterization and Community engagement and risk communication was yet developed; • Iasi and Brasov partners' social stores will not be supported; • Incapacity to cover the previous demands and reach is acknowledged (mainly in Constanta and Bucharest);
Winter cash PDM	• **Demographic composition:** winter cash was a complementary program to 50/20 Gov assistance program; data collection was conducted by SMS interview; the sample size for the cash for winter included 414 households summing up a total of 1286 individuals; we had a decent geographical coverage with most of the people interviewed being in Constanza, Bucharest, Suceava and Brasov followed by the other cities as well. • **Reception and expenditure of cash:** 18% of the respondents said that they did not receive the expected amount (the assistance program differed); also 90% did not know whether they received the expected amount; in terms of the transfer modality, the majority 80% received it via MoneyGram and then we have another 10% via Smith and Smith and another 5% with the bank; most of them have spent the money in supermarket, local shop, local market and wholesale; they spend because it's mostly on food and we see only 10% and spending the assistance on rent; • **Risks in accessing the cash assistance:** 3% of the of the respondents feel unsafe during the distribution, namely around 7 respondents saying that they felt either at risk either unsafe during the enrollment process. another 4 people reported feeling unsafe or keeping the money at home and 5% while spending the money; • In terms of **encountering problems in receiving, withdrawing or spending**, 86% of the respondents reported that they haven't encountered or are not aware of any problems, 14% reported facing at least one of the following issues: the registered person couldn't access or withdraw the cash (5.5%), encountered poor services from the financial service

	provider (3.5%), got wrong or not valid PIN (1.5%), received refusal of services by shop/market owners (2.2%), some even needed to pay additional money or do favors for other persons to access the assistance (3.6%) - in this case, most of the submissions refer to having to pay for a taxi to get there or other household members; on Other issues, 1/4 of the respondents said that the assistance has significantly improved the living conditions significantly reduced the feeling of stress and the financial burden. And we have 40% reporting that they were able to meet less than half of their basic needs, 21% were able to meet half of their basic needs for the sent more than half. • **Markets and prices:** 83%, answered affirmatively, indicating that they found the right quality; 2% of the respondents reported that they did not find the right quality of items or services in the marketplace (such as medicines, food products, articles of clothing, and hygiene products); • 87% of the people have responded to the questionnaire have reported at least one coping mechanism. Among the surveyed refugees approximately 2% have also reported resorting to extreme coping mechanisms, such as sending children under 16 to work (n=9), engaging in high risk activities (i.e. (E.g. illegal activities, survival sex, drug dealing, early marriage, joining armed groups etc.) (n=7) or begging (n=8); • 92% of the respondents reported that they would prefer receiving the assistance in cash as the preferred way as opposed to in kind or a combination of the two. • **On PDM Report – Transition MPCA - Accountability to affected population:** 91% indicated that they would use the hotline as the preferred channel for reporting concerns or providing feedback, while 6% mentioned community mobilizers as their preferred means of communication.
AOB	• Deadline for final submission on budgets/targets by organization and sector on 11/10; • Activities and of the narrative timeline for the final Romania chapter has moved to 20th November; the appealing partners will be having consultations in the working groups and developing the narratives for the Romania chapter by sector; • **Transferred value for cash:** we are proposing for transfer value and this is also subject to discussion during the next CWG an amount of 653 RON plus the inflation rate of 9.7. To further discuss on the targeting criteria, but for the moment we will keep the same value of last year plus inflation rate. • Save the Children: we made an assessment for basic needs and we can present this so information next meeting; Save the Children has also accepted UNHCR's proposal in co-leading the BNWG; • All partners should be requested to report in ActivityInfo each month. • Partners are encouraged to report every month under the Basic Needs sector for the purpose of the monthly Inter-Agency Romania Update.
Next meeting: 8th November 2023 from 10:30 to 12:00 Location: UNHCR Conference Room- Alexandrina 20-22 and Online, Teams Meeting	