



Terms of Reference Protection Working Group Hungary

1. Background

Hungary has maintained an open-door policy for refugees from Ukraine since the beginning of the crisis in February 2022. As of October 2023, there have been almost 3 million documented border crossings into Hungary by Ukrainian nationals, including arrivals directly from Ukraine and via Romania. Despite noticeable reductions, ongoing refugee movements, including transit from and to Ukraine for short visits or onward movement, persist. The Hungarian government, in line with other EU member states, extended Temporary Protection status to 38,000 refugees from Ukraine as of December 2023; in addition, almost 25,800 Ukrainian nationals reside in the country with work permits issued after February 2022.¹ There are also asylum-seekers and refugees from other nationalities entering and staying in Hungary, as well as persons in refugee-like situations, including unaccompanied children.

The humanitarian response is coordinated by the Hungarian government and UNHCR, which established an Inter-Agency mechanism and the Ukraine Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP). UNHCR leads the Protection Working Group (PWG). Elections for a PWG Core Group to support the coordination of protection activities, including Gender-based Violence (GBV) and child protection, will take place in the first quarter of 2024.

2. Geographic Coverage

PWG coordination activities cover all of Hungary.

3. Structure

Membership. Participation in the PWG is open to all operational humanitarian entities engaged in Protection activities, including child protection and GBV in Hungary, be they government, UN/inter-governmental organizations, or non-governmental/civil society organizations, given that they abide by established protection principles, including the best interests of the child, in the delivery of their humanitarian interventions (including Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Child Safeguarding and GBV Guiding Principles) and having expertise in the field of Protection – including Child Protection and/or GBV. Attendance in PWG meetings is open to other entities working in areas other than Protection on an ad-hoc basis, if approved by the Chair and Co-Chair. For further details, see also *Section 8 – Principles of Partnership*.

PWG Coordinator and Co-Coordinator. UNHCR will be the PWG chair with the support of a designated PWG Core Group member as co-coordinator on a rotational basis.

PWG Core Group. Given the considerable number of agencies participating in the PWG and the fact that child protection and GBV are integrated into one protection sector working group in Hungary, the need to establish a PWG Core Group has been recognized. It aims to provide strategic direction and guidance to protection actors to improve protection analysis and strengthen technical, strategic, and policy coordination of the protection response for an efficient delivery of quality protection services and results to improve the protection environment for refugees, including child protection and GBV.

4. Objectives of the PWG

¹ [RRP 2024 – Hungary Country Chapter](#)



Consistent with the overall objectives, priorities and targets in the Ukraine RRP and its protection sector strategy part, as well as additional relevant national and regional strategies, the PWG aims to:

- Contribute to sector planning and strategy development, including through participatory initiatives reflecting age, gender, and diversity.
- Ensure accountable and predictable protection interventions, including child protection and GBV across Hungary by preventing service overlaps and minimizing gaps and promoting adherence to protection minimum standards, including applying the best interests of the child, in program delivery to ensure effective and coordinated protection interventions.
- Establish and validate a monthly protection analysis and identification of emerging refugee protection trends, including on child protection and GBV. Support further identification and analysis of protection issues and gaps to:
 - advocate with relevant authorities for remedial action and solutions.
 - ensure protection actors are kept up-to date on protection needs and risk to inform their planning, program adaption and monitoring.
 - tailor capacity building initiatives aimed at preventing and addressing protection, child protection and GBV concerns.
 - coordinate with agencies to respond to identified gaps.
 - enhance the ability of individuals and communities to develop positive self-protection mechanisms.
 - strengthen data generation and compilation with particular emphasis on protection concerns, including child protection and GBV.
- Facilitate and contribute to the protection sector needs assessment and analysis, reporting and development/review of strategic, contingency, and response plans, ensuring that these are in line with and contribute to the RRP protection strategy for 2024.
- Monitor progress against key indicators and targets for the protection sector as set out in the RRP and other guiding documents.
- Identify good practices and strive towards harmonization of tools used in the delivery of protection services, including child protection and GBV, as prioritized by the members.
- Advocate for protection mainstreaming in other sectors and for protection concerns to receive appropriate attention in the humanitarian response and lend expertise as needed.
- Undertake contingency planning and preparedness in the event of new refugee emergencies in Hungary.
- Establish an annual work plan whose progress is regularly monitored. Members to actively contribute to its objectives where relevant.
- Ensure mainstreaming and transferring know-how/knowledge/experience to national partners/government to ensure sustainability of actions and promote inclusivity and accessibility of services to refugees beyond 2025.

5. The PWG Core Group

The PWG Core Group aims to:

- Put forward protection, child protection and GBV issues to the PWG requiring focused attention and concerted decisions, to promote positive change and the improvement of protection response and support with PWG meeting agenda setting;
- Feed into and validate monthly protection analysis and identification of emerging protection trends, including on child protection and GBV;
- Support the implementation of the RRP monitoring framework for Protection, child protection and GBV. Gather feedback, conduct evaluations, and propose adjustments to strategies as needed. Promote regular reporting and interagency products;
- Support to the development and implementation of the PWG work plan and monitoring and evaluation of actions implemented under it, and protection mainstreaming.



The Core Group comprises UNHCR, and four other protection agencies. UNICEF, the coordinator of the child protection sub-working group until 2023, is part of the Core Group.

The additional three Core Group members are elected in an anonymous vote administered by UNHCR by all participating PWG members, with no quorum required.

PWG Core Group membership is guided by the following:

- a) Operational engagement in the protection sector in Hungary
- b) Capacity and resources to effectively engage in the Core Group, including by allocating a focal point with the right expertise and time necessary to carry out their protection commitments within the Core Group.

The Core Group is elected for a period of twelve months.

The Core Group meets monthly, in preparation for the PWG meetings, a minimum of seven days before each PWG meeting. In conjunction with the regular meetings, one monthly meeting with protection and child protection monitoring agencies to discuss and enhance analysis of findings. Other ad-hoc meetings may be convened by the co-chairs on a need basis.

6. Objectives of the Co-ordination

In partnership with the PWG Coordinator, the Core Group members will rotate as Co-Coordinators per agreed schedule. They will:

- Co-facilitate meetings, support agenda setting and minute taking, ensuring active participation and contribution from all members and follow-through of key decisions and action points.
- Collaborate with the co-chair and core group members to set goals, establish priorities, and create strategies to address protection, child protection and GBV issues effectively.
- Foster partnerships and collaborations with other organizations, agencies, or community groups working in similar areas to leverage resources and expertise.
- Maintain records of the group's activities, progress, and outcomes. Prepare reports or presentations to stakeholders or higher authorities as required.
- Participation in inter-sectoral and Inter-Agency meetings and other relevant coordination processes to ensure that appropriate linkages are made with other sectors' objectives and strategies, so that protection, child protection and GBV are effectively mainstreamed in the work of the other sectors.

7. Working Modalities

Meetings. PWG meetings take place on the 3rd Thursday of the month with ad-hoc meetings called if needed. The PWG meeting is scheduled in the calendar available on the UNHCR portal. The working language of meetings is English, with complementary use of Hungarian as appropriate. Simultaneous translation is not generally available but can be arranged by the Chair and Co-Chair depending on a meeting's envisaged objective and key participants. Meetings can be held online, or in-person in Budapest.

PWG work plan. The annual PWG work plan is developed and approved by the PWG members. All PWG members strive to take an active part in the implementation of the work plan. The Core Group delivers to the PWG and co-coordinators regular updates on the implementation status of the work plan together with appointed focal points for specific objectives and will ensure quarterly revision on the implementation of the work plan.



Sub-groups' reporting. The Border Coordination Group is a standing sub-group to the PWG. At least one key member will attend the regular PWG meetings and report on respective sectoral thematic and coordination updates. Its Terms of Reference are found in the Annex.

Technical Task Forces. The PWG may agree to form specific Technical Task forces, on a temporary basis, to provide a forum of experts to address certain thematic issues that require concerted action.

PWG records. The minutes of PWG meetings will be published online on the operational data portal. Other working documents, such as work plans, and any other information shared in the PWG, will be for internal use of PWG members. Agencies wishing to use this information for purposes other than the activities of the PWG must seek the approval of the source of the information and the protection sector lead.

8. Principles of partnership

Members of the PWG will be working in accordance with the humanitarian imperatives and with principles of accountability, predictability, and partnership. They will be respectful of each other's mandates and recognize that all members have different areas of expertise and operational capacities. Specifically, the PWG members commit to:

- Adhering to recognized protection standards and the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, and confidentiality as well as the best interests of the child principle
- Ensuring their predictable participation within the sector and engagement in its collective work, including by nominating a focal point and alternate to participate in the PWG meetings.
- Ensuring capacity and willingness to contribute to the PWG work plan and activities.
- Mainstreaming key programmatic cross-cutting issues (including AGDM).
- Working cooperatively with other sector partners and sharing information through the established mechanisms, including organizational resources and capacities.

It is expected that PWG members will

1. Regularly participate and engage in response plans;
2. Regularly and timely report against the RRP indicators (ActivityInfo)
3. Be proactive in exchanging information and reporting, highlight needs, gaps, and duplication and share responsibilities for protection sector activities, including assessing needs, developing plans, policies, and guidelines;
4. Engage in the Sector's activities, including contingency planning, protection mainstreaming and other relevant activities

9. Feedback and Complaints

Anyone can submit feedback or complaints, including anonymously, regarding the functioning of the PWG or the Core Group. Feedback and complaints should be submitted to Refugee Forum (RCF) Coordinator, who on a case-by-case basis will refer them to the PWG meeting for plenary discussion.

10. Validity and Amendments



There is no time limit to the validity of these TOR. The TOR can be amended at any point in time, upon suggestion from any PWG member, after the PWG members agree to revise the document. The present terms of reference will be reviewed yearly at the time of setting the PWG annual work plan.

11. Annex: List of PWG members

A list with participating organizations will be shared in March 2024

12. Annex: Border Coordination Sub-Group – Terms of Reference

The Border Coordination Group (Hungarian-Ukrainian border) provides a coordination platform for Hungary-based humanitarian partners operational along the Hungarian/Ukrainian border. It is a sub-group of the Hungary national Protection Working Group.

Objectives

The Border Coordination Group is responsible for ensuring that the following functions are provided:

- Ensure a coordinated approach to the provision of protection services and support harmonized programming to strengthen planning and overall effectiveness of services offered
- Share information on observed border movement trends, operational challenges, and protection concerns
- Keep abreast of legal framework / administrative entry and exit procedures for those entering/exiting to and from Ukraine that fall under the member's mandate
- Identify and review best practices for protection service provision and strengthen referral pathways for cases at risk.
- Develop coordinated capacity building/training plans for border-based actors.
- Recommend the inclusion of priority topics on the agenda of the national PWG, if so required, and report relevant border monitoring observations and updates to the PWG as part of a situational protection analysis.
- Work towards a harmonized awareness messaging to those exiting and arriving in Hungary for reasons of international protection. Inform new relevant message development as required.
- Inform and support the development of harmonized advocacy messages to address priority protection concerns identified as Ukraine – Hungarian borders.

Membership

Membership of the group is open to focal points and back-ups from entities engaged in the humanitarian response along the Ukrainian-Hungarian border, as per the table below.

Leadership

The Coordination Group is chaired by IOM and UNHCR on a rotational basis. The Coordination Group reports to the national Protection Working Group (PWG).

Role of the Leading Agency



The leading agency is responsible for:

- Convening the meetings
- Drafting meeting minutes and ensure identified action points are followed up on
- Monitor the implementation of any agreed sector guidance, tools and standard operating procedures (as applicable)
- Providing technical support to its members, as required.

Meeting modalities

The Coordination Group will meet bi-monthly in hybrid format, the 3rd Tuesday. The group’s working language is Hungarian.

Validity

These Terms of Reference remain valid unless group members and Chair agree on changes, formally to be communicated to all members and the national PWG Coordinator.

Organization name	Focal point(s)