



Terms of Reference
Protection Sector
Protection Working Group – Moldova
Updated: January 2025

Background

Nearly 1,217,333 refugees and third-country nationals (TCN) have arrived in Moldova from Ukraine since 24 February 2022, the highest per capita number of Ukrainian arrivals anywhere else in the world. While most arrivals continue westward to the EU, around 127,000 Ukrainian refugees have chosen to remain in Moldova, of whom 58% are female, 42% are children and 19% are older persons. Since the onset of the crisis, the Government of Moldova and UNHCR have established an inter-agency (IA) mechanism to coordinate the humanitarian response, one which encompasses coordination within and across all sectors throughout Moldova, covering responses at the border crossing points (BCP) and in the country, and has drawn on government, UN agencies and NGO comparative expertise, supported by an integrated information management system. Each sector has a working group that is led by some combination of government, UN, and NGO agencies according to these terms of reference.

Structure

The Protection Working Group (PWG) is open to all humanitarian operational partners intervening in the protection sector, be they government, UN/inter-governmental organisations, or non-governmental organisations (both national and international) that are abiding by established humanitarian principles in the delivery of their humanitarian interventions (including SEA commitments) and have particular expertise in the field of protection.

The PWG at the national level draws participation from protection-related forums and areas of responsibility. These include:

- Child Protection Sub-Working Group (CP SWG)
- GBV Sub-Working Group (GBV SWG)
- Disability and Age Task Force (DATF)
- Roma Task Force (RTF)
- Anti-Trafficking Task Force (ATTF)

The Sector Coordinator and Co-Chair of the PWG are UNHCR and the Ombudsman's Office respectively, with the invited participation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Asylum and Statelessness Directorate, and other ministries as appropriate, as per their leadership and specific accountability in the sector's response.

Accountabilities

Consistent with the overall objectives, priorities, and targets in the RRP, sector strategy documents, and other relevant national and regional strategies, the sector leads are accountable for:

- effective coordinated approach on protection issues as well as protection programming and programme implementation, supported by common needs assessments, gaps and capacities analysis, programme design, evaluation, and reporting to maximize impact, prevent overlap, and minimize gaps;



- sector planning and strategy development/ refinement, also through participatory initiatives reflecting age, gender, and diversity mainstreaming (AGDM approach);
- ensuring that agreed in-country and global humanitarian/ protection standards and guidelines are met;
- contingency planning, preparedness, and capacity building in the field of protection;
- common advocacy and resource mobilization platforms; and,
- monitoring progress against key indicators and targets for the protection sector as set out in the RRP and other guiding documents.

Responsibilities

Sector leads share the following responsibilities:

1. Call regularly scheduled meetings to set strategies and monitor progress toward common targets, and share summary action points with all partners;
2. Share information about the evolving protection situations and trends, needs/gaps analysis to guarantee a common understanding by all partners of the sector's needs, to ensure that the strategy's objectives and targets are met;
3. Ensure that the sector has and shares accurate information about who is doing what where and when, to facilitate well-coordinated programme planning and implementation;
4. Encourage the use of common needs assessment and monitoring tools, and ensure timely and accurate reporting by all partners;
5. Promote the regular review of the sector strategy, and oversee that partners' strategies are in line with the overall sector strategy and global standards specific to the sector;
6. Provide relevant inputs to the RRP and other relevant national and regional strategies and processes;
7. Participate in inter-sectoral inter-agency meetings and other relevant inter-agency processes to ensure that appropriate linkages are made with other sectors' objectives and strategies and that protection is effectively mainstreamed in the work of the other sectors;
8. Maintain the relationship with relevant Government counterparts, the donor community, and other relevant humanitarian and development actors;
9. Identify common advocacy messages on core legal and physical protection concerns, especially for groups with specific needs, and ensure that they are informing discussions in inter-sector meetings;
10. Devise communication/ outreach strategies towards beneficiaries; and
11. Participate in contingency planning and preparedness processes.

Core Group See Annex I

Given the number of participating agencies to the national PWG, in consultation with the sector, partners the PWG may choose to agree to form a Core Group of agencies for more in-depth review and guidance on matters of concern to the WG and to enhance strategic direction, planning and inclusive decision-making.

In November 2022, the Protection Advisory Group (PAG) of the PWG was established.¹ The PAG provides policy and strategic direction to the work of the Protection Sector. The PAG, which is comprised of selected

¹ For further reference, please consult the Protection Advisory Group (PAG) Terms of Reference (ToR), available at [PAG TORs 23.08.2022.docx](#).



protection organizations, will support the Sector Coordinator and Co-chair and sector members in implementing the sector objectives and work plan and contribute to protection analysis informing sector activities in a consultative manner. In January 2025, the PAG was extended for another year, resuming its supportive role to PWG. Membership consists of two co-chairs (UNHCR and Ombudsman Office) and eight selected members, i.e., two UN agencies (OHCHR and UNICEF), three INGOs (INTERMEDIOS, NRC, and CWS) and three local NGOs (CDA NCU, HelpAge).

The PWG will meet every 2 months and will be convened by the Sector Coordinator and/or Co-Chair. Ad hoc meetings may be called by the Protection Working Group Coordinator as appropriate.

Technical Task Forces

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

Principles of partnership

PWG partners will:

- adhere to recognized protection standards;
- ensure predictable participation within the sector and engagement in its collective work including by nominating a focal point and alternate to participate to the PWG meetings;
- ensure capacity and willingness to contribute to the strategic response plan and activities;
- mainstream key programmatic cross-cutting issues (including age, gender, diversity);
- work cooperatively with other sector partners and share information through the established mechanisms, including on organizational resources;
- be ready to facilitate participation, including from local organizations.

An option is given to organizations who wish to attend in an observer status.

Validity

There is no time limit for the validity of these TORs; the TORs can be revised when the members agree to revise the document.
