



## Terms of Reference

### Socio-Economic Inclusion and Livelihoods Working Group

#### 1. Background

As a result of the military actions started on 24th February in Ukraine, Ukrainian inhabitants have fled their homes seeking safety, protection and assistance in neighboring countries. Nearly three years into the Ukraine conflict, Moldova is hosting 123,000 refugees (the vast majority of whom are women and children), that account to circa 4% of its population, the highest share to population size among the countries in the region. According to the official data of the Moldovan authorities, circa 69,000 individuals have received Temporary Protection status since March 2023, and other several thousand have legalized their stay through other forms.

Labour market inclusion remains rather low among refugees. According to SEIL, only circa 46% of refugees are estimated to have a job, and informality is as high as 45%, according to SEIL. Skills mismatch, limited flexible work arrangements, language barriers and care responsibilities are among the main barriers to formal employment among. Limited access to finance and entrepreneurship education, legal barriers for self-employment further hinder the economic inclusion of refugees.

Labour market inclusion remains low among refugees, with an estimated 46% employed and 45% working informally, according to SEIL. Key barriers to formal employment include skills mismatch, limited flexible work options, language barriers, and care responsibilities. Additionally, issues related to access to finance and financial services, entrepreneurship education, and legal obstacles to self-employment further hinder refugees' economic inclusion.

Considering the emergency and the humanitarian needs of refugees from Ukraine, the country-level refugee coordination structure was set up by the Government of Moldova and UNHCR, with participation of Government Ministries and other entities, UN organizations, international and local NGOs. The country-level refugee coordination structure foresees to coordinate a multi-partner response in support of refugees and Government of Moldova and anticipates all partners to act together to maximize the response and avoid duplications and parallel systems. It also aims at guiding joint advocacy initiatives and resource mobilization efforts in support of the country-level response.

The Socio-Economic Inclusion and Livelihoods Working Group (SEIL WG) is one of several Working Groups of the country-level refugee coordination structure set up



by the Government of Moldova and UNHCR, with participation of line Ministries and other Government entities, UN organizations, international and local NGOs, the private sector, etc.

Moldova's government has demonstrated strong commitment to refugee protection and inclusion, as shown by its pledges at the Global Refugee Forum and its commitment to developing a Phased integration mechanism for foreigners, including refugees, into national systems (2025-2027). Once approved, the mechanism will aim to ensure refugees' access to essential services and inclusion opportunities. In this context, the Social-Economic and Livelihoods sector response seeks to improve refugees' livelihoods, support their inclusion on the labour market, and expand economic opportunities. Moreover, it prioritizes strengthening national systems to ensure better integration of refugees into existing national frameworks related to employment and economic development. Ultimately, it aims to facilitate refugees' transition from reliance on humanitarian aid to self-sufficiency, resilience and socioeconomic inclusion, and empower them to engage and contribute to their host communities.

## 2. Key definitions & guidelines

The SEIL Working Group will refer to the 'Regional Socio-Economic Inclusion Working Group' Guidance and Studies on Socio-Economic Inclusion by Thematic Area to support its programmatic activities. Key definitions and terms defining the activity of the working group are:

- **Socio-economic inclusion** refers to *the process that supports refugees, stateless persons, third country nationals and other forcibly displaced persons moving from Ukraine, in integrating into the economies and social fabric of host countries and communities*
- **Livelihood** comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living. Livelihoods activities and interventions include temporary work schemes and cash for work, community infrastructure work, training opportunities and career guidance, financial and technical assistance for small business, women economic empowerment, etc., and are essential to fostering the inclusion of refugees and vulnerable host communities.
- **Inclusion** is the process that helps refugees integrate into the economies and societies of their host countries.



### 3. Objectives

The Socio-Economic Inclusion and Livelihoods Working Group [SEIL WG] provides technical guidance to livelihoods and economic inclusion actors at country level to ensure effective, coherent and predictable interventions to support the Government efforts to respond to the livelihood and economic inclusion needs of refugees, and other people in need of international protection fleeing *Ukraine*. The SEIL WG will oversee the work of any livelihoods and economic inclusion related sub-working groups established.

The main objectives of the SEIL Working Group are to ensure coordination among the different stakeholders, provide strategic guidance and technical inputs for the implementation of the work plan; ensure effective information sharing; identify relevant gaps and opportunities; conduct research and build evidence to strengthen the SEILWG; encourage technical and institutional capacity building of multi-stakeholders; improve data and information management for evidence-based programming and harness the comparative advantages of each member.

The SEIL Working Group advocates for the inclusion of refugees in economic growth and poverty reduction efforts, and in national and local services. Helping to connect affected people to their hosts also supports their engagement in economic opportunities.

While the host Government is the primary duty-bearer in any refugee situation in their country, the members of the SEIL Working Group will support Government's efforts in leading and coordinating the response in the respective sector.

The Group will work towards the following objectives:

1. Reduce the levels of socio-economic vulnerability of refugees and members of the host communities, especially through the roll-out of income-generation activities, access to the labour market, training and skills development, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and social protection that will help beneficiaries build self-reliance and live with dignity.
2. Support national and local governments in creating an enabling environment for the socio-economic inclusion and medium-term integration of refugees, while strengthening the resilience of host communities.
3. Promote social cohesion and peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities.



Working Group members will also work towards the operationalization of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, with focus on medium-term actions to increase the capacities of refugees and host communities to cope with crisis context, as well as promote efficient and harmonious integration of the refugees in the Moldovan society and economy.

#### 4. Accountability

The SEIL Working Group is accountable for:

- Ensuring that the needs of refugees and host communities are met by SEILWG actors through timely and coordinated action;
- Ensuring relevant and robust coordination mechanisms, including information management, are in place among SEILWG members, government counterparts and donors to allow the implementation of needs assessments, planning, prioritization, implementation, reporting and evaluation exercises;
- Ensuring that data on the situation and the needs of the affected population is gathered (disaggregated according to age, gender and diversity) and the analysis of information regularly is updated;
- Ensuring that all SEILWG members are accountable to affected populations through consultative and feedback mechanisms.
- Advocating for adequate funding for activities delivered by the members of the working group.

#### 5. Core functions

The core functions of the SEIL Working Group include:

- **Strategic leadership.** Lead the planning process for the development of an inclusive response plan as well as the preparation of appeal documents, based on the Moldova Refugee Response Plan and Phased integration mechanism for foreigners, including refugees, into national systems (2025-2027).  
Provide national technical guidance on assistance services to SEILWG. Promote national standards, guidelines and good practices.
- **Information management.** Manage information to support decision making and improve knowledge to better identify relevant gaps and opportunities. Facilitate the flow of livelihoods and economic inclusion information between SEILWG members and other fora in order to minimize duplication, including by developing a matrix of *Who is doing What Where and When* (4Ws) of activities. Monitor and report on



activities in line with the Refugee Response Plan. Encourage communication and information sharing between partners as well as between the different sectoral working groups to safeguard strategic priorities.

- **Livelihoods and economic inclusion analysis.** Provide strategic guidance and advice on the implementation of a livelihoods and economic inclusion analysis. This includes the setup of mechanisms to measure the impact and evolution of risks; the development of messaging, provision of analysis to support advocacy and resource mobilization for livelihoods and economic inclusion based on evidence and outcomes of the monitoring mechanisms. Conduct research and build evidence to strengthen the sector's performance and make sure research and assessments activities are coordinated among SEILWG members.
- **Technical support.** Provide technical support to partners, foster capacity building/development, including supporting needs assessments, project design, proposal development and advocacy initiatives; promote inter-sectoral collaboration in support of the livelihoods and economic inclusion response. Develop/adapt standard operating procedures and referral pathways. Improve data and information management for evidence-based programming.
- **Joint livelihood and economic inclusion response.** Coordinate the response in accordance with the regional livelihoods and economic inclusion strategy. Ensure coherence between all actors when working on needs/gaps analysis; agree upon recommendations for the response and to foster aligned planning and reporting among the members in line with the SEILWG strategy.
- **Advocacy.** Advocate with key stakeholders to develop, consolidate and implement sectorial strategies, identify advocacy gaps and develop appropriate joint advocacy messages and tools for Government and other counterparts. Ensure cross-cutting issues, including gender equality programming and protection mainstreaming are reflected in SEILWG activities.
- **Capacity development.** Identify the capacity development needs of all stakeholders involved in the livelihoods and economic inclusion response. Provide technical support, as required, throughout the design of targeted operational response to ensure it is in line with the strategic priorities, the evolving nature of the crisis and needs of persons of concern.
- **Accountability to Affected People (AAP).** Ensure that AAP is at the centre of the humanitarian response through robust community-based feedback and complaints mechanisms to guarantee participation and inclusion, communication and transparency, feedback and response with an age, gender, and diversity approach. Coordinate, identify and strengthen the resilience of host communities, through



support benefiting both host populations and refugees and through increasing the awareness of, and equitable access to services.

- **Nexus approach.** Strengthen links between the refugee response and development initiatives that are either under the auspices of the Government and/or international development actors – this includes sharing of protection analysis pertaining to persons of concern as well as host communities.

## 6. Specific functions

The specific functions of the SEIL Inclusion Working Group include:

- Enabling a coordinated approach within in the SEIL Working Group at both national and local levels to strengthen, articulate and complement each other's work and allow for a coherent, relevant, and comprehensive response in line with the mandate of each organization, international standards and the RRP.
- Expanding the work of group at local level, to provide a better participation space and engagement of local actors and host communities.
- Coordinating with other working groups to facilitate knowledge sharing, synergies, and joint actions in areas cutting across two or more sectors.
- Supporting the implementation of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus within the overall refugee response in Moldova, closely coordinating with the Inter-Agency Coordination Team and the other Working Groups, and RCO when relevant.
- Facilitating information exchange among partners in the field of livelihoods and economic inclusion, including sharing findings from individual needs assessments, as well as challenges, best practices and lessons learnt.
- Supporting the crystallization of response to ensure its focus on livelihoods and socio-economic inclusion and integration– for example identifying context-specific solutions to provide livelihoods for refugees through socio-economic inclusion (access to formal labour markets and finance, employment, skills development/professional development training, entrepreneurship, self-employment, and economic opportunities, etc.) and social cohesion between refugees and host communities.
- Strengthening advocacy on positive impact that economic inclusion and integration can have on refugees and host communities and build partnerships for response – for example with the private sector, to rally for employment creation.



- Enhancing an evidence-based approach through conducting joint studies, establishing strong monitoring mechanisms, identifying good practices and lessons learnt and producing reports.
- Participating in inter-agency and sector reporting exercises (e.g. reporting in ActivityInfo; Working Group reports).
- Facilitating learning and capacity development for both WG members and partners.

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

### Chairing

The SEIL WG is co-led by United Nations Development Programme and Ministry of Labour and Social Protection<sup>1</sup>. The leads/co-coordinators are responsible for:

- Reporting to and sharing relevant information to/from the SEIL WG members and to the relevant sub/technical groups in alignment with the Refugee Coordination Model;
- Ensuring effective implementation of the livelihoods and economic inclusion response and addressing identified gaps;
- Leading the livelihoods and economic inclusion coordination and information management efforts, including advocacy;
- Chairing the coordination meetings and following up on action points and agreed deadlines with members;
- Representing the SEIL WG in planning and strategic meetings, and other in-country and regional platforms, as appropriate;
- Providing guidance and support to technical taskforce and sub-national coordination mechanisms<sup>2</sup>;
- Ensuring that livelihoods and economic inclusion strategies and priorities are integrated into national plans and policies;
- Facilitating information sharing and exchange of best practices/lessons learned between the SEIL WG members; and
- Advocating and mobilizing resources on behalf of the SEIL WG and in collaboration with refugee protection coordination.

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<sup>1</sup> [Where feasible, the government leads the coordination of all sector working groups through the relevant line ministry. The co-coordination of sector working groups is based on partner presence and expertise on the ground, willingness to engage. The government may prefer to co-coordinate the sector working groups, leaving the lead coordination role to another organization.]

<sup>2</sup> [In principle, the sub-national working groups should be co-led by local authorities, engaging actors present in the area, and report to the national sector working groups.]





## **Membership**

- Membership of the SEIL WG is open to all livelihoods and economic inclusion partners (including UN agencies and other international organizations, international and national NGOs and civil society organizations) who are active (or who plan to be active) in the livelihoods and economic inclusion component of the refugee response.
- Organizations involved in livelihoods and economic inclusion activities are encouraged to participate in the meetings.
- For accountability and follow-up purposes, each organization should nominate one focal point for participation in meetings and a back-up member. For continuity, the same person should attend each meeting. Member organizations can nominate replacements if the designated focal point or back-up leaves the organization.
- The person representing their organization should be a livelihoods and economic inclusion specialist. An updated list of members will be circulated on a regular basis.
- Main responsibilities of members include:
  - Represent and take decisions on behalf of their organizations;
  - Regularly attend the SEIL WG meetings and share information about activities, available and expected funding, trends and gaps, including geographical and programmatic gaps;
  - Coordinate planning and assessments with the SEIL WG members to avoid duplication and address gaps;
  - Contributing to policy and strategy development pertinent to livelihoods and socio-economic inclusion component;
  - Actively take part in the implementation of the SEILWG responsibilities and work plan; and
  - Endorse and disseminate interagency standards, guidelines and tools.

## **8. Working Modalities**

- The SEILWG will meet regularly once in two months and Ad hoc meetings may be called at short notice in case of critical issues. Minutes of the SEILWG-meetings will be circulated among all members in a timely manner. Meetings will be held either online, or in person in Chisinau, or in the territory.





- An agenda for the meeting shall be shared with the members before the meeting, and the meeting minutes shall be recorded and circulated for comments after the meeting has been held.

## **9. Amendments to these ToRs**

The duration of these ToRs will be 24 months, until December 2026. Amendments to the ToRs may be proposed by any of the members of the SEIL WG.