UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Route-Based Approach
Establishing Multi-Purpose Hubs - A guide
July 2025

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym	
AVR	Assisted Voluntary Return
CMR	Clinical Management of Rape
CSO	Community Based Organization
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HQ	Headquarters
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KISEDP	Kalobeyei Integrated Social and Economic Development Programme
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MLO	Migrant-Led Organization
MRC	Migrant Resource Center
PAAHM	Advanced Post for Humanitarian Assistance to Migrants
RLO	Refugee-Led Organization
RSF	Resettlement Support Facility
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WLO	Women-Led Organization

Purpose of this Guide

This note serves as a short operational guide on establishing multi-purpose hubs for UNHCR operations and partners and may be used by others who work on a route-based approach. It is based on existing practices in situations of mobility, including in mixed movements. It details the services, modalities, requirements, and resources commonly utilized to effectively operationalize the route-based approach. While this note provides general suggestions on how to set-up multi-purpose service Hubs, the elements in it will need to be further customized according to the overall context, the dynamics of the movements, and the locations.

This guide should be read together with other relevant operational guidance including the guide on Operationalizing Protection of Children in Mixed Movements in the Route-Based Approach .

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Introduction

Mixed movements of refugees and migrants[1] pose significant, multifaceted challenges for governments, the people themselves and communities in countries of origin, asylum, transit and destination. While refugees have distinct needs for international protection, as recognized in international refugee law, they often use the same routes as migrants and face similar vulnerabilities and risks along the way, such as falling prey to traffickers and smugglers. For far too many people, these journeys result in increased vulnerability, trauma or loss of life.

To address these and other challenges, the route-based approach proposes a set of comprehensive, targeted and coordinated interventions to be taken by States, UNHCR, IOM, other UN agencies, civil society partners, migrant and refugee organizations and other stakeholders, along main routes in countries of origin, asylum, transit and destination. The interventions seek to reduce dangerous journeys and related human suffering, and offer effective, rights-based responses to the challenges of mixed movements, while helping States manage irregular movements, including with support to return, in line with their international obligations.

One of the concrete measures to achieve the goals of the route-based approach across the six pillars is the establishment of multi-purpose hubs (Hubs) in countries along routes. The aims of the Hubs include providing alternatives to dangerous journeys, at an early stage of the route, through engaging and communicating effectively with refugee and migrant communities, delivering life-saving protection services, and offering information and counselling on risks, protection, access to asylum, rights and solutions, including voluntary return, and enhancing and providing assistance to access safe and regular pathways for refugees and migrants. In addition to offering essential protection and legal support, Hubs serve as strategic enablers for refugee-driven third country solutions, including resettlement and complementary pathways. These are not limited to referrals but also include preparatory and facilitative services tailored to support access to such solutions. The Hubs may also provide or facilitate access to counselling on learning and employment opportunities, both within and beyond the concerned country, in cooperation with development actors and relevant partners, particularly where such opportunities contribute to stability, self-reliance, or regular pathways. The Hubs are *not* intended to facilitate onwards or irregular movements, but rather to contribute to effective responses and alternatives along the route.

What are multi-purpose hubs?

A Hub is a physical, digital, or hybrid space, or an entire specific location, identified as strategic for coordinated, multi-purpose interventions. Anchored in the route-based approach, a Hub can offer information and counselling

[1] Mixed movements refer to the cross-border movement of people, generally in an irregular manner, involving individuals and groups who travel alongside each other, using similar routes and means of transport or facilitators, but for different reasons. People travelling as part of mixed movements have different needs and profiles and may include asylum-seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied or separated children, stateless persons, and migrants (including migrants in irregular situations or migrants in vulnerable situations). UNHCR master Glossary of terms.

on available services and options, including regular pathways, support for voluntary return, and referrals to asylum procedures or specialized services in the country where individuals are located.[2]

Hubs also aim to respond to diverse needs and protection risks faced by people along their journeys. They may offer support for immediate safety and emergency needs, legal counselling, assistance for children, and health services, including mental health care. Support may also include information and counselling to access protection services, help individuals make informed decisions, including on the dangers of irregular movements, how to stay safe, where and from whom to seek assistance, their rights, available opportunities, and alternatives to irregular movement; facilitate peer support networks; and promote positive engagement with local communities. Where families report missing relatives, Hubs may facilitate access to tracing services and psychosocial support, in coordination with relevant partners. These interventions are informed by community feedback, adapted to evolving protection needs, and implemented through collaboration among various actors operating across different locations, depending on existing structures and the needs identified along the route. The provision of such services requires the creation of safe virtual or physical spaces and a trusted environment.

Sofia, Bulgaria. UNHCR in cooperation with UNICEF during the opening of Center for support of refugees "Blue Dot" at the HQ of the Bulgarian Red Cross. 9 May 2022. © UNHCR/Boris Cheshirkov

[2] The multi-purpose hubs should not be confused with return hubs as their respective purpose and scope differ greatly. There is no commonly agreed upon definition of a return hub but, at a general level, it refers to an arrangement made between two or more States whereby third country nationals who are irregularly on the territory of a State and who cannot immediately be returned to their country of origin, are instead sent (voluntarily or involuntarily) to a third country. See UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), The Need for Effective Returns Systems and the Potential Role of Return Hubs, March 2025, https://www.refworld.org/policy/legalguidance/unhcr/2025/en/149708

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While primarily intended to support refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants, Hubs may also reach nationals at risk of embarking on unsafe journeys, particularly in countries that are both countries of origin, asylum and transit, by providing counselling, information, access to alternatives that support informed decisions-making and to reduce reliance on dangerous irregular movement.

The support can be provided through a one-stop shop approach or by providing short- or mid-term social work, or outreach support, depending on the context and the mobility dynamics. Where feasible, Hubs can include mobile teams to reach individuals and groups at risk of exclusion and marginalization, who may otherwise not be reachable. Although each Hub will be designed to meet local needs, standardized services and processes at Hubs can streamline administrative procedures for people and address bureaucratic barriers, reduce duplication of services, coordinating the activities of various partners and capitalizing on existing expertise, ensuring faster access to assistance and protection measures for individuals in need.

Figure1: Key features of Multi-Purpose Hubs

Strategic Location & Accessibility

- Located in strategic towns or places identified as critical for multi-purpose interventions by States, UNHCR, IOM and others
- Positioned where refugees and migrants are concentrated

Adaptable and Integrated

- Delivered as physical, digital, or hybrid services
- Facilitate cross-referrals and collaboration for streamlined services
- Adjusted to evolving movement patterns and protection needs

Protection and Solutions

- Safe spaces for asylum, services, return, and integration support
- Promote informed decision-making and access to durable solutions

Community-Centered & Locally-Led

- Involve local actors and promote ownership
- Adapt services based on community feedback

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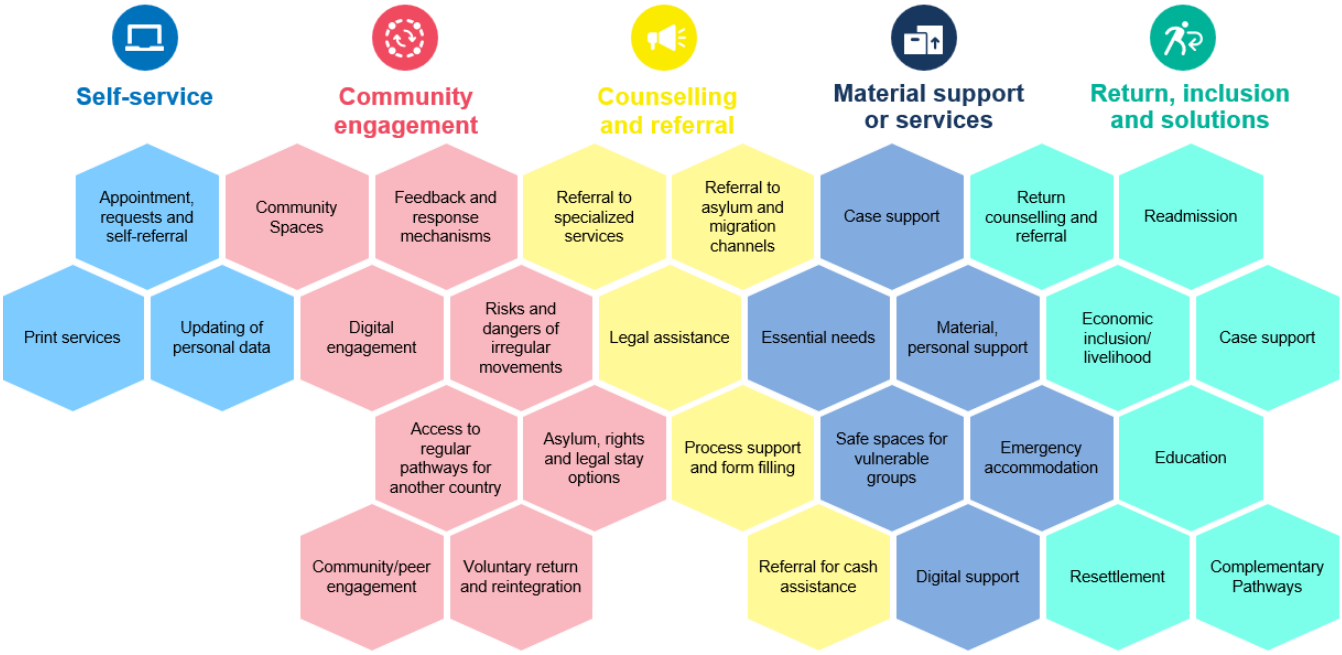
Figure 2: Representation of elements which can form part of multi-purpose Hubs (the description is in the below).



Data collection is an integral part of the multi-purpose hub design. Enhanced data collection and capacity for analysis will be key to facilitating evidence-based planning and decision-making by humanitarian and government actors, ensuring that interventions address critical needs along the key routes. The data will also inform outreach strategies and two-way engagement with people involved in mixed movement situations, as well as their own communities at home or abroad and host communities.

Hubs may build on existing capacities and experiences, including UNHCR one-stop-shop models and IOM Migrant Resource Centres, IFRC Humanitarian Service Points[3], UNHCR's "Guichet Uniques", Telling the Real Story, and UNHCR-UNICEF Blue Dots Counselling Places. In doing so, care should be taken to avoid duplication of efforts, particularly in locations where multiple actors are present, by ensuring joint planning and coordination of services rather than parallel structures.

Hubs should be designed so there is presence of, or referral to, public services, whether provided by central or local authorities, where feasible from the outset. Activities should be informed by refugee or migrant led organizations (MLOs/RLOs), and where possible led by them. They should further build on work by community-based organizations (CSOs) and may evolve into locally led structures in the future. Hubs and related activities should be designed based on a protection assessment of risks for refugees and migrants along the route, and a

[3] See 231218-HumanitarianServicePoints-EN.pdf (ifrc.org)

mapping of existing services provided by local authorities, NGOs, MLOs/RLOs and CSOs, to ensure that they are placed, when not virtual, on the key routes used by refugees and migrants.

Where Hubs include physical presence, these should be designed and strategically located in key mixed movement locations, areas of transit or departure where refugees and migrants are most concentrated or frequently pass through. These locations should be identified based on mobility patterns, safety of women and girls and needs assessments, and selected as strategic points where interventions by various actors can be coordinated and delivered.

Hubs should be designed in a manner that avoids pull effects or facilitating of movement (see section on the Risks below for more details). A multi-stakeholder approach to the design will better ensure this, and monitoring and evaluation will allow for adjustments to mitigate risks and unintentional results.

Services and modalities

The services and activities envisaged through the Hubs fall in four over-arching categories: 1) self-service functions for protection and solutions; 2) information and Community Engagement; 3) counselling to individual referrals to specialized services or procedures; and 4) material support and services.

The constellation of services and activities will be context specific and adapted to the dynamics and profiles of the mixed movements of refugees and migrants on the route and the country operation strategies. They will be delivered by local actors, including authorities and NGOs, UNHCR, IOM, or partners through tasks, which should be optimized as part of the Hubs where feasible; specific contexts may necessitate the use of an in-person modality for the provision of certain services.

Hubs, whether digital or physical, should ensure accessibility, inclusiveness, privacy, and safety also for children, women, persons with disabilities, older persons, LGBTIQ+ and other populations at risk of discrimination and abuse, including men.

Services at Hubs will be country specific, while information, communication and counselling will include risks of irregular travel and onward movement as well as opportunities in the local context and regular alternatives beyond the country context, including meaningful third country solutions such as resettlement and complementary pathways. These are not merely options for referral, but essential components of a comprehensive support system available along the route. Cross-border case-management should be envisaged for victims of crime, including survivors of gender-based violence, victims of trafficking and children, especially those who are separated or unaccompanied (for more see the guidance on Operationalizing Protection of Children in Mixed Movements in the Route-Based Approach).

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1. Self- Service

Self-service

- Appointment, requests and self-referral
- Print services
- Updating of personal data

Where feasible, Hubs should include self-service options, supported by a clear guidance to ensure accessibility and usability.

Refugee self-service portals, permit automated services for requests for registration or self-enrollment; documentation; schedule appointments, self-referral; updating contact information and family composition; and accessing case information, with the capability for securely sharing protected biographical data.

Examples. Americas and in Egypt Digital Gateway (unhcr.org)

2. Community Engagement

Community engagement

- Community Spaces
- Feedback and response mechanisms
- Digital engagement
- Risks and dangers of irregular movements
- Access to regular pathways for another country
- Asylum, rights and legal stay options
- Community/peer engagement
- Voluntary return and reintegration

Depending on the communication channels, format and language used to share information in countries of asylum, transit and destination, people on the move may have challenges to access information to enable them to access services and the situation at various places, and the options available. It is therefore critical to ensure that the services and activities foreseen in the context of the Hubs are communicated to the persons concerned in a language, format, and through channels they can understand and access. These should be determined based on the profiles of the people on the move in the concerned location or area, taking into account specific needs and vulnerabilities, including literacy, special needs, and other barriers to accessing information, such as limited connectivity or access to digital tools.

For UNHCR, community engagement in the context of a route-based approach should be stepped up and where possible build on ongoing work being done in communities, including municipalities and be two-way engagement.

It entails a continuous process throughout the journey across countries of origin, asylum, transit and destination. Effective communication helps promote protection, reduce the risks of misinformation and disinformation and exploitation, and ensures that refugees and migrants are informed, engaged, and able to access support and services wherever they are along the route. Outreach should connect communities to available assistance and reporting channels, while also building trust and fostering meaningful engagement.

Depending on the context it can include the creation of Community Spaces, or provision of information through Digital Support. While tailored to community needs, the outreach and communication is typically general in nature, and therefore differs from individual counselling and referral. In the context of the route-based approach it entails raising awareness and providing accurate and accessible information on:

- asylum, rights, services and legal stay options in the country;
- registration mechanisms for persons potentially in need of international protection;
- the rights and opportunities for complementary and regular pathways in another country;
- voluntary return and reintegration; and
- risks and dangers of onwards and irregular movements, including in countries of origin and destination;
- Information on GBV services available in the areas and guidance on how to access them;
- mechanisms to report abuse and exploitation (e.g. hotlines, complaint systems), including those operated by law enforcement or protection agencies;
- access to socio-economic opportunities, including vocational training, livelihoods programmes, and employment-related services, as well as national labor laws and work rights applicable to refugees and migrants;
- contact details of consular services and other relevant authorities (where available);
- Information to stay safe online, mitigate risk of online abuse and exploitation, particularly those linked to travel, accommodation and employment offers, and improve digital safety.

Iraq. Inauguration of a newly-constructed One-Stop Shop (Community Service Center) in Zakho, Duhok by UNHCR on 29 January 2025. © UNHCR/Rasheed Rasheed

Information can be provided in written or oral format, in-person or digitally, and can be part of community outreach and engagement. It should provide timely, accurate and actionable information that is adapted to the changing information needs of Hub users (refugees, migrants, host communities, community groups etc.). The information should be responsive to misinformation and disinformation that is impacting individuals, examples include misinformation about service availability or eligibility, or disinformation that certain groups are excluded for services. It should also build on UNHCR innovative initiatives on improving digital safety involving displaced communities in online outreach and moderation (see for example, *Wise Browsing, Safe Posting: Protecting Displaced Communities Against Digital Threats – A Community-based Approach).* It should be considered as one element in a broader engagement with communities, and counselling, but will not always involve two-way communication.

- **Feedback and response mechanisms** to enhance participation and provide avenues to ask questions, seek clarification on issues and processes, provide suggestions and feedback and services, as well as voice concerns, including issues such as sexual exploitation and abuse, while upholding confidentiality and anonymity. These channels should also be made available for children and persons with low digital literacy such as older persons.

- **Engagement with local communities** and with refugee-led community-based organizations and women-led organisations including through outreach, to improve social cohesion and avoid tension. Depending

on the context and on the dynamics of the movements, some self-organized community-based initiatives can also be supported to foster solidarity nets. Refugee-led and community-based organizations are eager to help with advice and form filling, to render support for complementary pathways and family reunification more sustainable and locally based. As appropriate, this can include work done on countering dis- and mis information online.

- **Diaspora communities** play a key role in shaping narratives and information flows across borders. They are often trusted sources of advice and support for those still on the move or in countries of origin. As such, they can be engaged to help share accurate information, counter misinformation, and contribute to support mechanisms such as complementary pathways and family reunification. This is especially important in digital spaces, where dis- and misinformation can spread rapidly.

Tips:

- Ensure the community engagement plan includes opportunities to monitor sentiment towards refugees and migrants; this can be offline consultations and/or monitoring online comments/posts.
- If the Hub has an online presence be sure to develop a moderation strategy to monitor and address comments of concern (including hate against refugees/migrants or threats against UNHCR, or individual staff and partners).
- For more information see Chapter 5 of UNHCR's Using Social Media for Community Based Protection Guide: https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Using-Social-Media-in-CBP-Chapter-5-Moderation-and-Sensitive-Information.pdf
- Resources: Social Media for Community Based Protection Guide and E-Course.

Examples:

Help.unhrc.org website - Information for refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless people.

Information that allows new arrivals to decide on the type of visa they require: Advanced Post for Humanitarian Assistance to Migrants (PAAHM) in Brazil, where IOM and UNHCR support the provision of information to those arriving at airports.

Information about access to work, study, migration and other opportunities through outreach from recruiters, municipalities, and others.

Information on **available services, GBV risks, including trafficking,** to women and girls and other at-risk groups.

Video: UNHCR_Feedback_Mechanism-Poland.mp4

Digitalized interactive support through chatbots, with the option for human intervention when the chatbot cannot fully address the inquiries. La Chama chatbot – UNHCR

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Telling the Real Story website and Evaluation (2021).

Safe Online – A guide to being protected on the internet.

3. Counselling and Referrals

Counselling and referral

- Referral to specialized services
- Referral to asylum and migration channels
- Legal assistance
- Process support and form filing
- Referral cash assistance

A central element of the Hubs is providing counselling to individuals and referrals to specialized services or procedures, including the asylum procedures for those who might be in need of international protection.

The identification and referral of vulnerable individuals to specialized services as well as counselling and referral to relevant protection, solutions and legal processes, should be envisaged at all stages along the route, and can be integrated in other work.

Counselling and referrals would typically cover three areas:

Counselling for vulnerable individuals and referral to specialized services.

- **Early identification and referral** of profiles facing heightened risks (e.g. unaccompanied and separated children, etc.), including upon disembarkation of people intercepted or rescued at sea. Where relevant, this should be guided by the Model Disembarkation SOPs, and by the UNHCR–IOM Framework Document on Developing SOPs to Facilitate the Identification and Protection of Victims of Trafficking. GBV survivors, including trafficking survivors, should not be forcibly, rather staff should provide information on GBV services available and enable survivors to make their own decisions.
- **Counselling and referral to psychological and psychosocial support**, which can also serve as an entry point for early identification of those at risk.
- Counselling and referral to IFRC/ICRC, or others for services to trace family members and restore family links.

Counselling on options and referral to asylum and migration channels, incl. AVR, pathways

- **Counselling and information on options and referral to** asylum procedures; protection services available in countries of asylum, transit and destination; rights and obligations in-country and in the region.
- **Counselling and information on refugee-specific and regular migration pathways**; risks and dangers of irregular movements. Counselling should also help refugees and migrants understand the purpose,

scope, and applicability of refugee-specific pathways, such as resettlement, many of which are limited in scale and intended for refugees with specific protection needs. This helps to ensure expectations are realistic and that individuals receive guidance on the most appropriate channels based on their situation. Counselling can also include information on eligibility for refugee documents including travel documents; eligibility for and systems in place for repatriation, and family tracing and reunification; availability of support for voluntary return, including reintegration support. Where possible, Hubs should incorporate practical support with third country mobility opportunities.

- **Counselling and information on assisted voluntary repatriation and reintegration** options and referrals to IOM, noting that refugee repatriation to countries of origin needs to be part of formal return agreements between the country of asylum and the country of origin, facilitated by UNHCR.
- Trained staff, legal and community volunteers can offer **personalized guidance regarding asylum procedures** in the transit country; regular migration route options in the region and beyond, and provide cultural orientation upon arrival and departure.[4]

Referral to legal and other assistance:

- **Legal** aid and access to legal services, including potentially those offered through trained community based and refugee-led organisations, or legal service provided such as PILnet[5], on matters relating to asylum, regular migration, trafficking in persons, criminal and tort law, as well as family, property, labour and other legal needs.

- **Process support and form filling** and other practical support to those seeking access to regular mobility channels that don't require legal advice. This includes support with some visa application forms (family reunification, for instance); selecting the correct photographs for applications; certification of diplomas and other necessary documents. This may be provided by Refugee Led and Community Based organisations, perhaps for an agreed fee.

Examples:

HELP.UNHCR – Information for Refugees, Asylum-seekers and Stateless People | UNHCR; Blue Dot Hubs established by UNHCR and UNICEF at border crossings and along anticipated routes during the height of the Ukraine and Syrian crises.

UNHCR Egypt's registration tool for Sudan situation.

[5] PILnet is a global non-governmental organization that serves as a global network for public interest law. At the 2023 GRF they pledged to 1) Mobilization of PILnet's network to increase legal assistance for displaced people, RLOs and other CSOs, 2) Mobilization of PILnet's network to increase legal assistance and legal advocacy to support refugees to exercise their rights. For more see 2023 GRF pledge and the PILnet Legal Community Pledge.

UNHCR Costa Rica's Kobo form for appointment requests, information registration and update, referral to partners.

UNHCR Belgium Kobo contact form. Also apps: (ex. Germany's Ankommen app) and chatbots (ex.la Brazil's Chama, a digital chatbot providing access to accurate and reliable information through WhatsApp, and UNHCR's Turn.io platform; Asylex's chatbot offering legal aid in emergencies.

4. Material Support and Services

Material support and services

- Case support
- Essential needs
- Material personal support
- Safe spaces for vulnerable groups
- Emergency accommodation
- Digital support

Hubs may provide support services to cover essential and emergency needs. These can include material support, case management support as well as safe spaces for vulnerable groups. The material support and services should be based on route-based analysis of protection needs (example: Abuse, Protection and Justice along Routes between East and West Africa and Africa's Mediterranean Coast. A route-based perspective on key risks) and mapping of existing structures and services (example: Mapping Protection Services. A route-based approach to protection services along mixed movement routes) and be done in close cooperation with local authorities, other UN entities, NGOs and others, to avoid duplication.

- Immediate social support. Basic psychological first aid and psychosocial support, safe spaces for children, women and other populations at heightened risk, and logistical support, accommodation, meals, and other essential needs.

- **Emergency multipurpose cash assistance** aimed at enhancing autonomy and decision-making, while also serving as a responsive measure to address emergency shocks effectively. Where relevant, access to specific non-food items such as dignity kits or assistive devices. Other sectoral forms of cash assistance (emergency cash or cash for protection) may also serve as risk mitigation or response, targeting individuals with intersecting vulnerabilities to help mitigate risks and/ or respond such as trafficking and GBV as well as part of case management interventions. Where feasible, hubs may offer information on access to formal and non-formal education, language classes, and vocational training opportunities, including certification programs. These services support long-term integration, self-reliance, and safe alternatives to onward movement, especially for youth and adults seeking skills development. Vocational training geared towards the development of transferrable skills may also support access to complementary labour pathways.

- **Health services**. Primary healthcare consultations, reproductive health services, dignity kits, mental health and psychosocial support, referrals to specialized medical care when needed, and specific health needs related to mobility, such as health checks, vaccination and communicable diseases.

Examples: IOM has migrant and refugee health centres around the world dedicated to supporting efficient travel to destination countries, whether for migration or resettlement purposes.

- **Third country mobility support services:** Hubs play a crucial role in facilitating access to safe and regular third country solutions, including resettlement, family reunification, labor or educational pathways, etc. Where relevant, Hubs may host or coordinate a range of services such as: early identification and triaging of individuals with durable solution potential; provision of tailored counselling on available third country options, including eligibility criteria, procedural steps, and required documentation; and practical support with applications, documentation, language preparation, and pre-departure orientation; etc. Dedicated spaces may be provided for interviews with embassies or adjudicating authorities, and coordination with recruiters, education sponsors, or private sponsors under labor or educational pathways. These services may be delivered by UNHCR, IOM, NGOs, or refugee-led organizations trained to support third country solutions.

The Hubs may also provide *physical spaces of safety for groups at risk*, such as:

- **Child Friendly Spaces** and other services needed by people travelling with children and who do not have enough community support for children to be kept safe while adults navigate complicated decisions and processes. Arrangements for adolescents should equally be considered. [See also the guidance on *Operationalizing Protection of Children in Mixed Movements in the Route-Based Approach*].

Case-management and individual support could be foreseen at Hubs including for:

- **Asylum case processing,** where UNHCR is carrying out mandate RSD, including in the context of resettlement case processing.
- **Processing by IOM of cases for assisted voluntary return.**
- **Support with accessing pathways for safe and regular movement**, including those where flexibility allows refugees access to existing regular mobility opportunities. Support could be, among other, with advice and form filling to access labor mobility, restoring family links, education, sponsorship pathways, or other.

Examples: Multi-Purpose, Multi Partner Hubs in Uganda and (newly) in Tchad; also https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mrs_40.pdf Migrant Resource Centers (MRCs) are run by governments and/or with other actors and their main goals are information dissemination, helping avert irregular migration, providing employment and skills development opportunities and offering information on scholarship opportunities.

High Commissioner Filippo Grandi unveils a plaque during the inauguration of the UNHCR-built 'One-Stop Shop' in Tiné, Chad, on the border with Sudan, during a country mission to Chad, in April 2025 ©UNHCR/Bienvenu DALDIGUE

- **Resettlement case processing (expedited or other)**. Resettlement counselling and case processing by UNHCR and others, including the possibility of immediate connections between referral actor(s), State adjudicators, orientation and health checks, and travel management.
- **Case management.** Case management services offered in these multi-purpose Hubs encompass child protection, best interests procedures, and protection case management for other violations experienced by adults such as trafficking, harassment, sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as other forms of trauma incurred in the country of origin or along the route. These services often require additional time, dedicated safe spaces and human capacities, as they involve individualized and comprehensive assessment, case planning and support, and referral to specialized services to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals. GBV case management shouldn't be provided in the hubs unless there are no other

GBV response services in the area. Case management services should be provided by UNHCR partners, preferably local women-led organizations with expertise in GBV case management.

Other material support at Hubs could include:

- **Internet access, print and scan stations and photobooths.** Physical spaces can offer internet connectivity and kiosks, enabling individuals to access crucial information, connect to MHP Services, with families in areas of origin, asylum, transit or destination, and access online essential services. They can also provide correctly calibrated photo booths; printers, scanner and other technical tools needed for complete in-country and international applications.
- **Space for in-person information sessions,** including those dedicated to the risks and opportunities associated with various mobility options; cultural orientation for those joining organized schemes; language classes and tests, and similar.
- **Space for ethical recruiters and industry liaison teams to meet refugees and potential migrants,** including for both local employment opportunities and, where available, employment in third countries through regular labor mobility schemes.
- **Host destination country interview processes.** Given that most destination countries require in-person interviews and biometric connections, MPHs could offer interview spaces, waiting rooms and (potentially) immediate passage to health checks. Example: EUAA Resettlement Support Facility (RSF) in Türkiye.
- **Community spaces:** Hubs can also serve as community spaces where individuals can connect with and support each other, share experiences, develop solidarity nets, link up with existing community-support networks, and access cultural and recreational activities, including for children.

While most of these services may be best provided in physical locations and in-person; remote and digital options and services should be considered when feasible, including for multi-purpose cash, and in some circumstances health and other consultations, which can be done virtually. In some locations, services may also be made accessible to local communities.

Where should physical Hubs be located?

Mapping of services by government entities, UNHCR, other UN agencies and NGOs along the route, can serve as a starting point for developing a wider Hub plan. This can be done jointly with NGOs, IOM, local authorities and others.

Example: Mapping Protection Services report for the Central Mediterranean route

Within the context of the route-based approach, physical Hubs could be positioned:

1. **In countries from which large numbers of mixed movements originate, and where** nationals alongside asylum-seekers, refugees, and migrants, may be at risk of resorting to irregular journeys. The availability of information and services for nationals may increase the readiness of a host state to engage with this model.

2. **In countries along mixed movement routes** accessible to asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants via appointment following registration of identity documents in person or online. To mitigate pull factor (see risks below), access could be limited to those with advance appointments. These Hubs would serve as a clearing house advice hub, as well as offering links to such services as can be negotiated with the country in question, to facilitate 'off ramps' for those who wish to stop travelling.

Based on an analysis of the mobility and the routes, services could be **strategically located** at **border crossings**, **major transportation Hubs** (including train and bus stations, airports, land and coastal crossings, ports), and **at, or before, key decision points** are taken about taking **non-regular routes,** such as where smugglers offer their services. They should preferably be built on in existing locations where services are already available including in facilities or existing community centers.

For example, the Multi-Purpose Hub officially launched in April 2025 in Tiné, Chad, is strategically located at the Chad–Sudan border, near the police station in Tiné. The town serves as a key crossroads, not only for Sudanese refugees fleeing the ongoing conflict in Sudan, but also for refugees and migrants from Chad moving toward Libya. Individuals of various nationalities often transit through Tiné, staying temporarily before deciding whether to continue their journey along the Central Mediterranean Route.

Aside the static and hybrid locations, in-person services can also include **mobile teams** to extend some support in remote or underserved areas along the routes, providing direct assistance and support to those individuals who may face barriers in accessing center-based or online services.

Which actors might contribute to a Multi-Purpose Hub?

UNHCR, IOM and ILO already support a wide variety of multi-purpose Hubs in countries of origin, asylum, transit and destination. UNHCR and UNICEF collaborated with others in the humanitarian community on information for those on the move from Blue Dot points during the height of the Ukraine crisis. UNHCR and IOM work closely with the Government of Brazil at entry points, giving new arrivals information that allows them to decide on refugee or migrant status. UNHCR and IOM each work with NGOs such as Talent Beyond Boundaries and Refuge Hub in places around Africa, and UNHCR, Refuge Hub, and the Global Family Reunification Network has been actively supporting the engagement of refugee led organizations and community-based organizations in advice provision and form filling around the world.

In locations where the private sector is already engaged in seeking workers for local, regional and global labour needs, sector-led training actors and reputable recruiting agencies may be important partners. Similarly, in places, local authorities may be willing to allocate local authority resources, including physical space in the centre of an urban area and share municipal technology and hardware.

For instance, the private sector supported NGOs in their work during the Ukrainian crisis:

- Deloitte's IRENA, a cloud-based contact centre, offers automated support across multiple channels. It has self-service features, dynamic content delivery, and a multilingual voice Bot. If the voice Bot can't address requests, a human operator steps in.

- The GeoMatch project, implemented by a consortium of organizations including the Immigration Policy Lab, Church World Service, utilizes an AI-powered algorithm that analyses refugees' background characteristics, resettlement locations, and employment outcomes. GeoMatch provides data-driven insights to governments and immigrants, helping them identify communities where newcomers are most likely to thrive.

The private sector can also offer extensive reach for sharing critical protection information, including how to stay safe online, safety on the move and where and how to access services. An example incudes UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe's engagement with META where free advertising was used to share targeted protection messages for Ukrainians, with a focus on safety on the move.

Many NGOs are also present along routes and provide vital services and support and IFRC has adopted some time back a route-based approach.

It is important to note that **Hubs, or one-stop shops should not create a parallel system to the service provision provided by local authorities. Local authorities partner with NGOs, community groups, and other stakeholders to deliver housing etc.** Local authorities can also assist in enrolling children in local schools and expand existing vocational training and adult education programs to reach refugees and migrants. Local authorities can link refugees and migrants to employment opportunities and access programmes to develop job skills and qualifications. They can also assist with the recognition of foreign qualifications and certifications and extend existing services to ensure refugees and migrants can access mainstream legal advice and representation for asylum claims and other legal matters.

Local authorities can provide ongoing staff training at Hubs to ensure they are equipped to handle the needs of refugees, including cultural sensitivity training. They can also recruit and manage volunteers from the local community to support at the Hubs. Insights from the one-stop-shop can be used to advocate for policy changes at local and national levels to better support refugees.

Some examples of one-stop shops, as part of Hubs, for refugees demonstrate various integrated service delivery models.

Kalobeyei Integrated Social and Economic Development Programme (KISEDP): The Turkana County Government in Kenya has been instrumental in the KISEDP initiative in the Kalobeyei settlement. This programme integrates services such as education, healthcare, and vocational training within the settlement, aiming to create a sustainable and inclusive environment for refugees and the host community. The local government plays a key role in planning, coordinating, and implementing these services.

The Utrecht Refugee Launchpad is an initiative by the city of Utrecht that provides housing, education, and community integration services for refugees. These include temporary housing combined with local student housing to foster social integration. Dutch language courses and vocational training are provided, as well as assistance with job searches, internships, social activities, and events to build relationships between refugees and locals.

The Glasgow Integration Network, supported by the Glasgow City Council, offers a range of services to refugees and asylum seekers, including **a**ccess to healthcare services and mental health support, free legal aid for asylum

claims and immigration issues, English language classes and educational support for children and adults, and social and recreational activities to promote integration.

Risks

There are risks associated with the establishment of MPHs.

Risk	Mitigating Actions
Hub acts as a pull factor, especially if services and assistance available through their presence that is not present elsewhere in the region.	▪ **Standardizing services and access to pathways in countries of origin, asylum and transit elsewhere in the region and on relevant routes**, potentially along with the establishment of multiple Hubs along a given route. ▪ **Consider how national policies on "onward movement" reflect the goals of the route-based approach.** ▪ A **hybrid approach** using virtual eligibility check can help States and UNHCR apply policies in a targeted way. ▪ Ensure communication clearly conveys that Hubs are not intended as transit points or facilitation sites for onward movement, but as protection-oriented service hubs where support is provided based on needs, not on intentions to move.
Can be perceived to support irregular and/or onwards movements.	▪ **Focus on emergency and essential needs provision and explaining the life-saving nature of support and protection services** for refugee and migrants who are victims of serious crimes along the route. ▪ Ensure **balanced engagement and provision of information** with a **focus on protection and options where people are;** and include information about regular migration routes and pathways, as well as return.
Limited resources, including over time.	▪ **Underpin the identification of Hub activities with evidence of protection needs and gaps** and articulate both ongoing and additional needs allowing for proactive fundraising – also for additional funding where appropriate. ▪ **Foster partnerships** and build on existing structures and initiatives. ▪ **Explore innovative or pooled funding mechanisms,** including in collaboration with development actors, the private sector, and other partners, especially in contexts where these actors already have a strong presence.
Hubs falls short of providing effective access to opportunities for refugees and migrants, or meet their	▪ **Multi-partner advocacy and negotiation**, including the diplomatic corps where there is hope for third country engagement and opportunities.

expectation for "route-based information" to facilitate irregular journeys	▪ **Seek and plan on the basis of multi-year commitments** from donors and destination states for increased, predictable opportunities as part of global multi-lateral processes. ▪ **Inclusion of Hubs and their services in regional and national level multi-partner plans**, including the plans of development actors and the private sector offering training in skills needed in local, regional and global labour markets. ▪ **Start with a digital and / or ad hoc 'hub'** in an existing facility with limited staff and other investment, and ensure that growth is driven by opportunities.
Duplicated resources	▪ Prior to identifying a location for a Hub, undertake a mapping of population movements, existing services, and actors to ensure the **necessity**, **complementarity**, and **avoidance of redundancy** in service provision. ▪ Establishment of Hubs through **joint programming** involving different states, as well as UNHCR, IOM, ILO, NGOs, local authorities, private sector and other partners, including refugee-led organisations (MLO/RLOs) engaged in the provision of services and support.
Political sensitivities or resistance from authorities	▪ **Engage early and consistently** with national and local authorities to ensure alignment with national migration and asylum policies and frameworks. ▪ Emphasize that Hubs are **protection-oriented** and respond to humanitarian and protection needs, rather than facilitating irregular movements. ▪ **Clearly communicate the objectives, scope, and boundaries** of Hubs services, and demonstrate complementarity with state-led efforts.

Requirements and resources

- Operations and consortiums should possess a thorough understanding of the national **asylum system** capacity in the country where the centre is located and, when relevant, in neighbouring countries along routes.
- Operations and consortiums should possess sufficient information to counsel refugees and migrants on regular pathways - family reunification, labour and education.
- Consider the availability and willingness to collaborate by **national services**, including health services, visa offices/consulates etc.

- Establish strong **standard operational procedures**, defining roles and responsibilities across staff and partners, for the provision of services within and outside the Hubs
- Map and link to existing **referral pathways** with national and private services and with civil society organizations.
- Develop joint **information and communication strategy** on the Hubs, the offer of services etc.
- Assess the involvement or willingness of the **private sector** (including digital and financial providers) to participate in training and skills development programs for staffing and users.
- Evaluate the presence and capacity of **partners**, including IOM, ILO, as well as the availability of local CSOs/MLOs/RLOs/WLOs to participate in the initiative.
- Consider the **connectivity** and **digital literacy** of the targeted population in designing digital systems and assess digital risks that targeted population can face online when using digital systems and establish mitigation measures.
- Involve host communities and persons on the move in hub planning and management, creating spaces for community gatherings, cultural events, experience and skill-sharing, if the context and the mobility dynamics allow.
- Regularly assess the **effectiveness** of the Hubs in meeting the needs of users through feedback and accountability mechanisms.
- Plan for an **exit strategy** involving the transfer of functions to national services, depending on the context.

1. Human Resources

- **Multidisciplinary teams**. The best Hubs will have a diverse team including social workers, healthcare professionals, legal advisors, interpreters, and cultural mediators, with clear professional requirements.
- Identification of professionals for Hubs may be through establishment of partnerships with local professional associations to put together a roster of specialists (e.g. doctors, social workers etc.) who could be mobilized based on needs.
- **Competency training**. Provide ongoing training to staff on cultural sensitivity, trauma-informed care, and relevant legal frameworks. All personnel working in the hubs should be trained on GBV safe disclosure. See UNHCR GBV Safe Disclosure Facilitation Package.
- **Community liaisons**. Engage community members who understand the local context and can build trust between host communities and communities on the move.
- **Volunteers**. Consider volunteers, including among individuals within the mixed movement for non-specialized tasks, such as welcoming newcomers, providing basic information, and organizing community events.
- **Language skills**. Ensure language proficiency in relevant languages to facilitate communication. This may include remote interpretation upon demand for minority languages, such as sign language interpretation.
- **Security personnel**. Employ security personnel to maintain safety within the Hubs and train them to maintain respectful and non-discriminatory attitudes.

2. Financial Resources

- **Infrastructure costs**
  - **Construction and Renovation**: While the use of pre-existing spaces (municipal social services and community spaces, etc.) is encouraged, it is important to allocate funds for building or renovating hub facilities when absolutely required. This includes construction materials, utilities such as temporary WC, and architectural design. When health or other specialized services are also to be provided, consider the lay-out of the building and the necessity for separate and confidential spaces.
  - **Equipment and Furnishings**: Budget for furniture, computers and other connectivity devices, digital identity management equipment, signage, and other necessary equipment.
- **Utilities:** Cover ongoing costs for electricity, internet, water, heating, and cooling, maintenance, and cleaning services.
- **Mobile Teams:** consider additional logistic costs in case mobile teams are also associated to the multi-purpose hub.
- **Services and Programs**
  - **Legal Aid:** Fund legal clinics, legal counselling and representation, and administrative support.
  - **Health Services:** Budget for medical screenings, vaccinations, emergency response to GBV (sexual and reproductive health, possibly including CMR) and MHPSS support or coordinate to host operational health actors in the Centre.
  - **Case management services**: Budget for qualified case workers, supervision and duty of care provisions.
  - **Funding for cash-based interventions:** other pre-requisites for cash assistance should also be considered.
  - **Language Interpretation:** Allocate resources for male and female and multi-languages interpreters according to the profile of the population.
- **Digital and virtual services and support** will require separate budgeting, including investment in hardware, software, energy, staff, maintenance, licensing.
- **Community Activities: Organize cultural events, offer some skill-building programs as applicable in the context and depending on the mobility dynamics. In case such** initiatives are carried out by local grass-root organizations, consider also the use of UNHCR "Small Grant Agreements"
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**
  - **Data Collection on the impact of activities delivered:** Invest in data collection tools and personnel to assess the effectiveness of the Hubs.
  - Include **mechanisms** for individuals to provide feedback on the service obtained.
  - **External Evaluations:** Consider hiring external evaluators to provide an unbiased assessment.
  - **Emergency Preparedness and contingency budget:** Maintain reserves for unexpected emergencies (e.g., sudden influx of refugees, natural disasters).

3. Additional resources

Support Spaces Toolkit
Movilidad Segura | Inicio
Blue Dot Hub: Safe Space, Protection and Support Hubs - Blue Dot Hub
Using social media: Engaging with people on the move

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