



EVALUATION BRIEF

# FINAL EVALUATION OF EUTF REGIONAL PROTECTION INTERVENTION WITH UNHCR

“ENHANCING SELF-RELIANCE AND ACCESS TO RIGHTS FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS IN NORTH AFRICA”

EVALUATION CONCLUSION

FEBRUARY 2024

**There is an evident improvement in access to and quality of services for refugees and asylum seekers supported by the interventions, hence contributing to reducing their vulnerabilities and protection risks to some extent.**

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## EVALUATION DETAILS

### MAIN OBJECTIVES:

- Overall independent assessment of the performance of the three interventions in their entirety, paying particular attention to their different levels of results measured against the expected objectives and the reasons underpinning such results;
- Identification of the key lessons learned, conclusions and related recommendations in order to improve future interventions;

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

To inform the interventions’ exit strategy for ensuring the sustainability of their results;  
 To draw lessons that can be replicated in other European Union (EU) interventions;  
 To be accountable for the use of EU resources concerning the results of the programme;

### GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE:

Morocco

Tunisia

Egypt



### TIMEFRAME OF THE INTERVENTIONS:

01/01/2020 - 31/12/2021

### IMPLEMENTING PARTNER OF THE INTERVENTIONS:

UNHCR

### EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION:

Nahla Hassan -Team Leader  
 Georges Assaf - Key Expert 2  
 Anna Charpin - Key Expert 3

## Evaluation Context

The North of Africa (NoA) region is characterised as an area of origin, transit and final destination for mixed migration flows. The movements of displaced people across the region reflect a broad set of inter-related historical, economic, social and demographic dynamics.

The root causes of migration and forced displacement are complex and require a holistic and integrated response approach. Today, the key challenge in the NoA region continues to be the arrival of mixed migration flows.

Across the three countries in which the evaluated EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) interventions were implemented, refugees and asylum-seekers are reported to be in need of assistance and support. It is generally related to their overall wellbeing and particularly concerns their status, the need for psycho-social assistance and their access to quality education and quality health services.

This final evaluation assessed the performance of the Interventions, the enabling factors and those hampering a proper delivery of results to inform the planning of future EU interventions related to protection and migration management in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia.

The evaluation specifically identified the results and achievements of the interventions in the three countries as initially proposed by the logical frameworks and action documents.

Evaluated Interventions	Action Fiche T05-EUTF-NOA-REG-09	Action Fiche T05-EUTF-NOA-REG-16
1. Enhancing self-reliance and access to rights for refugees and asylum-seekers in North Africa - EGYPT	Total: 10.360.072 EUR EUTF: 7.705.000 EUR	Total: 11.460.073,42 EUR EUTF: 8.805.000 EUR (top-up of 1.100.000 EUR)
2. Enhancing access to rights for refugees and asylum-seekers in North Africa - MOROCCO	Total: 2.140.000 EUR EUTF: 1.610.000 EUR	Total: 2.779.000 EUR EUTF: 2.210.000 EUR (top-up of 600.000 EUR)
3. Amélioration de l'accès aux services de base et aux droits pour les réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile en Tunisie – TUNISIE	Total: 2.940.000 EUR EUTF: 2.185.000 EUR	Total: 4.963.500 EUR EUTF: 2.935.000 EUR (top-up of 750.000 EUR)

## Evaluation Methodology

Seven overarching Evaluation Questions (EQs) guided this evaluation based on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) evaluation criteria of **relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability** and **impact**, coupled with the **EU criteria of added value**. Mixed-method, theory-based and participatory approaches were adopted throughout the review, emphasising Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) and disability inclusion.

The evaluation team conducted an **in-depth review** of relevant documents of the three interventions and other secondary sources.

The **field data collection** took place between **December 2022 and April 2023**. The evaluation team conducted a total of **21 FGDs and 83 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)**, with the **participation of 297 people**, guaranteeing engagement and inclusion of the different stakeholders and beneficiary groups in the three countries.

KIIs were conducted with stakeholders at the national and sub-national levels across Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia, getting feedback and input on the processes and results of the interventions.

The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with beneficiary groups from different geographic locations in the three countries concerned. Consideration of the different services provided by the projects (education, health, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) services, capacity building) was also ensured. The evaluation team has covered all respondent groups and key geographic locations.

In **Egypt**, the evaluation team visited the urban areas of **Greater Cairo, Alexandria, Sharkia and Damietta**. In **Morocco - Casablanca, Rabat, and Oujda**. In **Tunisia**, physical meetings/visits were only possible in **Tunis** – including **La Goulette**.

Building on the desk review, the primary data collected was prepared and analysed systematically against the EQs, judgement criteria, indicators and assumptions. The team has backed up the findings by combining sources and methods to ensure validity and reliability. Data collection methods and stakeholders' perspectives were triangulated for each EQ to ensure that findings were grounded in solid evidence.



Egypt, Alexandria. Refugees access primary and secondary public healthcare.

13 November, 2023 Credit Line © UNHCR/Firas Al-Khateeb



Egypt, Alexandria. Refugees and migrants get vaccinated against Covid-19. 15 November, 2021 Credit Line © UNHCR/Pedro Costa Gomes

## Key Findings

- The three projects showed strong coherence with the Valetta Action Plan, the EUTF-NOA and the EUTF-Africa. The projects were coherent with UNHCR's five strategic directions for 2017-2021, to which the organisation was committed, and they stayed coherent with the strategic directions for 2022-2026.
- The three respective interventions appeared to follow the same model, aiming to contribute to adequate protection of refugees and asylum seekers in host countries, thus reducing irregular movements to Europe onwards.
- The projects in the three countries demonstrated high flexibility and rapid response in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The final evaluation accounts for the full achievement of planned outputs in the three countries, exceeding the set targets for some indicators, such as housing in Egypt and legal assistance in Tunisia and Morocco.
- There is an evident improvement in access to and quality of services for refugees and asylum seekers supported by the projects, hence contributing to reducing their vulnerabilities and protection risks to some extent.
- The EU remains one of the key funding sources for protection for persons served by UNHCR in the three countries, helping to bring protection issues and rights higher on government's agendas and promoting legal frameworks, social integration and stability.

## Lessons Learned from the Evaluation

- Regional projects would benefit from regular exchanges, especially when implemented by the same organisation. Regional projects without a regional intervention logic or framework will operate as individual projects with limited to no regional outlook.
- Creating linkage amongst projects across countries would help increase south-south cooperation and coordination and support the development of regional understanding and solutions.
- Coordination work at the regional level of UNHCR would have been beneficial to include – as an action or a separate component – through regular meetings of the three projects.
- Coordination within the three projects on the regional level may have had more impact on the outputs that similarly show regional trends in terms of arrivals, refugee



expectations, and asylum possibilities and in terms of comparing good practices from each country for a regional overview.

- Government engagement is critical for expanding the space to protect persons served by UNHCR.
- Improved targeting and clear vulnerability criteria would improve the ability of UNHCR to reach the most vulnerable and the furthest left behind, especially concerning access to education and health, which continue to be a challenge, especially in Egypt.
- The needs of persons served by UNHCR are varied and complex depending on the context. Available funds would never be sufficient to meet all the vulnerable persons' needs. Hence, Improving the situation for Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) survivors require concerted efforts to raise awareness and engage state-run institutions in the fight against Gender-based Violence (GBV).
- The role of the EU could be maximised and made more influential through the different funding instruments by paying further attention to adapting to the fluctuating movement of irregular migration, possibly through flexible funding allocations, refined Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems and a stronger focus on addressing the underlying causes of the weak protection systems, including legal protection and system strengthening of health and education sectors.
- Experiences, capacities and long-standing partnerships between UNHCR and its Implementing Partners (IPs) were essential for achieving outputs. The IPs were well embedded in the local and country contexts and had experiences working on protection with wide geographical coverage.



Tunisia, Sfax. A refugee provides his thumb prints, during a biometric data registration conducted by UNHCR staff member Anis Laouiti in Sfax. July, 2020 Credit line © UNHCR/Peter Horton

## Key Recommendations

- Increase fund allocations to refugees and asylum seekers: Ensure continued assistance to refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco, especially with the current outlook on the economic situation in the country, inflation, spikes in prices and increasingly limited livelihood opportunities, which place protection risks for both persons served by UNHCR and host communities.
- Consider a coordination outcome among the three projects at the regional level, focusing on regional analytical outputs on sharing information and good practices and lessons learned to improve knowledge and implementation modalities.
- Strengthen the regional advocacy efforts to better access protection services for persons served by UNHCR.

## Specific Recommendations

Strengthen the engagement of government and non-governmental stakeholders and target beneficiary groups during the design phase of the planned interventions through stakeholder mapping, consultations and sharing of experiences and best practices. This may improve understanding of targeting and considering the specific needs of refugees and asylum seekers and their non-homogeneous intersectional vulnerabilities.



Tunisia, Tunis. Refugees and Asylum seekers receive exceptional cash distribution.

12 February, 2021 © UNHCR/Chiara Cavalcanti

**Egypt:** Ensure meaningful complementarity: Ensure a structured complementarity with existing and future actions implemented in Egypt at the onset of future programme design. This would maximise the impact and efficiency of the available financial and human resources and allow for meaningful exchanges and information sharing within and across countries. Following this, complementarity and exchange of experiences at the regional level should also be sought.

**Integrate advocacy in future programming:** Build on the advocacy efforts implemented through the project, which were successful in the short term during the COVID-19 pandemic, albeit unsustainable, not integrated into the legal frameworks. Advocacy will reflect recognition of the impediments in the existing legal framework for migration in Egypt and promote an enabling environment to protect refugees and asylum seekers.

**Tunisia:** For future programming, ensure the design is informed by in-depth context analyses, thematic analyses and specific needs assessments and strengthened by consultations with national government stakeholders, civil society and beneficiaries.

Targeted interventions for diverse population groups, people UNHCR works with and for, should be designed to respond to their specific needs based on intersectional vulnerabilities and considering the Agenda 2030 principles.

Strengthen the Action's strategic approach, with a clear definition of expected outputs and modalities in achieving them and a clear identification of stakeholders as well as risk and mitigation measures.



**Tunisia, Zarzis.** Refugees and Asylum seekers are sensitized against the risks of COVID-19.

15 September, 2021 © UNHCR/Hallouli Mohamed Ameur

**Morocco:** Provide technical support to establish Protection Working Groups (PWGs) towards monitoring, referring, and responding to the protection needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

Strengthen partnerships with central government bodies with sub-national branches for a timelier, inclusive, engaging and needs-specific response to people UNHCR works with and for where they are located geographically.

Scale up the dialogue with the government to effectively implement the Stratégie Nationale d'Immigration et d'Asile (SNIA) in facilitating documentation delivery to allow integration of people UNHCR works with and for in society. Additional approaches/incentives for the empowerment of people UNHCR works with and for are to be considered, especially for refugees living in Morocco for decades without access to proper documentation for them and their children born in exile and who would voluntarily envisage a safe return to their country of origin.

Increase fund allocations to refugees and asylum seekers: Ensure continued assistance to refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco, especially with the current outlook on the economic situation in the country, inflation, spikes in prices and increasingly limited livelihood opportunities, which place protection risks for both people UNHCR works with and for and host communities.

**Egypt:** Strengthen information sharing to people UNHCR works with and for and IPs about targeting, eligibility and means of accessing healthcare and medical services, guiding the operations through direct assistance or referrals and placing more clarity on the urgency of appropriate case management.

There is a need to clarify and improve the targeting of people UNHCR works with and for who need elective surgeries. Globally, UNHCR does not support cancer patients, heart conditions surgeries, or other types of complex health needs. UNHCR does not fully cover patients requiring dialysis for kidney conditions. There is a need for explicit targeting and better partnerships to provide better support to these cases.

Enhance the role of CSOs in protection and service provision: Strengthen the role of CSOs in providing services and protecting people UNHCR works with and for vulnerable migrants. This could be achieved by increasing available direct funding to NGOs/CSOs (national and international).

Support the development of an appropriate system for health profiling of people UNHCR works with and for to enable better

medical screening, programming, tracking and assistance that is directly relevant to their needs.

**Tunisia:** Strengthen information sharing to people UNHCR works with and for and IPs about access to healthcare and medical services, guiding the operations through direct assistance or referrals and placing more clarity on the urgency of appropriate case management.

**Morocco:** Review, consolidate and refine the standard approach of service delivery put in practice by the project in the field of i) education, ii) health iii) psychosocial assistance to include, beyond primary health care centres, a fourth pillar for medical assistance by structuring the current dispersed ad hoc interventions in reaction to emergencies. The suggested fourth pillar is to be put in place in cooperation with a network of physicians and hospitals with the help of the Conseil National de l'Ordre des Médecins and other relevant health professional entities.

Strengthen coordination with relevant ministerial departments and public entities specialised in delivering services to vulnerable groups for better inclusion in the public education system, health services in hospitals (beyond emergencies) and inclusion of the most vulnerable people UNHCR works with and for in the national healthcare plan (now under discussion).

Consider a coordination outcome among the three projects at the regional level, focusing on regional analytical outputs on sharing information and good practices and lessons learned to improve knowledge and implementation modalities. Two or three Coordination meetings per year among the three countries would permit the development of a clear comparative overview of trends of arrivals of refugees, profiles, and lengths of stay and compare the provided assistance and response from national institutions in the view of comparing challenges and lessons learned and informing on good practices.

Strengthen the regional advocacy efforts to access protection services for people UNHCR works with and for better. While UNHCR maintains a global advocacy approach on the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, it is equally important to recognise the commonalities among people UNHCR works with and for in NoA, which require additional and integrated advocacy efforts and resource mobilisation to strengthen and improve the situation of people UNHCR works with and for in NoA.

Consider the development of a NoA strategy and approach first through integrated coordination at the regional level coupled with clear advocacy and media campaigns to raise awareness about the plight of refugees and asylum seekers and increase acceptance of their rights across the region. This could also be coupled with rigorous resource mobilisation campaigns to increase funding for projects targeting people UNHCR works with and for and host communities in NoA.

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