

UNHCR Mexico – Cash Based Interventions (CBI) Programme Assessment (1+1)

Annex A – Terms of Reference

I. Overview

Mexico has consolidated as a main destination country for persons in need of international protection in the Americas. The exponential growth in the number of asylum applications, which reached a historical record in 2021, continued in 2022. In contrast to the apparent trends established in the second half of 2021 with an overwhelming number of Haitian nationals requesting asylum in Mexico; 2022 has seen an exponential growth in the arrival of Cuban, Venezuelan and Nicaraguan nationals, and a steady increase of Central American individuals, mostly from Honduras.

Most new arrivals enter Mexico through the southern border, where the influx is putting additional pressure on an already weak asylum system, as well as assistance and public service providers, leading to increasing xenophobia. The rise in the number of claimants is therefore most acutely felt in Tapachula which has a local population of 353,706 residents (INEGI,2020) and receives over 75% of Mexico's asylum claims in addition to a regular influx of migrants. COMAR/UNHCR data also indicates that an increasing number of asylum-seekers are lodging asylum claims in the central region: Mexico City (9.2 million habitants) and the northern region: Saltillo (0.88 million habitants) and Monterrey (1.15 million habitants). These locations are also attracting the majority of Central Americans being recognized as refugees and who are likely to settle in these parts of the country (due to labor opportunities as well as existing social networks).

In accordance with Mexican law, refugees have the right to permanent residence, which allows for the right to access formal employment, health services, and education. However, refugees have faced significant obstacles in accessing these rights in practice and thus their living conditions remain precarious. For asylum-seekers without a formal migratory document, the problem is exacerbated. The Government has introduced a temporary Population Registration Code (CURP), similar to a permanent CURP provided to residents so that asylum seekers and refugees who do not yet have permanent residence can enter the labor market and access public services. Asylum-seekers can also attain a Visitor's Card for Humanitarian Reasons (TVRH), which legally allows them to engage in remunerated work. However, the reality is that most businesses or employers do not recognize the temporary CURP or the TVRH, leaving asylum seekers and refugees in limbo. Furthermore, the emission of the CURP is still inadequate, particularly in locations where COMAR still has not established a permanent presence. There are significant delays in the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) procedures as well as the documentation process to obtain permanent residency, which means that most persons remain outside of the labor force for extended periods of time (around 12-months in many cases).

Moreover, without the right documentation they are unable to access employment, and as such they are likely to adopt negative coping strategies such as begging, sex work, child labor, working in informal and precarious/unsafe/exploitative conditions, or otherwise abandon their asylum process to seek stability elsewhere- even if this means illegal or exploitative work and lack of international protection.

Many are extremely vulnerable and require humanitarian assistance to meet their most urgent and basic needs, such as: food, water, shelter, and other Non-Food Items, including cooking utensils and hygiene items. Since 2016, The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (hereinafter "UNHCR") has been supporting these populations with life-saving assistance, including Cash-Based Interventions (CBI) since 2018 under direct implementation of UNHCR. CBIs not only aim to enable persons to meet their basic needs but also support their livelihoods by reducing their risk of

displacement. Through CBIs, persons are able to determine their own needs and priorities and are given full decision capacity on how to address them.

The Participatory Assessments facilitated by UNHCR as well as the PDMs conducted in Mexico, confirmed that asylum seekers prioritize food, shelter, and basic domestic/hygiene items in their expenditure. UNHCR provides Multi-Purpose Cash Grants (MPG) under the Humanitarian Assistance programme as well as for other specific initiatives and needs under Protection and Durable Solutions to cover Basic Needs including food, Non-Food Items (NFIs), and contributions towards shelter/utility bills up to four (4) months

The delivery mechanism used by UNHCR Mexico is that of prepaid cards that allows the beneficiaries of the assistance to withdraw amounts from ATMs as well as to purchase in shops with their card. The amount of MPG is based on the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) as per the information from the two main poverty measurement institutions in Mexico, i.e. CONEVAL and INEGI, and completed by the findings of a country-wide Market Assessment implemented by UNHCR in 2021.

The primary focus of the CBI Evaluation services will be on UNHCR's ongoing Humanitarian Basic Needs Assistance as well as other Protection and Durable Solutions interventions using MPGs and will take place primarily in the principal asylum-seeker and refugee-hosting locations listed below as. The locations to be covered may be expanded in line with the operational requirements.

Current main asylum-seeker and refugee-hosting locations:

- Tapachula, where the biggest population of persons are entering Mexico,
- Tenosique and Palenque in Southern Mexico,
- Mexico City,
- Monterrey,
- Saltillo,
- Tijuana

Some of the other locations across all Mexico where services may be required in the future:

- Aguascalientes,
- San Luis Potosí,
- Guanajuato,
- Irapuato,
- Guadalajara

II. Description of required services

Depending on the requirements, the evaluation will be for any or all of the below mentioned purposes:

- To establish whether UNHCR's CBI programme in Mexico is relevant and is meeting the humanitarian needs of the persons served in any or all of the above-mentioned cities as well as further locations in Mexico.
- To assess the distribution process as well as the outcomes of cash assistance on HH and community level;
- To confirm that markets are functioning and that PoCs can access markets in a safe and dignified manner;

- Based on the findings, draw up a final report of the review and propose clear, appropriate and realistic recommendations for direct improvement of ongoing CBI activities in Mexico.
 - Upon requirement of UNHCR, include comparative analysis with previous data collected on previous occasions.
 - Upon requirement of UNHCR, produce executive reports, presentations and two-pager handouts.
- To assess the relevance of the UNCHR's Cash-Based Interventions by looking at the extent to which CBIs objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, donors and UNHCR Mexico Operations needs and priorities (relevance);
- To assess the degree of coherence of UNHCR's Cash-Based Interventions with other national cash actors' interventions, and with their policies and priorities (coherence);
- To assess the extent to which UNHCR's Cash-Based Interventions delivered results in an economical and timely way (efficiency);
- To assess the extent to which Cash-Based Intervention has generated or is expected to generate positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level of results (impact);
- To assess the extent to which the net benefits of the UNHCR's Cash-Based Interventions continue or are likely to continue (sustainability);

III. Key Evaluation Questions

Item 1 - GENERAL CBI ASSESSMENT

Household-level outcomes and use of cash

1. What outcomes have the UNHCR's CBI had on the targeted population?
2. How are persons using the cash assistance provided by UNHCR?
3. Was the MPG transfer amount sufficient from the persons perspective to cover large part of immediate basic consumption needs?
4. Is there any evidence of anti-social use or potential fraud?
5. Have there been any unintended (positive/negative) secondary impacts on persons due to MPGs provided by UNHCR? Which ones?

FOR UNHCR RELOCATION PROGRAMMES

1. Has the cash assistance also supported pathways to sustainable solutions? For eg. Longer-term investments, access to documentation, financial inclusions, etc.
2. Has the cash provided helped to build longer-term support, e.g., to start-up businesses? If so, how?
3. What psychological effects has the response had, e.g., did persons feel empowered, respected, and dignified as a result of the financial support?

Markets

1. Do persons have safe and dignified access to local markets?
2. Can persons find what they need in the markets, at a price they can afford?
3. Is there any indication that the MPG has led to a significant impact of prices (e.g., inflation or deflation and seasonality) and availability of goods and services at local level?

Social cohesion and co-existence

Has there been an impact (positive/negative) on intra-household dynamics due to MPGs or the way they were delivered? Has there been an impact (positive/negative) on community dynamics due to

MPGs or the way they were delivered? E.g. *To what extent have relationships between host community and beneficiaries changed, including xenophobia/ community tensions, if at all? Are there positive or negative changes in the host community and beneficiaries relations, which are attributable to UNHCR's project?*

Process

1. Did persons receive the right amount of cash?
2. Were distributions timely and efficient?
3. Were the MPG delivered and spent safely?
4. What costs were borne by the persons in receiving and using the MPG?
5. Was there any perceived abuse of persons by agency/partner staff, authorities, market traders or Financial Service Providers involved in targeting, distribution or deliver of MPG?
6. What do the persons think of the project? What would they like to see differently? Are there existing and appropriate feedback channels, where persons could raise concerns or suggestions?
7. Do persons know why they were selected? Are any groups missed out in their opinion?
8. Do persons receive adequate programme relevant information on targeting criteria, programme objective, date and time of MPG delivery? Any relevant information they are missing?

Item 2- POST DISTRIBUTION MONITORING

General

1. Number of persons assisted with CBI;
2. Number of cash transfers made;
3. Total monetary value of cash distributed;
4. % of the persons targeted in the country who have received cash assistance;

Efficiency

1. % of households who received correct transfer value;

Accountability

1. % of households who were able to correctly identify available channels for complaint mechanism
2. Number of complaints received about CBI;
3. % of households who reported CBI as their preferred assistance modality;

Risks

1. % of households who reported feeling at risk (unsafe) receiving/keeping/spending the cash assistance;

Markets

1. % of households who report being able to find key items / services when needed;
2. % of households who report being able to find key items / services of sufficient quality in shops/markets;
3. % of households who report no increases in prices of key items/services over the last 4 weeks;

Expenditure

1. Top 5 expenditures done with the cash grant;

Outcomes

1. % of households who report improved living conditions
2. % of households who report reduced feelings of stress;
3. % of households who report being able to meet all/half/less than half/none of the basic needs*;
4. % of households reporting using one or more negative coping strategy in the last 4 weeks*;
5. % of households who have a bank account or mobile money account or other official account;
6. % of households who are on a pathway to sustainable solutions

Item 3 - MARKET ASSESSMENT

1. Do persons have safe and dignified access to local markets?
2. Can persons find what they need in the markets, at a price they can afford?
3. Is there any indication that the MPG has led to a significant impact of prices (e.g., inflation or deflation and seasonality) and availability of goods and services at local level?

Item 4 – IMPACT EVALUATION

The impact evaluation aims to assess the long-term outcomes of UNHCR's Cash-Based Interventions were intended to produce in relation to [Policy on Cash-Based Interventions](#) (the "CBI" Policy) and CBI Strategic Directions. The overall aim of this evaluation is to assess relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, sustainability and impact of cash assistance with the following specific objectives:

1. To analyze whether the CBIs were able to meet its high-level objectives, specifically the progression from outcome to impact (that persons can meet their needs in dignity, are protected and can transition to solutions through the expanded use of innovative, efficient and effective cash-based interventions);
2. To confirm the extent to which CBIs laid a foundation for future sustainability;
3. To identify and document lessons learned and guide the design of future cash assistance programmes.

IV. Methodology

The CBI and market review methodology will be proposed by the selected company/organization and validated by the Mexico Operation (UNHCR CBI Unit) based on standard methodologies. The methodology and products of this review will enable front-line staff to adequately and quickly integrate important aspects of CBI and markets into the programme's decision-making. The review should be evidence-based including both qualitative and quantitative data, including a household survey. Different approaches and data methodologies will be used for the data collection including Focus Group Discussions (FGD), Key Informant Interviews (KII) and individual household interviews. Attention should be given to ensure that all stakeholders, with special focus on vulnerable and

marginalized groups are involved in the FGDs and interviews. Available secondary data should also be reviewed and included in the final analysis and report.

Through a consultative and field-based process, the main stakeholders to be interviewed should include but are not limited to:

- Persons – asylums seekers and refugees (new arrivals and old caseload)
- Host communities
- Local traders/suppliers in largest markets (market committees)
- UNHCR/partner staff – COMEX and Field Offices
- Local government – COMAR and INME.

The Impact Evaluation methodology will be proposed by the selected company/organization and validated by the Mexico Operation (UNHCR CBI Unit) based on standard [counterfactual impact evaluation methodologies](#). The methodology and products of this evaluation will enable the UNHCR operation to identify the impact (or causal effect) of CBIs on beneficiaries of cash assistance. The evaluation could include mixed method evaluation, e.g., combining a Randomized Control Trial with an Ethnographic Study. It is important that the results include the cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis of the CBIs being evaluated. The final report should also focus on the impact, that is, the changes directly attributable to the CBIs.

V. Key activities

Conduct a literature review: a literature search by consulting existing documents on humanitarian needs and market functioning in the different localities, and the resources available on the context of the intervention areas.

Collect quantitative data: using and adapting the Post Distribution Monitoring tools already developed for the Mexico operation and already formatted in KOBO, and together with the CBI monitors (1 in each location) collect quantity data in the selected areas of operation. Clean data and include findings/analysis in the final report. The sample should be representative (scale to be determined: Mexico or specific locations).

Develop qualitative data collection tools: quantitative approaches will be developed using interviews and FGD with POC as well as all stakeholders (highlighted above).

The selected company/organization together with local stakeholders and UNHCR/partner staff will determine the target markets to visit during the evaluation.

Collect data in the field: the selected company/organization will conduct the data collection in the field with the strong involvement of stakeholders and local enumerators - to be identified by the selected company/organization. The exact number of interviews/FGDs to be conducted will be decided in coordination with the UNHCR CBI Unit and the selected company/organization.

Analysis of results and synthesizing/findings to be carried out by the selected company/organization.

Final report as per template provided and proofread by a native speaker. Main findings are available in data visualization tools, such as Tableau, Power BI, D3, Plotly, or equivalent.

Quality control and assurance over all activities from data collection to final report.

The data collection should be done in a way that will allow its use as baseline data for a potential future impact evaluation.