

UNHCR PROJECT PROPOSALS 2023

Government of Belgium



UNHCR's local partner, Right to Protection, registering families for multi-purpose cash assistance and screening for protection vulnerabilities. © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

Project Proposal

Attaining a favourable protection environment and realizing basic rights through community-based protection and multi-purpose cash assistance in Ukraine

August 2023

Project overview

Project Title	Attaining a favourable protection environment and realizing basic rights through community-based protection and multi-purpose cash assistance
Total Budget	EUR 3,000,000 (USD 3,325,942)*
Implementation Period	January – December 2023
Number of Beneficiaries	20,000 internally displaced, returnee, and war-affected people inside Ukraine
Summary of Project and Expected Outcomes	The project will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support vulnerable individuals and families to meet their basic needs and avoid harmful coping mechanisms; - improve the protection environment and outcomes by providing relevant information/counselling and community-based mental health and psychosocial support activities.

* exchange rate 0.902 14 July 2023

Country background and operational context

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 marked the beginning of the largest conflict in Europe since the Second World War and immediately triggered massive displacement and created vast humanitarian needs. Over subsequent months, the humanitarian situation has deteriorated drastically, rendering some 17.6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection, according to the [2023 Humanitarian Response Plan](#).

With no evident prospects for a negotiated peace, the war in Ukraine will likely continue in the second half of 2023 and into 2024—and perhaps beyond. There has been massive destruction of civilian infrastructure and housing and a huge disruption to the economy and livelihoods. According to the Rapid Damage Needs Assessment 2 (RDNA2), Ukraine's gross domestic product (GDP) shrank by 29.2% in 2022, and poverty increased from 5.5% to 24.1% in 2022, meaning that 7.1 million people have been pushed into poverty.

According to the 2022 Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA), at the national level, the three biggest drivers of households' (HH) extreme multi-sectoral needs index scores are Livelihoods (19%), Shelter/NFI (16%) and Protection (11%). About one in six HHs surveyed in the MSNA were found to have Protection Living Standards Gaps (LSGs), and a notable proportion of HHs had Extreme LSGs in Protection (11% of all assessed HHs), particularly in the East and South. In western parts of Ukraine, many IDPs continue to suffer the effects of family separation and struggle to find adequate accommodation and income, resulting in vulnerability to exploitation and gender-based violence (GBV), while incidents of social tensions with host communities have been reported.

Protection Monitoring indicates that the most frequently reported protection risks include exposure to shelling and armed violence (similar to the findings of the MSNA), family separation, restrictions on freedom of movement, separation of children from their families, lack of identity documents, obstacles for children to access education, and exposure to mines and other explosive remnants of war, particularly in newly accessible and return areas.

The war is causing enormous psychological distress for people who have seen their loved ones killed or injured and their homes and cities destroyed. Children and youth are particularly affected due to the disruption of routines and predictability in life, and many women have had to take on an additional care burden while trying to provide for their families.

The impacts of war are uneven, with the greatest effects on women, children, older people, and people with disabilities. Across the country, the impact of job loss, drops in household income, loss of purchasing power, and the loss of assets among Ukrainians, is seen but particularly impacts the most vulnerable.

Project objective

The project will:

→ support vulnerable individuals and families to meet their basic needs and avoid harmful coping mechanisms such as reductions in spending on hygiene items, water, baby items, health, education or moving to poorer quality shelter to meet basic needs;

→ improve the protection environment and protection outcomes by providing protection information/counselling, community-based mental health and psychosocial support activities, and ensuring that affected populations are consulted and meaningfully participate in the humanitarian response

Timeframe

The project is implemented from January to December 2023.

Activities

Activity one:

UNHCR will support the capacity of displaced communities to respond to their protection needs. UNHCR will support community outreach facilitators, particularly in areas with lower access to services and assistance. Facilitators, who are members of displaced or host communities, play a critical role in identifying individuals at risk and initiating their referral to protection or other relevant services. Facilitators are also instrumental in mobilising communities to address key concerns or needs, such as organising childcare, facilitating access to information, and advocating with local stakeholders (primarily local authorities but also potentially including NGOs whose support might be needed for advocacy).

UNHCR will ensure that individuals in need have access to relevant protection services. Social workers will be deployed in areas where public social services remain insufficient to address needs among displaced communities, or in return and newly accessible areas. Mobile teams will reach out to people in situations of vulnerability, at risk of neglect or violence, and provide the relevant psychosocial support, in the frame of case management where necessary. Protection teams will also be working jointly with other components of UNHCR's response (camp coordination and camp management (CCCM), shelter/NFI, and multi-purpose cash (MPC)) to ensure direct access to psychosocial support and protection to people in need in targeted communities. UNHCR will work closely with public protection services at the local level to ensure complementarity and optimise coordination for effective referral.

The participation of IDPs and other war-affected people will be promoted through a variety of approaches: participatory assessments, effective access to feedback and response mechanisms, including a central hotline and email, that manages to ensure a systematic tracking of claims/queries and programmatic learning, protection monitoring, and regular surveys, in particular regarding intentions to return. Information on UNHCR programmes are disseminated through various channels, including social media, UNHCR's Help page and hotline.

Indicator	Target
# of internally displaced and war-affected individuals in Ukraine who received protection information of counselling	6,500
# of internally displaced and war-affected individuals in Ukraine who participated in community based mental health and psycho-social support activities	

Activity two:

As a result of the impacts of the war in Ukraine, many have resorted to harmful coping mechanisms, such as reducing food consumption, expenditure on medicines, baby items, or borrowing money to pay for much needed items, exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities. Multi-purpose cash assistance can support those in need to avoid resorting to such negative practices.

The modality of multi-purpose cash assistance provides greater dignity of choice in meeting needs and is often significantly more cost-efficient than the delivery of in-kind aid. Experience and [evidence](https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/respond-emergencies/cash-based-interventions) (<https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/respond-emergencies/cash-based-interventions>) highlight that cash assistance increases protection outcomes, facilitates inclusion and solutions, and improves efficiency and effectiveness in programme delivery. In Ukraine, multi-purpose cash assistance is an integral part of UNHCR's programmes and is a key modality for reaching vulnerable individuals efficiently and effectively. Further, multiple assessments indicate that cash assistance is the preferred modality of Ukrainians, giving them choice and dignity.

A recent Ground Truth Solutions [report](#) indicated that cash is cited as what people most want from aid providers and recommended prioritization of cash assistance as people say it is the most useful kind of aid, allowing people to access the specific goods and services they need. The report also noted that financial aid is particularly critical for women, as many men are serving at the frontline in the army. In this regard, the [Rapid Gender Analysis](#) noted that women in particular spoke of the impact that a lack of cash had on their ability to access housing, food, and non-food items, particularly hygiene items. Similarly, the recent post-distribution monitoring exercise conducted on UNHCR's non-food intervention (NFI) programme in Ukraine indicated that the largest proportion of respondents indicated cash assistance as their preferred modality of assistance, above receiving in-kind NFIs.

To this end, UNHCR will enrol IDPs, returnees, and other war-affected individuals for cash assistance in multi-protection service enrolment centres, if they meet the eligibility criteria, which are assessed through an individual interview by partner staff. Importantly, at the same time and location, these individuals will be screened for specific needs, and referred for assistance as relevant (for example, legal assistance, psychosocial support, GBV response). These cash enrolment centres are complemented by mobile teams, enhancing enrolment, and thus cash assistance, reach to rural areas, especially for those with reduced mobility, such as older people or people with disabilities.

Enrolment is conducted using UNHCR's registration and case management system, proGres v4, in accordance with standard operating procedures specific to Ukraine. Individuals can approach an enrolment centre directly to make an appointment or make an appointment through the Donbas SOS hotline, which is available freely nationwide. A date and time are given, removing the need to wait for long periods of time which can be challenging for some individuals. Vulnerability of individuals is considered when scheduling appointments and slots are kept to fast-track individuals for vulnerability reasons.

When recipients are enrolled, a number of steps are taken to reduce risks. These include: data quality checks, including tax ID validation, telephone number validation, bank account number validation: internal de-duplication measures are taken to identify and remove duplicates. UNHCR uses Building Blocks, a neutral humanitarian blockchain network, to ensure de-duplication of cash assistance provided by other organizations as agreed by the Cash Working Group (CWG). Recipients are first offered a digital wallet with Stellar - a pioneer integrated blockchain payment solution powered by Stellar

network to reach people in need with speed and agility; if they prefer not to use a digital wallet, payments are processed using Rapyd to the recipients bank account. In instances where recipients choose not to use a digital wallet and have no bank account, payments are received through Western Union. Recipients of cash assistance receive an SMS message informing them of the availability/transfer of the assistance and, depending on the specific FSP, beneficiaries can withdraw the money from a Western Union Branch, a Moneygram agent, an ATM, or spend directly from their bank account.

Recipients of multi-purpose cash assistance receive a transfer of UAH 2,220 per person per month for a period of three months, which is in-line with the Cash Working Group.

Indicator	Target
# of households receiving multi-purpose cash assistance	13,500

Beneficiaries

A total of 20,000 beneficiaries will be reached with this contribution. Beneficiaries will include vulnerable internally displaced, returnee, and war-affected individuals and families.

Eligibility criteria for cash include: not already being enrolled with UNHCR and not having received cash assistance from other organizations; being in a single-headed household with at least one child under 18 or older family members (over 55); being in a household headed by an older person (i.e., composed of one or more individuals >55 or a person over 55 responsible for at least one child <18); being in a household with one or more persons with specific needs (disability, chronic illness, woman at risk, etc.); being a foster family caring for documented unaccompanied minors. Eligible people should also meet the socio-economic criteria of earning less than UAH 5,400 per person (family member) per month.

Financial Requirements

The table below presents the contribution requested by the UNHCR Ukraine for the response presented above.

		UNHCR's overall Requirements	Proposed Belgian contribution	
		USD	USD*	EUR
Attaining a Favorable Protection Environment	Community-based protection	13,750,000	277,162	250,000
Realizing Basic Rights in Safe Environments	Basic needs/Multipurpose assistance	162,500,000	2,513,194	2,266,901
Support to staffing and coordination			332,594	300,000
Sub-total			3,122,950	2,816,901
Support costs 6.5%			202,992	183,099
TOTAL			3,325,942	3,000,000

* The exchange rate used is 0.902 (UN rate 14 July 2023)