

# Inter-Agency Winterization Planning Process

Refugee Response Plan | Moldova | May 2023

## Introduction

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure the adequate preparation and response to the needs of refugees during the winter season in Moldova. It aims to provide a comprehensive approach to winterization through an inter-agency coordination effort. This planning strategy briefly outlines the process of needs assessment, data analysis, sectoral planning, and inter-sectoral consolidation to ensure the most efficient and effective response.

## Objectives

1. Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to understand the specific requirements of refugees and affected host communities during the winter season, building on the experience of the previous winter response.
2. Analyze the data jointly with all stakeholders to identify the key areas of intervention.
3. Conduct sectoral planning to develop tailored response packages.
4. Consolidate all sectoral plans into an Inter-Agency Winterization Strategy for a coordinated and comprehensive response.

## Key Planning Assumptions

The following assumptions will guide the planning and implementation of the winterization strategy:

- 1. Markets in Moldova are functional and accessible**, and refugees and host communities can access necessary goods and services. It also enables cash-based interventions, which are often more cost-effective and dignifying than in-kind assistance.

The Cash Working Group, with technical support from UNHCR, is conducting a market assessment that covers both consumers and retailers, examining issues related to the availability of winter goods, including solid fuel. Although the Cash Post-Distribution Monitoring exercise has already indicated that cash has been an effective winter response, the market assessment will provide additional insights for winterization planning.

- 2. Cash-based interventions will be prioritized** to allow refugees to meet their winter needs. This approach is flexible, efficient, and empowers the beneficiaries.

According to the 5th Round of Post-Distribution Monitoring of Cash Assistance for Refugees in Moldova (which covered the winterization cash top-up), cash remains the preferred modality of assistance for 96% of households. Spending the assistance did not pose threats or challenges to beneficiaries. Moreover, almost every household (99%) was able to find the items and/or services that they needed in the markets and/or shops.

**3. Focus on community infrastructure and private accommodation insulation:** Efforts will be made to enhance the resilience of both community infrastructure and private accommodations to the cold weather. This will include critical repairs activities such as insulation and infrastructure improvements to winter proof homes. When it comes to public infrastructure, activities should focus on areas hosting refugees, and should be part of wider social cohesion initiatives. In addition, activities implemented by humanitarian organizations shall not duplicate, but rather complement similar activities that may be implemented by development actors.

According to data from the Rapid Socio-Economic Profiling and the UNHCR Cash Programme, more than half of the refugees live with friends or family without paying rent, while approx. 30% pay rent. While the need for accommodation insulation support for those paying rent should be analyzed in relation to security of tenure, providing support for infrastructure improvements for the most vulnerable households hosting refugees presents not only an opportunity to mitigate the harsh conditions of the winter season, but also a means to promote social cohesion.

**4. Coordination with Local Public Authorities and Local Refugee Coordination Forums (LRCFs)** on the identification of main needs and priorities at the community level.

Coordinating the winter response with the Local Refugee Coordination Forums and local public authorities is crucial to ensure aid reaches the most vulnerable. Collaboration with local civil society organizations further extends outreach, enabling targeted support to refugees and affected Moldovans at higher risk, improving efficiency, and enhancing social cohesion and inclusion.

**5. Non-Food Items (NFIs) should only be considered as a last resort measure** when other options are not feasible or appropriate, including difficulties to access local markets and/or challenges to obtain certain goods, such as solid fuel.

**6. Inclusion of Refugees in Government Winterization Support Programmes:** RCF partners will actively advocate for and support the inclusion of refugees in national

winterization support programmes at national, regional and municipal level. Those eligible for existing government support shall be supported to access them, while ensuring that those with humanitarian needs - but not falling under the government criteria - can be supported by humanitarian aid aligned with government support.

## Planning Figures

While planning figures will largely be obtained following the needs assessment, including a review of secondary data, the overall refugee population expected to be in Moldova during the 2023/2024 winter season is approximately 65,000 to 80,000 individuals, assuming a gradual improvement of the situation in Ukraine. If there are no improvements in the coming months, the expected figure rises to 95,000 to 100,000 individuals. Unless a major change occurs, no significant increase in new arrivals is expected during the winter season, a trend similar to what was experienced last winter. As for host community members affected by the refugee influx, figures will be established following the overall needs assessment, but in line with the overall 2023 Refugee Response Plan planning figures.

Information about and geographical distribution of persons with specific needs will be obtained from the triangulation of different datasets to support planning and targeting. This will include a breakdown by specific protection needs, including women at risk, older persons at risk, persons with disabilities, unaccompanied or separated children, children at risk, and individuals with serious medical conditions. Collaboration with local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), especially Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and those working with older persons, is critical to ensure that individuals most affected by the winter season can be supported in a timely and effective manner.

## Planning Steps and Milestones

The winterization planning process will involve the following steps and milestones:

- 1. Needs Assessment (June):** The needs assessment will involve both a Secondary Data Review and a Winter Household Survey. Secondary data, including Vulnerability Assessment (MSNA), Rapid Socio-Economic Profiling, and Protection Monitoring will be reviewed to understand the existing situation and needs. The Winter Household Survey will involve primary data collection directly from refugees, both in Refugee Accommodation Centres (RACs) and outside of RACs, and host communities.

A winter rapid needs assessment will be conducted to understand the pressing needs of refugees in and outside of accommodation centers. This data, coupled with insights from community structures and local public authorities, will supplement existing information from other data collection exercises such as the Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment, Rapid Socio-Economic Profiling, and Protection Monitoring. Together, these insights will facilitate a more effective and coordinated winter response.

Secondary Data Review	Vulnerability Assessment (MSNA) Rapid Socio-Economic Profiling Protection Monitoring
Primary Data Collection	Winterization Rapid Needs Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refugees in RACs</li> <li>- Refugees Outside RACs</li> <li>- Affected Moldovans</li> </ul> Community Level Assessment in coordination with LRCFs

**2. Joint Data Analysis (July):** The data collected through the needs assessment will be analyzed in a Joint Data Analysis Workshop involving all key partners, which will include a stocktaking of 2022/2023 Inter-Agency Winter Response. The findings from this analysis will inform the development of the 2023/2024 Winterization Strategy.

**3. Sectoral Planning (July - August):** Each sector involved in the response will identify their priorities and develop a response package. This package will include specific activities to address the identified needs, along with the associated costs.

**4. Inter-Sectoral Consolidation (August):** The sectoral plans will be consolidated into an Inter-Agency Winterization Strategy. This comprehensive plan will guide the winterization response across all sectors. All activities will be registered by partners on the Activity Info platform for tracking and coordination.

## Winterization Planning Coordination

The coordination of the winterization planning strategy will be overseen by the Winterization Task Force. The Task Force will be led by the Sector Lead of the Basic Needs Working Group, together with IOM and ACTED. Other organizations are welcomed to join the Winterization Task Force by expressing their willingness to do so by writing to the Inter-Agency Coordination team at [mdachrcf@unhcr.org](mailto:mdachrcf@unhcr.org).

The taskforce will be responsible for ensuring a coordinated and effective planning process, ensuring clear communication and information sharing among all sectors and their partners, and maintaining the Inter-Sectoral Coordination Group informed and updated. The taskforce will also be responsible for ensuring a strong link with Local Public Authorities and Local Refugee Coordination Forums (LRCFs) to ensure the integration of the winterization activities into the broader refugee response plan.

The Taskforce will count with technical support from the Inter-Agency Coordination Team at UNHCR. The Winterization Task Force will be guided by principles of inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability, and will strive to ensure that the needs of all refugees and community members hosting them are met in a fair and equitable manner, and in complementarity and support to the winter response of the government of the Republic of Moldova.

## Tentative Timeline

	June	July	August	September
<b>W1</b>	Secondary Data Review HH Survey Draft	Data Cleaning	Sector Consultations	Registration of Activities in Activity Info
<b>W2</b>	Secondary Data Review HH Survey Approval	Joint Data and Risk Analysis Workshop	Sector Priorities and Response Package	Implementation of winter activities
<b>W3</b>	HH Survey Data Collection	Winterization Needs Overview	Inter-Agency Winterization Workshop	
<b>W4</b>	HH Survey Data Collection	Sector Consultations	Registration of Activities in Activity Info	

For further information, please contact Diego Nardi (Inter-Agency Coordination Officer - [nardid@unhcr.org](mailto:nardid@unhcr.org)) and Yuri Arnautov (Inter-Agency IM Officer - [arnautov@unhcr.org](mailto:arnautov@unhcr.org))