



JOINT PROGRAMME EXCELLENCE AND TARGETING HUB

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2023

## CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	3
<b>SUPPORT TO COUNTRY OPERATIONS</b> .....	5
BANGLADESH .....	6
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO .....	7
EGYPT .....	9
MAURITANIA .....	10
MOZAMBIQUE .....	12
NIGER.....	13
SOUTH SUDAN.....	15
UGANDA.....	16
ZIMBABWE .....	17
<b>GLOBAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL COORDINATION</b> .....	18
<b>GLOBAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL ACHIEVEMENTS</b> .....	19
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	23

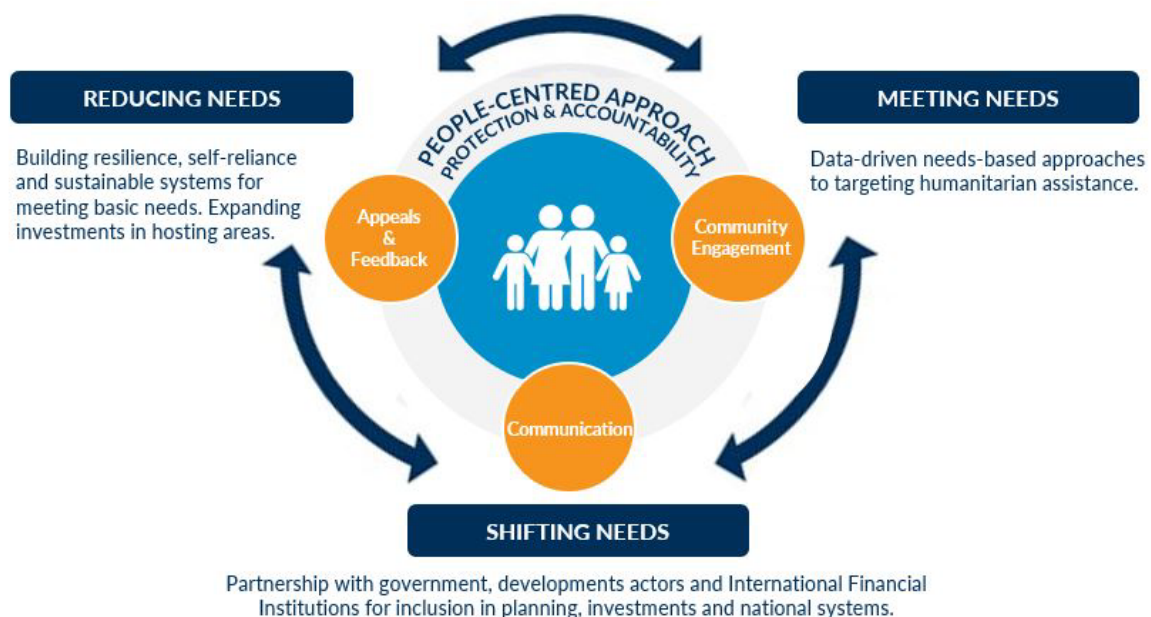
*Cover image credits, clockwise: 1.WFP/Sayed Asif Mahmud; 2. UNHCR/Malika Diagana; 3. UNHCR/Omar Dalkouli; 4. WFP/Andy Higgins; 5. WFP/Tatenda Macheke*

# INTRODUCTION

The UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub (Joint Hub) is a dynamic collaboration between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), building on a long-standing partnership between the two agencies to enhance assistance and outcomes for refugees and forcibly displaced people.

Comprised of an inter-agency team of roving UNHCR and WFP technical experts, the Joint Hub is a demand-driven service drawing on each agency’s expertise, knowledge and networks. The Joint Hub responds to requests from UNHCR and WFP country operations and regional bureaux, offering strategic and technical support backed by data and evidence throughout joint planning and programming. This includes assessment, evidence-based decision-making, targeting, prioritization, and the development of sustainable solutions to enhance self-reliance and inclusion in national development plans and investments.

At the core of the Joint Hub’s mission is a people-centred approach. By integrating the voices of forcibly displaced people into analysis and decision-making through community consultations and feedback mechanisms, we ensure that our efforts are inclusive and responsive. We pay particular attention to the participation and inclusion of all groups, considering age, gender, and other diversity factors.



Created in April 2020, with support from the US Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, the Joint Hub has actively supported UNHCR and WFP in addressing some of the world’s largest displacement crises, working in 18 countries to date.

2023 has been a challenging year, marked by severe funding shortfalls at a global level. Refugees in at least 25 countries are facing cuts to their food and basic needs assistance, several only receiving half or less than what is required to meet their minimum needs. With reduced (or no) assistance, food insecurity is increasing alongside serious protection risks.

In operations where the Joint Hub is active, vulnerability levels are high as a direct consequence of protracted displacement and the scarcity of alternative sources of income and support. In addition, in some contexts limiting host-government policies and low levels of development investments reduce the opportunities for forcibly displaced people. Targeting and prioritization - while good practice - will

not serve to break the cycle of aid dependency and lessen pressure on humanitarian budget requirements. Unfortunately, medium to long-term solutions for displaced populations are not keeping pace with reductions in humanitarian funding, underlining the importance of joint efforts to mobilize the political and financial engagement of external stakeholders.

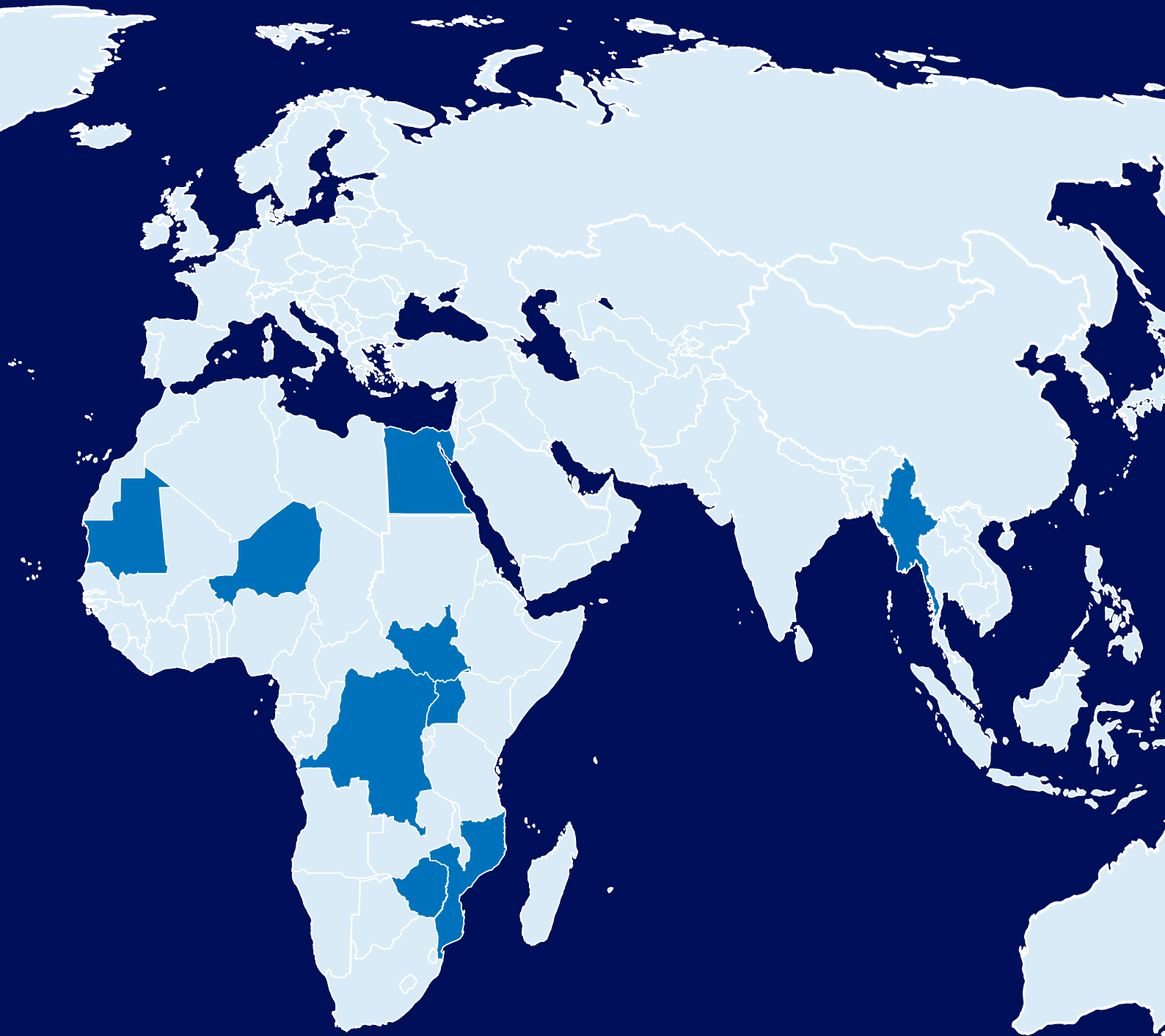
Against this backdrop, the Joint Hub nevertheless achieved some significant achievements in 2023, both in the countries it supports, and in regional and global level collaboration between WFP and UNHCR. Highlights include:

- In-depth technical and coordination support in nine countries: Bangladesh, DRC, Egypt, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, South Sudan, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.
- The development and global launch of the UNHCR-WFP Joint Analytical Framework (JAF), providing a set of tools for country operations to better understand the ability of forcibly displaced people to meet their basic needs.
- Identifying, documenting, and disseminating good practice and lessons learnt from collaborative action within WFP and UNHCR, as well as externally, including through the organization of events in Brussels, Geneva and Rome.



## SUPPORT TO COUNTRY OPERATIONS

---





WFP/Sayed Asif Mahmud

# BANGLADESH

## AUGUST 2023 - ONGOING

Bangladesh hosts nearly [a million Rohingya refugees](#), most of whom fled Myanmar seven years ago. The majority of refugees are dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs and overall vulnerability continues to increase, with data showing that 83 percent of Rohingya refugees are highly vulnerable.<sup>1</sup>

### JOINT HUB SUPPORT

With significant funding shortfalls for assistance to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh,<sup>2</sup> in 2023 the Joint Hub was requested to support UNHCR and WFP to develop a shared prioritization approach. The Joint Hub is currently conducting a thorough technical and best practice review of the planned Prioritization and Targeting Exercise (PTE) working to strengthen Accountability to Affected People (AAP) mechanisms to mainstream protection.

Prior to the Joint Hub's engagement, UNHCR had been leading the PTE to leverage data within an inter-agency framework. The Joint Hub's support seeks to build on the work already achieved. A second phase of support to define and implement a needs-based approach to prioritization is expected in 2024, depending on the requirements of the response.

### KEY AREAS OF WORK

- **Assessment and analysis:** The Joint Hub conducted a comprehensive review and preliminary analysis of existing data sets and the methodology of the existing PTE. Results were presented by the Joint Hub to country operations in September 2023, and to the PTE inter-agency working group in January 2024, recommending ways to strengthen the existing methodology using advanced statistical methods, as well as aligning PTE objectives with programmatic interventions. The Joint Hub also conducted in-depth quantitative analysis of the current Refugee Influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment (REVA-6) data, offering deeper insights into vulnerability profiles and providing draft scores for the proposed scorecard targeting methodology. The scope of work for the next phase of support (in 2024) will be defined based on the stated aims and objectives of the PTE and drawing from newly available data sets.
- **Targeting and prioritization:** Prior to the Joint Hub's engagement, a well-advanced targeting and prioritization methodology had been developed with the PTE Working Group under UNHCR's leadership, which the country offices are keen to retain given sunk costs, time constraints and upcoming deadlines. Yet to be determined, the Joint Hub is suggesting adjustments to render the approach more statistically robust.

<sup>1</sup> WFP [REVA-6 Report](#), 2023, pg. 9)

<sup>2</sup> See article [UN in Bangladesh announces devastating new round of rations cuts for Rohingya refugees](#), 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023.



## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

AUGUST 2020 - ONGOING

The DRC is home to over 500,000 refugees and 6.3 million internally displaced people.<sup>3</sup> The widespread and protracted humanitarian crisis in the country has had a severe impact on the lives and livelihoods of both forcibly displaced people and Congolese nationals alike. In 2023, 23.4 million people in DRC were acutely food insecure (July-December).<sup>4</sup>

### JOINT HUB SUPPORT

The Joint Hub has been supporting WFP and UNHCR in DRC to develop a common understanding of the food and socio-economic needs of the Burundian, Central African Republic, and South Sudanese refugee populations to meet basic needs and contribute to self-reliance. [Assessments conducted in 2021 and 2022](#) revealed that refugees' vulnerability levels were extremely high, resulting in a decision not to shift to needs-based targeting for assistance but rather to focus on supporting self-reliance and socio-economic inclusion. This has remained the core of the Joint Hub's support throughout 2023.

### KEY AREAS OF WORK

- **Self-reliance and socio-economic inclusion:** UNHCR and WFP, with support from the Joint Hub, developed the 'Joint Strategy for Strengthening Refugees' Livelihoods and Resilience in the DRC', a five-year strategy (2024-2028) to support refugees of all nationalities across the country. The strategy is accompanied by an action plan and budget for implementation. During 2023, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), a key strategic partner for this work, formally joined the collaboration and the strategy has since been led jointly by the three agencies. One key result was the pledge submitted by WFP, on behalf of the tripartite collaboration with UNHCR and FAO, under the [Agriculture, Food Systems and Food Security Multi-Stakeholder Pledge](#) (MSP), as part of the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023.
- **Advocacy and partnerships:** Throughout 2023, strategic engagement with donors, other UN agencies and development partners continued with the aim of fostering broader support for the implementation of the multi-actor Joint Strategy.
- **Coordination support:** A Joint Hub-supported Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Officer was deployed to DRC for most of 2023, directly supporting the collaboration and technical work of WFP and UNHCR in-country. When their contract came to an end in September, the Joint Hub continued to provide remote coordination support through regular online meetings, with participation from country offices and regional bureaux, with the aim of ensuring a smooth handover of the work conducted over the past three years.

<sup>3</sup> For population figures see : [Democratic Republic of the Congo | Global Focus \(unhcr.org\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Democratic Republic of the Congo | World Food Programme \(wfp.org\)](#)



## WFP, UNHCR AND FAO PLEDGE: 'PROMOTING SELF-RELIANCE OF REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES IN DR CONGO'

A tripartite pledge was submitted at the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva (13-15 December), in which the three agencies commit to support the Government of DRC and UN agencies' efforts to provide resilience solutions to refugees by:

- **Ensuring the immediate food and nutrition security needs** of 155,000 refugee households, while supporting their transition into longer-term interventions to build their self-reliance.
- **Strengthening and diversifying the livelihoods** of 286,000 refugees and their host communities by 2028, through a multi-stakeholder approach. Agriculture and its sub-sectors are the main activity for more than 70 per cent of refugee households in DRC.
- **Fostering non-agricultural self-employment, financial inclusion and building up of professional skills** will also be a key pillar to open up opportunities for the creation/strengthening of income-generating activities for refugees in and outside of camps.

Through a five-year strategy for resilience and economic inclusion of refugees in DRC, WFP, UNHCR and FAO aim to gradually transition refugees from heavy dependence on food aid to increased self-sufficiency. The agencies are engaged to create a stronger platform of coordination and stakeholder collaboration, including through mobilizing joint resources and advocating for the integration of refugees into national development programmes.

The strategy is national in scope, but focuses primarily on the provinces of Nord Ubangi, Sud Ubangi and Bas Uélé, which host Central African refugees; Sud-Kivu province, which hosts Burundian refugees; and the provinces of Ituri and Haut Uélé, which host South Sudanese refugees. It also includes urban refugees in cities such as Kinshasa, Bukavu and Goma.

Source: [Multistakeholder Pledge: Agriculture, Food Systems, and Food Security | The Global Compact on Refugees | UNHCR \(globalcompactrefugees.org\)](#)





WFP/Gabrielle Menezes

# EGYPT

## JUNE 2023 - ONGOING

Egypt hosts 480,000 registered refugees and asylum-seekers from 62 countries.<sup>5</sup> Since the outbreak of conflict in Sudan in April 2023, Sudanese refugees now make up the largest portion of refugees hosted in Egypt, followed by those from Syria, South Sudan and Eritrea. Most refugees live in urban areas of Cairo and the north coast of the country.

### JOINT HUB SUPPORT

The Joint Hub began supporting UNHCR and WFP in Egypt in June 2023, following a scoping mission in June 2022 and a request from the country operations. The Joint Hub is leading and coordinating collaborative work, which aims to assess refugee needs based on a 'one refugee' approach (regardless of country of origin) and to inform targeting/prioritization of basic assistance, and longer-term planning for socio-economic inclusion, whilst ensuring accountability to affected people throughout.

### KEY AREAS OF WORK

- **Inception phase:** A kick-off mission took place in June 2023 and the Scope of Work was signed by UNHCR and WFP management.
- **Assessment and analysis:** All tools for quantitative and qualitative data collection were jointly developed, finalized and translated into Arabic. The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), the official statistical agency of Egypt, has been selected to conduct quantitative data collection for the assessment, while qualitative data will be collected by UNHCR, WFP and partners. Negotiations with CAPMAS are still ongoing, with data collection expected to commence in 2024.
- **Self-reliance and socio-economic inclusion:** Regular joint technical meetings have been held, coordinated by the Hub, with participation from country offices and regional bureaux with some limited opportunities identified thus far. Additional pathways will be explored with national stakeholders.
- **Coordination:** The Joint Hub is providing coordination support, with regular weekly calls since the kick-off mission in June. Recruitment for an in-country Joint Hub coordinator is underway with the post expected to be filled in early 2024 once data collection can commence.

<sup>5</sup> See [Egypt: Factsheet | Global Focus \(unhcr.org\)](#)



# MAURITANIA

OCTOBER 2020 - ONGOING

UNHCR/Omar Doukali

Mauritania is home to over 150,000 refugees, the vast majority of whom live in Mbera refugee camp in the southeast, having fled the ongoing conflict in Mali.<sup>6</sup> Data shows that nearly three quarters of Malian refugees are highly vulnerable and dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs.<sup>7</sup>

## JOINT HUB SUPPORT

The Joint Hub has provided technical support to UNHCR and WFP in Mauritania since October 2020, resulting in a harmonized approach to targeting assistance and the successful inclusion of the most vulnerable refugees in the Government of Mauritania's social protection programmes, with the support of the World Bank. While the Joint Hub is phasing out engagement in Mauritania, in 2023 the team continued to provide technical support for assessment, data analysis and accountability to affected people, as well as documentation of good practice and lessons learnt.

## KEY AREAS OF WORK

- **Assessment and analysis:** At the request of the country offices, in 2023 the Joint Hub provided analytical support for an assessment of 4,000 additional refugee households ('complementary targeting') to assess levels of vulnerability and eligibility for assistance, including food assistance from WFP and social transfers through Tekavoul, the Mauritanian social safety net programme. This assessment was an extension and update of the 2021 census, aiming to include both new refugee arrivals and households that were not reached in the initial survey.
- **Accountability to affected people:** Country operations led on all aspects of AAP related to the 'complementary targeting' conducted in 2023, building on the experience of a similar process with Joint Hub support in 2021. AAP activities included the establishment of the appeals process for the complementary targeting - receiving, assessing and responding to appeals from households contesting their vulnerability categorization and eligibility for assistance.
- **Documentation and learning:** In November 2023, the Joint Hub conducted a 'Learning Review' in Mauritania, to capture good practice and lessons learnt from the process of WFP-UNHCR-Joint Hub collaboration in Mauritania.

<sup>6</sup> See [Mauritania: Registered Refugees and Asylum Seekers | Global Focus \(unhcr.org\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> 73.5% are highly vulnerable, according to household survey data from the 'complementary targeting' conducted by WFP-UNHCR (unpublished, 2023).



## LESSONS LEARNED: COLLABORATIVE ACTION TO SUPPORT MALIAN REFUGEES IN MAURITANIA

**Certain pre-conditions are necessary for refugee inclusion.** The context in Mauritania was conducive to refugee inclusion in the national social protection system. This is not the case in all contexts. The existence of development funding (primarily from the World Bank in this case) was the primary driver, alongside the legal framework, willingness of the Government and capacity of the social protection system, which all proved important pre-conditions for the successful inclusion of refugees.

**Adoption of a collaborative mindset is key.** When both WFP and UNHCR share a strategic vision of what can be achieved through working together - and have a collaborative mindset and willingness to coordinate - solutions can be found to the inevitable challenges that are encountered, and successful partnership can be maintained throughout the process.

**Greater investment – by a broad range of stakeholders – is necessary to support resilience and self-reliance and thus reduce refugee needs in the longer-term.** As budgets for humanitarian assistance reduce, both WFP and UNHCR recognise the importance of finding dignified alternatives to assistance dependency, so that those refugees with labour capacity can engage in sustainable livelihoods and meet their own basic needs.

**Targeting is not one-off; it is a programmatic approach which needs to be financed and updated on a continual basis.** Greater clarity is required regarding the frequency of joint (re)targeting and appeals processes in the future, to include new arrivals and those absent during previous assessments, as well as to re-categorise households whose vulnerability situation has changed dramatically over time. One of the lessons learnt expressed by WFP and UNHCR was that the Joint Hub could have put greater emphasis on strengthening the internal capacity of the two agencies (and especially the capacity of national staff) to maintain the targeting approach in the future, as well as providing further support vis-à-vis the implementation of continuous targeting mechanisms. While valid, some foundational technical skills and know-how may still be required for this capacity strengthening approach to be effective.

**Joint Hub coordinators should share 'time and space' equally with staff from WFP and UNHCR.** It is important that Joint Hub coordinators divide their time between the offices of both agencies and are thus not perceived as having a stronger affiliation to one agency over the other.





## MOZAMBIQUE

JULY 2020 - ONGOING

Mozambique hosts approximately 25,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, while 850,000 people remain displaced internally due to violence perpetrated by non-state armed groups and the devastating impact of the climate crisis – with Mozambique being one of the most affected countries in the world.<sup>8</sup>

### JOINT HUB SUPPORT

The Joint Hub has been supporting UNHCR and WFP's work with the Government and other partners on enhancing refugee self-reliance in Mozambique, including through joint programme design for livelihoods in Maratane and a joint donor engagement strategy.

### KEY AREAS OF WORK

- **Self-reliance and socio-economic inclusion:** The Joint Hub continues to provide support, both remotely and in-country. In July, a Joint Hub consultant conducted a mission to lay the foundations of the [UNHCR-WFP Call-to-Action \(C2A\)](#)<sup>9</sup> by identifying, together with the country offices, concrete steps to expand sustainable food security, nutrition, self-reliance and inclusion into development and government programmes. These findings will inform the planned 2024 scoping mission and launch of the C2A by WFP and UNHCR in Mozambique.
- **Targeting for assistance:** The development of needs-based targeting for assistance has been on hold since June 2023, awaiting finalization of the refugee verification exercise, completed at the end of 2023.

---

<sup>8</sup> [Mozambique: Operational Update | Global Focus \(unhcr.org\)](#)

<sup>9</sup> The Call to Action initiative, which was launched by both agencies in 2021, directs all UNHCR and WFP country operations to work together to ensure that humanitarian assistance is targeted to those in need, as well as advancing longer-term solutions.





UNHCR/Colin Delfosse

# NIGER

JUNE 2022 - ONGOING

Niger hosts the largest number of forcibly displaced people of any country in West Africa, with over 400,000 refugees from Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso and other countries, and 550,000 internally displaced people.<sup>10</sup> In 2023 the security situation in the country worsened, causing further forced displacement. Combined with the food price crisis and recurrent climatic shocks, these factors have contributed to increasing vulnerability for both refugees and Nigerien nationals alike; a total of 3.3 million people—13 percent of the population—are acutely food insecure.<sup>11</sup>

## JOINT HUB SUPPORT

The Joint Hub has been supporting the UNHCR and WFP country offices in Niger since June 2022, with the development and implementation of a common targeting strategy for basic needs assistance for refugees, IDPs and host populations. The new targeting strategy was implemented from May 2023 onwards, commencing with the community-based selection of households (May-August). The new lists of eligible households were used for food assistance from November 2023.

## KEY AREAS OF WORK

- **Assessment and analysis:** In July, the [Joint Assessment Mission \(JAM\) report](#) was published, providing detailed analysis of the vulnerability of refugees, IDPs and host populations living in the regions of Tillabéri, Tahoua, Maradi and Diffa. The findings were used to inform the re-targeting approach for WFP's food assistance (see box below). The analysis is also intended as a starting point for collective reflection, with the aim of finding sustainable solutions to better support displaced populations and the communities that host them, in a context where humanitarian and development resources – as well as community solidarity – are increasingly stretched in the face of growing needs.
- **Accountability to affected people:** The Joint Hub provided considerable technical support, both remotely and through in-country missions, in order to integrate protection and accountability. A total of 72 community consultation sessions were held with refugees and asylum seekers, IDPs and host communities, as well as local authorities and NGO partners; the qualitative data was used to inform the analysis, develop and refine the targeting approach. A joint communication strategy was also developed and rolled out, focusing on sharing key messages about the re-targeting of WFP's food assistance and how to make appeals.
- **Documentation:** The Joint Hub produced technical documentation detailing the process for targeting for WFP's food assistance in 2023.

<sup>10</sup> [Niger | Global Focus \(unhcr.org\)](#)  
<sup>11</sup> [Niger | World Food Programme \(wfp.org\)](#)



## TARGETING STRATEGY FOR WFP'S FOOD ASSISTANCE FOR REFUGEES, IDPS AND HOST POPULATIONS IN NIGER

On the basis of the JAM assessment and analysis, which provided an estimation of vulnerability levels by geographic region and type of population, the Joint Hub supported UNHCR and WFP in developing the method for re-targeting WFP food assistance.

The chosen targeting method uses a combination of categorical eligibility criteria and community-based selection of households.

**Eligibility criteria:** the same categorical eligibility criteria were used for all population groups (refugees, IDPs and hosts) across all geographic regions, based on the quantitative results of the household survey and validation through qualitative community consultations ("categorical" approach).

The eligibility criteria were all [households with at least one of the following](#) characteristics would be selected for assistance:

- Female household head, with no other member able to work in the household
- At least 1 disabled member
- At least 1 chronically ill member
- At least 4 children under 5 years old
- Household head aged 60 years or above, with no other member able to work in the household
- Assistance as the most important income source

**Selection of eligible households:** these categorical criteria were then applied as part of a community process inspired by the Household Economy Approach, during which the communities themselves identify and select the households that meet the agreed upon eligibility criteria ("community-based" approach). This selection process took 3-4 months (May-August 2023).

The rationale for this approach was: i) the country operations' decision to use rigorous, objective, quantitative data to build an evidence-based targeting strategy; ii) the fact that communities already receiving WFP assistance were familiar with community-based methods (and specifically the Household Economy Approach); and iii) the need for a harmonised approach for all three population groups (refugees, IDPs and host communities), thus avoiding differential approaches that could be perceived as unfair and negatively affect social cohesion.

Source: [Mission d'évaluation conjointe \(JAM\) PAM-UNHCR auprès des populations réfugiées, déplacées internes et hôtes au Niger](#) (2023)





# SOUTH SUDAN

## NOVEMBER 2022 - ONGOING

South Sudan is affected by a severe and protracted humanitarian crisis, driven by conflict, climate shocks, widespread economic crisis, and the conflict in neighbouring Sudan. In 2023, more than 500,000 people fleeing conflict in Sudan crossed into South Sudan, the majority of whom were South Sudanese people returning to their home country.<sup>12</sup> At the end of 2023, South Sudan is hosting 870,000 returned refugees, 450,000 refugees and asylum seekers (from Sudan, DRC, Ethiopia, Eritrea and others) and 2 million internally displaced people.<sup>13</sup>

### JOINT HUB SUPPORT

The Joint Hub's support to WFP and UNHCR in South Sudan aims to ensure the most effective use of limited resources to support refugees. The focus of the Joint Hub's work has been on assessing the needs of refugees to design and implement a targeting and prioritization strategy for available humanitarian assistance.

### KEY AREAS OF WORK

- **Assessment and analysis:** [Profiling and Analysis to Inform targeting and prioritization of assistance to refugees in South Sudan](#) was published in September, showing that 85 percent of refugee households were highly vulnerable. The analysis used the newly developed UNHCR-WFP Joint Analytical Framework (JAF), see further details below.
- **Accountability to affected people:** With guidance from the Joint Hub, UNHCR and WFP were able to ensure community engagement prior to and during implementation of the new targeting approach. Qualitative and quantitative data were used to develop a communication strategy. The Joint Hub supported the community consultations, communication with communities and the design of the joint appeals process building on existing feedback mechanisms. Support was provided remotely and also through a Joint Hub mission in July.
- **Targeting and prioritization:** Community consultation findings were used to propose eligibility criteria for targeting and prioritization approaches for food assistance. For prioritization, a combination of criteria was suggested to identify the most vulnerable households to receive higher levels of assistance. Analysis of the prevalence of such criteria combinations in UNHCR's proGres registration data was conducted in order to estimate the number of eligible individuals and to support WFP in building budget scenarios.
- **Economic inclusion:** Country offices are reviewing the type of technical support needed from the Joint Hub to advance medium-term self-reliance and economic inclusion efforts based on the programmatic offer and identified needs and gaps. Meaningful discussions around self-reliance and inclusion are challenging given capacity constraints and competing priorities.

<sup>12</sup> [South Sudan | World Food Programme \(wfp.org\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> [South Sudan | Global Focus \(unhcr.org\)](#)



# UGANDA

JULY 2021 – PHASING OUT IN 2023

Uganda hosts 1.6 million refugees, more than any other country in Africa, with the majority of refugees coming from South Sudan (919,000) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (545,000).<sup>14</sup> The Ugandan Government provides refugees with plots of land for cultivation to encourage self-sufficiency.<sup>15</sup> However refugees struggle to meet their basic needs, with data showing that nearly 90 percent are highly vulnerable and dependent on assistance (IPE sample data 2022, unpublished; [VENA 2020](#)).

## JOINT HUB SUPPORT

The Joint Hub has been supporting UNHCR and WFP in Uganda since 2021 to assess vulnerability and implement needs-based prioritization of food assistance for refugees. The prioritization strategy combines geographical and index-based approaches to prioritise the most vulnerable households and the use of categorical criteria to phase out self-sufficient refugees. In 2023, the Joint Hub has been progressively phasing out its engagement as country teams, working with the Ugandan government, are leading the implementation of the prioritization approach.

## KEY AREAS OF WORK

- **Accountability to affected people:** The Joint Hub provided support to country operations in terms of AAP and integrating protection into the roll-out of the updated prioritization approach (phase 3) for food assistance. During 2023, the Joint Hub focused on (i) communication with communities, reviewing and refining key messages and frequently asked questions, and (ii) recommending improvements to the 'joint prioritization review' mechanism (which enables certain households to request a review of their vulnerability categorisation).
- **Self-reliance and socio-economic inclusion:** Despite persistent efforts over the last two years, the Joint Hub has been unsuccessful in garnering support for a joint transition/self-reliance strategy or presenting a compelling case for Joint Hub involvement in this area. Nonetheless, the WFP country office recently released a draft transition model for refugees, targeting 1 million refugees and 430,000 nationals by 2030, while UNHCR also launched its Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Strategic Directions (2023-2028).

<sup>14</sup> [Uganda | Global Focus \(unhcr.org\)](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Uganda | World Food Programme \(wfp.org\)](#)





# ZIMBABWE

## NOVEMBER 2023 – ONGOING

Zimbabwe is a landlocked, low-income, food-deficit country in Southern Africa. The country hosts 17,400 refugees and asylum seekers, the majority of whom have fled the DRC, with a small number from Burundi and other countries.<sup>16</sup> Most refugees live in Tongogara Settlement, where 90% of households are considered highly (or extremely) vulnerable and dependent on the assistance provided by WFP, UNHCR, the Government of Zimbabwe and partners.<sup>17</sup>

### JOINT HUB SUPPORT

Zimbabwe is the most recent addition to the list of countries supported by the Joint Hub. While discussions with UNHCR and WFP country offices began in early 2023, the request for support and scope of work was formalised in the second half of the year. The Joint Hub is guiding country operations through the process of assessing needs and vulnerabilities of refugees, as well as opportunities for, and barriers to, self-reliance. This data will inform targeting of basic needs assistance, programming to support livelihoods and self-reliance, and development of broader inclusion strategies.

### KEY AREAS OF WORK

- **Inception phase:** Defining and agreeing on the Scope of Work, conducting a literature review to understand the context and challenges faced both by refugees and the country offices working to support them.
- **Assessment and analysis:** The first Joint Hub mission to Zimbabwe was conducted in December 2023, initiating the process for the Joint Assessment Mission (JAM). Stakeholders were convened and a consensus was reached on the shared objectives of the JAM, the methodology and sampling was agreed upon, data collection tools were finalised and quantitative data was collected through a household survey in the refugee camp. Qualitative data collection will be conducted in early 2024.

<sup>16</sup> [Zimbabwe | Global Focus \(unhcr.org\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> Results of JAM household survey, data collected December 2023 (unpublished)

## GLOBAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL COORDINATION

### SUPPORTING COORDINATION AT A GLOBAL LEVEL

The Joint Hub coordinates three different thematic working groups at global level, on (1) Assessments, Analysis and Targeting, (2) Accountability to Affected People and (3) Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion.

These working groups bring together staff from both agencies, across different divisions and areas of work, offering a forum to share experience and challenges, and to agree on technical and strategic approaches to UNHCR-WFP collaboration.

Many of the results presented below have emerged as a result of this global level coordination between the two agencies. For example, the work on the Joint Analytical Framework grew out of a recognized need at global level to harmonise approaches for assessment and analysis – thus a separate JAF working group was created for this purpose, for the duration of the framework’s development and up until its launch.

### SUPPORTING COORDINATION AT A REGIONAL LEVEL

In 2023, the Joint Hub continued to support coordination and collaboration with two Regional Bureaux, East and Horn of Africa (in Nairobi) and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in Jordan (UNHCR) and Cairo (WFP). The focus has been on these two bureaux as they cover the regions where most of the countries the Joint Hub supports are located.

The aim of the Joint Hub’s engagement at regional level is to increase coordination and knowledge sharing, as well as to agree on approaches to deliver tailored support to country offices – ideally being able to identify in advance which countries may need support.

The first Joint Hub Regional Coordinator has been based in Nairobi since early 2023, while engagement with MENA colleagues is mostly conducted remotely, as well as through in-person missions.





# GLOBAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL ACHIEVEMENTS

## UNHCR-WFP JOINT ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

### What is the JAF?

The Joint Analytical Framework (JAF) is a set of tools to guide UNHCR and WFP country operations to reach a common understanding of the ability of refugees, asylum seekers, and other forcibly displaced people to meet their basic needs. Basic needs are identified according to three indicators: economic capacity, food consumption and negative coping strategies.

### Why do we need a joint approach?

The work of the Joint Hub over the last two years has highlighted the need for a joint approach to guide UNHCR and WFP country operations to have a common understanding of refugees' multi-faceted needs and a shared approach to analyzing data. The two agencies have developed tailored analytical approaches for each context in which they work together, which has been a time-consuming and complex process. Therefore, after discussion and consultation with UNHCR and WFP technical teams in headquarters, it was agreed to establish a technical working group to develop a joint analytical framework at global level, to be used as a reference for country offices and regional bureaus.

### How has the Joint Hub contributed?

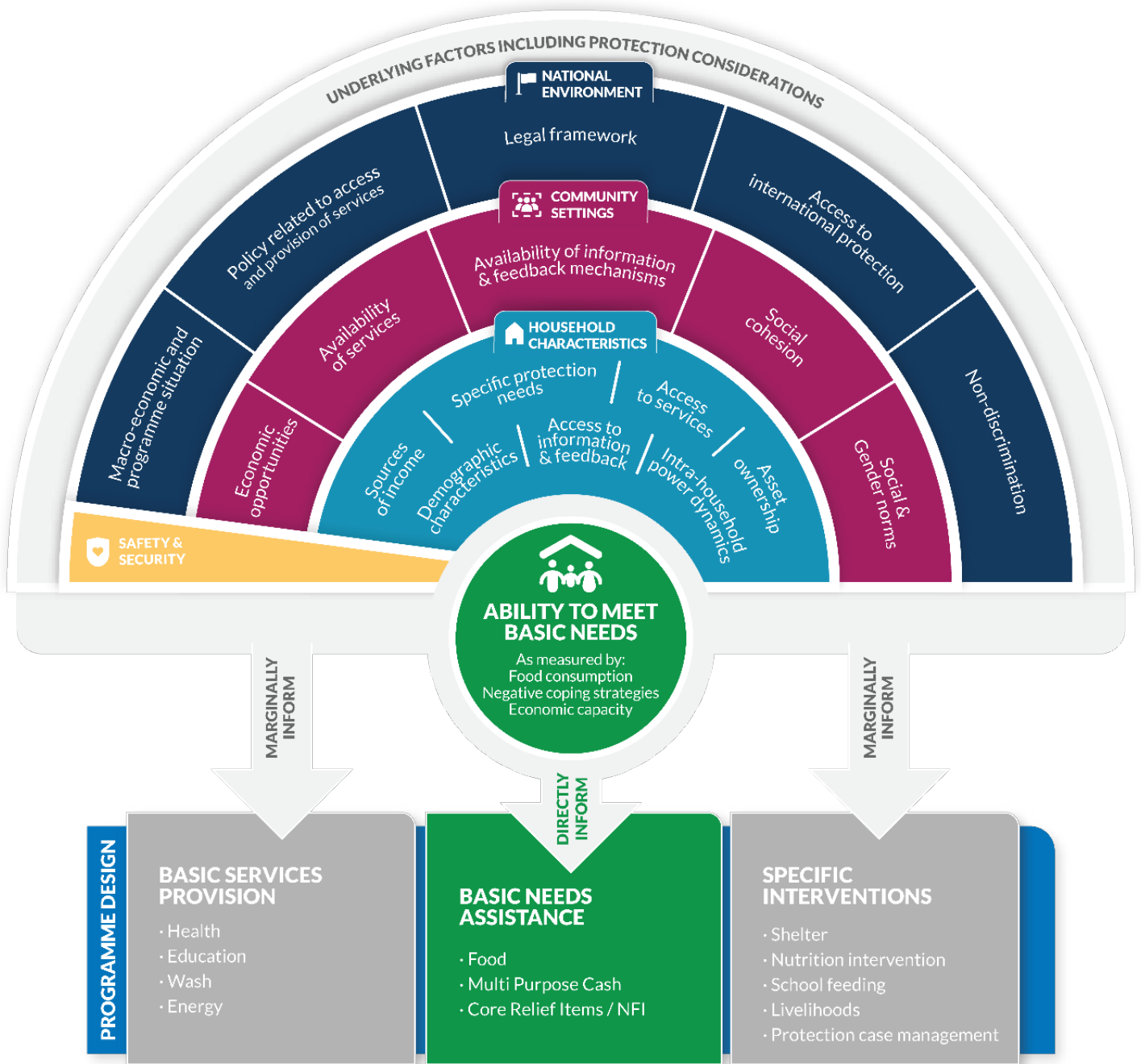
Since April 2022, the Joint Hub has been leading and coordinating the development of the JAF and supporting technical work across UNHCR and WFP divisions at their respective headquarters. The Joint Hub led on finalising the package of tools including quantitative and qualitative questionnaires, a livelihoods module, and a data analysis plan. In 2023, the Joint Hub piloted the use of the JAF in South Sudan and Zimbabwe, as well as in Egypt (in preparation for the planned data collection in 2024).

### Rolling out and institutionalizing the JAF

The JAF was officially launched jointly by both WFP and UNHCR in November 2023. Prior to this, two webinars were organized by each agency to showcase the JAF, reaching employees at HQ, regional and country level. In December, as part of the [Multistakeholder Pledge on Agriculture, Food Systems and Food Security](#) at the [Global Refugee Forum](#), WFP submitted a pledge to “continue and intensify its collaboration with UNHCR on vulnerability analysis and assessments to inform needs-based joint programming for food security and essential needs, by implementing the new WFP-UNHCR Joint Analytical Framework (JAF) to understand and quantify refugees' needs, collect comparable data on food security and essential needs and fill existing data gaps.”

The JAF is fully aligned with each agency's corporate approach to assessment and analysis and thus requires being integrated into existing guidance and tools - for example, the Joint Hub provided support to UNHCR's newly launched 'Assessment and Monitoring Resource Centre', which includes the JAF as one of the recommended methodological approaches.

A series of six 'learning lab' webinars are planned for 2024, to further encourage uptake of the tools.





## GLOBAL REPORT ON FOOD CRISES

The [Global Report on Food Crises \(GRFC\)](#) provides a comprehensive overview of acute food insecurity around the world. Through independent and evidence-based analysis, the report is used to inform decision-making for humanitarian and development assistance at global, regional and country-level.

The GRFC is published on an annual basis by the Food Security Information Network in support of the Global Network against Food Crises. The findings result from the collaborative effort of 16 partners to achieve a consensus-based assessment of acute food insecurity, including in situations of forced displacement.

In 2023, the Joint Hub actively engaged in the displacement technical working group, contributing essential analysis and data on acute food insecurity among refugees and other forcibly displaced populations. In addition, the Joint Hub contributed to finalising the 'spotlight' chapter of the report, which focuses on the food security status of forcibly displaced people.

## DATA INNOVATION FUND PROJECT

In 2023, the 'Leveraging appeals data for more accountable and timely assistance' initiative was selected as one of the awardees of the [UNHCR Data Innovation Fund](#). The project is led by the Joint Hub, in collaboration with WFP and UNHCR, and aims to transform the handling of incoming appeals, particularly in the absence of an automated system for triage. By integrating appellants' grounds for appeal with available data sources, the project seeks to predict the likelihood of success for each appeal. This predictive model empowers UNHCR and WFP to prioritize follow-ups on appeals with a higher chance of success. The project will begin in January 2024.

Recognizing the importance of creative and responsible data approaches, this collaboration also leverages data visualization to inform decision-making on appeals. Anticipated outcomes include a more effective use of appeals data, improving decision-making and follow-up processes.

## COST OF TARGETING STUDY

In 2023 the Joint Hub commissioned a new study on the 'Costs of Targeting', which aims to estimate the costs and benefits associated with targeting humanitarian assistance. A collaboration between the Joint Hub, WFP, UNHCR and UNU-MERIT at Maastricht University, the study will utilise a case study methodology, independently evaluating key targeting metrics, and providing concrete examples and recommendations for decision makers. The study's methodological approach is based on an extensive literature review and key informant interviews with WFP, UNHCR, national governments and other stakeholders. A reference group comprising representatives from UN agencies, NGOs, donors (including the United States Government) and development actors, has been established to provide strategic and technical guidance to the study.

## LEARNING EVENTS IN BRUSSELS, GENEVA AND ROME

Efforts to expand and diversify the donor base and raise the profile of the Joint Hub continued, with three external events organized in 2023:

- **In Brussels (21 March)**, the Joint Hub presented on the panel for an [EU Humanitarian Talk](#) at the European Humanitarian Forum. The discussion aimed to share experience and learning from Rwanda and Mauritania, as examples of joint analysis and programming for greater efficiencies and inclusion. A shared understanding of vulnerability and leveraging data for greater engagement with development actors was highlighted as essential to our new way of working.
- **In Geneva (13 June)**, the Joint Hub participated in a showcasing and fundraising event 'A New Way Forward: Better outcomes for refugees through collaborative action', co-hosted by the EU Delegation and the US government (BHA and PRM). The overall objective of the event was to present the innovative collaboration between UNHCR and WFP, in order to garner political support for the Joint Hub's work and attract new potential sources of funding. UNHCR Geneva and WFP Rome presented the Joint Hub as a critical component of UNHCR and WFPs global collaboration. South Sudan country teams joined on-line to share their experience in increasing collaboration with the support of the Joint Hub.
- **In Rome (14 November)**, the Joint Hub took the spotlight in an important event organised by WFP, with support from the US government and UNHCR. This event, held on the sidelines of the WFP Executive Board session, aimed to highlight the collaborative efforts of UNHCR and WFP in addressing forced displacement crises. The event was opened by Valerie Guarnieri, Assistant Executive Director Programme at WFP and moderated by Marcia Wong from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), with speakers from UNHCR and WFP describing their experience of collaboration between the two agencies in Egypt and Lebanon.

Overall, the discussions at these three events highlighted the importance of the Joint Hub, as an independent team of experts, in supporting UNHCR and WFP to build a robust and shared evidence base for decision-making, both in terms of programming of assistance but also for advocacy and expanding refugee inclusion and solutions with Government, development actors and financial institutions. Political support to expand rights of refugees to engage in economic activities and reduce the needs was also noted as a critical way donor states can support greater outcomes for refugees and other forcibly displaced people.

## ONLINE LEARNING COURSE ON THE JOINT TARGETING GUIDANCE

'The Fundamentals of Joint Targeting' is an introductory training available to all UNHCR and WFP staff, via their respective corporate learning platforms. The course was launched in February 2022 and covers the basics of UNHCR-WFP joint targeting, including mainstreaming protection in targeting, key targeting concepts, including targeting errors, and an outline of the steps required in the targeting process. Completion of a short quiz is required for a learner to graduate.

In 2023, 123 staff from UNHCR and WFP enrolled in the course (83 from WFP and 40 from UNHCR). The videos from this course are also publicly available on the [Joint Hub's YouTube channel](#) in order to reach a wider humanitarian audience interested in learning more about targeting concepts.



## CONCLUSION

As delineated in the Joint Hub's 2023–2025 strategic plan and reaffirmed during the March 2023 UNHCR/WFP High-Level Meeting, the primary objective of the Joint Hub in 2023 was to solidify past accomplishments and accumulate further evidence, with heightened attention directed towards medium and long-term outcomes concerning self-reliance and inclusion for the people we serve.

At the heart of the Joint Hub's work is the support we provide directly to WFP and UNHCR country operations. In 2023 we worked in nine different countries, two of which (Mauritania and Niger) have reached the concluding phase of documentation and learning. Three new countries (Bangladesh, Egypt, Zimbabwe) have been added to the Joint Hub's portfolio. Throughout the year, the Joint Hub has also intensified coordination efforts in regional bureaux, as well as ten headquarters divisions and services.

Although the Joint Hub has applied best practices in joint programming by assessing, analyzing, targeting, prioritizing, and ensuring community engagement and accountability for available humanitarian aid – and is recognised for its strong expertise in these areas – it nevertheless encountered challenges in certain country operations to establish itself as a credible entity for supporting longer-term considerations regarding self-reliance and inclusion. Shifting perceptions of how the Joint Hub can best work with agencies to foster technical and strategic collaboration across the humanitarian – development nexus is a work in progress. Though the Joint Hub's initial focus was on needs-based targeting, due to the high demand from country operations, our role has evolved over time with gained experience and the shifting landscape of forced displacement, requiring greater emphasis on transition and the sustainable well-being of affected populations.

Having supported a substantial number of countries (18 to date), established an expanded presence through regional bureaux, and acquired a deeper understanding of UNHCR and WFP operations at the headquarters level, the Joint Hub is strategically positioned to advance its learning and trend analysis beyond the current case-study methodology. In the upcoming period, the Joint Hub aims to thoroughly examine this wealth of knowledge and experience across thematic areas, providing crucial feedback to UNHCR and WFP on technical, strategic, and collaborative insights. This contribution is expected to significantly aid in integrating the Joint Hub's learning into agency policy and practice development, backed by field-tested evidence.

Designed as a technical advisory and support initiative, it has become clear over time that the potential of the Joint Hub to influence the way UNHCR and WFP work together, at technical, programmatic and strategic level, is indeed significant. The Joint Hub is unpacking what it takes for two principal UN agencies, with complementary mandates and functions, to share analysis, pool resources and achieve joint objectives. The impact of our work can already be discerned through an increasing focus for both agencies on shared goals, trust building and enhanced communication.





**JOINT PROGRAMME EXCELLENCE AND TARGETING HUB**