

PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ITALY

Ensuring safety, protection and durable solutions for vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees evacuated from Libya through the ETM Programme and other persons of concern of UNHCR in Agadez



© UNHCR / Vulnerable refugee arrived through the ETM programme's evacuation from Libya and provided Mental Health and Psychosocial Support to support her rehabilitation after traumatic experiences.

UNHCR Niger

June 2021

I: BASIC DATA FACTSHEET

A) Project Title	Ensuring safety, protection and durable solutions for vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees evacuated from Libya through the ETM Programme and other persons of concern of UNHCR in Agadez
B) Main Objectives	Improve assistance, living conditions, access to protection and durable solutions for asylum-seekers and refugees evacuated through the ETM programme and those arrived and hosted in Agadez.
C) Beneficiaries	An estimated total of 2,175 refugees and asylum-seekers and host community members will directly benefit from UNHCR's activities, including 931 PoCs in the ETM Programme, 40 persons from the host community living around the ETM Transit Centre and 1,204 PoCs hosted in Agadez.
D) Time Frame	12 months commencing upon signature of the grant agreement.
E) Budget / Implementation	EUR 3,000,000 (USD 3,658,536.59)

* The exchange rate used is 0.820 (UN rate June 2021). However, the final exchange rate applied will be determined by UNHCR according to the date of the receipt of the contribution.

II: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Being at the crossroads between West, Central and North Africa and a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS, which has a free movement protocol since 1979), Niger has always been a hosting country for many populations moving around the region. Since 2012, it has also witnessed a large influx of refugees from neighboring countries due to the violence and security crises going on in Mali, Nigeria, Chad, Libya and Burkina Faso.

Niger is also a major crossroads of migratory movements northwards towards Libya, Algeria and the Mediterranean. These migratory flows constitute mixed movements, including economic migrants as well as persons in need of international protection.

The ETM Programme caseload

Since November 2017, Niger welcomes vulnerable refugees trapped in detention in Libya through its *Emergency Transit Mechanism* (ETM) with the aim to evacuate vulnerable refugees from Libya to Niger. This programme provides refugees with access to life-saving protection and case processing as well as durable solutions, including resettlement and complementary pathways.

Evacuated refugees are among the most vulnerable persons under UNHCR's mandate, being survivors of long-term torture and violence, in many cases after the loss of family members in the Mediterranean Sea or during detention in Libya. In Niger, UNHCR offers them protection and hospitality in a transit center in Hamdallaye or in guest houses in Niamey and implements the *Philosophy of Care* strategy, to integrate psycho-social, mental health, sport and recreational activities designed to protect and help refugees, including youth, to recover from trauma.

Methods of psychosocial intervention, including the UNHCR Niger programmes Art of Kindness, Pacific Coexistence, Multicultural Awareness, allow the refugees in transit in Niger to better position themselves in the new social context of welcoming third countries, once they will be relocated.

Since the beginning of the ETM, 3,361 persons have been evacuated from Libya to Niger, and 2,892 persons resettled in various countries. As of 1 June 2021, 540 persons evacuated from Libya are being accommodated in Niger, waiting to be resettled to third countries or to find other sustainable, durable solutions. In 2021, six evacuation flights are planned to receive about 800 people in Niger.

Through the ETM programme, UNHCR evacuates them to Niger, as a transit country, where they are hosted and receive assistance to meet their basic needs (including medical and psychosocial support) while protection assessments, status determination and resettlement procedures with third countries or other durable solutions are underway.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR has registered a considerable slowdown in departures for resettlement or the Humanitarian Corridors programme, which has a tremendous impact on refugees' lives and requires the provision of more specific services on UNHCR's part.

The Agadez caseload

Since 2018, a flow of asylum seekers and refugees, mostly Sudanese, have begun to settle in Agadez, and they continue to arrive. These people arrive either on their own or are sometimes expelled from Algeria. In particular, those identified in need of international protection are often extremely vulnerable people who have experienced detention in Libya and have managed to flee to seek protection in Niger.

UNHCR, through collaboration with the Government of Niger, IOM and partner NGOs, identifies asylum seekers in migration flows and provides them with the protection and assistance they need. The situation remains complex, with an increase in returns from Libya and refoulements from Algeria.

As of 21 May 2021, a total of 1,204 people was registered in Agadez by UNHCR. 20% of these beneficiaries are minors, of whom about 5% are unaccompanied and/or separated children (UASCs) The majority (69%) live in a 15-hectare Humanitarian Centre, about 15 kilometers from Agadez, built at the end of 2018. The most vulnerable (approximately 373 people) are hosted in guesthouses in the town of Agadez.

UNHCR provides protection and legal support for asylum applications and a full package of direct assistance (water, food, shelter, health, education, protection and psycho-social support) to facilitate the integration and peaceful coexistence of this population with the local population of Agadez while waiting to find a durable solution, through integration in Niger or through resettlement to third countries.

However, it takes time to find durable solutions for these beneficiaries, many of whom are already traumatized by fleeing their countries of origin, in addition to having experienced indescribable torture and violence. Many arrive in Niger with a very precarious physical and mental health situation and need specialized care, including for gender-based violence (GBV).

III: STRATEGY OF UNHCR ON MIXED MOVEMENTS

UNHCR in Niger is fully engaged in continuing the positive and challenging experience of the ETM programme, together with the support of the international community and the

Government of Niger, as well as maintaining the protection and assistance to all other beneficiaries (asylum seekers and refugees) arriving into the Nigerien territory with their own means, fleeing from the violence in Libya.

The dangerous irregular mixed movements of refugees and migrants across the Sahara Desert towards and through North African countries as well as via the sea routes to other European countries continue to take a devastating toll on human life.

Those traveling to North Africa often have to resort to the services of smugglers at least once during their journey, especially for crossing the Sahara Desert. Data presented in the joint report by UNHCR and MMC this year indicated that the desert crossing was where many deaths and various forms of abuse occur, including sexual and gender-based violence.



The ETM programme and the assistance to other beneficiaries hosted in Agadez reflect the [2021 updated risk mitigation strategy and appeal](#) for the Western and Central Mediterranean Situation and respond to the request of the Nigerien Government to support the management of these vulnerable beneficiaries in need of a holistic response to their needs.

IV: MAIN OBJECTIVES

Main Objective:

Improve assistance, living conditions, access to protection and durable solutions for asylum-seekers and refugees evacuated through the ETM programme and those arrived and hosted in Agadez.

Result:

1. Protection response, research of durable solutions and high-quality standards of living conditions are strengthened and ensured (R1)

Activities:

UNHCR is responsible to provide protection and durable solutions to its beneficiaries as a pivotal means to the implementation of its strategy in Niger. The activities under result 1, implemented in close collaboration with the Government of Niger and the technical implementing partners, will provide access to legal protection for the targeted beneficiaries, ensuring their access to the RSD procedures, including for minors and unaccompanied children. It will also reinforce the capacity of the operation to facilitate access to durable solutions and complementary pathways - including resettlement, reintegration and other humanitarian solutions - according to beneficiaries' needs.

Number of beneficiaries: 931 beneficiaries (PoCs) from the ETM Programme.

- Protection Response: Improving access to and quality of status determination procedures (RSD), by providing PoCs with access to information about their rights, building the capacity of protection actors (implementing partners and institutional partners working in the RSD procedures at the national level), in coordination with INTERSOS strengthening child protection through the Best Interest Determination (BID) process, establishing and maintaining Community-Based child protection structures, creating prevention and response services for children at risk;
- Durable solutions: Facilitating the access to Complementary Pathways through pledges to third countries' admission, providing PoCs with access to information about the possible durable solutions, strengthening submission of Resettlement pledges through reinforcement of case workload.

In order to maintain a high-quality and respectable standard of reception and assistance to the targeted beneficiaries of this proposal, especially the most vulnerable ones evacuated from Libya (ETM) or fleeing by their own means (Agadez), UNHCR will continue operationalizing its Philosophy of Care strategy within the infrastructures hosting the PoCs through the package of services proposed under result 2. These activities aim to ensure that all the PoCs hosted in the ETM programme and in Agadez have access to a holistic package of assistance, including nutrition, health and maintenance of the WASH structures, as well as the opportunity to participate in livelihood and self-reliance activities. They have the double goal to provide PoCs with economic sustainability during their stay in Niger while strengthening pacific coexistence and integration facilitation.

R1.1 - ETM component

Number of beneficiaries: 931 beneficiaries (PoCs) from the ETM Programme hosted in the Hamdallaye Transit Centre and guesthouses in Niamey; 40 persons from the host community living around the Centre.

- Direct Assistance: Providing food, vouchers, cash grants according to the plans of distribution, maintaining and reinforcing living conditions within the Hamdallaye Transit Centre; Cash-based assistance (CBI) pilot projects may be also implemented in Hamdallaye and Niamey;
- Health: Providing and supporting access to primary health care services, including full implementation of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) activities in coordination with COOPI, establishing referral mechanisms to secondary and tertiary health care services with public health institutions, providing access to non-communicable disease programmes;
- WASH: Establishing water management committees, maintaining water system operations, implementing environmental health and hygiene campaigns, supporting

medical waste management services for health structures in coordination with public health institutions and implementing partners;

- ***Self-reliance and Livelihood***: promoting and developing activities of agricultural - livestock - fisheries production for beneficiaries and host communities. Ongoing activities include training and production of vegetables (moringa, cabbage, tomatoes), conservation, and sales to local market. The winning formula of the initiative is the complementarity between the host community of Beira Kora and ETM PoCs of Hamdallaye, as well as the remuneration scheme and the opportunity to gain valuable capacity for integration to resettlement countries. Further to this, and always in line with the idea of strengthening self-reliance and increase capacity, vocational trainings on welding and sawing are also provided for PoCs and host community.

R1.2 - Agadez component

Number of beneficiaries: 1,204 beneficiaries (PoCs) hosted in the Humanitarian Center and guesthouses in Agadez.

- ***Direct Assistance***: Providing food, vouchers, cash grants according to the plans of distribution; **Cash-based assistance (CBI) pilot projects may be also implemented in Agadez and the Humanitarian Centre;**
- ***Health***: Providing and supporting access to primary health care services, establishing referral mechanisms to secondary and tertiary health care services with public health institutions, providing access to non-communicable disease programmes.

V: COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP

UNHCR works in close collaboration with the Government of Niger to reinforce the National Asylum System, building a safe asylum space in the country since 2016 (through the RDPP-NA programme). **UNHCR and the Government of Niger also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in December 2017, renewed in early 2020, expanding the asylum space in Niger to persons of concern evacuated from Libya through the ETM programme.**

UNHCR has also signed an **MOU with IOM and the Government of Niger on the identification and referral of migrants and refugees in the context of mixed movements.** IOM and UNHCR have extensive experience in working together, especially when it comes to the mutual referral mechanism of either rejected ETM cases or people initially assisted by IOM who are in need of international protection.

Additionally, UNHCR works with several national/international NGOs and institutional actors serving as implementing partners for technical activities according to their specific expertise. Among them, the following organizations will support the implementation of the proposed activities:

- ***Commission Nationale d'Eligibilité (CNE)***: Government Eligibility Body working in close collaboration with UNHCR RSD staff to determine the refugee status;
- ***Action pour le Bien-Etre (APBE)***: National NGO with expertise in direct assistance, camp management, WASH and Health services;
- ***INTERSOS***: Italian NGO with expertise in child protection and educational activities for minors; Intersos provides a full package of assistance to minors, not only in terms of Protection and follow-up of their RSD cases, but also proposing several educational and recreational activities (both in ETM and Agadez) to accompany their stay in Niger and their future integration.

- **COOPI**: Italian NGO with expertise in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS); COOPI works in strict collaboration with the UNHCR MHPSS unit, providing psychologists, doctors, and experts in psychosocial support. Their collaboration with UNHCR is paramount to implement all the activities that accompany the mental health of beneficiaries hosted in the ETM and Agadez.

VI: CHALLENGES AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Security – the volatile and unpredictable security situation in Niger may hamper humanitarian access, including to project locations, as well as the safety of UNHCR and partner staff working on the project.

Despite the relatively calm situation in Niamey and Agadez, compared with the other regions of Niger, security remains a potential challenging factor for the implementation of the activities in the project locations.

To date, the following mitigation measures are in place:

- The humanitarian operations are conducted under UN security provisions in conjunction with OCHA. This coordination mechanism includes a permanent exchange of information concerning the humanitarian activities to be carried out day by day. This information concerns the locations where activities will take place, the chosen itinerary, their nature, the number of staff involved, the kind of vehicles used, and the criticality level of the intervention. There is a permanent contact between the UNHCR representation in Hamdallaye and Agadez with OCHA liaison officers in order to report any incident. A clear programme of activities validated by OCHA is delivered to the humanitarian coordination every week. In the case of potential sudden deterioration of the situation, the staff is informed immediately and necessary measures are taken for their safety.
- Implementing partners' teams are flexible and can be redeployed to support activities in other sites whenever there is an accessibility constraint in one intervention site.

These measures may be adjusted and reinforced throughout the project as the security situation evolves.

COVID-19 – the spread of the pandemic and the preventive measures introduced by the Government of Niger have created delays in the processing of RSD and Resettlement procedures and travels and may render the implementation of certain activities difficult.

The main mitigation measures adopted in the framework of COVID are the following:

- A COVID risk mitigation framework was introduced and guides operations in managing related risks. Where possible, virtual meetings and telework are adopted to support the project remotely. Staff and beneficiaries are sensitized about the risks and equipped with a mask and apply social distancing;
- A COVID-19 vaccination campaign is ongoing among UNHCR's staff, implementing partners and beneficiaries in all intervention sites;
- The operation has adapted to the new context and carries out additional activities such as refresher training, continuous sensitization sessions and distribution of hygiene products and masks to beneficiaries and staff in all intervention sites.

Peaceful coexistence – risk of tensions between refugees and the host population.

UNHCR is pursuing its strategy of integrating vulnerable host communities into the programme, which has played an important role in facilitating discussion with the communities for peaceful

coexistence and avoiding tensions between the host and the refugee populations due to feelings of discrimination.

UNHCR interventions significantly ease the pressure on the local community in terms of access to the community infrastructure and services. Both communities (refugee and host population) are benefitting from the infrastructures put in place for refugees. In addition, both are involved in the project activities, such as agricultural - livestock - fisheries production work, contributing to the implementation of the community-based model of UNHCR in Niger.

So far, no tension between refugees and host communities has been observed. Moreover, each site has a mixed refugee-host community committee in place, which has the responsibility to mediate in case of tensions or difference of opinions.

VII: VISIBILITY

UNHCR will also ensure visibility to the donor's contribution stressing the importance and impact of the funding opportunity provided to UNHCR. Social media and external communication platforms will be used to report on the project's implementation and provide visibility to the donor. UNHCR publishes an external monthly report for every region with general updates on the implementation of each project. These reports will be another opportunity to underline the importance of the donor's contribution. Lastly, donor visibility will also be guaranteed through official boards and other visibility items on the sites of implementation.

VIII: BUDGET

	Total financial requirement (USD)	Total contribution required (USD)	Total contribution required (EUR)
R1: Protection response, research of durable solutions and high-quality standards of living conditions are strengthened and ensured			
Protection response	699,885.11	228,682.16	187,519.37
Durable Solutions	222,537.75	71,880.00	58,941.60
Direct Assistance	5,123,019.76	1,666,000.00	1,366,120.00
Health	2,407,199.53	1,261,711.42	1,034,603.36
WASH	185,096.92	154,270.18	126,501.54
Self-reliance and Livelihood	50,980.62	47,320.96	38,803.19
TOTAL OPERATIONS	8,688,719.69	3,429,864.71	2,812,489.06
Visibility	5,380.91	5,380.91	4,412.35
Administrative fees (6,5%)	565,116.54	223,290.97	183,098.59
GRAND TOTAL	9,259,217.14	3,658,536.58	3,000,000.00