

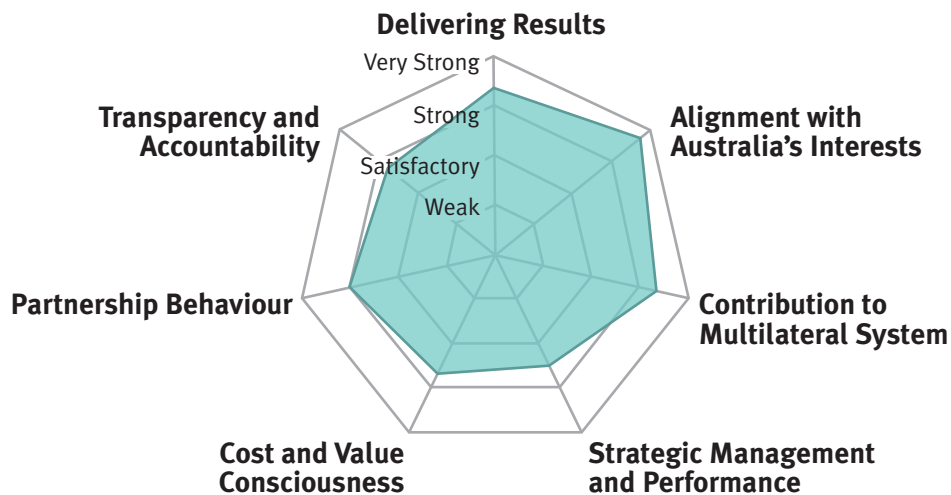


Australian Multilateral Assessment March 2012

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)



OVERVIEW OF ORGANISATION RATINGS



ORGANISATION OVERVIEW

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) mandate is to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and to resolve the refugee problems worldwide. Its main purpose is to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of refugees. It aims to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and to find safe refuge in another country, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or resettle in a third country.

It has an additional mandate concerning the issue of statelessness, as it is given a designated role under Article 11 of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The General Assembly requested that UNHCR promotes the 1954 and 1961 statelessness Conventions and that it helps to prevent statelessness by providing technical and advisory services on nationality legislation and practice to States.

The UNHCR's Executive Committee and the United Nations General Assembly have authorised the UNHCR's involvement with other groups, including former refugees who have returned home and internally displaced people.

In 2011, UNHCR's budget was US\$3.32 billion. In 2010–2011, Australia provided \$38.9 million to UNHCR, comprising \$16.0 million in voluntary core contributions and \$22.9 million in non-core funding.*

RESULTS AND RELEVANCE

1. Delivering results on poverty and sustainable development in line with mandate

STRONG

UNHCR has demonstrated results in responding to emergencies. It has the capacity to respond to a new emergency affecting up to 500 000 people and can mobilise over 300 trained personnel within 72 hours. It is also the ability to immediately mobilise resources to help respond to an emergency without delay. For example, UNHCR is working with non-government organisations (NGOs) and Tunisian and Egyptian authorities to support approximately 100 000 people who have fled violence in Libya. UNHCR also helped tens of thousands of refugees who fled violence in 2010 in southern areas of Kyrgyzstan.

UNHCR is in the process of strengthening its results focus and has recently implemented a series of initiatives to that effect. The 2010 review *Measure for measure: A field-based snapshot of the implementation of results based management in UNHCR* conducted by UNHCR's Policy Development and Evaluation Service found that UNHCR has made significant progress in introducing results-based management. However, the review went on to state that UNHCR could do more to communicate the rationale, objectives of and the advantages to be gained from results-based management to staff at every level of the organisation.

UNHCR's work is strongly aligned with the Millennium Development Goals. Through fulfilling its mandate of helping refugees and internally displaced people, UNHCR helps the poorest and the most vulnerable.

a) Demonstrates development or humanitarian results consistent with mandate

VERY STRONG

UNHCR has a clearly defined mandate to protect and assist refugees and stateless persons. It also delivers critical protection and humanitarian assistance outside of these mandates to populations that have been internally displaced as a result of armed conflict, with the support and endorsement of UNHCR's Executive Committee and the UN General Assembly.

* Figures presented in this online report differ slightly from those published in the full Australian Multilateral Assessment report and organisational summary contained therein. This is due to revised information becoming available following the publication of the hard copy of the Australian Multilateral Assessment report in March 2012.

UNHCR has been very effective in demonstrating results on the ground in accordance with its mandate. Examples from the UNHCR Global Report 2010 include:

- > successful airlifts of emergency relief supplies to authorities in Uzbekistan to assist refugees who fled violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan in mid-2010. UNHCR then provided more than 13 400 returnees with durable, safe and warm shelters before the onset of winter
- > assisting more than 200 000 internally displaced persons in Sri Lanka to return home
- > assisting approximately 113 000 Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran to voluntarily return to Afghanistan
- > working as protection cluster head during the floods in Pakistan and collaborating with its partners to offer almost two million people emergency shelter and non-food items, and
- > offering more than 50 training sessions to approximately 3600 government officials in Indonesia to build capacity in refugee processing.

Feedback from Australia’s overseas mission in Burma reports that UNHCR is playing an important advocacy role for better access to, and treatment of the Rohingya population in northern Rakhine State and of displaced and refugee populations on the Thai-Burma border. Feedback from Australia’s overseas mission in Iran supports UNHCR’s strong performance, reporting that UNHCR has made considerable effort to provide services to the large refugee community in Iran and have been instrumental in establishing a new program to provide health insurance for refugees.

b) Plays critical role in improving aid effectiveness through results monitoring

SATISFACTORY

UNHCR is in the process of strengthening its results focus and has recently implemented a series of initiatives to that effect.

While UNHCR has made improvements in recent years in implementing a results framework and in strengthening monitoring and reporting against the strategic objectives, the work is ongoing. According to the 2011 Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) report, although UNHCR implemented a new budget structure in 2010, its financial report for 2010 still does not allow for ‘analysis of the relationship between expenditures and results achieved’. The 2011 UN Report of the Board of Auditors also noted this limitation.

The 2010 review *Measure for measure: A field-based snapshot of the implementation of results based management in UNHCR* conducted by UNHCR’s Policy Development and Evaluation Service stated that significant progress has been achieved in the introduction of results-based management. It went on to state that UNHCR could do more to communicate the rationale for, objectives of, and the advantages to be gained from, results-based management to UNHCR staff at every level. Since the 2010 review, UNHCR has continued reinforcing its communication with staff on results-based management through issuance of more detailed guidance. In addition, a series of regional workshops have been organised for program managers.

c) Where relevant, targets the poorest people and in areas where progress against the MDGs is lagging	VERY STRONG
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UNHCR is mandated to work with asylum seekers, refugees and internally displaced people, who are often the poorest and most vulnerable.

Displaced populations assisted by UNHCR are often in situations of extreme insecurity, poverty and deprivation and require significant levels of humanitarian assistance. UNHCR allocates assistance on the basis of need recognising that factors such as poverty, gender, disability and social group will impact the specific needs of individuals.

2. Alignment with Australia’s aid priorities and national interests	VERY STRONG
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UNHCR’s work aligns very closely with Australian interests. Australia has signed the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the UNHCR also plays a role in referring refugees for resettlement to Australia.

UNHCR also aligns closely with the Australian aid program’s strategic goals of humanitarian and disaster relief and promoting opportunities for all.

UNHCR’s age, gender and diversity mainstreaming strategy is well established. The aim of the strategy is to ensure gender equality so that people can enjoy rights regardless of their age, gender or background. UNHCR has taken steps to enhance the protection of people with disability by adding specific protection provisions into its planning process. A climate change policy paper is in place and UNHCR acknowledges it needs to adapt much of its environment-related planning and work to respond to population displacement induced by climate change.

UNHCR is highly effective in operating in fragile contexts. It has established a good track record of working in a flexible and efficient way to support people in the most difficult of situations.

a) Allocates resources and delivers results in support of, and responsive to, Australia’s development objectives	VERY STRONG
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UNHCR allocates resources and delivers results in line with the Australian Government’s interests as a signatory to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. UNHCR also plays a role in referring refugees for resettlement to Australia.

UNHCR provides advice to the Australian Government and plays a role in referring refugees to Australia for resettlement.

b) Effectively targets development concerns and promotes issues consistent with Australian priorities	VERY STRONG
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UNHCR’s goals align closely with Australia’s aid priorities as outlined in *An Effective Aid Program for Australia*. In particular, UNHCR’s work in responding to emergencies aligns with the strategic goal of ‘humanitarian and disaster response’. Further, its work in

relation to providing basic services for refugees and internally displaced people aligns with the strategic goal of ‘promoting opportunities for all’.

c) Focuses on crosscutting issues, particularly gender, environment and people with disabilities	STRONG
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UNHCR has a strong focus on the crosscutting issue of gender. The Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming strategy is well established. The aim of the strategy is to improve gender equality so that people can enjoy rights regardless of their age, gender or background. The strategy involves a range of initiatives including the mainstreaming of age, gender and diversity analysis into all activities, including the development of policy, manuals and guidelines, capacity building and training, designing and delivering program assistance and sharing lessons learned. The 2011 MOPAN report found that 81 per cent of respondents provided ratings of adequate or higher for UNHCR’s mainstreaming of gender equality into its programs.

UNHCR has taken steps to enhance the protection of persons with disabilities by adding specific protection provisions for them in its planning process. In 2010, the protection of displaced persons with disabilities was a theme for the Executive Committee and the conclusion was approved in October 2010. This policy directive provides a global framework for UNHCR’s work with persons with disabilities. In 2011, the Community Services Unit produced a guidance note in cooperation with Handicap International on working with people with disabilities in displacement.

Internally and at operational-level, UNHCR does not have a focal point on disability per se but rather includes disability needs in all of its work similar to how gender is approached within the organisation. UNHCR is currently working with the Women’s Refugee Commission on developing a training module on mainstreaming disability issues into the work of UNHCR and its partners.

The 2011 MOPAN report concluded that that UNHCR sufficiently addresses how it will take environmental issues into account when delivering humanitarian action. UNHCR has in place environmental guidelines that commit the organisation to environmentally responsible practices. UNHCR also has a climate change policy paper in place which acknowledges the need to adapt its work to respond to people who may be displaced as a result of climate change.

d) Performs effectively in fragile states	VERY STRONG
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UNHCR has demonstrated strong emergency response performance and capacity in fragile states, including those affected by armed conflict and high levels of insecurity. UNHCR has developed an organisation-wide approach to mobilising human resources for humanitarian emergencies and conducts three emergency management workshops a year to consolidate and improve its response capacity.

A UNHCR handbook for emergencies provides guidance on various activities to be undertaken in the preparedness and response phase. UNHCR has an active response roster of 300 staff from within and from external partners and is able to respond to rapid

onset situations in a timely manner through its surge mechanism. It prepares contingency plans and has adequate procurement and supply chain management practices which can support its operations in fragile situations. Three large scale displacement crises in 2011 placed considerable stress on the financial and staff resources of UNHCR, and additional investments are needed to ensure that the organisation retains the internal capacity to respond to large crises, without relying excessively on temporary roster staff or consultants.

3. Contribution to the wider multilateral development system	STRONG
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UNHCR is mandated to lead and coordinate international action on refugees and internally displaced people. Despite immense and growing challenges, it is considered to deliver on this effectively. UNHCR’s role as cluster lead has contributed to enhanced coordination and predictability of humanitarian response.

In its role as cluster lead, UNHCR has contributed to the development of norms and standards on international humanitarian response. It has also developed tools and guidelines for use internally and by other cluster actors to ensure greater coherency and quality standards in humanitarian response.

UNHCR provides extensive information, research findings and guidance notes to a wide range of stakeholders to keep them informed, share experiences and document lessons. An example of one of the innovative tools developed by UNHCR is RefWorld. This is a publicly available leading source of information relevant to making decisions on refugee status and includes details on origin countries, policy documents and documents relating to international and national legal frameworks.

a) Plays a critical role at global or national-level in coordinating development or humanitarian efforts	STRONG
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UNHCR is mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and to resolve refugee problems worldwide, and despite immense and growing challenges, is considered to deliver on this effectively at both a global and national-level. UNHCR coordinates with broader political processes to support the resolution of humanitarian crises where possible and appropriate. Increasingly UNHCR is reaching out to development actors to address protracted refugee situations, recognising that coordination between humanitarian and development actors is critical to ensuring the early recovery of affected populations, and sustainable and durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons.

In the Asia-Pacific region, which hosts approximately one third of the world’s refugees and over half of the world’s stateless persons, UNHCR plays a key role in the coordination of regional responses to displacement and protection.

UNHCR has also assumed the role of global cluster lead for protection, emergency shelter and camp management for populations that have been internally displaced due to armed conflict. This has contributed to enhanced coordination and predictability of humanitarian response.

UNHCR conducts an annual dialogue on protection issues to draw on experiences of non-government organisations (NGOs), partners and governments in addressing refugee issues. Through this dialogue UNHCR has identified three new challenges: urban refugees; protracted refugee situations; and individuals with protection needs in mixed migratory movements.

b) Plays a leading role in developing norms and standards or in providing large-scale finance or specialist expertise	VERY STRONG
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UNHCR contributes to the development of norms and standards in international humanitarian response through its role as cluster lead. UNHCR has developed a number of tools and guidelines to promote greater coherency and quality in humanitarian response.

UNHCR is a full member of the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee and plays a key role in ensuring the success of system-wide reforms to improve international humanitarian response. Its role in committee working groups has been instrumental in developing and implementing tools, training, guidance and policies on protection, coordination, leadership, camp management, legal aspects of refugee issues, pooled funding and partnerships.

c) Fills a policy or knowledge gap or develops innovative approaches	STRONG
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UNHCR provides a range of information to partners on issues related to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The UNHCR website provides a range of resources, such as: maps that show refugee and IDPs movements in conflict areas; statistics on refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs; and research on refugees.

UNHCR has also developed the research tool RefWorld, which is a leading source of information relevant for decision making on refugee status. It contains a large collection of reports and other information relating to situations in origin countries, policy documents and documents relating to international and national legal frameworks. Since 2007 RefWorld has been available online and is updated daily. This is an important and essential source of information collated and made publically available by UNHCR.

ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR	
4. Strategic management and performance	STRONG

UNHCR has a clear mandate and 40 global strategic priorities which inform its priorities in delivering protection and assistance. However, the November 2010 report *Measure for measure: a field-based snapshot of the implementation of results based management in UNHCR* conducted by UNHCR's Policy Development and Evaluation Service stated that the global strategic priorities serve as a useful checklist of UNHCR activities, but do not necessarily inform the resource allocation process and prioritisation at the field level. Management has committed to measures to address this in 2012–13.

UNHCR's Executive Committee holds one annual session in Geneva at which member states hold management to account by reviewing and approving its reports, evaluations, operational plans, policies and finances. Executive Committee members have access to a range of material and can express their observations and requests for improvement against these on an ongoing basis throughout the year. There have been some issues with UNHCR's slow provision of reports before Executive Committee and Standing Committee meetings. This means that member states do not have enough time to adequately review documentation.

UNHCR's Policy Development and Evaluation Service conducts a range of reviews and evaluations. However, according to the 2011 MOPAN report, there are gaps in UNHCR's evaluation function and more can be done to improve it.

UNHCR leadership has established a comprehensive reform agenda. A range of sound human resources policies are in place and UNHCR has implemented a new performance management appraisal system to improve assessments and accountability for staff performance.

a) Has clear mandate, strategy and plans effectively implemented	SATISFACTORY
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UNHCR has a clear mandate with 40 global strategic priorities. The 2011 MOPAN report reported that stakeholders rated UNHCR as adequate or strong in all key areas of strategic management. The report assessed UNHCR as strong in making key strategic documents available to key partners including the public, having an organisational strategy based on a clear mandate, and in its focus on crosscutting thematic priorities.

The November 2010 Report *Measure for measure: a field-based snapshot of the implementation of results based management in UNHCR* stated that while the global strategic priorities serve as a useful checklist of UNHCR activities, they are not necessarily informing the resource allocation process and prioritisation at the field level. Management has agreed to measures to attempt to address this in 2012–13, including an increased focus on 15 indicator areas. Operations have been requested to make special consideration to these areas within their operational budgets.

UNHCR has established a comprehensive reform agenda, including multi-year structural change and updating management processes to reinforce UNHCR's capacity to provide affected individuals with assistance and protection. However, it was noted in the 2010 Report of the Board of Auditors that the UNHCR has not yet demonstrated tangible benefits from its reform agenda, which was introduced in 2006.

b) Governing body is effective in guiding management	STRONG
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UNHCR is governed by the UN General Assembly. UNHCR's Executive Committee advisory board is comprised of 85 member states. The Executive Committee holds one annual session in Geneva during the first half of October at which member states can hold UNHCR management to account by reviewing and approving, reports, evaluations, operational plans, policies and finances.

The Standing Committee of the Executive Committee meets several times each year to carry on the Executive Committee’s work between plenary sessions. These meetings cover all areas of policy and operational management. In 2011 the Standing Committee met three times to review budgets, consider program budgets, review regional and country activities, receive reports from the High Commissioner and adopt the annual work program of the governing bodies. The Standing Committee also holds informal consultations and briefings throughout the year on issues, which require detailed discussion or in-depth consideration.

Both the Executive Committee and its Standing Committee are active in reviewing and contributing to the management and operations of UNHCR and provide detailed feedback and guidance to the organisation. The governing bodies play an active role in budget prioritisation and in guiding policy and program directions. There have been some issues with UNHCR’s slow provision of reports prior to Executive Committee and Standing Committee meetings, that has resulted in member states having insufficient time to adequately review documentation. This means that member states do not have sufficient time to adequately review documentation. The oversight of the Executive Committee and Standing Committee would be enhanced by the timely provision of required documentation. UNHCR is attempting to address this by increasing the number of staff in the Secretariat.

<p>c) Has a sound framework for monitoring and evaluation, and acts promptly to realign or amend programs not delivering results</p>	<p>SATISFACTORY</p>
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UNHCR Evaluation Policy is based on the Standards for Evaluation in the UN system and Norms for Evaluation in the UN system, prepared by the UN Evaluation Group. UNHCR also subscribes to the UN Evaluation Group Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct.

The Policy Development and Evaluation Services, a small evaluation unit, undertakes assessments of UNHCR’s projects, programs, policies and practices. It also promotes research on refugees and supports the exchange of ideas between academics and practitioners and policy makers. As the evaluation office is small and centralised, evaluations are selective rather than systematic in nature.

According to the 2011 MOPAN report UNHCR can do more to maximise the potential of its evaluation function. The MOPAN report states that there are gaps in relation to defining the desired coverage of the evaluation function; ensuring that quality of evaluations is consistent through a system of quality control; and tracking implementation of recommendations provided in evaluations. It should be noted that UNHCR has contested some of these findings, as they utilise independent evaluation consultants, and regularly establish multi-stakeholder steering committees and employ ‘expert commentators’ to ensure quality control.

There is some evidence that UNHCR has adjusted its approaches based on performance information provided through evaluations and reviews. In its management response to the snapshot evaluation of results-based management conducted in 2010, UNHCR identified actions to address the recommendations of the evaluation. It noted that significant efforts were being made to train UNHCR staff in the different elements and

tools of results-based management but early technical difficulties were affecting the roll out of the Focus software. The second version of the software is expected to be rolled out shortly, which is hoped to provide improved performance.

At country-level there is evidence that past performance is taken into account in developing new interventions. Country offices prepare end-of-year reports (annual protection report and the country report), which are expected to contain information on performance against outputs and outcomes against objectives and targets.

d) Leadership is effective and human resources are well managed	STRONG
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The current UNHCR leadership has been active and energetic in establishing a comprehensive reform agenda and in ensuring the organisation’s efforts are focussed on timely and systematic implementation.

UNHCR has a range of sound human resources policies. The division of Human Resource Management is responsible for human resources and is comprised of the: Career Management Support Section; Recruitment and Posting Section; Personnel, Administration and Payroll Section; Global Learning Section; Policy Section; Staff Welfare Section; and Medical Services.

UNHCR has implemented a new performance management appraisal system to improve assessments and accountability for staff performance. Additional measures to support merit-based postings and promotions are being undertaken by UNHCR.

5. Cost and value consciousness	STRONG
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UNHCR’s governing bodies and management focus on issues relating to value for money although management information is sometimes constrained by inconsistent reporting from country networks.

Cost effectiveness is a consideration of programs and UNHCR has satisfactory procurement procedures which are guided by the principle of value for money and require that contracts are awarded on the basis of the best competitive bid. The 2010 report of the Board of Auditors states that the UNHCR cannot fully demonstrate that it uses resources cost effectively, including that there is little evidence of a competitive selection process for the selection of implementing agencies. Improvements to these processes are underway.

The document *Partnership: An Operations Management Handbook for UNHCR’s Partners* prescribes that implementing partners should ensure that the best possible value for money is achieved for assistance activities.

a) Governing body and management regularly scrutinise costs and assess value for money	STRONG
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UNHCR's management regularly reviews budget proposals and examines financial assessment and resource mobilisation strategies.

According to the 2010 Report of the Board of Auditors, UNHCR cannot fully demonstrate that it uses its resources cost effectively. It also stated that UNHCR needs to improve its evidence base for allocation decisions. The Board recommended that UNHCR develops comparative and cost-based information and to link financial and output data in order to assess efficiency and cost effectiveness. UNHCR is taking measures to address this recommendation, including establishing a working group with external expert support to develop new business reports which link performance and financial data. These reports are to be part of the global focus information service, scheduled to be made available to staff in early 2012.

b) Rates of return and cost effectiveness are important factors in decision making	SATISFACTORY
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UNHCR applies its own financial rules and the financial regulations of the United Nations, which state that the general principle of value for money shall be applied in relation to procurement. According to the 2011 MOPAN report, procurement procedures at the UNHCR are satisfactory and are guided by the principle of obtaining the best value for money.

According to the 2010 Report of the Board of Auditors, UNHCR's performance reporting from its country network is weak and does not enable UNHCR management to make effective judgements on the cost effectiveness of projects and activities.

c) Challenges and supports partners to think about value for money	STRONG
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The UNHCR partnership handbook outlines the principles of building effective partnerships and emphasises the importance of transparency, improvement and prioritisations, all linked to value for money.

The operational and administrative costs of implementing partners are negotiated between UNHCR officer and implementing partners in the field. Procurement guidelines require that contracts are awarded on the basis of best competitive bidding. In regards to how these principles play out in the field, the Board of Auditors 2010 report found that there is little evidence of any kind of competitive selection process for the selection of implementing partners. However, the newly established implementing partner management service in UNHCR is developing a new selection process for implementing partners, which will be issued by May 2012, and UNHCR's full range of implementing partner performance management processes will be reviewed by the end of 2012.

6. Partnership behaviour

STRONG

UNHCR works effectively in partnership with various agencies and stakeholders to address refugee issues and deliver assistance. It works closely with UN agencies through the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the UN Development Assistance Framework and the UN Delivering as One. Feedback during Australian Multilateral Assessments field visits and from Australian overseas missions was generally positive about UNHCR's partnership behaviour.

As an emergency response agency, UNHCR cannot always align its work with national systems or procedures. However, in situations where it has a long-standing presence, it collaborates with national agencies. The 2011 MOPAN report states that UNHCR is seen as adequately making use of local capacities and developing local capabilities.

Feedback from the field has generally been positive regarding UNHCR's engagement with stakeholders. According to the Australian overseas mission in Tehran, UNHCR seeks to liaise closely with all stakeholder organisations. The Australian overseas mission in Rangoon reported that UNHCR consults well with NGO partners.

UNHCR has extensive partnerships with civil society and relies heavily on these partners to deliver its field operations. It also holds annual consultations with NGOs. However, some feedback from NGOs stated that their relationship with UNHCR is often based on a service delivery model, rather than mutual collaboration and that UNHCR could do more to engage collaboratively with civil society.

a) Works effectively in partnership with others

STRONG

UNHCR performs effectively in establishing partnerships and in collaborating with a variety of agencies and stakeholders to address refugee issues and delivery assistance. It works closely with UN agencies through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the UN Development Assistance Framework and the UN Delivering as One, as well as in UN Working Groups, forums and task forces to represent refugee and displaced persons' perspectives and experiences. It has extensive partnerships with NGOs as UNHCR relies heavily on NGOs and civil society partners to delivery its field operations.

Feedback received during field visits by the Australian Multilateral Assessment team and from Australian overseas missions, was generally positive. Australia's overseas mission in Rangoon reported that UNHCR consults well with donors and with NGO partners. It readily shared information with Australia and is open to feedback. According to the Australian overseas mission in Beirut, UNHCR is always open to dealing with them. Australia's overseas mission in Tehran reported that UNHCR seeks to liaise closely with all stakeholder governments and organisations. There are regular consultations and they are very responsive to being approached by stakeholders. Feedback received during the Australian Multilateral Assessment team's visit to Jakarta indicated that UNHCR worked well with the International Organization for Migration in supporting the Indonesian Government in dealing with unaccompanied minors.

The 2011 MOPAN report concluded that UNHCR could do more to share relevant information with partners and to disburse technical cooperation through coordinated

projects. MOPAN received mixed views from respondents regarding UNHCR’s coordination with partner governments and partner organisations. Some respondents considered this a strength of UNHCR’s, while a larger number said that this is an area for improvement.

b) Places value on alignment with partner countries’ priorities and systems	STRONG
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As a humanitarian assistance agency, UNHCR is not always able to work in line with national systems and procedures. Where it has a long-term presence it works to collaborate with partner governments. For example, UNHCR has worked with Afghan refugees in Pakistan for almost 30 years and maintains a long-standing partnership with the Pakistan government. In the 2011 MOPAN report it states that UNHCR is seen as adequately making use of local capacities and developing local capabilities.

c) Provides voice for partners and other stakeholders in decision making	STRONG
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UNHCR has an extensive partnership with civil society and holds annual NGO consultations to focus on issues such as strengthening capacity of national partners and how to address barriers.

There has been some criticism from NGOs that UN humanitarian response does not engage with NGOs as partners beyond seeing them as service delivery agencies. For example, in a submission to the Australian Multilateral Assessment, Oxfam states that despite heavy reliance on NGOs and the knowledge that the NGOs have of the local context, United Nations agencies including UNHCR are yet to move from working with NGOs in service delivery to engaging with civil society on the basis of shared objectives, complementary approaches and transparency.

7. Transparency and accountability	STRONG
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UNHCR publishes a significant amount of reports, documents and other material on its website although not all reports UNHCR prepares are automatically made available to donors.

Resources are allocated based on field operation needs, which are determined through a comprehensive and participatory needs assessment and planning process and according to a set of criteria.

UNHCR’s Office of Internal Oversight Services conducts independent audits across UNHCR’s programs in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing, and all expenditure is subject to external audits. Furthermore, UNHCR’s Ethics Office promotes staff understanding and observance of UNHCR’s transparency standards. Despite these strong processes, the UN Board of Auditors 2010 report noted that UNHCR faced some challenges in this area, including inadequate oversight, lack of risk management, and low financial management capacity in the field. UNHCR is working to address these concerns, and is currently developing a new risk-management approach.

UNHCR promotes transparency among partners. For example, in the Operations Management Handbook for UNICEF Partners the organisation states that all partners should commit to transparency and information sharing so partnerships are effective.

a) Routinely publishes comprehensive operational information, subject to justifiable confidentiality	STRONG
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UNHCR has an extensive website on which many of its research documents, policies, reports, governance material and other studies are posted. The site is comprehensive and has an archive section extending back more than ten years. UNHCR publishes its annual Global Report which includes detailed chapters on achievements at country-level. However, not all reports UNHCR prepares are automatically made available to donors.

The planned roll out of the Global Focus External web portal is intended to provide access to operational information on selected operations sourced from the operational management database application. This has the potential to further increase transparency, although it is still in development.

UNHCR is not a signatory to the International Aid Transparency Initiative.

b) Is transparent in resource allocation, budget management and operational planning	STRONG
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The UNHCR budget is allocated across four population groups: refugees, stateless persons, internally displaced persons and returnees. Following a consultation process with donors, UNHCR introduced a new budget process in 2010 that has increased transparency in resource allocation. Needs assessment and planning processes are now conducted in accordance with a set of prioritisation criteria which emphasise core protection activities, lifesaving interventions and activities designed to realise durable solutions. Additional criteria prioritise activities that: yield high protection results; maintain a positive protection environment; prevent a progressive weakening of the international protection regime; and UNHCR is best placed to undertake.

c) Adheres to high standards of financial management, audit, risk management and fraud prevention	SATISFACTORY
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UNHCR is audited by the United Nations Board of Auditors and Office of Internal Oversight Services of the United Nations. Main risk areas are reported to the Executive Committee and UNHCR reports on measures taken to address identified problems. Structural changes are under consideration to improve overall accountability and structure of the audit function. Both internal and external audit are fully independent entities. Proposed changes include establishing an Independent Audit and Oversight Committee to replace the existing Oversight Committee (composed of staff) to strengthen the oversight responsibilities of management and the governing bodies, and entrench a stronger risk management culture.

At the recent UNHCR Executive Committee meeting donors expressed general satisfaction with UNHCR's financial management and ongoing efforts to improve the efficacy and

accountability of the organisation. However they encouraged the organisation to implement reforms recommended by the Board of Auditors, including the establishment of an organisation-wide risk management approach. UNHCR accepted this recommendation, and a concept paper will be prepared for Senior Management's comments in early 2012.

UNHCR also carries out inspection and investigation functions through its Office of the Inspector General which is mandated to assess the quality of UNHCR's management, including: identifying measures to prevent mismanagement and waste of resources; to investigate allegations of misconduct by anyone working for the agency, including non-permanent staff; and to conduct inquiries into violent attacks on UNHCR staff and operations, as well as other types of incidents that could affect the reputation of the organisation.

The office is critically under-resourced and has not benefited from increased staff or resources commensurate with the growth in the size and budget of the organisation. It is currently unable to investigate all complaints of staff misconduct and there is insufficient staff and resources to allow for regular review (minimum of once every five years) of the quality of management of field operations.

Overall, UNHCR's field operations are well run and transparent. UNHCR has an established review process of country operation plans, looking at program management and effective prioritisation. Financial and program support functions continuously monitor field operations' progress on implementation, expenditures and achievement of objectives. Budgets are reviewed periodically and plans adjusted throughout the year, in order to reinforce field offices' good financial management and attention to cost effectiveness. Reporting from field locations confirms UNHCR is vigilant in investigation claims of fraud or mismanagement when these arise.

UNHCR provides training and guidance to managers in accountability and risk management but there is no evidence of a comprehensive risk management strategy.

d) Promotes transparency and accountability in partners and recipients	STRONG
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UNHCR uses a checklist for the selection of its implementing partners and partner performance is regularly monitored through UNHCR's extensive field presence. Payments to partners are made by instalment and are subject to satisfactory performance and reporting against agreed targets. Despite these mechanisms, the 2011 UN Board of Auditors report concluded that UNHCR's management of its implementing partners is inadequate. UNHCR and implementing partners met in 2011 to discuss improving UNHCR's implementing partners management framework. This meeting representing the first in a series of consultations with stakeholders, engaging them in the development of a risk-based management approach to UNHCR's work with implementing partners.

Through its needs assessment processes, UNHCR has a regular and open dialogue with its target population groups. UNHCR has also joined the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response peer review process on Accountability to Affected Populations,

which provides UNHCR the opportunity to share lessons with NGOs and other international organisations working with refugees, and displaced populations and deepen its approach to accountability and learning. UNHCR's policy on complaints requires that all field offices must have a complaints mechanism in place to allow refugees and other persons of concern to file a complaint at the camp and office level.