

Evaluation of UNHCR's Engagement with the Private Sector

EVALUATION REPORT
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Executive summary

Aim and audience of this evaluation

The overall aim of this formative centralized evaluation is to strengthen UNHCR's understanding of how to better engage and partner with the private sector beyond fundraising, for a range of potential benefits for refugees and other persons of concern (PoC). The key evaluation questions focused on documenting the types of private sector engagements (PSEs) in which UNHCR has been involved between 2016 and 2019; the perspectives of UNHCR and private sector partners on the desired objectives, challenges and risks from said engagements; and lessons learned from similar agencies.

The prime audience for this centralized evaluation is the Senior Executive Team, divisions, Regional Bureaux and country operations. Looking across the whole organization enabled the evaluation team to make recommendations that can tackle the existing fragmentation of partnering expertise and functions across the organization and support the rationalization of partnering across the organization.

Methodology

The evaluation used mixed methods, including the collection and analysis of data from surveys, interviews and participant observation across the key components of the evaluation, including:

1. A stocktake of non-financial PSEs that are ongoing or took place in the past three years, particularly in operational divisions;
2. Benchmarking of similar agencies and a literature review of PSE beyond fundraising;
3. A case study of PSE in Malaysia and the Africa Shared Value Summit in Nairobi, Kenya; and
4. Consultations with UNHCR Headquarter (divisions and Regional Bureaux) and field staff on strategic considerations and implications of UNHCR's partnerships in the future.

Findings were then presented to UNHCR and a series of three strategic workshops were conducted to explore how and what UNHCR could do to better position its engagements with the private sector to leverage potential benefits to improve protection and solutions for PoC.

Key findings

Private sector engagement for operational purposes is undertaken across UNHCR

The evaluation shows that PSEs are managed by many UNHCR Country Offices as well as Regional Bureaux and various divisions at Headquarters. UNHCR engages with almost 250 private sector actors in over 60 countries for improving the protection and well-being of PoC. In addition, the Private Sector Partnerships Service (PSP) in the Division of External Relations (DER) recently established a team, the Shared Value Partnerships Unit (SPU), to directly work on shared value creation through UNHCR's partnerships with global private sector actors.

Engagements centred on promoting protection, self-reliance and meeting needs

The evaluation notes five main result areas from PSE: (1) provision of goods and services to meet protection and other needs of PoC; (2) improvement of the environment for refugee protection and access to services; (3) economic and financial inclusion (e.g. access to work permits, bank services); (4) helping UNHCR to work more efficiently and effectively so that resources can stretch further; and an ambition to work towards (5) changing the business models and practices of the private sector to be more refugee-inclusive.

Organizational mandate, operational coverage and staff expertise support PSE

The evaluation finds that many staff involved in PSE are highly passionate and committed to the work they are doing and can clearly see and articulate the goals of the partnership. These individuals tend to have previous experience working with/in the private sector, are innovative in

their approach to operational programming, understand their political economic context, have a strong sense of what will work to achieve their goal and know also how to partner with other stakeholders, such as national and local government bodies. In practice, UNHCR already has a whole-of-organization approach to PSE.

Moreover, UNHCR has expertise in partnering with the many different types of stakeholders promoted in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), including government, NGOs, civil society organizations, multilateral organizations and international financial institutions (IFIs).

Private sector actors currently partnering with UNHCR expressed their interest in UNHCR's unique mandate, positive organizational reputation and understanding of the situation of those forcibly displaced and the environments they live in.

Several factors hinder private sector engagement beyond fundraising

The annual planning cycle was reported as a challenge for designing longer-term interventions and targeting higher-level impact outcomes desired by private sector actors. The budgeting framework was also perceived by UNHCR staff as a challenge because the tendency is to prioritize activities that the organization is directly implementing. In contrast, PSEs tend to involve collective actions by the private sector and other partners, and UNHCR's role is convening or coordinating between actors. It is sometimes challenging for staff to justify time and resources to support these types of effort under the current framework. UNHCR's current Results-based Management (RBM) system that supports the organization's planning and reporting was found to also have limitations in being able to capture and record operational engagements with the private sector and corresponding results from partnering. Current changes to the RBM system that are under way will address the issue of recording partnership outcomes but leave other recording and measurement issues unresolved.

Technical guidance and capacity-building resources related to PSE on operational activities were the most cited requests for support from staff working in Regional Bureaux and country operations. Specific areas that are found to be challenging include the development of value propositions in negotiation with partners, negotiation skills, selecting the appropriate partners and partnership type, and managing partnerships. Formal and informal spaces for sharing and learning across teams and operations on how others engage with the private sector are limited.

Based on the stocktake, the evaluation finds that managerial support for PSE varies within the organization. Low managerial and senior management support creates disincentives for staff to seek out partnerships with private sector actors. UNHCR's whole-of-organization approach to PSE is not uniformly supported either in strategy or managerially.

The evaluation notes that in practice, UNHCR works with all stakeholders that the GCR identifies as being critical to a whole-of-society approach. However, these engagements are organized at HQs in a siloed way according to the type of partner; i.e. different divisions and teams tend to manage partnerships with one sector.¹ Furthermore, HQ staff not only manage their "own" partnerships, but also have to provide support to others who work with these partners in the field as well as technical support. These teams do not regularly interact with one another to share best practices or harmonize partnering processes. More recent efforts have been made to foster linkages across the various organizational silos for other purposes (e.g. protection or programming), which the evaluation notes as a positive trend and recommends that this model should be used also for partnering.

¹ It was beyond the scope of this evaluation into PSE to carry out this mapping as part of this project.

Partnering can evolve with financial and non-financial benefits flowing to UNHCR and/or others

The evaluation notes that in the literature, benchmarking and stocktake partnering with the private sector can include both financial contributions as well as operational partnership. Partnering can evolve, for example, with an operational goal in mind and at a later point lead to financial contributions to UNHCR and/or other partners and vice versa. Financial contributions may not always go to UNHCR, especially with the whole-of-society approach and UNHCR's role as the convener/catalyst versus implementer. It was not clear from the evaluation whether such cases would count towards PSP's \$1 billion fundraising target or to regional or national targets. There were cases where it was appropriate for resources go to other partners, or to the partnership itself. These latter two possibilities should not be cut off in order to prioritize PSP's \$1 billion target. What is appropriate to the decentralized goal and partnership should be prioritized. Regardless, based on the literature and benchmarking, a helpful process appears to follow these steps: (a) define the impact goal; (b) identify the stakeholders that could contribute (from the public and/or private sector); and (c) negotiate the partnership type suited to achieving this aim. Renegotiating and evolving the partnership will then be done as needed to achieve the evolving goals for PoC.

Recommendations

The evaluation offers nine recommendations, which are discussed in more detail in Recommendations of the report and are summarized in the table below. At a foundational level, UNHCR should **approach and measure partnering along a range of outcomes; decentralize partnership objective setting; strengthen working relationships across the organization; remove barriers** (such as annual planning cycles and budgeting) and **establish institutional incentives for partnering; meet staff's capacity development needs in partnering** with the private sector; demonstrate the same level of support for operational partnering as that given to fundraising; position the Shared Value Partnerships Unit (SPU) in PSP for global engagements, trade delegations, and "go/no-go" lists; develop a strong value proposition; and map which Headquarters departments partner with all types of partner, for what purposes and how (section 8.2). These are musts for the organization to better optimize its engagement with the private sector and meet current partnering demands and expectations.

First, as a matter of urgency, to improve UNHCR's ability to achieve positive impacts for PoC and its internal efficiency and effectiveness, UNHCR should develop a professional orientation towards goal-driven partnering (not siloed by partner or stakeholder group). This requires creating a **whole-of-organization strategy that rationalizes operational partnering support writ large**.² UNHCR should centralize support for partnering as a professional orientation and activity (rather than having each division or department develop its own guidance and support according to partner type). Therefore, the evaluation recommends that UNHCR first do a mapping of all types of partnerships (section 8.2) in Headquarters and the support offered to other UNHCR staff across different partner types. This will bring understanding of the breadth and depth of partnerships held at HQ and the types of expertise that can be called on to support the field and technical staff.

Second, it would be transformative for the organization to establish a **Partnering Support Service dedicated to supporting HQ and field staff in developing single- and multi-stakeholder partnerships**. The "Functional and Structural Review of UNHCR's Partnerships with the Private Sector"³ completed in 2018 makes reference to support functions sitting inside PSP, but this additional demand would distract PSP from their core task. Additionally, UNHCR has a wealth of partnering experience to draw on, including that from PSP. This Service should offer technical support, training, coaching and guidance on all matters concerning partnering for operational purposes. This includes **helping teams to think through the value proposition of UNHCR**,

² This does not affect HQ fundraising departments or units, but only "non-financial" partnering.

³ Horekens, J. Functional and structural review of UNHCR's partnering with the private sector: Focus on the Private Sector Partnership Service (PSP) and its Leadership Giving Section. Switzerland: 12 April. 2018.

identifying partners of interest, benefits vs. risk analysis, and choosing the appropriate partnership models and approaches across the full spectrum of outcomes that could be achieved (philanthropic, transactional, exchange and/or transformational: [Figure 8](#)). There are three currently vacant posts for supporting operational partnerships that could be deployed in this Partnering Support Service. The evaluation recommends that the Service be situated within a division that is close to the core business of the organization; for example, operationalizing the GCR objectives or strategic planning.

Third, **UNHCR should establish a Partnering Hub**. This Hub would be managed by the Partnership Support Service and bring together staff from different Headquarters divisional teams who support partnering (e.g. technical guidance, field support, training) and also field staff (including many identified in this evaluation) who are experienced in partnering. As with the other Hubs, the purpose of the Partnering Hub would be to break down silos between different partnership units and allow for **greater coordination, coherence and streamlining of processes, systems and results tracking**. Establishing a Partnering Support Service and Hub helps fulfil the other eight recommendations. Only this transformative approach to supporting and professionalising partnering across the whole organization, together with all the relevant stakeholders, would have the potential to allow UNHCR to deliver on the demands of the GCR and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) – both in terms of impacts for PoC and the whole-of-society approach – and also improve UNHCR efficiencies and effectiveness.

Detailed recommendations

The nine detailed recommendations are critical for the organization to consider in order to achieve impacts for PoC and efficiency and effectiveness gains for UNHCR from private sector engagement in the future, while guarding against the reputational or operational risks to which all respondents were sensitive.

	Recommendation	Responsible
1	It is critical that UNHCR meets the substantive support needs of staff who are engaging in private sector partnering (Box 2) . The benchmarking exercise showed that most organizations are still testing approaches and figuring out how partnerships work best for them. The evaluation recommends UNHCR to (a) foster a learning culture around its partnering approaches and tactics; (b) encourage formal learning opportunities for staff development; and (c) designate the three currently vacant posts that are earmarked for supporting partnering with the private sector for non-financial purposes to be used to recruit staff who are skilled in: how to support others to develop their partnership potential across all four types of partnering (Figure 8); partnership thinking and practice; and how to bring different interests together . These support posts need to sit close to organization's core business: strategic planning or the operationalization of the GCR.	SET
2	Staff learning needs identified by this evaluation cannot be fulfilled by the Shared Value Partnerships Unit (SPU) . The SPU should not be distracted from fulfilling the important role that it alone can play . The evaluation recommends that the current unit (a) manage relationships with multinational corporations (MNCs) and other global private sector partners in close consultation with field and regional staff working with the country offices of these MNCs; (b) manage trade delegations from donor countries; and (c) work closely with Regional Bureaux and teams within PSP to review block-lists and develop allow-lists of pre-approved partner organizations .	SET and DER

	As with all interactions across divisions and between the Centre and the regions/field, it is critical to develop “service-level agreements” to clarify mutual expectations and create constructive processes and pathways for collaboration and coordination.	
3	<p>The evaluation recommends that UNHCR diversify its language use and thinking towards partnering to reflect a broader range of outcomes that can arise from partnership (Figure 8): fundraising; exchange between partners; combining or integrating strengths and resources; or transforming partners’ practices to further UNHCR’s mission and mandate.</p> <p>What are currently called “partnerships” with NGOs appear to be more contractual than partnership as defined in this typology. Since NGOs are part of a GCR whole-of-society approach, the evaluation recommends moving relationships with NGOs into the partnering space; the implications of this need to be considered.</p> <p>Expand planning and measurement of partnership impacts and outcomes to include quantitative and qualitative measurements of the four aspects identified in Figure 9: Impacts for PoC and meeting partnership objectives; partnering environment; partner relations; and value creation for all partners.</p>	SET
4	Following the decentralization of authority that is under way i.e. regionalization and decentralization transformation at UNHCR, the evaluation recommends that the Senior Executive Team (SET) communicate to Regional Bureaux and divisions that partnering strategies should be designed locally, aligning to country-defined outcomes and impacts of their RBM Results Framework (Figure 10). This also requires delegation of competency and accountability, which will be supported by training developed through the new Partnership Support Service and/or Hub (see Recommendations 1 and 9). Delegation of decision-making authority and accountability should be as close to the point of delivery as possible, using centralized due diligence processes when partnerships are set up, and then the “Three Lines of Defence” for ongoing risk management.	SET, Regional Bureaux and Divisions
5	<p>Coordination is a challenge but it is also seen by benchmarking organizations as a critical way to solidify and institutionalize a partnership and ensure that organizational impact objectives are met. Any of the four types of partnership can be leveraged to mobilize the other, but this needs to be done with care.</p> <p>Establishing service-level agreements will help clarify expectations and create processes and pathways that support positive and purposive collaboration and coordination inside UNHCR. Ensure a clear line of sight between the operational goals and the offer from the private sector through effective communication between all internal stakeholders; for example, between PSP and other divisions, and the three pillars within the new Regional Bureaux structure.</p>	DER, DRS, Regional Bureaux
6	This evaluation recommends that UNHCR should (a) remove annual planning restrictions and (b) actively incentivize those who would partner . Incentives include management and reward processes and creating the category of “catalytic partnership” to record and report resources mobilized that are not mobilized into UNHCR, and yet contribute to the PoC/UNHCR mandate; for example, to a partnership platform such as Sin Fronteras (Box 1).	SET and Division of Strategic Planning and Results

	<p>This evaluation recommends improving the measurement of partnering through new RBM core and flexible outcome and impact indicators as well as the GCR indicators. The evaluation suggests that the new RBM should have the functionality developed to link result outcomes to UNHCR's private sector partners (e.g. tick box with drop-down list of pre-approved partners and free text entry). In addition, UNHCR should prioritize developing quantitative and qualitative measurements of the impacts and pillars of partnering (Figure 9) as well as training and mainstreaming theories of change to plan and monitor the complex impact pathways inherent to partnerships.</p>	
7	<p>This evaluation recommends that leadership teams at Headquarters, Regional Bureaux and field offices make their support for all four types of partnerships audible, visible and tangible, focused on partnering to achieve decentralized objectives set close to the point of impact.</p> <p>As fundraising is supported, so should the other three types of partnerships (exchange, integrate and transform) receive resourcing for a centralized unit that services their learning and implementation needs (see also Recommendation 2); regional focal points; and a small amount of funding to give impetus to innovative operational partnerships.</p>	SET, Division Heads, Regional Bureaux; Country Representatives
8	<p>Formulating a value proposition is critical as noted in the stocktake, benchmarking and literature review. The value proposition serves to define what UNHCR has to offer. A strong value proposition forms the basis of a strong negotiating position with all sector partners.</p> <p>The new Due Diligence policy should be communicated and trained across the organization, highlighting the need for due diligence even in partnerships where no money changes hands.</p> <p>It is critical to reinforce the lines UNHCR has drawn between partnership and procurement, in order to avoid the danger seen by many respondents to UNHCR's reputation. In the same vein, this evaluation recommends that trade delegations to HQ or field operations need to be managed through the SPU or directed to Procurement.</p>	SET
9	<p>In order to realize the potential of the whole-of-society approach espoused in the GCR, UNHCR needs a whole-of-organization strategy to optimize how it supports partnering. This is a mission-critical task: organizing the support for partnering across the organization will ensure that UNHCR is able to leverage its partnering to yield maximum benefits to PoC and improve efficiency and effectiveness of UNHCR's internal processes and resource use.</p> <p>First, UNHCR must undertake a mapping of its partnership work at HQs. This should focus on mapping the different types of partnerships (fundraise, exchange, integrate and transform (Figure 8) as well as the sector of the partner. Once this mapping has been concluded, the decision must be taken as to how best to organize the support for partnering across the organization, to ensure that UNHCR is able to leverage its partnering to yield maximum benefits to PoC and improve efficiency and effectiveness of UNHCR's internal processes and resource use.</p>	SET

Second, UNHCR should **establish a Partnering Support Service** to develop HQ and field staff's professionalization in partnering. Horekens' report makes reference to support functions sitting inside PSP, but this additional demand would distract PSP from their core task and fail to use the wealth of partnering experience inside UNHCR beyond PSP. This unit should offer **technical support, training, coaching and guidance on all matters concerning partnering for operational purposes**. This includes helping teams to think through the value proposition of UNHCR, identifying partners of interest, benefits vs. risk analysis, and choosing the appropriate partnership models and approaches across the full spectrum of outcomes that could be achieved (philanthropic, transactional, exchange and/or transformational: [Figure 8](#)). The three currently vacant posts for supporting operational partnerships could be deployed in this Partnering Support Service. The evaluation recommends that the Service be situated within a division that is close to the core business of the organization; for example, operationalizing the GCR objectives or strategic planning.

UNHCR should **establish an interdivisional Partnering Hub** managed by staff from the Partnering Support Service that brings together thematic experts of the SPU, DRS, DPSM, DIP, DER, Regional Bureaux and field staff. This Partnering Hub would match the other Hubs (e.g. solutions, protection or programming) that seek to counter HQs' institutional silos by sharing good practice, experience and expertise across UNHCR.

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List of abbreviations

Centre	Headquarters and Regional Bureaux
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DER	Division of External Relations
DESS	Division of Emergency, Security and Supply
DFAM	Division of Financial and Administrative Management
DIP	Division of International Protection
DPSM	Division of Programme Support and Management
DRRM	Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service
DRS	Division of Resilience and Solutions
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GHP	Global Humanitarian Platform
HQ	Headquarters (in Budapest, Copenhagen and Geneva)
ICT	Information Communications Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IFIs	International Financial Institutions (such as the World Bank)
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LET	Logistics Emergency Teams
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNOCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PCS	Partnership and Coordination Service (DER), which includes the Partnership Section, Inter-Agency and Coordination Section, and Sport Section
PoC	Persons of Concern
PoP	Principles of Partnership (by Global Humanitarian Platform)
PSE	Private Sector Engagement
PSP	Private Sector Partnerships, previously Private Sector Fundraising or PSFR (DER)
RBM	Results-based Management
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SET	Senior Executive Team
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SPU	Shared Value Partnerships Unit (PSP/DER)
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

1. Introduction

1. With this formative evaluation, UNHCR seeks to strengthen its understanding of how to better engage and partner with the private sector beyond fundraising, for a range of potential benefits for refugees and other persons of concern (PoC), taking into account the factors that influence these relationships and make them successful. The evaluation contributes to strategic and timely evidence and recommendations that will inform UNHCR's organizational strategy and practice; ultimately, contributing to improved outcomes for PoC through UNHCR's engagement and partnership with the private sector.

2. Background on private sector engagement (PSE) beyond fundraising

2. The private sector plays an increasingly important role in the humanitarian and development sectors, actively providing products or services, making financial contributions, or improving internal operations of humanitarian organizations. In addition, the private sector plays a significant role in spurring economic growth, investing in technology and employing people, including refugees. The private sector is encouraged to uphold ethical conduct in refugee situations, share tools to identify business opportunities in host countries, and develop country-level private sector facilitation platforms.⁴ Governments, NGOs and UN agencies have developed private sector engagement strategies and partnerships to better leverage such collaborations.
3. In UNHCR, fundraising from the private sector has increased significantly in recent years as has competition from other UN agencies and NGOs. More recently, the fundraising team, renamed Private Sector Partnerships Service (PSP) in June 2016, previously called the Private Sector Fundraising or PSFR has turned its attention to partnerships beyond fundraising. The majority of UNHCR divisions and field offices have also been engaging with the private sector where the internal and external context allows.
4. UNHCR's current private sector engagement has five distinct yet interconnected aspects: (1) raising funds; (2) delivery of goods and services; (3) advocacy for refugee/forced displacement issues; (4) employment of refugees; and (5) product development/technology investments, including through innovation. While the aim of increasing contributions and raising funds is directly under the responsibility of the PSP, other aims or aspects of engagement are initiated by other UNHCR staff, whether at field level or in HQ. As such, **the majority of non-fundraising partnering is carried out by many different main interlocutors within the organization.**
5. Collectively, the World Humanitarian Summit, Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), New York Declaration, Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁵ set the context for internal changes in UNHCR in order to tackle global challenges. The potential positive impacts of private sector engagement are recognized in calls for a "whole-of-society approach". These documents frame private sector engagement as necessary to reach global objectives when

⁴ www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf

⁵ UN General Assembly. Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Draft Resolution A/69/L.85, 12 August 2015, p. 10, para. 39; p. 27 paras. 17.16 and 17.17.

responding to refugee crises. This imperative for working with the private sector is being translated into UNHCR's global and field objectives.

6. Externally, private sector companies are increasingly seeking to expand their definition of value creation at the heart of their business model from economic outcomes alone to contribute value to social and environmental concerns. Therefore, many seek to support UNHCR's mandate to work in partnership to jointly find short-term and durable solutions for PoC.⁶

3. Purpose and scope

7. This is not a classical *ex post* evaluation with an accountability focus. Instead, the evaluation is mainly intended to strengthen UNHCR's understanding of how to better engage with the private sector (beyond fundraising). This is a strategic forward-looking evaluation that aims to inform organizational strategy development based on analysis of what is working/not working internally and externally. This evaluation serves to inform UNHCR strategy going forward with regard to non-financial private sector engagement, in partnerships that are designed to create shared value for PoC and for UNHCR and their private sector partners.

With this formative evaluation, UNHCR seeks to strengthen its understanding of how to better engage and partner with the private sector beyond fundraising, for a range of potential benefits for refugees, taking into account the factors that influence these relationships and make them successful.⁷

8. The question this evaluation addresses is how, in the near future, UNHCR can engage the private sector beyond fundraising to improve the protection and solution situation for PoC. The evaluation recognizes that refugees and other PoC directly engage with the private sector in their daily lives independent of UNHCR. The scope of the evaluation centres on UNHCR's engagements with the private sector beyond fundraising. However, managing partnerships (and support for partnering) with all sectors has developed in an organic way in HQs and is now fragmented across the organization, mainly (but not exclusively) depending on the sector of the partner, rather than comprehensive whole-of-society thinking. Partnerships with the public sector are structured depending on the function of the partnership rather than sector.
9. In this evaluation, beyond fundraising refers to non-financial, non-procurement-related partnerships with the private sector, focusing on operational activities; for example, working with the private sector to develop infrastructure needed by PoC or improve the legal framework for refugees through collective advocacy efforts (e.g. lobby for refugees to have the right to work). Gifts in kind are not considered within the scope of this definition. For the purpose of this evaluation, the private sector is understood as the part of the economy that is owned and controlled by individuals and organizations through private ownership, and not owned or controlled by the States. It excludes NGOs, private individuals and civil society groups. However, it encompasses a variety of for-profit organizations, such as informal businesses, small-scale social enterprises to large multinational corporations (MNCs), all of which operate in local, national and international markets based on their reach. Included in this definition are businesses, firms, companies, chambers of commerce, corporate foundations, industry associations and

⁶ UN General Assembly. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. 71/1, 3 October 2016, p. 24, para. 15.

⁷ Terms of Reference for this Evaluation of UNHCR's Engagement with the Private Sector. 2018, p. 1 (emphasis added).

private enterprises. Purely philanthropic and charitable foundations are not included, but may be considered where they are linked to and aligned with a corporation or business.

10. The scope of this centralized evaluation necessarily could not cover all the organizational research needs on this topic. Therefore, further decentralized research may be required; for example, the market analysis needed by PSP.

4. Key evaluation questions

11. The evaluation was driven by three main evaluation questions:

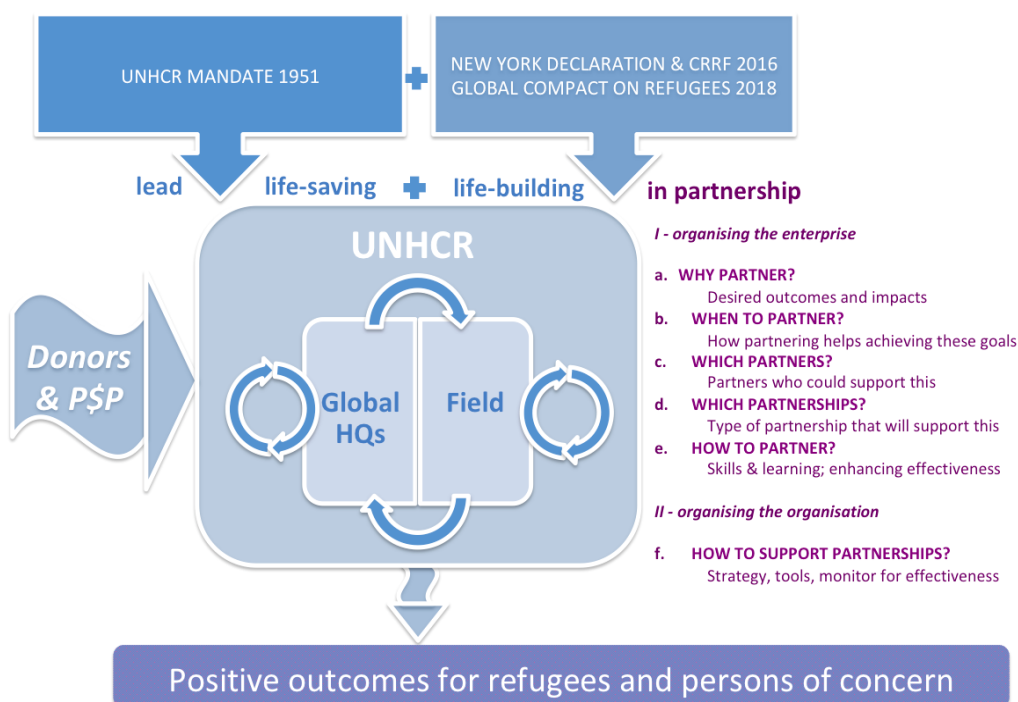
KEQ 1: To what extent has UNHCR's engagement with the private sector improved UNHCR's ability to deliver protection and solutions for refugees?

KEQ 2: What are the approaches and models that are used by others in partnership with the private sector? What factors influence successful engagement? What lessons can be learned?

KEQ 3: How and what should UNHCR do to better position its engagement with the private sector?

12. Based on UNHCR's mandate, the New York Declaration, CRRF and GCR, the role of the agency is evolving with increasing importance on partnerships with stakeholders from a diverse array of sectors. An evaluation framework was developed to examine the key evaluation questions within this global policy context. Critical questions in the evaluation framework cover **why** UNHCR should partner, **when** to partner, how to identify **which partners and partnerships** may better create value for UNHCR's persons of concern, as well as **how to partner**, and **how UNHCR can support such partnerships** as critical to analyse (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Evaluation framework

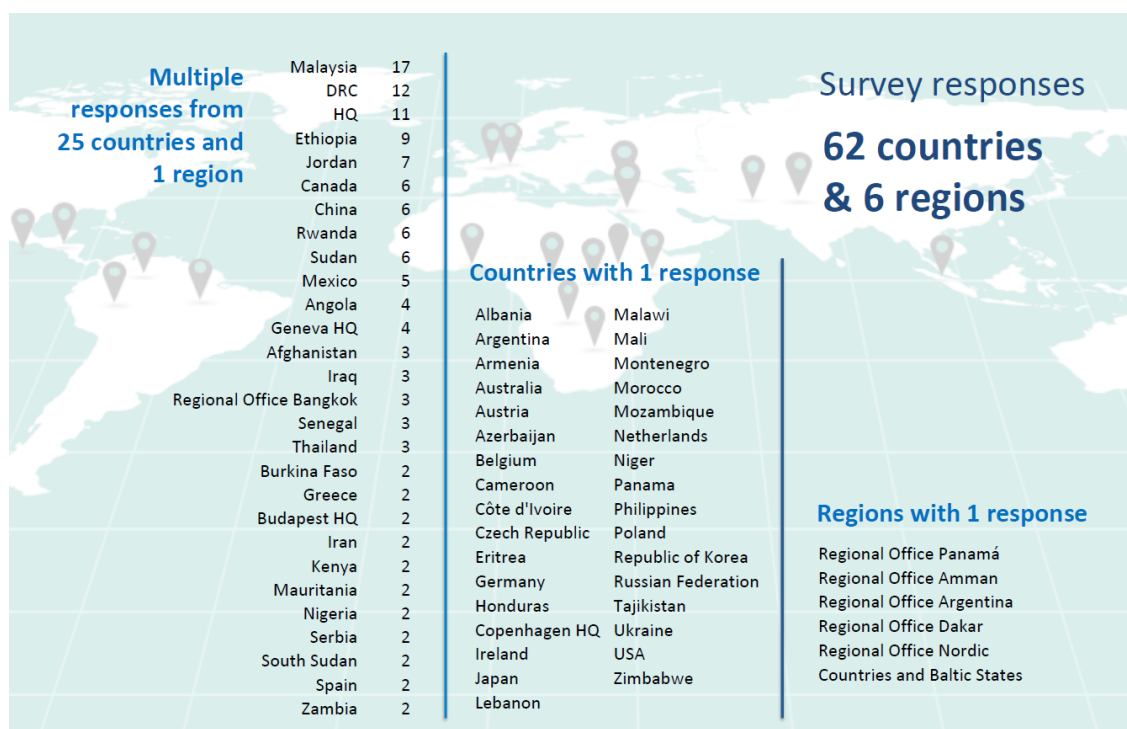


5. Methodology and limitations

5.1. Methods and data collected

13. The evaluation used mixed methods and the methodology included several key components, including the following: (1) a stocktake of private sector engagements (PSEs) that are ongoing or occurred in the past two to three years; (2) benchmarking of similar agencies and a literature review of trends in PSE beyond fundraising; (3) a case study of PSE in Malaysia; and (4) consultations with UNHCR Headquarters staff on strategic considerations and implications of UNHCR's PSE in the future.
14. The stocktake was informed by an online survey and in-depth interviews with UNHCR staff in Headquarters and field operations. The survey was sent out by the Director of the Division of External Relations (DER) to all operations within UNHCR and HQ divisions to be completed by any staff managing or engaging with the private sector for reasons other than fundraising; therefore, each office could submit more than one response (**Figure 2**). The survey collected information on the staff managing the engagement, the private sector entity engaged, intended benefits/results and intervention/work activities, reasons for not engaging with the private sector (if "No" to PSE was reported), likelihood of PSE in the near future and requested areas for further support. The evaluation team received 117 individual responses from 62 countries and seven regional offices.

Figure 2: Survey respondents



15. A total of 52 in-depth interviews were carried out, comprising 34 staff members from 18 field operations and 18 staff members in three Headquarter locations.⁸ A list of operations and HQ teams already known to be engaging with the private sector was provided to the evaluation team for the in-depth interviews. Furthermore, consultations were conducted with all seven Regional Bureaux to discuss their perspective on private sector engagement, enabling and inhibiting factors to conducting PSE and the types of support they will need in the near future.
16. Six agencies were benchmarked: the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Organization of Migration (IOM), World Food Programme (WFP), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), World Vision International and UNICEF. Benchmarking entailed both documentary analysis and key informant interviews with organizations identified by UNHCR Evaluation Service. The literature review involved a desk review of academic and policy/organizational literature on what works (and what doesn't) in PSE. Both benchmarking and the literature review served to surface effective practices on private sector engagement and elicit lessons learned.
17. Interviews with the private sector were conducted during June, July and August 2019. Overall, the evaluation team reached out to 11 private sector partners⁹ who are in different industries and work with UNHCR globally and locally. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1.5 hours (see [Annex 2: Participants](#)).
18. An eight-day mission to Malaysia was conducted to provide contextual background and validate preliminary data findings from the stocktake. A programme was prepared, led by the PSP unit of the Malaysia office. The evaluation team carried out 33 interviews, including with 10 staff members, the deputy representative and representative, and nine PoC (three women, six men). In addition, the evaluation team interviewed eight representatives of the private sector and volunteers working in the private sector.
19. A series of three strategic workshops were conducted. The first two workshops provided opportunities for further data collection and validation among HQ staff from five divisions and all Regional Bureaux. The first (four-hour) workshop presented initial findings and analysis from the stocktake alongside two participatory exercises that served to validate findings and refine the second phase of work. The second (two-hour) workshop focused on analysis from the benchmarking and literature review, surfacing the key tensions that UNHCR must face and resolve as it moves forward with its PSE beyond fundraising. In the third (2-hour) workshop, the focus moved towards strategic questions and was therefore led by relevant UNHCR staff, supported by the evaluation team's findings and recommendations. Finally, a webinar with participants from field and regional offices was conducted.

5.2. Limitations

20. Neither the survey nor the interview provides a representative sample: only people who chose to engage with the survey and were available for interviews participated. In order to complete the evaluation in the time allotted, particularly given the additional tasks that arose, a relatively small (but relevant) sample of respondents were reached. The evaluation team therefore reports descriptive statistics, but no analysis could be carried out using statistical significance testing or effect sizes. The team interviewed private

⁸ Field operations: Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Germany, Ghana, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Malawi, Mexico, Netherlands, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uganda. Divisions of Headquarters: Protection, Legal, PSP, Settlement, Health, Livelihoods and Economic Engagement, Supply Chain.

⁹ This also includes the private sector interviews conducted by the evaluation team in Malaysia.

sector actors who are currently partnering with UNHCR and their perspectives and experiences may differ from actors that UNHCR has not yet partnered with.

21. The findings are presented in two sections. Data from an internal stocktake of UNHCR's current and recent engagements within the last three to four years are discussed in section 6. This is followed by findings from a benchmarking exercise against six other agencies, highlighting key lessons learnt and important changes/actions taken by these organizations from their experience engaging with the private sector beyond fundraising (section 7). A discussion of these findings follows in section 8 and finally, section 9 presents the evaluation's recommendations.

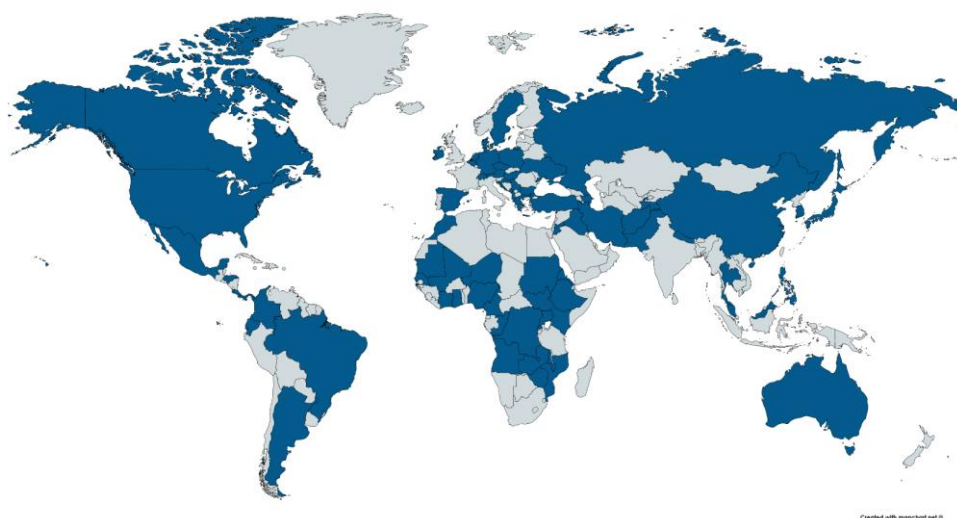
6. Stocktake findings of UNHCR's PSE beyond fundraising

22. The evaluation observes that UNHCR has accumulated significant experience in working with the private sector. The Private Sector Partnerships Service within the Division of External Relations (DER) engages with the private sector mainly for fundraising purposes (cash and gifts in kind) in keeping with their fundraising expertise and ambitious \$1 billion target, and also provides services to other divisions that engage with the private sector. PSP has a solid track record of successfully managing global partnerships with outcomes beyond fundraising. Non-financial partnerships are not considered as only a way of reaching potential donors; UNHCR is also aware that they bring value to the organization and PoC in their own right.

6.1. Who does UNHCR engage with in the private sector?

23. **Based on the survey, UNHCR staff from all divisions engage with a wide range of private sector companies in every region of the world where it operates.** Some 177 staff reported to have engaged about 130 MNCs and approximately 114 local companies within the past several years. Of the global and local private sector partners reported in the survey, 30 companies were mentioned more than once in the survey (see [Annex 1: Top companies mentioned in the stocktake survey](#)).
24. The survey and deep dive interviews showed that UNHCR engages with MNCs and local companies in a wide range of different locations, totalling 62 countries among UNHCR operations who responded to the evaluation survey ([Figure 2](#)). **The evaluation observed that countries with multiple reported engagements also tended to have regional office presence: Jordan, Senegal, Kenya and Thailand.**
25. This mix between local and multinational companies reflects UNHCR's strengths as a global and local actor. In field operations, the choice for private sector partners is either context specific, opportunity driven, or derives from individual staff members' existing networks. Social enterprises were seen as useful potential partners because their goals and values are aligned with UNHCR, while working from a market-based business model.

Figure 3: Countries that reported PSE beyond fundraising



26. The companies that UNHCR has engaged for non-financial purposes can be categorized into five main industries depicted in Figure 4.

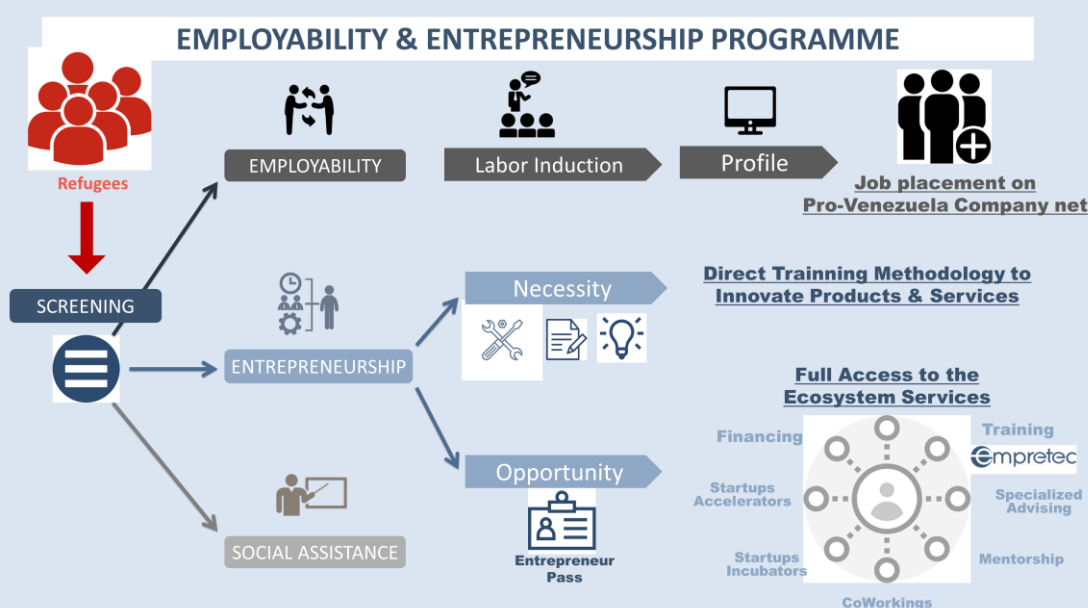
Figure 4: Main industries currently engaged



27. The most frequently mentioned companies were MNCs (e.g. UNIQLO, Ikea, Google, Equity Bank, and Microsoft), due to their multiple interlocutors in UNHCR. Some of the partnerships with large firms originated in PSP, and others were brokered by sector or field teams. **The majority of partnerships are initiated by the private sector partner.**
28. Many PSP informants selected contacts to pursue on the basis of the monetary value of the potential partner, staying true to their goal. In the same way, field and sector staff used criteria relevant to their objectives to select their partners. Because these field objectives are specific to local contexts it is not useful to summarize or generalize; what matters is the **relevance of the partner (from whichever sector) to achieving the goal defined by UNHCR staff closest to the point of impact.**

Box 1: Case - 'Sin Fronteras' [Without Borders] partnership in Ecuador

Sin Fronteras is an innovative, multi-partner multi-year programme that fosters the economic inclusion of refugees and migrants, as well as host communities, in Ecuador. The programme is a joint effort between two UN agencies (UNHCR and UNDP) and two Ecuadorean organizations (the local government Economic Development Agency of Quito (CONQUITO) and the national Entrepreneurship and Innovation Alliance (AEI), a public, private and academic organization devoted to improving the conditions for entrepreneurs and innovators). The private sector partners in the platform provide the entrepreneurship and employability services to refugees in exchange for credits assigned to PoC by the platform. Sin Fronteras is funded by the Inter-American Development Bank, and private sector enterprises such as Corporación Favorita, Cisneros Group and the Productive Recovery Programme “Re-Emprende”. The funds go to this platform organization and are managed through a trust fund.



This multi-stakeholder platform responds to the employability needs of PoC by bringing together the private sector providers of employability services with the funding to access these services.

6.2. Why does UNHCR engage with the private sector?

29. Based on the survey, the top **five most frequent areas of work** where UNHCR engaged with the private sector for operational purposes were in **employment/livelihoods, education, internet connectivity, energy and cash-based interventions**. Within those work areas, the most common interventions that UNHCR and the private sector partnered on include awareness-raising, advocacy and the provision of goods, services and technologies.
30. The stocktake found that PSEs focus primarily on **supporting refugees, then host communities followed by asylum-seekers**. Less work with the private sector is done concerning returnees, stateless persons, internally displaced persons (IDPs) or asylum-seekers.

31. The evaluation observed **great variation in the types of benefits targeted for PoC** through private sector engagement across the organization: global to local, and across all functional teams. Similarly, there was variation between countries and regions, which is a positive reflection of **strategic PSE, relevant to local needs and objectives, that UNHCR staff are undertaking**.

In the stocktaking analysis, these benefits were categorized by the evaluation into five key areas:



Provision of goods and services to meet PoC needs:
32.9 per cent reported this as a desired outcome



Creating an enabling legal, social and political environment, and improving the protection space:
25.1 per cent reported this as a desired outcome



Economic and financial inclusion (e.g. work permits):
19.1 per cent reported this as a desired outcome



Helping UNHCR to work more efficiently and effectively:
14.1 per cent reported this as a desired outcome

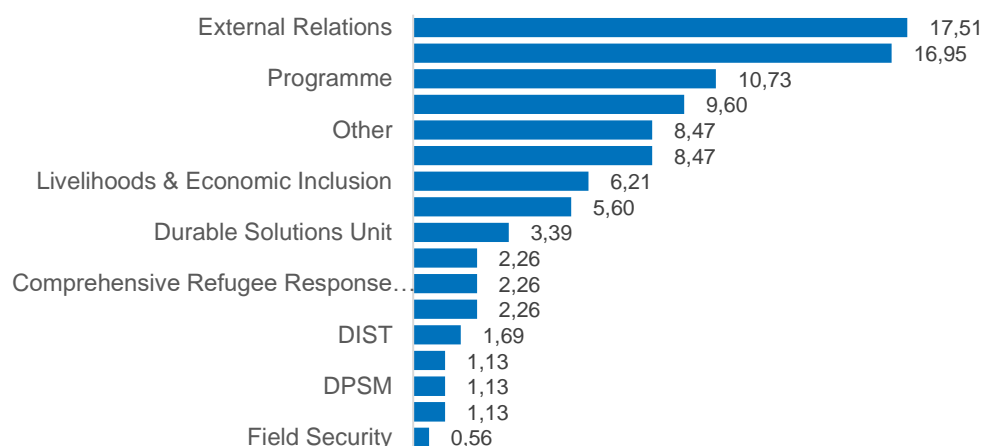


Changing business models and practices to be refugee-sensitive from solutions to prevention:
desired outcome in the future

6.3. Who within the organization engages with the private sector?

32. Private sector engagement for the benefit of PoC occurs across different functional units across UNHCR operations and HQs. Based on the survey and interviews, **a wide variety of teams work on PSE**, including External Relations (26%), of which Private Sector Partnerships comprises 8.5 per cent followed by the Executive Office (17%), Programme (10.7%), Protection (9.6%), Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Unit (6.2%), Durable Solutions (3.4%), etc.

Figure 5: Percentage breakdown of functional teams working on PSE within UNHCR



6.4. Inhibiting factors to PSE beyond fundraising

33. Reported internal challenges centre on the measurement of results for PoC; organizational culture and attitude; organizational structure to support partnering; operational support and learning for better partnering; clarity of partnering processes and responsibilities; organizational incentives for PSE; and communication and ability to relate to the private sector (see also Annex 3).

6.4.1. Measurement and monitoring of results for PoC

34. Based on interviews with UNHCR staff in country operations and HQs, the focus on getting the job done and the inability to report on PSE within the **current Results-based Management (RBM)** system used by operations to plan and report on operational implementation **gets in the way of documenting results from PSE beyond fundraising**. This lack of measurement limits the ability of UNHCR to capture a comprehensive picture of impact on PoC or outcomes for UNHCR.
35. Where reporting exists, it is designed to count direct beneficiaries. This monitoring data is done by UNHCR staff and/or implementing partners. For instance, implementation activities are countable and directly attributable (e.g. UNHCR distributed 20,000 winter packages to IDPs and refugees). These results may be recorded against indicators in the RBM system. However, the **current RBM system captures results for PoC based on predefined indicators that may not adequately reflect the outcome targeted though the PSE. Interviews with private sector partners reflect that the private sector measures impact differently than UNHCR.** Private sector partners stated that they want to understand how their inputs have changed the well-being status of those affected by forced displacement. **The organization also does not have a partnership management database for PSE beyond fundraising designed to track account management processes or the complexity of the engagement, the time and level of effort involved, and benefits to UNHCR from such partnering.**
36. Interviews reflect that, in addition to direct implementation, in the context of the CRRF and GCR, UNHCR is increasingly playing a convenor/facilitator role. Working in partnership means that UNHCR will need to count different activities (e.g. engaging the private sector to lobby government for refugees to have access to work permits). **It was noted that these results or benefits will not be attributable to UNHCR alone but**

are still critical to monitor and capture as systematically as possible to record UNHCR's important role.

6.4.2. Organizational culture and attitude

37. The interviews with staff reflected the perception that UNHCR's institutional culture was considered to be risk averse, and the majority of teams (even those who were engaging) framed private sector engagement as inherently risky: for PoC, staff and UNHCR. **An organizational fear of failure was felt to lead to insufficient space for learning by doing or learning from each other.**
38. Most staff reported that **internal decision-making moved too slowly in comparison to what was expected by the private sector partner**.⁷ Echoing concerns of UNHCR staff, private sector partners also shared that they think UNHCR works slowly and have long processes, and private partners ask for more speedy interactions and decrease the waiting time.
39. The evaluation team also observed from interviews and surveys that **senior management support for PSE and encouragement of a multi-stakeholder approach to partnering involving the private sector appears uneven**. For instance, based on the survey, one of the main reasons respondents reported never having/currently not engaged with the private sector is their perception that PSE was not relevant nor necessary to their work.
40. Interviews with UNHCR's **private sector partners reflect that they sometimes found it difficult to partner because UNHCR tends to ask for money (especially HQ) while they wanted to engage through other means**. However, the \$1 billion fundraising target was observed to be of primary importance to the majority of PSP staff working at HQs and operations. **This is a tension point in terms of approaching PSE with a fundraising mindset primarily versus a partnering mindset**. This partnering mindset is even more challenging, based on private sector partners' perceptions, when **UNHCR Headquarters does not always have a clear or consistent vision of the needs of PoC that the private sector could help address**. Some partners shared that it seems HQ may have lost touch with the field and do not give enough space to those who need to be heard regarding their programming. The evaluation reflects that these findings point to several challenges, including the tension between an ambitious fundraising target and not inappropriately pressuring private sector partners for money where such an ask might deter the private sector partner, and deflect their attention from gains for PoC through a non-financial partnership.

6.4.3. Organizational structure to support partnering

41. Within UNHCR, the evaluation team observed that the formal development and management of partnering at HQs is divided across teams primarily in the Division of External Relations (DER) and Division of Resilience and Solutions (DRS).
42. Within the DER, there are three teams focusing on partnering. First, the **Private Sector Partnerships Service's mission is to raise funds from the private sector**, including corporate companies, foundations, high net worth individuals and individual donors as well as to seek and maintain strategic relations with private sector entities. In most cases, such partnerships are led by partnership managers in UNHCR offices or by national partners, supported by the PSP Private Partnerships and Philanthropy Section, which encompasses the Due Diligence Unit, Partnership Development Unit (including gifts in kind) and the Partnership Support Unit supporting the development of concept notes, pitches, proposals, legal agreements and reports. While a primary focus of PSP is on raising funds, there are now further expectations that this Service would support

UNHCR's efforts to broaden partnerships with the global and local corporate sector, foundations and civil society organizations beyond financial support in order to support UNHCR's work globally. Following Horekens' report, the **Shared Value Partnerships Unit (SPU) was established in 2018 inside PSP to assist with "shared value" non-financial partnerships**. Since it sits in PSP, this unit is directly responsible for contributing to PSP's \$1 billion fundraising target and therefore seeks to ensure that UNHCR does not lose potential opportunities for donations from non-fundraising partnerships. This additional demand should not distract PSP from their core task.

43. The second team focusing on partnering, the **Partnership and Coordination Service (PCS)**, which was strengthened as a result of the HQ review in 2017, brings together work with **non-donor UN agencies, NGOs and sports** organizations under a unified leadership structure. **PCS is the custodian for the non-financial memoranda of understanding (MoUs)** governing partnerships with UN agencies, NGOs, academia, etc. The PCS also **represents UNHCR in inter-agency fora**, i.e. to public sector, multilateral non-donor agencies. This work includes the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, mandated by a UN resolution to forge stronger synergies between humanitarian partners, including the main UN agencies, the Red Cross Movement and the NGOs. The Service develops coordination models based on UNHCR's mandate in consultation with partners in humanitarian emergency, enabling partnerships that happen on the ground. To do this, the unit works with inter-agency bodies as well as managing bilateral relationships with IOM, OCHA, UNICEF, NGOs and civil society.
44. The third team focusing on partnering, the **Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service (DRRM)**, based in Geneva, manages relations with governmental, intergovernmental and UN donor bodies in matters pertaining to resource mobilization and allocation, and provides guidance and support to field operations and Headquarters in preparing funding appeals. DRRM seeks to provide donors with a clear understanding of the organization's policies, programs and resource requirements through consultations, briefings, publications and field missions for donors.¹⁰
45. In addition to these teams in DER, the **Division of Resilience and Solutions (DRS)**, which started operating in February 2018, **seeks to identify solution opportunities** for refugees and IDPs by addressing underlying causes of displacement. DRS looks at how UNHCR in partnership can address legal, economic, civil and political constraints to solutions by providing innovative approaches to support the field. **Within DRS, there is a team dedicated to mainstreaming the CRRF approach worldwide among other types of technical support** (e.g. livelihoods, education and vocational training, repatriation, return and reintegration) as well as Partnerships under these **four and an Advocacy Service**. DRS and **Senior Development/CRRF Officers in the field** partner with multilateral development banks and bilateral development actors. Therefore, as in the field, DRS partnerships may be with public, private or NGO partners.
46. Interviews with staff at HQs reflected that partnership teams with DER could coordinate better with one another on a routine basis. Similarly, it was felt to be **rare for interdivisional meetings to discuss partnership coordination across partner types** – governments, NGOs/not-for-profit organizations and the private sector. There were reports of a siloed approach to managing partnerships, which appears to be more at HQs than the field. Interviews reflected that such **cross-team coordination was more frequent at the country level than at HQs. Lack of clarity and coordination led to frustration and mutual misunderstanding between staff from the different**

¹⁰ UNHCR organizational structure, 1 July 2018.

divisions. This **need for coordination is being addressed** through weekly meetings between the heads of services in DER and relatively recent attempts to bring together partnerships within DER as a result of the HQ review.

6.4.4. Operational support and learning for better partnering

47. One factor cited by survey respondents as to why they were not engaging with the private sector was lack of know-how and expertise. Knowledge gaps were expressed by many of those interviewed, including the need for technical guidance on the mechanics of how to conduct PSE beyond fundraising and training on areas such as interest-based negotiation, determining one's value proposition, risk assessment, cost–benefit analysis, “go/no-go” decision-making, partnership models/approaches and relationship management. Staff knew their learning needs but were unclear on where to get that technical support. Private sector partners interviewed also noted that from their perspective UNHCR lacks people with experience of working with the private sector. As an example, a degree of agility and innovation exists within the private sector and partners viewed that UNHCR lacks such flexibility in how the organization approaches its work.
48. PSP respondents were concerned at the lack of skills in negotiation, relationship management and portfolio management in non-PSP staff who might engage in partnerships with the private sector. Equally, non-PSP staff were concerned that asking a partner for money alone, or too quickly, might stunt the potential for a potential partner to contribute to UNHCR's mandate in other ways. These concerns from PSP and non-PSP staff both carry risks in reputation and not getting everything possible out of the partnership. Specific areas of support requested are listed in **Box 2**.

Box 2: Support needs identified by the stocktake

Guidance

- How to engage the private sector in a politically precarious country
- Risk assessment tools
- Best practices for partnering
- Understand how to motivate private sector
- Information and business case products for dissemination
- Clear policy on PSE beyond fundraising
- Clarity on types of benefits for the operation
- List of current PSEs in the region
- Clarity on what are the steps in PSE
- List of global companies for local engagement
- Clarity on who and how to get support within the organization
- Increased dialogue and consultation between PSP officers and field staff already involved or interested in PSE
- Due diligence process
- Way to assess impact
- Corporate management approach

Innovative partnerships

- Small fund for piloting innovative partnerships

Mechanisms for partnering

- Partnership agreements beyond fundraising

- Legal advice
- Global partnership database
- Standard MoU that can be adapted at country level for private sector partnerships

Skills development and learning

- Idea exchange with other operations and how they engaged
- Sharing of good practices
- Understanding why the private sector wants to work with UNHCR
- Training staff on how to deal with PSE
- All training simulations to include private sector partnering as a possible option

6.4.5. Clarity of partnering processes and responsibilities

49. The stocktake has shown that almost all divisions at HQs and numerous country operations are involved in PSE beyond fundraising. Across interviews, the evaluation team noted staff frustration at the lack of clarity of standard operating procedures for conducting PSE for non-fundraising purposes, including uncertainty around due diligence processes, partnership management, reporting results, as well as confusion as to which teams at HQ should be informed and consulted. **Field and technical staff did not feel generally that their support needs were understood, much less addressed** (see [Box 2](#)). Paradoxically, while staff reported the organization as risk averse and overly controlling, risk assessment processes were not always carried out when engaging with the private sector. Most staff interviewed believe that formal due diligence and risk management is necessary only when PSE involves fundraising. This evaluation was undertaken during a transition from old to new due diligence processes; once these processes have been approved, they should be communicated throughout the organization, particularly with regard to the processes for financial and non-financial engagements.
50. It was also noted by the evaluation team that **UNHCR does not have a global system for recording partnerships**. Indeed, an important rationale for the evaluation was to map PSE because so little was known as to what PSE was carried out outside of PSP and DRS (especially Livelihoods). The Partner Portal that was launched in 2017 is managed by PCS but is only for project partnership agreements (PPAs) with NGOs and other not-for-profit partners (such as other UN agencies or universities). PSP has Salesforce, a Client Relationship Management system, but PSP reported that it is not currently being used systematically to record even fundraising partnerships inside PSP. Interviews showed that PSE is highly individually driven at the field level, with the exception of intense support from Headquarters for partnerships for Livelihoods work and certain country or regional managerial support. As such, **without a global partnership recording system, it is difficult for UNHCR to map or sustain these relationships**, particularly when staff rotate.
51. The evaluation team also noted from interviews with staff at Headquarters and in the field, **a lack of clarity on how UNHCR was supposed to implement/operationalize the whole-of-society approach** espoused by the Global Compact on Refugees. UNHCR has started employing CRRF Officers and Development Officers; however, **interdivisional working relationships with a whole-of-society approach was noted as a gap by the evaluation**.
52. **Private sector partners** interviewed shared that they have found mutually beneficial collaboration after some rounds of trial and error. However, they **highly recommend**

having a more structured approach towards working with the private sector. Technical staff inside the partner organization may prefer to speak with technical staff inside UNHCR rather than a fundraiser, whereas corporate social responsibility (CSR) staff may prefer to communicate with someone from PSP. There is no single organizational point of contact that is always relevant for every private sector partner, and therefore no one department or division should be mandated to do this. At the same time, **whoever manages the relationship needs to be clear and transparent, and it should be based on the type of partnership not the type of partner** (i.e. the sector they belong to).

6.4.6. Organizational incentives for PSE

53. UNHCR's **annual planning and budget cycle limits UNHCR's ability to partner.** Staff cannot commit to an engagement for longer than 12 months. This is usually much shorter than the private sector would prefer or is useful for the multi-stakeholder partnerships frequently brokered in the field. These engagements then need to be renegotiated annually, with an unnecessary duplication of labour from year to year.
54. Universally across interviews, it was reported that the **current budgeting framework of planning and allocating resources was a disincentive for PSE** that involved macro-level changes not directly attributable to UNHCR. The annual budgetary process was universally identified as constraining non-financial engagements and also fundraising from partnerships. Partnership benefits that can be given a monetary value can reduce the team's budget (Operating Level) by the same amount. While this was considered at HQs to be of minor importance, since the budget would usually be increased by the same amount, field and technical staff identified this as a significant stumbling block. Many found creative ways to work around this constraint; for example, by fundraising for the partnership platform. This leads to less income being reported for UNHCR and difficulty for staff in justifying the time spent on brokering and managing partnerships since they cannot report what they are contributing under the current system.
55. The current RBM system only measures outputs and outcomes as a result of UNHCR-funded programming. It does not capture collective outputs and outcomes that are not tied to a direct activity implemented by UNHCR or its implementing partners. Hence, planning and reporting rotate around budget allocations that are tied to these performance indicators. **It is difficult based on this structure to plan for and conduct activities that UNHCR is not directly funding.** Hence, there is a lack of incentive for staff to engage with the private sector on activities outside of those it plans to directly affect. Furthermore, the perceived demand to know what the results will be from the outset of an engagement is seen to stifle growth of projects and people.
56. It was apparent that for many of the staff interviewed, engaging with the private sector was perceived as personally and professionally risky based on UNHCR's current RBM and performance reward structures. There was a **perceived lack of institutional rewards in terms of staff recognition, job positions and promotions** for engaging with the private sector beyond fundraising. Support from senior management in country operations was also found to be variable. For instance, in some operations, senior managers were reported to hold reservations about engaging with the private sector on operational matters, whereas, in other countries, PSE was actively encouraged and embedded in strategic planning. Again, some staff would continue with private sector engagement in spite of the situation; many would not. Staff rotation also affects the sustainability of these relationships that tend to depend on the individual managing the engagement.

6.4.7. Communication and ability to relate to the private sector

57. Based on a series of interviews with the private sector, **existing private sector partners who were interviewed greatly appreciated that UNHCR was reaching out to the private sector, and not only for fundraising.** However, current partners shared that UNHCR has serious difficulties speaking the language of corporates. Moreover, UNHCR also imposes its own terminology and abbreviations to private sector partners, which creates barriers for relating to the private sector. In addition, partners feel that UNHCR is not very experienced in working with the private sector and does not always understand private sector needs, priorities or constraints. Moreover, from the communication and branding perspective, partners shared that UNHCR name changes in different languages confuses the public and is not very good for marketing.
58. Private sector partners also underlined that communication between different departments at UNHCR could be improved and that they did not want to be pushed too hard by fundraisers. These respondents were current non-financial partners; this in no way implies that the private sector should hold back from fundraising. However, it is important to recognize when and how to approach different partners with different asks. The frequent rotation of staff is also perceived as a challenge by private sector partners, as they want continuity through the partnership.
59. But this is not a one-way street: UNHCR brings a great deal to the table otherwise the private sector partner would not be there. However, in interviews and in the survey, **staff found it difficult to communicate that value and felt themselves to be in an inferior negotiating position.** Mapping UNHCR's value proposition and negotiating from that confident basis is critical for moving forward.

7. Benchmarking organizations

60. In this section, the evaluation team presents key lessons learned that are most relevant to UNHCR based on a benchmarking exercise with the generous participation of WFP, UNICEF, IFRC, WWF and World Vision International.

7.1. Support offered to carry out PSE

61. **Instead of guidelines, most benchmark organizations support with training and examples.** IFRC shows good examples and devotes time and resources on how to scale up. IOM does capacity-building, including trainings, preparing support materials, e-learning platforms, and provides a document on how to pitch to the private sector. UNICEF Headquarters and regional offices also hold workshops and retreats with country staff, plus it provides online case studies and examples of Terms of Reference to guide country offices.
62. **Benchmark organizations work with well-known partnership specialists,** for example the Partnership Brokers Association (PBA) or the Partnering Initiative (TPI). Learning opportunities are also taken from the Humanitarian Leadership Academy, a global learning initiative that facilitates organizational learning, partnerships and collaborative opportunities, and the UN Staff Systems College (in person in Bonn or online).
63. At the same time, there are organic ways of developing partnering expertise from within. World Vision International works with a cumulative or "snowball" effect: starting with a small group of interested, committed staff members, it builds their expertise and confidence to create a community of practice internally, bringing these people together for sharing, exchange and training. WFP is investing in learning from monitoring and

evaluating its partnerships and incorporating achievements and lessons into its strategy documents.

TAKEAWAYS:

- Practices of others show that in addition to guidelines, training and examples are also important ways to support staff engaging with the private sector.
- Providing templates to staff was noted to be helpful.
- Setting up Communities of Practice so that staff who are already committed to and experienced in partnering can coach/support others is worth considering.
- External partnerships specialists could be a helpful resource.

7.2. Measuring results

64. All benchmarking organizations face a structural funding gap, as does UNHCR. An important consideration for all of them when engaging with the private sector is to receive funding for their programmes and operations. In addition to fundraising, benchmark organizations use partnerships to mobilize resources that improve their technical capacity, improve the way they work (increasing efficiency), develop their expertise and innovate their operations.
65. Benefits of partnerships beyond fundraising vary with the nature of the partnership but are usually focused on the people of concern for the organizations (migrants, children, vulnerable and poor people) or their core business (emergency assistance, nature conservation, sustainable production). **The most successful partnerships (as reported by the benchmark organizations and used as “best cases”) are those that are closely and logically linked to their mandate, programmes and/or desired impact. In this way, companies also contribute to implementation.**
66. **Benchmark organizations also work with the private sector to influence their behaviours.** This type of approach that is called “transformational” partnership because it results in behavioural change of those in the partnership. For instance, Organization A’s strategic choice is to work with companies to advance their mission, trying to make them sustainable and increase their adaptation to climate change. A company that undertakes a transformational partnership with Organization A works to make broad changes in their business practices, integrating sustainability into core areas within their business. Similarly, UNICEF provides guidance to their corporate partners on how to assess if they are child-friendly. WWF and UNICEF will not receive funding from companies that are on their block-lists. However, they sometimes engage in dialogue in an effort to encourage these companies to change their practices to meet higher standards. See [Box 3](#) of a ‘best case’ example presented to the evaluation team.

Box 3: Example of ‘best case’ identified by benchmarking organization

Recently, World Vision International has engaged in the Humanitarian Private Sector Partnership e-Platform (HPPP) in East Africa and The Innovation Lab for the Nepal Earthquake Response, established in 2015. This project aims to innovate with and for the benefit of the most vulnerable people, increasing the role of the private sector, building capacity of communities and emerging markets and integrating the innovation capacity of the private sector, and facilitating partnerships with local actors. The Lab team facilitates, maps interest of stakeholders and matchmakes with the private sector based on mutual benefits. Benefits for the private sector are: access to potential new customers and markets, and testing new products.

67. The interviews reflected that many engagements started as philanthropy and are leveraged into transactional or transformational partnerships, or vice versa. World Vision International tries to capitalize on long-standing relationships as, based on its experience, partnerships can have both financial and non-financial elements to them depending on the outcome they are trying to achieve with the partner. Once UNICEF has engaged a private sector partner in one area, they work with those partners on multidimensionality when it makes sense to do so; for example, advocating for policy change, fundraising and advocating for the partner to uphold standards in their practices, policies and supply chains, such as to ensure no use of child labour.
68. Benchmarking organizations acknowledge that it is difficult to count or attribute efforts towards, and the impacts of, partnering. WFP claims to be able to formulate impact value, partnership value and the impact multiplier of a partnership. Their quantitative indicators are based on trying to calculate the dollar value of non-monetary private sector contributions. Their descriptive (qualitative) parameters measure, for example, conducting research together or joint advocacy to shape the global nutrition agenda. World Vision International is planning to develop a systematic methodology to measure and report the value of private sector partnerships. They distinguish three key dimensions to assess partnership impact: (1) beneficiary reach, (2) efficiencies and cost savings, and (3) skills building.
69. WWF measures the impact of its conservation goals, and these very technical impact measurements are used in helping businesses identify the risks of not being sustainable. However, formulating key performance indicators or measuring impact of partnership is not a distinctive area on which WWF focuses. UNICEF also uses its private sector partners for advocacy. Non-financial partnerships are evaluated, although UNICEF recognizes the difficulty of monetizing their impact.

TAKEAWAYS:

- Private sector partnering is closely linked to an organization’s mandate and core business.
- It is possible and desirable to leverage one type of partnership and evolve it into other types – partnering exists along a spectrum from purely financial to purely operational and there is no need to dichotomize relationships nor assume they cannot evolve.
- Measuring what results from partnering is challenging because it is not always possible to attribute results directly to the partnership and variations in how organizations go about measuring outcomes.
- Many benchmarking organizations trying to measure results multidimensionally, such as the dollar value where possible and qualitative indicators.

7.3. Organizational structures and support

70. **When too many people within an organization talk to the same partner from different fronts, the organization does not present itself with a consistent ask or goal for collaboration.** UNICEF designates a consistent lead (a person or a team) within the organization for the private sector partner. That does not preclude other UNICEF representatives from working with the partner, but it requires internal coordination and communication from within to deliver a coordinated partnership strategy from UNICEF to the partner. Equally, World Vision International designates relationship managers rather than fundraisers as the single point of contact for the partner company because it considers the approach required for partnering to be different from fundraising. When they have partnerships with multinational companies, different departments/divisions engage with the company in different capacities depending on the overlap of interests and needs. Coordination is a challenge, but it is also seen as a way to solidify and institutionalize a partnership.
71. WFP anticipates several changes in team structure and capabilities for the organization to realize its ambition regarding technical partnerships with the private sector. It plans to establish a dedicated Technical Partnerships Management Team and a **Centre of Excellence** to synthesize and share knowledge and best practices. WWF already has a **dedicated team** working on WWF's ambition to transform business. Every country office has business leads managing the partnerships with corporates. They are responsible for the contractual agreement(s) with the companies concerned. The activities of the engagements in many cases take place in other countries or regions. WWF's business leads are senior staff, skilled in partnership thinking and practice, who have knowledge of the private sector: they understand what the private sector needs and how to bring different interests together. It is not about fundraising, and it goes beyond relationship management.
72. WFP staff indicate that to get **backing from senior management is important**. This was also noted by UNICEF, which has developed a sophisticated and well-thought-out framework for how to engage with the private sector non-financially. This framework is given high visibility through internal communications and prioritization led by the new Executive Director. It includes a focus on mainstreaming private sector engagement across the organization so that everyone has a basic level of PSE, and all staff will look to the Private Fundraising and Partnerships team for advice.
73. **Coordination and receiving support between different levels of the organization was seen to play an important role when PSE was conducted at the country level.** Country offices request help from UNICEF Headquarters when initiating conversations with the private sector. World Vision International Headquarters also responds to requests for support from the field, distinguishing between two types of frequently asked questions and tailoring its support accordingly:
 - How should we engage? Support includes creating a value proposition with them, teaching them how to do a mapping of the business landscape in a country to see which companies will be suitable, and how to negotiate with a company; and
 - Why should we engage? Support consists of talking with them about what it means and how it benefits the organization.
74. The evaluation observed that the benchmarking organizations are providing support for partnerships at different levels: it is crucial to embed the partnership mindset in the overall organizational strategy. Thus, it is important to have a more holistic and step-by-step approach that involves different levels of the organization when setting up partnerships with the private sector.

TAKEAWAYS:

- Benchmark organization noted that it was helpful to have one entry point and main manager to ensure coordination with others within the organization.
- It is beneficial to have a team with professional skills who are dedicated to operational partnerships with the private sector.
- It is helpful for organizations to work through relationship management and coordination between centre-field/sector/operations.
- It is important for all staff to have technical support specifically for partnering.
- Visible senior support to communicate the importance of PSE internally is critical.

7.4. Processes

75. All benchmark organizations have long-standing experience in partnering with governments, civil society organizations and other international organizations. Most of their strategies, policies and frameworks are based on these experiences. Staff requirements need to be in place, for example having partnering experience as part of job descriptions. **The benchmark organizations that take partnering most seriously hire professional partnership managers as opposed to fundraising or technical staff) who can build and maintain collaborations.** Partnership managers make things happen, have an affinity with the private sector and are opportunity driven.
76. The evaluation observed that most partnerships are formalized by an agreement. Often, partnerships start with signing a MoU to pursue common objectives with each partner contributing its own resources. **MoUs are typically to define strategic alliances and declare agreement on intent, areas of common interest, spheres of cooperation and operational engagement.** WFP prefers legal agreements to avoid implementation risks but formalization is also considered to be a way to secure long-term impact. In contrast, World Vision International considers that “If one partner wants to enforce the agreement through a legal process, then the partnership is probably failing already and other ways of fixing it would be better”.¹¹ In most cases, legal agreements are used when there is money transfer involved.

TAKEAWAYS:

- Benchmarking organizations hire professional partnership managers who can build and maintain collaborations.
- Most organizations formalize the partnership by an agreement, but the specific type varies; it is important to consider the level of formality of partnerships agreements.

7.5. Risk management

77. **All benchmark organizations have “no-go” lists with exclusion criteria for companies they will not work with.** WFP prefers to formalize its partnerships with legal agreements to avoid risks when there is no formal relationship. Formalization includes a rather thorough due diligence process in its selection of and engagement with partners. However, being a UN agency, this is not always easy and can sometimes cause companies anxiety. If no money is involved, WFP can be more flexible: there is a dedicated team in its legal division to do risk assessments and it

¹¹ UNHCR organizational structure, 1 July 2018.

knows the opportunities WFP is looking for. Additionally, WFP has a robust due diligence system to review companies based on a colour-coded flagging system. WFP's due diligence committee consists of senior leadership and the Deputy Executive Director and it will assess (decline or accept with contingencies) a full report on wrongdoings of a company and consider suggestions from WFP staff on how to mitigate these and gauge the value of the partnership. This appears to be followed in the field as well as at HQ.

78. Such a process is not always easy, and tends to be very time-consuming; for example, processing times of agreements at UNICEF can be slower than that of the partners. World Vision International takes its partner through every step of a clearly defined process, so companies know what to expect. **Most benchmark organizations feel that they work rather slowly, which hinders the speedy interactions sought by the private sector.** There is also limited capacity since the organization does not have many people working in private sector engagements.

TAKEAWAYS:

- All benchmark organizations have “no-go” lists with exclusion criteria for companies they will not work with.
- Most benchmark organizations consider that they work more slowly than what is expected by the private sector partner. In order to minimize this, UNHCR should consider reviewing existing processes to make them as streamlined and useful as possible; it is important that country operations and partners understand the process and expected time frames.

7.6. Value proposition

79. Benchmarking organizations consider the main motives for the private sector to start working with them are twofold. First, it is about their reputation; they want to be known as a **responsible business** so that they are perceived as an attractive employer. Second is the **link to the private sector's CSR projects which are getting more strategic and increasingly linked to the SDGs.**¹² Organizations shared that these businesses look for partners with a strong brand, one that is recognizable, well known and appealing.
80. From the perspective of its staff, WFP is an interesting partner for the private sector due to its reputation (“we are known for getting things done”), **its reach, the possibility to scale, and employee engagement** (including volunteer and secondment placements). Moreover, WFP staff also think that the **clear-cut mission** of WFP is helpful: it is even in its name, which is compelling. World Vision International considers its size and long-term engagements with local communities to be advantages, as is the structure of support from global level and implementation power at local level. For MNCs, World Vision International considers itself to offer three distinct advantages: **sectoral diversity, wide geographical spread, and long-term presence in field locations.** Access to information about potential customers is another noted driver for the private sector. For instance, IFRC shared that it collects information at the beneficiary and community levels through its work, such as the participatory community vulnerability

¹² UNGA: United Nations General Assembly, Transforming our world (also known as the Sustainable Development Goals), 2015.

assessments. In addition to having this wealth of information, IFRC also considered its widespread volunteer network to be another attraction for private companies.

81. The organizations noted to the evaluation team that **successful partnerships start with a specified need. However, articulating and prioritizing needs is critical, and difficult.** For example, a WFP representative said: “We start with what we need; we are good at saying no”;¹³ however, not all organizations regard themselves as able to articulate their needs well. A commonly shared explanation for this was a lack of experience in partnering with the private sector whilst at the same time, needs change and so the private sector contribution has to change.
82. All the benchmark organizations mentioned the challenge of finding out what a private sector partner has to offer to their target population or their organization. **An estimation of intended benefits (including a weighted assessment against identified risks) are always part of the due diligence process.** UNICEF works to ensure that both parties understand each other and the opportunities that exist to establish clear objectives. There needs to be positive benefits for both UNICEF and the partner. World Vision International also emphasizes the importance of knowing what the organization is bringing to the table and to really understand the private sector interest in order to better negotiate and define value and impacts together. WWF seeks to work with those who have the greatest potential to contribute to their mandate, either by changing their business practices or by leading the innovative solutions needed to drive sustainability. WFP has a clear strategic principle: “fewer, bigger, better”. This means that WFP only works with companies that improve WFP’s way of working in the areas of logistics, supply chain and nutrition.
83. **Benchmark organizations acknowledge the challenge of articulating and prioritizing needs** as a basis for partnering. They recognize that it requires the right people with the right training, i.e. people who have good partnering skills and know their way around companies and the interests of the corporate partners. These partnering professionals have a thorough understanding of the organization’s technical operations; know what the organization brings to the table; and how to protect the organization’s interests and reputation, up to saying “no” if the offer is not appropriate to the organization’s mission or long-term needs (see Annex 4 on how to support partnerships).

TAKEAWAYS:

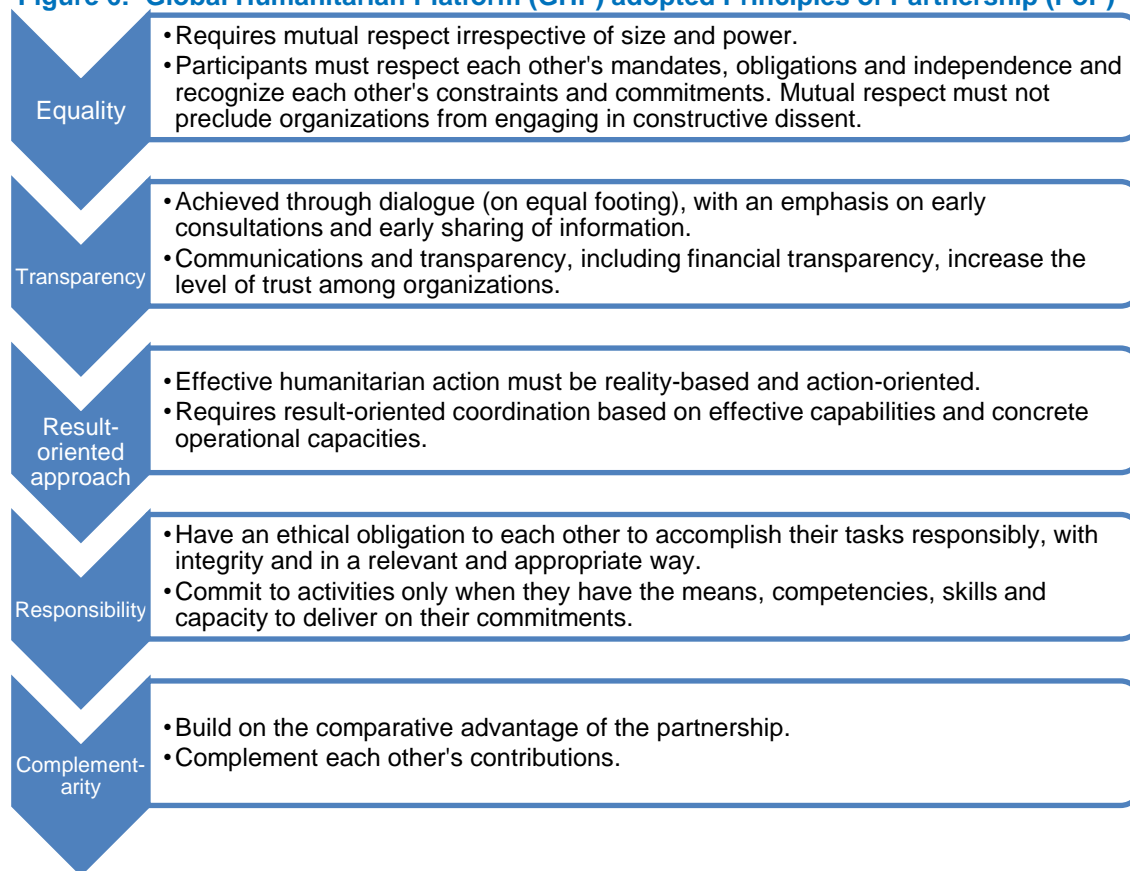
- Develop a broad and flexible value proposition based on the comparative advantages of the organization.
- Successful partnerships start with a specific need; however, articulating and prioritizing desired outcomes can be challenging. The GCR objectives and new RBM indicators can help to address these challenges.
- UNHCR’s reputation is central to its value proposition; care must be taken regarding what is given in return for use of the brand.
- Having staff with strong partnering skills in order to negotiate and navigate effectively is helpful.

¹³ WFP senior staff member working on private sector partnerships.

7.7. Key principles

84. The benchmarking organizations mentioned some core partnership values that are at the heart of building and managing effective partnerships and which are common and valid for every partner involved. Ideally, partnership values are jointly formulated and genuinely committed to by all partners. To confirm this and as a foundation, a useful practice is to include partnership values as a preamble in the partnership agreement. Key partnership values include, for example: equity and respect; genuine commitment and mutual benefit; transparency and accountability; and patience and persistence.
85. UN agencies have committed to various principles to guide their work with the private sector based on frameworks of humanitarian action and human rights. The partnering principles of these organizations usually fit on one page or contain a certain number (a maximum of 10) in an attempt to keep them focused and make them easier to remember. WWF has core guiding principles that guide its private sector work which include: **transparency, measurable results and the mutual right to disagree** – especially with the private sector, which often has such different interests. With these principles they recognize the importance of being objective, independent and credible.
86. **Most partnering principles formulated by benchmark organizations comply with core values (human and child rights, good governance)**, although no one refers to the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (also known as the Ruggie Principles). They all have respect, equity, being open and responsive, responsible and committed as top priorities: this is how they want to interact with their partners and how they want to be treated. It is not clear though how these principles are actually used in operations.
87. In 2007, The Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP) adopted the Principles of Partnership (PoP). GHP emphasizes that the PoP provide a framework for *all* actors in the humanitarian space – including governments, academia, the private sector and affected populations – in order to engage effectively ([Figure 6](#)).
88. **Most benchmarking organizations do not make a distinction between principles based on the type of partner.** World Vision International has partnership principles, including a commitment to seek mutual benefit; to respect and value others' contributions; to **manage power dynamics carefully**; to listen and be responsive, and to communicate openly and transparently.
89. IFRC has a code of conduct to guide all its work in the field and at headquarters; there are no clear separate guidelines for private sector partnering. For UNICEF, certain values such as child rights are non-negotiable, and its partners have to uphold these. World Vision International makes sure that its partnering practice is fully aligned to global humanitarian standards and the organization has also adopted the GHP PoP (see [Figure 6](#)).

Figure 6: Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP) adopted Principles of Partnership (PoP)¹⁴



90. For organizations that have adopted partnership values, these cannot automatically be declared applicable to every partnership entered into. The potential partner(s) in question must be able and willing to subscribe to these values and / or be given the space to question them. The result may be that adjusted partnership values are established for that specific partnership. Partnership values are therefore starting points for the conversation, not directive rules.

TAKEAWAYS:

- Most partners use the GHP Principles of Partnership.
- Other important principles noted were transparency, importance of managing power dynamics (mutual right to disagree) and the importance of the partner to comply with core values espoused by the benchmark agency (e.g. child rights, human rights).

¹⁴ Source: <https://www.icvanetwork.org/principles-partnership-statement-commitment>

8. Forward-looking considerations for discussion

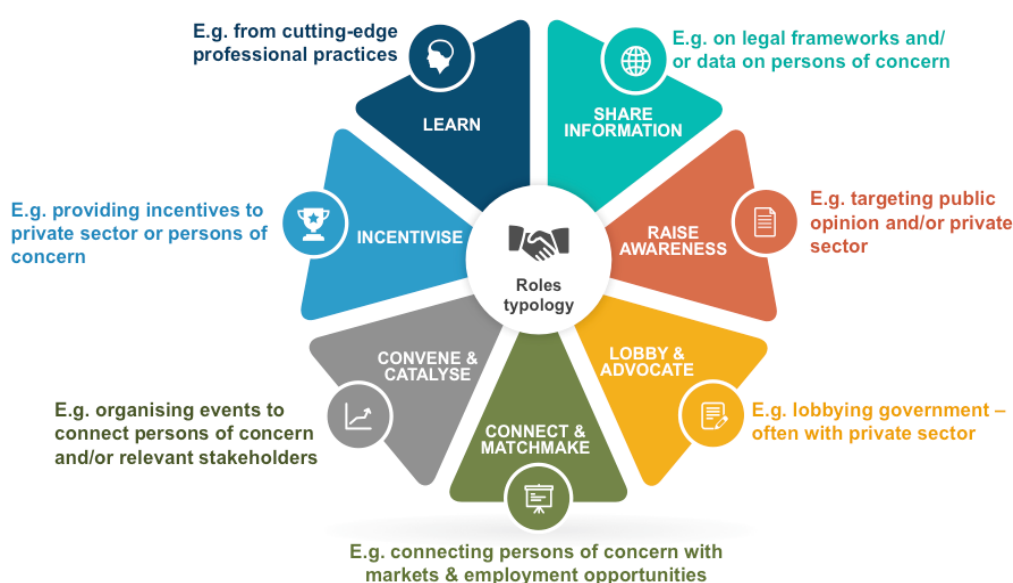
91. UNHCR is a highly influential player in improving outcomes for refugees and other PoC. These impacts have also been supported by partnering with – and beyond – the private sector. This analysis of existing practices in UNHCR (global, regional and field operations) and appropriate benchmark organizations alongside a review of relevant academic and policy literature is a starting place to indicate the strategic choices UNHCR must consider in order to strengthen its partnering practices to maximize impact for those affected by forced displacement and minimize risk for UNHCR. This section discusses the key areas that UNHCR would benefit from considering based on the evaluation's analysis.

8.1. Leveraging what UNHCR already has

8.1.1. Roles played by UNHCR in partnerships

92. **Partnerships are not new to UNHCR and the organization has accumulated much experience from partnering with the private sector.** Based on this experience, the evaluation noted seven roles played by UNHCR, as illustrated in [Figure 7](#): to share information, raise awareness, lobby and advocate, connect and matchmake, convene and catalyse, incentivize, and learn.
93. Incentivizing private sector engagement includes investing in market assessments and de-risking private sector investments. While in the past, UNHCR money has been used to incentivize private sector actors, this evaluation also found useful examples where UNHCR partners with donor states and multilaterals. For example, the Economic Inclusion team brokered a partnership with local microfinance institutions with the Grameen Bank, in which Sida stood as guarantor for defaulted accounts. The SPU also responded that there could potentially be interest from private sector actors to fund, for example, market analyses in refugee camps. This typology of roles is therefore also useful in identifying the kind of role UNHCR would like a partner to take.


Figure 7: Roles that UNHCR plays in private sector engagement beyond fundraising



8.1.2. Partnership models developed by UNHCR

94. UNHCR currently uses **five main different models of engaging the private sector**, which may be more or less appropriate depending on the objective and the context of the engagement, and the specific partner engaged (i.e. not the sector). **Table 1** describes each model and shows the level of difficulty of measuring outcomes for PoC.

Table 1: UNHCR uses multiple models when engaging the private sector and other partners

Model	Description	Tracing the impact pathway
1-to-1	UNHCR engages one private sector company	Straightforward  Complex
Delegation	UNHCR delegates the engagement to an implementing partner	
Via public sector	UNHCR is delegated to engage with the private sector by government or another international organization, or UNHCR collaborates with/delegates to public sector partner for part of its private sector engagement	
Platform	UNHCR is one of many partners that agree on shared goals and specific tasks each will contribute for PoC	
Roundtable	UNHCR convenes a discussion after which others may or may not choose to take action for PoC	

95. It is important to recognize the strengths and limitations of these different models. The model of one-to-one private sector engagement was the most common approach reported by PSP, but not by other UNHCR staff. UNHCR also uses the same range of models with partners from other sectors. For example, the platform model is used in the global Logistics Emergency Teams (LET) multi-stakeholder partnership. When UNHCR engages with a partner one-to-one, tracing and attributing the results for PoC or the house is more straightforward. However, when UNHCR convenes a roundtable discussion, collective actions may not be immediately agreed and therefore monitoring actions and attributing subsequent results becomes inherently challenging. That is not to say that this model should be discarded. Rather, this – and all of the models identified – can be used as one of a range of options, and the level of complexity recognized in managerial processes and rewards.

96. The widespread assumption that more PoC would be positively affected was found the further down the table an actor is. However, data were not collected so the evaluation team were unable to test that assumption. More robust measures and tracking of outcomes for UNHCR and impacts for PoC are required. These models provide a toolkit with a range of options that might be more or less appropriate depending on the objective for PoC, the context and the specific partners.

Box 4: Typical approaches to PSE know-how across UNHCR

- Pragmatic and innovative approaches;
- Fit their approach to the context;
- Look for room to manoeuvre;
- Seek out opportunities; and
- Mobilize internal backing.

97. **The evaluation team observed that many of UNHCR's operational engagements with the private sector at the field level are driven by individuals who do not have PSE in their job description.** These individuals displayed strong know-how in terms of their approaches to engaging with the private sector. **Box 4** lists some of the key

aspects of their approaches, reflecting that there are currently staff within UNHCR who could serve as resource persons to other staff within the organization.

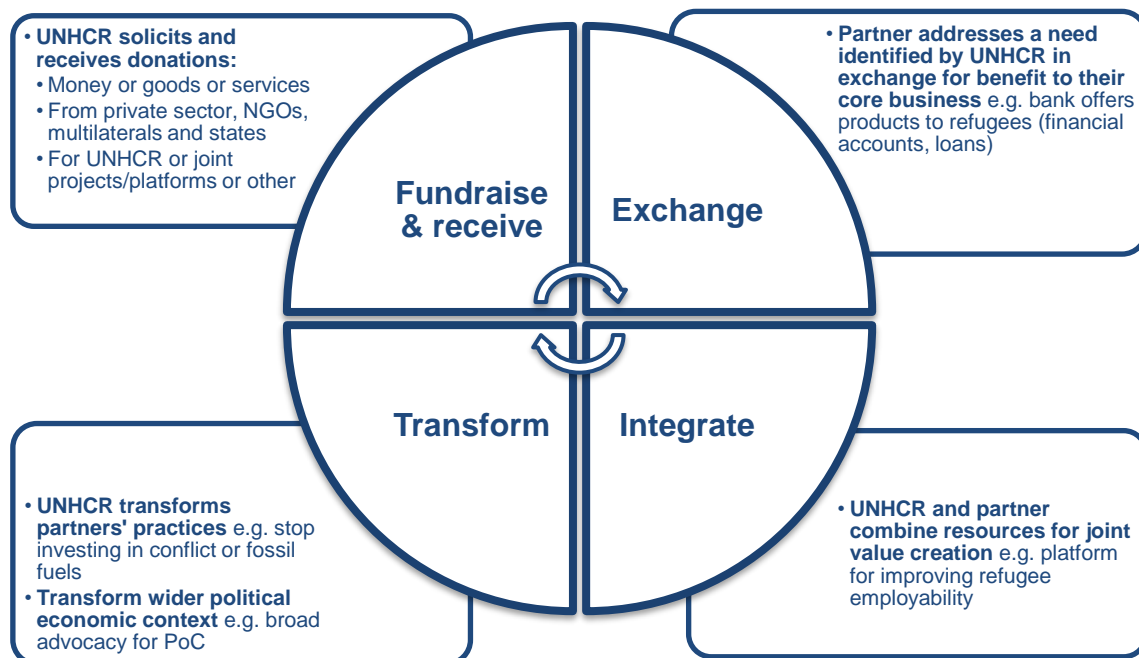
98. These staff invest time and effort in engaging with the private sector, often despite a lack of recognition and reward as discussed earlier. The evaluation has found that such individuals can be found across geographic regions and tend to have these traits in common: **are passionate about the mandate and feel responsible; possess a high level of commitment to partnering; often have experience in non-UN contexts; understand the political economic environment very well and have a good idea of what is possible/will work in order to frame the right type of partnership goals that the private sector will want.**

8.2. Broadening the organizational mindset

99. While UNHCR has developed useful models of partnership and roles inside them, it is struggling with defining and naming the range of its partnership activities. Certain partnerships may have both financial and non-financial components. Partnerships that are brokered by the Centre may be implemented in the field. In the same partnership, fundraisers may be managing the financial aspects alongside relationships between technical staff in both partner organizations.
100. Understanding the different types of partnerships – and making conscious decisions about the type of ambition for a particular engagement – gives a better sense of the type of relationship UNHCR needs to foster. It also gives a truer representation of the range of options into which the relationship may be developed.
101. Using the language of “financial” and “non-financial” does not do justice to this complexity. Therefore, the typology in the figure below is proposed to help UNHCR define more clearly the range of ways in which it could engage the private sector, and indeed other categories of partners. Examples of intentional relationships with the private sector for fundraising, exchanging and integrating were found in the field during this evaluation.
102. A hierarchy for partnerships is not helpful because all forms of engagements have merits and may be more or less appropriate depending on the context, the partner or the impact objective. This is a continuum: partnerships could fall in any – or more than one – of the quadrants. Partnerships are dynamic and multifaceted. **Moving a relationship into another of the quadrants does not mean abandoning the first relationship; it takes skill and specialist knowledge.** In many instances, participants in the evaluation articulated a *transformational ambition* for their engagement with the private sector, without full clarity about what this entails in practice. A transformational ambition requires transformational partnering. Not all partnerships need to be transformational in order to achieve the desired impact for PoC.
103. Different parts of the organization can engage differently. For example, the expectation would be that PSP brokers more philanthropic relationships and supports others to leverage other types of partnerships from those. In the same way, operational departments would broker partnerships that are more likely to focus on transacting and combining and support PSP with leveraging those into financial partnerships. Senior leadership would focus on transformational partnerships.
104. However, currently within the organization, **partnership management is divided by partner type** so that the PCS manages NGOs, multilateral agencies and consortia while PSP manages private sector partners, DRRM manages government partners and DRS manages the relationship with development banks. Such an approach **limits each team to one type of partner for one type of partnership outcome**. Thus, NGOs that

receive funds to implement are managed by one team whereas those that donate to UNHCR are managed by a different team.

Figure 8: Typology of partnering relationships¹⁵



1. **Fundraise and receive** one-way transfers of resources (cash or gifts in kind) from corporate (e.g. Uniqlo), charitable foundation, multilateral or Member State sources. Most commonplace. Amenable to strict quantitative targets. Negotiation of amount and frequency of donation for UNHCR mandate.
2. **Exchange** resources around specific activities (employee engagements). Connects more directly to core business of both/all partners. Greater strategic fit. Larger number and type of activities than in fundraising.
3. **Integrate** missions, strategies, values, personnel, and activities. Co-creation of value for both/all partners. Integral to both/all partners' strategies. Joint value creation and mutual effects on partners. Negotiation of what specific impacts are sought and how partnership activities can support that. Higher intensity of collaboration than in transactional.
4. **Transform** partners' understanding of their responsibilities. Activities aimed at larger scale social change through collective action. Deep change in partners' practices, particularly businesses', that has the potential to lead to broader social change.

105. Opening the framing of partnerships with all partners to include all four options – fundraise, exchange, integrate and transform – opens the space to undertake many different types of partnership with different types of partners. For example, NGO partners are consistently considered to be “implementation partners” that have a contractual relationship with the organization. And yet they could support UNHCR's mandate in many other ways; for example, employing refugees or through transforming their work practices and scope to advocate for and support refugees beyond their

¹⁵ Source: Adapted from Austin, 2000; Austin and Seitanidi, 2012. Collaborative value creation: A review of partnering between nonprofits and businesses. Part 2: Partnership processes and outcomes. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*.

contract with UNHCR. The current structure could limit the future possibilities for these relationships, and the impact they could have for PoC.

106. How does this compare with benchmarking organizations? UNICEF deliberately seeks to engage all partners in all four types. WFP prioritizes partnerships that exchange and integrate with their work. WWF's focus is mainly on using partnerships to transform businesses into more sustainable corporate practices. **Without reducing UNHCR's commitment to fundraising, the evaluation finds that there is scope to expand existing fundraising relationships into these other types, and also to expand partnerships in the other three quadrants into fundraising relationships. This takes skill and bringing in different types of expertise, as well as mutual respect between different teams at HQ, regional and country levels.** It is not possible to make the most of all four types of partnerships if one of them is prioritized over others; vocal support from the very top is needed to maximize the potential of these partnerships.

8.3. Fit for the future

8.3.1. Results-based Management (RBM) renewal and GCR indicators

107. UNHCR is currently **revamping its RBM in order to strengthen UNHCR's ability to: make decisions based on evidence; be accountable for results; and inclusively, effectively and efficiently deliver and report on its protection and solutions results.** As such, new core outcome and impact areas have been identified in order to better cover the full gamut of result areas needed for PoC.¹⁶ If the offer from the private sector or other donor does not match the needs of PoC/UNHCR, it is easier to say "no thank you" if these needs have been defined under the new RBM project and GCR indicators.
108. Based on the stocktake survey and interviews, respondents reported that private sector engagement targeted changes in all the impact areas currently in discussion for the new RBM (**Box 5**). The **new RBM will allow operations to create their own output-, outcome- and impact-level indicators** in addition to reporting on a limited set of core indicators. **This flexibility will allow operations to track and report results related to PSE. The new RBM will also capture collective outcomes and impacts, no longer restricting results to only activities implemented through UNHCR funding.**¹⁴ This will help to remove one of the large stumbling blocks cited by many of the staff interviewed by the evaluation team.

Box 5: Results areas in UNHCR's new RBM Results Framework¹⁷

Impact Area 1: Reception and protection frameworks

Improvements in access to and enjoyment of international protection by PoC.

Impact Area 2: Meeting needs

Improvements in access to basic/fundamental services in relation to humanitarian needs of PoC and host communities.

Impact Area 3: Supporting communities

¹⁶ RBM Renewal Project: Advisory Group RBM (AGR). 11 September 2019.

¹⁷ Existing measures of the extent to which refugees enjoy rights in line with international obligations or conventions is still reflected in some parts of the new RBM framework.

Enhancing the inclusion of PoC in existing systems as well as strengthen the self-sufficiency and self-determination of PoC and host communities.

Impact Area 4: Solutions

Increasing access to durable solutions and alternative pathways by PoC.

Source: UNHCR (2019) Results Areas. Draft, May 2019.

109. In addition to the RBM Renewal Project creating an enabling environment for PSE, the GCR and accompanying Indicator Framework (recently developed in consultation with Member States and NGOs) helps to incentivize private sector engagement beyond fundraising. The GCR proposes a multi-stakeholder or whole-of-society approach, aimed at mobilising new actors and resources to engage in refugee protection to ensure stable and sustainable protection. These include development actors, faith-based actors, private enterprises, and sports and cultural institutions. The GCR has helped catalyse this comprehensive approach, which UNHCR country operations have already started applying broadly.
110. The GCR Indicator Framework will also create incentives for UNHCR to engage with the private sector because it tracks key impact areas that governments, UNHCR and partners are targeting for the benefit of refugees. The evaluation team reviewed the GCR indicators and identified those for which private sector engagement beyond fundraising may be relevant in [Box 6](#).

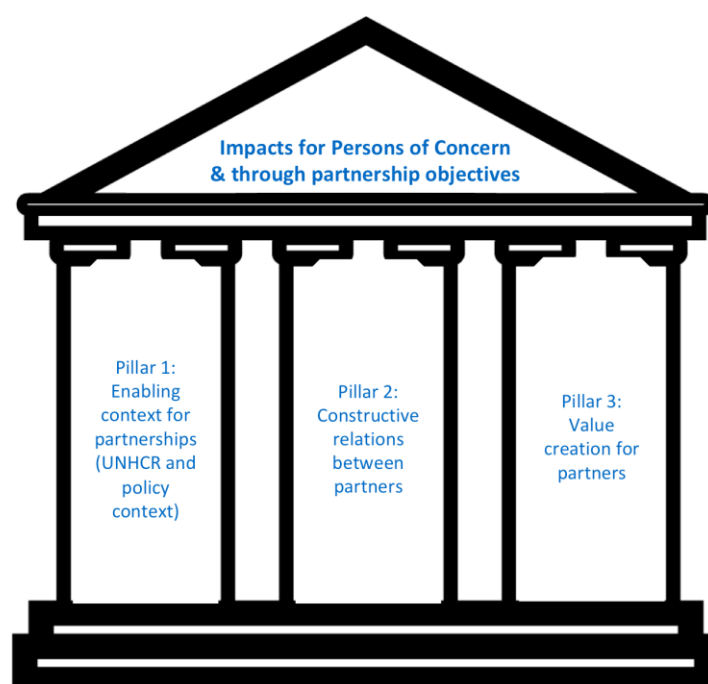
Box 6: GCR objectives and indicators relevant to private sector engagement

- 1: Ease pressures on host countries** (*maps onto RBM Impact Areas 3 and 4*).
- Indicator 1.2.2 Number of partners supporting national arrangements in refugee-hosting country.
- 2: Enhance refugee self-reliance** (*maps onto RBM Impact Area 3*).
- Indicator 2.1.1. Proportion of refugees who have access to the labour market.
 - Indicator 2.1.2. Proportion of refugees who are able to move freely within the host country.
 - Indicator 2.2.2. Proportion of refugee and host community living below the national poverty line.
- 3: Expand access to third country solutions** (*maps onto RBM Impact Area 4*).
- Indicator 3.2.1. Number of refugees admitted through complementary pathways from host country.
- 4: Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity** (*maps onto RBM Impact Area 4*).
- Indicator 4.2.1. Number of refugees returning to their country of origin.

Source: UNHCR (2019) Global Compact on Refugees: Indicator Framework. July 2019.

111. The GCR Indicator Framework and UNHCR's RBM give clarity to the types of **impacts** sought by the organization. In addition to these impacts, other **outcomes** are also important, and need to be recognized as worthwhile milestones on the way to impacts, as well as critical to the functioning of UNHCR. Each of these aspects of partnering matter and should be measured.

Figure 9: Impacts and pillars of partnerships¹⁸



112. Specifically, there are two dimensions of impact: did the partnership meet its objectives and did meeting these objectives positively impact the lives of PoC? In addition, achieving these impacts rests on three pillars (Figure 9) : (1) an environment with many private sector actors and high interest; (2) constructive relations between partners; and (3) value creation for all partners. Managing and measuring these different dimensions of partnering require training in relationship management and also in tracking complex impact pathways – for example, through theories of change.¹⁹ These **participatory methods of planning and evaluation are critical to the functioning and impacts of partnership**, but appear to not be particularly familiar to UNHCR.

8.3.2. UNHCR's decentralization and regionalization

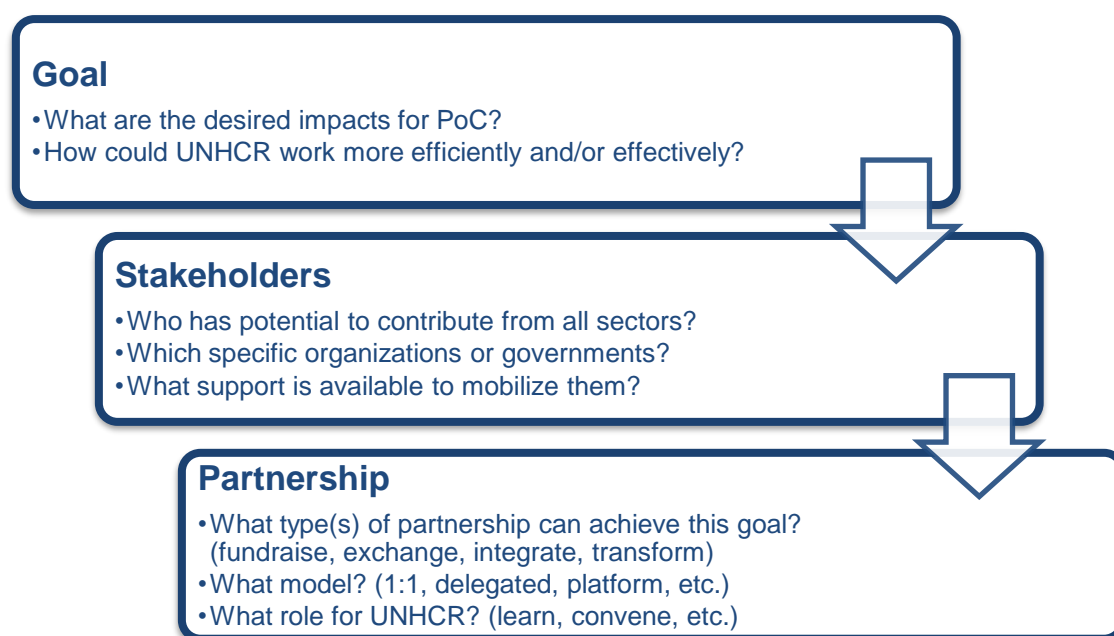
113. A change already under way that has the potential to support PSE is UNHCR's regionalization and decentralization. This **aims to improve UNHCR's delivery of protection and solutions for forcibly displaced and stateless people** by (a) enabling Country Representatives and their teams to take faster and more context-appropriate decisions on the ground, (b) simplify decision-making processes, and (c) make them more efficient by extending greater operational agility to operations working in highly fluid contexts and ensuring more time to focus efforts where it matters most; empowering Country Representatives and Regional Bureaux to translate global objectives into regional strategies; and aligning UNHCR's presence and authority at regional level with that of UN sister agencies.

¹⁸ Adapted from Andonova and Faul (forthcoming) <https://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/bae42f16-4b66-423c-8e8f-11fb9788749b.pdf>

¹⁹ <https://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/>

114. This change will improve UNHCR's line of sight from the needs of PoC to interventions and stakeholder partnerships that can meet them. **The regionalization process offers an opportunity to ensure that local PoC needs and private sector offers are better aligned and negotiated. Having greater clarity of the desired impact and understanding of the context will strengthen UNHCR's ability to communicate and engage with the private sector.** This clear view between aligning the offer and priority at regional and country levels should improve support linkages between PSP/SPU and HQ divisions as well as Regional Bureaux and Operations.
115. Rather than starting from the sector of the partner, the decision-making process should begin by defining the desired impact for PoC or outcome for UNHCR. After defining the goal, stakeholders can then be identified that could make a contribution (whether from the public and/or private or voluntary sectors), and then the specific organizations to be approached. Finally, the partnering approach (typology, model and roles) that is suited to achieving the goal can be negotiated. **Figure 10** presents an illustrative process of the considerations for partnering.

Figure 10: Decision flow chart



116. **With greater autonomy comes the need for enhanced rewards and recognition, and also risk management at the operations level.** Decentralized responsibility should be complemented with decentralized rewards and recognition through local managerial processes related to local goals and objectives. The evaluation team notes that UNHCR's risk management is changing in order to more proactively identify, analyse and treat risks throughout the organization, and the new Due Diligence policy that was recently finalized. It will be important for UNHCR to incorporate PSE into such processes, including a cost–benefit analysis conducted by a multi-functional team (e.g. external relations, programme, legal, etc.) to assess the benefits (operational and financial) the partnership are expected to generate for PoC/UNHCR in the short, medium and long term in relation to resource inputs and foreseen risks. This local and regional process does not change the need for a centralized due diligence process before embarking on a partnership. Risk assessment is not a one-off action, however. These decentralized processes will allow for continuous review through the course of the partnership.

117. In the regionalization process, a new approach to coordinating the relationship between operations and HQ divisions through a “**service-level agreement**” will be trialled. This agreement will specify the mutual expectations and way of working between HQ divisions and Regional Bureaux in order to maximize support to field operations while minimizing overlap and conflict. These agreements also help strengthen a client-centred approach among HQ divisions towards the field. During the Regional Bureaux consultations, the evaluation team noted the Bureaux were in the process of relocating offices and staff to their regional locations. As part of the regionalization process, new functional pillars were introduced and Bureaux were in the process of developing the organizational structures per pillar. Understandably, the extent to which strategies/plans for PSE beyond fundraising varied widely among the Bureaux. All Bureaux, though, recognized the importance of slowly defining roles and responsibilities between HQs and Bureaux once all staff were in place to ensure coherence and coordination.

8.3.3. Form and function

118. Partnering with external organizations has developed in an organic manner within UNHCR Headquarters. **Responding to immediate needs as they arose has led to a patchwork in which different units manage relationships and partnerships with partners from one stakeholder group** (either private sector or IFIs or donor states). This does not reflect Field Officers’ experience and the need to develop partnerships with stakeholders from a variety of sectors. In addition to managing partnerships, many HQ staff are also **expected to support** other staff in their interactions with their stakeholder group. This atomisation of support for partnering in different places in the organization is not helpful to fulfilling UNHCR’s mandate or the GCR’s demand for a whole-of-society approach. While each unit is working to partner effectively as mandated, **the time has come for a rationalization of partnering support across the organization.**
119. Within DER, partnerships are managed by three teams (see section 7.3 for more detail). The Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service (DRRM) manages relations with government and bilateral (public sector) donors. The Partnership Section manages bilateral relationships with UN agencies, NGOs and consortia and the Sport Section manages sports partnerships; the Inter-Agency and Coordination Section develops inter-agency strategy and partners with certain UN agencies. The PCS supports the field on developing relationships with NGOs, advocacy partners and UN humanitarian partners. PSP manages private sector philanthropy and hosts the SPU that is currently made up of two PSP staff established in response to the recommendations of Horekens’ report.²⁰ Inside PSP, the Partnership Support Unit (PSU) supports fundraisers in the development of concept notes, pitches, proposals, legal agreements and reports.
120. The Division for Resilience and Solutions’ (DRS) Partnership Section is responsible for operational engagements with IFIs, including both multilateral development banks and bilateral development actors. The purpose of developing partnerships with these development banks is to promote the inclusion of refugees into their programming, policy and advocacy efforts. These partnerships are framed with a clear impact area in mind and DRS builds on the partnership by fostering trust and being transparent. An important element of partnering practised by DRS is understanding the priorities of IFIs and negotiating the focus of the operational partnership so that it supports both their interests and those of UNHCR. In addition, within DRS, there is a team dedicated to mainstreaming the CRRF approach worldwide, who support field staff in developing

²⁰ Horekens, J. Functional and structural review of UNHCR’s partnering with the private sector: Focus on the Private Sector Partnership Service (PSP) and its Leadership Giving Section. Switzerland: 12 April. 2018.

their partnerships across all stakeholder groups (e.g. livelihoods, education and vocational training, repatriation, return and reintegration).

121. An innovation in the organization has been the development of four “Hubs” that aim to become repositories of best practice and engines that share experience and expertise across UNHCR.²¹ These Hubs aim to counter the institutional silos that often characterize Headquarters, bringing together thematic experts across many divisions. There is a Hub focusing on development and solutions in DRS, a Hub on integrated programming in the Division of Programme Support and Management (DPSM), a Hub on field protection in the Division of International Protection (DIP) and a Hub on resource mobilization and advocacy in DER. While each of these Hubs is hosted in one division, they coordinate and bring together thematic experts who may sit in other divisions. Members of the four Hubs also meet regularly to ensure greater coordination between Hubs and interaction with Regional Bureaux.

8.4. What does UNHCR have to offer in its partnerships?

122. Defining further engagement with the private sector should take into account **what current private sector partners value in the extent to which it fits UNHCR’s principles and does not leave it open to reputational risk** (see section 7.5) and how that works with UNHCR’s mandate and the GCR. Based on interviews with UNHCR’s private sector partners, **what appealed to them in the first place was UNHCR’s mandate**. Partners underline that UNHCR is the leading body for the refugees’ issues. All of the partner organizations put refugee issues on top of their CSR initiatives and thus, working with UNHCR fulfils their goals. Employee volunteering is also another important gain for the private sector. UNHCR’s global scope gives it scale and working with UNHCR helps companies to have a global impact. Almost all interviewees are aware that UNHCR is in touch with different communities, governments and other organizations, and they shared their desire for **UNHCR to leverage this strength in multi-stakeholder partnerships (reflecting the demands of the GCR)**. All of the partners consulted by the evaluation team would like to continue working with UNHCR and they have the **appetite to extend the boundaries of their current engagement with UNHCR**.
123. There was close alignment between what current private sector partners prioritized and what staff (collectively) identified as important. However, there was a danger identified that some private sector actors (and some PSP staff) identified the possibility of moving partnership relationships into more favourable procurement conditions. Many respondents expressed **concern that “partnerships” might be exploited as a back door to procurement. This should be resisted due to the very real reputational risk to UNHCR and the potential that partnership relations and impacts would be distorted away from what is relevant and useful to PoC and UNHCR**. A more desirable model is where market assessments show the opportunities for any and all private sector actors who may then choose to get involved, or not. UNHCR has experience of working with donor states and multilateral donors to finance external market assessments; this could also be extended to private sector donors.
124. Brand is a key concern for UNHCR, and an important benefit identified by private sector partners who see UNHCR as a highly regarded, trusted and prestigious organization to work with. The concerns that **UNHCR might currently give away its brand too cheaply and without the necessary due diligence** were reported in every phase of the evaluation and across all levels and locations of the organization. These fears were

²¹ *Ibid.*

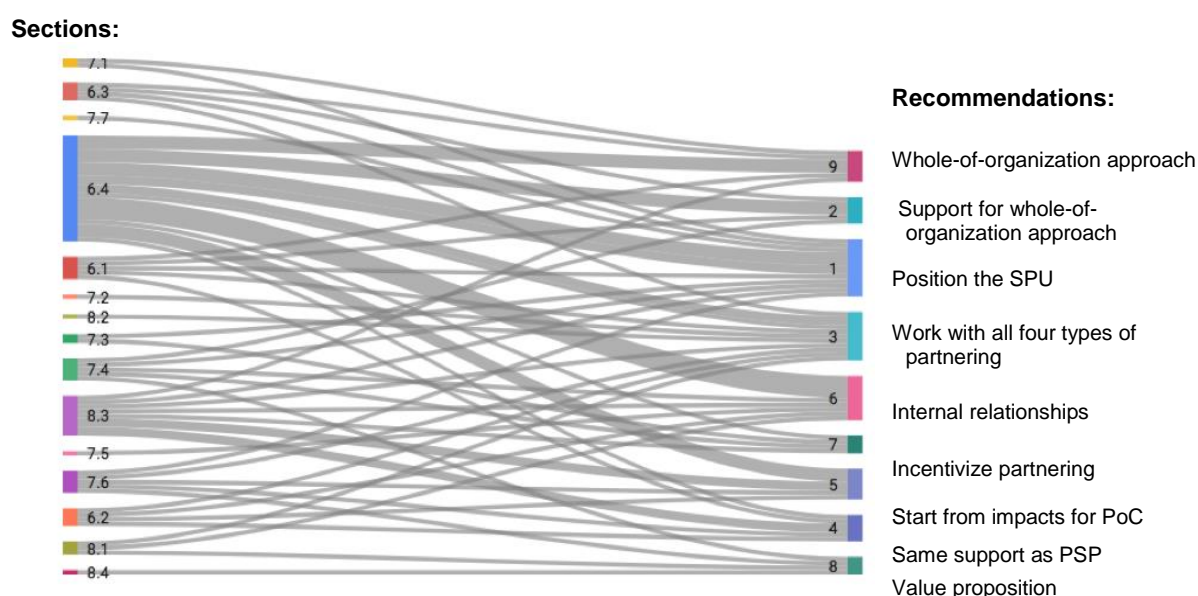
expressed towards activities of HQs, field offices and national associations. A new Due Diligence policy is currently being finalized. Like UNHCR, most benchmark organizations consider that they work more slowly than what is expected by the private sector partner. In order to minimize this, UNHCR should review existing processes to make them as streamlined as possible and carefully **communicate to operations and partners the process and expected time frames**.

125. There is a danger from the current trend towards **labelling tied aid as “partnership”**, in which donors hold a *quid pro quo* expectation that if a UN agency conducts business with private sector companies from their country, they will increase the aid given to the UN organization. This carries **potential dangers for UNHCR operationally and in terms of risks to reputation** and UNHCR’s principle of neutrality. This evaluation recommends that trade delegations to HQ or field operations need to be managed through the SPU or directed to Procurement rather than distracting field or technical field support staff in HQ divisions from their duties.

9. Recommendations

126. This section contains nine recommendations which are summarized in the Executive Summary ([Detailed recommendations](#)). All are critical for UNHCR to consider in order to achieve impacts for PoC and efficiency gains from private sector engagement in the future, while guarding against the reputational or operational risks to which all respondents were sensitive. **Meeting the professional development needs of staff to carry out and optimize partnering with the private sector based on a whole-of-society approach** is mission-critical for UNHCR, and this requires a dedicated support team. To provide this support, there are two transformational options for UNHCR to consider; an integrative approach through either restructuring partnering teams into one partnership service or establishing a partnering Hub). Whichever of these integrative approaches is taken, a **whole-of-organization approach to partnering** is critical if UNHCR is to deliver on the demands of the GCR and CRRF (in terms of **impacts for PoC and whole-of-society** working) and also improve UNHCR efficiencies and effectiveness. These recommendations were developed from the preceding sections and are depicted in [Figure 11](#).

Figure 11: Derivation of recommendations



9.1.1. Recommendation 1: Meet staff's learning needs with regard to partnering

127. In addition to the championing of a whole-of-organization approach, this evaluation recommends **meeting the substantive support needs of staff who are engaging in partnering**. The stocktake and interviews identified serious concerns from the field and technical staff that their learning needs regarding new requirements for partnership working were not being met ([Box 2](#)). The benchmarking exercise showed that most organizations are still testing approaches and figuring out how partnerships work best for them.

128. Two benchmarking organizations have established – or plan to establish – **dedicated teams and centres of excellence to synthesize and share knowledge and best practices**. UNHCR cannot afford to ignore these developments in comparator organizations. There are currently three vacant posts that are earmarked for supporting engagement with the private sector for exchange, integrative and transformative (“non-

financial”) purposes. These posts should be used specifically to bring in to the organization specialists who are skilled in: how to support staff across the organization to develop their partnership potential across all four types of partnership (**Figure 8**); multi-stakeholder partnership thinking and practice; and how to bring different interests together. This is not about fundraising alone and goes beyond relationship management. As with the structural option in section 9.1.1, current changes in the Centre mean that it is unclear where this support unit should sit, apart from the functional need to be **close to the operational core of UNHCR**.

129. In addition, and in the interim while this team is being recruited, **formal learning opportunities** should be identified in the UN Staff System College (UNSSC) or the Humanitarian Leadership Academy and communicated to staff as part of their professional development. New learning modules should be developed by the dedicated team with the Global Learning and Development Centre. Different parts of the organization can contribute different upskilling “modules”; for example, PSP might contribute its expertise on negotiation and communication tactics, while Field Officers identified in this evaluation and DRS could support with their experience on putting together and managing multi-stakeholder partnerships.
130. Fostering **safe spaces for trying new ideas** and combinations of teams and approaches with different types of partnerships is an important step to improving UNHCR’s PSE strategies. This learning culture would create spaces for sharing experiences on what has worked/not worked from engaging with the private sector. As part of this, the evaluation recommends supporting **learning-by-doing and peer learning by facilitating Communities of Practice**. Such Communities of Practice would be supported through the Partnering Hub or Whole-of-Society Partnering Service. Rather than ignoring internal dissent, it is important to encourage “**spaces of negotiation**” for **frank discussion** of different views of partnering for PoC. Specialist organizations (such as the Partnership Brokers Association (PBA) and the Partnering Initiative (TPI) should be engaged to support specific partnering opportunities and help resolve internal conflicts.

9.1.2. Recommendation 2: Position the Shared Value Partnerships Unit (SPU)

131. Staff learning needs that have been identified by this evaluation cannot be fulfilled by the Shared Value Partnerships Unit (SPU); nor should the SPU be distracted from fulfilling the important role that it alone can play. Inside the new Partnerships Support Service (or inside PSP if the strategic decision is taken to use the Hub model), the current two-person SPU has a significant role to play in **managing relationships directly with MNCs and other global private sector partners** in close consultation with field and regional staff working with the country offices of these MNCs. Where a relationship with a private sector partner is initiated by non-PSP staff, the SPU should work with those who hold the relationship before approaching the company for fundraising purposes, in the same way that they would expect this of non-PSP staff. The SPU also has a role in **managing trade delegations from donor countries**, especially where tied aid is being passed off as “partnership”. In addition, the SPU should be tasked with working closely with Regional Bureaux, due diligence, and PSP to **review block-lists and develop allow-lists** of pre-approved partner organizations. In all cases, it is critical to **develop “service-level agreements”** to clarify mutual expectations and create constructive processes and pathways for collaboration and coordination.

9.1.3. Recommendation 3: Approach and measure partnering along a range of outcomes

132. The range of partnering outcomes requires the UNHCR to broaden the language used to describe partnerships beyond the terms of “non-financial” or “beyond fundraising”, where financial/fundraising sounds like the default form of partnership. The evaluation recommends that **UNHCR diversify its language use and thinking towards partnering to reflect a broader range of outcomes** that can arise from partnership.
133. Partnering can take at least four forms (**Figure 8**) – financial purposes through **fundraising**; transactional where there is an **exchange** between the partners; combining or **integrating** strengths and resources to achieve something jointly; or **transforming** partners’ practices in ways that further UNHCR’s mission and mandate. Communication of these different types of partnering can be articulated and conveyed across teams and levels within the organization.
134. What are currently called “implementation partnerships” with NGOs appear to be more contractual than partnerships as defined in this typology; the desirability and implications of moving relationships with NGOs into the partnering space needs to be considered.
135. The measuring of partnership impacts and outcomes (**Figure 9**) needs to be expanded to include quantitative and qualitative measurements of:

Impacts: What have been the ultimate impacts for PoC?

Did the partnership reach the objectives the partners set for themselves?

Pillar 1: What is the context in which partnerships are being attempted?

Pillar 2: How do partners characterize the relationships inside the partnership?

Pillar 3: What value do partners consider they derive from the partnership?

136. These additional data will help inform theories of change and partnering strategies at HQ and the field. It is only by using this language that staff can recognize the range of partnership types (**Figure 8**) and also the range of models (**Table 1**) and roles (**Figure 7**) available to them and therefore be able to hold them all in their repertoire.

9.1.4. Recommendation 4: Align partnering strategies to country- and sector-defined impacts

137. A strategy that defines all priorities and partners from the Centre, or HQ, is doomed to failure. Operationalizing the importance of context in UNHCR’s overall partnering strategy requires allowing flexibility for local priorities and prioritized partners. Following the decentralization of authority that is under way i.e. the regionalization and decentralization transformation at UNHCR, the evaluation recommends that the Senior Executive Team (SET) communicate to Regional Bureaux and divisions that **partnering strategies should be designed locally, aligning to country- or sector-defined outcomes and impacts** of their Results Framework as per the requirements of the RBM Renewal Project and GCR indicators. Using the country-defined Results Framework as the basis, it makes it easier to formulate a clear ask of the private sector as well as say “no thank you” when the private sector offer (or other donor) does not align.
138. This also requires **delegation of competency and accountability**, which will be **supported by training** developed through the new Partnership Support Service or Hub. Delegation of decision-making authority and accountability should be as close to the point of delivery as possible, using centralized due diligence processes at the establishment of partnerships and then the “Three Lines of Defence” for ongoing risk

management (defined in the regionalization and decentralization process).²² This is the point where PoC needs are best articulated and also where the needs of UNHCR to fulfil those are clearest.

9.1.5. Recommendation 5: Strengthen linkages and working relationships across the organization

139. The evaluation noted tense relationships between PSP and non-PSP staff and between HQs and field. Lack of trust underpinned these tensions, alongside frustrations regarding the lack of understanding of different needs. However, both sides appreciate the pressures that the other is under (to deliver impacts for PoC or achieve the ambitious \$1 billion fundraising target). However, conflict is still widespread. These tensions are not specific to UNHCR, but are witnessed even in private sector companies, for example between sales and service departments. That these tensions are endemic does not mean they can be ignored. Rather, **tensions need to be recognized and managed.**
140. In many benchmarking organizations, **coordination is a challenge, but is also seen as a critical way to solidify and institutionalize a partnership and ensure that organizational impact objectives are met.** Financial and non-financial relationships are two sides of the same coin; neither one supersedes the other. Both are critical to the flourishing of UNHCR, and its capacity to fulfil its mandate. **Any of the four types of partnership can be leveraged to mobilize the other, but this needs to be done with care.** Where a relationship with a private sector partner is initiated by PSP staff, their working principle is that field and technical staff must coordinate with the PSP staff member who holds the relationship before approaching the company for non-fundraising purposes. The principle works in the opposite direction as well, so that PSP staff coordinate with field or technical staff where they hold the relationship.
141. Much of the discontent between PSP and non-PSP staff arose from a lack of mutual understanding with regard to respective roles and responsibilities, and what were reasonable demands and time frames. Greater clarity is therefore required in how PSP will work with Regional Bureaux, and field and technical staff in HQs, to support their work and align to country-defined goals as required by the organization's mandate and ongoing decentralization. Establishing **service-level agreements will help clarify expectations and create processes and pathways that support positive and purposive collaboration and coordination** inside UNHCR.
142. Effective and efficient partnering is hindered where the offer from the donor does not match the impact identified for PoC; this also causes internal friction. **Ensure a clear line of sight of UNHCR's goals to the offer from the private sector** through effective communication between the three pillars within the new Regional Bureaux structure (e.g. Strategic Planning and Management, External Engagement and Protection and Coordination). For instance, PSP and DRRM could communicate offers to the Regional Bureaux, which may or may not take them up.

²² Quick Guide to UNHCR's Regionalization & Decentralization Process, February 2019.

9.1.6. Recommendation 6: Remove barriers and establish institutional incentives for partnering

143. Factors that inhibit staff in-country operations and sectors from partnering include a restrictive budgeting and planning framework that preclude designing interventions outside of what UNHCR will implement, and beyond the annual planning cycle. The evaluation recommends that UNHCR (a) remove existing barriers to partnering, and (b) actively incentivize staff who would partner.
144. First, **approach operational planning with a multi-year as opposed to a one-year mindset**. Second, UNHCR should **incentivize partnering through management and reward processes**. Create the category of “catalytic partnership” to record and report resources mobilized that are not mobilized into UNHCR, and yet contribute to PoC/UNHCR mandate; for example, to a partnership platform. There are many cases where partners may provide funds to a joint platform where they may not contribute directly to UNHCR (e.g. **Box 1**). There are also cases where UNHCR receiving the money would contribute to diverting UNHCR from its main corporate objectives, and yet UNHCR has been a key partner in mobilizing funds for projects that could hold positive impacts for PoC (e.g. renewable energy project). These contributions still need to be tracked and the effort it has taken to mobilize them needs to be recognized. Thus, this evaluation recommends **improving the measurement of PSE**. With the new RBM core and flexible outcome and impact indicators as well as the GCR indicators, the impetus for and ability to measure contributions made from UNHCR’s PSE has grown. The evaluation recommends that the new RBM should have the functionality to link result outcomes to UNHCR’s private sector partners (e.g. tick box with drop-down list of pre-approved partners and free text entry). In addition, UNHCR should prioritize developing quantitative and qualitative measurements of the impacts and pillars of partnering (**Figure 9**) as well as training and mainstreaming theories of change to plan and monitor complex impact pathways inherent to partnerships,

9.1.7. Recommendation 7: Demonstrate the same level of support as that given to fundraising

145. The impression of respondents was that partnering “beyond fundraising” was undervalued by the organization. The evaluation recommends that UNHCR leadership should demonstrate the same level of **organizational and leadership commitment** to so-called “non-financial” PSE as to fundraising and model the support that they expect from all managers. As with fundraising, the other three types of partnerships (exchange, integrate and transform) should **receive resourcing** for a centralized unit that services their learning and implementation needs; regional focal points; and a small amount of funding for catalysing innovative partnerships. This evaluation recommends that leadership teams at the Centre, Regional Bureaux and field offices make **this support audible, visible and tangible**, using the same communications techniques as used to give enthusiastic approval to fundraising.

9.1.8. Recommendation 8: Value proposition and reputational risk

146. Further engagement with the private sector should take into account **what current private sector partners value in the extent to which it fits UNHCR’s principles and does not leave it open to reputational risk** (see section 7.5) and how that works with UNHCR’s mandate and the GCR.
147. **Formulating a value proposition is critical** as noted in the stocktake, benchmarking and literature review. The value proposition serves to define what UNHCR has to offer with all sector partners. A strong value proposition **forms the basis of a strong**

negotiating position. A useful resource tool in this regard is the Partnership Value Proposition Canvas developed by PPP Lab.²³

148. The value proposition will go some way to mitigating the other risks identified (in section: 8.4). In addition, the **new Due Diligence policy should be communicated and trained** across the organization, highlighting the need for due diligence even in partnerships where no money changes hands. At the same time, it is critical to **reinforce the lines UNHCR has drawn between partnership and procurement**, in order to avoid the danger seen by many respondents to UNHCR's principle of neutrality. In the same vein, this evaluation recommends that trade delegations to HQ or field operations need to be managed through the SPU or directed to Procurement.

9.1.9. Recommendation 9: Develop a whole-of-organization approach to partnering

149. In order to realize the potential of the **whole-of-society approach** espoused in the GCR, UNHCR needs a **whole-of-organization approach to partnering**. This evaluation has revealed a series of partnering activities with the private sector in the field and in operational departments. Across the whole of the organization, staff have developed a rich suite of models (**Table 1: UNHCR uses multiple models when engaging the private sector and other partners**) of partnering and roles (**Figure 7**) inside partnerships, belying the mental model of one-to-one partnering with the private sector. The one-to-one model may be more relevant for PSP but is not necessarily for other parts of the house (operational divisions at HQs or in field offices), where this evaluation reveals that more multi-stakeholder – or whole-of-society approaches – are already used. Many existing private sector partners interviewed²⁴ remarked that UNHCR has a position of influence and they would like **UNHCR to use its convening power to bring these different sectors and actors to the table** and help them work together in multi-stakeholder partnerships. The evaluation recommends that the SET as a matter of urgency **actively champions this whole-of-organization approach** to whole-of-society working to inform regional and country-level strategic planning and stakeholder engagement approaches in order to improve UNHCR's ability to achieve positive impacts for PoC and its internal efficiency and effectiveness.
150. UNHCR has developed a variety of approaches to manage all of the different types of partnering occurring across the organization. Now is the time for the organization to **bring cohesion to its partnerships**. This is a mission-critical task. The findings from the benchmark organizations and literature show that when organizations' leadership thinks strategically about partnering with the private sector, they **make it an integral part of their corporate strategy**. Partnering needs to be seen as a strategic element of how UNHCR achieves its mandate, not just an add-on or a route to fundraising alone.
151. Developing a professional orientation towards goal-driven single- or multi-stakeholder partnerships (not siloed by partnership types) requires creating a **whole-of-organization strategy that rationalizes operational partnering support writ large**.²⁵ Only this transformative approach to supporting and professionalizing partnering across the whole organization together with all relevant stakeholders, would have the potential to allow UNHCR to deliver on the demands of the GCR and CRRF (both in terms of

²³ <https://www.ppplab.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/PPPCanvas-User-Guide.pdf>

²⁴ Private sector partners interviewed for this evaluation are exclusively those engaged in exchange or integrative partnerships. Those engaged exclusively in fundraising partnerships may have a different viewpoint, which is relevant to those partnerships and not these.

²⁵ This does not affect HQ fundraising departments or units, but only "non-financial" partnering.

impacts for PoC and whole-of-society approach) and also improve UNHCR efficiencies and effectiveness.

152. First, UNHCR must undertake a **mapping of its partnership work with all partners at HQs**. This should focus on mapping the different **types of partnerships** (fundraise, exchange, integrate and transform (as discussed in section 8.2 and [Figure 8](#), as well as the **sector** of the partner. It is important to map at the global level which team engages with whom in all four types of partnership, and also the support they offer to other UNHCR staff across different partner types. This will bring understanding of the breadth and depth of partnerships held at HQ and the types of expertise that can be called on to support the field and technical staff.
153. Second, UNHCR should consider **centralizing support for partnering** as a professional orientation and activity (rather than having each division or department develop its own guidance and support according to partner type). This approach was already observed to be happening at the field level. It would be transformative for the organization to **establish a Partnering Support Service dedicated to supporting division, Regional Bureaux and field staff in developing single- and multi-stakeholder partnerships**. Horekens' report makes reference to support functions sitting inside PSP, but this additional demand would distract PSP from their core task and ambitious goal. Additionally, UNHCR has a wealth of partnering experience to draw on, including that from PSP. The purpose of such a support service is not to take over management of partnerships but to develop and offer technical support, training, coaching and guidance on all matters concerning partnering for operational purposes. This includes helping teams to think through the value proposition of UNHCR, identifying partners of interest, benefits vs. risk analysis, and choosing the appropriate partnership models and approaches across the full spectrum of outcomes that could be achieved (philanthropic, transactional, exchange and/or transformational: [Figure 8](#). The three currently vacant posts for supporting operational partnerships could be deployed in this Partnering Support Service. The evaluation recommends that the Service be situated within a division that is close to the core business of the organization; for example, operationalizing the GCR objectives or strategic planning. The evaluation recommends a structural solution in order to give the impetus needed to develop partnership competencies across the organization, with partners from all sectors as demanded in the CRRF and GCR (e.g. NGOs, government, private sector, multilateral agencies, development banks, faith-based organizations, civil society, etc.). However, this decision can only be taken once the initial mapping is complete and responsibilities within DRS and the new Division of Strategic Planning and Results have been more clearly delineated.
154. Third, **UNHCR should establish a Partnering Hub**, matching the Solutions Hub, Protection Hub, Programming Hub, and Resource Mobilization and Advocacy Hub. This Hub would be managed by the Partnership Support Service and bring together staff from different HQ divisional teams who support partnering (e.g. technical guidance, field support, training) and also field staff (including many identified in this evaluation) who are experienced in partnering. As with the other Hubs, the purpose of the Partnering Hub would be to break down silos between different partnership units and allow for greater coordination, coherence and streamlining of processes, systems and results tracking. Members of this fifth Hub would join the cross-Hub meetings to ensure coordination between Hubs and with Regional Bureaux. Lessons learned from the functioning of the current Hubs should be used to improve their functioning and prime the recommended Partnering Hub to start as strongly as possible. In addition to this Hub, a dedicated team to meet the professional development needs is required (see section 9.1.1).

10. Annexes

Annex 1: Top companies mentioned in the stocktake survey

Company
UNIQLO
IKEA
Google
Equity Bank
Microsoft
Adecco
CIMB
Facebook
Fast Retailing
Manpower
IKEA Foundation
Top Glove
Unilever
Vodacom
Western Union
Airbnb
Airtel
Biopro
Bodyshop
Care Clinics Group
Chambers of Commerce
Dairy Farm
Dutchlady
Hilton Hotel
Law firm
MTN
Microfinance Banks
Orange
Zain

Annex 2: Participants

Title	Division, Functional Unit	Location
Sr. Evaluation Adviser	Executive Office, Evaluation Service	HQ Geneva
Sr. Evaluation Officer	Executive Office, Evaluation Service	HQ Geneva
Sr. Private Sector Relationships Officer	External Relations, Private Sector Partnerships Service	HQ Geneva
Corporate Relations Officer	External Relations, Private Sector Partnerships Service	HQ Geneva
Head of Service	External Relations, Partnership Coordination Service	HQ Geneva
Head of Service	External Relations, Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service	HQ Geneva
Chief of Section	External Relations, Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service	HQ Geneva
Sr. Donor Relations Officer	External Relations, Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service	HQ Geneva
Sr. Advisor on Private Sector	External Relations	HQ Geneva
Liaison Officer	External Relations	HQ Geneva
Head of Service	Executive Office, UNHCR Innovations	HQ Geneva
Deputy	Executive Office, UNHCR Innovations	HQ Geneva
Director	Resilience and Solutions	HQ Geneva
Deputy Director	Resilience and Solutions	HQ Geneva
Director	Programme Support and Management	HQ Geneva
Deputy Director – Public Health, Shelter & Settlement and Energy & Environment	Programme Support and Management	HQ Geneva
Deputy Director – Integrated Programme Service	Programme Support and Management	HQ Geneva
Head of Section	External Relations, Private Sector Partnerships Service	HQ Copenhagen
Sr. Digital Engagement Officer	External Relations, Digital Engagement	HQ Copenhagen
Sr. Fundraising Communications Officer	External Relations, Digital Engagement	HQ Copenhagen
Fundraising Communication Officer	External Relations, Digital Engagement	HQ Copenhagen
Sr. Corporate Relations Officer	External Relations, Digital Engagement	HQ Copenhagen
Corporate Relations Officer	External Relations, Digital Engagement	HQ Copenhagen
Private Sector Partnerships Officer	External Relations, Digital Engagement	HQ Copenhagen
Livelihoods Officer	Resilience and Solutions, Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Unit External Relations, Private Sector Partnerships Service	HQ Geneva HQ Copenhagen
Global Private Sector Partnerships Officer	External Relations, Digital Engagement	HQ Copenhagen
Director	External Relations	HQ Geneva
Head of Service	External Relations, Private Sector Partnerships Service	HQ Copenhagen
Head of Corporate Partnerships Unit	External Relations, Private Sector Partnerships Service	HQ Copenhagen
Sr. Fundraising Officer	External Relations, Private Sector Partnerships Service	HQ Copenhagen

Sr. Strategic Planning and Coordination Officer	External Relations, Private Sector Partnerships Service	HQ Copenhagen
Associate External Relations Officer	External Relations, Partnership Coordination Service	HQ Geneva
Head of Section	Emergency, Security and Supply/Supply Management and Logistics Service	HQ Budapest
Sr. Public Health Officer	Programme Support and Management/Public Health Section	HQ Geneva
Sr. WASH Officer	Programme Support and Management/Public Health Section	HQ Geneva
Associate WASH Officer	Programme Support and Management/Public Health Section	HQ Geneva
Sr. Policy Advisor	Programme Support and Management/RBM Renewal Project	HQ Geneva
Sr. Resettlement Officer	International Protection, Resettlement	HQ Geneva
Sr. Advisor, Gender-based Violence	International Protection, Field Protection Service	HQ Geneva
Sr. Policy/External Relations Officer	Resilience and Solutions	HQ Geneva
Sr. Livelihoods Officer	Resilience and Solutions, Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Unit	HQ Geneva
Livelihoods Officer	Resilience and Solutions, Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Unit	HQ Geneva
Sr. Education Advisor	Resilience and Solutions, Education Unit	HQ Copenhagen
Education Officer	Resilience and Solutions, Education Unit	HQ Copenhagen
Policy Officer	Resilience and Solutions	HQ Geneva
Director	Regional Bureau Europe	HQ Geneva
Sr. Desk Officer	Regional Bureau Europe	HQ Geneva
Director	Regional Bureau Americas	HQ Geneva
Deputy Director	Regional Bureau Asia & Pacific	HQ Geneva
Director	Regional Bureau East & Horn of Africa	Nairobi, Kenya
Director	Regional Bureau Southern Africa	Pretoria, South Africa
Director	Regional Bureau MENA	HQ Geneva
Sr. External Relations Officer	Regional Bureau Africa	HQ Geneva
Sr. Policy Advisor	Regional Bureau Asia	HQ Geneva
Sr. Policy Advisor	Regional Bureau Americas	HQ Geneva
Sr. Communications Officer	Regional Bureau Europe	HQ Geneva
Sr. Regional Private Sector Partnerships Officer	Europe Region	The Hague, Netherlands
Sr. Regional Private Sector Partnerships Officer	MENA Region	Abu Dhabi, UAE
Sr. Regional Private Sector Partnerships Officer	Asia & Pacific Region	Bangkok, Thailand
External Relations Officer	Regional Bureau Asia & Pacific	HQ Geneva
Sr. Enterprise Risk Management Officer	Executive Officer, Enterprise Risk Management	HQ Geneva
Sr. Partnerships Advisor	Resilience and Solutions	HQ Geneva
Sr. Partnerships Officer	Resilience and Solutions	HQ Geneva
Sr. Solutions and Development Officer	Executive Office, UNHCR Ethiopia	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Sr. Development Officer	Executive Office, UNHCR Cameroon	Yaoundé, Cameroon
Durable Solutions Officer	Livelihoods Unit, UNHCR Quito Sub-Office	Quito, Ecuador
Sr. Programme Assistant	Programme, UNHCR Ghana	Accra, Ghana

Livelihoods Associate	Livelihoods Unit, UNHCR Ghana	Accra, Ghana
Sr. Livelihoods Officer	Livelihoods Unit, UNHCR Ethiopia	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Sr. Livelihoods Officer	Livelihoods Unit, UNHCR Turkey	Ankara, Turkey
External Relations Officer	Programme, UNHCR Colombia	Bogotá, Colombia
Livelihoods Officer	Protection, UNHCR Brazil	Brasília, Brazil
Assistant Representative – Operations	UNHCR Colombia	Bogotá, Colombia
Durable Solutions Officer	Protection, UNHCR Colombia	Bogotá, Colombia
Head of Sub-Office	UNHCR Medellin Sub-Office	Medellin, Colombia
Associate Durable Solutions Officer	Durable Solutions Unit, UNHCR Costa Rica	San José, Costa Rica
Durable Solutions Associate	Durable Solutions Unit, UNHCR Costa Rica	San José, Costa Rica
Protection Associate	Protection, UNHCR Germany	Berlin, Germany
Reporting Officer	Programme, UNHCR Jordan	Amman, Jordan
Associate Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Officer	Livelihoods Unit, UNHCR Jordan	Amman, Jordan
Livelihoods Officer	Community Services, UNHCR Kenya	Nairobi, Kenya
Sr. Solutions Advisor	CRRF, UNHCR Kenya	Nairobi, Kenya
Assistant Programme Officer	Livelihoods Unit/UNHCR Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Associate Programme Officer	Health Unit, UNHCR Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Livelihoods Officer	Programme, UNHCR Malawi	Lilongwe, Malawi
Associate Durable Solutions Officer	Durable Solutions Unit/UNHCR Mexico	Mexico City, Mexico
Head of Office	UNHCR Netherlands	The Hague, Netherlands
Private Sector Partnerships Officer	External Relations/UNHCR Head of Office in The Netherlands	The Hague, Netherlands
Livelihoods Associate	Programme Office, UNHCR Rwanda	Kigali, Rwanda
Sr. Development Officer	Programme Office, UNHCR Rwanda	Kigali, Rwanda
Sr. Development & Solutions Officer	Programme Office, UNHCR Uganda	Kampala, Uganda
Assistant Livelihoods Officer	Programme Office, UNHCR Uganda	Kampala, Uganda
BAC Education Group	Private sector partner	Malaysia
Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS)	Private sector partner	Malaysia
Asia School of Business	Private sector partner	Malaysia
DLA Piper law firm	Private sector partner	United Kingdom
Gezer Shoes	Private sector partner	Turkey
Ikea Foundation	Private sector partner	The Netherlands
MyBucks Banking Corporation	Private sector partner	Malawi
Qualitas Medical Group	Private sector partner	Asia-Pacific region
Unilever	Private sector partner	United Kingdom
UNIQLO	Private sector partner	Japan
UNIQLO-Fast Retailing	Private sector partner	Japan
Vodafone	Private sector partner	United Kingdom
YTL Communication	Private sector partner	Malaysia

Annex 3: Context-specific strategic questions for effective partnering²⁶

Why do we want to partner? What is the rationale to work with others?

This first question refers to the rationale at the beginning of this report (see **Figure 1**), and the formulation of a value proposition (see section 8.4 and section 9.1.9). UNHCR needs to be clear about its comparative advantage (“what is distinctive about our organization?”) and what makes the organization an attractive partner to others (“what makes UNHCR attractive to others?”). It also implies that UNHCR has evidence about how partners regard them (based on previous experiences, independent evaluations or consultancy reports).

Deciding when to engage

Partnering is not a quick fix or an easy option. It is important to be sure there is not an obvious other way to address the issue or challenge within an area of work that has been identified. So, first, identify in broad terms the issue / challenges to be addressed.

Guiding questions:

1. What is the issue to be addressed?
2. Are there any non-partnering alternatives to tackle the issue that needs consideration?

If a partnering approach seems the only / best way forward, build a clear rationale to persuade others. This rationale includes the partnership desired impact, translated into partnering objectives.

Guiding questions:

3. How can partnering help to achieve the desired impact?
4. What is the partnership objective?
5. To what extent is this goal related to the core activities of the partners?
6. What are their motives / interests and their capacities to fulfill the partnership’s objective(s)?
7. How does UNHCR make sure refugees and PoC are involved and that their voices are being heard?

Deciding which partners

A stakeholder mapping is a systematic approach to identify all organizations which need to be taken into account by a starting a partnership that might play some role. In other words: what is the optimal partner configuration?

Stakeholders can be defined as (1) those whose interests are affected by the issue or those whose activities strongly affect the issue, (2) those who possess resources (financial, influence,

²⁶ Drost, S. and Pfisterer, S. How to make cross sector partnerships work? Critical success factors for partnering. Partnerships Resource Centre, Rotterdam. 2013 www.rsm.nl/prc/publications/detail/69111-how-to-make-cross-partnerships-work-critical-success-factors-for-partnering/; Pfisterer, S., Payandeh, N. and Reid, S. Designing Comprehensive partnering agreements: Introduction to the Partnering Agreement Scorecard. Partnerships Resource Centre, Rotterdam. 2014 www.rsm.nl/prc/publications/detail/68263-designing-comprehensive-partnering-agreements/; PPPLab. Insight Series 02: Building partnerships. 2014 <https://ppplab.org/2014/10/insight-series-02-building-partnerships/>; Promoting effective partnerships for the SDGs, www.effectivepartnering.org; Tennyson, R. The partnering toolbook. International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF). 2011 <https://thepartneringinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Partnering-Toolbook-en-20113.pdf>

expertise) needed for strategy formulation and implementation, and (3) those who control relevant implementation instruments (usually the public sector).

Assessing potential partners depends first and foremost largely on what the partner has to offer in terms of knowledge, expertise, product or service and the extent to which this fits with the need within the area of work that has been articulated and prioritized.

Guiding questions: Does the partner organization have...

8. A good track record of stability and reliability?
9. Reasonable respect within their own sector / from other sectors or key players?
10. Skills and competences that complement those of UNHCR and / or other partners?
11. Striking power when things get tough?
12. What are potential risks (beyond financial or reputational; think of autonomy, conflict of interests, implementation challenges)?
13. What are common rewards (improved access to information, resources, networks, greater reach, operational efficiency, innovation, enhanced credibility, etc.)

Furthermore, it is important to assess if a partner is “fit for partnering” (internalization). Are they potentially good partners?

Guiding questions:

14. Does UNHCR have a clear understanding of how the partner differs in its organizational values and systems?
15. Does the partner have an organizational framework for partnering? Or: how well are partnerships supported across the organization?
16. Does the partner have a partnering mindset (or at least a basic understanding of key processes, tools and skills)?

To answer these questions, the current states may be reviewed: What is known so far? Is this information based on reliable information? Is it enough information upon which to base a decision or are further actions needed? Is more information required? Are there remaining concerns? May these be discussed with the partner?

Another indication of “fit to partner” is the extent to which partners are able to mitigate risks. There are several conditions that should be in place in order to enable partners to do this effectively:

Guiding questions for risk mitigation in PSE (in addition to reputational/financial risks)

17. How well would partners respond to unanticipated events?
18. How best can they prepare themselves to be flexible to respond to changes?
19. How will partners share information on risks between them?
20. Are partners able / willing to reframe risks as opportunities

Deciding which activity/intervention

Once partners have been identified, it is time to invest in deepening the understanding between them and build the partner relationships. Time spent on this at an early stage will reward later and make the partnership more robust when it faces challenges.

Guiding questions:

21. What are the key principles and values for partnering (see section 7.7.7)?
22. What are the principles to build a successful partnership?
 - How are partners interacting (behaviour)?
 - How will they communicate internally and externally (shared responsibility)?
 - How will logistics be managed (being efficient and effective)?
 - How will decisions be made (building collective responsibility)?
 - How will the partnership be monitored and reviewed (joint learning to enable continuous improvement)?

Next, it is important to move to a broad agreement about the key issues to be addressed by the partnership.

Guiding questions:

23. What are the focus area(s) of work, actual projects and specific goals to accomplish its objectives?
24. What are the desired outcomes from the partnership activities?
25. How will these outcomes be measured and assessed?
26. What are the specific activities that should be developed to achieve these outcomes (be realistic as well as ambitious)?
27. Which accomplishments will be defined as intermediate goals through the process?
28. What resources are needed and what is each partner able and willing to contribute (resource mapping)?

Deciding which role to play

One of the critical success factors of effective partnerships is clarity of roles and responsibilities. In the initiation phase it must be clear who does what to allow for accountability between partners and towards stakeholders. UNHCR is already experienced in playing several roles: to share information, raise awareness, lobby and advocate, connect and matchmake, convene and catalyse, incentivize, and learn (see [Figure 7](#)).

Guiding question:

29. Are the roles and responsibilities of each partner clear and transparent for all?
30. Which partner will be in charge of implementing which activity?
31. Will there be joint responsibilities?
32. How will these responsibilities be distributed and will they change over time?

When roles are being determined, it is important to develop a constructive working relationship and create a working climate in which open dialogue is welcomed. Clear communication and jointly agreed upon principles (see section 7.7) are crucial.

Guiding questions:

33. Are regular dialogue, stock-taking and consideration of new directions being provided?
34. How do partners create a sense of ownership and genuine joint responsibility?
35. How do partners best understand and manage power dynamics?
36. Are partners content with the extent to which their contributions are appreciated?

Deciding which model to use

What type of partnership will be likely to support achieving the goal? This depends on the partners needed to be involved but also the particular context the partnership will work in. Effective partnering takes full account of local priorities and conditions and engages with the people affected in tailored and locally appropriate ways.

The choice of model of engagement (see [Table 1](#)) is highly dependent on contextual circumstances and opportunities. The models of engagement and their supposed impacts were self-reported but not backed up by data. It is important to identify the impact pathways and the assumptions underlying these models, moving from activities to outputs to outcomes. Of the range of partnering models UNHCR has used, it might prove easier to negotiate among many partners in the platform model, since it avoids one-to-one confrontation.

Each of these models can be used across the four ways of engaging (transformational, integrative, transactional or philanthropic). To continue the example of transactional working to secure offers of employment for PoC, UNHCR targets individual companies in one-to-one relationships, and also through Chambers of Commerce, and through government policy change and implementation, and through platform models. Equally, UNHCR can work in any of these models of engagement to transform partner companies to improve working conditions for PoC: from bringing together all major companies in an industry to raise employment standards together in a platform model to engaging one company to raise its standards, to engaging with the government to improve national labour laws.

Guiding questions:

37. What will each partner bring to the table?
38. What is the perspective of each partner on refugees and PoC (those being seen as customers, clients, suppliers, employees, entrepreneurs)?
39. What is their track record?
40. What are the possibilities / constraints in the country / region regarding collaborating with others (think of local economic, political, historical and social conditions)?
41. How can these possibilities / constraints be met?

Acknowledgement of each partner's contribution as well as their own legitimate priorities and potential partnering constraints is important in developing mutual engagement.

Guiding questions:

42. How do partners ensure they are all engaged and value each other's contribution?
43. How do partners deal with "disruptive" colleagues?
44. What is the procedure to enter or leave the partnership?
45. What are the transparency requirements of and from each partner (towards refugees, PoC, stakeholders, constituencies)?