

PROJECT PROPOSAL TO THE ITALIAN AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

**Project: Protection and Assistance Support to Eritrean
Afar Refugees in Ethiopia**



Eritrean Afar refugee weaving the traditional dibora mat. (Photo: UNHCR)

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Title:	Protection and Assistance Support to Eritrean Afar Refugees in Ethiopia
Total Budget:	EUR 1,000,000 (USD 1,234,568)*
Implementation Period:	24 months
Number of Beneficiaries:	38,000 Eritrean Afar refugees

* The exchange rate used is 0.810 (UN rate 01 April 2018)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND UNHCR'S RESPONSE IN ETHIOPIA

With more than 900,000 registered refugees as of January 2018, Ethiopia is the second largest refugee hosting country on the African continent. The Government of Ethiopia continues to provide access to asylum within the context of the open door policy which it has maintained for many years, and UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies are allowed to implement mandate related activities. Refugees continued to arrive throughout 2017, mostly from South Sudan, Somalia, and Eritrea – a trend which is expected to continue in the coming years. Most refugees are granted refugee status *prima facie*¹, and the majority of the refugees are accommodated in camps, whilst only a smaller percentage of the refugee population is permitted to reside in urban areas for medical and/or protection and humanitarian reasons. In addition, about 16,000 Eritrean refugees reside in Addis Ababa under the Out-of-Camp Policy (OCP).

UNHCR works with partners to place protection at the core of all interventions for all refugee population groups in Ethiopia. For refugees, the primary objective includes sustaining access to asylum. A focus in this regard is to expand registration and documentation of the refugee population, especially by issuing refugee ID cards to all refugee groups. Protection and delivery of basic services (border reception, access to life-saving and life-sustaining assistance through food and nutrition, shelter and non-food items, health and education services as well as water and sanitary facilities) is continued whilst also encouraging self-reliance of refugee populations, focusing on access to expanded work opportunities and livelihoods/skills training.

CRRF

UNHCR Ethiopia, in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia, other humanitarian organisations, development actors, donor agencies, and the private sector, has been working on a range of initiatives to address the socio-economic needs of refugees and host communities. In February 2017, Ethiopia accepted to be considered as a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) focus country. The decision by Ethiopia to participate in the CRRF was quickly supported by a joint World Bank-UNHCR mission to consider support to refugee and host communities under the IDA-18 refugee sub-window.

In November 2018 The Government of Ethiopia formally launched the CRRF, effectively paving the way for the implementation of the nine pledges it made at the Leaders' Summit on Refugees in September 2016 in New York. Through the pledges, which serve as a

¹ Refugee from countries other than Somalia, South Sudan, Eritrea, Yemen, and exceptional cases from Sudan have to go through the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) process. In addition, certain criteria might trigger and exclusion from acceptance on *prima facie* basis and require refugees to undergo RSD procedures, such as involvement in committing crimes against humanity and criminal acts.

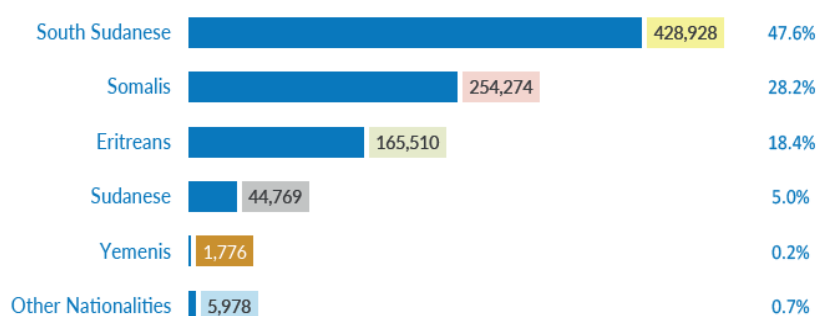
vehicle for implementing the CRRF in the country, Ethiopia seeks to promote refugees' self-reliance through an improved and sustainable response that combines wider support to host communities, furthering peaceful coexistence and inclusion of refugees into national development plans

Working under the overall supervision of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Government has developed a road map to guide the implementation of the pledges and a Steering Committee set up to oversee the process. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs co-chair the Steering Committee together with UNHCR. The Pledges are in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Ethiopia's second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTPII).

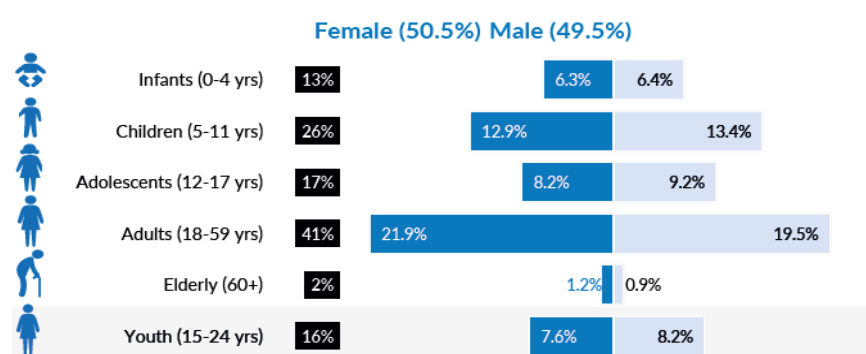
Beneficiaries

As of 31 January 2018, 901,235 refugees were registered in the 26 refugee camps and urban areas and settings in Ethiopia. The majority of refugees originate from South Sudan (47.6%) followed by Somalia (28.2%), Eritrea (18.4%), Sudan (5%), Yemen (0.2%) and other nationalities (0.7%). Out of the total refugee population, 56% are children, and 78% are women and children. Most refugees flee their countries due to civil war and conflict, coupled with food insecurity and drought.

Population of Concern by Country of Origin (POC) (as of 31 Jan 2018)



Age & Gender breakdown



The contribution of AICS will directly support the Eritrean Afar refugees residing in Barahle and Aysaita camps; of the 37,188 registered Eritrean Afar refugees, 11,247 refugees were registered as residing outside the camps and 25,941 within the camps. These camps grew steadily over the past years, with refugees previously residing with their Ethiopian clan members relocating, which severely constrains the limited services available in the camps. In 2017, 6,696 Eritrean Afar refugees arrived in Ethiopia, bringing the total population to

13,886 in Aysaita and 12,055 in Barahle. Women and children form 79% of the refugee population in the camps.

UNHCR'S PLANNED OBJECTIVES FOR 2018

Responding to sudden massive influxes whilst further stabilising existing camps will remain the key priority of UNHCR and all partners working with refugees in Ethiopia.

Core common objectives in the response include:

1. Preserving and enhancing the protection environment and living conditions for refugees and promotion of peaceful coexistence;
2. Strengthening refugee protection through the expansion of improved community-based and multi-sectoral child protection and SGBV programmes;
3. Strengthening access to basic services;
4. Expanding labour opportunities;
5. Supporting the implementation of the Government's pledges to expand access to rights, services, and self-reliance opportunities in the longer-term, in line with the CRRF;
6. Contributing to the development of linkages to local and national development interventions; and expanding access to solutions when feasible and legal migration pathways.

With scarce land availability to establish additional camps to support refugees predominantly within the Gambella Region, and the whole-of-society approach newly endorsed by the Government, settlement options will be explored that place an emphasis on the expansion of existing community facilities in health, education, WASH, environmental protection, energy, shelter, social protection and employment as part of the broader refugee response.

For newly arrived refugees, immediate and timely registration, including screening for specific needs and vulnerabilities is important. Whilst awaiting registration and relocation to identified locations, basic services will be provided to the new arrivals, including health, nutrition, WASH and protection and education interventions. The high number of unaccompanied and separated children, as well as other vulnerable children amongst newly arriving refugees, specifically South Sudanese and Eritrean refugees, will be the focus of UNHCR, the Administration for Refugees and Returnees Affair (ARRA) and partners' joint efforts.

Addressing the nutritional needs of new arrivals and prevention and treatment of malnourished cases is key as malnutrition continues to pose a challenge across all locations. In Gambella, Melkadida and Afar regions the prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) remains above the emergency threshold of 15%. GAM and stunting prevalence remain within the emergency threshold in 15 and 10 of the 26 refugee camps respectively.

Health services in the remote areas of Ethiopia are often underdeveloped and provide a limited range of services. To contribute to peaceful coexistence, health services are provided free of charge to host community members. In 2018 UNHCR will continue to focus on enhancing access to primary health care services and strengthen referral services. In line with the CRRF, a closer cooperation with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and respective Regional Health Bureaus will be established to benefit from national initiatives, and further alignment of health service implementation with the MoH will be explored.

In 2017, an average per capita supply of 18.7 litres of potable water per day was achieved. Average household latrine coverage stood at 32.4%. Continued efforts will focus on improving access to water in order to be able to achieve the UNHCR minimum standard of 20 litres per person per day with a strong focus on community participation and seeking integration with host community structures, particularly in water provision. Currently five

water sources use solar energy for water pumping and it is foreseen that 11 additional sources will be solarized in 2018, bringing the number of fully solarised water systems to 5. The utility approach to water supply is being piloted in Gambella (at Itang) and serving over 200,000 refugees and host communities. Three additional regions in Tigray, Benishangul Gumuz and Jijiga are planned for 2018 with the aim to reduce unit cost of water production and ensure sustainability.

In terms of access to adequate shelter, to the extent possible, replacement of tents with transitional shelters aligned with the architecture of the host community will be pursued. This is in line with the national shelter strategy approach that was finalised in 2017. Shelter provision will target the most vulnerable groups such as female-headed households, children, older people, persons with physical disabilities, and other groups/persons with special needs as a priority. UNHCR has put in place the necessary structures and systems and conducted response analysis for the institutionalisation of Cash-Based Interventions (CBIs) in 2018. Based on the response analysis, it is expected that use of cash in different sectors, including in replacing Core Relief Items (CRIs), will be rolled out in 2018 in all field offices apart from Gambella and Dollo where there are plans for joint CBI assessments by UNHCR, WFP and ARRA.

Through greater streamlining with the national education system, where possible, parallel systems will be minimised. Investment will be made in infrastructure, particularly in the construction of classrooms for primary education and secondary education. Refugee schools will be included in the national education assessments. The improvement of the quality of education is vital, including the qualification of the teachers and the facilities and materials.

UNHCR's livelihood activities targeting refugees and host communities fall under: agriculture and livestock; vocational skills training; microfinance and small enterprise. Backyard gardening has been established in Gambella and Assosa, while in Shire refugees are largely engaged in agriculture and goats and cattle fattening. Vocational training courses are available in all locations, and are increasingly linked to markets, often targeting youth and women. Income Generating Activities are related to business skills of refugees and driven by market opportunities. In line with CRRF, UNHCR will focus on enhancing coordination of livelihood interventions with development actors.

PRIORITY INTERVENTIONS ERITREAN AFAR REFUGEES 2018

UNHCR's operational priorities in relation to the provision of Protection and Mixed Solutions for Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers in Ethiopia is anchored within the Comprehensive Protection and Solutions Strategy for Eritrean Refugees for the period of 2017-2020. Leveraging on the opportunities presented by the GoE Pledges at the Leaders' Summit in 2016, the increasing donor interest in operationalizing opportunities for the creation of a humanitarian and development continuum and drawing from the objectives of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, UNHCR's protection and solutions priorities will include the following:

With regard to data management and integrity through strengthening of reception conditions, registration and documentation, programme implementation targeting Eritrean Refugees will pursue actions to merge the refugee registration process, upgrade facilities at the entry points, enhance joint border monitoring with government and other stakeholders by employing a broadly multi stakeholder approach where possible and the enhanced implementation and use of the Biometric Information Management System (BIMS). Actively pursuing opportunities for synergies between existing services provided to refugees in camps and community development support within the context of regional development programmes.

Priority interventions will target increasing potable water supply, sanitation/hygiene services and advocacy for sustainable projects, and improving current services in the type and quality of shelter particularly in the Afar region. Provision of primary health care and reproductive health services remains a core life-saving activity, aiming to maintain or further reduce low mortality rates in the camps.

In relation to SGBV, the operation will work to enhance access to justice and physical protection of survivors and also strengthen mental health and psychosocial services, including for survivors of trafficking. Environmental Protection and access to alternative energy will also be a priority, focussing on the most vulnerable households. In line with the national strategy on environmental protection and recognising the cross-cutting impact of the lack of appropriate domestic energy sources for refugees in terms of protection (particularly of women and girls) and food security, the operation in 2018 will prioritise enhancing provision of alternative energy (e.g. ethanol/electrification) for household and communal consumption. Core relief items, such as buckets or kitchen sets, will be provided to new arrivals; broken items will be replaced as required.

COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP

Within the context of the CRRF and the roll-out of the Pledges, UNHCR will foster the expansion of partnerships with government actors - including leaders of regions and local districts - traditional and non-traditional donors and partners, and international and national NGOs. UNHCR's membership of the Humanitarian-Development Nexus Group, spearheaded by the UN Resident Coordinator in Ethiopia, that has engaged selected donors, UN agencies and international NGOs, also serves as an important conduit to reinforce the collaboration between international humanitarian and development actors. Throughout the partnership and coordination with various actors, ARRA and relevant line ministries should be at the forefront and play a key role.

A CRRF Steering committee was established and is co-chaired by ARRA, UNHCR, and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation. Six technical committees covering the nine pledges have been created and will include representatives from other line ministries, representatives from NGOs, the RCO, EIC, and representatives from the donor community as well as the World Bank.

UNHCR Ethiopia is implementing the Refugee Coordination Model, and coordination mechanisms are established with partners, the Government, incorporating the participation of refugees, and also involving development institutions in the refugee programme. The Refugee Task Force (RTF) in Ethiopia is chaired by UNHCR and the government counterpart ARRA in Addis Ababa, with a corresponding Task Force at field level. The RTF continues to serve as key inter-sector and information platform for updating refugee situations, supporting active interaction and exchanges among various actors, including UN agencies, international and national NGOs and the Government. Sector coordination also continues, through functional technical groups, including the Protection Working Group and its sub-groups.

In Ethiopia, UNHCR works with more than 40 NGO partners, government agencies, ministries, and humanitarian and development donors and agencies. Key partners in Gambella for health include ARRA (government), MSF, IRC and GLRA. For WASH, key partners are ARRA (Government), IRC, World Vision International, Oxfam, ANE and DCA.

UNHCR registers all refugees in country, and maintains a registration database which also includes information gathered on vulnerabilities and specific needs as well as the education level of each individual refugee. As part of UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity

Mainstreaming approach, UNHCR also holds annual consultations with refugees to ensure their needs, as well as proposed solutions are reflected in the planning processes.

UNHCR works closely with the UN sister agencies and has partnership agreements or Memorandums of Understanding with FAO, UNICEF and WFP. UNHCR and UNDP are also closely coordinating their projects related to peaceful co-existence, livelihoods and access to justice. UNHCR is also closely working with IOM to ensure border evacuation is conducted in a safe and dignified manner, as well as on the relocation of South Sudanese refugees from Gambella to Assosa (Gure Shembola refugee camp).

UNHCR's AGDM Approach

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)'s Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) Policy (2011) guides the agency's work with women, men, girls and boys affected by forced displacement and statelessness. The policy highlights the importance of age, gender and diversity, which it defines broadly to include, for example, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability and membership in a minority or indigenous group. Recognizing that these traits play a critical role in determining a person's opportunities, capacities, needs and risks, UNHCR holds its staff responsible for integrating AGD considerations into all their work.

With funding from AICS UNHCR will ensure women and girls have full access to basic services, risks of sexual and gender based violence are reduced, and female participation in refugee governing bodies, such as the Refugee Central Committees, is increased.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

- UNHCR conducts routine monitoring of projects implemented by its partners, under annual Project Partnership Agreements – (PPAs), and under its own direct implementation. Monitoring of activities is conducted by established Multi-Functional Teams (MFT) at all Sub-Offices following UNHCR Ethiopia's Standard Operating Procedures for Programme Management. Each Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) has a specific monitoring plan for performance and financial monitoring which is developed for each annual operations management cycle in consultation with each of the partners. Financial and performance verifications will be conducted utilizing the risk-based approach and a risk based monitoring schedule will be agreed with all partners by the end of the first quarter of each year.
- Joint Performance Monitoring will be undertaken by MFTs and will be coordinated by the Heads of Sub and Field Offices at each field location depending on the range of each respective PPA. Reporting on monitoring will be undertaken through standardised and collectively adopted templates used by all offices in the operation. Field missions, coordinated by the Country Office, will be undertaken using primary physical data collection, documentary reviews and interview sessions with key actors. Financial verification will be conducted to review and verify the accuracy and completeness of financial reports submitted by partners on a quarterly basis by vetting the necessary supporting documents. Performance and financial verification reports highlighting variances and weaknesses identified with recommended corrective measures will be shared with partners in order for them to initiate remedial action.
- Direct implementation by UNHCR is monitored following a monitoring plan established by the UNHCR Programme Unit in each of the Sub-Offices in consultation with the appropriate technical sections based on the established direct implementation plan. Direct implementation monitoring plans will be communicated to the Programme Unit in the Country Office during the first quarter of each year.

Project Control will conduct quarterly financial monitoring (budget and expenditure variance analysis).

- Evaluation is a component of the UNHCR Programme Cycle. Each year when developing the Country Operation Plan, UNHCR reviews the activities implemented in the previous year and reflects the findings in the planning for the subsequent year. The Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES) in UNHCR headquarters has an evaluation function for certain themes.

RISK AND ASSUMPTIONS

UNHCR will continue its operation in Ethiopia with the main planning assumptions, including:

- The continued receptiveness of the Government of Ethiopia and the maintenance of its open door policy towards refugees.
- Continued socio-economic and political stability in Ethiopia, particularly in refugee hosting areas.
- The security situation in Countries of Origin, particularly South Sudan and Somalia, will remain unpredictable and voluntary repatriation is not an option in the cases of South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea;
- Refugees will remain at increased risk of malnutrition as a result of the continuous reduction of food rations provided by WFP, the limited agriculture opportunities and the effects of potential extreme weather conditions.
- Absence of natural disasters and larger epidemics.

UNHCR recognizes the risk of massive influx of refugees from South Sudan and Somalia beyond the anticipated numbers and resources may be insufficient to address basic protection and assistance. UNHCR regularly monitors the number of refugees and the situations in countries of origin and contingency planning is in place.

Civil unrest and violent protests in specific regions continued throughout 2017; in February 2018 a State of Emergency was declared again. Even though, the general security situation is considered stable, and areas hosting refugees have largely not been directly impacted, it is recognised as a risk for the Ethiopia operation as communication and road travels are impacted. UNHCR has contingency business continuity plans in place to ensure the protection of people of concern and continuity of service delivery.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Energy & Environmental Protection

Sustainable access to energy has a positive impact in the lives of refugees. Not only does it allow them to cook, have lighting, heating and power in refugee households and other infrastructures, but it also improves their protection, well-being and livelihoods. In contexts where firewood is the main source of energy, the competition for natural resources is high. This has a negative impact on the relations with the host communities as the availability of firewood is constrained by the often large presence of refugees in their areas. Moreover, ecosystems and the environment are inevitably degraded, causing a strain in the livelihoods of both refugees and their host communities.

Having light and electricity extends a lifeline to refugees, especially women and children who are most likely the ones searching for energy sources. It supports the investment of their time in education and livelihoods, while reducing protection risks like Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV).

Cognisant of the significant challenges presented by the lack of sustainable and renewable energy sources, UNHCR and partners are committed to jointly and comprehensively working together towards addressing the energy needs of refugees and the communities that host them. Access to the national grid is limited and will not address the need for cooking energy of individual households. With funding from the AICS UNHCR would provide a mix of energy options to the refugees, including stoves and ethanol and briquettes to 220 households and 500 households in the camps in Afar. In addition, indigenous and exotic trees will be planted to rehabilitate the land impacted by the presence of refugees; woodlots will be established in particularly degraded areas, increasing also the survival rate of the individual trees while also reducing soil erosion.

WASH

While the provision of water is currently considered within the standard of 20 litres of potable water per person per day in both camps in the Afar region, the water systems needs continuous investment and repairs to ensure the uninterrupted provision of water to all refugees in the camps. In addition, the water systems are also serving the surrounding host communities in the arid area.

The family/household latrine coverage remains low with 15% in both camps, leading to open defecation and creating public health related risks as well as expose the SGBV related risks for women and girls accessing shared latrines. UNHCR will use funding from the AICS to construct additional latrines (approximately 600) in the camps, enhance the promotion of hygiene, maintain and de-sludge latrines and ensure adequate waste management.

BUDGET

Activity for 24 months	Budget in USD	Budget in EUR
Overall Requirement Afar Operation 24 months	5,752,311	4,659,372
Funding from AICS		
Population has sufficient access to energy	315,253	235,475
Natural resources and environment better protected	298,932	262,018
Population lives in satisfactory conditions of sanitation and hygiene	255,502	206,957
Supply of potable water increased or maintained	284,114	230,129
Sub-total	1,153,801	934,579
Program Support Cost (7%)	80,767	65,421
Total budget	1,234,568	1,000,000

* The exchange rate used is 0.810 (UN rate 01 April 2018)

The implementation period will commence with the exchange of letters between UNHCR and the Government of Italy.

UNHCR will provide short narrative mid-year reports 8 weeks after the completion of 6 months of implementation. An annual report, including a narrative and financial report (at the level of detail of the proposed budget), will be provided 10 weeks after the completion of the first year. Since UNHCR's partners provide financial reports on quarterly basis, the financial report will be indicative/estimated in case sufficient reports are not available yet. UNHCR will also provide a final report covering the 24 months of implementation 12 weeks after completion of implementation period.