# Gulf of Guinea Joint Response Plan

for refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, and host communities

January
December
**2024**

## Côte d'Ivoire Response Plan

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# Côte d'Ivoire

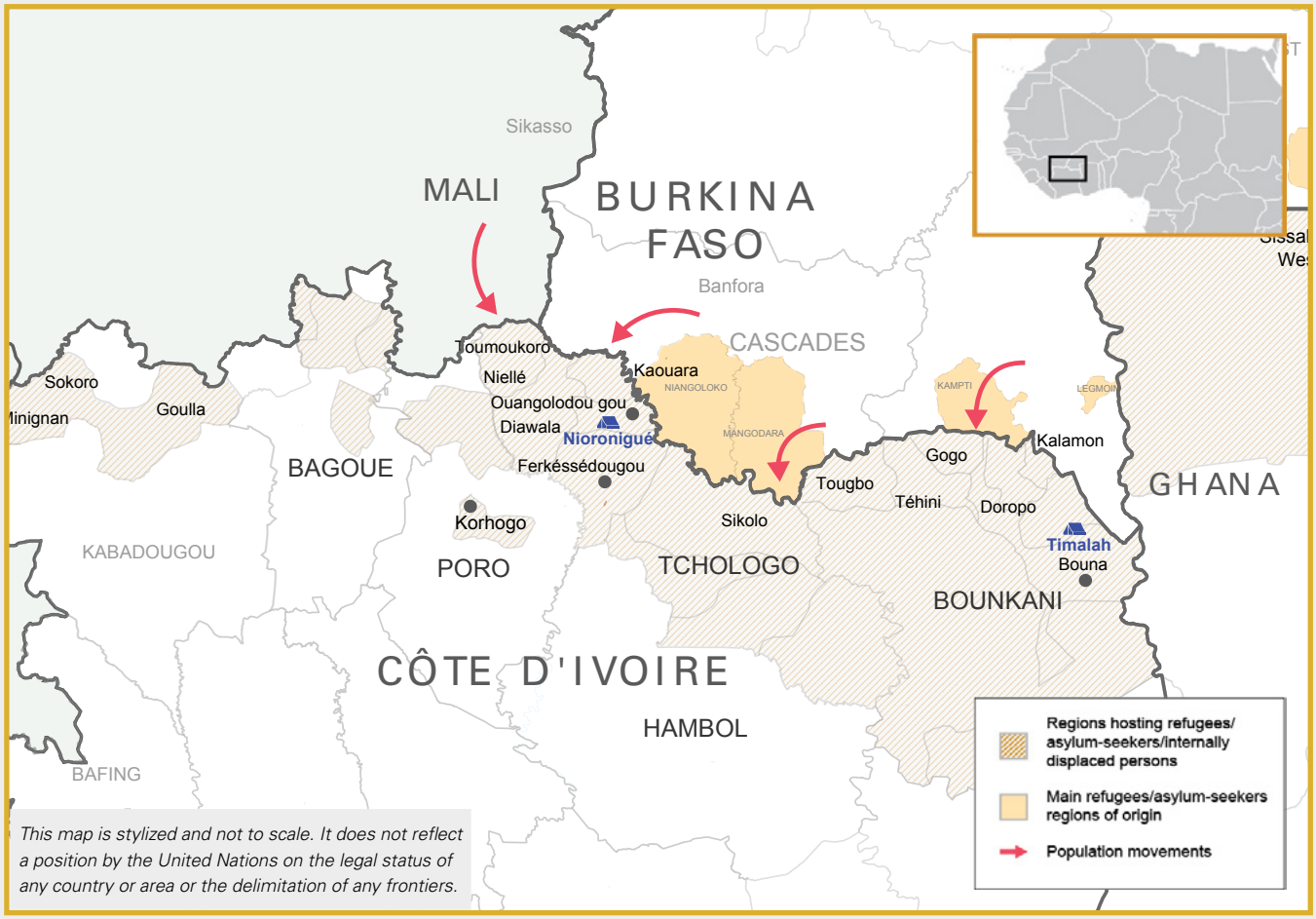
## KEY FIGURES

**85,000**
**Projected refugee populations/asylum seekers**

**0**
**Internally Displaced Persons**

**75,000**
**Host-community members to be reached**

**50.9 USD (millions)**
**Financial requirements**




## Population Groups in Affected Regions (Bounkani & Tchologo)

| Population | 31 December 2023 | 2024 Joint Response Plan (Population to be reached) |
|---|---|---|
| Refugees / asylum-seekers | 45,000 | 85,000 |
| Host communities[1] | 73,762 | 75,000 |
| Total | 118,762 | 160,000 |

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Hassana Casse, a 30-year-old mother with her baby Samira, at the Pietro Bonili Health Center of Odienné, in the northwest of Côte d'Ivoire.

1 Cadre Harmonisé Novembre 2023 (IPC 3+ population)

# Part 1: Current Situation

In April 2021, Côte d'Ivoire became the first coastal country to receive people fleeing insecurity and violence in the central Sahel. In 2023, the deterioration of the security situation in Burkina Faso led to an eleven-fold upsurge in numbers over the course of the year, and as of December 2023, Côte d'Ivoire hosted an estimated 45,000 refugees and asylum-seekers[1] from Burkina Faso, 36,729 of whom were registered. The majority of forcibly displaced persons in northern Côte d'Ivoire are women and girls[2] (55%), while 31% (around 14,000) are school-age children, and more than 20% are under the age of 5.

In early 2023, to respond to the increasing influx of refugees and asylum-seekers, and the strain on host community resources, the government established two sites on the outskirts of northern towns: Nioronigue, which is in the Ouangolodougou region of Tchologo, and Timalah, which is in the Bouna region of Bounkani. As of February 2024, more than 14,000 refugees and asylum-seekers have been relocated to these sites, while a considerable number chose to stay in villages much closer to the border. In these areas, basic public services and infrastructures in host communities are overwhelmed, exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities.

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Recognizing the challenges faced by the country and communities in hosting Burkinabe refugees and asylum-seekers, in 2022 the UN Country Team adopted the "Plan de Resilience Nord-Est", a triple nexus-based approach to support the government's efforts to address immediate needs and ensure community resilience. The "Plan de Resilience Nord-Est" supports the ability of individuals, households, communities, local institutions and systems to absorb and recover from shocks, while continuing to function and adapt in a way that supports long-term prospects for sustainable development, peace and security.

In line with the "Plan de Resilience Nord-Est", this response plan is led jointly by WFP, UNICEF UNHCR, and IOM with the participation of 15 humanitarian and development partners. This innovative strategy goes beyond immediate emergency assistance, integrating humanitarian and resilience responses into a single plan aligned with national priorities. Through this plan, partners will work together to ensure that forcibly displaced populations and host communities affected by the situation in the central Sahel have effective and equitable access to education, health care, sanitation and other essential socio-economic goods, services and infrastructure, as well as opportunities for sustainable livelihoods (in line with SDGs 1 to 11).

1 All arrivals have not gone through refugee status determination and are therefore referred to as asylum seekers.

2 UNHCR Data Portal.

# Needs and Vulnerabilities

Three joint assessments involving the Government, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP were conducted in January 2023, February 2023 and April 2023 in the regions of Tchologo (north) and Bounkani (north-east), to assess whether the humanitarian needs of both displaced and host populations were being met. These assessments confirmed the significant needs of the population in several sectors, including child protection, biometric registration and social welfare, drinking water, market food supply, access to health and access to education. Additionally, protection risks and vulnerabilities are constantly highlighted by the protection monitoring conducted through Project 21 inter-agency protection monitoring[3] in the six provinces bordering Burkina Faso and Mali.

## Access to basic services

Communities in the Bounkani (north-east) and Tchologo (north) regions of Côte d'Ivoire face challenges accessing basic social services and have significantly lower economic development than the rest of the country. In these regions where the basic social services are lacking, further reductions in access would only exacerbate structural inequalities and community tensions.

The limited level of access to basic services was highlighted by an assessment conducted by REACH and IOM in October 2023[4], and indicated that 30% of refugees and asylum-seekers surveyed had access to WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) services, 15% had access to education, and only 12% had access to health services. Considering the evolving situation, there is a need for more responsive and systematic data collection and analysis on the level of access to basic services available to refugees, asylum-seekers, and host communities to inform the response. Furthermore, these activities need to be extended to all northern regions to adapt to ongoing population movements.

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**IOM**
Rare access to safe water in the community of Debango

### Health and nutrition

According to Project 21[5], only 12% of refugees and asylum-seekers had access to health services, which is attributed to lack of financial capacity, restricted physical access, and a lack of medicines, medical material and equipment. A comparative analysis of Project 21 results between February and September 2023 show a general deterioration in access to basic services.

Measles, dengue and polio epidemics occurred in 2023. In June 2023, a measles vaccination campaign was conducted in the four health districts in Bounkani and Tchologo, covering refugees, asylum-seekers and host communities in addition to the routine vaccination programme.

The Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) Calculator, assessing the population in need of sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence (GBV) services, estimates that each month there will be 19,664 women pregnant with 328 expected obstetric complications and 2,185 live births.

Despite some progress, the nutritional situation remains worrying in Côte d'Ivoire's northern regions, with marked disparities compared to the national average for the main nutrition indicators for women and children. The prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) in children aged 6-59 months is almost 10% in the Tchologo region and more than 6% in the Bounkani region. The results of mass nutrition screenings of children aged 6-59 months organized by the Ministry of Health in these regions in May 2023 showed a GAM prevalence rate of more than 3% overall and almost 14% among the refugee and asylum-seeker population[6]. In addition, the coverage and quality of nutrition services need to be improved, particularly in sites where refugees and asylum-seekers are relocated.

3 Project 21

4 Évaluation territoriale de l'accès des populations aux infrastructures sociocommunautaires de base, Tchologo et Bounkani, Côte d'Ivoire, REACH, Octobre 2023

5 Project 21

6 Ministry of Health, Demographic Health Survey, 2021, Côte d'Ivoire

### Education

In 2023, a total of 900 refugee and asylum-seeker children from Burkina Faso in the sites were placed in temporary learning spaces along with nearly 980 Ivorian children who were out of school. According to government and UNHCR data as of 31 December 2023, more than 13,900 refugee and asylum-seeker children are of school age. The reasons cited for not attending school were recent arrival (30%), lack of financial resources (25%), lack of documentation (14%), lack of information (10%), lack of schools (6%) and linguistic barriers (3%).

A joint assessment conducted in February and April 2023[7] indicated an inadequacy of school infrastructures in the localities hosting refugees and asylum-seekers. In these areas, the education system was facing pre-existing limitations in terms of available physical space, infrastructures, human resources and materials. The proportion of public primary schools with incomplete structures is much higher in the north than in the rest of the country. Furthermore, in five of the eight regions hosting refugees and asylum-seekers (Folon, Gontougo, Poro, Tchologo and Bafing) more than 60% of public primary schools do not have a water point. Insecondary schools, some 39% in Bounkani and Folon regions do not have water points, compared to 11% at national level.

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**UNICEF**
Children attending class at a temporary learning space in the village of Nioronigue, in the north of Côte d'Ivoire.

### Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

The government and partners have provided WASH assistance to communities, notably by repairing and building water pumps and constructing latrines. However, the response remains insufficient compared to the needs.

In northern Côte d'Ivoire, the limited number of human-powered drinking water pumps in most villages forces people to collect surface water. The results of the latest national surveys (EDS, 2021) show that access to drinking water in the regions in the north-east (Bounkani, Gontougo) and north (Poro, Tchologo, Bagoué) is below the national average (80%) except for Tchologo (87%). The presence of refugees and asylum-seekers has increased the pressure on already scarce water resources in these areas. The proportion of the population without access to any form of sanitation exceeds 35% in all the northern regions, and reaches over 50% in Poro, Tchologo and Bagoué. The low level of access to drinking water and sanitation services was highlighted by an assessment conducted by REACH in October 2023.

In the two sites hosting over 11,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, there are only eight human-powered pumps, which leaves only one water point for more than 1,300 people (well above the SPHERE standard). This high pressure on existing water points leads to frequent breakdowns.

7 Rapport d'évaluation multisectorielle des acteurs humanitaires et sécuritaires, Régions du Bounkani et du Tchologo, Février 2023.

## Food security

Most refugees and asylum-seekers arrive with meagre belongings if any, and do not have any livelihoods prospects. New arrivals face stark poverty and high levels of food insecurity. Moreover, existing food insecurity among host communities was already high. In 2021, a study of the National Institute of Statistics on regional poverty levels reported that poverty is highest in the north and north-east, particularly in the Bounkani region, with a rate of almost 72%, which is well above the national average of 40%. The latest results of the *Cadre Harmonisé*, conducted in November 2023, show that 30% of the population in the two regions of Bounkani and Tchologo is under pressure in terms of food security, of whom some 22% (71,105 individuals) are severely food insecure. This is particularly the case in communes hosting refugees and asylum-seekers.

Moreover, the Hunger Map report[8] showed an increase in the prevalence of insufficient food consumption scores over the period from June to August 2023 in both Zanzan (from 20% to 27%) and Savanes (13% to19%) regions. In addition, the prevalence of crisis or above crisis food-based coping strategies almost doubled in Savanes over the same period, from 16% to 30%. Under these circumstances, the communities that host refugees and asylum-seekers risk a worsening of their already dire food security situation. Moreover, WFP has noted that refugees and asylum-seekers in the sites of Nioronigue and Timalah are entirely dependent on WFP assistance to meet their food needs.

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## Protection

### Reception at the border

According to the Project 21, some 43% of refugees and asylum-seekers encountered no difficulties crossing the border to Côte d'Ivoire, whereas 31% experienced extortion of goods. Despite 98% expressing an intention to seek asylum, the same percentage lacked knowledge of asylum procedures. On Ivorian territory, 70% reported no threats of violence, while 9% experience extortion of goods, and 4% of male asylum-seekers reported being temporarily detained in a military camp for interrogation, with no violence or ill- treatment.

### Registration and Documentation

Some 23% of refugees and asylum-seekers do not possess any type of civil documentation such as a national identity card or birth certificate. Non-registration of refugee children's births in Ivorian territory remains high. Birth registration is critical to legal identity, a fundamental right that enables access to services while protecting children from exploitation, early marriage and statelessness.

8 The **HungerMapLIVE** is an integrated global hunger monitoring system that collects, processes, and displays real-time information on key food security metrics, conflict, weather events, and other drivers of food insecurity - all in real-time and in one place. The HungerMapLive is available and can be accessed: https://hungermap.wfp.org/

Government partner Direction d'Aide et d'Assistance aux Refugiés (DAARA) and UNHCR register new arrivals. Refugee status determination procedures have not been initiated. Currently, the only document provided by the government is proof of registration, which is not always recognized.

### Child Protection

Registration data indicate that women and girls constitute most of the forcibly displaced population, rendering them vulnerable to various protection risks, particularly those in single-headed households with children. Displacement has also resulted in unaccompanied and separated children, leading to psychosocial distress for many families. 61 unaccompanied refugee and asylum-seeker children (43 boys and 18 girls) and 436 separated refugee and asylum-seeker children (271 boys and 165 girls) were identified in 2023.

Children are particularly susceptible to various protection risks, including sexual and gender-based violence, exploitation, neglect, harmful practices such as child marriage, child labour, trafficking, and other child rights violations. Incidents are under-reported, and joint efforts are needed to make this issue visible, to provide support for case management and strengthening the protection systems.

The number of structures and staff dedicated to child protection, such as social centres and socio-educational complexes, remains largely insufficient.

### GBV

Although 90% of female asylum seekers said they did not face particular risk faced in the host community where they lived, their vulnerability pose risks related to GBV and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). 10% of asylum seekers cited forced marriage as the major risks for women and girls.

The GBVIMS (Gender-Based Violence Information Management System) helps to monitor and collect cases of GBV reported to responded to by social protection structures and their partners. This is a tool initiated by UNFPA and managed by the Ministry in charge of Women, Family and Children. In the first semester of 2023, it has registered 122 GBV cases in Tchologo (103) and Bounkani (19).

### Peaceful coexistence and social cohesion

The arrival of a forcibly displaced populations from Burkina Faso could trigger tension among the communities due to the pressure on services, access to limited land and natural resources. Currently, 93% of surveyed refugees and asylum-seekers felt integrated in their host communities while 4% reported to have faced discrimination. The main threat to peaceful coexistence remains the presence of cattle herds brought by refugees and asylum-seekers on host community farms. In response, the government has prohibited the entry of cattle to the country, depriving many refugees and asylum-seekers of their only means of livelihood.

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## Shelter and Core Relief Items

80% of new arrivals report shelter as one of their main needs, and 10% of asylum-seekers households report shelter as their most important priority. New arrivals typically stay within the host community villages, where they live with relatives in makeshifts shelters within or around the village where they are vulnerable to weather conditions, security risks and robbery. 20% of new arrivals rent a room in the beginning but only 10% manage to sustain the rent in the longer term. 98% of new arrivals request support with core relief items, mainly kitchen utensils and bedding.

## Livelihood and economic inclusion

According to the WFP baseline survey conducted in June 2023, refugee households have limited access to productive assets and economic opportunities. Only a third have access to land and livestock assets, which explains the very low average income level, which does not exceed 18,000 CFA per month. The host communities are also in a vulnerable situation with a monthly income level around 22,000 CFA. These levels are extremely low as the minimum agricultural wage is estimated at 36,000 CFA per month throughout the country and the monthly food budget is estimated at 56,000 CFA per household.

# Part 2 – Response Strategy

The Gulf of Guinea Joint Response Plan is an interagency response tool for an immediate and resilience-based response to the influx from Burkina Faso and its impact on hosting communities. It focuses on refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as the host communities receiving these new arrivals. The geographical scope prioritized is the northern region of Côte d'Ivoire.

While strengthening the protection environment, the response aims to bridge the gap between initial humanitarian needs and development objectives in the north, to enable refugees and asylum-seekers to integrate into national services while also improving the quality of the services for host communities. Improving access to social and basic services for vulnerable populations, including refugees, asylum-seekers and host communities, will reduce their vulnerability and strengthen their capacity to absorb new arrivals and cope with external shocks and crises. This will contribute to building more resilient and shock-responsive systems and strengthen social cohesion among communities.

The plan is aligned with the 2021-2025 National Development Plan, Government Social Programme (PSGOUV2), United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, The Global Compact on Refugees, and the Programme de Resilience dans le Nord-Est de la Côte d'Ivoire.

**The response strategy will be structured around four strategic pillars:**

**Analysis: Evaluation and monitoring** Partners will build capacity for data collection, processing, analysis and visualization, enabling more harmonized and rapid inter-agency planning and decision-making in support to the authorities.

**Assistance: A common response to emergency situations for faster and more efficient assistance** The partners will pool their human and material resources to ensure that in the event of a sudden shock, the humanitarian community can quickly assist the authorities with specific assistance needs. Partners will provide integrated, needs-based, and contextually appropriate humanitarian assistance to refugees/asylum seekers and host communities in need to prevent a deterioration of their health and protection outcomes and to support their human dignity.

**Prevention: Community Integration and Resilience** Communities and local authorities in the northern regions are on the front line of responding to the impact of the situation in the central Sahel. Partners will build their capacity to identify early risks, take steps to mitigate them, and reduce the strain that an increased influx of displaced persons puts on access to existing basic social services.

**Protection: Ensure that all community members are included in an enhanced protection environment** The protection of individuals and communities will remain at the heart of partners' response to the spillover of the central Sahel crisis, ensuring that initiatives are implemented in support to the authorities, civil society and community-based interventions. The response that will be implemented aims to guarantee the full enjoyment of the rights of displaced persons and their host communities, to ensure assistance for immediate essential needs and improved access to basic social services, and to strengthen social cohesion, resilience and self-sufficiency.

## 1. Analysis: Data Collection and Analysis

### Improvement of information management systems

Data pertaining to refugees and asylum-seekers will be used to improve the capacity of stakeholders for analysis and decision making through strengthened collection, processing, interpretation, and dissemination of information. Reader-friendly dashboards and maps on refugees and asylum-seekers, statistic infographics, protection monitoring, operational presence (3/4/5Ws) and contact lists will be produced to ensure that the relevant actors are working with the same or complementary information and baseline data, and that this information is as relevant, accurate and timely as possible. Data analysis will further be improved through severity of needs, response analysis, protection analysis updates and operational mapping. In addition, partners of this response plan will reinforce existing management information system to increase knowledge and use of social services and social centres.

IOM will contribute to data collection efforts by extending its Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT) in partnership with the largest regional network of herders, the Billital Maroobé Network (RBM); as well as the Mobility and Solutions Index (SMI), which tracks context-specific data in four key areas: demographic and mobility trends, safety and security, access to services and infrastructure, and social cohesion. The SMI will help identify narrow pockets of fragility by measuring the perceptions of local communities, as well as generating broader regional data on stability.

Partners will contribute to the GRANIT coastal countries monitoring tool coordinated by OCHA, IOM and REACH by ensuring the quality of the information collected and the analyses that can be carried out through the sectoral working groups[9].

### Border/protection monitoring, registration

Refugees and asylum-seekers are first registered by the Office National de l'Etat Civil en Côte d'Ivoire (ONECI) in the national records and are then registered by DAARA (Direction d'Aide et d'Assistance aux Refugiés) and UNHCR. Data on refugees and asylum-seekers are shared with all partners through a data sharing agreement that also ensures the data protection of refugees and asylum-seekers.

The inter-agency protection monitoring mechanism P21 is implementing a systematic and regular collection, verification, and analysis of information over an extended period to identify violations of rights and/or protection risks, priorities for, and needs of refugees/asylum seekers. The protection monitoring is also used to estimate the number of arrivals and pre-identify asylum seekers before they are formally registered. It covers the regions of Tchologo, Bounkani, Poro, Bagoué and Folon.

Several components of the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) will be implemented in the north of Côte d'Ivoire and other targeted regions of the country, depending on the context and partner needs. Data will be collected in coordination with concerned national authorities (such as the National Institute of Statistics, the National Population Office), via a large and well-established network of community relays and enumerators. This collaboration between key stakeholders at field level will make it possible to provide an in-depth analysis of the situation in the north of the country, highlighting displacement mobility trends and vulnerabilities of people on the move (refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, transhumant, etc.) as well as host communities. In coordination with the Ministry of Interior, partners will also support the digitalization of data collection and analysis at land borders (border posts and mobile teams).

**Partners involved:** CIAUD, IOM, UNHCR

## 2. Assistance: Coordinated Immediate Humanitarian Response

UN agencies and partners will pursue their efforts to better articulate and coordinate the humanitarian response to the needs of newly arrived refugees and asylum-seekers and the host communities receiving them. For this purpose, national-level coordination will continue with relevant government ministries, national authorities, the UN Resident Coordinator and the Operational Coordination Group. Joint missions and joint emergency response teams will be organized as needed to ensure the complementarity of the response and the multisectoral approach based on the mandates and expertise of each actor.

### Emergency shelter and Core Relief items

The government has constructed two reception centres with 2,000 shelter units with capacity for 14,000 refugees and asylum seekers. However, their capacity has already been exceeded. Most refugees and asylum-seekers want to remain in border town and villages, hosted by relatives who live in local communities however those who do not have relatives or means remain stranded. Partners will position emergency shelter materials in case it is required. Core relief items were distributed to all new arrival households, and there's a need to replenish the stock for more incoming arrivals.

Essential WASH supplies will be provided to refugees and asylum-seekers in affected communities, especially dignity and hygiene kits, water purification tablets and latrine slabs for building the temporary latrines, which will be complemented with hygiene promotion sessions.

**Partners involved**: UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM

9 Outil de veille multirisques pour les pays côtiers d'Afrique de l'Ouest: Bénin - Côte d'Ivoire - Ghana - Togo (GRANIT) (Au 31 juillet 2023) | OCHA (unocha.org)

## Food and multi-purpose cash assistance (CBT)

To address the high food insecurity among the increasing population of refugees and asylum-seekers from Burkina Faso, WFP has been providing food assistance through multi-purpose cash assistance primarily at transit sites, as well as to some refugees/asylum seekers in host communities, and to some vulnerable host community households, reaching nearly 16,000 people as of January 2024. Given the increasing influx of refugees and asylum-seekers, among whom nearly 90% identity food as their most pressing need, WFP proposes to scale up its response to meet the food needs of the most vulnerable affected people, providing unconditional assistance through cash-based transfers to targeting 50,000 refugees/ asylum-seekers and 12,500 of the most vulnerable members of the host community to reach 2,500 host community households.

Households from the host population will receive repeated quarterly transfers aligned with the national safety net programme financed by the World Bank, while refugees and asylum-seekers will receive a monthly transfer of 10,000 CFA per person. Refugees and asylum-seekers relocated in transit sites will initially be prioritized, as per the request of the Government's National Security Council (CNS- Conseil National de Sécurité). WFP is committed to providing emergency assistance based on defined vulnerability criteria regardless of the relocation status of displaced populations and targeting refugees and asylum-seekers staying in host communities, ensuring the non-conditionality of humanitarian assistance.

WFP has chosen CBT as the modality of assistance due to several factors, which evidence that cash is effective and allows autonomy, flexibility, and choice to beneficiaries. In July 2023, the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) has been estimated to be at 112,907 CFA per month for a household of six persons. Multi-sectoral assessments were conducted to determine the feasibility of using cash

WFP/2024

transfers in the affected districts. Although the presence of banks and financial services was limited, telecommunications operators were identified as potential service providers for cash transfers. Cash assistance was then identified as the first option of assistance delivery modality. In addition, a market assessment has been conducted by WFP to evaluate the market functionality in three northern districts (Denguélé, Savanes and Zanzan). The overall results show that the markets are functioning well overall, despite high price volatility, poor infrastructure, and limited services. As the lead of the cash working group, WFP is working closely to ensure coordination, alignment in assistance modalities and information sharing.

**Partners involved:** WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF

## 3: Prevention: Community Integration And Resilience

The proposed response is part of the United Nations system's resilience programme, implemented by 10 agencies. The resilience programme is aligned with government priorities, notably phase 2 of the government's social programme. The initial aim is to strengthen social cohesion and peaceful coexistence through community dialogue. Through these initiatives, partners of the Gulf of Guinea Joint Response Plan will collaborate with the Ministry of Reconciliation and National Cohesion, the Observatory of Solidarity and Social Cohesion, and other organizations to organize four large-scale awareness campaigns on peaceful coexistence.

## Access to basic services

### Health and nutrition

Health services at the level of Nioronigue and Timalah sites will continue to be strengthened in terms of material, equipment and human resources. Special attention will also be paid to community engagement including to raise awareness of and prevent communicable and non-communicable diseases. The situation of persons with specific needs (such as pregnant women, chronically ill patients, and elderly persons) will be monitored closely, and targeted support provided for specific health costs. Outside the two sites, based on a joint assessment with authorities and criteria such as attendance rates and pressure on existing services following the arrival of refugees and asylum-seekers, health facilities will be selected for rehabilitation and equipment.

In the two sites, partners will provide mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to children and caregivers, including through the establishment of Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) to allow children to engage in safe play and recreational activities intended to build resilience and enhance psychosocial wellbeing.

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**UNICEF**
Madou, a 2 and a half year old boy, receives a vitamin A supplement and a deworming tablet in the village of Dagba, in the North of Côte d'Ivoire.

Partners are supporting detection of malnutrition in children under five and their referral to health centres, which have been equipped with Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) and essential drugs for treatment of malnutrition to ensure the survival of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. In April 2023, a large malnutrition screening took place in the Tchologo and Bounkani regions where 109,018 children aged 6-59 months – including 1,541 refugees and asylum-seeker children – were screened for acute malnutrition through the Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) test. In the northern regions of the country, throughout 2023, some 3,984 severely malnourished children under-five received treatment and 22,905 children were supplemented with Vitamin A. Additionally, a total of 714 cartons of ready-to-use therapeutic food, 60 cartons of F100 milk, 60 cartons of F75 milk and monitoring tools were distributed in the health centres serving the localities hosting the refugees and asylum-seekers to ensure the treatment of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM).

As part of regular activities, the National Nutrition Programme (NNP) will continue to be strengthened through the training of 160 healthcare providers and the provision of nutrition intrants.

At the transit sites, WFP will provide Specialized Nutritious Food (SuperCereal and SuperCereal Plus) to prevent acute malnutrition. Additional prevention activities for lactating mothers and their children, including the promotion of breast-feeding, nutrition awareness raising, and cooking demonstrations will also be caried by partners.

In host communities, UNICEF will undertake population screenings of affected communities followed by subsequent routine screenings as populations in communities with affected persons grow. These screenings will be then followed up with routine childhood immunization services, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health services, and Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) counselling. This will also strengthen gaps in health facility service delivery. Provision of essential health and nutrition supplies will continue to be provided in the Tchologo and Bounkani regions for treatment of malnourished and unvaccinated children from displaced populations, with the inclusion of host community members where required. This includes supplies such as oral rehydration supplies, emergency medication, ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF), Iron Folic Acid (IFA), and Vitamin A tablets. In addition, 34 resource persons from NGOs and the Ministry of Health in the health regions of Poro, Bagoué, Tchologo and Bounkani were trained on nutrition management in emergencies in July 2023. Their support will continue and will be reinforced for the continued prevention, detection and treatment of malnutrition.

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It is crucial to highlight that more than 25 per cent of refugees and asylum-seekers from Burkina Faso are women and girls of reproductive age. The needs of this specific population group should be clearly addressed to contributing to women's dignity while preventing pregnancy among young girls, maternal death, and sexually transmissible diseases and managing potential cases of sexual assault and violence. To meet these needs considering the current population, the response will require dignity kits, inter-agency emergency reproductive health kits for community response, and Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn care for hospitals.

UNFPA supported the health districts of the regions affected by the crisis, in the establishment of departmental pools of trainers in community strategies with the aim of involving communities in the promotion of health, including reproductive health. A community network of has been set up including 40 Husband Schools, 6 Local Communication Units, 5 Women-Friendly Spaces and 140 Community-Based Distribution Agents for modern contraceptives. These strategies will be strengthened and supported for greater involvement of communities in the response for community resilience in terms of access to health and protection services, including the promotion of schooling for young girls.

**Partners involved:** UNICEF, ACF, ARK, UNFPA, UNHCR and WFP

### Water, sanitation, and hygiene

The WASH response is focused on life-saving and durable WASH services. Interventions will prioritize the provision of emergency water supply through the rehabilitation of non-functional water sources, the construction of gender-segregated semi-permanent emergency latrines, and the construction or rehabilitation of public latrines at schools and health facilities.

New water points will be built as required. To improve sustainable access to water, solar-powered mini water systems will be built using existing boreholes., The objective is to not create parallel systems, but rather to invest in the existing systems in close collaboration with the Regional Water Directorate Provision of WASH. Core relief items (CRIs), including household water treatment tablets, water storage containers and hygiene items will be provided along with strong social and behavioural change communication (SBCC). Community engagement and SBCC will ensure practice of correct hygiene and sanitation behaviours.

**Partners involved:** UNICEF, ACF, UNHCR, IRC, OIM

### Education

To ensure that the most affected population have access to education services and opportunities, the interventions will support inclusive and quality learning opportunities in line with the New York Declaration to provide quality primary and secondary education in safe learning environments for all refugee and asylum-seeker children.

The inclusive access to education opportunities will be ensured with specific attention to girls, children with disabilities, and other marginalized and vulnerable children. The response will be structured around four axes: i) community engagement; ii) reinforcement of coordination mechanisms under the leadership of regional education directorates; iii) support to education learning processes through Temporary Learning Space, Child Friendly Spaces and national alternative education approach; iv) strengthening the system in terms of infrastructure, equipment and training of teachers (including MHPSS and PSEA)

**Partners involved:** UNHCR, UNICEF

## Climate-resilient agriculture and livelihoods

To promote socio-economic resilience, the livelihoods and productive capital of refugees, asylum-seekers and host communities will be strengthened through the development of income-generating activities (IGAs) for young people and women, with an emphasis on the value chain approach. The activities will enable at least 50 economic interest groups to be set up and/or revitalized.

The distribution of production materials and IGA kits will increase the income of 2,000 heads of households, refugees, asylum seekers and host community members, with a specific attention on women heads of households. To ensure the sustainability and ownership of these projects, the technical and managerial skills of the economic interest group leaders will be strengthened. The intervention will ensure synergies with the Office National de l'Etat Civil (ONECI), UNDP and IOM to provide civil documentation as a lever to access economic programs provided by the authorities.

To ensure that vulnerable refugees, asylum-seekers and host community members can meet their immediate food needs while simultaneously supporting them to build assets to benefit the whole community and foster social cohesion, WFP will initiate from the last quarter 2024 a transition program through Food for Asset (FFA) activities for 20,000 people. Targeted participants of the FFA activities will be from the unconditional assistance beneficiaries list, aiming to transition towards strengthening resilience for a more durable solution. WFP will conduct an integrated context analysis, engage in community-based planning, and assess needs and vulnerabilities in the targeted communities to select beneficiaries, against eligibility and vulnerability criteria, from both asylum seeker and host communities for FFA programming. The planned caseloads have been determined, based on the JRP's projection of the total asylum seekers expected to be sheltering in Côte d'Ivoire by the end of 2024.

Rehabilitation of productive assets through FFA activities, along with the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices (such as composting, living hedges, agroforestry, slash-and-burn agriculture and crop rotation) will be prioritized. Households involved in the FFA activities will also be accompanied with the set-up of Village Saving Loans Associations (VSLAs) to encourage investment and livelihood diversification. Agricultural activities will be designed and selected to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change and with the objective to ensure climate resilience and the preservation of ecosystems.

**Partners involved:** WFP, UNDP, IOM, UNHCR and UNICEF

## Social cohesion and community engagement

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In close coordination with local authorities, partners will support the strengthening of the resilience of refugees, asylum-seekers and host communities while promoting social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. This will be achieved by supporting participatory decision-making processes at local level, with the aim of identifying solutions to improve access to basic services and better management of available resources. Given that competition for natural resources is likely to be exacerbated by the influx of people and animals into the affected areas, particular attention will be paid to preventing community conflicts over access to and management of land, water, and forest space. Dialogue between refugees, asylum-seekers and host communities will be facilitated through awareness-raising and community-organized cultural events. Students, parents, teachers and communities will continue to be involved in peace promotion activities and community engagement to reinforce social cohesion around schools.

To address community tensions linked to the presence of cattle herders among refugees and asylum-seekers, IOM will implement an innovative tool to track cattle within hosting areas (Transhumance Tracking Matrix) and facilitate the provision of services such as sufficient drinking points for cattle to reduce incidence of cattle roaming onto sensitive lands. In areas around the camps, local NGO Etoile du Bounkani will build cohesion based on common grounds and common problem-solving activities.

UNDP is currently implementing important projects to improve the community resilience, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in the Bounkani and Tchologo regions: "Commitment of young people for the stability in the North" and "Cross-border Conflict prevention initiative along Cote Ivoire-Burkina Faso," and "Strengthening social infrastructure of local communities in the Northern region".

Through these initiatives, UNDP will collaborate with the Ministry of Reconciliation and National Cohesion, the Observatory of Solidarity and Social Cohesion, and other organizations to organize four large-scale awareness campaigns on peaceful coexistence. Additionally, community discussions and training sessions for community leaders on conflict prevention and resolution procedures will be realized to prevent and peacefully manage disputes between refugees/asylum-seekers and host communities.

**Partners involved:** UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, IOM

## Social Protection

The social protection working group, led by UNICEF, ensures that the new national social protection strategy includes elements of shock responsiveness, including a proposed social protection fund capable of ensuring expansion of existing programmes to respond to crises. Where interventions are already in place, necessary adjustments will be made, while exploring opportunities to strengthen the national system and services to improve government responsiveness, inclusiveness and accountability to vulnerable communities, and to strengthen social cohesion within and between vulnerable communities.

Based on a realistic capacity assessment, partners will support and strengthen social cash transfer programmes or food transfers, such as school feeding programmes, asset-building programmes and programmes with a nutritional component. Social protection programmes can also provide an important market entry point for smallholder farmers, who can be incentivized to produce more and help address food availability challenges, and for food processors, particularly women's groups. With adequate resources and the right technical staff, governments will be supported to adapt and/or expand their own inclusive and nutrition-sensitive social protection programmes to meet current needs and mitigate or prevent further escalation.

At the onset of the influx refugees and asylum-seekers to Bounkani and Tchologo, UNICEF and WFP triggered the inclusion of social protection in the response plan and the revival of the cash working group. A minimum expenditure basket was discussed to ensure harmonization of cash intervention parameters by different partners. In addition, to encourage the expansion of the government cash transfer programme, which targets about 2,000,000 Ivorians, UNICEF led discussion with the Social Safety Nets Programme Management Unit to advocate for an increase in the number of beneficiaries in host communities. To ensure stronger community resilience and improve social cohesion, four communes in Bounkani and Tchologo regions have been supported to implement or scale up a participatory budgeting initiative, focusing on youth and adolescents. More than 80 youth in these communes have been engaged in discussions with local authorities and will have increased capacity in advocacy for inclusion of community and children's priorities in local budgets.

**Partners involved:** WFP and UNICEF

### Reception at the border and protection/boarder monitoring

UNHCR is partnering with national NGO *Coordination des Droits de l'Homme dans les Armées (CADHA),* which will continue to ensure the training of border officials posted along the borders with Burkina Faso and Mali on human rights law, humanitarian rights and international protection, with a focus on access to territory and non-refoulement.

Protection monitoring carried out by UNHCR through CIAUD throughout the six northern regions bordering Burkina Faso and Mali will be reinforced to adjust to movements dynamics and protection needs identified. Protection monitoring is a tool for preventing and responding to human rights violations, supporting evidence-based programming of protection interventions and more effective coordination between humanitarian, development and government actors. It will ensure that protection incidents are documented, reported and referred to existing service providers for follow-up and appropriate assistance. By analysing incident trends and statistics, UNHCR and its partners will be able to better prioritize and target protection activities in affected areas.

### Registration and documentation

Upon arrival, asylum-seekers are screened by a member of the Conseil National de Security (CNS), before being registered in the national civil registry database by the Office National De l'Etat Civil et de l'Identification (CENI). The Direction d'Aide et d'Assistance aux Refugies (DAARA), and UNHCR register asylum seekers. So far, the only documentation provided by the government is a proof of registration, a document that is not always recognized in the area. Advocacy will continue for the systematic issuance of a Unique Identification Number (UNI) to refugees and asylum-seekers to facilitate access to numerous services, including SIM cards and cash-based interventions. Support will be provided to the DAARA to ensure vital events in the lives of refugees and asylum-seekers are recorded, including birth, marriage, divorce and death. Efforts will continue to ensure refugees and asylum-seekers are provided with access to simplified/accelerated asylum procedures to assess their refugee status and eventually grant them refugee documentation. An emphasis is also put on the provision of birth certificates of children.

## Child Protection

To improve the protection environment for children, partners will work to strengthen and complement the national child protection system, ensuring critical child protection services are provided to vulnerable children. The response will focus on supporting existing protection mechanisms to identify and refer the most vulnerable, including unaccompanied and separated children, children with disabilities, those with special needs, and other children at risk to appropriate services and support.

Additional support services include a Cash-Plus component to the most vulnerable children to increase livelihood as a key strategy to improving resilience and generating multisectoral results for children.

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Community capacity has been strengthened through child protection committees and social workers in Tchologo and Bounkani, including for mental health and psychosocial support and child protection in emergencies. Social workers across four social services from the Tchologo and Bounkani regions have been trained in information management according to CPIMS+ (Child Protection Case and Information Management) principles and as supervisors and case managers. Outside the site, in 2023, some 8,059 people (including 2,027 women; 2,071 men; 1,972 girls; 1,989 boys) were reached with awareness raising on topics related to child protection (children's rights, GBV, protection against violence, abuse and exploitation, birth registration and child labour) with support from the 30 child protection committees set up in 2022 in border villages.

Additionally, following the operationalization of the refugee reception sites, a child-friendly space at the Timalah site has been created to provide psychosocial support for children. To involve the community more closely in the design and implementation of child protection activities, and to reach more children, a child protection committee, comprising 15 women and 10 men, has also been set up at the Timalah site. The members of this committee have been trained in children's rights and protection against violence, abuse and exploitation.

Increasing access to information on children's rights and child protection services, including those related to violence against children, will continue to be key in the response. Partners will work to expand and strengthen comprehensive packages of community-based integrated protection services including outreach and individualized case management, information dissemination on services and referral pathways, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support services (MHPSS), and the identification and protection of the most vulnerable and at-risk children. Frontline social service workforce capacity will be strengthened in the localities with the highest number of refugees and asylum-seekers, and the strengthening of standardized, protection-sensitive referral mechanisms between sectors will be prioritized.

As part of the resilience activities, and with the support of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), a trans-national meeting brought together 57 child protection actors including social workers, administrative authorities, UN agencies and NGOs from Côte d'Ivoire (24) and Burkina Faso (23), resulting in the creation of a trans-national network to strengthen cooperation on child protection including for case management to address matters such as early marriage and family reunification. This network will continue to play a key role in 2024.

**Persons with specific needs**

Inside the sites, partners in all sectors will ensure that services are adapted and accessible to persons with specific needs, especially persons living with a disability. Protection monitoring will allow for the identification of persons with specific needs among refugees and asylum-seekers and referral to appropriate case management.

**Gender-based violence**

GBV risks are identified in all sectors and areas of work. Contextually, GBV risk mitigation measures will be integrated into all work plans and strategies. The Regional Directorate of Women, Family and Children of Bounkani, ensuring coordination in this context, has deployed a temporary team in the field to identify needs and respond to GBV and PSEA.

Four platforms against GBV have been set up by the Ministry of the Family and UNFPA in Tchologo (3) and Bounkani (1) and include the coordination of the GBV response among all public administrations and civil society involved in social protection, health, security, and justice. These platforms will serve as a key collaborative space, bringing together public administrations and civil society working in the areas of social protection, health, security, and justice within their respective regions. Inside and outside the sites, the actors will strengthen the identification of GBV incidents and cases, and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), and the responses will be coordinated through effective referral mechanisms.

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**UNICEF**
A woman with her baby in the village of Nambonkaha, in the North of Côte d'Ivoire.

GBV partners will provide survivors with timely, safe, and adequate access to quality GBV services, included at a minimum, to health, mental health and psychosocial support, safety and security, justice, education, livelihood services and outreach. GBV partners will ensure quality case management systems and referral pathways are in place.

**Partners involved :** UNHCR, CIAUD, IRC, CARITAS Côte d'Ivoire, AVSI, OIM, Etoile du Bounkani, UNFPA, UNICEF

## 5. Country Cross-Cutting Response Priorities

### Accountability for Affected Populations (AAP)

Obtaining and responding to community feedback is a key aspect of partners' work on accountability towards affected populations (AAP) and putting affected communities in the centre of humanitarian responses. Communities' involvement in decision making will be further strengthened through regular consultations on programmes during project implementation, considering culturally appropriate ways of engaging with affected women, men, boys, and girls. To this purpose, partners will provide trainings to field staff on AAP, community engagement and Communication with Communities (CwC). Sessions with the communities will be held to discuss the vulnerability criteria for the selection of the beneficiaries, the preferences on the assistance and the delivery modality and the communication channels. Partners will also prepare communication materials and visuals to ensure beneficiaries understand the process and their rights.

### Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

UN agencies and partners, working in conjunction with implementing partners and the government, will enhance efforts to safeguard beneficiaries and communities against sexual exploitation and abuse. These measures encompass the establishment of transparent reporting channels and referral pathways for necessary support. Complaints and feedback mechanisms, both at the community level and toll-free helpline, have been established for support, feedback, and referrals. Communities are consistently sensitized through various channels, including interactive voice response messaging over mobile phone, face-to-face interactions, and posters in the local languages. These efforts focus on the project's objective and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Additional initiatives will involve collaborative development of educational materials with the communities to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. There will be continuous capacity-building efforts for all UN, partner, and affiliated personnel to ensure adherence to the UN Standards of Conduct for Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Additionally, community-based complaints mechanisms will be put in place to address concerns effectively. The PSEA focal point the level of the Resident Coordinator office will oversee coordinating the activities of the PSEA network.

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### Localization

The proposed intervention will prioritize collaboration and partnership with local non-government organizations (NGOs) that have a strong local presence. This approach aims to leverage their ability to provide contextual knowledge and ability to implement community specific programmes tailored to community needs. Local NGOs will be encouraged and empowered to play a key role in delivering protection and assistance on the ground. Working with and investing in these local actors as equal and strategic partners will be a priority for an effective emergency response programme.

## Climate Action

The intervention will give priority to initiatives that promote sustainable natural resource management in the designated areas. Awareness campaigns and sensitization efforts will strictly adhere to the principle of 'do no harm' to the local ecosystem. Through community-based participatory planning with local communities, environmental risks, and mitigation measures for various implementation activities in both host and refugees/asylum-seekers locations will be identified. Renewable energy options will be explored noting climate challenges related to the gathering of wood and burning of charcoal. Solar lights and panels will be considered to reduce environmental degradation of the areas. Addressing overcrowding and unregulated waste generation in refugees/asylum-seekers sites and reception centres is essential for public health and safety. The project will advocate proper waste management techniques and provide support for beneficiaries with clean cooking and energy-efficient devices to reduce the use of wood in the sites and their vicinity.

Training programmes on risk identification and management will be conducted, and systematic data collection on environmental and social risks will enable mitigative actions throughout the intervention. Within the project locations, the intervention will also champion climate-smart agriculture practices aimed at enhancing food security in host communities. This entails training in Good Agronomic Practices (GAPs), the promotion of agroforestry, and the prevention of bushfires.
The establishment of refugee/asylum-seeker sites can lead to significant environmental damage, including water and air pollution, as well as deforestation. The intervention will focus on afforestation activities around the sites and reception centres, promote water treatment techniques, and conduct sensitization and education on pollution prevention in both the sites/reception centres and host communities. Participating agencies will work closely with local and regional authorities to implement measures that safeguard and protect the environment.

## 6. Partnership and Coordination Arrangements

The Conseil National de Sécurité (CNS) in the Prime Minister's office is leading the refugee coordination response at the central level, with full delegation of authority to the prefects of six concerned regions. The prefects will have full authority of decision at the regional level, working with the decentralized technical ministries.

Response Plan partners support the existing coordination mechanism. In the field, sectoral working groups led by line ministries and co-led by sectoral leads ensure intra-sector information management and coordination, as well as the mainstreaming of cross cutting issues. At the national level, the Resident Coordinator's office holds a monthly meeting on the refugee situation in the north for the international humanitarian community to exchange and strategize.

## Stakeholders involved in the response

**Authorities:** Conseil National de Sécurité (National Security Council), Regional Prefects

**INGOs:** International Rescue Committee, AVSI, Action Contre la Faim, CIAUD, Médecins du Monde, REACH, Save the Children,

**National NGOs:** Caritas Côte d'Ivoire, Etoiles de Bounkani, Animation Rurale de Korhogo (ARK)

**UN agencies:** International Organization for Migration, United Nations Funds Populations Agency, United Nations High-Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Funds, World Food Programme.

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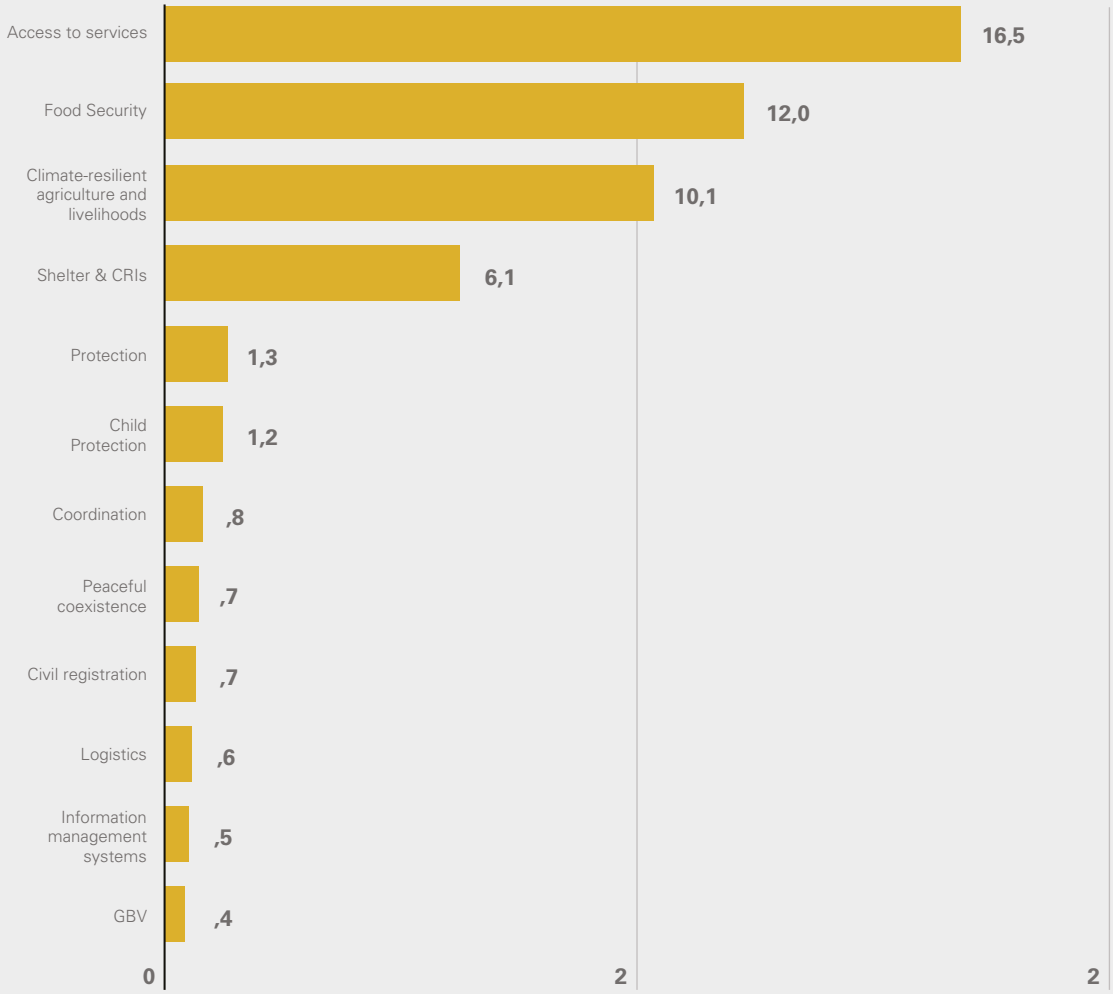
## 7. Financial Requirements (USD $) $ 50.9 (millions)

| Analyze | Assist | Prevent | Protect | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| $512,000 | $18,119,000 | $27,322,000 | $3,616,0000 | $1,361,000 |

### Budget Summary by Sector




### Budget Summary by Partner

| Partner (UN Agencies) | Acronym/ Short Title | Requirements in US$ |
|---|---|---|
| **World Food Programme** | WFP | 22,000,000 |
| **United Nations Children's Fund** | UNICEF | 13,500,000 |
| **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees** | UNHCR | 8,000,000 |
| **International Organization for Migration** | IOM | 7,430,000 |
| **Total** | | **50,930,000** |

## For more Information

**World Food Programme (WFP)**
Severine GIROUD
Deputy Country Director
severine.giroud@wfp.org

**United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**
Mariana STIRBU
Deputy Representative
mstirbu@unicef.org

**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**
Ali Mahamat
Representative
mahamata@unhcr.org

**International Organisation for Migration (IOM)**
David PREUX
Chief of Mission
dpreux@iom.int