

# End of Term Evaluation of the “Women’s Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection in Human Mobility Crisis in Central America”

## Terms of Reference

### 1. Introduction

UN Women recognises that women, girls and LGBTQ+ in human mobility- such as refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and migrants- face unique protection challenges and barriers to accessing essential services and rights throughout all stages of the journey. These include gender-based violence (GBV), discrimination and heightened vulnerability to trafficking, kidnapping and murder. Traditional humanitarian protection planning and service delivery often fail to adequately consider the differentiated needs of women, girls and LGBTQ+ in these contexts.

In this context, in partnership with the Government of Japan, the “Women’s Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection in Human Mobility Crisis in Central America” project was designed to respond to the unprecedented displacement and human mobility crisis in Central America, particularly affecting women, girls and LGBTQ+, while enhancing their ability to lead, to equally participate in and benefit from gender-responsive protection services and social cohesion initiatives in the border areas of Costa Rica, Honduras and Panama. Running from March 2024 to March 2025, the project supports UN Women’s commitment to gender equality, safety, and leadership by addressing critical needs within humanitarian, peacebuilding, and development frameworks. It aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 5 on Gender Equality and 16 on Peaceful and Inclusive Societies, the UN Women Strategic Note Latin America and the Caribbean (2023-2025) and contributes to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) in each country and at for the Americas and the Caribbean. The project is under the UNW’s globally implemented LEAP-Gender Accelerator Model.

These Terms of Reference outline the main parameters for launching this Programme Evaluation in January 2025. The exercise seeks to operationalize the following guiding principles aligned with the UN Women Evaluation Policy<sup>1</sup>: responsiveness to UN Women’s strategic priorities in the Americas and Caribbean region; timeliness, relevance, and utility to the most critical programmatic and operational needs of the organization; as well as innovation and flexibility to implement efficient and effective approaches in evaluating UN Women work.

### 2. Background

#### 2.1. Mixed movements in Central America

The Central America sub-region is one of the most dynamic, complex, and rapidly evolving areas<sup>2</sup> concerning mixed movements<sup>3</sup> with multi-causal displacement drivers. Outmigration from countries in the sub-region, intraregional, transit, and return migration flows<sup>4</sup> characterize the human mobility dynamics. Over the past 15 years, the number of international migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean has more than

<sup>1</sup> UN Women, Evaluation Policy (UNW/2020/5/Rev.1).

<sup>2</sup> Migration Data Portal. Mixed migration. 2022. Available at: <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/mixed-migration>

<sup>3</sup> Migration Data Portal. Regional Data Overview. Migration data in Central America. 2023. Available at: <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/regional-data-overview/migration-data-central-america>

<sup>4</sup> IOM, World Migration Report, 2022. Available at: <https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2022>

doubled, from 7 million to 15 million people in 2022; of them, 48.7% are women<sup>5</sup>, most in transit to the north of the continent, making Central America a critical point for human mobility. Statistics vary at the country level as countries have different capacities to monitor human mobility flows with a gender approach, compounded by the challenge that mixed movements often use unmonitored routes.

Numerous contextual factors impacted and intensified human mobility flows through Central America, including the complex humanitarian emergency in Venezuela, which has led to the emigration of 7,710,887 people, 85% in the Americas and the Caribbean. Haitian mobility has also represented one of the most significant flows by nationality due to a deteriorating humanitarian situation marked by spiralling violence, protection and human rights issues, food emergencies, and the cholera epidemic. Socio-economic vulnerabilities further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change-related extreme weather events, including hurricanes Eta and Iota, and violence stemming from organized crime have also had profound impacts on the Central American population, increasing international displacement flows. Additionally, drivers of migration in other countries and regions, including Afghanistan, Cameroon, Angola, and China, led to an increase in the arrival and transit of migrants through Central America, further exacerbating the trend.

In July 2024, electoral upheaval in Venezuela raised concerns about a significant increase in migration; but this did not materialise during the third quarter of the year, as the number of new arrivals of Venezuelans to Colombia increased by about 7% between July and August 2024. However, a new increase was recorded in the number of Venezuelans crossing from Colombia to Panama via the Darien Province in September<sup>6</sup>. Along the same line, tensions arose between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, after the re-election of Dominican president, Luis Abinader, and the implementation of massive deportation of Haitians to their country, which may result in the increase of Haitian migrants in the three countries covered by this project<sup>7</sup>. UN Women continually monitors mixed migratory movements in intervention areas to tailor its response to the requirements of the new population in transit, including the translation and adaptation of information materials, when deemed necessary.

The inauguration of the 2025 U.S. Administration has intensified uncertainty within Central America's migration landscape. Policies announcing mass deportations, along with shifts in migration and foreign policy, are directly disrupting asylum and transit processes across the region. These deportations heighten the vulnerabilities of displaced populations, as forcibly returned individuals frequently endure harsh detention conditions, insufficient legal representation, and family separations—serious breaches of their human rights and dignity. Women and LGBTQI+ individuals are particularly at risk, facing heightened exposure to gender-based violence and discrimination in return contexts where protections are often inadequate or entirely absent. This will have strong implications for the implementation of the project over the final months, as well as potential changes in the direct observations in field during the implementation of this evaluation.

## **2.2. The situation in Panamá, Costa Rica and Honduras**

The journey through Central America to the north follows a distinct route that begins in Panama, where migrants typically enter through the dangerous Darien Gap, a rugged jungle region connecting South and

<sup>5</sup> World Bank, Migrant Women and girls in Central America risk their lives for a better future, 2022. Available at: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/latinamerica/migrant-women-girls-search-better-future-central-america>

<sup>6</sup> According to the National Migration Service of Panama, 19 800 Venezuelans enter the Country via the Darien. <https://www.migracion.gob.pa/wp-content/uploads/IRREGULARES-POR-DARIEN-2024-1.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> BBC. (2024). Dominican Republic 'to deport up to 10,000 migrants a week'. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c20jepjrx74o>

Central America characterized by limited infrastructure and high risks of exploitation and violence. In 2024 alone, **Panama** reported over 302,203 entries from Colombia, with a substantial portion being women and girls<sup>8</sup>, approximately 21% were children, many of whom were unaccompanied or separated from their families, highlighting the growing vulnerability of young migrants in the region.

Authorities have relocated reception points in indigenous communities to assist those in transit in nearby spaces<sup>9</sup>. Recent reports indicate that approximately 35% of persons in human mobility through the Darien gap are women<sup>10</sup>, 9% of the women are pregnant or breastfeeding, and girls and boys make up 5% of the transit population<sup>11</sup>. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has reported that one case of sexual violence against persons in human mobility occurred every three hours, including rape against children; 95% of sexual violence survivors are women<sup>12</sup>. MSF has called on the Panamanian government to ensure that survivors of sexual violence can access medical care within 72 hours to avoid unwanted pregnancies, HIV, and other sexually transmitted diseases<sup>13</sup>.

From **Panama**, at least 300,000 migrants travelled northward to **Costa Rica**<sup>14</sup>, before crossing into Nicaragua and continuing their journey through **Honduras**. In **Costa Rica**, the number of arrivals between January and September 2023 (407,229) surpassed the total registered in 2022 by 80% (226,610) according to IOM data<sup>15</sup>. The country has become a frequent passage route for Haitians, Cubans, Venezuelans, and persons from other countries<sup>16</sup>, and has also experienced a significant increase in the number of people applying for refugee status in the last five years, mainly from Nicaragua and Venezuela<sup>17</sup>. IOM estimates 73,807 persons entered Costa Rica in September 2023 alone, an average of 2,460 persons per day. On September 29, 2023, the Government of Costa Rica declared a National Emergency in response to the migratory situation<sup>18</sup>, highlighting the need for an inter-institutional and comprehensive approach to provide a humane and orderly response to this complex situation, and develop joint approaches with the government of Panama to optimize the verification and transfer of migrants who make up the mobility flow through the Americas. Shelters, bus stations, and public space in border cities are over their capacity<sup>19</sup>, exposing persons in human mobility to unsanitary conditions, and an increased exposure to GBV, violence and trafficking networks.

<sup>8</sup> Gobierno Nacional de Panama (2024). Migration Report. <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:EU:7553b03a-e9a6-4e5d-a221-0f332832fc89>

<sup>9</sup> UNHCR. Mixed Movements Darién and Chiriquí. September 2023. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/104240>

<sup>10</sup> UNHCR, Mixed Movements Official Data, May 2023. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/100745>

<sup>11</sup> UNHCR. Mixed Movements Darién and Chiquirí. September 2023. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/104240>

<sup>12</sup> UNHCR, Mixed Movements Official Data, May 2023. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/100745>

<sup>13</sup> UNICEF. Records highest ever number of migrant children crossing the Darien jungle towards the US. 2021. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/2021-records-highest-ever-number-migrant-children-crossing-darien-jungle-towards-us>

<sup>14</sup> IBC Human Mobility (April - June 2024). Available in: <https://www.rcplac.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/IBC%20HM%20July-Sept%202024.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> OIM. DTM Monitoreo del flujo migratorio de personas en situación de movilidad por las Américas en sitios específicos de alta movilidad y concentración de personas migrantes en Costa Rica, OIM, San José, Costa Rica. 2023 Available at: [https://dtm.iom.int/Costa\\_Rica](https://dtm.iom.int/Costa_Rica)

<sup>16</sup> IFRC. Costa Rica Population Movement-DREF Operation N° MDRCR020. 2022. Available at: [https://reliefweb.int/report/Costa\\_Rica/Costa\\_Rica-population-movement-dref-operation-ndeg-mdrcr020-final-report](https://reliefweb.int/report/Costa_Rica/Costa_Rica-population-movement-dref-operation-ndeg-mdrcr020-final-report)

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Swissinfo. Costa Rica registra el paso de más de 300,000 migrantes y declara emergencia nacional. 2023. Available at: [https://www.swissinfo.ch/spa/crisis-migratoria-Costa\\_Rica\\_Costa\\_Rica-registra-el-paso-de-m%C3%A1s-de-300.000-migrantes-y-declara-emergencia-nacional/48850814](https://www.swissinfo.ch/spa/crisis-migratoria-Costa_Rica_Costa_Rica-registra-el-paso-de-m%C3%A1s-de-300.000-migrantes-y-declara-emergencia-nacional/48850814)

Presidencia de la República. Gobierno de Costa Rica. Comunicados. 2023. Available at: <https://www.presidencia.go.cr/comunicados/2023/09/presidente-firma-decreto-de-emergencia-nacional-para-atencion-oportuna-y-agil-de-crisis-migratoria/>

<sup>19</sup> BBC News. Estamos sobre pasados: la grave crisis migratoria que llevó al presidente de Costa Rica a pedir la declaración de la emergencia nacional. 2023. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/articulos/c5179k0xdlo#:~:text=Seg%C3%BAn%20datos%20oficiales%20de%20las,la%20atravesaron%20en%20todo%202022.>

In **Honduras**, during the first three quarters of 2024, Honduras witnessed a sharp rise in irregular migration, with 341,000 entries recorded—highlighting a stark increase in migratory pressure compared to the previous year<sup>20</sup>. Nearly 40% of the country’s human mobility flows are women and girls<sup>21</sup>. Women traveling alone with children experience increased vulnerability because gender-based violence, the situation of violence they are fleeing, or the lack of social capital during the transit<sup>22</sup>. Venezuela, Cuba, Ecuador, Mauritania, and Haiti are the main nationalities of persons in human mobility throughout the country<sup>23</sup>. Furthermore, the northern corridor, particularly the northern borders of Honduras and Guatemala, represents critical points in the migration route, where migrants face additional vulnerabilities and protection challenges.

The increase in flows exceeded the capacity of shelters at the main transit points. Extreme poverty rates that primarily affect women, alongside recurrent climate shocks, chronic violence, and alarming rates of GBV, drive significant internal and international human displacement<sup>24</sup>. Honduras is listed as a high-risk country in the Inform Risk Index, according to Insight-Crime, it is among the most violent countries due to trafficking, gangs, corruption, and transnational criminal organizations. Resulting violence takes on many forms, including homicides, femicides, forced disappearances, restrictions on mobility and freedom, forced recruitment of children by gangs, GBV, extortion, forced eviction, dispossession, and forced displacement<sup>25</sup>.

With current changes in the context and migration flows, new country-specific challenges arose. **Honduras**, with nearly 5% of its population on deportation lists<sup>26</sup>, faces multiples challenges to address poverty, violence, and climate-induced displacement. **Guatemala** estimates that nearly 2.7 million nationals are in the United States, but only 400,000 have the necessary documents to work<sup>27</sup> and may face deportation. In **Mexico**, after the U.S. CBP One app was disabled, an estimated 270,000 people are stranded on the Mexican side of the border, with no clear indications of when or how they will be able to apply for asylum. At the same time, ongoing U.S. migration dynamics could pose significant pressure for Panama and Costa Rica, particularly regarding the management of their shared transport corridor for mixed movement flows. Increased migration pressure could force the closure of this vital route, leaving many people stranded in precarious conditions in both countries.

In general, women and girls in human mobility in Central America require humanitarian assistance, and the current humanitarian response is insufficient. In 2022, the CEDAW Committee raised concerns about gender-based violence, including the disappearances and rape suffered by migrant women crossing the Darien Gap, and urged Panama to take measures to address the high risk of GBV against women<sup>28</sup>. According to a 2022 UNHCR and HIAS<sup>29</sup> regional study on GBV and women in human mobility across Latin America, 62% of women surveyed felt unsafe and at risk of gender-based violence during transit. The study also revealed

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Consorcio Life Honduras. SITREP No. 11. 2023. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/honduras/media/3236/file/SITREP%2011.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> OCHA. Honduras Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/honduras-humanitarian-needs-overview-2023-september-2022>

<sup>25</sup> OCHA. Honduras Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/honduras-humanitarian-needs-overview-2023-september-2022>

<sup>26</sup> Isacson, Adam (2025). Weekly U.S. – Mexico Border Update: Trump’s First Days. WOLA

<sup>27</sup> Swissinfo (2024). EEUU deportó un récord de más de 61,000 guatemaltecos en 2024.

<sup>28</sup> CEDAW 2022 Report. Available at: <https://panama.un.org/es/173502-el-comit%C3%A9-de-derechos-de-las-mujeres-de-la-onu-publica-hallazgos-sobre-rep%C3%BAblica-dominicana>

<sup>29</sup> UNHCR; HIAS (2022) Our right to safety: Placing forcibly displaced women at the center of searching solutions to address gender-based violence. Available at: <https://segurasenmovilidad.org/2022/12/08/our-right-to-safety-executive-summary/>

that 30% of women continued to be at risk of suffering gender-based violence in their destination country, and 35% reporting feeling unsafe in the host community, reaffirming GBV is a reality for women<sup>30</sup>. A UNHCR<sup>31</sup> survey taken in 2015 further revealed that 40% of Central American women asylum seekers who had experienced sexual assault, rape, attacks, or threats never reported them to the police, and 10% said the police were the perpetrators. Such symbolic violence creates the conditions for the normalization and promotion of violence against women in human mobility<sup>32</sup>.

This is why Panama, Costa Rica<sup>33</sup> and Honduras called on the international community for support. In October 2023, all three countries signed the Palenque Declaration, to obtain the support of international organizations to provide attention to people in human mobility with special protection needs, with a priority focus on women and children<sup>34</sup>, reflecting the immediate support and regional articulation required to address the uptick in migration flows and complexities they pose at national level. The situation requires complementary gendered approaches to relief and protection concerns on the migration route through Central America, including leveraging humanitarian diplomacy to put the needs of women, girls, and LGBTIQ+ persons in human mobility at the centre of response, further improving humanitarian access and protection, and making available gender-based violence prevention information in relevant languages.

In addition to protection needs related to gender-based violence, women, adolescents and girls in international mixed displacement have limited conditions and resources to access minimum hygiene items, as well as essential elements that contribute to their psychological and physical well-being, including critical information on rights and services from first response institutions and humanitarian actors. Protection kits must consider cultural specificities and the particularities of the geographical context, in which they are provided, based on previous needs assessment centred on women, adolescents, LGBTIQ+ and girls' voices, and that include age and disability concerns<sup>35</sup>.

### 3. Project General Information

Through this project, UN Women seeks to address the gaps in women's leadership, their equal access and protection in the situation of unprecedented displacement and human mobility crisis in Central America. The project aims to enhance the gender responsiveness of the protection and social cohesion efforts in response to the intensification and increase of protection risks to gender-based violence and human trafficking, thus, preventing and responding to the differentiated and incremented risks for women and girls in human mobility.

The project responds to the human mobility crisis in Central America particularly affecting women and girls, who face challenges at all stages of the journey, including gender-based violence, discrimination, and vulnerability to trafficking, kidnapping, and murder. According to the recent evidence, at least one in every

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> UNHCR. Women on the run. First-hand accounts of refugees fleeing El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico. 2015. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/operations/5630f24c6/women-run.html>

<sup>32</sup> Hourani, Jeanine, et.al. Structural and Symbolic Violence Exacerbates the Risks and Consequences of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence for Forced Migrant Women. *Frontiers*. (2021). Available at: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fhumd.2021.769611/full>

<sup>33</sup> UN. Costa Rica require el apoyo de la comunidad internacional ante el desafío migratorio. 2022. Available at: <https://news.un.org/es/story/2022/09/1515031>

<sup>34</sup> Los Angeles Press. Resultados de la Cumbre Migratoria de Palenque. 2023. Available at: <https://www.losangelespress.org/noticias/resultados-de-la-cumbre-migratoria-de-palenque-20231023-6812.html>

<sup>35</sup> Global Protection Cluster. Dignity Kits. Guidance Note. Available at: [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/dignity\\_kits\\_guidance\\_note\\_en.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/dignity_kits_guidance_note_en.pdf)

four migrant women, refugees, and asylum seekers experienced harassment or abuse on their journey<sup>36</sup>, 25 percent of family groups travel with a woman or girl, with transit being the riskiest stage. Among the key reasons why women feel reluctant to file complaints are fear of being deported to their countries of origin in uncertain conditions, risk of abuse or harassment by authorities, fear of being re-victimized by the perpetrator, lack of information about available services, and long distances that make it difficult to access such services during their transit journey<sup>37</sup>.

At the Outcome level the proposed project aims to ensure that women affected by the human mobility crisis lead, equally participate in and benefit from gender-responsive protection services and social cohesion initiatives in Panama, Costa Rica, and Honduras. To achieve this result, the project centres on two outputs:

- **Output 1** aims to enhance the capacities of humanitarian actors to plan and deliver protection services, including gender-based violence care, that are responsive to the needs of women in human mobility.
- **Output 2** aims to increase the capacities of women in human mobility and in host communities, to access and influence protection service delivery and social cohesion initiatives in Panama, Costa Rica and Honduras.

The project is being implemented in three countries – Panama, Costa Rica and Honduras with the overall coordination and technical oversight of the UN Women Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean. UN Women will directly implement Output 1 and will select responsible partners from civil society organizations to implement Output 2 activities in each of the project countries. UN Women is implementing the project in close collaboration with other UN Agencies and state and non-state actors that are part of the humanitarian response architecture to ensure coordination, integration, and sustainability of the project's activities with delivery as one approach to enhance coherence, efficiency and effectiveness of UN country-level agencies. Collaboration has also been key with the Embassies of Japan and other entities, including strategic partners of Japan's Official Development Assistance, the Gender Mainstreaming Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, JICA, Japanese private sector companies, and Nikkei communities present in the region and specifically in target countries.

The project also aims to contribute to the achievement of the internationally agreed human rights norms and instruments provide a comprehensive framework that outlines the necessary conditions and key actions required for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, as well as the intersectionality of their human rights. The proposed project is aligned with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and contributes to the implementation of the UNSC's Women's, Peace and Security agenda.

The project aims contributes to advancement and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and specifically the SDG 5 on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, SDG 10 on Reducing Inequalities within and among Countries (particularly target 10.7: which asserts the commitment "to facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies"), the SDG 16 on Governance, Peace and

<sup>36</sup> Darien Panama: Mixed Movements Protection Monitoring February 2023, UNHCR. Available from: <https://data.unhcr.org/es/documents/details/98861>

<sup>37</sup> "Migrant women and girls in Central America risk their lives in search of a better future", 2023, World Bank. Available from: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/latinamerica/migrant-women-girls-search-better-future-central-america>



Security, and SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals. The project was formulated based on the UN Women internal Guidance Note on SDG Leaving No One Behind to Programming, thus focusing on those furthest behind, and integrates a range of programmatic tools and approaches such as advocacy, social mobilization, integrated technical advice, capacity building and others in line with the LNOB principle, working with partners such as governments, international organizations, NGOs, Women rights organizations, and refugee led initiatives.

The project is funded by the Government of Japan, through a generous contribution of JPY 291,140,000 (USD 1,971,825.26 per UN Operational Rate of Exchange for December 1, 2023) for the duration of 12 months (March 2024 - February 2025).

#### 4. Objectives, scope and use of the Evaluation

The main purpose of this evaluation is to assess the relevance/coherence, effectiveness, organizational efficiency and sustainability of the “Women’s Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection in Human Mobility Crisis in Central America” project and use the evaluation findings for strategic decision-making, organizational learning and accountability as well as for the generation of knowledge. Furthermore, the evaluation will also aim to draw lessons and practices regarding the implementation of this innovative humanitarian intervention by UN Women, and recommendations to be applied for future potential programming. The evaluation will be conducted with a special focus on lessons learnt.

The specific objectives of this evaluation are to:

1. Analyse how relevant were the project interventions for women in human mobility and in host communities, with a particular focus on vulnerable population (indigenous, afro-descendent, LGBTIQ, amongst others) **(relevance and human rights and gender)**.
2. Analyse the different modalities of work across the three countries and what have been its strengths, limitations and weaknesses **(efficiency and effectiveness)**.
3. Assess to what extent gender mainstreaming has truly been integrated within this humanitarian response, the achievements and gaps and how this integration has occurred **(effectiveness)**.
4. Examine to what extent the project has been able to achieve its objective of empowering the target population given the short implementation window, determining what empowerment really means and how the project helped women in human mobility and in host communities to improve leadership in these communities **(effectiveness)**.
5. Assess the changes experimented during project implementation, repercussion of these changes and UN Women’s capacity to respond to the changing humanitarian context for current and future similar programming **(efficiency and sustainability)**.
6. Measure to what extent the project was able to build institutional capacities to respond and serve target communities with a particular focus on women, girls from a gender diverse population **(sustainability)**.
7. Identify and validate **lessons learned, good practices and work innovations** implemented by UN Women in relation to the mainstreaming of gender in humanitarian action.
8. Provide **actionable recommendations** with respect to UN Women’s work on the area for the benefit of the wider organisational priorities and resource mobilisation in the area.

Targeted users of the evaluation are the senior management and programme staff for the UN Women Americas and Caribbean Regional Office (ACRO), the counterparts at local and national levels, including national and local institutions, humanitarian actors, women-led organizations, civil society organizations

and representatives and key stakeholders from the Government of Japan. The findings of the evaluation are expected to contribute to effective programming, organizational learning and accountability, as well as inform future programming and contribute to resource mobilisation.

## 4. Evaluation questions

To meet the exercise's stated objectives, the following questions will be evaluated based on the key criteria of relevance/human rights and gender, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability using the standard definitions of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee with the integration of human rights and gender in a cross-cutting manner.<sup>38</sup> The below areas may be further refined during the inception phase. In these areas of evaluation, the exercise will look to identify lessons across its triple mandate of coordination, programmatic, and normative dimensions for potential application to future programming in the region.

Criterion	Question <sup>39</sup>
<b>Relevance</b>	1. To what extent did the project interventions addressed the needs for women in human mobility and in host communities through-out all the project implementation (including adaptations)? How did their perspectives shape programming?
<b>Coherence</b>	2. To what extent did the programmatic initiatives adhere to programme and strategic priorities of the donor <sup>40</sup> , UN Women <sup>41</sup> and other UN agencies <sup>42</sup> , and relevant normative frameworks and the local/regional/national government?
<b>Efficiency</b>	3. To what extent the different modalities of work (including resource investment) across the three countries supported the response to human mobility and changes required during the implementation of the programme, and what have been its relative strengths, limitations and weaknesses?
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<p>4. To what extent did the project enhanced the capacities of humanitarian and government actors to plan and deliver protection services, including gender-based violence care, that are responsive to the needs of women in human mobility (output 1)? What were the key enablers and limitations?</p> <p>5. To what extent did the project increase the capacities of women in human mobility and in host communities, to access and influence protection service delivery and social cohesion initiatives in Panama, Costa Rica and Honduras (empowerment, output 2)? What were the key enablers and limitations?</p> <p>6. To what extent did the project achieve its intended outcome in relation to the conflict prevention, social cohesion, construction of safe environments and perception of safety among women in human mobility and in host communities, and ensuring their equal participation and access to gender-responsive protection services and social cohesion initiatives in Panama, Costa Rica, and Honduras?</p>

<sup>38</sup> OECD, 'Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use', OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation, Dec 2019.

<sup>39</sup> Several questions are used from the recent corporate evaluation and tailored to online capacity development to building on the global evaluation's findings.

<sup>40</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Development Cooperation Charter. Japan's Contribution to the Sustainable Development of a Free and Open World. 2023. Available at: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/100514705.pdf> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Human Security Japan Action. Available at: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/sector/security/action.html> National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Second Edition (2019-2022). Available at: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000521395.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> In particular with the objectives of the UN Women's LEAP initiative.

<sup>42</sup> Working on the area.



Criterion	Question <sup>39</sup>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<p>7. What evidence is there that institutional capacity and women empowerment achievements will be sustained or expanded? What capacity gaps still exist to respond to the changing context?</p> <p>8. What are the effects of shifting political priorities, funding, or policy environments for project sustainability? To what extent has the project adapted well?</p>
<b>Human Rights and Gender</b>	<p>9. What barriers (structural, cultural, policy-related) limited access to project benefits for particularly vulnerable groups? How did the project attempt to address these?</p>

The evaluation will be conducted according to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards and Code of Conduct and Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. The evaluation recommendations will be based on Sphere Minimum Standards and HAP standards, as appropriate and relevant.

## 5. Approach and methods

The assessment will be conducted through a mixed methods approach and will adopt a bottom-up, participatory approach aligned with the local stakeholders needs. It will be carried out in accordance with internal and external guidelines,<sup>43</sup> and place emphasis on the integration of gender equality and human rights principles in the evaluation process with a focus on Leaving No One Behind and intersectional aspects. Specific qualitative data collection methods will be articulated in the inception report, and include the final evaluation criteria, questions, and data analysis approaches. The assessment will be primarily carried out through remote and field data collection (in Costa Rica and Panama). Data collection methods may include:

- *Secondary analysis* of programme data including monitoring, reporting, budgetary data, and other relevant metadata from corporate systems and obtained from UN Women project teams and implementing partners (?).
- *Structured desk review* of key reference programme documents and knowledge products.
- *Semi-structured interviews* with UN Women, implementing partners, national and local government partners, CSOs and other key stakeholders.
- *Focus groups* with selected intervention's beneficiaries (*if possible*).
- *Field visits* and direct observation at selected programme sites.

Data from different research sources will be triangulated to increase its validity. The methodology and approach will incorporate human rights, intersectional and gender equality approaches. The Evaluation Team will further refine the approach and methodology and submit a detailed description in the inception report.

## 6. Timeline

The evaluation process consists of the below phases focused on following a consultative and rigorous process for producing the key evaluation products.

<sup>43</sup> This includes internally the UN Women Evaluation Policy and guidelines, as well as externally the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards, Ethical Code of Conduct, as well as Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation.

Phase	Deliverables	Timeframe
<b>Preparation</b>	Terms of Reference to structure the exercise	Week 2, February 2025
<b>Inception</b>	Inception Report with a scope, methodology, evaluation matrix (questions, indicators, sources), data collection tools, workplan, portfolio and stakeholder analysis (no more than 20 pages without annexes).	Week 3, February 2024
<b>Data collection &amp; analysis</b>	Collection of primary and secondary information through mixed methods, and data analysis through approaches articulated in the inception report to ensure triangulation, integration of human rights, intersectional and gender approaches.	Week 3, February to mid-March 2025
<b>Synthesis</b>	A presentation detailing the emerging findings of the evaluation will be shared in an internal preliminary findings workshop with the Evaluation Reference Group. Limitations, gaps and mitigatory responses will be evaluated in this presentation.	Week 3 March 2025
<b>Drafting</b>	A final assessment draft report will be developed for consultation and validation, including annexes detailing the methodological approach and analytical products. A draft report will be presented by no later than the third week of April 2025.	Week 3 March to Week 2 April 2025
<b>Validation</b>	At least one round of validation will be offered to the Evaluation Management Group, as well as validation from the IES representative.	Week 3-Week 4 April 2025
<b>Validation and Final Report</b>	The final report will be delivered in English, including a concise Evaluation Brief in English and Spanish, and presented virtually. The report structure will be defined in the inception report (~40 pages without annexes).	Week 1 May 2025

## 7. Governance and management

The Evaluation Consultants will be responsible for managing and conducting the exercise, including the quality assurance of the final products and its presentation to UN Women management, and ensure that the evaluation is conducted in accordance with the UN Women Evaluation Policy,<sup>44</sup> United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines, and other key guidance documents.<sup>45</sup> Quality assurance of the assessment will be carried out first through the standard internal review and approval of deliverables by the Evaluation Specialist and Evaluation Reference Group. Based on UNEG guidance and good practices of the international evaluation community, this layer of quality assurance follows UN Women standards.<sup>46</sup>

The Evaluation Management Group will be integrated by Gina Bernal (Humanitarian Response Programme Management Specialist) and Flavio Carrera (Analyst in Monitoring and Evaluation of human mobility response). The Evaluation Reference Group will be integrated from UN Women by Delfina García Hamilton and Dayanara Medina, and from HIAS by Eden Suskin.

<sup>44</sup> UN Women, Evaluation Policy, UNW/2020/5/Rev.1, 2020.

<sup>45</sup> United Nations Evaluation Group, UNEG Ethical Guidelines, 2008.

<sup>46</sup> UN Women, Guidance Note: Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS), 2021.