

Mauritania

The UNHCR-WFP Joint Hub Country Support Brief

Mauritania hosts over 160,000 Malian refugees and asylum-seekers in the arid Hodh Chargui region – home to the M'bera camp – as well as in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou (UNHCR, 2025). At the same time, the country faces significant challenges stemming from its sparsely populated, arid landscape, which exacerbates food insecurity and malnutrition. Recurrent droughts and floods, intensified by climate change, leave more than 590,000 people vulnerable – representing 12 percent suffering from acute malnutrition during the 2025 lean season (WFP, 2025).

JOINT HUB SUPPORT

Since 2020, the Joint Hub has provided various forms of support to the UNHCR and WFP operations in Mauritania, including the deployment of a staff member as Targeting Coordinator for 18 months, in-country missions and ongoing remote technical and coordination support, on a weekly basis. **The Joint Hub has invested in on-the-job training to reinforce the capacity of staff** in country operations and ensure monitoring, analysis and implementation of the targeting approach, as well as assessments, continue to be conducted jointly in the future.

KEY SUPPORT AREAS



Assessment and Analysis: Joint Assessment Mission (JAM)



Targeting



Accountability to Affected People



Partnerships

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The Joint Hub has provided technical and strategic support to the process of assessment, analysis and targeting, both for the delivery of UNHCR and WFP humanitarian assistance, and refugee inclusion in Mauritanian social protection national programmes. The Joint Hub support included:

- **Technical oversight for data collection**, from designing data collection tools, adapting the national Social Registry's standard questionnaire for the situation of refugees, quality protocols, and full census of 14,012 refugee households in and around M'bera camp (2021).

- **Analysis of household vulnerability**, according to five dimensions: food access, education, dependency, health and specific needs and working capacity. Combining quantitative and qualitative data (from community consultations) in the analysis to validate the vulnerability dimensions.
- **Developing a vulnerability score** for every household and categorising into three vulnerability groups, capturing different socio-demographic profiles.
- **Designing a targeting approach**, comparing different targeting models and providing support to choose the most appropriate approach for both WFP and UNHCR's assistance and inclusion in national social protection programmes.
- **Integrating protection risks** into targeting, for example including households headed by a minor (or composed only of minors) into the highly vulnerable group.
- **Supporting appeals mechanisms** and building in flexibility to include additional households in the programmes ('appeals buffer').

ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED PEOPLE

Communities' engagement and their feedback have informed the design of the targeting approach. With support from the Joint Hub, both agencies emphasized including refugee perspectives in decision-making throughout the process.

Clear and consistent communication, through a variety of channels and in the refugees' main languages, has been strongly emphasised. Key messages were shared on the re-targeting exercise, refugees' rights and how to provide feedback and complaints. Information was shared through meetings with community leaders and volunteers, mobile loudspeakers, posters, home visits and WhatsApp messages in local languages, ensuring messages were received and understood by all, including illiterate people, people with disabilities and the elderly.

Appeal process was established prior to the implementation of the targeting approach to allow households time to submit a request to have their eligibility status reviewed. Appeals were received at the registration centre, an appeals helpline and via mobile teams in surrounding villages. The Joint Hub also supported the country offices to establish an assistance buffer thereby enabling additional vulnerable households to be added to the lists, following appeals.

PARTNERSHIPS AND NEW WAYS OF WORKING

The Joint Hub played a convening role in Mauritania as a neutral broker, able to **maintain dialogue and support partnership** to achieve a shared vision for refugees. Throughout the targeting process, activities were conducted jointly by UNHCR and WFP, in close coordination and partnership with the Government of Mauritania, supported by the World Bank. As a result, UNHCR and WFP country offices have **increased dialogue and joint activities**, as well as staff undertaking new activities and incorporating new tools and approaches in their daily work.

PROGRAMATIC OUTCOMES OF COLLABORATIVE ACTION

- **Joint targeting approach** for basic needs assistance, delivered by WFP, UNHCR and national social protection programmes.
- **Inclusion in national social protection programmes** (cash transfers and national health system) for the most vulnerable Malian refugee households (53 percent of households in 2022).
- **Protection mainstreamed** and integrated throughout the process, with time and resources invested in community engagement, communications, appeals **processes** and managing complaints and feedback.

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR WORK IN MAURITANIA

[Lessons Learned from Mauritania](#), The Joint Hub (2024)

[Supporting Inclusion of Refugees in the National Social Safety Net, Mauritania](#), The Joint Hub (2023)

[Joint Targeting for Refugees in Bassikounou, Mauritania](#), The Joint Hub (2022)

[How the UNHCR-WFP Joint Hub is promoting and supporting collaboration in Mauritania](#) (video), The Joint Hub (2022)

[Stratégie du HCR en Mauritanie, 2021-2025](#), UNHCR (2021)

[COVID-19 – Cash for Social Protection for Refugees in Mauritania](#), UNHCR (2020)

Learn more: www.wfp-unhcr-hub.org