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## Government advisory as an effective instrument for the operationalisation of the Global Compact on Refugees

Findings from a new study commissioned by the  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

## Executive Summary

The German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has been supporting UNHCR in facilitating the realisation of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) through the [joint GIZ-UNHCR global programme](#). Under this programme, ten GCR advisors were deployed to Ethiopia, Mauritania, Mexico, Rwanda, Somalia, and Uganda. A new study provides an overview of their achievements and lessons learned and develops recommendations on their future deployment. The study is based on 23 virtual interviews with GCR advisors, national partners, GIZ and UNHCR staff, and external observers conducted between October 2023 and January 2024, two lessons learned workshops with GCR advisors in November and December 2023, and a document review.

Most GCR advisors were seconded to national institutions that either oversaw the general GCR implementation process (e.g. CRRF Secretariat in Uganda) or had responsibility for implementing the GCR within a specific sector (e.g. Ministry of Water in Ethiopia). The GCR advisors carried out a broad range of tasks that included policy advice on the inclusion of refugees into national systems, capacity building of relevant government institutions, supporting coordination and participation structures, facilitating government-UNHCR cooperation and providing technical support to the implementation of specific Global Refugee Forum (GRF) pledges. In this way, they could support partner governments in addressing some of the challenges to GCR implementation, including limited commitment, limited capacities, and coordination challenges. Key achievements of the GCR advisors included sustaining government commitment to GCR implementation and making evidence-based contributions to the national discussion on refugee inclusion through studies and evaluations. Additionally, the GCR advisors supported the government successfully in engaging with development partners on the GCR. They contributed to the monitoring of the national GRF pledges, and facilitated national consultation processes on the GCR and the country's future commitments to it, notably its GRF pledges 2023. Furthermore, GCR advisors provided technical support to integrating refugees into national systems in areas such as WASH or labour market integration.



Figure: Results areas of the GCR advisors

The study finds that GCR advisors are an effective and efficient instrument for supporting the technical implementation of the GCR in refugee-hosting countries, although not without some challenges. Constraining factors included changing political priorities, limited stakeholder involvement in defining their role, multiple reporting lines and the long-term sustainability of their role. Factors enabling the effectiveness of the GCR advisors included the following: their strategic placement, political awareness and strong diplomatic skills, a small but flexible operational budget, understanding and endorsement of their position by the national government, UNHCR and GIZ, and jointly developed work plans.



## Case study: GCR advisor in Mauritania

Mauritania hosts more than 100.000 refugees from Mali and other Sahelian countries. It maintains an open-door policy towards refugees and is committed to integrate refugees into national systems such as health, WASH, social protection and civil registration. Mauritania is relatively new to humanitarian and development work so that its institutional structures in this area are still developing. The overall responsibility for the refugee response lies with the Ministry of Interior. Since 2021, UNHCR and GIZ have designed joint initiatives that facilitate the socio-economic inclusion of refugees and vulnerable Mauritians from host communities (“ProNexus” project, a component of the GIZ-UNHCR global programme). They thus support the government’s policy of inclusion for refugees, allowing them to be gradually integrated into national services, starting with healthcare and social protection.

From 2022 to 2024, the “ProNexus” project seconded a national staff member as GCR advisor to the Ministry of Interior to support it in carrying out its responsibilities under the GCR. The GCR advisor had worked for the government before and was aware of the Ministry’s corporate culture and decision-making processes. As a former senior official, he was trusted by ministry staff and his advice accepted.

The main activities of the GCR advisor included capacity building of the ministry and advisory and support to the coordination of the refugee response. This involved the development and implementation of a structured training programme for ministry staff on the GCR, the provision of advisory services to the Director General of Territorial Administration in charge of the refugee operations, and some practical support. The GCR advisor also carried out liaison functions between the ministry and its international partners and facilitated their cooperation with the regional administrations in the refugee-hosting areas. An important aspect of this work involved facilitating the flow of information and helping international actors understand government interests and concerns and vice versa. Furthermore, the GCR advisor supported inter-governmental coordination and the coordination with international partners.

He was instrumental in establishing the “commission on coordination of development projects in refugee-hosting areas” that involved the government, UNHCR, GIZ, the World Bank and other partners and helped them coordinate their activities. This commission was also in charge of developing Mauritania’s pledges to the GRF 2023, a process equally supported by the GCR advisor.

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He was a transmission belt between the Ministry of Interior, GIZ and us.

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- UNHCR Mauritania

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