

Research Terms of Reference

Energy Vulnerability Reduction Fund Assessment

MDA2501

Republic of Moldova

January 2025
V1



REACH Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

1. Executive Summary

Country of intervention	The Republic of Moldova				
Type of Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>	Natural hazard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Conflict	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>specify</i>)
Type of Crisis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sudden onset	<input type="checkbox"/>	Slow onset	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protracted
Mandating Body/ Agency	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)				
IMPACT Project Code	67AZF				
Overall Research Timeframe (<i>from research design to final outputs / M&E</i>)	18/11/2024 to 31/03/2025				
Research Timeframe <i>Add planned deadlines</i>	1. Pilot/ training: 17/01/2025		6. Situation Overview sent for validation: 17/03/2024		
	2. Start collect data: 21/01/2025		7. Key findings presentation: 31/03/2025		
	3. Data collected: 14/02/2025				
	4. Data analysed: 28/02/2025				
	5. Data sent for validation: 03/03/2025				
Number of assessments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single assessment (one cycle)			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multi assessment (more than one cycle)			
Humanitarian milestones <i>Specify what will the assessment inform and when</i> <i>e.g. The shelter cluster will use this data to draft its Revised Flash Appeal;</i>	Milestone		Deadline (can be tentative)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Donor plan/strategy: ECHO, as the donor of EVRF	31/03/2025		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inter-cluster plan/strategy			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cluster plan/strategy: Cash Working Group	31/03/2025		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	NGO platform plan/strategy			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify): The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, as the implementer of the EVRF energy compensation programme will use the findings to improve the programme's implementation in addressing energy vulnerability of households in Moldova.	31/03/2025		
	Audience type		Dissemination		

Audience Type & Dissemination Specify <i>who</i> will the assessment inform and <i>how</i> you will disseminate to inform the audience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Programmatic <input type="checkbox"/> Operational		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Product Mailing (e.g. mail to NGO consortium; HCT participants; Donors) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cluster Mailing (Education, Shelter and WASH) and presentation of findings at next cluster meeting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presentation of findings (e.g. at HCT meeting; Cluster meeting) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Website Dissemination (Relief Web & REACH Resource Centre)	
Stakeholder mapping Has a detailed stakeholder mapping been conducted during research design to identify all actors that could contribute to and/or benefit from the research?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
General Objective	The assessment aims to assess the access to and effectiveness of the Energy Vulnerability Reduction Fund (EVRF) energy compensation governmental programme in minimising the negative impacts of the sharp increase in energy prices on the living conditions and well-being of energy-vulnerable Ukrainian refugee and Moldovan households in the winter of 2024-2025. Through this, the assessment seeks to inform the effective and inclusive design and implementation of future interventions aimed at energy vulnerability in Moldova in a way that supports social cohesion and the integration of refugees.			
Specific Objective(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify any barriers faced by potentially energy-vulnerable refugee and Moldovan households to accessing the EVRF energy compensation in the winter of 2024-2025. 2. Measure the extent to which refugee and Moldovan beneficiary households of the EVRF energy compensation are able to meet their energy needs for the winter of 2024-2025. 3. Understand the impact of the EVRF energy compensation on the living conditions and well-being of refugee and Moldovan beneficiary households during the winter of 2024-2025. 4. Identify how coping strategies employed by potentially energy-vulnerable refugee and Moldovan households to meet their energy needs for the winter of 2024-2025 differ between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the EVRF energy compensation. 5. Assess the level of satisfaction of refugee and Moldovan beneficiary households with the amount and mode of distribution of the EVRF energy compensation during the winter of 2024-2025. 			
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What barriers prevent potentially energy-vulnerable refugee and Moldovan households from accessing the EVRF energy compensation in the winter of 2024-2025? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is the level of awareness of potentially energy-vulnerable refugee and Moldovan households regarding the EVRF energy compensation? 			

	<p>b. Are there barriers in the application process and eligibility criteria that prevent potentially energy-vulnerable refugee and Moldovan households from accessing the EVRF energy compensation?</p> <p>2. To what extent are refugee and Moldovan beneficiary households of the EVRF energy compensation able to meet their energy needs for the winter of 2024-2025?</p> <p>3. What is the impact of the EVRF energy compensation on the living conditions and well-being of beneficiaries?</p> <p>a. How does impact differ between refugee and Moldovan households?</p> <p>4. What coping strategies are employed by potentially energy-vulnerable refugee and Moldovan households to meet their energy needs for the winter of 2024-2025?</p> <p>a. How do the coping strategies differ between EVRF beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries?</p> <p>5. To what extent are refugee and Moldovan beneficiary households satisfied with the amount and mode of distribution of the EVRF energy compensation during the winter of 2024-2025?</p>																				
Geographic Coverage	Nationwide Republic of Moldova, excluding the Transnistrian region.																				
Secondary data sources	<p>1. Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. Law No. 241 of 28 July 2022 on the Energy Vulnerability Reduction Fund, amended by LP255 on 15 November 2024, MO477-480/20.11.24 art.643; in force 20 November 2024.</p> <p>2. UNDP "The Impact Assessment of the Energy Vulnerability Reduction Fund in the Winter of 2022-2023", 25 September 2023.</p> <p>3. UNDP "Targeted and Inclusive Approaches to Tackling Energy Poverty in a Crisis Context: Case Study from Moldova", April 2024.</p> <p>4. REACH Moldova Refugee Population Profiling Assessment 2024, Refugee Estimates and Trends Database, September 2024.</p> <p>The full list of secondary data sources can be found in Section 3.3.</p>																				
Population(s) <i>Select all that apply</i>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>IDPs in camp</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>IDPs in informal sites</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>IDPs in host communities</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>IDPs [Other, Specify]</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Refugees in camp</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Refugees in informal sites</td> </tr> <tr> <td>X</td><td>Refugees in host communities: Refugees displaced from Ukraine to Moldova after the escalation of the conflict on 24 February 2022</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>[Other, Specify]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>X</td><td>Host communities: Moldovan households</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>[Other, Specify]</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in camp	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in informal sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in host communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs [Other, Specify]	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in camp	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in informal sites	X	Refugees in host communities: Refugees displaced from Ukraine to Moldova after the escalation of the conflict on 24 February 2022	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, Specify]	X	Host communities: Moldovan households	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, Specify]
<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in camp	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in informal sites																		
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in camp	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in informal sites																		
X	Refugees in host communities: Refugees displaced from Ukraine to Moldova after the escalation of the conflict on 24 February 2022	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, Specify]																		
X	Host communities: Moldovan households	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, Specify]																		
Stratification <i>Select type(s) and enter number of strata</i>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>X</td><td> Geographical #: 6 1. Region a. North b. Centre c. South 2. Type of settlement </td> <td>X</td><td> Refugee/Moldovan households #: 2 Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes X No </td> <td>X</td><td> Beneficiary/Non-beneficiary households #: 2 Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes X No </td> </tr> </table>	X	Geographical #: 6 1. Region a. North b. Centre c. South 2. Type of settlement	X	Refugee/Moldovan households #: 2 Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes X No	X	Beneficiary/Non-beneficiary households #: 2 Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes X No														
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		a. Rural b. Urban Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Population size is known only for the Moldovan households. Population size for refugee households are based on estimates as described in Section 3.4.	Population size is known only for the Moldovan households. Population size for refugee households are based on estimates as described in Section 3.4.	Population size is known only for the Moldovan households. Population size for refugee households are based on estimates as described in Section 3.4.
Data collection tool(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Structured (Quantitative)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Semi-structured (Qualitative)
		Sampling method	Data collection method	
Structured data collection tool # 1 <i>Select sampling and data collection method and specify target # interviews</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Purposive <input type="checkbox"/> Probability / Simple random <input type="checkbox"/> Non-probability / Stratified simple random <input type="checkbox"/> Probability / Cluster sampling <input type="checkbox"/> Probability / Stratified cluster sampling <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	<input type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview (Target #): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Group discussion (Target #): _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Household interview (Target #): 437 <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview (Target #): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Direct observations (Target #): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify] (Target #): _____	
Disaggregation by gender and age <i>Are you planning to conduct sex/age disaggregated analysis?</i>		Gender	Age	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
Data management platform(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IMPACT	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNHCR
	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, Specify]		
Expected output type(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Situation overview #: 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Report #: __
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Presentation (Preliminary findings) #: __	<input type="checkbox"/>	Presentation (Final) #: __
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Interactive dashboard #: __	<input type="checkbox"/>	Webmap #: __
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Clean dataset #: 2 (beneficiary and non-beneficiary households)		
Access	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public (available on REACH resource center and other humanitarian platforms)		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted (bilateral dissemination only upon agreed dissemination list, no publication on REACH or other platforms)		
Visibility <i>Specify which logos should be on outputs</i>	REACH 			
	Donor: ECHO  Funded by the European Union			
	Coordination Framework: PLACE Consortium			



Partners: N/A

2. Rationale

2.1 Background

Since 2019, Moldova has faced a worsening energy crisis, driven by escalating natural gas prices and an increasing reliance on imports, mainly from Russia and Ukraine. The crisis intensified in 2021 with the global post-pandemic energy market disruptions, further exacerbated by the escalation of hostilities in Ukraine in 2022. These factors drove gas prices to historic highs and fuelled inflation, which peaked at 34.6% in late 2022.¹ Moldova's heavy dependence on energy imports has left the country highly vulnerable to external shocks, pushing many households into energy poverty, with some spending over 10% of their income on heating and electricity.²

In response, in 2022 the government established the Energy Vulnerability Reduction Fund (EVRF), under Law 241/2022, supported by the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).³ The fund aims to alleviate energy poverty through subsidies and energy efficiency measures. Initially providing mainly direct utility bill subsidies, the EVRF transitioned fully to cash-based assistance for the 2024-2025 winter season to enhance accessibility and autonomy for beneficiaries, including refugees with legal status and proof of having resided in Moldova for at least eight months during the past 12.⁴

As the supply of natural gas to the Republic of Moldova was halted by the Russian state-owned energy company, Gazprom, on 1 January 2025, concerns are rising over energy security amid geopolitical tensions and Ukraine's decision to not renew its gas transit agreement with Russia.⁵ In response, Moldova is diversifying its energy sources, including imports from Romania and potential suppliers such as Poland and Turkey,⁶ while exploring renewable energy initiatives.

Despite its successes, the EVRF has not yet been fully evaluated in terms of its inclusivity or long-term impact. In its 2022-2023⁷ and 2023-2024⁸ assessments of the EVRF, UNDP recommended a more integrated approach and improved data governance for the EVRF to ensure its ongoing effectiveness and broader coverage. However, further evaluation of the programme's impact, especially on refugees, the effectiveness of subsidies in meeting their specific needs, and barriers to accessing compensation, is necessary. Furthermore, while assessments have utilised economic modelling, perspectives of beneficiaries remain underexplored.

¹ German Economic Team. Moldova is making some progress on energy security. *Newsletter Moldova*, Issue No. 77. May-June 2023 [GET_NL_MDA_77_ENG.pdf](#)

² United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Tackling Energy Vulnerability and Poverty in Moldova. November 2023. [EVF Nov 2023](#)

³ Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. [Law No. 241 of 28 July 2022 on the Energy Vulnerability Reduction Fund, amended by LP255 on 15 November 2024, MO477-480/20.11.24 art.643; in force 20 November 2024.](#)

⁴ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. [Programul "Ajutor la contor" - Guvernul Republicii Moldova.-Acasă](#)

⁵ Ministry of Energy. [The government approved the Plan of measures for the cold season, which ensures energy security | Ministerul energiei.](#) 2 October 2024.

⁶ VOA News. [Moldova says end of Russian gas for Transdnistria 'very realistic' scenario.](#) 27 November 2024.

⁷ UNDP. [The Impact Assessment of the Energy Vulnerability Reduction Fund in the Winter of 2022–2023 | United Nations Development Programme](#) 25 September 2023.

⁸ UNDP. Report on the welfare impact of energy compensations in Moldova in 2021-2024 (unpublished). 12 December 2024.

2.2 Intended impact

This research aims to provide actionable insights to key actors, including the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) and stakeholders involved in Moldova's refugee response, to optimise the design and implementation of the EVRF and complementary winterisation programs. By addressing barriers to access, refining categorisation methodologies, and examining the differential impacts of the EVRF on host and refugee populations, the research seeks to improve the understanding of how energy subsidies influence resource allocation, energy consumption behaviours, and social cohesion.

The findings will directly inform ongoing and planned humanitarian interventions by identifying gaps in service delivery and providing evidence-based recommendations for policy adjustments. Moreover, the research will support strategic decision-making processes by highlighting priority funding areas and enabling targeted resource allocation, ultimately contributing to system-wide improvements in Moldova's approach to energy poverty mitigation and inclusion.

3. Methodology

3.1 Methodology overview

The EVRF assessment will use a quantitative research methodology, through a structured household survey conducted via phone and in-person. The survey will target households across Moldova, excluding the Transnistrian region, and will encompass both refugee and Moldovan households. The sample will include households that have benefitted from the EVRF program as well as those who did not, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the program's accessibility, impact, and general energy consumption behaviours. Both refugee and Moldovan households will be recruited to participate in the survey either through an online consent form which will be shared on social media channels and advertised in public spaces, or in-person, to reach the broadest scope of potential respondents within these populations.

Key definitions:

- **Energy vulnerability:** Energy vulnerability is defined in the law as a situation characterized by reduced access or reduced purchasing power of the household consumer in relation to the energy resources necessary for food preparation, thermal comfort in the home and other basic needs.⁹
- **Energy-vulnerable households:** For this assessment, households that are spending over 10 percent of their disposable income on electricity, gas and thermal energy are determined to be energy-vulnerable. This is the same definition for households in “energy poverty” as used by the impact assessment of the EVRF conducted by UNDP.¹⁰
- **Refugees:** For this assessment, the use of the term “refugees from Ukraine” or simply, “refugees” refer to persons or groups of persons who have been displaced from Ukraine following the escalation of hostilities on 24 February 2022. This definition is not limited to any legal status designation, and therefore, may include Ukrainians that have acquired Moldovan citizenship or third-country nationals that were displaced from Ukraine.
- **Household:** The respondent and all individuals, including their family or close acquaintances, who are living with them and share key resources and expenses beyond rent. Family units that use a common meter but do not live in the same accommodation are not considered to be within the same household.
- **Refugee households:** Households in Moldova consisting only of refugees from Ukraine (as defined above), and no members of the host community.
- **Moldovan households:** Households in Moldova consisting of at least one member of the host community (was not displaced from Ukraine to Moldova after 24 February 2022) with Moldovan citizenship. Households with at least one Moldovan that is not a refugee from Ukraine are considered to be at a significant advantage

⁹ Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. [Law No. 241 of 28 July 2022 on the Energy Vulnerability Reduction Fund, amended by LP255 on 15 November 2024, MO477-480/20.11.24 art.643; in force 20 November 2024.](#)

¹⁰ [The Impact Assessment of the Energy Vulnerability Reduction Fund in the Winter of 2022–2023 | United Nations Development Programme](#)

compared to households consisting of only refugees in terms of having a strong social network in their local community and access to public services and information.

- **Disability:** For this assessment, the Washington Group Short Set on Functionality (WG-SS) will be used to determine which households include persons with disabilities and which are without. The WG questions locate disability as at the interaction between a person's capabilities (limitation in functioning) and environmental barriers (physical, social, cultural or legislative) that may limit their participation in society. They are not intended as a diagnostic tool or as a means to determine eligibility for social benefits.¹¹

3.2 Population of interest

Geographical coverage

The EVRF assessment will cover the entirety of the Republic of Moldova, excluding the Transnistrian region. The Transnistrian region is excluded due to households in this region not being eligible for the EVRF energy compensation. The sample for both beneficiary and non-beneficiary households will be stratified according to type of settlement (rural and urban) and region (North, Centre, South). Due to the method of recruiting respondents for this assessment (detailed in Section 3.4), specific settlements will not be sampled so as to allow all interested and eligible respondents across these three regions to participate in the survey.

Key geographical terminology

- **Region:** Excluding the Transnistrian region, which is not within the scope of this assessment, there are three official regions in Moldova: North, Centre and South.
- **Rural settlements:** Level 2 territorial-administrative unit which includes communes and villages. Communes are composed of two or more villages. The village is the level 2 territorial-administrative unit only if it is not part of a commune.
- **Urban settlements:** Level 2 territorial-administrative unit which includes municipalities (except Chişinău and Bălţi municipalities which are level 1 territorial-administrative units) and cities. Under the terms of the law, some cities can be declared municipalities.

Populations of interest and unit of measurement

The populations of interest for this assessment are **refugee and Moldovan households** residing in the Republic of Moldova, excluding the Transnistrian region. These populations comprise two key groups that will be assessed:

1. **Beneficiaries of the EVRF energy compensation**, who will be surveyed to evaluate the programme's impact on household expenditures and energy vulnerability. A total of 634,008 households (1.2 million individuals) were registered to receive the EVRF energy compensation for the month of November 2024.¹² Households that registered in December 2024 and only began receiving the compensation from the month of January 2025 are excluded from this assessment as it would be too short a time period from when they receive their electricity, gas, or heating bills for the month of December 2024 to the start of data collection for this assessment for them to be able to assess how the compensation has impacted their household.
2. **Non-beneficiaries of the EVRF energy compensation**, both those who applied but were not selected and those who did not apply, to identify barriers to accessing the compensation and coping strategies employed during the winter by non-beneficiaries.

As the EVRF energy compensation is distributed at the household level and energy-related bills are also charged at the household level, the unit of measurement for this assessment is the household.

¹¹ Washington Group on Disability Statistics. [Interviewer Guidelines](#). 8 February 2023.

¹² Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. [Compensațiile pentru energie pentru luna noiembrie vor fi achitate începând cu azi](#). 10 December 2024.

3.3 Secondary data review

The secondary data review was conducted from the end of November to December 2024, focusing on past assessments of the EVRF programme, information on the current situation of energy expenses and energy-vulnerability in Moldova, and similar assessments of the impact of cash-assistance programmes. The table below lists the secondary sources that informed this research.

Title	Source	Purpose of source
Law No. 241 of 28 July 2022 on the Energy Vulnerability Reduction Fund, amended by LP255 on 15 November 2024, MO477-480/20.11.24 art.643; in force 20 November 2024	Parliament of the Republic of Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextual understanding • Informing research design
Report on the welfare impact of energy compensations in Moldova in 2021-2024 (unpublished)	UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextual understanding • Identifying research gaps • Informing research methodology
Moldova's energy crises and the impact of the Energy Vulnerability Reduction Fund in alleviating poverty during the winter of 2022–2023	UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextual understanding • Identifying research gaps • Informing research methodology
Economy-wide impacts of the energy price compensation policy	UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextual understanding • Identifying research gaps • Informing research methodology
Moldova: The data component of the Energy Vulnerability Reduction Fund	UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextual understanding • Identifying research gaps
Targeted and Inclusive Approaches to Tackling Energy Poverty in a Crisis Context: Case Study from Moldova	UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextual understanding • Identifying research gaps • Informing research methodology
Registration has started for energy compensation for the 2024-2025 cold season	UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextual understanding • Informing research design
The government approved the Plan of measures for the cold season, which ensures energy security	Ministry of Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextual understanding • Informing research design

REACH Moldova Post-Distribution Monitoring of UNHCR's Cash-Based Interventions in Moldova – Data Analysis Plan (unpublished)	REACH (IMPACT Initiatives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire design • Informing research methodology
Evaluating the mediating role of energy subsidies on social well-being and energy poverty alleviation in Bangladesh	Energy Research & Social Science, Elsevier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of energy vulnerability and energy poverty • Informing research design
Usually resident population of the Republic of Moldova, as of 1 January 2024 by Districts, Ages, Years, Areas and Sex	National Bureau of Statistics Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sampling for Moldovan households
REACH Moldova Refugee Population Profiling Assessment 2024 Refugee Estimates and Trends Database	REACH (IMPACT Initiatives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sampling for refugee households

3.4 Primary Data Collection

Method

Primary data will be collected via quantitative household surveys of the populations of interest. Interviews will be conducted via phone call or in-person. To reach a greater amount and wider spread of households across the Republic of Moldova, an invitation to participate in the survey will be advertised in targeted public spaces and social media platforms where the target populations are most likely to be reached. Included in the invitations will be a consent form that households interested in participating in the survey can fill so that they may be contacted via phone to be interviewed.

Due to the limited ability of this method to reach respondents such as older individuals or people with disabilities that are not active on social media and have limited mobility, part of the targeted interviews may be conducted in-person. To identify such respondents, members of the IMPACT Moldova Field Team will contact social workers in locations selected according to the estimated population density of refugee households and expected geographical concentration of EVRF energy compensation beneficiaries and/or physically go to those locations to recruit participants. In cases where the Field Team is physically recruiting participants, in-person interviews may be conducted directly for the convenience of the respondents and efficiency of data collection.

Sampling

1. Beneficiary households

A purposive sampling approach was used to sample EVRF energy compensation beneficiary households based on available capacity and coverage of the populations of interest. The population will be stratified according to households with at least one Moldovan citizen that is a member of the host community, and households composed fully of refugees from Ukraine. Since households with at least one Moldovan member of the host community are expected to have significant advantages over households composed of only refugees in terms of access to information about the compensation programme and overall ability to access the compensation, these strata were determined to be the most appropriate for answering the research questions of this assessment.

Due to the lack of disaggregated data on the total beneficiaries of the EVRF energy compensation programme, certain assumptions were made to allow for stratification of the sample. Based on estimates of the refugees from Ukraine residing

in Moldova according to monitoring of border crossings by the Border Police,¹³ about 5% of the population in Moldova excluding the Transnistrian region are estimated to be refugees from Ukraine.¹⁴ Assuming that the beneficiaries of the EVRF energy compensation for November 2024 have a similar distribution of the population of Moldova, it is calculated that of the 634,008 beneficiary households of the EVRF energy compensation, 31,700 are refugee households and the remaining 602,308 households include Moldovan members of the host community.

Sampling was done at the level of type of settlement to ensure coverage of households living in rural and urban settlements, so that findings for households in these two areas can be compared. It is also assumed that 50% of the beneficiary households are living in rural areas and 50% are in urban areas.

The sample was then further divided between regions: North, Centre and South. This was done proportionally based on data on the total usual resident population in Moldova from the National Bureau of Statistics and REACH's Refugee Population Profiling Assessment which estimates the number of refugees from Ukraine in Moldova in May/June 2024.¹⁵ The sample was stratified by region in order to reflect as much as possible the actual distribution of beneficiary households across the regions in Moldova, but findings will not be compared by region due to there being no significant differences expected between the regions in terms of energy vulnerability.

Table 2 and 3 shows the number of households sampled for this population. If more detailed demographic information on the beneficiaries of the EVRF energy compensation is received from MLSP prior to the beginning of data collection, the sample will be adjusted according to this data to better reflect the groups represented in the beneficiary list. Limitations of this sampling approach are discussed in detail in Section 3.6.

2. Non-beneficiary households

Purposive sampling was also used to sample households in Moldova that are not beneficiaries of the EVRF energy compensation. This was done using the same strata as that used for beneficiary households – households with at least one Moldovan member of the host community, and households composed fully of refugees from Ukraine.

The sample size for this population of interest is 120 households, and this was determined based on the selected strata and feasibility. For comparability of findings between the households with at least one Moldovan host community member and households composed of only refugees, this sample was then split equally between the geographical strata – by region and type of settlement. Table 4 and 5 shows the number of households sampled for this population. Limitations of this sampling approach are discussed in detail in Section 3.6.

¹³ UNHCR Operational Data Portal. [Country - Republic of Moldova](#). Last updated 30 November 2024.

¹⁴ National Bureau of Statistics Moldova. [Usually resident population by districts, age groups, areas and sex, as of January 1, 2024](#). Accessed on 26 December 2024.

¹⁵ [REACH Moldova Refugee Population Profiling Assessment 2024 Refugee Estimates and Trends Database](#). 6 September 2024.

Table 1. Overall sample:

Population of interest		Population estimates (by household)	Target household surveys	Total target household surveys
Beneficiaries	Refugees	31,700 ¹⁶	158	317
	Moldovans	602,308 ¹⁷	159	
Non-beneficiaries	Refugees	9,706 ¹⁸	60	120
	Moldovans	1,101,494 ¹⁹	60	
			Grand total	437

Table 2. Beneficiary households by region:

Region	Refugee households	Moldovan households
North	25	40
Centre	97	92
South	37	28
Total	158	159

Table 3. Beneficiary households by type of settlement:

Type of settlement	Refugee households	Moldovan households
Rural	73	75
Urban	86	85
Total	158	159

¹⁶ Calculated based on 5% of the total number of beneficiary households of the EVRF in November 2024 (634,008 households). 5% was determined based on refugee population estimates from UNHCR Operational Data Portal, [Country - Republic of Moldova](#), last updated 30 November 2024, and National Bureau of Statistics Moldova, [Usually resident population by districts, age groups, areas and sex, as of January 1, 2024](#), accessed on 26 December 2024.

¹⁷ Calculated based on 95% of the total number of beneficiary households of the EVRF in November 2024 (634,008 households), which is the remaining beneficiary households after subtracting the estimated refugee beneficiary households.

¹⁸ Calculated based on [REACH Moldova Refugee Population Profiling Assessment 2024 Refugee Estimates and Trends Database. 6 September 2024](#), and average household size of 2.8 according to [REACH Moldova Refugee Intentions Assessment 2024](#).

¹⁹ Calculated based on National Bureau of Statistics Moldova, [Usually resident population by districts, age groups, areas and sex, as of January 1, 2024](#), accessed on 26 December 2024, and average household size of 2.2 according to National Bureau of Statistics, [Average household size by area, 2023](#), accessed on 30 December 2024.

Table 4. Non-beneficiary households by region:

Region	Refugee households	Moldovan households
North	9	16
Centre	35	33
South	15	9
Total	60	60

Table 5. Non-beneficiary households by type of settlement:

Type of settlement	Refugee households	Moldovan households
Rural	30	30
Urban	30	30
Total	60	60

Tool

Data will be collected through a structured household survey using the Kobo Collect application (for in-person interviews) or the Enketo webform (for phone interviews). A single tool will be developed for interviewing both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries as about two-thirds of the questions apply to both populations of interest. For faster and easier data cleaning and processing, the Kobo tool will consist of three main parts: the general introduction and screening questions applicable to both populations of interest (metadata questions); one group of questions for beneficiaries; and one group of questions for non-beneficiaries. The two latter groups will be coded as single repeat groups, so the collected data is easily identifiable in a new Excel sheet per population group.

The tool will include questions asked to both populations of interest on household demographics, income, energy-related expenses, well-being and ability to meet basic needs, and their experience applying for the EVRF energy compensation (if they applied) or why they did not apply. Questions asked only to beneficiaries of the EVRF energy compensation include details on the compensation received, and their level of satisfaction with the compensation programme.

To ensure only relevant data is collected and that data collection runs smoothly, the tool will be piloted over two days before the planned start of data collection. A minimum of five respondents that filled in the consent form (more if the number of households that filled in the consent form is much higher than the target in the strata) will be interviewed over the phone using the tool by enumerators during the pilot phase. Feedback from enumerators on the tool during this phase will be implemented to polish the data collection tool in preparation for the official start of data collection. Feedback will be collected in-person from enumerators during debriefs at the end of each pilot day.

Enumerator training

Prior to piloting the tool and conducting data collection, a training on data collection for this assessment will be conducted for enumerators from the IMPACT Moldova Field Team. The training will be conducted by the Assessment Team (Assessment Officer and Data Officer) and will be over a day. The topics that will be covered include the contextual background, objectives and rationale behind the assessment, how the EVRF programme works and how households can

apply, the populations of interest of the assessment, the target sample, the plan for scoping of respondents, and going through the questionnaire in-depth, including clarification and discussion on questions that may be confusing, and logical checks that will be conducted during data cleaning so that enumerators can minimise such logical mistakes.

3.5 Data Processing & Analysis

The primary quantitative data will be collected using the Kobo Platform. Data cleaning will be conducted regularly (daily, if feasible) by the Assessment Officer and Data Officer to address duplicates, resolve any issues encountered during data collection, and ensure adherence to the correct methodology. To verify that the same households are not interviewed multiple times, surveys will be compared against each other based on basic household composition and demographics, such as household size, legal status of household members, presence of vulnerable groups, settlement, overall income and type of heating system. The data will be anonymised and cleaned in accordance with IMPACT's Minimum Standards Checklist for Data Cleaning and Processing for Structured (Quantitative) Data and the Management of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) guidelines.

Following data cleaning, the Assessment Officer and Data Officer will perform statistical analysis on the cleaned dataset, following the data analysis plan developed during the research design phase. Relevant software such as R and Excel will be used for analysis, which will comply with IMPACT's Data Analysis Guidelines for Quantitative Research.

All data cleaning and analysis will undergo review by the IMPACT HQ Research Department's Africa and Europe Unit before proceeding to output production to ensure quality and accuracy.

3.6 Limitations

1. Findings will not be representative and will only be indicative

The sampling approach for this assessment is not representative and the method of scoping for respondents may be impacted by selection bias. The purposive sampling approach used is not representative, although different official data sources were used to inform the targets set for each stratum.

Additionally, selection bias as a result of the method of recruitment of participants for the household survey may impact the representativeness of the findings. Although the invitation to participate in the survey will be shared on various social media channels and posters will be put up in several public spaces in order to maximise its reach, these will likely only reach a certain portion of the populations of interest that are active on these social media channels or that frequent those public spaces and interact with the advertisement. Such groups may exclude older individuals, people with disabilities, and other marginalised groups that are not active on social media. To mitigate this, the Field Team will also reach out to social workers that would have information on these groups, particularly in rural areas, and conduct in-person recruitment and interviews where necessary, but this method will also have its own biases based on the locations they go to.

2. Findings may be biased towards more negative experiences of the EVRF programme due to the method of recruitment of participants

Related to the selection bias described in the previous limitation, the sample of this assessment will likely be biased towards respondents that have had more negative experiences and feedback to provide on the EVRF programme. Households that are dissatisfied with the programme are more likely to be interested in being interviewed about it and having their voices heard than those that are satisfied. As such, those that are dissatisfied are more likely to take the time to sign up and fill in the consent form than those that are satisfied.

3. Findings will only be able to capture the experience of households during the early winter period

Due to limitations in the time available for conducting this assessment, data collection is scheduled shortly after EVRF beneficiaries are expected to receive the second payment of the compensation in January 2025. As such, beneficiaries would have only had sufficient time to utilise and experience the impact of the first payment of the compensation. This timing limits the ability of this assessment to capture the impact of the EVRF throughout the 2024-2025 winter season. Similarly, for non-beneficiaries, the assessment would only capture their experience during the first few months of this winter season.

4. Assessment of the programme's impact is based on the perspectives of respondents and therefore is not objective

Assessing the impact of the EVRF energy compensation objectively is challenging as the compensation is provided simultaneously with rising energy expenses and is capped compared to previous years, making it difficult to isolate the effect of the support. Additionally, beneficiaries may have anticipated receiving the compensation, which could influence their reported behaviours and perceptions. A further limitation is the lack of a true control group, as all eligible households may have adjusted their behaviours in anticipation of the program, reducing comparability.

Additionally, responses from respondents that are beneficiaries of the EVRF programme may not be entirely honest and self-censored to reflect more positively on the programme than their actual opinion of it, out of fear of losing access to the compensation. To mitigate this, a clear disclaimer will be included in the beginning of the consent form and the beginning of the interview that their responses will not affect their status as beneficiaries, however, there may still be biased responses.

Moreover, households with central heating systems have little control over their heating usage, which may affect the accuracy of self-reported energy consumption data. Other challenges may include potential response bias, the potential inaccuracy of self-reported data, and external factors influencing household energy consumption and economic vulnerability during the assessment period, which would be difficult to objectively capture through a household survey.

Consequently, the assessment will rely heavily on beneficiaries' self-reported experiences and perspectives to evaluate the programme's effectiveness.

4. Key ethical considerations and related risks

The proposed research design meets / does not meet the following criteria:

<i>The proposed research design...</i>	Yes/ No	Details if no (including mitigation)
... Has been coordinated with relevant stakeholders to avoid unnecessary duplication of data collection efforts?	Yes	
... Respects respondents, their rights and dignity (<i>specifically by: seeking informed consent, designing length of survey/ discussion while being considerate of participants' time, ensuring accurate reporting of information provided</i>)?	Yes	
... Does not expose data collectors to any risks as a direct result of participation in data collection?	Yes	
... Does not expose respondents / their communities to any risks as a direct result of participation in data collection?	Yes	

... Does not involve collecting information on specific topics which may be stressful and/ or re-traumatising for research participants (both respondents and data collectors)?	Yes	
... Does not involve data collection with minors i.e. anyone less than 18 years old?	Yes	
... Does not involve data collection with other vulnerable groups e.g. persons with disabilities, victims/ survivors of protection incidents, etc.?	No	Since participation in the household survey will be advertised widely on social media channels and public spaces, respondents may include vulnerable groups such as older individuals, people with disabilities, and victims/survivors of protection incidents that are interested in participating in the survey. The survey, however, will not ask respondents any sensitive questions related to protection issues, as the scope of the assessment only covers the EVRF energy compensation, and household's income and expenses related to the winter season. Furthermore, the IMPACT Moldova Field Team has been trained on how to interview older individuals and persons with disabilities in the most sensitive and respectful manner.
... Follows IMPACT SOPs for management of personally identifiable information ?	Yes	

5. Roles and responsibilities

Task Description	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed
<i>Research design</i>	Assessment Officer, Data Officer	Associate Research Manager	PLACE Consortium, UNDP, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Associate Field Manager	Projects and Fundraising Officer, Country Coordinator
<i>Supervising data collection</i>	Field Assistants, Field Officer	Associate Field Manager	Assessment Officer, Associate Research Manager	ECHO, Country Coordinator
<i>Data processing (checking, cleaning)</i>	Assessment Officer, Data Officer	Associate Research Manager	Associate Research Manager, HQ Research Department	ECHO, Country Coordinator

<i>Data analysis</i>	Assessment Officer, Data Officer	Associate Research Manager	Associate Research Manager, HQ Research Department	ECHO, Country Coordinator
<i>Output production</i>	Assessment Officer	Associate Research Manager	Associate Research Manager, HQ Research Department	ECHO, Country Coordinator, Projects and Funding Officer
<i>Dissemination</i>	Assessment Officer	Associate Research Manager	Associate Research Manager, Projects and Fundraising Officer, Liaison Officer	ECHO, Country Coordinator
<i>Monitoring & Evaluation</i>	Assessment Officer	Country Coordinator	Associate Research Manager, Projects and Funding Officer, HQ MEL Unit	ECHO
<i>Lessons learned</i>	Assessment Officer, Associate Field Manager	Assessment Officer	Associate Research Manager	HQ MEL Unit, ECHO

Responsible: the person(s) who executes the task

Accountable: the person who validates the completion of the task and is accountable of the final output or milestone

Consulted: the person(s) who must be consulted when the task is implemented

Informed: the person(s) who need to be informed when the task is completed

6. Data Analysis Plan

The Data Analysis Plan (DAP) for this assessment can be found [here](#).

7. Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

IMPACT Objective	External M&E Indicator	Internal M&E Indicator	Focal point	Tool	Will indicator be tracked?
Humanitarian stakeholders are accessing IMPACT products	Number of humanitarian organisations accessing IMPACT services/products Number of individuals accessing IMPACT services/products	# of downloads of x product from Resource Centre	Country request to HQ	User_log	X Yes
		# of downloads of x product from Relief Web	Country request to HQ		X Yes
		# of downloads of x product from Country level platforms	Country team		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
		# of page clicks on x product from REACH global newsletter	Country request to HQ		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
		# of page clicks on x product from country newsletter, sendingBlue, bit.ly	Country team		X Yes
		# of visits to x webmap/x dashboard	Country request to HQ		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
IMPACT activities contribute to better program implementation and coordination of the humanitarian response	Number of humanitarian organisations utilizing IMPACT services/products	# references in HPC documents (HNO, SRP, Flash appeals, Cluster/sector strategies)	Country team	Reference_log	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moldova Refugee Coordination Forum 2025-2026 winterisation plan. Ministry of Labour and Social Protection official documents or articles. UNDP reports or articles.
		# references in single agency documents			
Humanitarian stakeholders are using IMPACT products	Humanitarian actors use IMPACT evidence/products as a basis for decision making, aid planning and delivery Number of humanitarian	Perceived relevance of IMPACT country-programs	Country team	Usage_Feed back and Usage_Survey template	General partner usage survey to be conducted at the end of 2025 for all 2025 activities targeting at least 10 partners.
		Perceived usefulness and influence of IMPACT outputs			
		Recommendations to strengthen IMPACT programs			

	documents (HNO, HRP, cluster/agency strategic plans, etc.) directly informed by IMPACT products	Perceived capacity of IMPACT staff Perceived quality of outputs/programs Recommendations to strengthen IMPACT programs			
Humanitarian stakeholders are engaged in IMPACT programs throughout the research cycle	Number and/or percentage of humanitarian organizations directly contributing to IMPACT programs (<i>providing resources, participating to presentations, etc.</i>)	# of organisations providing resources (i.e.staff, vehicles, meeting space, budget, etc.) for activity implementation # of organisations/clusters inputting in research design and joint analysis # of organisations/clusters attending briefings on findings;	Country team	Engagement_log	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes X Yes X Yes