

UN Joint Programme to Build Urban and Rural Resilience and the Conditions for Recovery in Syria MPTF OFFICE GENERIC ANNUAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2019

<p style="text-align: center;">Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Title: UN Joint Programme to Build Urban and Rural Resilience and the Conditions for Recovery in Syria • Programme Number • MPTF Office Project Reference Number:³ 00116116 (EC) 00118029 (non-EC) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results²</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Syria</p> <p>Outcome 1: Urban Area-based Recovery and Neighborhoods Plans that are responsive to community’s needs, particularly the most vulnerable groups, are developed, delivered and monitored in an inclusive participatory and conflict-sensitive manner at local level.</p> <p>Outcome 2: Basic and social services restored, improved and sustained to enhance community resilience and social cohesion</p> <p>Outcome 3: Households and communities benefit from sustainable livelihood opportunities, including economic recovery and enhancing social cohesion and community security</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Participating Organization(s)</p> <p>UNICEF, UNDP, FAO, UNFPA, WFP and UN-HABITAT</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Implementing Partners</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TBD</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>Total approved budget as per project document: \$70,766,349 MPTF /JP Contribution⁴: UNDP - \$300,000 (00118029) \$596,774 (00116116) FAO – \$300,000 (00118029) UNHABITAT - \$300,000 (00118029) UNFPA - \$300,000 (00118029) UNICEF - \$300,000 (00118029) WFP - \$300,000 (00118029)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Programme Duration</p> <p>Overall Duration (<i>months</i>): 24</p>

¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

² Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

³ The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁴ The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

	Start Date ⁵ : 15.01.2019 First transfer: 23.05.2019 (00116116) First transfer 06.11.2019 (00118029)
Other Contributions (donors): 0	Original End Date ⁶ (14.01.2021) Current End date ⁷ (14.01.2021)
TOTAL: \$2,396,774	
Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.	<p style="text-align: center;">Report Submitted By</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name: Hisashi Izumi ○ Title: Joint Programme Manager ○ Participating Organization (Lead): RCO ○ Email address: hisashi.izumi@one.un.org

⁵ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁶ As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

⁷ If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities.

NARRATIVE REPORT FORMAT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UN Joint Programme (JP) in Syria brings together six UN implementing agencies to deliver coordinated resilience and recovery-oriented interventions to communities who are still witnessing massive damage to every aspect of life and livelihoods. To date, the Syrian context has largely focused on the provision of humanitarian assistance with less emphasis on resilience efforts. Recognizing this, the JP utilizes an urban area-based approach that is guided by inclusion and local participation to deliver multi-pronged interventions to affected communities.

The Joint Steering Committee (JSC) selected Deir Ezzour City and Dara'a City and their rural catchment areas as the two locations for the JP, based on extensive technical assessments and ground consultations, selected two locations. For this reporting period (1 January to 31 December 2019), activities were primarily focused on the inception phase. To this end, three main items were produced under the JP were:

1. Detailed guidelines and steps for conducting local planning and consultations in Dara'a City and their rural catchment area;
2. Activity work plan and preliminary budget to address social vulnerability in Dara'a City and their rural catchment areas were established and;
3. Detailed consolidated assessment and comprehensive Dara'a Response Overview, together with priority project activities was discussed at the JSC on 27 November 2019.

Despite the various challenges, coordination efforts between implementing agencies have contributed to a successful inception phase and paved the way to jumpstart intervention in the next phase. Towards the end of this reporting period and based on experience preparing for the Dara'a Response Overview, all agencies have started the groundwork for Deir Ezzour City and its rural catchment areas, including assessments and community level consultations.

I. Purpose

The JP has been developed to enable participating UN organizations to address critical needs within targeted communities while also strengthening the resilience of displaced populations and host communities, promote social and economic recovery, strengthen rural-urban linkages, support local planning and community participation and contribute to overall social cohesion within communities. The JP adopts a flexible programming approach, at the neighborhood level with strong emphasis on community consultations and decision-making to prioritize needs and activities and select areas of intervention. Under the JP, the following results will be delivered:

1. Outcome 1: Urban Area-based Recovery and Neighborhoods Plans that are responsive to community's needs, particularly the most vulnerable groups, are developed, delivered and monitored in an inclusive participatory and conflict-sensitive manner at local level.
2. Outcome 2: Basic and social services restored, improved and sustained to enhance community resilience and social cohesion
3. Outcome 3: Households and communities benefit from sustainable livelihood opportunities, including economic recovery and enhancing social cohesion and community security

II. Results

i) Narrative reporting on results:

Under the JP, collaboration between six UN implementing agencies (FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF and WFP) serves to build upon and maximize synergies between existing programming tools, activities and resources to reinforce the benefits of interventions.

Between 1 January and 31 December 2019, activities undertaken primarily contributed to partial achievements under ‘Outcome 1: Utilizing the Urban Area-based and Neighborhood Planning Approach’. On this, the JP successfully produced a comprehensive Response Overview for Dara’a City under that will guide the first phase of the intervention. The second phase of the Dara’a Response is anticipated to begin in the first quarter of the second year.

Inception Phase Kick-Off

Following the signing of the JP prodoc in January 2019, the JP led by UN Habitat made the preparations for a detailed work plan, preliminary assessment, and template for the Location Selection Report, to be utilized by participating agencies. Joint planning for location selection under the Inception Phase was guided by local and regional planning expertise previously established during the EU-funded Urban Information and Analysis Project.

The first Joint Steering Committee (JSC) meeting was convened in January 2019 and led to the confirmation of the inception phase work plan, terms of references and formal establishment of the JSC, JP Technical Working Group (TWG), and Project Management Unit (PMU).

Briefly, the JSC is co-chaired by representatives from European Union (EU) and the Resident Coordinator, and its members are the Government of Norway and the six respective UN Heads of Agencies. Chaired by the JP Manager and bringing together all technical focal points from the participating agencies, the TWG’s primary role is to ensure day-to-day coordination, joint analysis and coherent planning while the PMU provides coordination support to and programmatic oversight of the JP. In 2019, UN Habitat seconded a staff member to act as the JP Manager a.i. on a cost recovery basis to provide oversight and leadership to the JP. Recruitment for the JP Manager was undertaken in 2019 although there were significant delays with regards to the recruitment. At the end of the reporting period, the JP Manager has yet to recruited.

Location Identification and Selection

Location identification was prioritized to kick start preliminary assessments. Six locations - Aleppo City (Eastern Neighborhoods), Homs City (Al Waer), Deir Ezzour (central neighborhoods), Dara’a City, and Douma - were selected from an initial list of ten as proposed by the TWG. The results of this assessment were shared in February 2019 with Head of Agencies and representatives from the EU and Norway.

A comprehensive inception phase report prepared by UN Habitat in March 2019, with inputs from participating agencies, offered detailed local contextual analysis, area needs, risks, potential interventions and partner mapping including ranking of the five identified locations.⁸ Following further discussions with the EU and Norway, two locations were eventually selected in June 2019 - Deir Ezzour City / District and Dara’a City / Sub-District - as the final locations for interventions under the JP. The approval was required by the JSC to avoid raising expectations and potential for operational and reputational risks as the development of this Urban Area-based and Neighborhood Action Planning process require a high level of local community engagement.

Planning and Coordination of Inception Phase Activities and Key Achievements

⁸ Annex 1: Location Selection Report

During this reporting period, thematic pillars of intervention were established, and methodology notes were prepared to guide interventions under the JP. These pillars (social, infrastructure, agriculture and planning and local engagement) were designed to facilitate implementing agencies' work in a coherent and coordinated manner.

These pillars together with the Urban Area-based and Neighborhood Action Planning Approach were utilized to develop the activity matrix and local plans for the first phase of the Dara'a Response and which then endorsed by the JSC on 27 November 2019. This approach brings together UN agencies, communities and local authorities to jointly assess, plan and design appropriate interventions. Similar modality and planning will be utilized for subsequent phases and for establishing the Deir Ezzour Response Overview.

The Dara'a Response was divided into two phases following recommendations and agreement between participating agencies at the TWG. This will allow the initial package of Phase 1 activities to address immediate vulnerability needs in Dara'a while paving the way for in-depth consultations required for the second phase of activities which will focus on longer-term recovery and resilience efforts.

In general, the JP planning process employs a two-pronged approach. Firstly, local actors (such as non-state civic groups, community leaders, women and youth groups) are consulted to agree on the geographic and sectoral framing where interventions will be prioritized and implemented. This is then complemented with consultations with technical experts, local service providers and community stakeholders through a locally led planning process to develop the Neighborhood Action Plans that prioritize activities in each neighborhood based on agreed selection criteria. This approach is rooted in empowering local communities and promotes accountable and inclusive decision-making, which in turn creates the space for ongoing dialogue and social cohesion.

Additional to this, as most agencies were either new to joint programming and/or the resilience approach within the Syria context, methodology notes were jointly prepared to support coordinated efforts. These notes were instrumental in providing functional and technical guidance for agencies when conducting assessments, designing and planning their interventions within the resilience framework. Some of the examples of consultations, methodologies, planning tools developed and assessments conducted included:

- UNDP conducted local consultations in Dara'a, bringing together 70 community representatives including community activists, mukhtars, neighborhood committees, and local experts from academia to development. These consultations focused on discussions on community multi-sectoral needs, prioritization, mapping of risks and available resources.
- FAO, UNDP and WFP jointly developed an integrated assessment methodology to support the planning of resilience-based activities relating to agriculture, livelihoods and support to local economy in rural and urban areas. This methodology aims to identify area-specific complementary and multi-sectoral interventions, while also reducing assessment-fatigue within targeted communities.
- UN Habitat and UNDP developed a joint methodology note⁹ for local planning and community engagement process that led to the identification of the detailed steps to guide local planning and consultations in Dara'a City and mapping of the local mechanism and entities that can pro-actively engage with youth, women, vulnerable groups including people with disabilities.

⁹ See Annex 3 for sample methodology note on local consultation and engagement.

- The UN Habitat Urban Damage and Functionality Assessment approach was utilized to guide all activities relating to infrastructure and housing. This will also ensure that agencies are utilizing similar data sources and updated information thereby consistency across interventions. UN Habitat conducted a 10-day citywide Field Urban Damage Assessment in October 2019 led by the Syndicate of Engineers and with participation of 75 community representatives in each neighborhood. Results were framed by GIS and provided details on the degree of damage of each building and infrastructure and informed the type of interventions needed to be included in the Dara'a Response Overview.
- Community consultations were also held with representatives from local organizations, NGOs, UN agencies, neighborhood committees and municipalities. These consultations created spaces to understand the local context, map problems faced by different segments of society and support the preparations of the multi-sector Urban Area-based Action Plan under Outcome 1. Given that local communities have been affected on varying levels by the protracted conflict in Syria, it is prudent that the Urban Area-based Action Plan accurately reflect the myriad and critical needs of the communities.
- FAO utilized the Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM), produced jointly with WFP in 2019 to identify challenges and collect data on agricultural production and overall food and nutrition security.¹⁰ In collaboration with the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), the Planning and International Cooperation Commission (PICC) and Food Security Sector partners, WFP produced the 2019 Food Security Assessment (FSA) and Food Security and Livelihood Assessment (FSLA). These analyses were shared with participating agencies to ensure efficient design of interventions for targeted communities. These data also contribute to the rural profile of the catchment areas around the targeted cities.
- UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP provided guidance on the development of vulnerability criteria and risk dimensions that will support social protection and social cohesion. From extensive technical consultations with sector partners and relevant local authorities in Dara'a City, UNICEF pre-identified the selected locations to begin assessments in early 2020 that will inform activities relating to non-formal education and school rehabilitation.

From the above-mentioned assessments and consultations, three main items corresponding to Outcome 1 were produced:

- (1) Detailed guidelines and steps for conducting local planning and consultations in Dara'a City,
- (2) Activity work plan and preliminary budget to address social vulnerability in Dara'a City were established
- (3) Detailed consolidated assessment and comprehensive Dara'a Response Overview, together with priority project activities was discussed at the JSC on 27 November 2019.¹¹

Overall, participating agencies also conducted exploratory exercise to identify potential implementing partners who will be supporting assessments and eventually interventions at the local level. A stakeholder analysis and a list of potential IPs have been mapped and included in the Dara'a City Response Overview. Each agency will utilize its internal selection to pre-identify, select and contract potential partners. No partnerships were formalized during the reporting period.

Crosscutting Issues

¹⁰ CFSAM is a joint exercise under the responsibility of the FAO and WFP Secretariats. It was conducted jointly by technical teams of the two agencies in June-July 2019 with the final report published in September

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ca5934en.pdf>

¹¹ Annex 2: Dara'a Response Overview (final draft)

Some of the crosscutting issues identified to be addressed across all aspects of the JP activities include, but not limited to, gender, youth and social protection. For instance, women currently represent more than 51 percent of the Dara'a City population and many continue to face limited opportunities and difficulties in accessing education, livelihoods, and accessible health services while also often excluded from community engagement. Gender-based violence also remains high. A gender-sensitive approach has been incorporated into the overall planning under the JP.

The future of many youth in Dara'a City often remain in limbo as they are faced with a number of challenges including limited employment, inability to continue one's education, low skills, and conscription. Overall, protracted conflict in Syria has also meant major disruptions in basic services, community networks, safety net and rule of law, which have severely affected the overall wellbeing of the population.

Key Challenges and Lessons Learned

For the reporting period, there were some key challenges worth noting that led to delays in overall implementation:

The project design did not allocate a dedicated budget to support the inception phase. Alongside this, there was lack of clarity as to whether agencies were able to ask for initial funds during inception. As a result, most agencies utilized its existing resources, particularly staffing to support the inception phase and as such, there were constraints in organizing and coordinating much needed groundwork with immediacy. As the request for disbursement of funds was not made in the reporting period, participating agencies were not able to start activities under outcome 2 and 3, as approval from JSC and donors is also needed to kick start activity implementation.

With agencies in Syria primarily focused on the provision of humanitarian assistance, mobilizing agencies to shift attention, energy and resources to support resilience-based coordination took more time than originally envisaged. Notwithstanding, the participating agencies were able to provide initial resources to jumpstart the inception phase by providing considerable inputs, coordinating with each other and supporting joint planning.

External to the JP, there were various layers of discussions that needed to take place with donor counterparts in the region and their respective capitals namely Brussels and Oslo, given the sensitivity of operating within the Syrian context. These back-and-forth consultations, feedback and revisions, while taking considerable time, were essentially necessary to ensure that the JP meets its obligation to its donors.

Alongside this, in order to ensure smooth implementation of activities within the context, engagement with relevant public entities cannot be overlooked. Under the JP, it was deemed imperative that prioritization and partnerships remain focused at the local level, and less at the national level. During the reporting period, while there were requests to national counterparts to organize a presentation of the JP, there have been delays in scheduling such a meeting. In 2019, there was a leadership vacuum due to the late deployment of a Resident Coordinator to Damascus that partly contributed to the delay in ensuring engagement with relevant public entities at the strategic level in order to ensure a non-objection of the activities foreseen.

Overall, as this is nearly the first of its kind joint programming initiated within the Syria context, many participating agencies were new to the resilience approach and did not have in-house expertise to immediately support initial activities, specific assessments and technical planning. Preparing joint methodological notes provided much guidance on this front and in the later half of 2019, agencies have

started procedures to recruit or request specific expertise. Even so, it is worthy to acknowledge that against the backdrop of the ongoing situation in Syria and operational limitations, coordination efforts between agencies have contributed substantially to the successful completion of preparatory activities, multiple assessments and production of a comprehensive JP Response Overview for Phase 1 in Dara'a City.

Lessons Learned

Within the reporting period, the lessons learned are as follows:

- Ensuring that future requests for disbursement are anticipated and planned for ensure that funds arrive to each agency in a timely manner. This would entail the PMU to coordinate closely with respective agencies to monitor and track implementation progress.
- Inclusion of a dedicated budget and time period to support specific planning, coordination and organizational efforts into the inception phase, especially if agencies are new to joint programming.
- Prioritizing the establishment of the PMU at the inception phase to provide guidance and support to participating agencies as well as coordinate stakeholder liaison thereby minimizing delays and potential strain on agencies' existing resources.

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome 1 ¹² Urban Area-based Recovery and Neighborhoods Plans that are responsive to community's needs, particularly the most vulnerable groups, are developed, delivered and monitored in an inclusive participatory and conflict-sensitive manner at local level.	0	During the reporting period, activities were primarily focused on the preparatory and inception phase.	
Output 1.1 Participatory formulation of plans and resilience programmes that are responsive to people's needs, particularly the most vulnerable group.	0		
Outcome 2 Basic and social services restored, improved and sustained to enhance community resilience and social cohesion Indicator: Baseline: Planned Target:	0		
Output 2.1 Educational, recreational and PSS spaces rehabilitated, and nutrition-sensitive agriculture education sessions provided	0		
Output 2.2 Social cohesion is enhanced through neighborhood-based rehabilitation of community assets including housing, WASH, basic social and productive infrastructure and services	0		
Outcome 3 Households and communities benefit from sustainable livelihood opportunities, including economic recovery and enhancing social cohesion and community security	0		
Output 3.1 Income, sustainable livelihoods opportunities and inclusive local economic development are restored and maintained in	0		

¹² Note: Outcomes, outputs, indicators and targets should be **as outlined in the Project Document** so that you report on your **actual achievements against planned targets**. Add rows as required for Outcome 2, 3 etc.

both urban and rural catchment areas to increase household incomes, boost food production and enhance local markets			
Output 3.2 Social and economic needs of community and the most vulnerable groups are identified and addressed	0		

