

UN Joint Programme 2.0

Country: Syria

Programme Title: UN Joint Programme to Strengthen Urban and Rural Resilience and the Conditions for Recovery in Syria (UNJP 2.0)

Outcomes:

1. Women, men, girls, and boys have more equitable basic services, such as electricity, water, education and health care.
2. Women, men, including youth have enhanced sustainable food systems and livelihood opportunities.
3. Trust, cohesion, and cross-cleavage cooperation between local communities is enhanced.

Programme Duration: Three (3) Years

Anticipated Start/End Date: 01/January/2024 to 31/December/2026

Fund Management Option: Joint Programming through a Pass-Through Mechanism

Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs): FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Habitat, UNICEF, and WFP, coordinated by RCO under the leadership and guidance of UN RC/HC

Total Estimated Budget: Immediate ask for Aleppo (initial target governorate under UNJP 2.0) is USD 15 million (the total gap stands at USD 60 million)

Out of which: Approximately and indicatively USD 15 million is to be allocated for each of the four target governorates (firstly **Aleppo**, then followed by Rural Damascus or Homs, and Hama). Exact figures for Aleppo will be determined, following the assessment and prioritization process during the inception phase.



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UNFPA Syria



World Food



1. Introduction

The present programme document outlines the background, rationale and justification, objectives and management arrangements for cooperation concerning the UN Joint Programme 2.0 in Syria for the duration of three years, as agreed between the parties: FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Habitat, UNICEF, and WFP, coordinated by RCO under the leadership and guidance of UN RC/HC. The programme document is an annex to the legal agreement.

Since 2011, Syria has faced a humanitarian crisis with war, massive population displacement, economic collapse and, latterly, the earthquake that hit the country in February 2023. Throughout this time, donors have been prepared to provide humanitarian assistance, to alleviate the suffering of up to 15 million people in need. However, after more than twelve years, the reliance on short-term humanitarian interventions is increasingly recognised as unsustainable and inefficient. Moreover, funding for the Syrian response is increasingly subject to “competition” from other humanitarian crises elsewhere, leading to declining overall funding levels, while the overall number of people in need in Syria has continued to rise. Because of political constraints, no significant external support is available for reconstruction and recovery in Syria. Despite increasing public discourse promoting “early” recovery in Syria and talk of a humanitarian-development-peace nexus – most notably through the annual cycle of Brussels conferences - few have been willing to fund anything beyond light rehabilitation of humanitarian infrastructure; donor funding is constrained by more or less explicit “red lines” (conditions); and donors have been largely unwilling to engage in longer-term interventions to redress the crippling “brain drain” and the collapse of public institutions which has affected the country since 2011.

Despite this unpromising context, the EU agreed to fund a UN Joint programme on strengthening rural and urban resilience in Syria, subject to stringent red lines in terms of scope of work, and choice of implementing partners. After discussions which lasted over two years, this was eventually signed at the end of 2018, with the core document drawn up by the EU and co-signed by six participating UN agencies (FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Habitat, UNICEF, and WFP). Norway has subsequently joined along with the EU. Recently, Italy has also joined the JP in late 2022, with the total budget of USD 30 million disbursed to date. This will be referred to as UNJP Version 1.0. This document summarises the achievements of this first phase (2019-2023); the main lessons learned; and outlines a theory of change for a new phase of work – “UNJP Version 2.0”.

2. Context, strategic considerations, rationale, and justification

Context, Challenges and Rationale

More than 12 years into the crisis, the scale, severity, and complexity of needs across Syria remain overwhelming. The impact of more than a decade of conflict on the country’s human and physical capital has been compounded by a series of cascading crises, including economic downturn in Lebanon, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the worst periods of drought in the country’s modern history, the earthquake, and more recently, the Ukraine crisis which has driven up global food and energy prices. As a result, the socio-economic situation deteriorated dramatically. Since 2020, the number of people in need (PiN) of humanitarian assistance has been increasing year-by-year. According to the 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), over 15.3 million Syrians are in need of humanitarian assistance, an

increase of over half a million people from 2022. With 97% of the population living below the poverty line – despite over 60% of households having at least one employed household member, large-scale investments are needed to reverse the socio-economic decline.

The protracted situation in Syria has reduced the ability of people, communities, and cities to respond to on-going shocks and their ability to move beyond simply coping to recovery and development. Against the disruption caused by prolonged hostilities and extensive displacement, access to services and livelihood opportunities remain scarce and unequally distributed. Individuals and households, strained by many years of deprivation, are struggling to meet their basic needs. Syrians are exposed to the daily indignities and deprivations in accessing basic services and employment opportunities. Children, adolescents and youth, millions of whom have known nothing but conflict, comprise more than half of the displaced, as well as half of those in need of humanitarian assistance.

Large numbers of Syrians have been forced from their homes, and many of them have been displaced multiple times. Multiple displacements have exhausted households' savings and undermined livelihood activities. Meanwhile, those who remained in their communities are sharing meagre resources with the internally displaced, and, increasingly with returnees. Within host communities, large movements of internally displaced persons (IDPs) place incredible strain on already stretched infrastructure, services, and social services. Social tension is increasing in host areas as well as other locations across Syria. An increasing number of young male Syrians are leaving Syria seeking livelihoods and economic opportunity.

The protracted nature of the conflict, and the sheer extent of damage to Syria's physical, social, and economic fabric, have resulted in ever increasing numbers of Syrian's relying on humanitarian assistance and/or negative coping strategies to survive. The interconnected nature of pre-conflict economic, agricultural, social, and physical infrastructure means that the impact of the conflict is felt by Syrians in both rural and urban areas and requires coordinated multi-sector responses at the local level to overcome the significant barriers to recovery and resilience. At the same time, the crisis has greatly constrained the capacity of Syrian communities and local authorities to systematically gather and analyse data in support of evidence-based and participatory decision-making, aid strategic planning, and to coordinate, monitor and evaluate the delivery of assistance and basic services that are required to escape the cycle of dependency on humanitarian assistance and enable Syrian communities to begin to recover and build resilience.

Most importantly, the social fabric of the country has been severely damaged by the protracted conflict, which has deepened and widened pre-existing fissures and created new grievances. Social divisions differ significantly depending on local dynamics. They may crystalize along political, religious, socio-economic, rural-urban, ethnic or tribal lines. They may also occur along geographic distribution and movements of populations. Community security has been undermined by such tensions, as well as the consequences of the war economy, corruption and criminality. Communities have banded together in response to insecurity, contributing to increased in-group/out-group dynamics. That has contributed to the localization of conflict dynamics. Such dynamics pose an ongoing threat to future stability in Syria, to the individual security, safety and well-being of Syrians, and to prospects for social cohesion.

Funding for Syria is in the decline, as multiple other crises absorb donor attention. In this context, forging a resilience-oriented path for the most vulnerable populations is imperative to respond to immediate lifesaving needs in complementarity with humanitarian assistance. This duality of approach which sits at the heart of

'Nexus' thinking, tackles the challenges of increasing humanitarian needs through more sustainable interventions that lessen the dependency on humanitarian assistance over time, while contributing to reducing social inequalities and building social cohesion at the local level.

Aleppo Governorate is home to approximately 4.2 million Syrians. Within this population, 2.6 million reside in Aleppo City, and according to the Syria Earthquake Recovery Needs Assessment (SERNA), 2.8 million people require humanitarian assistance. Aleppo Governorate, once Syria's vibrant economic hub, has been deeply affected by the prolonged conflict, which has left its economy shattered and its social fabric fragmented.

East Aleppo City (EAC) is characterized by largely informal neighbourhoods populated by rural migrants. EAC suffered neglect and poverty long before 2011, with an extreme gap between the rich and the poor. During the conflict, east Aleppo came under NSAG control and suffered years of siege, destruction, and displacement. The area remains severely damaged and was thus particularly vulnerable to the recent earthquake. Destruction, lack of basic services, lack of livelihood opportunities, and weak law and order have exhausted the population's ability to withstand shocks, negatively impacted their resilience, and impeded the large-scale return of displaced people. Among the most vulnerable groups are IDP returnees, who cannot afford to pay rent in displacement and thus decided to resettle under harsh living conditions in their original neighbourhoods.

The humanitarian situation remains precarious, compounded by the February 6 earthquake, which caused significant damage: according to the SERNA, the Health and Nutrition, Education, and Electricity sectors in Aleppo sustained damages, estimated at \$471 million, \$104 million, and \$24 million, respectively. Two-thirds of Aleppo's 4,500 schools are non-functioning. This crisis has led to an alarming surge in child labour as families struggle to meet basic needs, while women entering the workforce face exploitation, including sexual harassment.

The stark disparities in living standards and access to essential services between the relatively well-off western Aleppo and much poorer eastern Aleppo have fuelled conflict dynamics. The lack of essential services has given rise to crisis entrepreneurs who exploit the desperate need for services like electricity and drinking water, exacerbating class divisions, and impoverishing the community. The historical informality of East Aleppo City and the consequent fragility of property rights were further exacerbated by the crisis and the impact of the earthquake. As a result, housing, land, and property (HLP) challenges are highly concentrated in this area. Given their rural origins, many eastern Aleppans identify with tribal social structures. As competition over limited resources and livelihood opportunities in rural areas has increased, so has the salience of tribal identities.

Following the earthquake, the slow recovery and inadequate disaster response have exacerbated feelings of abandonment among the population, making it crucial to conduct rigorous needs assessments, conflict, and political economy analyses. In addition, it is imperative to prioritize interventions targeting shared infrastructure, particularly in Eastern Aleppo City, focusing on services that benefit diverse communities. In rural areas, emphasis should be placed on improving access to drinking water, electricity, and agricultural infrastructure. Encouraging shared livelihoods and creating value chains that bridge identity cleavages in both urban and rural settings can foster interdependence across class divides.

Definition

One of the recommendations from the UNJP Phase 1, and particularly through the Mid-term Review, is to have clearer understanding among the PUNOs of what is meant by resilience and early recovery and what the UNJP 2.0 intends to achieve. Accordingly, definitions and guiding principles of these crucial concepts are outlined below.

“Early Recovery (ER)” is an approach that addresses recovery needs that arise during the humanitarian phase of an emergency, using humanitarian mechanisms that align with development principles. It enables people to use the benefits of humanitarian action to seize development opportunities, build resilience and establish a sustainable process of recovery from crisis¹. In Syria where political constraints prevent a standard development approach, resilience building assistance is an integral part of the UN’s response to its protracted humanitarian crisis. UN specialized agencies, funds and programmes deliver humanitarian resilience building assistance through the third strategic objective of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and more mid/longer-term resilience building assistance through the UN Strategic Framework for Syria (SF)².

What is resilience?

Resilience is the ability of individuals, households, communities, cities, institutions, systems and societies to prevent, resist, absorb, adapt, respond and recover positively, efficiently and effectively when faced with a wide range of risks, while maintaining an acceptable level of functioning without compromising long-term prospects for sustainable development, peace and security, human rights and well-being for all³.

What is risk?

Risk is the consequence of the interaction between a threat or hazard, the characteristics that make people and places exposed and vulnerable to that threat or hazard, and the capacities available to manage the risk.

As applied in a resilience context, risks facing communities may be political, security, social, economic, environmental or climate-related, or, most likely, some combination of these.

What resilience matters in contexts like Syria?

First, investing in resilience helps prevent and curtail economic, environmental and human losses in the event of a crisis, thereby reducing human suffering and protecting development gains.

Second, building resilience can stimulate risk-sensitive economic activity by creating a conducive environment for public and private sector investments as well as entrepreneurship and livelihood diversification by businesses and households.

Also, investments in resilience can bring co-benefits across many of the Sustainable Development Goals. Focusing attention and resources to build resilience where risks intersect can be a more cost-effective and transformative way to progress simultaneously toward multiple development goals.

Last but not least, building resilience can contribute to fostering more peaceful, inclusive societies, with particular benefits for women, youth, and other marginalized groups.

Resilience building interventions under the SF in Syria, including through the UNJP 2.0⁴, are aimed at achieving a range of objectives including:

¹ Global Cluster for Early Recovery, <https://www.undp.org/geneva/global-cluster-early-recovery-gcer>.

² <https://syria.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/UNSF%202022-2024%20English%20Final%20Signed.pdf>

³ UN Common Guidance on Helping Build Resilient Societies (December 2020)

<https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/UN-Resilience-Guidance-Final-Sept.pdf>

⁴ UNJP 2.0 Programming Principles

- (a) build on the inputs from the HRP ER activities to work on re-establishing systems for the provision of basic services, such as stronger local-level capacity building component and more sustained support to service provision,
- (b) scale HRP ER activities vertically, by developing a result-chain that leads to a more sustainable change/outcome in peoples' lives, and

In doing so, interventions under the SF are designed and implemented within the Parameters and Principles of UN Assistance in Syria by limiting capacity building assistance to ones related to the provision of essential services and limiting rehabilitation of infrastructure to civilian infrastructures for the provision of essential services, and not engaging in reconstruction.

Although they are complementary, ER activities under the HRP are differentiated from resilience-building activities under the SF in the following ways:

- ER activities under the HRP focus on activities that provide localized access to services and livelihoods in a more cost-efficient and empowering way;
- ER activities generally have shorter project cycles with shorter-term objectives and may often result in an "output" level of change (e.g., provision of a localized service, individual-level capacity development), while resilience-building interventions under the SF, including through the UNJP2.0, have clear, distinct, and mid-to-longer-term objectives, aimed at addressing systems towards sustainable impact.

Main stakeholders and implementing partners, including:

Primary stakeholders

- Participating UN Organizations

The Joint Programme brings together the combined expertise and capacities of six UN agencies – FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, and WFP, who have a demonstrated track record, expertise, and capacity to support multi-sectoral, integrated resilience-building, including: strengthening the resilience of vulnerable communities through an integrated package of services; promoting local and inclusive social and economic recovery; supporting local planning approaches that foster community participation and help bridge social divides; contributing to addressing the social cohesion and community security needs of local communities, strengthening their collective ability to manage grievances, ease tensions and peacefully resolve.

- FAO is at the forefront of work towards sustainable agriculture by promoting protection and sustainable use of natural resources while meeting society's growing needs for decent and resilient livelihoods.
- UNDP is a leading agency with its in-house capacity in conflict sensitivity, which informs PUNOs' analysis, planning, prioritization and implementation. In addition, UNDP has extensive experience in programming to support access to livelihoods and basic services across Syria.
- UNFPA works extensively to achieve gender equality through gender mainstreaming and gender equality programming. UNFPA also supports women empowerment interventions and advise other PUNOs to engage women in decision making and providing access to economic and social resources.
- UN Habitat's work around area-based planning offers a useful framework for local actors, local communities, local leaders, CBOs and municipalities, as well as other key actors, to develop plans through participatory, inclusive, and bottom-up processes, thereby also contributing to build the capacity of community stakeholder groups to meaningfully participate in local planning and prioritisation processes.

- UNICEF works to ensure and support the protection of children's rights, including equitable access for girls, boys, and young people to basic services.
- WFP works with its expertise and demonstrated capacity, in close coordination with FAO and others, in developing value chains on key agriculture commodities for livelihoods and economic recovery.

- Communities

Engagement with communities and bottom-up planning will ensure the empowerment of local stakeholders in a way that promotes accountable and inclusive decision-making processes, creates the space for dialogue and contributes to improved social cohesion. This approach also maximizes ownership and buy-in of activity prioritization by the community itself while minimizing agency-driven, top-down and siloed sectoral programming.

- - Representatives of IDPs and affected communities
 - Local and neighbourhood committees
 - Community leaders, religious leaders, tribal leaders
 - Youth and women representatives
 - Municipalities / Local councils
 - Technical directorates in governorates
 - Technical Service Departments within the relevant line ministries
 - Private sector
- Implementing partners (these will be subjected to robust due diligence procedures):
 - NGOs (national and international)
 - CSOs
 - Freelancers
 - Locally based private businesses (linked to the need to reactivate local economic circuits)
 - Local retailers (same as above)
 - Financial service providers
 - Faith based organizations
 - Professional Associations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Syndicate of Engineers.
- Others
 - International Organizations and Research Institutions
 - Donors
 - Multilateral organizations

Value-added of the UNJP 2.0

Why is joint, area-based, integrated programming through UNJP 2.0 critical?

Value-added of working together: UNJP 2.0 envisions multi-sectoral, integrated efforts to address multidimensional resilience challenges in targeted areas. The governance and programming structure, which brings together a wealth of complementary expertise from six PUNOs, enables a comprehensive, joint, strategic-level consideration of proposed interventions, taking into account: the balance of interventions in the target area; conflict sensitivity and risk; relationships/interdependence between interventions; opportunities for gender transformative programming; and wider spatial and intersectoral considerations. This integrated approach to programming is further enhanced through the use of UN Multi Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO)-administered pass-through mechanism, which enables the achievement of catalytic results that depends upon the comparative advantages of two or more participating UN organizations working together in a coordinated and integrated manner. The comparative advantage of the UNJP is

especially clear in the context of Syria given the urgent, renewed need for a Nexus approach to maximize the impact of assistance for early recovery to build resilience and ensure its sustainability through joint analysis, coherent planning, and joined-up programming to ensure synergies and complementarities.

A business case for bottom-up and area-based approach

An expressly area-based approach, which, in different contexts of the world including in Syria, has shown to provide more impactful, sustainable results, while building social cohesion and empowering communities. UNJP is, by definition, multi-sectoral. It entails adopting a whole-of-society, participatory approach, where the community in the targeted areas takes the lead in defining and prioritizing interventions. This requires a flexible approach to address area-specific problems with the inclusion and participation of all stakeholders while ensuring a timely response to sudden shifts in priorities - critical in a highly fluid context like Syria. The programming decisions of the JP are informed by carefully designed consultations and workshops aiming to both build the capacities of communities to ensure meaningful engagement in transparent, participatory processes to arrive at agreed priority interventions. As part of the bottom-up and community-led approach, PUNOs conduct a series of local consultations and review the findings of assessments conducted. Following that, the PMU and PUNOs convene a planning and validation workshop at the local level to verify the outcomes of the consultations and preliminary assessments, with the objective of validating and fine-tuning a set of integrated interventions in an area-based manner, taking into account geographic and sectoral coverage as well as its complementarity with municipal plans to maximize the efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of interventions.

Furthermore, thus far, few early recovery programmes carried out in areas controlled by the Government of Syria (GoS) have been reviewed and evaluated, making evidence-informed decision making challenging. The UNJP is one of the few large-scale programmes that has been **evaluated by an independent and external review**. Instead of reinventing the wheel, it is important to capitalize on the gains made and positive lessons learned and make adjustments to overcome bottlenecks and challenges encountered.

Projectized funding can incentivize actors to work individually or even at cross-purposes, as it reinforces the 'default' modality of standalone interventions and encourages planning on a very short time horizon. By contrast, un-earmarked, multi-donor, and pooled funding, accompanied by strategic political messaging, can help act as an **incentive to encourage meaningful inter-agency collaboration** and joint action and to multiply the impact of interventions. In addition, uniquely, donor funding through the UNJP is multi-year, which enables bottom-up and community-led approach, building the capacities of communities to engage meaningfully in participatory processes. This in turn contributes to enhancing community-level social cohesion and trust.

Finally, one of the positive gains achieved under the current UNJP is **behavioral change and momentum** among the PUNOs, which has taken time to mature. Throughout UNJP Phase 1, a shared recognition has emerged among PUNOs that the benefit of working together outweighs the transactional costs. Furthermore, the behavioral/attitudinal change can be built upon and transformed into institutional change in the next phase. The PUNOs believe that joint action is an evolutionary process through constant and continuous learning.

Alignment with the UNSF and other initiatives

The UNJP is fully aligned with the UN Strategic Framework (UNSF), and is particularly designed to achieve impact in three of the UNSF outcome areas, namely: Outcome 1 Improved, equitable, inclusive and safe

access to quality basic services⁵; Outcome 2: Better access for people, especially the most vulnerable, to social protection services, sustainable livelihoods and inclusive and equitable socio-economic recovery⁶; and Outcome 4 Vulnerable people's resilience is enhanced through increased institutional responsiveness in planning and providing services⁷.

On the issue of the UNJP's place within the larger UN response in Syria, discussions around establishing an eventual country-wide ER Trust Fund (TF), anchored to the UNSF, are currently underway. Thus far, these discussions are still a 'process' whereas the UNJP 2.0 is a 'product' – one that has already been tested, applied, rolled out, and evaluated, and is hence ready to scale up. As an existing programme, the Syria UNJP (and proposed UNJP 2.0) employs a 'hybrid' modality, answering the need for more joint analysis, coherent and integrated planning, and joined-up implementation, while the Steering Committee makes funding decisions for each response plan/joint workplan in a given governorate, allowing for flexibility, agility, and strategic considerations. On the relationship between the two initiatives, it should be noted that, as envisaged by the RC, the potential ER TF would not merge with or absorb the UNJP. On the contrary, the ER framework and ER TF intend to attract funding from new donors, and to rationalize ongoing ER activities under the HRP that primarily look at a 'output-level change', in order to seek complementarity and maximize impact through more coherence and joint programming. By contrast, the UNJP 2.0, associated with the UNSF, has clear, distinct objectives of: build on the inputs from the HRP ER activities to work on re-establishing systems for the provision of basic services, including a stronger local-level capacity building component and more sustained support to service provision; scale HRP ER activities vertically, by developing a result-chain that leads to a more sustainable change/outcome onto the lives of people.

Last but not least, as far as the Area-based Return Support (ABRS) is concerned, the ABRS by its design is to provide support to areas that witness returns. The ABRS has a clear focus, both programmatically and geographically that is linked to areas of significant returns, selected according to clear criteria, while the UNJP has a broader mandate of assisting vulnerable Syrians to build and strengthen resilience, primarily in areas affected by the conflict. The ABRS has carried out extensive conflict analysis and bottom-up consultations in various parts of the country which the UNJP has been building on, and will continue to do so, to complement, and benefit from, for example, for the purpose of UNJP's next steps in Aleppo.

A number of lessons learned, positive and negative, and best practices which influenced and informed the design and planning for UNJP 2.0 (refer to Annex for more details):

1. There was a need for an explicit theory of change contextualised to each target governorate and a resilience model to foster a more strategic approach to identifying the desired impact of interventions and allow work-planning to become more than just a series of well-meaning interventions. Reflecting on this, for UNJP 2.0, the PUNOs and PMU have worked together and developed a joint theory of change with result-chains, with collective understanding of a desired impact and outcome areas, rather than relying solely on traditional, output-focused approaches.
2. The existence of a functioning UN hub is seen as an important success factor in the implementation of the JP. The difficulties of implementation in Dara'a (no hub) contrast with the relative successes

⁵ related SDGs: SDG 2, SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 9, SDG 10, SDG 11, SDG 16

⁶ related SDGs: SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 5, SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 10, SDG 11, SDG 13, SDG 15

⁷ related SDGs: SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 10, SDG 11, SDG 16

of implementation in Deir Ezzour (with hub). Based on this, the PUNOs and PMU factored in the capacity of Hubs into the process of identifying and prioritizing target governorates. There is also a need to reinforce the links between the hubs and UN agencies centrally, to ensure consistent and optimum cooperation, including more frequent visits to the field to promote area-based, consistent and effective coordination and ensure strategic direction.

3. Community consultations and assessments have been a valuable element in the UNJP planning process, especially in informing the needs-based prioritization of geographical locations. However, these consultations were not always timely, comprehensive, representative, or well-coordinated. Hence, for UNJP 2.0, the PUNOs have already begun a much more coordinated, joined-up assessment, supported by a coherent strategy for engagement with local communities, including local authorities, while observing donor redlines and ensuring the programme's neutrality is preserved.
4. Positive social outcomes have been achieved in various areas of JP work. However, this was not always part of the original design; at times, these social outcomes seemed to be more a kind of positive by-product of a planned activity, and they were not systematically captured by output-level monitoring and evaluation practices. Therefore, the PUNOs and PMU have taken further steps already in looking at how best to design and measure positive social outcomes including by incorporating an explicit social/peacebuilding element into the theory of change at both the general and location-specific levels, which in turn provides the conceptual framework for "softer" social outcomes to be captured in subsequent monitoring and evaluation.
5. There is a need for joint needs assessments, conflict sensitivity analysis and area-based planning, to design JP activities and avoid "silo"-type approaches. It was noted that the mere fact of geographical proximity did not automatically guarantee integration, sequencing, and optimal implementation. The PUNOs/PMU have since been making greater efforts in both planning and coordination of implementation, from the start of the process.
6. Conflict sensitivity has been a key principle of the JP since its inception. For UNJP 2.0's analysis and planning processes, the JP's Programme Management Unit (PMU) has taken further, progressive steps toward strengthening conflict sensitivity in the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of interventions under the JP, based on lessons learned during the program's implementation and on the evolving understanding of how conflict sensitivity considerations can help strengthen resilience programming more broadly.
7. Typically, budget allocations under JP Version 1.0 were more or less divided equally among participating agencies. This had the advantage of fostering consensus between the participating agencies but detracted from the optimal allocation of programme resources on the basis of community needs and priorities and the relative capacities of PUNOs. Based on this lesson, the PUNOs and PMU have taken active steps in ensuring that, with a clear theory of change, outcome areas informed by joint problem tree analysis carried out 'agency-blindly', the allocation of resources will be on the basis of needs and agency mandate and competencies would contribute greatly to the programme's impact and efficiency.

8. Initially the management of the JP was entrusted to an acting manager on an interim basis who was a staff member of one of the JP UN participating organizations. The Programme Management Unit was fully established later on, headed by an independent Programme Manager, and functionally housed within the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) to tackle the issue of neutrality and conflict of interest (that is, if a coordination/secretariat is attached to one of participating UN organizations, there would be little/insufficient firewall). The Programme Manager was able to quickly draw together the participating agencies, resolve issues with government clearance of activities, including selection of locations, and convened to facilitate and enforce programmatic discussions to meaningfully enhance complementarities and minimize overlap. However, he had little control over budgets and programmatic decisions made by agencies. These weaknesses of governance were eventually recognized and addressed by PUNOs under the leadership of the UN RC/HC, through more explicit commitment and political support from the PUNOs leadership, assigning more senior staff from the PUNOs to participate from the early discussion phase.
9. Development of sustainability plans should have been integrated into the proposal phase along with the assessments of benchmarks against integration indicators. The development of sustainability plans was introduced towards the end of the programme implementation for JP Version 1.0, which has caused confusion and did not lead to meaningful community engagement on sustainability. Based on this, the PUNOs/PMU have already put together its approach and strategy of how to ensure that planning and design of activities are done with a lens of sustainability and exit strategy, as described below.
10. Risk management requirements and templates should have been set clearly and shared with all participating UN agencies from the onset of JP Version 1.0 implementation to ensure appropriate risk management and mitigation mechanisms are in place for an efficient due diligence process. Taking this into account, the PUNOs and PMU have established a clear strategy and policy about risk management and due diligence, found in the subsequent sections of this document.

Approaches and cross cutting issues

UNJP Version 1.0 has embarked on a number of interagency initiatives to strengthen key approaches and **cross cutting** considerations. Significant gains in this respect have been achieved already to date, which the UNJP 2.0 will capitalize on.

As for **gender mainstreaming**, based on the best practice, UNJP 2.0 will capitalize on the gains and will undertake extensive, targeted consultations with women to better understand their experiences, needs, and priorities. The gender approach of the UNJP entails a focus on multiple and overlapping factors such as gender, age, disability, as affecting people's experiences, needs and priorities. In addition, strengthening the gender lens can help identify gendered local conflict drivers and ensure that programming is equitably targeted and can reduce negative coping strategies. Under technical leadership of UNFPA, the UNJP has already developed a gender mainstreaming strategy that will, for UNJP 2.0, inform gender sensitive conflict sensitivity analysis, planning and programming. Among other factors, programming will address gender inequalities and social norms that may affect Sexual and Reproductive Health, Family Planning, and Maternity Health outcomes and implement interventions that empower women and girls to make informed decisions

about their reproductive health. Given that women are disproportionately affected by poverty, addressing women's access to sustainable livelihoods, through targeted vocational training, job placement, and microfinance initiatives, will be an integral component of programming under the UNJP 2.0, thus reducing gendered socioeconomic disparities and enhancing the sustainability of livelihoods initiatives.

Area-based programming: The six PUNOs will concentrate investments in strategic locations, ensuring complementarities and linkages between the different interventions to enhance the cumulative impact on the target population. These interventions will mutually reinforce and revive communities at a pace and a scale that cannot be achieved by working separately. UNJP 2.0 aims to minimize the inherent inefficiencies of vertically-funded single-agency programmes by ensuring coherence, both sequential and cross-sectoral, among the activities at the grassroots level. The interventions identified through participatory needs assessment will be temporally planned for implementation by the relevant PUNOs to ensure that the sequence leads to maximum impact and sustainability, and the right support is provided at the appropriate time, building upon the previous input. For instance, the rehabilitation of water conveyance systems will be followed by the distribution of seeds and fertilizer whereas the construction schedule of the channels will be ensured to be completed before the cropping seasons. Based on the learning from the previous phase, the cross-sectoral linkages among the activities by the PUNOs will also be strengthened to contribute towards greater well-being outcomes of the target beneficiaries.

Once a specific area is selected, joint analysis of stakeholders, value chains, transport corridors, urban and rural services delivery, education, health, business opportunities, social protection, social cohesion, and food security will be developed locally to define the most appropriate package of interventions in the selected neighborhoods. The joint planning process also creates an entry point to strengthen local governance processes, whereby community actors are supported in an inclusive and participatory manner that also promotes accountability, while addressing sources of social tension at local level. By linking rural and urban areas through a value chain approach, UNJP 2.0 will help restore vital economic and livelihood connections disrupted by the conflict and increase potential rural-urban complementarities in different fields. This will be done in a way to **maximize confidence building between divided communities** so as to contribute to **longer-term social cohesion and reconciliation objectives**.

To guarantee an **environmentally friendly, climate change sensitive and water efficient** approach, the PUNOs carry out environmental and social risk analysis. This is particularly relevant for agricultural interventions. UNJP 2.0 ensures agricultural activities achieve increased productivity with reduced environmental effects. Activities are designed with a value chain approach, thus building on existing market capacity, avoiding risks of market saturation, reducing crop waste and spoilage, and promoting investment in crops with higher productive potential and nutritional values for consumption. At the same time, investing in rural infrastructure in a sustainable manner, especially irrigation systems, is crucial to ensure avoiding over-extraction and depletion of natural resources. FAO conducts Natural Resource Assessments prior to any intervention to identify the feasibility and appropriate locations for the rehabilitation of water systems, thus ensuring sustainability of water resources and appropriate land use, as well as avoiding competition over limited natural resources. The use of Water Users Associations ensures local governance on, and promotes community management and oversight of, water resources and equitable access to water for irrigation.

In addition, under the UNJP phase 1, a research component has been launched with the aim of generating **more evidence on the linkages between climate change and gender aspects** and analyzing the gendered

impacts of climate change at the individual, community, and systems level. The research looks at drivers such as relevant gender-responsive policies, relevant capacities, women engagement, local knowledge and participation at the different levels, available disaggregated data, and available alternative livelihoods for women. The study intends to also provide evidence-based information on active local actors, innovative initiatives, and implications of climate change on local communities, particularly women, which is expected to inform possible interventions carried out under the UNJP 2.0 and beyond, as well as contributing to the body of research on the linkage between climate change and gender.

Conflict sensitivity considerations are mainstreamed into the collective programmatic decisions of the JP throughout all stages of the programme cycle. At the planning stage, joint conflict analysis is conducted, aimed at systematically identifying risks of doing harm from a conflict sensitivity perspective, including issues related to housing, land, and property (HLP) rights, protection, returns, and community tensions over scarce resources. The analysis also identifies opportunities to enhance social cohesion and local peacebuilding by using the JP to address existing social grievances and build bridges across social groups and communities. This joint conflict analysis guides the PUNOs in the consideration of potential new areas for operation and is taken into account in decisions by the JP Steering Committee. Conflict sensitivity also guides the design of specific JP interventions in the selected areas. Moreover, during the planning phase for the UNJP 2.0, PUNOs have agreed to further strengthen shared conflict sensitivity practices to minimize risks of doing harm, as well as develop and operationalize a shared theory of change of how the JP will contribute to social cohesion in the new targeted areas. In terms of “do no harm” (key conflict sensitivity risks), concerns remain in relation to HLP rights. The UNCT has also conducted local political economy analysis to better understand and mitigate risks of interventions related to crisis economies. Finally, the PUNOs are acutely aware of risks of exacerbating tensions between different social groups in the current context of rising scarcity and economic hardship, and tailor their programming carefully under the Joint Programme to avoid causing unintended harm.

As part of its conflict sensitivity approach, the JP goes beyond risk management to pursue opportunities to strengthen **social cohesion** through its programming, thereby helping advance local peacebuilding within current national realities. Programming is designed, wherever possible to:

- Address root causes of conflict at the local level, including unequal access to services, exclusion of certain population groups from livelihood opportunities, in particular youth, women and rural populations, weak performance of local service providers and outsourcing of services to crisis entrepreneurs, competition over scarce resources, including water, and lack of community voice in local administration.
- Facilitate dialogue and build trust across social cleavages. JP resilience interventions provide platforms for dialogue which addresses collective interests across divides. At the local level, participatory dialogue over resilience priorities can be a very effective way to rebuild trust and social cooperation. When involving local authorities, it can also help reinforce some level of community voice and participation in local administration, thereby empowering communities.
- Strengthen advocacy with authorities to advance protection and inclusivity, utilizing programming an entry point to shape how essential services are provided, pushing for more inclusion of marginalized groups/areas and greater accountability. This includes advocacy on delicate issues like

HLP, access to civil documentation, youth protection, freedom of movement and community participation that can be deepened through engagement and negotiations on JP programming.

Human Rights Based Approach: UNJP 2.0 takes a Human Rights Based Approach, supporting rights holders to claim their rights, and encouraging duty bearers to meet their obligations, with the aim of achieving greater respect, protection, promotion, and fulfilment of human rights. UNJP 2.0 bases its interventions on a thorough local context analysis, which takes into account pressing human rights concerns of particular relevance, including protection, gender, children's rights, and HLP issues, among others. Throughout the planning and programming, people are recognized as key actors in their own development, rather than passive recipients of commodities and services. UNJP 2.0 focuses on marginalized, disadvantaged, and excluded groups, including persons with disabilities, who are among the most vulnerable categories in Syria.

Results-based Management (RBM): UNJP 2.0's resources will contribute to a clear and logical chain of results from Outputs through to Outcomes. There are a limited number of tangible and specific outcomes and outputs for each priority area. These outcomes will make a significant difference in respect of key challenges, can be achieved in the proposed timeframe for the action, are outcomes in which the UN has a clear comparative advantage and for which the UN can mobilize resources from different areas of expertise.

Capacity development: A central premise of UNJP 2.0 is that it can best contribute to achieve defined Outcomes through the development of the capacities of individuals, communities and civic groups to increase the capacity of rights holders (individuals, communities and local civil society) through empowerment around essential services, livelihoods and social protection; and technical dialogue and advocacy with the duty bearers to identify needs and respect, protect, and fulfil those rights. The UNJP 2.0 interventions intend to work on re-establishing systems including stronger **local-level capacity building** component and more sustained support to service provision and urban-rural livelihoods, as well as local-level capacity to design, plan, implement and monitor their action plan.

Advocacy: Principled advocacy with duty-bearers is a cross-cutting activity accompanying all interventions under the Joint Programme. JP PUNOs will continue reaching out to all relevant stakeholders including with local government actors, community representatives, local neighbourhoods and village committees, and individual members of the community to ensure that they are committed and well-resourced to ensure sustainability of the JP interventions.

3. Programme or Project Objective (*)

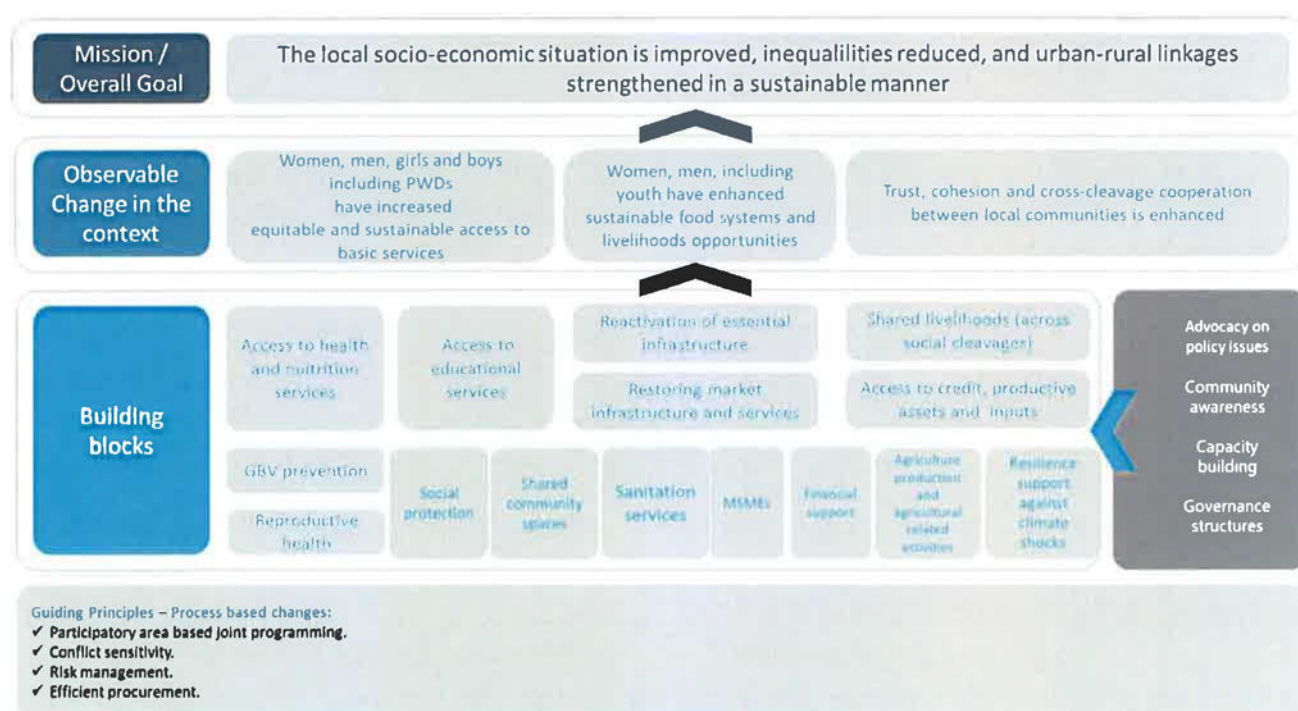
The overall objective of the UNJP 2.0 is to improve equitable access to basic services, restore food systems, and provide dignified and sustainable livelihoods opportunities for targeted communities, while building trust and cooperation across social divides. Through these pathways, the programme seeks to better equip local communities to withstand future shocks, and to empower them to pursue their own recovery priorities in an inclusive and sustainable manner.

4. Theory of change and key assumptions (*)

This Theory of Change, developed jointly by the six PUNOs, will serve as a commitment and a guiding framework for the six participating agencies to contribute to a more equitable, resilient, and interconnected Aleppo Governorate. The proposed ToC encompasses three interlinked pathways of change:

If equitable access to basic services and infrastructure is increased, individual and community livelihood assets and value chains are restored, inclusive mechanisms for community participation are established, and social protection is provided for the most vulnerable;

Then, households and communities will benefit from diversified, dignified, and sustainable livelihoods; educational, health, nutritional, and protection outcomes will be improved; and social cohesion will be strengthened, thus empowering communities to pursue their own recovery priorities, reducing aid dependency, and improving communities' adaptive capacity and ability to withstand future shocks.



Pathway 1: Improving Access to Basic Services and Infrastructure

The crisis has resulted in massive damage to basic infrastructure, including facilities such as hospitals, health clinics, and schools, as well as electricity, water, and sewage networks. In addition to this physical destruction, the crisis and related displacement have also resulted in the loss of high numbers of qualified technical staff, significantly reducing the capacity of key service delivery institutions. In combination, these factors have severely degraded the capacity of local providers to deliver adequate services vital areas such as health, education, water and sanitation, and nutrition to the population. Compounding the impact of the crisis, the destruction of transportation infrastructure such as roads has further impaired access to services, particularly for rural communities, as well as severing trade and social linkages between communities.

By rehabilitating critical infrastructure and ensuring that service delivery facilities are adequately equipped and staffed, the UNJP 2.0 aims to improve the targeted communities' access to essential services. This will improve living conditions for targeted populations, facilitate economic activity and mobility, and provide employment opportunities for young professionals and local NGOs.

Beyond the material impact on individuals' lives and livelihoods, previous experience in the Syria context, including in the UNJP 1.0, has demonstrated that shared infrastructure and improved access to essential services such as healthcare and education provides an important entry point for dialogue and confidence-building across social divides⁸. In line with this finding, interventions will be designed based on a robust local context analysis to ensure that restored services are accessible to a broad range of beneficiaries. Throughout the programme cycle, the UNJP 2.0 will also engage with local communities to promote participatory, community-based management and oversight of shared infrastructure and services, and in doing so enhance community buy-in and increase the sustainability of interventions over the long term.

Pathway-Specific Theory of Change:

If communities and households gain improved and more equitable access to essential services, *and* infrastructure is restored in an accessible, community-led manner, *then* educational, health, sanitation, and protection outcomes for vulnerable groups will be improved, socioeconomic inequalities and gender inequity will be reduced, and negative coping mechanisms will decrease.

Outcomes:

At the community level:

- Improved and more equitable access to basic education, health, sanitation, and other vital services
- Reduced socio-economic disparities
- Increased dialogue and cooperation over access to shared infrastructure and services across social cleavages.

At the household level:

- Improving housing conditions positively impacts overall household well-being.
- Access to clean water and sanitation facilities reduces the risk of waterborne diseases and lowers healthcare expenses.
- Better transportation infrastructure lowers commuting and goods transport costs
- Improved health and nutritional outcomes, including sexual and reproductive health, maternal health, and family planning.
- Increased access to education, improving children's prospects and decreasing the risk of negative coping mechanisms such as child labor and early marriage.
- Improved access to shared services reduces the expenses incurred for private services (health, education, drinking water, etc.), thus reducing pressure on household finances.

⁸ See Annex for context analysis of Aleppo Governorate conducted under the JP. The identification of shared infrastructure as a n opportunity for building social cohesion has also been identified in other analyses, e.g. the Regional Profiles produced by U NDP's Context Sensitivity Team in collaboration with Synaps.

Interventions

Possible interventions may include:

Infrastructure Rehabilitation, such as roads, electricity, sanitation networks, and water supply.

Reactivating Health, Nutrition, and Education Services, including rehabilitating and staffing healthcare facilities and schools, prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable groups including women, youth, and people with disabilities. As such, there will be a strong focus on women's specific health needs, including sexual and reproductive health, maternal health, and on ensuring access to education for marginalized groups.

Pathway 2: Restoring Sustainable Livelihoods and Food Systems

The crisis has caused devastating damage to Syria's basic infrastructure and productive assets, disincentivized investment, and severely weakened human capital across all sectors of the economy. This has led to a catastrophic collapse in sustainable livelihoods for individuals and communities, and a commensurate increase in negative coping mechanisms, particularly among vulnerable groups. At a systems level, the crisis has severely disrupted value chains, food systems, and urban-rural linkages, exacerbating inequalities and impeding economic recovery.

To address this, the JP 2.0 aims to increase access to communities' and individuals' access to dignified, sustainable livelihoods, with a particular emphasis on restoring the economic linkages between rural and urban areas. Interventions under this outcome will promote agricultural productivity, improve productive infrastructure, increase communities' and individuals' access to financial and productive assets, and improve the alignment between the available skills base and the local labour market.

Pathway-specific Theory of Change

If access to productive inputs, finance, and infrastructure is increased, **and** the local skills base is enhanced, **and** value chains are restored, **then** households and communities will benefit from improved livelihoods, rural-urban linkages will be increased, poverty and socioeconomic inequality will be reduced, and the sustainability of local economies will be improved.

Outcomes:

At a community level:

- Improves the flow of goods and services through market networks, and enhances linkages between rural and urban areas.
- Encourages entrepreneurship, creates jobs, and supports sustainability of MSMEs.
- Diversification of income sources reduces community vulnerability to economic shocks.
- Improved agricultural practices and related livelihood activities will lead to higher crop yields and better food security.
- Reduced displacement/emigration due to improved training, employment, and livelihood opportunities for youth.
- Reduced incentive to participate in illicit and crisis economies.

At a household level:

- Increased income from diversified livelihoods, particularly benefitting female-headed households.
- Increase financial stability and preparedness for financial shocks, improving the stability of the family environment.
- Decreased risk of negative coping mechanisms, including early marriage and child labour.

Interventions

Categories of intervention within this pathway include:

- *Agricultural Development*: Training in modern agricultural techniques, rehabilitating irrigation infrastructure, establishing water users associations, and promoting climate-smart and sustainable agriculture practices.
- *Productive infrastructure*: Rehabilitation of craft and light industrial workshops.
- *Labor market interventions*: Vocational training; on-the-job training programmes; employment referrals and job placement of individuals into SMEs, with a particular focus on women, youth and marginalized populations.
- *Access to Credit and Productive Assets*: Microfinance programs, grants, and access to resources like agricultural inputs and equipment.

Pathway 3: Enhancement of Social Protection, Building Trust, and Governance

The crisis and related displacement have caused massive damage to Syria's social fabric, creating horizontal and vertical trust deficits, exacerbating inequalities and resource competition, distorting local economies and empowering crisis entrepreneurs, while undermining governance and community-level mechanisms for promoting social cohesion. Strengthening trust, building cooperation across social cleavages, and improving governance at local level will therefore be vital for sustainable recovery.

To address this dimension, the UNJP 2.0 incorporates an explicit social cohesion logic, in which interventions aim to build trust and cooperation across social cleavages, reduce socially destructive inequalities, and promote shared access to basic services and livelihoods, while empowering local communities to jointly prioritize, design, and oversee interventions. The UNJP 2.0 will actively promote increased community participation in decision-making on resilience priorities, and will work to build the capacity of community stakeholders, including NGOs, CSOs, and faith-based organizations, while strengthening their role in the design, implementation, and oversight of interventions. In addition, the UNJP 2.0 will provide an entry point for advocacy with local authorities for more meaningful community engagement to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of rehabilitated services and established livelihoods, thereby improving the inclusivity and accountability of local-level governance.

At the level of the individual, interventions aimed at improving systems will be complemented by social protection activities targeting vulnerable populations, such as women, youth, and people with disabilities, thus improving the lives of the most vulnerable and reducing the risk of negative coping mechanisms.

Pathway-specific Theory of Change:

If social protection measures are introduced to assist the most vulnerable, and *if* governance structures are made more inclusive and responsive, and *if* the capacity of community-based and civic organizations is strengthened, *then* horizontal and vertical social cohesion will be improved, civic participation in local governance will increase, and community ownership over decision-making will be strengthened.

Outcomes:

At the community level:

- Dialogue over shared interests will built trust between communities, including across social cleavages.
- Community mechanisms to advance shared interests will be established and strengthened.
- Community participation in design, implementation, and monitoring of interventions will lead to increased community ownership of local recovery priorities,
- Engagement between civic groups and local authorities will increase,
- Women's participation in local decision-making will increase.

At the household level:

- Improved social protection outcomes for the most vulnerable individuals and households, particularly female-headed households and people with disabilities.
- Negative coping mechanisms, such as child labor, early marriage, participation in illicit economies, and recruitment into armed groups, will be reduced.

Interventions:

Social Protection: Promoting social cohesion and safety nets, including support for families with children with severe disabilities; gender-based violence assistance; support for vulnerable individuals to restore and preserve their HLP documents to help guarantee ownership rights.

Support to community engagement and governance structures: Capacity-building for local authorities, with appropriate risk mitigation measures; advocacy to promote participatory decision-making processes, and establishing and engaging mechanisms for community inputs, including neighbourhood committees in urban areas and village committees in rural areas.

Overarching risks and assumptions

Given UNJP 2.0 is anchored to the UN Strategic Framework for Syria and its related outcome areas, UNJP 2.0 will be aligned with the overarching SF assumptions, risks etc. The achievements of SF outcomes, and the effective implementation of related key outputs and activities in each of the four areas of the SF depend on a number of assumptions, including improved stability and accessibility, favourable and enabling political commitment from all relevant stakeholders, macroeconomic and environmental conditions, institutional capacities to contribute to relevant policies and program delivery approaches, as well as availability and use of disaggregated quality data and analyses for transparent and inclusive evidence-based planning and

programming. This will allow the provision of more sustained service delivery and socio-economic recovery, which are at the heart of the SF⁹.

All assumptions are made in a responsive context to humanitarian needs in the foreseeable future. Linked to these assumptions, the Syrian country context presents several interlinked risks, which need to be considered and mitigated to ensure successful achievement of SF results. To account for these risks, the UN through the SF applies a risk-informed approach and uses resilience-based and participatory programming to mitigate risks across all priority areas and interventions.

Potential risks to the implementation of the SF include circumstances beyond UN control, such as limited access to hard-to-reach and target populations, explosive ordnance contamination, weak local-level administrative and technical capacities, severe economic conditions, which may cause specific risks for women and children, climate risks including droughts, lack of available funding.

In line with global UN programming guidance, the UN system in Syria, including the parties under UNJP 2.0 in particular, applies risk mitigation through regular updates of the UN context analysis, as well as frequent situational scanning and assessment of structural, operational and programme criticality risks, in collaboration with implementing partners. Regular monitoring of the country context at the UN system level also draws on the risk mitigation plans of individual UN agencies and the UNCT, which are updated on an ongoing basis to effectively prepare for and safeguard against various risks during the implementation of UN programmes. Sharing of knowledge and good practices, as well as enhanced coordination with key national counterparts and relevant partners in providing coherent and effective support to key SF priorities and results such as ones under UNJP 2.0, constitutes another risk mitigation approach. Risks of increased violence and social tension will be mitigated by applying context sensitive approaches and targeted risk-informed programming.

5. Summary of the results framework for Aleppo (*)

Project Title	UN Joint Programme to Strengthen Urban and Rural Resilience and the Conditions for Recovery in Syria (UNJP 2.0)
Outcome	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women, men, girls, and boys have more equitable basic services, such as electricity, water, education, and health services. 2. Women, men, including youth have enhanced sustainable food systems and livelihood opportunities. 3. Trust, cohesion, and cross-cleavage cooperation between local communities is enhanced.
Outcome indicators (draft)	<p># of crisis-affected communities' who have a positive perception of the capacities of local authorities to provide basic services.</p> <p># of tensions between communities in the targeted areas due to unequal access to basic services</p>

⁹ UN Strategic Framework Syria

	# of households in crisis-affected areas are able to accommodate the immediate impact of shocks and stresses due to acute health issues # of social tensions between different communities over access to water resources. # of households in crisis-affected areas are able to accommodate the immediate impact of water stresses.
Output indicators (draft)	# of people between the ages 4 and 24 that go to school. % decrease of the share of electricity costs out of the total HH expenditure. # households that have enough drinking water to meet their housing needs. # women aren't able to access health care when they feel they need it. # PWDs aren't able to access health care when they feel they need it. # of people reported a positive impact after attending community meetings in rehabilitated community centers.

The total population in Aleppo Governorate is estimated at about 4.2M, of those 1.9M are residing in East Aleppo City (EAC) neighbourhoods, according to the recent city council's estimates shared with the UN suboffices in Aleppo. In the rural areas of EAC covering As-Safira, Menbij, and Al Bab, the population is about 830K. According to UNOCHA, nearly 66% of the overall population of Aleppo Governorate need different forms of assistance.

Based on the previous calculations on cost per beneficiary, and keeping the anticipated volume of investment in UNJP 2.0, it is expected to directly support a segment roughly ranging between 6~8% of the population in need in EAC and its rural catchment areas, with multisectoral resilience-supporting area-based interventions at urban and rural levels, while the percentage of the indirect beneficiaries may range between 30~40% based on the average family size. It is worth noting that area-based interventions may render different multisectoral benefits to the same given beneficiary whether an individual or a household.

N.B. Baseline, target, number of direct and indirect beneficiaries, indicators, budget at output level will be determined, finalized and provided during the inception phase.

6. Inputs/budget (*)

Indicative, estimate budget per budget item for each target governorate

Budget items	in USD
Staff and Other personnel costs	2,500,000
Supplies, Commodities, Materials	1,000,000
Equipment, Vehicles and Furniture including Depreciation	500,000
Contractual Services	5,000,000
Travel	50,000
Transfers and Grants to Counterparts	4,000,000
General Operating and Other Direct Costs	1,000,000
Total Direct Costs	14,050,000
Indirect Support Costs Total	983,500
Total	15,033,500

This includes the overhead cost of PMU (one international manager, and two national officers), estimated at around USD 400,000 to 500,000 per year

Indicative, estimate budget per year for each target governorate

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
in USD	3,033,500	6,000,000	6,000,000
Outcome 1	1,200,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Outcome 2	1,200,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Outcome 3	633,500	1,000,000	1,000,000

This is an estimate figure, informed by the phase 1 of UNJP, in which expenditure for Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 normally account for higher budgets compared to Outcome 3. Also, Year 1 usually is spent more on planning, design and approval of activities, while implementation usually accelerates in Year 2 and Year 3.

Approximately USD 15 million is required for each governorate (firstly Aleppo and followed by other three governorates subject to funding availability). USD 15 million is an indicative, estimate budget for each governorate, to be determined following prioritization, work-planning and budgeting during the inception phase and to be approved by the Joint Steering Committee with contributing donors as standing members. All funds from donors will be spent solely on activities leading to the expected outputs and outcomes as agreed between the parties. The PUNOs are responsible for ensuring that the funds are spent in compliance with the agreement and with due consideration to economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in achieving the results intended. Budget at output level and activity level, including the distribution of funds between PUNOs will be prepared and finalized during the inception phase. The direct costs will be broken down, budgeted and detailed in Workplans and Response Plans, following the assessment, consultations and prioritization (please refer to Annex for one of the examples – Workplan and Response Plan for Deir Ezzour). Workplans and Response Plans are prepared jointly by PUNOs/PMU for each target governorate after its inception phase, with a list of detailed and budgeted activities, with context analysis, rationale and justifications. Also, attached to it, the M&E Framework with baselines, targets and indicators, is also prepared by PUNOs/PMU for each target governorate. All these are shared, reviewed and endorsed by the JSC members.

7. Institutional and Management arrangement (*)

The management arrangements aim to ensure adequate reporting, dialogue, learning and timely decisions about the project/programme, including possible adaptations to ensure achievement of agreed outcomes. The contributing donors shall have the right to carry out any technical or financial supervision mission that is considered necessary to monitor the implementation of the project/programme. After the termination of the project/programme support, the contributing donors reserves the right to carry out evaluations in accordance with this article.

Governance and Coordination Structures

The UN RC plays an active role in making sure that the Joint Programme Manager is empowered and supported by heads of participating agencies to ensure effective coordination and strategic prioritization of area-based, integrated activities between agencies. Funding decisions regarding prioritization of locations, focus areas and activities are made based on need and on relevance to the logic of the agreed Theory of Change, and the ultimate decision on activities to be funded is in the hands of the UN RC based on the advice of PMU, along with donors.

The PUNOs and the PMU will be supported by the UN RC in his/her strategic leadership of the UN Country Team, relationships with national authorities and in his/her capacity as Designated Official. The UN RC with the support of the PMU will provide overall strategic guidance and oversight for the programme, exercise necessary authority over prioritization and ensure that PUNOs meet their obligations. The UN RC with the support of the PMU is entrusted with supporting the overall programme implementation based on the initial design, donor strategies, programmatic oversight, consolidation of programme reports, and an analysis of lessons learned.

At the national level, the UNJP convenes a Joint Steering Committee (JSC), which will be co-chaired by the UN RC/HC and a representative of the contributing donors to the JP, with participation of all PUNOs and contributing donors as standing members, managing the overall steer of the programme upstream and downstream. Supported by PMU, the JSC will also include representatives of the other donors involved in the JP and from the PUNOs.

Programme Management Unit (PMU)

Based on the track record of effective coordination and convening power, the PMU continues to be composed of one Joint Programme Manager; and two staff members supporting monitoring and evaluation and on donor reporting, communications, and advocacy (National Officers). The PMU will act as Technical Secretariat for the JP. The JPM will coordinate the activities of the PMU as well as being the interface between donors and PUNOs in areas of coordination, monitoring and reporting.

Technical Working Group (TWG)

The Technical Working Group (TWG) includes representatives from the PUNOs at the technical level, and is chaired by the Joint Programme Manager (JPM). The TWG will meet on a regular basis (at least monthly) to determine more specific priorities and to elaborate on programme components. This TWG will directly link with the PMU in providing the necessary field-based information, *inter alia* priority needs, activities to be selected, sequencing of interventions, identify complementarities, etc. At the local level, PUNOs will work in teams under the leadership of a designated focal point agency, supported by PMU and PUNO focal points based in Damascus with frequent field visits to convene area-based TWG meetings.

Communication and Visibility

Due to the political and security context of the programme – in particular working with community stakeholders to whom public communication and visibility may result in operational and security risks – the UNJP will engage in visibility activities in a careful, strategic, and well-informed manner, adhering to the principle of "do no harm" vis-a-vis beneficiaries and local implementing partners, and in close consultation with donors.

As the UNJP is an innovative pilot initiative, communications and visibility activities will highlight and reinforce the value of a joint, locally-led planning approach to be able to respond to people's needs in a complex and dynamic environment with the required resilience programming that supports basic social services provision and livelihoods, while facilitating social cohesion. Visibility activities will target the

contributing donors, the wider donor community, and beyond. All materials for dissemination to this target group – including presentations – will have the logo of the JP PUNOs and contributing donors. A detailed Communication and Visibility Strategy is attached as Annex.

8. Financial Management, planning and reporting (*)

Donors and PUNOs will strive for alignment of the support to the implementing partner rules and procedures, while respecting sound international principles for financial management and reporting.

Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process and part of the implementing UN agencies' responsibilities supported and coordinated by PMU, aimed at providing time-sensitive/real-time data and information. PUNOs and PMU generate periodic, periodic updates for the JSC, and elaborate **annual progress reports** and **final reports**. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (outputs and direct outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the log frame matrix or the list of result indicators. The report shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation.

Accounting, indirect costs and fees: In order to demonstrate transparency in accounting, the Administrative Agent (AA) will comply with standard UN regulations and create a separate ledger account for the Joint Programme. All funds received will be deposited into the Joint Programme Account and recorded by the AA. Funds channeled to PUNOs will not be recorded as income. UNDP, as both AA (MPTFO) and a PUNO (UNDP Syria) will, therefore, have two ledger accounts for the Joint Programme: (i) one for administering the Joint Programme Account; and (ii) for the receipt and administration of funds disbursed from the Joint Programme Account to UNDP for its portfolio of substantive activities within the Joint Programme.

Each PUNO shall assume full programmatic and financial accountability for the funds disbursed to it by the AA. Each PUNO shall establish a separate ledger account for the receipt and administration of the funds disbursed to it by the AA. The PUNOs participate in the design, ongoing programmatic implementation, and oversight of the Programme through the working groups and PMU. They shall be entitled to deduct indirect costs on contributions received according to their own regulations and rules, taking into account the size and complexity of the particular programme.

The AA fee will be included as direct cost in the budget. Indirect costs of the PUNO recovered through programme support costs will be 7%. In accordance with relevant UN General Assembly resolutions (2012 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review Principle of Full Cost Recovery), all other costs incurred by each PUNO in carrying out the activities for which it is responsible under the Fund will be recovered as direct costs. The Administrative Agent will issue a financial report and final certified financial statement to donors and PUNOs on its activities.

As for the 1% levy, there will be no additional 1% levy charged if the funding is channelled through joint programme modalities such as the UNJP in Syria.

One advantage of inter-agency pooled funds is the use of standardized and pre-agreed templates. These simplify fund processes, making implementation, tracking, and evaluation easier and faster. Further details on accountability frameworks, UNDG guidelines, legal agreements, and annual reporting guidance notes can be found at the below site

<https://mptf.undp.org/page/how-contribute>

Also attached please refer to attached as Annex a standard template for a contribution agreement known as Standard Administrative Arrangement (SAA) which needs to be signed between contributing donors and MPTFO as AA, on behalf of PUNOs. The SAA details the legal relationships, the governance mechanisms, reporting arrangements, closure etc.

UNJP PUNOs will be using the following implementation modalities:

- Direct execution by UN agencies especially for procurement of all goods and services, using available resources, long term agreements, and capacity building due to the depletion of the local markets and limited local capacities.
- Direct implementation through local NGOs and local businesses to facilitate the implementation of the activities aiming at improving community and managerial/organizational structure resilience such as youth participation and engagement, improving social services, and expanding urban and rural networks.
- Modality using a third-party approach can also be utilized to overcome administrative hurdles of transferring financial resources to contested areas and monitor the project implementation where access for UN staff is challenging.

The procurement of goods or services will be carried out in accordance with applicable UN rules and procedures and will uphold key principles such as competitiveness, transparency, and value for money. NGO grants will be administered according to the UN NGO grant scheme as per standard rules and procedures. The scheme promotes a conflict sensitive approach, gender and environmental sustainability, respect of international laws (human rights, international humanitarian law, etc.), equal opportunities, financial accountability, and sound management of resources in line with UN transparency obligations.

9. Operational issues (risk management, due diligence and procurement) (*)

With regard to **risk management and due diligence**, it is worth noting that a risk profiling process is considered as a consultative approach intended to enhance more risk informed decision making. It should be noted that UN entities are not subject to country-specific sanctions and are under no legal obligation to abide by unilateral sanctions or restrictive measures. However, the UN in Syria is aware of the complex and politicized operating environment and risks inherent in procurement of goods, services, and civil works in Syria. UN agencies must abide by their corporate standard operating procedures in compliance with UN international procurement rules and regulations and they have been working with their respective headquarters on strengthening procurement processes to enhance accountability and transparency regarding human rights due diligence.

The UNJP Syria 1.0 sought pragmatism, weighing predictable and acceptable risks against expected positive impact for the Syrian people, by putting people first in line with globally accepted, principled humanitarian action that remains central to the UN's mandate in Syria. Going forward for the UNJP 2.0, in recognition of the heightened political and reputational risk, and learning the lessons during the first phase, the PUNOs have already embarked on an effort to enhance due diligence, individually and collectively.

As part of the prerequisites for conducting background checks on suppliers, under the UNJP Version 2.0, the PUNOs will diligently ensure that selected bidders/suppliers commit to refraining from engaging in any proscribed practices. These practices encompass human rights violation, corruption, fraud, coercion, collusion, obstruction, or any other unethical/problematic conduct concerning the UN or any other parties. The selected bidder/suppliers will also be required to conduct their business in a manner that avoids imposing any undue risks—be they financial, operational, reputational, or otherwise—on the UN and/or its partners.

To achieve this, through a series of internal discussions and reflective processes including at the senior management level, it was agreed that the PUNOs will strengthen background check processes for suppliers, which will include a thorough examination of documentation and solicitation. The PUNOs will carefully take into account any banking constraints and potential impact of financial transaction restrictions when finalizing contracts with these bidders/suppliers. Financial transactions executed through the banking channels will adhere to anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing procedures, as established by the UN General Assembly in Resolution 60/288¹⁰.

To achieve these objectives, the following steps will be taken:

- Enhancing the legal background check for both the corporation and its major owners who are associated with the bidders/suppliers.
- Ensuring a thorough examination of the history, local reputational background, and experience of the applied bidders/suppliers.
- Conducting background checks for any joint ventures and local representatives affiliated with the suppliers to ascertain their suitability.
- Carefully considering the implications of financial transactions, taking into account the necessary consideration measures for banks transactions' restrictions."

PUNOs will collaborate closely with the RCO, especially the Risk Management Unit (RMU), taking note of the RC's stated intention to scale up the RMU and expand its terms of reference to encompass advanced risk profiling and contract management schemes, thereby broadening its reach and effectiveness, if and when required funding is mobilized.

Funds will be allocated and set aside for an independent mid-term review and one of the areas of focus will be, among others, to look at adherence and challenges encountered with respect to the UN due diligence framework.

During the course of implementation under the UNJP Version 1.0, it has been recognized that there is room for more innovative solutions to enhance **operational efficiency** particularly in the area of procurement and address fragmented procurement planning/execution which often creates overlap and inefficiency. To address this, the PUNOs are now finalizing a joint workplan with a set of prioritized activities, using Italy's new contributions disbursed in early 2023, based on which to put together consolidated procurement plans. The PUNOs in turn make concerted efforts to explore various options to achieve operational efficiency gains, such as through (but not limited to) LTAs and Joint Tendering. The PUNOs with support of PMU intend to put together rosters ("living" rosters, to be updated continuously) and solicit bidding offers from those on the

¹⁰ <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/terr-ares60288.php>

roster, which likely results in gains in term of efficiency, time, and reduced transaction costs. This approach will be applied for the next phase of UNJP (i.e., UNJP 2.0) in Aleppo and beyond.

Risk matrix:

UNJP 2.0 identified the following risks will make utmost efforts to mitigate risks to ensure smooth, effective and risk-informed programming (more details on the risk table are annexed to this document): Exchange rate volatility/high Inflation; deterioration of the security situation precluding resilience efforts and access of implementation; causing harm through intervention; risk of social backlash; distribution effects risk; legitimization effects risk; substitution effects risk; market effects risk; diversion effects; duplication of efforts; lack of effective due diligence on third parties.

10. Sustainability and Exit Strategy

UNJP 2.0 identifies, and keeps in mind from the start of planning, three key elements on which the sustainability of interventions depends, thereby ensuring a smooth exit of the UNJP.

Community engagement and empowerment: Meaningful engagement with all relevant individuals of diverse age and backgrounds, with a particular focus on women and girls to ensure they can express their views and participate in decision-making about how to sustain the gains made under the UNJP phase 1. Community's capacities will be enhanced to sustain access to critical livelihood systems as well as basic services in a manner that enables them to: 1) help the most vulnerable families generate sustainable income, 2) enhance community's financial capacity to improve access to basic services including reproductive health (RH) services, learning and skills-building opportunities. PUNOs will support the role of neighbourhoods and village committees in managing the community's resources to anticipate and mitigate risks. PUNOs will advocate with different stakeholders to ensure that women and other vulnerable or/and marginalized groups participate meaningfully in the committees.

Support to service-provision facilities: The local service-provision institutions/facilities need to be supported to recover their capacity to deliver the services currently being provided through the UNJP in an efficient, sustainable, and inclusive manner. Therefore, and while considering the donors redlines, the JP PUNOs will perform a light rehabilitation to existing local facilities, when needed, (e.g., health centres, community centres...) and support others with extra functions (e.g., Curriculum B classes for Out-of-School Children in the already rehabilitated schools, etc.) to sustain the services provided to the local community. The JP PUNOs will advocate with the relevant local government entities to allocate the needed resources to cover running costs of the rehabilitated facilities and the tailored extra functions provided. The JP PUNOs believes that even light rehabilitation and covering running costs will not be enough to make the facilities working sustainably and efficiently, especially in rural areas where staff and beneficiaries will incur high transportation costs. Therefore, the JP PUNOs, on one hand, will enhance the communities' financial capacity in order to support the rehabilitated facilities to continue provision of services and improve quality and access, for example, through empowering existing community livelihood system so communities can make savings in form of donations to support the rehabilitated primary health centre. It will also support pregnant women in emergency to timely access the services. On the other hand, the JP PUNOs will advocate through already available committees and NGOs, with well-off families and traders to contribute with collective funds that will enable, for example, teachers to be transported from urban to marginalized and/or rural areas. The community will have access to monitor services provided through the supported facilities. Furthermore, the JP PUNOs will support already operating NGOs with running costs to phase down their services, while providing them with capacity building to enhance their skills on proposal writing to raise fund, financial management and reporting. Due to the lack or, weakness of available basic services system, like education and vocational training, NGOs' presence will remain needed.

Improved urban-rural market dynamics, sustained livelihoods: The JP PUNOs will work on sustaining the results supporting rural and urban interlinkages under the JP. This will be done through: 1) improving access to market information, 2) provision of tools and knowledge to farmers to resume production and absorb shocks, 3) enabling connections to wholesale traders, and 4) providing information on market support services (e.g., microfinance, logistical services.) to improve their understanding of market trends and conditions. Specific emphasis will be on women's economic empowerment and inclusion to address gender barriers and challenge discriminatory structures that prevent women's participation in market activities, including the overlap of care, domestic and community responsibilities. The JP PUNOs will work closely with relevant market actors to improve their capacities and knowledge on this issue and will prioritize support to women (e.g., farmers, vendors, wholesalers, ...etc.) where possible.