



JP SYRIA PHASE II FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT 2024

**UN Joint Programme to Strengthen Urban and
Rural Resilience and the Conditions for Recovery in
Syria Phase II**



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UN Joint Programme to Strengthen Urban and Rural Resilience and the Conditions for Recovery in Syria Phase II

FINAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY 2023 – 31 DECEMBER 2024

Programme Title & Project Number		Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results ²	
Programme Title: UN Joint Programme to Strengthen Urban and Rural Resilience and the Conditions for Recovery in Syria Phase II • MPTF Office Project Reference Number: ³ 00140233		Syrian Arab Republic Outcome 1: Urban Area-based Recovery and Neighbourhood 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. Outcome 2: Basic and social services are restored, improved, and sustained to enhance community resilience and social cohesion. Outcome 3: Households and communities benefit from sustainable livelihood opportunities, including economic recovery and enhancing social cohesion and community security.	
Participating Organization(s)		Implementing Partners	
FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, and WFP		• Please refer to the activity matrix.	
Programme/Project Cost (US\$)		Programme Duration	
Total approved budget as per project document: MPTF /JP Contribution ⁴ : \$ 2,000,000 • <i>by Agency (if applicable)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAO \$ 344,000 • UNDP \$ 722,000 • UNFPA \$ 184,000 • UN-Habitat \$ 335,000 • UNICEF \$135,000 • WFP \$ 280,000 		Overall Duration (<i>months</i>)	24

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](#)

Contributions (donors) • Italy	\$ 2,150,100		Start Date ⁵ (dd.mm.yyyy)	1 January 2023
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⁵ The start date is indicated as per the approved project document, which 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.

Table of Contents

ABBREVIATIONS	4
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
1.1 Introductory background	5
1.2 The JP Phase II (JP Sustainability workplan) deliverables' overview	5
1.3 JP Secretariat deliverables overview	6
2. PURPOSE.....	8
3. RESULTS.....	8
3.1. Sustainability workplan basis areas	8
3.2. Sustainability workplan cross-cutting aspects	9
3.3. Planning, and coordination highlights.....	9
3.3.1. Coordination meetings and desk follow up.....	9
3.3.2. Coordination in the field	10
3.3.3. Narrative reporting on results.....	11
4. LESSONS LEARNT	22
5. GENERAL CHALLENGES	22
6. ANNEXES	25

ABBREVIATIONS

CWG	Communications Working Group
DEZ	Deir-ez-Zor
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HoAs	Heads of Agencies
IP	Implementing partner
JP	The Joint Programme to Build and Strengthen Urban and Rural Resilience and the Conditions for Recovery in Syria
JSC	Joint Steering Committee
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOFAE	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPTFO	Multi Partner Trust Fund Office
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PMU	Programme Management Unit
PUNO	Participating United Nations Organization
RC/HC	Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator
RWH	Rainwater Harvesting
ToC	Theory of Change
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
WUA	Water Users Associations
WFP	World Food Programme of the United Nations

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introductory background

The past five years of implementation of The UN Joint Programme to Strengthen Urban and Rural Resilience (JP) in Syria in its first phase, followed by its sustainability phase (also named as phase II) has witnessed a shift in the UN approach from the provision of humanitarian assistance to towards more emphasis on provision of resilience support to the people of Syria. . The JP brought together six UN implementing agencies, namely FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, and WFP, to deliver coordinated resilience and recovery-oriented interventions, through a unique multi-donor, multi-year, multi-agency pooled funding mechanism to communities who are still witnessing massive damage to every aspect of life and livelihoods.

The JP was based on collective programming principles towards delivering resilience-supporting solutions, by means of applying an area-based, and conflict-sensitive approach, which facilitates community participation and bottom-up led processes.to re-instate rural-urban linkages, while streamlining gender during all stages. The JP in Syria, during its first phase of implementation funded by the EU and Norway, which ended by 31 December 2023, supported the resilience of Syrian people in many locations in Dara'a and Deir ez-Zor governorates through jointly designed, and planned interventions ensuring complementarity in action, maximizing impact in urban and rural areas, and avoiding duplication and overlap in the two targeted locations.

1.2 The JP Phase II (JP Sustainability workplan) deliverables' overview

It was agreed in the JP's Joint Steering Committee (JSC) meeting held back on 27th October 2022, that the JP's phase II should ensure the sustainability of the gains made during its first phase of implementation . This was achieved by maintaining and expanding on a group of approved interventions that will further enhance the resilience of people and ensure smoother exit of the JP from its current locations in Dara'a and Deir ez-Zor. During the year 2023, the JP programme management unit (PMU) worked with the JP technical focal points at the six UN agencies to conduct the needed assessments by using a result chain and problem tree approach to develop the sustainability workplan for the JP named JP Phase II with focus on sustaining and enhancing achievements made toward supporting people's resilience.

The Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs) placed their funds requests in December 2023 and received their implementation budgets by end of December 2023. Early January 2024, the JP PUNOs started their preparations for implementation, aligned priorities of activities, prepared bills of quantities for procurement, and commenced agreements with their implementing partners. Implementation proceeded during 2024 and concluded by the end of December 2024. Early results of action started to be seen on the ground by the first quarter of 2024. The JP Phase II (Recognized as the JP Sustainability) workplan focused on three basis areas: a) Community engagement; b) Support to service-provision facilities; and c) Improved urban-rural market dynamics and sustained livelihoods, where these basis areas are in line with the main three original outcomes of the JP⁸.

Under sustainability basis (a) Community engagement; the JP PUNOs jointly delivered 73 various capacity development sessions to about 2,800 individuals covering neighborhood committee members, village committees' members, community volunteers, youth and other community stakeholders while maintaining inclusion of vulnerable segments and PWDs, in order enhance community engagement and participation in local planning initiatives.

⁸ JP Outcome 1: Urban Area-based Recovery and Neighbourhoods 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

JP Outcome 2: Basic and social services restored, improved, and sustained to enhance community resilience and social cohesion.

JP Outcome 3: Households and communities benefit from sustainable livelihood opportunities, including economic recovery and enhancing social cohesion and community security.

Under sustainability basis (b) Support to service-provision facilities; the JP PUNOs jointly contributed to further rehabilitation of key infrastructure assets in the industrial zone of Deir Ezzor city including expansion of the electricity grid by additional 3 km of wiring and sewage network by additional 1 km of pipes, removal of 1500 cubic meters of debris and road pavement and installation of additional 20 street solar lighting units. These rehabilitation works have benefitted about 2,900 individuals including small industrialists and craftsmen shops, in addition to daily workers and labourers in the area and contributed to increasing the return movement of more craftsmen and opening of more workshops in the areas. Additionally, these rehabilitation works availed about 60 temporary job opportunities for temporary workers under cash for work modality.

Under sustainability basis (c) Improved urban-rural market dynamics and sustained livelihoods; the JP PUNOs in a complementary manner contributed to improving urban rural linkages by rehabilitating two major whole sales markets of agricultural produce and livestock in Deir Ezzor city and in the northwestern rural areas. Both markets have benefited from infrastructure enhancement works that contributed to furthering economic transactions between the city and rural areas, benefiting farmers, wholesalers, and middlemen, besides availing many micro job opportunities for daily workers, labourers, and truckers. The intervention has rendered benefits to approximately 75,000 individuals. The JP PUNOs offered vocational training and supported access to market to about 700 individuals who were supported under the first phase of the JP, while works in irrigation infrastructure continued by means of applying Rainwater Harvesting (RWH) techniques that helped about 480 smallholder households in rural Dara'a make better benefit from rainwater. Simultaneously, at urban level 35 micro, small and medium enterprises were supported to recommence their activities in various professions.

1.3 JP Secretariat deliverables overview

Donor involvement and high-level meetings

- I. Two Joint Steering Committee (JSC) meetings to discuss progress of the JP Phase II (JP Sustainability workplan) as well as the JP 2.0 progress on inception were held during 2024. The JP 2.0 is the succeeding iteration of the first phase of the JP that was funded by the EU and Norway and ended by 31 December 2023. The JP 2.0 is programmed to be implemented between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2026.
- II. Standard Administrative Agreement discussed and signed with Sweden, who contributed 40,000,000 SEK (equivalent of US\$ 3,658,568), for the JP Syria 2.0.
- III. Standard Administrative Agreement discussed and signed with Switzerland, who contributed 2,500,000 CHF (equivalent of US\$ 2,835,563) for the JP Syria 2.0.
- IV. Continual donor engagement with Italy to update the donor on the progress of the JP Phase II (JP Sustainability) workplan as well as to discuss and finalize the Standard Administrative Agreement re Italy's contribution for the JP 2.0
- V. Enhanced due diligence and risk management SOPs document was prepared and reviewed with donors.

Programme, planning, monitoring, and reporting.

- VI. Upon completion of activities a field mission for JP PMU to Deir-Ezzor in early December 2024 was planned and approved. However, the mission was aborted as per UNDSS recommendations due to security concerns.
- VII. JP PMU team and the focal points of the participating UN agencies in Damascus, Deir-Ezzor and Dara'a conducted continual follow up of activities through bi-lateral and multi-lateral meetings to get appraised of achievements and challenges on the ground.
- VIII. Monthly tracking sheet for the JP Phase II (JP Sustainability) workplan was developed and populated by the PUNOs FPs monthly.

- IX. Draft Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework with output indicators for the JP Phase II (JP1 Sustainability) was developed jointly with the PUNOs focal points.
- X. Annual progress narrative and financial reports for the JP Phase II (JP1 Sustainability) were prepared and timely submitted.
- XI. Final progress narrative and financial reports for the first phase of the Joint Programme (JP phase 1) in Dara'a and Deir ez-Zor were prepared and timely submitted, along with the relevant activity matrices tracking sheets and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Communications and advocacy

- XII. The communication and advocacy materials for the JP Phase II (JP1 sustainability) activities have been represented in the communication products of the JP 1 that were produced towards the end of 2023 and earlier in 2022. This is due to the fact that JP Phase II (JP1 sustainability) activities were designed as an enhanced extension of the support to livelihoods and urban/rural socio-economic linkages provided under JP1.

2. PURPOSE

The JP Phase II workplan has been developed to enable the participating UN organizations to focus on maintaining the gains made by the JP's first phase through continuing to address the most critical resilience needs within targeted communities including with the displaced populations as well as the hosting communities, while simultaneously promoting social and economic recovery, strengthening rural-urban linkages, supporting local planning and community engagement, and contributing to overall social cohesion within communities. The JP adopts a flexible multi-year, multi-partner, and multi-sector programming approach, at district, subdistrict, city and/or village, and neighbourhood levels with strong emphasis on community consultations and decision-making to prioritize needs and activities and select areas of intervention. The second phase of the JP adopts the same programming approach while utilizing a theory of change following to a profound problem/results trees analysis to support urban-rural livelihoods and socio-economic linkages.

3. RESULTS

During the implementation of the first phase of the JP, the interventions proceeded to realizing the following three outcomes:

1. Outcome 1: Urban Area-based Recovery and Neighbourhood 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 are 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.

3.1. Sustainability workplan basis areas

The JP Phase II, which also identified as the JP sustainability's workplan identified three key basis areas to support urban-rural livelihoods and linkages that are aligned with the original three outcomes of the JP, to build upon in order to enhance the resilience of people, while streamlining gender equality, accountability to affected population, advocacy and climate change mitigation approaches across the three sustainability basis areas. These areas are:

A- Community engagement and empowerment (Aligned with Outcome 1): The sustainability interventions within this area embark on ensuring meaningful engagement with all relevant community stakeholders, including vulnerable and marginalized groups (youth, women and girls, and people with disabilities) of diverse age and backgrounds. This important approach will support community members in expressing their views and participation in decision-making about how to sustain the gains made in phase I. Communities' 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 communities' financial capacity to improve access to basic services including reproductive health (RH) services, learning and skills-building opportunities. The JP participating UN organizations (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 young people, women, and other vulnerable and marginalized groups participate meaningfully in the committees.

- B- Support to service-provision facilities (Aligned with Outcome 2):** The local service-provision institutions / facilities need to be supported to recover their capacity to deliver the services currently being provided through the JP in efficient, sustainable, and inclusive manner. Against this backdrop, the JP PUNOs will continue doing light rehabilitation to existing local facilities, when needed, (e.g., health centres, community centres, etc.) and support others with extra functions (e.g., Curriculum B classes for Out-of-School Children [OoSC] in the already rehabilitated schools, etc.) to sustain the services provided to the local community. Priority shall be given to basic health, protection, learning, and skills-building services that address rights of the most vulnerable including children, youth, and women who continue to be severely disadvantaged from access to such services.
- C- Improved urban-rural market dynamics, sustained livelihoods (Aligned with Outcome 3):** The JP PUNOs will work on sustaining the results supporting rural and urban interlinkages under the JP. This will be 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., 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.

3.2. Sustainability workplan cross-cutting aspects

The JP sustainability workplan incorporated four cross-cutting aspects, and devised approaches that the JP PUNOs will adhere to during implementation. These are: 1) accountability to crisis-affected populations: by ensuring their voices are heard and programmatic decisions are informed by their priorities; 2) Gender and conflict sensitivity: by warranting that PUNOs are impartial and warrant that all individuals have equitable and unhindered access to services; 3) Climate change: climate change is a challenge that is hampering efforts to revive rural livelihoods, and impacts negatively on women girls through increased cases of GBV in rural areas. PUNOs will support the livelihoods of affected communities through increasing their awareness on the causes of climate change and the good practices of climate action at local level in a way that sustain their livelihoods while maintaining the natural resources; 4) Advocacy: through embedding it as a principle in each of the sustainability areas to ensure that they are committed and well-resourced to ensure sustainability of the JP intervention.

3.3. Planning, and coordination highlights

3.3.1. Coordination meetings and desk follow up.

During the reporting period, the PMU coordinated efforts with the participating UN organizations to implement the JP Phase II (JP1 sustainability) workplan through the Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings, in addition to a series of follow up bi-lateral and multilateral technical meetings between the JP programme management unit and the technical focal points at the six UN agencies to get understanding of progress on the ground, take account of the encountered challenges and discuss solutions to mitigate risks and challenges. To this end, the JP Phase II (JP1 Sustainability) workplan's activity matrix was tracked monthly and populated with inputs on the status of implementation of each activity.

3.3.2. Coordination in the field

The JP PUNOs coordinated efforts in the field to implement the JP Phase II (JP1 Sustainability) workplan to ensure complementarity and evade duplication and overlap, especially in areas where hard interventions (i.e., civil works) take place by more than one agency. Simultaneously soft interventions (i.e., training, skill-building, and governance capacity enhancement..., etc.) by more than one PUNO where the audience can be same or may have training topics that require joint expertise of more than one PUNO; such interventions emphasized solid coordination.

Against this backdrop, UN-Habitat, in close collaboration with UNDP, completed the rehabilitation of essential basic infrastructure services during the first phase of JP in Deir Ezzor City. This coordinated effort aimed to ensure the continuation and spatial expansion of the earlier interventions, effectively addressing critical infrastructure needs, which are needed to support urban and off-farm rural livelihoods. The scope of work included the restoration and enhancement of sewage networks, extensive street repairs to facilitate safer and more accessible mobility and the installation of solar-powered street lighting to promote energy efficiency in public utilities of the light-industries' section of the industrial area. Through these activities, both agencies reinforced their commitment to enhancing the resilience of the targeted working communities and improving the well-being of light industrial store and workshop owners, thereby creating a more conducive environment for new small and medium businesses to emerge, to eventually contribute to the long-term recovery of Deir Ezzor.



Figure 1- The targeted sewage pipelines in the industrial area of Deir Ezzor City by UNDP and UN-Habitat through UNJP phase II and sustainability phase, UN-Habitat.

WFP and FAO coordinated efforts regarding enhancing community engagement and strengthening local governance at rural level through complementary training of village committees, water users' associations and natural resource users' associations. UNFPA followed up with their livelihoods and access-to-market beneficiaries of women and girls through coordination with FAO and UNDP depending on the type of livelihood whether urban or rural and UNICEF enhanced their engagement with youth through various empowerment and skill-building initiatives in coordination with the JP PUNOs including FAO and UNFPA.

3.3.3. Narrative reporting on results

The JP Phase II (JP1 Sustainability) workplan's implementation was distributed between the two original locations of the Joint Programme, which are Dara'a and Deir-ez-Zor governorates, with less focus on equilibrium of sustainability action between the two locations depending on the nature of the required action, its relevance to each of the three sustainability bases in support of the theory of change and the livelihoods problem tree. The theory of change based on which the sustainability workplan was developed emphasized the needs for sustaining livelihoods and urban rural linkages, while availing the necessary level of community engagement and required infrastructure assets needs to achieve the goal of theory of change and enable smooth exit of the JP from its current locations.

The collective complementarity and joint action between the JP PUNOs have enhanced the resilience of the JP beneficiaries in urban and rural areas of Dara'a and Deir Ezzor, maintained the JP overall objective and sustained the achievements made under the first phase of the JP under its three outcomes. The following provides an area-based account of JP Phase II achievements based on the three sustainability bases that are aligned with the main JP Outcomes⁹.

In Dara'a

The JP Phase II capitalized on its area-based approach in Dara'a, to sustain the results achieved by the JP 1 under Outcome 1 in alignment with the sustainability basis relevant to furthering community engagement and empowerment. In this regard the JP Phase II provided training to technical village committees including Water Users Associations (WUA), village development committees, and Pastoral Reserve Management group. In parallel the JP focused on youth development and enhancing their involvement in local governance, participation decision making and supporting their role and engagement in climate action through innovative initiative named Youth-led-Climate Action.

While under the JP Outcome 3 in alignment with the sustainability basis relevant to improving urban-rural market dynamics, sustained livelihoods, three PUNOs (FAO, WFP, and UNFPA) collaborated to support the beneficiaries of small grants under the JP 1 with enhanced vocational training sessions on business planning and access to market while distributing in kind assistance including additional productive toolkits for diverse professions in urban and rural areas in an effort to enhance economic interaction between urban and rural areas and strengthen linkages. Beneficiaries also demonstrated strong management skills, having incorporated financial planning sessions into their training, allowing them to reinvest in and expand their businesses, even in small steps. Alongside these efforts, the JP worked on enhancing irrigation infrastructure and supporting farmers with modern climate-friendly irrigation techniques to enable them to maintain their crops and increase yield and enhance their agricultural livelihoods.

The following is a detailed account of the JP area-based interventions in Deir Ezzor grouped by sustainability basis.

Under community engagement and empowerment sustainability basis A *(Aligned with Outcome 1: Urban Area-based Recovery and Neighbourhood 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)*

⁹ JP Outcome 1: Urban Area-based Recovery and Neighbourhoods 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

JP Outcome 2: Basic and social services restored, improved, and sustained to enhance community resilience and social cohesion.

JP Outcome 3: Households and communities benefit from sustainable livelihood opportunities, including economic recovery and enhancing social cohesion and community security.

Under the first phase of the JP, WFP rehabilitated the Al-Jalad pastoral reserve, which covers an area of 70 hectares cultivated with pastoral shrubs and some additional infrastructure including fencing and guard room. A total of 60,500 seedlings were planted, and the area was supported with fencing, solar lighting, and a guard room. This intervention directly supports 100 sheep keepers who own 3,000 heads of sheep, providing them with a sustainable source of fodder and improving their livelihoods.

To sustain the benefits achieved in the Al-Jalad pastoral reserve and ensure its ownership and management by the local community, WFP established a Reserve Management Group. The group was empowered through a comprehensive training package consisting of three sessions, each focusing on a critical aspect of sustainable rangeland and natural resource management. On the first day, participants learned about rangeland development in eligible areas. The second day focused on community participation and proper site management, while the third day covered natural resource development and maintenance in the area.

A total of 23 participants (13 women and 10 men) were trained, with 56% female representation, ensuring that women, who play a vital role in community development, were actively involved in the project. This training equipped participants with the knowledge and skills needed to sustainably manage the Al-Jalad pastoral reserve, promoting community-led conservation efforts and ensuring the long-term preservation of natural resources.

By empowering the Reserve Management Group, WFP has fostered environmental sustainability and strengthened community participation and local governance in natural resource management.



Figure 2- Records of WUAs at each surface irrigation branch in Nawa, Daraá



Figure 3- Training of WUAs of AlBadia wells on the operational, organizational, and social aspects

Under the same objective to support community-based natural resource management, FAO complemented the rehabilitation of nine community wells and a surface irrigation network in Dara'a under JP1 through the establishment of Water Users Associations (WUAs). This component was implemented through three-day trainings provided to 95 board members of the WUAs, including only 4 women reflecting the fact that the vast majority of landowners in rural Dara'a are men.

The training aimed to complement the technical training provided during the first phase. In this second phase the training focused on governance-related topics namely operational, organisational, and social aspects of WUAs taking into account the specific technical and local conditions for wells and irrigation canals. Following the trainings, the WUAs at each well and irrigation canal branch agreed on the by-laws and arrangements governing the use of these systems considering the local conditions in each community, the technical conditions of water wells and surface networks and the capacity and the intended use of the systems (e.g., supplementary

irrigation for fruit trees, drinking water for sheep or crops irrigation). The WUAs were also encouraged to maintain records documenting all meetings records and by-laws. FAO maintained follow-up with these WUAs to ensure their durability and sustainability, relying on key indicators such as the equitable distribution of water with minimal conflicts, regular meetings of board members, collection of water distribution fees and maintenance of irrigation systems (including solar panel sets, irrigations networks) as well as record keeping.

In complementarity with the efforts of participating agencies to strengthen community participation and local governances, and under the first phase of the JP, FAO trained village development committees in ten villages in Dara'a. These committees included community leaders, farmers' representatives, and other local influential community members. As a result of these trainings, the committees successfully developed multi-sectoral Action plans for their villages addressing areas such as agricultural livelihoods, healthcare, education, and civil service requirements.

To further empower and strengthen these committees, cementing their role as representatives and community access points, and to help them gain recognition for their functions within their communities, relevant local governmental bodies, and national and international organizations operating in their regions, FAO provided them with additional two-day training on advocacy and resource mobilization. In Dara'a, 44 of village committees' members were trained, including ten women (22 percent). FAO also successfully collaborated with the participating organizations, INGOs and NGOs to channel their initiatives through these committees, ensuring complementarity of action and institutionalizing joint action across the JP interventions. Moreover, to help these committees establish dedicated professional workspaces and maintain distinct entity, FAO provided basic office furniture and IT equipment.

Through the first phase of the Joint Programme UNICEF, with its implementing partners, had made significant strides in strengthening local governance by promoting inclusive decision-making. There has been a notable increase in the involvement of young people, girls, and women in decision-making processes. This progress was made possible through skill-building programs for youths, empowerment initiatives aimed at fostering active citizenship and social responsibility, and by creating substantial opportunities for meaningful engagement.

Also, under JP1 and in collaboration with PUNOs, UNICEF promoted an Advance Youth-Led Climate Action as There has been a marked improvement in the way young people are engaging with environmental issues. With active support, they have been involved in climate action initiatives and have contributed to the development of innovative concepts and sustainable solutions to address the challenges posed by climate change.

These achievements were driven through implementing the following interventions.

1. Strengthening Rural Community's Local Governance,

This intervention to empower young people in rural communities for social and civic engagement has shown remarkable results in both Dara'a and Deir-Ezzor governorates. The goal was to develop young people's skills in areas such as social action, peacebuilding, and active participation in governance with a target to support 420 young people 210 in Dara'a and 210 in DEZ governorates, UNICEF supported 398 young people (231 females) in Dara'a, while 239 ones (144 females) in Deir Ezzor.

The intervention ensured that young people understand their rights to participate in decision-making processes. Moreover, by coordinating initiatives with FAO and advocating for youth involvement in village

development committees, UNICEF has ensured that young people are engaged in shaping their future policies and actions.

2. Supporting Village Committees' Plans for Adolescents and Youth Development Needs in coordination with FAO

This intervention equipped young people with foundational, transferable, and technical/vocational skills that are necessary for their future social and economic prospects. This initiative also focused on gender-sensitive approaches to skills development, with a target to support 1,000 young people 500 in Dara'a and 500 in DEZ governorates, UNICEF supported 647 young people (390 females) in Dara'a, and 515 young people (309 females) in DEZ.

The focus on the life skills and citizenship education (LSCE) framework -skills building- and gender-sensitive approaches allow young people to acquire skills that are essential for personal and community development, addressing socio-cultural norms and biases.

3. Supporting Young People's Climate Action and Innovative Solutions for Climate Change

This intervention aimed at increasing young people's awareness of climate change and environmental issues and engaging them in developing innovative and sustainable solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change. with a target to reach 200 young people 100 in Dara'a and 100 in DEZ governorates. Actually, 180 young people have been supported under this intervention (108 females) in Dara'a, while 102 ones (61 females) in DEZ.

The support for young people-run businesses and community-based groups implementing climate change initiatives has further stimulated youth involvement in sustainable development and socio-technical transformation.

Under the **Improved urban-rural market dynamics, sustained livelihoods sustainability basis C** (*Aligned with Outcome 3: Households and communities benefit from sustainable livelihood opportunities, including economic recovery and enhancing social cohesion and community security*)

To complement what has been achieved by participating UN agencies and FAO under JP1 to support agricultural entrepreneurship in Dara'a and Deir Ezzor through the implementation of FAO Nabta programme¹⁰, FAO worked with UNFPA and WFP to support the former Nabta grants' beneficiaries and agricultural business school to improve and sustain their businesses.

UNFPA, in partnership with their IP the Syrian Society for Social Development (SSSD) in Dara'a, implemented various activities to support women, girls, and youth in building resilience. In 2022, a market assessment



¹⁰ NABTA: means plant in Arabic. It is an agricultural entrepreneurship training programme initiated by FAO.

conducted with UNDP helped shape interventions based on market needs. As a result, from 2022 to 2023, UNFPA and SSSD provided vocational training and distributed productive toolkits in diverse professions, including food processing, maintenance work, beekeeping, solar system installation, accounting, graphic design, and automotive electricity maintenance. Additionally, grants were provided to youth with existing skills to help them establish their own businesses.

As part of their exit strategy, and to ensure sustainability, a comprehensive assessment was conducted to identify beneficiaries who had started their small businesses, UNFPA conducted a thorough re-evaluation of both the small business grants and vocational training kits provided to the beneficiaries. The purpose of these assessments was to gauge the sustainability of the interventions, determine the continued effectiveness of the support, and measure the impact on the beneficiaries' livelihoods.



Figure 5- follow up with beneficiaries.

The evaluation process involved a combination of direct follow-up with beneficiaries, site visits, questionnaires, evaluation forms and collaboration with the implementing partners. The primary reason behind this assessment was to ensure that the interventions were still providing tangible benefits and to identify any gaps that could be addressed before the program's completion. These assessments were essential in shaping the final stages of the project, ensuring that we could effectively plan the exit and handover to local systems. a list of needed items with technical specifications had been prepared in consultation with technical experts to be purchased and distributed to targeted beneficiaries. Many beneficiaries reported that their projects significantly contributed to their family incomes, often evolving into family-run businesses, which had a positive impact on reducing violence. Women noted improvements in their roles within their families and communities.

Beneficiaries also demonstrated strong management skills, having incorporated financial planning sessions into their training, allowing them to reinvest in and expand their businesses, even in small steps. However, challenges such as price instability due to currency fluctuations and broader economic conditions after December 8, 2024, affected markets, banking, and NGO operations, leading to delays in handing over purchased items to beneficiaries. Despite these challenges, the initiative has strengthened economic resilience and self-reliance within communities.



Figure 6- UNFPA IP team in Dara'a.

Under the JP1, FAO implemented its agricultural entrepreneurship programme ‘Nabta’ targeting rural women and youth to build their entrepreneurship skills and enhancing their business management capacity for agriculture-related livelihood opportunities. To maximise the impact of this programme in responding to the needs, FAO provided seed funding to a number of graduates of these trainings to support their start-up agricultural businesses and coached and mentored them throughout the inception phase of their projects. UNFPA and WFP complemented FAO activity by providing grants to additional women and youth graduates of this training to also start their entrepreneurial projects.

To complement what has been achieved under this programme, FAO worked with UNFPA and WFP to support former *Nabta* grant beneficiaries and other ongoing agricultural businesses in Dara'a and Deir Ezzor to improve and sustain their businesses.

In Dara'a 47 agricultural entrepreneurs (of whom 28 female) received two-day trainings on topics related to preservation, packaging, and quality standards for agricultural products. UNFPA and FAO also planned to organize an agricultural products expo in Dara'a to help these small entrepreneurs exhibit and sell their products;



however, due to the political and security instability during December 2024, the plan was cancelled. To support them in sustaining their businesses under these unstable economic conditions, FAO provided basic inputs to those whose businesses are ongoing. Inputs varied from a solar system for a women's group to operate fridges and basic electric machines, to row materials and essential tools for food processors, beekeepers and others.

Under the JP1, FAO rehabilitated five common water wells in southern Dara'a to provide sources for supplementary irrigation for fruit trees in the area. However, optimizing rainwater utilization was essential to help farmers reduce irrigation costs while adapting to climate change.

Figure 7- installation of rainwater harvesting bunds.

Access to water and the efficient use of water are key to ensuring the sustainability of restored livelihoods in rural communities. As the impacts of climate change increase, dependence on irrigation becomes critical for farmers. FAO works extensively to address this challenge by increasing production and supporting rural households to generate income while protecting natural resources.

Since early 2024 FAO has introduced the concept of small-scale Rainwater Harvesting (RWH) through delivering training to farmers and technicians. A total of 237 farmers and 27 technicians received two-day training sessions followed by the installation of four RWH observation fields to demonstrate the importance of this technique. In late summer 2024 FAO launched a call for applications to scale up RWH and invited fruit tree farmers in the targeted area (whose lands were suitable for this technique) to apply and benefit from the initiative. Ultimately, 400 farmers were selected, and each had 70 olive trees in their lands equipped with RWH bunds. Over the past few months of the current winter beneficiary farmers have been able to observe the benefit of this technique, despite the limited rainfall during this winter.



Figure 8- rainwater accumulated around olive trees because of applying RWH.

In Deir-ez-Zor

The JP Phase II continued its area-based implementation approach in Deir Ezzor, to sustain the results achieved by the JP 1 under Outcome 1 in alignment with the sustainability basis relevant to furthering community engagement and empowerment. In this regard the JP Phase II supported the community local planning initiatives through provision of advanced training on needs analysis and prioritization, and strengthened their position as local development committees who collaborate with governmental agencies and international organizations on fulfilling their communities' resilience needs, thereby creating an collaborative atmosphere that contributed to strengthening social fabric and supported the overall resilience of population in the targeted locations.

The JP Phase II interventions under Outcome 2 in alignment with the sustainability basis relevant to supporting service-provision facilities, the JP Phase II continued its intervention in the industrial area in Deir Ezzor to restore access to basic infrastructure services including sewage, electricity, debris removal and road repair. The impact of these interventions extended along an 80-shop stretch within the light-industries section of the industrial zone, significantly contributing to the industrial area's economic revitalization and availing many small and micro job opportunities for daily workers and labourers. Collaboratively with the municipality's efforts to encourage the return, the JP interventions under Outcome 2 had a key role in encouraging workshop owners to return and restore their businesses besides reviving the surrounding neighbourhoods by means of increasing the return movement due to the rehabilitation of basic services.

While under the JP Outcome 3 in alignment with the sustainability basis relevant to improving urban-rural market dynamics, and sustaining livelihoods, the JP has rehabilitated a major urban wholesale market of agriculture produce in Deir Ezzor city and re-emphasized its economic linkage with a major wholesale market in northwestern rural areas which was rehabilitated under the first phase of the JP then extended its rehabilitation during the phase II under the sustainability workplan. These two complementary interventions contributed to strengthening economic linkages between urban and rural areas, enhanced transactions, and yielded benefits to a large number of agriculture producers, livestock owners and traders, wholesalers, mediators, truckers, and daily workers. The JP phase II expanded its MSME's revival interventions to support an additional number of MSMEs by means of grants and in-kind assistance to complement the achievement made in infrastructure rehab and betterment of access to basic services under Outcome2.

Simultaneously, vocational training sessions and agricultural entrepreneurship programmes were administered to enhance the knowledge of the beneficiaries who were supported under the first phase of the JP. The VT graduates were enabled access to market and were availed some opportunities as apprentices, while farmers enrolled in agri-entrepreneurship programmes were availed the opportunity to improve the quality and marketability of their products and sustain their small rural businesses.

The following is a detailed account of the JP area-based interventions in Deir Ezzor grouped by sustainability basis.

Under community engagement and empowerment sustainability basis A *(Aligned with Outcome 1: Urban Area-based Recovery and Neighbourhood 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)*



Figure 9- Ayash village committee holding regular meetings in the new office.



Figure 10- An NGO working with Qsubi village committee office to respond to the needs of refugees from Lebanon.

Similar to Dara'a, FAO worked to empower the established village-committees under JP1 in Deir Ezzor, advocating for their crucial role in local rural governance through the FAO tool *Community Action Planning*. Twelve village committees received training, as well as basic furniture and IT equipment, to support them in fulfilling their expected roles. FAO's advocacy, combined with the effective work of several committees, attracted the attention of government entities, UN agencies, INGOs, and NGOs in the governorate, positioning these committees as key entry points for their respective villages. This gradual transformation in rural governance, along with the evolving role of women, is essential in fostering inclusivity and enabling genuine community-led planning and programming. This approach contributes to the sustainability of rural development programs.

Under Support to service-provision facilities B *(Aligned with Outcome 2: Basic and social services are restored, improved, and sustained to enhance community resilience and social cohesion)*

UNDP and UN-Habitat jointly implemented a coordinated intervention to restore essential infrastructure services in the industrial area, beginning with the first phase of the JP (i.e., JP1) and continuing into Phase II under the sustainability plan. This collaboration aimed to build upon previous efforts, addressing critical infrastructure needs to support both urban and off-farm rural livelihoods.

As part of the sustainability plan, UNDP first cleared 1,500 m³ of debris to prepare the area for further restoration, creating 25 emergency jobs and providing immediate support to the local community. To strengthen the area's infrastructure, UNDP rehabilitated an additional 3 km of the electricity grid and installed two transformers, directly benefiting 150,000 individuals and generating 35 emergency (temporary) jobs. Building on these efforts, UN-Habitat complemented the work initiated by UNDP in the first phase by expanding on the rehabilitating the sewage network, ensuring its functionality and sustainability.

In this regard, the UN-Habitat undertook the rehabilitation of sewage networks and the repair of relevant streets in the light-industries' section of the industrial area of Deir Ezzor, covering a total length of 660 meters. These

interventions also included the installation of multiple solar powered streetlights¹¹, enhancing safety and accessibility in the area. These critical infrastructure improvements directly benefited approximately 540 persons, including industrial workshop owners, daily commuters, and residents of the surrounding neighbourhoods.

The impact of these interventions extended along an 80-shop stretch within the light-industries section of the industrial zone, significantly contributing to the industrial area's economic revitalization. Collaboratively with the municipality's efforts to encourage the return, the activities had a key role in encouraging workshop owners to return and restore their businesses. As a result, about 600 workshops have already been rehabilitated and re-operated by their owners, thus, availing multiple micro-job opportunities and signalling a major step toward economic recovery.

Furthermore, in December 2024 the owners of approximately 100 workshops commenced maintenance of their workshops at their own cost, with expectations for their reopening within the next six months. These efforts have not only fostered the return of businesses and skilled workers but also strengthened urban-rural linkages. Given that the industrial zone provides essential maintenance services for farming tractors and other equipment (e.g., water pumps) used in rural areas, its restoration has played a pivotal role in boosting overall economic activity between rural and urban areas.

These interventions collectively enabled a total of near 485 workshops—many of which had voluntarily returned but struggled due to the lack of electricity—to resume operations.



Figure 11, Rehabilitation works of sewage pipelines in the industrial area of Deir Ezzor City,

Under the Improved urban-rural market dynamics, sustained livelihoods sustainability basis C (*Aligned with Outcome 3: Households and communities benefit from sustainable livelihood opportunities, including economic recovery and enhancing social cohesion and community security*)

The wholesale market in Deir Ezzor City, was rehabilitated by UN-Habitat through repairing its internal streets and installing several solar lighting units to foster its operational capacity. This intervention directly benefited approximately 1,800 people, including wholesalers, traders, daily labourers, and workers, besides the residents of the surrounding neighbourhoods, by improving market accessibility and functionality which reflected positively on the overall business conditions and economic transactions.

¹¹ UN-Habitat installed twenty street solar lighting units in the light industrial area and the wholesale market in Deir Ezzor City.

The rehabilitation efforts facilitated the restoration and operation of 54 commercial shops within the market, providing a fostered economic lifeline for business owners and their customers. Moreover, this intervention played a crucial role in strengthening the commercial linkages between the DEZ city's wholesale market and Al-Shmeitieh rural wholesale market, located in northwest rural Deir-Ezzor city, which was rehabilitated under the JP1 and expanded also under the JP Phase II (JP1 sustainability) workplan. By fostering better connectivity between these trade hubs, the project supported a more efficient supply chain, enabling smoother distribution of goods between urban and peri-urban areas. This enhanced economic integration is expected to stimulate further investment, improve market resilience and promote resilience in urban-rural economic exchanges.



Figure 12- Rehabilitation works of the wholesale market in Deir Ezzor City.

Additionally, medium, small and micro economic activities in the industrial area of Deir Ezzor, were directly supported to re-initiate work, where a total of 35 MSMEs were revived with UNDP's support, and a referral mechanism was established to connect JP-supported MSMEs' owners with graduates from vocational training sessions in various professions so that they can be hired as apprentices, thus ensuring complementarity in-between interventions by the same PUNO. This created a mutually beneficial partnership between the business community and individuals who received skills development and employment opportunities through UNDP's Youth Empowerment Centre in Deir Ezzor. Consequently, 80 individuals received skills development support and on-the-job training within JP-supported MSMEs. By the end of the program, these beneficiaries were also provided with productive kits, further enhancing their ability to generate income. This integrated approach fostered practical, work-based experience, supported local business recovery, and contributed to long-term economic development.

Similar to its approach in Dara'a, FAO implemented the agricultural entrepreneurship programme aimed at supporting those who were trained and awarded grants in JP1 to start their businesses and workshops, to improve the quality and marketability of their products and sustain these businesses. A total of 30 trainees, including 27 women, received the same training provided in Dara'a. A number of these entrepreneurs also participated in the exhibition organised by UNFPA and were able to showcase their products. FAO additionally provided 27 of these entrepreneurs with inputs to help improve and sustain their current businesses.



Figure 13- livestock section of the wholesale market in Al Shmeitieh village northwest Deir Ezzor

During the first phase of the JP the agricultural section of the AlShmeitieh rural wholesale market was upgraded by WFP. However, this rehabilitation increased pressure on the area of the agricultural section due to the poor condition of the livestock wholesale section, as sheep breeders also began using the areas of the agricultural section. To ensure the market's sustainability, WFP upgraded the sheep and livestock wholesale section of the AlShmeitieh market in northwestern rural Deir Ezzor, focusing on improving market infrastructure to enhance trade efficiency and support local livelihoods. This intervention directly benefited 15,000 households (HHs), corresponding to approximately 75,000 beneficiaries.

The upgraded market has provided better facilities for livestock trading, enabling local herders and traders to expand their businesses and access more reliable income sources. By strengthening the local economy, this intervention has not only improved the trading environment but also fostered economic stability and growth in the region. The AlShmeitieh market upgrade is a testament to the Joint Programme's PUNOs commitment to supporting vulnerable communities through targeted interventions that address immediate resilience needs while creating long-term opportunities for sustainable development.

Grant and vocational training programs in Deir Ezzor have played a vital role in enhancing livelihoods by equipping individuals with essential skills and financial support to sustain and grow their businesses. Reassessments revealed that many beneficiaries continue to successfully utilize vocational kits in fields such as electrical, computer, and mobile phone maintenance, as well as cheese production, pastry, and plumbing. These skills have enabled them to generate income, secure employment, or establish small businesses that contribute to the local economy.

Small business grants have further empowered entrepreneurs by providing them with the necessary resources to expand their ventures, create job opportunities, and increase product availability in the market. Many beneficiaries who received support have demonstrated resilience, overcome economic hardships and strengthening their financial independence. Additionally, the 2024 Expo event served as a critical platform for beneficiaries to highlight their businesses, market their products, and connect with funding entities and potential clients. The event fostered collaboration among stakeholders, including FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, and UNICEF, creating new opportunities for growth and sustainability. By integrating vocational training, financial assistance, and business networking, these initiatives have contributed to long-term economic stability in Deir ez-Zor. They have not only enabled individuals to build sustainable livelihoods but also played a key role in the broader recovery efforts of the region, reinforcing economic resilience and fostering self-reliance within the community.

4. LESSONS LEARNT

- The adoption of a theory of change (ToC) approach and problem tree/result chain analysis enhanced the design of joint sustainability interventions between the participating UN organizations.
- Maintaining engagement with the local community enabled better apprehension and prioritization of the sustainability needs for the already implemented interventions through the first phase of the JP.
- Continuous monitoring of local markets status with regards to availability of workforce, work tools, supplies, and materials, in parallel with monitoring inflation and the exchange rate fluctuations and its trends, will help to better estimate costs and lead to more efficient budgeting.
- There is a keen need to continually monitor and address the climate change effects on people's resilience in the targeted locations, especially since rural livelihoods depend mainly on the availability of water resources, which are hampered by several drought-like conditions. This helped addressing some of the sustainability interventions.
- Continual engagement with donors and provision of updates regarding the implementation of the JP phase II (JP sustainability) workplan, through JSC meetings and through bi-lateral discussions helped in bridging any gaps of understanding and enhanced the development of the workplan.
- Continual coordination between the JP PUNOs' technical field staff in Dara'a and Deir-ez-Zor and the JP PUNO focal points in central offices led to achieving more solid complementarities and triggered innovative ideas to further enhance planning efforts at PUNO central offices. Furthermore, it fosters closer monitoring and sharing of findings to troubleshoot and resolve any emerging technical issues or obstacles in implementation in a timely manner. Additionally, field staff have better comprehension of access and security aspects and are able to provide timely information to central offices to manoeuvre implementation and field missions.
- The enhancement of community engagement and strengthening of the local governance capacities, enabled the local communities at urban and rural levels to undertake the caring for safety, continuation of management and operation of the rehabilitated community assets upon the fall of the previous government in early December 2024, which in turn safeguarded the Joint Programme's achievements in its first phase and during the sustainability phase.

5. GENERAL CHALLENGES

Security and accessibility

The security situation in Syria in general and particularly in Dara'a rural areas and some of Deir-ez-Zor rural areas continues to present a challenge and may temporarily hinder access to implementation during 2024. The sporadic tensions and conflicts in Dara'a governorate, especially in the eastern and western rural areas of Dara'a city, have caused some intermittent delays in the implementing the activities by the participating UN organizations under the JP phase II workplan.

UN field missions to implementation sites required approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates (MoFAE) of the previous government, where the purpose, location, and participants, whether national or international staff, should be defined. Similarly, private contractors apply for their own permits and coordinate with relevant governmental authorities to transport goods, supplies, and equipment and to deploy workers and implement contracts.

Although security incidents are usually unpredictable, the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) maintains coordination with relevant security parties in the country and stays abreast of developments. Any significant information regarding road-related and/or location-related risks are immediately shared with UN agencies, enabling the UN agencies to take necessary measures.

The major shift of control and the collapse of the previous government on 8 December, caused some delays in the finalization and closure of some activities on the ground. The delay was minor in terms of 1 ~ 2 weeks, then the finalization work resumed and PUNOs were able to conclude most of their delayed activities towards end of the year.

Humanitarian situation

The scale, severity and complexity of humanitarian needs suffered further worsening in 2024 due to the economic downturn resulting in some of the most challenging humanitarian conditions experienced in the past thirteen years of the crisis: the rising cost of commodities and continual devaluation of the local currency during 2024; scarcity of fuel and electricity, which were also topped up by various protracted socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19; the collapse of the Lebanese economy; sanctions; and climate change-induced events such as droughts.

As a result, risks of GBV; the likelihood of de-prioritization of women's health, antenatal and postnatal care; de-prioritizing children's education in return for sending them to child labour; hostility; and criminal actions all had severely increased, along with disrupted and deteriorated access to life-saving sexual and reproductive health services, as well as essential GBV services. Additionally, the severe increase in financial burdens on families to maintain their access to basic needs on top of the increased costs of agricultural inputs and other livelihood sources may disrupt the gains made to sustaining livelihoods that were achieved through the JP interventions.

Integration and coordination

Each of the participating UN organizations has its own mandate, expertise, and specific programmes, and some of the agencies' programmes share similar aspects and technical characteristics. This fact presented a key challenge to finding synergies, where interventions are streamlined to tackle the most opportunities for complementarities to maximize effectiveness and impact, as the JP is intended by nature to be conducted jointly. The PMU utilized the bi-weekly TWG meetings approach to share updates on the progress of UN agencies' implementation of the JP activities, discuss challenges and present common solutions for better coordination and more harmonized activities on the ground. This helped largely in overcoming coordination challenges. Additionally, the PMU created a communication working group (CWG) and held area based TWG meetings with technical field staff during field missions, hence extending and enhancing the coordination efforts at the technical field level.

Financial

Exchange rate related:

The gap between the official exchange rate of the US dollar to the Syrian pound and the unofficial market rate¹² remained a significant financial challenge for the UN operations. The UN agencies had to use the official rate in transactions with local implementing partners (IPs), but when procuring services, supplies, and materials for projects, they faced inflated prices based on the unofficial rate. This discrepancy continued to negatively impact operations until the shift of control in early December 2024.

¹² Towards the end of 2024 and before the fall of the previous government, the official exchange rate accounted for 70 percent of the unofficial rate.

The UN agencies, particularly the World Food Programme (WFP), closely monitored market price changes for various commodities and supplies, providing frequent updates. Despite the requirement to use the official rate in transactions with IPs and contractors, which added a burden to the execution of necessary works and services, the flexibility of the Joint Programme (JP) to absorb additional donor funds could potentially cover the gap if more funding became available. Although the Syrian pound appreciated slightly against the US dollar in December 2024, the UN exchange rate remained fixed according to the central bank's official rate. This change had almost no impact on the joint programme activities by Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs) towards the end of the year.

Operational

Operational challenges are usually relevant to UN agencies' internal procedures with regards to procurement and financial transfers to implementing partners. In some cases, when the procurement value exceeds a certain threshold, the case needs to be referred to the regional office of a given agency for review and clearance. Recognizing that procurement planning plays a critical role in expediting implementation, the JP PMU with the TWG members explored various opportunities to enhance joint procurement, where two or more agencies would collaborate to implement a joint intervention or to complement by means of sharing the technical studies and/or assign the procurement task to one of the agencies, hence saving time and cost dedicated for administrative processes.

Implementing partners related

Generally, agencies face the issue of a limited number of qualified IPs who can implement activities with expected quality and reach, and, in some cases, agencies must directly deliver their interventions, which inevitably adds additional burden and time. In cases where the IPs' performance and capacities are not up to the standards of UN agencies as evaluated through the framework of a Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers, agencies may suspend or put on hold contracts with IPs and share such information with other UN agencies.

Other challenges

The absence of a UN Hub in Dara'a governorate, along with intermittent access challenges in some parts of western and eastern rural Dara'a, pose a challenge to regular follow-up, coherent planning, and joined-up coordination with external partners.

6. ANNEXES

ANNEX A

The JP Phase II : JP Urban Rural Livelihoods Sustainability workplan. *(Separately attached in a PDF document)*

ANNEX B

The JP Phase II : JP Urban Rural Livelihoods Sustainability Activity Matrix with monthly progress tracking of activities. *(Separately attached in a PDF document on A3 printing size)*

ANNEX C

The JP Phase II: JP Urban Rural Livelihoods Sustainability M&E framework. *(Separately attached in a PDF document on A3 printing size)*