

Action Document for EU Trust Fund
to be used for the decisions of the Operational Board

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title/Number	EUTF support to social assistance to vulnerable refugees and host communities affected by the Syrian crisis in Lebanon	
Total cost	Total estimated cost: EUR 52,000,000 Total amount drawn from the Trust Fund: EUR 52,000,000	
Duration	30 months	
Country	Lebanon	
Locations	Nationwide	
Implementing Partner(s)	World Food Programme (WFP)	
Main Stakeholder(s)	Prime Minister's Office Ministry of Social Affairs	
Aid method / Method of implementation	Project Approach: Direct management – Procurement of services Indirect Management – Delegation Agreement with WFP	
DAC-code	16011	<u>Sectors:</u> Social protection and welfare services policy, planning and administration
Objectives	<p>The overall objective is to strengthen the resilience of the most socio-economically vulnerable Syrian refugees and Lebanese host populations.</p> <p>The specific objectives of the action are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most socio-economically vulnerable Syrian refugees and Lebanese host populations receive a package of social assistance that results in reduced vulnerability and increased resilience. • National social assistance system is further developed in parallel with an emerging national social protection framework that draws from the lessons of humanitarian cash programming in Lebanon. 	

Main Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of social assistance: To provide social assistance to the most socio-economically vulnerable Syrian refugees and Lebanese host populations. • Policy dialogue: technical assistance in support of the overarching social protection framework in Lebanon, specifically contributing to progressive policy analysis aimed at developing a sustainable, long-term social safety net system. • MoSA capacity building: Provide targeted human resources and capacity building to support MoSA's policy and operational roles in relation to NPTP and other social safety net systems. • E-governance: To improve IT infrastructure, IT security, and inter-connectivity across government offices and services. • Monitoring and evaluation: To review M & E systems to ensure that registration, distribution, monitoring and case management are efficient and effective. • SDC upgrading: To support their role as the principal focal point for registration, selection and case management, referrals to other social services, etc. • Communications: Development of a joint GoL-donor approach to present the core message of the emerging social assistance system, including application of the evidence base for utilising a cash modality.
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2. RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

The war in Syria has had catastrophic consequences for civilians, and caused the flight of over five million persons to neighbouring countries. Since 2012, the humanitarian response to the crisis has been the largest globally. In Lebanon, which has the largest per capita refugee presence in the world, international humanitarian funding has grown 30-fold, from US\$44 million in 2011 to US\$1.3 billion in 2016 and US\$1.9 billion in 2017 (OCHA Financial Tracking Service, December 2017).

Lebanon's status as a middle-income country has been challenged by the arrival of over 1.5 million refugees from Syria since 2012. The crisis has highlighted and exacerbated pre-existing deficiencies in Lebanon's public sector governance and service delivery. These challenges had surfaced repeatedly during the various crises through which the country has passed but were not able to be addressed. The current crisis has been met with an unprecedented humanitarian response that has been characterized both by standardized approaches as well as innovations in education, health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), multi-purpose cash assistance and protection.

Multi-purpose cash assistance has become a primary mechanism through which the main players have sought to reach vulnerable refugees, through the provision of food vouchers and restricted or unrestricted cash assistance. Multi-purpose cash assistance was the single largest sector in the 2017 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), representing over US\$550 million out of a total appeal of US\$2.7 billion.

As the crisis has become protracted, its impact has expanded beyond refugees to vulnerable Lebanese host communities. Moreover, with a negative outlook for continued high levels of external financing for refugees, it is evident that there is a need to focus on longer-term resilience with an emphasis on cost efficiency and systems strengthening.

Given this, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) together moved to streamline cash delivery through a single system. The initiative emphasised cost efficiency and effectiveness, as well as accountability and transparency. The process challenged key humanitarian agencies to reconsider their positions in the provision of multi-purpose cash assistance. In addition, it prompted consideration of whether the model should be applied as the basis for any new, cash-based social assistance system for vulnerable Lebanese families.

The EU-Lebanon Compact includes an EU commitment to "Support the Government of Lebanon in its response to the current humanitarian crisis. Increase support to the most vulnerable Lebanese and refugees". The Joint Humanitarian Development Framework (JHDF) for Lebanon for 2018-2019 was developed by ECHO and NEAR/EUTF Syria teams in order to further define a comprehensive EU response to the Syrian crisis by coherently addressing humanitarian, mid-term and development priorities. JHDF prioritises support to basic needs/social safety nets through a transition from short-term emergency safety nets into a more systemic and longer-term poverty-alleviation mechanism. In line with the strategic direction of the JHDF, EUTF support should be used to: (i) provide social assistance to respond to recurrent and protracted crisis for refugees and vulnerable Lebanese populations; (ii) simultaneously contribute to the development of a long-term, social assistance programme targeting vulnerable Lebanese populations, in line with wider GoL and EU social protection support.

In addition, the Lebanon Partnership Paper agreed at the Brussels II Conference in April 2018 outlined the following joint commitment: "The Government of Lebanon and the international community will also support the development of Lebanese social protection systems, with a particular emphasis on reforming and expanding the National Poverty Targeting Programme, drawing from the experience of humanitarian social safety nets, and emphasising a graduation approach into active labour market participation."

This Action builds on the approach adopted by the EU through the Communication *Lives in dignity: from aid-dependency to self-reliance*, as regards the support given to forcibly displaced persons and vulnerable host communities in terms of access to protection services, education, health and job opportunities. It also builds on the humanitarian-development nexus as put forward in the new European Consensus on Development.

EUTF, with support from the DEVCO/ECHO/NEAR initiative on a "Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus (SPaN)", launched an expert mission to consider options for EUTF support to a systemic and longer-term poverty-

alleviation mechanism, targeting vulnerable Lebanese / non-Lebanese populations, during November 2017 – February 2018.

2.1 Summary of the action and its objectives

The **overall objective** is to strengthen the resilience of the most socio-economically vulnerable Syrian refugees and Lebanese host populations.

The **specific objectives** of the action are:

- The most socio-economically vulnerable Syrian refugees and Lebanese host populations receive a package of social assistance that results in reduced vulnerability and increased resilience.
- National social assistance system is further developed in parallel with an emerging national social protection framework that draws from the lessons of humanitarian cash programming in Lebanon.

The Action is aligned to the LCRP Output 3.2 (National Social Safety Net Strategy):

Sector partners engage with MoSA/NPTP to assess, enhance, and build the capacity of existing safety net and assistance transfer mechanisms. This engagement falls under the roll-out of the national social safety net strategy.

In line with the Overall Objective of the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, *"to provide a coherent and reinforced aid response to the Syrian crisis on a regional scale, responding primarily to the needs of refugees from Syria in neighbouring countries, as well as of the communities hosting the refugees and their administrations, in particular as regards resilience and early recovery"*, the Action will contribute to the Specific Objective 3 of the current Result Framework¹.

2.2 Context

2.2.1 Country context

Lebanon's middle-income status masks a high degree of inequality. Since 2011, income poverty in Lebanon has increased by two-thirds, and unemployment has doubled, with unemployment highest in the country's poorest areas.

The impact of PM Hariri's rescinded resignation in November 2017 has led to a reduced expectation in terms of economic growth. While the Central Bank of Lebanon estimates real GDP growth at 2.5 per cent for full-year 2017, this is still way below the requirements for a tangible recovery. The consensus is that GDP annual growth will be 2.4 per cent in 2018, down 0.2 percentage points from previous month's forecast, and 2.7 per cent in 2019. The economy is estimated to operate at 80% of potential output and full employment, suggesting a large cyclical output gap in a persistently sluggish demand for goods and services.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/eutf_EUTF_Syria_results_framework.pdf

The poverty rate for registered displaced Syrians increased dramatically from 48% in 2014 to 70% in 2015. The proportion of registered Syrian refugee households living below the poverty line (US\$ 3.84 per person per day) continues to increase, reaching 76% of the refugee households in 2017.

The protracted refugee crisis in Lebanon has impacted beyond refugee populations. LCRP 2017 – 20 indicates that over 105,000 Lebanese households live below the absolute poverty line of US\$3.84 per day (calculated in 2004). 35,000 households live under the extreme poverty line of US\$2.40 per day (also calculated in 2004). A limited number of Lebanese are covered by social insurance if they are in formal employment.

The table below highlights the extent of poverty in Lebanon.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Extreme Poverty</i> <i>(US\$2.40/day)</i>	<i>Broad Poverty</i> <i>(US\$3.84/day)</i>	<i>Current amount of multipurpose cash assistance per household per month (HH)</i>
Lebanese*	10%	28%	US\$ 135 / HH / per month
Syrians displaced	58%	75%	US\$ 135 / HH / per month
Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (PRL)	N/A	66%	
Palestinians Refugees from Syria (PRS)	N/A	89%	US\$ 100 / HH / per month

* To date the only existing information on vulnerability in Lebanon is the Household Budget Survey (HBS) that was conducted in 2012, pre-refugee crisis.

2.2.2 Sector context: policies and challenges

In Lebanon, support for vulnerable refugees and communities hosting refugees operates through separate systems. While there are identifiable reasons for this, the consequence is that both refugees and host populations get different treatment and benefits. The support provided to refugees is widely seen as unfair by poor Lebanese. Lebanon's social protection system is not sufficiently developed to ensure the provision of adequate support to its poorest citizens and the country cannot support refugees without facing political consequences.

Multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) has been the primary mechanism to reach vulnerable refugees by providing food vouchers and restricted or unrestricted cash assistance. During 2017, ECHO/DFID initiated a process to streamline cash delivery through a single system, with a focus on cost efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and transparency. Other donors (eg. DE, NO) have followed suit.

Social Development Centres (SDCs) are a vital component of MoSA, as they are the critical vehicle through which people in need across the country receive relief and support from the Government. There are over 216 SDCs across all eight governorates. SDC staff consists mainly of social workers, health professionals and administrative professionals. The exact breakdown is currently unavailable. The authorised staffing level is around 2,800 staff members, although in the 2016 MoSA Strategic Plan it is reported that the staff level of SDCs is less than 1,000. This has been the case since 2005. SDCs are lacking 75 per cent of the needed staff/budget. Not all SDCs are equipped with Internet infrastructure; those without

Internet being encouraged to subscribe to Internet services to improve connectivity between them and the Ministry. In addition, half of the administrative personnel of SDCs are without computers and manually record data in logbooks. Since 2010 there has been an increase in social services provided. Workload has further increased on account of SDC staff being the primary information gatherers for the intelligence needed to assess a person for a benefit under the NPTP. There is a clear need to enhance the skills of SDC staff both professionally as social workers but also in inter-personal skills and time management. The WFP has purchased a number of tablet computers for use by SDC staff. There is a need for automation of the offices and the development of strong communication links between SDC sub-offices and the main office, as well as with MoSA headquarters. A review of business processes and an organisational development review would help the SDCs to offer better services to clients in the future.

Lebanon's National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) provides social protection to about 150,000 vulnerable Lebanese citizens through access to free basic healthcare, schooling and food assistance, as well as a cash transfers of \$US27 per month to the poorest 52,000 individuals (or 10,000 households), with a maximum of 5 persons per household, in the form of e-card food vouchers. WFP supports the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) to perform this task. MoSA has recently carried out a reclassification of the NPTP beneficiary list, and embryonic policy dialogue at the level of MoSA has considered potential five-fold expansion of the number of households receiving e-card food vouchers. Other Ministries that have a stake in NPTP are the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and Ministry of Finance (MoF). Furthermore, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), Ministry of Labour (MoL), Central Administration of Statistics (CAS) and the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) are all be implicated in any policy dialogue concerning social protection.

A further review of the overall mechanism for NTPT is needed, as envisaged by LCRP 2017-2020. A complete reform of the NPTP will need to address various policy issues, including the need to: draw lessons from humanitarian social safety nets piloted in Lebanon; carry out a joint vulnerability assessment and analysis for all persons in Lebanon; consider the adoption of multi-purpose cash assistance under NPTP; introduction of a wide-ranging and effective GoL-led coordination structure (including relevant ministries, international donors, financing institutions and other social partners); GoL willingness to engage in long-term financing of social safety nets, etc. The envisaged EUTF programme is designed to address these issues progressively during the course of implementation.

Evidence has shown that providing the whole benefit as cash will reduce the vulnerability of recipients and that. In Lebanon, the WFP contracted the Boston Consulting Group to research the situation affecting Syrian refugees in both Jordan and Lebanon in 2016. The research found that:

Cash produced food security results superior or equal to those of vouchers. Measured using WFP's standard Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators (CARI) methodology, food security outcomes were better with cash in three out of five PDM [post-distribution monitoring] rounds and equal in the remaining two rounds. This trend was seen consistently while using multiple food security indicators, including the Food Security Index (FSI), Food Consumption Score (FCS), and dietary diversity index. In Lebanon, the average FCS was significantly

higher in the cash group than in the voucher group, as was the percentage of beneficiaries having an “acceptable” FCS.

The same report went on to dispute the assertion that if cash was paid to beneficiaries there would be an increase in money spent on temptation items (tobacco, drugs, alcohol, etc.):

Beneficiary households in both Jordan and Lebanon typically spend 38% to 45% on food, 24% to 30% on rent, and 30% to 33% on other non-food items. In both Jordan and Lebanon, spending patterns in the voucher and cash groups were similar and not impacted by modality. As food and accommodation represent the most important basic needs, and food spending exceeds WFP transfer value by nearly 100%, spending on other categories is expected - and observed - to be unaffected by “modality” (means and conditions of payment). The modality switch did not change spending behaviour, not even on temptation goods (for example, tobacco). These trends remained consistently similar over time (up to eight months in Jordan). Consequently, switching WFP modality over the course of the study did not influence beneficiaries’ fulfilment of basic needs (including access to housing, health care, and education).

Moreover, the Boston Consulting Group study found that there are cost-effectiveness gains achieved by switching vouchers to cash implying beneficiaries can buy more food. The study found an increase in purchasing power of cash over vouchers of between 8% and 15%, and consequently a higher benefit on food security, if beneficiaries are free to buy food from where they wish as opposed to being restricted to WFP designated shops.

2.3 Lessons learnt

Social protection is an effective mechanism for increasing equity (e.g. through cash transfers and increased access to basic social services), supporting resilience to shocks, and for protection against individual and covariate risk, making it a key element in poverty prevention and reduction, in social stability and for inclusive growth.

Evidence collected over the last few years indicates that cash-based programming generally represents a more efficient and effective modality of assistance, as it enables beneficiaries to choose how to address their own needs efficiently, and with dignity. Research undertaken with beneficiaries of cash programming in Lebanon confirmed that the primary areas of spending are basic needs - food, rent and health care, and that monthly cash assistance has a higher impact in mitigating household’s vulnerability. Research also confirmed that the pre-conditions for cash transfer programmes in Lebanon are largely present. In view of the above, ECHO considers multi-purpose cash assistance to be the most-effective modality for addressing chronic, structural socio-economic vulnerabilities. This is fully in line with the Grand Bargain commitments subscribed by ECHO at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

The launch of the joint multi-donor (ECHO, DFID) unrestricted cash initiative in 2017 has been a game changer in several respects. The principles of efficiency, cost-effectiveness, accountability, protection, consistent governance and sound operational structure underwritten by the initiative are in fact essential elements placing the needs of beneficiaries at the centre of the response. As of January 2018, 71% of households receiving assistance under this initiative were able to purchase items they were not able to buy, prior to receiving this type of cash assistance. Specifically, 27% were able to purchase more food, 12% spent more money on health expenses and 11% were now able to purchase necessary household items.

As the prospects for continued high levels of external financing become unlikely, there is a need to focus on longer-term resilience of systems a particular emphasis on cost-efficiency. A transition or transformation of short-term emergency safety net into a systemic and longer-term poverty alleviation mechanism is therefore of the utmost importance. This transition requires collaboration between humanitarian and development actors, to move from a humanitarian to stabilisation response.

In order to achieve effective social protection, EU development cooperation focuses on measures for administrative and technical capacity development to support approaches that address the underlying causes of inequality and vulnerability – particularly those that affect women, children and people with disabilities; support the engagement of civil society, social partners, and the private sector; and support approaches that seek to enable partner countries to participate in productive economic activity and employment. It emphasises the need for social protection benefits to be funded from domestic resources in order to ensure both ownership and sustainability.² The EU Member States' Council endorsed the guiding principles for future EU development cooperation in the field of social protection in its conclusions adopted on 15 October 2012.

There is a growing international acceptance of the need to position social protection in crisis contexts, within the parameters of the humanitarian – development nexus. The Outcome Document of the Brussels Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement (September 2017)³ concluded with a common vision to implement social protection in contexts of fragility and forced displacement:

- *People are at the centre of strengthening social protection systems, following an inclusive and rights-based approach throughout the lifecycle*
- *Governments take significant actions to expand and strengthen social protection systems including floors in their countries and are supported by the international community in this endeavour;*
- *Humanitarian interventions undertaken in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, are used as a window of opportunity to maintain and enhance existing social protection systems and to trigger investments in the development of 'nascent' safety nets or social assistance structures*
- *Social protection programmes are designed and implemented in a predictably resourced and sustainable manner, appropriate to the contexts of protracted conflict and forced displacement, that is to say:*
- *They provide coverage for all people including vulnerable and displaced people outside times of emergency and facilitate their contribution into national systems by linking them to employment and livelihoods efforts;*
- *They support the immediate needs of people during emergencies in a timely manner;*
- *They contribute to building resilience of people, communities and systems to shocks that affect an individual or a household and widespread disasters: enabling people*

² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52012DC0446&qid=1422538779964>.

³ <http://sp-fragility-displacement.onetec.eu/docs/OUTCOME%20DOCUMENT%20.pdf>

and the national social protection system to anticipate and prepare for a crisis or disaster;

- *They monitor the actual benefits for the beneficiaries and document good practices and lessons learned;*
- *They are implemented through local governance structures that comprise skilled and well informed workforce.*

The Outcome Document of the Brussels Conference on Social Protection concluded that:

There are important evidence gaps in the area of social protection in contexts of fragility and forced displacement. It is important that all stakeholders (governments, international and local actors, academic institutions and donors) leverage and invest resources in monitoring & evaluation as well as in high quality research to generate a systematic evidence base to improve quality in policies, promote better programming design and practices and make the investment case to enable governments to expand social protection coverage and contribute to learning.

There are numerous lessons from humanitarian cash programming in Lebanon (e.g. vulnerability assessment, targeting, delivery modality, data management, monitoring and evaluation, governance structures) that can feed into the discussions on longer-term safety nets and social assistance approaches.

2.4 Complementary actions

Since the onset of the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon, the EU has supported actions in provision of social services targeting Syrian refugees and vulnerable host communities. EU support includes system strengthening components, such as the piloting of a new costing model for primary health services, supporting the Reaching All Children in Education (RACE) initiative and developing the system for child protection services.

The EUTF support to the health sector aims to increase access to quality, equitable and affordable health services (care and drugs), and to increase the capacities of primary and secondary health sectors with a particular focus to reduce tension among communities while accessing health services and respond to vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees' demand. The programme "Reducing Economic Barriers to Accessing Health Services in Lebanon" aims to access quality primary health care, community health, and mental health services for Syrian refugees and other vulnerable populations in Lebanon. The focus is on improving access, equity and affordability of health care services for refugee populations and the vulnerable host communities, while strengthening key health institutions such as the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and targeted Primary Health Care Centres PHCCs as part of a larger health care system strengthening effort, ultimately focusing on supporting patient level resilience to illness. This pilot project will test a model that MoPH could use nationally.

The EU (ENI and EUTF Syria) has disbursed over €200 million to support access to formal and non-formal education of Lebanese children as well as refugee children from Syria, as well increasing the capacities of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education through public schools, pre-school activities and youth programmes. EU funds have also been used to rehabilitate schools, train teachers, raise awareness and provide educational supplies and school transport.

EUTF provides support to Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) on Child Protection and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (see below). ECHO provides basic multi-purpose cash assistance for Syrians, while EUTF provides cash assistance to Palestinians Refugees from Syria (PRS) through UNRWA. There is ongoing ENI project aimed at reinforcing the National Social Security Fund (NSSF); the project's primary objective is to enhance the strategic, technical and institutional capacity of NSSF, improve the legislative framework and related quality of actuarial management and rationalise/modernise NSSF management methods.

EUTF, in partnership with UNICEF, supported MoSA to define and implement a National Plan for Safeguarding Children and Women in Lebanon 2014-2017; with a focus on developing a continuum of services related to Child Protection and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), through Social Development Centers (SDCs) and a network of civil society organizations. A recent update "National Strategic Plan for the Protection of Women and Children in Lebanon 2018-2021" focuses on strengthening MoSA's organisation, management and administration, so that it can improve the quality and availability of services needed to enhance the protection of children and women in the country, in line with Lebanon's national policy goals and international commitments.

The draft Strategic Plan is underpinned by a Capacity Assessment of MoSA at the central and local levels, which aimed to examine nine areas that are decisive for MoSA's capacity to fulfil its protection mandate in the context of the current economic and security situation in the country: (1) mandate, vision and mission of MoSA in the protection field; (2) legal framework for protection; (3) structures, core functions and core competencies; (4) procedures, policies and processes; (5) human resources; (6) infrastructure for monitoring analysis and communication; (7) financial resources; (8) coordination capacity and (9) organization and governance.

Basic / food assistance is currently provided to Syrian refugees in Lebanon through multiple channels including in-kind food assistance, cash-based food assistance, multi-purpose cash assistance, cash grants to populations affected by seasonal hazards and emergencies and education specific cash grants). Multiple UN agencies (UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, UNRWA) and NGOs ACF, ACTED, ICRC, LRC, RI, Solidarite Suisse) are involved in the provision of basic / food assistance. Disbursements are reported to the Basic Assistance and Food Security Working Groups under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP).

Since 2016, the main humanitarian agencies implementing cash-based interventions in Lebanon (WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and the former Lebanon Cash Consortium) have been requested to move towards a harmonized cash assistance delivery mechanism, in order to streamline programmatic and operational efficiencies. Nearly 70% of Syrian households registered with UNHCR as refugees' households in Lebanon now hold a Common Card, which can be used in any WFP-contracted shop, as well as any ATM across the country, depending on the type of assistance loaded.

UNHCR provides multipurpose cash to 198,000 Syrian refugees, in addition to seeking out additional funds to provide winter cash allowance. According to figures shared in February 2018, UNHCR caseload for multipurpose cash was fully covered until May 2018.

According to its most recent donor briefing (April 2018), WFP is providing cash-based assistance to 696,000 Syrian refugees in three forms: (i) food e-vouchers (345,000 beneficiaries); (ii) unrestricted cash for food (170,000 beneficiaries); (iii) multipurpose cash

(180,000 beneficiaries). WFP's caseload is fully covered until June 2018 (food e-vouchers), April (unrestricted cash for food) and partially covered throughout 2018 (multipurpose cash). Applying the same base allowance of \$27/person/month under the food e-voucher system, WFP also provides assistance to 52,000 individuals under NPTP.

WFP's cash assistance programme is underpinned by a protection focus that is embedded in inter-agency cooperation:

- ***Mainstreaming protection in analysis, programme design and monitoring:*** WFP works with relevant protection actors, including UNHCR, the Basic Assistance Working Group, the interagency Sexual Exploitation and Abuse network, the Ministry of Social Affairs and a range of NGOs to ensure strong protection analysis throughout the programme cycle, including VASYR, in socio-economic analysis which is the basis of targeting, in programme design and implementation, and in monitoring.
- ***Protection and programme implementation:*** WFP includes protection concerns in its programme operations. This includes ensuring card issuance locations are accessible, beneficiary education sessions at card distribution sites, protection desks at card distribution sites staffed by protection specialists from UNHCR and NGOs, conducting home visits for assessments, card delivery and replacement when disability or age does not allow the beneficiary to travel. WFP is part of a unified interagency hotline which allows beneficiaries of WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF assistance to call one hotline.
- ***Referral mechanisms:*** WFP also is part of an interagency referral network which enables cash beneficiaries to receive assistance from organisations that specialize in protection programmes in areas such as domestic violence, protection of children, support to the aged and disabled, and psycho-social support.

The World Bank has been a key player in supporting the development of NPTP. It recently prepared a Concept Note for an Emergency Social Protection System (E-SPSP). The Concept Note is still in draft form but there are potential entry points for coordination with proposed EUTF support: common emphasis on developing the 'building blocks' (lessons from past experiences with targeting, benefits definition, beneficiary registry, case management system, M & E system, etc.) for a social assistance in Lebanon; the inclusion of a 'graduation' approach; the framing of support in terms of complementarity to other donor financing, etc. EUTF is exploring complementarities with the World Bank.

In relation to the graduation approach; EUTF will carry out a review of existing livelihoods interventions from June 2018; this can be used to inform potential referral from NPTP and MPCA to livelihoods projects that provide for training and apprenticeship opportunities for vulnerable populations.

2.5 Donor co-ordination

Social protection in Lebanon can be characterised by a high degree of fragmentation, both in terms of the Lebanese policy framework, but also in terms of international support. This reflects wider challenges in the aid architecture:

The coordination system in Lebanon has often faced criticism. Coordination in Lebanon is led by the government, together with the Resident

Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, UNHCR and UNDP. Despite a plethora of coordination fora, there is a lack of effective coordination. This relates to a lack of a common understanding over what should be coordinated and to what extent it should be prioritized. Coordination is furthermore challenged by power struggles between the agencies and actors involved in the response. The transition of the humanitarian response to a more long-term response that includes a development focus has only increased the complexity and number of actors engaged, leading to further struggles and coordination challenges (Mansour Kholoud in State of the Syria crisis response: Assessing Humanitarian and Development Challenges, Voluntas Advisory, April 2018).

The fragmentation of humanitarian cash assistance operations in Lebanon has been reflected in donor support, which has been directed towards different programmes in an uncoordinated way. Since the start of the cash operation discussions in Lebanon, ECHO and DFID have pushed for increased harmonisation and cost efficiency and effectiveness. The ECHO and DFID cash initiative elaborated in 2016 created for the first time an momentum towards increased donor coordination; four donors are now currently supporting one system for multipurpose cash assistance, which is underpinned by an independent monitoring and evaluation framework and governance structure.

Since 2017, various initiatives have been initiated regarding social protection and social assistance in Lebanon, often tied to the programming priorities of different agencies. In January 2018, a ‘Cash Task Force’ was initiated under the auspices of the Humanitarian Country Team for a period of 3 months. Its stated objective was to “propose a framework for complementary national safety nets able to cover the socio-economic vulnerabilities of both Lebanese and non-Lebanese”. The Task Force included MoSA, UN agencies, the World Bank, INGOs and various donors. Progress with the Task Force was hindered by different interpretations about its purpose, with frequent efforts to integrate a wider social protection and social service delivery orientation and confusion about the primary focus in terms of target groups (ie. Lebanese or non-Lebanese populations). Action Points developed by the Task Force, clearly oriented towards gradual and inclusive Government-led policy dialogue centred on interchangeable lessons between humanitarian and longer-term safety nets, offers meaningful entry points for a more joined-up approach on coordination and policy development.

Donor coordination is increasing. Recognition of protracted nature of the crisis, as well as the need to address the humanitarian – development nexus, motivates a greater level of direct Government-Donor dialogue. This echoes calls from MoSA for enhanced bilateral policy dialogue. Furthermore, the EU Delegation has recently invited EU member states active in the field of social assistance to form a donor group, with the aim of moving towards an agreed set of principles, engaging in dialogue with the Government of Lebanon, and subsequently with implementing agencies about possible modalities for support.

There is strong potential for EU Delegation and EU member states to play a more structured role in policy dialogue with other major donors supporting social assistance in Lebanon. EUTF provides an ideal vehicle through which EU member states and other donors might eventually channel their contributions, in order to increase the number of beneficiaries reached (both through MPCA and NPTP) and to contribute to the development of sustainable, long-term social safety net system in Lebanon.

The proposal to establish a Government-led and inclusive policy forum on social assistance is now being discussed by the main actors who have been engaged in the Cash Task Force. The Technical Assistance proposed through this EUTF Action Document will be well-positioned to support this group, with all key social assistance stakeholders – most notably in the Government of Lebanon - benefiting from the analysis and support that will be provided.

3. DETAILED DESCRIPTION

3.1 Objectives

The **overall objective** is to strengthen the resilience of the most socio-economically vulnerable Syrian refugees and Lebanese host populations.

The **specific objectives** of the action are:

- The most socio-economically vulnerable Syrian refugees and Lebanese host populations receive a package of social assistance that results in reduced vulnerability and increased resilience.
- National social assistance system is further developed in parallel with an emerging national social protection framework that draws from the lessons of humanitarian cash programming in Lebanon.

In the short-term, EUTF support will focus on creating a meaningful impact on people's vulnerability, improving perceptions about provision of international support to host communities as well as refugees, and easing social tensions, hence contributing to the stability of Lebanon. A dual pillar of the project will be to support the development of the national social assistance system.

A central objective of EUTF support is to achieve equity for the most vulnerable in Lebanon, whatever the background or citizenship of those in need. Achieving this vision will take time, including building a long-term commitment from donors and the Lebanese government. Hence, a longer-term objective of EUTF support will be to support GoL to develop a clear and coordinated social protection benefits package including: nationally defined set of essential healthcare (under the leadership of Ministry of Public Health) and education (under the leadership of Ministry of Education and Higher Education) services; minimum income security via transfers to facilitate access to essential goods and services (children, working age population); pensions/transfers in-kind that guarantee access to essential goods and services (pensioners).

EUTF will seek to align to proposed work to carry out a joint vulnerability assessment including the Lebanese population, based on the WFP-developed Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR). This proposal is strongly supported by the majority of actors working with social assistance in Lebanon; it will help to generate a better understanding of the current socioeconomic status of Lebanese households, in order to inform government strategies and to improve the design of the NPTP including targeting, monitoring and delivery.

3.2 Expected results and main activities

3.2.1 *Specific Objective 1: The most socio-economically vulnerable Syrian refugees and Lebanese host populations receive a package of social assistance that results in reduced vulnerability and increased resilience.*

The activities under *specific objective 1* are, *inter alia*:

- ***Provision of social assistance - at an equal total volume - to Lebanese and Syrian vulnerable populations with EUR 48,000,000, over the period 2018 – 2020.*** EUTF support will be pursued through two parallel channels:
 - **MPCA (Syrians):** Assistance to Syrian refugees will be provided in the form of 100% multipurpose cash assistance. EUTF will build on the current caseload covered by ECHO, EU member states and other donors. EUTF support to MPCA will be provided as a part of a multi-donor contribution. Hence, the precise number of households to be covered under MPCA, and consequently NPTP, will be defined during the process of negotiation (after adoption of this Action Document).
 - **NPTP (Lebanese):** EUTF will build on the current caseload covered by DE through the e-card food voucher pillar of NPTP. A share of EUTF support under NPTP will be provided in the form of multipurpose cash assistance, while a share will most likely be provided either as food e-vouchers or unrestricted cash for food (the precise shares will be agreed with GoL following elections in May 2018).
- Since it will not be possible to adapt the current household benefits allowance for MPCA or NPTP with immediate effect, the proposal is to begin by contributing to the same benefits package under each scheme and review these after one year. This will extend to an analysis of the multipurpose cash pilot under NPTP.
- Working from an assumed contribution of \$27 / person / month, and applying the logic of equal support to Syrian and Lebanese vulnerable populations, EUTF support will ensure an initial indicative caseload of 6,000 - 8,000 households / year in each group of Syrians and Lebanese. EUTF support is envisaged within a wider advocacy effort to increase other donor contribution within a pool or co-funding framework; this will be important in consideration of the current practice of applying top ups to specifically vulnerable groups. The definition of caseloads to be supported by specific donors will underpin discussions of an enhanced donor coordination structure. This will also allow for discussions about how to ensure Top Up contributions for specific vulnerable populations.
- The EUR 48,000,000 envelope is expected to encompass overheads for the administration of assistance including beneficiary / card management systems to support the delivery chain, both for MPCA and NPTP. By choosing to partner with WFP on the multi-donor supported MPCA programme for Syrian refugees, EUTF support will immediately benefit from already established mechanisms for system delivery, as well as independent monitoring and evaluation and interagency protection/referral structures. The level of overhead / administration costs will be negotiated following the adoption of the Action Document, in order to ensure a maximum level of financing can be made available for target beneficiaries.

3.2.2 *Specific Objective 2: National social assistance system is further developed in parallel with an emerging national social protection framework that draws from the lessons of humanitarian cash programming in Lebanon.*

The activities under *specific objective 2* are, *inter alia*:

- ***The development of the national social assistance system*** is an undertaking that will take time and will require domestic political agreement, as well as agreement between major donors and the GoL, under the leadership of the MoSA with inputs from line Ministries. Any future system should also be designed to be shock responsive (ie. can be scaled up in an emergency). While it is recognised that it will not be feasible in the short term to operate a single programme to assess, select, support and monitor both nationals, stateless persons and refugees, EUTF support can be utilised to explore common principles and approaches, operating two systems side by side.
- ***Technical assistance services to support the strengthening of MoSA as the lead agency for social protection in Lebanon***, ensuring it can enhance its capacities on social assistance, whilst supporting the development of an overarching social protection policy framework in Lebanon and analysing the ‘nuts and bolts’ of potential reforms to both programmes. The technical assistance will be made available to support policy dialogue by the sector as a whole; it would have a clearly-stated objective to increase interchanges between the MPCA and NPTP. Technical assistance support may include but will not necessarily be limited to:
 - **Policy dialogue:** EU will provide an impetus for inclusive policy dialogue through the provision of technical assistance aimed at supporting the development of a social protection framework in Lebanon, as well as specifically contributing to progressive policy analysis aimed at developing a sustainable, long-term social safety net system. EUTF technical assistance will offer support an emerging policy forum on social assistance, in addition to contributing to the elements outlined below. It is anticipated that the sector as a whole (ie. concerned GoL authorities, civil society and the wider aid community) will be able to benefit from the technical assistance provided. Consideration will be given to the main social transfer systems (multi-purpose cash assistance for Syrian refugees and NPTP) as well as other mechanisms (eg. UNRWA multi-purpose cash assistance).
 - **MoSA capacity building:** MoSA’s capacity at present is limited, both in terms of human and technical resources. A targeted organisational capacity assessment focusing on MoSA and SDC administration of social assistance programmes may be included. Additional human resources may be made available to support MoSA’s policy and operational roles in relation to NPTP and other safety net systems. Capacity building and exposure opportunities will be made available to concerned GoL staff, including tailored training and overseas study visits.
 - **Review targeting approaches and methodologies:** Carry out analysis and support gradual adoption of common methodologies/approaches on targeting. Based on the outcomes of vulnerability studies, the technical assistance will help to inform a further refinement and systematisation of targeting approaches, to ensure transparency and accountability.
 - **Benefits structure / calculation:** Periodically review, and make forward-looking recommendations on, the benefits package for social transfers to different

population groups (Lebanese, Syrian, Palestinian), drawing from specially commissioned analytical studies, post-distribution monitoring, etc.

- **Review delivery modalities:** Periodical review delivery modalities of different social transfer systems, including requirements for enhanced outreach, registration, enrolment, information database management, benefits monitoring, payments/transactions and service packages (household support, livelihoods programmes, access to services, etc), and case management. This should improve the cost efficiency and effectiveness of the government system.
- **Graduation:** Together with the World Bank and drawing from wider EUTF and other donor livelihood assessments, the programme will seek to consider the barriers and entry points for specific target populations (eg. female-headed household).
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** Review existing GoL social protection mechanisms (NPTP, NSSF, etc.), including analysis of data on government expenditure and data/statistics systems in use for targeting. Review M & E systems to ensure that registration, distribution, monitoring and case management are efficient and effective. This would include improving the relevance of data collected (linked to the vulnerability assessment), the quality of data collection through digitisation and automating updates to the databases, as well as establishing a digital platform from which government agencies can harvest live information and monitor implementation and budgets.
- **E-governance:** EUTF support may be considered – where justified by a well-elaborated and sustainable plan – towards the enhancement of e-governance systems to support the development of the social protection framework and administer the NPTP.
- **SDC upgrading:** EUTF support may be considered – where justified by a well-elaborated and sustainable plan – towards the upgrading of SDCs so that they become the principal focal point for registration, selection and case management, referrals to other social services, etc.
- **Communications:** Communications related to social assistance programming is commonly overlooked and underestimated. The programme will aim to benefit from a joint GoL-donor approach to agree on how to present the core message of the emerging social assistance system, including application of the evidence base for utilising a cash modality. Giving rising levels of inequality and vulnerability among the Lebanese population, fairness of social assistance can be a very powerful political message. In addition, it will be important for the EU to communicate to the Lebanese public that its assistance is aimed to address vulnerability of both Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese. A long running communications campaign will be considered, built on a more in-depth scoping study based on agreed objectives of the overall approach.

The Technical Assistance component, situated in MoSA but producing analysis for the benefit of Government, UN, donors and civil society partners, will pave the way for enhanced and coordinated Government-led policy dialogue on social protection and social assistance. There is a clear intent to create strong interlinkages between the 2 components envisaged as part of this Action; under MoSA leadership with strong donor support, the Technical Assistance provider will be engaged directly with WFP, acting as an implementer of direct assistance.

Both parties will be charged with introducing assistance that has long-term sustainability in mind; from the outset of the programme, an exit strategy will be considered that may be phased after 2 or 3 cycles of external support, anticipating gradually increasing levels of Lebanese domestic financing towards NPTP.

Through the framework contract, EUTF would be able to mobilise rapid support to MoSA to assist coordination of different actors supporting social assistance in Lebanon, through the appropriate policy forum, already during 2018.

A sustainability perspective will underpin this Action. The opportunity of two years of direct grant support and 30 months of technical assistance will assist in the formulation of a social protection policy framework and the further development of two parallel social assistance systems, whilst also exploring the fiscal space for a gradual increase in GoL contributions. However, recognising that a longer horizon of international support may be necessary, EU will explore opportunities to engage EUMS with direct or complementary financial contributions aligned to EUTF support. EUTF support would seek to create a strong link to the economic reforms which are being promoted as a consequence of the *CEDRE* conference, as well as various efforts at supporting graduation, and in so doing would seek to build a strong collaboration with key partners such as the World Bank.

The rationale and activities suggested for each specific objective under this action will be further refined during the finalisation of the programme in full coordination with all relevant stakeholders.

These arrangements should be underpinned by formal agreements which outline the respective commitments of EU, the Government of Lebanon (MoSA and OPM) and the selected implementing partners concerning the implementation of the Action.

3.3 Risks and assumptions

The implementing partners will be requested to address identified risks to ensure their mitigation. Among the key risks are:

- Political opposition to the presence of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.
- Lack of Government commitment to parallel assistance for Syrian refugees and Lebanese vulnerable populations.
- Insufficient involvement of concerned Government Ministries and Departments.
- Insufficient commitment to explore fiscal space for longer-term Government financing, or to pilot the use of cash, under NPTP.
- Continued institutional fragmentation in the social protection / assistance fields.

The assumptions for the success of the project and its implementation include:

- Stable security conditions and political stability.
- No further deterioration of the legal environment for refugees.
- Access decent work by Syrian refugees.

- Government commitment to support the EUTF programme concept, including a commitment to policy dialogue on necessary long-term reforms and support to the most vulnerable populations living in Lebanon.
- Commitment to engage all Social Ministries (eg. MoSA, MoPH, MEHE, MoL and NSSF) and MoF in the policy component of the programme.
- Commitment of all partners to coordinate activities in the social protection sphere.
- Commitment to joint vulnerability assessment / analysis for all persons in Lebanon
- Commitment to explore fiscal space for longer-term Government financing, or to pilot the use of cash, under NPTP.

Mitigating measures will be further defined in the actual projects.

3.4 Cross-cutting issues

A number of cross cutting issues have been identified:

Gender equality and empowerment of women will be addressed through the provision of social assistance support to socio-economically vulnerable households, with the objective of reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience of all household members, including women and girls. It will also be addressed from a policy perspective through technical assistance support (eg. in revisions to the vulnerability assessment and targeting formula).

Conflict sensitivity underpins the rationale for this Action; it will directly address perceptions about the unequal treatment and provision of benefits between refugees and host populations. Furthermore, the Government of Lebanon will benefit through the improved provision of social assistance to its own population. While a longer-term objective, the reduction of inequality can result in greater political stability.

Transparency and accountability will be addressed through the administration of the MPCA programme including existing governance and M & E structures, in addition to safeguards that will further enhance transparency and accountability in the administration of NPTP. The Technical Assistance component will target continuous improvements in this regard.

3.5 Stakeholders

The primary stakeholders of this proposed action are:

- Syrians refugees and vulnerable Lebanese population representation.
- EU Member States and other donors contributing to the Trust Fund.
- Relevant Ministries and authorities including MoSA, PMO, NSSF, MoPH, MEHE, CAS and MoF.
- Donors, IFIs, UN agencies and NGOs supporting humanitarian and long-term social safety nets in Lebanon.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1 Financing agreement, if relevant

In order to implement this action, it is not foreseen to conclude a financing agreement with the Government of the partner countries, as referred to in Article 184(2)(b) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012.

The envisaged assistance to Lebanon is deemed to follow the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures adopted pursuant to Article 215 TFEU⁴.

4.2 Indicative operational implementation period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3.2 will be carried out is 30 months. A possible extension of the implementation period may be granted by the Manager, and immediately communicated to the Operational Board.

4.3 Implementation components and modules

A two-pronged approach will be applied to implementation: an international partner with the status and experience to ensure the provision of social assistance to targeted Syrian and Lebanese populations; in addition to service contractors procured specifically to provide technical assistance to support the development of the national social assistance system in parallel with an emerging national social protection framework that draws from the lessons of humanitarian cash programming in Lebanon.

4.3.1 Specific Objective 1- Indirect management with World Food Programme

This specific objective may be implemented by World Food Programme in accordance with Article 58(1)(c) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012. This implementation entails the activities as set out above under 3.2.1.

The selection of World Food Programme has been made on the basis of its eligibility and expertise in the field, their established presence in Lebanon and experience from collaboration with and access to relevant national authorities. The possibility to scale up existing operations and/or introduce new activities within existing portfolios is considered a major added value. World Food Programme is uniquely placed to cover social assistance caseloads of the most socio-economically vulnerable Syrian refugees and Lebanese host populations. This is because it is the only Agency that currently spans support to MPCA (Syrians) and NPTP (Lebanese). Furthermore, by engaging World Food Programme, EUTF support will benefit from advancements already attained under ECHO/DFID/NO/DE support to MPCA, in terms of assistance provision, efficiency, governance and monitoring and evaluation structures. Finally, EUTF engagement will benefit from existing DE support to NPTP.

As such, the selection of World Food Programme may be justified by their unique position as a lead agency in the sector, coupled with their ability to absorb considerable funds in a short period whilst maintaining the required accountability standards.

⁴ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/8442/consolidated-list-sanctions_en

4.3.2 Specific Objective 2 – Procurement (direct management)

This specific objective will cover the activities as set out above under 3.2.2. and will be implemented through the procurement of services, following appropriate procurement procedures as outlined in the EU Financial Regulations, and in accordance with the indicative provisions as below:

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Type (works, supplies, services)</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Indicative number of contracts</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash Task Force Support or support to its successor body • MoSA Human Resource Management/Organisational Development • GoL Social Protection Plan 	Service Contract	EURO 0.8m	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen capacity of MoSA (mid-2018 – end 2020) 	Service contract	EURO 3.2m	1
TOTAL		EURO 4m	

4.4 Indicative budget

Component	Amount in EUR
Specific Objective 1: Indirect management	48,000,000
Specific Objective 2: Direct management - Procurement	4,000,000
TOTAL	52,000,000

Costs for monitoring, evaluation, communication and visibility shall be included in the projects' budgets and included in each contract.

4.5 Performance monitoring

Monitoring shall be ensured primarily through EU Delegations in-country and in particular with the assistance of specific Trust Fund field and liaison officers posted within the EU Delegations.

In addition, the EU Trust Fund has established an independent Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) function to accompany all Fund programmes. The purpose of the EUTF M&E Framework is to assess, across various levels, the degree to which the Overall Objective and the Sector-specific outcomes of the Trust Fund have been achieved.

Through its M&E Framework, the EUTF measures regularly implementation progress, efficient delivery and effective use of the funds in line with the given operational targets. These regular assessments ensure that best practices and lessons learnt are incorporated into future actions and constitute also a basis for a possible decision of suspension or revision of activities, should the conditions on the ground not allow for their proper implementation.

Partners implementing this Action will comply with the reporting requirements and tools developed by the EUTF, including the submission of Quarterly Information Notes (QIN), as part of their contractual obligations.

By virtue of its engagement in WFP's MPCA programme for Syrian refugees, EUTF will benefit from the Cash Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning Organisational Network (CAMEALEON), which aims to reinforce the quality, value for money and accountability of multi-purpose cash programming in Lebanon and inform cash programming globally.

Implementing partners are also requested to share any internal monitoring and/ or evaluation reports with the Contracting Authority. This should allow for an increased results-oriented learning process in terms of proper planning and implementation.

4.6 Evaluation and audit

Projects should carry out a final evaluation, and one external audit per year. A mid-term evaluation may also be considered. Whenever possible, evaluations will be jointly carried out by partners. This will also contribute to harmonise EU support and to the host countries in the region, in order to make technical co-operation more effective in line with current EU guidelines⁵.

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this Action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts.

4.7 Communication and visibility

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU. Beneficiaries, host communities and administrations in Syria's neighbouring countries, the European public, EU Members States and other stakeholders of the Trust Fund need to be informed about the EU's efforts as the leading donor in the Syria crisis response. Insufficient visibility of the EU's actions weakens the EU's political traction in the region and its standing in Europe. Unsatisfactory recognition of knowledge of EU assistance also has a potential to negatively affect the EU's political efforts to resolve the Syria crisis and its future role in a post-peace agreement transition.

Communication and visibility is an important part of all EUTF Syria programmes and must be factored in to underline the programme's importance at all stages of the planning and

⁵ EC Guidelines No. 3, Making Technical Co-operation More Effective, March 2009

implementation. Each implementer is required to draw up a comprehensive visibility, communication and outreach plan for their respective target country/community and submit a copy for approval to the EUTF Syria Communication and Outreach Lead. The related costs will be covered by the project budgets. The measures shall be implemented by the implementing consortium/ia, and/or contractors, and/or grant beneficiaries. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, procurement and grant contracts.

The global objective of the EUTF Syria communication and visibility campaigns, and hence of the implementing partner, is to improve recognition, public awareness and visibility of the comprehensive and joint EU efforts to effectively address the consequences of the Syrian and Iraqi crises. This should be done by highlighting the Action's real-life impact and results among defined target audiences in the affected region but also vis-à-vis the general public, donors and stakeholders in the EU Member States.

The Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Action together with specific requirements for the EUTF Syria serve as a reference for the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the relevant contractual obligations. According to the EUTF Syria's Visibility and Communications strategy all communication and outreach campaigns must be evidence-based, people-oriented and easily understandable. Regional outreach and communication must be conflict sensitive, strategic, do no harm and mindful of the differentiation in messaging for beneficiaries and stakeholders in each country of operation of the Action. The campaigns must place the beneficiaries at the centre and thus ensure adequate ownership. Messaging should have a human face, be empathic, honest, transparent, direct, unambiguous, neutral and conducive to a highly sensitive human and political environment, in addition to being gender-sensitive and gender-balanced.

Furthermore, campaigns should also include components of participatory and engaging communication, where the beneficiary becomes a key actor. This will support the EUTF Syria's programmes in promoting social cohesion, inclusion, dialogue and help mitigate tensions and misperceptions between refugee and host communities.