

Action Document for the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis to be used for the decisions of the Operational Board

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title/Number	Support to Higher Education for Syrian refugees and vulnerable host youth Phase II		
Total cost	Total estimated cost: 28.4 Million EUR Total amount drawn from the Trust Fund: 28.4 Million EUR		
Country	Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq		
Locations	Nationwide		
Implementing Partner (s)	<i>Negotiated Procedure: DAAD, NUFFIC, Campus France, German Jordan University and SPARK</i>		
Main Stakeholder (s)	<i>further and higher education providers, CSOs, government agencies in the region, Syrian students and families and vulnerable youth in host countries</i>		
Aid method / Method of implementation	Direct management through: Grant		
SDGs	Main target of this program is SDG 4, while also contributing to 8 and 5.		
DAC-code	11420	Sector	Education
Objectives	<p>To improve livelihood options through higher educational opportunities for refugees youth and vulnerable host community in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) To support the completion secondary education of and preparation for eligible candidate for HE admission and scholarship selection (2) To provide higher education opportunities with a unified scholarship application process and scholarship holders with administrative, educational, livelihood and psychosocial support (3) To maximise livelihood and career options for scholarship holders through planning for multiple scenarios (4) To create national and regional networks and platforms of information sharing, collective learning, community development and knowledge building to stimulate conducive policy making, sharing best practices, career development, and sustainable livelihoods 		

<p>Main Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify eligible secondary school students and develop adequate and timely information and services on preparation, eligibility and availability of higher education scholarship programs and opportunities - To provide educational, livelihood and psychosocial support for promising school pupils - To manage EUTF scholarship program including a unified application process and award criteria on the basis of a calibrated mix of transparent academic, motivation and vulnerability criteria - To provide scholarship students a broad range of high quality study programmes and access to administrative, educational, livelihood and psychosocial support; support access to a digital learning programme with e-learning modules on digital skills, the digital economy and digital enterprising know how, and are part of a ‘digital zone network’ - To create short-term courses, internships and networking opportunities for graduates and alumni (including Phase I); including the establishment of a national and regional inclusive and participative higher education platforms with broad based representation - Develop a local and regional media outreach plan to actively engage the press and social media around innovative collaborative and participative EUTF actions and to identify and promote additional funding for scholarships
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2. RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

2.1. Summary of the action and its objectives

To improve livelihood options through higher educational opportunities for refugees youth and vulnerable host community in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq.

The specific objectives of the action are:

- (1) To support the completion secondary education of and preparation for eligible candidate for HE admission and scholarship selection
- (2) To provide higher education opportunities with a unified scholarship application process and provide scholarship holders with administrative, educational, livelihood and psychosocial support
- (3) To maximise livelihood and career options for scholarship holders through planning for multiple scenarios
- (4) To create national and regional networks and platforms of information sharing, collective learning, community development and knowledge building to stimulate conducive policy making, sharing best practices, career development, and sustainable livelihoods

The Action is in line with the Overall Objective of the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, (EUTF Syria) *"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 hosting communities and their administrators, in particular as regards resilience and early recovery"*, the Action builds towards outcome 1 of the EUTF Strategic Overarching Framework¹, namely: **Syrian children and students are better educated**

In particular, the intervention logic of the Action aims to achieve **'increased access to higher education for Syrian students'**, aligned to the relevant result statement presented in the EUTF Results Framework².

2.2. Context

2.2.1. Country context, if applicable

In 2018, of an estimated pre-conflict population of 22 million, 6.6 million Syrians are displaced internally and over 5.5 had sought refuge outside the country.

As at end October 2018, UNHCR accounted for 5,629,700 registered refugees living in the neighbouring countries, namely Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq. The vast

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/trustfund-syria-region/sites/tfsr/files/eutf_ofw.pdf

² https://ec.europa.eu/trustfund-syria-region/sites/tfsr/files/eutf_rf_2019.pdf

majority of Syrian refugees in the neighbouring countries live in urban areas, with around only 8 percent accommodated in refugee camps.

JORDAN

Jordan managed to peacefully navigate these very tumultuous times. However, Jordan's economy is structurally fragile. The country has little natural resources, with very scarce water, deserts that spread across a large part of its territory and an almost landlocked geography. Its demography is booming, youth unemployment is high and female labour force participation is low and further decreased in the last 5 years.

Since the beginning of the Syria crisis, Jordan's economy has continued to suffer from detrimental regional dynamics, some unrelated to Syria. These include the regional insecurity and its impact on tourism and foreign investments; the collapse of the Syrian economy, the strong contraction of economic activity in neighbouring Iraq; the closure of commercial routes through Syria; the feud between Qatar and the rest of Gulf countries; and the influx of Syrian refugees in Jordan.

As a result, Jordan's economy has been verging closer to the brink. All economic indicators are blinking red. Jordan's economic growth has fallen to just over 2% during the past three years, down from an average of 2.7% between 2010 and 2016. Jordan's total foreign debt reached \$35 billion in 2016, up from \$19 billion in 2011, which was equivalent to 93% of GDP³. Unemployment rate jumped from 12.5 per cent in 2010 to 15 per cent in 2018 (World Bank).

Jordan hosts approximately 1.3 million Syrians. As at April 2019, UNHCR registered 660,393 refugees, with approximately 121,280 living in camps. The remaining (approximately 539,113) have settled in urban and rural areas, primarily in northern governorates and in Amman. According to UNDP, the poverty rate for Jordanians is estimated to be 15 per cent in 2018. According to UNCHR over 80 per cent (estimation) of Syrian refugees in Jordan are below the poverty line.

Access to the labour market

In 2016, under the Jordan Compact, Jordan committed to issuing up to 200,000 work permits to Syrian refugees over a three-year period in exchange for trade concessions by the European Union. Over 10 years, the compact will apply to 52 product groups manufactured in Special Economic Zones, provided that producers employ 15 per cent of Syrian refugees, rising to 25 per cent after three years. A significant shortcoming of the Jordan Compact seems to be its focus on low-skilled jobs.

From January 2016 to present, Syrian refugees held about 142,520 work permits, 4, 5 per cent of which to women. As these permits have to be renewed on a regular base, the estimated number of valid work permit is around 45,650 for Syrian refugees in 2018, up

³ Independent Monitor's assessment report, Jordan Compact and Brussels meetings, Agulhas, March 2019

from 36,790 in 2016⁴. These figures offer some measure of job opportunities in the formal sector, but the recent Fafo study⁵ suggests that, for Syrian refugees, employment in the informal sector⁶ is at least twice the level of formal employment. Jordanian Labour Law regulates Syrian refugees as it applies to migrant workers.

Women face additional constraints, which explain the even lower number of Syrian women in Jordan's paid workforce, estimated at between 6-7 per cent. In comparison, 17 per cent of Syrian refugee women had worked previously in Syria.

The particular constraints face by women include limited mobility, disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work, and a lack of opportunities deemed suitable for them in the face of restrictive socio-cultural norms and associated occupational segregation. However, most women – around six in ten – report wanting to work. An ODI⁷ report found that the women interviewed expressed a clear preference to work from home to remain close to their families and overcome gendered harassment and discrimination.

In summer 2017, GoJ decided to allow the registration of joint ventures between Syrians and Jordanians. In November 2018, in recognition of the low take-up of that model, the GoJ changed the regulation to allow Syrian-only Home Based Businesses (HBBs) to be registered. HBBs are well suited to the employment needs of women refugees. Syrians have not, as yet, registered any HBBs.

Despite the high unemployment rate, Jordan has opened the labour market for Syrians by waiving the fee on work permits and creating a new law on home-based businesses.⁸

The GoJ initiatives, reinforce the concept that "The whole neighbouring region will benefit from Syrians being able to have employment while waiting to return to Syria".⁹

The JGU led consortium has very good connections with the private sector especially through the private college "Al Quds/Luminus", which is also partners of other EU projects as the "Shamal Start" (start-up project). Meetings have been held between the consortium and the EU Delegation Economic section in Jordan, looking for employment options for the graduated students, and indications on job opportunities.

⁴ Ministry of Labour report, "Syrian Refugee Unit Work Permit Progress Report: July 2017", and "MOPIC Jordan Compact Summary Update", 14 January 2019.

⁵ Fafo, The living conditions of Syrian refugees in Jordan, 2019, [link](#)

⁶ Ibid

⁷ ODI (2017) Syrian women refugees in Jordan, Opportunity in the gig economy?

⁸ Ms Mary Kawar, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of Jordan, Brussels III Conference, Days of dialogue

⁹ Mr Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations, Brussels III Conference, Days of dialogue

LEBANON

Lebanon's population is about 6 million. It is religiously very diverse, a key identity of the country. The country hosts an estimate of one million Syrian refugees. Overall, the Lebanese state is facing serious challenges, both domestic and external.

Lebanon has a massive public debt of \$80 billion, more than 150% of the gross domestic product, according to April 2018 World Bank figures. It is one of the highest debt to GDP ratio in the world.

Since the Syria crisis, the Lebanese economy saw four of its five main sources of income decreasing: The import-export route overland to and through Syria is almost halted. Tourism suffers from unstable political and security situation, both domestically and regionally. The banking sector, cornerstone of the Lebanese economy, continues to generate wealth. However, there is an increased scrutiny of international and western banking regulators regarding money laundering and financing of terrorism. In addition, Lebanese banks had to retreat hastily from Syria and, to a lesser extent, Iraq both previously seen as expansion markets.

According to UNHCR, there are nearly one million refugees from Syrian in Lebanon. Lebanon is not party to the 1951 Refugees Convention. Lebanon has no domestic law offering legal protection for refugees and asylum seekers. Although, Lebanon has never formally published a legal position *vis a vis* Syrian refugees, all Lebanese authorities seem to recognize their obligation to abide to the principle of non-refoulement. Lebanon is also bound by its obligations under the Human Rights treaties it has ratified.

As a result, of Lebanon's difficult economic situation and vulnerabilities faced by Syrian refugees, an estimated 76% Syrian refugees in Lebanon now live below the poverty line, an increase from 49% from 2014. For Palestinian Refugees from Syria, the percentage stands at 89%.

Access to the labour market

According to the World Bank, the Syrian crisis has strained Lebanon's public finances, service delivery, and environment. It has worsened poverty incidence among Lebanese as well as widened income inequality. About 200,000 additional Lebanese have been pushed into poverty, adding to the erstwhile 1 million poor. An additional 250,000 to 300,000 Lebanese citizens are unemployed, most of them unskilled youth. The unemployment rate in Lebanon is estimated to have increased from around 11% before the crisis to an estimated 18-20% (30% amongst youth).

Access to the labour market for Syrian refugees is constrained by a number of factors. Since 2015, the Lebanese authorities have suspended the right for registered Syrian refugees to work in Lebanon. Entry into Lebanon and obtaining a residency permit is conditional on a certified pledge not to work. This is additional to a decree of the Ministry of Labour limiting the work options for Syrian nationals to agriculture, construction and cleaning services.

This effectively means that, when and if a Syrian “displaced” person is able to obtain all of the required documents and a work permit, they become “migrant workers”, and are subject to job restrictions. The result is a high level of unemployment and underemployment amongst the Syrian refugees legally working in the country, and a high percentage of Syrian refugees working illegally, including an enhanced risk of exploitation (absence of conditions for decent work, child labour, etc.).

IRAQ

As of October 2018, over 250,184 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR in Iraq. The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) alone hosts 97 per cent of Syrians in the country. The internal conflict in Iraq, started in June 2014, resulted in internal displacement of some 3.3 million persons at its peak. The KR-I currently hosts about 1 million IDPs including minorities such as the Yezidis. Together, refugees and IDPs represent up to 20 percent of the KR-I population.

Most of the refugees in KRI study in Arabic, which is the educational language in Syria. It is worth to note that the official study language in KRI schools is Kurdish. Hence, There are a number of available Arabic language schools in non-camp areas, yet the availability of secondary schools is very limited and not all the refugees are able to access them. In camp setting, the situation is better because Arabic primary and secondary schools are available inside the camps.

Access to job market:

In KRI refugees can access all jobs with their residency permit, except in governmental sector. However, in some cases refugees are working in governmental sectors under temporary contracts, for instance hiring Syrian refugee teachers in KRI refugee schools as lecturers.

2.2.2. Sector context: policies and challenges

One of the most significant long-term consequences of the Syrian crisis is the disruption of the education system inside Syria. Moreover, the Syrian refugees as well as vulnerable host community members are struggling to absorb additional students let alone to identify the financial means those students need.

Table 3: Higher Education Data

Country	Total pop (million)	% youth (15-24)	Total HE students	No. refugees from Syria (Oct 2018)	% of total population	No. Syrian youth (18-24)	% Syrian refugees in HE (2016)	No. of tertiary education providers
Lebanon	6.08	16.42%	579,815	952,562	16.0%	101,892	6%	51
Jordan	9.70	20.07%	895,441	672,578	7.0%	80,471	8%	72
Iraq	38.27	19.25%	3,390,309	250,184	0.7%	42,366	n.a.	39

JORDAN

There are no legal impediments to the access of Syrian refugees to Higher Education. The government set up in September 2017 a grace period enabling all children to enrol in schools, regardless of their nationality and documentation status. While reportedly renewed, the government is yet to issue an official confirmation. The Education Strategic Plan (2018-22) and Common Results Framework, which are both in line with the Human Resource Development Strategy (2016-25), were prepared which are inclusive of not only Syrian refugees, but also other vulnerable residents in host communities. However, at the practical level, Syrian refugees face major hurdles to enrol and succeed in universities in Jordan.

In November 2018, there has been a reversal of the decision of the Higher Education Council concerning documentation for Syrian students thanks to policy dialogue, and donors'. Also in autumn 2018 the donors group successfully advocate for reversing a decision for documentation requested at primary and secondary level for Syrian children registration.

Enrolment has been very positive at the primary school level, but there is very low participation above Grade 10. Age-specific enrolment rates for Syrian refugees in 2017 ranged from 99% of under-11s, to 48% of 15 year olds and 15% of 16 year olds. An estimated 73,000 Syrian refugee children are out of certified education, including children with disability and those residing in informal tented settlements. More than 65 per cent of Syrian children drop out from schools. The cost associated with schooling, the quality of education and of the learning environment and violence in and around school remain a strong concern and are the main reasons for drop-out.

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) accounts for 1.13 (113 girls in every 100 boys) across the Kingdom, indicating girls are more likely to go to school than boys (it apply also to HE). Among Syrian refugees, gender parity is more even, with a GPI of 1.03. National Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in MOE-licenced Kindergartens (KG2) stands at 62.2 per cent, and GER in secondary schools is at 75.6 percent. The rate is lower for Syrian refugees with only 19 per cent in KG2 and 24 per cent enrolled in secondary education .

Precise data on access to tertiary education is challenging to capture but an estimated 8 per cent Syrian refugee youth have access to higher education in Jordan, compared to the 20 per cent pre- crisis rate in Syria. The Ministry of Higher Education reported that 15,944 Syrian students were officially registered at Jordanian Universities in the academic year 2016-17.

Jordan has a developed higher education system with a total of 31 recognized high education institutions, 12 public and 19 privates and 41 community colleges. The same legal framework governs all Jordanian universities. Overall, Jordanian universities are able and willing to enrol more Syrian refugees. However, prospective Syrian students face daunting challenges, as some elements are described above.

LEBANON

The situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon is precarious. Many high-skilled Syrians find ways to leave Lebanon, resulting in what some researchers termed the 'deskilling' of the Syrian population in Lebanon.

Lebanon's tertiary education sector is diverse, buoyant, loosely organised and driven by the private sector, both for-profit and not-for-profit. In total, there are 51 universities and community colleges in Lebanon. They operate under a very permissive legal framework and teach in Arabic, French, English or Armenian. English and French are the main teaching language in most universities, in contrast with the Syrian education system that is in Arabic. A number of universities have confessional and political links.

Lebanon and Syria have an agreement allowing for mutual recognition of secondary and tertiary education certificates, dating from 1962. Before the Syria crisis, Syrian students routinely enrolled in Lebanese universities. Thus, at the academic level, there is no impediment for Syrian refugees to enrol in a Lebanese university.

In reality, there are numerous hurdles. The first is the high level of drop out of Syrian secondary school age children, which create a break in the education sector continuum, with a reduced pool of Syrian children, in particular, able to pass into the higher education system.

Another major challenge is financial. Except for the public Lebanese University (LU), all universities require fees most if not all Syrian refugees cannot afford. Even the reduced fees of the LU are a challenge as there are numerous other costs attached to studying, such as transport, accommodation, books, etc. More importantly, there is a significant opportunity cost, as students cannot work while attending courses.

The second impediment is administrative. Enrolments often require residence permit, and/or transcripts and diplomas from Syria or from Lebanese schools. The process of administrative registration can be cumbersome and often requires additional financial resources to obtain a paper or a stamp.

The estimated number of Syrian students in Lebanese universities is between 6,500-10,000. According to the Ministry of Higher Education, the number stood at 6,288 students in 2016. This represents about 6% of the 18-24 age group. This contrasts sharply with the pre-war tertiary education enrolment rates for Syrians, which was at 26% in urban areas and 16% in rural areas.

Lebanon has not issued any specific policy on the enrolment of Syrian refugees in tertiary education. Requirements and processes are the same as any student, thus not addressing the specific needs and challenges for Syrian refugees. This creates a situation where access to high education for Syrian refugees in Lebanon is only open nominally and for those affluent and able to navigate the administrative system. This carries a strong gender bias.

IRAQ

At present 15 public and 15 private universities are operating in Kurdistan region, public universities receive funding from Kurdistan Regional Government budget, and private universities are relying on tuition fees. Two of the private universities are categorized as non-for-profit institutions where depending on donations and tuition fees.

Admission to public universities in the KR-I is a centralized process. It follows an admissions plan regulated by the Central Admission Department at the Ministry of Higher

Education and Scientific Research (MoHE). Based on the admissions plan, there are two options of submitting an application for placement at a university.

Foreign students are expected to pay tuition fees of 2000 USD on average. In the other hand, MoHE is not able to identify refugees through their application system which led to a number of refugees (who studied high school in KRI) being accepted at universities and studying without paying tuition fees.

2.3. Lessons learnt

The EUTF Syria conducted an external evaluation of the EUTF's scholarship programmes and supporting activities. The evaluators concluded that the support had been swift to respond to the needs of the young refugees in increasing their educational perspectives. In addition, the evaluation identified a number of learning points and opportunities for improvement:

- The support shall avoid fragmentation and focus on student pathway perspective; in addition specific protection and gender issues affecting Syrian refugees have to be consider. Programme actors try to optimise towards individual targets generating silo effects that contribute to the fragmentation of support towards the students.
- Across all contexts, the volume of the response is far too limited compared to demand. Existing programmes try to make up for this by maximising the numbers out of a given budget, while not always carefully considering the resulting effects on study choices, livelihoods, access to laptops and study materials, and on the resulting dropout rates.
- Existing programmes are largely effective in achieving and exceeding targets. In addition, analytical financial reporting linking direct and indirect costs to results should be envisaged
- The EUTF programmes take a transactional and target driven approach towards their operational context and forego opportunities for deeper engagement with relevant authorities at institutional and policy levels.
- The pursuit of complementarity through parallel programmes leads to coherent coverage of all study levels with different partners and various services in a given context. However, this approach foregoes opportunities for enhancing pathway continuity for the student and for integration and leverage within the EUTF portfolio. It also forgoes opportunities for pursuing complementarities and synergies with other EU and non-EU instruments as a strategy for policy dialogue and implementation of joint initiatives with national authorities.
- The action lacks strategies to ensure sustainability of the benefits for the students after graduation, as the programmes do not sufficiently invest in active participative engagement with the targeted young Syrians and stakeholders, and with state structures at policy levels. This hampers the development of innovative solutions that could maximise the options for young Syrians towards multiple scenarios in the future

- While visibility activities are diligently pursued, the EU is missing opportunities to come forward with a clear consolidated approach aimed at integrating financing instruments and leveraging across functional and sectoral divisions of the EU services. This is also visible in the lack of local media strategies leaving EU media presence scattered and ad hoc without clear direction.
- In the absence of a state policy guaranteeing compliance with Human Rights requirements, there is a need to approach the issue of access of Syrian refugees in Lebanon to high education as a Protection issue and not only an issue of scholarships.

2.4. Complementary actions

EUTF Syria specific actions are:

- ✓ HOPES Program with DAAD, NUFFIC, British Council and Campus France; this 12 million EUR covers Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey. The program provides scholarships for successful applicants, a counselling mechanism a small grant scheme to support Higher Educational courses as well as foster regional exchange.
- ✓ SPARKS program; this 18 million EUR program covers Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey; the partner negotiates with targeted Universities a reduced fee for final beneficiaries. This also includes assessment of applications, placements and provide space for selected applicants to develop their own initiatives
- ✓ GJU program "EduSyria II" with Zarqa University, Al Quds/Luminus college and Jordan University for Science and technology; this 11 million EUR program covers Jordan and is using its network to place Syrian Refugees and disadvantaged Jordanians in higher education and vocational education programs in engineering, economics, health care, sciences, social sciences and educational/teacher training.

In Jordan selection and award criteria are agreed with UNHCR for Syrian refugees and with National Aid Fund/NAF and other private social protection institutions. NAF recommends considering covering transportation within the scholarship, to avoid drop out.

- ✓ A parallel similar scholarship programme with GJU called "EduSyria I" of 5 million Euro. This program also places Syrian Refugees and disadvantaged Jordanians in higher education and vocational education programs in engineering, economics, health care, sciences, social sciences and educational/teacher training.
- ✓ A Special Capacity Building for Higher Education Window for Jordan (CBHE) component of Erasmus+ was approved in 2014. The maximum contribution of the EU is set at 5 million EUR. The Ministry of Higher Education aims at integrating the international dimension into its policies and practices by recruiting international students, exchanging scholars, and building research partnerships between Jordanian and international institutes.
- ✓ eTwinning, launched in 2005, is one of the main components of the European Commission's eLearning Programme that is co-funded by Erasmus+. In May of

2018, Jordan joined the eTwinning Plus platform. Madrasati is acting as the Partner Support Agency for Jordan.

Erasmus+ new call was presented recently noting refugees are a cross-cutting priority.

- ✓ In the last 15 years, the EU has been supporting Lebanese higher education through several programmes including Tempus and Erasmus Mundus (2002-2013). The EU will extend its support until 2020 with programmes such as Erasmus+. As a result of the last 3 calls for proposals under Erasmus+ (2015-2017) 11 capacity building projects have been selected for implementation over the next 3 years.
- ✓ ERASMUS+, under the mobility and academic exchange initiatives, has approved 181 mobility projects of a budget of 6 million EUR. Staff and students benefit from short-term mobility (between 3 and 12 months) in the period 2016 and 2018.
- ✓ Since 2005, the EU has invested 12 million EUR through UNRWA in Lebanon to support scholarships for Palestine refugees in Lebanese Universities.
- ✓ The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights provide 5.4 million EUR for the Arab Master programme in Democracy and Human Rights. The objective is to train and support a pool of experts across the Arab region, the second to build strengthen a network of experts in the region. The Lebanese Université de Saint Joseph is a co-applicant.

2.5. Donor co-ordination

The EU is actively contributing to overall donor co-ordination under the auspices of the United Nations in the framework of the 3RP that integrates humanitarian, development and macro-fiscal interventions to increase coherence between humanitarian and development and national and regional priorities.

In country, the relevant EU Delegations are leading co-ordination with EU Member States. EU Delegations are also important partners in the co-ordination platforms established for the various National Response Plans to the refugee crisis. The EU Trust Fund Management is in the lead in order to ensure co-ordination with MS contributing to the fund.

In Jordan the Higher Education working group is meant to be merged with the general group for education, because the two ministries, Education and Higher Education merged recently. The Tertiary Education Working group started in 2016 to respond to a specific coordinate need for scholarship programs for refugees. The group was co-chaired by UNESCO and UNHCR, but was never really part of the official groups under the Inter-sector Working Group (ISWG- basically the humanitarian coordination structure under overall UNHCR leadership).The transition to one consolidated ESWG with revised ToRs and updated membership is planned for 2019.In Lebanon, the RACE executive committee coordinates the response to the Syrian crisis in the education sector. The Minister of Education and Higher Education is chairing the committee and includes all key actors in the sector (EU, German Embassy, DFID/British Embassy, WB, USAID, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNESCO, Italian Embassy/Italian Cooperation, and Embassy of the Netherlands). While not formally a part of the aid coordination structures under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan

(LCRP), UNESCO and UNHCR co-chair a Higher Education Round Table group that meets recurrently to exchange information on key policy issues as well as scholarship funding.

There are also regular meetings in Brussels with Member States education experts also in the framework of the network of organizations in the 'Donor Harmonization Group on Higher Education'. Moreover, the EU participation in the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait may also contribute to good donor coordination.

3. DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The rationale behind international support to access to higher education is that Higher Education is essential to address the humanitarian-development nexus¹⁰, beside the impact on social and economic regional context.

The program is consolidated the work done within Phase I and shall continue to provide scholarships and foster pathways for 'EU student identity'. Refugees and vulnerable host community members shall have a market oriented educational opportunities and benefit from a regional network of past and present scholarship holders. The "EU Students" may use such network for career opportunities and information sharing also in light of future scenarios, which may include a return to Syria.

The proposed programme is in essence a scholarship program. The support focuses on the needs of beneficiaries in a consistent continuous pathway perspective from secondary to the entry in gainful employment or other career options allowing for self-reliance. A participative approach and decision-making may help young people in their pathways towards a successful career.

Throughout the implementation, the program pursues an active participative engagement with young Syrians and other stakeholders in order to develop innovative solutions that maximise the self-reliance options for young Syrians and other scholarship holders. Digital learning options and digital livelihood opportunities might be promising developments in this regard.

In close cooperation with the respective EU services, the implementers engage with relevant authorities at institutional and policy levels in order to move from the existing transactional relationships in the pursuit of targets, towards a collaboration in the pursuit of shared results.

3.1. Objectives/Expected Results

The **Overall Objective** of the programme is

¹⁰ Ms Abla Amawi, Secretary-General of the Higher Population Council in Jordan, Brussels III Conference, Days of dialogue

To improve livelihood options through higher educational opportunities for refugees youth and vulnerable host community in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq

The **Specific Objectives** are:

- (1) To support the completion secondary education of and preparation for eligible candidate for HE admission and scholarship selection
- (2) To provide higher education opportunities with a unified scholarship application process and provide scholarship holder with administrative, educational, livelihood and psychosocial support
- (3) To maximise livelihood and career options for scholarship holders through planning for multiple scenarios
- (4) To create national and regional networks and platforms of information sharing, collective learning, community development and knowledge building to stimulate conducive policy making, sharing best practices, career development, and sustainable livelihoods

Other Results are:

An indicative logframe reflecting all of the above is included in Annex 1.

3.2. Activities

The envisaged indicative main activities are:

- Identify eligible secondary school students and develop adequate and timely information and services on preparation, eligibility and availability of higher education scholarship programs and opportunities,
- To provide educational, livelihood and psychosocial support for selected school pupils;
- To manage EUTF scholarship program including a unified application process and award criteria on the basis of a calibrated mix of transparent academic, motivation and vulnerability criteria
- To provide scholarship students a broad range of high quality study programmes and access to administrative, educational, livelihood and psychosocial support; support access to a digital learning programme with e-learning modules on digital skills, the digital economy and digital enterprising know how, and are part of a ‘digital zone network’
- To create short-term courses, internships and networking opportunities for graduates and alumni (including Phase I); including the establishment of a national and regional inclusive and participative higher education platforms with broad based representation
- Develop a local and regional media outreach plan to actively engage the press and social media around innovative collaborative and participative EUTF actions and to identify and promote additional funding for scholarships

3.3. Risks and assumptions

The main risks are:

Risk	level	Mitigation
Political climate in the region adversely affects attitudes towards Syrian refugees	H	Active engagement with the state and civil society and inclusion of local vulnerable youth to promote social cohesion
Economic fragility and high unemployment in the region negatively affect access to quality employment for refugees.	H	Active engagement with the private sector and civil society Entrepreneurial capacity building and support Promotion of digital livelihoods, remote working and digital enterprising
Low volume of financing compared to demand affect impact and visibility of the EUTF action	M	Fund matching, cooperation and synergy actions Media strategy
High dropout rates in secondary reduce number of candidate students	M	Support to promising secondary school pupils at risk of dropout
High dropout among scholarship students	M	Pathway fostering approach with adequate support and broad study choice
Gender bias	M	Mitigated through selection process and protection activities

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

Objectives	Assumptions
Ensure the completion of secondary education for promising pupils eligible for applying to the EUTF HE scholarship scheme	The EUTF programmes have access to secondary school data and are actively supported by authorities in the identification of eligible pupils at
Ensure successful preparation of the eligible candidate students to qualify for HE admission and scholarship selection	Prep students are committed to completing the programme
Ensure successful graduation of scholarship students at quality study programmes in the fields of their choice	HEI are willing and have the capacity to actively facilitate
Maximise livelihood and career options for refugee graduates through planning for multiple scenarios	Host countries accommodate and facilitate alternative learning paths and digital livelihood development and in developing networks with stakeholders from the public and private sectors.
Ensure stakeholder engagement and participation in the design and implementation of EUTF initiatives	Stakeholders show interest in being actively involved in shaping the EUTF programmes
Integrate Protection and gender as horizontal themes in the design and implementation of the programmes	Host countries accept principles of gender equality and support the need for Syrian refugee protection
Create national and regional	Stakeholders and programmes are actively

networks and platforms of information sharing, collective learning, community development and knowledge building to stimulate conducive policy making, sharing best practices, career development, and sustainable livelihoods	involved in developing the platforms and producing engaging content and reliable information
Objective 8: Create EU added value and leverage through fundraising, synergies and media strategy	EUDs have the capacity to engage more fully with these aspects

3.4. Cross-cutting issues

GENDER the proposed Action mainstreams gender through all the steps of the project management cycle, from design to monitoring and evaluation through implementation. The Action will aim for up to 50% female participation by using best practices with special promotion amongst female Syrian refugees and host communities.

In the scholarship promotion phase, female promoters, preferably current female scholarship holders, may carry out a large proportion of the promotional activity. Cooperation with local NGO's and Syrian refugee, outreach capacity will aim to increase the number of female applicants. A safe learning environments and transport to campus will contribute to higher female intake and retention. At least 50% of female representation within students committees will be required.

The action will also align with the thematic objectives of the National Gender Action Plans in place as standard practise in all the EU actions.

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY: the Action applies a conflict sensitive approach to *Do No Harm*. In addition, activities are aimed to enhance social cohesion and social integration. For instance, where possible, activities deliberately target both Syrian Refugees and host community members to support social cohesion and integration.

DISABILITY: the proposed Action will make efforts to ensure that needs of Syrian refugees with disabilities are taken into consideration. As proven in already implemented projects by SPARK so far 19 students with disability have been granted the scholarships and this will be continued in order to ensure the inclusion of Syrian Refugees with disabilities under all the aims and activities of the Action, in view of the high risk of their under-participation and social exclusion.

RADICALIZATION Several studies highlight the importance of the role of education in countering radicalization has gained prominence among policymakers and practitioners.

Through the proposed horizontal pathway to tailored higher education programs, the Action contributes to enable skilled youth in building on their academic knowledge, in view of finding their place in the society. Well-coordinated youth curricula and enhanced collaborative approaches towards the creation of a students' network in support of common initiatives can help fostering such positive impact prospects, including with regard to the EU added-value, in the spirit of an 'EU student identity'.

MIGRATION Many refugees consider leaving the neighbourhood as a top priority. This is especially true amongst young people. The EU is responding by mobilising support to inclusive economic and social development; creating job opportunities for youth is a key measure for economic stabilisation. Safe and legal mobility on the one hand and tackling

irregular migration, human trafficking and smuggling on the other are further priorities. This also applies to Syrian refugees.

The programme will integrate a Rights-Based Approach in each step of the project cycle from identification, formulation, implementation, monitoring to evaluation.

3.5. Stakeholders

The primary stakeholders of this proposed action are:

- ✓ EU Member States contributing to the Trust Fund; government of the country the actions are implemented
- ✓ Project partners (further and higher education providers, CSOs, government agencies in the region) Private Sector such as chamber of commerce and private businesses.
- ✓ Immediate beneficiaries: Syrian students and families and vulnerable youth in host countries

3.6. Contribution to SDGs

This intervention is relevant for the 2030 Agenda. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of goal 4, quality education while also contributing to goals 8, decent work and economic growth, and 5, gender equality.

The programs aim to enable boys and girls to complete secondary education and provides for an opportunity to access to higher education and skills development. With the Goal to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, the present Action aligns to measure achievements relevant to the “volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study” (SDG indicator 4.b.1.).

In relation to SDG 8, the program also contributes to reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.

3.7. Intervention Logic

The proposed action builds on the experience of the first generation of Higher education programs currently¹¹ funded by the EUTF Syria, already reviewed through a sector portfolio evaluation. The evaluation confirms the viability of the approach and compliment the results of the ongoing programs.

Moreover, the evaluation puts forward a vision of fostering a pathway for targeted youth and wrap the offered services around the student in a consistent and continuous way. The

¹¹ June 2019, please see also section 2.4 complementarity.

experts recommend shifting from a vertical funding and programming perspective towards a horizontal pathway perspective that builds from the individuals' knowledge and ambition into the concrete opportunities offered by the labour market. The recalibration will balance the mix of functions and responsibilities between regional and national levels, through increasing transparency and flexibility of implementation modalities to align them with the guiding principles of the *'pathway fostering'* programme design:

- Establishing a transparent mechanism in allocating programme funding to implementing agencies on the regional strategy and guiding principles which would provide coherent and complementarity in a pathway fostering manner.
- Fixing overall budgets for each programme while allowing for adaptive programming and fluid internal resource allocation towards shared results and targets across the different programme components within those programmes.
- Capitalising on the successes of existing programs such as the calls for proposals by finding bridges for funding continued development and scaling up of such innovations with other EU financing instruments.

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.

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 48 months. A possible extension of the implementation period may be decided by the Manager, and immediately communicated to the Operational Board.

4.3. Implementation components and modules

4.3.1. Grant (direct management)

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals upon negotiations to a consortium potentially including SPARK, DAAD, NUFFIC, German Jordanian University and Campus France. Cooperation of the above with local entities fitting the criteria mentioned below are also not excluded. One grant per country is envisaged with a maximum of three international partners. The regional tasks concentrate within the partnership first finalised.

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because above mentioned organisation do have an evidenced high degree of specialisation and technical competence. The consortium is also equipped with the necessary administrative powers for the specific characteristic of this action.

The justification is based on the (1) limited number of providers working in the field of higher education. (2) The specific character to work with higher educational facilities and

refugee youth as well as vulnerable host community members in the targeted countries demands an implementing partner well established. (3) Competence of the context, methodology and the management of such complex assignment is crucial for the success. The proposed partners do satisfy these criteria as they have the knowledge, experience and expertise.

(4) There is an opportunity to build on success stories and merge the approaches of the proposed implementing partners (i.e. use the application process by SPARK; the careful selection and the more strict criteria for the identification of direct beneficiaries that limit the dropout rates, applied by DAAD). (5) Scholarships for higher education opportunities – i.e. master courses - demand at least a 3 to 4 years financial commitment. Considering the program aiming at the end of the secondary education on the one side and entry into the labour market on the other, a minimum period of 48 months is necessary.

Considering a successful extension request of the EUTF Syria mandate for one year until the end of 2020, the implementation of EUTF Syria programs may last until end of 2023. These time constraints also justifies an accelerated contracting process and mandates to negotiate with organisations mentioned above which have proven to implement similar projects which would limit the transformation costs and risk of delays.

In case the above negotiations are not conclusive and/or budgetary availability allows, further identification of alternative implementing partners. Potential partners will be selected in accordance to their administrative and operational capacities, knowledge of the sector in question and managerial ability and flexibility to adapt to the operational environment.

Exception to the non-retroactivity of costs

As a rule, the costs incurred shall be eligible as of the date of entry into force of the grant agreement. The authorising officer may set the eligibility prior to the date of entry into force of the agreement, and even prior to the date of submission of the proposal. Still, unless the financing decision so decides, it is not within the authorising officer’s powers to set the eligibility prior to the date of adoption of this financing decision.

Such decision would be possible to ensure smooth continuation of activities and avoid the increase of transformational costs.

4.4. Indicative budget

The proposed programme is in essence a scholarship program. Scholarships will absorb the main part of individual program budgets.

Module	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
Grant (direct management) – cf section 5.4.1	N.A.	
Jordan	15,000,000.-	

Lebanon	8,000,000.-	
Iraq	5,000,000.-	
Regional	400,000.-	
Total	28,400,000.-	

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

4.5. Performance monitoring and reporting

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 an independent Monitoring and Evaluation exercise to accompany all Fund programmes and ensure that targets are met and lessons learnt can be incorporated into other EUTF actions.

The purpose of the EUTF Syria Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is to assess, across various levels, the degree to which the Overall Objective of the Trust Fund has been achieved. Partners implementing this Action will comply with the ad hoc Monitoring and Evaluation Framework developed for the EUTF Syria as well as with the reporting requirements and tools being developed by the EU Trust Fund.

The implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the Action and elaborate regular progress reports and final reports.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

The monitoring and evaluation exercises noted above will represent milestones in the implementation of the activities. These regular assessments will constitute a basis for a possible decision of suspension or revision of activities, should the conditions on the ground not allow for their proper implementation.

4.6. Evaluation and audit

Overall, evaluation of the EUTF is mandated by the Constitutive Agreement of the Fund (article 13): “The Trust Fund and the Actions financed by it will be subject to the evaluation rules applicable to EU external programmes, in order to ensure the respect of the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.” Detailed provisions for the Evaluation of EUTF-funded Actions are defined by the strategy for portfolio evaluations.

To support the fulfilment of the mandate of the EUTF reinforcing the EUTF capacity to bring a change in the cooperation area, the projects will carry out a number of evaluations.

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.

If necessary, ad hoc audits or expenditure verification assignments could be contracted by the European Commission for one or several contracts or agreements.

Audits and expenditure verification assignments will be carried out in conformity with the risk analysis in the frame of the yearly Audit Plan exercise conducted by the European Commission. The amount dedicated in the budget for external *Evaluation and Audit* purposes is EUR. Evaluation and audit assignments will be implemented through service contracts, making use of one of the Commission's dedicated framework contracts or alternatively through the competitive negotiated procedure or the single tender procedure.

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 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. Within the context of this protracted crisis, it is increasingly important to strategically communicate the sustainability of the project's impact and the EU support, highlighting that the action also helps strengthening the host countries' national public service delivery systems and infrastructures beyond the current crisis.

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.

ANNEX 1 - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX (max. 2 pages)

The indicative logframe matrix will evolve during the lifetime of the action and can be revised as necessary: The activities, the expected outputs and related indicators, targets and baselines included in the logframe matrix are indicative and may be updated during the implementation of the Action, no amendment being required to the financing decision. The logframe matrix should be used for monitoring and reporting purposes: new lines will be added for including baselines / targets for each indicator at contracting or inception stage new columns may be added to set intermediary targets (milestones) for the output and outcome indicators whenever it is relevant, as well as to regularly update values (“current value”) for reporting purpose. The inception report should include the complete logframe (e.g. including baselines/targets). Progress reports should provide an updated logframe with current values for each indicator. The final report should enclose the logframe with baseline and final values for each indicator.

Additional note: The term "results" refers to the outputs, outcome(s) and impact of the Action (OECD DAC definition).

	Results chain: Main expected results (maximum 10) Reference overarching framework – sector objectives	Indicators (all indicators on individual beneficiaries are disaggregated per sex and per refugee/host community/IDPs))	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Impact (Overall objective)	To improve livelihood options through higher educational opportunities for refugees youth and vulnerable host community in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq.	<p>% of eligible Syrian refugees and vulnerable host community youth and adolescents accessing higher education with EUTF support</p> <p>% of Syrian refugees and vulnerable youth entering labour market through EUTF-funded Actions</p> <p><i>% of EUTF funding matched with other funding to expand the EUTF HE programmes</i></p>	<p>Independent external monitoring report (i.e. Agulhas assessment post B3C conference), and other Evaluations (including end-line studies)</p> <p>Project Final reports;</p> <p>EUTF Sector portfolio Evaluation and sector briefs</p>	<i>Not applicable</i>

	Results chain: Main expected results (maximum 10) Reference overarching framework – sector objectives	Indicators (all indicators on individual beneficiaries are disaggregated per sex and per refugee/host community/IDPs))	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Specific Objectives	<p>(1) To support the completion secondary education of and preparation for eligible candidate for HE admission and scholarship selection</p> <p>(2) To scholarship provide higher education opportunities with a unified scholarship application process and provide scholarship holders with administrative, educational, livelihood and psychosocial support</p> <p>(3) To maximise livelihood and career options for scholarship holders through planning for multiple scenarios</p> <p>(4) To create national and regional networks and platforms of information sharing, collective learning, community development and knowledge building to stimulate conducive policy making, sharing best practices, career development, and sustainable livelihoods</p>	<p><i># youth awarded with EUTF-funded scholarships;</i></p> <p><i># of EUTF funded graduates participating in employability enhancing courses, activities and networks</i></p> <p><i># partnerships with private sector organisations and civil society organisations offering work placement / internship opportunities</i></p> <p><i># drop-out rates related to protection issues successfully resolved</i></p> <p><i># EUTF of graduates & alumni (including Phase I) that are actively engaged as mentors and enablers in the networks and platforms</i></p> <p><i># alumni of alliances created</i></p>	<p>Quarterly Information Notes</p> <p>External studies by renown actors</p> <p>Project reports (interim and progress reports)</p> <p>Financial reports</p> <p>EUTF ROM missions</p>	<p>Syrian Refugees continue to stay in host countries</p> <p>Socio-economic situations in host countries is not further deteriorating</p> <p>Syrian refugees consider the return to Syria as not conducive</p>

	Results chain: Main expected results (maximum 10) Reference overarching framework – sector objectives	Indicators (all indicators on individual beneficiaries are disaggregated per sex and per refugee/host community/IDPs))	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Other Results (Outputs and/or Short-term Outcomes)	<p>- Outputs:</p> <p>(1) adequate and timely information that offers perspectives on higher education scholarship opportunities is provided</p> <p>(2) X scholarships to selected candidates in various fields are awarded through EUTF scholarship scheme</p> <p>(3) Scholarship holders have access to administrative, educational, livelihood and psychosocial support as well as access to short-term courses, internships and networking activities</p> <p>(4) Graduates and alumni develop their own initiatives for building successful careers and sustainable livelihoods with seed funding</p> <p>(5) an adequate protection environment is provided to Syrian refugees and vulnerable youth accessing HE programs</p> <p>(6) The development of national and regional stakeholder networks and social media platforms to connect students with alumni, diaspora, private enterprise and civil society</p> <p>(7) maximise funding and close gaps through cooperation and synergy with other EU and non-EU programmes, funding agencies, implementing partners, and or state initiatives</p>	<p><i># of application received</i></p> <p><i># of students that study their first-choice programme at the HE institution of their choice</i></p> <p><i># of successful graduations</i></p> <p><i># of EUTF students with at least 3 months of practical experience outplacement during study</i></p> <p><i>% of EUTF funded graduates and alumni developing successful initiatives of their own</i></p> <p><i># of students' network established, including through national and regional social media</i></p> <p><i># of youth referred to specialised services</i></p>	<p>QIN</p> <p>Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) reviews</p> <p>Progress reports</p>	<p>Syrian Refugees continue to stay in host countries</p> <p>Socio-economic situations in host countries is not further deteriorating</p> <p>Syrian refugees consider the return to Syria as not conducive</p>