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**External Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism for the
European Union Regional Trust Fund in response to the
Syrian Crisis**

EUTF Syria Final Evaluation

Evaluation Report

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*The report is the result of a collaborative effort by the Evaluation Team: Team Leader – Pierre Tainturier, Senior Evaluation Experts – Nahla Hassan, Gianfranco D'Eramo and the Junior Evaluation Expert – Beste Naz Gulen with the support of the Backstopping Team.
Edited by Dietmar Aigner, M&E Team Leader EUTF Core Team, Rachel Norman – Quality Control Expert.*

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Context and Background of the Evaluation.....	1
Response to Evaluation Questions	2
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	8
1. Context and Background of the Evaluation.....	11
The Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (EUTF Syria).....	11
Presentation of the EUTF Syria.....	12
Evaluation Methodology.....	15
2. Response to Evaluation Questions	20
EQ1: HOW HAVE RELEVANCE, RESPONSIVENESS AND TARGETING DEVELOPED OVER THE LIFE OF THE EUTF SYRIA?.....	20
EQ2: WERE THE INTERNAL PROCESSES, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE OF THE EUTF SYRIA SUITABLE TO MANAGE THE GIVEN MANDATE?	26
EQ3: WERE ALLOCATION AND COMMITMENT OF AVAILABLE FUNDS IMPLEMENTED IN A TIMELY AND EFFICIENT MANNER?	29
EQ4: TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE THE CHOICES OF RECIPIENTS AND IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS ALLOWED FOR AN EFFICIENT USE OF FUNDS?.....	33
EQ5: HOW CAN THE QUALITY OF PARTNERSHIP RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL AUTHORITIES AND IMPLEMENTING STAKEHOLDERS BE ASSESSED?	40
EQ6: TO WHAT EXTENT THE EUTF SYRIA HAS ACHIEVED ITS OBJECTIVES? WHAT WAS THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION MECHANISM?	45
EQ7: WHAT IMPACT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED OR IS STILL ANTICIPATED AS A RESULT OF THE EUTF SYRIA'S ACTIVITIES?.....	52
EQ8: HOW CAN THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE EU TRUST FUND BE ASSESSED IN RELATION TO THE MEASURES TAKEN BY BENEFICIARY COUNTRIES TO ADDRESS THE REFUGEE CRISIS?	58
EQ9. TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE THE EUTF'S COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY ACTIVITIES HELPED TO ADEQUATELY COMMUNICATE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE EUTF AS WELL AS THE VALUES OF THE EU?.....	60
EQ10. CAN SPECIFIC STRENGTHS/ ADVANTAGES BE IDENTIFIED WHEN COMPARING THE EUTF'S MANDATE AND ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER EC INSTRUMENTS?	64
3. Conclusions and recommendations.....	69
EQ1: How have relevance, responsiveness, and targeting developed over the life of the EUTF?.....	69
EQ2: Were the internal processes, management, and governance of the EUTF suitable to manage the given mandate?	69
EQ3: Were allocation and commitment of available funds implemented in a timely and efficient manner?	70

EQ4: to what extent have the choices of recipients and implementing partners (IPs) allowed for an efficient use of funds?.....	70
EQ5: How can the quality of partnership relations with national authorities and implementing stakeholders be assessed?	71
EQ6: How can the achievement of EUTF Syria objectives be assessed overall?	72
EQ7: What impact achieved or still to be expected can be attributed to the EUTF's activities?.....	72
EQ8: How can the contribution of the EUTF to national responses be assessed?	73
EQ9: How have the EUTF's communication and visibility activities helped communicate achievements?.....	73
EQ10: Can specific strengths be identified compared to other EU instruments?.....	74
ANNEXES	75
Annex 1: LIST OF KEY IP AND PROJECTS.....	75
Annex 2: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED	79
Annex 3: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES	81

List of figures

Figure 1: EUTF Syria's overall intervention logic	13
Figure 2: EUTF Syria project cycle management and operational workflow	22
Figure 3: EUTF Syria management structure. Source: EUTF Syria evaluation	27

List of tables

Table 1: EUTF Syria final evaluation – Questions to be addressed	16
Table 2: Final Evaluation Action Plan	18
Table 3. % achievement of EUTF Syria expected results	45
Table 4. List of the evaluations specified under the EUTF M&E Framework	52

List of graphs

Graph 1. Duration of projects	23
Graph 2. Was the process fast enough to meet the needs?	24
Graph 3. Origin of funds and contributions	30
Graph 4. IP's satisfaction level toward procedures	32
Graph 5. Time between approval by the Board and the signature of contract	33
Graph 6. Actions adopted by the Board	34
Graph 7. Breakdown of actions by recipient organisations and countries	34
Graph 8. Partnership relations with the national authorities	40
Graph 9. Involvement of the national authorities in the projects' formulation	41
Graph 10. Partnership with EUD from IPs' perspective	44
Graph 11. Number of ROM missions	51
Graph 12. Resources mobilised through FRIT	68

Acronyms

3RP	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan
AAI	Accelerated Access Initiative
C&V	Communication and visibility
CfW	Cash for Work
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DG DEVCO	Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DG HOME	Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
DG INTPA	Directorate-General for International Partnerships
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
EC	European Commission
EEAS	European External Action Service
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
EUTF	European Union Trust Fund
FRIT	Facility for Refugees in Turkey (Facility)
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GJU	German-Jordanian University
HE	Higher Education
HOPES-LEB	Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians and vulnerable youth in Lebanon
HQ	Headquarter
HUMA MGA	Humanitarian aid model grant agreement
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
INGO	International
IP	Implementing partner
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
JHDF	Joint Humanitarian Development Framework
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
LINKED	Linking Vulnerable Populations and Inclusive Market Networks to Advance Sustainable Economic Development in Lebanon (Project)

LPSP	Long-Term Primary Education Subsidization Protocol
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEW	Ministry of Energy and Water
MoH/ MoPH	Ministry of Health/ Ministry of Public Health
MoLA/ MoMA	Ministry of Local Administration/ Ministry of Municipal Affairs
MOSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MS	Member State
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSC	National Steering Committees
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
OM	Operational Manager
PHCC	Primary Healthcare Centres
PRS	Palestinian Refugees from Syria
PwDs	People with Disabilities
QIN	Quarterly Information Notes
RDPP	Regional Development and Protection Programme
ROM	Results-Oriented Monitoring
RSCP	Resilience and Social Cohesion Programme
SDC	Social Development Centre
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SRPR	strengthen the resilience of Palestinian refugees from Syria in Jordan and Lebanon (UNRWA project)
SUMAF	Technical Assistance to Support the Monitoring of Actions Financed under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey/ Türkiye
TA	Technical Assistance
TOBB	Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
ToRs	Terms of References
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UHC	Universal Healthcare Coverage

WASH

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Executive Summary

Context and Background of the Evaluation

1) The Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (EUTF Syria)

The Syrian refugee crisis remains one of the most severe humanitarian crises of the 21st century, with millions displaced both internally and externally. Host countries such as Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq have faced immense challenges in accommodating refugees, affecting their economies, social services, and political stability. To respond to this crisis, the European Union established the EUTF Syria in 2014, aimed at providing coordinated aid, fostering resilience, and promoting early recovery. The EUTF Syria became a key financial instrument to implement EU commitments made during various international conferences, including the 2016 London Conference and the Brussels Conferences on Syria. The Trust Fund has evolved to adapt to changing needs and crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Lebanon's multifaced crisis, regional conflicts and the 2023 Türkiye-Syria earthquake.

2) Presentation of the EUTF Syria

a. Objectives and Intervention Logic

The EUTF Syria was designed as a regional, multi-partner initiative focusing on key priority areas such as basic education, higher education, livelihoods, health, water and sanitation (WASH), protection, and social cohesion. The intervention logic of the fund is based on a holistic approach to addressing refugee and host community needs while strengthening national institutions and infrastructure. Through strategic programming, the Trust Fund has sought to ensure access to essential services while fostering institutional sustainability and economic integration.

b. Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism

Since 2017, the EUTF Syria has incorporated a structured Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning framework. This framework includes results-oriented monitoring, data analysis and results reporting, and impact-focused evaluation. The EUTF Syria Results Framework ensures accountability and evidence-based knowledge on programme effectiveness. Furthermore, the Strategic Outcome Framework provides insights into the long-term effects of interventions at individual, organizational, and national levels.

3) Evaluation Methodology

a. Objectives and Evaluation Questions

This final evaluation aimed to assess the overall functioning, performance, and impact of the EUTF Syria from its inception to its completion in 2025. The evaluation was guided by ten key questions, focusing on aspects such as relevance, efficiency, governance, financial management, and comparative advantages of the EUTF model.

b. Data Collection Methods

A mixed-methods approach was adopted, including documentary reviews, stakeholder interviews, an online survey with implementing partners, and field consultations. This ensured a comprehensive analysis of financial reports, project outcomes, and stakeholder experiences across Lebanon, Jordan, Türkiye and Iraq.

Response to Evaluation Questions

EQ1: Relevance, Responsiveness, and Targeting

The EUTF Syria initially focused on emergency assistance but later transitioned into a resilience-driven development approach. Early interventions prioritised immediate relief, while later phases incorporated long-term sustainability measures, such as integrating refugee education into national systems. The targeting evolved from broad population-based approaches to more refined, context-sensitive strategies that considered host country policies and socio-economic conditions. Coordination with local and national authorities improved over time, enabling better alignment of interventions with national development strategies and humanitarian needs.

A key strength of the EUTF Syria's targeting approach was its ability to evolve with changing circumstances. Initially, interventions were based on large-scale humanitarian needs, but as the crisis became protracted, the Trust Fund incorporated resilience and economic integration measures. For example, the focus on cash-for-work and livelihood support programmes helped bridge the gap between emergency relief and long-term stability. Additionally, flexible funding mechanisms allowed the EUTF Syria to rapidly respond to unexpected crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Türkiye-Syria earthquake.

EQ2: Governance and Management Suitability

The governance structure of the EUTF Syria has been largely effective, with centralised management in Brussels and operational oversight at the partner country level. The slow recruitment process initially posed challenges, but improvements in staffing and coordination have since enhanced efficiency.

EU Member States (MS) actively participated in decision-making, ensuring strategic alignment. The EUTF Syria's governance is appreciated by interviewed stakeholders including MS representatives, who noted the effectiveness of Board meetings, structured reporting, and the inclusion of partner countries as observers. Quarterly reports and an online portal provided updates, though some MS found the information insufficient or difficult to access due to the absence of a centralised document platform. Additionally, misconceptions linking the EUTF Syria to migration control policies created political hesitancy among some policymakers, underscoring the need for clearer communication and engagement strategies to reinforce its development-focused mandate.

EQ3: Efficiency in Fund Allocation and Commitment

The EUTF Syria's key strength was its ability to pool resources from all EU MS, enabling collective action that individual national initiatives could not achieve. This approach expanded participation, ensured a well-funded and large-scale response, and allowed for more diverse and effective interventions. By streamlining efforts under a single framework, the EUTF Syria reduced costs while maximising impact. Its governance structure also gave EU MS a contributing role in decision-making, thus strengthening coordination and accountability.

The EUTF Syria successfully pooled financial contributions from EU and MS, securing over €2.3 billion. The Fund achieved a 98% implementation rate, outperforming other comparable EU Trust Funds. Over time, the allocation processes became more structured and transparent, improving the efficiency of fund disbursement.

Despite its successes, the EUTF Syria's pooled funding model faced challenges. Commitment levels varied among MS and disparities in contract allocation led to financial imbalances. Some MS with smaller contributions benefited more through awarded contracts, while larger contributors did not always see proportional returns.

The selection process evolved from an open invitation model, which faced criticism for lacking transparency and favouring well-connected organisations, to a structured and coordinated approach. By 2016, stronger collaboration with partner governments ensured project alignment with national priorities, and a multi-stage workflow improved selection efficiency.

The contracting process initially took longer than expected, with significant delays in finalising agreements due to negotiations and procedural complexities. Early regional programmes and NGO consortia required extended discussions, further slowing immediate progress. However, performance improved from 2017 onwards, as increased staffing and process refinements subsequently reduced approval times. These adjustments ultimately enhanced the efficiency and predictability of fund allocation.

EQ4: Effectiveness of Implementing Partners

The selection of recipients and implementing partners (IPs) for the EUTF Syria varied across sectors and countries, balancing efficiency and effectiveness. The three main types of IPs were International Organisations, primarily UN agencies, NGOs, and EU MS development agencies. The choice of IPs influenced project delivery, with NGOs demonstrating strong flexibility and responsiveness in crisis settings, while MS development agencies provided policy influence and institutional sustainability.

In the education sector, NGOs played a crucial role in student retention and non-formal education, offering psychosocial support and adapting quickly to remote learning during COVID-19. Meanwhile, MS development agencies facilitated refugee education integration into national systems. In the livelihoods sector, NGOs provided direct cash-based assistance and livelihood support, whereas MS development agencies focused on macroeconomic policy and institutional capacity building. In healthcare, NGOs were effective in community-based interventions, while UN agencies such as WHO and UNICEF led large-scale procurement and policy coordination, though some struggled with monitoring weaknesses. In the WASH sector, International Financial Institutions and large development agencies handled infrastructure, but NGOs were more effective in community engagement, ensuring the uptake of sanitation services.

The EUTF Syria encouraged IPs to form consortia, which improved coordination and expanded the reach of interventions. In Lebanon's WASH sector, consortium models ensured alignment with national authorities but also led to inefficiencies due to overlapping responsibilities among partners. While the consortium approach allowed for leveraging different strengths, it also created challenges in coordination.

The regional approach was initially favoured for strategic coordination and efficiency, leveraging experienced agencies and pooled funds to avoid duplication. However, it struggled with local adaptability and policy alignment. In contrast, national interventions were later prioritised as they provided greater flexibility and sustainability. They were better integrated into partner country policies, ensuring stronger government buy-in. Despite this, the national approach lacked opportunities for cross-country learning and best practice sharing, limiting its broader impact.

EQ5: Partnership Relations with National Authorities and Implementing Stakeholders

The partnership between the EUTF Syria and national authorities was generally positive, facilitating effective project implementation. National ministries played a key role in providing formal backing and reducing bureaucratic obstacles, ensuring smooth project execution. Over time, government institutions in Lebanon and Jordan became more engaged in education, vocational training, and health sector projects. In particular, ministries helped align interventions with national priorities, increasing institutional ownership and policy coherence.

In the education and vocational training sectors, national authorities in Lebanon and Jordan actively collaborated on governance reforms and student support initiatives. In the health sector, the ministries of health undertook crucial roles in planning, coordination, and policy alignment, with Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health leading a steering committee to integrate EUTF-funded interventions into national strategies. The WASH sector saw strong governmental facilitation, particularly in Iraq and Jordan, where national institutions ensured proper oversight and planning. In Türkiye, partnerships with municipalities strengthened infrastructure planning, while employment initiatives, such as DAHIL, integrated Syrian entrepreneur training into Chamber of Commerce programmes, ensuring sustainability.

Despite these successes, challenges remained. National authorities' involvement in deeper policy discussions and reform formulation was limited, reducing the long-term impact of interventions. Government restrictions also complicated partnerships, as seen in Türkiye, where reluctance to work with Non-Governmental Organisations created operational difficulties. Similarly, in Lebanon and Jordan, political and institutional constraints affected the selection of beneficiaries and the balance of support between refugees and host communities. The Jordan Compact, launched in 2016 to improve refugee access to education and employment in exchange for financial support, had mixed results, with some institutional barriers still limiting access to formal labour markets.

EU Delegations (EUDs) played a crucial role in supporting implementation by facilitating coordination, ensuring policy alignment, and leveraging EU influence to ease negotiations. Their involvement was particularly strong in the education, livelihoods, and WASH sectors, where they integrated multiple EU funding instruments to enhance strategic coordination. In Lebanon, EUDs played a key role in education policy development and donor coordination, supporting non-formal education pathways and the country's five-year Education Plan. In Jordan, they contributed to refugee education by funding teacher recruitment and school rehabilitation. In the health sector, EUDs guided interventions to align with national strategies, ensuring long-term sustainability. They also played an active role in reforming Lebanon's national water and wastewater strategy.

However, EUDs faced several challenges, including administrative constraints, limited staffing, and bureaucratic inefficiencies that slowed project approvals. Weak risk assessments led to delays, such as the withdrawal of an international NGO from a WASH intervention in Lebanon. In higher education, while EUDs engaged with national authorities, their ability to influence policy was restricted by government priorities favouring local students over refugees. In the WASH sector, Lebanon's political instability and Jordan's stance on refugee responsibility hindered long-term planning efforts.

EQ6: Achievement of EUTF Syria Objectives and Contribution of Monitoring and Evaluation

The EUTF Syria largely achieved its objectives across priority sectors, improving access to services, strengthening local capacity, and enhancing infrastructure. A comprehensive Results Framework, comprising 37 Key Performance Indicators, guided monitoring and evaluation efforts, ensuring systematic assessment of project effectiveness.

- In the livelihoods sector, interventions such as vocational training, cash assistance, and job placement improved employability and reduced negative coping mechanisms. However, long-term employment opportunities remained limited due to restrictive policies, economic instability, and barriers to refugee workforce integration, particularly in Lebanon and Jordan.
- The protection sector successfully expanded services for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection programmes, exceeding most targets, though effectiveness varied based on legal and institutional contexts.

- In the social cohesion sector, activities such as community engagement programmes and social protection schemes fostered inclusion but struggled to address deep-rooted tensions between host communities and refugees, especially in Lebanon.
- The EUTF Syria made significant contributions to education by increasing access to formal and non-formal schooling for refugee and host community children. Country-specific approaches varied, with Türkiye focusing on infrastructure, Jordan leveraging community centres, and Lebanon emphasising direct teacher payments.
- Higher education targets were consistently met, with scholarships and vocational training programmes improving access, though labour market integration remained a challenge. In the health sector, interventions expanded access to medical services, particularly in Lebanon, where nearly two million patients benefited from subsidized healthcare. Infrastructure upgrades in Iraq and Jordan further improved service delivery.
- The WASH sector faced delays, with only 72% of the targeted population gaining improved access to water and sanitation due to slow infrastructure development and weak institutional capacity.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) mechanisms played a crucial role in tracking progress and refining strategies. Since 2017, the EUTF Syria employed a structured MEL framework, integrating results-oriented monitoring (ROM), data analysis and reporting, and impact-focused evaluation. The MEL system improved data quality aligned projects with key performance indicators and provided real-time insights through digital platforms. Regular evaluations, including sector and country assessments, informed decision-making, though early projects suffered from poor logframe design and an overemphasis on quantitative targets. ROM supported evaluations through extensive field missions and quality control measures, thus enhancing accountability.

EQ7: Impact Achieved and Anticipated

The EUTF Syria interventions have resulted in significant long-term effects, measured through behavioural changes among beneficiaries and improved institutional performance. A major impact has been the increased trust in public institutions, with greater engagement in healthcare, education, and protection services. Service accessibility improvements led to higher school enrolment rates in Lebanon and Jordan, increased healthcare utilization, and stronger participation in social protection programmes.

In the livelihoods sector, cash-for-work and training programmes positively influenced financial literacy and economic resilience. Beneficiaries in Türkiye expressed higher trust in government institutions, while training programmes in Lebanon improved financial management practices. However, limitations in cash assistance amounts and legal barriers to refugee employment restricted long-term impact. In the protection sector, women centres in Jordan improved self-confidence and safety, while Lebanon saw increased demand for GBV and child protection services.

Social cohesion efforts fostered stronger relations between refugees and host communities, with 70% of beneficiaries reporting increased trust. Municipal engagement in Jordan and Lebanon contributed to service improvements, while behavioural training helped families enhance emotional management and communication. However, these gains remain fragile, particularly in Lebanon's unstable political environment. In the education sector, satisfaction with services led to higher enrolment among refugee children, and psychosocial support contributed to a better learning environment.

Healthcare access improved as awareness of primary healthcare centres (PHCCs) increased, particularly in Lebanon. In Iraq, knowledge of mother and childcare services grew, while Jordan saw efforts to raise awareness about healthcare access for refugees. The WASH sector showed mixed results, with

beneficiaries in Jordan adopting water-saving practices but still relying on water trucking, and Lebanon experiencing declining trust in water authorities due to economic conditions.

Institutionally, local organisations improved service delivery, particularly in higher education, vocational training, and protection services. In Jordan, university networks influenced policies on vulnerable student inclusion, while Lebanon's Social Development Centres enhanced child protection services. However, sustainability remained a challenge due to financial and administrative constraints.

Unexpected positive effects included the integration of digital tools during COVID-19, environmental conservation efforts in cash-for-work programmes, increased trust in primary healthcare services, and strengthened capacities of Lebanese NGOs through consortium participation. On the negative side, cash-for-work programmes disrupted the agricultural labour market in Lebanon, aid distribution perceptions fuelled social tensions, and non-formal education centres became preferred over public schools, hindering reintegration efforts.

EQ8: Contribution of the EU Trust Fund to National Refugee Response Measures

The EUTF Syria played an indirect role in shaping public policies and strategies in beneficiary countries, influencing responses to the Syrian refugee crisis. While regulatory changes in labour market access for refugees occurred in Jordan, Iraq, and Türkiye, these cannot be directly attributed to EUTF Syria interventions. Jordan introduced flexible work permits and home-based business opportunities for Syrian refugees, Türkiye enacted work permit regulations for foreigners under temporary protection, and Iraq facilitated refugee business establishment. However, Lebanon has remained resistant to any policy changes regarding refugee labour market access due to political constraints.

In the protection sector, the EUTF Syria contributed to legislative improvements addressing GBV. In Lebanon, a 2020 law against sexual harassment was influenced by advocacy campaigns supported by the EUTF Syria. In Iraq, the first national GBV strategy (2022–2026) incorporated inputs from EUTF-backed interventions, strengthening referral systems for women survivors of violence.

Education policies in Lebanon and Jordan were significantly shaped by EUTF Syria initiatives. Lebanon's Five-Year Education Plan and National Inclusive Education policy benefited from EUTF Syria funding and technical support. In Jordan, the fund extended the National Education Strategy and promoted inclusive education, though financial constraints and Lebanon's economic crisis threaten long-term sustainability. Higher education programmes, such as HOPES-LEB, facilitated policy dialogue in Lebanon, and EUTF-supported strategic planning efforts emphasized labour market alignment, though implementation remains limited. In Jordan, EUTF Syria collaboration with universities strengthened institutional capacity but did not directly introduce new policies.

In the health sector, the EUTF Syria influenced policies toward universal health coverage. Lebanon piloted a subsidized primary healthcare model, which the Ministry of Public Health now advocates as a potential national policy. In Jordan, discussions on primary healthcare financing remain at an early stage, complicated by fragmented insurance systems. In Iraq, inclusive health policies exist but lack effective monitoring and implementation for vulnerable populations.

The EUTF Syria also contributed to policy development in the WASH sector, particularly in Lebanon, where it supported revisions to the National Water Sector Strategy in 2020, incorporating sustainability measures such as the water-energy nexus and solarisation. However, conflicting legal frameworks and weak political will hinder implementation.

Despite these contributions, there is little evidence that national governments have allocated their own resources to sustain refugee-supportive policies. Interviews indicated limited access to national financial data, and in Lebanon and Jordan, refugee services remain heavily reliant on external donor funding. Jordan has coordinated refugee support through international partnerships, but financial sustainability

remains uncertain. Lebanon's economic crisis has severely constrained government involvement, leading to continued reliance on international organisations. Türkiye has reported spending approximately \$50 billion on hosting refugees since 2011, though this estimate excludes indirect and opportunity costs.

EQ9: Effectiveness of EUTF Syria's Communication and Visibility Activities

The EUTF Syria's communication and visibility efforts aimed to enhance awareness of its achievements and reinforce the EU's values. These efforts included media campaigns, project branding, and stakeholder engagement to highlight the impact of EU-funded interventions. Overall, communication activities improved over time, but challenges persisted in ensuring widespread recognition of the EUTF's contributions.

Initially, visibility efforts were inconsistent, as branding guidelines were not uniformly applied by implementing partners. As the programme matured, a structured communication strategy was implemented, ensuring that all EUTF-funded projects prominently displayed EU logos and messaging. Social media campaigns, newsletters, and video documentaries were used to showcase project outcomes, while high-level events and field visits provided opportunities for EU representatives to engage directly with beneficiaries.

Despite these improvements, several obstacles limited the reach and effectiveness of communication efforts. In some countries, political sensitivities restricted the visibility of EU support, particularly in Lebanon, where government authorities were reluctant to emphasise international aid. Additionally, some beneficiaries remained unaware of the EU's role in funding services they received, highlighting gaps in outreach strategies.

Public perception of the EUTF Syria varied by region. In Türkiye, where large-scale infrastructure and employment projects had high visibility, EU contributions were more widely recognised. In contrast, in Lebanon and Jordan, where funds were often channelled through UN agencies and local NGOs, EU visibility was weaker. Surveys conducted with beneficiaries and stakeholders indicated that while the EUTF Syria was seen as effective, its direct link to the EU was not always clear.

This final evaluation also found that communication efforts were more successful when integrated into project implementation rather than treated as separate activities. Initiatives that involved storytelling, testimonials from beneficiaries, and engagement with local media were particularly effective in demonstrating the real-world impact of EUTF-funded programmes.

EQ10: Strengths and advantages of the EUTF Syria compared to other EU Instruments

The EUTF Syria provided key advantages over traditional EU financial instruments, particularly in terms of flexibility, responsiveness, and financial coordination. A survey of stakeholders showed strong satisfaction with the EUTF, with respondents highlighting its clear and transparent award process, adaptability to changing conditions, and long-term funding stability. The Trust Fund mechanism allowed the EU to mobilise additional financial resources outside of standard budget frameworks, overcoming the limitations of rigid EU funding cycles and enabling a faster response to the Syrian refugee crisis.

The EUTF's ability to bridge short-term humanitarian aid with long-term development efforts set it apart from other EU instruments, which often operated in separate silos. It effectively combined emergency relief with sustainability-focused interventions, ensuring both immediate impact and long-term resilience. This integrated approach was particularly valuable in addressing the protracted nature of the Syrian crisis.

In comparison to other EU funding tools, such as the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance and the European Neighbourhood Instrument, the EUTF Syria demonstrated a more agile governance structure,

allowing for quicker approval and implementation of projects. Its streamlined financial mechanisms enabled faster fund disbursement, ensuring that aid reached beneficiaries without the delays typically associated with conventional EU programmes.

The EUTF Syria also played a crucial geopolitical role by strengthening the EU's diplomatic leverage in negotiations with Lebanon, Jordan, Türkiye, and Iraq. By linking financial support with policy discussions on refugee protection and socio-economic integration, it positioned the EU as a strategic actor in the regional response to the crisis.

Monitoring and accountability mechanisms were a significant strength of the EUTF Syria, with rigorous oversight and a results-driven reporting system ensuring transparency and efficiency. The combination of quantitative performance tracking and qualitative impact assessments reinforced donor confidence and demonstrated tangible outcomes.

While the EUTF Syria was effective in leveraging funds, securing financial commitments from EU MS remained a challenge, similar to other EU Trust Funds. Political motivations often dictated MS contributions, with migration-related concerns driving financial support. In contrast, the Facility for Refugees in Turkey/ Türkiye had a more balanced funding structure, pooling existing resources rather than raising new funds.

Overall, the EUTF Syria proved to be a highly effective instrument for crisis response, offering greater flexibility, faster financial deployment, and a more integrated approach than traditional EU funding instruments. Its ability to combine emergency aid with long-term development, along with strong monitoring and accountability systems, positioned it as a valuable model for future EU crisis interventions. However, sustaining financial contributions and balancing political considerations remain challenges.

Conclusions and Recommendations

EQ1: Relevance, Responsiveness, and Targeting

The EUTF Syria evolved from an emergency response mechanism into a long-term development instrument. Initially focused on immediate humanitarian relief, the fund later transitioned to resilience-building and economic integration, aligning projects with national policies. Early interventions faced challenges in sustainability due to limited contextual analysis, but structured needs assessments improved targeting over time. While responsiveness increased, regulatory barriers in sectors such as livelihoods continued to limit refugee access to formal employment, affecting long-term sustainability.

Recommendations

Future EUTF mechanisms should incorporate structured needs assessments at the outset, ensuring relevance and sustainability. The transition from emergency relief to development should be embedded in project design, and country-specific programming should be fully aligned with national strategies to improve ownership and reduce donor dependency.

EQ2: Governance and Management Suitability

The governance structure of the EUTF Syria facilitated rapid decision-making and fund allocation. While centralized financial management ensured transparency, early staffing shortages and slow recruitment caused delays in project contracting. Operational efficiency improved over time, and Member States valued the EUTF's decision-making forums. However, some concerns were raised regarding donor visibility and the accessibility of governance documents.

Recommendations

Future funding mechanisms should ensure adequate staffing from the outset. A hybrid governance model, balancing centralised financial oversight with decentralized operational decision-making, could improve efficiency. Structured engagement mechanisms should enhance EU MS participation beyond Board meetings.

EQ3: Efficiency in Fund Allocation and Commitment

The EUTF Syria effectively mobilised financial contributions, achieving a 98% implementation rate by 2024. While early contracting delays affected project initiation, increased staffing and improved business processes accelerated implementation in later phases. Some MS raised concerns about the lack of visibility of their financial contributions.

Recommendations

Introducing multi-annual funding commitments would improve budget predictability and programme continuity. A refined communication strategy should enhance donor visibility while maintaining an EU-wide branding approach.

EQ4: Effectiveness of Implementing Partners

Implementation efficiency varied by sector and country. International organisations played a key role in large-scale infrastructure and policy coordination, though high costs and monitoring challenges persisted. NGOs provided flexibility and responsiveness, particularly in education and health, but had limited policy influence. MS development agencies contributed to systemic reforms but faced bureaucratic delays. The consortium model improved expertise and coverage but sometimes led to inefficiencies.

Recommendations

Future funding mechanisms should adopt a balanced approach, combining large-scale infrastructure with localised, community-driven interventions. Coordination should be strengthened to prevent duplication of efforts. Institutional capacity-building for local organisations should be prioritised to enhance sustainability.

EQ5: Partnership Relations with National Authorities and Implementing Stakeholders

The EUTF Syria successfully engaged national authorities, particularly in education and healthcare, aligning interventions with government priorities. However, engagement in refugee employment policies remained limited due to political sensitivities. Coordination mechanisms varied in effectiveness, with some partner governments more proactive than others.

Recommendations

Future funding mechanisms should prioritise early partner government engagement to ensure stronger ownership. Structured policy dialogue tools should be introduced, particularly on sensitive issues such as refugee employment. Capacity-building for local governments should be enhanced to support long-term service provision.

EQ6: Achievement of EUTF Syria Objectives and Contribution of Monitoring and Evaluation

The EUTF Syria significantly improved access to essential services, reaching over 10 million beneficiaries. It enhanced healthcare access, supported education for 800,000 children, and improved infrastructure in host communities. However, long-term sustainability remains uncertain due to reliance on donor funding and limited national ownership.

Recommendations

Future EUTF mechanisms should integrate long-term impact assessments, tracking systemic changes beyond immediate outputs. Greater efforts should be made to institutionalise successful interventions within government frameworks. Exit strategies should be embedded in project planning to transition programmes to national ownership.

EQ7: Impact Achieved and Anticipated

The EUTF Syria had a substantial impact on improving living conditions for refugees and host communities. Increased access to education and healthcare contributed to better human development outcomes. However, systemic barriers, economic instability, and shifting policies in partner countries affected long-term sustainability.

Recommendations

Future interventions should prioritise policy reforms that support refugee integration. Strengthening resilience within host communities will reduce aid dependency. IP monitoring approaches should be expanded to track long-term socio-economic impacts beyond project completion.

EQ8: Contribution of the EU Trust Fund to National Refugee Response Measures

The EUTF Syria complemented national response efforts, aligning interventions with government strategies in key sectors. However, the integration of EUTF-funded initiatives into national frameworks remained inconsistent, and financial sustainability was uncertain.

Recommendations

Future funding should be deeply integrated into national development plans. Policy dialogue should focus on addressing structural barriers to refugee integration. Stronger coordination among international donors, partner governments and EU financial instruments should be prioritised.

EQ9: Effectiveness of EUTF Syria's Communication and Visibility Activities

The EUTF Syria positioned the EU as a major actor in the refugee response. However, branding inconsistencies and limited public engagement reduced visibility. Some MS felt their contributions were not adequately recognized, and public perception of EU-funded projects varied by country.

Recommendations

A more structured communication strategy should ensure consistent branding and highlight both EU and MS contributions. Community engagement efforts should be expanded, and collaboration with local media and civil society should be strengthened to enhance public awareness.

EQ10: Strengths and Advantages of the EUTF Compared to Other EU Instruments

The EUTF Syria demonstrated strengths in flexibility, rapid response, and pooled funding mobilisation. Unlike traditional EU financial instruments, it was able to quickly adapt to emerging crises. However, its short-term nature and fragmented implementation posed challenges for long-term planning.

Recommendations

Future funding models should retain flexibility while incorporating multi-annual planning for sustainability. Coordination with other EU instruments should be enhanced to maximise impact and streamline operations. Simplified administrative procedures should improve efficiency while maintaining strong accountability standards.

1. Context and Background of the Evaluation

THE REGIONAL TRUST FUND IN RESPONSE TO THE SYRIAN CRISIS (EUTF SYRIA)

a. A massive humanitarian crisis

The Syrian refugee crisis is one of the most significant humanitarian emergencies of the 21st century. As of 2024, the Syrian refugee crisis has led to the displacement of over 6.8 million people internally, with another 5.5 million registered as refugees in countries such as Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq.

In the first years of the escalating military conflict, in 2012 and 2013, many Syrian refugees lived in overcrowded camps but mostly in informal settlements, often lacking access to clean water, sanitation, and adequate shelter. Food insecurity was a pressing challenge due to limited income opportunities, with malnutrition, particularly among children. The demand for healthcare services surged, but partner countries' medical infrastructures were overwhelmed. Limited funding restricted access to treatment, vaccines, and essential medicines. Over half of Syrian refugee children remained out of school due to resource constraints, language barriers, and socio-economic hardships.

Many refugees lacked legal documentation, restricting their movement, access to employment, and basic services. Women and girls were at increased risk of exploitation, human trafficking, and domestic violence. Economic hardships led to a rise of negative coping mechanisms such as child labour and early marriages among refugee communities, further exacerbating vulnerabilities.

While the intensity of conflict fluctuated, the situation has remained dire due to ongoing instability and economic hardship. The crisis has placed immense pressure on host nations, testing their social services, economies, and political stability:

- Türkiye, as the largest host country with over 3.6 million Syrian refugees, has integrated many into its labour market. However, economic downturns, rising unemployment, and increasing social tensions have fuelled resentment toward refugees, leading to stricter policies.
- Lebanon, with the highest per capita refugee population, struggles with an economic crisis, political instability, and an overwhelmed public sector. The presence of over 1.5 million Syrians has strained public services and contributed to rising poverty among both refugees and host communities.
- Jordan has implemented structured refugee assistance programmes, yet the influx of Syrians has heightened competition for jobs and resources. Despite international aid, economic difficulties and water scarcity have created additional stress on Jordan's infrastructure.
- Iraq hosts smaller refugee populations but faces its own political and economic challenges. Many refugees are internally displaced due to conflicts within the country.

b. The EU responses to the Syrian crisis

Since 2013, European Union (EU) funding rules have enabled the European Commission (EC) to set up and administer EU Trust Funds (EUTFs) to carry out emergency and post-emergency actions or thematic actions (for example, migration-related)¹. EUTFs as a financial instrument are generally financed from several sources and offer certain advantages over other multi-annual EU programmes: faster decision-making, the possibility of calling on additional resources from EU Member States (MS), other countries or entities, better coordination and greater impact due to the pooling of resources.

The EUTF Syria was established in 2014 to provide a coherent aid response to the needs of refugees from Syria in the neighbouring countries, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities and

¹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) No. 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the Financial Rules Applicable to the General Budget of the Union and Repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No. 1605/2002, OJ L 298, 26.10.2012.

local administrations, with a particular focus on resilience and early recovery. The EUTF Syria has served as the primary instrument for implementing the EU's commitments made at the 2016 London conference on Syria, and at the annual Brussels conferences on the future of Syria and the region (from 2017 to 2023) in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 2254.

The EUTF Syria was designed with a multi-sectoral, regional and multi-partner approach in order to be as comprehensive as possible in meeting the scale and range of needs resulting from the Syrian refugee crisis. In addition, the EUTF Syria has been designed as a truly large fund with large programmes, aiming to improve cost-effectiveness through economies of scale. Furthermore, the EUTF Syria was designed to offer flexible and rapid approaches that could evolve over time in line with developments on the ground.

At the end of December 2021, seven years after its establishment, the mandate of EUTF Syria finally expired. The remaining term until the end of 2025 has only served to conclude the implementation period. With the end of the EUTF's mandate, the EU response to the Syria refugee crisis has since been programmed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), set up in the context of the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework.

c. New challenges to take on in the context of the transition government

Following the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime in December 2024, Syria faces a complex transition marked by political restructuring, economic instability, and security concerns. Various factions and international actors compete for influence, leading to fragmented governance and challenges in restoring law and order. Reconstruction is a monumental task, with extensive urban destruction, high unemployment, and limited international aid due to political uncertainty and corruption concerns. The Syrian refugee crisis persists, with some returning cautiously while others remain abroad due to insecurity.

The EU, plays a critical role in Syria's future, tying reconstruction aid to political reforms and emphasizing human rights.

In this context, the Trust Fund is considered an instrument to address evolving humanitarian and development needs, both in Syria and in the neighbouring countries where refugee communities have been hosted.

PRESENTATION OF THE EUTF SYRIA

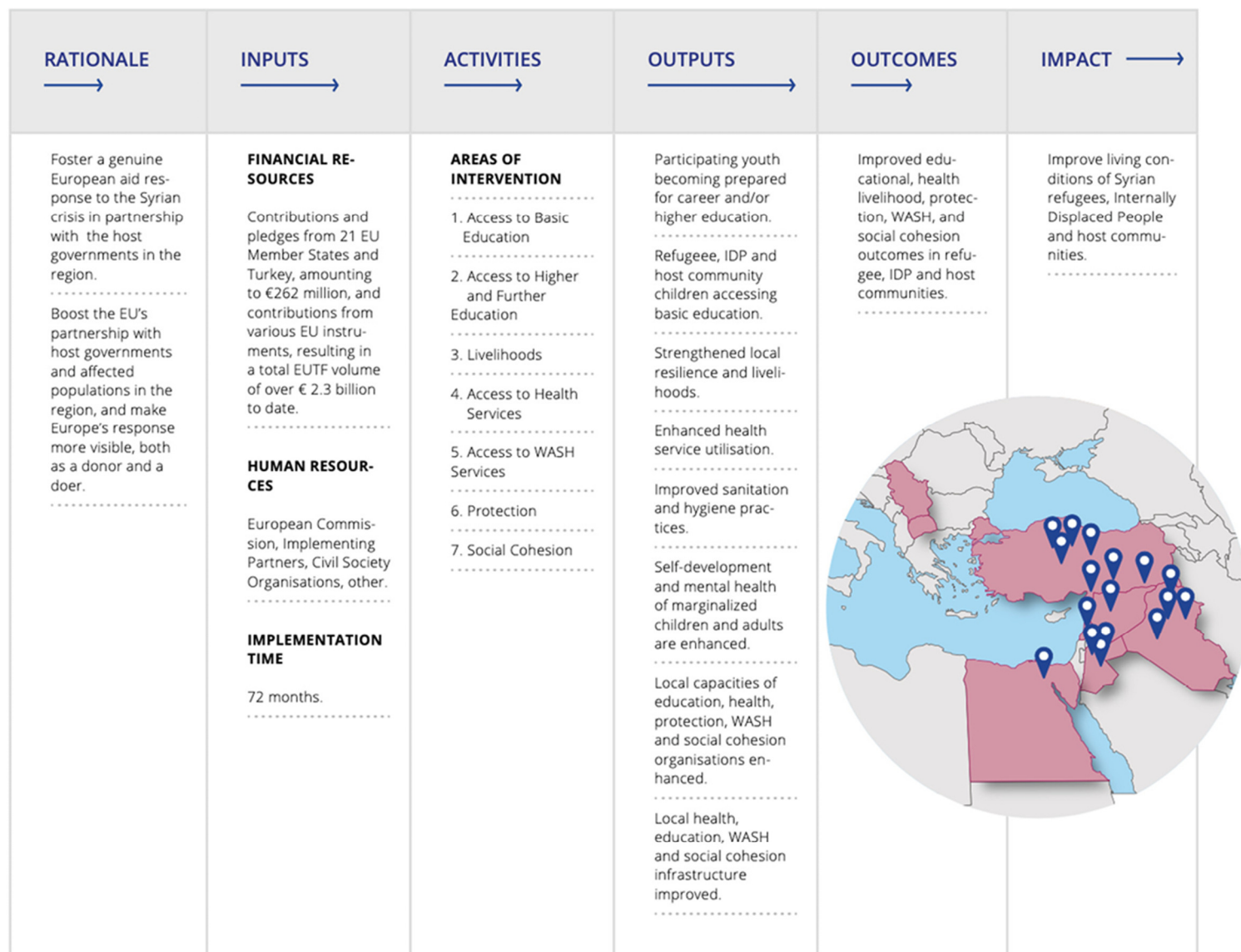
1) EUTF Syria's objectives and the intervention logic

The EUTF Syria initiative was established to provide a coordinated and strengthened aid response to the Syrian crisis at a regional level. It primarily addresses the needs of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and host communities, with a strong focus on resilience and early recovery.

Both single- and multi-country interventions have aimed to deliver quality outcomes for different target groups, ultimately enhancing overall living conditions. As illustrated in the intervention logic (Figure 1), efforts to improve access to essential services for Syrian refugees, IDPs, and vulnerable host communities are complemented by strengthening national, regional, and local institutions, as well as developing or upgrading local infrastructure. The Trust Fund operates on the principle that by ensuring access to healthcare, education, livelihoods, protection, and social cohesion, displaced populations and host communities can achieve better living conditions. This is made possible through enhanced institutional frameworks, increased capacity within communities, and improved access to services and infrastructure.

EUTF Syria interventions are structured within key priority sectors, each with dedicated budget allocations, covering (1) basic education, (2) further and higher education, (3) livelihoods, (4) health, (5) water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), (6) protection, and (7) social cohesion.

Figure 1: EUTF Syria's overall intervention logic



ASSUMPTIONS

- The EUTF is able to identify the most pressing intervention needs.
- Operations of the EUTF are based on inclusive partnerships, local ownership, accountability and transparency.
- Effective collaboration between EC, donor community, implementing partners and other stakeholders both at overall fund and individual country/target area level.
- The donor community continues to fulfill funding commitments as agreed.
- Security situation inside Syria does not worsen dramatically resulting in a further massive influx in the number of refugees across the borders.
- Political stability and security conditions allow for the implementation of actions in the neighbour countries of Syria.
- Syrian refugees, Internally Displaced People and host communities are interested and willing to participate in the various actions deployed under EUTF Syria.

2) The EUTF Syria monitoring and evaluation mechanism

Since 2017, EUTF Syria has been benefiting from the technical assistance known as the EUTF Syria Monitoring and Evaluation Framework with the aim of assessing, at various levels, the extent to which the overall objective of the Trust Fund is being achieved. The objectives of this technical assistance are threefold:

- **Results-Oriented Monitoring:** To conduct regular and ad-hoc external monitoring and develop recommendations for Madad-financed projects and provide evidence-based knowledge on the results and outputs, through the use of SMART qualitative indicators.
- **Data Analysis:** To assess effectiveness of the Madad projects at thematic and geographic level, through centralised data collection and analysis based on the inputs received by project partners and sector/ country analysis.
- **Impact-focused Evaluation:** To assess the sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness of Madad-funded programmes and evaluate prospects of impact, through external portfolio evaluations.

An EUTF Evaluation Strategy was defined and several framing tools have been designed to meet these objectives. For example, the Result Framework that enables the measurement of the results achieved by the partners implementing the actions, and the Outcome Framework which is oriented to change measurement at sector and longer terms levels.

The EUTF Results Framework

The main objective of the Results Framework is to provide evidence-based knowledge on the progress achieved by EUTF-financed projects. The Results Framework is organized around several key components:

- **Access to Services:** Evaluates the reach and quality of services provided to Syrian refugees, IDPs, and host communities.
- **Local Capacity Strengthening:** Assesses efforts to enhance the capabilities of local institutions and service providers.
- **Improvement of Local Infrastructure:** Monitors the development and rehabilitation of essential infrastructure to support community needs.

By integrating these components, the EUTF Syria Results Framework ensures a comprehensive and adaptive approach to monitoring and evaluating the Trust Fund's impact, promoting accountability, and enhancing the effectiveness of aid delivery in response to the Syrian crisis.

The EUTF Strategic Outcome Framework

The EUTF Syria Strategic Outcome Framework is a strategic tool designed to guide and evaluate the EUTF Syria's impact in addressing the Syrian crisis. It focuses on meeting the needs of Syrian refugees, IDPs, and host communities in neighbouring countries, and on identifying lessons learned and potential gaps. In that sense, the framework is a tool that helps inform programming, ensuring aid efforts remain relevant, effective, and aligned with beneficiaries' evolving needs.

The Outcome Framework reflects EUTF programming at both sector and country levels, providing an overview of expected outcomes resulting from delivered outputs. Recognizing that outcomes may take time to materialize and that awareness about them might be limited, the framework aims to enhance understanding and reporting of these outcomes.

The EUTF Syria identifies three social actors and corresponding levels of change where outcomes may occur:

- **Individual Level:** Behavioural changes among beneficiaries, such as refugees or host community members seeking specific services after awareness sessions.
- **Organizational Level:** Adjustments in intervention strategies by local organizations, for instance, after piloting new approaches in service delivery.
- **National Level:** Policy or regulatory changes promoted by national institutions, exemplified by the adoption of laws developed with EUTF support.

By focusing on these areas, the EUTF Syria Outcome Framework ensures a comprehensive and adaptive approach to aid delivery, promoting accountability and enhancing the effectiveness of the European Union's response to the Syrian crisis.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

1) Evaluation objectives, questions, and matrix

The EUTF Syria Board agreed in December 2023 that there was a need for a final evaluation, not only to evaluate the achievements of the Trust Fund based on traditional evaluation criteria such as the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and effects of interventions, but also to evaluate the Trust Fund as a specific EU instrument to capitalize on this experience for future uses.

The overall objective of the evaluation, as stated in the Terms of Reference (ToRs), is *“to contribute to the continued relevance and impact of the EU’s response to the Syria crisis in the Southern Neighbourhood region, in line with the EC political agenda of “a stronger Europe in the world”, and to “contribute to institutional learning, in particular by providing experience of the work of EU Trust Funds, using EUTF Syria as an example”*. This general objective is supplemented by three specific objectives (SO).

- **SO1. Assess the overall functioning, performance and achieved/ expected impact of the EUTF** from its inception (December 2014) until today, with a specific view on how the EUTF has contributed to the response to the Syrian crisis in the EUTF recipient countries (particularly Jordan Lebanon, Türkiye and Iraq).

Under this objective, specific attention will be given on analysing the achieved results regarding access to services, capacity building of service providers, enhanced infrastructure, as well as the outcomes linked with behavioural change among the target beneficiaries, performance and practice changes among service providers, and contributions to policy-making.

- **SO2. Provide an overview** of the extent to which the Trust Fund Model, as a (financing) instrument, has significant strengths/ weaknesses compared to other EU financing modalities.

Under this objective, an internal analysis of the EUTF Syria governance and management will be undertaken through a comparative approach that considers the other European Commission (EC) instruments in the target countries as well as the other EU Trust Funds elsewhere.

- **SO3. Identify lessons learned, experiences and possible gaps to be covered, synergies to be implemented** in continuing supporting the response to the Syrian refugee crisis.

This objective should be based on the analyses carried out for SO 1 and 2.

The final evaluation terms of references (ToRs) propose a total of 12 Evaluation Questions (EQs) which were reorganised and rationalised during the inception phase, leading to a final list of 10 questions displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: EUTF Syria final evaluation – Questions to be addressed

Evaluation questions	Evaluation criteria	Approach to address the evaluation questions
EQ1: How have relevance, responsiveness and targeting developed over the life of the EUTF?	Relevance	This EQ examines whether interventions selected and supported are aligned to identified needs and national priorities. The evaluation will assess the process relating to identification, targeting and formulation, which is piloted by the EU OM at EUDs, for national project, and at the HQ level, for regional projects
EQ2: Were the internal processes, management and governance of the EUTF suitable to manage the given mandate?	Efficiency	Mobilising human resources and capacities (management, technical, administrative) within the EUTF unit as well as the decision-making process based on information-sharing between the EUTF Unit and the Board are aspects which have been closely examined.
EQ3: Were allocation and commitment of available funds implemented in a timely and efficient manner?	Efficiency	This EQ complements EQ2 by looking at critical features of an EUTF, i.e. its funds pooling capacity and its flexibility and responsiveness in funds allocation.
EQ4: To what extent have the choices of recipients and implementing partners allowed for an efficient use of funds?	Efficiency	This EQ deals with the choice of recipients based on several implementation modalities: INGO, EU member state development agencies, UN agencies and international financial institutions, through direct grants or delegation agreements. The evaluation carried out a comparative analysis between these recipients and modalities, as well as between regional/multi-country projects and national projects, in order to highlight the respective strengths and weaknesses as regards to efficiency.
EQ5: How can the quality of partnership relations with national authorities and implementing stakeholders be assessed?	Effectiveness	A stakeholder analysis including the EUDs, the implementing partners (IPs), and the national authorities, has been carried out to appreciate the extent to which partnerships have been conducive to deliver results and outcome.
EQ6: How can the achievement of the EUTF objectives be assessed overall? What was the contribution of the monitoring and evaluation mechanism?	Effectiveness	The evaluation team will use the result framework and consolidated data from the result reporting of EUTF Syria. Another aspect of the question includes a specific component addressing the EUTF functioning as a model by examining how informative the M&E framework has been for programming. The evaluation team informed whether the monitoring mechanisms have been in place for timely, adequate and efficient reporting, and to feed into management decisions on strategy and future programming.
EQ7: What impact has been achieved or is still anticipated as a result of the EUTF's activities? EQ8: How can the contribution of the EUTF be assessed in relation to the measures taken by beneficiary countries to address the refugee crisis?	Impact	Measuring the impact of EUTF Syria was based on the EUTF Syria Outcomes Framework. An analysis of changes in the behaviour of target populations, the performance and practices of service providers and the policymaking of national authorities' policies, covering all the sectors, has been carried out.
EQ9: To what extent have the EUTF's communication and visibility activities helped to adequately communicate the achievements of the EUTF as well as the values of the EU?	Effectiveness	This EQ relates to the capacity of the EUTF Syria to communicate its results and outcomes and to increase the visibility of the EU and the Member States in the region. The evaluation team will assess the extent to which the EUTF partners and stakeholders are aware of EUTF outcomes, activities and investments, and aware of the EU continued response to the Syrian crisis
EQ10: Can specific strengths/advantages be identified when comparing the EUTF's mandate and activities with other EC instruments?	Added-value	This question has been addressed using the findings related to the assessment of the features of the Trust Fund and comparing them with other EC instruments used in the region and with other EU Trust Funds used elsewhere.

Based on these questions, an evaluation matrix was defined as a tool to guide the evaluation exercise. For each EQ, the matrix proposes one or more judgment criteria (JC) as well as one or more indicator for each evaluation question. A total of 14 JCs and 35 indicators were designed. JCs were formulated as desirable statements that meet the EQ, and indicators were to measure the veracity of statements.

The indicators were the starting point for collection of data from primary and secondary sources. The JCs analysed all their associated indicators and provided a composite finding for use in answering the EQ. All the data collected were populated into the matrix to address the matrix's indicators and JCs, which resulted in the elaboration of the Evaluation report volume 2.

2) Data collection methods

The evaluation team collected data from both primary and secondary sources, using a variety of data collection techniques. A triangulation method for the collection and analysis of primary and secondary data has been used in order to optimally respond to the evaluation questions.

The main primary sources for this evaluation were individuals representing the stakeholders involved in the implementation of the EUTF Syria interventions across all priority sectors, as well as third-party stakeholders who were not directly involved in the EUTF Syria but were considered as key actors of the priority sectors. The secondary sources are documentation from project implementing partners, partner countries across all priority sectors.

Documentary review

A list of key implementing partners (IPs) was drawn in coordination with the EU during the inception phase. The documents related to each of their EUTF Syria funded projects, including country or regional projects, along with other documents related to sectors and to EUTF as an instrument, were collected during the inception phase in preparation for the desk review. The senior experts, including the team leader, were each assigned specific priority sectors to review the projects-related documents. Documents included the logframes, Quarterly Information Notes (QIN), EUTF Result Reports, Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) reports, sector portfolio evaluations, and other types of evaluation such as sector-related strategic evaluation of all types of EU support. The list of reviewed documents can be found in annex 2.

The review resulted in providing a written evidence-based assessment for each indicator. This assessment took into account the specific circumstances of each country where the analysed interventions took place.

The IPs' online survey

Based on a questionnaire designed and validated during the inception phase, the IPs online survey was launched in late July 2024 after the approval of the evaluation's inception report with the purpose of consulting the IP's about their satisfaction toward the EUTF Syria as an instrument, their partnership with the national authorities and the EUDs, the main achievements of their funded-projects as well as the long-term effects on the targeted population.

17 IPs and 29 projects were initially selected during the inception phase as primary sources for the data collection process. IPs' representatives were contacted to complete the online survey. However, the list was broadened to include all the organisations selected for the EUTF Regional Education study, which was launched in parallel to the EUTF Syria Final Evaluation. This Study aims to provide an overview of selected aspects of educational interventions for refugees and vulnerable people from the host communities, in Jordan, Lebanon and Türkiye. Moreover, other IPs were included to maximise the chance to reach a significant number of respondents.

A total of 43 organisations and 86 persons (average of two per organisation) covering 78 projects, were contacted. By mid-September, 34 persons had responded which although corresponds to a 39% response rate, the numbers of IPs responding to the survey – 26 IPs - were satisfactorily representative of the total number of IPs.

Consultations through individual interviews

Interviews with Operational Managers (OMs) in charge of the follow-up of EUTF Syria-supported projects in Lebanon, Jordan and Türkiye, with EUTF Syria staff at headquarter, as well as interviews with

representatives of EU Member States (MS) of the EUTF Syria Operational Board were conducted. This consultation provided insights on the performance of the EUTF Syria as an EU instrument, performance related to the main outcomes in the sectors concerned and to better understand how project supervision, outcome monitoring, and approaches towards sustainability took into account the changing context. Specific attention was also given to the donors' coordination mechanism and to what extent national governments were involved in them.

Additional interviews with key implementing partners, institutional partners and EU OMs in the host countries also took place, either during field trips to Jordan and Türkiye or remotely as regards Lebanon, to substantiate data collected through the desk review and the online survey.

3) Evaluation implementation plan

The data collection and analysis method occurred in an iterative process that unfolded in three phases: the inception, desk, and the verification phase, as described in Table 2:

Table 2: Final Evaluation Action Plan

EVALUATION PHASE	KEY ACTIVITIES	KEY milestones	DELIVERABLES
INCEPTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kick-off meeting in Brussels Collection and analysis of relevant documentation Detailed outline of evaluation approach and methodology (including evaluation matrix) Lists of contacts and sources for later evaluation phases Outline of a possible online survey (for desk phase) Workplan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KO meeting: May 29 Inception report approval: July 11 	1. Inception report (draft and final)
DESK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of a structured online survey Preliminary interviews with a limited number of key informants, in particular in Brussels Analysis of existing secondary data Collection and generation of primary data Draft itinerary for field visits/ interview plan (for verification phase) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch of the online survey: July 26 Submission of draft desk report: October 16 Submission of final desk report: November 16 	2. Desk report with preliminary key findings, obvious data gaps and proposals to fill them (draft and final)
VERIFICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further data collection and analysis Field/ verification visits at least to Lebanon and Jordan (if justified to Brussels and/ or Türkiye) to further improve data quality through interviews with key informants Debriefing of verified findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field trips to Jordan and Türkiye between November 20 and December 20 Remote interviews with Lebanon and EU staff in December and January Information collected during the desk phase was further explored and substantiated 	3. Debriefing presentation
REPORTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the detailed evaluation report, including findings, conclusions, and lessons learned (draft and final) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report preparation: January and February 2025 	4. Evaluation report (draft and final) 5. Outline of a possible Lessons Learned Document

4) Challenges

Due to the phasing out of the EUTF Syria, the EU officers available and consultable for the evaluation as well as the IP interlocutors have decreased tendentially, which could have caused a problem of accessibility to key information. The Evaluation Team compensated this challenge with a comprehensive desk review and by targeting in-position EUTF Syria operational managers and some managers who had key position at the HQ level and who kindly accepted to take part to this evaluation.

The regional tensions in 2024 prevented the evaluation team from visiting Lebanon during the verification phase. However, remote interviews with targeted stakeholders were properly planned and executed. Field trips to Jordan and Türkiye took place as planned.

5) Structure of the report

This EUTF Syria Final Evaluation is composed of two volumes:

- The current Volume 1 of the evaluation report provides synthetic and analytical answers to each evaluation questions (section 2) as well as conclusions and recommendations per evaluation questions (section 3).
- Volume 2 reflects and interprets the results of all the data collection activities including the online survey, the documentary review, and interviews with the OMs and some of the IPs. It is therefore structured around the evaluation matrix and the provided responses primarily address the evaluation matrix indicators designed before each evaluation question.
- An ad hoc lessons learned report has also been developed to provide clear guidance as to whether and to what extent the Trust Fund model would be suitable as an EU intervention mechanism in future similar crisis situations. The possibility of continuing the EUTF M&E system after the institutional withdrawal of the EUTF has also been specified.

2. Response to Evaluation Questions

EQ1: HOW HAVE RELEVANCE, RESPONSIVENESS AND TARGETING DEVELOPED OVER THE LIFE OF THE EUTF SYRIA?

1. The EUTF Syria evolved from a short-term emergency response mechanism to a long-term development instrument, becoming more relevant, responsive, and targeted over time.

The EUTF Syria was able to identify key issues and emerging priorities in line with the beneficiaries' needs and the EU, EU MS and partner countries priorities for responding to the Syria crisis. However, the evaluation highlights different findings about the relevance of the EUTF Syria-funded interventions.

a. Early Phases (2015–2017): Focus on Emergency Assistance

At its inception, the EUTF Syria was primarily focused on humanitarian aid and crisis response. The goal was to address urgent needs stemming from the Syrian refugee crisis, particularly in neighbouring host countries such as Türkiye, Lebanon, and Jordan.

Targeting was broad and population-based, with a focus on ensuring access to education, social services, and emergency cash assistance. This first generation of projects was negotiated directly with IPs at the EUTF Headquarters (HQ) level to quickly adapt the EUTF response to various contexts. This generation was primarily driven by a cost-efficiency objective to quickly deploy large programmes in response to massive beneficiary needs. The conditions for in-depth needs identification were not always in place, especially in the higher education and health sectors, as pointed out by sector evaluations.

- For example, the initial EUTF response (T04.11, T04.26, T04.29) in the higher education sector was primarily focused on providing as many scholarships as possible to reach the highest number of beneficiaries, rather than enhancing students' perspectives for employment or fostering their personal and career development.
- In terms of the health sector, the earliest EUTF response, did not tackle healthcare's affordability— the key barrier for Syrians and vulnerable host communities - alongside availability and accessibility. The sector evaluation mentioned that national stakeholders had little or no inputs into the initial designs and consequently showed little ownership.
- Cash-based programmes in the livelihood sector were key to assist people in facing lack of income but did not sufficiently address long-term employment barriers.

While these interventions were relevant to the crisis and helped address immediate needs, they were not sufficiently tailored to long-term integration and had limited sustainability.

b. Middle Phases (2018–2020): Shift Toward Resilience and Economic Integration

By 2018, the EUTF began shifting from short-term emergency responses to resilience-focused development interventions. This transition was necessary as the refugee situation became protracted, with no clear prospect of voluntary return for Syrians in host countries.

In contrast, **this second generation of projects was programmed at the country level and followed consultations facilitated by the EUDs with national authorities.** These projects were more relevant to the specific contexts of the countries where they were implemented. They aligned with the Strategic Overarching Framework, the Operational Results Framework, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), the Country-level Response Plans for the Syria Crisis, as well as various national development plans and sector-specific country priorities and strategies.

The coordination and cooperation between EU Delegations (EUDs), Member States (MS), and national and international stakeholders in each priority sector and partner country appear to have been facilitated by a variety of mechanisms:

- The needs of beneficiaries, emerging priorities, and the most suitable modalities were often determined through detailed assessments and consultations with ministries and local partners. For example, livelihood interventions typically involved needs assessments, although in some cases, particularly concerning labour market demand, further in-depth analysis provided better alignment with market needs.
- Coordination among key stakeholders was achieved through established mechanisms such as National Steering Committees (NSCs), which included key ministries and local partners. These committees helped in the design and decision-making processes, ensuring that the needs and operational limitations were considered.
- Different sectors saw varying levels of coordination. In the health sector, for instance, a strong collaboration with national health authorities, facilitated by the EUDs, resulted in better-defined interventions. In the WASH sector, coordination challenges were observed, particularly in Lebanon due to the fragmented institutional setup.

c. Late Phases (2021–2024): Institutionalization and Adaptation to External Shocks

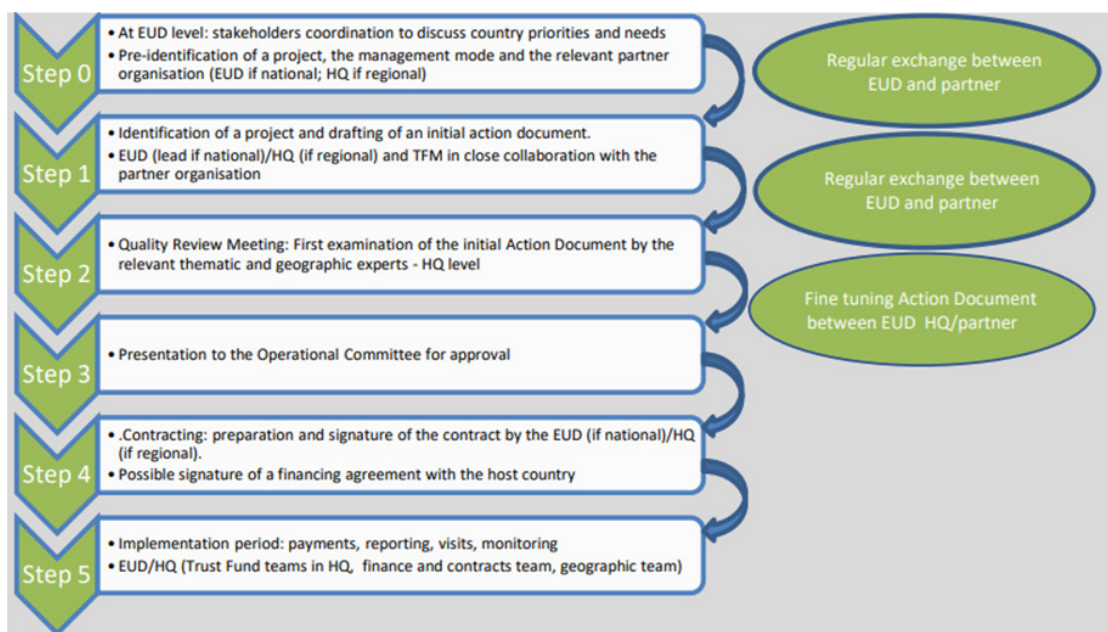
The most recent phase of the EUTF for Syria saw a strong push toward institutionalization, localization, and greater adaptability in the face of external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the escalating military conflict in Ukraine, and natural disasters.

2. The EUTF project cycle management and operational processes enabled rapid responses for project identification and formulation to identified needs and priorities and were flexible enough to adapt to contextual changes on the ground.

a. Efficient identification and formulation workflow

EUTFs are aimed to be a rapid and flexible instrument that allow a fast and comprehensive response to crisis. The EUTF Syria project cycle management and operational workflow are described as follows. The identification and formulation process encompasses step 0 and 1 (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: EUTF Syria project cycle management and operational workflow



The desk review and interviews with OM indicate a significant evolution in how Steps 0 and 1 are conducted. In the first year of EUTF Syria (2015), 66% of the selected projects were multi-country initiatives with a regional focus. The goal was to make a substantial response to the humanitarian crisis and utilize the EUTF Syria as an instrument for large-scale programmes aligned with the needs of the regional crisis. These programmes were managed at the HQ level, during a time when the EUTF Syria had limited human resources. Consequently, the identification and formulation phases were very brief.

The share of regional projects declined rapidly, dropping to approximately 18% between 2016 and 2020, with the focus shifting to projects targeting individual countries to be managed at the Delegation level. This identification and formulation process required greater coordination, particularly with national authorities and other technical and financial partners.

- A defining feature of the Trust Fund's success has been its emphasis on multi-stakeholder collaboration. The identification and formulation of projects have been meticulously designed to align with national development strategies, government priorities, and the evolving needs of refugee and host communities.
- Extensive consultations with local stakeholders, national authorities, and IPs ensured that interventions were relevant and context-specific.

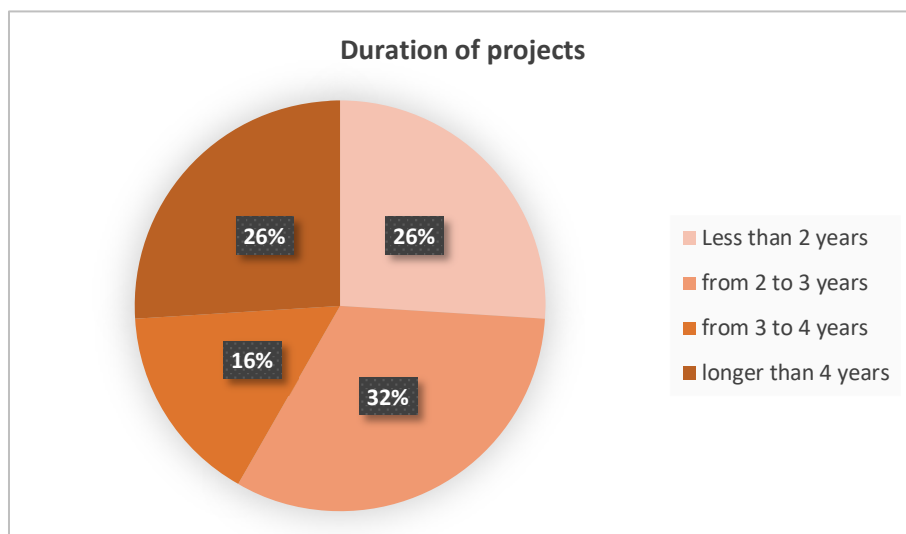
Multi-stakeholder coordination, while valuable, initially, on occasion extended the project formulation phase. The necessity to align international agencies, national governments, and local institutions meant additional time was needed to harmonise strategies and funding mechanisms. However, according to the OM interviewed, the increasing number of tasks assigned to them and the challenges of coordinating with national authorities were partly offset by the fact that OM managing EUTF Syria projects could leverage the sectoral knowledge of their colleagues in the Delegations. As a result, **the formulation and identification process became shorter, as OM could draw on lessons learned from past experiences.**

Other structural and operational challenges have posed obstacles to efficient identification and formulation workflow:

- One of the primary challenges has been the short duration of project implementation periods. Many projects were designed with an 18–24 month timeline, as shown in the Graph 1 below, which is more suitable for humanitarian aid rather than long-term development efforts. Yet, 64% of projects with a duration less than two years were contracted after the early stage of the

EUTF Syria, before 2017. Given the complexity of projects requiring infrastructure development, capacity-building, and policy integration, implementing agencies recommended extending project timeframes to at least 36 months.

Graph 1. EUTF Syria financial data



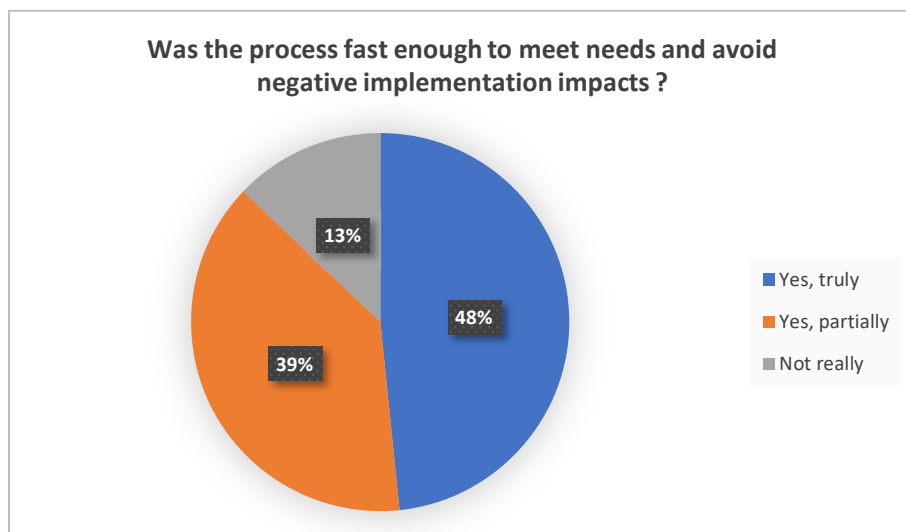
- Administrative and bureaucratic bottlenecks also slowed response times, particularly in Türkiye, Lebanon, and Jordan. Complex registration and approval processes at the national level required multiple layers of engagement, causing project initiation delays. In some cases, national authorities imposed specific demands that could slow down the formulation and identification process. For instance, in Türkiye, civil society organisations (CSOs) identified as potential IPs were thoroughly scrutinized by national authorities before receiving full approval. In Lebanon, discussions about the final recipients or beneficiaries of support across various sectors could be prolonged, especially amid institutional instability and frequent ministerial

Despite these challenges, the Trust Fund’s project cycle management and operational workflows have significantly improved over time, resulting in more efficient response times and impactful interventions. By decentralizing decision-making, enhancing coordination with local stakeholders, and refining financial mechanisms, the Trust Fund has increased its agility and effectiveness. While early challenges in bureaucracy and coordination affected response times, continuous improvements have led to a more streamlined approach.

This positive appreciation is reflected in the perspective of representatives in the EUDs and MS, who considered EUTF Syria having fulfilled its mission as a rapid deployment instrument. The strong involvement of MS, given the political and strategic significance of the Syrian refugee issue, was reflected in their active participation in Board meetings, which helped expedite the process. Some EUD representatives noted that having only two Board meetings a year encourages staff and management to accelerate the formulation and production of Action Documents to ensure they are ready for review.

In the online survey, the vast majority of IPs reported that the project cycle management and operational workflow of EUTF Syria were sufficiently rapid to meet the needs of beneficiaries on the ground. Only 13% of respondents indicated issues related to the formulation period and the contracting process, as shown in the Graph 2 below. There were reported examples of projects that underwent several iterations while needs on the ground were quickly evolving, or projects that experienced delays in their second phase due to a prolonged award process.

Graph 2. Source: EUTF Syria final evaluation online survey



In addition, some OMs suggest adopting multi-annual action documents and budgets to avoid repeating similar processes each year. According to these OMs, these action documents should remain sufficiently general to further enhance the adaptability and flexibility of the EUTF instrument.

b. Great EUTF Syria flexibility

The EUTF Syria was not only a funding mechanism but also a structural instrument that enabled rapid adaptation in response to evolving crises and sector-specific challenges. Unlike traditional aid programmes, the EUTF's multi-sectoral design, financial flexibility, and decentralized implementation allowed for swift adjustments to meet urgent needs while maintaining a strategic vision.

This adaptability was facilitated by several key institutional and operational mechanisms within the EUTF framework. For example, as EUTFs are not tied to national programmes or fixed allocations, the Board can allocate funds at short notice where they are most needed, making the Fund an inherently flexible instrument, capable of reacting rapidly to new crises and population displacements. This specific feature of EUTFs has been confirmed in the case of EUTF Syria.

Rapid Response Capacity in Crisis Situations

The EUTF's ability to mobilize resources swiftly and adjust interventions in response to sudden crises was evident across multiple crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the Türkiye-Syria earthquake, Lebanon's financial collapse, and the Beirut Port explosion.

- COVID-19 Pandemic Response

When the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, it disrupted nearly every sector. In response, the EUTF swiftly approved an emergency €54.7 million "Corona Package", which supported eight sector-specific interventions across the targeted countries.

- This emergency funding enabled partners such as WHO, UNOPS, and the Lebanese Red Cross to scale up pandemic containment measures, medical supply procurement, and epidemiological surveillance systems.
- The education sector saw equally rapid adjustments. With schools across countries forced to close, EUTF-funded education programmes such as SRPR (T04.212), TVET4All (T04.231), and the UNDP-led project in Türkiye (T04.76) transitioned to online learning, developing integrated digital materials in collaboration with psychosocial support (PSS) teams. This ensured that displaced Syrian children, many of whom had already faced severe disruptions in their education, could continue learning. Additionally, workplace learning for the

construction sector was moved into schools, creating a more accessible learning environment and preventing further delays in vocational training programmes (TVET4All).

- The pandemic also had a devastating effect on employment, requiring immediate modifications in economic support programmes. The RDPP project (T04.164) in Lebanon shifted from traditional employability programmes to home-based income generation, recognizing that lockdowns and movement restrictions made formal employment nearly impossible for refugees. Similarly, the EUTF Support to Women's Resilience and Economic Empowerment (T04.290) in Jordan, which initially targeted uneducated women, expanded its scope to include educated women who had lost their jobs due to pandemic-induced layoffs. This demonstrated how the EUTF's flexible financial mechanisms enabled swift programmatic changes based on real-time needs assessments.

- Türkiye-Syria Earthquake Response

The Türkiye-Syria earthquake caused widespread devastation, making it necessary for EUTF-funded programmes to pivot towards urgent humanitarian and economic recovery interventions. The earthquake necessitated a series of adaptive measures to ensure the continuity of operations, support affected communities and address financial and logistical challenges.

- One of the most immediate responses was the reallocation of funds under the guidance of the EUD. This allowed projects to shift resources toward emergency relief efforts while still maintaining aspects of their original objectives. Given the significant destruction in areas where seven of the project lots were located, adjustments had to be made to accommodate the realities on the ground.
- The financial impact of the earthquake was substantial, doubling operational costs and straining planned activities. To address this, project stakeholders engaged in budget revisions and no-cost extensions, with at least two major budget amendments being implemented—one in the middle of the project and another near its completion. These modifications were necessary to restructure expenditures and reallocate funding where it was most needed.
- Another key adaptation was the introduction of cash-for-work initiatives. Recognizing the disruption to employment opportunities, particularly in sectors reliant on seasonal labour, these initiatives provided immediate financial support to affected workers while also contributing to community rehabilitation. The cash-for-work programmes helped maintain economic stability for displaced individuals and ensured that critical infrastructure, including community assets, could be restored more efficiently.

- Lebanon's Economic & Financial Collapse, and Beirut Port Explosion

The economic crisis in Lebanon, characterized by hyperinflation, currency devaluation, and widespread financial instability, necessitated urgent changes in project implementation.

- The EUTF recognized that cash-based assistance programmes were becoming ineffective due to rapid currency depreciation. To mitigate this, programmes like LINKED (T04.241) were modified to introduce dollarized cash payments, ensuring that beneficiaries retained purchasing power.
- In the health sector, WHO's intervention (T04.74) expanded beyond its initial mandate to include direct medication procurement, filling critical gaps left by the government's inability to secure essential drugs. Meanwhile, REBAHS expanded its primary healthcare services, increasing the number of consultations from 500 to 3,000 per month as more Lebanese citizens—previously reliant on private healthcare—turned to public services due to affordability issues.

The Beirut Port explosion in August 2020 presented a unique challenge, as the disaster caused widespread physical and economic damage in a city already struggling with a financial collapse.

- The explosion placed immense pressure on healthcare facilities, requiring the EUTF to reallocate resources toward emergency medical response efforts. The Lebanese Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) engaged directly with the EUTF to adjust project priorities, ensuring that hospital support, emergency treatment, and post-trauma care were quickly integrated into existing programmes.
- Additionally, water and sanitation projects had to be reoriented toward emergency service delivery, as the explosion damaged key infrastructure. Some WASH interventions, such as T04.272 and T04.294, which were originally designed for infrastructure improvements, had to be repurposed for immediate water supply stabilization.
- Economic support programmes also had to pivot toward recovery efforts, providing small grants and business assistance to affected workers and enterprises.

The EUTF's ability to respond quickly and adjust interventions without bureaucratic bottlenecks made it instrumental in delivering timely, life-saving support in all these crises.

Flexibility in programme design and implementation

The EUTF's structural flexibility allowed IPs to modify interventions mid-course, ensuring that projects could evolve in response to changing needs. Unlike rigid EU funding instruments - such as the bilateral supports through geographic programmes and IPA of NDICI Global Europe - which often require formal amendments before adjustments can be made, the EUTF enabled direct modifications to project scope, target groups, and financial allocations without unnecessary delays.

- In the education sector, this adaptability was evident in scholarship programmes such as HOPES (T04.11) and EDU-SYRIA, which modified their eligibility criteria to account for economic barriers preventing refugee students from continuing their studies. Initially designed as merit-based scholarships, these programmes expanded to include students facing financial hardships, ensuring that more vulnerable populations had access to higher education.
- The health sector also benefited from programmatic flexibility. In Lebanon, as WHO's intervention (T04.74) recognized the worsening medication shortages, it was modified to focus on drug procurement, a role originally intended for the Lebanese government. Similarly, the REBAHS initiative was scaled up to absorb more patients as private healthcare services became unaffordable due to Lebanon's financial crisis.
- Economic and livelihood support projects had to be restructured as well. The EDU-SYRIA (T04.215) programme in Jordan was originally designed to promote traditional employment pathways. However, recognizing the growing employment restrictions on Syrian refugees, it was restructured to focus on digital employment opportunities, such as online business development and coding programmes. In Lebanon, RDPP (T04.164) transitioned away from large-scale employment initiatives to focus on home-based income generation, allowing refugees to work within the confines of restrictive host-country regulations.

This flexibility ensured that EUTF programmes remained relevant and effective, even as local economic, political, and social conditions shifted unexpectedly.

EQ2: WERE THE INTERNAL PROCESSES, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE OF THE EUTF SYRIA SUITABLE TO MANAGE THE GIVEN MANDATE?

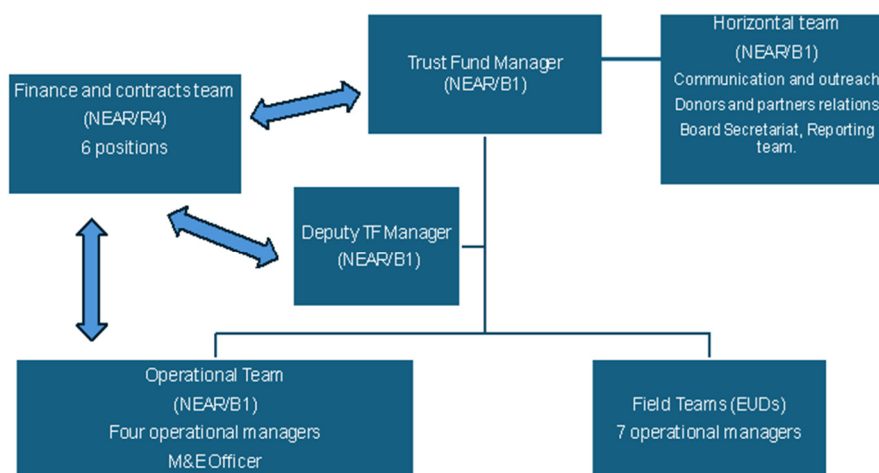
1. **The EUTF governance, mechanisms and processes were conducive to achieve the EUTF mandate and objectives. The human resources and capacities (management, technical, administrative) within the EUTF unit have been adequate for the management of the instrument, despite a slow staffing**

process at the beginning. Furthermore, information sharing with the MS on projects, results and challenges has been effective.

a. Adequate human resources capacities

The EUTF Syria is managed by the EC on behalf of the donors and the EU. A centralised management structure was established, revolving around a secretariat based in Brussels (see Figure 3 below). This secretariat is responsible for preparing meetings of the Trust Fund Board and the Trust Fund Operational Board, transmitting essential information related to financial management and the status of action implementation, and producing reports, including annual reports. The chart below describes the management structure:

Figure 3: EUTF Syria management structure. Source: EUTF Syria evaluation



Operational managers (OMs) at headquarter level were recruited as sector experts covering the various priority sectors of EUTF Syria. Given that the number of managers was smaller than the number of sectors, they covered different sectors within EUTF Syria. These HQ managers played a fundamental role in designing and launching the first EUTF Syria interventions as the recruitment of OMs in the EUDs took time. The assignment of OMs in the EUDs varied throughout the intervention period and was determined by country needs, project volume and the human resources already available in the delegations.

The recruitment process for EUTF Syria was slow, and the management team in Brussels was not fully established until late 2016. Although the assignment of three civil servants in 2015 was deemed appropriate, due to the slow pace of contracting, subsequent staff shortages quickly hampered EUTF Syria's performance. The Operational Board emphasized in 2016 that the allocation of human resources in line with Trust Fund management responsibilities and priorities, including Finance, Contract and Audit staff, needed to be urgently increased and streamlined. By 2017, the Operational Board noted significant reinforcements of human resources in DG NEAR for both the operational and financial management of the EUTF Syria. This enhancement was in response to the growing financial resources of the EUTF and led to improved capacity for timely project contracting, as well as better monitoring and management of ongoing projects and commitments.

Nevertheless, while EUTF Syria performance improved compared with 2017, bottlenecks remained due to inadequate staffing. Project identification methods evolved, and in doing so required greater consultation with IPs, and more critically with national authorities in partner countries. This resulted in lengthening the overall process.

The EUTF Syria mid-term evaluation corroborated by interviews with EUTF staff at the EUDs confirmed that **EUD staff in some EUDs were very active in providing support to the EUTF Syria team, which helped to respond to the huge portfolio of projects.** The staff consulted at EUD level emphasised the strong complementarity between the staff assigned to EUTF Syria and the staff assigned to the EUDs, generating a high level of coherence in the sectoral strategies developed by the EUDs in each country.

Furthermore, EUTF Syria staff assigned to the EUDs and consulted during the evaluation indicated that centralising the financial and contractual management of projects in Brussels was relevant to guarantee accurate information sharing with the Operational Board. However, they also pointed out, that having a centralised management cell with limited human resources, results in a slowed workflow, especially regarding project implementation follow-up.

b. Effective information sharing with the EU Member States

Interviews with representatives of the Board's MS confirm the results of the mid-term evaluation carried out in 2018: the assessment is generally positive, and MS representatives appreciate the Operational Board meetings as a forum for sharing information. Above all, **the quality of meeting preparation, including the transmission of information in advance, is praised.** The **inclusiveness and participation of the partners/ beneficiary countries of the EUTF as observers** (e.g. Iraq, Türkiye, Lebanon and Jordan) is seen as **an added value of the EUTF Syria.**

Interviews conducted by the final evaluation team, as well as a review of Board meeting minutes and related documentation, reveal that the board is generally fulfilling its mandate. Informed decisions are made on the allocation of funds to individual actions, and EUTF implementation is monitored. The frequency of the meetings – between two and three times per year – as well as the attendance rate are consistently high, and the Board meeting is considered as a valuable venue for MS representatives to express their views on programming and implementation issues.

To ensure that MS remain well-informed, structured reporting mechanisms were established by the EUTF Syria HQ team. Quarterly monitoring reports provided regular updates on financial contributions, contracts, and project progress. In addition, the EUTF maintained an online portal, offering MSs on-demand access to relevant documents and project information. Beyond these formal reporting structures, efforts were made to facilitate direct engagement with stakeholders. In 2018, field visits to project sites in Jordan and Lebanon were organized, allowing MS representatives to witness firsthand the impact of EUTF-funded interventions and engage with beneficiaries and IPs on the ground.

Despite these efforts, challenges persisted in ensuring transparency and visibility regarding MS contributions. **While the EUTF had established structured reporting mechanisms, some MS expressed concerns about the depth and accessibility of the information provided.** This was particularly evident among countries less actively involved in the governance of the fund, where representatives felt they lacked detailed updates and materials to effectively communicate with their national parliaments and policymakers. Several EUTF Syria Board members interviewed highlighted concerns regarding the public nature of the EUTF's website and the absence of a centralized, secure platform for archiving and accessing key documents. Additionally, the predominant reliance on email-based information sharing was not always well received, with some stakeholders considering it inefficient and inadequate for managing such a complex financial instrument.

Political misunderstandings further complicated the fund's operations. Interviews with MS representatives and EUTF Syria HQ staff revealed that perceptions of the EUTF were sometimes influenced by misconceptions stemming from other EU-managed Trust Funds, particularly the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. The latter faced criticism for prioritizing migration control, leading

some political actors to incorrectly assume that the EUTF Syria operated under a similar policy framework. This misperception fuelled debates about the Trust Fund's objectives and strategic purpose, resulting in hesitancy among some policymakers to continue supporting the Trust Fund model. Such misunderstandings underscored the need for clearer communication and engagement strategies to reinforce the EUTF Syria's distinct mandate and development-focused approach.

EQ3: WERE ALLOCATION AND COMMITMENT OF AVAILABLE FUNDS IMPLEMENTED IN A TIMELY AND EFFICIENT MANNER?

1. **EUTF Syria has proved to be the right instrument to enable the EU and MS to respond collectively to the common challenges resulting from the Syrian crisis. EUTF Syria has been successful in pooling funds from the MS, and the actual allocation of funds to EUTF Syria by Board members has been fully aligned with initial commitments.**

a. EU Member States funds pooling

A critical strength of the EUTF was its ability to mobilize resources from all EU MS, fostering a level of cooperation that would have been difficult to achieve through individual national initiatives.

EU MS emphasized that their participation in the EUTF for Syria was driven by both humanitarian concerns and strategic interests, reflecting a shared commitment to addressing the refugee crisis. While some countries had long pursued policies centred on humanitarian aid cooperation, the broader challenges of regional stability, migration management, and security at Europe's borders created a strong incentive for collective action under the Trust Fund framework. By uniting efforts, the EUTF enabled a coordinated, structured, and impactful response, ensuring that interventions were aligned with both humanitarian imperatives and geopolitical priorities.

By pooling financial contributions, the Trust Fund amplified the scale and impact of interventions, enabling participation even from MS that might have otherwise contributed minimally or not at all. This catalytic effect highlighted the strategic advantage of a collective European response, demonstrating that joint efforts yielded far greater reach and efficiency than isolated national programmes.

The EUTF provided flexibility in how MS could contribute, allowing them to align their financial support with their national budgetary structures and priorities. Some countries directed funds from humanitarian aid budgets, while others utilized development assistance, migration management resources, or security-related budgets. This adaptable approach ensured that all MS—regardless of their financial priorities—could participate without disrupting national budgetary strategies.

This flexible funding model allowed the EUTF to secure a total of €2.3 billion. **This strategic pooling of resources ensured that the response was not only large-scale and well-funded but also diverse enough to meet the wide-ranging needs of displaced populations and host communities.**

The EUTF's pooled funding model also maximized efficiency and coherence in delivering aid. Had each MS implemented its own bilateral aid programme, the response would have risked being fragmented, leading to duplication of efforts, inefficiencies, and higher administrative costs. **By streamlining interventions under a single coordinated framework, the EUTF reduced overhead expenses while enhancing the impact and reach of available funding.** This collective approach allowed smaller nations to contribute meaningfully, ensuring that they could play a role in addressing the crisis without the challenges associated with direct programme administration.

Beyond financial coordination, the EUTF's governance structure ensured that contributing MS had a voice in decision-making. The Operational Board provided a platform for EU countries to shape funding priorities and influence resource allocation, ensuring that their national foreign policy objectives were

reflected in the Trust Fund's programming. At the same time, by aligning individual national interests within a broader EU-led approach, the EUTF strengthened European solidarity and cooperation, reinforcing the principles of burden-sharing.

Finally, another significant advantage of the Trust Fund has been its role in enhancing cooperation with Türkiye, a key partner and upper-middle-income country. The EUTF's ability to finance projects that supported refugees while simultaneously benefiting local host communities positioned it as a diplomatic and development tool that would have been difficult to implement through conventional bilateral assistance. This model strengthened both the EU's humanitarian response and its geopolitical engagement in the region, reinforcing cooperation with Türkiye while addressing migration-related challenges in a mutually beneficial manner.

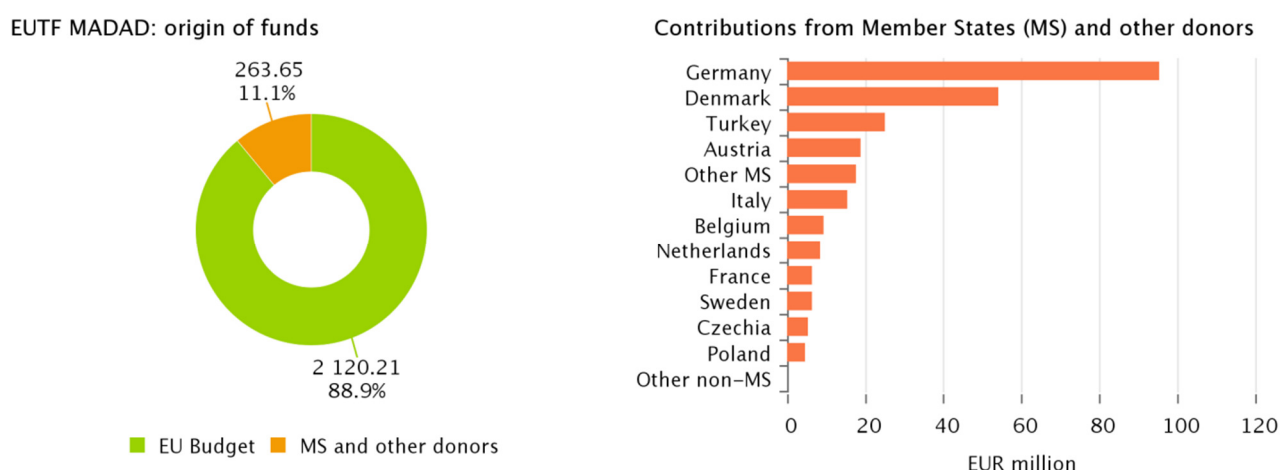
Despite its successes, the EUTF's pooled funding model faced several challenges:

- A key issue was the variation in commitment levels among MS—while some actively engaged in governance and decision-making, others contributed funds without significant strategic involvement. This discrepancy led to concerns about visibility and influence, particularly among smaller donors.
- Another challenge came from the fact that the allocation of contracts within the EUTF created financial disparities. Some MS that contributed relatively less to the fund still saw financial benefits when their national development agencies were awarded contracts, while others, despite larger contributions, did not experience the same financial returns. These issues underscored tensions regarding fair representation, visibility, and financial distribution within the EUTF framework.

b. Alignment between pledge, commitment and implementation of funds

The analysis of financial reports shows that the total contribution of MS to EUTF Syria accounts for more than 11% of the total funds allocated to the Trust Fund. Germany is by far the largest contributor among MS, as illustrated in the Graph 3 below:

Graph 3. Source: European Commission - Overview All EU Trust Funds - August 2024



While most MS contributions have remained consistent from year to year, a few countries have seen fluctuations in their contributions over the period:

- Denmark was the largest contributor in 2016 and 2017, but Germany took the lead in 2018 by significantly and consistently increasing its contribution. Denmark's contributions also rose during this time, albeit to a lesser extent.
- Austria and Italy, the third and fourth largest MS contributors respectively, gradually increased their contributions from 2016 to 2018.

- Belgium raised its contribution significantly, starting with a 100% increase in 2018 and then an additional 50% in 2021.

The financial report also reveals minor discrepancies between funding pledges and certificates of commitment:

- Denmark and the Netherlands in 2016 and 2017,
- France in 2018.

In August 2024, the Monthly Report on the Multiannual Implementation of the EU Trust Funds shows that **the EUTF Syria implementation rate, based on committed and contracted amounts, stands at 98%, which makes the EUTF Syria the best performing of all the EUTFs** (Africa, Bekou, Colombia).

2. The EUTF has succeeded in allocating available funds in a transparent and timely manner despite the extended time taken for contracting during the first half of EUTF Syria period.

a. Clarity and transparency of the EUTF Syria selection process improved over the intervention period

The selection procedures and criteria for the EUTF Syria Trust Fund evolved over time, transitioning from an open invitation model to a more structured and coordinated approach. The extent to which these processes are clearly and transparently defined can be analysed across different phases of their development.

• Initial phase: Open invitation model

During the initial phase, the EUTF Syria Trust Fund used a negotiated procedure, which meant that direct awards were given to INGOs, national agencies from EU MS, and international organizations. The selection process for the first eighteen projects followed an open information campaign, which was published on the EUTF website, inviting interested organizations to submit concept notes. Once a sufficient number of applications had been received, ad-hoc evaluation committees were formed to assess the proposals.

Despite appearing to be an open process, this method was criticized for lacking transparency and for potentially favouring organizations that had strong lobbying power. Some IPs indicated that their selection was influenced by advocacy efforts, both at the level of the EUD and in Brussels. This created an uneven playing field, as organizations that had established relationships with decision-makers had an advantage over those that did not. Moreover, it was reported that some MS governments played a role in facilitating funding access for organizations from their respective countries, further undermining the fairness of the process.

• Transition to a structured and coordinated approach

By the end of 2016, the EUTF adopted a more structured and coordinated approach to project selection, in response to the challenges experienced under the open invitation model. This shift emphasized stronger collaboration with host governments, ensuring that selected projects were aligned with national priorities. The transition was significantly influenced by the Joint Humanitarian Development Framework (JHDF) in Jordan and Lebanon, which aimed to enhance coordination between different EU funding instruments, including ECHO (humanitarian aid) and the Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI).

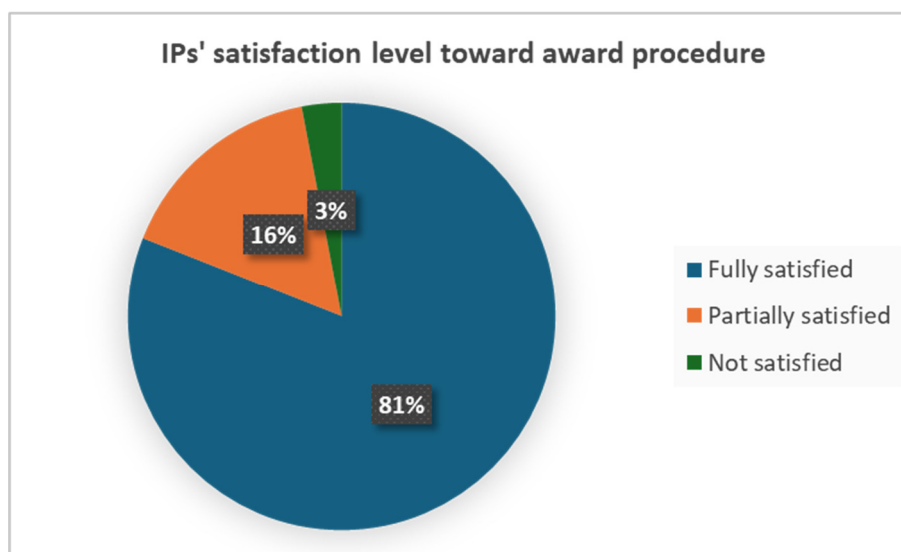
Under the revised framework, project pre-identification became a collaborative effort involving the EUDs and national authorities. Instead of relying on an open call for applications, the EUTF Operational Board formalized key operational criteria for project selection. These criteria included relevance to the Syrian crisis response, financial sustainability, cost-effectiveness, added value in terms of impact, and the visibility of EU funding.

The selection process followed a structured, multi-stage workflow. It began with consultations between EUDs and local stakeholders to define country-specific priorities. Based on these discussions, project

identification and the drafting of action documents were carried out either by the EUD for national-level projects or by the Trust Fund Manager at headquarters for regional initiatives. These initial proposals then underwent a technical review conducted by experts from various EU departments, including DG NEAR, DG DEVCO, DG ECHO, DG HOME, EEAS, and the EU Delegations. After revisions, the final project proposals were submitted to the Operational Board for approval. Once approved, contracts were signed, and the implementation phase began, with financing agreements established with IPs.

The structured selection process was generally well received by IPs, as shown in the Graph 4 below. In an online survey, a significant number of IPs expressed satisfaction with the procedures. This suggests that while the selection process was not fully transparent in the sense of an open competition, it was still perceived as clearer, more predictable, and more aligned with strategic priorities than the earlier open invitation model.

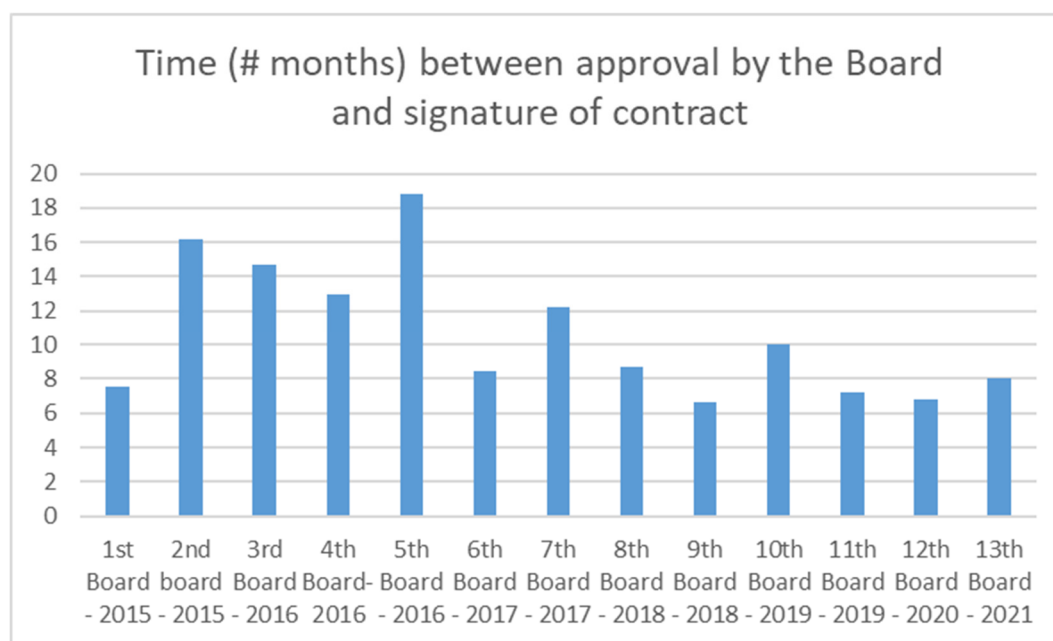
Graph 4. Source: EUTF Syria Evaluation online survey



b. The contracting process took more time than expected but improved over the period.

In theory, as the EUTF Operational Board can adopt 'Action Documents' for programmes on the basis of financial commitments, the Fund can negotiate and sign contracts soon after the Board Meeting. In practice, the contracting process takes quite long as shown in the following Graph 5. Despite repeated claims that EUTF Syria is an instrument for rapid contracting, **the evaluation shows relatively long delays between the time the project is approved by the Board of Directors and the time the contract is actually signed.** Up to the fifth Board, projects were sometimes signed more than a year or a year and a half after approval. From the sixth Board onwards, performance improved as staff numbers increased. No project was signed more than a year after approval.

Graph 5. Source: EUTF Syria data



During the first phase of EUTF Syria, concerns were raised about how slowly projects were being conceived, approved and contracted. The mid-term evaluation of the EUTF Syria highlighted that one of the main reasons for delays was the preference given, at the time, to regional programmes and consortia for which the negotiation period takes a long time to reach an agreement on internal procedures and governance between the partners. Generally, negotiation with NGOs also takes time as they are perceived of having less fund absorbing capacities. Furthermore, discussions tended to take place on the intervention modalities. In some cases, a challenge is that MS/ UN agencies continue to negotiate specific contract terms, which unnecessarily delays the process.

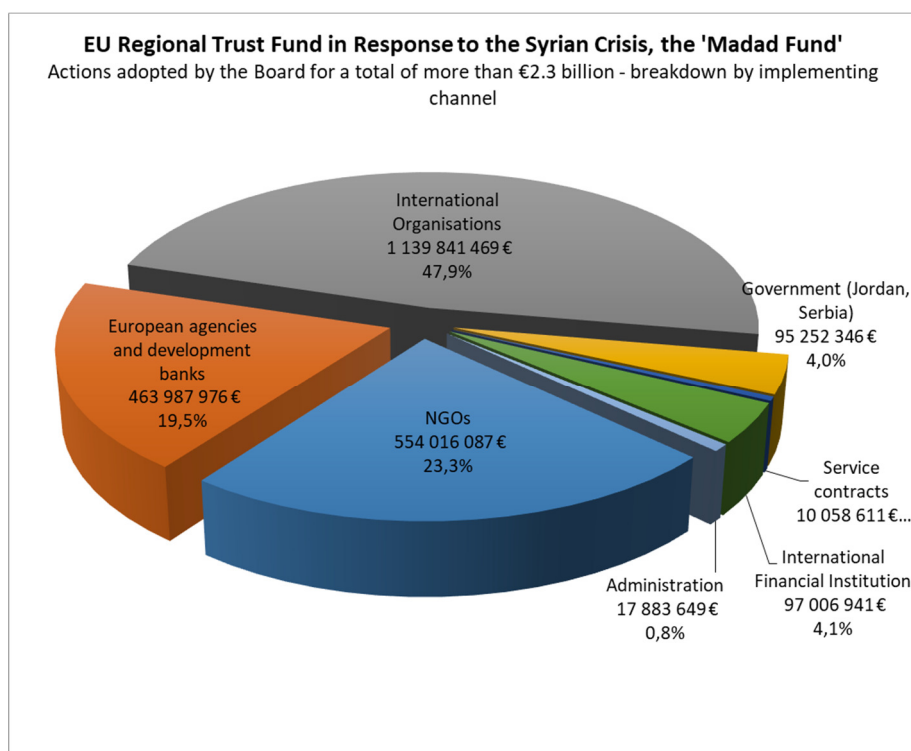
Timeframes for finalising contracting significantly improved around 2017, in response to completing the EUTF staffing process and introducing a business process to address the duration and define timelines associated with each step of both Action Document and level of contracting (see section 2 EQ1, 2a).

EQ4: TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE THE CHOICES OF RECIPIENTS AND IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS ALLOWED FOR AN EFFICIENT USE OF FUNDS?

1. Depending on sectors and countries specific circumstances, the choices of recipients and implementing partners (IPs) were balanced. The grouping of IPs into consortia was encouraged, given the complementarities between them.

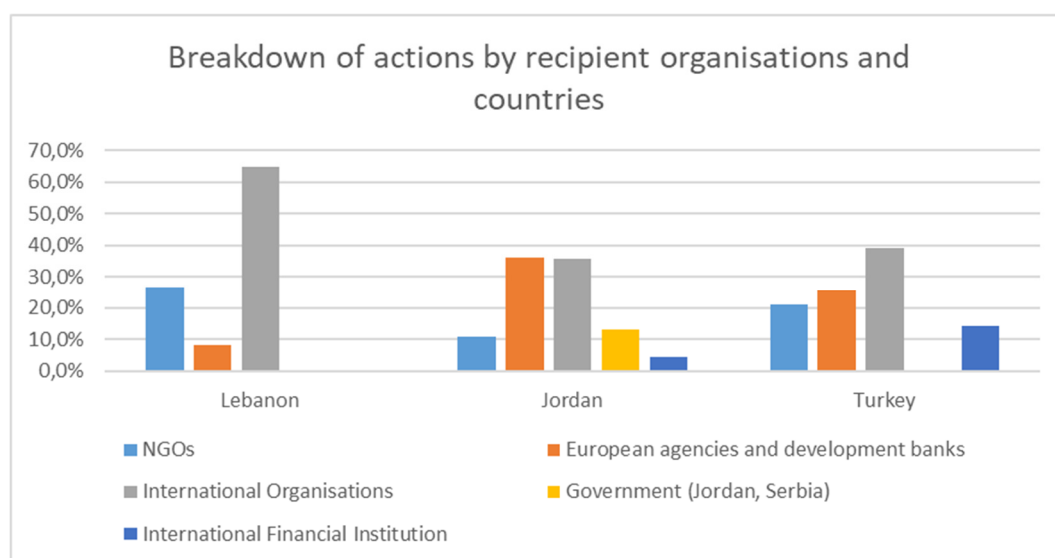
The main recipients of EUTF Syria's funding are (i) International Organisations (mostly UN Agencies), (ii) NGOs and (iii) MS development agencies and European development banks (see Graph 6 below).

Graph 6. Source: EUTF Syria data



With the disaggregation of data at countries' level, a number of specific findings emerged: More than 60% of funded projects have been implemented by International Organisations (mostly UN agencies) in Lebanon while the number averages at 36% in Jordan and Türkiye. European development agencies and development banks have been key IPs in Jordan, while less so for projects in Türkiye and played a minor role in implementing EUTF Syria projects in Lebanon. NGOs have received between 20% and 28% of EUTF Syria funds in Türkiye and Lebanon respectively and have received less than 10% of the funds in Jordan. Nevertheless, NGOs were generally represented in consortium and piloted components of programmes.

Graph 7. Source: EUTF Syria data



The effectiveness of IPs varies significantly based on the type of recipient and the sector of intervention.

Each type of IP—Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), EU Development Agencies, and International Organizations (UN agencies, IFIs, and other multilateral bodies)—has demonstrated strengths and weaknesses in different contexts. This analysis compares their impact across key sectors such as education, health, livelihoods, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).

a. NGOs have proven to be the most flexible and responsive IPs, particularly in crisis settings.

Their proximity to beneficiaries, community engagement, and ability to adapt quickly make them highly effective in humanitarian response and social service delivery.

In the education sector, NGOs have played a crucial role in student retention and non-formal education, as seen in Lebanon's "Back to the Future" programme by AVSI, which improved retention by incorporating psychosocial support and strong community engagement. Unlike EU Development Agencies, NGOs have been able to rapidly pivot to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, whereas EU-funded public education initiatives struggled to transition.

However, despite their strengths, NGOs often lack the policy influence and institutional sustainability that EU Development Agencies bring.

In long-term systemic improvements, EU Development Agencies have played a more crucial role, particularly in school infrastructure and national policy integration. In Jordan, for instance, EU funding has facilitated the integration of refugee education into the national Accelerated Access Initiative, allowing displaced students to enrol in public schools. While NGOs excel in local-level implementation, their dependency on donor funding and their limited ability to influence national policies restrict their long-term impact.

In the livelihoods sector, NGOs have also been more effective in directly improving household resilience through livelihood support and cash-based assistance, whereas EU Development Agencies tend to focus on macro-level economic policies and institutional capacity-building. The RDPP programme (T04.164), for example, leveraged NGO flexibility to accelerate implementation and mitigate delays, which EU-funded projects have historically struggled with due to lengthy procurement procedures and bureaucratic hurdles. While EU agencies ensure alignment with European policies and long-term systemic changes, they are slower in execution and less adaptable to emerging challenges in fragile contexts.

The modality of INGO consortia had proven advantages in terms of closeness to the communities, positive relationships with the local government and local level coordination.

According to the mid-term strategic evaluation (October 2018), "The consortia model of IPs is seen to help widen the reach of interventions, both on sectoral and geographical bases".

INGO consortia: the case of the WASH sector in Lebanon

In the WASH sector in Lebanon, INGO consortia were the chosen modality for the majority of the interventions which were awarded in three subsequent rounds (in 2017, 2018, and 2021) to pre-selected IPs with a substantial experience in the water sector and with whom the EUD had existing partnerships. A total of five consortia were selected, each comprising four INGOs (T04.20, T04.34, T04.98, T04.100, T04.272, this latter consortium also including two NGOs). A UN agency (UNICEF) was chosen as IP for two interventions (T04.90, T04.294) while for one intervention (T04.206) a MS development cooperation agency (AFD) was chosen. The sector evaluation (December 2021) noted the positive aspects related to the consortium modality (namely IPs building on previous and shared experience, liaison with national authorities, community outreach capacity). However, it also highlights inefficient coordination within and between consortia, with some INGOs partners in three consortia overlapping in themes and geographical areas, which eventually hindered coordination with the four Water Establishments (WEs) and the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW).

- b. NGOs and international organizations like UN agencies have often complemented each other, but their effectiveness differs based on project scope and sectoral requirements.**

NGOs have been highly effective in community-based health interventions, whereas UN agencies have led large-scale procurement, health system strengthening, and coordination with national governments. In Iraq and Lebanon, international NGOs such as IMC and AISPO have had a direct impact on healthcare access in marginalized communities, particularly by supporting primary healthcare centres (PHCCs) with outreach and awareness activities.

UN agencies, particularly WHO and UNICEF, have ensured medication procurement and policy coordination but have struggled with monitoring and reporting weaknesses. A striking example is WHO's reliance on the local YMCA in Lebanon for medication distribution, which resulted in severe drug shortages due to an inadequate assessment of the implementing partner's procurement capacity.

In the water and sanitation (WASH) sector, international organizations, particularly International Financial Institutions (IFIs) like the World Bank and the European Investment Bank, have been effective in large-scale infrastructure investments but ineffective in community-level engagement. In contrast, NGOs have demonstrated better adaptability in working with local communities to ensure the uptake of sanitation services. In Jordan, IFIs handled wastewater infrastructure development, but failed to convince households to connect to sanitation services, a challenge that NGOs were more suited to address due to their established local relationships.

Another sector where NGOs and international organizations differ in effectiveness is livelihoods and social protection. While NGOs excel in direct implementation of livelihood projects—such as providing vocational training, cash grants, and employment opportunities—international organizations focus more on institutional policy support and large-scale frameworks. A good example of this contrast is found in Addressing Life-Cycle Vulnerabilities Through Social Protection (T04.292), where UNICEF and ILO took the policy-driven approach, while NGOs engaged in service delivery, advocacy, and community-based implementation. The direct delivery model used by ILO and UNICEF was ultimately more successful in overcoming political instability and financial constraints, highlighting that in fragile environments, direct involvement by international organizations can sometimes be more effective than relying solely on NGOs with limited institutional influence.

- c. The comparison between EU development agencies and international organizations largely revolves around bureaucratic efficiency, policy impact, and cost-effectiveness.**

EU development agencies, such as GIZ, AFD, and AECID, have been instrumental in long-term structural reforms but often struggle with cost-efficiency and timely execution. In higher education, for example, the EDU-SYRIA consortium, led by Jordanian universities and managed by the German-Jordanian University (GJU), demonstrated a high degree of national ownership and policy influence, making it more effective than fragmented UN-led education programmes that suffered from high overhead costs.

In contrast, international organizations like UNICEF and UNHCR have led in education policy coordination and refugee education financing, making them more effective in integrating refugee populations into national systems. UNICEF's Makani Centres in Jordan increased school retention rates, but these interventions were weaker in improving learning outcomes, whereas EU-funded projects focused on long-term school infrastructure and institutional capacity-building. While EU agencies have ensured stronger monitoring systems, such as Quarterly Information Notes (QINs) and OPSYS tracking, their dependence on national governments makes them vulnerable to political instability and implementation delays, especially in Lebanon.

The WASH sector further illustrates the differences in effectiveness. While EU agencies have provided technical expertise and policy alignment, they have been slower to execute projects compared to UN agencies like UNICEF, which quickly adapted WASH interventions in Jordan when COVID-19 hit, shifting from education-focused programming to emergency sanitation measures. However, the costs

associated with UNICEF's procurement and reporting limitations have been significant, making EU-led WASH interventions more transparent but less agile.

d. Consortium-based projects, involving multiple partners with complementary roles, have proven to be particularly effective across various sectors:

A key emerging trend in project implementation under the EUTF Syria is the strategic use of consortium-based projects, either formed of UN agencies or EU bilateral agencies, or formed with UN Agencies and EU agencies as the main IPs and NGOs as subcontractors for specific components. This allows for leveraging the strengths of each type of organisation—UN or EU agencies operating at a systemic level with large infrastructure investments, while NGOs focus on more localized, targeted interventions for specific populations. This division of labour maximizes the comparative advantages of each partner.

- **Livelihoods:** The RDPP action (T04.164) in Jordan is a standout example of flexibility, allowing partner organisations enough autonomy to adapt their projects to local conditions while promoting goal-oriented, partnership-driven implementation.
- **Higher education:** HOPES and EDU-SYRIA were both consortia formed specifically for EUTF Syria funding. HOPES, composed of EU MS agencies, had representative organizations in each country, fostering a shared identity but also leading to fragmentation due to siloed implementation. This issue was addressed in its successor, HOPES-LEB, by streamlining roles through a work package approach. EDU-SYRIA, managed by the German-Jordanian University, effectively leveraged cooperation among Jordanian universities despite their competitive nature, utilizing their respective strengths in graduate and diploma studies.
- **Health:** In Jordan, the T04.255 intervention involved four national foundations/programmes that, as highlighted by a recent Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) report (10/2023), demonstrated strong commitment and ownership of the activities. In Lebanon, the REBAHS interventions worked through Primary Health Care Centres (PHCCs), which, given their community-based roles, functioned similarly to local community-based organisations (CBOs).
- **WASH:** In Iraq, UN agencies like UN-Habitat and UNDP implemented large-scale multi-component interventions (T04.132, T04.247). These projects were part of broader housing reconstruction efforts, with WASH infrastructure and services forming only a component of the more extensive multi-sectoral programmes.

This approach allows for a comprehensive response where systemic, large-scale interventions coexist with localized, community-focused efforts, enhancing both impact and sustainability across different sectors.

The delegation agreement was also an efficient contracting modality for T04.172, allowing UNICEF to quickly convert what had started as an intervention in the education sector into a timely emergency WASH response to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the camps. However, this was also made possible by UNICEF's mandate and status as the UN leading agency for the WASH sector which represents a clear advantage in terms of policy coordination with donors, national authorities and NGOs in the framework of the 3RP's Jordanian Response Plan.

2. The national project approach proved more conclusive than the regional approach

a. Strengths of the regional approach

In the initial phase of the EUTF Syria, a deliberate effort was made to design regional programmes, based on the rationale that a regional crisis required a coordinated regional response.

The regional and multi-country approach of the EUTF Syria provided several advantages in addressing crises such as the Syrian refugee situation. They enabled a **holistic approach** covering the entire region, facilitating a coordinated and coherent response to the crisis. By working with experienced key agencies

already operational in the region, these programmes **quickly scaled up existing activities**, which is particularly important in emergency settings.

Furthermore, by pooling funds at a regional level, regional projects helped to **avoid the duplication of efforts and the establishment of parallel structures** by leveraging the existing capacities, expertise, and experience within consortia. Cost savings were also achieved: reducing the number of direct IPs and contracts lowered the transaction costs of the Fund's interventions.

By relying on consortia with a proven track record in the region, the EUTF Syria aimed to enhance the overall impact and sustainability of its interventions. Regional programmes, therefore, not only addressed immediate needs but also contributed to a more streamlined and efficient response across multiple countries, leveraging existing structures to enhance coherence.

- Projects implemented by SPARK in the higher education sector highlighted the strengths of a regional intervention model, where services could be standardized and optimized across different countries. This approach allowed for consistent delivery of educational support throughout the region, which is particularly valuable in situations where harmonization of services, such as scholarship programmes or vocational training, is needed across multiple countries. One significant advantage of SPARK's regional intervention was the flexibility offered by its diverse funding sources. This allowed SPARK to reallocate resources and balance funds between countries as needed, enabling stronger coherence in its programming and greater financial independence. By having access to various funding streams, SPARK could adjust its budget based on evolving needs across the region, thereby ensuring continuity in service delivery beyond EUTF Syria funding.

In addition to improving operational efficiency, the regional approach **enhanced the visibility of the EU's efforts**. Instead of appearing as fragmented national contributions, EU interventions were seen as part of a broader, unified European response, reinforcing the "Team Europe" approach. This collective strategy strengthened the EU's influence in international crisis management and allowed it to act more strategically in dealing with migration challenges.

Another significant outcome of this approach was its capacity to gradually foster stronger engagement with partner countries. Initially, governments such as those in Lebanon and Jordan were reluctant to work directly on refugee issues. However, the regional framework gradually facilitated their integration into the process, helping them align refugee assistance with their national development plans. This contributed to longer-term resilience, ensuring that both refugees and local populations benefitted from support.

Furthermore, **the multi-country approach facilitated a smoother transition from emergency relief to development.** Humanitarian efforts, such as water distribution or temporary education support, were transformed into permanent infrastructure projects or systemic enhancements in schools. This reduced dependency on short-term aid while fostering long-term sustainability.

b. Weaknesses of the regional approach

While regional programmes have been beneficial in many aspects, **they also had limitations related to coordination and capacity differences between regions and faced challenges in ensuring that interventions remained contextually relevant across diverse local settings.**

The standardization of services reduced flexibility in tailoring interventions to the unique needs of each local context. This rigidity made it harder to respond to local opportunities for policy influence or to foster synergies between partner organisations. For example, in-country dynamics may present openings to align higher education programmes with national priorities or to collaborate more closely with local institutions, but the regional model's overarching framework could limit the capacity to pursue these context-specific opportunities.

While the regional and multi-sectoral approach under the EUTF Syria carried significant political relevance and was designed to address the cross-border nature of the crisis, it often proved overly

complex. **The broad objectives and intricate management structures of regional projects made it difficult to maintain coherence across multiple countries.** In practice, despite efforts to organize cross-cutting activities at the regional level, these programmes were often implemented in a siloed manner, with each country managing its interventions independently rather than through a unified approach.

c. Strengths of the national approach

The second wave of EUTF-funded projects shifted focus toward national interventions.

One of the most significant advantages of the national approach was its ability to tailor interventions to the specific needs and challenges of each country. National projects were designed to address localized socio-economic conditions, institutional structures, and government priorities, ensuring that interventions were not only context-sensitive but also deeply integrated into national frameworks.

- In the education sector, EUTF-funded projects in Lebanon focused on school rehabilitation and the integration of Syrian refugee students into the national education system. These projects were aligned with the policies of the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education, ensuring smoother implementation and greater sustainability. Similarly, in Jordan, national education projects contributed to classroom expansion, teacher recruitment, and cash-for-education programmes, directly responding to the needs of the country's refugee population.
- In the health sector, national interventions were closely integrated with national healthcare institutions, allowing for better alignment with existing public health policies and programmes. This was evident in Lebanon, where a pilot initiative for subsidized primary healthcare contributed to broader policy discussions on universal healthcare coverage. Unlike regional projects, which often struggled with fragmented decision-making, national initiatives benefited from more direct engagement with relevant government entities, ensuring that interventions were responsive to country-specific healthcare priorities.

Another critical strength of the national approach was its capacity to adapt to evolving political, economic, and humanitarian contexts. The rapidly shifting nature of the Syria crisis required interventions that could be adjusted in response to new developments, including changes in refugee populations, government policies, and funding availability. National projects were inherently more flexible, as they were not constrained by the bureaucratic complexities of multi-country coordination. This flexibility allowed IPs to modify their strategies based on ground realities, making national interventions more resilient and effective in times of crisis. For instance, in Jordan, national livelihood programmes successfully adapted to evolving labour market demands by working closely with local businesses and vocational training institutions, ensuring that skills development programmes remained relevant to employment opportunities.

The national approach also proved to be more efficient in terms of resource allocation and project implementation. The streamlined management of national projects reduced delays, enhanced coordination between stakeholders, and minimized the risks associated with large-scale, multi-country interventions. In the WASH sector, for example, national projects in Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon effectively targeted localized sanitation challenges, ensuring that resources were deployed where they were most needed without the additional complexity of coordinating across borders.

d. Weaknesses of the national approach

On the other side, and despite the added-value of the national approach, the evaluation identified some limitations.

One of the primary limitations of the national approach was its tendency to operate in isolation, with limited opportunities for cross-country coordination and learning. While national projects were highly effective in responding to country-specific needs, they often failed to leverage best practices and lessons learned from similar interventions in neighbouring countries. This lack of knowledge-sharing sometimes resulted in duplication of efforts and missed opportunities for innovation.

- In the higher education sector, for instance, national scholarship programmes focused primarily on increasing access to education but did not systematically integrate regional networking opportunities for students and universities. As a result, potential benefits such as student mobility, faculty collaboration, and harmonization of academic standards were not fully realized.

Successful national initiatives were not always replicated or scaled up in other countries facing similar issues.

- In the health sector, for example, Lebanon's innovative subsidized healthcare model demonstrated strong potential for broader application but remained confined to national implementation due to the lack of a regional mechanism for expansion.
- Similarly, in the education sector, national projects in Jordan and Lebanon effectively integrated Syrian refugee students into public schools, but the lessons learned from these experiences were not systematically transferred to other partner countries facing similar educational challenges.

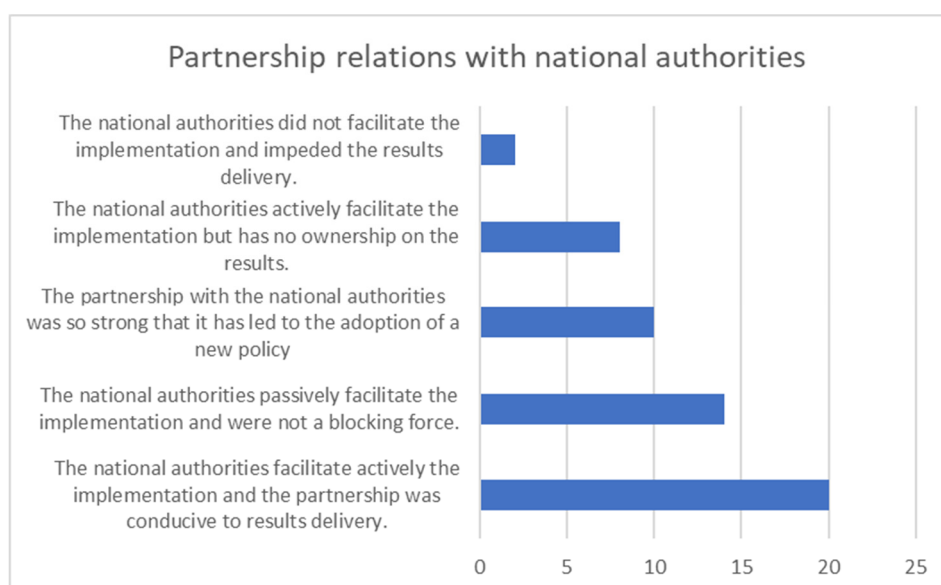
The EUTF Syria experience demonstrates that the national approach is more effective than the regional approach in responding to the Syrian refugee crisis. While regional interventions provided strategic coordination and cost efficiency, they struggled with local adaptability, policy alignment, and responsiveness to national needs. In contrast, national interventions were more flexible, better integrated into host country policies, and ensured stronger government buy-in, leading to greater sustainability and impact.

EQ5: HOW CAN THE QUALITY OF PARTNERSHIP RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL AUTHORITIES AND IMPLEMENTING STAKEHOLDERS BE ASSESSED?

1. Interventions supported by the EUTF Syria were implemented effectively through cooperation based on common interests with national authorities and IPs.

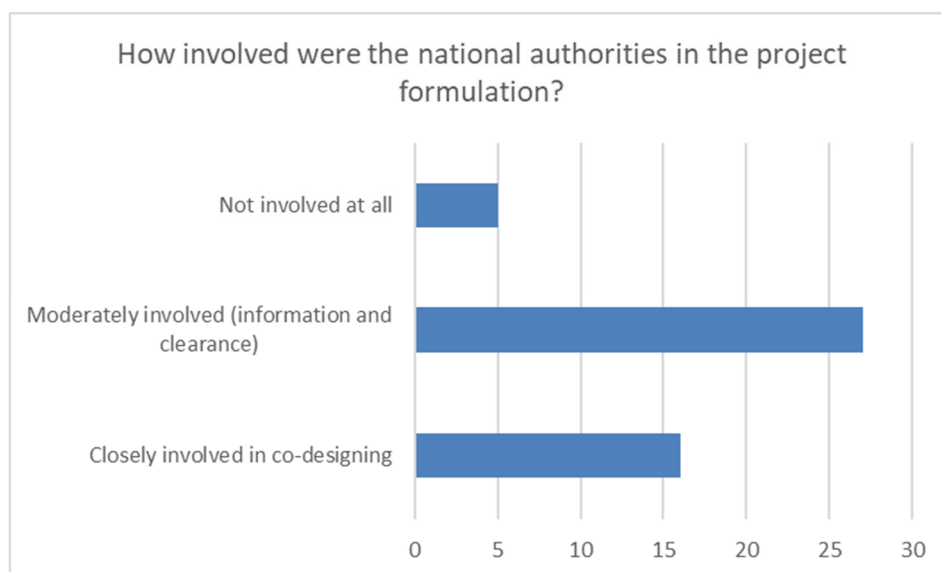
According to the results of the IP online survey, the partnership with national authorities under the EUTF Syria was generally positive, particularly in terms of facilitating project implementation (see Graph 8 below).

Graph 8. Source: EUTF Syria Evaluation online survey



Partner country ministries played a supportive role by providing formal backing and ensuring that there were no major bureaucratic or administrative blockages that could hinder project progress. This facilitative role was key in enabling projects to move forward without unnecessary delays.

Graph 9. Source: EUTF Syria Evaluation online survey



In several cases, national and local governments actively supported project implementation by aligning interventions with national priorities, providing policy direction, and ensuring institutional ownership.

- In the higher education and vocational training sector, national authorities gradually moved from a passive role to a more engaged approach. Over time, line ministries increased their participation in implementing vocational and technical education programmes. In Lebanon, the Directorate General for Vocational and Technical Education (DGVTE) collaborated with the Vet4All intervention to strengthen TVET governance, aligning it with the National Strategic Framework for Technical and Vocational Training. In Jordan, the EDU-SYRIA intervention fostered closer cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development's National Aid Fund, helping to prioritize vulnerable Jordanian students for scholarship opportunities.
- The health sector also saw strong governmental facilitation in several cases. In Jordan, the Ministry of Health played a leading role in coordinating donor support and ensuring strategic alignment with national health priorities. The Ministry's Technical Implementation Unit provided essential contributions to health project planning, coordination, and decision-making. Similarly, in Lebanon, the Ministry of Public Health led the EUTF Health Steering Committee, ensuring that interventions were well-coordinated and integrated into national healthcare objectives. The REBAHS interventions particularly benefitted from the Ministry's leadership, resulting in strong institutional ownership and policy coherence.
- In the WASH sector, national authorities in Iraq facilitated implementation through well-coordinated sector governance structures. The high-level National Coordinating Committee, along with district-level Departments of Water, played a pivotal role in planning, approving, and overseeing water and sanitation interventions. These institutions helped ensure that interventions were properly selected, implemented, and quality-controlled. In Jordan, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and the Water Authority of Jordan collaborated with IPs to align projects with national water sector priorities. The involvement of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation further ensured that WASH interventions were integrated into Jordan's broader response to the Syrian crisis.
- With municipalities, the partnership has been particularly strong in planning the infrastructure component of projects in Türkiye. In the livelihoods sector, Türkiye provided institutional

support for employment initiatives, particularly through the DAHIL action, in which the Chambers of Commerce incorporated Syrian entrepreneur training programmes into their agendas. This approach ensured continuity and sustainability, with national institutions taking ownership of project outcomes. Jordan also demonstrated strong municipal engagement in projects such as the RSCP action, where local governments actively participated in planning and integrating interventions into existing infrastructure investment plans.

Another factor that supported stronger partnerships with national authorities was the robustness of the donor and agency coordination systems, as seen in the health sector in Lebanon. Effective coordination helped align national priorities with donor-funded interventions, improving overall collaboration.

However, **while the partnership was beneficial from an operational standpoint, the involvement of national authorities in deeper aspects of project development was relatively limited.** Their participation in the formulation of interventions and engagement in policy dialogue, especially around key reforms, was viewed as relatively limited by IPs. This lack of strong involvement may have diminished opportunities for ensuring that interventions were closely aligned with national reform agendas or for influencing policy changes through the projects.

As previously mentioned (EQ1), the partnership between IP and national authorities in the EUTF Syria projects faced specific challenges due to the different demands of governments in different countries. For example, in Türkiye, there was reluctance on the part of the government to select CSOs as partners, complicating the collaboration process. In Lebanon, negotiations over the selection of final recipients or beneficiaries across various sectors often created complexities. Similarly, in Jordan, there was a clear requirement to balance support between Syrian refugees and host communities, further complicating the dynamics of partnership.

The Jordan Compact

In February 2016, the Jordan Compact introduced a new strategy for addressing prolonged displacement. In exchange for billions of dollars in grants, loans, and preferential trade agreements with the European Union (EU), Jordan pledged to enhance access to education and legal employment opportunities for Syrian refugees residing in the country. Despite the successes achieved in issuing work permits for refugees and promoting universal access to education, institutional barriers persisted regarding access to the formal labour market² and vocational training programmes throughout the EUTF Syria implementation period.

2. EUDs support to interventions' implementation

The various sector and strategic evaluations, survey and interviews with IPs, report **the EUDs supported project implementation to varying extents, focusing particularly on coordination and ensuring project alignment with EU policies and frameworks.** The delegations facilitated partnerships with national ministries, helping to align project objectives with national priorities and leveraging the EU's influence, to ease negotiations.

- In the livelihoods, protection, and social cohesion sector, EUDs actively supported the EUTF Syria's holistic approach by integrating various EU funding instruments (ECHO, ENI, IPA, DCI) to enhance coordination and avoid duplication among national governments. Their involvement helped reduce competition between implementing agencies and increased predictability of funding, allowing for a more stable, long-term approach to resilience-building. Interviews with

² Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement, "Assessing the Jordan Compact One Year On – An Opportunity or a Barrier to Better Achieving Refugees' Right to Work", Journal of Refugee Studies, 2020

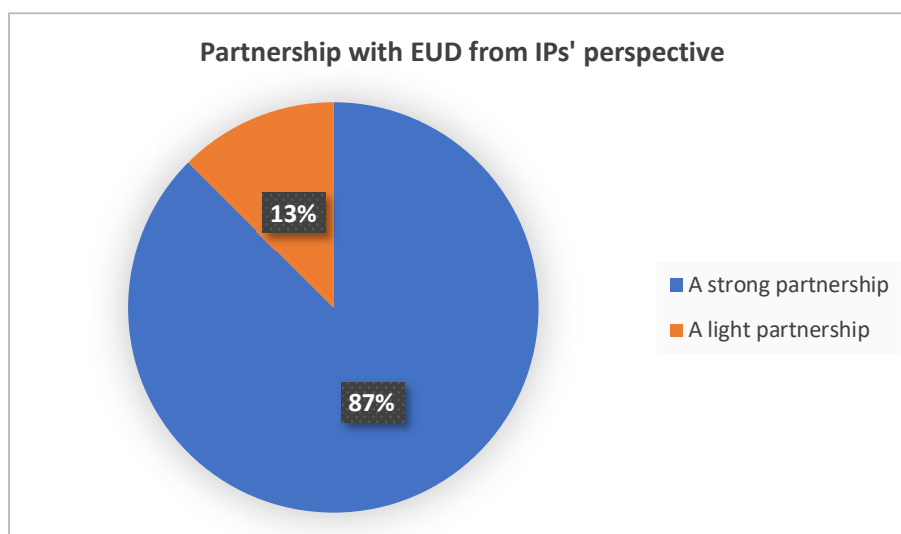
IPs confirmed that EUD programme managers provided technical oversight, visibility efforts, and advocacy support, helping ensure that projects aligned with EU strategic objectives.

- In basic education, EUDs played a major role in policy development, donor coordination, and financial facilitation. In Lebanon, the EUD was critical in supporting the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) by fostering better coordination with IPs, including NGOs and UN agencies. This collaboration led to the development of non-formal education (NFE) pathways, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and monitoring frameworks. The EUD also supported the formulation of Lebanon's five-year Education Plan (2022-2026), focusing on equitable access to education for Lebanese and refugee children, as well as the establishment of a National Inclusive Education policy. Similarly, in Jordan, the EUD facilitated the implementation of the Accelerating Access Initiative (AAI), a donor-funded programme aimed at improving education access for refugees. Financial support from the EU allowed for the hiring of additional teachers, school rehabilitation, and provision of learning materials.
- In higher education and vocational training, EUDs played a greater role after 2020, when they became directly involved in programming, contracting, and managing higher education interventions. Operational Managers (OMs) within the EUDs facilitated policy engagement with national education authorities, such as the Secretary of State for Higher Education in Jordan, the National Director for Higher Education in Lebanon, and the Kurdish Minister of Higher Education in Iraq. This direct engagement helped prevent duplication of efforts and ensured a coordinated approach. The Jordan EUD was particularly proactive, financing an external expert team to develop a methodology for tracer studies to track the long-term impact of higher education interventions. This initiative aimed to fill a critical gap in assessing the sustainability of EUTF Syria-funded education programmes.
- In the health sector, EUDs played an increasingly strategic role post-2019, following recommendations from the EUTF Syria mid-term evaluation. The Lebanon EUD was particularly active, leading to the creation of the EUTF Health Steering Committee and the development of an Action Document (AD) that outlined funding priorities for the sector. Additionally, EUDs guided IPs in aligning interventions with national health strategies, ensuring coherence and sustainability. In Iraq, EUDs facilitated coordination with the Ministry of Health, ensuring that interventions complemented national healthcare objectives.
- EUDs also had a significant impact on WASH interventions, particularly in Iraq and Lebanon. In Lebanon, the EUD initiated a revision process of the national water and wastewater strategy, leading to the creation of a Technical Assistance (TA) programme implemented by AFD. This initiative aimed to address the legal, operational, and planning weaknesses of the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW), ensuring better governance of water resources. Additionally, EUDs played a crucial role in adjusting WASH interventions to meet emerging needs, such as responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and developing crisis-mitigation strategies for failing water establishments.

More broadly, **OMs at EUDs successfully contributed to necessary adaptations to project design in response to changes in local contexts and regulations.** This finding is corroborated by the IPs opinion when asked about the nature of the partnership with the EUDs.

The majority of IPs considered the partnership as strong as OMs played an important hands-on role and assisted IPs engaging with the relevant national authorities.

Graph 10. Source: EUTF Syria Evaluation online survey



There are multiple examples of interventions across the three countries that have benefited from no-cost extensions to facilitate their implementation, as well as instances where EU Delegations (EUDs) have promoted synergies with partners outside the EUTF framework.

Despite their facilitative role, **EUDs faced several challenges and constraints regarding EUTF Syria interventions. Administrative constraints were a critical issue.** Many EUDs lacked sufficient staffing and decision-making autonomy, which slowed down project approvals and amendments. In Lebanon, a weak preliminary risk assessment resulted in the withdrawal of an international NGO from a WASH intervention (T04.20), causing major implementation delays. Similarly, in Jordan, institutional bottlenecks in procurement and tendering processes led to repeated contractual amendments and budget realignments.

A direct high-level policy dialogue in the different EUTF Syria priority sectors was not taken up sufficiently. Interviewed OMs acknowledged this as one of the main limitations of the EUTF Syria. On the one hand, countries' policies, with the partial exception of Iraq, focusing on the return scenario and institutional restrictions to Syrian refugees' integration remained key barriers for EUD policy action. On the other hand, EUDs did not sufficiently avail of the different funding instruments and political clout to influence policy changes.

- In higher education, while EUDs engaged with national authorities, their influence over policy change remained limited. For instance, in Jordan, the EUD's ability to push for better integration of Syrian students in universities was constrained by government priorities favouring Jordanian students. Additionally, negotiations between the Jordanian EUD and UNHCR over data-sharing concerns related to the EDU-SYRIA database stalled collaboration efforts, highlighting the complexity of inter-agency coordination.
- In the WASH sector, EUDs faced structural challenges related to weak governance frameworks in Lebanon. While the Lebanon EUD worked to reform national water policies, political instability and economic collapse hampered institutional reforms. In Jordan, despite efforts to engage the government in developing an exit strategy for refugee WASH services, the government maintained its stance that Syrian refugees remain the responsibility of the international community, preventing long-term sustainability planning.

EQ6: TO WHAT EXTENT THE EUTF SYRIA HAS ACHIEVED ITS OBJECTIVES? WHAT WAS THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION MECHANISM?

1. Overall, the EUTF Syria achieved most of its priority sector objectives.

The EUTF Syria employs a comprehensive Results Framework to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its funded projects, measuring to what extent the EUTF Syria achieves its objectives. This framework encompasses 37 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) categorized into the three EUTF Syria specific objectives:

- **Access to services:** Evaluates the reach and utilization of services provided across EUTF Syria priority sectors
- **Local capacity strengthening:** Assesses the training and development of local personnel, including educators, healthcare workers, and administrative staff, to enhance service delivery and sustainability.
- **Improvement of local infrastructure:** Measures the construction, upgrading, or rehabilitation of facilities like schools, healthcare centres, and water treatment plants to support community needs.

According to surveyed IPs, investments in infrastructure and local capacity building improved access to services for both Syrian refugees and their host communities. Table 3 below shows the extent to which EUTF Syria has reached its targets:

Table 3. % achievement of EUTF Syria expected results

	% of achievement (# of beneficiaries compared to initial targets)						
	Livelihoods	Protection	Social cohesion	Health	Basic education	Higher education	WASH
Access to service	92%	100%	98%	100%	100%	100%	72%
Local capacity	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	N/A	100%
Infrastructure	N/A	100%	100%	100%	87%	N/A	100%

a. In the livelihoods sector

The livelihoods sector is the leading sector in terms of achieved outputs under the access to service category of EUTF financed actions, with Lebanon having the highest output delivery. Livelihood assistance focused on life skills and vocational training, cash transfers, career counselling, job placement and the creation of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). These interventions globally represent 25.6% of the total EUTF.

- As of September 2024, 77,848 people benefited from work opportunities promoted by EUTF-financed actions (36% women, 64% men, 0% N.D - 57% host community, 49% refugee community, 3% N.D). 257,437 people participated in employability, vocational and entrepreneurial skills training programmes (59% women, 40% men, 1% N.D - 31% host community, 67% refugee community, 2% N.D). 1,266,083 people received cash assistance or food vouchers (50% women, 48% men, 2% N.D - 33% host community, 62% refugee community, 6% N.D).

EUTF Syria livelihood interventions provided cash and income opportunities, reducing negative coping mechanisms like debt, child labour, and GBV. Programmes included vocational training, career counselling, and job placement, improving beneficiaries' skills and qualifications. However, long-term employment remained limited, particularly in Lebanon and Jordan.

Cash-for-Work (CfW) and Cash-for-Training (CfT) schemes offered short-term employment but did not align with long-term development goals. Women's participation was low due to the male-dominated nature of CfW activities. In Jordan, restrictive policies and costly work permits hindered Syrian refugees' employment, confining them to labour-intensive sectors like agriculture and construction. In Lebanon, outdated legal frameworks and political opposition limited refugee integration into the workforce.

Despite challenges, vocational training initiatives successfully improved skills and supported MSMEs. Programmes like RDPP in Lebanon facilitated job creation, revised child labour policies, and integrated GBV prevention into security training. However, employment barriers persisted due to economic crises, political instability, and shifting global priorities.

NGOs and CSOs played a crucial role in delivering services, particularly in women's empowerment and capacity-building. However, declining international focus on Syrian refugees, increasing political resistance, and Lebanon's stance against local integration further complicated long-term solutions. The Lebanese government maintained that Syrian refugees' only viable future is their return to Syria, reinforcing barriers to sustainable employment.

b. In the protection sector

The EUTF-financed protection sector tackled GBV and child abuse with an integrated approach that included counselling and psychosocial support (PSS), case management and the use of referral systems to complementary programmes and services. Protection initiatives globally accounted for 3.7% of the EUTF Syria's budget and were interlinked with livelihoods interventions, jointly providing refugees and host communities with essential cash assistance and income-generating opportunities.

- Protection planned targets have been exceeded for all aggregated outputs in terms of access to services and in local capacity strengthening. Jordan and Iraq are the countries with the highest percentage of achievement of target values in terms of local capacities. 473,512 people received PSS (47% women, 32% men, 21% N.D - 24% host community, 53% refugee community, 23% N.D). 125,191 women accessed GBV services (86% women, 14% men, - 42% host community, 42% refugee community, 16% N.D), and 15,736 people trained on child protection and GBV (4% women, 47% men, 6% N.D - 86% host community, 4% refugee community, 10% N.D). This does not include beneficiaries of social protection cash assistance.
- Number of women accessing to GBV related services is reported as 125,191 (86% women and among those 14% men have accessed these services. Among the beneficiaries 42% of those are related to host community, 42 among refugee community and 16% N.D.

The availability of services under the EUTF Syria-financed actions varied across countries based on their legal and institutional frameworks.

- In Lebanon, the WFP project (T04.153) established grievance redress mechanisms and call centres to address concerns. The Referral Information Management System (RIMS) was particularly effective in managing child protection cases.
- In Iraq, weak legal frameworks made it challenging to develop referral systems, though efforts like the GBV Strategic Plan (2022–2026) aimed to improve responses to gender-based violence (GBV).
- Women-only safe spaces and centres were established in Jordan, Iraq, and Türkiye, providing protection and economic empowerment programmes.

Awareness campaigns on GBV have had a positive impact, increasing survivor access to services and shifting social norms. Jordan's national authorities have shown commitment to addressing GBV, particularly in response to COVID-19, by expanding hotlines and digital reporting platforms. Amendments to the National Women's Strategy and public commitments by authorities further reinforce these efforts. In addition, the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) has played a key coordinating role.

c. In the social cohesion sector

Though initially established as a priority sector, social cohesion evolved into a cross-cutting objective across all EUTF Syria priority sectors. The EUTF Syria exceeded its social cohesion targets and delivered planned capacity-strengthening initiatives for local partners. **Significant progress has been made in enhancing access to services, building local capacities, and fostering social cohesion among Syrian refugees and host community members through various activities and initiatives:**

- A total of 748,664 young Syrian refugees and host community members participated in peer information, outreach activities, and extracurricular events such as sports and cultural programmes. This represents 44% of the target for women and 47% for men (9% N.D). Among the participants, 36% were from the host community, while 35% were from the refugee community. However, 29% of the refugee community remain unaccounted for due to data limitations.
- In terms of awareness and information campaigns, 1,471,828 individuals were reached through sessions focused on hygiene, environmental awareness, and protection-related topics. This accounts for 49% of the target for women and 37% for men (12% N.D). Of these participants, 21% were from the host community, while 47% were from the refugee community. Despite these efforts, 14% of the host community and 32% of the refugee community data remain unavailable.
- Efforts to strengthen local capacities have resulted in the training of 8,383 public members, with 40% of participants being women and 60% men. Notably, 100% of those trained were from the host community, with no recorded data from refugee communities.
- Additionally, 8,250 individuals were trained in social cohesion, achieving 49% participation by women and 51% by men, representing 89% of the overall target. Among these, 89% were from the host community, while only 9% were from the refugee community, with remaining data unrecorded. 16,633 beneficiaries reached in terms of local capacity enhancement, exceeding the overall target value of 11,132. Local infrastructure enhancement in social cohesion context exceeded its target value with 832 current value over 781.

Social tensions between host communities and refugees remain high due to competition for jobs, with many livelihood programmes failing to create lasting employment or social cohesion. Lebanon's economic crisis has worsened the situation, particularly for refugees facing job restrictions and forced returns.

- Key EUTF Syria projects, like RDPP and QUDRA, aimed to reduce tensions through community engagement and livelihood support, but resistance to refugee labour integration and limited job opportunities hindered success.
- In Jordan, government policies and strong community ties have helped maintain stability, supported by initiatives like Makani and Oasis centres, which provide safe spaces and training for both Jordanians and Syrians.
- Additionally, social protection grant schemes, such as the NDA (implemented by UNICEF and the ILO), have contributed to stability by ensuring equitable access to financial support for both Lebanese and non-Lebanese beneficiaries, even if they did not directly enhance social cohesion.
- Meanwhile, the SRPR action, led by UNRWA, has played a crucial role in fostering stability among Palestinian refugees (PRL and PRS) by providing economic opportunities through cash-for-work and youth employment programmes, alongside cash assistance and complementary interventions.

d. In the basic education sector

The Trust Fund provides access for children from refugee, IDPs and host communities to formal education, non-formal education (NFE) schemes, accelerated learning and catch-up classes. Most of the basic education planned targets have been exceeded for all aggregated outputs in terms of access to services and in local capacity strengthening.

- A total of 801,149 children had their registration fees for public formal education subsidized, with 53% being girls and 42% boys. Of these, 36% were from the host community, while 35% were from the refugee community, with some data -29%- remaining unavailable (N.D.).

- Additionally, 33,805 children and adolescents were referred to formal education, with 26% being girls and 29% boys (45% N.D). **98% of refugees being referred, and 2% of host community (2%).**
- Furthermore, 193,723 children participated in non-formal education and learning support programmes, with 33% being girls and 36% boys (and 31% N.D). Among the participants, 28% were from the host community and 33% were from the refugee community, though some figures remain unaccounted for (39%N.D.).

The number of educational personnel, including teachers and administrative staff trained is also over 100% achieved with 69,732 personnel trained for 65,725 personnel initially targeted (64% women, 16% men, 19% not disaggregated - 69% host communities, 12% refugees, 19% not disaggregated)

The EUTF Syria education sector significantly improved access to formal and non-formal education for Syrian refugees and host communities. Country-specific approaches varied;

- with Türkiye focusing on infrastructure, teacher training, and integration programmes,
- Jordan leveraging Makani centres to bridge out-of-school children into formal education,
- Lebanon emphasizing cost-effective solutions like direct teacher payments and school rehabilitation.

Across all three countries, inclusive education, psychosocial support, and infrastructure improvements were key priorities. However, challenges remain, including dropout rates, child labour, lack of data on learning outcomes, and difficulties in sustaining digital education efforts. While the EUTF's adaptive strategies have been transformative, further improvements in reintegration programmes, targeted literacy pathways, and data-driven decision-making are needed to maximize long-term educational impact.

e. In the higher education sector

The main result of the EUTF interventions in the higher education (HE) sector is that enrolment of young Syrians and vulnerable host communities in HE and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has increased.

- Targets for all countries were fully achieved and regularly exceeded scholarships continue to meet the needs of the beneficiary students and help develop their perspectives. A total of 5,742 higher education certificates were awarded, covering Bachelor's, Master's, and vocational education programmes. Women accounted for 49% of the recipients, while men represented 51%. Among these, 27.8% of the scholarships were awarded to individuals from the host community, while 71.8% were awarded to refugees. 9,548 adolescents and adults accessed higher education scholarships with the support of the Trust Fund. Of these, 51% were women and 49% were men. Current achievements indicate that 36.4% of participants were from the host community, while 63.4% were from the refugee community and 0.2% of figures remain N.D.

Early EUTF Syria scholarship programmes prioritized maximizing awards while minimizing support services, leading to high dropout rates (T04.11, T04.26, T04.29). This target-driven approach often overlooked student needs and programme quality.

Since 2019, interventions have improved by offering better support services, lowering dropout rates, and focusing on employability. New programmes provide a mix of scholarships, internships, job placements, and entrepreneurship support, shifting towards a beneficiary-centred model. Strengthening institutional capacity has also helped improve access to higher education (HE) and technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

However, integrating graduates into the labour market remains challenging. Limited evidence on employability outcomes and persistent institutional barriers, make it difficult to measure long-term success.

f. In the health sector

The main result of the EUTF health interventions is that more Syrian refugees and host communities have better access to health services.

- According to the latest figures, 5,893,561 Syrian refugees and vulnerable host communities (target: 4,263,708) in Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan gained access to medical care and health services. Refugee communities access a larger share of healthcare services, with 34% of health consultations and 54% of health education sessions provided to them, compared to host communities
- Local capacity enhancement, on contrary, nearly doubled the target value in the aggregated value with target value being 18,080 and 34,066. Nonetheless, reported disaggregated value as follows: 49% Women, 46% and 5% N.D)
Personnel from host communities received training at a slightly higher rate than their counterparts from refugee communities (48% vs. 42%). Women are also being trained in slightly higher numbers compared to men.
- With Trust Fund support, over 888,000 people, including 60% women and 54% Syrians, have benefited from health education activities. The project aims to enhance citizen participation in prevention, health promotion, and NCD patient support across three governorates.

EUTF Syria interventions improved healthcare access, especially in Lebanon, where nearly two million patients benefited from subsidized services under REBAHS. PHCCs expanded affordable care, strengthened management, and integrated health data into MoPH's system.

In Iraq, 142,000 people, including pregnant women and newborns, gained access to upgraded hospitals and mental health services.

In Jordan, healthcare access expanded through hospital rehabilitations, ambulance procurement, and vaccination campaigns. Further improvements are expected by 2025 with ongoing upgrades. Across all countries, these efforts enhanced healthcare quality and accessibility for vulnerable populations.

g. In the WASH sector

The main result for the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector is that more Syrian refugees, IDPs and host communities have access to safely managed water and WASH services. The most recent figures show that only 72% of the targeted population in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon have increased access to WASH services (2,011,918 individuals out of a total of 2,787,874).

- Delays in construction and rehabilitation of water and wastewater infrastructure combined with limited strengthening of local institutions' service delivery capacity contributed to low achievement rates.
- The increased access to water is difficult to assess as data collection on subscriptions to water services was neither uniform nor systematically foreseen or utilised by the interventions. Only the sector evaluation (December 2021) identified tangible results concerning access to water from the point of view of the communities.

2. Management decisions on strategy and future programming were informed by the monitoring mechanisms which provided timely, adequate and efficient reporting.

Since 2017, EUTF Syria has been benefiting from the technical assistance known as the EUTF Syria Monitoring and Evaluation Framework with the aim of assessing, at various levels, the extent to which

the overall objective of the Trust Fund is being achieved. The objectives of this M&E Technical Assistance (TA) team are threefold³:

- **Results-Oriented Monitoring:** To conduct regular and ad-hoc external monitoring and develop recommendations for EUTF-financed projects and provide evidence-based knowledge on the results and outputs, through the use of SMART qualitative indicators.
- **Data Analysis:** To assess effectiveness of the EUTF Syria projects at thematic and geographic level, through centralised data collection and analysis based on the inputs received by project partners and sector/ country analysis.
- **Impact-focused Evaluation:** To assess the sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness of EUTF-funded programmes and evaluate prospects of impact, through external portfolio evaluations.

An EUTF Evaluation Strategy was defined and several tools have been designed to meet these objectives, including the Result Framework that enables the measurement of the results achieved by the partners implementing the actions, and the Strategic Outcome Framework which is rather oriented to change measurement at sector level with a long-term perspective.

The desk review of documents shows that, overall, the EUTF-financed actions in all sectors had clearly identifiable outputs, outcomes and overall objectives, and are equipped with Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) systems. These documents are aligned with the Action Documents developed by EUDs in the target countries. The document review reveals quality issues with the MEL systems designed at the level of funded actions. Primarily observed in first-generation projects across all sectors, issues were i) the poor design of the logframe; and ii) focus was placed on quantitative targets that are not instrumental to effectively capture changes, track outcomes, identify negative effects and monitor whether duplication was taking place or not.

Data collection and analysis system

The M&A TA team for the EUTF Syria established a robust data collection and analysis system based on the Quarterly Information Notes (QIN), including establishing a helpdesk. These efforts have resulted in IPs submitting QINs that have regularly fed into the EUTF's monitoring database, and in turn this has helped maintain up-to-date data on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and project progress. Continuous quality improvements have also been encouraged, particularly in disaggregation and alignment with the Results Framework (RF). The Helpdesk has supported partners in enhancing data quality and provided a forum for addressing data-related inquiries. Furthermore, the M&E TA team has also coordinated with AKVO on the EUTF Syria Web Platform: The EUTF platform, regularly updated by the EUTF technical assistance team, mirrors the monitoring database and has enabled automatic generation of results reports. It has also included interactive features, like geographical mapping, to improve usability and facilitate communication of results to stakeholders.

Although the monitoring database primarily handled quantitative data, efforts have been made to include qualitative insights from project-level reports to better represent project outcomes. This approach was aimed at enhancing the quality and depth of reports and connecting them more closely with on-the-ground realities. After 2019, IPs managed to include qualitative assessment and survey into their M&E system, especially in the higher education sector. Some projects, such as REBAHS in the health sector, stood out for the robustness of its M&E system.

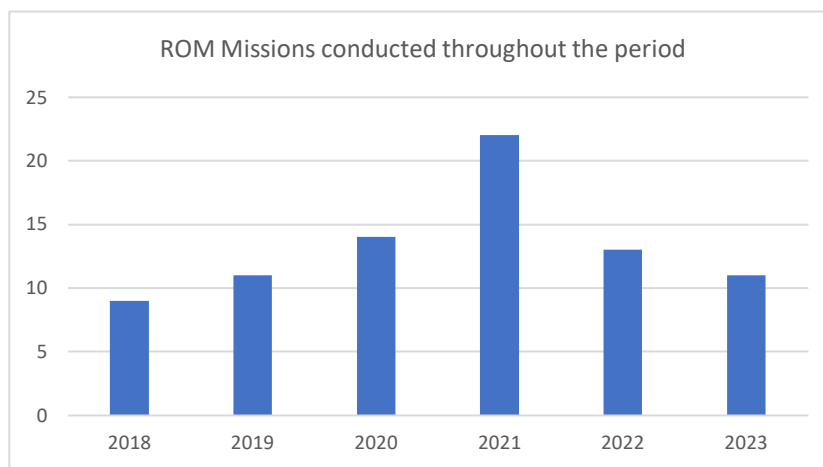
Results-Oriented Monitoring

Another feature of the EUTF Syria M&E system is the ROM mechanism by project. Even though this mechanism is not specific to the M&E TA team, the latter has made it possible to mobilize significantly more resources to systematize the use of this mechanism. In the period 2018-2023, 80 ROM missions

³ <https://particip.de/en/references/details?id=7563>.

were undertaken with an average of almost 13 missions per year. The Graph 11 below shows that the number of missions gradually increased to its height in 2021.

Graph 11. Source: EUTF Syria Evaluation data



The M&E TA team tailored the standard EU ROM system to the specific needs of the EUTF Syria. This customization involved revising the ROM Handbook, which outlines specific quality standards, methodologies, and requirements for robust quality control processes for ROM reports, ensuring consistency and clarity in findings. This quality control has helped maintain high standards in the delivery and communication of ROM findings to EUTF stakeholders.

Unlike standard EU ROMs, the EUTF ROMs have included ad-hoc missions and customized ToRs for each review, allowing for adjustments based on project scope, complexity, and geographical reach. This flexibility has supported more accurate and relevant assessments tailored to each project's unique requirements.

The ROM findings have fed into the EUTF's centralized data collection and evaluation frameworks, enabling real-time monitoring and aligning project performance with broader EUTF objectives. This integration has allowed ROM data to support not only immediate project assessments, but also long-term evaluations and lessons learned for policy-making.

Impact-focused Evaluation

The M&E TA established a comprehensive evaluation strategy, that defines the principles and methodologies of evaluations for the EUTF Syria. Evaluation topics and methodologies were tailored to reflect changing EUTF priorities and contexts. Three types of evaluations have been considered and conducted.

- **Sector Evaluations:** These evaluate specific thematic priorities across multiple countries.
- **Country Evaluations:** These assess the portfolio of EUTF programmes within individual countries, such as Lebanon or Jordan.
- **Horizontal Evaluations:** These focus on broader aspects like outcomes, gender mainstreaming or communication across the entire EUTF regional portfolio.

The evaluations have been evidence-based, following a mixed-methods approach with a focus on qualitative data. The outcome harvesting approach was implemented as a pilot project in some sector evaluations and helped capture outcomes at both project and programme levels. It combines data from both monitoring and evaluation reports to foster a holistic view of project impacts and improve reporting on qualitative and quantitative metrics.

Across the whole implementing period of EUTF Syria, five sector evaluations were carried out in line with the EUTF Evaluation Strategy and its updates. The purpose of these evaluations was to analyse the EUTF Syria priority sectors in view of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and EU value-added and to provide conclusions and recommendations to inform future programming. In 2022, the EUTF Outcome Evaluation was the first systematic attempt by the Trust Fund to identify, analyse and evaluate the actual results achieved since the beginning of its activities.

Table 4. List of the evaluations specified under the EUTF M&E Framework

Sector scope	countries	date
Basic education	all countries	2019
Health	all countries	2020
Higher education	all countries	2018
Livelihood	all countries	2019
WASH	all countries	2022
Outcome evaluation (all sectors)	all countries	2023

In 2024, a EUTF Regional Education Study has been launched to provide an overview of selected aspects of educational interventions for refugees and vulnerable people from the host communities, by comparing models put in place in Jordan, Lebanon and Türkiye for access to formal and non-formal education.

When interviewed, OM in the EUDs deeply appreciated the high level of resources allocated to ROM missions and portfolio evaluations which provided them with a substantial amount of informative data that were used to change approaches and refine their strategy of intervention. The Action Documents designed from 2019 relied on the evaluations results to motivate new objectives, as confirmed by the documentation and mentioned by the OM in the EUDs interviewed.

EQ7: WHAT IMPACT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED OR IS STILL ANTICIPATED AS A RESULT OF THE EUTF SYRIA'S ACTIVITIES?

Since EUTF Syria interventions have been designed based on expected outcome per sector, it is possible to identify long-term effects of EUTF interventions based on the Strategic Outcome Framework. Two types of outcomes have been considered to address EQ7⁴:

- (i) Behaviour changes among beneficiaries related to positive opinion about the accessibility, the affordability and quality of services (indicator 7.1.1),
- (ii) Changed strategies and improved performances of local institutions and service providers (public and community-based) in delivering services to both the Syrian refugees and host communities (indicator 7.1.2),

In addition, the final evaluation team studied in this section the extent to which unexpected positive or negative effects emerged from EUTF Syria's intervention at community and service provider level (indicator 7.1.3).

1. Behavioural change

The EUTF Syria interventions have led to significant behavioural changes across various sectors, impacting individuals, communities, and institutions. When surveyed online, 53% of responding IP

⁴ The third outcome outlined in the EUTF Syria Strategic Outcome Framework and related to national Institutions and sectors ministries is used to address EQ8.

representatives stated that they have observed a “moderate positive change” in terms of behaviour change, and 47% observed a “significant positive change”.

One of the most notable transformations has been the gradual rebuilding of trust in public institutions.

As service accessibility improved, beneficiaries became more likely to engage with public institutions, enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of governance structures. Greater awareness of available services has led to increased healthcare utilization, and use of protection and psychosocial services. Similarly, in education, high satisfaction with services contributed to increased school enrolment in Lebanon and Jordan, as parents recognized the value of formal education. **These behavioural changes indicate a shift toward a more proactive approach to accessing essential services, emphasizing the importance of both service quality and outreach efforts.**

Beside the cross-sectoral changes, specific behavioural changes at sector level could be observed.

In the **livelihoods** sector, IP respondents to the online survey highlighted several positive effects of interventions at the behavioural level. Programmes offering cash-for-work and cash-for-training components received strong feedback, with beneficiaries expressing high levels of satisfaction with the services provided. However, it was also noted that while the cash provided was appreciated, the amount was often insufficient to fully cover beneficiaries' needs.

- In Türkiye, beneficiaries of livelihood projects implemented by local government bodies reported an increased level of trust towards government institutions. This suggests that such programmes not only improved economic resilience but also contributed to strengthening social cohesion by building confidence in public institutions.
- In Lebanon, there were significant reported impacts from the trainings provided under these livelihood programmes. Trainings focused on decent work conditions and financial literacy had a measurable effect on participants, increasing their knowledge and changing their practices. In particular, such training helped families manage their finances more effectively, leading to positive behavioural shifts in financial management. A beneficiary survey conducted by the IP noted that cash received through the programme was used as intended, highlighting the success of financial education in helping participants make responsible financial decisions.
- The BADAEL action stakeholders have noted a shift in perception towards social enterprises⁵ and an increase in number of social enterprises. In addition, several EUTF Syria-supported universities have included courses on this topic based on the experience and inputs of EUTF actions.

In the **protection** sector, findings from the evaluation process indicated several positive outcomes:

- In Jordan, the establishment of women's centres has significantly contributed to improved self-confidence among beneficiaries, fostering a greater sense of safety and enhancing access to essential information and services related to social protection. One of the notable achievements has been the increased awareness among beneficiaries regarding GBV and the appropriate mechanisms for reporting such cases. The establishment of referral systems to health services, psychological support, and legal aid has played a crucial role in this process, empowering women to seek assistance and support when needed. Additionally, there have been marked improvements in the well-being of child beneficiaries associated with these initiatives. A substantial 71% of child beneficiaries reported (project beneficiary survey) feeling safer and more protected from violence. This improvement highlights the effectiveness of the women's centres in not only addressing the immediate needs of women and children but also in creating a supportive environment that promotes safety and well-being.

⁵ A social enterprise is an organization that applies commercial strategies to address social or environmental issues, prioritizing positive impact over profit maximization. Unlike traditional businesses, social enterprises reinvest their earnings into their mission, aiming to create sustainable solutions for societal challenges.

- In Lebanon, respondents to the IP online survey highlighted a notable increase in the demand for services, particularly in child protection (CP) and GBV case management. This growing demand can be attributed to several factors, including the enhanced availability of services, particularly in areas outside major urban centres, and a rising awareness among rights holders regarding their rights to protection and the services available to them. As rights holders become more informed about their entitlements and the support options at their disposal, they are more likely to engage with the systems designed to protect and assist them

In terms of **social cohesion**, the evaluation showed that the EUTF Syria-funded actions effectively promoted social cohesion by fostering collaboration between refugees and host communities:

- 70% of beneficiaries believed that their trust increased in the other community.
- In Jordan, participatory approaches in municipal service management strengthened trust between local governments and communities.

An IP-conducted survey in Lebanon revealed positive outcomes for both Syrian and Lebanese female adults, particularly in the area of behavioural skills development. Participants reported gaining and applying new skills to improve communication with their children, as well as reflecting on and better managing their emotions, especially anger and frustration. Furthermore, both Syrian and Lebanese children benefited from similar empowerment initiatives aimed at equipping them with the skills necessary to manage the negative emotional effects of bullying. This empowerment has contributed to building resilience among children, helping them cope with challenging social dynamics.

The survey also indicated a notable increase in trust among community members, which was fostered through efforts to deconstruct social taboos and promote inclusivity in service provision at the local level. By adopting an inclusive approach, these initiatives have helped bridge gaps between different community groups, enhancing social cohesion and mutual support.

However, it is important to note that these positive outcomes remain fragile and are significantly influenced by the political context in Lebanon. The complex and often unstable political environment can impact the sustainability of these gains and the overall effectiveness of programmes aimed at fostering emotional and social skills in communities.

In the **education** sector, some IPs responding to the online survey noted a significant increase in the enrolment of children in both Lebanon and Jordan, attributing this trend to the high levels of satisfaction with the services provided. Satisfaction surveys conducted among Palestinian refugee children and their families from Syria (PRS) indicated strong appreciation for the educational services available to them, as well as the psychosocial support and recreational activities offered. The positive feedback regarding education services suggests that families recognize the value of these projects in enhancing their children's learning opportunities. This satisfaction likely contributes to higher enrolment rates, as parents are more inclined to register their children in projects, they believe will benefit them academically and socially.

In the **health** sector, an increasing number of people seeking treatments in PHCCs is reported in Lebanon due to a growing awareness that services provided by the PHCCs are affordable and medications free-of-charge and that medical staff in the PHCCs are perceived as trustworthy. In Iraq, more limited evidence of changed behaviours and perceptions was reported. The available examples relate to improved knowledge in mother and childcare (T04.18, T04.181) and a positive change in attitude towards mental health support services (T04.183).

In Jordan, the sector evaluation showed that Syrian refugees are not informed about the possibility to access primary healthcare services under the same conditions as Jordanians without healthcare insurance. More positive indications are expected from the ongoing intervention, T04.255 (extended until April 2025) that includes a specific outreach component implemented by four national

organisations to inform Syrian refugees about access to primary healthcare and raise awareness about risk factors for non-communicable diseases.

Regarding the **WASH** sector, data from satisfaction surveys in Lebanon indicate that positive perception was linked to the capacity of the Water Establishments (WEs) to provide quality water, when the water network was the primary source. In addition, the level of trust toward WEs and municipalities remained low, when residents still rely on water trucking and private wells to access water. As for the number of subscribers, which increased up to 2019, the satisfaction surveys also showed positive results in some localities. Nonetheless, negative perceptions prevailed from 2020 onward, when the crisis in the country deepened, purchasing power dropped and the water supply capacity reduced.

In Jordan, there is evidence of changed behaviours that include adopting water-saving strategies such as reducing water consumption for non-domestic use, installing devices for water saving and recycling water for domestic and gardening use. Nevertheless, the communities reported that access to water was not changed and that they still needed to supply water from water trucks.

The positive perceptions and behavioural changes of beneficiaries in Iraq are linked to the successful provision of services focused on priority areas for the return of displaced people, where access to water and sanitation services, as well as schools, electricity and housing have improved.

The major factor toward these behavioural changes is the integrated, multi-sectoral approaches.

Initiatives that combined economic empowerment with social cohesion, education with child protection, and healthcare services with outreach campaigns proved to be the most effective in fostering long-term transformation. By addressing both material and psychological needs, these comprehensive strategies not only improved living conditions but also promoted trust, resilience, and self-sufficiency.

2. Enhanced capacities of local institutions and service providers

In the **livelihoods** and the **higher education** sectors, (both include support to TVET institutions), **positive outcomes were noted in local institutions capacity in Lebanon and Jordan to promote livelihoods related services**. This was achieved through introducing competency-based and new curricula, design and delivery of a distance learning modality, Involvement of a private sector third-party assessment team and process and the establishment of advisory boards.

Working as a network of universities under the leadership of the German-Jordanian University allowed the Jordanian universities to advocate for measures to promote the inclusion of vulnerable groups into Jordanian universities and, thereby influence policy. However, there is no evidence that this was capitalised upon.

In Iraq, the SPARK-run project (T04.218) focused on institutional strengthening of five academic institutions and aimed to establish career development centres. The project facilitated the development of Innovation Hubs within partner universities, which served as vital links between academic knowledge and practical industry experience, providing students with opportunities to engage in real-world projects and fostering entrepreneurship. However, there is no evidence that this mechanism was capitalised upon after the end of the project.

In Jordan and Lebanon, local implementing NGOs reported to have strongly improved capacities where specific capacity development components were budgeted for. This includes development of a gender strategy and anti-harassment strategy, Standard Operating Procedures for many different processes, security strategy, whistle-blower strategy, and digitalisation of a payment management system. The role of local authorities, including municipalities, was reported to be central to CfW projects (to select beneficiaries and proposing concrete activities). However, municipalities often lack knowledge and readiness to play a leading role for CfW and economic intensive projects.

In both the **protection** and **social cohesion** sectors, **there is substantial evidence of capacity-building initiatives aimed at strengthening local institutions, particularly as the strategies developed by the EUDs evolved during the second phase of the EUTF Syria. These initiatives were designed to support public service providers with a focus on sustainability.**

- In Jordan, partnering with the MoSD to establish and manage the Oasis women-only centres exemplifies strong government engagement and sustainability: they developed internal procedures and delivered GBV training to ministry staff, improved knowledge and allocated national resources, which ensured a continued operation of the centre after the project end.
- In Lebanon, Social Development Centres (SDCs) were supported to enhance child protection and GBV services. Training for social workers on child protection and GBV, alongside a new registry system for case management, improved service delivery. However, administrative challenges hindered the full implementation of the "self-implementation" model aimed at reducing reliance on CSOs.
- Regarding social cohesion, despite efforts to support the municipalities in Jordan, their initiative capacities, both from an administrative and financial point of view, are still too restrained by the centralized institutional framework of Jordan. Also, volunteerism in Jordan is still poorly diffused, calling into question the sustainability of municipal projects based on community participation.

In Jordan, the Women Resilience and Economic Empowerment action (T04.249) contributed to strengthening labour rights by supporting the creation of a Protection Platform for private sector employees. This platform offers seven online services for both employees and employers, allowing them to report labour rights violations. These services include reporting unlawful layoffs, submitting complaints related to child labour violations, addressing unpaid wages for immigrant workers, filing grievances about inspection procedures, and handling various other labour-related inquiries.

Regarding the **education sector**, **local institutions have improved service delivery for Syrian refugees and host communities by prioritizing inclusivity, adapting curricula, and enhancing teacher training. Capacity-building initiatives strengthened educators' skills, while infrastructure investments reduced overcrowding and improved learning environments.** Collaboration with international stakeholders introduced alternative education models, expanding access. However, challenges remain, including funding constraints and the sustainability of donor-dependent interventions.

Regarding the **health** sector, **improving capacity and practices of the PHCCs and developing and testing of a model for their long-term subsidisation was the central focus of the three REBAHS interventions in Lebanon** (T04.54, T04.210, T04.281). Working with both the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and the PHCC levels ultimately changed the PHCCs' modality of service delivery which became more inclusive and affordable, as it is provided to vulnerable beneficiaries through subsidised fee-based health services packages.

In Jordan, broader improvements in performance were noted at the level of the Ministry of Health (MoH). For example, its enhanced coordination and geographic coverage in managing and administering routine vaccinations resulted from the activities carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic (T04.202).

Regarding the **WASH** sector, WASH institutions and service operators improved their performance as a result of the EUTF interventions. However, while limited to specific interventions and to specific areas, the effects of these results are also questionable insofar as the functioning of the WASH operators in the three countries continue to depend on external financial support for Operations and Maintenance (O&M). WASH institutions and operators lacked strategies for improving performance, including policies and plans for increasing revenues and recovery costs and mechanisms for customer communication. O&M and regular asset management were not adequately factored into the EUTF interventions which either lacked plans to maintain services or, when there were plans, their implementation was prevented by the lack of matching provisions in the institutional budgets.

3. Unexpected positive or negative effects

The documentation review of strategic, mid-term, and outcome evaluations of the EUTF Syria identified both positive and negative unexpected effects. An unexpected effect refers to a result or outcome that emerged without being intentionally targeted by any of the EUTF Syria-funded activities.

a. Unexpected positive effects

The evaluation identified a list of unexpected positive effects in the various sectors of EUTF Syria:

- The unexpected integration of digital tools during COVID-19 significantly improved project efficiency, particularly in WASH, health, and education sectors. For instance, digital platforms facilitated service delivery, record-keeping, and communication between providers and beneficiaries. The shift to digital learning and remote education platforms also provided a sustainable framework for future education continuity.
- Certain livelihood projects focused on reforestation and conservation as part of a broader Cash-for-Work strategy, aligning with the "Green Deal" objectives. This approach was driven more by the local energy crisis than by direct environmental goals, yet it contributed positively to environmental conservation and energy efficiency through renewable energy solutions in Lebanon and Jordan.
- In both Lebanon and Jordan, school rehabilitation efforts fostered community pride, particularly within host communities, leading to greater support and engagement with local public schools.
- Some projects, like Youth Resolve 2 (YR2), not only improved relations between host communities and Syrian displaced populations but also strengthened bonds within Lebanese communities, fostering unity within local groups.
- There are indications that women's participation in the projects has changed family dynamics and gender perceptions, with more favourable views towards women working outside the home. Furthermore, an unexpected outcome is that the self-employment track is a preferred strategy of women, even though it was promoted without a gender lens. Women considered it as more suitable to flexible working time, and safer as harassment of women can occur in the workplace with men.
- Increased trust and usage of primary healthcare facilities emerged as partially unexpected outcomes, especially in Lebanon, where financial crises pushed more people toward these affordable health services. This has led to a strengthened relationship between beneficiaries and healthcare providers.
- Another partially unexpected positive outcomes are the capacities of several Lebanese NGOs that have been enhanced due to their membership in EU-financed consortia as IPs. According to several NGOs, being part of a consortium led by an INGO was an opportunity to increase their capacities in implementing development projects, especially as efforts are shifting from strictly humanitarian interventions to recovery ones.

b. Unexpected negative effects

In some areas of Lebanon, livelihood interventions have negatively affected the agriculture sector. When CfW activities were implemented during the agriculture season, this has led to a decrease in the number of available agriculture workers; and/ or an increase in the daily agriculture workers' wages (to match the dollarised CfW activities) which the farmers were unable to match due to the financial crisis. Furthermore, some stakeholders mentioned that some CfW interventions required little effort which led certain beneficiaries of labour-intensive programmes (e.g. constructing irrigation canals) unwilling to carry out the work which was physically more demanding. Another negative effect was the concentrating of support to certain micro-businesses, which led to market saturation of certain value chains, especially traditional Lebanese food items (preserves, dairy). Similarly, focusing on construction, agriculture, and agri-food sectors, in which Syrians are allowed to work through the sponsorship mechanism, may have saturated the labour force in these sectors and increased competition in self-employment activities.

Non-formal education centres (NFE) in Lebanon offer quality services with additional support such as sports and psychosocial activities, making them preferred over public schools by many Syrian families. While beneficial, this preference has inadvertently affected reintegration into the formal education system, creating a divide in educational experiences and complicating long-term education planning.

Furthermore, some Lebanese host communities perceive a bias in aid distribution, where Syrian refugees receive more support at the expense of locals. This perception has contributed to social tensions, particularly in Lebanon and Türkiye, with isolated conflicts noted. The payment of salaries in foreign currencies to educators working with Syrians, while others are paid in local currencies, has further fuelled resentment.

EQ8: HOW CAN THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE EU TRUST FUND BE ASSESSED IN RELATION TO THE MEASURES TAKEN BY BENEFICIARY COUNTRIES TO ADDRESS THE REFUGEE CRISIS?

The EUTF has indirectly contributed to the establishment and application of new public policies and strategies to respond to the needs of the Syrian refugees and vulnerable host communities.

Regarding the **livelihoods** sector, **changes in the national regulation to access the labour market for refugees occurred in Jordan, Iraq and Türkiye but can't be directly attributed to EUTF Syria-funded intervention:**

- In Jordan, the government has passed various policies facilitating employment for Syrian refugees, including issuing flexible (independent) work permits only in certain sectors, such as in agriculture and construction, and passing a policy that allows Syrian refugees to run home-based businesses. There is a lack of clear and concise information about work permit procedures and requirements and obtaining it is complicated.
- In Türkiye, in January 2016, the government enacted a regulation enabling foreigners under temporary protection to obtain work permits. Even though it comes with certain limitations (e.g. 10% quota of Syrian employees per company), the legislation is an important step to ensure the right to work.
- In Iraq the government has allowed Syrians to establish and regularize their own business. In this regard, the mid-term review of the RDPP action (T04.164) reports that Iraq has far greater potential for articulating strategies or avenues for integration given the legal status and right to employment granted to refugees.
- In Lebanon, a relaxation of constraints limiting access to the labour market for refugees is a no-discussion topic, primarily due to difficulties in policy dialogue, limited government capacity and low responsiveness from ministries.

In the **protection** sector, **several legislative and regulatory improvements regarding protection against sexist and sexual violence have occurred throughout the EUTF Syria period and in different countries. EUTF Syria interventions contributed to the policy making by advance recommendations.**

- In Lebanon, the law against sexual harassment was passed by the parliament in December 2020. EUTF Syria interventions supported campaign run by local partners which also provided inputs during the law-making process.
- In Iraq, the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation (WHO) launched the first GBV strategic plan (2022–2026) in 2022, providing the strategic vision and operational directions for the health system to respond to gender-based violence and reduce the health consequences. This policy tapped into EUTF Syria supported interventions led by UN Women to develop referral system for women victims of violence.

The EUTF Syria significantly influenced **education** policies in Lebanon and Jordan, **shaping national strategies for inclusive education and supporting alternative learning pathways**. In Lebanon, it helped develop the 5-Year Education Plan and the National Inclusive Education policy, while in Jordan, it extended the National Education Strategy and supported the 10-Year Inclusive Education Strategy. The EUTF also facilitated funding mechanisms like Lebanon's TREF and strengthened institutional capacity for education reform. Additionally, it promoted inclusive education for children with disabilities. However, challenges like funding constraints and Lebanon's economic crisis threaten the sustainability of these efforts.

In the **higher education** sector, **many efforts indicate that the EUTF Syria has positively influenced policy development, although practical application remains a challenge due to economic and systemic constraints**, especially in Lebanon:

- The HOPES-LEB project fostered comprehensive policy dialogues involving higher education institutions, students, and policymakers to address the sector's resilience amid Lebanon's ongoing crises. This dialogue yielded recommendations for universities, international donors, and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE).
- With contributions from the EUTF Syria, a strategic plan was developed under the guidance of UNESCO and approved in 2022. This plan, which emphasizes labour market needs, incorporates policy recommendations from various national stakeholders, including academic institutions, organisations, and students. In addition, the EUTF Syria facilitated dialogue promoting non-discrimination and inclusive education principles within the Higher Education Plan. However, implementation remains limited amid Lebanon's economic and institutional challenges.
- In Jordan, the EUTF Syria collaboration with Jordanian universities has strengthened institutional capacities, enabling them to implement large-scale projects in refugee contexts. While the EUTF has not directly introduced new higher education policies, its initiatives have influenced existing policies by promoting inclusive education.

In the **Health** sector, **the governments in the three countries committed to take measures towards achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** and ensure that everyone (irrespective of status) can access a full range of quality health services without financial strain.

- In Lebanon, the EUTF interventions (T04.54, T04.210, T04.281) stimulated policy changes by providing the government with an evidence-based model to subsidise primary healthcare (Long-Term Primary Health Care Subsidisation Protocol - LPSP). This model, comprehensive of a number of specific protocols, was developed, piloted, and evaluated in close cooperation with the MoPH which now more strongly advocates the government for adopting a new policy to finance primary healthcare and reduce the over-use of the hospitals.
- In Jordan, despite the state's clear commitment to develop sustainable financing and clear service packages in the health sector. Discussions on subsidising primary healthcare are still at an early stage. Moreover, they are linked to the reform of the highly fragmented insurance system and to other aspects of the reform that involves multiple authorities and different levels of coordination.
- In Iraq, in the Autonomous Region of Kurdistan, inclusive policies exist providing universal access to the public health structures. However, the extent to which these policies are effectively implemented with regard to Syrians, IDPs and vulnerable host communities is largely unknown due to the ineffective institutional monitoring mechanisms and the unreliable data.

In the **WASH** sector, the EUTF Syria has supported the establishment and revision of public policies, particularly in Lebanon. Notably, through its support for the Lebanon Water Forum, the EUTF contributed to revising Lebanon's National Water Sector Strategy in 2020. This revision emphasized essential policy directions, including the water-energy nexus, solarization efforts, and engagement with local communities and municipalities, which are now integrated into the national strategic framework

for water management. However, the political will to enact these strategies remains limited and the conflicting legal frameworks still pose challenges⁶.

There is no evidence of resource allocations from the national budgets to finance inclusive policies relevant to all the sectors. Interviews with OMs indicated that access to national financial information is limited. In Lebanon and Jordan, financial sustainability of refugee-focused services remains highly reliant on external funding, raising concerns about long-term provision and stability of support if donor contributions decrease.

- The Government of Jordan has made efforts to coordinate and support refugee initiatives, notably through partnerships like the Accelerated Access Initiative (AAI) for education, which has seen significant budget support from international donors, including the EU. However, Jordan's financial commitment to sustain these results independently is constrained, and much of the refugee support, especially in education, relies on continued donor funding from entities such as the EU, the United States, Canada, Germany, and Norway.
- In Lebanon, government financial involvement in the protection and health sectors, and essential services for refugees is minimal due to the severe economic and political crisis. This limited involvement often results in reliance on international organisations to fund. This dependency indirectly reduces the government's accountability and willingness to fund refugee-supportive systems, creating sustainability challenges if donor support diminishes.

In Türkiye, a study indicates that “based on several accounts and also public declarations of government officials, the total cost of hosting refugees in Türkiye between 2011 and 2022 has been estimated to be about \$US50 billion. This is an “all inclusive” estimate of direct government spending on refugees, excluding any indirect costs and opportunity costs”⁷.

EQ9. TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE THE EUTF'S COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY ACTIVITIES HELPED TO ADEQUATELY COMMUNICATE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE EUTF AS WELL AS THE VALUES OF THE EU?

EUTF Syria's communication efforts strengthened the EU's public presence, with its strategy evolving significantly over time.

The EUTF Syria's communication and visibility efforts played a crucial role in shaping the EU's public presence and messaging throughout the Fund's implementation.

1) The communication strategy and structures implemented under the EUTF Syria evolved significantly over the years

- Early phase (2014-2017): Establishing identity

During the initial years of the EUTF Syria, from 2014 to 2017, the communication strategy was designed primarily to establish the EU's visibility as a leading financial instrument in response to the Syrian crisis. The approach taken was highly centralized, with decision-making and strategic messaging controlled largely from Brussels. **The primary focus of this phase was on branding and identity-building**, ensuring that key stakeholders, including policymakers, donors, and IPs, recognized the EU's role in supporting refugees and host communities in Lebanon, Jordan, Türkiye, Iraq, and the Western Balkans.

⁶ The sector is governed by a complex and overlapping array of legal frameworks, leading to conflicts and inefficiencies in service delivery. Traditional water management practices, deeply rooted in local customs, often clash with modern legal frameworks and multiple governmental entities, at local and national levels, share responsibilities.

⁷ Semih Tumen. “The case of Syrian refugees in Türkiye: Successes, challenges, and lessons learned”. Background paper to the World Development Report 2023: Migrants, Refugees, and Societies, April 2023.

Despite the strong emphasis on high-level visibility, this period revealed several critical weaknesses. **The centralized nature of the communication structure made it difficult for the strategy to adapt to the rapidly changing regional dynamics.** There was a notable lack of direct engagement with affected communities, which led to significant gaps in public understanding of the EU's contributions. Additionally, the communication and visibility team operated with a lean complement of staff, coupled with administrative constraints often slowed the implementation of outreach efforts. However, despite these obstacles, the team successfully laid the foundation for a structured, coherent, and EU-led communication approach.

- Mid-term reforms (2018-2021): Shift to impact-driven storytelling

Between 2018 and 2021, the communication strategy underwent significant refinements, shifting away from its initial focus on branding towards a more impact-driven storytelling approach. By this stage, the EUTF had **solidified its position as a major funding instrument**, attracting increased contributions from EU MS and international partners. Recognizing the need for a more compelling narrative, the communication efforts concentrated on documenting tangible outcomes in EUTF Syria's priority sectors. This shift aimed to ensure that the impact of EUTF-funded actions was not only measured but also clearly articulated to a broad audience.

The period also witnessed **an improvement in coordination between the communication and visibility team, EU delegations, and IPs.** This enhancement led to a more structured messaging framework and ensured consistency across countries.

However, **this period was also marked by external crises that required agile and responsive communication strategies.** The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021 necessitated rapid adjustments, as funds were redirected to support public health initiatives and socio-economic stability in affected countries. The communication team effectively highlighted the EU's adaptability and solidarity during this global crisis. Similarly, in response to the socio-economic collapse in Lebanon in 2020, **the team played a critical role in countering misinformation regarding EU funding allocations.** Furthermore, the devastating Türkiye-Syria earthquake in 2021 required real-time documentation of humanitarian responses, demonstrating the team's ability to react swiftly to emerging crises.

Despite these successes, several challenges remained. Security concerns and instability in the region severely limited direct field visits, which hindered efforts to collect firsthand testimonies and document project impact on the ground. Additionally, digital outreach remained underutilized, with missed opportunities for more interactive engagement through social media and local media networks., although this modality presents a risk of disinformation. While the shift toward storytelling improved overall communication effectiveness, gaps in community-level engagement persisted.

- 2022-2023: Transition and strategic adjustments

A major transition in communication management occurred in 2022 when the outgoing contractor, Ecorys, was replaced by Altair. This transition initially resulted in a temporary reduction in content dissemination, as the new team restructured operations and revised the existing communication approach. In response to these gaps, Altair introduced a revised Communication and Visibility strategy in 2022, which brought about several significant changes.

One of the most important adjustments was a **return to a region-specific approach to storytelling, moving away from broad, one-size-fits-all messaging.** This change recognized the diverse contexts of EUTF-funded interventions and sought to tailor narratives that resonated with local audiences. Another major milestone was the revival of the widely recognized "Madad" branding, which had been temporarily suspended. Restoring this branding played a crucial role in reinforcing the programme's visibility and regional recognition. Additionally, **closer collaboration between the communication and monitoring teams was established, ensuring that project impact was documented and communicated more effectively.**

With these strategic adjustments, several key achievements were recorded between 2022 and 2023. Field visits increased significantly, allowing for the collection of firsthand beneficiary testimonials. Over 30 visits were conducted, gathering testimonies from more than 110 beneficiaries. In addition, the

communication and visibility team produced over 20 photo reportages, 30 video testimonials, and multiple human-interest stories. These efforts contributed to a more compelling and accessible presentation of the EUTF's impact. Social media engagement improved, with monthly campaigns amplified by EU delegations, while visibility at major EU events, such as the Brussels Conferences on Supporting Syria in 2023 and 2024, reinforced the programme's strategic importance.

However, despite these accomplishments, several ongoing challenges persisted. One of the most pressing difficulties was the complexity of knowledge dissemination. **The technical nature of certain content limited its accessibility to broader audiences, necessitating tailored dissemination channels to engage a wider public effectively.** Regional instability also continued to pose challenges, with escalating military conflicts, tensions in Lebanon, and restricted access to Iraq limiting field missions and affecting direct engagement. Moreover, as the Madad programme approached its conclusion, stakeholder engagement declined due to the lack of new funding opportunities. With most projects completed, there was no longer a dedicated team on the ground, making sustained communication efforts increasingly difficult.

- Long-term knowledge consolidation (2024 and Beyond)

By 2024, the communication and visibility team had successfully consolidated its institutional knowledge, ensuring that key insights from the Trust Fund were preserved for future EU crisis response strategies. Success stories and impact reports were archived on platforms such as DG NEAR's migration webpage and Capacity4dev, securing their long-term accessibility. **The visibility of EUTF-funded interventions remained strong, with curated content showcased at major international events.** In addition, the team strengthened partnerships with external stakeholders, ensuring that lessons learned from the EUTF could inform future Trust Fund strategies.

2) The communication strategy and structures implemented at sector level

The visibility and communication efforts of the EUTF Syria varied significantly across different sectors, with some achieving strong engagement and impact-driven storytelling, while others struggled with limited public awareness and branding challenges.

In the **livelihood** sector, the visibility of EUTF-funded initiatives remained relatively low, as communication efforts often highlighted implementing agencies rather than the EU's contributions. Coordination among consortium members was weak, and budget constraints further limited visibility activities. Attempts to engage the corporate sector in projects such as vocational training and employment programmes faced significant challenges, particularly in Lebanon, where businesses showed reluctance in hiring Syrian refugees. The QUDRA programme (T04.15), which was designed to improve visibility through dialogue platforms, faced delays due to staff turnover and only gained traction in 2018. Additionally, engagement with migrant communities was underdeveloped, as communication strategies did not fully consider their preferred information channels.

In the **basic education** sector, visibility was stronger in Lebanon, where school construction and rehabilitation projects were well-integrated with local priorities. The use of EU logos and branding helped enhance recognition at the community level, but the broader objectives of the EUTF were not always effectively communicated. In Jordan, the presence of multiple international donors created a crowded funding landscape, making it difficult to distinguish EUTF-funded contributions. Across both countries, visibility efforts focused more on project outputs (e.g., number of schools built) rather than outcomes (e.g., improved quality of education and student performance).

In the **higher education** sector, EU visibility was largely tied to scholarship programmes, with EDU-SYRIA being one of the most recognized initiatives. However, students often found the branding confusing due to the presence of multiple logos from different IPs. A 2018 evaluation report recommended that visibility efforts move beyond simply reporting visits of EU officials and instead include regional media strategies, field visits with journalists, and alumni engagement. While some efforts were later

implemented under HOPES-LEB, the overall adoption of these recommendations remained inconsistent across different projects.

In the **health** sector, visibility was stronger at the institutional level but weak among final beneficiaries. Healthcare institutions and government stakeholders, such as Lebanon's MoPH, were aware of the EU's contributions. However, patients and direct beneficiaries often mistook EU-funded health services as being provided solely by IPS such as international NGOs or UN agencies. In Jordan, visibility was even lower, with only a small number of EU-funded health projects explicitly recognized as part of EUTF Syria.

In the **WASH** sector, communication and visibility efforts varied widely across projects. While all interventions had C&V plans in place, implementation was inconsistent. Some projects effectively promoted EU branding through banners, websites, and social media, while others focused more on IP visibility. A notable success was GIZ's Solid Waste Management intervention (T04.208), which used explanatory videos and promotional materials to clearly highlight EU contributions. However, in cases where UN agencies were responsible for project implementation, EUDs faced difficulties in ensuring that visibility requirements were upheld, as contractual obligations often lacked specific enforcement mechanisms.

3) EUTF Syria communication and visibility outcomes

- Establishing the EU as a Key Player

The ability of the EU to establish itself as a leading donor in the region was strongly supported by its branding strategy, especially around Madad, which reinforced both diplomatic influence and public recognition.

Since its establishment, the EUTF has played a pivotal role in coordinating EU funding efforts for the Syrian crisis, ensuring a structured and strategic approach to humanitarian aid and development assistance. This visibility has been further reinforced through high-profile diplomatic engagements, donor conferences, and coordination with EU institutions and MS.

The transition from Ecorys to Altair in 2022 also led to significant improvements in communication strategies, particularly in documenting impact through enhanced storytelling and evidence-based reporting. These efforts helped to further solidify the EU's leadership role in crisis response.

Additionally, EUTF Syria's participation in major international donor events and diplomatic conferences has ensured sustained visibility. The Brussels Conferences on Supporting Syria (2023 and 2024), for instance, have provided key platforms for the EUTF to showcase its impact and strategic importance. Such engagements have also allowed the EU to secure continued financial commitments from MS and international partners, reinforcing its leadership in regional crisis management.

However, there are gaps in visibility at the national level within partner countries, especially in the event of the integration of EU visibility into multi-donor initiatives. While the EU has been a major financial contributor to several large-scale projects, its role is often diluted when projects are implemented under joint donor frameworks.

- Recognition gaps among local communities

Despite high visibility at the institutional level, the EUTF Syria has struggled to achieve consistent recognition among local communities in targeted countries. Many direct beneficiaries—including refugees and host populations—are either unaware of the EU's involvement or misattribute the funding to IPs. Whereas EUTF-funded services are widely used, they are poorly linked to the EU in public perception.

The main reasons for this disconnect at the grassroots level is the dominance of IP branding. Many EUTF-funded projects are executed through UN agencies, NGOs, and local service providers, which often receive greater visibility than the EU itself.

- Challenges in mitigating misperceptions

One of the most persistent challenges facing EUTF Syria is the presence of misperceptions and negative perceptions regarding EU funding allocation. These misperceptions are often politically charged and fuelled by social and economic tensions in partner countries.

A primary misconception is the false narrative that EU funding is exclusively directed toward Syrian refugees, neglecting host communities. This sentiment is particularly strong in Lebanon, where competition over jobs, resources, and public services has led to resentment toward the refugee population. Despite efforts by the EUTF to promote inclusive and equitable funding allocations, the perception that refugees receive disproportionate support continues to drive anti-refugee rhetoric.

To counter this, **the EUTF has attempted to reframe its communication strategy to highlight the shared benefits of EU-funded initiatives for both refugees and host communities.** For instance, success stories such as the rehabilitation of water plants in Lebanon have been used to illustrate how EU support benefits the broader population, not just refugees. However, such efforts have not yet been fully scaled or integrated into a cohesive public awareness campaign.

Another challenge is the volatile political environment in host countries, where refugee assistance is often a highly politicized issue. In Lebanon and Jordan, certain political groups have weaponized misinformation to fuel anti-refugee sentiment, making it difficult for even well-crafted communication efforts to shift deeply entrenched beliefs.

EQ10. CAN SPECIFIC STRENGTHS/ ADVANTAGES BE IDENTIFIED WHEN COMPARING THE EUTF'S MANDATE AND ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER EC INSTRUMENTS?

The advantages of EUTF Syria correspond to the expected added value of the Trust Fund mechanism.

When surveyed via the online questionnaire, 100% of respondents are satisfied with the EUTF as an instrument of which, 65% are highly satisfied and 35% are moderately satisfied. None report of advantages that go beyond the Trust Fund rationale.

- 40% of respondents emphasize the quality of the award process, as being clear, transparent and relatively rapid.
- 30% of answers highlight the flexibility of the instrument, and its capacity to adapt to changing situations
- 25% emphasize the volume and the length of the funding.
- 25% highlight the quality of the EUD staff, in terms of communication and support.

1) At the origin of the EUTF Syria: Why was it needed?

- The scale of the crisis exceeded the EU's standard budget allocations

The complexity of the Syrian refugee crisis and its impact on multiple neighbouring countries required an approach that traditional EU funding tools could not fully accommodate. The EUTF Syria was relevant and appropriate because it addressed urgent funding, coordination, and policy challenges, that existing mechanisms struggled to manage.

The desk review and the interviews with EUTF Syria team members highlighted that one of the main reasons for establishing the EUTF Syria was the urgent need for a faster response mechanism to address the massive humanitarian crisis unfolding in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Türkiye, and Iraq.

The Syrian crisis was one of the largest refugee crises in modern history, with over five million people displaced into neighbouring countries and millions more internally displaced. The EU's existing financial allocations for humanitarian aid and development cooperation were insufficient to cope with the sheer scale of the crisis.

- EU humanitarian aid budgets were stretched thin across multiple crises worldwide, including conflicts in Yemen, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic, as well as natural disasters in Asia and Latin America. There was no dedicated financial instrument within the EU budget specifically designed to handle a crisis of this magnitude in Syria's neighbouring countries.
- The existing EU financial instruments, such as the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), were designed for long-term planning and structured budget allocations, which made them slow and inflexible in reacting to sudden crises.

The EUTF Syria enabled the EU to mobilize additional financial resources outside of the standard budgetary framework by pooling contributions from MS and external donors. This mechanism significantly expanded the financial capacity of the EU, allowing it to go beyond its existing budgetary constraints and deploy €2.3 billion in funding for projects in Lebanon, Jordan, Türkiye, and Iraq.

The EUTF Syria allowed the EU to bypass bureaucratic delays and rapidly channel funds to affected areas, ensuring that resources reached beneficiaries without the constraints of pre-existing budgetary cycles. Without the Trust Fund, the EU's response would have been limited to fragmented, smaller-scale interventions, leaving many critical needs unmet.

- The need for a strong EU political and diplomatic response.

The Syrian refugee crisis was not just a humanitarian and development challenge but also a major geopolitical issue, with significant implications for EU foreign policy, migration management, and regional stability.

Before the establishment of the Trust Fund, the EU's involvement in the Syrian crisis was largely seen as fragmented and reactive, with individual MS taking different policy approaches. There was no centralized EU framework to ensure that financial assistance was aligned with broader diplomatic efforts to stabilize the region.

The Trust Fund helped the EU strengthen its role as a global crisis responder, demonstrating that it could act collectively and strategically in managing the crisis. It provided the EU with greater diplomatic leverage in negotiations with Lebanon, Jordan, Türkiye, and Iraq, ensuring that financial aid was linked to policy discussions on refugee protection, legal frameworks, and socio-economic integration.

2) A comprehensive mechanism based on the nexus approach

Within the first generation of the EUTFs, the EUTF Syria is the largest in terms of allocated budget compared to country coverage. It has a budget of 2.38 billion euros focusing mainly on three countries, with Lebanon receiving 44,4%, Jordan receiving 23.6%, and Türkiye receiving 21,1% of the fund. As a comparison, the Africa Fund has a larger budget of 4.93 billion euros but covers 26 countries. By contrast, the Facility for Refugees in Turkey - a large part of which includes funds from EUTF Syria - had a total budget original of six billion, concentrating on a single country.

EUTF Syria is the most comprehensive instrument in terms of priority sectors covered: it covers seven priority sectors, while the Facility and EUTF Africa cover four sectors respectively.

Moreover, **a defining feature of the EUTF Syria is its ability to bridge the gap between short-term humanitarian assistance and long-term development efforts—a capability that traditional EU funding instruments lacked.** Traditional EU funding was split between DG ECHO (humanitarian aid) and DG DEVCO (development aid), creating institutional silos that often resulted in disjointed programming. The Trust Fund, however, provided a single platform through which both immediate relief and sustainable solutions could be financed together.

The Trust Fund embraced the Nexus approach, which recognizes that protracted crises like the Syrian refugee situation require both emergency relief and long-term resilience-building. This integrated approach not only addresses immediate humanitarian crises but also lays the groundwork for longer-term recovery and development efforts, making it a vital instrument for promoting stability and resilience in the region.

3) The EUTF Syria has proved to be a more flexible and rapid response mechanism than other EU instruments.

The desk review of documents related to performance of EUTF including EUTF Syria, as well as interviews with member state (MS) representatives and OMs, conclude that EUTFs, including EUTF Syria, have effectively fulfilled their objective of serving as a more flexible and rapid response mechanism compared to the NDICI.

The EUTF Syria's design and operational approach have provided it with greater flexibility and a more rapid response capability than other EU instruments, allowing for a more effective and timely reaction to the evolving challenges of the Syrian crisis. The EUTF Syria:

- operates under a streamlined governance structure that allows for quicker approval and implementation of projects. This contrasts with the more bureaucratic procedures of IPA and ENI. However, some EUTF interventions faced delays due to complex and lengthy contracting processes as well as to long staffing process.
- consolidates contributions from the EU budget, MS, and other donors into a single mechanism. This pooling of resources enables a more significant and flexible financial response to urgent needs.
- is designed to quickly adapt to changing circumstances on the ground. It can reallocate funds and adjust programming swiftly in response to new developments, something that IPA and ENI, with their predefined programming cycles, may find challenging.
- is specifically focused on addressing the consequences of the Syrian crisis while IPA and ENI have broader mandates covering various countries and sectors. This specialization allows for more concentrated efforts and resources.
- can disburse funds more rapidly to implement partners, ensuring timely delivery of aid and services to affected populations, due to its flexible financial mechanisms.
- has the ability to adjust its strategic priorities and reallocate resources in response to emerging needs making it more flexible than IPA and ENI, which have more rigid structures and longer planning horizons.

This flexibility in implementation also characterizes the EUTF Africa. Desk review and interview with EUTF Africa manager revealed that one of its key advantages was its ability to intervene in fragile and conflict-prone areas where standard EU instruments, such as the European Development Fund (EDF) or the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), were either too rigid or required formal agreements with national governments. In many cases, governments in crisis-affected regions were either unwilling or unable to engage in formal partnerships, making it difficult for traditional EU funding to operate effectively. The EUTF circumvented these bureaucratic hurdles by enabling direct engagement with international organizations, NGOs, and local actors, allowing interventions to take place in areas with weak or absent state institutions. This was particularly valuable in regions such as Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, and the Sahel, where state fragility made traditional development aid difficult to implement.

According to our interviews, the Humanitarian aid model grant agreement (HUMA MGA) managed by ECHO is the instrument that enables a quicker response to emergency situations than EUTFs. ECHO is responsible for delivering rapid humanitarian aid to victims of conflicts and disasters. It operates through established frameworks and partnerships and has developed simplified contracting and

decision-making processes, enabling faster disbursement of funds and deployment of aid. In the context of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, ECHO's contracting speed was up to five times faster than traditional assistance methods⁸.

Overall, the findings suggest that EUTFs and the HUMA MGA are essential instruments for addressing urgent needs in humanitarian contexts, providing the flexibility and speed required to respond effectively to emergencies while navigating the complexities of international aid mechanisms.

4) Strong monitoring, accountability, and results-based funding

The monitoring mechanism of EUTF Syria was widely appreciated for its rigorous oversight, transparency, and effectiveness in tracking project outcomes. It provided a structured and results-driven approach, ensuring that EU-funded initiatives were well-managed, accountable, and adaptable to changing needs.

One of its key strengths was the quarterly results-based reporting system, which allowed for continuous oversight and real-time adjustments. This approach enabled quick interventions when projects faced challenges, ensuring that resources were allocated efficiently and that funded initiatives remained aligned with strategic objectives.

The monitoring system also played a crucial role in transparency and donor confidence. By providing regular financial tracking and impact assessments, the Trust Fund could offer clear and verifiable data to EU institutions and MS, reinforcing the credibility of its funding efforts. This transparency strengthened the EU's reputation as a reliable and accountable donor.

A notable feature of the monitoring mechanism was its integration of both quantitative performance data and qualitative human-impact stories. This dual approach ensured that statistical results were complemented by real-life testimonials, making the impact of EU funding more tangible and relatable to policymakers and the public.

5) The EUTF Syria has proved to be as effective an instrument as other EU Trust Funds, instruments and mechanisms in increasing EU and MS visibility.

When asked about the benefits and added value of the Trust Fund, the OMs indicated that the resources deployed in terms of communication were commensurate with the financial resources deployed to meet needs in the target countries. These OMs appreciated the visibility they enjoyed, and considered that EUTF Syria had become a positive brand, known to all humanitarian and development actors and institutional partners.

While some studies⁹ suggest that EUTFs generally present a risk of visibility conflict between MS and the EC due to collective EU-wide branding that may overshadow individual donor contributions, this issue has not been reported for EUTF Syria. Instead, interviewed MS representatives emphasised the significance of highlighting a European response to a Europe-wide challenge, such as the influx of refugees and migrants and the associated risks of destabilization at EU borders. They noted that the collective visibility of contributions from all MS enhances the perception of a unified and robust European approach to these pressing issues.

In the context of Türkiye, the Facility has served as the EU's primary instrument for addressing refugee-related challenges, resulting in notable gains in visibility. This visibility not only underscores the EU's commitment to supporting Türkiye in managing refugee flows but also enhances the overall recognition of the EU's role in addressing regional and humanitarian crises.

⁸ European Court of Auditors. 2018. "The Facility for Refugees in Turkey: helpful support, but improvements needed to deliver more value for Money".

⁹ Policy Department for Budgetary Affairs, Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union. "Oversight and Management of the EU Trust Funds Democratic Accountability Challenges and Promising Practices" 2018.

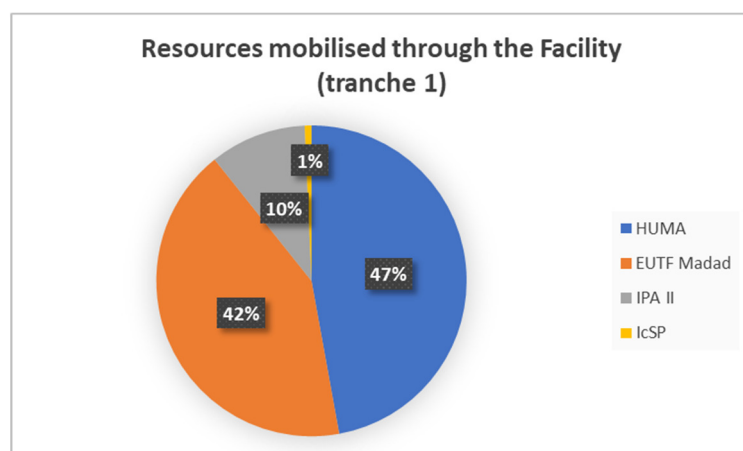
6) The EUTF Syria has proved to be an effective instrument to leverage funds compared to other EU Trust Funds and Facility on Refugee in Turkey.

The first studies on setting up Trust Funds revealed the EC initial difficulties in raising funds from MS¹⁰. During the year 2015, the Commission asked MS to match the EU funding as there were cash-flow problems in responding to the crisis in and around Syria. The Commission had to exert pressure on the MS to assume responsibility and increase their contributions as they were slowly forthcoming. EUTF Syria was not an isolated case, and all EUTFs experienced the same situation, mainly due to the novelty of these instruments.

As indicated by MS representatives interviewed, the political motivations of MS to commit to priority issues such as migratory flows - a priority issue at both national and European level - have been the driving force behind contributions to Trust Funds. In this respect, the instrument itself does not inherently encourage financial contributions; rather it is the political mandate and the European dimension of the issue this instrument addresses that fosters the fund pooling process. This is also the case with the EUTF Africa which was designed to address migration root causes. MS financial contributions reached 14%, slightly higher than the MS financial contribution to the EUTF Syria (11%).

The Facility on Refugee in Türkiye was established in November 2015. It is not a fund in itself but a coordination mechanism for the mobilisation of resources, both from the EU budget and from MS. The Facility is mandated to use the already existing financing instruments available to the Commission. It is not aimed at leveraging new funds but rather to pool and channel existing fundings, as shown by the graph 12 below.

Graph 12. Source: FRIT data



The first tranche of the Facility (Tranche I) consisted of EUR three billion, which was fully contracted by the end of 2017, and has an implementation deadline of 2021 (extended by two years following the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020). A second tranche of EUR three billion was agreed in July 2018, to be committed at the end of 2019 and fully implemented by 2025.

Compared to EUTF Syria, it is important to note that the respective contributions of the EU and the MS to the Facility are more even and balanced: one billion from the EU budget and two billion from MS for the first tranche and two billion from the EU budget and one billion from MS for the second tranche.

¹⁰ ECDPM. "EU Trust Funds – Shaping more comprehensive external action?", Briefing Note, November 2015,

3. Conclusions and recommendations

EQ1: How have relevance, responsiveness, and targeting developed over the life of the EUTF?

The EUTF Syria evolved from a short-term emergency response instrument into a long-term development mechanism. In its early years, the Trust Fund primarily focused on immediate humanitarian needs, including emergency cash assistance, access to education, and primary healthcare. These initial interventions were designed to provide rapid relief but were often developed without in-depth contextual analysis, leading to challenges in ensuring long-term sustainability and national ownership.

As the crisis prolonged, the EUTF adapted by shifting towards resilience-building and economic integration. From 2018 onwards, projects were increasingly aligned with national development priorities, sectoral policies, and donor coordination mechanisms. In sectors such as education and health, the EUTF progressively transitioned from direct service provision to strengthening national institutions. However, while responsiveness improved, certain sectors, such as livelihoods, continued to face regulatory barriers, limiting refugee access to formal employment.

Although targeting improved over time through structured needs assessments and stakeholder consultations, the early phases saw broad, population-based programming that did not sufficiently tailor interventions to specific vulnerabilities. The move toward country-specific programming in later phases enhanced local relevance and increased government engagement. However, long-term sustainability remains uncertain as many interventions continue to rely heavily on donor funding rather than being integrated into national budgetary frameworks.

Recommendations:

- Future EUTF mechanisms should ensure that potential implementing partners integrate structured needs assessments from the outset to ensure relevance and sustainability. This should include comprehensive labour market analyses, vulnerability assessments, and consultations with national authorities and local communities.
- Additionally, any future EUTF should ensure that the transition from emergency relief to development-oriented interventions is embedded in project design, so that resilience-building measures begin early rather than after initial emergency responses.
- Country-specific programming at EU level should be further refined by ensuring that interventions are fully aligned with national development strategies and governance structures. This will improve ownership and sustainability, reducing dependency on donor-driven interventions.

EQ2: Were the internal processes, management, and governance of the EUTF suitable to manage the given mandate?

The governance structure of the EUTF Syria effectively facilitated rapid decision-making and fund allocation. The centralised management model ensured oversight and coherence, while the involvement of EU Delegations enhanced country-level coordination. However, the initial phases of implementation were hindered by slow recruitment processes and understaffing, leading to delays in project contracting and execution.

Over time, operational efficiency improved as human resources were strengthened, and clearer business processes were introduced. The Operational Board meetings were highly valued by EU MS as forums for strategic discussions and decision-making. Nevertheless, some MS expressed concerns regarding the visibility of their contributions and their ability to influence decision-making processes.

While transparency in financial reporting was generally strong, the reliance on email-based information sharing and the absence of a centralised document repository limited accessibility to critical governance documents.

The centralised financial and contractual management of EUTF Syria in Brussels ensured consistency, transparency, and efficient fund coordination, but limited decentralisation slowed project implementation, causing delays in approvals and disbursements

Recommendations:

- Future pooled funding instruments such as an EUTF should ensure that staffing and human resource capacity are adequately planned from the outset to prevent early-stage bottlenecks. This should include allocating sufficient financial, contract management, and audit personnel to facilitate smooth fund administration.
- Decentralising contractual management of EUTF to country offices could improve efficiency by allowing for more direct oversight of project implementation. A hybrid management model should be considered, where financial oversight remains centralised for accountability purposes, but contracting and operational decision-making are more decentralised at the country level. This would allow EUDs to have greater flexibility in managing contracts and responding to challenges on the ground, without compromising the overall integrity of the fund. This would also reduce the burden on headquarters-based staff, who were frequently overwhelmed by the high volume of projects under the EUTF Syria.
- Structured engagement mechanisms should be introduced to ensure that MS have clear avenues to provide strategic input beyond Operational Board meetings.

EQ3: Were allocation and commitment of available funds implemented in a timely and efficient manner?

The EUTF Syria successfully mobilised financial contributions from EU MS, allowing for a collective response to the Syrian refugee crisis. The fund allocation and commitment processes were largely efficient, but delays were encountered in the early phases due to complex contracting negotiations and initial reliance on large regional projects.

As the Trust Fund matured, improvements in business processes, increased staffing, and a shift towards country-specific programming helped accelerate project implementation. By 2024, the EUTF Syria had achieved a 98% implementation rate, making it one of the most efficiently managed EU Trust Funds. However, some MS expressed concerns about the visibility of their contributions, as the Fund operated under a collective EU-wide branding rather than highlighting individual donor commitments.

Recommendations:

- Introducing multi-annual funding commitments would help the EUTF reduce uncertainty in budget allocations and ensure continuity of programming.
- Efforts from EUTF should also be made to improve donor visibility by developing clear communication strategies that highlight individual contributions while maintaining an EU-wide approach to branding and public engagement.

EQ4: to what extent have the choices of recipients and implementing partners (IPs) allowed for

an efficient use of funds?

The efficiency of implementation modalities varied across sectors and country contexts. International organizations, particularly UN agencies, played a critical role in large-scale infrastructure and policy coordination. However, their interventions were sometimes costly, and challenges were noted in monitoring and reporting.

NGOs demonstrated strong flexibility and responsiveness, particularly in crisis settings. Their ability to quickly adapt to changing needs allowed for effective service delivery, particularly in education, health, and protection. However, their capacity for long-term policy influence was limited compared to EU development agencies.

EU development agencies contributed significantly to systemic reforms but often faced bureaucratic constraints that slowed implementation. The consortium model proved effective in maximising expertise and geographical coverage but also introduced coordination challenges, which occasionally led to inefficiencies.

Recommendations:

- A balanced approach should be adopted in future EUTF to leverage the strengths of different implementation modalities. This includes ensuring that large-scale infrastructure investments are complemented by localised, community-driven interventions to enhance sustainability.
- Stronger coordination mechanisms should be introduced to prevent the risk of duplication of efforts and improve collaboration between international organizations, NGOs, and national authorities. Clearer guidelines should be established for project selection to ensure a balance between immediate humanitarian needs and long-term development objectives.
- Additionally, efforts should be made to strengthen the institutional capacity of local organisations to enhance local ownership and sustainability of interventions. This will help reduce dependency on international partners over time.

EQ5: How can the quality of partnership relations with national authorities and implementing stakeholders be assessed?

The EUTF Syria successfully fostered strong partnerships with national authorities, which facilitated project implementation. Ministries played an essential role in policy alignment, particularly in education and healthcare. However, in some sectors, engagement remained limited, particularly regarding refugee employment and legal integration.

Coordination mechanisms, such as national steering committees, were effective in enhancing government buy-in but varied in effectiveness across countries. While some partner governments were proactive in supporting interventions, others were hesitant to fully integrate refugee assistance into national policy frameworks.

Recommendations:

- Any future EUTF should prioritise early engagement with national authorities in project design to ensure stronger ownership. More structured policy dialogue should be introduced to facilitate partner government engagement, particularly on sensitive issues such as refugee employment.
- Enhanced capacity-building initiatives for local governments should be implemented to enable them to take over service provision once donor funding phases out. Strengthening the

institutional capacity of government agencies will ensure that services continue beyond the lifespan of externally funded projects.

EQ6: How can the achievement of EUTF Syria objectives be assessed overall?

The EUTF Syria played a pivotal role in responding to the Syrian crisis, particularly in improving access to essential services such as healthcare, education, livelihoods, and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene). By the end of its September 2024, the Trust Fund had reached over 10 million beneficiaries, enhanced healthcare access for over 5.6 million people, and facilitated the education of 800,000 children and young adults. Infrastructure development projects contributed significantly to improving service delivery in host communities.

Despite these achievements, challenges persisted in ensuring sustainability and systemic change. Many projects successfully delivered short-term results, but their long-term viability was uncertain due to limited national ownership and financial dependence on donor funding. While some sectors, such as health and education, saw progress in policy alignment with national strategies, the livelihoods sector remained constrained by regulatory barriers that hindered refugee employment. Furthermore, the lack of systematic impact tracking beyond output-based indicators made it difficult to assess the broader societal and economic changes resulting from the EUTF's interventions.

Recommendations:

- To strengthen impact assessments, any future EUTF should incorporate more robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks that track long-term systemic changes, not just immediate outputs. This should include behavioural and policy shifts, changes in institutional capacity, and the sustainability of services provided. The primary responsibility lies with the respective implementation partners.
- Efforts should be made to institutionalise successful interventions within national government frameworks to ensure continuity beyond donor funding cycles. This requires stronger engagement with partner governments to advocate for financial commitments and policy reforms that integrate refugee and host community support programmes into national budgetary structures.
- Future EUTF-funded programmes should also emphasise exit strategies from the outset, ensuring that projects transition smoothly from donor-led implementation to national ownership. Capacity-building efforts should be intensified to equip national and local institutions with the tools and resources needed to sustain interventions over the long term.

EQ7: What impact achieved or still to be expected can be attributed to the EUTF's activities?

The EUTF Syria had a substantial impact on improving living conditions for Syrian refugees and vulnerable host communities. Access to education and healthcare improved significantly, leading to better human development outcomes. In the livelihoods sector, targeted interventions facilitated employment for thousands of refugees, although systemic barriers continued to limit broader economic integration.

However, the long-term impacts of these interventions remain uncertain due to ongoing geopolitical, economic, and regulatory challenges. The economic downturn in Lebanon, the impact of COVID-19, and shifting migration policies in partner countries affected the sustainability of the EUTF's achievements. Additionally, while short-term employment and skills development programmes provided immediate relief, they did not always translate into sustained economic self-reliance for refugees.

Recommendations:

- Future interventions should prioritise structural and policy-level reforms that create an enabling environment for sustainable refugee integration. This includes advocating for regulatory changes that ease access to formal employment and business opportunities for refugees.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on building resilience within host communities to prevent aid dependency. This can be achieved by supporting private sector engagement, fostering social cohesion initiatives, and investing in community-driven development programmes.
- Monitoring mechanisms of implementing partners should be strengthened to track the long-term socio-economic impact of interventions. Tracer studies should be conducted to assess how beneficiaries of education, vocational training, and livelihood programmes are faring several years after project completion.

EQ8: How can the contribution of the EUTF to national responses be assessed?

The EUTF Syria effectively complemented national responses by aligning its interventions with partner country strategies in key sectors such as education, health, and social protection. The Trust Fund's flexible financial approach allowed for quick adaptation to emerging crises, supporting government-led efforts in mitigating the impacts of the Syrian refugee crisis.

However, in some areas, the integration of EUTF-funded initiatives into national frameworks was inconsistent. While some partner governments actively collaborated in project design and implementation, others maintained a more cautious approach, particularly regarding long-term commitments to refugee support. Policy fragmentation and political sensitivities around refugee integration further complicated national buy-in.

Recommendations:

- Future funding mechanisms should focus on a deeper integration with national development plans, ensuring that externally funded interventions are embedded within host country policies and budgetary allocations. Early-stage government engagement should be prioritised to strengthen ownership and long-term sustainability.
- Policy dialogue should be intensified to address structural barriers to refugee integration, particularly in labour markets. Efforts should be made to align international donor efforts with national social protection schemes to create a more coherent response framework.
- More systematic coordination should be established between EUTF-funded projects and other EU financial instruments to enhance complementarity and avoid duplication of efforts. This requires stronger collaboration between EUDs, EU MS, and partner governments to ensure a unified response.

EQ9: How have the EUTF's communication and visibility activities helped communicate achievements?

The EUTF Syria successfully positioned the EU as a major actor in the response to the Syrian refugee crisis, highlighting its commitment to humanitarian and development objectives. However, branding inconsistencies and limited public engagement strategies sometimes reduced visibility in key areas. While major achievements were well-documented in EU reports, communication efforts at the beneficiary level varied in effectiveness.

The visibility of individual MS contributions was another area of concern, as some governments felt that their financial commitments were not adequately recognised. Additionally, public perception of EU-funded projects in partner countries was not always strong, partly due to limited outreach campaigns targeting local communities.

Recommendations:

- A more structured and coherent communication strategy should be developed to ensure that the EU's contributions, as well as those of individual MS, are effectively highlighted. Visibility guidelines should be standardised across all IPs to maintain consistency in branding and messaging.
- Public engagement efforts should be expanded to improve awareness and understanding of EU-funded interventions. This could include community-based information sessions, media campaigns, and digital storytelling initiatives that showcase beneficiary experiences and project outcomes.
- Collaboration with local influencers, civil society organisations, and journalists should be strengthened to amplify the reach of EU communications. Greater efforts should also be made to counter misinformation and negative narratives surrounding refugee assistance programmes by proactively engaging with local media and policymakers.

EQ10: Can specific strengths be identified compared to other EU instruments?

Compared to other EU financing instruments, the EUTF Syria demonstrated unique strengths, particularly in its flexibility, rapid response capabilities, and ability to mobilise pooled funding from MS. Unlike traditional bilateral aid programmes, the EUTF was able to react swiftly to emerging crises, reallocating resources as needed without being constrained by fixed national allocations.

However, the predictability and sustainability of funding were weaker compared to more established EU financial instruments. The Trust Fund's limited lifespan created uncertainties for IPs and beneficiaries, affecting long-term planning. Additionally, while flexibility was a key advantage, it sometimes led to fragmented project implementation and challenges in maintaining coherence across different funding cycles.

Recommendations:

- Future funding mechanisms should retain the flexibility and responsiveness of the EUTF model while incorporating multi-annual planning to enhance predictability and sustainability. This could involve integrating Trust Funds into broader EU financial frameworks, ensuring continuity of support beyond short-term funding cycles.
- Greater coherence should be established between Trust Funds and other EU instruments to maximise impact and avoid risk of duplication. This requires stronger coordination mechanisms between DG NEAR, DG ECHO, and DG INTPA, as well as enhanced collaboration with international donors.
- Efforts should also be made to streamline contracting and governance structures to improve efficiency without compromising flexibility. Simplified administrative procedures and clearer guidelines for IPs would help reduce delays while maintaining high standards of accountability.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: LIST OF KEY IP AND PROJECTS

Expert in charge	Project Partner	contract number	Action Title	EUTF Syria Priority Sector	Location	Start date	Duration (in months)	EUTF contribution
Gianfranco D'Eramo	ACTED	T04.272	Water and Wastewater Programme for Host Communities and Syrian Refugees in Lebanon	WASH	Lebanon	27.01.2021	36 months	25 000 000,00
Gianfranco D'Eramo	AECID	T04.255	Enhanced Support to the Public Health System in Jordan for Syrian Refugees and Jordanians: Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases through Primary Health Care.	Health	Jordan	14.01.2021	24 months	22 000 000,00
Gianfranco D'Eramo	DAAD	T04.220	Higher Education phase II	Higher education	Lebanon	03.04.2020	44 months	8 399 999,00
Gianfranco D'Eramo	German Jordanian University (GJU)	T04.29	Providing access to higher and vocational education in Jordan	Higher education	Jordan	01.10.2016	66 months	10 999 996,00
Gianfranco D'Eramo	German Jordanian University (GJU)	T04.166	Providing access to higher and vocational education in Jordan	Higher education	Jordan	15.01.2019	47 months	2 260 000,00
Gianfranco D'Eramo	German Jordanian University (GJU)	T04.215	Support to higher education for Syrian refugees and vulnerable host youths – EDUSYRIA III	Higher education	Jordan	15.01.2020	47 months	15 000 000,00
Gianfranco D'Eramo	GIZ	T04.208	EUTF support for an integrated Solid Waste Management system in Syrian refugee camps and neighbouring communities affected by the Syria Crisis	WASH	Jordan	05.12.2019	36 months	56 000 000,00
Gianfranco D'Eramo	IMC	T04.210	EUTF Programme in support of the Healthcare System for vulnerable population in Lebanon	Health	Lebanon	01.03.2020	26 months	41 646 858,00

Expert in charge	Project Partner	contract number	Action Title	EUTF Syria Priority Sector	Location	Start date	Duration (in months)	EUTF contribution
Gianfranco D'Eramo	IMC	T04.281	Reducing Economic Barriers to Accessing Health Services - Piloting the Long Term PHCC Subsidization Protocol (REBAHS - LPSP)	Health	Lebanon	01.06.2021	12 months	9 930 347,00
Gianfranco D'Eramo	SPARK	T04.218	Higher education phase II	Higher education	Iraq	02.04.2020	50 months	5 000 000,00
Gianfranco D'Eramo	UNICEF	T04.90	Mitigate social tensions among vulnerable populations through improved water services in Lebanon	WASH	Lebanon	21.11.2018	24 months	15 000 000,00
Gianfranco D'Eramo	UNICEF	T04.294	Water and Wastewater Programme for Host Communities and Syrian Refugees in Lebanon	WASH	Lebanon		24 months	22 000 000,00
Gianfranco D'Eramo	WHO	T04.74	Strengthening the health care system resilience and provision of chronic medications at primary health care centres for vulnerable Syrian refugee and Lebanese host communities	Health	Lebanon	07.04.2018	56 months	38 400 000,00
Gianfranco D'Eramo	WHO	T04.202	EUTF Jordan health programme for Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians	Health	Jordan	01.03.2020	36 months	43 000 000,00
Gianfranco D'Eramo	WHO	T04.300	EUTF Programme in support of the Healthcare System for vulnerable population in Lebanon	Health	Lebanon		27 months	11 000 000,00
Nahla Hassan	AICS	T04.40	Strengthening the resilience of host communities and Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraqi Kurdistan	Protection	Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq	01.01.2018	81 months	12 595 500,00
Nahla Hassan	Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (RDPP project)	T04.164	Regional Development and Protection Programme 11 - MENA (ROPP II MENA)	Protection and livelihoods	Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq	01.10.2018	51 months	20 000 000,00

Expert in charge	Project Partner	contract number	Action Title	EUTF Syria Priority Sector	Location	Start date	Duration (in months)	EUTF contribution
Nahla Hassan	Danish Refugee Council	T04.241	LINKED - Danish Refugee Council	Protection and livelihoods	Lebanon	01.08.2020	32 months	14 500 000,00
Nahla Hassan	DRC	T04.286	EUTF support to Economic Development and Social Stability in Lebanon	Livelihoods	Lebanon		21 months	4 500 000,00
Nahla Hassan	Euromed Feminist Initiative (EFI)	T04.290	EUTF Support to Women Resilience and Economic Empowerment in Jordan	Livelihoods	Jordan	01.04.2021	41 months	4 000 000,00
Nahla Hassan	GIZ	T04.200	QUADRA II: Resilience for Refugees, IDPs, returnees and host communities in response to the Resilience for Refugees, IDPs, returnees and host communities in response to the protracted Syrian and Iraqi crises	Protection and livelihoods	Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq	01.09.2019	51 months	58 400 000,00
Nahla Hassan	GIZ International Services	T04.231	Vocational and Technical Education for All in Lebanon (VTE4all)	Higher education	Lebanon	28.10.2020	36 months	4 350 000,00
Nahla Hassan	SPARK	T04.270	DAHIL employment creation through improved access to finance for Syrians under Temporary Protection (SuTP) and host communities	Livelihoods	Türkiye	01.04.2021	32 months	2 000 000,00
Nahla Hassan	UN Women	T04.249	EUTF Support to Women Resilience and Economic Empowerment in Jordan	Livelihoods	Jordan		41 months	7 000 000,00
Nahla Hassan	UNICEF/ILO	T04.292	The EU Regional Trust Fund's support for improved social protection for Syrian refugees and Lebanese communities in Lebanon	Protection	Lebanon		36 months	20 000 000,00
Nahla Hassan	UNRWA	T04.212	Strengthening the resilience of Palestine refugees from Syria in Jordan and Lebanon	Education, health and livelihoods	Lebanon, Jordan	01.01.2020	30 months	43 200 000,00

Expert in charge	Project Partner	contract number	Action Title	EUTF Syria Priority Sector	Location	Start date	Duration (in months)	EUTF contribution
Pierre Tainturier	The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye (TOBB)	T04.68	Living and Working Together: Integrating SuTPs to Turkish Economy	Protection and livelihoods	Türkiye	26.12.2017	65 months	15 000 000,00
Pierre Tainturier	FAO	T04.187	Building Resilience of Syrians under Temporary Protection and Host Communities in Türkiye through Supporting Socio-Economic Integration and Creating Livelihood Opportunities	Livelihoods	Türkiye	01.11.2019	57 months	10 000 000,00
Pierre Tainturier	SPARK	T04.168	Increasing access to inclusive quality primary, secondary and higher education opportunities for Turkish and Syrian children, youth and students (Human Resources Development)	Higher education	Türkiye	10.01.2020	49 months	10 000 000,00
Pierre Tainturier	UNDP	T04.76	To strengthen the economic and social resilience of Syrians under Temporary Protection (SuTP), their host communities and relevant national and local Government institutions.	Livelihoods	Türkiye	01.02.2018	57 months	50 000 000,00

Annex 2: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Legal document
Regulation (EU, Euratom) No. 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the Financial Rules Applicable to the General Budget of the Union and Repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No. 1605/2002, OJ L 298, 26.10.2012
EUTF Africa - Mid-Term Eval
evaluation-eutf-2015-2019-final-report-october-2020-response-services-one-year-later_en : Vol 1, Vol 2, summary
Mid-term evaluation of the European Union emergency-MN0722170ENN
European Court of Auditors. 2018. “The Facility for Refugees in Turkey: helpful support, but improvements needed to deliver more value for Money”.
EUTF Communication & Visibility
EUTF C&V - Presentation - January 2023
EUTF C&V Strategy - as of January 2023 - clean
EUTF Financial View and signed project lists
25.04.2024 EUTF Signed Contracts
Updated Financial View as of 25.04.2024
EUTF North of Africa - Other Evaluations
Annex 1_Evaluation Plan 2023
Cover Note 2023 draft (1)
EUTF Operational Board Meetings
1 st -15 th Meeting minutes
EUTF ROM Reports
T04.17 ROM Report, 19.06.2019
T04.18 ROM Report, 30.04.2018
T04.22 ROM Report , 29.05.2018
T04.25 ROM Report, 21.07.2022
T04.26 ROM Report, 31.03.2020
T04.26 ROM Report, 31.03.2020
T04.40 ROM Report, 03.01.2022
T04.50 ROM Report, 08.01.2020
T04.54 ROM Report, 16.04.2019
T04.74 ROM Report, MQs and Response sheet, 03.09.2020
T04.90 ROM Report, 04.06.2020
T04.112 ROM Report, 21.04.2022
T04.116 ROM Report, 17.07.2023
T04.143 ROM Report 10.08.2021
T04.164 ROM Report 20.12.2021
T04.166 ROM Report, 11.04.2024
T04.198 ROM Report, 08.07.2021
T04.210 ROM Report, 12.07.2021*
T04.210 ROM Report Response, 12.07.2021*
T04.200 ROM Report,01.09.2022
T04.231 ROM Report, 10.06.2024
T04.257 ROM Report and Monitoring Questions 09.06.2024
T04.272, ROM Report 09.12.2022
T04.292, ROM Report, 15.01.2024
T04.294 ROM Report, 05.12.2022
T04.302 ROM Report, 04.07.2023
T04.272 ROM Report, 09.12.2022
T04.292 ROM Report, 15.01.2024
T04.294 ROM Report, 05.12.2022*

T04.302 ROM Report, 04.07.2023
T04.212 Consolidated ROM Report, 24.10.2023*
T04.212 Jordan and Lebanon ROM Report, 24.10.2023*
EUTF Syria Annual reports
2015-2023 reports
EUTF Syria Result Reports
1 st -11 th reports
EUTF Syria and other EU evaluations
Mid-term EUTF Syria evaluation report, 2018
Final reports, EUTF Syria Outcome Evaluation vol1 and vol 2
Final report, Basic Education, all countries, 2019
Final report, Health, all countries, 2020
Inception report, Impact evaluation of primary health care programme in Lebanon, 2024
Final report, Higher Education, all countries, 2018
Final report, Livelihood, all countries, 2019
Final report, Livelihood/agriculture, Lebanon, 2024
Final report, WASH, all countries, 2022
ToRs EUTF Syria Education Study, 2024
Other
ECDPM. “EU Trust Funds – Shaping more comprehensive external action?”, Briefing Note, November 2015
European Parliament- Policy Department for Budgetary Affairs, “Oversight and Management of the EU Trust Funds Democratic Accountability Challenges and Promising Practices”, 2018
European Parliament Research Services, “Implementation of the EU trust funds and the Facility for Refugees in Turkey”, 2020
European Parliament- Policy Department for Budgetary Affairs, “Implementation of the EU Trust Funds and the Facility for Refugees in Turkey”, 2021
Report of the EUTF HQ Mission to Türkiye, “Visits of ongoing projects under the EU Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, some of them financed under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey”, 2023
Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement, “Assessing the Jordan Compact One Year On – An Opportunity or a Barrier to Better Achieving Refugees’ Right to Work”, Journal of Refugee Studies, 2020
Monitoring datasets¹¹
T04.112; T04.116; T04.143; T04.15; T04.166; T04.17; T04.172; T04.196; T04.198; T04.200; T04.210; T04.212; T04.215; T04.22; T04.255; T04.257; T04.270; T04.272; T04.281; T04.286; T04.290; T04.294; T04.300; T04.302, T04.32; T04.66; T04.70; T04.76; T04.78; T04.40/ T04.50; T04.80; T04.82; T04.86

¹¹This dataset is derived from automated progress and monitoring reports within the RSR (Results and Status Reporting) system, AKVO used by implementing partners and EUDs. It includes an overview of project data, updates, and a detailed breakdown of results and indicators. Reports such as the Kick-start Report, Project Updates Table, Results and Indicators Overview, and EUTF for Syria Results and Indicators are automatically generated in various online formats (PDF, XLSX). The dataset was accessed between August and October 2024.

Annex 3: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES*

**This Evaluation follows GDPR compliant practices. In case of distribution of this deliverable to stakeholders outside the EUTF, please notify Particip to update this table to remove personal data*

Stakeholder	Name	Contact	Function
EUTF Syria HQ			
EU HQ	Alberto Gomez Corteson	Alberto.CORTEZON@ec.europa.eu	MADAD Trust Fund Manager DG NEAR
EU HQ	Francesca Renzi	Francesca.renzi@eeas.europa.eu	EUTF Syria Monitoring and Evaluation Officer – DG NEAR
EU HQ	Carlotta Comparetti	Carlotta.COMPARETTI@ec.europa.eu	EUTF Syria Communication Officer
EU HQ	Maxence Daublain	maxence.daublain@eeas.europa.eu	Former Adviser/ Programme Manager European Delegation to Beirut
EU HQ	Janik Marschall	Janik.MARSCHALL@ec.europa.eu	Programme Officer DG NEAR
EU HQ	Joanna Athlin Villa	Joanna.athlin.villa@gov.se	Former Donors and Partners Relations officer DG NEAR
EUTF Horn of Africa			
EUTF Africa	Enrique De Loma Ossorio Friend	Enrique.DE-LOMA-OSSORIO-FRIEND@ec.europa.eu	EUTF Africa Manager for the Horn of Africa
EU Member States representatives			
Germany	Michaela Passlick	Michaela.Passlick@bmz.bund.de	Deputy Head of Division 301 – Middle East II Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Italy	Martino Jacopo	jacopo.martino@esteri.it	(ex) Head of Office - EU Development Cooperation Policies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy
Italy	Daniele Bosio	daniele.bosio@esteri.it	Head of Office - EU Development Cooperation Policies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy
Jordan			
EU Delegation Amman	Hazem Nazzel	hazem.nazzel@eeas.europa.eu	Operational Manager WASH sector
EU Delegation Amman	Ola Al Tibawi	ola.altibawi@eeas.europa.eu	Operational Manager Health sector
EU Delegation Amman	Wieke Waterschoot	wieke.waterschoot@eeas.europa.eu	Operational Manager HE Sector
EU Delegation Amman	Karolina Liskovcova	Karolina.LISKOVCOVA@eeas.europa.eu	Operational Manager Social Protection sector
EU Delegation Amman	Kalina Nikolaeva	Kalina.NIKOLAEVA@eeas.europa.eu	Operational Manager Livelihoods sector
EU Delegation Amman	Tina Prihavec	Tina.PRIHAVEC@eeas.europa.eu	Operational Manager Livelihoods sector

Ministry of Local Development	Areej Zuraijat	zuraigata@yahoo.com	Director Local Development Department
AICS	Martino Costa	martino.costa@aics.gov.it	Head of Programs – Jordan, Resilience and Social Cohesion Programme (RSCP) (T04.40)
European Feminist Initiative	Boriana Johnson	boriana.jonsson@efi-ife.org	Executive Director (T04.290)
German-Jordanian University	Dhiah el Diehn About-Tair	Dhiah.aboutair@edu-syria.eu	Programme Manager – EDUSYRIA (T04.29, T04.166, T04.215)
German-Jordanian University	Fawwaz Alsaqqar	Fawwaz.alsaqqar@edu-syria.eu	Extracurricular Coordinator (T04.29, T04.166, T04.215) (+ 6 other colleagues)
Queen Raina Teacher Academy	Abdelmajeed Shamlawi	a.shamlawi@qrta.edu.jo	Queen Raina Teacher Academy (T04.215)
Ministry of Health	Huda Ababneh	Huda.ababneh@moh.gov.jo	Director of Project Management, Planning and International Cooperation (T04.202, T04.255)
Ministry of Health	Anas Almohtaseb	Anas.Almohtaseb@moh.gov.jo	Director of NCDs Directorate (T04.202, T04.255)
Jordan Breast Cancer Program	Rasha Fakheraldeen	r.fakheraldeen@jbcp.jo	Head Communication & Social Marketing Unit (T04.255)
Royal Health Awareness Society	Mahmoud Nabulsi	mnabulsi@rhas.org.jo	Deputy Director General (T04.255)
Jordan Breast Cancer Program	Reem Al Ajlouni	r.al-ajlouni@jbcp.jo	Programme Director (T04.255) + 1 other colleague
AECID	Francesc Vila Pala	francesc.vila@aecid.es	Programme Manager (T04.255)
GIZ	Wa'el Safi	wael.safi@giz.de	Project Manager (T04.208)
GIZ	Mohammed Albustanji	mohammed.albustanji@giz.de	Project Coordinator (T04.208)
GIZ	Haikal AlAbed	Not applicable	Team Leader, QUDRA II – Resilience for Refugees, IDPs, returnees and host communities in response to the protracted Syrian and Iraqi crises (T04.200)
UN Women	Nidal AlHajja	Not applicable	Resilience and Empowerment of Vulnerable Women: The Future of Jordan's Growth and Stability (T04.249)
UN Women	Anastasia Jonsdottir	Not applicable	Resilience and Empowerment of Vulnerable Women: The Future of Jordan's Growth and Stability (T04.249)

WHO	Nazeema Sheerin Muthu	muthun@who.int	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer (T04.202)
WHO	Mohammed Emad	alemadm@who.int	Technical Officer for UHC (T04.202)
WHO	Omar Abachee	alabacheeo@who.int	Operations Officer (T04.202)
Lebanon			
EU Delegation Beirut	Madhuri Severgnini	Madhuri.Severgnini@eeas.europa.eu	Operational Manager Health sector
EU Delegation Beirut	Ivanka Todorova	Ivanka.Todorova@eeas.europa.eu	Operational Manager WASH sector
EU Delegation Beirut	Leila Emerson	Leila.EMERSON@eeas.europa.eu	Operational Manager
EU Delegation Beirut	Sara Dominoni	Sara.DOMINONI@eeas.europa.eu	Operational Manager
DAAD	Nina Knops	knops@daad.de	Senior Desk Officer (T04.220)
UNICEF	Luigi Peter Ragno	lragno@unicef.org	Chief Social Policy (T04.292)
ILO	Rania Eghnatios	eghnatios@ilo.org	Programme Manager and Social Protection Specialist (T04.292)
GIZ	Rawane Chamseddine	rawane.chamseddine@giz.de	Project Manager (T04.231)
UNRWA	Emanuela Rizzo	E.rizzo@unrwa.org	Programme Support Officer (T04.212, T04.286)
DRC	Ida Johanne Møller Jepsen	ida.jepsen@drc.ngo	Grant Management Specialist (T04.241)
Première Urgence Internationale	Lieke de Jong	dep.hom@premiere-urgence-lib.org	Deputy Head of Mission (T04.210, T04.281, T04.54)
UNICEF	Joanna Saade	jsaade@unicef.org	Head of Stabilisation (T04.90; T04.294)
ACTED	Gaëtane Wicquart	gaetane.wicquart@acted.org	Country Director (T04.272)
IMC	Stefan Cramer	scramer@InternationalMedicalCorps.org	Deputy Country Director (T04.210, T04.281, T04.54)
IMC	Iman Khalil	ikhilil@InternationalMedicalCorps.org	Health Director (T04.210, T04.281, T04.54)
AFD	Ramy Saliba	salibar@afd.fr	Currently Team Leader of TA (non EUTF) (T04.206)
WHO	Edwina Zoghbi	zoghbie@who.int	Operations Officer (T04.74)
ACF Spain	Jeltsje de Bleeuw	jdeblauw@lb.acfspain.org	Deputy Program Coordinator of Spark Syria Response Portfolio (T04.270)
Jordan and Lebanon			

Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Anna Catherine Legendre	annleg@um.dk	Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (T04.164)
Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Mirielle Chia	mirchi@um.dk	Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (T04.164)
Expertise France	Juliette Falkehed	juliette.falkehed@expertisefrance.fr	Project Manager ,QUDRA II- Resilience for Refugees, IDPs, returnees and host communities in response to the protracted Syrian and Iraqi crises- (T04.200)
Türkiye			
EU Delegation Ankara	Deniz Ozbek	Deniz.OZBEK@eeas.europa.eu	Sectoral Manager (T04.155)
EU Delegation Ankara	Feyhan Evitan Canbay	Feyhan-Fethiye.CANBAY@eeas.europa.eu	Programme Manager – Socio-Economic Development
EU Delegation Ankara	Laurent Guirkingier	Laurent.GUIRKINGER@eeas.europa.eu	Head of Section (T04.68)
EU Delegation Ankara	Alessandro Budai	Alessandro.BUDAI@ec.europa.eu	Former Operational Manager for EUTF SUMAF (T04.68)
EU Delegation Ankara	Laura Fallavollita	Laura.FALLAVOLLITA@eeas.europa.eu	Former Programme Manager European Delegation to Ankara
Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality	Fatma Akyol	Not available	Head of the Women and Family Branch and formerly GMM Social Services Projects' Coordinator (T04.76)
FAO	Çağatay Çebi	Cagatay.Cebi@fao.org	Projects Branch Manager (T04.187)
FAO	Fatih Bayrak	Fatih.Bayrak@fao.org	MEAL Officer (T04.187)
TOBB	Tugce Duru Kaya	tugce.kaya@tobb.org.tr	EU Project Development and Implementation Expert (T04.68)
TOBB	Fatih Denizhan Zaimoğlu	denizhan.zaimoglu@tobb.org.tr	EU Project Development and Implementation Expert (T04.68)
UNDP	Mustafa Ali Yurdupak	mustafa.yurdupak@undp.org	Assistant Resident Representative – Programme (T04.76)
UNDP	Kerem Şenol	kerem.senol@undp.org	Project Administrator (T04.76)
UNDP	Berkin Erol	berkin.erol@undp.org	Project Associate (Monitoring & Evaluation), (T04.76)
Ecorys	Colm Dunne	Colm.dunne@sumaf.eu	Team Leader, SUMAF