European Commission

SECTOR UPDATE: EUTF´S CONTRIBUTION TO (SOCIAL) PROTECTION

JUNE 2025

PROTECTION

CONTEXT:

The 'EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis' -herein the Trust Fund- has provided **protection** for Syrian refugees and vulnerable members (children, women and men) of hosting communities in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Türkiye. With an emphasis on children and women, the Trust Fund has supported provision of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), gender-based violence related (GBV) services and child protection services. Besides improving access to those services, the Trust Fund has aimed at strengthening capacities to provide those services, including referral mechanisms to complementary programmes and services. The support to changes in legal, institutional and policy frameworks to strengthen governance of social services has primarily been provided in Jordan and Lebanon. Regarding **cash assistance**, the Trust Fund has aimed at improving the financial situation of vulnerable host communities and refugees to cope with the various crisis in the region.

To date, the Trust Fund has funded **13 actions with a protection or social protection focus**. These interventions have been implemented with the involvement of **11 leading partners** -AECID, AICS, ASAM, EFI, GIZ/GIZ IS, IOM, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, UNICEF, UNRWA and World Vision. In addition, **19 projects** supported by the Trust Fund in basic and higher education, health or livelihoods have included **protection related components**. **Cash assistance components** have been integrated into **20 projects**, primarily within the sectors of education and livelihood as well as (social) protection and health. Leading implementing partners in cash assistance protection projects are ILO, UNHCR,

UNICEF, UNRWA and WFP. Currently, one protection-focused action (T04.306) led by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECID) in Jordan is scheduled to conclude activities in June 2025. Three additional protection projects recently completed implementation of activities: T04.284 (ILO-UNICEF) in Jordan; and T04.292 (ILO-UNICEF); T04.253 (AICS). Among the projects specifically focused on cash assistance, T04.153 (WFP) in Lebanon has recently concluded. Furthermore, one higher education project with a protection component (GJU, T04.215) has also recently finalised its implementation of activities.

PROTECTION RELATED OUTPUTS

In terms of **protection related outputs**, the Trust Fund has provided psychosocial services to more than 473,000 people and GBV services to more than 127,000 individuals, the majority of whom are women. Targets have been exceeded across several areas, such as strengthening local capacities, with more than 17,000 women and men trained in GBV and child protection service provision. Women continue to benefit from access to psychosocial support and GBV related services to a greater extent than men. Refugee communities are accessing psychosocial support at higher rate.

The access to GBV services shows no significant difference across communities of origin. Capacity building on child protection and GBV have similarly reached both women and men, predominantly from host communities. Psychosocial services have primarily been delivered in Türkiye and Lebanon while capacity development in the social protection sector has been carried out in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Türkiye, in all cases, exceeding planned targets. With regard to **cash assistance**, the Trust Fund has reached over 1,254,106 people (91% of the target), with an equal distribution between women and men, and 59% of beneficiaries identified as Syrian refugees.

The assessed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are part of the EU Trust Fund (EUTF) Results Framework (https://ec.europa.eu/trustfund-syria-region/monitoring-evaluation_en).

OUTCOMES

Overall, in terms of **outcomes**, the **final EUTF evaluation from 04/25**, highlights a range of positive results in the **protection sector**. In **Jordan**, the evaluation emphasises the establishment of women's 'Oasis centres', which have played a significant role to women's self-confidence and

→ The following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are part of the EUTF Results Framework (https://ec.europa.eu/trustfund-syria-region/monitoring-evaluation_en).

improving access to information and essential services. Key achievements include increased awareness on GBV and the development of a referral system. These centres have also contributed to fostering a greater sense of safety among children. The strengthened supportive environment is recognised as a crucial outcome promoting safety and wellbeing. In **Lebanon**, the evaluation reports a *"notable increase in the demand for services, particularly in child protection (CP) and GBV case management"*, attributed to "enhanced availability of services (...), and rising awareness", among other factors. Support was also extended to the Social Development Centres (SDCs) to strengthen their child protection and GBV service capacities. The report further recapitulates progress on **legislative and regulatory frameworks**, highlighting the law against sexual harassment passed by the Lebanese Parliament in December 2020 – an achievement supported by local NGOs, other partners and the EUTF. It also referenced Iraq's first GBV Strategic Plan (2022–2026), launched by the Ministry of Health and WHO in 2022, which aims to guide the health sector's response to GBV. In addition, the **final EUTF evaluation** notes that **cash assistance** support has generated positive outcomes including improving food consumption, better wellbeing indicators over a period of 12-months, and enhanced coping strategies that help prevent negative approaches, such as debt incurrence, child labour or exposure to GBV. However, the rising cost of living, particularly increasing food prices and worsening living conditions in Lebanon, has constrained the sustainability of these effects. Despite most beneficiaries reporting the importance of such cash transfers in their everyday life, the amount of the assistance provided was not sufficient to meet basic needs. This made evident the importance of complementing financial support with access to social, health and education services through robust referral mechanisms.

PROJECT LEVEL

At **project level**, all protection and cash assistance related actions have concluded the implementation of activities. In the case of the **AECID-led project**, which has largely achieved its goals, the final measurement of outputs and outcomes will be available soon. Its last available Results Oriented

Monitoring **(ROM) report 11/24** highlighted that the project was on track to achieving outcomes, citing an increased number of services provided to GBV victims and survivors; broad coverage of awareness raising campaigns and consolidation of the One-Stop-Shop model across all partner organisations – enabling centralised efforts of public institutions, civil society organisations and community-based organisations. The **AICS-led project** (T04.253) has demonstrated mixed results, although the information about the last quarter will be available once the reporting period is closed after June 2025. More than half of the intended outputs – such as those related to training, awareness, information system in SDCs, SDCs refurbishments, shelter provided, SDC services and case managed – have been achieved. However, other targets, including upgraded infrastructure, referrals and organisations contracted for referrals, have not been met. Outcome-level results for this project have not yet been measured.

The **WFP project (T04.153)** which has recently concluded, extensively reached its planned outputs. However, outcomes present a more nuanced picture, shaped by a challenging operational context. According to the recent **evaluation draft report of the WFP project (06/25)** the project *"has enabled beneficiaries to meet their basic needs"* but *"due to the high levels of need, and several external hindering factors including inflation, currency fluctuations and limited funding, the provided transfers met only a proportion of basic needs"*. Nevertheless, the cash transfers were critical enabling beneficiaries to meet essential expenses such as food, healthcare, housing and other essential needs during periods of crisis.

Regarding the component supporting Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the evaluation notes that the one-off payment was insufficient to significantly alleviate their economic hardship or to ensure food security. In terms of institutional strengthening, the evaluation highlights the project effectiveness in strengthening the capacity of MoSA to implement the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) at both national and sub-national levels. The project also helped to establish a grievance redress mechanism and call centres to address beneficiary concerns. Furthermore, the final EUTF evaluation also mentions the Referral Information Management System (RIMS) as being *"particularly effective in managing child protection cases"*. While outcome targets on awareness and complaints were achieved, referral outcomes fell short of expectation since only self-referrals were received – contrary to initial plans to receive them from other agencies.

In all Figures the difference between total figures and the sum of disaggregated ones is due to a residual amount that hasn't been broken down by sex or community of origin at the source. This applies to all indicators where disaggregation is not fully available.

INCREASED FINANCIAL CAPACITY OF SYRIAN REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES

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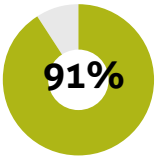
CUT OFF DATE: **MARCH 2025** / **20** CONTRIBUTORS / **6** COUNTRIES

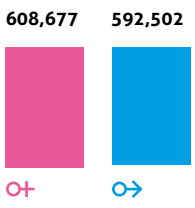
11.

Number of people receiving cash assistance (and/or food vouchers) from EUTF



1,254,106
Aggregated current value

1,381,002
Target



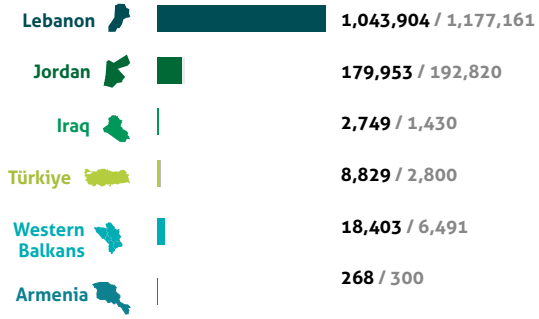


Figure 1.

STRENGTHENED PROTECTION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, WOMEN, AND MEN.

STRENGTHENED PROTECTION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, WOMEN, AND MEN.

CUT OFF DATE: **MARCH 2025** / **22** CONTRIBUTOR / **6** COUNTRIES

24.

Number of people receiving psychosocial support

473,512
Aggregated current value

461,414
Target

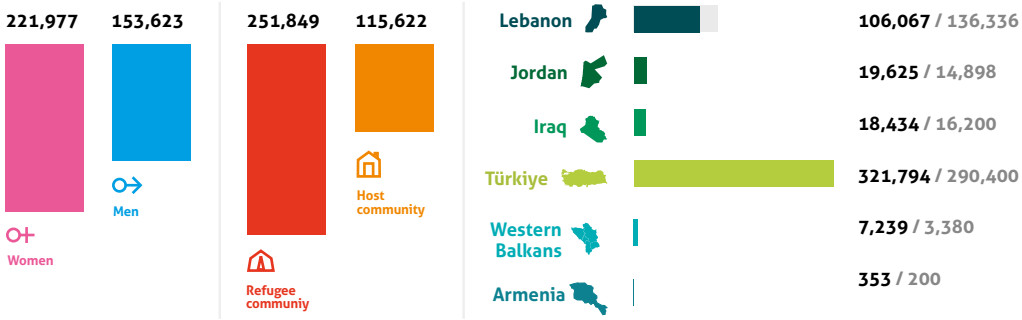


Figure 2.

STRENGTHENED PROTECTION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, WOMEN, AND MEN.

CUT OFF DATE: **MARCH 2025** / **7** CONTRIBUTORS / **4** COUNTRIES

25.

Number of women accessing Gender Based Violence related services.

127,577
Aggregated current value

87,446
Target

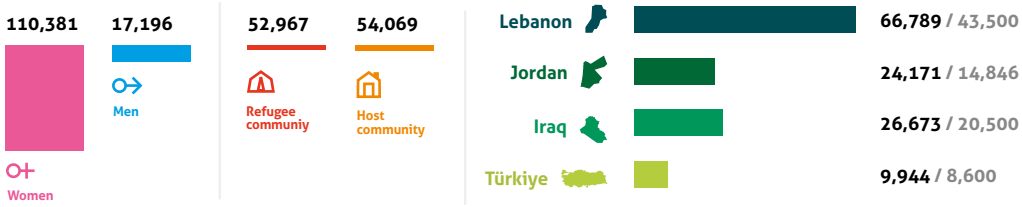


Figure 3.

STRENGTHENED PROTECTION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, WOMEN, AND MEN.

CUT OFF DATE: **MARCH 2025** / **16** CONTRIBUTORS / **6** COUNTRIES

26.

Number of people trained on child protection and gender based violence.

>100%

17,223
Aggregated current value

10,855
Target

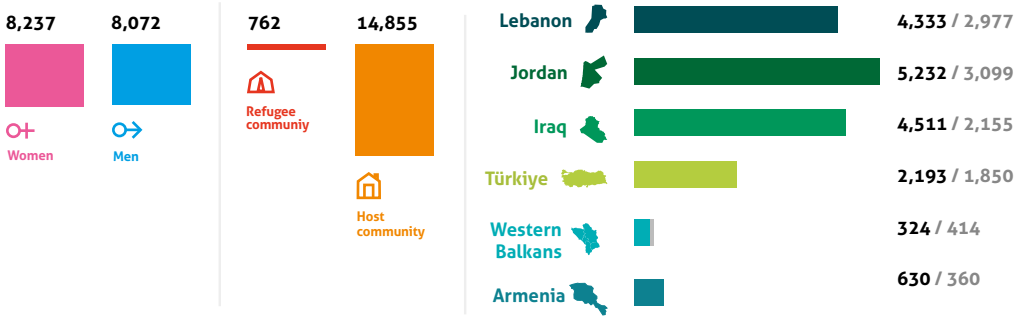


Figure 4.

LOCAL AND NATIONAL SYSTEMS AND SERVICE DELIVERY CAPACITIES IN TARGET AREAS STRENGTHENED.

LOCAL AND NATIONAL SYSTEMS AND SERVICE DELIVERY CAPACITIES IN TARGET AREAS STRENGTHENED.

CUT OFF DATE: **MARCH 2025** / **23** CONTRIBUTORS / **4** COUNTRIES

30.

Number of municipalities benefitting from improved infrastructure.

>100%

585
Aggregated current value

479
Target

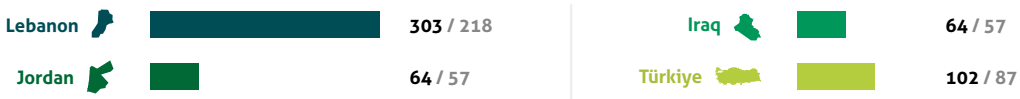


Figure 5.

LOCAL AND NATIONAL SYSTEMS AND SERVICE DELIVERY CAPACITIES IN TARGET AREAS STRENGTHENED.

CUT OFF DATE: **MARCH 2025** / **14** CONTRIBUTORS / **4** COUNTRIES

31.

Number of public sector officers trained.

>100%

8,582
Aggregated current value

4,825
Target

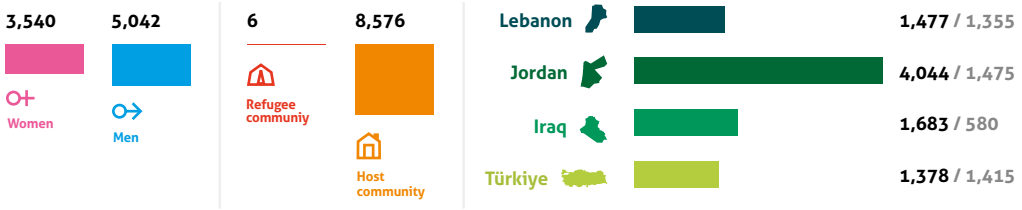


Figure 6.

PROTECTION OUTCOMES IN JORDAN

Enhance the accountability of Jordanian law enforcement and judiciary systems with regard to prevention and protection of GBV cases among refugees and host communities

GIZ International Services-IS (T04.284)

The project led by GIZ IS aims at enhancing the accountability of Jordanian law enforcement regarding prevention and protection of GBV cases among refugees and host communities. The primary stakeholders are the Family Protection and Juvenile Department (FPJD), the departments within the Public Security Directorate (PSD) that support the FPJD, and the judiciary system. Three main results were defined, to:

1. Improve PSD's regulatory framework and mechanisms for strengthening GBV prevention and protection;
2. Target capacity building to law enforcement professionals; and
3. Develop and promote GBV awareness-raising campaigns.

The recent **ROM report 02/25** highlights that *"although the project monitoring framework does not adequately allow to measure outcome indicators"* due to an output focus of indicators and absence of baselines and targets, "the level of delivery and outcome achievement were high". In terms of **individual behavioural changes**, the report references a notable increase in the reporting of GBV cases and a growing demand for related awareness raising activities as a result of the project. All project stakeholders see the relationship between the awareness campaigns, the heightened visibility of GBV as a critical issue, and the approximately 20% increase in reported cases – from circa 54,500 in 2020 to more than 66,000 cases in 2023. The ROM report also adds this trend as indicative of *"enhanced trust among citizens towards the FPJD"* to address GBV from a victim-centred approach. The FPJD also confirms the dual impact: an increase in the cases reported and consultations after awareness activities conducted by a mobile team, and a rise in requests for those activities from municipalities, schools, universities, and NGOs.

With regard to **changes in strategies of local institutions**, the **ROM report 02/25** underlines that FPJD and PSD have notably strengthened their capacity to deliver GBV services through a comprehensive approach that addresses the needs of victims, survivors and individuals at risk. The Mobile Awareness Team is specifically commended by FPJD for its contribution. Evidence suggests that the comprehensive service approach is being effectively internalised by the institution. Furthermore, FPJD/PSD is investing in the refurbishment and adaptation of three field stations in Amman and one in Irbid, while also developing procedures aimed at enhancing services across 17 FPJD field stations nationwide. The report also makes evident the importance to strengthen communication around the ongoing transformations within the FPJD.

At the **national level**, the **ROM report 02/25** identifies as a key success the adaptation (at the time of the mission) of an Addendum to FPJD´s Standard Operating Procedure in Dealing with Family Violence, Sexual Abuses & Child Protection Cases to better reflect the new comprehensive

approach. This Addendum will be applicable to the Comprehensive Service Centre (CSC) and 17 FPJDs around the country. The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Development have also committed to CSC. The report highlights several enabling factors contributing to the initiatives' success, including institutional support, additional external funding from USAID for the construction of the CSC, quality of training, strong communication campaign and the Mobile Awareness Team. Synergies with the AECID-led projects further facilitated coordination with other civil society initiatives.

Nonetheless some challenges are also noted. These include the limited early coordination with the AECID-led project, which may have led to the overlap of actions; limited engagement with key institutions, such as the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA); and the absence of standardised joint multi-agency training from the various ministries and organisations involved in the management of GBV cases. A potential measure to enhance project impact – a GBV referral system managed by FDJP – is currently undergoing testing. Once operational, it would be available to all relevant line ministries and civil social organisations offering services. However, at the time of the ROM mission, the full extent of the USAID GBV funding remained unclear, leading to concerns over the potential negative effects on some of the organisations currently providing GBV services.

As good practice, the ROM report mentions the CSC as a multi-agency, victim-centred response mechanism for GBV. The model integrates police services, case management, legal, social, medical, and psychological support services provided by governmental and non-governmental actors, using a holistic approach to survivor protection and assistance. If fully and effectively implemented, the CSC is expected to 1. offer a more efficient service provision and better coordination among FPJD and all relevant actors; 2. reduce re-victimisation; 3. improve access to justice and protection pathways for survivors; and 4. serve as a scalable model of integrated service delivery in other contexts.

Promoting inclusive local economic empowerment and development to enhance resilience and social stability

ILO (T04.235)

The ILO-led project was conceived to support the operationalisation and implementation of the National Social Policy Strategy, with a focus on institutional strengthening and on enhancing the links between social protection and employment. Aiming at contributing to the social protection and economic self-reliance of refugees and vulnerable local population in Jordan the project uses a three-pillar intervention approach, encompassing:

1. enhanced coordination, integrated planning, and monitoring for government wide efforts in the social protection and employment sector;
2. strengthened national systems/mechanisms to enhance access to the labour market, decent work and employment-based social protection schemes.
3. vulnerable Jordanians and Syrians transition from cash assistance to sustainable jobs.

The recent **ROM report 05/25** underlines that this action shows limited effectiveness and impact. Despite some *"important policy advancements"*, those were not *"sufficiently translated into meaningful implementation"*. In terms of employment targets, they were only partially achieved and the transition system from cash assistance to employment has not materialised.

In terms of **individual behavioural changes**, the extent of access to on-the job training and job placements did not achieve expectations. Due to external factors (government priorities, economic crisis) and internal ones (coordination gaps or unconsidered gender specific barriers), training has reached 64% of the 3,570 target and placements, 54% of the 2,975-target, according to the most recent **QIN 03/25**. The **ROM report 05/25** adds that none of the beneficiaries have been able to graduate from the cash assistance

to sustainable employment. While beneficiaries praised the on-the job training in terms of increasing their skills and self-confidence, the benefits were time-bound. They reported positive effects on their psychological wellbeing, on their income during the training period and on their relationship within their families and community. Nevertheless, working conditions, low wages and barriers to access work permits in the case of refugees limited the sustainability of further benefits.

Women accounted for 39% of the training beneficiaries and 45% of those placed in employment. However, they faced additional barriers - such as long hours, lack of childcare, and unsuitable work conditions - that were not adequately addressed by the project design. While the ROM report highlights positive effects, such as temporary financial independence, ability to pay siblings' education or to pursue freelance work, as well as improvements in skills and confidence, many women reported that the training did not result in long-term employment opportunities. In addition to workplace related issues (lack of Occupational Health and Safety -OHS- standards or limited respect from employers), other more organisational ones were also reported. These included the mismatch between training content and labour market demands, as well insufficient career counselling services. Beneficiaries recommended improving training conditions and securing job placements in more stable working environments would be more effective. The awareness programme to promote access to available social assistance and social insurance programmes in the NSPS context has reached 75,000 households to date representing 21% of the 350,000-target. A broader national campaign was expected to start in May 2025.

Regarding **institutional changes**, government stakeholders – including the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) – acknowledged that following project support to revise the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS), *"social protection has become increasingly regarded as a systemic approach, broadening Social Security Cooperation's mindset from social insurance to a more comprehensive lifecycle approach to social protection"*. Although the second draft of NSPS has not yet been adopted, a launch event is planned for the second quarter of 2025. According to the **ROM report 05/25**, MoSD has clearly enhanced its coordination role through the established Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and the inter-ministerial technical committee, comprising of 12 entities. MoSD now leads policy efforts on social protection through the taskforce of each pillar and the Higher Steering Committee and are *"relatively active in both the implementation of the strategy and its update"*. Among various deliverables, the statistical bulletin has played a key role in institutionalising a unified understanding of social protection data, previously fragments across ministries. By shifting from survey-based data to national registries reliability, operational efficiency is improved and has the potential to guide future social policy making. The ROM report highlights evidence of strengthened inter-agency coordination through the developed key performance indicators. The report confirms that the major project results showing potential impact, if sustained, are found at the level of institutional capacity and data management of MoSD. However, the planned Graduation Tracking System at the National Action Fund (NAF) remained on hold.

At **national, policy level**, while some policy reforms were introduced to extend contributory social assistance to refugees, *"the approach was hindered with reduced governmental commitments"*. With respect to outcome 2 – focused on strengthening the national system for employment based social protection - the **ROM report 05/25** assesses progress as inconsistent and having deviated from original outcomes. The effects of various studies conducted- draft masterplan

of the Social Security Cooperation reforms; a study on the platform economy; pension system diagnostic study, among others- remain unclear at this stage. More recently, efforts to translate labour laws and regulations have gained some interest of the Ministry of Labour to revise them. However, it is too early to assess whether these developments will have any impact on policy changes in the organisation of the labour market for both Jordanians and Syrian refugees.

In terms of **good practices**, the mentioned ROM report highlights the strong relationship and close cooperation with all governmental institutions - MoSD, Department of Statistics (DoS), NAF, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC) and MoL - as a crucial good practice. The alliance between UNICEF and ILO is also highlighted for promoting an integrated approach between social protection and employment policies, enhancing coordination and knowledge sharing. The continuous presence of the UNICEF team helped mitigate challenges arising from the frequent government personnel turnover. The report also commends the project's adaptability that allowed the project to shift from the graduation model approach to focus on one on-the-job training. This project fostered other partnerships with trade unions, e.g., the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions and the private sector and helped to create job placements for more than 1,600 people, 28% Jordanians and 72% Syrians.

PROTECTION OUTCOMES IN LEBANON

Addressing Life-Cycle Vulnerabilities Through Social Protection Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon

ILO-UNICEF (T04.292)

The ILO-UNICEF-led project aims at widening coverage of social protection in Lebanon, by focussing on

1. strengthening the national social protection system;
2. designing and providing social grants to the most vulnerable persons; and
3. increasing evidence-based participation of non-governmental stakeholders in the social protection strategy debate.

The recent **ROM report 03/25** stresses that *"the project largely achieved its planned outcomes and has had a lasting policy and institutional impact, strengthening the Government's capacity to advance social protection reforms, expand social assistance to the most vulnerable and, beyond its initial objectives, support shock-responsive social protection"*. With respect to **individual behavioural changes**, the initiative has expanded access to social grants for the most vulnerable in society – particularly adults and children with disabilities. Over 27,000 people and more than 130,000 children with disabilities are now included in the social grant system. According to the report, 85% of the beneficiaries are satisfied with the programme citing financial relief especially for medical and daily expenses and *"a sense of independence (...) alleviating the psychological burden"* they perceive they are on their families. However, they also assess the assistance *"insufficient to comprehensively cover their needs or full medical costs or support their long-term self-reliance*". Post-distribution outcome monitoring indicated low to moderate impact on *"financial security, autonomy,*

community participation and service access but a high impact on trust in government institutions". It revealed that only 31% reported improved financial independence and 40% improved ability to meet their basic needs and seek health services in the past month due to the National Disability Allowance (NDA). Notably 81% of persons with disabilities reported increased trust in public authorities due to the NDA, although the report warns that unmet expectations may jeopardize this trust. As a noteworthy effect, the NDA has also strengthened gender-responsive social protection by increasing women´s participation in cash assistance programmes.

At an **institutional level**, the **ROM report 03/25** confirms that the national social protection system has been strengthened following the endorsement of the National Social Protection Strategy and that inter-ministerial coordination and policy engagement has been fostered. In addition to capacity building efforts within the Ministry of Social Affairs, the establishment of coordination structures and the launch of a social protection reform dashboard have further contributed to improve institutional social development capacities. The EU NDICI programme will continue to support these advancements. The report also confirms an increase in evidence-based participation from non-governmental stakeholders in the social protection strategy debate. This progress is attributed to the generation of various studies being used for policy advocacy in knowledge-sharing workshops in Lebanon and Jordan. Moreover, the launch of the Social Protection Academy in 2024 is anticipated to strengthen institutional knowledge and will be supported by the EU NDICI. During the 2024 military conflict, the project provided critical support to Lebanon's emergency response, enabling the rapid deployment of cash transfers and digital payment solutions. This experience generated an unexpected but positive institutional effect: the integration of emergency assistance with long-term social support mechanisms.

Nationally, according to the same ROM report, the project has clearly widened social protection coverage with the NDA and the National Child Grant expanding its access for people and children with disabilities. Despite progress, further reforms are required and the governance structure *"remain fragile"*, as noted in the report. The EU NDICI programme on social protection is expected to continue to support these reform efforts. Sustainability continues to be challenging and, although the government has doubled its NDA contribution, external funding remains essential. MoSA cannot financially and technically maintain the Rights and Access Centres, the new Management Information System or the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) on its own.

The mentioned **ROM report** highlights some good practices essential to the effective delivery of social protection. A crucial element is to ensure that social protection programmes are shock responsive, allowing for rapid adaptation during crises. Additionally, the focus on comprehensive systems that integrate different services, a monitoring and a grievance mechanism is also identified as a key success factor. Furthermore, a structured coordination approach is highly relevant in the context of social protection. The integration of digital innovations has been very beneficial. The adoption of digital payments has not only helped to reduce payment delays, but it also played a crucial role during the military conflict. According to the report, the ability to raise concerns digitally as part of the GRM system also improved the effectiveness of social protection interventions.