

**Government of the Syrian Arab Republic
Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour
& United Nations Development Programme**

Initiation Plan

Poverty Alleviation and Women Empowerment in Syria

SYR/07/013

Brief description

The Initiation Plan (IP) aims at setting the framework for the technical assistance that UNDP will provide to the National Programme on Poverty Alleviation and Women Empowerment that was stipulated in the National Tenth Five-Year Plan. Adopting an approach that uses women empowerment as an entry point for poverty alleviation with a special focus on financial empowerment through microfinance, the one-year IP phase has two main outputs:

1. Identification of the poor areas that will be targeted by the programme, defining the microfinance mechanism and testing the mechanism in five pilot villages.
2. Formulation of the full fledged project document on poverty alleviation through providing women with access to microfinance services.

Country: Syrian Arab Republic

UNDAF Outcome(s)/Indicator(s):

UNDAF Outcome 1 A socioeconomic environment in place that enables sustainable growth, employment equity and protection of vulnerable groups.

Indicator: Poorest areas and villages identified based on HDR and MDG indicators better targeted.

Expected Outcomes/Indicators (CP outcomes linked to the SRF/MYFF goal and service line)

A.4 Enhancing poverty alleviation programme including income generation and improving access to extension services in rural and poor areas – MYFF Goal: Achieving the MDGs and reducing human poverty; Service Line: Local Poverty Initiatives including microfinance

Expected Output(s)/Indicator(s):

A.4.1 Rural area-based integrated interventions to alleviate poverty, including through women's empowerment

A.4.2 Assets for the poor for income generating activities provided through micro-credit in rural areas

Implementing partner:
(Designated institution/Executing agency)

Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor

Responsible Parties:

Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor

Programme Period: 2007-2011	Budget	US\$	906,600
Programme Component: Achieving the MDGs and reducing human poverty;	GMS Fee:	US\$	32,830
Project Title: Poverty Alleviation & Women Empowerment	Total budget:	US\$	939,430
Project ID: SYR/07/013	Allocated resources:		
Project Duration: 1 year (August 2007 –August 2008)	• Government/MoSAL*	\$	689,430
Management Arrangement: NEX	• UNDP TRAC	\$	250,000

Agreed by: H.E. Dr. Tayssir Al-Raddawi
Head of the State Planning Commission
On behalf of the Syrian Government

8-8-2007
Date:

Agreed by: H.E. Dr. Diala Haj Aref
Minister of Social Affairs and Labor
On behalf of the Implementing Partner

8-8-2007
Date:

Agreed by: Mr. Ali Al-Za'tari
Resident Representative – UNDP

8-8-2007
Date:

The UN exchange rate prevailing at the signature date of the project is US\$ 1= SP 49.90

1) Situation Analysis

Poverty Incidence and Characteristics

According to the 2005 UNDP Poverty Study², almost 2 million of individuals (11.4 per cent of the Syrian population) could not obtain their basic food and non-food needs, in 2003-2004. Using the higher expenditure poverty line, overall poverty in Syria rises to 30.1 per cent, representing almost 5.3 million individuals.

While poverty was generally more prevalent in rural than in urban areas (62 per cent in rural areas), the greatest differences were geographic. The North-Eastern region (Idleb, Aleppo, Al Raqqa, Deir Ezzor and Hassakeh), both rural and urban, have the greatest incidence, depth and severity of poverty; the Southern urban region has very low levels; and the Middle and Coastal regions intermediate levels. However, the rural-urban variations were equally noticeable as inequality in urban areas increased significantly while it did not change in rural parts.

In terms of correlates to poverty, education was found to be the single characteristic with the strongest correlation to poverty risk in Syria with more than 18 per cent of the poor being illiterate, and 12 percent just able to read and write. Further, poverty was found to be highest, the deepest and the most severe among illiterate individuals. This phenomenon was very pronounced in rural areas where the rate of poverty of illiterate persons reached 11.7% compared to 5% for university graduates. Poverty perpetuated the lack of education, leading to a vicious cycle of low level of income and low education. Additionally, it should be stressed that poverty interacts with gender to produce large gaps in educational enrolment among the poor. If the enrolment rate of poor girls all over Syria is disturbingly low, those living in poor rural households had the highest probability of being illiterate, regardless of the sex of the head of the household.

Unemployment rates were correlated with poverty in Syria. Poor' unemployment rate reached 12 per cent in both urban and rural areas in 2003-2004 while the corresponding rates for the non-poor fluctuated between 7.4 per cent (urban areas) and 9 per cent (rural parts). While employment was dominated by the private sector during the same years, especially in rural areas, private sector workers were most likely to be poorer than public employees. At the national level, the poor were over-represented in agriculture and construction, and to some extent in manufacturing activities.

Female-headed households (FHH) were vulnerable to economic shocks due to the generally irregular and insecure income sources. If wages represented, like for male-headed households, a high proportion of FHH earnings, they had less importance as the level of transfers in their favor reached as high as 48.8 per cent of their global income.

² Poverty in Syria: 1996-2004 - Diagnosis and Pro-Poor Policy Considerations (Heba El Laithy and Khalid Abu-Ismaïl), 2005

Situation of Women

The Syrian Government confirmed its interest to gender issues and its commitment to achieve gender equity by acceding to international human rights conventions. In September 2002, it ratified the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Following the UN World Conference on Women held in 1995 in Beijing, it established the National Committee for Post Beijing Follow up of Women's Affairs with the mandate to formulate proposals about the needed steps for national progress towards gender equality.

With the adoption, in 1973, of the Syrian Constitution, Syrian women gained many of their rights in the political, economic, social, cultural, health and education sectors as well as in the working world in general. However, despite the legal recognition of their equality with men and the authorities' support (see above), deeply felt social codes discourage them from entering in the public realm or making political demands. Not only women are still facing many obstacles to attain full gender equity but even claiming access to their basic rights is encumbered.

Education

Considering gender educational parity, the second National MDGs Report indicated considerable progress, during the period 1990-2004. Nevertheless, the interim target (2004) was not met at all educational levels, with the exception of the secondary school whose target was exceeded by 8%. Additionally, it should be noted that gender equity witnessed regional disparities, with the North Eastern Region displaying the lowest ratio of girls to boys, at all educational levels. For example, the ratio of females to males at secondary level stood as low as 49% in Deir Ezzor, compared to the national average (85%). This is mainly attributed to the customs and traditions prevailing in that part of the country that discourage girls from pursuing their education while promoting early marriage and to the fact that participation in agricultural activities impedes many girls to attend school.

Women in the Economy

Regarding their insertion in the labor market, Syrian women are still struggling disproportionately compared to men. According to the statistics for year 2002, the rate of women in economic activity equals 24% while the women's share of adult labor force is only 21%.

Considering earnings, the average earned income (estimated in US\$ purchasing power parity) of females was US\$ 1,549 in 2002, less than third the one of men (US\$ 5,496). The gap can be explained by the occupational distribution of both groups as desegregation of data for the period 1970-2000 demonstrates large gender differences. In

particular, the significant increase of the percentage of women involved in agriculture in 2000 was coupled with a decrease of their participation in the services sector and a downward trend of their employment in low-paid primary industry activities following the recession of the late 1990s. It is also worth to note the escalation of the percentage of unpaid women workers in 2000.

A more noticeable figure portraying the disadvantageous economic environment for women is the unemployment rate. While the men' unemployment rate during the period of 1970-2000 fairly changed the overall female unemployment rose from 4.4% to 18.5% (with a peak at 28% in urban areas). This negative trend represents a serious obstacle for women's empowerment in all sectors of society.

According to the National 2005 MDGs Report, women's participation in the non-agricultural sector is still considered low as demonstrated by the following figures. Between 1995 and 2004, their participation in the financial productive sector decreased from 13.1% to 5.3%. This diminution was compensated by the increase (from 4.4% to 10%) in the productive services and by the surge (from 22.5% to 47.2%) in the social services. The trend reflects *the engendering* process of the latter sector which goes along with their exclusion from productive activities. Finally, there were clear regional disparities in terms of the participation of women in the non-agricultural sector (Idleb with a rate of 33.7% suffering from the lowest levels). In particular, 52.3% of women were active in the social services sector in urban areas compared to 37.2% in rural parts, a gap that can be attributed to the involvement of rural women in agricultural activities.

Women's participation in the Decision-making Process

As for women's participation in the Parliament, it increased from 9.6% to 12% between the 1990-1994 and the 2002-2006 periods whereby female parliamentarians occupied 30 seats out of a total of 250. Those figures are considered among the highest in the Arab Region after Iraq and Tunisia. Nevertheless, the representation of women at the governorate level did not show much improvement over the 1990-2006 period whereby each of the governorates of the North Eastern Region were still represented by one woman only and the governorate of Quneitra had still no female representation in the Parliament.

The progress in terms of women empowerment achieved at the legislative level was not matched with similar improvement when considering executive institutions. For example, throughout the whole period 1990-2005, women managed to occupy only two ministerial positions out of a total of 30. In addition, they were mainly nominated in ministries entrusted with traditional tasks, notably the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor and Ministry of Culture, leaving the more critical ministerial positions to be lead by male ministers.

Strategy

In line with the findings and recommendations of the 2005 UNDP Poverty Study, the Syrian Government decided to use a combination of strategies in order to alleviate poverty and to make significant progress towards goal #1 of the MDGs. In this context, the tenth Five Year Plan included a separate output concerning the alleviation of poverty and job creation. Under this output the plan listed nine objectives, namely:

1. Adopt a policy of sustainable economic development in order to improve income level, to increase job opportunities, to fight unemployment and to achieve a more equal distribution of income in favor of the poor.
2. Raise the level of education in the segments of society that is threatened of poverty and eradicate illiteracy.
3. Reduce internal migration.
4. Build social safety nets for comprehensive health and social security, and provide popular housing.
5. Ensure access of the poor to financial resources through financing small and micro enterprises.
6. Increase investments and capital accumulation, especially in the neediest governorates with particular concentration on northeastern regions.
7. Activate the role of the local community and develop the responsibilities of local societies which will be encouraged to move from a charitable approach to a more development-oriented one.
8. Develop the rural areas and the Badia by expanding public services, especially health facilities and infrastructure services.
9. Develop a social welfare strategy that focuses especially on the disabled and the citizens affected by temporary risks or crises. The state is recommended to intervene in cooperation with NGOs to provide systematic support on a case-by-case basis

To achieve those objectives, the Government has adopted a combination of approaches, namely the welfare strategy, the economic approach and the human capital approach. The social welfare strategy aims at lifting at least 25% of the poor people (i.e 0.5 million) above the lower poverty line. This would be achieved through the establishment of a Social Welfare Fund that will distribute direct cash transfers to the individuals whose resources are inferior to this minimal level and who are unable to work. Through the human capital approach, the Government will address the characteristics of the poor and attempt to change them by developing nutrition, health, education and training programmes. Finally, the economic approach to poverty reduction encompasses a variety of interventions as enhancement of employment opportunities, investment in economic sectors. The latter approaches present two advantages comparing to the welfare strategy. First, they act on the causes of poverty rather than just reducing the effects. Second, they can prove to be less costly in the long term since they aim at improving households

productivity. In this respect, the Standards of Living Map for Syria² recognized Sen's classification which identifies four dimensions of poverty -opportunity, capability, security, and empowerment- to be relevant to any poverty reduction strategy in Syria³.

The Government will address those four dimensions through the implementation of an integrated programme entitled "*Poverty Alleviation and Women Empowerment*" for which 0.25% of the Government's investment budget has been allocated over a period of five years (2006-2010).

The two main components of the programme

i) The first component, which is being managed and implemented by the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment, aims at addressing the capability dimension of poverty by improving infrastructure and enlarging people's access to basic services such as safe drinking water, sanitation, roads, health services and schools (human capital approach).

ii) The second component, with which the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor has been entrusted and for which UNDP's assistance was sought, will address in an integrated manner the other dimensions of poverty: opportunity, empowerment and security (human capital and economic approaches).

In particular, the second component (this Project) will use women empowerment as an entry point for poverty alleviation in the targeted areas through:

- i) Providing poor women with access to financial services (microfinance) in order to increase household's economic security and income, to reduce their vulnerability to risks and to help them building assets;
- ii) Developing new economic and job opportunities for poor women entrepreneurs by helping them to create their own businesses,
- iii) Raising awareness among the local communities and women, especially those already active in the local economy, about reproductive health, local governance and gender issues

²The Standards of Living Map for Syria is based on a statistical procedure developed by Elbers et al. (2002) that combines household survey data with population census data. It shows poverty incidence and status of other human development indicators at the lowest geographical/administrative level (village level). It is being prepared by UNDP in cooperation with the State Planning Commission and the Central Bureau of Statistics and is currently in the last stages towards its completion.

The two main outputs of the Initiation Plan

i) The first output is articulated around three dimensions: identification of the poor areas in which the microfinance activities will be implemented; definition of the microfinance mechanism for both urban and rural areas; and implementation of the selected mechanism in five pilot villages.

The Initiation Phase will start by launching the necessary studies to identify the areas that will be targeted by the project. This will be done by comparing the Standards of Living Map to the Microfinance Map³ (that will be developed in this project) while taking into consideration the current work done by the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment. Then, the microfinance mechanism(s) for urban and rural areas will be defined. In order to test the mechanism on the ground, five pilot villages (areas) will be selected during the IP phase and work will be initiated in them. The lessons learnt from this phase would help in better designing the overall approach for the full-fledged project.

ii) The second output consists of formulating a full-fledged project document for a poverty alleviation project through providing women with access to microfinance services.

The last three months of the IP phase will mainly focus on drafting the full-fledged project document. By then, implementation in the pilot areas will have started and initial lessons will have been highlighted. The first draft Project Document will be presented to the Project Board for review and comments.

Thus, the overall project is expected to support both the Syrian Government's national and international goals and the UN's and UNDP's specific objectives related to those goals as follows:

- i) It will support the development goals of the Syrian Tenth Five Year Plan (2006-2010) which prioritizes poverty alleviation through job creation and increased incomes of citizens;
- ii) It will positively contribute to the achievement of the time bound goals of the MDGs, particularly MDGs 1 to 5;
- iii) It is in line with the UNDAF (2007-2011) Outcomes 1 and 3, namely "A socio economic environment in place that enables sustainable growth, employment equity and protection of vulnerable groups" and "Inter and intra-regional disparities related to access to and quality of health, education and other social services reduced, with a focus on the Northern, Eastern and Badia regions of the country and other disadvantaged areas";

³The Microfinance Map will be produced through this project and will put microfinance projects that were or are currently being implemented on a map and will specifically highlight the percentage of female beneficiaries from these projects.

It contributes to one of the UNDP Country Programme components, namely: "Poverty reduction and economic growth" where UNDP pledges to provide support to Syria's transformation to the social-market economy by going beyond its formerly ad hoc approach and comprehensively supporting the revitalization of growth while at the same time improving equity in targeted disadvantaged areas and vulnerable populations.

Project Rationale

Goal 1 of the MDGs

Since the end goal of this project is poverty alleviation, it is expected to directly contribute to achieve Goal 1 of the MDGs, "*Reducing extreme poverty and hunger*". Considering the advantages of using the tool of microfinance for poverty alleviation, a World Bank study about three microfinance institutions has shown that 40% of the entire reduction of poverty in rural Bangladesh was directly attributable to microfinance⁴. In Syria, preliminary results of a study conducted by ICARDA in 2005-2006 in the area of Jabal Al Hoss (where a UNDP microfinance programme has been implemented since 2000) demonstrate a significant improvement of the conditions of live of the beneficiaries of loans. Indeed, 24.2% of this group experienced an increase of their personal income during the period covered by the study as a result of investing in income generating activities while only 2% of the non-beneficiaries noted such an increase. Some beneficiaries diversified their income resources- 1% ran two income generating activities in addition to their main job- and 31.6% were able to start new activities as compared to 10.6% of the non-beneficiaries. The socio-economic condition of the people in Jabal Al-Hoss also improved as the result of the project. The nutritional value of food of the beneficiaries' families increased by 17.6% compared to a 4% improvement in the non-beneficiaries' food value.

The project will attempt to break the vicious cycle of poverty and gender inequality and transform it into a virtuous cycle which uses women empowerment as a tool for poverty alleviation while using, in the same time, the microfinance component as a means for women empowerment. Evidence has shown that the ability to borrow, save and earn income enhances poor women's confidence, enabling them to better confront systemic gender inequities⁵. This empowerment is reflected in their ability to participate in family and community decisions⁴. In Indonesia, female clients of BRI (a microfinance institution) were more likely than non-clients to make joint decisions with their husbands about different issues such as allocation of household money, children's education, use of contraceptives and family size. Finally, the project will include a separate component concerning women empowerment through providing them with training on gender and governance issues and leadership skills.

⁴ From Microfinance to Macro Change).

Donor Brief No. 9: Microfinance and the MDGs

http://www.cgap.org/portal/binary/com.ep.contentmanagement.servlet.ContentDeliveryServlet/Documents/DonorBrief_09.html

Goal 2 of the MDGs

As for the impact of such an integrated programme on Goal 2 of the MDGs, "*Achieving universal primary education*", numerous evidence suggest that greater access to financial services and increased income allow poor people to invest in their children's future, particularly in their education. In Uganda, for example, Foccas clients (a bank offering microfinance services for the poor), spent a third more than non-clients on their children's education⁵

Goal 3 of the MDGs

The project will also have a direct impact on the third goal of the MDGs, "*Promoting gender equality and empowering women*". Indeed, the project could serve as an example of combining poverty alleviation and women empowerment in one integrated programme. This is in line with the findings of several studies which show that neither poverty nor poor health outcomes reduction can be achieved without gender equality and women' empowerment. A World Bank Study has shown that while women and girls bear the largest and most direct cost of gender inequalities (legal, social, and economic), the costs cut more broadly across sectors, eventually harming everyone. Further, the rationale behind offering microfinance services to women stems from several studies which show that: i) women are a better credit risk than men; ii) women benefit from creation of social network and increased level of empowerment, in addition to economic benefits

Goal 4 and 5 of the MDGs

The project will have both a direct and indirect impact on goals 4 and 5 of the MDGs, namely "*Reducing children's mortality and improving maternal health*". By getting an enlarged access to financial services, women will be encouraged to seek health care services when needed rather than wait until an illness became critical. In addition, the programme will explicitly include education on basic health issues concerning women (reproductive health) and their children. In Bolivia, for example, the female clients of CRECER (a bank offering microfinance services) adopted breast-feeding practices, responded better to rehydration therapy for curing diarrhea while their children presented higher rates of DPT3 immunization⁵. Other studies show that integrating reproductive health education with microfinance programmes yield positive impacts in terms of both poverty reduction and women empowerment.

The Microfinance Sector in Syria⁶

The microfinance sector in Syria is still in a very nascent stage of development, with the first intervention launched by UNDP in 2001. This poses both opportunities and challenges as new operators enter the market and different models are tested to assess their appropriateness and national replicability.

⁵ This section is based on the Microfinance Review Mission Commissioned by UNDP Syria in 2004 and conducted by Deena Burjorjee, Judith Brandsma, and Mohamed Nasr

As the pioneer of microfinance in Syria, UNDP has a unique opportunity to play a leading role in the development of the sector both through ongoing support to downstream interventions as well as upstream policy work with the major stakeholders. In order to ensure sustainable access to microfinance services to the entrepreneurial poor all over Syria, efforts must be made to promote a mature microfinance industry capable of operating free of donor and government support. Below is a summary of possible areas of intervention for UNDP, based on the sector analysis undertaken.

According to the Microfinance Review Mission conducted in 2004, about 32,000 households had access to financial services at the end of 2003, albeit credit-only. The potential is considerably higher: at least 240,000 poor households are estimated to need micro-credit while tens of thousands more households may require access to micro-savings, insurance and deposit services.

Timeframe:

The Initiation Plan will be implemented over a period of one year starting in August 2007 until August 2008.

Results and Resources Framework II (IP) (2007-2008/ 1 year):

Project Title: Poverty Alleviation and Women Empowerment in Syria

Project number: SYR/07/013

Intended Outcome as stated in the Country Programme Results and Resource Framework:

A.4 Enhancing poverty alleviation programme including income generation, and improving access to extension services in rural and poor areas

Intended Outputs as stated in the Country Programme Results and Resource Framework:

A.4.1 Rural area-based integrated interventions to alleviate poverty, including through women's empowerment

A.4.2 Assets for the poor for income generating activities provided through micro-credit in rural areas

MYFF Goal 2:

Achieving the MDGs and reducing human poverty

Service Line: Local Poverty Initiatives including microfinance

Outputs	Output Targets	Indicative Activities	Responsible Parties	Inputs
The poor areas where microfinance activities are to be implemented identified, the microfinance mechanism for each of the rural and urban areas defined and implemented in five pilot villages corresponding to both the needs and skills of targeted women and the market needs.	Implementation structures in place Targeted areas identified based on the poverty map - Women within targeted areas identified -Detailed market analysis conducted -Micro financing	1) Set up project implementation structures (NPD, Admin/Finance, Project Board) 2) Build working relations with all parties, national as well as international, dealing with poverty alleviation and women empowerment in Syria 3) Identify the areas that will be targeted by the project (both the areas that will be targeted by the full fledged project document and the five villages that will be piloted in the initiation plan phase) based on the following: a. Identification of the poorest areas according to the Map of the Standards of Living (geographical targeting) b) Identification of the villages where public	MOSAL (central and local) MAAR	- NPD: US\$ 2,000*12= 24,000 -Loan officers: 350 * 2 * 12= 8400 -Heads of units (loans, women, legal): 1250*3*12= 45,000 -Admin/Fin Asst.: 600*12= 7,200 -Rent: 7,000 -Office Equipment: 15,000 -Vehicle: 20000* 3= 60,000 International cons 12,000*9= 108,000 -Travel: 20,000

	<p>mechanisms within the targeted areas identified</p> <p>-Five pilot areas selected for implementing the microfinance programme</p> <p>-Lessons learnt from the five pilot villages documented</p>	<p>work is being carried out by the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (MOLAE) within the framework of the FAWI programme</p> <p>c) Results of a study to map the microfinance projects in Syria and identify mechanisms adopted (with a focus on the participation of women in these activities)</p> <p>4) Conduct a market analysis in the targeted areas to "direct" potential women entrepreneurial activities to sectors which respond to demand in the market</p> <p>5) Select the microfinance mechanism suitable for rural areas and the one suitable for urban areas</p> <p>6) Based on the selected mechanism in the rural areas, conduct PRAs in the five pilot villages in order to target women who have the potential to be good entrepreneurs and to assess their needs</p> <p>7) Train targeted women on how to develop their own projects (entrepreneurial skills, business development), on microfinance mechanism, etc.</p> <p>8) Provide basic training to targeted women on reproductive health, gender issues, etc.</p> <p>9) Implement the microfinance programme for women in five pilot villages</p> <p>10) Document lessons learnt from the microfinance programmes in the five pilot villages</p>		<p>-National consultants: 3,000*10 = 30,000</p> <p>UNVs: 5,000</p> <p>-Training expenses: 13,000</p> <p>-Publications: 10,000</p> <p>-Pilot Microfinance (loans): 100,000*5 = 500,000</p> <p>Sub-total: US\$ 854,600 (Gov: 604,600; UNDP: 250,000) F&A: \$ 30,230 Sub-total with F&A: \$ 884,830</p>
<p>Full-fledged project document for a poverty alleviation project through providing women with access to microfinance services.</p>	<p>PD prepared</p>	<p>1. Review the lessons learnt from the five pilot areas and the mechanisms defined for urban and rural areas and recommend any modifications if needed</p> <p>2. Present the findings and recommendations to</p>	<p>MOSAL</p>	<p>-International consultant: 12,000*3= 36,000</p> <p>Travel: 10,000</p> <p>National consultant: 3,000*2 = 6,000</p>

the project board	
3) Prepare a draft of the full-fledged project document	
4) Finalize the project document with the IPB	
Total	<u>5,939,430</u>
	Sub-total: 52,000 (Gov)
	F&A: 2,600
	Sub-total with F&A: 54,600

Management Arrangements

The Initiation Plan will be nationally executed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MOSAL). MOSAL (referred to as the implementing partner) will be responsible for the overall implementation of the project and for ensuring that the day-to-day activities are implemented in accordance with the work plan. It will also be responsible for supervising project staff and consultants in coordination with UNDP, ensuring that the proper equipment is in place and the coordination of events. Throughout implementation of the IP and formulation of the full-fledged PD, the MOSAL needs to ensure maximum coordination with other concerned government institutions, mainly the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (MOLAE), which is responsible for implementation of the public works component of the Poverty Alleviation and Women Empowerment Programme, the State Planning Commission in its capacity as the coordinating body with all ministries, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform considering the presence of its agricultural extension units and women development units at the local level, and its previous experience in implementing microfinance projects.

A Project Board (PB) will be established to monitor the project's progress towards results. This group would be responsible for making executive management decisions for the IP project when guidance is required by the National Project Director (NPD), including approval of project revisions. The PB will consist of senior representatives from the MOSAL, MOLAE, SPC, MAAR, and UNDP. Its members should meet at least twice during the implementation of the IP (upon launch of the project and at the end). (Terms of Reference are attached in Annex of this document).

A National Project Director (NPD) will be recruited by in accordance with UNDP's rules and regulations (TORs are attached in Annex). The NPD will be accountable for the implementation of all the activities of the project, coordination among the different stakeholders, ensuring adherence to and application of acceptable financial management systems and monitoring and evaluating the project's overall progress. S/He will be accountable to the Project Board, and any changes in the milestones and outputs of the project will be discussed with and agreed upon by the Board. The NPD will be supported by an Administrative/Finance Assistant who will also be recruited in accordance with UNDP's rules and procedures (TCRs are attached in Annex of this document). Further, depending on the exact mechanism selected, heads of women development unit, loan department, and legal departments, in addition to loan officers will be recruited.

Planning and management of implementation will be governed through approved annual work plans, with schedules defined either monthly or quarterly. The annual work plan, once approved by the Project Board (or UNDP and MOSAL), will be the instrument of authorization to the NPD to implement.

The National Project Director will produce monthly monitoring reports on progress of activities including timeliness of delivery. S/he will also produce quarterly progress reports and one Annual/Terminal Report at the end of the IP.

Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

The Project Management Team and the MOSAL will be responsible for delivering the outputs of the project, the implementation, input management, and sound administrative management. The NPD will develop and submit a detailed project work plan, a procurement plan at the outset of the project, quarterly financial reports, and quarterly progress reports to the UNDP country office. The report should include two sections, namely project implementation and project performance. It should receive inputs from Deliverable Descriptions, Outputs Definitions, Quality Log, Issues Log, and Risks Log. Additionally, one annual progress reports (APRs)/final project review report at the end of the IP will be submitted to UNDP. These documents will provide critical information and lessons learned regarding the effectiveness of the implementation strategy and the delivery of outputs and recommendations for the full fledged project both in terms of substantive and management aspects.⁷

During the IP, the Project Board will meet at least two review meetings of this initiation plan: one six months after implementation and the other at the end once all deliverables are achieved. The second meeting will discuss achievements, results, and lessons learned, and will provide initial comments on the full-fledged PD. At least one field visits should take place by UNDP CO during the life of the IP to the targeted areas. The project is subject to auditing once in its lifetime, in accordance with NEX rules and procedures.

Legal Context

This project document shall be the instrument referred to as such in Article 1 of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Government of the S.A.R. and the United Nations Development Programme, signed by the parties on 12 March 1981. The host-country implementing unit shall, for the purpose of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement, refer to the government cooperating agency described in that document.

The following types of revisions may be made to this project document with the signature of the UNDP Resident Representative only, provided he is assured that the other signatories of the project document have no objections to the proposed changes:

- Revisions in, or additions of, any of the annexes of the project document.
- Revisions which do not involve significant changes in immediate objectives, outputs or activities of the project, but are necessitated by rearrangement of inputs already agreed to, or by cost increases due to inflation; and mandatory annual revisions, which re-phase the delivery of agreed project inputs or expert or other costs due to inflation or take into account expenditure flexibility.

Schedule of payment: the full contribution of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor will be paid in one installment in January 2008.

⁷ These reports will be prepared in line with the UNDP updated rules and regulations and the templates included in the user guide 2006 (<http://content.undp.org/go/userguide/results/project/>)

Annual Work Plan

EXPECTED CP OUTPUTS and indicators including annual targets	PLANNED ACTIVITIES List all activities including M&E to be undertaken during the year towards stated CP outputs	RESPO NSIBLE PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET		
			Source of Funds	Budget Description	Amount
The poor areas where microfinance activities are to be implemented identified, the microfinance mechanism for each of the rural and urban areas defined and implemented in five pilot villages corresponding to both the needs and skills of targeted women and the market needs.	Put in place the implementation structures	MoSAL	UNDP	71400 - Contractual Services Individual (NPD)	24,000
		MoSAL	UNDP	71400 - Contractual Services Individual (Loan Officers)	8,400
		MoSAL	UNDP	71400 - Contractual Services Individual (Heads of Units)	15,000
		MoSAL	UNDP	71400 - Contractual Services Individual (Admin & finance Assis)	7,200
		MoSAL	MoSAL	73400 - Rental & Maint of Other Equip	7,000
		MoSAL	MoSAL	72800 - Information Technology Equipment	6,000
		MoSAL	UNDP	72200 - Furniture & Equipment (office Equipment)	9,000
		MoSAL	MoSAL	72200 - Transportation Equipment (3 cars)	60,000
		MoSAL	MoSAL	75100 - F&A	3,650
	Identify targeted areas based on the poverty map -including identification of women within targeted areas	MoSAL	UNDP	71300 - Local Consultant	6,000
		MoSAL	MoSAL	71200 - International Consultant	21,600
		MoSAL	MoSAL	71600 - Travel	4,000
		MoSAL	UNDP	72500 - Supplies (publications)	10,000
		MoSAL	UNDP	71500 - Contractual Services - (UNVs)	5,000
		MoSAL	UNDP	74200 - Audio Visual &Print Prod Costs	4,000
		MoSAL	MoSAL	72700 - Hospitality	2,000
	MoSAL	MoSAL	75100 - F&A	1,380	
	Conduct detailed market	MoSAL	UNDP	71300 - Local Consultant	6,000

PLANNED BUDGET		RESPONSIBLE PARTY		ACTIVITIES List all activities including M&E to be undertaken during the year towards stated CP outputs	EXPECTED CP OUTPUTS and indicators including annual targets
Budget Description	Amount	Source of Funds	MoSAL		
	200	75100 - F&A	MoSAL	analysis	
	1,500	72700 - Hospitality	MoSAL		
	3,000	74200 - Audio Visual&Print Prod Costs	UNDP		
	4,000	71600 - Travel	MoSAL		
	21,600	71200 - International Consultant	UNDP		
	6,000	71300 - Local Consultant	UNDP	Identify micro financing mechanism(s) within the targeted areas	
	32,200	71200 - International Consultant	MoSAL		
	4,000	71600 - Travel	UNDP		
	0	75100 - F&A	MoSAL		
	6,000	71300 - Local Consultant	UNDP	Implement the microfinance programme in five pilot areas	
	28,600	71200 - International Consultant	MoSAL		
	4,000	71600 - Travel	UNDP		
	500,000	72600 - Grants (Micro Capital Grants-Credit	MoSAL		
	25,000	75100 - F&A	MoSAL		
	6,000	71300 - Local Consultant	UNDP	Document lessons learnt from the five pilot villages (including M&E)	
	4,000	71200 - International Consultant	MoSAL		
	4,000	71600 - Travel	UNDP		
	3,000	74200 - Audio Visual&Print Prod Costs	UNDP		
	1,500	72700 - Hospitality	MoSAL		
	0	75100 - F&A	MoSAL		
SUB-TOTAL					884,830

EXPECTED CP OUTPUTS and indicators including annual targets	PLANNED ACTIVITIES List all activities including M&E to be undertaken during the year towards stated CP outputs	RESPO NSIBLE PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET		
			Source of Funds	Budget Description	Amount
Full-fledged project document for a poverty alleviation project through providing women with access to microfinance services.	PD prepared	MoSAL	MoSAL	71300 - Local Consultant	36.000
		MoSAL	MoSAL	71200 - International Consultant	10.000
		MoSAL	MoSAL	71600 - Travel	6.000
		MoSAL	MoSAL	75100 - F&A	2600
	SUB-TOTAL				54.600
TOTAL					939,430