



“EMERGENCY SUPPORT TO STRENGTHEN THE RESILIENCE OF THE SYRIAN PEOPLE”

UNDP SYRIA CONCEPT NOTE SUBMITTED TO NORWAY

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BACKGROUND

Five years into the crisis, Syria is still witnessing massive destruction of infrastructure and damage to every aspect of life. Syrians are exposed daily to violence and are increasingly deprived of access to basic services due to hostilities or competition on scarce resources as a result of massive internal displacement. The appalling loss of life continues. At least 13.5 million Syrians are in dire need of humanitarian assistance. An estimated 4.2 million refugees fled Syria. 6.5 million are internally displaced, constituting the largest number of internally displaced persons in any country in the world¹. An increasing number of people with disabilities (PWDs) is reported.

More than 86% of the population is now living in poverty due to the crisis, with an increased rate of 57% unemployment. Total economic losses are estimated at more than 202 billion dollars². The country lost nearly four decades of human development. The crisis has also caused damage to housing and property, basic infrastructure, social services, and productive sectors. The disruptions to the banking services due to uni-lateral economic measures, the rapid shrinkage of the private sector, insecure roads hindering internal transit and trade, the rising costs of imports and inflating prices due to the devaluation of the currency affect the whole economy and most importantly the informal sector that employs a large proportion of people. Social networks are under increasing pressure due to the limited and depleting resources of host families and local communities. The number of women-headed households is increasing due to the absence of their male partners, parents or siblings for various reasons.

Without security, jobs, services and infrastructure, the living conditions of Syrians and their livelihoods prospects have significantly eroded, severely increasing their vulnerability and undermining their ability to cope with the crisis. The protracted nature of the crisis might also signal further human, social, material losses, depleting national human resources and crisis response capacities and mechanisms, and leading to further displacement, including resorting to illegal migration and risking death and human trafficking.

STRATEGY

Over the last three years, UNDP has prioritized a resilience building programme focusing on area-based interventions to create emergency jobs, provide livelihoods support, restore critical community infrastructure and basic services and foster social cohesion. This has contributed to the improvement of the living conditions of the affected population, both IDPs and host communities, and to the creation of an enabling environment for humanitarian assistance, reducing the demand for humanitarian relief, and thus enhancing the resilience of affected communities. Yet, the protracted nature of the crisis makes it even more pressing to scale up livelihoods and resilience-based support to populations inside Syria.

The overall objective of the proposed project is therefore to provide emergency assistance that bridges humanitarian relief with an early recovery approach in order to strengthen the resilience of the Syrian people in the face of the

¹ Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO)2016

² Confronting Fragmentation – Impact of the crisis report. Syrian Centre for Policy Research 2016

protracted crisis, reducing the risk of radicalization and unsafe migration and displacement, and contributing to community stabilization. Providing emergency livelihoods opportunities to affected and vulnerable populations is a contribution to stabilizing communities, de-radicalization and reducing the driving factors for displacement, illegal and unsafe migration. It also plays a major role in creating conducive environment and additional economic opportunities enabling the return of refugees or displaced to their original home lands, provided that security situation allows.

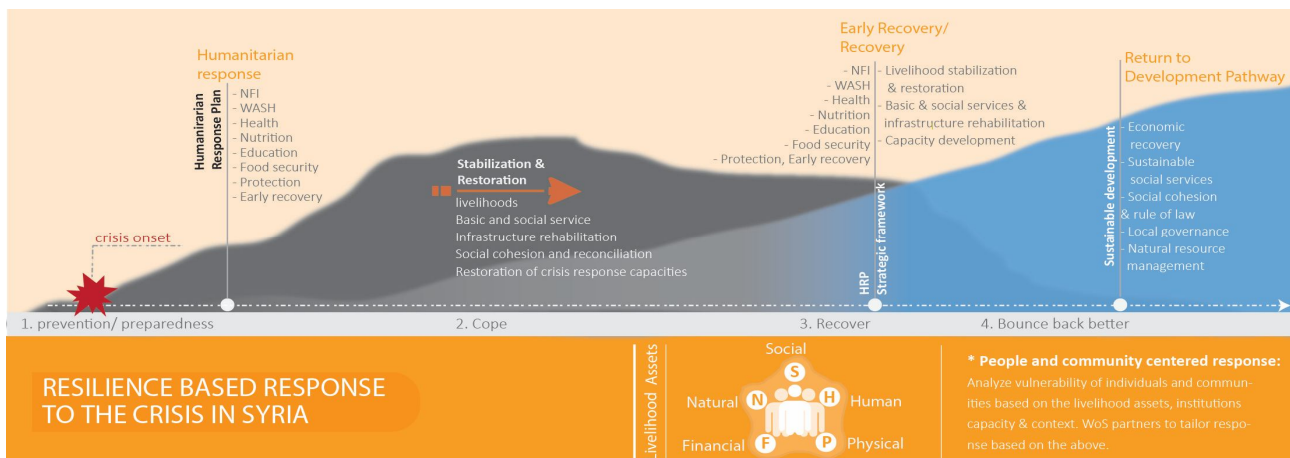
First, and building on the ongoing UNDP Resilience Building programme, which has helped improve the living conditions of more than 4 million affected persons, **the proposed project will scale up support to enhance the resilience of populations by delivering and implementing three main types of assistance**, namely:

- Basic and social services and infrastructure rehabilitation through labor intensive schemes;
- Socio-economic recovery of affected population;
- Capacity development of local partners, and promotion of social cohesion and community security

Based on the preliminary assessments of the most urgent needs, UNDP’s intervention targets the areas where the impact of the crisis has been deemed most severe, and where major groups of IDPs are hosted, and where IDPs and business are returning. Both access and security for implementation of activities are risk factors to consider and mitigate. Once the areas are identified, response plans are formulated and implemented through field teams with the participation of local stakeholders including NGOs, faith-based organizations and local technical directorates. Progress is monitored against pre-agreed targets and indicators and recorded in an Information Management System (IMS).

UNDP remains one of the few agencies in Syria playing the critical bridging role between humanitarian relief and development within an emergency context of conflict. UNDP fulfils its coordination mandate in leading the Early Recovery and Livelihoods Sector within the UN’s Humanitarian Response Plan for Syria, with human resource capacity in Damascus and in Gaziantep. This project builds on the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2016 and links up to the Country Programme Document for UNDP 2016-2017. Additionally, this project ensures cooperation and coordination with other UN agencies operating in the humanitarian field in Syria for harmonized interventions and complementarities.

Second, and while continuing with the ongoing resilience building programme, funding from Norway will enable UNDP to scale up its programme both thematically and geographically. In addition to ongoing initiatives in Al Waer, Harasta, Al-Tal, Palmyra and other areas that became accessible through the implementation of local agreements, and based on a localized conflict analysis, UNDP is exploring the possibility of delivering cross-line and cross-border resilience building support, taking advantage of the expanding operational capacity across the country as well as in Gaziantep, Turkey. Stabilization programming in areas of local agreements and areas recovered from ISIL is also being explored. With the support from Norway, UNDP will be able to expand its outreach to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in Syria including in those geographic areas. **Under the proposed project, UNDP will focus on areas where local agreements have recently been reached in Rural Damascus such as Moadamiyeh.**



UNDP’s understanding of the relationship between humanitarian relief, early recovery, stabilization, and resilience-building

Support from Norway will also enable UNDP to engage more rigorously in the emerging thematic areas of support, namely local governance, access to justice and community security, and reconciliation. UNDP has initiated preparatory policy work on the new thematic areas of reconciliation, local governance, and access to justice and community security. Under the proposed project, promotion of **social cohesion** inside Syria will be a key component. UNDP has developed a programming note for social cohesion in Syria which identifies ways in which UNDP can make a realistic and achievable contribution to support peace in Syria now, in a context of ongoing uncertainty prior to the agreement of political settlement, while preparing groundwork for more extensive peacebuilding activities immediately after settlement. Guided by the programming note, UNDP will launch a targeted programming on social cohesion in the coming weeks. **The funding from Norway will be the first such contribution to support the UNDP's targeted social cohesion interventions inside Syria.** Furthermore, UNDP Syria has taken initial steps for programming on **access to justice and community security** with the technical support provided by the Folke Bernadotte Academy. UNDP is finalizing a Project Initiation Plan (PIP) to be launched at the beginning of 2017 through which UNDP will develop a comprehensive programme by mid-2017.

The work in these thematic areas will complement the basic and social services and infrastructure and socio-economic recovery programme in support of the overall objective of strengthening the resilience of the Syrian people. The ongoing programme-oriented conflict analysis of selected locations will inform and substantiate the existing and emerging programmes not only by strengthening the conflict sensitivity of the programmes but also by enabling interventions that will enhance local capacity for conflict management, support inter-communal dialogues and activities and reduce vulnerabilities of affected population especially youth who are normally an easy target for recruitment and engagement in armed conflict.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

Basic and social services and infrastructure rehabilitation through labor intensive schemes

The crisis in Syria continues to cause massive destruction of infrastructure, deterioration of basic social and municipal services. Rubble is spread in the majority of the severely affected neighborhoods, piles of garbage are left on the streets and basic local services are difficult to maintain. Moreover, unemployment is on the rise as many businesses have either closed down or drastically cut the number of workers.

UNDP targets affected communities primarily for debris removal and solid waste management through provision of needed equipment and materials and cash-for-work schemes, rehabilitation of sewage and water networks, and provision of renewable energy solutions. UNDP also addresses major service delivery problems to contribute to the early recovery and to improve living conditions for people in the affected areas and help accelerating the return of the IDPs to their homes and revitalization of basic business services in these cities. **The proposed project will be utilized for the immediate stabilization of areas where local agreements have recently been reached. UNDP is working to identify urgent needs and priorities in consultation with the local community.**

Socio-economic recovery of affected population

The protracted crisis had a direct impact on the livelihoods of the Syrian population. IDPs fleeing violence left behind their productive assets, businesses and sources of income. Within the host community, they have to rely on humanitarian aid, savings and other coping mechanisms that are exhausted after five years of displacement. Host communities are also affected by the receding economic performance in all sectors and its impact on their livelihoods.

To enhance the resilience of the Syrians, restore their disrupted livelihoods and enable them gain access to a dignified source of living, UNDP provides rapid and responsive assistance through mobilizing the participation of people in the social and economic rebuilding of their communities. Activities vary from repair of fishing boats and support to greenhouse farming, to sewing workshops and artisanal works while ensuring an element of vocational training and tool kits provision. UNDP tailor its interventions based on the characteristics of the impact of the crisis on target areas and

the affected sectors and businesses in addition to the demand in the local market and the expertise and skills of IDPs and host communities.

UNDP's entry point for engaging in socio economic recovery is its long-term strategic partnership with national and local stakeholders, its operational presence at the area based level and extensive experience of working with local institutions and communities on all aspects of human development. UNDP focuses its programme on vulnerable groups ensuring the priorities and needs of female-headed households, PWD and youth are adequately addressed. Implementation of field activities will be done in cooperation with the wide network of local partners.

Under this project, interventions in the areas of socio-economic recovery will be implemented in parallel with the basic and social services and infrastructure activities. The interventions under both outputs will be coordinated so as to generate maximum dividends and contribute to the immediate stabilization of the areas.

Capacity development of local partners

The escalating crisis in Syria and access difficulties to critical areas in need of support have created a wide recognition about the vital role of local partners in connecting them with affected communities and the need to develop the capacities of local partners to achieve tangible results and reach desirable impact.

UNDP will support civil society organizations and strengthen their organizational, operational and communication capacities to enable them to implement developmental and humanitarian initiatives through networking and collaboration opportunities. The project will include initiatives that aim to enhance the absorption and implementation capacities of local partners, contributing directly to better planning, project management and monitoring of ongoing and future interventions. This includes, among many others, twinning programmes particularly for NGOs operating in highly affected and hard to reach areas, training of trainers to ensure that local NGOs and CBOs members are well equipped with specialized skills, field visits, focus groups, peer-to-peer networks and e-space for NGOs networks to facilitate sharing lessons and experiences.

Social cohesion

The level of social cohesion in Syria is directly linked to conflict in the country, both undermined by and contributing to instability and insecurity. Conflict has undermined trust between groups: communities are increasingly likely to subscribe to in-group/out-group interpretations of others and of events and to express intolerant attitudes towards others; and some members of communities are increasingly likely to resort to the threat, or use, of violence in their interactions with people of different backgrounds. It is unlikely that such effects can be immediately addressed through a political settlement and, as a result, they pose an ongoing threat to future stability in the country and to the individual security and well-being of Syrians.

Within this context and given the limitations regarding broader action prior to a political settlement, addressing local conflict dynamics can be identified as one of the most effective ways to support social cohesion in Syria. By addressing, in positive and inclusive ways, those issues which divide communities at the local level, Syrians can immediately improve safety and security while maximising the impact of more comprehensive social cohesion efforts in the future. A general framework for the sorts of actions can be employed are as follows:

Respond - Syrian communities have greater ability to respond to local conflict events in ways that minimise violence and de-escalate tensions.

In Syria's increasingly fragmented context, local communities are increasingly responsible for responding to threats to community safety. Various factors may trigger conflict events between elements of society, escalating tensions and potentially leading to violence. If left unaddressed, or dealt with in inappropriate ways, these events can contribute to the long-term decline of social cohesion and impact stability.

UNDP's activities work to enhance the existing capacity of local communities to quickly identify threats to community safety and social cohesion, develop appropriate responses and deploy effective pro-peace

interventions. This is important in all areas, but particularly so in vulnerable locations that are under threat of, or have recently experienced, active violence.

Prevent - Syrian communities have enhanced capacity to identify and reduce the drivers of conflict relating to inter-group relations at the local level, through measures addressing structural barriers to social cohesion and strengthening structural connectors between groups.

While community response mechanisms are designed to minimise the harm caused by conflict events as they occur, communities also need to engage in sustained preventative efforts to strengthen social cohesion and reduce the likelihood of those conflict events happening. Through community engagement, including the mapping of key issues affecting social cohesion, a broad understanding can be developed regarding how various factors affect social cohesion at the local level. With the facilitation of UNDP, communities can be supported to identify possible interventions that may be implemented to address those factors. Examples of such interventions may include, but are not necessarily limited to: developing common social spaces and supporting communal activities that bring members of the community together across social divisions; expanding youth volunteer networks; and providing training and mentoring in facilitation and public engagement to youth to act as social cohesion champions in their local communities.

Connect - Social cohesion actors in Syria can access stronger networks to support each other through shared experience and which can be foundations for community-led social cohesion efforts after a political settlement.

Assessments of Syria's peacebuilding capacities have shown a need to strengthen links between actors involved in peacebuilding activities, including social cohesion. Fostering such a network of social cohesion actors is important: it can provide support to its participants' activities through shared experience and assistance; important source of understanding of structural social cohesion issues across the country to assist with planning in a Syrian owned manner; and it can provide a critical mass of partners to support national social cohesion activities after a political settlement.

UNDP will work to foster a network of its local partners working on social cohesion across Syria. A primary mechanism for doing this will be to bring people from different communities together during provision of training related to the above, providing an opportunity for sharing experiences, and to foster dialogue between people from different geographic and social backgrounds. Continued meetings of partners as the programme continues, and a gradual expansion of participants as programme activities reach more areas, will serve to strengthen the network over time.

UNDP's social cohesion programme activities will be designed and implemented at the local geographic level to make them as relevant as possible to the specific needs of local communities. The social cohesion component under this project will target two locations, based on identification of social cohesion and conflict risk and opportunities, on the basis of preliminary analysis by UNDP.

Community security and access to justice

UNDP is finalizing a project initiation plan (PIP) which will enable UNDP to carry out critical planning exercises and lay out its programmatic entry points to tackle immediate individual and community security needs. The PIP will provide modest community security and access to justice service provision, develop a programme document informed by mapping and assessment exercises, and strengthen partnerships, coordination and advocacy. By the end of the implementation of the PIP, UNDP will develop a comprehensive programme document that will chart UNDP support in the medium term and will inform the scaling-up of activities pending the political context.

The proposed project will contribute to one of the outputs of the PIP as well as the forthcoming community security and access to justice programme, in which UNDP will pilot community security and access to justice initiatives to address immediate security and justice needs at the local level with specific focus on the needs of girls, women and other vulnerable groups. These interventions will aim to preserve stability and address community security

challenges related to criminality, human trafficking, smuggling, disputes and SGBV. This is in addition to raising community's awareness regarding IEDs management in urban settings, management of small weapons and weapon's safety. In order to support community security, there will be a focus on creating dialogue spaces within communities for managing perceptions, strengthening linkages with service providers and encouraging young women and men's engagement for countering violent extremists' mobilization at the local level.

The activities may include capacity building of paralegals, community leaders, civil society and justice professionals on community security and access to justice; establishment of legal advice and referrals desks in identified areas with special focus on housing, land and property rights, documentation, gender and children issues; rolling out legal technical capacity building for civil society (human rights, documentation, legal harmonization and comparative analysis); and roll out community sensitization and awareness raising trainings on safety measures.

INDICATIVE BUDGET

Please see the attached budget table.

PROJECT DURATION

The proposed project will be a contribution to the second year of the UNDP Syria Country Programme 2016-2017. The duration of the project will be one year (January - December 2017).

ANNEX 1- UNDP'S AREA BASED APPROACH

Overall approach

Adapting to the highly diverse situations in affected communities, UNDP has since the onset of the crisis resorted to an area-based response approach with different implementation modalities and with different types of local and international partners. UNDP is now actively operating in twelve governorates (Aleppo, Damascus, Dar'a, Deir-Ez-Zor, Hama, Al-Hassakeh, Homs, Idleb, Lattakia, Ar-Raqqa, Rural Damascus, and Tartous) either through field presence, outsourced personnel, private service providers and/or partner NGOs. The extended network of partners and various implementation modalities are essential to overcome operational and access challenges, and ensure higher flexibility in response and resilience to security and other shocks in the target areas. Work is guided by regularly updated governorate profiles, including a situation analysis of different socio-economic and vital sectors in the target governorate to update needs, priorities, local partnerships, risks and opportunities for interventions. An area-based response plan is then developed and updated in close consultation with local stakeholders under the framework of UNDP's mandate in livelihoods, early recovery and resilience.

A conflict sensitive planning is adopted when devising the area-response plans mainly to examine the dynamics between host communities and IDPs or among the IDPs themselves. Such analysis is constantly updated by UNDP field teams and technical teams in Damascus for urgent actions and shift in the programme design. UNDP promotes for an engagement of local host communities in activities targeting IDPs by factoring a minimum of 30% of services and opportunities targeting the host communities.

Selecting the areas

UNDP develops Governorate Profiles capturing the main socio-economic characteristics in target governorate, priorities and needs of affected groups, partnership opportunities and potential entry points for livelihoods and resilience programming. A comprehensive livelihoods damage assessment methodology developed by UNDP in 2014 is used to identify priorities and needs in affected communities taking into consideration severity, magnitude and extent of damage in each targeted location. As such, the profiles serve to identify programmatic and operational opportunities, threats, and risks and explore available resources in the governorate in close collaboration with local stakeholders. The stakeholders mapping and analysis, which is an integral part, is crucial to better understand the socio-economic dynamics in the target governorate and ensure the inclusiveness of all concerned -including affected groups- in the local response plan.

Governorate response plans are then developed; they define the scope of interventions within the framework of the UNDP mandate and the strategic objectives of the 2015 Syria Strategic Response Plan. The response plans are then translated into area-based interventions by field teams in participation with local stakeholders including NGOs, faith-based organizations and local technical directorates. This approach ensures that interventions are demand driven and locally owned as they are defined by local communities in affected areas, i.e. IDPs and host communities who exhausted their coping mechanisms due to the protracted crisis. Progress is monitored against pre-agreed targets and indicators and recorded in an Information Management System (IMS).



ANNEX 2- UNDP'S INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

UNDP 's Information Management capacity to effectively support the Country Programme interventions through the development and implementation of context specific tools and applications. This results-based management system is specifically designed to match the operational context and demanding nature of interventions in Syria.

To keep the different fragments of the programme management lifecycle tide together, UNDP Syria developed the in-house platform, Internal Monitoring and Reporting Platform (IMRP), to allow better data flow and multi-direction communications to take place among different hubs where UNDP operations are taking place.

The programme support lifecycle consists of four phases/steps: starting by a holistic "assessment" of current situation, which allows informed-decision making for phase of "planning", results of planning to be carried-on to the next phase of "implementation" to be used for monitoring and evaluation purposes, and results of monitoring and evaluation to be used in the fourth phase of "reporting", in which results and findings are reported to senior management, HQ, donors, stakeholders and partners.

The first phase in programme management lifecycle's support is the assessment exercise, which has been conducted at macro and micro levels. At the macro level, the assessment was designed to measure the severity scale of damage in socio-economic infrastructure and livelihoods at sub-district levels.

The outcomes of this assessment provides the best possible data driven overview for decision makers to act upon for the strategic policy development for UNDP. At the micro level, the assessment helps categorizing the preferences and priorities of rehabilitation and reconstruction of socioeconomic infrastructure and livelihoods through the lens of local population at neighborhood level in major cities and towns of Syria. This helps UNDP Syria better design their area-based recovery interventions based on facts and realities on the ground at the grassroots level.

The second step in programme management lifecycle's support is the planning phase which heavily relies on results coming from the assessment exercise. The IMRP facilitates the consolidation of plans and helps achieving the intended results of country programme in the most efficient and effective automated way, saving precious time and resources for UNDP programme and operations in Syria.

Throughout the past years, UNDP succeeded in effectively monitoring its field activities relying on this robust information management system ensuring that programme interventions are implemented in accordance with planned targets set during the planning phase, and tracking progress achieved by UNDP's portfolios in different hubs across the fourteen governorates in Syria.

The final step in programme support is the process of evaluation and reporting the progress achieved against planned targets, where the IMRP enables timely, efficient, and accurate reporting and communication schemes as its provides the set of the required data to produce reports, communication materials, and visibility products.

