

Ex-post evaluation

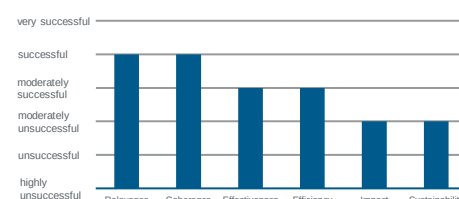
UNDP Livelihoods and basic infrastructure, Syria

Title	Project A: UNDP Livelihoods Syria; Project B: Employment promotion through rehabilitation of basic infrastructure and income-generating measures		
Sector and CRS code	Reconstruction aid and restoration measures (73010)		
Project number	Project A: BMZ no.: 201541119; Project B: BMZ no.: 201640713		
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development		
Recipient/Programme executing agency	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)		
Project volume/ Financing instrument	Project A: EUR 8.98 million; Project B: EUR 20.00 million; BMZ budget funds in each case		
Project duration	A: 01/2016 - 09/2017; 19 months; B: 10/2016-06/2017 8 months		
Year of report	2024	Year of random sample	2020

Objectives and project outline

The underlying objective of this EPE at outcome level was for both projects to rehabilitate basic infrastructure and provide temporary jobs in the short term through labour-intensive measures. The impact-level objective of both projects underlying this EPE was to contribute to the short-term socio-economic stabilisation of the project areas and strengthen the resilience of Syrian internally displaced persons and host communities. The projects each financed the UNDP programme "Strengthen the Resilience of the Syrian People and Foster the Recovery of Disrupted Livelihoods".

Overall rating:
Moderately unsuccessful



Key findings

- By financing labour-intensive measures, both projects effectively contributed to the creation of short-term employment opportunities in the areas of waste and debris removal as well as basic social infrastructure. Project B also made a peace-building contribution to understanding between different population groups by creating a youth network.
- The funded activities are still relevant from today's perspective. Taking into account the do-no-harm principle, both programmes were coordinated with national, supra-regional and cross-sectoral plans; they formed a coherent overall approach. Opportunities of conceptual change proposals or co-determination in the allocation of funds were realised to a high degree through survey-based poverty mapping and participatory approaches.
- The effectiveness of the projects showed a mixed picture but was just in line with expectations: While most of the short-term employment effects were exceeded, the existence and utilisation of the infrastructure created is permanently threatened by the ongoing crisis context and limits the medium-term effects.
- The developmental impacts in the area strengthening resilience were counteracted by the ongoing crisis context and the deteriorating socio-economic factors since the completion of the projects and, despite short-term stabilisation effects, remained below expectations, leading to an overall unsuccessful assessment of the project.
- The projects primarily financed short-term measures in a crisis context that were not designed for sustainability at the time of the project appraisal. For this reason, the sustainability that was deemed unsuccessful at the time of the evaluation as a result of a limited sustainability claim is not included in the overall assessment.

Conclusions

- The resilience effects of emergency aid programmes, that are primarily based on short-term employment measures and are implemented in acute crisis situations, are too ambitious.
- The labour mapping carried out by UNDP and a participatory mode of implementation enable the measures to be geared towards needs.
- In conflict-ridden contexts, the earmarking of financial resources harbours the risk of implementation delays and the flexibility in the allocation of funds that is necessary in volatile contexts.
- Output-based monitoring data from UN organisations limits the review of results at outcome and impact level.

Ex-post evaluation - assessment according to OECD DAC criteria

Overview of the rating per criterion:

Relevance	2
Coherence	2
Effectiveness	3
Efficiency	3
Overall developmental impact	4
Sustainability	(4)
Overall Rating:	4

Despite good relevance and coherence as well as limited efficiency, **the reductions in the overarching developmental impact in particular lead to an overall rather unsuccessful rating for both projects. Due to the primarily emergency nature of both projects and the associated reduced claim for sustainability, the sustainability criterion is considered in this evaluation but is not included in the overall assessment.** In view of the major disruptions and the resulting displacements as well as the poor supply situation of the local people, special attention was paid to the DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness and impact as part of the evaluation.

General conditions and classification of the project

Both projects predominantly financed the UNDP programme "Strengthen the Resilience of the Syrian People and Foster the Recovery of Disrupted Livelihoods" during the same period. A differentiated attribution of impacts to the individual programmes is therefore not possible, so they are considered together in this ex-post evaluation.

The UNDP programme aimed to contribute to strengthening the resilience of Syrian internally displaced persons and host communities and to improve their economic and social living conditions. The creation of short-term jobs was intended to provide income opportunities, especially for poor sections of the population. The programme was implemented by UNDP from Damascus using a participatory process ensure that it benefited those most affected by the conflict, such as displaced persons, women-headed households and persons with disabilities in different areas of Syria. Project A - UNDP Livelihoods Syria (BMZ no.: 201541119) was financed for a period of 19 months from January 2016 to September 2017 with funds from the Special Initiative on Stabilisation and Development in North Africa and the Middle East (SI MENA) and Project B - Promoting employment through the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure and income-generating measures (BMZ no.: 201640713) was financed for a period of eight months from October 2016 to June 2017 with funds from the Special Initiative on Displacement (SI Displacement). A total of 54 sub-projects in 8 of 14 Syrian governorates¹ were financed from the funds of project A and a total of 129 sub-projects from the funds of project B. Figure 1 provides a detailed overview of the project areas addressed by projects A and B as well as the project-specific key data.

¹ Aleppo, Al-Hassakeh, Damascus, Hama, Homs, Lattakia, Tartous and rural Damascus

Breakdown of total costs

Table 1: Breakdown of total costs

		Project A* (plan)	Project A* (actual)	Project B* (plan)	Project B* (actual)
Total costs	million EUR	8,98	8,98	20,00	20,00
Own contribution	million EUR	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Financing	million EUR	8,98	8,98	20,00	20,00
of which budget funds (BMZ)	million EUR	8,98	8,98	20,00	20,00

* Year of random sample: 2020

Map of the project country incl. project areas

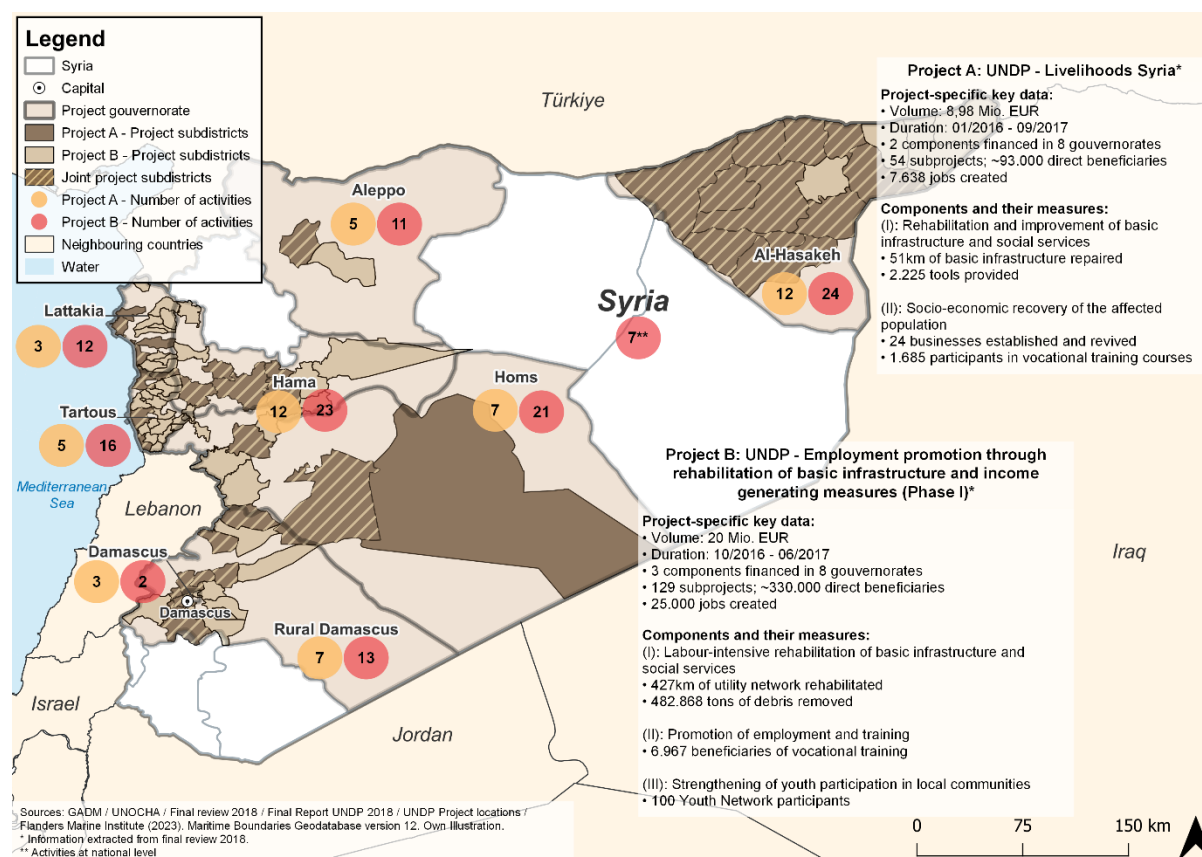


Figure 1: Location map of the intervention areas addressed by projects A and B and overview of the project-specific key data. Own illustration.

Rating according to OECD DAC criteria

Relevance

In 2016 and 2017, the core problem of urgently providing for Syrian internally displaced persons, returnees and poor sections of the population in host communities was adequately addressed by the funding provided to the UNDP programme by both projects. The UNDP measures financed by the projects were primarily intended to be limited to fast-acting, temporary employment promotion in eight governorates² in Syria, although the development of social infrastructure, the creation of further training opportunities and the establishment of businesses also implied a medium-term impact approach.

The objective underlying this EPE at the outcome level of both projects was to rehabilitate basic infrastructure and provide temporary jobs in the short term through labour-intensive measures. In addition, project B aimed to establish a youth network to improve social understanding. At impact level, the objective of both projects underlying this EPE was to make a short-term contribution to the socio-economic stabilisation of the project areas and strengthen the resilience of Syrian internally displaced persons and host communities.

Both projects were implemented directly by UNDP. The choice of UNDP as the implementing organisation in Syria was an obvious one, as UNDP was already active in Damascus, as well as in other areas of Syria, and was able to offer a dual implementation model in which UNDP implemented project measures both directly and with partner organisations (NGOs and civil society).

Projects A and B pursued a multi-sectoral approach, whose financed components were intended to operate at the interface between emergency aid and structural transitional aid:

- (1) Basic infrastructure and services: Rehabilitation and maintenance of waste management; rubble and debris removal; installation of street lighting.
- (2) Employment and training: Cash-for-work, setting up and supporting businesses, workshops; further vocational training; support for particularly vulnerable people (only project B); provision means of production and materials; support for setting up small businesses.
- (3) Youth (project B only): Monitoring networks for young people; awareness-raising workshops on the role of young people in a healthy society; community initiatives for young people.

The results chain on which the financed measures are based still corresponds in principle to the state of the art today, with restrictions on the level of ambition in the area of overarching developmental impact (impact level): Basic infrastructure was to be rehabilitated with the help of labour-intensive measures and temporary jobs were to be provided in the short term through labour-intensive measures (outcome level). While the employment measures of Components 1 and 2 address short-term, acute needs, the infrastructure created (Component 1) and, to a lesser extent, the awareness-raising measures (Component 3) are expected to have medium to longer-term effects. The resulting improvement in economic and social living conditions should make a short-term contribution to the socio-economic stabilisation of the project areas and to strengthening the resilience of Syrian internally displaced persons and host communities (impact level). Figure 2 shows a corresponding visualisation of this impact chain. **The primary focus of both projects on short-term measures is considered appropriate in order to offer quick solutions to the acute shortage of supplies for internally displaced persons and host communities.** However, at the time of the evaluation, the claim to also contribute structurally to improving the resilience of the population in the respective project areas appears too ambitious, especially for the heavily conflict-ridden governorates and in view of the very short financing period in some cases of project B³. **The development of medium-term impacts is strongly influenced by the dynamic context in the respective project areas, as there is a permanent risk that renewed acts of conflict in the selected project areas will threaten the existence of rehabilitated infrastructure and that new debris will limit the use of streets or residential neighbourhoods. It is therefore questionable whether the infrastructure rehabilitation measures designed for the medium term in highly volatile contexts, such as in Syria, can even achieve an overarching impact that sustainably improves the economic and social living conditions of the target group.**

² Project A: Aleppo, Al-Hassakeh, Damascus, Hama, Homs, Lattakia, Tartous and rural Damascus. Project B: Aleppo, Al-Hassakeh, Damascus, Hama, Homs, Lattakia, Tartous and rural Damascus

³ At the time of the project appraisal, project A was designed for an implementation period of 16 months and project B for an implementation period of only 6 months.

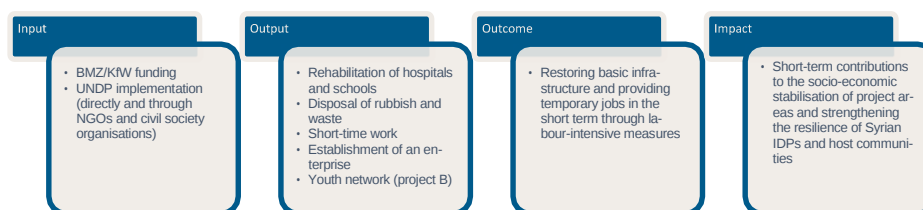


Figure 2: Visualised impact logic for projects A and B

The conceptual selection of the individual project locations and activities by UNDP was carried out in close coordination with the BMZ and the operational units of Financial Cooperation (FC) and was based on the do-no-harm principle for a conflict-sensitive design of the measures financed by projects A and B. The BMZ attached great importance to the fact that areas were given equal priority measures, but this earmarking made it difficult to adapt flexibly to the volatile context. Ongoing conflict in individual areas meant that interventions could only be implemented with a delay. According to the final review, UNDP had to include additional sub-districts in the implementation of Project B in addition to the originally agreed sub-districts. The reasons for this were, in particular, delayed or missing authorisations for implementation by the responsible authorities as well as incomplete or inaccurate technical descriptions of the project requirements and needs by the implementation partners or the respective municipalities in the project locations. Furthermore, adjustments had to be made, particularly in the context of activities in the agricultural sector, as the agricultural responsibilities and geographical boundaries were not the same as the administrative boundaries.

The selection process for the project areas was based on a poverty mapping prepared by the UNDP, which served as the basis for identifying the poorest communities and was a positive factor assessing the conceptual orientation of the projects at the time of the evaluation. The corresponding criteria of the poverty mapping, which was compiled on the basis of surveys, focussed on the neediness of the communities and individual members of communities and were thus able to remedy the poor data situation in the country. This created a needs-orientated allocation basis for the financed measures, which made it possible to select the poorest areas and thus increase the effectiveness of the measures. It was ensured that the measures benefited those most in need in the community and that the communities benefited from the measures. This process was designed to ensure the even distribution of interventions to the most disadvantaged areas and people. Once the poorest areas had been identified through poverty mapping, the beneficiaries of the cash-for-work component were selected by a local project committee, which also local communities and the municipality as final beneficiaries. The criteria were set by UNDP to ensure that the most affected and vulnerable people could benefit from the project interventions. From today's perspective, this needs-orientated and participatory project approach still appears appropriate and has a positive impact on the assessment of relevance.

To summarise, both projects address the developmentally relevant problem of the Syrian refugee crisis, the complexity of which was appropriately addressed by the chosen multisectoral approach without any significant shortcomings. Although the overarching development policy objective, which was considered too ambitious at the time of the evaluation, led to a reduction in the relevance rating, it is less significant due to the subsequent addition⁴. Overall, the relevance is therefore rated as just successful.

Relevance: 2

Coherence

The internal coherence between the two programmes is rated as good. Both projects financed almost entirely the same UNDP programme components, which reduced the complementarity of the financed measures, but the stronger focus on the youth component and on particularly vulnerable persons of project B had an additional effect on the other packages of measures.

Within German development cooperation, the labour-intensive measures financed by projects A and B fit in well with the focus of the special initiatives MENA and displacement, which primarily focus on promoting employment as a means of economic development and stabilisation in the region. The selection of project areas was carefully

⁴ Projects A and B did not originally explicitly define an objective at overarching development policy level, so this was subsequently added as part of the evaluation.

coordinated between the Federal Foreign Office (AA), the BMZ and FC. No information is available on the extent to which the funds used were sufficiently differentiated from the AA's projects, which were primarily orientated towards emergency aid.

The projects were consistent with international norms and standards to which the federal government has committed itself. The do-no-harm and do-good principles and the consideration of environmental and social standards should be emphasised in particular.

With regard to external coherence, UNDP liaised closely with UNHCR. This coordination was particularly important because UNHCR collected and managed the data of the target group members and was and is responsible for the coordination of different UN organisations. UNHCR therefore has a special role to play⁵. According to an interview with UNDP, UNHCR manages the protection and community services, shelter and non-food items sectors together with the relevant line ministries as part of an inter-agency coordination framework in Syria. UNHCR assumes this leadership and coordination role in all emergency situations, be it conflict or natural disaster.

Despite the low alignment with additionality of the financed UNDP measures, the internal coherence is rated as good, as both projects financed the same UNDP programme in close chronological order and a different alignment of the financing within the same programme could not have provided any programme-based added value from today's perspective. The BMZ is not known to have issued any guidelines on the focus of the programme. The equally good assessment of external coherence leads to a good overall assessment of coherence, as no significant deficiencies were identified.

Cohherence: 2

Effectiveness

The objective of projects A and B as part of this EPE was to rehabilitate basic infrastructure and provide temporary jobs in the short term through labour-intensive measures.

Project A financed under Component 1 the rehabilitation schools and hospitals, waste disposal and debris removal and, initially, street lighting with solar modules in the selected project locations. Under Component 2, the financed rehabilitation measures also created work opportunities for internally displaced persons and host communities. This also included the reconstruction of small businesses, such as bakeries, telephone repair shops, hair salons, sewing and metal workshops, as well as the provision of further training courses and basic equipment for businesses.

In total, the 54 local projects financed by Project A in the original eight⁶ of in total 14 planned Syrian governorates reached 4,193,207 people indirectly and 93,401 people directly, who either received a temporary job or training, started a business or used the infrastructure financed by the projects. The programmes implemented local projects provided 17,890 monthly employment opportunities⁷ for 9,936 people, 17% of whom were women, 30% internally displaced persons, 4.6 % people with disabilities and 60% young people.

Project B financed a total of 129 projects with funds of EUR 20 million which indirectly benefited 330,000 people and created employment opportunities for 25,000 people, 18% of whom were women, 32% internally displaced persons, 4.5% people with disabilities and 45% young people. At the same time, however, the aim of Programme B was for women to make up at least 30% of the target group. This was not achieved.

The projects financed under programme B were into the following components: Under Component 1 "Basic infrastructure and services", projects were implemented in the areas of debris and waste removal, rehabilitation of sewerage and water networks, transformers, repair of local electricity networks, renovation of health centres and smaller shops. Under Component 2 "Employment", workshops were offered for vocational training and further education, young adults in particular were advised and supported in setting up small businesses and material goods such as ovens, baking machines and sewing machines were distributed. Workshops were also organised in the agricultural sector and people were specifically trained and supported in fishing (repair of fishing boats) and mushroom cultivation. In addition to the measures financed under project A, awareness workshops for young people were carried out under Component 3 "Youth".

⁵ Schear, James A., Jeffrey Martini, Eric Robinson, Michelle E. Miro, and James Dobbins, *Stabilising Eastern Syria After ISIS*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2541.html.

⁶ Aleppo, Al-Hassakeh, Damascus, Hama, Horns, Latakia, Tartous and rural Damascus

⁷ BMZ, KfW, UNDP. 2017 Strengthen the Resilience of the Syrian People and Foster the Recovery of Disrupted Livelihoods BMZ 201541119. 1 January 2016 - 30 September 2017.

Due to the output-based data basis owed to the UNDP monitoring system, output results are used as proxies to verify the achievement of the indicators at outcome level. **Furthermore, the evaluation of effectiveness is predominantly based on the target values achieved at the time of the final review. The intervention logic and the level of ambition of projects A and B were primarily designed for fast-acting employment measures short-term effects, although the target system of projects A and B was also based on medium-term effects due to the creation of infrastructure.** At the time of the evaluation, which took place around 4 years after project completion, direct effects attributable to the projects can hardly be expected or measured in an ongoing conflict context. This in particular to the short-term employment measures.

At outcome level, the target achievement of the indicators of projects A and B can be summarised as follows:

Table 2: Achievement of Outcome Level

Indicator	Target value according to PA (2016, 2017)	Actual value at PCR (2018) ⁸	Actual value at EPE 2021
(1) Use of the improved infrastructure and services	(1) Rehabilitation of basic social infrastructure Project A: - 350,000-400,000 indirect beneficiaries - 975 jobs created - 400 business units rehabilitated - 90km of social infrastructure rehabilitated Project B: - Target value Number of beneficiaries n.a. - 8,775 monthly employment opportunities - 180km of social infrastructure rehabilitated - 3 Social units rehabilitated	(1) Rehabilitation of basic social infrastructure partially fulfilled Project A: - 1,168,306 indirect beneficiaries**, fulfilled - 1,539 jobs created (4,867 monthly employment opportunities)**, fulfilled - 23 Social units rehabilitated⁹, not fulfilled - 51km of social infrastructure rehabilitated*, not fulfilled Project B: - Number of beneficiaries unclear¹⁰ - 7,472 monthly employment opportunities*, not fulfilled - 427km of social infrastructure rehabilitated*, fulfilled - 28 social units rehabilitated*, fulfilled	No new more quantitative actual value Representatives of the target group stated in the interviews that the social infrastructure further continued to be used
	(2) Waste disposal Project A: - 250,000 - 300,000 indirect beneficiaries - 760 workplaces - 80,000 tonnes of waste removed; 5,000 tonnes separated Project B:	(2) Waste disposal: predominantly fulfilled Project A: - 1,750,500 indirect beneficiaries**, fulfilled - 1,746 jobs (6,216 monthly employment opportunities)**, fulfilled - 115,972 tonnes of waste disposed; 909 tonnes separated*, partially fulfilled Project B: - 25,339 monthly employment opportunities*, fulfilled	No new quantitative actual value

⁸ The values marked with * originate from the respective final inspections (2018), the values marked with ** were also taken from the UNDP final report on project A (2018)

⁹ During the project it was decided to rehabilitate social units, i.e. schools and health centres, instead of business units, as the approval of local authorities for the rehabilitation of businesses according to UNDP led to delays

¹⁰ The information on the number of beneficiaries under component 1 of project B provided in the impact matrix attached to the final inspection does not allow a clear allocation to indirect or direct beneficiaries and also appears to be incorrect. It refers to a number of beneficiaries of 34,068,00, which bears no realistic relation to the number of beneficiaries under component 1 of project A. For this reason, this information is not taken into account in this evaluation when analysing effectiveness

Indicator	Target value according to PA (2016, 2017)	Actual value at PCR (2018) ⁸	Actual value at EPE 2021
	- 4,560 monthly employment opportunities - 160,000 tonnes of waste removed; - 35,000 tonnes recycled	- 408,517 tonnes of waste disposed; - 26,440 tonnes recycled*; partially fulfilled	
	(3) Debris removal Project A: - 375,000 indirect users - 675 workplaces - 250,000 tonnes of debris removed; - 25,000 tonnes sorted Project B: - 3,375 monthly employment opportunities - 400,000 tonnes of debris removed; - 40,000 tonnes recycled	(3) Debris removal: partially fulfilled Project A: - 420,000 indirect users*; fulfilled - 589 jobs (2,241 monthly employment opportunities)**; not fulfilled - 111,800 tonnes of debris removed; - 25,000 tonnes sorted*; partially fulfilled Project B: - 4,082 monthly employment opportunities*; fulfilled - 482,868 tonnes of debris removed; - 49,799 tonnes recycled*; fulfilled	No new quantitative actual value
	(4) Renewable energy sources (Project A only) - 450,000 - 600,000 beneficiaries - 700 workplaces - 800 solar-based water heaters - 600 solar LED units - 12km street lighting	(4) Renewable energy sources: partially fulfilled - 761,000 beneficiaries**; fulfilled - 149 jobs (422 monthly employment opportunities)**; not fulfilled - 200 solar-based water heaters*; not fulfilled - 710 Solar LED Units**; fulfilled - 21km street lighting**; fulfilled	No new quantitative actual value
(2) Use of improved income of the target group	(1) Establishment/development of SMEs Project A: - 500 workplaces - 18 SMEs restored/rebuilt - 250 Production resources provided Project B: - 3,000 monthly employment opportunities - 30 SMEs restored/ rebuilt	(1) Establishment/development of SMEs: predominantly fulfilled Project A: - 1,140 jobs (2,447 monthly employment opportunities)**; fulfilled - 24 SMEs restored/ rebuilt*; fulfilled - 169 Means of production provided*; not fulfilled Project B: - 3,915 monthly employment opportunities*; fulfilled - 92 SMEs restored/ rebuilt*; fulfilled	No new quantitative actual value Representatives of the target group in the interviews that some SMEs still exist.
	(2) Utilisation of vocational training opportunities Project A: - 900 people take advantage of the training - 1.500 Startup Toolkits distributed	(2) Utilisation of vocational training opportunities: predominantly fulfilled Project A: - 1,685 people take advantage of the training*; fulfilled - 650 Startup Toolkits distributed*; not fulfilled	No new quantitative actual value

Indicator	Target value according to PA (2016, 2017)	Actual value at PCR (2018) ⁸	Actual value at EPE 2021
	Project B: - 1,500 people take advantage of the training - 1,500 toolkits distributed	Project B: - 6,967 people take advantage of the training*; fulfilled - 2,750 toolkits distributed*; fulfilled	
	(3) Utilisation of production resources to support agricultural activity Project A: 1,600 production resources are distributed Project B: no target values formulated	(3) Utilisation of production resources to support agricultural activity: not fulfilled Project A: 534 production resources were distributed**; Project B: 10,593 production resources are distributed*; unclear target achievement	No new quantitative actual value
	(4) Support people with disabilities (project B only) - 500 employment opportunities through workshops, training courses, toolkits	(4) Support people with disabilities: fulfilled - 2,666 employment opportunities through workshops, training, toolkits*; fulfilled	No new quantitative actual value
(3) Use of offers for the youth regarding social cooperation (project B only)	(1) Young people use the network - 1,200 workplaces - 100 participants in the Youth Network - 24 Crisis awareness campaigns for young people	(1) Young people use the network: fulfilled - 2,470 jobs*; fulfilled - 100 participants in the Youth Network*; fulfilled - 289 Awareness-raising campaigns for young people on the crisis*; fulfilled	No new quantitative actual value

The data in the table refers to the figures listed in the final report and was supplemented by figures in the final reports provided by UNDP for the components financed by FC. Due to the security situation, it was not possible to collect data on site, meaning that conclusions on the utilisation of the infrastructure created can only be drawn to a limited extent on the basis of the interviews with UNDP and the target group as well as the project documentation. Information and photos from the UNDP project report for Phase II of the FC project "Employment promotion through rehabilitation of basic infrastructure and income-generating measures" (BMZ No. 2017 40 893) indicate the use of the infrastructure created and show, among other things, the equipment of rehabilitated hospitals and schools as well as the lively traffic of buyers at markets and in shops. In addition, modern production facilities are depicted in which people with disabilities have found a job. However, the validity and relevance of this information can no longer be fully verified at the time of the evaluation.

At the time of the evaluation, overall picture of indicator fulfilment for projects A and B is mixed. While the target values for the number of total beneficiaries were clearly exceeded across all components in both projects for almost all indicators, the target values for waste separation and the number of distributed production resources in particular were not met in the majority of cases.

According to the UNDP, the employment opportunities created, some of which were significantly over-fulfilled, are due to the fact that more social infrastructure and electricity lines were rehabilitated, from which a larger number of people can benefit indirectly. However, such a connection between individual component services cannot be established in all cases. For example, four times higher employment figures were achieved under Component 1, Output 1 under programme A, although the target values for the infrastructure services at the time of the final inspection were well below expectations and provide possible indications that the ambition level of the indicator target values is too low. The clear overfilling of the number of beneficiaries and employees of project A under Component 1, Output 2, shows a similar disproportionate achievement of objectives, which are not logically related to the value of the labour input for waste separation and debris removal under Component 1, Output 2. The

sometimes significant differences in values may also be due to fluctuating exchange rates and a volatile security situation, which make it difficult to realistically plan target values and sometimes require adjustments to the project components. However, this problem generally exists in a fragile context, there are no more specific explanations for the sometimes widely differing degrees of achievement of the indicator target values and survey and documentation errors cannot be completely ruled out at the time of the evaluation.

Based on the target values in the area of employment opportunities created, which had already been largely exceeded at the time of the final inspection, it seems plausible that the short-term target component of both projects, the short-term provision of temporary jobs through labour-intensive measures, was achieved. However, the extent to which the medium to long-term target component, the restoration of the basic infrastructure, was achieved is questionable. Some of the indicator target values for the rehabilitated basic infrastructure had already fallen short of expectations at the time of the final inspection (e.g. project A, Component 1, Output 1) and valid statements ongoing utilisation can only made to a limited extent. **In view of the ongoing nationwide conflict context in Syria even after the completion of the programme, it seems plausible that a large part of the rehabilitated infrastructure was destroyed again at the time of the evaluation and that rubble and debris continue to impair the use of road sections.** Corresponding indications can also be seen in Figure 3 below. This shows the intensity of conflict in the Syrian governorates and districts financed by projects A and B at the time the project began in 2016, at the time of implementation and completion in 2017 and at the time of the evaluation in 2021. It becomes evident that the governorates in Aleppo, those in the catchment area around Damascus and, at the time of the evaluation, the governorates in Latakia addressed by the FC projects were the most severely affected by the conflict events and some of them still are today. Some of the FC project districts in the governorates of Al-Hasakeh and Homs also have a higher number of conflict events in 2021 that can be attributed to explosions, exchanges of fire or airstrikes. **Based on this, it can be assumed that at least in these project districts, basic infrastructure was continuously destroyed and the potential benefits could not be realised or only to a limited extent due to the counteracting factors and remained below expectations.**

However, interviews with representatives of the target group have shown that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation and an overall deteriorating economic situation, some representatives of the target group are continuing their businesses established under the UNDP programme.

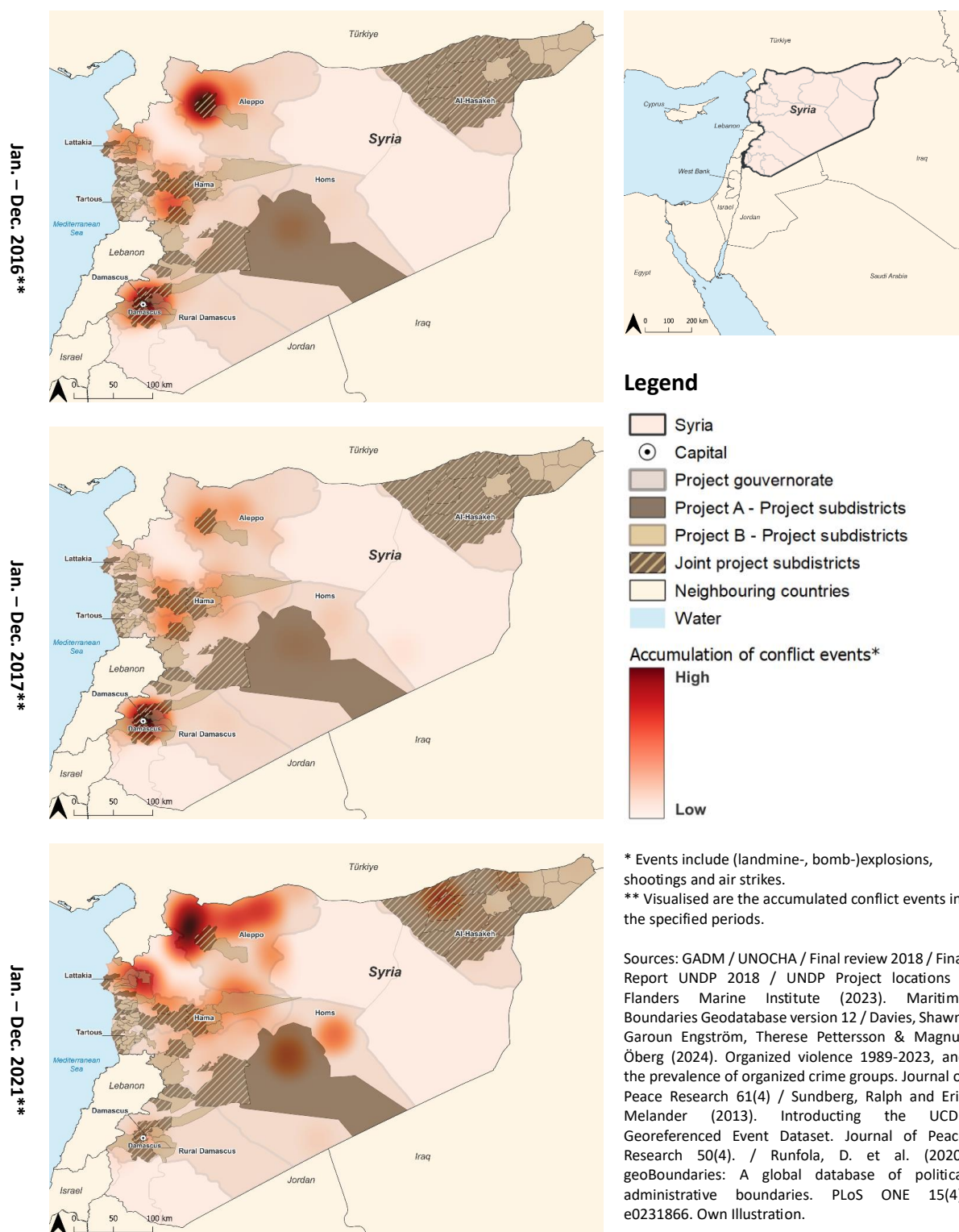


Figure 3: Visualisation of the concentration of conflict events in the project areas in Syria financed by the FC projects at the time of 2016, 2017 and 2021 as a heat map.

The geographical catchment area of the projects comprised the areas of Syria that were accessible during the implementation period, 2016-2017. In cooperation with FC and based on political guidelines from the German Federal Government, it was continuously ensured that the funding provided benefited target group members in all areas. **Time delays implementation were accepted in favour of geographical coverage.** The selection process for the project areas, which was based on poverty mapping, ensured that both the poorest areas in the

governorates and the poorest sections of the population in the municipalities were selected and reached. This location- and target-group-specific procedure enabled UNDP to specifically address vulnerable target groups such as single parents, women, people with disabilities and young people in the FC-financed measures.

The selection of locations, activities and local implementation partners had to be coordinated with the Syrian government, as UNDP was acting within the framework of the country programme. A politically biased influence of the Syrian government cannot be ruled out, which may have led to the exclusion of ethnic-religious population groups from participation in the programme and would represent an unintended negative effect of the projects.

In view of the fact that the target values for the outcome indicators were only partially achieved for the most part, the effectiveness of programmes A and B is rated as only partially successful overall. While the **short-term effects** in the area of employment **appear plausible** at the time of the evaluation and can be attributed to the fact that most of the target values had already been clearly exceeded at the time of the final review, **the medium- to longer-term effects in the context of infrastructure rehabilitation are questionable, particularly due to the ongoing conflict in the project areas.** The objective of promoting women also fell short of expectations. **Due to the emergency aid character of projects A and B and the inherent short-term impact of the predominant measures, an assessment of the impacts at the time of the evaluation is only possible to a limited extent.** For this reason, the achievement of the target values at the time of the final review and the achievement of objectives in the area of short-term employment promotion are given greater weight in the assessment of effectiveness. **Due to the positive results, particularly in the area of direct and short-term employment effects, which were below expectations in some cases but still dominate overall, the overall effectiveness is assessed as moderately successful.**

Effectiveness: 3

Efficiency

Two aspects were given particular consideration when evaluating efficiency in the context of emergency aid: (1) rapid implementation in the refugee crisis and (2) efficient use of funds.

Thanks to the instrument of the ex-ante appraisal and the subsequent definition of the allocation of funds by UNDP in accordance with the project proposals submitted and the detailed target system, project A in particular was set up within the scheduled time and the necessary disbursements to UNDP processed quickly. The co-operation between FC and UNDP was successful despite changing access to regions and changing political requirements of the BMZ. UNDP's high level of transparency, a good communication strategy and the dual approach of direct implementation on the one hand, coupled with implementation by local partner organisations on the other, had a positive effect on the implementation efficiency of the components.

However, the earmarking of FC funds for certain activities, the requirement for an even allocation of interventions to certain geographical areas and the associated earmarking of components aimed at creating jobs had a slowing on the projects. In some project areas, the rapid implementation of the measures was either thwarted by the volatile security situation and armed conflicts or delayed by the pending but necessary authorisation from the Syrian authorities. Overall, delayed the implementation and completion of the FC projects: The implementation time of project A was delayed by three months and in the case of project B, the start was already delayed by four months and the completion by six months, so that the implementation time of project B was two months longer than planned. However, the delays were cost-neutral and, in view of the volatile context, are still considered appropriate in the context of the evaluation. Nevertheless, a high degree of flexibility for needs-based implementation is essential for emergency aid projects in order to avoid delays and work towards appropriate allocation efficiency. In emergency aid contexts in particular, the latter depends on the time-critical provision of the financed measures and can be counteracted by specifying a regionally equalised coverage rate, as in case of projects A and B.

In terms of implementation efficiency, the FC projects were more expensive than comparable projects implemented by bilateral partners. Implementation costs indirectly attributable the project EUR 1.4 million for project A and USD 2.41 million¹¹ (11% of the financial contribution) for project B. In addition, UNDP calculated standard administrative costs, which made up 8% of the respective financial contribution and specifically amounted to EUR 0.7 million for project A and USD 1.75 million for project B. These were calculated pro rata according to the progress of expenditure. The administrative costs are comparable to those of other UN organisations and are

¹¹ The figures are from the final audit (2018) and cannot be converted into EUR due to a lack of exchange rate information

therefore considered appropriate in the context of this evaluation. In view of the urgency, the implementation of both projects by UNDP as the project executing agency made sense from today's perspective, especially as UNDP was present on the ground and had the institutional capacities that were essential for the implementation of the measures in the conflict-ridden context. Furthermore, it would not have been possible for FC to implement the projects with state partners at the time, meaning that the comparatively high implementation costs do not have a negative impact on the assessment of efficiency.

The unit costs of the measures implemented by UNDP are considered reasonable at the time of the evaluation, given the fragile context, rising inflation and the initial status of a middle-income country. The payment system to target group members was efficient as it was either transferred to a bank, which submitted amounts and signatures to UNDP, or transferred to the partner organisations, which also submitted signed lists of target group members. The production efficiency is therefore rated as unreservedly high.

Due to the reduced allocation efficiency caused by earmarking, combined with good production efficiency for the fragile context, the efficiency of the programme is rated as moderately successful overall.

Efficiency: 3

Overarching developmental impact

The underlying objective of this evaluation for projects A and B at impact level to contribute to the short-term socio-economic stabilisation of the project areas and to strengthen the resilience of Syrian IDPs and host communities.

Due to the emergency aid character and the predominantly associated short-term impact of the individual measures, particularly in the area of employment, potential effects at the impact level can hardly be determined around four years after the completion of the projects at the time of the evaluation. Nevertheless, in order to gain insights into the effects of the programmes at the overarching, developmental impact level, socio-economic parameters in Syria are regarded as descriptive proxy indicators. Subject to the attribution problems, the impact of the projects is assessed.

At the time of the evaluation, the overarching developmental impact showed a mixed picture. In 2016, when the implementation of projects A and B began, the annual per capita GDP was \$664 and increased slightly to \$862 in 2017, the year in which the projects were implemented. were completed.¹² A debris removal worker in Project B earned an average of \$150 per month or could have earned \$1,800 over a whole year¹³. Accordingly, an average annual income of around \$1,800 was sufficient to earn a living and send the children to school. **In principle, the temporary jobs provided by the FC funds therefore offered a sufficient, albeit temporary, income basis, which is also a key indicator of socio-economic stability and an important prerequisite for the resilience of the beneficiaries. At the time of the evaluation, however, it is unclear to what extent the temporary employment has also had a long-term impact on the income of the target groups beyond the short-term employment.**

Due more than ten years conflict and the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic, the situation in Syria has deteriorated dramatically since the completion of both projects in September (project A) and June (project B) 2017. According to the WFP, around 90% of the Syrian population is living below the poverty line in 2021 and the population living in extreme poverty has by 5-10 percentage points to a total of 60 to 65% since 2019.¹⁴ The market value of the Syrian currency plummeted by around 78% between October 2019 and March 2021, also affecting salaries and savings denominated in Syrian lira¹⁵, basic household purchases unaffordable for many to date due to the enormous currency devaluation. The national average price for a standard food basket was 236% higher in December 2020 than a year earlier.¹⁶ According to the WFP, almost 60 % of the almost 21 million people in Syria were "food insecure" in 2020 (12.4 million) and did not have safe access to sufficient and nutritious food. This corresponds to

¹² Information on per capita GDP in Syria differs significantly between different data sources. According to the World Bank per capita GDP in 2015 was only USD 857.4 (figure indifferent to the underlying exchange rate year). In any case, a wage was paid as part of the FC measures that is 2-3 times higher than the per GDP.

¹³ Although no precise information on the employment period was available at the time of the evaluation, an employment period of one year is not plausible given the short duration and the aim of the individual measures to provide as many employment opportunities as possible. The target group will therefore only have benefited from the annual income assumed in this evaluation for a few months.

¹⁴ UNOCHA (2021). Humanitarian Needs Overview. Syrian Arab Republic (2021). Access under: reliefweb.int/mwg-inter-nal/en5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=pQKm9_5V7tT6SPNPxaB7rIRpdJQ9i3gti5-L-euWNj4, Due to the lack of data for 2017, reference data from 2019 is for a before-and-after comparison of Syria's socio-economic parameters.

¹⁵ Synonym also Syrian pound.

¹⁶ UNOCHA (2021). Humanitarian Needs Overview. Syrian Arab Republic (2021). Access under: reliefweb.int/mwg-inter-nal/en5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=pQKm9_5V7tT6SPNPxaB7rIRpdJQ9i3gti5-L-euWNj4,

an increase of around 15% compared to 2017, when the total number of food insecure people was 10.5 million¹⁷ and an increase of 57% compared to 2019¹⁸.

However, the number of the "severely" food insecure population is dependent on external food aid has fallen significantly from 6.5 million people in 2017¹⁹ to 1.3 million people in 2020 in Syria²⁰. Due to the rise in food prices, particularly as a result of inflation, those affected have increasingly to negative survival strategies, which have involved, among other things, baskets of goods financed on credit or led to children dropping out of school early, as these were intended to contribute to the family's income.²¹ **These structural parameters indicate a tendency towards a worsening of the overall socio-economic situation in the country, which also suggests a deterioration in the living conditions of the target group addressed by the FC programme and has a fundamentally negative impact on their resilience.** This is in line with the interview statements, which also give reason to the overarching developmental impact of the projects. According to discussions with representatives of the target group and against the backdrop of the deteriorating situation in Syria, some target group members have left the project areas addressed by the FC programme or have left the country altogether. The extent to which these statements apply to the entire target group is unclear, but they contradict the project's underlying aim of improving the living conditions in the project areas through short-term socio-economic stabilisation to such an extent that the pressure to flee internally is reduced or even a return to the hometowns is made possible.

Against the backdrop of the polycrisis culminating in poverty, famine, inflation and the COVID-19 pandemic with slow vaccination progress as well as ongoing conflicts in Syria, a sustainable resolution of factors of internal displacement and a widespread return of internally displaced persons appears unlikely at the time of the evaluation. At the same time, these external factors undermine the impact of the projects at an overarching development policy level in the area of socio-economic stabilisation and strengthening resilience. **The less-than-expected direct effects of both projects in the area of infrastructure rehabilitation call into question potential overarching development policy effects in the area of infrastructure benefits and, in view of the additional ongoing warfare, structural effects from the activities financed by the FZ appear unlikely.** Despite the successful temporary employment effects, which have a positive contribution to the short-term socio-economic stabilisation of the project areas, it is unlikely that income improvements and the establishment of positive coping strategies will last beyond the conclusion of the projects. **Therefore, despite the recognisable, positive results in the area of short-term socio-economic stabilisation of the project areas, the achievement of objectives in the area of strengthening resilience remains well below expectations, particularly due to external, counteracting factors.** Accordingly, the overarching developmental impact of projects A and B is rated as moderately unsuccessful.

Overarching developmental impact: 4

Sustainability

Due to the emergency aid character (emergency procedure in the event of natural disasters, crises and conflicts in accordance with para. 47 of the FC-TC guidelines), the two FC programmes had a limited sustainability claim. This was already explicitly formulated at the time of the appraisal of both FC projects. **In retrospect, we also consider the limited sustainability claim to be appropriate, which is why the sustainability of the projects is considered, but the assessment is not taken into account for the overall evaluation this evaluation.**

In accordance with the requirements of the BMZ and German development cooperation, UNDP was explicitly not commissioned by FC to rebuild Syria on a grand scale. The aim of the projects was to create short-term jobs and income for particularly disadvantaged internally displaced persons and host communities, with a particular focus on single, people with disabilities and young people. The cash-for-work components in particular had the primary goal of a short-term contribution to securing the livelihoods of the target group. In contrast, the rehabilitation of infrastructure and support for the establishment of micro and small enterprises aimed to have a medium-term

¹⁷ WFP (2017) World Food Programme in Syria. Year in Review 2017. Access under: The World Food Programme in Syria: Year in Review 2017 IM Resource Portal (im-portal.org)

¹⁸ WFP (2021): Syria - Food Security Bulletins mVAM Bulletin Issue no. 52: January and February 2021. Access under: <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/MFP-0000124749/download>

¹⁹ WFP (2017): World Food Programme in Syria. Year in Review 2017. Accessed under: The World Food Programme in Syria: Year in Review 2017 IM Resource Portal (im-portal.org)

²⁰ WFP (2021): Syria - Food Security Bulletins mVAM Bulletin Issue no. 52: January and February 2021. Access under: <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/MFP-0000124749/download/>

²¹ Ebd.

impact. The youth networks also pursued a more medium- to long-term approach by contributing to the promotion of exchange and mutual understanding.

Provided that the rehabilitated infrastructure is not destroyed by renewed fighting in the intervention areas, there is the potential for a lasting impact. However, this is limited by the fact that the projects are not implemented by the government: According to political directives, there was to be no cooperation with state institutions, which made the implementation of the projects more difficult and was detrimental to sustainability, as maintenance of the rehabilitated infrastructure by state agencies is not guaranteed. However, this can be countered by the fact that UNDP, like all UN organisations in Syria, worked within the framework of a country programme that was co-ordinated and agreed with the Syrian government and, in particular, local authority structures were also involved in the approval processes.

Due to the high inflation in the last two years and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, living conditions in Syria have continued to deteriorate sharply. Members of the target group have had to give up their production facilities and continue their activities from home or stop working altogether. Even though not all participants in the training measures financed by the FC projects are still working in their field and some of have left the country, the activities have brought about a lasting positive change in the lives of many single mothers or people with disabilities, as interviews during the evaluation and case studies and videos by UNDP have shown.

Ultimately, the projects represent phases II (project A) and I (project B) of a series of FC projects that provide financing for the UNDP programme "Strengthen the Resilience of the Syrian People and Foster the Recovery of Disrupted Livelihoods" and now in their fifth phase.

Both projects thus a linking capability, as further financing could seamlessly follow on from them and thus have the potential to develop structural effects that go beyond the individual project. In the interviews, UNDP repeatedly pointed out that the impacts of projects A and B considered here only materialise in Phase VI.

An exit strategy was only indirectly incorporated into the projects and special initiatives. It is directly linked to the civil war in Syria. The re-election of the president and confirmation of the Syrian government in 2021 as well as the support of the regime by Russia and Iran will prevent the transition to development financing and reconstruction via state structures for the time being, making it more difficult for Syrian internally displaced persons and refugees to return.

Sustainability: 4

Methodology of the performance evaluation

A six-point scale is used to assess the programme according to the OECD DAC criteria. The scale values are assigned as follows:

- Level 1** Very successful: result significantly above expectations
- Level 2** Successful: result fully in line with expectations, without significant deficiencies
- Level 3** Moderately successful: below expectations, but positive results dominate
- Level 4** Moderately unsuccessful: is significantly below expectations and negative results dominate despite recognisable positive results
- Stage 5** Unsuccessful: despite some positive partial results, the negative results clearly dominate
- Level 6** Highly unsuccessful: the project is useless or the situation has worsened

The overall rating on the six-point scale is based on a project-specific weighting of the six individual criteria. Levels 1-3 of the overall rating indicate a "successful" project, while levels 4-6 indicate an "unsuccessful" project. It should be noted that a project can generally only be considered developmentally "successful" if the achievement of the project objective ("effectiveness") and the impact on the overall objective ("overarching developmental impact") as well as the sustainability are rated as at least "partially successful" (rating 3).

The annex to this report is available upon request (German only).

Imprint

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Evaluation department of KfW Entwicklungsbank
FZ-Evaluierung@kfw.de

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KfW Banking Group
Palmengartenstrasse 5-9
60325 Frankfurt am Main, German