

Action fiche for Syria

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title/Number	Support for areas affected by the influx of Syrian refugees to Lebanon		
Total cost	EU contribution: EUR 5,000,000		
Aid method / Method of implementation	Joint management (with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR))		
DAC-code	11120	Sector	Education facilities and training
	11130		Teacher training
	11220		Primary education
	11320		Secondary education
	11330		Vocational training
	15110		Public sector policy and administrative management
	15112		
	15150		Decentralisation and support to sub-national government
	73010		Democratic participation and civil society
			Reconstruction relief and rehabilitation

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Sector context

The year-long crisis in Syria has led an increasing number of Syrians to seek refuge across the border in Lebanon. The Lebanese authorities have engaged in a large humanitarian response to the influx of Syrian refugees in 2011 and 2012, in close co-operation with the UNHCR. Fleeing Syrians have been allowed to enter Lebanon and have not been prosecuted for illegal entry or stay. The Government's High Relief Commission (HRC) has provided food and non-food items as well as health care to refugees in the areas in northern Lebanon where they operate.

The influx was initially concentrated in the northern region and later in the Bekaa Valley where the HRC does not yet have a mandate to intervene. Both regions are among the poorest in Lebanon and characterised by weak infrastructure and limited livelihood opportunities. In addition to the needs of the refugee population, the resources of the host communities are often stretched to the limit. The limited access to infrastructure and resources could become a source of tension. EU humanitarian assistance is already mobilised by the European Commission and other donor

agencies to address the immediate humanitarian needs of the refugee population, e.g. food, shelter.

It is likely that the conflict in Syria will become protracted and that the needs of the Syrian refugees as well as of the host communities will go beyond the immediacy of humanitarian assistance. In light of the fragilities of the host regions there is an increased risk of tensions emerging between the refugee population and host communities. Therefore it is important for the international community to address the medium- to long-term needs of both groups.

The aim of this programme is to target the medium and longer term needs of both the displaced Syrian people and the Lebanese local population and to reinforce the capacities of the Lebanese authorities in dealing with the crisis.

The project at hand is in line with priorities outlined in the Joint Communications of the European Commission and of the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy “A partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean”¹ and “A new response to a changing Neighbourhood”² that embody the EU’s response to the demands in the region for greater freedom, justice and democracy as well as in the Communication “Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change”³.

2.2. Lessons learnt

In the region, the EU has already had success with adopting a two-step approach to refugee crisis providing humanitarian assistance through the European Commission's Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection while addressing medium- to long-term needs through more Instrument for Stability (IfS) or other EU funds. The latest example is the support provided to Syria to alleviate the pressure caused by the influx of Iraqi refugees. The improvements made to the local host communities played a significant role in reducing brewing tensions between refugees and host populations and the structures supported were used by and benefitted both groups further helping integration and inter-communal dialogue.

In order to ensure the best possible allocation of funds and to reduce the risk of duplication of activities, engaging in supporting activities through the main competent agency (-ies) authorised by the national authorities to work on projects concerning refugees and host communities has proven to be best practice.

2.3. Complementary actions

This action is complementary to the humanitarian assistance provided by the EU to address the needs raised by the influx of refugees as a consequence of the crisis in Syria as well as the activities of certain EU Member States, other countries and international organisations and NGOs.

¹ COM(2011)200 of 8 March 2011.

² COM(2011)303 of 25 May 2011.

³ COM(2011)637 of 13 October 2011.

Close co-ordination is foreseen between the European Commission, EU Member States as well as the main national and international organisations involved in the area. The UNHCR has a lead role in the co-ordination of donor activities.

UNHCR has from the start of the Syria crisis been on the ground providing emergency support to the Syrian refugees and vulnerable host communities in close co-ordination with the Government. UNHCR and its partners are distributing food and non-food items to registered and non-registered refugees and vulnerable host families in both the North and the Bekaa Valley, ensuring access to primary and secondary health care, education (which includes payment of all fees and school items, remedial classes, recreational activities and more), shelter (renovation of collective and other shelter), providing support to the host families (food, non-food items, fuel, winter clothes) and support to the host communities (quick impact projects). UNHCR also ensures that refugees are registered all over Lebanon and that a variety of protection concerns are properly addressed. Its teams do outreach work and border monitoring. UNHCR is the lead refugee agency and the overall coordinator for the refugee response in Lebanon.

UNHCR works in close coordination and co-operation with the Government of Lebanon who fund food kits and secondary health care for the registered refugees in the North on a monthly basis.

UNHCR funds its operations through earmarked funding and UNHCR's operational reserve.

Coinciding with this initiative, similar support will be provided by the EU to Jordan to assist mitigating measures to deal with the influx of Syrian refugees there.

2.4. Donor co-ordination

The EU has a close working relationship with the UNHCR, identified by the Lebanese authorities as the main coordinator for international assistance related to the influx of Syrian refugees. Informal consultative meetings, at ambassador's level, are being held twice a year, in order for UNHCR to update key donors on trends, achievements and challenges. On a regular basis, UNHCR will organise donor meetings which the EU will attend together with the other main donors. More technical meetings are also taking place twice a year with programme staff of key donor countries/agencies. Further ad hoc meetings can be organised when needed.

At the local level, a continuous and regular dialogue is maintained by UNHCR with implementing and other partners and the Lebanese authorities. UNHCR and the EU Delegation in Lebanon have a well-established and strong partnership and the EU is informed of any difficulty faced in the implementation of the projects

For this project the EU will establish a steering committee for the projects encompassing relevant Lebanese institutions, UNHCR and the main stakeholders involved in the implementation of the project.

3. DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives

The overall objective of this project is to mitigate the impact of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon.

The specific objective of this project is to alleviate the medium and longer term needs of both the local population and Syrian refugees in the main host communities in Lebanon (northern region and Bekaa Valley).

3.2. Expected results and main activities

The expected results are:

Result 1: The capacity of existing Lebanese institutions and structures to deal with crisis is improved.

Activities under this result will focus on strengthening Lebanese authorities, e.g. by institutional support to the High Relief Commission (HRC) at central level. At the local level it is foreseen that support will be given to the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities through local municipalities and to the Ministry of Social Affairs through its Social Development Centres (SDCs). Targeted support to local NGOs and organisations such as the Lebanese Red Cross/Red Crescent are also foreseen.

Main activities may include:

- Capacity-building of Lebanese authorities;
- Capacity-building of local NGOs and other institutions.

Result 2: The capacity and quality of the national primary and secondary education structures in the regions hosting Syrian refugees are reinforced.

Activities under this result will focus on addressing the central needs in the field of primary and secondary education both of Syrian refugees and the Lebanese host communities. More than half of the Syrian refugees are under the age of 18. Syrian refugees are allowed access to Lebanese public schools. This puts additional pressure on the already stretched resources available to public schools in the host communities which are at times already weak. The enrolment of Syrian pupils has significantly increased and UNHCR plans to be able to provide educational support to some 3,000 Syrian refugee children of school going age in some 200-250 schools throughout the country, with a focus on refugee concentration areas, in the Bekaa Valley and in the North. At the same time an expected 1,000 vulnerable Lebanese children will also benefit from educational support. As a result of the difference between the Lebanese and Syrian curriculum a large number of this group will also be in need of remedial classes or accelerated learning programmes. These programmes will also benefit the Lebanese students.

The teachers and administrative staff of the schools will need assistance in adapting to the increased workload and the school facilities will need to be upgraded. Main activities may include:

- Capacity-building for school staff;

- Remedial classes and accelerated learning programmes;
- School rehabilitation (e.g. infrastructure, playgrounds, safe spaces) and supply of equipment;
- Community involvement (e.g. actively involving parents in education);
- Capacity-building of community centre staff.

Result 3: The social and economic tissue of local communities is strengthened (community empowerment)

Activities under this result will focus on supporting and engaging the local communities, Syrian refugees and host populations alike through community empowerment and the establishment/creation of local structures and capacities that allow for this increased empowerment. Focus will be on the establishment or strengthening of the network of community centres covering both the northern region and the Bekaa Valley, half of them being Ministry of Social Affairs SDCs.

The community centres will be used as a central point where refugees and local Lebanese can gather to benefit from services to both refugees and host communities. The services would include vocational training, life skills training, counselling and community-building activities. Registration of new arrivals may also take place in some of the community centres. The issue of employment is essential as the scarcity of livelihood opportunities could be a source of tension between the refugees and their hosts. Already before the Syrian crisis the employment opportunities in both the northern region and in the Bekaa Valley were limited. Many economic activities used to cross the porous border whether, trade, employment or access to services. Since the beginning of the conflict, a large part of the – especially illegal - border crossing have been inaccessible due to the increased presence of the Syrian army and the mines which were laid along a large part of the northern border. This has significantly affected the economic situation in the regions and requires a re-adaptation of local job-skills. Assisting the two populations finding meaningful and legal sources of income is of utmost importance for any sustainable development of the regions.

Main activities may include:

- Vocational training activities;
- Life skills training;
- Establishment or rehabilitation and upgrade of community centres (including SDCs).
- Quick impact projects to improve municipal infrastructures, e.g. buildings, recreational areas, public gardens, wells, roads with a focus on providing support to the local communities and create further livelihood opportunities.

With a view to a particularly sensitive working environment and to avoid possible overlapping in EU assistance, particular care will be taken to ensure that specific actions are decided in complementarity with EU humanitarian assistance.

3.3. Risks and assumptions

In light of the uncertainty of the political and security situation in Syria, the project will need to maintain a degree of flexibility in order to be able to adapt to an evolving context. It is widely expected that the Syrian crisis will be protracted and

that further influx of Syrian refugees is possible. Any future major influx could require an adaptation of the approach.

There is a risk that the Syria conflict spill over into Lebanon, which could jeopardise the project and cut off access to Lebanese territory for international organisations and actors.

The Lebanese authorities are not ready to deal officially with the crisis due to political constraints and limitations on capacities and resources. Some in the international community could provide support outside the co-ordination mechanisms, which could lead to cases of duplication of support.

3.4. Cross-cutting Issues

The action is consistent with many of the cross-cutting issues identified in the European Union consensus on development.

Gender – women, men, children and young people: The action is gender-sensitive, in that the measures will benefit all men, women, children and other young people living in the communities affected (and will also include the persons with special needs). There will be an additional focus on the needs of children (including the most vulnerable Lebanese) in regards to education and of youth in regards to employment.

Governance and ownership: The activities will all be implemented through the UNHCR in close co-ordination with the Lebanese authorities at all levels. As the activities aim to engage the local populations directly in the improvement of their communities, the degree of ownership will be substantial, thereby improving sustainability.

Environment: The improvement of local infrastructure will help limit the environmental impact of the increased population levels in the affected regions.

3.5. Stakeholders

Main stakeholders were consulted during the preparatory period.

The direct beneficiaries are:

- The local and refugee population in the hosting communities in the northern region of Lebanon and in the Bekaa Valley.
- The local and central Lebanese authorities benefiting from capacity-building activities and improvement of infrastructure.

Other stakeholders include local and international NGOs and organisations used by UNHCR as implementing partners for the various activities.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Method of implementation

Joint management.

The intervention will be implemented through an agreement with the international organisation UNHCR in accordance with Article 53d of the Financial Regulation. UNHCR complies with the criteria provided for in the applicable Financial Regulation. A standard contribution agreement will be concluded, in accordance with the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) signed between the European Commission and the United Nations on 29 April 2003.

A steering committee will be set up to oversee and validate the overall direction and policy of the project. It will also facilitate the co-ordination between all Lebanese institutions and actors likely to be involved in the project. The steering committee will include the High Relief Commission, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, the UNHCR, the EU Delegation and other relevant stakeholders.

The change of management mode constitutes a substantial change except where the Commission "re-centralises" or reduces the level of tasks previously delegated to the beneficiary country, international organisation or delegatee body under, respectively, decentralised, joint or indirect centralised management.

4.2. Procurement and grant award procedures

– Joint management

All contracts implementing the action are awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the relevant international organisation (UNHCR).

4.3. Indicative budget and calendar

The overall budget for the infrastructure component of this proposal amounts to EUR 5,000,000 distributed on the following budget lines:

Description	Budget
Contribution agreement with UNHCR	EUR 5,000,000
Total	EUR 5,000,000

Foreseen operational duration of the programme is of 36 months as from signature of the contribution agreement with UNHCR.

4.4. Performance monitoring

Achievements will be monitored regularly by UNHCR and the beneficiary NGO and the results will be reported to the EU Delegation. The key performance indicators will be detailed in the contribution agreement. The EU Delegation task manager will carry out at least one monitoring mission a year for each component. It is expected that this project will also be subject to the regular results oriented monitoring missions.

4.5. Evaluation and audit

An external final evaluation, covering all activities of the action, will be carried out in accordance with European Commission procedures, financed under a different decision.

In case of joint management, and where applicable, the provisions included in the relevant framework agreement(s) signed with international organisation(s) will apply

Furthermore, if necessary and relevant, the European Commission might contract specific expenditure verification assignment(s) (service contracts) covering the expenditure incurred by UNHCR during the implementation of the action, financed under a different decision.

4.6. Communication and visibility

All visibility activities will be implemented in accordance with the "Communication and visibility manual for EU external actions". Depending on the evolution of the situation on the ground, visibility activities might need to be scaled down in order to allow a successful implementation of the project activities.

In case of joint management, and where applicable, the provisions included in the relevant framework agreement(s) signed with international organisation(s) will apply.