

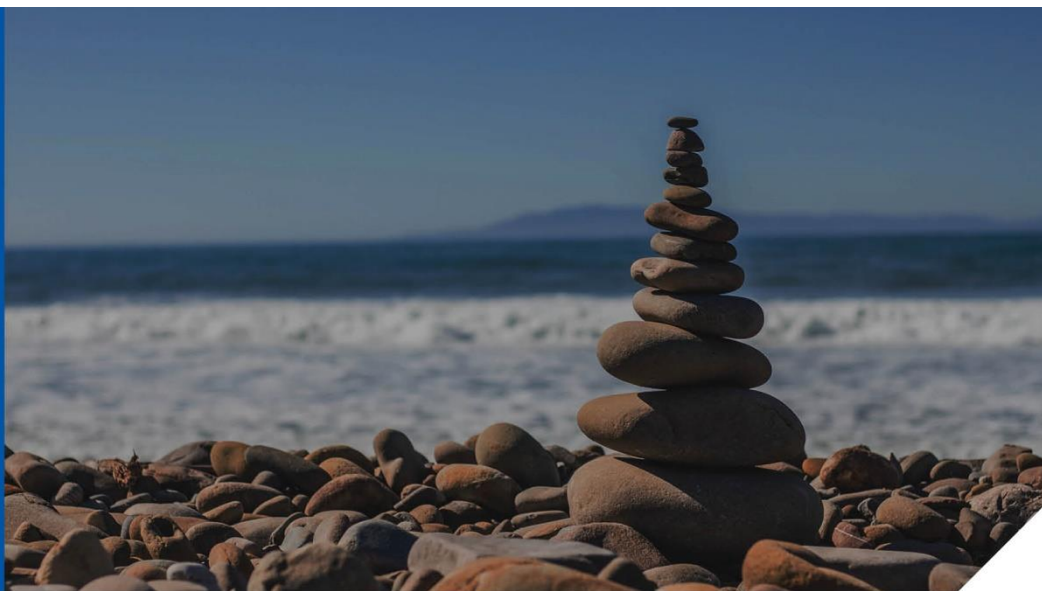


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# FINAL INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF STRENGTHENING NEXUS COHERENCE AND RESPONSIVENESS IN THE PALESTINIAN SOCIAL PROTECTION SECTOR

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## Table of Contents

<b>List of Abbreviations.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>List of Tables.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Project Background.....	5
2. Evaluation Background, Purpose and Scope .....	5
3. Key Findings .....	6
4. Lessons Learned.....	9
5. Emerging Good Practices .....	9
6. Conclusions and Recommendations.....	10
<b>Project Description and Timeline .....</b>	<b>12</b>
1. The Project Context: .....	12
2. Project Description.....	13
3. Project Stakeholders.....	14
4. Project Theory of Change .....	17
5. Project Timeline.....	18
<b>Evaluation Rationale, Objectives, and Methodology .....</b>	<b>21</b>
1. Background .....	21
2. Evaluation Objectives .....	21
3. Evaluation Scope .....	21
4. Evaluation Methodology .....	22
5. Limitations and Challenges.....	23
<b>Evaluation Analysis, and Interpretation.....</b>	<b>24</b>
1. Relevance.....	24
2. Coherence .....	28
3. Effectiveness.....	30
4. Efficiency .....	35
5. Contribution to Impact .....	36
6. Sustainability .....	39
<b>Learning and Recommendations.....</b>	<b>43</b>
1. Conclusions.....	43
2. Lessons Learned.....	44
2.1 Lessons Learned: .....	44
2.2 Emerging Good Practices: .....	45
3. Key Challenges .....	45
4. Recommendations .....	46
<b>ANNEXES .....</b>	<b>49</b>
1. TOR.....	49
2. Evaluation Matrix.....	63
3. Bibliography .....	68
4. List of Persons Interviewed.....	69
5. Template 4.1: Lessons Learned .....	70
6. Template 4.2: Emerging Good Practices .....	73

## List of Abbreviations

AMA	:	Coalition for Accountability and Integrity
CSO	:	Civil Society Organization
CTP	:	Cash Transfer Program
CWG	:	Cash Working Group
EU	:	European Union
GDPR	:	General Data Protection Regulation
ILO	:	International Labour Organization
IMS	:	Information Management System
JPG	:	Joint Planning Groups
MENA	:	Middle East and North Africa
MoSD	:	Ministry of Social Development
MoU	:	Memorandum of Understanding
NCTP	:	Palestinian National Cash Transfer Programme
OECD/DAC	:	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
OPT	:	Occupied Palestinian Territory
PCPC	:	Participatory Community Planning Committees
PDS	:	Public Distribution System
PMT	:	Proxy Means Testing
PMTF	:	Proxy Means Test Formula
PNCTP	:	Palestinian National Cash Transfer Programme
ROM	:	Results-Oriented Monitoring
SAs	:	Social Allowances
SDG	:	Sustainable Development Goal
SDSS	:	Social Development Sector Strategy
SPCVA TWG	:	Social Protection Cash and Voucher Assistance Thematic Working Group
SRSP	:	Shock-Responsive Social Protection
SWG	:	Social Protection Sector Working Group
ToC	:	Theory of Change
ToR	:	Terms of Reference
TWG	:	Thematic Working Group
UNRWA	:	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
UNSDCF	:	UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNICEF	:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WFP	:	World Food Programme

**List of Tables**

TABLE 1: PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS	13
TABLE 2: PROJECT TIMELINE	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS OF PROJECT RESULTS	32
TABLE 4: RECOMMENDATIONS MATRIX	46

## **Executive Summary**

### **1. Project Background**

The "Strengthening Nexus Coherence and Responsiveness in the Palestinian Social Protection Sector" project, funded by the European Commission (EC), aimed to enhance coherence, inclusivity, and responsiveness in the Palestinian social protection system. This project was led by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in partnership with UNICEF, Oxfam, and the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD). The initiative focused on aligning humanitarian and governmental efforts, adopting rights-based approaches, and developing shock-responsive mechanisms to address vulnerabilities. Key target groups included older persons, individuals with disabilities, and those affected by socio-economic shocks.

### **2. Evaluation Background, Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the "Strengthening Nexus Coherence and Responsiveness in the Palestinian Social Protection Sector Project" commissioned by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The main objectives are to evaluate the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and potential impact of the project to provide actionable recommendations for the design and implementation of similar future programs. This independent final evaluation aims to identify strengths, weaknesses, good practices, and lessons learned, ensuring that stakeholders, including ILO, project implementing partners, and the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) as the project's national partner, received comprehensive insights and feedback.

The evaluation took place over a period between September and November 2024, focusing on data collection activities conducted in October and November 2024. It utilized the standard ILO evaluation framework and the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, with a specific emphasis on integrating gender and other cross-cutting issues important to the ILO. Geographically, the evaluation targeted areas impacted by the project interventions, including regions where social protection initiatives were implemented. The key groups and beneficiaries involved in the evaluation process included project stakeholders, such as ILO, UNICEF, OXFAM, MoSD, and the European Commission, as well as members of the Participatory Community Planning Committees (PCPCs) and local trainees who participated in workshops and training sessions.

The methodology employed a participatory mixed-methods approach with a primarily qualitative assessment, using documentation reviews, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups to gather comprehensive data insights. Triangulation methods ensured objectivity and consistency in the evaluation findings, despite facing challenges such as disrupted data collection efforts due to regional conflicts and stakeholder unavailability. The evaluation's gender-sensitive approach respected local traditions and beliefs, promoting equitable and free participation from both female and male stakeholders.

### 3. Key Findings

**Relevance:** The project's alignment with frameworks like the Palestinian National Social Protection Strategy and the Social Development Sector Strategy emphasized its relevance to local priorities. Overall, the project demonstrated adaptability and relevance to the context and needs in Palestine by aiming at bridging gaps in social protection systems, fostering rights-based approaches, and mobilizing significant funding. The design of the project which emphasized participatory and adaptive approaches aimed at providing a pathway for reducing poverty and enhancing institutional resilience in the OPT, despite contextual limitations. The project addressed socio-economic vulnerabilities in the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT) by aligning with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 1.3, which emphasizes inclusive social protection systems. Operating in a context shaped by conflict, governance challenges, and economic instability, the project aimed to enhance resilience, reduce poverty, and overcome systemic barriers such as fragmented governance and poor coordination. Key initiatives were designed to focus on unifying policies, planning frameworks, and resource distribution to improve service delivery, with particular attention to Gaza and the West Bank. The project integrated gender considerations across its activities, ensuring equal participation and addressing gender-specific challenges within the social protection system. The development of Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) protocols and reactivation of Joint Planning Groups enhanced the system's capacity to manage recurring crises like conflicts and COVID-19. Efforts targeted marginalized populations, including refugees and displaced persons, ensuring recovery initiatives addressed structural vulnerabilities.

In response to the evolving needs in the OPT, the project management supported the introduction of a rights-based cash assistance program, aimed at maintaining the project's relevance. This initiative, funded by €67 million in EU support, benefited over 46,000 individuals. However, political and operational constraints, especially in Gaza, restricted the wider application of this initiative.

To address coordination gaps, and to align with the needs in the ground, the project complemented the Social Protection Sector Working Group (SWG) with an inclusive Thematic Working Group (TWG), enabling better integration of humanitarian and development actors.

**Coherence:** The project was aligned with ILO interventions and regional strategies, addressing the fragmented social protection systems in the OPT. The Shock-Responsive Social Protection Protocol (SRSP) and digital tools like the social registry dashboard improved crisis responsiveness, drawing on lessons from initiatives in Jordan and Lebanon. However, the Gaza war revealed significant challenges, such as governance fragmentation, logistical disruptions, and limited flexibility in emergency cash transfer coordination. The project supported the Social Development Sector Strategy (SDSS) by applying gender-sensitive, rights-based approaches, such as providing social allowances for older persons and individuals with disabilities. Awareness campaigns focused on women and marginalized groups, though systemic barriers, including limited childcare and income opportunities, continued to limit impact. Operational constraints during the Gaza war further hindered these efforts.

To ensure coherence with other relevant interventions and donors (e.g., the World Bank project and CWG), the project engaged with the Social Protection Cash and Voucher Assistance Technical Working Group (SPCVA TWG), which aimed to harmonize assistance with national programs.

The strengthened coordination through the SPCVA TWG should lead to streamlined aid delivery, minimized duplication, and fostered collaboration between humanitarian, development, and government actors. Moreover, the development of a draft Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) Protocol will allow for real-time crisis response, proving invaluable during the October 2023 emergency in Gaza. However, it should be noted that despite the achieved progress, trust deficits and fragmented data-sharing systems still exist and will undermine an effective coordination.

**Effectiveness:** The project strengthened social protection in the OPT by enhancing rights-based measures, nexus coherence, and responsiveness. Despite challenges, such as the October 7 crisis in Gaza, over 80% of planned outputs were delivered, showcasing adaptability and resilience.

Key achievements include the rollout of the first-ever rights-based social allowances for older persons and individuals with severe disabilities, benefiting over 30,000 individuals in the West Bank. Technical support from the ILO and alignment with SDG Target 1.3 were instrumental in this success. Administrative tools, such as digitized payment mechanisms, and the alignment of the Ministry's Information Management System with humanitarian actors further improved effectiveness.

The project developed a national Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) Protocol and strengthened vertical coordination through capacity-building efforts. Over 50 local officials and CSO representatives were trained in governance and social protection, while awareness campaigns engaged over 550 internally displaced persons in Gaza, addressing transparency and corruption issues.

Collaborative efforts were pivotal, with the SPCVA TWG facilitating dialogue and alignment between humanitarian and development actors. Stakeholders praised partnerships that informed policy changes and fostered programmatic coherence. While challenges in data sharing and coordination remain, the project established a solid foundation for a more inclusive and responsive social protection system in the OPT.

Social Allowances (SAs) were introduced through a Cabinet decision in August 2023, and receive funding support from the EU PEGASE programme, that fully funds the NCTP as of now. The first 2 quarters payments of SAs were disbursed retroactively in August 2024, and SAs now represent the core components of the NCTP, along with a poverty-based targeting component.

**Efficiency:** The project demonstrated efficiency by adapting to challenging political and operational contexts while maximizing limited resources. Key achievements included supporting vulnerable populations, especially the elderly, and strengthening public distribution

systems (PDS). Utilizing existing capacities, such as UNICEF-certified trainers and local consultants familiar with the Palestinian context, reduced costs and enhanced intervention relevance.

Collaborative partnerships were central to the project's success. Transparent communication between UNICEF, ILO, and local organizations like AMAN ensured effective coordination, particularly in Gaza, where AMAN's expertise facilitated effective capacity-building initiatives. ILO's neutral role was praised for fostering alignment among diverse stakeholders and avoiding conflicts of interest. Cost-effectiveness was further achieved through innovative approaches, including leveraging in-house expertise and implementing digital payment systems, which streamlined assistance delivery and reduced administrative overhead.

Operational adaptability during crises, such as the October 7 Gaza crisis, allowed the project to maintain momentum. Remote consultations enabled the timely development of critical outputs like the Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) Protocol. Regular meetings ensured swift issue resolution, while specialized consultants developed tools, such as integrated dashboards, to improve data management.

Despite successes, challenges in coordination between MoSD offices and fiscal constraints hindered some activities. Lessons emphasize the value of integrated systems, adaptive management, and leveraging partnerships to enhance efficiency and resilience.

**Contribution to Impact:** The project made significant progress in advancing rights-based social protection in the OPT, benefiting over 30,000 vulnerable individuals, including older persons and those with severe disabilities, through monthly allowances. This initiative, supported by the ILO, enhanced the credibility of the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) and aligned with SDG goals for sustainable impact. Capacity-building for local governance structures like Community Protection Committees (CPCs) and Planning and Community Partnership Councils (PCPCs) strengthened crisis management and grassroots representation, contributing to civil stability in crisis-prone areas. Technological upgrades, such as the MoSD Information Management System, increased transparency and supported data-driven decision-making. Community outreach campaigns, like "Social Justice in Aid Distribution," reached 550 displaced individuals in Gaza, promoting equity and trust. Despite challenges like legal barriers to data sharing, the project laid a strong foundation for emergency responses and long-term monitoring, ensuring sustainability and resilience in the social protection system.

**Sustainability:** The project institutionalized rights-based social protection measures, significantly advancing systemic resilience and sustainability in Palestine. The integration of social allowances into the Ministry of Social Development's (MoSD) policies has created a sustainable support system benefiting over 30,000 individuals, including older persons and those with severe disabilities. A database covering 342,000 families was established, enhancing aid distribution and system management. This database will support the institutionalization of social protection measures and enhance the decision-making ability of the MoSD, thereby strengthening its role in the sector.



Local governance structures, such as Participatory Community Planning Committees (PCPCs), were strengthened to ensure effective crisis management. These committees played a vital role during the October 2023 Gaza conflict, implementing emergency response plans while minimizing dependency on specific actors. However, formalizing PCPC structures remains critical for long-term functionality.

Extensive capacity-building initiatives trained senior officials and PCPC members, enhancing technical and resource mobilization skills for sustainable social protection delivery. Platforms like the Social Protection Cash and Voucher Assistance Thematic Working Group (SPCVA TWG) improved coordination among stakeholders, enabling scalable models for systemic integration.

The project emphasized financial sustainability, aligning social allowances with international standards and developing a costed roadmap for the Palestinian National Cash Transfer Programme (PNCTP). Lessons from the Gaza war showcased the project's adaptability and resilience, underscoring its potential for longer term effect. An upcoming EU-funded Phase 2 project will build on these achievements, fostering coherence and sustainability in Palestine's social protection framework.

#### **4. Lessons Learned**

1. **Flexibility and Adaptiveness** – Integrating flexibility into project design is essential for responding to unexpected challenges. Adaptive management approaches, such as annual **Theory of Change** workshops, help reassess and adjust the project's focus.
2. **Longer Implementation Period** – A two-year project duration was insufficient to accommodate necessary adaptations and achieve sustainable impact. Extending future projects to **three years** would allow stakeholders to adapt and implement changes more effectively.
3. **Stakeholder Engagement** – Ensuring **meaningful participation** from government and social partners strengthens project ownership and long-term sustainability.

#### **5. Emerging Good Practices**

1. **Dialogue and Relationship-Building** – Conducting **participatory workshops** and developing a **shared vision** across sectors enhanced coordination and collaboration.
2. **Structured Coordination** – The **Social Protection Cash and Voucher Assistance Thematic Working Group (SPCVA TWG)** proved the effectiveness of structured coordination mechanisms, serving as a model for future programs.
3. **Human Capacity Building** – **Tailored training and technical assistance** significantly improved the **Ministry of Social Development (MoSD)**'s ability to manage increased workloads and enhance coordination.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The following is a summary of the evaluation conclusions:

**Relevance:** The project aligned with SDG Target 1.3, addressing systemic vulnerabilities in the OPT's social protection system. Its humanitarian-development nexus approach improved stakeholder coordination and service delivery. However, gaps in institutional ownership, coordination, and private sector engagement were identified.

**Coherence:** The project supported ILO regional strategies and national policies, introducing Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) Protocols and digital tools to enhance crisis response. However, challenges during the Gaza war included fragmented governance, logistical delays, and trust deficits.

**Effectiveness:** Over 80% of planned outputs were achieved, benefiting 30,000+ vulnerable individuals. The project strengthened nexus coherence, advanced NCTP reform, and introduced rights-based social allowances. SPCVA TWG improved collaboration despite data-sharing barriers.

**Efficiency:** The project optimized resources using UNICEF-certified trainers and local consultants, reducing costs while ensuring relevance. Strategic partnerships (ILO, UNICEF, AMAN) expanded impact, while digital payment systems improved delivery. However, coordination gaps between MoSD offices and Oxfam required improvement.

**Contribution to Impact:** The project institutionalized rights-based social allowances and strengthened MoSD's leadership. It developed SRSP Protocols for emergency response and enhanced PCPCs and grassroots resilience. Outreach efforts engaged 550 displaced individuals, fostering social justice and trust.

**Sustainability:** Sustainability was ensured by integrating rights-based social protection into MoSD's 2024-2029 strategy, benefiting 30,000+ individuals. The EU-supported Phase Two project will build on these achievements, ensuring long-term resilience and adaptability.

Based on the evaluation findings, several key recommendations have been proposed, including:

1. Integrate adaptive management into project activities, including annual Theory of Change workshops, to reassess and adjust priorities.
2. Extend project timelines from two years to three years to allow adequate time for implementation and sustainability.
3. Institutionalize platforms like the SPCVA TWG for broad representation and alignment, ensuring resilience and coordination.
4. Invest in MoSD technical and IT infrastructure to improve the social registry and data management capabilities.
5. Provide ongoing training on emergency preparedness and shock response for national and local actors, informed by needs assessments.
6. Define clear roles for PCPCs, enhance coordination with MoSD, and invest in capacity-building to strengthen their effectiveness.
7. Facilitate the data-sharing agreements between MoSD and humanitarian actors, ensuring compliance with privacy standards.
8. Identify mechanisms to align external funding with national priorities to sustain social protection systems.

9. Strengthen MoSD, leadership in coordination platforms and align strategies with broader priorities.
10. Further refine and institutionalize the emergency and shock response protocols, incorporating follow-up actions.
11. Expand data-sharing agreements with agencies like WFP and OCHA, ensuring political and senior-level intervention.

## **Project Description and Timeline**

### **1. The Project Context:**

Social protection in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) is a critical mechanism for addressing the complex socio-economic challenges faced by its population, which remains highly affected by the ongoing occupation, territorial fragmentation, and recurrent conflicts. As of 2024, the OPT is home to approximately 5.2 million people, with a significant portion residing in Gaza, a region heavily impacted by poverty, unemployment, and humanitarian crises due to the ongoing blockade and frequent escalations of violence. In this context, social protection serves as an essential tool for mitigating the negative impacts of poverty, inequality, and crises, ensuring that individuals have access to basic rights and services throughout their life cycle.

According to the review of the project documents as well as interviews with stakeholders, the following are the key challenges in social protection filed in the OPT:

1. **Limited Contributory Social Insurance:** The coverage of contributory social insurance in the OPT remains minimal, with only 5% of households benefiting from pensions. Despite this, pensions are effective in reducing poverty among recipients and redistributing income within households, helping to alleviate some of the economic burdens faced by Palestinian families. However, the overall coverage is insufficient to meet the needs of the broader population.
2. **Widespread Social Assistance Coverage:** Around 40% of households in the OPT receive some form of social protection, with higher coverage rates in Gaza, where 70% of households benefit from non-governmental aid and 35% from government assistance. While social assistance programs play a vital role in providing financial relief, their adequacy remains limited. Government transfers cover only 15% of the individual poverty line on average, with larger families receiving even less per capita. This inadequacy highlights the need for more substantial and targeted interventions to meet the basic needs of vulnerable households.
3. **Dependence on External Financing:** The social protection system in the OPT is heavily dependent on external funding, which accounts for 53% to 58% of financing between 2015 and 2018. However, this reliance on external donors creates vulnerabilities, especially as international funding is often unpredictable and subject to shifts in political and humanitarian priorities. Additionally, allocations to social protection have decreased by 25%, leading to reduced per-beneficiary expenditures, which questions the sustainability and effectiveness of current interventions.
4. **Coordination Challenges Among Stakeholders:** A significant challenge in the OPT's social protection system is the fragmentation and lack of coordination between various actors, including government agencies, international organizations, and NGOs. In Gaza (prior to the war), for instance, 32% of households receive more than one type of social assistance, leading to overlapping benefits and inefficiencies. This fragmentation results in suboptimal use of available resources and hampers the ability of different

programs to achieve greater impact. Improved coordination among stakeholders, including better alignment of government and non-governmental programs, is essential to ensure that resources are effectively mobilized and used to maximize benefits for the most vulnerable groups.

## **2. Project Description**

The "Strengthening Nexus Coherence and Responsiveness in the Palestinian Social Protection Sector" project aims to improve coherence, inclusivity, and responsiveness within Palestine's social protection system. With a budget of EUR 1.5 million, it is funded by the Office of the European Union Representative (West Bank and Gaza Strip, UNRWA) and implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in collaboration with UNICEF, Oxfam, and the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD). The project focuses on aligning humanitarian and governmental efforts, developing shock-responsive mechanisms, and adopting rights-based approaches to benefit vulnerable groups, including older persons, individuals with disabilities, and those impacted by crises.

The project is divided into two components:

1. Enhancing rights-based and cross-nexus programmatic coherence in social protection (Component 1: Cross-Nexus Coherence).
2. Strengthening the responsiveness of the social protection system (Component 2: Responsiveness).

The project's design evolved to adapt to changing political and social contexts. Initially, the project aimed to support the Palestinian Social Security Law, with anticipated funding from Sweden and Spain. However, public demonstrations against the law led to its withdrawal, prompting a shift in focus. Stakeholders, including the EU and MoSD, worked to reorient the project toward the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (Triple Nexus) approach. These consultations marked MoSD's growing ownership of the development process and its leadership in shaping social protection systems.

The inception phase, starting in mid-2021, faced delays due to coordination and external challenges. Efforts during this phase included validating the project's framework and refining the theory of change. However, COVID-19 restrictions, coordination difficulties among stakeholders, and complications with the Ministry of Finance delayed progress. In response, the EU and MoSD prioritized integrating the Triple Nexus approach, extending the inception review period for further analysis and engagement. By April 2022, key revisions were approved by the Project Steering Committee, enabling the transition to full implementation.

Delays in implementation prompted a Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) exercise to identify solutions. In December 2022, the EU commissioned a ROM exercise to analyze the delays and provide actionable recommendations. Initially planned for two years, the project faced disruptions, including the October 2023 war on Gaza, which necessitated a no-cost extension, pushing the completion date to August 2024.

The project encountered significant challenges related to political instability, fiscal crises, and stakeholder coordination. Security issues and political division in Gaza, and the recent war on Gaza after October 2023 created barriers to implementation. Recurrent fiscal crises and reliance on external funding delayed cash transfers and hindered program sustainability. Fragmentation among stakeholders complicated efforts to streamline processes, while challenges in data sharing and limited technical capacity impeded the creation of a unified social registry. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated poverty and vulnerabilities, further straining existing systems.

Stakeholder involvement and adaptive measures helped address these challenges and achieve progress. The ILO's leadership during crises facilitated the project's adaptability and resilience. The SPCVA TWG promoted harmonization of cash transfer programs, reducing inefficiencies. Early EU engagement with MoSD enabled the transition to Nexus-based approaches despite initial setbacks. Innovations like a digital payment system and social registry dashboard improved coordination and accessibility, while rights-based social allowances demonstrated the potential for scaling inclusive initiatives. Capacity-building efforts empowered local actors, such as PCPCs, to lead community-level interventions and contribute to national strategies. These combined efforts laid the foundation for a more inclusive and responsive social protection system.

### 3. Project Stakeholders

The table below outlines the various stakeholders involved in the project and their respective roles:

Table 1: Project Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Role in the Project
<b>Ministry of Social Development (MoSD)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lead agency responsible for overseeing social protection initiatives in the OPT.</li> <li>- Manages Palestinian National Cash Transfer Programme (PNCTP).</li> <li>- Coordinates with humanitarian organizations for outreach and beneficiary identification.</li> <li>- Partners with ILO for implementing the project activities related to social protection reforms and ensuring alignment with national strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>International Labour Organization (ILO)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Main implementing partner.</li> <li>- Provides technical expertise in social protection policies and governance.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develops frameworks for cross-nexus social protection integration.</li> <li>- Guides capacity-building of local actors and supports coordination between humanitarian and development sectors.</li> </ul>
<b>UNICEF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supports the design and implementation of the project, primarily related to Component 2.</li> <li>- Works on improving social protection for vulnerable children, especially in crisis situations.</li> </ul>
<b>Oxfam</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supports the design and implementation of project activities related to Gaza, awareness campaigns, and activation and training PCPCs.</li> </ul> <p>Focuses on providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations, particularly in crisis-affected areas such as Gaza.</p>
<b>United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Works on building resilience in communities through cash transfers, livelihood support, and food security programs.</li> <li>- Partners with MoSD and other agencies to enhance the inclusivity and accessibility of social protection systems, particularly for marginalized groups.</li> <li>- Promotes coordination among humanitarian and development actors to ensure that social protection interventions are more integrated and effective.</li> </ul>
<b>World Food Programme (WFP)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delivers food assistance and supports nutrition-focused social protection.</li> <li>- Works alongside local governments and MoSD in crisis response efforts, such as providing food to the most vulnerable households.</li> </ul>
<b>World Bank</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides financial support and guidance for improving social protection systems.</li> <li>- Partners in the Social Protection Enhancement Project (SPEP) to establish a unified social assistance system (e.g., Social Registry and Case Management).</li> </ul>
<b>European Union (EU)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial contributor (EUR 1.5 million) to the project.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supports the implementation of the social protection reform agenda in Palestine.</li> <li>- Encourages alignment of social protection policies with European development priorities.</li> </ul>
<b>Local Government Units (LGUs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborate in the implementation of social protection programs at the local level.</li> <li>- Manage the distribution of social protection benefits and ensure local coordination.</li> <li>- Facilitate outreach and support for vulnerable populations in communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Participatory Community Planning Committees (PCPCs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key actors in local-level coordination, especially in crisis contexts like Gaza.</li> <li>- Receive capacity-building and technical assistance from the project to activate their role and improve their involvement in shock response.- Facilitate community engagement and ensure local needs are incorporated into social protection responses.</li> <li>- Support the identification and distribution of aid, coordinating between local authorities, NGOs, and beneficiaries during emergencies.</li> </ul>
<b>Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide complementary social protection programs, particularly in Gaza.</li> <li>- Support advocacy, monitoring, and outreach activities, especially among marginalized groups.</li> <li>- Help to mobilize and distribute aid, particularly in times of crisis.</li> </ul>
<b>Private Sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contributes to emergency funding and humanitarian responses (e.g., donations, in-kind support).</li> <li>- May be involved in implementing programs for economic resilience and job creation.</li> </ul>
<b>UNDP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides technical support and facilitates dialogue between government, NGOs, and donors.</li> <li>- Supports the development of frameworks for integrating social protection into broader development goals.</li> </ul>



<b>Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engage in community outreach, awareness campaigns, and advocacy for social protection.</li> <li>- Represent vulnerable groups in consultations and policy dialogue.</li> </ul>
<b>Palestinian Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides data for monitoring and assessing poverty, vulnerability, and the effectiveness of social protection interventions.</li> <li>- Supports the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data.</li> </ul>
<b>Humanitarian Coordination Structure (Protection Cluster)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordinates humanitarian responses to ensure social protection needs are addressed during crises.</li> <li>- Ensures coordination of actors within the humanitarian space.</li> </ul>

#### 4. Project Theory of Change

The project's Theory of Change (ToC) addresses systemic fragmentation in the Palestinian social protection sector by enhancing coherence, responsiveness, and adopting a rights-based approach. Aligned with the Social Development Sector Strategy (SDSS) and SDG Target 1.3, it aims to create inclusive social protection systems covering vulnerable populations. The ToC emphasizes two main components. First, it seeks programmatic coherence by aligning policies, financing, and designs among humanitarian and governmental actors, focusing on improving coordination, integrating cash assistance, and streamlining administrative tools. Second, it promotes shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) by developing decentralized systems to effectively respond during crises, enhancing data sharing through social registries, and building local actors' crisis response capacities. Ultimately, the ToC aspires to create a cohesive and responsive system that benefits vulnerable populations in both regular times and crises.

The project focuses on strengthening coherence, responsiveness, and collaboration in the Palestinian social protection system. It includes four strategic areas of focus. The first is Rights-Based and Nexus Programmatic Coherence, which aims to integrate humanitarian and development efforts into a unified framework. This involves creating mechanisms for dialogue among actors, formalizing cooperation agreements, and standardizing program administration. The second is Shock-Responsive Social Protection, enhancing the system's ability to plan and manage responses to shocks by adopting protocols, building civil servants' capacities, and establishing vertical coordination bodies. The third area is Coordination and Data Management, improving collaboration among stakeholders and enhancing real-time data sharing through tools like a social registry. The fourth area focuses on Capacity Building and Awareness, targeting training, governance, and awareness campaigns for effective social protection administration.

The inception phase identified critical gaps and introduced refinements to address operational and emerging needs. The COVID-19 pandemic and stakeholder consultations highlighted weaknesses in crisis responsiveness and coordination. Key adjustments included prioritizing the development of a Shock-Responsive Social Protection Protocol (SRSP) to institutionalize rapid crisis response and integrate decentralized bodies like Planning and Community Partnership Councils (PCPCs) into the framework. Local-level coordination was strengthened through standardized protocols clarifying the roles of central and local actors. Digitalization efforts were accelerated by introducing a unified social registry dashboard and digital payment systems to enhance data access and efficiency. Finally, harmonizing cash and in-kind transfer programs was prioritized to minimize duplication and inefficiencies. These changes were informed by lessons from the pandemic, aiming to institutionalize best practices, align stakeholders, and address systemic inefficiencies.

## 5. Project Timeline

The table below provides a detailed timeline for the project, *"Strengthening Nexus Coherence and Responsiveness in the Palestinian Social Protection Sector,"* highlighting key phases and milestones. The timeline captures the project's evolution from its launch to its conclusion, including the strategic planning during the inception phase, the establishment of coordination mechanisms, and the implementation of adaptive measures during crises, such as the Gaza war. It also underscores the final rollout of rights-based social allowances, illustrating the project's efforts to deliver meaningful social protection outcomes<sup>1</sup>.

**Table 2: Project timeline**

Date	Phase	Details
<b>Jul-21</b>	Project Start	The project officially commenced, focusing on enhancing programmatic coherence and responsiveness in the Palestinian social protection sector. Initial activities included consultations with stakeholders and the formation of a Project Steering Committee (PSC).
<b>July 2021 - May 2022</b>	Inception Phase	Extended consultations with the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), UNICEF, and Oxfam led to the development and refinement of the project's theory of change, log frame, and overall strategy. The inception report was approved on 9th May 2022, setting the foundation for project activities.

<sup>1</sup> The timeline was developed through a thorough review of project documents and outputs

<b>June 2022 - September 2022</b>	Implementation Phase Initiation	Activities picked up pace post-approval of the inception report. The Social Protection Cash and Voucher Assistance Thematic Working Group (SPCVA TWG) was established in September 2022. This group began fostering collaboration between humanitarian and government actors.
<b>Dec-22</b>	Key Developments in Social Protection Coherence	A no-cost extension of the project was agreed upon, extending its duration until March 2024. SPCVA TWG began to function effectively with workstreams focusing on routine social protection, shocks, and referrals.
<b>Dec-22</b>		EU commissioned a ROM exercise to analyze the delays and provide actionable recommendations.
<b>January - March 2023</b>	Shock-Responsive Measures and Training	The first capacity-building initiatives for Planning and Community Partnership Councils (PCPCs) were conducted. Revised Terms of Reference (TORs) for PCPCs were endorsed, enabling their formal establishment in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
<b>Oct-23</b>	Crisis Response and Adaptations	The Gaza war significantly disrupted project activities. Despite these challenges, the project adapted by strengthening emergency response mechanisms, including rapid-response meetings between MoSD and PCPC representatives.
<b>January 2024 - August 2024</b>	Project Extension and Final Activities	Another no-cost extension was granted to extend the project until August 2024. The rollout of rights-based social allowances for older persons and persons with severe disabilities was achieved in August 2024. SPCVA TWG workstreams continued addressing issues like data sharing and cash transfer adequacy.

<b>Aug-24</b>	Project Conclusion	The project officially ended. Achievements included the development of a Shock-Responsive Social Protection Protocol, capacity building for MoSD and local actors, and the rollout of rights-based allowances. Lessons learned from the project were documented to inform future initiatives.
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# Evaluation Rationale, Objectives, and Methodology

## 1. Background

The International Labour Organization (ILO) commissioned this external consultancy to conduct the evaluation of the "Strengthening Nexus Coherence and Responsiveness in the Palestinian Social Protection Sector Project" (hereafter referred to as "the project"). The evaluation process was undertaken between September and November 2024. This report represents the final deliverable of the evaluation, consolidating all fieldwork and data collection activities carried out by the evaluation team during October and November 2024. It provides detailed findings and recommendations for the ILO, project implementing partners, and the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), as the project's national partner.

The report is structured as follows: it includes an executive summary; the evaluation rationale, purpose, objectives, and methodology employed; a description of the project and its context; evaluation findings; lessons learned; challenges and recommendations. The annexes provide supplementary materials, including the evaluation matrix, list of documents consulted references, and a list of persons met.

## 2. Evaluation Objectives

The independent final evaluation, required under the ILO evaluation policy, assessed the extent to which the project achieved its intended results, identified key challenges, and captured lessons learned. The main objectives included:

- Evaluating the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and potential impact of the project.
- Providing actionable recommendations for the design and implementation of similar future programs.
- Identifying strengths, weaknesses, good practices, and lessons learned.

## 3. Evaluation Scope

The evaluation assessed the program using the standard ILO evaluation framework and the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, with a focus on integrating gender and other cross-cutting issues important to the ILO. The evaluation questions were structured around the OECD/DAC criteria, which included:

- **Relevance:** The evaluation examined whether changes in the project's context affected its original assumptions and whether the project's design was suited to address the identified problems. It also assessed if the objectives and design were relevant given the political, economic, and financial environment.
- **Coherence:** The evaluation analyzed the alignment of the project with other social protection interventions in the country and region, as well as its compatibility and integration with these initiatives.

- **Effectiveness:** The assessment focused on the project's performance in achieving its outcomes and outputs and its contribution to the ILO's Programme & Budget, Country Programme Outcomes, and broader Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **Efficiency:** The evaluation reviewed the effective use of resources in terms of cost, time, and management to achieve the expected outcomes.
- **Contribution to Impact:** It explored the project's potential to contribute to its intended long-term impact.
- **Sustainability:** The evaluation considered whether the project's results were likely to be sustained over time.

The evaluation applied a participatory mixed-methods approach with a primarily qualitative assessment, utilizing documentation reviews and stakeholder consultations to capture the scope of the project's activities and outputs. Given the limited time frame and the need to gather insights from multiple stakeholders, efficiency in collecting relevant information was prioritized. Triangulation methods were employed to corroborate findings and observations from diverse sources, including desktop reviews, secondary data, interviews, and focus groups, ensuring objectivity. Stakeholder engagement was encouraged through an interactive and iterative self-evaluation process, promoting mutual learning.

The methodology was designed to be gender sensitive. Data collection strategies, tools, and analyses respected local traditions and beliefs, ensured equitable and free participation of both female and male stakeholders, and evaluated findings through culturally and gender-sensitive lenses.

The evaluation questions outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR) were aligned with the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria. These questions were crucial for connecting the project's logic and context with the ILO's and international standards for project evaluations while addressing key evaluation concerns. The Evaluation Matrix detailed the criteria, relevant questions, and the tools used during the evaluation process. The complete Evaluation Matrix is included in Annex 7.1.

#### 4. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation used the **ILO evaluation framework** and the **OECD/DAC evaluation criteria**, with tools including:

1. **Desk Review:** A thorough analysis of project documentation, including progress reports, the ProDoc, and technical deliverables, was conducted. A comprehensive list of reviewed documents is included in Annex 7.2.
2. **Semi-structured Interviews:** Interviews were held with key stakeholders, including representatives from project implementing partners (ILO, UNICEF, OXFAM), the national partner (MoSD), the donor (e.g., the European Commission), and other collaborators. The list of consulted individuals is provided in Annex 7.3.
3. **Focus Groups:** Despite repeated attempts by the evaluator to organize focus group discussions with project beneficiaries and participants—such as members of the

Participatory Community Planning Committees (PCPCs) and trainees—it was not possible to access these beneficiaries. This was primarily due to the inability of the MoSD to coordinate the focus groups within the limited timeframe of the project.

4. **Triangulation of Findings:** Insights gathered from multiple sources, including the desk review and interviews, were cross verified to ensure objectivity, consistency, and accuracy in the evaluation findings.

## 5. Limitations and Challenges

The evaluation process faced several limitations that hindered data collection efforts and limited access to key project participants and sites.

- **Stakeholder Availability:** Many partners were unavailable during the evaluation period due to restrictions, relocation, or lack of response, despite multiple attempts to reach them.
- **Communication Gaps:** The evaluator was unable to meet with members of the Planning and Community Partnership Councils (PCPCs) and local participants of workshops and training sessions due to the MoSD's bureaucratic delays and delay in facilitating communication between the evaluator and these groups.
- **Impact of the Gaza and Lebanon War:** The situation in Gaza and Lebanon disrupted data collection efforts from beneficiaries and participants especially in Gaza and impacted the overall atmosphere for data collection. It also shifted the priorities of project stakeholders, making it challenging to arrange meetings and gather input.

## Evaluation Analysis, and Interpretation

This chapter presents the evaluation findings, based on data collected and validated in line with the established evaluation methodology. Structured to align with the Terms of Reference (ToR) and the evaluation design matrix, the chapter is organized according to the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria.

### 1. Relevance

*How did the project contribute to the ILO's Programme & Budget 2020-2021 and 2022-2023, Country Programme Outcomes, and United Nations Sustainable Development Framework 2020-2024, and the SDGs?*

**The project aligned with global frameworks but required adaptability to navigate shifting priorities due to contextual challenges, such as the Gaza war.** It supported international frameworks, including SDG Target 1.3 and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2020-2024, by focusing on coherence, inclusivity, and responsiveness. Stakeholders acknowledged the development of the MoSD's 2024-2029 strategy as a key milestone that strengthened long-term strategic capacity. However, the Gaza war exposed weaknesses in emergency response mechanisms, particularly in addressing the immediate needs of displaced populations. The limitations of the existing Social Protection Sector Working Group (SWG) in coordinating humanitarian and development actors further underscored the need for adaptive approaches.

**The project has contributed in advancing the ILO's Programme and Budget objectives for 2020–2021 and 2022–2023 by strengthening social protection systems and promoting inclusive policies.** Through its efforts to institutionalize social protection measures within the MoSD and integrate social allowances into national policies, the project has directly contributed to the ILO's strategic priority of achieving comprehensive and sustainable social protection for all. In the 2020–2021 biennium, the ILO emphasized expanding social protection coverage, a goal that the project supported by enhancing MoSD's capacity to design and implement effective policies. By establishing governance frameworks and coordination mechanisms, the project also helped lay the foundation for long-term, shock-responsive social protection systems. In the 2022–2023 biennium, the ILO placed a stronger focus on gender equality, inclusion, and resilience-building within social protection programs. The project's efforts to provide sustainable support to over 30,000 vulnerable individuals, including older persons and those with disabilities, aligned with these priorities by ensuring that social protection systems were not only comprehensive but also inclusive. Additionally, the project's role in fostering coordination among humanitarian and governmental actors reinforced the ILO's broader agenda of promoting coherence between social protection policies and economic development strategies. Through these contributions, the project has effectively supported the ILO's mission of expanding social security, enhancing institutional capacities, and ensuring that social protection mechanisms are resilient, inclusive, and aligned with global labor standards.



**The project directly addressed the socio-economic vulnerabilities in the OPT by responding to systemic challenges and aligning with SDG Target 1.3.** The project was highly relevant to the OPT's unique and complex socio-economic context, where decades of conflict, occupation, and governance challenges have created widespread vulnerability. By aligning with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 1.3—to establish inclusive and nationally appropriate social protection systems—the project addressed the urgent need for a framework to strengthen resilience and reduce poverty in a fragile and fragmented environment.

**The project integrated humanitarian and development frameworks to address immediate and long-term goals.** Its rights-based approach offered a transformative model for long-term resilience, addressing aid dependency and fragmented systems in the OPT. The project ensured immediate relief for vulnerable populations while laying the foundation for robust social protection initiatives aligned with SDG Target 1.3.

*How well was the project designed to address relevant priorities and needs of constituents, and have the goals been clearly specified?*

**The project's focus on cross-nexus coherence addressed governance fragmentation and improved coordination between key stakeholders.** The **Cross-Nexus Coherence** component directly responded to the fragmentation of governance and services in the OPT, where overlapping mandates between governmental and humanitarian actors often led to inefficiencies. The project's efforts to harmonize policy, planning, and budgeting frameworks among social protection stakeholders were crucial in addressing these gaps. By aligning humanitarian and development interventions, particularly in the West Bank and Gaza, the project supported the Social Development Sector Strategy (SDSS) and improved resource allocation and service delivery. This alignment is aligned with the SDSS-identified need to reduce Gaza's heavy dependence on external aid (nearly 80%) and overcomes systemic challenges such as duplication of efforts and weak inter-agency coordination, ensuring more effective and targeted support for vulnerable populations. The project focused on macro-level policy development and coordination, rather than direct support to individual workers and employers at the micro level.

**The project enhanced the responsiveness of social protection systems to address recurring crises and shocks in Gaza and the West Bank.** In a region marked by recurring shocks, such as COVID-19, the ongoing blockade, and frequent conflicts, the project's focus on responsiveness was particularly relevant. The development of Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) protocols, the reactivation of Joint Planning Groups (JPGs), and capacity-building efforts helped stakeholders anticipate and address crises more effectively. These measures bridged gaps between national policies and local implementation, ensuring that vulnerable groups, such as those impacted by conflict-induced displacement or economic shocks, were prioritized in emergency responses.

**The project effectively addressed the complex needs of the Palestinian population while aligning with national and donor priorities, emphasizing its relevance to local contexts**

**and capacities.** Supporting key frameworks like the Palestinian National Social Protection Strategy and the Social Development Sector Strategy (SDSS), the project aimed to establish a social protection floor for vulnerable groups, such as older persons, children, and individuals with disabilities. The project management aimed to realign the project to address the actual needs and opportunities that emerged during implementation, such as the introduction of first-ever rights based social allowances (SAs), which benefited over 30,000 individuals in the West Bank. However, operational and political barriers limited the project's reach in Gaza, leaving critical gaps in support for the most vulnerable, reflecting broader structural challenges within the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD). SAs are now the major component of the NCTP that was previously fully based on poverty targeting, with a smaller poverty targeted component still remain. Stakeholders emphasized the ministry's limited resources, fragmented coordination with humanitarian actors, and internal debates over representation between Gaza and Ramallah.

**The participatory and adaptive approach ensured the project's relevance to local needs and institutional capacities but highlighted gaps in ownership and institutional memory.** Stakeholder consultations confirmed that project outputs, including protocols and policy papers, were developed in close collaboration with the MoSD. The training of MoSD staff on the Transform tool was tailored to align with local contexts, showcasing the project's adaptability. However, the rotation of key MoSD staff following the project's design phase resulted in gaps in institutional memory, causing delays in implementation as the project team had to reengage and secure the new staff's buy-in to the project's design and scope. ILO's subsequent efforts to re-engage with new ministry staff were critical in regaining institutional ownership and aligning the project with evolving national priorities.

**The project's ability to adapt to the dynamic humanitarian and development context in Palestine was a cornerstone for affirming its relevance** The delayed inception phase allowed for critical adjustments, such as replacing the SWG with the more inclusive Thematic Working Group (TWG), which facilitated enhanced coordination between humanitarian and development actors. This expanded mechanism included 30-35 agencies and enabled improved data sharing, planning, and operationalization of the humanitarian-development-peace Nexus approach, addressing gaps in coordination and fostering more responsive interventions.

**Key technical achievements demonstrated the project's relevance in addressing systemic gaps in social protection.** The project supported the introduction of social allowances for older persons and individuals with disabilities. This effort mobilized €67 million in additional EU funding, benefiting over 46,000 individuals. Stakeholders recognized this rights-based approach as a pivotal step in addressing persistent gaps in social protection, ensuring that interventions were contextually relevant and aligned with both local and donor priorities.

**Capacity building and enhanced coordination mechanisms contributed to the project's alignment with partners' capacities and needs.** Training activities for MoSD civil servants on shock-responsive planning and risk analysis, alongside the development of the TWG, highlighted the project's commitment to aligning with local capacities and priorities. The participatory design process also promoted stronger intra-governmental collaboration,

addressing systemic barriers to effective social protection delivery and ensuring alignment with the MoSD's rights-based vision.

**The project flexible design aimed at addressing systemic gaps and mobilizing resources for social protection.** During the inception phase, the project assessed the limitations in the current social assistance targeting framework and advocated for a human rights-based approach to cash assistance. This advocacy led to €67 million in EU funding to provide cash assistance to 27,000 individuals with severe disabilities and 19,000 older persons starting in 2024. Stakeholders recognized this as a critical step in aligning interventions with the needs of marginalized populations and improving service delivery.

*How do the project's objectives and interventions address the specific needs and priorities of the target population, especially the most vulnerable groups?*

**The project's emphasis on recovery efforts in Gaza addressed the unique vulnerabilities of marginalized populations.** In the aftermath of conflicts that devastated Gaza's infrastructure and essential services, the project's targeted approach ensured that marginalized groups, including refugees and those displaced by conflict, were not overlooked. By promoting recovery efforts that addressed structural barriers, such as limited access to livelihoods and essential services, the project directly aligned with the OPT's critical needs for sustainable recovery and systemic change.

**The project directly addressed the needs of vulnerable groups through tailored interventions.** SRSP protocols and capacity-building measures prioritized those affected by conflict-induced displacement and economic shocks. In Gaza, recovery efforts targeted marginalized groups, ensuring structural barriers like access to livelihoods and essential services were addressed.

**The project ensured inclusion of vulnerable populations through significant financial mobilization.** Advocacy efforts secured €67 million in EU funding, benefiting 27,000 individuals with disabilities and 19,000 older persons, addressing persistent social protection gaps and aligning interventions with the needs of marginalized populations.

*Were the ToC of the project and approaches and strategies/assumptions relevant to achieve intended results?*

The assessment to the project ToC pointed the strengths and areas for improvement of the ToC of future interventions:

**The project's Theory of Change (ToC) demonstrates significant strengths while highlighting areas for improvement to guide future interventions.** The comprehensive design successfully integrates humanitarian and development efforts, ensuring alignment with global standards like SDG Target 1.3 and emphasizing long-term sustainability while addressing immediate needs. Its inclusion of shock-responsive components showcases adaptability to crises, such as COVID-19 and regional conflicts, proving its relevance in dynamic and challenging contexts.

**Despite its strengths, the ToC has notable limitations that need to be addressed in future iterations.** It underestimated the complexity of coordinating actors with varying mandates and did not allocate sufficient resources to building the capacity of local actors. These gaps hindered effective implementation and limited the ability of local stakeholders to take ownership of critical processes. Additionally, the ToC overlooked opportunities to engage the private sector, which could have provided essential support in financing and scaling digital solutions.

## **2. Coherence**

*To what extent is the project coherent with other interventions of the ILO in OPT and in the region?*

**The project aligns closely with broader ILO interventions and regional strategies, showcasing consistency in addressing fragmented social protection systems.** The introduction of the Shock-Responsive Social Protection Protocol (SRSP) and digital tools like the social registry dashboard reflects this alignment. These efforts parallel regional initiatives in Jordan and Lebanon, where digital systems streamline beneficiary data during emergencies. Stakeholders highlighted the value of this approach during interviews, particularly in improving data accuracy and crisis responsiveness. However, the Gaza war exposed vulnerabilities, such as operational fragmentation between Palestinian Authority-led and de facto Gaza authorities, emphasizing the need for adaptive strategies during crises.

**The project integrates with other initiatives, enhancing coherence and impact in social protection efforts.** Its alignment with SDG Target 1.3 and the Social Development Sector Strategy (SDSS) reinforces strategic consistency. Capacity-building initiatives, such as SRSP Transform Trainings, strengthened governance and anti-corruption skills, while policy dialogues ensured alignment with national priorities. Despite these successes, the Gaza crisis revealed the need for more flexible and adaptive management to address evolving challenges and sustain coherence in emergency contexts

*To what extent is the project consistent with the policies and goals of OPT on social protection, including work on gender?*

**The project is consistent with OPT's social protection policies and promotes a rights-based, gender-sensitive approach.** By supporting the Social Development Sector Strategy (SDSS), the project introduced initiatives like social allowances for older persons and individuals with disabilities. Targeted awareness campaigns in Gaza addressed specific vulnerabilities of women and marginalized groups. However, disruptions during the Gaza war revealed systemic barriers, such as limited childcare support and income-generation opportunities for women, highlighting the need for gender-equity mechanisms during crises.

**The project integrates gender considerations across its activities, ensuring equal participation and addressing gender-specific challenges within the social protection system.** In Gaza, the Participatory Community Planning Committees (PCPCs) included 33 members, with a balanced gender representation of 16 women and 17 men, ensuring that

women's perspectives were considered in humanitarian aid and social protection planning. The project also focused on gender-based corruption, addressing 25 out of 176 complaints related to gender-specific issues. In the West Bank, training courses included both 30 males and 32 females, ensuring that both genders were equipped with the skills to influence social protection policies. Outreach sessions targeted 550 participants, with a focus on women (393 females and 157 males), raising awareness about social protection rights, corruption risks, and the role of humanitarian aid, particularly for women affected by conflict. Legal counseling provided support for women to report gender-based corruption without fear of retaliation.

***What strategies are in place to ensure coherent collaboration between various stakeholders, including government, international organizations, and local NGOs, to avoid conflicts or duplication of efforts?***

**Collaboration strategies between stakeholders demonstrated strengths but faced significant challenges during the Gaza war.** Mechanisms like the Social Protection Cash and Voucher Assistance Thematic Working Group (SPCVA TWG) facilitated coordination and reduced inefficiencies. Stakeholders recognized its role in harmonizing humanitarian cash assistance with the Palestinian National Cash Transfer Programme (PNCTP). However, interviews revealed trust deficits between the Palestinian Authority and NGOs operating in Gaza, exacerbated by political tensions. The lack of formal agreements further hindered sustained collaboration. Additionally, the war disrupted digital tools, with fragmented data-sharing systems limiting timely responses to emerging needs.

**The Gaza war highlighted four key challenges in ensuring project coherence and coordination.** First, the fragmented governance between the West Bank and Gaza created significant operational barriers. Second, logistical disruptions delayed activities like social allowance rollouts. Third, while the SRSP Protocol provided a framework for shock responsiveness, it lacked the flexibility to address Gaza's unique crisis context, particularly in coordinating emergency cash transfers. Finally, trust deficits between humanitarian and governmental actors deepened, restricting effective data sharing and collaborative planning.

**Despite challenges, the project demonstrated resilience through its alignment with ILO strategies and OPT policies.** Stakeholders commended its adaptive management approach, particularly in leveraging platforms like the SPCVA TWG to sustain collaboration under crisis conditions. However, interviews revealed critical areas for improvement. Recommendations include empowering local actors to enhance decentralized coordination, formalizing stakeholder agreements through legally binding MoUs, expanding the SRSP Protocol to incorporate rapid-response mechanisms, and implementing trust-building initiatives to strengthen relationships between stakeholders.

**The project effectively integrates with other initiatives, enhancing overall coherence and impact in social protection efforts.** Its alignment with SDG Target 1.3 and the MoSD's Social Development Sector Strategy (SDSS) underscores its strategic consistency. Stakeholders noted that capacity-building initiatives, such as SRSP Transform Trainings, improved skills in governance and anti-corruption. Additionally, policy dialogues and consultations ensured

alignment with national priorities. However, the Gaza crisis highlighted the need for enhanced flexibility and adaptive management to address evolving challenges and sustain coherence during emergencies.

### **3. Effectiveness**

*To what extent did the project achieve the overall objective, outcomes, and outputs?*

**Based on the review of available documents and interviews with project stakeholders, the following outlines the progress toward achieving the project results and outputs. This analysis is further supported by an effectiveness matrix provided below.**

The project aimed to strengthen nexus coherence and responsiveness in Palestine's social protection sector, focusing on developing a shock-responsive, inclusive, and rights-based system that addresses the needs of vulnerable populations in the West Bank and Gaza. Despite challenges, such as the October 7 crisis in Gaza, the project demonstrated resilience and adaptability, achieving or exceeding most of its targets outlined in the log frame.

**Rights-Based and Nexus Programmatic Coherence of Social Protection Enhanced.** The project delivered all planned outputs under this objective. A key achievement was the rollout of rights-based social allowances for older persons and those with severe disabilities, benefiting over 30,000 individuals in the West Bank. The program was designed with technical guidance from the ILO, which also provided a forward-looking framework for payments through 2025. Additionally, a cooperation framework aligning with SDG Target 1.3 was established and endorsed by SPCVA TWG members, fostering collaboration between stakeholders. Discussions within the TWG facilitated by an endorsed roadmap advanced programmatic and financing frameworks, providing practical solutions to enhance social protection schemes. Administrative tools were upgraded, including the digitization of payment mechanisms, and the MoSD's Information Management System was reviewed to align with humanitarian actors.

**Responsiveness of the Social Assistance System Enhanced.** Efforts to enhance responsiveness were marked by significant achievements. A national Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) Protocol was developed in consultation with stakeholders to address emergencies effectively, with a focus on Gaza and the West Bank. This was complemented by a Shock-responsive Social Protection Plan supported by UNICEF, which remains under consultation. Vertical coordination structures were strengthened, including establishing a national committee to oversee aid distribution in Gaza and conducting capacity-building meetings with local charitable societies. Capacity development was a cornerstone of this component, with 50 senior officials and members of PCPC receiving intensive training on governance, social protection, and anti-corruption measures. Furthermore, an awareness campaign reached over 550 internally displaced persons in Gaza, promoting social justice in aid distribution and providing legal counseling on corruption issues.

**Overall Delivery Assessment.** The project's implementation was rated satisfactory, with over 80% of planned outputs delivered on time and most indicator milestones achieved. The alignment of programs, establishment of cooperation frameworks, and operationalization of a

shock-responsive system laid a strong foundation for advancing Palestine's social protection sector. However, several contextual and operational challenges impacted the full achievement of results. These included the Gaza war, which triggered a humanitarian crisis and disrupted government programs, shifting focus to emergency responses. Additionally, challenges in coordination, partnerships, and data sharing further affected implementation efforts.

***How did the project's outputs and outcomes contribute to ILO's mainstreamed strategies including gender equality, social dialogue, and labour standards?***

**The project has contributed in advancing the ILO's mainstreamed strategies by strengthening social protection systems and fostering inclusive, rights-based approaches.** It contributed to gender equality by ensuring women's participation in decision-making and integrating gender-sensitive approaches into awareness campaigns. Through structured platforms like the SPCVA TWG and JPGs, the project enhanced social dialogue by facilitating coordination between government institutions, civil society, and international partners. Additionally, by reinforcing rights-based approaches to social protection, the project indirectly supported labor standards, improving governance, institutional capacities, and the formal integration of humanitarian assistance into national social protection mechanisms. These efforts align with the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, contributing to sustainable and inclusive social security systems in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

**Technical support and alignment with ILO strategies were instrumental in achieving project milestones.** Stakeholders highlighted the critical role of ILO's technical support in advancing rights-based social allowances for older persons and individuals with severe disabilities, benefiting over 30,000 people in the West Bank. Alignment with SDG Target 1.3 and ILO's guidance significantly contributed to the transformative outcomes, particularly in addressing neglected groups.

**Collaborative engagement with stakeholders reflected effective communication across the project and ILO units.** Interagency coordination, facilitated through the SPCVA TWG, created a unified platform for decision-making and dialogue. Stakeholders emphasized that the development of the Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) Protocol and its consultations with humanitarian actors demonstrated ILO's role in enhancing programmatic coherence and strengthening partnerships.

**The project demonstrated strong collaborative engagement among international and local actors, supported by ILO's neutral facilitation.** Interviews emphasized the smooth collaboration between ILO, UNICEF, and other stakeholders, underpinned by transparent communication and shared goals. The EU praised ILO's neutral and technical role in managing relationships without conflicts of interest, further validating the effectiveness of backstopping support.

**Challenges in data sharing underscored the need for enhanced coordination and technical support.** Stakeholders noted that gaps in legal and ethical compliance frameworks, such as GDPR adherence, limited effective data-sharing protocols among partners. Although ILO backstopping units supported the development of responsible data-sharing guidelines,

operational challenges persisted, suggesting the need for stronger alignment and support mechanisms.



**Table 3: Summary of progress of project results**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Original Target</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Progress/Results</b>
<b>Specific Objective 1: Enhance rights-based and nexus coherence in social protection</b>	<b>Programmatic and Financing Framework (1.1)</b>	Inexistent	Develop a comprehensive programmatic and financing framework supporting SDSS implementation and expansion of allowances to Gaza when possible.	Completed	A financing framework supported MoSD's SDSS implementation. Rights-based social allowances rolled out for older persons and persons with disabilities, benefiting 30,041 individuals in the West Bank in August 2024.
	<b>Cooperation Agreement (1.2)</b>	Inexistent	Formalize roles and responsibilities among humanitarian and social protection actors through a cooperation agreement.	Completed	A cooperation framework was endorsed by the SPCVA TWG to align humanitarian and development actors under SDG 1.3. Principles for collaboration were developed instead of a formal MoU.
	<b>Nexus Programme Design Review (1.3)</b>	0 aligned programs	Review and update design features of at least three programs to align mechanisms (e.g., transfer values, payment periodicity).	Completed	The SPCVA TWG facilitated alignment between humanitarian and development cash assistance. A roadmap and mission statement for harmonizing humanitarian and government programs were achieved.
	<b>Administrative Tool Review (1.4)</b>	Fragmented tools	Review administrative tools and integrate improved delivery mechanisms for social assistance.	Completed	Practical guidance was provided for strengthening digital payment systems, enhancing accessibility, and making social assistance schemes more shock responsive.
<b>Specific Objective 2: Enhance the responsiveness of social protection</b>	<b>Shock-Responsive Measures (2.1)</b>	No system in place	Develop and adopt a national protocol for shock-responsive social protection to enable timely and effective emergency response integration.	Partially Completed	A national SRSP Protocol was finalized, emphasizing cash-based responses in emergencies. The endorsement of the protocol by the MoSD had not been completed at the time of the evaluation. Additionally, the development of emergency response plans by the PCPCs was still underway during the evaluation period.
	<b>Vertical Coordination Bodies (2.2)</b>	Inexistent	Establish or re-dynamize vertical coordination structures in Gaza and the West Bank.	Partially Completed	Strengthened coordination between PCPCs across the West Bank and Gaza. Emergency Humanitarian Intervention Plan prepared post-October 7 crisis. However, due to the war in Gaza and the security challenges in the West

					Bank, work with the PCPCs as a structured entity ceased in Gaza. Additionally, an agreement on the mandate and scope of the PCPCs in the West Bank remains unresolved.
	<b>Capacity Building (2.3)</b>	Limited capacity	Develop capacities of at least 50 local government and CSO representatives aligned with MoSD's rights-based vision.	Completed	SRSP training sessions were conducted for 50 senior officials, and workshops enhanced PCPC members' capacity for inclusive social protection planning.
	<b>Awareness Raising (2.4)</b>	Low awareness	Conduct awareness campaigns to promote MoSD's social protection governance among stakeholders and vulnerable groups.	Completed	Awareness campaigns targeted over 550 IDPs in Gaza, highlighting social justice in aid distribution and providing legal counseling on corruption-related issues.

#### 4. Efficiency

*To what extent were the project activities cost-efficient? Were the resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) allocated strategically to achieve outcomes? To what extent can the project results justify the time, financial, and human resources invested, and are the project resources adequate and available on time to implement the activities as planned?*

**Cost-effectiveness was achieved through innovative and resource-conscious approaches.** By leveraging in-house expertise, such as UNICEF and ILO trainers, the project avoided significant expenses associated with hiring external consultants. Digital payment systems, recommended during the project, streamlined social assistance delivery, reducing administrative overhead and ensuring timely disbursements. Moreover, the integration of local and international consultants in project activities fostered knowledge exchange while minimizing costs.

**Operational adjustments during crises demonstrated the project's adaptability and resourcefulness.** The Gaza crisis on October 7, 2023, led to delays and cancellations of some planned activities, but the project effectively mitigated these challenges. Remote consultations and virtual interviews ensured the timely development of critical deliverables like the Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) Protocol. Stakeholders noted that these measures allowed the project to regain momentum and achieve most indicator milestones within the revised timeline.

**Efficient use of human resources further enhanced the project's effectiveness.** The recruitment of specialized consultants, such as the Information Management Consultant, directly supported MoSD's institutional capacity. These experts developed tools like an integrated dashboard, which improved data management and coordination among partners. Regular biweekly meetings between partners and MoSD ensured streamlined communication and swift resolution of operational challenges, as noted by several interviewees.

**However, challenges to efficiency revealed areas for improvement.** Stakeholders identified gaps in coordination, particularly between MoSD offices in Ramallah and Gaza, which delayed the implementation of some activities. Oxfam's limited engagement, attributed to internal staff changes and leadership gaps, was cited as a missed opportunity to strengthen civil society advocacy and partnerships. Additionally, fiscal constraints within the Palestinian Authority hindered the co-financing of reforms, necessitating reliance on donor support.

*To what extent has the project been able to create synergies in cost sharing with other ILO or non-ILO initiatives either nationally or regionally?*

**The project displayed remarkable efficiency by adapting quickly to ground realities and maximizing limited resources.** Despite challenging political and operational contexts, the project achieved notable outcomes, including support for vulnerable populations, particularly the elderly, and strengthening public distribution systems (PDS). Stakeholders highlighted the

project's ability to utilize existing capacities and resources effectively, such as the use of UNICEF-certified trainers to deliver key training sessions and the reliance on local consultants familiar with the Palestinian context. This approach not only reduced costs but also enhanced the contextual relevance of interventions.

**Lessons from the project underscore the importance of integrated systems and adaptive management.** The use of the MoSD social registry and digital payment mechanisms proved essential for efficient resource allocation. Stakeholders emphasized the value of leveraging partnerships, such as the SPCVA TWG framework, to reduce duplication and pool resources effectively. Adaptive management strategies, including the shift to virtual platforms during crises, ensured the continuity of essential activities and deliverables.

*How did the project's governance structure facilitate good results and efficient delivery? And if not, why not?*

**Collaborative partnerships were a cornerstone of the project's efficiency.** Stakeholder interviews emphasized the smooth collaboration between UNICEF and ILO, facilitated by transparent communication and shared strategic goals. ILO played a pivotal role in aligning actors and coordinating efforts, despite the complexities of working across diverse institutional settings. The EU acknowledged ILO's neutral and technical role, praising their management of relationships without conflicts of interest. Partnerships with local organizations like AMAN further amplified the project's reach, particularly in Gaza, where AMAN's reputation and expertise ensured successful capacity-building initiatives.

## **5. Contribution to Impact**

*How does the project measure and track the long-term effects of social protection interventions on reducing poverty and inequality?*

**The project integrated systemic tracking mechanisms for long-term outcomes.** Key tools included the enhancement of the Ministry of Social Development's (MoSD) Information Management System (IMS), which consolidated data on over 342,000 families. This system facilitated real-time tracking of beneficiaries and enabled case management during emergencies, supporting decision-making to reduce poverty and inequality.

**Institutionalization of rights-based social allowances was a cornerstone of sustainability.** By embedding these initiatives within MoSD's policy framework, the project ensured the ongoing monitoring of vulnerable populations, including older persons and individuals with disabilities. This institutionalization helped assess impacts over time without relying heavily on external actors.

**Collaborative platforms enhanced tracking and evaluation.** The Social Protection Cash and Voucher Assistance Thematic Working Group (SPCVA TWG) aligned humanitarian and development actors, focusing on data sharing and coordination. Such mechanisms were integral to harmonizing short-term interventions with long-term development goals, ensuring outcomes were effectively measured against systemic benchmarks.

**Capacity building supported the sustainability of monitoring efforts.** The project trained MoSD staff and community planning committees on adaptive social protection and governance, strengthening local capacities to track program impacts effectively. These initiatives maintained institutional memory and fostered ownership of social protection monitoring systems.

**Adaptation to challenges underscored the project's monitoring robustness.** The project's response to the Gaza war, including adjustments to data-sharing agreements and protocols, ensured continuity in tracking interventions despite external disruptions. This adaptability highlighted the project's focus on maintaining reliable, long-term measurement frameworks.

***How likely are the project achievements to contribute to the social protection systems of OPT, West Bank and Gaza?***

**Strengthening Rights-Based Social Protection:** The implementation of rights-based social allowances for vulnerable groups was a transformative achievement, addressing long-standing inequities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). Over 30,041 individuals, including older persons and those with severe disabilities, received monthly transfers of 250 ILS (approximately 70 USD), supported by the International Labour Organization's (ILO) technical guidance. This foundational, non-contributory social protection system demonstrated inclusivity and equity, bridging gaps left by previous poverty-focused programs. Stakeholders, such as MoSD representatives, emphasized that this intervention not only provided financial relief but also reinforced the MoSD's credibility as a rights-based social protection leader. This approach aligned with broader efforts to enhance the MoSD's strategic role, ensuring the sustainability of these initiatives as part of its core mandate.

**Development of Shock-Responsive Mechanisms:** The project's development of a draft national Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) Protocol is expected to significantly enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) and its partners to respond to crises. This framework, tested during the October 2023 emergency, facilitated real-time decision-making and coordinated cash-based interventions, enabling thousands of affected households to receive timely support. MoSD officials noted that the protocol's guidelines should strengthen operational synergies and improve equitable assistance delivery during emergencies.

**Preparedness for Crisis Response:** One of the most significant indirect effects of the project was its role in preparing the MoSD and its partners to respond effectively to the aftermath of the war on Gaza. Stakeholders highlighted that without the preparatory work carried out under the project—such as establishing the TWG, organizing workshops, and improving coordination—the severe humanitarian crises in Gaza would have posed overwhelming challenges. Several stakeholders, including the MoSD, noted that the groundwork laid by the project-built trust among stakeholders, which became instrumental during the ongoing war emergency response, ensuring smooth coordination and impactful interventions.

**Demonstrating the Value of Preparation:** The unexpected war on Gaza underscored the critical value of the project's preparatory work. Stakeholders emphasized that the trust-building, coordination, and capacity-building efforts laid the groundwork for effective responses during the post-war emergency phase. Although these outcomes were unanticipated, they demonstrated the importance of long-term investments in system strengthening and preparedness.

**Building Trust and Strengthening Collaboration:** Before the project, there was limited trust and coordination between the MoSD and humanitarian actors, often leading to fragmented and inefficient efforts. The project addressed these gaps by fostering mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships. Enhanced relationships, built on trust and open communication, significantly improved collective responses to crises. MoSD officials credited the project with breaking down silos and paving the way for stronger collaborations, which have become a cornerstone of the ministry's approach to crisis management and social protection governance.

**Revitalizing Local Community Structures:** The project played a pivotal role in reactivating and enhancing Community Protection Committees (CPCPs), which had been underperforming prior to its intervention. Through targeted training and capacity-building efforts, these committees were empowered to provide critical support during emergencies. Their contributions were evident in crises across Gaza and the West Bank, where they responded to incidents such as Israeli incursions in Jenin, Tulkarem, and Tubas. These committees became essential in maintaining civil peace and stability in affected regions. MoSD representatives noted that without the project's investments, the enhanced functionality and responsiveness of these local structures would not have been possible.

**Capacity Building and Local Empowerment:** Capacity-building initiatives were central to the project's success. Two three-day SRSP training sessions for 50 senior officials strengthened governance and crisis management skills, while additional training for 62 Planning and Community Partnership Councils (PCPC) members empowered grassroots representation. MoSD officials emphasized that these efforts revitalized previously underperforming structures, enabling them to play a more active role in responding to emergencies and promoting civil stability in crisis-prone areas like Gaza and Jenin.

**Impactful Outreach and Awareness Campaigns:** The project prioritized community engagement through impactful outreach initiatives, such as the "Social Justice in Aid Distribution" campaign. By targeting 550 internally displaced persons in Gaza shelters, these campaigns raised awareness of beneficiaries' rights, addressed inequities in aid distribution, and provided legal counseling. Stakeholder interviews highlighted the importance of these efforts in fostering trust, empowering vulnerable populations, and ensuring more equitable access to social protection services.

**Policy and Strategic Alignment:** The project contributed significantly to the development of the MoSD Strategy 2024-2025, integrating shock-responsive mechanisms into national planning and aligning social protection goals with broader development objectives. Consultations led by UNICEF ensured stakeholder input, resulting in a strategy that reflects

diverse perspectives and priorities. MoSD representatives recognized that this alignment laid a strong foundation for reforming key programs like the Cash Transfer Program (CTP), enhancing their inclusiveness, adequacy, and resilience.

**Building Trust and Strengthening Collaboration:** Before the project, there was limited trust and coordination between the MoSD and humanitarian actors, often leading to fragmented and inefficient efforts. The project addressed these gaps by fostering mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships. Enhanced relationships, built on trust and open communication, significantly improved collective responses to crises. MoSD officials credited the project with breaking down silos and paving the way for stronger collaborations, which have become a cornerstone of the ministry's approach to crisis management and social protection governance

*What mechanisms are in place to assess the impact of coordinated efforts between governmental and non-governmental actors on the overall effectiveness of social protection programmes and to what extent gender balance is taken into consideration?*

**Enhanced Coordination and Governance Mechanisms:** The establishment of the Social Protection Cash and Voucher Assistance Thematic Working Group (SPCVA TWG) marked a critical milestone in strengthening governance and coordination. By bringing together humanitarian, development, and government stakeholders, the TWG streamlined aid delivery and reduced duplication. Key achievements, such as data-sharing agreements with UNICEF, UNRWA, and WFP, significantly improved transparency and efficiency in targeting and aid distribution. Stakeholders from partner organizations acknowledged that the TWG facilitated meaningful dialogue, aligned efforts, and improved the overall coherence of social protection interventions. This achievement lays the groundwork for a longer-term impact by institutionalizing collaborative mechanisms that promote sustainable, inclusive, and effective social protection systems. The strengthened coordination ensures that resources are utilized effectively, paving the way for more resilient and equitable responses to future social and economic challenges.

**Technological and Data Innovations:** The enhancement of the MoSD Information Management System (IMS) marked a major step forward in improving efficiency and accountability. Key innovations, such as integrated dashboards and aligned humanitarian and national databases, enabled better data-sharing and case management during emergencies. MoSD officials highlighted the development of a comprehensive database covering over 342,000 families as a critical milestone in supporting informed decision-making and promoting transparency.

## **6. Sustainability**

*Are the results achieved by the project likely to be sustainable? What measures have been considered to ensure that the key components of the project are sustainable beyond the life of the project?*

**Institutionalization of social protection measures ensures long-term sustainability of project results.** One of the most significant outcomes of the project was the institutionalization

of rights-based social allowances for older persons and individuals with severe disabilities. These initiatives, implemented through technical support from the ILO, benefited over 30,000 individuals and were integrated into the policy framework of the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD). This embedding within national systems significantly reduces reliance on external actors for continuation. Interviews with MoSD staff highlighted the importance of the dashboard and database established through the project, which includes over 342,000 families eligible for assistance. According to MoSD/Manal, this database remains a critical tool for sustaining aid distribution and ensuring systemic resilience.

**Strengthened local governance supports sustainability during crises.** The establishment of Participatory Community Planning Committees (PCPCs) provided a decentralized mechanism for managing social protection. These committees played a pivotal role during the October 2023 Gaza conflict, where they implemented emergency humanitarian response plans. According to interviews with Oxfam, the structuring of PCPC memberships around organizational roles rather than individuals enhanced continuity and minimized dependency on specific actors. However, Oxfam also noted the need for the MoSD to take a more strategic role in formalizing PCPCs' structures to ensure their long-term functionality.

**Capacity-building initiatives foster institutional resilience with the potential to continue beyond the project.** The project included extensive training for senior officials and PCPC members. For example, Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) training sessions enhanced technical skills, enabling participants to design adaptive social protection measures. Interviews with ILO experts underscored that these trainings are vital for sustaining innovations, as they ensure local actors can lead future interventions effectively. Additionally, resource mobilization training has empowered local governance structures to secure independent funding, thereby reducing long-term financial dependency.

**Enhanced coordination platforms contribute to systemic integration.** The creation of the Social Protection Cash and Voucher Assistance Thematic Working Group (SPCVA TWG) was a cornerstone of the project's strategy to align efforts across humanitarian and development actors. The SPCVA TWG's successes, including data-sharing agreements and shock-responsive protocols, provide scalable models for enhancing coherence. Interviews with stakeholders such as UNICEF confirmed that these mechanisms have built trust among actors and improved program alignment, fostering sustainability.

**Sustainability through financial planning and resource mobilization.** The project's approach to diversifying funding sources and securing financial commitments was another critical sustainability pillar. With support from partners like UNICEF and ILO, the design and costing of social allowances were aligned with international standards, providing a clear financial roadmap. The development of a financing scenarios paper for the Palestinian National Cash Transfer Programme (PNCTP) further underscores efforts to integrate donor contributions with national priorities. MoSD officials acknowledged that these initiatives were instrumental in mitigating the fiscal challenges faced by the ministry.



**Lessons from crises highlight the importance of adaptive management.** The project demonstrated resilience during the Gaza war by leveraging established systems, such as the PCPCs and emergency aid committees. Interviews with World Bank representatives emphasized that while MoSD faced capacity and resource constraints, its ability to adapt and maintain operations during the conflict underscores the project's systemic resilience. Moreover, this adaptability has informed advocacy for increased international support, linking humanitarian aid to long-term development objectives.

*Can future projects be built upon the results of this current project, ensuring sustainability and optimal use of results?*

**Institutionalization of social protection measures creates a sustainable foundation for future projects.** The project successfully embedded rights-based social allowances for older persons and individuals with severe disabilities into the Ministry of Social Development's (MoSD) policies. This institutionalization reduced reliance on external actors and provided a framework that future projects can expand to include additional vulnerable groups.

**Capacity-building initiatives provide a skilled workforce for future interventions.** Extensive training for senior officials and PCPC members improved governance and technical skills for implementing adaptive social protection measures. These trained individuals can play a critical role in scaling and sustaining future social protection efforts.

**Enhanced coordination mechanisms ensure alignment among stakeholders.** Platforms like the Social Protection Cash and Voucher Assistance Thematic Working Group (SPCVA TWG) successfully aligned humanitarian and development actors. Future projects can utilize these coordination mechanisms to integrate new stakeholders and promote programmatic coherence.

**Technological advancements in data management offer opportunities for expansion.** The project improved systems like the Information Management System (IMS) and the social registry dashboard, which enhanced data-sharing and decision-making. Future initiatives can build on these tools to integrate broader datasets, improve case management, and str

*What strategies are in place to secure long-term funding and resources from both national and international stakeholders to sustain social protection interventions?*

**Integration into national strategies reinforces project longevity.** The alignment of project outcomes with MoSD's 2024-2029 strategy institutionalizes key interventions. For example, the national Shock-Responsive Social Protection Protocol formalizes guidelines for crisis response, ensuring that innovations remain embedded within the country's broader development framework. Interviews with ILO further revealed plans to replicate the project's success in other MENA countries, amplifying its influence and impact.

**The new EU phase 2 project strengthens the foundation laid by the ILO's Nexus project to enhance sustainability.** The upcoming initiative, "Strengthening capacities towards a coherent national social protection system across the humanitarian, development, and peace nexus," builds on the successes and lessons learned from the current project. By continuing

to foster institutional capacity, the new project ensures that mechanisms like the Social Protection Cash and Voucher Assistance Thematic Working Group (SPCVA TWG) remain operational and inclusive. It expands programmatic alignment and coordination efforts between humanitarian and development actors, ensuring coherence in social protection systems. The project will also address financial sustainability by applying advanced public financial management tools and developing a costed roadmap to solidify the fiscal foundation of initiatives such as the National Cash Transfer Programme (NCTP). Furthermore, advanced training and technical assistance will equip the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) to lead and sustain a robust and adaptive national social protection framework. This phase not only amplifies the achievements of the Project but also introduces flexible and innovative strategies to address emerging challenges in a complex and evolving context, ensuring a resilient and inclusive system that supports Palestine's most vulnerable populations.

## Learning and Recommendations

### 1. Conclusions

**Relevance:** The project's assessment highlighted its strong relevance to the socio-economic context of the OPT, addressing systemic vulnerabilities and aligning with SDG Target 1.3 to strengthen social protection systems. Its focus on the humanitarian-development nexus improved coordination among stakeholders and enhanced service delivery. The project's adaptability to crises, participatory approach, and capacity-building efforts ensured alignment with local priorities. However, gaps in institutional ownership, coordination, and private sector engagement suggest areas for future improvement in similar interventions.

**Coherence:** The project aligned closely with ILO regional strategies and OPT policies, addressing fragmented social protection systems and supporting SDG Target 1.3. The introduction of Shock-Responsive Social Protection Protocols (SRSP) and digital tools enhanced data accuracy and crisis responsiveness, mirroring successful initiatives in Jordan and Lebanon. However, challenges emerged during the Gaza war, including fragmented governance, logistical delays, and trust deficits between humanitarian and governmental actors.

**Effectiveness:** The project demonstrated significant effectiveness in enhancing Palestine's social protection system, achieving over 80% of planned outputs on time and meeting key milestones. It strengthened nexus coherence by advocating and supporting the reform of the NCTP and the introduction of rights-based social allowances, benefiting over 30,000 vulnerable individuals in the West Bank. Key achievements included the rollout of a national Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) Protocol and capacity-building efforts, equipping over 50 officials with skills for adaptive governance. Stakeholders praised the SPCVA TWG for fostering collaboration and aligning humanitarian and development efforts. Despite challenges like the Gaza crisis and data-sharing barriers, the project showcased adaptability, delivering transformative outcomes for marginalized groups.

**Efficiency:** The project demonstrated strong efficiency through resource optimization, adaptability, and strategic partnerships. Leveraging existing capacities, such as UNICEF-certified trainers and local consultants, reduced costs while ensuring contextual relevance. Collaboration between UNICEF, ILO, and local organizations like AMAN enhanced project reach and streamlined efforts. Innovative approaches, such as digital payment systems, minimized administrative overhead and improved social assistance delivery. Operational adjustments, including virtual consultations during the Gaza crisis, ensured timely progress despite disruptions. However, coordination gaps between MoSD offices and Oxfam's limited engagement highlighted areas for improvement. The project underscored the value of adaptive management and integrated systems for future efficiency.

**Contribution to Impact:** The project made significant contributions to long-term impact by strengthening Palestine's social protection system and ensuring its responsiveness to emergencies. The rollout of rights-based social allowances for over 30,000 vulnerable individuals, guided by ILO's technical support, addressed structural inequities and elevated the

MoSD's role as a rights-based social protection leader. The establishment of the SPCVA TWG improved governance, fostering collaboration among humanitarian, development, and government actors, and ensuring resource efficiency. Development of the Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) Protocol enabled timely, equitable emergency responses, as demonstrated during the Gaza crisis. Capacity-building efforts empowered 50 officials and revitalized community structures like PCPCs, enhancing grassroots resilience and civil stability. Outreach campaigns raised awareness among 550 displaced individuals, promoting social justice and trust. Additionally, innovations like the MoSD's Information Management System improved transparency, enabling better data-driven decision-making. The project's alignment with MoSD's 2024-2025 Strategy integrated shock-responsive mechanisms into national planning, ensuring sustainable reform. These efforts collectively reinforced institutional capacity, trust, and collaborative frameworks, establishing a foundation for inclusive, resilient, and impactful social protection in Palestine.

**Sustainability:** The project ensured sustainability by institutionalizing rights-based social protection measures, benefiting over 30,000 individuals, and embedding these initiatives within the Ministry of Social Development's (MoSD) policy framework. Decentralized governance structures, such as PCPCs, and capacity-building efforts for MoSD officials enhanced local resilience and technical capacity. The SPCVA TWG improved coordination and trust among humanitarian and development actors, while financial planning tools aligned donor contributions with national priorities. Integration into MoSD's 2024-2029 strategy institutionalized key outcomes like the Shock-Responsive Social Protection Protocol. The EU-supported phase two project will build on these achievements, strengthening sustainability and adaptability for Palestine's social protection system.

## **2. Lessons Learned**

Several lessons and good practices have been identified that are essential for improving future interventions and addressing the complex and evolving context of the OPT:

### **2.1 Lessons Learned:**

1. **Flexibility and Adaptiveness:** Integrating flexibility into project design is crucial for maintaining relevance amidst unexpected challenges or contextual changes. Adaptive management, such as annual Theory of Change workshops, helps reassess and adjust the project's focus.
2. **Longer Implementation Period:** A two-year timeline proved insufficient for accommodating adaptive changes and achieving sustainable impact. Extending future project durations to three years is vital for stakeholders to adapt and implement effectively.
3. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Meaningful participation from government and social partners is essential for sustainability. Inclusive processes ensure stronger stakeholder ownership.

## 2.2 Emerging Good Practices:

1. **Dialogue and Relationship-Building:** Participatory workshops and shared vision-building across the nexus laid a strong foundation for coordination and collaboration.
2. **Structured Coordination:** The SPCVA TWG demonstrated the effectiveness of structured and systematic coordination mechanisms, which can serve as a model for future programs.
3. **Human Capacity Building:** Tailored training and technical assistance significantly enhanced the MoSD's capacity to manage increased workloads, improving coordination.

## 3. Key Challenges

The **large-scale war in the Gaza Strip** led to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, severely deteriorating economic and social conditions in the West Bank and disrupting government programming. This forced a shift in focus toward emergency response plans. However, project partners displayed commendable flexibility by implementing a no-cost extension until August 2024, rescheduling activities, and shifting data collection to virtual interviews, ensuring continuity in implementation despite the challenges.

The **internal division between the West Bank and Gaza Strip** further complicated coordination and implementation efforts. The inability to engage formally with the de facto government in Gaza and the limited robust communication between the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) in Ramallah and Gaza exacerbated the difficulties. To mitigate these issues, informal working relationships were established with the MoSD team in Gaza, ensuring that some level of coordination was maintained.

The **ongoing fiscal crisis of the Palestinian Authority** significantly hindered the government's ability to implement reforms and strengthen the national social protection system, even with EU funding. To address this, the project explored mechanisms to leverage externally financed humanitarian responses to sustain national systems, including submitting planning outlines for social allowances to secure further support.

The **work overload within the MoSD** posed additional challenges, as the ministry's focus on crisis response and other ongoing projects impacted its ability to fully engage in project activities. This was mitigated through regular meetings, capacity-building initiatives, and technical support, which helped ensure the MoSD's engagement and contribution to the project's goals.

**Coordination and data-sharing issues** also presented significant obstacles. Development and humanitarian actors displayed varying levels of interest in collaboration, with concerns about independence, neutrality, and data protection posing barriers to effective data-sharing. The project tackled these challenges by fostering senior leadership commitment, formalizing data-

sharing agreements, and encouraging regular reporting to build trust and transparency among stakeholders.

The **capacity and coordination of PCPCs** varied widely, with unclear roles and limited connections to national social protection systems undermining their effectiveness. To improve this, the project worked on developing a clear vision for the PCPCs, strengthening coordination and communication mechanisms, and providing capacity-building support through training and workshops.

In terms of **project partnership challenges**, the design aimed to showcase an effective partnership model between implementing partners (ILO, OXFAM, and UNICEF) to enhance synergies and coordination. While partnerships between sister UN agencies were smoother due to similarities in procedures and organizational culture, OXFAM faced challenges stemming from differences in organizational structures and its leadership interest. Informants noted that despite these obstacles, OXFAM exceeded some targets, particularly in training and activating PCPCs in the West Bank. However, the war in Gaza disrupted OXFAM's planned activities for PCPCs in the region, further compounding these challenges. Despite the challenges, OXFAM reported significant interest and engagement from local organizations in adopting the PCPC framework, particularly in Gaza, demonstrating a readiness to implement this concept with further support and capacity-building initiatives.

Several stakeholders, including MoSD representatives, highlighted the **strained relationship between the Cash Working Group (CWG) and the MoSD**. The ministry perceived the CWG as attempting to assert dominance, creating mutual mistrust. While the ILO facilitated efforts to bridge these gaps, further dialogue and clarified roles remain necessary to foster a better working relationship. Additionally, sustaining the momentum of the TWG remains a challenge due to conflicting priorities. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of ensuring TWG members have decision-making authority and transitioning its facilitation role from external consultants to the MoSD for greater national ownership and sustainability.

#### **4. Recommendations**

The following matrix outlines the key recommendations derived from the findings of this evaluation. Each recommendation is presented with its priority level, detailed description, responsible entities, recommended timeframe for follow-up, and potential implications. This structured approach ensures clear accountability and actionable steps for implementing the recommendations effectively:

**Table 4: Recommendations matrix**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Type of Recommendation</b>	<b>Priority (High/Medium/Low)</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Recommended Timeframe</b>	<b>Implications (Low/Medium/High)</b>
<b>1. Integrate adaptive management into project activities, including annual Theory of Change workshops, to reassess and adjust priorities.</b>	Strategic	High	ILO Management Team	Within 12 months	Medium
<b>2. Extend project timelines from two years to three years to allow adequate time for implementation and sustainability.</b>	Strategic	Medium	Donors and Project Partners	Within 18 months	High
<b>3. Institutionalize platforms like the SPCVA TWG for broad representation and alignment, ensuring resilience and coordination.</b>	Operational	High	MoSD and ILO Country Office	Ongoing	High
<b>4. Invest in MoSD technical and IT infrastructure to improve the social registry and data management capabilities.</b>	Technical	High	MoSD with donor's support	Within 12 months	Medium
<b>5. Provide ongoing training on emergency preparedness and shock response for national and local actors, informed by needs assessments.</b>	Capacity Building	High	ILO Management Team	Ongoing	High
<b>6. Define clear roles for PCPCs, enhance coordination with MoSD, and invest in capacity-building to strengthen their effectiveness.</b>	Operational	High	MoSD	Within 18 months	Medium

<b>7. Facilitate data-sharing agreements between MoSD and humanitarian actors, ensuring compliance with privacy standards.</b>	Operational	High	MoSD and Humanitarian Actors	Within 12 months	Medium
<b>8. Identify mechanisms to align external funding with national priorities to sustain social protection systems.</b>	Strategic	Medium	Donors and MoSD	Within 24 months	High
<b>9. Strengthen MoSD, leadership in coordination platforms and align strategies with broader priorities.</b>	Strategic	High	MoSD with the support from donors	Within 12 months	High
<b>10. Further refine and institutionalize the emergency and shock response protocols, incorporating follow-up actions.</b>	Operational	High	ILO Team and MoSD	Within 12 months	Medium
<b>11. Expand data-sharing agreements with agencies like WFP and OCHA (if possible) , ensuring political and senior-level intervention.</b>	Technical	Medium	MoSD, and Partner Agencies	Within 18 months	Medium



## ANNEXES

### 1. TOR

#### Terms of Reference

**Final independent evaluation of Strengthening nexus coherence and responsiveness in the Palestinian social protection sector.**

#### 1. Key facts

Information	Details
Project title	Strengthening Nexus Coherence and Responsiveness in The Palestinian Social Protection Sector
DC Symbol	PSE/21/01/EUR
Type of Evaluation	Independent
Timing of Evaluation	Final
Countries	Occupied Palestinian Territory
P&B outcomes	1, 2, 7, 8
SDG (s)	Goal 1.3
Duration	24 months
Start Date	July 2021
End Date	August 2024
Administrative unit	Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS)

Technical Backstopping Unit	SOCPRO
Collaborating ILO Units	<a href="#">GEDI</a> ; <a href="#">DEVINVEST</a> ; <a href="#">DWT-Beirut</a> ;
Donor	European Commission
Evaluation Manager	Marwan TAWFEEQ
Budget	1,500,00.00 Euros

## 2. Introduction

The Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) is home to about 4.7 million people, of which 2.9 million live in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the remaining 1.8 million live in the Gaza Strip. Two out of five Palestinians living in OPT are refugees; 40% of the population is under 14 years old and almost 70% of the population is younger than 30, while around 4% is over 65 years old.

For decades, the Occupied Palestinian Territory has been a highly fragile and conflict-affected environment. In 2023, the Fragile States Index rated it the world's 34th most fragile context, scoring negatively on external intervention, security, and economic decline indicators. This state of fragility has dramatically increased since 7 October 2023, with the ongoing war and acute humanitarian crisis unfolding in the Gaza Strip, alongside growing violence, restrictions and economic challenges in the West Bank. The war has led to an approximately 1.7 million Palestinians being internally displaced as of April 2023. The overwhelming majority of Gazans are now estimated to be living in multidimensional poverty, and vulnerability is also on the rise in the West Bank.

The implications of the ongoing hostilities on the Palestinian economy are grave. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) estimates a sharp contraction of gross domestic product (GDP) by one-third during the fourth quarter of 2023, compared to the same quarter of 2022 – a decline of more than 80 per cent in Gaza and of 22 per cent in the West Bank.<sup>2</sup>

### **Poverty and vulnerability trends across the West Bank and Gaza**

Even prior to the COVID-19 crisis, both poverty and extreme poverty had been increasing throughout since 2011. An increase in poverty was driven by the ongoing crisis in Gaza, in addition to worsening conditions and poverty profiles in the West Bank.

According to research conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and the ILO :

“as of 31 January 2024, 507,000 jobs have been lost across the Occupied Palestinian Territory as a result of the hostilities, compared to an earlier job loss estimate of 468,000. This includes 201,000 jobs lost in Gaza and 306,000 jobs lost in the West Bank. These job losses translate into daily labour income losses of USD 21.7 million. This figure increases to USD 25.5 million per day, when combined with the loss of income resulting from the partial payment of wages to civil servants and the reduced incomes of workers in the private sector across the Occupied Palestinian Territory.”

Poverty rates are relatively stable across the lifecycle, with significant shares of working poor. However, urban and refugee camp residents experience spikes in old age. In 2017, the poverty rate was highest among working age adults aged 26 to 35 years old. Between 2011 and 2017, poverty appears to have increased particularly for young children, young adults and the elderly (60+). However, a lack of significant variation in poverty across the life cycle suggests an important role for covariate shocks, rather than idiosyncratic life-cycle related events, in influencing poverty. While joblessness can often be associated with poverty, there are large numbers of households with working members—including many engaged in formal employment—who live in poverty. Persons with disabilities are 30 per cent likelier to experience poverty and 40 per cent more likely to experience extreme poverty than their non-disabled counterparts.

### **Social protection in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT)**

Access to social protection is a human right. It is fundamental to protect individuals and their families across the life cycle, to build political stability, and to ensure societies’ resilience to different types of shocks. Thus, social policies are vital to prevent and address current global risks, ranging from the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to refugee crises, forced migration, climate change, inequalities, and conflict.

Before 2024, the National Cash Transfer Programme (NCTP) was the main public social protection programme in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Managed by the Ministry of Social Development, the NCTP provided cash transfers to some 115,000 households (70 per cent in Gaza) living in deep poverty through four quarterly payments per year. Transfers ranged from 750 to 1,800 Israeli shekels per household per quarter. Previously, the planned annual budget for the NCTP amounted to approximately 517 million shekels (0.9 per cent of GDP), although budget execution has been significantly lower since 2018.

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<sup>2</sup> PCBS and PMA, “Press Release on the Performance of the Palestinian Economy for 2023 and Economic Forecasts for 2024”, 30 December 2023.

The NCTP depends heavily – and increasingly – on financial support from the European Union’s PEGASE mechanism (Mécanisme Palestino-européen de Gestion de l’Aide Socio-économique), and to a lesser extent from the World Bank and others. Until 2023, the NCTP targeted households below the national extreme poverty line, as well as vulnerable and marginalized households, specifically those whose members include persons with disabilities, elderly persons, orphans, people with chronic illnesses, and households headed by women. Targeting was achieved primarily through a proxy means test (PMT), developed and applied by the ministry’s staff and social workers, with the support of the World Bank, to rank families registered in the social registry from “poorest” to “wealthiest”.

Since 2018, NCTP payments have become less reliable and predictable, with the NCTP budget no longer being fully executed. While domestic revenues have increased and the PEGASE NCTP financial contribution has remained stable since 2018, overall overseas development assistance (ODA) has declined and clearance revenues due to the Palestinian Authority have been withheld by Israel, leading to a decline in social sector budget execution. The National Social Registry (management information system) was established with the support of the World Bank and is managed by the Ministry of Social Development since 2023.

Before 7 October 2023, the Palestinian Authority had made significant steps towards establishing a rights-based social protection system, moving towards protecting individuals throughout the stages of their life cycle. In the social protection sector, the earlier narrative of relief and safety nets had been on a trajectory towards more comprehensive national systems and social development. In September 2023, the Council of Ministers adopted the Ministry of Social Development’s new policy, which introduced individual social allowances for persons with severe disabilities and older persons over 65 years old without another source of income. Over one-quarter of older Palestinians live in poverty. This disproportionately affects older women, who tend to live longer than men and are more likely to be widowed and live alone, depriving them of important spousal material, social and emotional support. Poverty rates are starkly and consistently higher (roughly 9 per cent higher) across the life cycle among persons with disabilities compared to the rest of the population. These new social allowances build on the existing commitment to establish a social protection floor – articulated in the ministry’s previous strategies and budgets – in solidarity with groups that suffer from the highest levels of social and economic exclusion, and which have limited capacity for self-reliance or to attain a minimum standard of living. The social allowances will start being paid in 2024, with the financial support of PEGASE. The move to social allowances is particularly important given the low coverage rates of contributory social protection. Following extensive public consultation and tripartite agreement by workers, employers and the Palestinian Authority, a draft Social Security Law was also on the cusp of adoption in October 2023, before the escalation of hostilities; the adoption of the draft has since been postponed.

### 3. Project Background

With the support of the Office of the European Union Representative (West Bank and Gaza Strip, UNRWA) the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF and Oxfam have been implementing the Project: Strengthening nexus coherence and responsiveness in the Palestinian social protection sector which aims at addressing, together with government, other UN agencies and humanitarian partners, the fragmentation of programming, including at the humanitarian-development nexus, and increasing the capacity of MoSD and its partners to quickly leverage social transfers (cash and in-kind) in efforts to respond to emerging needs across Palestinian society. The overall objective of the project is to assist in the achievement of SDG 1.3, for countries to “implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including [social protection] floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and vulnerable. Specifically, it will i) enhance rights-based and nexus programmatic coherence of the Palestinian social protection sector and ii) increase the responsiveness of the social protection system in times of crisis to support OPT’s progress on SDG 1.3. The project will generate the necessary outputs towards the achievement those specific objectives.

The European Commission delegated the implementation of the project to the ILO through a Contribution Agreement. The ILO as an EU Pillar assessed organization has the full responsibility for the implementation in line with its own procurement procedures, accounting, internal control and audit systems which have been positively pillar assessed.

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) undertakes strategic supervision and guidance, and include representatives from MoSD, the EU and the ILO. The PSC meets annually and reviews the project progress and approve the Annual Working Plans(AWPs). The PSC is consulted on different occasions to address contingent strategic issues.

The PSC is assisted by a Project Consultative Committee (PCC), providing strategic and policy advice on relevant issues pertaining to the areas of operation of the Project. The PCC members were chosen among relevant humanitarian organisations in West Bank and Gaza.

### 4. Expected results.

#### Impact

The Overall Objective of the action is to support the implementation of “SDG Target 1.3: Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable...” [Sustainable Development Goal 1.3]

#### Outcomes and Outputs

##### **COMPONENT 1 – CROSS-NEXUS COHERENCE**

**Specific Objective 1: Rights-based and cross-nexus programmatic coherence of social protection is enhanced.**

Through this Specific Objective, the development intervention will seek to:

- Formulate and operationalize a common policy orientation across the spectrum of social protection actors in line with the SDSS
- Develop a whole-of-sector planning and budgeting framework for implementation of the SDSS
- Harmonize/align key programmatic design features across government and humanitarian interventions
- Maximize operational efficiencies across programmes, sharing businesses processes and administrative resources

Output 1.1: A programmatic and financing framework for cross-nexus implementation of the Ministry's Social Development Sector Strategy (SDSS) is developed

Output 1.2: A cooperation agreement outlining roles and responsibilities among humanitarian social protection actors and MoSD is developed

Output 1.3: Cross-nexus social protection programme design features are reviewed to improve programmatic coherence

Output 1.4: Administrative tools and resources are assessed to unlock and expand operational synergies across the nexus

## **COMPONENT 2 - RESPONSIVENESS**

### **Specific Objective 2: Responsiveness of the social protection system is enhanced**

Through this Specific Objective, the development intervention will seek to:

- Develop shock-responsive protocols and procedures for expanding and managing social protection programmes during crises.
- Establish or reactivate Joint Planning Groups (JPG) across the West Bank and Gaza in support of strengthening vertical coordination between national and local government.
- Develop capacities and raise awareness among local government, CSOs and humanitarian agencies on government's rights-based vision of social protection, the SDSS, current programmes, and administrative practices.

Output 2.1: Shock-responsive measures are developed for expanding and managing social protection programmes during crises

Output 2.2: Joint Planning Groups (JPG) are established or reactivated across the West Bank and Gaza in support of strengthening a SRSP system through vertical coordination between national and local government

Output 2.3: Capacities developed among local government, CSOs and humanitarian agencies on government's rights-based vision of social protection, the SDSS, current programmes and administrative practices

Output 2.4: Awareness is raised among stakeholders on MoSD's rights-based vision for social protection governance and administration

## 5. Purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation

ILO considers evaluation as an integral part of the implementation of development cooperation activities. Provision is made in the project in accordance with ILO evaluation policy and based on the nature of the project and the specific requirements agreed upon at the time of the project design and during the project as per established procedures. As the project is coming to an end and in line with the evaluation policy, a final independent evaluation is due. The final evaluation aims to assess the achievement of the results, identify the main difficulties/constraints, assess the impact of the programme for the targeted populations, and formulate lessons learned and practical recommendations to improve future similar programmes.

### Objectives

This evaluation will examine the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and potential impact of the project. It will provide recommendations for future similar projects. This evaluation will also identify strengths and weaknesses in the project design, strategy, and implementation as well as lessons learned and good practices.

Specifically, the evaluation will examine the following aspects:

- **Changes in context and review of assumptions (relevance):** Is the project's design adequate to address the problems at hand? Were the project objective and design relevant given the political, economic, and financial context?
- **Coherence:** Is the project compatible with other interventions in the region on migration?
- **Results in terms of outcomes and outputs achieved (effectiveness):** How has the project contributed towards project's goals? To what extent did it contribute to the ILO's Programme & Budget, Country Programme Outcomes, and more largely SDGs?
- **Use of resources in achievement of projected performance (efficiency):** How have the resources been used to fulfil the project performance in an efficient manner with respect to cost, time and management staff?
- **Assessment of impact (impact):** To what extent has the project contributed to long-term intended impact?
- **Sustainability:** Will the project's effects remain over time?

The evaluation will comply with ILO evaluation policy<sup>3</sup>, and the UNEG ethical guidelines<sup>4</sup> will be followed.

#### Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation will assess the project's overall performance in line with its planned outcomes and outputs. It will cover all aspects of the project highlighting the main challenges and good practices. The evaluation will integrate ILO's cross-cutting issues, including norms and social dialogue, gender equality, disability inclusion, and other non-discrimination concerns throughout its methodology and all deliverables. The geographical coverage is the OPT, West Bank and Gaza. The evaluation should cover the period of July 2021 – August 2024, while the project ends on 31 August 2024.

#### Clients of the Evaluation

The primary clients of this evaluation are ILO ROAS, ILO SOCPRO, GEDI; DEVINVEST; DWT-Beirut; the donor, ILO constituents in the country of implementation, and the project's key stakeholders. Secondary users include other project stakeholders and units within the ILO that may indirectly benefit from the knowledge generated by the evaluation.

A participatory approach involving key stakeholders will be ensured to the extent possible.

## 6. Evaluation criteria and questions (including Cross-cutting issues/ issues of special interest to the ILO)

The evaluation utilizes the standard ILO evaluation framework and follows the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria with emphasis on integrating gender:

#### Relevance and strategic fit

- How did the project contribute to the ILO's Programme & Budget 2020-2021 and 2022-2023, Country Programme Outcomes, and United Nations Sustainable Development Framework 2020-2024, and the SDGs?
- How well was the project designed to address relevant priorities and needs of constituents whether goals have been clearly specified?
- How do the project's objectives and interventions address the specific needs and priorities of the target population, especially the most vulnerable groups?

#### Coherence

- To what extent is the project coherent with other interventions of the ILO in OPT and in the region?
- To what extent is the project consistent with the policies and goals of OPT on social protection including work on gender?

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_mas/---eval/documents/policy/wcms\\_603265.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/policy/wcms_603265.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>



- What strategies are in place to ensure coherent collaboration between various stakeholders, including government, international organizations, and local NGOs to avoid conflicts or duplication of efforts??

### Effectiveness

- To what extent did the project achieve the overall objective, outcomes, and outputs?
- How did the project's outputs and outcomes contribute to ILO's mainstreamed strategies including gender equality, social dialogue, and labour standards?
- How effective was communication among the project team, the regional office and the responsible technical department at ILO headquarters? Has the project received adequate technical and administrative support/response from the ILO backstopping units?

### Efficiency

- To what extent were the project activities cost-efficient? Were the resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) allocated strategically to achieve outcomes? To what extent can the project results justify the time, financial and human resources invested in the project?
- To what extent has the project been able to create synergies in cost sharing with other ILO or non-ILO initiatives either nationally or regionally?
- How did the project's governance structure facilitate good results and efficient delivery? And if not, why not?

### Impact orientation

- How does the project measure and track the long-term effects of social protection interventions on reducing poverty and inequality?
- How likely are the project achievements to contribute to the social protection systems of OPT, West Bank and Gaza?
- What mechanisms are in place to assess the impact of coordinated efforts between governmental and non-governmental actors on the overall effectiveness of social protection programmes and to what extent gender balance is taken into consideration?

### Sustainability

- Are the results achieved by the project likely to be sustainable? What measures have been considered to ensure that the key components of the project are sustainable beyond the life of the project?
- Can future projects be built upon the results of this current project, ensuring sustainability and optimal use of results?

- What strategies are in place to secure long-term funding and resources from both national and international stakeholders to sustain social protection interventions?

## 7. Methodology

The evaluation will be carried out by an external consultant. The following is the proposed evaluation methodology. The evaluator is expected to conduct quantitative and qualitative data collection approach, triangulation of findings, and integration of cross cutting issues. Only if needed and upon the approval of the ILO, a local consultant can be hired. Any changes to the methodology should be discussed with and approved by the Evaluation Manager.

### Document review and analysis

In preparation of any evaluation, an important first activity that should be carried out is the review and analysis of project-related documents. These include but not limited to project documents or concept notes with logical framework, work plans, progress and technical reports, financial reports, any materials/ studies/ events proceedings prepared or undertaken within the framework of the project.

### Briefing and inception report drafting

The evaluator will have an initial consultation with the Evaluation Manager and the relevant ILO staff managing the project in OPT. The objective of the consultation is to reach a common understanding regarding the status of the project, the priority questions, available data sources and data collection instruments and an outline of the final evaluation report. The following topics will be covered: status of logistical arrangements, project background and materials, key evaluation questions and priorities, outline of the inception and final report.

### Individual Interviews

Following the desk review conducted by the evaluator and after the initial consultation/briefing with the project manager, as well as the approval of the inception report, the evaluator will hold virtual meetings with constituents/stakeholders together with interpreters supporting the process if needed. Individual or group interviews will be conducted.

### Presentation of preliminary findings

The evaluator will convene a workshop inviting individuals who have taken part in the interviews as a way to present preliminary findings and validate the interpretations.

### Drafting the evaluation report

The evaluator will draft the evaluation report based on the outline agreed upon in the inception report. The evaluation manager will share the draft report with relevant ILO staffs, partners and stakeholders and will consolidate their feedback. The evaluator will, thereafter, amend the evaluation report and submit a final version to the evaluation manager which needs to be approved by EVAL.

## 8. Management arrangements and work plan (including timeframe)

The evaluator will report to the ILO's evaluation manager and should discuss any technical and methodological matters with him. The ILO ROAS will provide administrative and logistical support during the data collection. The Evaluation Office will approve and sign off the final evaluation report.

The evaluator is responsible for conducting the evaluation according to the terms of reference (ToR). He/she will:

- Review the ToR and propose any refinements to evaluation questions and methodology during the inception phase.
- Review project background materials (e.g., project document and progress reports).
- Prepare an inception report.
- Develop and implement the evaluation methodology (i.e., conduct interviews, review documents) to answer the evaluation questions.
- Conduct preparatory consultations with the evaluation manager prior to the evaluation mission.
- Conduct key informant interviews and collect information.
- Either conduct focus group discussions or guide and coordinate with a national consultant to do so
- Analyze findings from key informant interviews and focus group discussions.
- Present preliminary findings
- Prepare an initial draft of the evaluation report with input from ILO specialists and constituents/stakeholders.
- Prepare the final report based on the ILO, donor and other stakeholders' feedback obtained on the draft report.
- Makes sure all deliverables are submitted as per EVAL's guidelines using the most updated templates.

### Evaluation Timeframe

The evaluation is to commence in August 2024 and complete in November 2024. The following table describes the tentative timeframe:

Tasks	Number of Working days
Desk review of documents related with project, drafting and submitting an inception report draft and its revision after incorporating comments	10
Conducting interviews	8
Data analysis	5
Drafting submission of evaluation report	5
Preparation of the Presentation of preliminary findings and conducting it.	1
Revising draft final report	2
Integration of comments and finalization of the report	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>

### Main deliverables

The main outputs of the evaluation consist of the following:

- **Deliverable 1:** Inception Report with comments log
- **Deliverable 2:** Draft evaluation report
- **Deliverable 3:** PowerPoint Presentation on preliminary findings

- **Deliverable 4:** Final evaluation report with comments log and a separate template for executive summary and templates for lessons learned and good practices duly filled in (as per ILO's standard procedure, the report will be considered final after EVAL's approval)

## Roles and Responsibilities

### **The ILO Evaluation Manager is responsible for:**

- Drafting and Finalizing the ToR with input from ILO colleagues and other stakeholders
- Hiring the evaluator and providing the evaluator with the project background materials
- Assisting the implementation of the evaluation methodology, as appropriate
- Reviewing the inception report, initial draft final report, circulating it for comments and providing consolidated feedback to the evaluator on the inception report and the final report
- Reviewing the final report
- Coordinating with the Regional Evaluation Officer for the Evaluation Office's clearance of the final report
- Disseminating the final report to stakeholders and Coordinating follow-up as necessary.

### **The ILO Regional Evaluation Officer:**

- Provides support to the planning of the evaluation.
- Approves selection of the evaluation consultant and final versions of the TOR.
- Reviews the draft and final evaluation report and submits it to the ILO Evaluation Office.
- Disseminates the report as appropriate.

### **The Project team is responsible for:**

- Reviewing the draft TOR and providing input
- Providing project background materials, including studies, analytical papers, reports, tools, publications produced, and any relevant background notes.
- Providing a proposed list of stakeholders
- Reviewing and providing comments on the initial draft report
- Participating in the debriefing on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations

## Legal and ethical matters

- This evaluation will comply with ILO evaluation guidelines and UN Norms and Standards.
- The ToRs is accompanied by the code of conduct for carrying out the evaluation “Code of conduct for evaluation in the ILO”<sup>5</sup>. The selected consultant will sign the Code of Conduct form along with the contract.
- UNEG ethical guidelines will be followed throughout the evaluation.
- The consultant will not have any links to project management or any other conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of the evaluation.

## Qualifications

- Master’s Degree in social sciences, economics, development studies, evaluation or related fields, with demonstrated strong research experience.
- A minimum of 7 years’ experience in conducting projects and programme evaluations, with demonstrated experience in development related programmes.
- Previous experience in evaluations for UN agencies is required. Evaluation experience with the ILO is an advantage.
- Relevant regional experience and familiarity with implementation of programmes and projects in the region. Experience in the gulf is an asset.
- Full proficiency in English. Command of Arabic is a strong advantage.
- Knowledge of the ILO and its normative mandate, tripartite structure and technical cooperation activities is an advantage.
- Excellent communication, interview and report writing skills.
- Demonstrated ability to deliver quality results within strict deadlines.
- Facilitation skills and ability to manage diversity of views in different cultural contexts.
- The evaluator(s) must have no previous involvement in the delivery of the project under evaluation.

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/wcmstp5/groups/public/---ed\\_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms\\_649148.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmstp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_649148.pdf)

## 2. Evaluation Matrix

Evaluations Question	Evaluation Indicators	Data Sources	Data Collection	Data Analysis
<b>Relevance:</b> <b>The extent to which the objectives of the project are consistent with the needs and interest of the people, the needs of the country and the donors' related strategies.</b>				
How did the project contribute to the ILO's Programme & Budget 2020-2021 and 2022-2023, Country Programme Outcomes, and United Nations Sustainable Development Framework 2020-2024, and the SDGs?	The project design clearly indicates points of alignment with the ILO P&B, and UNSDCF	Government National Development Plan, Sectoral Strategies, ILO Strategies, SDGs Stakeholders input	Desk review  Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews	Information gaps analysis Triangulation Analysis of the ProDoc vis a vis the various strategies Field mission (MoSD) validation
How well was the project designed to address relevant priorities and needs of constituents, and have the goals been clearly specified?	Interventions related to Nexus, coordination, and response were aligned to local needs and capacity categorized by stakeholders (national partners, local partners, international organizations, etc.).	MoSD documents  Discussion of the TWGs and other groups supported by the project  Capacity development plans and training needs assessment  Stakeholder contributions (ILO staff, and local partners)	Desk review  Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews	Results-based assessment Contribution analysis Beneficiary assessment Lessons learned
How do the project's objectives and interventions address the specific needs and priorities of the target population, especially the most vulnerable groups?	Interventions were aligned to the needs of the beneficiaries on the thematic area of project including gender and human rights especially for the most vulnerable groups	Project's documents  Stakeholder contributions (ILO staff, and local partners)	Desk review  Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews  Focus Group Discussions	Results-based assessment Contribution analysis Beneficiary assessment Lessons learned

<b>New:</b> Were the ToC of the project and approaches and strategies/assumptions relevant to achieve intended results?	ToC, intervention logic and approaches were relevant to achieve the objectives	Project's documents Results Framework of the intervention  Independent evaluation (ROM)  Stakeholder contributions (ILO staff, and local partners)	Desk review  Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews	Results-based assessment Contribution analysis Beneficiary assessment Lessons learned Verification of achieved outputs vs. intended results
<b>Coherence:</b> <b>How well or not the various activities of the project work together and also fit with other interventions in the field.</b>				
To what extent is the project coherent with other interventions of the ILO in OPT and in the region?		Government national and sectoral plans, list of projects implemented in the sector, etc.,  Stakeholder contributions (ILO staff, and local partners)	Desk review  Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews	Information gaps analysis  Triangulation
To what extent is the project consistent with the policies and goals of OPT on social protection including work on gender?		National Development Strategies, MoSD Strategies, and Policies  Stakeholder contributions (ILO staff, and local partners)	Desk review  Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews	Information gaps analysis  Triangulation
What strategies are in place to ensure coherent collaboration between various stakeholders, including government, international organizations, and local NGOs to avoid conflicts or duplication of efforts?		National Development Strategies, MoSD Strategies, and Policies, donors reports and policies  Stakeholder contributions (ILO staff, and local partners)	Desk review  Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews	Information gaps analysis  Triangulation



<b>Effectiveness:</b> <b>Extent to which the objectives of the project have been achieved.</b>				
To what extent did the project achieve the overall objective, outcomes, and outputs?	Level of achievement of project results Unintended negative outcomes/challenges Lessons learned	Project's documents Results Framework of the intervention Project outputs	Desk review  Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews	Information gaps analysis  Triangulation Lessons learned
How did the project's outputs and outcomes contribute to ILO's mainstreamed strategies including gender equality, social dialogue, and labour standards?	Points of linkages between the project results and the ILO strategies including gender equality, social dialogue, and labour	Project's documents ILO strategies Stakeholder contributions		Lessons learned
How effective was communication among the project team, the regional office and the responsible technical department at ILO headquarters? Has the project received adequate technical and administrative support/response from the ILO backstopping units?	Level, type, and frequency of communication  Quality and level of support from ILP backing units to the project team	Project's documents  Stakeholder contributions	Desk review  Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews	Information gaps analysis  Triangulation Lessons learned  Lessons learned
<b>Efficiency:</b> <b>Extent to which resources/inputs (funds, time, human resources, etc.) have been turned into results?</b>				
To what extent were the project activities cost-efficient? Were the resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) allocated strategically to achieve outcomes? To what extent can the project results justify the time, financial, and human resources invested, and are the project resources adequate and available on time to implement the activities as planned?	Level of efficient utilization of resources to achieve outcomes	Project progress reports and deliverables  Independent evaluations (ROM) and institutional assessments relevant to the project	Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews  Desk review	Beneficiary assessment Lessons learned Cost efficiency analysis
To what extent has the project been able to create synergies in cost sharing with other ILO or non-ILO	Degree of synergies between the project and other	Project progress reports and deliverables	Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews	Beneficiary assessment Lessons learned Cost efficiency analysis

initiatives either nationally or regionally?	initiatives implemented in the field of social protection	Budget and financial reports	Desk review	
How did the project’s governance structure facilitate good results and efficient delivery? And if not, why not?	Level of involvement of various governance bodies in the project's decision-making and follow-up processes	Project progress reports  Minutes of meetings of the steering committee and other technical groups related to the project  Stakeholder contributions	Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews  Desk review	Information gaps analysis  Triangulation
<b>Sustainability: Probability of the benefits of the project continuing in the long term.</b>				
Are the results achieved by the project likely to be sustainable? What measures have been considered to ensure that the key components of the project are sustainable beyond the life of the project?	Capacity of the MoSD and other relevant stakeholders to sustain the project post-completion, both technically and financially.	Project’s documents Results Framework of the intervention Project outputs Independent evaluations and institutional assessments	Desk review  Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews  Focus Group Discussions	Information gaps analysis  Results-based assessment Triangulation  On-site validation Contribution analysis Beneficiary assessment Lessons learned
Can future projects be built upon the results of this current project, ensuring sustainability and optimal use of results?	Partners' preparedness to implement future interventions based on the project's results.			
What strategies are in place to secure long-term funding and resources from both national and international stakeholders to sustain social protection interventions?	Availability of strategies and mechanisms to secure funding for future projects.			
<b>Impact orientation: The extent to which the project can contribute to its long-term intended impact.</b>				
How does the project measure and track the long-term effects of social	Mechanisms to track and measure the long-term	Project’s documents	Desk review	Information gaps analysis

protection interventions on reducing poverty and inequality?	effects of social protection interventions	Results Framework of the intervention Project outputs	Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews  Focus Group Discussions	Results-based assessment Triangulation  On-site validation Contribution analysis Beneficiary assessment Lessons learned
How likely are the project achievements to contribute to the social protection systems of OPT, West Bank and Gaza?	Level of contribution of the project to the social protection systems	Project's documents Results Framework of the intervention Project outputs	Desk review  Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews  Focus Group Discussions	Information gaps analysis  Results-based assessment Triangulation  On-site validation Contribution analysis Beneficiary assessment Lessons learned
What mechanisms are in place to assess the impact of coordinated efforts between governmental and non-governmental actors on the overall effectiveness of social protection programmes and to what extent gender balance is taken into consideration?	Availability of mechanisms to assess impact, including those related to gender considerations	Project's documents Results Framework of the intervention Project outputs	Desk review  Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews  Focus Group Discussions	Information gaps analysis  Results-based assessment Triangulation  On-site validation Contribution analysis Beneficiary assessment Lessons learned

### **3. Bibliography**

- Project Document (titled "Annex I: Description of the Action")
- ROM Report
- Progress Report 2022
- Progress Report 2023
- Progress Report 2024
- MTE Self-Evaluation Report
- January 2024 Work Plan (Excel sheet)
- PSC Meeting Minute-April 2022
- PSC Meeting Minute-November 2022
- PCPCs ToR
- Procedure Guide for Participatory Work Committees During Crises-Arabic
- Membership Form for the PCSCs.
- Campaign Materials
- Arabic ToR for the SPCVA Thematic Group
- Inception Report -May 2021
- Assessing System Readiness for Shock Responsive Social Protection in Palestine-September 2022
- Project Communication Plan-2021
- Comprehensive Mapping of Cash and in-Kind Governmental and Non-Governmental Social Assistance Programs in the Palestinian Territories-April 2023
- Financing and Design Options and Scenarios- Draft 12 July 2023
- ILO Policy Brief: Alignment opportunities for social protection programme design and delivery across the nexus: Occupied Palestinian Territory-2024.
- SPCVA TWG 3-Day Workshop on Strengthening Coordination- Output Documentation-March 2023
- Social Protection Cash and Voucher Assistance (SPCVA)-Thematic Working Group (TWG) Workshop Series-IPK Process Report-21 August 2024
- Synthesis of recent studies related to the social protection cash voucher assistance (SPCVA) nexus in the Occupied Palestinian Territory Summary report on findings and recommendations-2023
- TWG mission statement-2023

#### 4. List of Persons Interviewed

Organization	Name	Suggested Gender	Title
<b>MoSD</b>	Manal Ramadan	Female	Director General of Planning and Aid Management
<b>MoSD</b>	Bushra Sbeihat	Female	Systems Developer / Data Analysis
<b>MoSD</b>	Tamam Khader	Female	Director General of Community Based Organizations Department
<b>National cash coordinator</b>	Luca Sangalli	Male	NCWG Coordinator
<b>ILO</b>	Charis Reid	Female	Social Protection Officer
	Momin Badarna	Male	Social Protection Coordinator
	Luca Pellerano	Male	Senior Social Protection Specialist
<b>WFP</b>	Salah Lahham	Male	VAM Officer
<b>UNICEF</b>	Artur Ayvazov	Male	Chief Social Policy
	Cosma Gabagilo	Male	Social Policy Officer
	Ayman Sawalha	Male	Social Protection Officer
	Eyad Hamdan	Male	Social Protection Officer
<b>EUREP</b>	Stephanie Rousseau	Female	Programme Manager, PEGASE
<b>World Bank</b>	Vanessa Moreira	Female	Senior Social Protection Specialist
<b>Oxfam</b>	Omar Ghrieb	Male	Policy and Advocacy Officer
	Majd Al Khoury	Female	
<b>IPK</b>	Marc Steinlin	Male	TWG Facilitator
<b>AMAN</b>	Hama Zeidan	Female	Operations Director Coordinator Coordinator
	Intesar Hamdan	Male	
	Wael Ba'alousha	Female	



## 5. Template 4.1: Lessons Learned

### **FINAL INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF STRENGTHENING NEXUS COHERENCE AND RESPONSIVENESS IN THE PALESTINIAN SOCIAL PROTECTION SECTOR**

**Project DC/SYMBOL:** PSE/21/01/EUR

**Name of Evaluator:** Khaled Rajab

**Date:** 07 December 2024

*The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.*

<b>LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT</b>	<b>Flexibility and Adaptiveness</b>
<b>Brief description of lessons learned</b> (link to specific action or task)	Integrating flexibility into project design is essential for responding to unexpected challenges. Adaptive management approaches, such as annual Theory of Change workshops, help reassess and adjust the project's focus.
<b>Context and any related preconditions</b>	<p>The project was implemented in the OPT as there has been unrest, political instability, and crises. This volatile condition required a flexible approach to address shifting priorities and changing needs.</p> <p>Flexibility was incorporated into project design from the beginning, but the operational environment still posed unforeseen challenges.</p>
<b>Targeted users / Beneficiaries</b>	<p>Vulnerable people, particularly those in Gaza and the West Bank, who were directly impacted by socio-economic shocks and conflict.</p> <p>Stakeholders, including the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), local governments, and civil society organizations.</p>
<b>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</b>	The little of flexibility in earlier phases of the project delayed timely adjustments to the Theory of Change, postponing responses to emerging needs.
<b>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</b>	The incorporation of adaptive management approaches, annual Theory of Change workshops for example, allowed stakeholders to recalibrate the project's focus in real time. This guaranteed that the project stayed relevant and responsive to the shifting context.
<b>ILO Administrative Issues</b> (staff, resources, design, implementation)	ILO's staff showed adaptability in shifting project focus as needed, but the project design could have been more flexible from the outset to better adapt changes.

<b>LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT</b>	<b>Longer Implementation Period</b>
<b>Brief description of lessons learned</b> (link to specific action or task)	A two-year project duration was insufficient to accommodate necessary adaptations and achieve sustainable impact. Extending future projects to three years would allow stakeholders to adapt and implement changes more effectively.
<b>Context and any related preconditions</b>	<p>The project was implemented in a highly complex and fragile political and contextual context, which required time to tackle systemic issues within the social protection system and build stakeholder trust.</p> <p>A two-year duration was set against the backdrop of ongoing political challenges, armed conflicts, and logistical distractions, which created delays in implementation and adaptation.</p>
<b>Targeted users / Beneficiaries</b>	<p>Vulnerable populations, including elderly people, individuals with disabilities IWDs, and those who are affected by socio-economic shocks in Gaza and the West Bank, who require longer-term interventions for sustainability.</p> <p>Government partners, particularly the MoSD, that can benefit from more allocated time to build capacity and institutionalize changes.</p>
<b>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</b>	<p>The condensed time frame limited the project's capability to manage to make necessary adjustments and effectively assess and attend the needs of beneficiaries.</p> <p>The need for substantial capacity-building and coordination across diverse stakeholders necessitated more time than the initial two-year period.</p>
<b>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</b>	Expanding the project would have allowed for more thorough assessments, better adaptation to challenges, and the implementation of a wider range of capacity-building activities.
<b>ILO Administrative Issues</b> (staff, resources, design, implementation)	ILO staff worked under limited time restraints, which led to delays in some activities. Prolonged project timelines would have provided more time for better planning and more effective capacity-building activities.

<b>LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT</b>	<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b>
<b>Brief description of lessons learned</b> (link to specific action or task)	Ensuring meaningful participation from government and social partners strengthens project ownership and long-term sustainability.
<b>Context and any related preconditions</b>	In the OPT, where governance systems are often disjointed, actively involving both local and national stakeholders played a key role in maintaining the project's relevance and ensuring its long-term viability.
<b>Targeted users / Beneficiaries</b>	<p>Local governance frameworks, such as the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), along with social partners and project beneficiaries, were essential to fostering a sense of ownership crucial for ensuring the project's sustainable impact.</p> <p>Civil society organizations and other stakeholders significantly contributed to the project's achievements through cooperative efforts and shared decision-making.</p>
<b>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</b>	<p>In Gaza, certain stakeholders initially faced difficulties in fully engaging due to factors such as security challenges, political constraints, and conflicting priorities.</p> <p>Limited early involvement of some critical stakeholders hindered the development of robust partnerships and diminished project ownership in specific regions.</p>
<b>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</b>	<p>Active involvement of stakeholders, including the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) and local social partners, fostered a deeper sense of ownership in the project, particularly in shaping rights-based social protection initiatives.</p> <p>Collaborative decision-making approaches, exemplified in the development of the SRSP Protocol, ensured that the project's goals were closely aligned with the stakeholders' needs and capabilities.</p>
<b>ILO Administrative Issues</b> (staff, resources, design, implementation)	ILO staff were instrumental in promoting stakeholder involvement by organizing workshops and fostering collaborative planning efforts. However, placing greater focus on early engagement and maintaining ongoing dialogue could have further enhanced stakeholders' sense of ownership.





## 6. Template 4.2: Emerging Good Practices

### FINAL INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF STRENGTHENING NEXUS COHERENCE AND RESPONSIVENESS IN THE PALESTINIAN SOCIAL PROTECTION SECTOR

**Project DC/SYMBOL:** PSE/21/01/EUR

**Name of Evaluator:** Khaled Rajab

**Date:** 07 December 2024

*The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.*

<b>GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT</b>	<b>Dialogue and Relationship-Building Protocol</b>
<b>Brief summary of the good practice</b> (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	<p>Conducting participatory workshops and developing a shared vision across sectors enhanced coordination and collaboration.</p> <p>The project developed a national SRSP protocol, enhancing MoSD's capacity to respond to emergencies effectively. This framework guided crisis management and cash-based interventions during emergencies in West Bank and Gaza..</p>
<b>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</b>	<p>The project functioned within a highly divided landscape, involving multiple entities in the provision of social protection services. Establishing trust and fostering cohesion across various sectors was vital for achieving positive outcomes. In regions such as Gaza, cultivating relationships was particularly crucial due to the need to carefully manage complex local political dynamics.</p>
<b>Establish a clear cause- effect relationship</b>	<p>The protocol improved coordination, enabled real-time decision-making, and ensured timely aid distribution during crises.</p>
<b>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</b>	<p>Thousands of households affected by the Gaza crisis received targeted support, reducing immediate vulnerabilities.</p>
<b>Potential for replication and by whom</b>	<p>Local governmental entities, such as the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) and civil society organizations (CSOs), alongside international organizations and beneficiaries, reaped the benefits of improved coordination in service delivery and more streamlined communication channels.</p> <p>International organizations, governments, and NGOs can replicate this framework to enhance resilience in crisis-prone areas.</p>
<b>Upward links to higher ILO Goals</b> (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	<p>Supports SDG Target 1.3 by strengthening governance and institutional capacity for inclusive social protection.</p>

<b>GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT</b>	<b>Structured Coordination</b>
<b>Brief summary of the good practice</b> (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The Social Protection Cash and Voucher Assistance Thematic Working Group (SPCVA TWG) proved the effectiveness of structured coordination mechanisms, serving as a model for future programs.
<b>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</b>	<p>The fragmented governance framework in the OPT necessitated robust coordination strategies to prevent duplication and improve intervention efficiency.</p> <p>The creation of the SPCVA TWG facilitated collaboration among humanitarian and development stakeholders, offering an organized platform for coordination efforts.</p>
<b>Establish a clear cause- effect relationship</b>	Empowering SPCVA TWG improved crisis management, enhanced grassroots participation, and will lead to a minimized dependency on external actors.
<b>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</b>	The SPCVA TWG demonstrated remarkable success in optimizing efforts, minimizing redundancy, and ensuring the efficient allocation of resources. This structured coordination model is now regarded as a promising framework for future initiatives in the OPT and comparable settings.
<b>Potential for replication and by whom</b>	With the project support, local governments and humanitarian organizations can replicate this model to strengthen community-based governance.
<b>Upward links to higher ILO Goals</b> (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	Contributes to the ILO's Decent Work Agenda by fostering community resilience and participation.

<b>GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT</b>	<b>Human Capacity Building</b>
<b>Brief summary of the good practice</b> (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	Tailored training and technical assistance significantly improved the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD)'s ability to manage increased workloads and enhance coordination.
<b>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</b>	The MoSD faced the challenge of overseeing intricate social protection systems within a high-stress, conflict-affected setting, necessitating extensive capacity development. To support these demands, the project focused on delivering customized technical guidance and specialized training.
<b>Establish a clear cause- effect relationship</b>	Tailored training and technical assistance enhanced MoSD staff's technical expertise, crisis management skills, and coordination capabilities, enabling them to effectively oversee social protection systems. This improved capacity allowed the MoSD to efficiently manage programs like the rights-based social allowance initiative, benefiting over 30,000 individuals, even during high-pressure periods such as the Gaza conflict.
<b>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</b>	Customized training initiatives equipped MoSD personnel with the essential competencies to oversee social protection systems efficiently, particularly during times of heightened stress caused by crises. These measures significantly enhanced MoSD's capacity to manage such systems effectively.
<b>Potential for replication and by whom</b>	The model can be replicated by governments and development partners aiming to institutionalize inclusive social protection systems.
<b>Upward links to higher ILO Goals</b> (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	This practice aligns with SDG Target 1.3 and the ILO's Decent Work Agenda by ensuring social protection for all.