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BOUZOUR - Midterm Internal Evaluation

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Evaluation nature: Internal

Project countries: Lebanon

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Background & Context**

The Bouzour Project, funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) with a budget of \$3.68 million, is a 30-month initiative (July 2023 – December 2025) implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The project adopts the ILO's Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS), integrating market-based solutions with interventions to strengthen vulnerable communities' capacities. Adopting the ILO's Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS) seeks to address systemic constraints in agriculture and promote climate-smart solutions, renewable energy adoption, and market linkages. The project operates in Lebanon, where persistent economic and political instability has compounded to create severe challenges for livelihoods and business operations. This mid-term evaluation was undertaken to provide insight into the project's performance, identify lessons learned, and recommend adjustments for improved impact and sustainability.

The evaluation focused on understanding the design, implementation progress, and potential for scaling. Key lines of inquiry included the project's relevance to market needs, coherence with ILO's strategic objectives, efficiency in resource allocation, effectiveness in achieving outcomes, and prospects for long-term sustainability. It also examined how effectively the project responded to Lebanon's socio-economic crisis, conflict-related disruptions, and the ongoing Syrian refugee situation. The evaluation also assessed how the program adapted during Lebanon's conflict and how it can leverage new opportunities following the end of the conflict and regime change in Syria

### **Current Status**

The Bouzour project is currently in its second year of implementation (July 2023– December 2025) and is operating under **exceptionally difficult conditions** due to Lebanon's ongoing economic collapse and the **escalation of the Israel-Palestinian conflict in late 2023**, which significantly impacted **southern Lebanon**. These events have led to the **temporary suspension or relocation of field activities** in affected areas, particularly in the South and parts of the Bekaa. In response, the project has **reallocated activities geographically and adjusted timelines** to maintain operational continuity where feasible.

Despite these disruptions, most components remain underway, although at **varying degrees of progress**. Some interventions—such as the launch of OSH and recruitment mechanism pilots—were paused during the height of the conflict but have since **resumed**. The training of Master Trainers for the Improve Your Agribusiness (IYAB) module and greenhouse upgrade pilots are ongoing, albeit with some delays. Engagements with private sector partners continue, though **scaling activities** have been affected by both economic and security-related constraints.

The project continues to target vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian communities in agriculture but operates in a context marked by **limited access to finance, volatile markets, and regulatory uncertainty**, which require ongoing adaptation. The implementation remains broadly aligned with its original objectives but is proceeding with a **more phased and context-sensitive approach** than initially anticipated.

### **Methodology of Evaluation**

Applying a mixed-methods approach aligned with OECD-DAC criteria, the evaluation combined:

- **Document review:** Analysis of project reports, monitoring data, and partner documentation.
- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** Remote interviews with project staff, implementing partners, and other stakeholders.

Due to security constraints, direct field engagement was not possible. Nevertheless, remote data collection facilitated various perspectives on project performance and contextual adaptability.

This mid-term evaluation of the Bouzour Project was commissioned by the International Labour Organization (ILO) with funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The evaluation covers the project's implementation in Lebanon, focusing on interventions in key agricultural regions, including the North, Mount Lebanon, and the Bekaa Valley. Given the project's emphasis on inclusive market systems and employment generation for both Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees, the evaluation assesses progress across four outcome areas: productivity and decent work in horticulture, market access and value chain development, solar energy adoption, and business and financial capacity building. Applying a mixed-methods approach aligned with OECD-DAC criteria, the evaluation examines the project's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, while also assessing how interventions have adapted to Lebanon's ongoing socio-economic crisis and conflict-related disruptions. This evaluation's primary clients are the Bouzour Management, ILO ROAS (Regional Office for Arab States), ILO HQ, national project stakeholders, and Sida, the project's donor.

## Main Findings & Conclusions

- **Relevance:** Bouzour interventions are well-aligned with Lebanon's urgent needs in agriculture, energy, and market access. By pivoting to cost-effective greenhouse upgrades (working with welders, etc. rather than supporting the establishment of new costly greenhouses), enabling solar rental solutions, and expanding market linkages (e.g., with QOOT cluster), the project remains responsive to economic crisis and conflict realities. However, limited formal labor representation in agriculture constrains alignment with the ILO's tripartite model.
- **Coherence:** The project aligns with ILO's Programme and Budget (P&B) 2024-2025, and Lebanon's UNSDCF priorities, yet internal coherence across outcomes could be enhanced. Improved integration among solar energy, horticulture upgrades, and IYAB training could amplify impact. Externally, deeper collaboration with complementary programs (e.g., ANERA, LIFE) may strengthen policy engagement and financial access.
- **Efficiency:** With a 77% delivery rate for 2024, Bouzour has shown agile management in adapting to Lebanon's volatile environment. Timely financial support and capacity-building have enabled partners to maintain operations during the economic crisis. Nonetheless, the broader financial climate in Lebanon, exacerbated by the devastating regional conflict, remains a significant constraint to growth, as this has effectively halted any investments on the side of private sector.
- **Effectiveness:** The project is broadly on track to meet all key outcome-level targets, particularly around productivity gains, market linkages, and solar adoption. Notable successes include YY Regen's solar rental model and cooperative-led purchasing arrangements. That said, scaling up IYAB training (Outcome 4) and fully embedding labor safeguards in agriculture remain works in progress.
- **Sustainability:** The Bouzour Project applies the ILO's **Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS)**, which is the ILO's methodology to apply MSD to fragile and forced displacement contexts. It combines **push** with **pull** strategies to ensure sustainability, but more importantly emphasizes the need for flexibility and more hands-on support in these contexts. This approach **has been** further adapted to Lebanon's unique contexts, where business survival, rather than purely commercial expansion, is a priority. This **will** require reframing what sustainability means and **strengthening the push component** to include more and expand **direct partner support** in infrastructure and payroll. While some partners (e.g., SmartLand Agri, YY Regen) demonstrate early ownership, future sustainability hinges on securing access to finance, strengthening institutional capacities, and addressing regulatory gaps.

## Recommendations, Lessons Learned, and Good Practices

## Main Recommendations:

- **Continue / strengthen the Hybrid MSD Approach:** Given Lebanon's unique, fragile economy (multiple economic crises and devastating war), a purely facilitative MSD approach is insufficient. Bouzour follows the ILO's **Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS)**, which blends traditional MSD's **pull** strategies (facilitation and market linkages) with **push** strategies (capacity building to build the capacity of farmers and small businesses to more effectively manage their businesses)<sup>1</sup>. In practice—especially in fragile contexts—AIMS has also included **direct support and cost-sharing with private sector partners** to reduce risk and incentivize engagement. For instance, under AIMS projects in **Niger**, equipment such as **onion storage units and aquaculture facilities** was fully funded to catalyse private engagement in refugee-hosting areas<sup>2</sup>. Bouzour has already applied such a **hybrid MSD approach**, combining facilitation with hands-on support for key private actors (e.g. co-investing in solar rental models, post-harvest equipment, greenhouse upgrades, and cherry export pilots). Such an **approach** is essential to sustain operations and ensure clients or beneficiaries like MSMEs and farmers can access critical services (e.g. solar energy, IPM products, hydro-coolers, etc.), and partner businesses can gradually transition towards full market sustainability. This direct support must be carefully designed, underpinned by **root cause analysis**, and time-bound to maintain a clear focus on long-term systemic change.
- **Strengthen Internal Coherence:** Bouzour's interventions—solar energy, horticulture upgrades, and IYAB training—should be better integrated to reinforce one another. IYAB graduates need clear market linkages, and solar adoption should directly contribute to productivity gains in targeted value chains. The new program design should structure Bouzour around three interconnected pillars: Enabling Environment (policy, finance, energy access), Value Chain Growth (agriculture, waste management), and Empowering MSMEs & Workers (recruitment, training, and labor rights). This will enhance synergy and long-term impact.
- **Expand Financing Pipelines:** Lack of financing remains a major constraint on agribusiness growth. To attract private capital, Bouzour should facilitate blended finance models, diaspora-backed investments, and risk-sharing facilities. Strengthening financial linkages will be critical for long-term sustainability.
- **Scale Up Successful Pilots:** Proven models, such as YY Regen's solar rental scheme and cooperative-led exports, should be expanded. This requires investment, policy support, and partnerships to transition these pilots into scalable, commercially viable models.
- **Address the Labor Challenge:** The agriculture sector's informality limits worker protections. Bouzour should explore interventions in adjacent sectors with stronger labor representation, such as waste management. Additionally, cooperative-led hiring and ethical recruitment practices could improve labor conditions in agriculture.
- **Transform Bouzour Regionally:** Expanding Bouzour to Syria would enhance sustainability by leveraging cross-border trade, remittance-linked financing, and workforce mobility. Facilitating Lebanese MSME expansion into Syria and institutionalizing IYAB training for refugees and returnees would support economic recovery in both countries.

## Lessons Learned:

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.ilo.org/resource/other/approach-inclusive-market-systems-aims>

<sup>2</sup> See: International Labour Organization (ILO) & UNHCR. (2019). *Fiche Chaîne de valeur Oignon – Projet PAERCA, Niger (NER/19/01/USA)*. Niamey, Niger: ILO & UNHCR, funded by the U.S. Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM).

- **MSD in Fragile Contexts Requires Adaptation:** Direct financial support to partners is often necessary to stabilize partners. This aspect needs to be continued and further strengthened.
- **Energy Market Distortions:** Donor subsidies and weak regulation hinder the commercialization of the solar energy sector. Free or heavily subsidized solar installations funded by other programs undercut market prices, making it difficult for providers to compete. At the same time, the absence of a clear regulatory framework for private-sector electricity generation limits providers' ability to offer continuous or scalable services.
- **Skilling as a Public Good:** In a collapsed economy, vocational training may require sustained donor backing for short to medium-term
- **Gender and Refugee Inclusion:** Targeted interventions are crucial for women's participation and improving working conditions for Syrian refugees.

#### **Good Practices:**

- **Rental-Based Solar Model:** YY Regen's approach to the solar rental model bypasses high upfront costs for farmers (e.g. if they were to buy and install solar generators), enhancing energy access.
- **Adaptive Programming:** Pivoting greenhouse upgrades and market linkages demonstrates how flexibility yields continued results amid crises.

Overall, Bouzour is mainly on track, demonstrating resilience and innovation in a highly challenging context. Strengthening coherence, securing longer-term financing solutions, and expanding labor protections in agriculture will be essential to delivering sustained impact for Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees.

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## 1. BACKGROUND

### 1.1. Project Context

Lebanon has been experiencing a severe financial and economic crisis, which has had long-lasting effects on its economy and people. The drastic devaluation of the currency has led to a sharp increase in the prices of imported goods, making it increasingly difficult for households to meet their basic needs. The combined effects of these crises have resulted in unprecedented levels of unemployment, pushing both the Lebanese population and the approximately 1.5 million Syrian refugees further into poverty.

In this challenging context, the agriculture sector remains one of the few sectors where Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese host communities can legally find employment. Recognizing this, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has launched the Bouzour Project to promote decent jobs for Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees, focusing on the agriculture and agri-food sectors. These sectors are crucial for the livelihoods of both communities and are especially important for women.

### 1.2. Project Details

The project employs the ILO's Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS) to safeguard jobs and livelihoods for vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian communities and to encourage decent job creation in sectors with potential. It builds and expands on the activities of the **Prospects Project**, which involved the ILO, IFC, World Bank, and others. The project uses a market systems development approach to address key sectoral constraints to decent job creation sustainably, as well as interventions to strengthen the capacities of vulnerable communities and ensure decent work conditions. The project has four outcomes:

- a. Outcome 1: Increased productivity and decent working conditions in the covered horticulture sector
- b. Outcome 2: Farmers and agri-businesses upgraded and connected to new market opportunities in one identified sector
- c. Outcome 3: Farmers will be enabled to use solar energy systems for electricity generation
- d. Outcome 4: Farmers and small agri-businesses are capacitated to manage their activities and resources better

#### Project Snapshot

**Project Title:** BOUZOUR - Building Inclusive Markets and Decent Work for Syrian Refugees and Lebanese Host Communities

**Duration:** 1 July 2023 – 31 December 2025

**Donor:** Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)

**Budget:** \$3,541,326.44

**Administrative Unit:** Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS)/DWT-Beirut

**Technical Backstopping Unit:** ROAS/DWT-Beirut

The project has concluded its inception phase and has started implementation. The Bouzour project has undergone significant changes, especially due to the economic crisis and escalation of war in Lebanon. The original project document was developed in 2021/22, but by the time funding was approved and implementation began over two years later, Lebanon's socio-economic landscape had shifted significantly. The financial crisis had deepened, political instability had escalated, and the 2023-2024 conflict further disrupted economic activities. As a result, Bouzour's strategy required updates to ensure its relevance, including adaptations in intervention design, such as pivoting to cost-effective greenhouse upgrades, expanding cherry export models, and introducing rental-based solar solutions to mitigate

liquidity challenges in the market. The following table outlines some of the key decisions and activities across the four outcomes (progress discussed in section 1.4)

**Table 1: Outcomes & current status**

Outcomes	Current Strategy
1	Due to the financial crisis, the focus shifted from modern greenhouse upgrades to more informal, cost-effective upgrades. There's now more emphasis on local welders who are cost-effectively upgrading greenhouses. A mapping exercise is completed to compare productivity and costs between formal input suppliers and informal welders. Furthermore, the intervention with QOOT emerged as a direct response to the escalating conflict in Lebanon and required adapting the program approach to the new context. This outcome also entails work around climate-smart solutions.
2	The cherry sector was selected due to its potential for inclusive growth and job creation through international market exports, relevance for Lebanese and Syrians, particularly women, and high feasibility of interventions. The project completed a comprehensive <b>study on recruitment mechanisms and working conditions</b> for workers in Lebanon's agriculture sector. The study engaged farmers, workers, intermediaries, and social partners to identify challenges and opportunities for improvement. It provided actionable recommendations and was formally submitted to the Government of Lebanon to support national policymaking. The ILO has offered technical assistance to facilitate the implementation of these recommendations. The project developed a roadmap of interventions for 2025 aimed at enhancing recruitment systems and improving working conditions for agricultural workers.
3	They are focused on innovative solar energy models, such as rental solar systems for agriculture and cold storage energy efficiency. The project has also worked on <b>bridging information gaps between solar energy companies and agricultural actors</b> . A <b>prototype tool was developed</b> to estimate solar energy needs, pre-design systems, and calculate payback periods for farmers.
4	Promoting the ILO's Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) methodology adapted for the agricultural sector. The component is focused on strengthening the capacity of local institutions and trainer networks to deliver business management training effectively, focused on the agriculture sector.

### 1.3. Present Situation of the Bouzour Project

The Bouzour Project is in its second year of implementation, with most interventions progressing on schedule despite the challenges posed by Lebanon's conflict and economic instability. The project continues to focus on improving livelihoods and working conditions for Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees through market-driven solutions in the agriculture sector. The project is designed as a strategic effort to pilot market-based solutions that address key constraints within Lebanon's fragile context. The vision is to strengthen inclusive market systems that enhance resilience, productivity, and decent work opportunities for both Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees. However, progress toward large-scale systemic change remains challenging given Lebanon's ongoing economic crisis, political instability, and recent conflict escalation. The project has effectively demonstrated promising business models, including cooperative-led export schemes, solar rental solutions, and affordable greenhouse upgrades. Although Bouzour has successfully brokered innovative partnerships and supported behavioural shifts among targeted market actors, sustained scaling faces considerable barriers, such as persistent financing gaps, weak regulatory frameworks, limited formal labour representation, and structural vulnerabilities within agribusiness and cooperative models. Addressing these systemic bottlenecks will transform these pilots into lasting, inclusive market system change. The following table provides key highlights and achievements; later sections discuss findings and challenges.

Figure 1: Progress to date

#### Outcome 1: Enhancing Productivity and Working Conditions in Horticulture

- **Climate-Smart Agriculture:** The project has supported **15 farmers, four cooperatives, and one agribusiness** in adopting **climate-smart and water-efficient technologies**.
- **Greenhouse Upgrades:** 21 small greenhouse manufacturers have been engaged to provide **affordable greenhouse solutions**, potentially enhancing **productivity by 50%**. In 2025, the project aims to reach 400 farmers.
- **Market Linkages for SMEs:** A partnership with **QOOT cluster** was developed to improve **contract farming models and agri-SME resilience**, particularly in response to conflict-driven disruptions.

#### Outcome 2: Market Access and Value Chain Development

- **Expanding Export Opportunities:** The project successfully linked farmers to **new export markets**, with **two SMEs** securing contracts with **four international buyers** for Lebanese cherries. **12 MT of cherries** were exported, and farmers in Aarsal entered **organic niche markets** for the first time.
- **Increased Farmer Incomes:** Program surveys showed a **58% increase in farmgate prices**, a **38% rise in farmer incomes**, and **reduced input costs from 41% to 14%** through pre-financed purchasing schemes.
- **Improving Working Conditions:** A study on recruitment mechanisms and decent work in agriculture was completed, informing national policy. The project will pilot **local-level interventions to improve working conditions in 2025**.

#### Outcome 3: Solar Energy for Agriculture

- **Piloting Solar Solutions:** A **portable solar rental model** was tested with **two cooperatives**, reducing **cold storage costs by an estimated 50%** and benefiting **over 150 farmers**.
- **Strengthening Solar-Agriculture Linkages:** Engaged **9 solar companies and 2 energy associations** to develop tailored solar solutions for farmers, including a **prototype tool** for estimating energy needs and payback periods.
- **Scaling Up in 2025:** The partner plans to expand the rental model, with a focus on **last-mile distribution** and strengthening the **business case for private-sector solar providers** in agriculture.

#### Outcome 4: Business Development and Capacity Building

- **Master Trainer Certification:** Five trainers (2 male, 3 female) from four institutions have been certified as **SIYB Master Trainers**, ensuring sustainable **business development training for farmers and SMEs**.
- **Building Systems:** In **2025, the project will train additional trainers (TOT) with selected institutions** and expand outreach to farmers and agribusinesses, ensuring long-term local-level capacity development.

### 1.4. Present Situation of the Bouzour Project

The Bouzour Project is in its second year of implementation, with most interventions progressing on schedule despite the challenges posed by Lebanon's conflict and economic instability. The project continues to focus on improving livelihoods and working conditions for Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees through market-driven solutions in the agriculture sector. The project is designed as a strategic effort to pilot market-based solutions that address key constraints within Lebanon's fragile context. The vision is to strengthen inclusive market systems that enhance resilience, productivity, and decent work opportunities for both Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees.

The escalation of conflict in Lebanon in 2024 led to supply chain disruptions, forcing the project to pivot interventions—focusing on agri-SMEs in the North and Mount Lebanon as alternative sourcing regions. Political changes in Syria also remain a key factor affecting refugee labor dynamics, requiring continuous monitoring. Looking ahead, the Bouzour project aims to scale proven models, enhance decent work conditions, and ensure market resilience through strategic partnerships, innovative financing models, and sector-wide knowledge sharing.

## 2. EVALUATION DESIGN

### 2.1. Objective of the Evaluation<sup>3</sup>

The key objective of this Mid-term evaluation is to assess the design, activities, implementation strategies, and approaches of the ILO Bouzour Project. This evaluation focused on:

- I. Determine how the project's design and activities contribute to achieving its objectives.
- II. Identify key findings and lessons learned during the project implementation.
- III. Propose improvements and adjustments needed to ensure the project's continued relevance to the needs of the target groups.
- IV. Enhance learning within the ILO and among key stakeholders to inform future project designs and implementations.

The OECD-DAC criteria guided the evaluation, focusing on relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The evaluation also assessed how the program adapted during Lebanon's conflict and how it can leverage new opportunities following the end of the conflict and regime change in Syria. The MTR primarily focuses on assessing progress and effectiveness at the **partner level** rather than directly measuring beneficiary-level impact. However, the evaluation examines whether the partnerships and market system changes facilitated by Bouzour are on a **sustainable trajectory** to generate intended outcomes for farmers, workers, and MSMEs over time. This approach ensures that while direct beneficiary impact may not yet be fully realized, the foundational mechanisms for systemic change and inclusive market development are in place and capable of achieving long-term impact.

### 2.2. Methodology of Evaluation

The mid-term evaluation of the Bouzour project was conducted as an internal review, applying a mixed-methods approach aligned with the OECD DAC criteria (Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness- early sign, Efficiency, and Sustainability). The methodology combined qualitative and quantitative data collection, drawing from project documentation, key informant interviews (KIIs), and secondary data sources to assess progress, challenges, and adaptation strategies.

The evaluation matrix and KII guidelines structured the inquiry, ensuring a systematic assessment of the project's interventions across market systems, climate-smart agriculture, solar energy, and business development.

#### Data Collection Methods

- I. **Selection of Interventions:** Based on discussion with the project team, the evaluation focused on four key interventions across project outcomes, ensuring insights from **active and advanced interventions**, which could provide the most actionable insights:
  - a. Climate-smart and water-efficient solutions (SmartLand Agri) and farmer linkages with a network of service providers and buyers (QOOT pivot strategy).
  - b. Market access improvements for smallholder farmers (Nasr Rahme/FAV).
  - c. Solar energy rental models for agriculture (YY Regen).

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<sup>3</sup> The report has been structured in line with the ILO Guidelines: Checklist 4.2: Preparing the Evaluation Report

d. Capacity building for business training scalability (SIYB Master Trainers).

- II. **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** The evaluation relied on **remote interviews** with key stakeholders, including project staff, implementing partners, and relevant external actors. These discussions explored intervention effectiveness, stakeholder engagement, and early signs of market system changes. The KII guidelines are provided in the annex. The interviews were conducted using MS Teams and were organized in January 2025.
- III. **Document Review:** Project reports, monitoring data, and partner documentation were analyzed to assess project performance and triangulate interview findings.
- IV. **Remote Engagement:** Given Lebanon's security constraints and logistical challenges, all interviews were conducted remotely.

**ILO Tripartite Mandate Consideration:** While the project does not directly work with employer and worker associations, interviews were conducted with ILO specialists **José Manuel (Employers' Activities)** and **Mustapha Said (Workers' Specialist)** to gain insights on private sector engagement and decent work considerations. However, these perspectives may not directly reflect employers' and workers' organizations.

The evaluation also accounted for **conflict escalation in Lebanon and shifting political dynamics in Syria**, assessing how interventions adapted to these evolving challenges. This contributed to the delay in implementing the MTR, which was initially envisaged to have been completed by December 2024.

### 2.3. Evaluation Matrix: Criteria and Questions

The **Evaluation Matrix** is a key tool that structures the evaluation process by aligning each evaluation question with specific criteria, indicators, data sources, and analysis methods. For the **Bouzour Project Mid-Term Review**, the matrix assesses the project's performance against the OECD DAC criteria of **Coherence, Effectiveness (early sign), Efficiency, Relevance, and Sustainability**.

The Evaluation matrix in the Annex outlines the questions answered during the evaluation, the data sources to inform those answers, and the analysis methods used in the review. Since this evaluation was conducted remotely, the matrix focuses on gathering evidence from project documentation, stakeholder interviews, and early signs of market system changes. This approach allows the evaluation to provide valuable insights despite the limitations of conducting field visits or direct beneficiary assessments. The matrix guided the evaluation, ensuring that all aspects of the project were thoroughly assessed and that the findings were relevant and actionable for future project implementation.

### 2.4. Integration of the ILO Normative and Social Dialogue Mandates

The evaluation aimed to integrate the **ILO's Normative Mandate**<sup>44</sup>—which emphasizes international labor standards, social justice, and decent work—into its assessment. The review examined how Bouzour's interventions have contributed to **decent working conditions for Syrian refugees and Lebanese host communities**, particularly within the agriculture and agri-food sectors. However, direct engagement with **workers' associations** was limited due to security constraints and the online nature of interviews. To address this gap, interviews were conducted with **ILO specialists on employer and worker activities** to capture insights into broader labor dynamics. While these interviews do not represent official positions of

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<sup>44</sup> Guidance Note 3.2: Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate, . ILO Evaluation Office

worker and employer organizations, they provided a valuable contextual understanding of the challenges and opportunities for integrating labor **standards within the project's market systems approach**.

The **ILO's Social Dialogue Mandate**, which promotes collaboration between **governments, employers, and workers**, was also considered. The evaluation examined how Bouzour fosters stakeholder engagement and promotes inclusive dialogue. However, Direct engagement with employer associations (e.g., ALI) and labor unions was not feasible; furthermore, ALI does not represent most of the agriculture-related partners that Bouzour partners with (details in findings). The review focused on **how or whether interventions indirectly support labor inclusion and decent work principles through private-sector engagement and value chain improvements**.

The evaluation sought to determine where the **Bouzour Project** falls within the **ILO's Normative Continuum**. The project's **Decent Work Agenda focus** suggests it is in the **Developing or Integrating stage**, where labor standards awareness and decent work principles are incorporated. However, given Bouzour's **AIMS approach**, which operates primarily through **private-sector partners**, the **implementation of labor standards remains indirect**. The review found that **while decent work principles** are considered and discussed, given the program's approach for the business case and market actor buy-in, incorporating them in intervention design, active enforcement, and systematic labour rights implementation remain areas for further strengthening. In 2025, the project is incorporating Occupational Health and Safety (**OSH considerations with a gender lens**), focusing on raising awareness, especially among female workers, the majority of whom are Syrian. However, it is essential to note that **agricultural workers remain outside Lebanon's labour law**, meaning that formal enforcement of decent work standards is structurally constrained. Addressing this gap would require **labour law reform**, which may fall beyond the scope of a short-term project like Bouzour. Given these limitations, interventions must continue to take an **incentive-driven approach**, leveraging productivity gains, market access, and recruitment mechanisms, along with the push component of the AIMS approach that may entail OSH awareness among workers and to encourage businesses and cooperatives to adopt better labour practices voluntarily).

## 2.5. Ethical Guidelines

The evaluation methodology for the Bouzour Mid-Term Review aligns with international ethical standards around research, **such as Canada's Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans** (TCPS 2, 2022)<sup>5</sup> by ensuring that interviews with participants were conducted with respect for persons, concern for welfare, and justice—the three core principles of TCPS 2. The evaluation employed informed consent for all key informant interviews (KIIs), ensuring that participants were aware of the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to confidentiality. The Evaluation Question Matrix (EQM) was designed to minimize risks by focusing on professional and programmatic insights rather than personal or sensitive information, thereby upholding participant welfare. No interview recordings or raw data were shared beyond the evaluation team, reinforcing confidentiality and trust.

Recognizing that stakeholders come from diverse backgrounds and experiences, the methodology was designed to ensure that all voices were considered while maintaining ethical and professional standards. Consent was explicitly sought before recording any interviews, and participants who preferred not to be recorded had their decision fully respected, with interviewers instead taking detailed notes.

**Given the security constraints in Lebanon, interviews were conducted remotely**, ensuring no undue risk to participants while maintaining anonymity and data protection standards in line with TCPS 2's guidance on privacy and confidentiality. Additionally, the evaluation methodology ensured fair

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<sup>5</sup> Retrieved from: [https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique\\_tcps2-eptc2\\_2022.html](https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-eptc2_2022.html)



representation of stakeholders, including ILO staff, program partners, and sectoral actors and specialists, while recognizing the limitations in directly engaging employer and worker representatives due to security, program design and logistical constraints. The evaluation upholds rigorous ethical standards by adhering to these international good ethical research principles, ensuring that findings are credible and ethically sound.

### 3. FINDINGS

This section articulates the key findings from the MTR across the selected OECD-DAC criteria. Multiple findings are discussed under each criterion. The following section will articulate key learnings, recommendations, and a conclusion.

#### 3.1. Relevance

##### 3.1.1. Strong Alignment with Market Needs and Sectoral Challenges

The Bouzour Project has been crucial in addressing Lebanon's **agricultural, financial, and energy crises**, ensuring that smallholder farmers and agribusinesses remain viable despite economic turmoil. Lebanon's ongoing **financial crisis, inflation, and currency devaluation** have made it increasingly difficult for farmers to afford essential inputs such as fertilizers, seeds, and irrigation technology. The sharp rise in **diesel prices and fuel shortages** has dramatically increased operating costs, particularly for irrigation, cold storage, and processing facilities. Bouzour's targeted interventions, including **climate-smart agricultural technologies, solar energy solutions, and access to export markets**, have provided **cost-effective alternatives** to help farmers and agribusinesses mitigate these constraints.

For instance, **SmartLand Agri's precision irrigation solutions** have directly addressed the **growing problem of water scarcity and rising input costs**, allowing farmers to optimize their use of water and fertilizers. By integrating **sensor-based irrigation and fertigation systems**, the intervention has **enhanced productivity while reducing expenses**, making modern agricultural technology more accessible to smallholder farmers. Similarly, **Nasr Rahme's export facilitation model** has allowed farmers to **secure stable market connections** and benefit from structured contract agreements that **stabilize prices** in an otherwise volatile market. However, the **need for post-harvest infrastructure, such as hydrocooling and automated sorting facilities**, remains a key challenge, limiting the competitiveness of Lebanese agricultural exports despite the improvements in farming practices and market linkages.

Furthermore, **the expansion of QOOT's engagement to include SME agribusinesses** has been a **key adaptation of the project**, ensuring that supply chain disruptions caused by the war and financial crisis do not sever the link between farmers and buyers. Many SMEs have struggled to source raw materials due to **conflict-related restrictions in the South**, forcing them to **pivot their sourcing strategies toward farmers in Mount Lebanon and the North**. Bouzour's support in **facilitating B2B connections and contract farming agreements** has helped mitigate these disruptions, ensuring **continued access to agricultural inputs and securing market opportunities for farmers**.

##### 3.1.2. Successfully Adapting to Changing Economic and Political Contexts

Lebanon's **political instability, regional conflict, and banking collapse** have created a highly **volatile economic environment** where access to **capital, markets, and energy sources** remains uncertain. The Bouzour Project has demonstrated a strong ability to **pivot strategies and allocate resources in response to emerging crises**, ensuring that **farmers, cooperatives, and agri-SMEs receive the necessary support to sustain operations**. Even during the inception, the program identified Outcome 1, promoting modern greenhouses (adapted from ILO's PROSPECT program), has already gained significant

market traction, and various donors and NGOs have started providing financial support and subsidies for greenhouses. Based on the market reality, the **program pivoted to dissemination rather than heavy-handed financial support for greenhouses and reallocated the budget to Outcome 2.**

Another significant real-time adaptation made by the project has been its support to solar energy providers such as YY Regen, whose business model was at risk due to the war-induced liquidity crisis and banking restrictions. Lebanon's **financial collapse has severely restricted access to commercial loans, making it almost impossible for companies like YY Regen to expand their solar rental model without external funding.** The Bouzour Project's injection of funds helped sustain YY Regen's operations and ensured that smallholder farmers and cooperatives continued to benefit from affordable, renewable energy solutions. This intervention allowed YY Regen to maintain liquidity and expand its rental model, which, in turn, enabled cooperatives to reduce their reliance on costly diesel generators—a critical adaptation given the steep rise in fuel prices following the conflict escalation. While Bouzour's intervention with YY Regen was primarily aimed at validating the viability of solar rental solutions for farmers, cooperatives, and processing facilities, nonetheless, the project played a critical role in sustaining YY Regen's liquidity during Lebanon's financial crisis. Given the lack of access to commercial finance, this unintended support became essential for maintaining operations and demonstrating the business case for solar adoption in agriculture.

The project's intervention in the cherry export sector with Nasr Rahme and FAV not only enabled farmers to receive pre-financed inputs through a collective purchasing fund but also introduced a **scalable and promising market-oriented model.** This pilot has facilitated **meaningful behavior change** among exporters, leading them to proactively **invest in farmer training, pre-financing of inputs, and improving working conditions** to enhance product quality. Exporters have also begun **co-investing in post-harvest infrastructure** and forging **new off-taker partnerships** to expand their market reach.

However, **despite these improvements, cherry export volumes have been declining,** presenting a major challenge to sustaining and scaling the model. Factors such as **logistical constraints, increasing production costs, market access barriers, and competition from regional producers** have contributed to this downturn. While exporters have adapted by improving quality standards and diversifying their market strategies, the **sector remains highly vulnerable to economic and geopolitical instability.** Addressing these challenges requires **continued risk-sharing mechanisms,** targeted investments in **post-harvest infrastructure** (e.g., hydro-cooling and sorting machinery), and strategies to **expand export market access.** In this context, donor-funded risk-sharing support may still be necessary in the **short-to-medium term,** while market-driven investments continue to mature and stabilize.

Bouzour's engagement with **QOOT's pivot strategy,** which facilitated **contract farming arrangements between agri-SMEs and alternative farmer networks,** has been another **critical adaptation.** As many SMEs lost access to their usual sourcing regions due to the **war in the South,** Bouzour is providing **technical support to help them secure alternative supply chains and buyers.**

The relevance of Bouzour's interventions remains strong given the **uncertain future of Syrian refugees in Lebanon,** who make up a significant portion of the agricultural labour force. While **political narratives around refugee returns to Syria have intensified,** actual return rates have been minimal, and there is little indication that **large-scale repatriation will occur in the near future.** Many refugees face **ongoing safety concerns, a lack of economic opportunities in Syria, and political uncertainty,** making immediate large-scale returns unlikely. This means that the **demand for labour-focused interventions and support for refugee workers in agriculture remains highly relevant** for the foreseeable future. Bouzour's interventions in improving working conditions, stabilizing agricultural employment, and promoting inclusive market systems continue to be crucial in ensuring economic resilience for Lebanese farmers and Syrian agricultural workers.



### 3.1.3. Challenges to Alignment with ILO's Triparty Mandate

The Bouzour Project aligns well with ILO's Decent Work Agenda, particularly in its support for employment generation, improved working conditions, and market resilience. However, structural barriers within Lebanon's labor and employer organizations have made it difficult to integrate formal labor representation into the project's interventions.

A key challenge has been that **ALI** (Association of Lebanese Industrialists), the primary employer representative in Lebanon, **does not include primary agriculture within its scope**, apart from agrifood processing companies. This has created a gap in employer representation for agricultural producers, making it **challenging for the project to engage with formal employer structures in agriculture**. The program supports selected ALI members in their service delivery for members related to solar energy, and Bouzour links them with the LSES (association for solar energy companies). The solar tool development on solar PV pre-sizing is also being rolled out with selected ALI members.

**Lebanon's labor unions do not cover agricultural workers**, as agriculture is considered part of the informal sector and is excluded from labor protections under Lebanese law. This institutional gap meant **the** project had no clear worker organizations to engage with, requiring a market-driven approach to improve labor conditions rather than relying on traditional labor advocacy mechanisms.

Despite these limitations, Bouzour has positively impacted workers through systemic market interventions. By facilitating **better market linkages, reducing production costs, and promoting technology adoption**, the project has **improved farmer incomes and job stability for agricultural workers**. For example, the **Nasr Rahme/FAV-led cherry export initiative** enabled farmers to receive higher prices, more stable incomes and **increased demand for seasonal workers**, potentially leading to higher recruitment rates and better wages for cherry pickers. The project's **comprehensive study on recruitment mechanisms and working conditions in Lebanon's agriculture sector** has also provided **valuable insights into informal hiring practices**, including the role of **Shawish labor brokers** who control farmworker recruitment and wages. These findings can **inform future interventions** to develop fair recruitment practices and improve **labor protections** for Syrian refugees and Lebanese agricultural workers.

The **AIMS approach**, with a direct focus on capacity building (push strategy) used by Bouzour, was a pragmatic response to these labor market challenges, focusing on strengthening commercial relationships and improving economic incentives for farmers and workers. While the project **did not engage directly with labor unions**, it improved **employment conditions by ensuring market stability and increasing incomes**. It also plans to embed OSH training and awareness for workers in 2025 and roll out IYAB courses for farmers. Given that formal labor organizing in agriculture remains weak in Lebanon, future interventions could explore alternative worker representation models, such as farmer cooperatives playing a dual role in market facilitation and labor advocacy.

Recognizing the **regulatory limitations in Lebanon**, Bouzour has adopted a **market-driven approach to improving working conditions**, leveraging **incentives rather than enforcement**. In the **cherry sector**, the project is supporting **SMETA certification efforts** and is working with **value chain actors to establish child labour controls, grievance mechanisms, and workplace improvements**—which will be further piloted in 2025. Similarly, in **horticulture, upgraded greenhouse structures** have significantly improved working conditions for labourers. Additionally, following delays due to the recent conflict, Bouzour has now **relaunched its OSH initiatives across components** and resumed pilot activities on **recruitment mechanisms** (will be rolled out in 2025), which were also on hold due to the war. These efforts

demonstrate how Bouzour navigates Lebanon's fragile environment by fostering **private sector engagement in labour improvements** through **market opportunities and economic incentives** rather than relying on a regulatory approach.

#### 3.1.4. Conclusion on Relevance

The Bouzour Project has been highly relevant to Lebanon's economic, political, and environmental realities, successfully addressing climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy integration, and market access challenges. The project's ability to pivot interventions in response to the financial crisis, fuel shortages, and war-related disruptions has been critical in ensuring that smallholder farmers, cooperatives, and agri-SMEs remain resilient. Additionally, Bouzour's financial support to companies like YY Regen played a key role in sustaining renewable energy solutions for farmers, ensuring that businesses could survive the liquidity crisis caused by the conflict.

However, structural labour representation gaps in the agricultural sector posed challenges to direct engagement with traditional ILO constituents. Despite this, the project positively influenced labour conditions through market-driven mechanisms, improving income stability, recruitment practices, and employment opportunities in target value chains. Moving forward, further integration of labour-focused interventions, such as ethical recruitment models and cooperative-based worker representation, could strengthen the sustainability of these gains.

### 3.2. Coherence

#### 3.2.1. Good alignment with ILO's Strategic Priorities and mandate

Both of Bouzour's outcomes align with the ILO's **Programme & Budget** (2024–2025) through contributions to Outcome 3 (Full and productive employment for just transitions), Outcome 4 (Sustainable enterprises for inclusive growth and decent work), and Outcome 8 (Integrated policy and institutional responses for social justice through decent work), by supporting inclusive business models, decent work in agriculture, and improving working conditions. Under the UNSDCF (2023–2025), Bouzour supports People and Prosperity, particularly Outcome 1, which emphasizes improving access to livelihoods, entrepreneurship, and sustainable energy for MSMEs and social and economic inclusion of vulnerable populations. Through targeted interventions in solar energy, value chains, and workforce skilling, Bouzour contributes to building resilience among Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees.

A key challenge has been the **absence of strong employer and worker organizations in the agricultural sector**. The Association of Lebanese Industrialists (ALI) does not include primary agriculture apart from agrifood processing, while trade unions such as CGTL and FENASOL do not extend protections to agricultural workers, particularly informal and seasonal laborers. This has made it difficult for Bouzour to link agricultural employment improvements to the ILO's tripartite framework, limiting its potential for long-term systemic change in labor rights and protections. However, **Bouzour's study on recruitment mechanisms in agriculture has provided valuable insights** into how informal hiring practices operate, mainly through the **Shawish system** (an informal labor broker structure that controls wages and recruitment of farmworkers). This study has been well-received, but its impact depends on how it is leveraged. One key opportunity is for Bouzour to continue collaborating with the PROSPECTS program, which may have greater visibility within the donor and policy community. While institutionalizing fair recruitment practices is a broader normative mandate led by ILO's DWT-Beirut and supported by multiple projects, including PROSPECTS and Bouzour, closer alignment can enhance collective influence, especially in research dissemination. Bouzour can contribute to this agenda by piloting practical models and leveraging PROSPECTS' positioning to amplify lessons and engage national stakeholders and international partners in policy-level dialogue.

While Bouzour has made efforts to integrate ILO's Decent Work Agenda into market-driven interventions, the absence of formal labor engagement mechanisms remains a constraint. Moving forward, stronger collaboration with ILO's tripartite partners or alternative advocacy mechanisms—such as farmer cooperatives playing a dual role in labor representation—could enhance coherence with ILO's broader mandate.

### 3.2.2. Strengthen Integration with Other Development Initiatives

Bouzour was **conceptually built upon lessons from the multi-country PROSPECTS program**, a multi-agency initiative involving the ILO and other UN/multilateral agencies. The initial rationale was that Bouzour would expand market-based approaches to agricultural value chains while ensuring decent work considerations. PROSPECT has more resources than Bouzour, and while both programs aim to enhance employment and resilience for refugees, displaced populations and host communities, their implementation strategies differ. PROSPECTS also works on financial inclusion, while Bouzour has a much narrower focus and concentrates on market linkages and value chain strengthening with Lebanon. **There may be an opportunity for deeper integration, particularly in linking PROSPECT's financial access initiatives with Bouzour's interventions.**

Bouzour also collaborates with **the Global SCI project<sup>6</sup>**, particularly in the **solar energy sector**, where SCI has broader engagements while Bouzour targets agricultural applications. **A joint pilot tested solar rental models for cooperatives**, demonstrating tangible cost savings and environmental benefits. The SCI engagement in solar energy adoption was designed to complement Bouzour's market-driven approach. However, donor saturation in the solar market has created **distortions**, making it challenging to establish fully commercial models.

Beyond ILO, **several regional and international actors overlap with Bouzour's activities**. For example, **ANERA**, a key international NGO in Lebanon, has supported agricultural interventions and is already working with some of Bouzour's partners. Similarly, the **LIFE program**, another market systems initiative, has provided complementary funding mechanisms for smallholder farmers. These existing synergies highlight an opportunity for **Bouzour to strengthen partnerships and align its exit strategy with ongoing initiatives**, ensuring sustained impact beyond the project's duration.

### 3.2.3. Improving internal coherence and linkages between outcomes

One key issue is that specific components **operate in parallel rather than reinforcing one another**. The solar energy component (Outcome 3) is a strong example—while its focus on reducing reliance on diesel-powered irrigation and cold storage is highly relevant, it has not been explicitly linked to core agricultural value chain interventions (Outcomes 1 & 2). For instance, there is no explicit strategy to integrate solar-powered solutions into the horticulture or cherry value chain activities despite post-harvest cold storage and irrigation efficiency being significant constraints for market competitiveness. However, a cherry-producing cooperative is one of the cold storages receiving the YY regen portable solution. These need to be explicit and reflected in the TOC (see recommendations).

Similarly, the **market access component (Outcome 2) has focused on expanding export/market opportunities for cherry producers**, but it is not directly connected to the **agricultural productivity improvements (Outcome 1)**, where the focus is on Horticulture. It is interesting to note that partnerships like QOOT and FAV are already targeting additional value chains such as Apricot (which was one of the

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<sup>6</sup> This is part of a SIDA-funded Global Partnership, including Conflict Perspective and Humanitarian, Peace and Development Nexus. Bouzour is also collaborating with Nexus (e.g. Nexus helped the program conduct the conflict analysis)

sectors Bouzour wanted to select as part of its outcome 2)<sup>7</sup>, vegetables, avocado etc. In future program design, both productivity and market access components need to be integrated within the value chain.

**There is more synergy in actual implementation than reflected in the theory of change.** For instance, in connecting YY Regen, Bouzour introduced them to some of the cooperatives they are operating in other interventions (e.g. Cherry). However, the program design is such that Bouzour's activities are being **implemented as stand-alone interventions rather than interconnected levers of systemic change**. A more deliberate effort to **synchronize interventions**—such as linking solar-powered irrigation to export-focused horticulture farms or embedding post-harvest mechanization into the cooperative market model—**could significantly enhance impact**.

Another key gap in Bouzour's internal coherence is the **role of training and skills development (Outcome 4)** within the broader market system. The **Improve Your Agribusiness (IYAB) program** is a promising initiative that aims to enhance business skills among agricultural entrepreneurs, but its link to employment generation, value chain strengthening, or investment in productive enterprises remains weak. The selection of institutes for IYAB was based on their existing footprint in agriculture **and their capacity to provide** adult learning and farmer training. However, **no structured pathway ensures that IYAB graduates are directly connected to employment opportunities within Bouzour's other interventions**. For instance, there is no mechanism to link trainees with cooperatives or agribusinesses benefiting from market access support (Outcome 2), nor is there an established pipeline for trainees to engage with solar or mechanization initiatives (Outcome 3).

Furthermore, the long-term financial sustainability of these training institutions remains uncertain. Given Lebanon's severe economic crisis, banking collapse, and the lack of public funding for vocational training, it is highly unlikely that these institutions will be able to continue offering IYAB without external financial support. This raises an important question about whether Bouzour should explore alternative financing models—such as public-private partnerships, donor-backed skills funds, or employer-supported training subsidies—to ensure that skills development does not remain donor-dependent<sup>8</sup>.

#### 3.2.4. Conclusion on Coherence

Bouzour has made significant progress in aligning with ILO's strategic priorities and engaging with external development partners. Still, gaps in coherence remain, external and internal. At the external level, Bouzour may explicitly strengthen its linkages with complementary programs such as PROSPECTS, SCI, and other donor initiatives like ANERA and LIFE Lebanon, ensuring that interventions do not operate in parallel but reinforce each other. In particular, Bouzour's agricultural recruitment study could be leveraged within PROSPECTS or other ILO programs/activities (Country Office/ DWT) to drive policy discussions on informal labor governance.

At the internal level, the project should enhance coherence across its four outcome areas, ensuring that solar energy, value chain upgrading, skills development, and market access interventions work as an integrated system rather than separate activities. Moving forward, Bouzour should adopt a more

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<sup>7</sup> See sector selection report, which identified Apricot as a viable option but ultimately selected cherry.

<sup>8</sup> **LIWAY program (SIDA-funded, Ethiopia)** applied an MSD approach to reform the skilling market systemically. Instead of just creating trainers, LIWAY integrated freelance trainers and private training providers into a self-sustaining skills market, ensuring they could be hired directly by businesses, cooperatives, and donor projects. The program also improved labor market information systems (LMIS), aligned curricula with employer needs, and strengthened institutional linkages to drive long-term sustainability beyond donor funding.

**Source:** LIWAY In-Depth Case Study, BEAM Exchange (2023), <https://beamexchange.org/resources/1949>

intentional approach (reflecting it in the program TOC) to linking interventions, ensuring that market actors, financial access initiatives, and training programs are aligned to drive long-term system change.

### 3.3. Efficiency

#### 3.3.1. Resource Allocation: Financial, Human, and Technological Inputs

The Bouzour project continues to demonstrate **effective resource allocation**, particularly in its ability to **leverage private sector engagement and donor funding to sustain key interventions**. From a **financial efficiency** standpoint, the project has maintained a **77%<sup>9</sup> delivery rate for 2024**, with key adjustments to reallocate operational savings toward project activities. Bouzour operates with a lean project team regarding human resources, balancing technical expertise in market systems development, agribusiness, and renewable energy. The following table provides the summarized program budget across key elements and their percentage to total budget.

**Table 2: Budget Distribution<sup>10</sup>**

LINE ITEMS	BUDGET IN \$	BUDGET IN %
ACTIVITY BUDGET	\$ 1,498,255	40.73%
PROJECT MANAGEMENT & OVERSIGHT	\$ 1,632,858	44.39%
MONITORING AND EVALUATION	\$ 93,933	2.55%
PROVISION FOR COST INCREASE	\$ 46,146	1.25%
PSC	\$ 407,045	11.07%
TOTAL	\$ 3,678,236	100.00%

From the above table, it may seem that Bouzour has significant overhead costs compared to the activity budget. However, both Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) review of MSD programs<sup>11</sup> and SIDA's Evaluation of the market systems development approach<sup>12</sup>, articulate that it is not appropriate to view implementation or staff cost in MSD as overhead; *"Stakeholders also need to appreciate that staff time and skills are not overheads but essential elements of delivery of results"* (DFAT, 2020, pp 30) and *"...compared to other forms of programming, facilitation requires high implementer staff costs in proportion to other budget items"* (SIDA, 2019, pp 29). Given the above, the budget was restructured along with activity, facilitation costs<sup>13</sup> and overhead<sup>14</sup> to give a clearer picture of the actual overhead.

**Table 3: Reclassified Budget Distribution**

LINE ITEM	BUDGET IN \$	BUDGET IN %
ACTIVITY BUDGET	\$ 1,498,255	40.73%
FACILITATION	\$ 900,183	24.47%
OVERHEAD	\$ 826,608	22.47%
PROVISION FOR COST INCREASE	\$ 46,146	1.25%
PSC	\$ 407,045	11.07%

<sup>9</sup> This information refers to actuals plus commitments.

<sup>10</sup> Based on the Revised Inception Budget outlined in the file ILO SIDA Budget\_revised Inception report\_v3

<sup>11</sup> See: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/aid/market-systems-development-synthesis-review-and-management-response>

<sup>12</sup> <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida62186en-evaluation-of-the-market-systems-development-approach.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Staff costs for the following activities were distributed according to the given percentages for facilitation, with the remaining allocated as overhead. Higher percentages for senior roles imply more time spent on overhead: P4 Chief Technical Advisor (50% facilitation), NOB - entrepreneurship and decent work conditions (75% facilitation), NOB - private sector engagement (75% facilitation), G5 - project support (100% facilitation). In addition, the M&E budget was included in the facilitation cost, which is in line with good practice. If the revised budget is used, the direction remains the same, but the activity budget increases to 42%, and the management budget comes down to 42%.

<sup>14</sup> Overhead includes the remaining percentage of facilitation costs listed above, as well as the full staff costs for the following categories: Activity 5.1.5 Driver, Activity 5.1.6 HQ Technical Support, Activity 5.1.7 P3 Security Officer, Activity 5.1.8 G5 Communication Assistant, and operational costs.

TOTAL

\$ 3,678,236

100.00%

The reclassified budget gives a more accurate picture of how the project costs are distributed. The project has faced **delays in multiple areas**, stemming from **Lebanon's financial crisis, geopolitical instability, escalation of war, and operational challenges**. The **ongoing regional conflict has resulted in over 1 million internally displaced persons in Lebanon<sup>15</sup>, limiting access to key agricultural areas and affecting** business operations; dealing with the humanitarian crisis and survival became a priority rather than long-term development, business investment and growth. The project has rightly requested a no-cost extension till December 2025, and hopefully, with a ceasefire in Lebanon and increased stability in Syria, the project might be able to complete all deliverables in a timely and efficient fashion.

### 3.3.2. Effective Allocation of Resources and Responsiveness

Bouzour has demonstrated a highly efficient allocation of financial and human resources, particularly in the financial support to partners and the overall responsiveness of its program management. Several partners, including SmartLand Agri and Nasr Rahme, emphasized that Bouzour's financial support was timely, allowing them to sustain their operations amid Lebanon's ongoing economic instability. SmartLand Agri credited Bouzour's support with helping them weather financial constraints, noting that expansion and innovation would have been significantly hampered without this intervention. The funding facilitated the installation of smart irrigation systems, which led to measurable cost savings and productivity increases for farmers. Similarly, Nasr Rahme's ability to secure collective purchasing funds enabled cooperatives to reduce costs on agricultural inputs, a direct outcome of Bouzour's timely financial interventions. **This efficiency was particularly valuable in Lebanon's fragile economic context, where inflation and currency fluctuations make financial predictability crucial.**

While financial support to private sector partners like SmartLand Agri and Nasr Rahme was crucial for sustaining operations, Bouzour's interventions also directly benefited cooperatives, farmers, and workers. Through activities such as collective purchasing mechanisms, training in export standards, and support in climate-smart agriculture, the project enabled cooperatives and farmers to access new markets, reduce the costs of purchasing input, and enhance productivity. Moving forward, ensuring that these benefits are scaled and sustained remains key to Bouzour's long-term impact.

### 3.3.3. Conclusion on Efficiency

The Bouzour project has demonstrated a strong track record in financial and human resource efficiency, particularly in leveraging private-sector partnerships, ensuring timely fund disbursement, and adapting to Lebanon's volatile economic and geopolitical conditions. The project's 77% delivery rate in 2024 underscores its ability to manage resources despite external shocks effectively. While traditional budgeting structures may suggest high management and facilitation costs, a reclassification of the budget highlights that these expenditures are essential components of market systems development programming, aligning with good international practice around MSD.

Despite delays caused by Lebanon's financial crisis, regional instability, and logistical constraints, Bouzour has remained highly responsive to shifting market dynamics. The rapid deployment of Bouzour's facilitative agreements—structured under the AIMS approach—enabled agribusinesses like SmartLand Agri, YY Regen, and FAV/ Nasr Rahme to continue operations, expand services, and strengthen resilience. While these agreements were designed as market-based partnerships rather than direct financial aid, in Lebanon's fragile economic context, they played a crucial role in sustaining key market actors, with some partners relying on this financial support to navigate severe liquidity constraints and operational risk. At the same time, adaptive management strategies, such as shifting export strategies, introducing rental

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<sup>15</sup> See: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/09/1155141>



models for solar energy, and scaling cooperative purchasing mechanisms, have maximized cost-effectiveness. While challenges remain, particularly in securing financing for long-term expansion, Bouzour's operational flexibility, efficiency in resource allocation, and ability to deliver impact in a crisis-prone environment position it as a highly effective program. Continued coordination with donors, impact investors, and financial institutions will be crucial in sustaining these efficiency gains beyond the project's current timeline.

### 3.4. Effectiveness

#### 3.4.1. Program on track to reach its Logframe target

The Bouzour project is broadly **on track to achieving its key outcome-level targets by 2025**, with notable progress in productivity improvement, market linkages, and energy efficiency in agriculture. The first three outcomes—**enhancing productivity and working conditions, upgrading farmers and agribusinesses, and enabling access to solar energy solutions—are likely to meet their targets**, contingent on the successful scaling of interventions in 2025 (For a detailed analysis of progress across indicator Annex 1).

However, **Outcome 4** (farmers and small agribusinesses improving management capacity) **remains contingent on the successful rollout of the Improve Your Agribusiness (IYAB) training at the farmer level**. While institutional capacity-building and trainer certification have been achieved, achieving a tangible impact at the farmer level within the project's timeframe presents a challenge due to structural constraints in Lebanon's TVET system and farmer engagement barriers.

**Outcome 1:** Bouzour has made significant strides in this outcome. The engagement of 21 greenhouse manufacturers and the planned expansion of farmer outreach to 400 beneficiaries in 2025 indicates that the outcome target is achievable. However, achieving 30 contract farming agreements through QOOT remains challenging, and alternative farmer engagement models may be needed to mitigate the high transaction costs associated with contract farming.

**Outcome 2:** Market linkages for farmers and cooperatives have demonstrated early success, with 145 farmers and 774 workers engaged across three villages. The successful export of 12 MT of cherries, alongside an average 37.58% increase in farmers' annual income, suggests that the program delivers clear market benefits. Female representation at the farmer level remains lower than among agricultural workers, and future interventions need to monitor retention in export markets and ensure that farmers continue benefiting from established linkages.

**Outcome 3:** Introducing solar-powered rental solutions has yielded measurable cost savings, with storage fees dropping by 50%, benefiting over 150 cooperative members. The potential expansion by the partner from 10 to 20 rental units in 2025 suggests this intervention may surpass its initial target. In parallel, a **prototype tool** was developed in 2024 to estimate energy needs, pre-design systems, and calculate payback periods for farmers. Two roundtables with 26 stakeholders and engagements with nine solar companies and two energy associations helped validate the tool and promote tailored solar solutions. The **last-mile distribution strategy**, developed to connect farmers with service providers, will be piloted in 2025. However, the scalability of solar energy adoption will depend on continued financial support and ensuring that last-mile distribution is effectively piloted.

**Outcome 4:** While Bouzour has successfully trained master trainers and built institutional capacity, training 200 farmers remains uncertain. The selection of 45 trainers for SIYB TOT is in progress, but behavioral change among farmers and skill adoption may take longer than the project's timeframe allows. A realistic assessment of expectations and potential adaptations may be necessary.

**Overall Reflection:** The traffic light assessment suggests that most interventions are progressing well, but some areas—such as gender balance at the farmer level<sup>16</sup>, contract farming scale-up and farmer-level training in IYAB—require close monitoring. Bouzour has successfully navigated Lebanon’s multiple crises and adjusted interventions accordingly, demonstrating its resilience and adaptability. However, the final success will depend on how well the 2025 implementation is executed and whether farmer-level interventions can achieve the expected scale and impact within the project’s timeframe.

Bouzour’s Gender Strategy (drafted March 2024) aims to integrate gender considerations across all project interventions, ensuring that women, particularly Syrian refugees and Lebanese host communities, benefit from inclusive market systems. The strategy applies a mix of **gender-mainstreamed** and **gender-aware** interventions, balancing direct support with broader systemic change. However, as the strategy outlines, significant challenges persist, including the **absence of legal protections for agricultural workers**, restrictive cultural norms, and **limited economic agency for women** in Lebanon’s patriarchal society. While the project has made strides in increasing women’s access to training, agricultural value chains, and decent work conditions, structural barriers—such as the **lack of land ownership, financial exclusion, and informal employment practices**—continue to hinder sustainable gender transformation. As the strategy states in moving forward, Bouzour must **strengthen partnerships with stakeholders advocating for policy reforms**, enhance **private sector incentives for gender-inclusive hiring and investment**, and develop **longer-term sustainability strategies** to ensure that gender-responsive interventions extend beyond the project’s duration. The project’s planned OSH awareness-raising, gender-specific skilling, and cooperative support for women-led agribusinesses represent crucial next steps but must be **complemented by systemic efforts to shift workplace norms and institutional frameworks**.

### 3.4.2. Ongoing Global Instability Will Likely Affect the Project

Lebanon’s economic and political instability continues to shape the implementation and sustainability of Bouzour’s interventions. The **financial crisis, ongoing conflict, and geopolitical uncertainty** have made it increasingly difficult for agribusinesses and cooperatives to access financing, maintain stable supply chains, and engage in long-term planning. Multiple stakeholders acknowledged that without Bouzour’s financial support, they would have struggled to maintain business continuity, let alone pursue innovation or market expansion. For example, **YY Regen was able to sustain its business despite Lebanon’s financial turmoil, thanks to Bouzour’s intervention**. Similarly, cooperatives engaged in collective purchasing initiatives have **demonstrated improved bargaining power**, but the fragile economic context continues to threaten their stability.

Given these realities, Bouzour’s approach to sustainability, while rooted in AIMS, may need to further strengthen the **pull** side of the framework by complementing facilitative MSD principles with more **targeted direct support** for private sector partners, i.e. push support that includes partners. While the project already integrates cost-sharing and de-risking mechanisms, fragile contexts like Lebanon may require more **structured financial support**, such as **direct subsidies for partners or payroll support**, to ensure that interventions can be implemented and sustained. However, such support must be carefully designed and **grounded in comprehensive root cause and constraint analysis** to avoid market distortions and ensure long-term viability. This shift does not alter the **push** strategies focused on MSMEs, farmers, and workers, but rather enhances the **market-systems side** of AIMS by addressing systemic financial constraints that hinder private sector participation. This is particularly evident in Outcome 4, where **the IYAB training for agribusinesses currently lacks a clear path to financial sustainability**. In the near term, **such training may need to be provided as a public good** until local institutions gain the capacity and financial stability to take over. This reframing of sustainability, **from purely market-driven**

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<sup>16</sup> This has been identified as a challenge even in the original project document. In addition, the program has drafted a Gender Strategy (March, 2024) and plans to undertake targeted gender-related activities in 2025.



**solutions to a more adaptive, resilience-building approach**, is crucial for navigating the realities of Lebanon's economic environment.

### 3.4.3. Finance and Enabling Environment Need to Be Addressed

The broader financial and policy environment presents **significant barriers to Bouzour's interventions**, particularly in **energy and agricultural markets**. The diesel market remains opaque and controlled by cartels, making fuel-dependent agricultural businesses vulnerable to price fluctuations. This has accelerated demand for alternative energy sources, particularly solar. The solar market is also **distorted by donor subsidies**, making it difficult for private providers to develop **sustainable commercial models**.

Furthermore, **solar energy remains legally constrained**—the private sector still has no formal approval for continuous solar electricity supply, meaning cooperatives and agribusinesses cannot fully transition to renewable energy solutions. Despite this, Bouzour's pilot with YY Regen has demonstrated strong demand for **rental-based solar solutions**, with **60% of surveyed cooperatives expressing interest**. With a potential ceasefire in the region, donor money may begin **flowing into Lebanon again, creating opportunities and challenges**. Bouzour must recognize this shifting donor landscape and position its interventions accordingly, ensuring that new funding streams support sustainable energy models rather than distorting the market further. Bouzour may also want to explore how to work with the national government on the regulatory space (e.g. regulatory sandboxing) around private electricity supply.

### 3.4.4. Evolution from Pilot Interventions to Systemic Change

Much of Bouzour's work has focused on **piloting interventions** and testing models to improve productivity, market access, and energy efficiency. The subsequent implementation phase needs to focus on **scaling up successful pilots and embedding them into local systems**. For example, **YY Regen's solar rental model has reached a critical point where it can expand** beyond its initial pilot phase. The company has already secured **\$46,000 in funding but needs an additional \$100,000 to scale from 10 to 20 rental units**. This model could become self-sustaining and expand regionally to Qatar and the UAE if adequately supported. The partner also acknowledged that Bouzour's suggestion to approach cooperatives was a new model for them, and originally, they were targeting only large companies and farmers. The cooperative model has enabled them to scale their operation significantly.

Similarly, Nasr Rahme & FAV were supported with a \$10,000 collective purchasing fund, showing a strong return on investment, allowing cooperatives to negotiate better prices on agricultural inputs. The model has expanded beyond cherries to vegetables, apricots, and apples, suggesting high scalability potential. However, to **ensure systemic change**, Bouzour must go beyond pilot interventions and **facilitate engagement with investors, financial institutions, and diaspora funding networks** to create a sustainable financing pipeline for these solutions<sup>17</sup>. Without external investment, many of these promising models will remain **limited in scope and fail to develop lasting market shifts**.

### 3.4.5. Work Around Labour Directly Will Be Challenging

Addressing **labour market issues directly remains challenging** due to **structural gaps in Lebanon's employer and worker representation** in agriculture. Unlike other economic sectors, Lebanon's agro-sector is not well-represented within employer and worker organizations—the Association of Lebanese Industrialists (ALI) does not include agriculture beyond processing, and labor unions generally do not cover agricultural workers. This makes it difficult for Bouzour to engage in ILO's traditional tripartite model, requiring alternative approaches to improving working conditions in agriculture.

One potential avenue is identifying decent work and well-being deficits in the sector and engaging **ILO's employer and worker specialists** to explore feasible interventions. Bouzour has contributed valuable

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<sup>17</sup> See different financial approaches being deployed by ACELI Africa (<https://aceliafrica.org/aceli-africa-year-3-learning-report/>)

insights by conducting a **recruitment study that maps agriculture hiring mechanisms and working conditions**. This study needs to be operationalized, potentially through **pilot interventions that test new recruitment mechanisms, skill certification, or improved contract structures for seasonal workers**. However, given the **structural challenges in the agricultural sector**, it may also be worth considering **whether Bouzour should shift its labor-related focus to another sector** in a potential second phase of the project. For example, the **waste management sector** has better institutional representation, with ALI and labor associations playing a more active role and with significant representation of Syrian refugees.

#### 3.4.6. Enhancing Internal Coherence to Strengthen Program Effectiveness

Greater internal coherence, discussed before, across Bouzour's interventions can significantly enhance overall **program effectiveness** by ensuring that different components **reinforce rather than operate in silos**. While the four outcomes address critical challenges in agriculture, market linkages, energy access, and business skills development, they do not always function as a cohesive whole (See the section on Coherence). By improving **alignment between interventions**, Bouzour can create a **more holistic approach** to enhance individual intervention outcomes and contribute to broader systemic change. This would ensure that interventions build upon one another rather than **remaining fragmented**. Strengthening these **synergies** will allow Bouzour to drive **greater systemic change**.

#### 3.4.7. Conclusion on Effectiveness

The Bouzour project has demonstrated substantial progress in achieving its key objectives, particularly in enhancing productivity, strengthening market linkages, and expanding access to solar energy solutions. Despite Lebanon's ongoing macroeconomic and geopolitical instability, the program has adapted effectively, ensuring that financial support, technical assistance, and targeted interventions have kept partners operational and positioned for growth. The first three outcomes are on track to being achieved by 2025. Progress of Outcome 4 (capacity-building for farmers and agribusinesses) is contingent on the successful rollout of IYAB training and its long-term sustainability within local institutions.

However, several structural challenges remain. The enabling environment for finance and energy solutions is distorted, requiring careful navigation to avoid reinforcing market inefficiencies. Solar energy expansion, while promising, is constrained by regulatory limitations and donor-driven price distortions, while Lebanon's broader economic crisis hampers agricultural finance. The transition from pilot interventions to systemic change is critical, particularly for models like YY Regen's solar rental expansion and Nasr Rahme & FAV's collective purchasing initiative, both of which require external investment to reach full scale. Additionally, addressing labour market challenges remains complex given the lack of institutional representation for agricultural workers, requiring alternative engagement strategies.

Finally, greater internal coherence across Bouzour's four outcomes could further enhance program effectiveness, ensuring interventions reinforce each other rather than operating in silos. The project's next phase will need to prioritize scalability, financing pipelines, and regulatory engagement to sustain and expand its impact. While challenges persist, Bouzour's ability to navigate Lebanon's volatile landscape has proven its adaptability and resilience, positioning it as a critical driver of systemic change in the country's agricultural sector.

### 3.5. Sustainability

#### 3.5.1. Redefining Sustainability in Fragile Market Context

The **sustainability of Bouzour-supported interventions** must be analyzed **within Lebanon's complex and fragile context**. Since 2019, the country has faced a compounded crisis, including a severe financial downturn, the Beirut port explosion, the COVID-19 pandemic, and, most recently, escalating regional conflicts. In such an environment, traditional sustainability approaches centered on long-term financial

independence and market-driven scalability need to be reassessed. Rather than focusing solely on growth and private sector ownership—hallmarks of typical Market Systems Development (MSD) programs, i.e., the pull factors in the AIMS approach that Bouzour follows—**sustainability in Lebanon must also encompass resilience, survival, and the ability of partners to maintain operations despite external shocks.**

A key question emerging from this evaluation is: what should sustainability mean in a context like Lebanon? While MSD programs (pull factors in AIMS) generally aim to create incentives for systemic change, many partners have struggled due to liquidity crises and external shocks, which have severely impacted their ability to operate. Discussions with partners, particularly **YY Regen** and **SmartLand Agri**, indicated that Bouzour's financial support played a crucial role in sustaining their operations and allowing them to continue providing services during the ongoing economic downturn. These interventions underscore that sustainability in Lebanon's fragile economic environment must be understood as maintaining core market functions rather than expecting rapid, independent expansion (Adopt or Adapt in AAER Systemic Change Framework). In the area of IYAB training, a key sustainability issue is how it will sustainably continue beyond the TOT and master trainer; is the vision that courses will be offered commercially or in the medium term they should be viewed as a public good? (more on this below).

This raises a critical internal question for donors and implementers: *Should sustainability in such contexts focus solely on providing technical assistance and financial support, or should it extend to subsidizing critical infrastructure or even payroll support for essential service providers?* While direct payroll support may not align with long-term sustainability principles, in fragile economies like Lebanon—where the financial system has effectively collapsed—more hands-on support and co-financing for critical investments are essential for enterprise and sector growth. Another defining characteristic of such fragile contexts is the high level of risk, which often deters private sector actors from making large-scale investments. In this environment, cost-sharing and de-risking mechanisms become crucial. Bouzour's approach in the cherry sector<sup>18</sup> and solar energy sector, for example, illustrates how subsidizing strategic investments and mitigating financial risks for exporters can catalyse market participation and encourage long-term engagement that might otherwise be considered too risky. These examples indicate that Bouzour's interventions have helped key actors remain operational despite Lebanon's crises, reinforcing that **sustainability is not just about growth but survival and adaptation in fragile contexts.** There needs to be a deeper reflection within ILO and its partners to understand sustainability in a fragile environment.

### 3.5.2. Early Signs of Partner Ownership and Capability for Sustainability

While Bouzour has played a **stabilizing role**, some partners are already demonstrating **early signs of ownership and market-driven sustainability.** For instance, **SmartLand Agri** mentioned that it has successfully **leveraged its partnership with Bouzour to enhance its branding, investor confidence secure a \$50,000 contract with ANERA** (American Near East Refugee Aid), an international NGO, which will help sustain its operations beyond the project. The company has also gained brand value and credibility, positioning itself for regional expansion into Saudi Arabia by 2026, with a possible entry into Syria if conditions allow. However, challenges remain. SmartLand Agri's technology—smart irrigation and soil monitoring—has proven highly cost-effective, reducing fertilizer use by 43% and water consumption by 35%. However, **the adoption rate remains constrained by farmers' inability to access financing.** Given Lebanon's **banking crisis and lack of microfinance options**, many farmers cannot invest in these technologies, limiting market-driven scaling.

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<sup>18</sup> For detail see: <https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/ILO-%20Bouzour%20project%20Lebanon-%20Cherry%20survey.pdf>

YY Regen conducted market research and found that among 70 agricultural cooperatives surveyed, 60% expressed interest in the solar rental model. This demonstrates a strong latent demand, but scaling the model requires additional capital investment. YY Regen has already secured **\$46,000 in funding from impact grants**. Still, it needs **at least \$100,000 to double its solar units from 10 to 20 before exploring regional expansion into Qatar and the UAE by 2026**. Bouzour's support has enabled YY Regen to **stabilize, and now the company is positioning itself for long-term growth**. The model has been tested with cold storage, cooperatives, and processing units for farmers. There is a continuing feasibility assessment on other portable solar solutions that can be beneficial and cost-effective for farmers. This highlights an important lesson: MSD approaches in fragile contexts must recognize that businesses often need assistance to survive before they can thrive. Therefore, Bouzour might need to include/increase 'push' support for partners, i.e. direct subsidy for partners (e.g. buying infrastructure or payroll support) as it does for farmers/MSMEs/workers (beneficiaries) in the AIMS approach.

Similarly, **FAV and Nasr Rahme have demonstrated the ability to sustain and expand their cooperative-led export model**<sup>19</sup>. Bouzour's \$10,000 investment in a collective purchasing fund helped cooperatives negotiate better deals on agricultural inputs, increasing their profitability and financial sustainability. Beyond the Bouzour-supported cherry value chain, cooperatives have expanded to **vegetables, apricots, apples, and other crops**, demonstrating a **market-driven shift toward diversified production**. However, **cooperative structures remain fragile, with many farmers still hesitant to formalize their market arrangements**. However, scaling and sustaining their model will depend on investments in post-harvest infrastructure, such as hydro-cooling and automated sorting systems. The estimated cost for a fully functional facility is between **\$300,000 and \$400,000—far beyond the financial capacity of cooperatives**. These cooperatives risk losing their competitive edge in export markets without additional investment.

While cooperatives alone lack the resources to meet these investment needs, **export markets provide a potential pathway for financing and incentivizing such structural upgrades**. However, for this to materialize, the scale of operations must significantly increase. Currently, the volume of exports facilitated through the model is insufficient to generate the necessary returns for cooperatives to justify such large-scale investments. Strengthening partnerships between cooperatives and private-sector exporters will be critical in unlocking the financial incentives needed to drive long-term infrastructure development. A broader strategic engagement with commercial buyers could also help de-risk these investments and provide a more straightforward pathway for cooperatives to target high-quality export markets.

These examples show that partners demonstrate ownership, but sustainability hinges on resolving systemic constraints such as access to finance, infrastructure gaps, and market volatility.

### 3.5.3. Financing Pipeline Critical for Long-Term Sustainability

One of the most substantial findings from the evaluation is that **all partners emphasized the need for continued investment support to sustain and scale their models**. While Bouzour has helped catalyze additional funding in some cases, **the financing gap remains the biggest constraint to sustainability**.

YY Regen, SmartLand Agri, and FAV all indicated that financial support was essential for their survival during Lebanon's economic crisis, and they now require investment capital to expand. YY Regen needs at least \$100,000 to increase its solar unit fleet, while SmartLand Agri is seeking additional working capital to

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<sup>19</sup> See: <https://www.ilo.org/resource/article/ilo-bouzour%E2%80%99s-pilot-initiative-open-new-markets-cherry-cooperatives>

expand its irrigation solutions. FAV and cooperatives require financing for post-harvest facilities to improve export quality.

However, Lebanon's ongoing banking crisis has severely limited access to commercial financing, making it difficult for businesses to secure the capital they need to scale. As a result, donor-funded projects like Bouzour, PROSPECT, SCI, others have been critical in bridging the financing gap, but long-term sustainability requires more structured investment mechanisms. Some of the partners recommended that Bouzour explore interventions in the following areas (more discussed in recommendations)

- Investor engagement and impact investment facilitation: Bouzour could connect businesses with diaspora investment networks and impact investors and financial institutions to create sustainable funding pipelines.
- Blended finance models: Exploring risk-sharing mechanisms where donors provide partial credit or loan guarantees for private-sector loans could help de-risk investments in agribusiness and renewable energy.
- Microfinance and leasing solutions: Given the constraints on commercial lending, partnerships with microfinance institutions or lease-to-own models could help businesses expand their customer base by reducing the upfront cost barrier for farmers.

By facilitating **investor engagement and financial linkages**, **Bouzour could significantly enhance the sustainability of its interventions**, ensuring that businesses and cooperatives have **the capital they need to survive, grow, and expand beyond direct donor funding**.

#### 3.5.4. Skilling as a Public Good for the Short to Medium Term

The Bouzour Project has faced significant challenges in directly addressing workers' needs through traditional labor and employer associations, as Lebanon's formal structures do not adequately represent agricultural workers. The Association of Lebanese Industrialists (ALI) does not cover primary agriculture apart from agrifood processing, limiting engagement with organized employer bodies. Likewise, trade unions in Lebanon do not formally represent agricultural workers, as the sector is mainly informal and dominated by seasonal labor, including Syrian refugees. This structural gap has made it difficult for Bouzour to integrate agricultural labor concerns into a tripartite social dialogue or formal labor market institutions.

The Improve Your Agriculture Business (IYAB) training initiative emerges as a structured intervention explicitly designed to institutionalize entrepreneurial and management skills among farmers and small agribusinesses. However, at this stage, it is still in its early phase, focusing on training master trainers and rolling out Training of Trainers (TOT) across selected institutes rather than directly engaging workers. Beyond IYAB, Bouzour's approach to skilling extends across multiple project components, integrating training on good agricultural practices, productivity improvements, and market-driven compliance. For instance, in the cherry sector, farmers have been trained to meet export standards, while climate-smart agriculture interventions have introduced water-efficient technologies and sustainable production methods. Additionally, recognizing the critical need for improved Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) standards, Bouzour has engaged greenhouse installers—primarily Syrian workers—to assess sectoral challenges and risks. While OSH awareness-raising efforts have not yet been implemented, the project plans to roll out targeted initiatives to enhance worker safety and installation efficiency, incorporating a gender lens to address specific risks faced by female workers. With further gender-responsive skilling efforts planned for 2025, including targeted interventions for women entrepreneurs, Bouzour continues

strengthening technical and business capacities while advancing decent work conditions across the sector.

The **selection of training institutes** has been carefully aligned with those with **an existing agricultural footprint** and **trainers experienced working with farmers and adult education**. The goal is to increase commercial orientation among agricultural workers and smallholder farmers, helping them develop entrepreneurial and market-linked skills. While this approach enhances long-term sustainability by embedding skilling programs within local institutions rather than relying on Bouzour to deliver them, **the financial sustainability of these institutions remains a critical challenge**. Given Lebanon's economic collapse and severe funding shortages, **it is highly unlikely that a commercial model for TVET training in agriculture will emerge in the foreseeable future**. This raises an important question for Bouzour and its donors: **How can these institutions continue to deliver agricultural skills training if they lack sustainable financing mechanisms?** While institutionalizing training is a **more sustainable option than direct delivery by Bouzour**, further reflection is needed on whether public or donor-backed financing mechanisms are necessary to ensure that skilling remains accessible to agricultural workers in Lebanon's fragile economic landscape. Experiences from other countries suggest that establishing strong Master Trainer structures remains valuable, as such networks have successfully mobilized donor funding for continued training, particularly under well-recognized programs and branding like ILO's Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB)<sup>20</sup>. In many low-income or fragile/post-conflict countries with weak public institutions, donor funding has effectively replaced government financing for service delivery. In this context, a mixed model—where a pool of specialized local trainers is regularly contracted by donors while also offering cost-recovery training for business enterprises—can provide a sustainable approach<sup>21</sup>.

#### 3.5.5. Conclusion on Sustainability

The sustainability of the Bouzour Project must be understood within Lebanon's fragile economic and political context, where survival, rather than growth, is often the immediate priority for businesses, cooperatives, and agricultural workers. Traditional MSD principles (pull elements of AIMS) emphasizing partner-driven scaling and financial independence are challenging to apply in a country facing multiple crises, including an economic collapse, fuel shortages, geopolitical instability, and weak institutional frameworks. Despite these challenges, Bouzour has played a critical role in stabilizing key market actors, enabling them to weather external shocks and laying the foundation for long-term resilience. The experience of partners like YY Regen, SmartLand Agri, and Nasr Rahme & FAV demonstrates that targeted financial and technical support has helped businesses remain operational, expand services, and, in some cases, attract additional investment. However, long-term sustainability will depend on addressing systemic barriers, particularly access to finance, post-harvest infrastructure, and stronger institutional linkages for agricultural labour representation.

Moving forward, Bouzour and its donors must critically reflect on what sustainability means in Lebanon's fragile market context. Should the program limit its role to providing technical assistance and financial support, or should it go further by facilitating significant infrastructure investments (like it did in the cherry sector), investor engagement, or temporary financial safety nets for critical market actors? The case of IYAB training institutionalization illustrates this dilemma—while embedding skills training within local institutions is a more sustainable approach, these institutions lack the financial resources to continue delivering training without external support. However, as evidence from other countries shows, this may be the most sustainable approach given Lebanon's fragile context. Similarly, ensuring that cooperatives

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<sup>20</sup> See:

[https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed\\_emp/%40emp\\_ent/%40ifp\\_seed/documents/publication/wcms\\_777202.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_emp/%40emp_ent/%40ifp_seed/documents/publication/wcms_777202.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



and agribusinesses sustain market linkages will require financing mechanisms beyond traditional grant-based support. To ensure long-term impact, Bouzour may need to focus on building a financing pipeline, strengthening institutional sustainability, and supporting adaptive strategies that allow partners to remain resilient in Lebanon's unpredictable environment.

## 4. CONCLUSION: EVALUATION OF BOUZOUR PROJECT

The mid-term evaluation of the Bouzour Project demonstrates a well-structured intervention that remains broadly on track to achieving its key objectives. The project has effectively navigated Lebanon's volatile economic and geopolitical landscape, ensuring resilience for farmers, cooperatives, and agribusinesses through a mix of market-driven solutions and targeted financial support. However, while significant progress has been made, challenges remain in scaling interventions, securing long-term financial sustainability, and addressing labor market gaps within Lebanon's agricultural sector.

### 4.1. Relevance

Bouzour Project remains highly relevant in the context of Lebanon's economic and social challenges. By targeting agricultural productivity, market access, and renewable energy solutions, **the project aligns well with the needs of smallholder farmers and workers (Syrian and Lebanese) struggling amid Lebanon's financial collapse and regional instability**. Bouzour's interventions directly address key constraints such as liquidity shortages, rising production costs, and limited access to export markets. However, *despite its alignment with the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, the lack of formal employer and worker representation in agriculture limits the project's ability to engage with traditional tripartite mechanisms*. The recruitment study on agricultural labor dynamics provides valuable insights into informal employment structures, but its impact depends on whether it can be operationalized into tangible policy or pilot interventions.

Recognizing these challenges, Bouzour adopts an **incentive-driven approach**, fostering private sector actors to improve working conditions where it creates market benefits. For instance, in the **cherry sector**, Bouzour is supporting **SMETA certification** and working with value chain actors to strengthen **child labor controls, grievance mechanisms, and overall labor conditions**—all of which will be further developed in the **2025 pilots**. In **horticulture**, improved greenhouse technologies are being introduced to significantly **enhance working conditions** for laborers. Additionally, with the easing of wartime disruptions, Bouzour has **relaunched its OSH initiatives across components** and is reviving the **pilot on recruitment mechanisms**, both of which were previously paused due to the conflict. These efforts illustrate how Bouzour is driving **decent work improvements through market-based incentives**, reinforcing sustainable business practices while navigating Lebanon's complex economic and legal landscape.

### 4.2. Coherence

Bouzour aligns well with ILO's strategic priorities, the UNSDCF for Lebanon, and complementary initiatives such as the PROSPECTS program and System Change Initiative (SCI). Opportunities also exist for greater collaboration with donors such as ANERA and LIFE. Internally, however, gaps in coherence remain. **The four outcome areas often operate in silos rather than reinforcing each other as an integrated system**. For instance, the solar energy interventions do not explicitly support core value chain upgrades, and the IYAB training lacks clear linkages to employment opportunities within Bouzour's other interventions. Further strengthening these connections and making them explicit in the TOC would enhance the program's systemic impact and long-term sustainability.

### 4.3. Efficiency

Despite Lebanon's volatile macroeconomic conditions, Bouzour has **efficiently managed its financial and human resources**, maintaining a **77% delivery rate for 2024** and ensuring timely fund disbursement to partners. **Flexible program management and rapid response mechanisms have been crucial in**

**adapting to market shifts, liquidity crises, and geopolitical instability.** Several stakeholders highlighted that Bouzour's support was instrumental in maintaining business continuity during Lebanon's liquidity crisis. However, **agribusinesses and cooperatives' financial and operational constraints underline the need for sustained investment and risk-mitigation strategies.**

#### 4.4. Effectiveness

**The project is on track to achieving its key outcome-level targets by 2025.** Progress in enhancing productivity, market linkages, and solar energy adoption is evident, with clear signs of market system improvements. Introducing solar-powered rental solutions has led to cost reductions, and contract farming models have facilitated increased farmer incomes. However, **Outcome 4—capacity building for farmers and agribusinesses—remains contingent on the successful rollout of IYAB training.** While institutional capacity has been strengthened, translating training into tangible farmer-level behavior change within the project timeframe remains challenging. Moreover, **achieving systemic change requires moving beyond piloting and transitioning to scale-up, which will require working on structured financing pipelines and regulatory engagement.**

#### 4.5. Sustainability

The evaluation underscores that sustainability in fragile contexts like Lebanon must be reframed beyond traditional market facilitation principles. Bouzour follows the **Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS)**, balancing **push** elements (capacity building for MSMEs, farmers, and workers) with **pull** strategies (facilitation of market linkages and private sector investment). In Lebanon's volatile economic environment, sustainability must be understood not just as financial independence but as the **resilience of key market actors** to withstand shocks. Bouzour has successfully **enabled business models that create win-win outcomes**—for instance, in the **cherry sector**, exporters such as Nasr Rahme are now investing in farmer training and pre-financing inputs, which has improved quality, expanded market access, and increased returns for all actors, including higher wages for workers.

However, despite these gains, **structural constraints—particularly access to finance—remain a major risk to sustaining and scaling these models.** While Bouzour cannot resolve Lebanon's broader financial sector collapse, addressing **financial constraints within its intervention areas, such as cherry and horticulture value chains, is crucial.** Without mechanisms to ensure continued investment and liquidity for its partners, the long-term viability of these business models—and Bouzour's impact—risks being eroded. Ensuring that **market actors have a financing pipeline**, whether through **de-risking mechanisms, partnerships with financial institutions, or alternative investment strategies**, is essential to consolidating the progress made and preventing gains from being washed away by Lebanon's ongoing economic instability. Bouzour will need to continue, strengthen, and expand its direct financial support ('push' element for partners) to market actors.

While promising, the IYAB training model currently lacks a clear pathway to financial sustainability, raising questions about whether skilling should be treated as a public good in the near term or a mixed model might be more appropriate. Additionally, labor market interventions face structural challenges due to the lack of formal worker representation in agriculture, necessitating alternative engagement strategies.

#### 4.6. Cross-Cutting Issues: Gender and Refugee Inclusion

Gender and cross-cutting issues were integrated within the above OECD-DAC criteria in line with the evaluation matrix and the MTR terms of reference. Bouzour has made notable progress in **gender inclusion at the agricultural worker level**, but **women's representation among farmers and agribusiness owners remains low.** Future interventions need to focus on increasing women's participation in value chains beyond labor roles. The **project has successfully engaged Syrian refugees** in agricultural employment, mainly through improved market linkages, but structural barriers—such as



**lack of labor protections and the informal nature of employment—continue to limit their bargaining power and long-term job stability.** The **project’s recruitment study provides valuable insights** into informal hiring practices and potential avenues for improving fair recruitment mechanisms. Further efforts are needed to ensure decent work principles are embedded in the agricultural employment structure.

Bouzour’s **Gender Mainstreaming Strategy** (March 2024) aims to ensure that gender considerations are integrated across all interventions, applying a structured **gender-aware** and **gender-responsive** approach. The project follows the ILO’s AIMS framework, recognizing that improving women’s access to decent work in agriculture requires both **market-driven opportunities** and **targeted support** to address systemic barriers. Key planned or upcoming interventions include enhancing women’s participation in climate-smart horticulture, integrating gender considerations into value chains, promoting OSH awareness with a gender lens, and supporting female agripreneurs. However, as the strategy outlines, persistent challenges such as **legal constraints, restrictive social norms, and limited access to finance and land ownership** continue to hinder women’s full economic participation. Moving forward, Bouzour must **strengthen private sector engagement in gender-inclusive business practices**, ensure **gender-disaggregated data collection** to track impact, and explore **collaborations with policy and advocacy actors** to address long-term structural barriers

#### 4.7. Overall Reflections

The Bouzour Project has **successfully navigated Lebanon’s highly volatile economic, financial, and political landscape, demonstrating strong adaptability and resilience** in its interventions. While the project is largely on track to meet its core targets, **structural challenges—such as financial barriers, regulatory constraints, and limited labor protections—continue to shape the program’s effectiveness and sustainability.** Addressing these issues will require **greater internal coherence between intervention areas, more structured financial pipelines for agribusinesses, and deeper engagement with policymakers to improve the enabling environment**, especially considering that there is a new government which might be receptive towards ILO. As the project moves into its final implementation phase, scaling successful pilots, strengthening investment linkages, and ensuring long-term institutional ownership will be key to sustaining impact beyond the project’s duration.

### 5. LESSONS LEARNED AND EMERGING GOOD PRACTICES<sup>22</sup>

The evaluation of the Bouzour project has provided significant insights into the program’s implementation, its ability to adapt to Lebanon’s volatile economic and political context, and its impact on agricultural productivity, market access, and energy efficiency. The lessons learned and emerging good practices presented below highlight key takeaways for future interventions and similar programs.

#### 5.1. Lessons Learned

##### 5.1.1. MSD in Fragile Contexts Requires Adaptation

**Lesson:** It has been confirmed that the traditional **Market Systems Development (MSD) approach**, which relies primarily on partner-driven sustainability, has its limitations in fragile contexts like Lebanon. Bouzour follows the **Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS)**, which already integrates **push elements** such as direct subsidies and capacity building for MSMEs, farmers, and workers. However, amid Lebanon’s prolonged economic crises, geopolitical instability, and financial market failures, private sector partners face severe constraints in sustaining and scaling interventions. The escalation of the war has further **shifted priorities from business growth and innovation to sheer survival**, limiting their ability to invest in long-term market solutions. In this context, **push support for partners—such as liquidity assistance, targeted subsidies, and public-good investments—needs to be further reinforced** to ensure that key

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<sup>22</sup> Developed in line with ILO Guidelines: Guidance Note 5.5: Dissemination of Lessons Learned and Emerging Good Practices

market actors remain viable and capable of driving systemic change in the long run. (See Recommendation for greater detail).

**Context:** Lebanon's banking collapse and currency devaluation have severely limited access to credit, making it impossible for market actors to invest in new technologies or expand operations. Bouzour successfully adapted by supporting partners like YY Regen and Nasr Rahme, helping them stay afloat during economic shocks and, at the same time, piloting innovative inclusive business models.

**Target Users:** Development agencies, MSD practitioners, and policymakers designing programs in fragile economies.

**Implication for Future Projects:** Future programs in similar fragile markets should recognize that direct financial support may be necessary as a transitional strategy before market actors can fully own interventions. Strengthen the push element of AIMS, targeting partners, with direct financial support around infrastructure and payroll support.

### 5.1.2. Energy Market Distortions Pose Challenges for Sustainable Solar Adoption

**Lesson:** While solar energy solutions offer a viable alternative to Lebanon's unreliable and expensive diesel market, donor subsidies and regulatory barriers have distorted the market, making it challenging to establish commercially viable models.

**Context:** Many solar providers, including Bouzour-supported partners, struggle to compete with heavily subsidized donor-funded solar installations. Moreover, private sector-led solar electricity generation still lacks regulatory approval for continuous supply, restricting its long-term viability.

**Target Users:** Renewable energy policymakers, donors, and implementers in market systems development.

**Implication for Future Projects:** Programs aiming to introduce renewable energy solutions must engage policymakers in developing a regulatory framework that supports private sector participation while avoiding excessive market distortions. Now, with a new government, this intervention is feasible.

### 5.1.3. Skilling as a Public Good in Fragile Markets

**Lesson:** The financial sustainability of vocational training and business development services is unlikely in a fragile economic context like Lebanon. In the short to medium term, such training must be treated as a public good and funded accordingly

**Context:** Bouzour's Improve Your Agribusiness (IYAB) training aims to build farmers' business skills, but no viable commercial model exists to sustain the training beyond donor funding. The financial collapse of Lebanon's vocational training institutions further exacerbates this challenge.

**Target Users:** TVET & BDS institutions, donors, and development agencies implementing skills development programs.

**Implication for Future Projects:** Donors and implementers must recognize that skills training for vulnerable populations in fragile markets will require long-term public or donor-backed financing mechanisms. Experiences from other countries suggest that establishing strong Master Trainer structures remains valuable, as such networks have successfully mobilized donor funding for continued training, particularly under well-recognized programs and branding like ILO's SIYB<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> See:

[https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed\\_emp/%40emp\\_ent/%40ifp\\_seed/documents/publication/wcms\\_777202.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_emp/%40emp_ent/%40ifp_seed/documents/publication/wcms_777202.pdf)

#### 5.1.4. Gender and Refugee Inclusion in Agricultural Value Chains Requires Targeted Strategies

**Lesson:** While Bouzour has successfully improved market access and income for Lebanese farmers, ensuring greater participation of women and Syrian refugees requires tailored interventions that address socio-economic and structural barriers.

**Context:** Female representation is lower among farmers than among agricultural workers, and Syrian refugees face legal and social barriers to formal employment in agriculture.

**Target Users:** Gender and social inclusion specialists, MSD program designers, and labor market policymakers.

**Implication for Future Projects:** Future interventions should integrate specific strategies for promoting women's participation in farming and formalizing employment pathways for Syrian refugees in agriculture; this is already being planned and aligns with Bouzour's Gender Strategy.

### 5.2. Emerging Good Practices

#### 5.2.1. Leveraging Rental-Based Models for Inclusive Energy Access

**Good Practice:** Bouzour-supported YY Regen's rental-based solar model has proven successful in addressing energy needs for cooperatives without requiring high upfront investment from farmers.

**Context:** Given Lebanon's financial crisis, most farmers and cooperatives cannot afford to purchase solar installations outright. The rental model allows them to access solar power without the burden of capital expenditure.

**Impact & Beneficiaries:** Over 150 cooperative members have benefitted from reduced energy costs, and the partner plans to double its outreach in 2025.

**Potential for Replication:** This model can be expanded to other fragile contexts where liquidity constraints prevent direct asset purchases.

#### 5.2.2. Adaptive Programming in Crisis Contexts

**Good Practice:** Bouzour's ability to pivot interventions in response to Lebanon's conflict and financial crisis has been crucial in ensuring program continuity and impact.

**Context:** The initial focus on modern greenhouses was modified to include local welder-based upgrades due to rising costs. Similarly, market access interventions were adjusted to accommodate disruptions in supply chains caused by conflict (e.g., Intervention with QOOT Cluster).

**Impact & Beneficiaries:** These adaptations enabled Bouzour to continue supporting key agricultural actors despite economic, escalating war, and political instability. Many partners acknowledged that Bouzour's support was crucial for their survival, and now they are well-positioned for expansion.

**Potential for Replication:** Development programs in fragile contexts should incorporate flexible design mechanisms allowing real-time adaptation to emerging challenges.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1. Continue /strengthen the Hybrid MSD Approach with HDP Nexus Considerations

**Priority:** High | **Responsible:** ILO Project Team & ILO Country Office | **Timeline:** Medium-Term | **Resources:** Medium

#### Overview

A **hybrid Market Systems Development (MSD)** approach<sup>24</sup> blends traditional market facilitation with temporary direct support, especially in fragile economic and political contexts. Unlike standard MSD models that rely solely on market incentives, a hybrid approach acknowledges the need for strategic interventions such as temporary financial assistance, technical support, and regulatory facilitation to stabilize critical actors in crisis-affected markets. The following are characteristics of a hybrid approach:

1. A hybrid approach is still an MSD approach – it maintains a systems perspective. This implies that the market system has been analysed, and market constraints have been identified.
2. The analysis leads to articulating systemic change and the sector's vision after program support (reflected in country strategy). This should include a reflection on whether or not supplementary intervention or direct delivery may be required in light of the constraints that need to be addressed and the expected lack of capacity of system actors. Specific gaps should be well-defined and justified to avoid the overuse of potentially less sustainable models.
3. This strategy should be turned into an intervention portfolio. In line with the gaps identified, supplementary interventions or direct delivery can be considered to support commercially sustainable business models.
4. The accumulated change of this intervention portfolio should result in an increasingly resilient system.

While the ILO's **Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS)**<sup>25</sup> is officially framed as a blend of market facilitation (“pull”) and direct support to vulnerable target groups (“push”); in practice—especially in fragile and forced displacement contexts—**AIMS has incorporated push elements for private sector partners as well**. For instance, in **Niger**, the AIMS-supported project fully funded establishment of **onion storage facilities**<sup>26</sup> (e.g. 6 onion storage facilities) and **aquaculture infrastructure**<sup>27</sup> (e.g. 1.35-hectare modern aquaculture site, and 30 permanent and 20 mobile fishponds) near refugee camps to de-risk private sector engagement and catalyse inclusive business models. These interventions demonstrate that direct partner-facing support—including equipment and infrastructure—can be appropriate and even necessary under AIMS, provided it is grounded in systemic analysis and structured with a long-term sustainability lens.

Beyond ILO, another example of hybrid (direct and facilitation) support for partners is exemplified by **SHARPE, a UKAID-funded MSD program in Ethiopia**; it provided time-bound subsidies to catalyse innovation in refugee markets. This included cost-sharing for one-off infrastructure (e.g. satellite bank branches, imported solar equipment) and recurrent expenditures like temporary staff salaries<sup>28,29</sup>. Unlike conventional MSD programs that avoid such direct investments, SHARPE adapted to its fragile, donor-

<sup>24</sup> Hirst, D., Bekkers, H., & Zulfikar, M. (2022). *Hybrid Market Systems Development to Reinforce System Resilience and Climate Preparedness*. IFDC and OU. Retrieved from: [https://beamexchange.org/uploads/filer\\_public/8d/a0/8da077c8-3c6e-47e8-82d4-9af7a3bd0407/hybrid\\_market\\_systems\\_development\\_to\\_reinforce\\_system\\_resilience\\_compressed.pdf](https://beamexchange.org/uploads/filer_public/8d/a0/8da077c8-3c6e-47e8-82d4-9af7a3bd0407/hybrid_market_systems_development_to_reinforce_system_resilience_compressed.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/resource/other/approach-inclusive-market-systems-aims>

<sup>26</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO) & UNHCR. (2019). *Fiche Chaîne de valeur Oignon – Projet PAERCA, Niger (NER/19/01/USA)*. Niamey, Niger: ILO & UNHCR, funded by the U.S. Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM).

<sup>27</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO) & UNHCR. (2019). *Fiche Chaîne de valeur Pisciculture – Projet PAERCA, Niger (NER/19/01/USA)*. Niamey, Niger: ILO & UNHCR, funded by BPRM.

<sup>28</sup> Davies, G. (2024, February). *Using grants to catalyse market systems change in the context of host and refugee communities: Learning from SHARPE*. Tandem. A UK Aid funded project. See:

[https://www.dai.com/uploads/SHARPE%20Subsidy%20Brief\\_Using%20grants%20to%20catalyse%20market%20systems%20change%20in%20the%20context%20of%20host%20and%20refugee%20communities.pdf](https://www.dai.com/uploads/SHARPE%20Subsidy%20Brief_Using%20grants%20to%20catalyse%20market%20systems%20change%20in%20the%20context%20of%20host%20and%20refugee%20communities.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> Davies, G. (2024, February). *Use of financial subsidies for the private sector in the context of host and refugee communities*. Tandem. A UK Aid funded project. See:

[https://www.dai.com/uploads/SHARPE%20Public%20Subsidy%20Report\\_Use%20of%20financial%20subsidies%20for%20the%20private%20sector%20in%20the%20context%20of%20host%20and%20refugee%20communities.pdf](https://www.dai.com/uploads/SHARPE%20Public%20Subsidy%20Report_Use%20of%20financial%20subsidies%20for%20the%20private%20sector%20in%20the%20context%20of%20host%20and%20refugee%20communities.pdf)

heavy context by de-risking early-stage private sector engagement. These measures were carefully negotiated, milestone-based, and targeted for sustainability and systemic impact.

Bouzour is already implementing **targeted subsidies**, such as to support the **solar rental model** and the sale of **smart irrigation and soil monitoring products**, ensuring affordability for end-users while enabling partners to expand market access. However, for effective scale-up, Bouzour could adopt a **graduated subsidy approach**, where financial support **declines as partners reach specific sales volume thresholds**, fostering long-term sustainability. Additionally, Bouzour can further strengthen **private sector resilience** by **co-financing R&D efforts** to help partners refine and expand their product offerings or by making **strategic direct investments**<sup>30</sup> in production infrastructure. Given Lebanon's economic crisis and the **private sector's limited capacity for innovation and risk-taking—further exacerbated by the war—**Bouzour may need to adopt a **more risk-tolerant investment strategy**, selectively supporting high-potential partners to sustain and scale innovation in the sector.

The **Humanitarian-Development-Peace** (HDP) Nexus, as outlined in ILO's Crisis-HDP Nexus Summary, emphasizes that economic stability and employment generation are crucial for peacebuilding in conflict and post-crisis contexts. Bouzour, operating in Lebanon's financial and geopolitical crisis, must ensure that its market interventions promote economic sustainability and contribute to resilience-building and social cohesion.

#### Key Actions:

- **Implement a tiered approach** where financial support transitions into facilitation (e.g., initially subsidizing **IYAB** as a public good and later introducing cost-sharing mechanisms).
- Strengthen social dialogue mechanisms between agribusinesses, cooperatives, and workers to align employer and worker priorities, ensuring the ILO's tripartite approach is reflected.
- Strengthen and expand on ILO's Recommendation No. 205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience, ensuring that Bouzour's interventions contribute to stability in crisis settings<sup>31</sup>.
- **Support cooperatives and agribusinesses with temporary liquidity support**, allowing them to remain operational during Lebanon's financial crisis.
- **Reinforce and expand AIMS-aligned 'push' partner support within Bouzour by integrating carefully designed, time-bound direct support to private sector actors.** In fragile contexts, AIMS is not limited to push strategies for vulnerable populations—it also allows for direct support to market actors where facilitation alone is insufficient. As demonstrated in Niger (e.g. fully funded onion storage and aquaculture infrastructure) and in SHARPE's MSD program in Ethiopia (e.g. cost-sharing for infrastructure and temporary staffing), such support can de-risk innovation and unlock inclusive business models. Bouzour should continue and expand its use of this approach through graduated subsidies, strategic co-investments, and milestone-based risk-sharing mechanisms that build long-term market sustainability.

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<sup>30</sup> See how The Wood Foundation Africa (TWFA) and Gatsby Africa (GA), working in Rwanda's Tea sector, purchased two tea factories, which were being privatized by the Government, to create systemic change in the Tea sector. Reference: <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/africa/reports/pdf/2020-in-it-for-the-long-haul-wood-foundation-gatsby-africa.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> Bouzour has conducted a **conflict analysis study** (March 2024) to assess the impact of Lebanon's economic crisis, political instability, and war on agricultural livelihoods and social tensions. The findings are actively informing project interventions, ensuring a **conflict-sensitive approach** that mitigates risks and promotes social cohesion. For instance, Bouzour is leveraging **market incentives** to improve working conditions rather than relying on regulatory enforcement, as seen in the **cherry sector**, where exporters are adopting **SMETA certification and labor standards** to access high-value markets. Additionally, following war-related delays, the project has relaunched **OSH awareness initiatives and recruitment mechanism pilots** to strengthen labour protections and resilience in agriculture.

## 6.2. Strengthening Internal Coherence Through Value Chain Integration

**Priority: High | Responsible: ILO Project Team & ILO HQ | Timeline: Short & Medium-Term | Resources: Medium**

### Overview

Bouzour's **four outcome areas currently function in silos**, with **limited synergies across interventions**. Bouzour should adopt a structured and integrated approach to improve internal coherence, ensuring that different program components **reinforce each other**.

ILO's Enterprise Summary highlights that **lack of coordination between interventions** and **weak employer engagement** can undermine sustainability. To address this, Bouzour should:

#### 1. In the Short-Term (By End of Program):

- Strengthen **explicit connections** between solar energy (Outcome 3) and agricultural productivity and market access value chain (Outcome 1 & 2).
- Align activities so that **horticulture, cherry value chains, and solar energy interventions are intentionally and explicitly interlinked**.

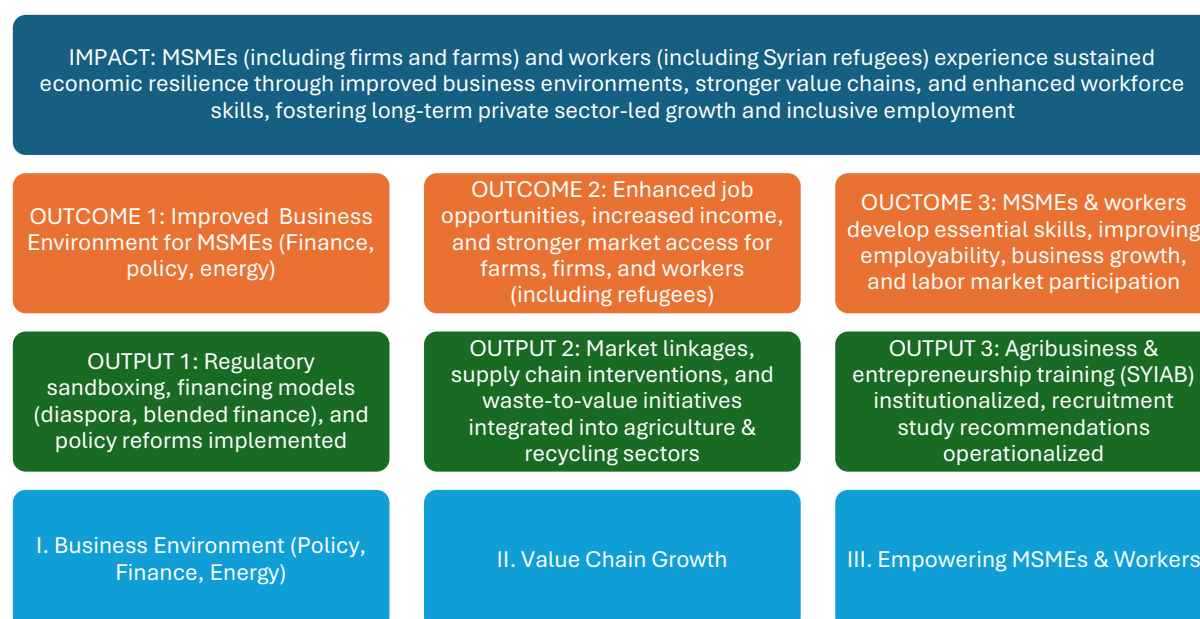
#### 2. For the Next Phase of Bouzour (Medium-Term):

For the next phase, Bouzour should **restructure its program into three interconnected pillars** to **improve internal coherence, maximize systemic impact, and ensure sustainability**. A more structured approach will align activities under **three complementary pillars**, ensuring that interventions reinforce each other rather than operate in silos.

- I. **Business Environment (Policy, Finance, Energy)** – This pillar will **create the foundational conditions for private sector-led growth** by addressing **policy gaps, access to finance, and regulatory bottlenecks** in energy, finance and selected value chains (e.g. waste recycling and agriculture). It will support efforts such as **regulatory sandboxing for solar energy**, innovative financing models (diaspora funding, blended finance), and **policy reforms** to enhance market functionality. A strong enabling environment ensures that **businesses and cooperatives can scale effectively** without being constrained by financial or legal barriers. However, achieving this will **require significant additional resources**—both in terms of **funding and specialized expertise** (e.g., policy advisors, fund managers, etc). Moreover, interventions must align with **AIMS principles**, ensuring that sustainability remains at the core of all activities, avoiding dependency on short-term external support while fostering systemic market resilience.
- II. **Value Chain Growth (Agriculture, Waste Recycling as a New Sector)** – The second pillar will focus on **strengthening agricultural value chains** while **diversifying into waste recycling** (potential, subject to internal research), a sector with strong economic and labor market potential, and relevance to Syrian refugees. By integrating waste management into Bouzour's portfolio, the program can address **employment gaps, environmental sustainability, and circular economy opportunities**. This pillar ensures that **value chain interventions are market-driven and scalable**, leading to long-term private-sector engagement and job creation. More research needs to be done to assess the viability of waste recycling as a value chain sector for Bouzour.
- III. **Empowering MSMEs & Workers (Rolling out Recruitment Study Action Points, IYAB)** – The final pillar will **equip MSMEs and workers with the necessary skills, business development support, and market linkages** to participate effectively in value chains. The **recruitment study action points** will guide labor market strategies, while **IYAB (Improve Your Agriculture Business)** will **institutionalize agribusiness training** at local institutions, ensuring its sustainability beyond

Bouzour. This pillar strengthens **human capital and enterprise capacity**, making the value chains more inclusive and competitive.

**Figure 2: Simplified Proposed TOC**



By structuring the program in this way, Bouzour can **enhance coherence, ensure interventions reinforce each other, and drive systemic change**. The **Enabling Environment** pillar provides the necessary **infrastructure and financial mechanisms** for businesses to thrive, the **Value Chain Growth** pillar ensures market expansion, and the **Empowering MSMEs & Workers** pillar builds the capacity of individuals and enterprises to engage in economic opportunities. This integrated framework will enable Bouzour to **scale impact effectively while adapting to Lebanon's complex and evolving market conditions**.

#### Key Actions:

- Integrate the **energy component (solar solutions)** more systematically with **agricultural interventions**.
- Strengthen linkages between **value chain and skills development**, ensuring that **training aligns with market needs**.
- Undertake internal discussion to conceptualize **redesign for the second phase**. Conduct market assessments on finance, waste recycling, etc.

Apply ILO's Just Transition framework to ensure environmentally sustainable value chain growth.

### 6.3. Supporting Partners to Scale Up and Enhance Effectiveness

**Priority: Medium | Responsible: ILO Project Team | Timeline: Short-Term | Resources: Medium**

#### Overview

Scaling successful interventions is critical for maximizing impact and ensuring sustainability. Bouzour's pilot interventions in **solar energy, contract farming, and agricultural market linkages** have demonstrated **strong potential** but require **structured scaling strategies** to ensure **broader adoption and long-term sustainability**. The examples and recommendations presented in this section are **illustrative rather than exhaustive**, reflecting insights from **partners directly interviewed during the**



**evaluation.** As not all partners were engaged in the review process, these findings should be **considered indicative** rather than a comprehensive assessment of all scaling opportunities within the project.

Key considerations for scaling include:

- **Strengthening access to finance** to support business expansion.
- **Encouraging market confidence** by showcasing successful models.
- **Building the capacity of partners** to operate at scale.

Each intervention will require **specific measures** to address sectoral challenges and **enhance effectiveness** in scaling.

**I. YY Regen (Solar for Agriculture):** YY Regen has **pioneered the rental model** for solar-powered irrigation, allowing **cooperatives to access clean energy without high upfront costs**. However, **expansion is constrained by financing and market awareness**.

#### **Key Actions for Scaling:**

- **Expand from 10 to 20 rental units:** YY Regen currently operates 10 solar rental systems, but farmer demand significantly exceeds supply. The business requires an **additional \$100,000** investment to scale to 20 units. Bouzour should **facilitate connections with impact investors, donor programs, and blended finance options**.
- **Facilitate impact investment meetings:** Many investors hesitate to fund small-scale solar initiatives due to uncertainty in farmer adoption and financing mechanisms. Bouzour can de-risk investments by coordinating meetings between YY Regen and **impact investment funds**.
- **Organize farmer field days to showcase successful solar-powered cooperatives:** Many farmers remain skeptical of the rental model. **On-site demonstrations of cost savings and productivity gains will build market confidence and drive adoption**. Bouzour should support **cooperative visits to existing solar-powered farms** to showcase **the benefits in real time**. **The presence of the ILO can build trust among farmers on the rental solar model**. Some of these activities are already in the pipeline.

**II. QOOT (Contract Farming Models):** Contract farming **can help smallholder farmers secure stable markets**. However, managing it is often expensive and prone to side-selling, where farmers sell to third parties instead of fulfilling their contracts or partners purchase from the open market when prices fall, reneging on their contracts. QOOT is exploring **30 contract farming agreements**, but the high transaction costs and risks necessitate alternative models.

#### **Key Actions for Scaling:**

- Transition from traditional contract farming to Directed and Relational Procurement Models<sup>32</sup>:
  - **Directed Procurement Model:** Instead of **fixed contracts**, buyers provide **pre-agreed terms with flexibility in pricing**. Farmers receive input support, training, and guaranteed off-take opportunities but are not locked into strict contracts. This reduces side-selling risks and lowers the administrative burden for buyers.

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<sup>32</sup> See for detail:

(<http://www.actionforenterprise.org/resources/4.3.1%20Directed%20Procurement%20Model%20Facilitation%20Tool.pdf>)



- **Relational Procurement Model:** Farmers build long-term relationships with buyers through transparent pricing, ongoing support, and flexible arrangements. Trust-based engagement encourages consistency in supply without rigid contracts.
- **Facilitate buyer-farmer dialogues** to establish trust-based agreements: QOOT should create structured platforms where farmers and buyers negotiate procurement arrangements, reducing power imbalances and enhancing mutual accountability.

**III. Smartland Agri:** The partner provides **climate-smart agricultural technologies**, but **cost remains a barrier** for many farmers. Expanding market penetration will require **affordable options and demonstration efforts**.

#### **Key Actions for Scaling:**

- **Develop low-cost product bundles to increase affordability:** Farmers struggle to adopt advanced agricultural technologies due to high costs and lack of financing. Bouzour should work with Smartland Agri to **develop scaled-down, cost-effective versions** of its technology or **bundle products into tiered pricing options**.
- **Organize farmer field demonstrations for climate-smart solutions:** Adopting new technology often requires **proof of effectiveness**. Bouzour should support **on-site demonstrations** where farmers can **observe performance improvements firsthand**. This is also being planned for 2025.

**IV. Nasr Rahme & FAV:** They have helped cooperatives and smallholders access better-priced agricultural inputs through **bulk purchasing models**. However, **sustainability and expansion require a long-term financing structure**.

#### **Key Actions for Scaling:**

- **Expand input supply models beyond cherry farming:** The collective purchasing model has **proven effective** for cherry farmers, but **demand exists across multiple crops**. Bouzour should support expanding the input supply system to include vegetables, apricots, apples, and other high-value crops. Bouzour is already working with the Chamber of Commerce and MoA to ensure that exporters and farmers can get all the necessary permits to export to Europe.
- **Introduce multi-year financing cycles to strengthen sustainability:** Single-cycle grants are **insufficient** to create long-term market confidence. Bouzour should advocate for longer financing cycles to ensure that input supply mechanisms **remain viable and independent of donor funding**.

### **6.4. Rolling Out Activities on Finance and Business Enabling Environment**

**Priority: High | Responsible: ILO Project Team, PROSPECT Initiative & ILO HQ | Timeline: Medium-Term | Resources: High**

#### **Overview**

Access to finance and an enabling policy environment are **critical for long-term sustainability**. Many partners **struggle with liquidity constraints**, and Lebanon's regulatory barriers prevent the scaling of energy solutions in agriculture.

One proposed solution is **Regulatory Sandboxing**, which allows private sector actors to test business models in a controlled environment before formalizing regulations. **Sandboxing can be particularly useful for solar energy**, where policy restrictions currently limit investment.

#### **Key Actions:**

- **Advocate for a Regulatory Sandbox** to test and validate **private-sector-led solar energy models in agriculture**.
- Work with **PROSPECT and financial institutions** to explore financing models such as:
  - **Diaspora investment initiatives**, leveraging **Lebanon's expatriate community**.
  - **Impact investment facilitation**, introducing partners to **global challenge funds**. Bouzour can structure and launch specialized challenge funds or create a venture accelerator unit using a tried approach: boot camp (Selecting winners), accelerator (concept to go to market), and scale up (crowding in more investors) phase model supported by other programs such as Clean Cooking Alliances<sup>33</sup>. They organize standalone systemic constraint-driven challenge funds like UNCDF Pacific Fintech Challenge<sup>34</sup>.
  - **Blended finance models**, including **loan guarantees for agribusinesses**.
  - **Support partners to attend challenge fund events** both locally or internationally e.g. UAE)

## 6.5. Addressing the Labor Challenge: Expanding Sector Focus and Refining Messaging

**Priority: Medium | Responsible: ILO Country Office, ILO HQ | Timeline: Medium-Term | Resources: Medium**

### Overview

Engaging agricultural labor has been a persistent challenge for Bouzour, primarily because **agricultural workers are not formally covered by employer or worker associations** in Lebanon. Unlike sectors with structured labor representation, agriculture operates in an **informal and fragmented labor market**, making it difficult to engage workers through traditional tripartite mechanisms. Additionally, **political sensitivities around Syrian refugee labor further complicate intervention design and messaging**. A more effective approach would be to:

1. **Expand beyond agriculture into waste recycling**, a sector where many Syrian refugees are already engaged, and where formal labor representation exists.
2. **Depoliticize labor-related messaging**, shifting from a refugee-specific focus to a broader “agricultural workforce” framing, which could **reduce resistance from local stakeholders**.
3. **Leverage Durable Solutions strategies<sup>35</sup>** to promote **host-refugee economic integration**, ensuring that interventions **build social cohesion** rather than reinforcing labor market divides.

### Key Actions

- **Expanding to Waste Recycling as a New Labor Market Entry Point:**
  - Many Syrian refugees and marginalized workers are **already engaged in informal waste collection and processing**. Expanding into this sector provides a structured opportunity to integrate decent work principles, following ILO's Just Transition and Crisis-HDP Nexus frameworks.

<sup>33</sup> See description of venture accelerator mode: <https://cleancooking.org/industry-development/venture-accelerator/>

<sup>34</sup> See for detail: <https://www.uncdf.org/inclusiveinnovation/pacific-islands-fintech-innovation-challenge>

<sup>35</sup> <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/other/iasc-framework-durable-solutions-internally-displaced-persons>

- The sector aligns well with **environmental sustainability goals**, offering potential donor funding from circular economy and climate adaptation programs.
- Engaging **waste cooperatives and formalizing existing informal workers** will help create a more sustainable and legally recognized workforce, making it easier to establish worker representation structures than in agriculture.
- **Depoliticizing Labor Messaging to Reduce Resistance:**
  - Rather than explicitly focusing on **Syrian refugee labor**, Bouzour should frame interventions around broader “agricultural workforce development.”
  - This framing shifts the **focus from nationality to economic productivity and** market inclusion, reducing Lebanese stakeholders' political resistance while ensuring that refugees can benefit from the interventions.
  - This approach aligns with **ILO’s Enterprise and Disability Inclusion Summaries**, which emphasize that inclusive employment strategies should avoid politicization.
- **Integrating Durable Solutions to Strengthen Host-Refugee Economic Collaboration:**
  - The **Durable Solutions Framework** emphasizes that **long-term stability for displaced populations** must be integrated with **economic development strategies**, rather than treated as standalone humanitarian interventions.
  - Bouzour should ensure that **refugee employment interventions are linked to broader value chain initiatives** rather than creating separate job programs that could exacerbate **host-refugee labor tensions**.
  - This also means **partnering with local business associations** to create incentives for hiring displaced workers, strengthening **economic resilience in host communities**.
- **Using PROSPECT to Expand Policy and Donor Engagement:**
  - Bouzour should **leverage the PROSPECT program’s visibility** to disseminate findings and attract **additional donor interest in labor market policies**.
  - If ILO cannot directly address all labor-related challenges under Bouzour, PROSPECT can serve as a **platform to engage external donors and policymakers**, ensuring that labor market gaps receive **longer-term structural support**.

## 6.6. Transforming Bouzour into a Regional Program Covering Syria & Lebanon

**Priority: High | Responsible: ILO Project Team & Donor | Timeline: Medium-Term | Resources: High**

### Overview

Bouzour is currently part of Sida’s Syria Crisis Strategy, which has recently been revised to include a migration pillar, recognizing the potential for Syrians to return under improving conditions. Unlike PROSPECT, funded by the Dutch, which operates bilaterally in Lebanon, **Sida is not directly engaged in Lebanon, making it advantageous to explore regional economic integration, which will likely be more aligned with the Syria Crisis Strategy.**

Given the historical economic linkages between Syria and Lebanon, Bouzour can position itself as a regional program that fosters cross-border trade, business expansion, financial inclusion, and workforce

mobility. Several partners, including YY Regen and agribusinesses, have expressed interest in entering the Syrian market once border restrictions ease.

Expanding Bouzour into Syria and Lebanon would enhance program sustainability, creating regional employment pathways for Lebanese MSMEs (firms and farms) and workers, including Syrian refugees. **It would also unlock new financing opportunities, particularly around remittances, private sector engagement, and diaspora investment.**

#### **Key Actions**

- **Develop Remittance-Linked Finance for Business Creation:**
  - Establish financial mechanisms that leverage Lebanese-Syrian remittance corridors to support MSME expansion and entrepreneurship.
  - Pilot diaspora-backed investment models where Syrians abroad can co-invest in MSMEs and cooperatives in both countries.
- **Institutionalize IYAB Training for Syrian refugees (in Lebanon) and returnees (in Syria)**
  - Expand IYAB (Improve Your Agriculture Business) training across Lebanon and Syria, equipping Syrian refugees with entrepreneurial skills.
  - Align training with reintegration programs, ensuring refugees who return can establish businesses in Syria.
- **Facilitate Lebanese Business Expansion into Syria:**
  - Support Lebanese MSMEs and cooperatives navigating Syrian market entry, including legal, financial, and operational frameworks.
  - Develop trade linkages that allow Lebanese agribusinesses, solar energy providers, and recyclers to scale regionally.
- **Leverage Policy Engagement for Regional Coordination:**
  - Work with Lebanese and Syrian stakeholders to create an enabling environment for cross-border investment and labor mobility.

Align program interventions with regional durable solutions, ensuring labor market access, job creation, and legal protection for returning Syrians.

## Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix

**Table 4: Evaluation Question Matrix for Mid-Term Evaluation**

OECD DAC Criteria	Evaluation Questions	Indicators/ Measures	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Informants	Analysis Approach
<b>Relevance</b>	Are the project's objectives aligned with the perceived needs of stakeholders, beneficiaries, etc., in both design and implementation?	- Alignment of objectives with stakeholder needs	- Needs assessments - Inception Report - Cherry Value Chain Report - Stakeholder interviews	- Desk review - KIIs	- Market actors	Conduct a gap analysis by comparing stakeholder needs assessments with project objectives. Use feedback from beneficiaries to assess alignment.

<b>Relevance</b>	How does the project integrate gender considerations and decent work agenda into its strategies and programs, aligning with the gender-related goals of the ILO?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender Strategy</li> <li>- Gender-disaggregated data</li> <li>- Info on Decent Work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project reports</li> <li>- Gender strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- KIIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ILO gender specialists</li> <li>- ILO project staff</li> <li>- Market Actors</li> </ul>	Review MRM data to assess gender and decent work mainstreaming. Cross-check gender integration strategies and the decent work agenda with project outcomes and staff feedback.
<b>Relevance</b>	What is the project's specific contribution, and what is its added value, to the ordinary activities carried out by the national actors concerned?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stakeholder feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project reports</li> <li>- National plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- KIIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National actors (Public)</li> <li>- Market actors (private)</li> </ul>	Conduct a comparative analysis of national activities and project contributions. Use stakeholder interviews to identify perceived added value.
<b>Relevance &amp; Effectiveness</b>	How do the identified conflict dynamics affect the project's planning, implementation, and progress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conflict-related challenges</li> <li>- Impact on activities and timelines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conflict analysis</li> <li>- Progress reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- KIIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ILO Project Staff</li> <li>- Market actors</li> </ul>	Use conflict-sensitive analysis to assess the influence of external dynamics on project activities. Cross-check conflict-related challenges with activity progress and feedback from stakeholders.
<b>Coherence</b>	Do the project's objectives and products complement or align with the ILO's Programme and Budget (P&B 2024-2025) and the UNSDCF (2023-2025) for Lebanon and other initiatives by regional institutions, ILO programs, or development partners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alignment with ILO's P&amp;B, UNSDCF</li> <li>- Complementarity with national/regional strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- UNSDCF, ILO P&amp;B</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- KIIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ILO staff (Project, Regional, HQ)</li> <li>- Donor representatives (SIDA)</li> </ul>	Compare project objectives with strategic frameworks (P&B, UNSDCF). Assess through triangulation of interviews and document reviews. Check for coherence with national priorities and development initiatives.

<b>Coherence</b>	How does the project integrate with the strategies and programs of other partners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Level of coordination with partners</li> <li>- Integration with other initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project reports</li> <li>- Partner agreements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- KIIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ILO Project Staff (SCI, ENABLE, PROSPECT)</li> </ul>	Identify synergies and overlaps between the project and other initiatives. Through interviews, assess coordination mechanisms and partner feedback. Use partner agreements and collaboration reports for cross-checking.
<b>Coherence &amp; Effectiveness</b>	How coherent is the project's logical framework (e.g., do outputs have a causal link with outcomes, which contribute to the project's broader development objective? Is the results framework realistic?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clarity and logic of TOC and logframe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project TOC/ logframe</li> <li>- Progress reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- KIIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ILO Project Staff</li> </ul>	Map outputs to outcomes and cross-reference with the Theory of Change. Use contribution analysis to verify logical connections between activities and broader objectives.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	How is the project expected to influence the dynamics of the market system and its stakeholders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Market system change indicators</li> <li>- Stakeholder feedback on early signs of change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Progress reports</li> <li>- Research across Outcomes</li> <li>- Stakeholder interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- KIIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Market actors</li> <li>- ILO Project Staff</li> </ul>	Conduct stakeholder analysis to assess market influence—Cross-check qualitative feedback from stakeholders with quantitative data on market changes. Utilize contribution analysis to track early market system changes.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	Will the project be capable of achieving its desired outcomes and outputs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Progress against logframe indicators</li> <li>- Beneficiary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project M&amp;E data</li> <li>- Primary data (KII with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review (MRM Documents)</li> <li>- KIIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ILO Project Staff</li> </ul>	Review progress against log frame targets using project monitoring data. Use scenario analysis to predict future performance based on current trends.



		reach and results	Partner and Staff)			
<b>Effectiveness</b>	What potential challenges or obstacles might hinder the effectiveness of the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- List of challenges</li> <li>- Mitigation measures taken</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Progress reports</li> <li>- Risk registers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- KIIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ILO Project Staff</li> <li>- Market actors</li> </ul>	Conduct a risk analysis using project reports. Cross-reference identified challenges with mitigation measures and stakeholder feedback.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	Considering challenges encountered during implementation, what strategies can be employed to address these challenges in the upcoming year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adaptation strategies</li> <li>- Examples of adjustments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Progress reports</li> <li>- Field reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- KIIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ILO Project Staff</li> <li>- Market actors</li> </ul>	Assess the effectiveness of current strategies using case examples from the project. Conduct forward-looking analysis through stakeholder consultations to identify feasible solutions.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	What is the anticipated evolution from initial action research/pilot interventions to more advanced strategies, and what measures are in place to assess this progression during the initial stages of implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Signs of scaling or evolution</li> <li>- Early signs of impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pilot reports</li> <li>- Ongoing Research</li> <li>- Progress reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- KIIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ILO project staff</li> <li>- Market actors</li> </ul>	Use trajectory analysis to assess pilot-to-scale progression. Review key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor scaling efforts and early signs of impact.
<b>Efficiency</b>	How effective are resources, including human, financial, and technological, allocated for the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Budget execution rate</li> <li>- Resource allocation efficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial reports</li> <li>- Staffing data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review (budget, Chart of Account)</li> <li>- KIIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ILO finance team</li> </ul>	Use cost-efficiency analysis by comparing resource allocation with output delivery—Cross-check with financial reports and human resource data.

<b>Efficiency</b>	Have there been any delays, and what impact have these had on the project timeline and activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of delayed activities</li> <li>- Impact on outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Progress reports</li> <li>- Work plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- KIIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ILO project staff</li> </ul>	Conduct timeline analysis to compare planned vs. actual timelines. Use impact assessment for delayed activities to understand knock-on effects.
<b>Sustainability</b>	To what extent are partners already expressing capability and willingness to engage in market systems development, and how is the project fostering early signs of ownership within the context?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partner engagement level</li> <li>- Cost Share (in kind or cash)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partnership agreements</li> <li>- Stakeholder interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- KIIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ILO Project Staff</li> <li>- Market actors</li> </ul>	Conduct stakeholder engagement analysis to assess early signs of ownership. Use interviews to gauge partner commitment and readiness for long-term engagement.
<b>Sustainability</b>	Does the project have an exit strategy in place, and how does the project ensure that the transition or conclusion of activities aligns with the sustainable engagement and ownership of partners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exit strategy indicators</li> <li>- Early signs of sustainable outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project reports</li> <li>- Exit strategy documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- KIIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ILO Project Staff</li> <li>- Market actors</li> </ul>	Use exit strategy analysis to evaluate partners' preparedness for project conclusion. Cross-reference sustainability measures with partnership agreements and interview feedback.

Annex 2: Progress Against Logframe

Indicator		Program Target	Achievement (as of Dec, 2024)	Reflection and Review	Traffic Light
<b>Outcome 1: Increased productivity and decent working conditions in the covered horticulture sector</b>		Productivity and/or decent working conditions increased on at least 60 farms		Achievable subject to successful scale-up and roll-out in 2025 of the following interventions across the three outputs. The targets of some of the output level indicators are significant, and even if they are partially achieved, the outcome target can be achieved.	
1.1	Farmers have access to information on the benefits of modern greenhouses and other relevant technologies, and can access relevant services	400 farmers/workers receive information, 5 information campaigns implemented	The project engaged <b>21 small greenhouse</b> manufacturers, such as welders and other service providers, to assess their readiness for further training and capacity building. Selected manufacturers are now undergoing tailored training better to serve smallholder farmers with affordable and innovative greenhouse upgrades. <b>In 2025</b> , the project plans to target <b>at least 400 farmers</b> to raise awareness and promote the adoption of these upgrades.	Contingent on the success of the awareness campaign	
1.2	Farmers are able to draw on guidance on IPM/semi-organic production and support from a network of service providers and buyers to switch	150 farmers receive guidance, 50 farmers change production practices, 2 partnerships established	An ongoing intervention was designed to optimize the interactions between key aggregators, farmers, and processors. <b>9 agri-food processor companies and 4 aggregators were evaluated to participate in this model, and 4 crops were analyzed.</b> Aggregators act as intermediaries, ensuring that farmers' produce meets the required quality and quantity specifications while providing the necessary support. <b>In 2025</b> , the pilot at the farmer level will be rolled out.  A partnership was established with the QOOT cluster (130 members) to develop linkages between agri-SMEs and farmers through B2B and contract farming models. <b>In 2025</b> , QOOT plans to sign contract farming agreements with <b>30 farmers</b> .	QOOT's ambitious target of 30 contracts between SMEs and farmers is time-consuming. QOOT may focus on a different form of farmer engagement than contract farming that reduces transaction costs. The target can be reached if the pilot with agri-food processors is rolled out successfully.	

1.3	Farmers are aware of climate-smart and water-efficient technology and more able to access these	1 pilot implemented, 10 farmers adopt technology, 5 information campaigns, 300 farmers/workers receive information	In 2024, the project supported <b>15 farmers (13 male, 2 female)</b> with Smart-land Agro across four cooperatives and one small agri-business to adopt climate-smart and water-efficient technologies, positioning these cooperatives as models for wider replication. The <b>scale-up of this model is planned for 2025</b> , with other farmers potentially crowding in due to the demonstration effect and market promotion.	The scale-up is on schedule and can also achieve the outcome target. Bouzour may support the partner in organizing farmer-field days (FFD) to create awareness and uptake and promote cheaper alternatives.	
<b>Outcome 2: Farmers and agri-businesses upgraded and connected to new market opportunities in one identified sector</b>		At least 50 farms connected to new market opportunities		Achievable subject to successful scale-up and roll-out in 2025 of the following interventions across the three outputs	
2.1	Specific opportunities for local producers in the agriculture or agri-food sector are identified	At least one sector identified, one Market Systems Analysis (MSA) developed, 5 value chain interventions designed	Based on an extensive market study <sup>36</sup> , the cherry value chain was targeted for its potential to drive inclusive growth, job creation, and export opportunities by extending the harvest season and enhancing product quality.	Completed	
2.2	Actors in the selected sector or value chain with potential for inclusive growth have access to the information, support and guidance needed to contribute to economic and social upgrading of the value chain	20 actors provide services, 100 farmers/workers access relevant information (50% women)	The program worked with Nasr Rahme and FAV (Cooperatives) to engage <b>65 farmers</b> to bridge the gap between farmers and new markets, serving as a proof of concept. A similar effort was made with Natagri. By the end of 2024, the interventions successfully connected with four international buyers in three countries, facilitating the export of about 12 MT of cherries, including upgrading farmers in Aarsal to sell organic cherries to open a niche market. A study shows <b>farmers' average annual income increased by 37.58%</b> . In total, <b>both interventions engaged 145 farmers</b> (138 male, 7 female) and <b>774 workers</b> (384 female, 390 male) across three villages (Aarsal, Ainata, Kaa El Reem). Additionally, <b>100% of surveyed farmers</b> <sup>37</sup> expressed their intention to	On schedule to reach the target. Female representation is weaker on the farmer outreach but more balanced among workers. Need to monitor if farmers continue to use the export channel established.	

<sup>36</sup> [From Orchard to Opportunity: A Rapid Market Analysis of the cherry value chain in Lebanon](#)

<sup>37</sup> Based on Bouzour's baseline and endline surveys conducted with 66 farmers before and after the pilot, comparing data from the 2023 and 2024 seasons, during which the ILO intervention was implemented in 2024.

			continue selling their produce throughout this scheme. The intervention is planned to be <b>scaled up in 2025</b> .		
2.3	Improved working conditions for workers in selected farms	150 workers with improved working conditions, 10 pilot farms alleviate decent work deficits	In 2024, the project completed a comprehensive study <sup>38</sup> on recruitment mechanisms and working conditions for workers in Lebanon's agriculture sector. The study engaged farmers, workers, intermediaries, and social partners to identify challenges and opportunities for improvement. It provided actionable recommendations and was formally submitted to the Government of Lebanon to support national policymaking. The ILO has offered technical assistance to facilitate the implementation of these recommendations. Building on this research, the project developed a roadmap of interventions for 2025 aimed at enhancing recruitment systems and improving working conditions for agricultural workers.	Recruitment research needs to be promoted via multiple channels. According to the 2025 Workplan, the program aims to accomplish several activities, including designing an agreement model, identifying farmers, engaging companies, and rolling out a pilot. However, expecting to complete these and achieve results by the end of 2025 may be optimistic.	
<b>Outcome 3: Farmers enabled to use solar energy systems for electricity generation</b>		At least 100 farmers enabled to use solar energy systems		Achievable subject to successful scale-up and roll-out in 2025 of the following interventions across the three outputs	

<sup>38</sup> [Recruitment mechanisms and working conditions for workers in the agriculture sector in Lebanon](#)

3.1	Providers of solar energy systems are enabled to offer innovative solutions adapted to farmers' needs and are capacitated to grow and create decent jobs	1 pilot model for solar energy, 100 farmers/workers benefit (50% women)	An intervention <sup>39</sup> with YY Regen was conducted with portable solar rental solutions with two cooperatives to demonstrate the benefits of solar adoption for cold storage. The cooperative reduced its energy expenses by 50%, with the cost of storage per crate of produce dropping from USD 5–6 to USD 3–3.50. Lower operational costs led to reduced storage fees for smallholder farmers, <b>allowing more than 150 cooperative members to benefit from more affordable storage services</b> . The partner has conducted an internal study and identified 70 cooperatives, with 60% willing to invest in such a rental model. <b>In 2025, the partners want to double their rental units from 10 to 20 and scale up</b> , provided they get adequate financial support.	This program has the potential to overshoot the target, provided Bouzour provides adequate support to the partner. Gender balance at the farmer level is a concern.	
3.2	Relevant services for solar energy systems are offered and adapted to farmers' needs	2 partnerships established for business development services (BDS), 150 farmers/workers access solar energy BDS	Two roundtables engaged <b>26 stakeholders</b> from the solar and agriculture sectors, showcasing best practices on successful applications of solar energy in agriculture uses and fostering collaboration. Engagements with nine solar companies and two energy associations were conducted to map and promote tailored solar solutions for smallholder farmers. <b>A prototype tool was developed to estimate solar energy needs, pre-design systems, and calculate payback periods for farmers</b> , supported by a last-mile distribution strategy to connect farmers with solar providers which <b>will be piloted in 2025</b> .	The program aims to transform a tool prototype into a testable version for decision-making in solar energy adoption, support solar energy suppliers with a last-mile distribution pilot, collect and present distribution results, and establish or modify a model based on success and lessons learned. However, expecting to complete these activities and achieve results by the end of 2025 may be optimistic.	
<b>Outcome 4: Farmers and small agri-businesses capacitated to better manage their activities and resources</b>		At least 200 farmers capacitated to better manage their activities and resources		Subject to the successful and timely roll-out of IYAB training at the farmer level.	

<sup>39</sup> [Renting a Portable Solar Energy System in Lebanon | International Labour Organization](#)

4.1	Capacity of farmers and agri-business to better manage their income-generating activities and small businesses	3 local institutions build capacity, 15 trainers trained, 200 farmers improve business management skills	In 2024, <b>5 master trainers</b> (2 male and 3 female) from <b>4 institutions</b> in Lebanon completed a certification process to become IYAB (Start and Improve Your Business) Master Trainers. In <b>2025</b> , the project will scale these efforts by conducting training of trainers (TOT) within selected institutions and delivering targeted training programs for farmers. So far, <b>120+ applications for TOT have been received</b> , and they will be evaluated based on experience in adult learning, business development services (BDS), and entrepreneurship. Following a detailed interview process, they plan to select <b>45 trainers (for TOT)</b> to assess motivation, availability, and ability to work with farmers.	The program will likely reach the trainer and institution targets, but farmer-level behaviour change, adoption, and skill improvement may take more time, especially for 200 farmers.	
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Annex 3 List of persons interviewed

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Role/Title</b>
<b>Nadja Nutz</b>	ILO HQ	AIMS Coordinator / Technical Backstopper
<b>Hala Obeid</b>	ILO Beirut	Project Staff
<b>Mona Saadi</b>	ILO Beirut	Project Administration
<b>Badra Alawa</b>	ILO ROAS	Enterprise Specialist
<b>Isaac Cowan-Gore</b>	ILO HQ	SCI – Systems Change Initiative
<b>Mette Grangaard</b>	ILO ROAS	Just Transition Specialist
<b>Jose Manuel</b>	ILO ROAS	Sr. Specialist, Employers' Activities
<b>Shaza Ghaleb</b>	ILO ROAS – PROSPECTS	Regional Programme Manager
<b>Said Mustapha</b>	ILO ROAS	Workers' Specialist
<b>Ayala Luana</b>	Bouzour ILO	Program Manager Bouzour
<b>Ahmad Abbass</b>	SmartLand Agro	CFO
<b>Khaled Alabbass</b>	SmartLand Agro	Technical Lead
<b>Michel Rahme</b>	Nasr Rahme	Export Manager
<b>Mazen Bou Chebel</b>	FAV Cooperative	Representative
<b>Hasan Jaafar</b>	YY Regen	Co-Founder
<b>Marc Bou Zeidan</b>	QOOT	Cluster Executive Director
<b>Pauline Eid Saad</b>	IYAB	Master Trainer

## STAKEHOLDER CHECKLIST

### Introduction for Key Informant Interviews

This evaluation is being conducted independently to gather insights and lessons that will help improve the Bouzour project's activities for the remainder of its implementation and inform the design of future programs. We aim to hear your perspectives and learn from your experiences as a program partner.

During our discussion, we will focus on your collaboration with the **Bouzour Project**. When we refer to "**interventions**," we mean the specific partnership activities you have been involved in under the Bouzour Project. We are not asking you to discuss the entire agricultural sector in Lebanon but rather to share your insights from your area of focus or your organization's vantage point. For instance, while some partners may work directly with agricultural value chains, others—such as those addressing energy or capacity building—contribute in ways that indirectly impact agriculture.

The questions below are guidelines, rather than a strict questionnaire, to facilitate the conversation and ensure we capture valuable insights from your unique perspective. Thank you for your time and cooperation. Your input is essential in shaping the Bouzour project's outcomes and future activities.

#### 1. Relevance & Coherence

- From your perspective, how well do the project's objectives address the current needs of Lebanon's agricultural and agri-food sectors? Are there unmet needs or areas for additional focus?
- How effectively have the intervention or partnership activities with the Bouzour Project aligned with your organization's strategies or goals?
- How relevant are intervention activities given the shift in the current context: post-conflict in Lebanon and potential stability in Syria?
- What are your views on integrating gender considerations and the decent work agenda in the intervention activities?
- Are there any gaps or missed opportunities for coordination?

#### 2. Efficiency in Program Delivery

- Can you describe your engagement with the Bouzour project team and other partners? Have there been clear communication and collaboration mechanisms?
- Have there been any delays (time, payment, resources, etc.) or challenges in implementing activities? If so, how were these addressed, and what could have been improved?

#### 3. Effectiveness of Program Activities

- Have you observed any early signs of broader changes in your specific market due to your interventions/ partnership with Bouzour?

- Are there any specific tools, technologies, or approaches introduced through the project that have been particularly impactful? If so, how so?
- What challenges or barriers have impacted the effectiveness of the interventions or Bouzour project-supported activities in your view?
- How has the project addressed the needs of vulnerable groups (e.g., Lebanese, Syrian refugees, women, smallholder farmers)?
- What tangible outcomes have you seen regarding productivity, market access, or working conditions resulting from the Bouzour project's activities, if at all?

#### **4. Sustainability**

- What role do your organization or other stakeholders play in sustaining the outcomes of the Bouzour-supported activities?
- What level of ownership or engagement do you see among local partners, cooperatives, or beneficiaries in the project outcomes? What incentives have been most effective in encouraging participation?
- Are there any indications that the interventions can be maintained or scaled up beyond the Bouzour project's duration?

#### **5. Adaptation to Contextual Changes**

- How has your intervention been affected by recent changes, such as the conflict in Lebanon or shifts in the political situation in Syria? Are there any mitigation strategies or adaptive measures that were particularly effective?
- Based on your experience, what lessons can be drawn from the project's implementation so far?
- What changes or recommendations would you suggest for improving future activities or scaling up successful interventions?

#### Annex 5: List of Documents Reviewed

- 1. ILO-Sida.Lebanon proposal-12-05\_clean.docx
- 2. ILO SIDA Budget\_08-06-38mill.xlsx
- 240917\_Intervention List (Selection).xlsx
- 3. Inception report - LBN2301SWE (002).pdf
- 4. ILO SIDA Budget\_revised Inception report\_v3.xlsx
- 5. Progress report - LBN2301SWE\_Dec 2023.docx
- 6. Presentation Sida - Annual Meeting\_final.pptx
- Bouzour Interventions Summary.docx
- Report draft\_Cherry MSA.docx
- Springfield ILO.pdf
- 2.2.1.Intervention Guide-Nasr Rahme.xlsx
- Cherry Intervention ToC (2).pptx
- ILO Bouzour\_ Gender Mainstreaming Strategy\_Draft3\_clean.docx
- Summary Conflict Analysis Study for Bouzour project.pdf
- ToC-greenhouse horticulture.pptx
- TOC\_Results Chains - Bouzour\_clean.xlsx
- Bouzour Interventions Summary.docx
- Climate smart ILO brief-Lebanon Bouzour\_0.pdf
- Intervention Guide-SmartLandAgri.xlsx
- Scoring for coops.xlsx
- Selection Criteria for farmers.xlsx
- 2.2.1.Intervention Guide-Nasr Rahme.xlsx
- Nasr RahmeFAV pilot results.pptx
- Sowing the seeds of change through private sector partnership.docx
- Sowing the seeds of change through private sector partnership\_FAV\_Outcome 2.pdf
- Background on tool development.docx
- Renting a Portable Solar Energy System in Lebanon-brief (1).docx
- Renting a Portable Solar Energy System in Lebanon-brief\_YY ReGen\_Outcome 3-.pdf
- Tool Development - Strategyg.pptx
- BDS\_report\_draft.docx
- Implementation Guide SIYB.pdf
- Regional SIYB ToMT Workshop Report.docx
- 5. Progress report - LBN2301SWE\_Dec 2023.docx
- Bouzour Interventions Summary.docx
- Presentation Sida - Annual Meeting October.pdf
- Work Plan 2025 and Guidance Note.pdf
- Working draft - Progress report - LBN2301SWE\_Dec 2024.docx
- TOCs - Bouzour\_clean-231224.xlsx
- A Guide to market-based livelihood interventions for refugees.pdf
- AIMS.docx
- Value Chain Development for Decent Work.pdf
- normative mandate.pdf
- docs for evaluators.pdf

- filling evaluation title page.pdf
- preparing the evaluation report.pdf
- quality checklist for evaluation reports.pdf
- Updated gender note.pdf
- writing inception report.pdf
- writing summary.pdf
- Template 4.1 Lessons Learned-Word version.docx
- Template 4.2 Emerging good practices -Word version.docx
- Template 4.3 - Summary EN.docx
- Template 4.4 - title page EN.docx

**Terms of Reference (ToR) for Mid-Term Internal Project Evaluation “ILO Bouzour Project - Building Inclusive Markets and Decent Work for Syrian Refugees and Lebanese Host Communities”**

**Project Context**

Lebanon has been suffering from a severe financial and economic crisis with long-lasting effects on its economy and its people. With the drastic devaluation of the currency, prices of imported items have risen sharply, and households are now increasingly struggling to cover food needs. The combined effects of the crises have resulted in unprecedented levels of unemployment and pushed both the Lebanese population and the approximately 1.5 million Syrian refugees further into poverty. The Lebanese agriculture sector remains one of few sectors where both Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese host communities can legally find employment as well as vulnerable Lebanese host communities but has been particularly hard-hit by the ongoing crises.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is therefore funding a project aimed at ‘Promoting Decent Jobs for Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees’ that is funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida). The project focuses on the agriculture and agri-food sector as a key sector for the livelihoods of both Lebanese and Syrian vulnerable population groups and in particular women of both communities and aim to develop specific agricultural and agri-food value chains with potential for decent job creation that benefits both groups.

The project makes use of the ILO’s Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS) to safeguard jobs and livelihoods of vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian communities threatened by the crises and encourage decent job creation for both groups in sectors with potential. To that end, the project makes use of the market systems development approach to address key sectoral constraints to decent job creation sustainably, in combination with more direct interventions to strengthen capacities of vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian communities and safeguard decent work conditions.

The project seeks to achieve four key outcomes with interlinked components:

1. **Enhanced Productivity and Working Conditions in the Horticulture Sector:** The project supports farmers in adopting modern greenhouses and sustainable farming practices, improving productivity, crop quality, and working conditions for both Lebanese and Syrian workers.
2. **Upgraded Market Opportunities for Farmers and Agri-Businesses:** By identifying and capitalizing on local and international market opportunities, the project helps farmers and agri-businesses in selected sectors to access upgraded markets, fostering inclusive growth.

3. Adoption of Solar Energy Systems for Sustainable Electricity Generation: To counter the energy crisis, the project promotes solar energy systems for farmers, reducing costs, ensuring stable electricity supply, and leading to environmental benefits.
4. Capacity Building for Efficient Resource Management: The project empowers farmers and small agri-businesses with essential business management skills, enhancing their ability to plan, calculate profits, and make informed decisions.

## **PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION**

### **Evaluation Background**

ILO considers evaluation as an integral part of the implementation of development cooperation activities. Provisions are made in all projects 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. The Regional M&E and Knowledge Management Officer at the ILO ROAS supports the evaluation function for all ILO projects.

In accordance with the ILO evaluation policy, two evaluations are required during the project implementation, one at the mid-term and the other at the end of the Action.

The project document states that a mid-term internal evaluation will be conducted, which will be used to enhance learning within the ILO and among key stakeholders and guide the project team in adjusting if necessary the project's approach and scope for implementation during the project's remaining period.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the mid-term internal evaluation is to enhance learning within the ILO and among key stakeholders and guide the project team in adjusting if necessary the project's approach and scope for implementation during the project's remaining period.

The mid-term evaluation will be conducted using the OECD/DAC criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability). Specifically, the mid-term evaluation focused on the following aspects:

(1) Assessing the project's design and activities, its implementation strategy and approaches, the challenges and how these challenges are addressed; and to what extent these contribute to the achievement of project objectives.

(2) Drawing key findings and lessons learned and proposing improvements and adjustments needed to ensure that the project remains relevant to the needs of the target groups and contributes to knowledge development.

The evaluation will comply with the ILO evaluation policy, which is based on the United Nations Evaluation Norms and Standards and the UNEG ethical guidelines.



## Scope of the evaluation

The mid-term evaluation will cover the project from inception phase up until June and look at the project activities, outputs and outcomes in Lebanon. The evaluation will take into consideration the project duration, existing resources and political, security and environmental constraints.

The evaluation will take place tentatively from 19/06/2024 until 30/08/2024 through in-person (if the situation allows) and online field work to collect information from different stakeholders. The consultancy shall start with initial briefing with the project team, the Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS). The International Consultant will be working in-person or online and could be supported by a local consultant who supports with the field work; conducting FGDs, interviewing stakeholders, etc.

The evaluation will integrate gender equality and environmental concerns and just transition as a cross-cutting concern throughout its methodology and all deliverables, including the final report.

## Clients of Evaluation

The primary clients of this evaluation are ILO ROAS and Lebanon team, and the ILO constituents, and the donor. Secondary users include other project stakeholders and units that may indirectly benefit from the knowledge generated by the evaluation.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The evaluation utilizes the standard OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) which has 6 main criteria:

- **Relevance** – the extent to which the objectives are aligned with national and local priorities and needs, the constituents' priorities and needs, and the donor's priorities for the country;
- **Validity of design** – the extent to which the project design, logic, strategy and elements are/remain valid vis-à-vis problems and needs;
- **Efficiency** - The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way
- **Effectiveness** - the extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups;
- **Impact** - the extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects;
- **Sustainability** – the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue.

For the purpose of the mid-term evaluation, the focus will be on the following 3 criteria:

#### Relevance and Coherence:

1. Are the project's objectives aligned with the perceived needs of stakeholders, beneficiaries, etc. in both design and implementation?
2. Do the project's objectives and products complement or align with the ILO's P&B (2024-25) and the UNSDCF (2023-25) for Lebanon, other initiatives by regional institutions, ILO programs, or development partners? How does the project integrate with the strategies and programs of other partners?
3. How does the project integrate gender considerations into its strategies and programs, aligning with the gender-related goals of the ILO?
4. What is the project's specific contribution, its added value, in relation to the ordinary activities carried out by the national actors concerned?
5. How do the identified conflict dynamics affected the planning, implementation and progress of the project?
6. How coherent is the project's logical framework (e.g. do outputs have a causal link with outcomes, which in turn contribute to the project's broader development objective? Is the results framework realistic?

#### Impact orientation and sustainability:

1. How is the project expected to influence the dynamics of the market system and its stakeholders?
2. What is the anticipated evolution from initial action research/pilot interventions to more advanced strategies, and what measures are in place to assess this progression during the initial stages of implementation?
3. To what extent are partners already expressing capability and willingness to engage in market systems development, and how is the project fostering early signs of ownership within the context? Does the project have an exit strategy in place, and how does the project ensure that the transition or conclusion of activities aligns with the sustainable engagement and ownership of partners?

#### Effectiveness and efficiency

1. Will the project be capable of achieving its desired outcomes and outputs?
2. What potential challenges or obstacles might hinder the effectiveness of the project?
3. How effective are resources, including human, financial, and technological, allocated for the project?

4. Considering challenges encountered during implementation, what strategies can be employed to address these challenges in the upcoming year?

## **METHODOLOGY**

The evaluation will be carried out by a hired external consultant. The following is the proposed evaluation methodology. Any changes to the methodology should be discussed with and approved by the Evaluation Manager.

### **Desk Review**

The evaluator will review project background materials before conducting any interviews. These include the project documents, the progress reports (if is available), the intervention plans, the value chain analyses and studies conducted, the TORs and background documents for the ongoing activities, and any other relevant documents including national and regional ones.

### **Briefing**

The evaluator will have an initial consultation with the relevant ILO project staff and specialist in Lebanon and ROAS. The objective of the consultation is to reach a common understanding regarding the status of the project, the priority evaluation 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 and/or Group Interviews**

After the initial consultation with ROAS, and following the initiation briefing with project team and backstopping specialist and the desk review and the inception report, the evaluator will have meetings with stakeholders. Interviews will use a questionnaire designed to solicit feedback on opportunities and constraints to the delivery of project outcomes. The questionnaire will be developed by the evaluator in consultation with project staff.

A list of interviewees shall be developed by the project staff and provided to the evaluator. The evaluator will schedule the meetings.

### **Debriefing**

Upon completion of the data collection & analysis, the evaluator will provide a debriefing to the Project team, ILO DWT and ROAS on the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations. The evaluator will also debrief stakeholders to validate results.

### **Evaluation Management**

The evaluator will report to the ILO evaluation manager on technical and methodological matters.

## **MAIN DELIVERABLES**

The main outputs of the evaluation consist of the following:

- Deliverable 1: Inception Report
- Deliverable 2: PowerPoint Presentation on preliminary findings
- Deliverable 3: Final evaluation report with executive summary and templates for lessons learned and good practices dully fille in (as per ILO's standard procedure)

### **Inception Report**

The evaluator will draft an Inception Report, which should describe, provide reflection and fine-tuning of the following issues:

- Project background
- Purpose, scope and beneficiaries of the evaluation
- Evaluation criteria and questions
- Methodology and instruments
- Main deliverables
- Management arrangements and work plan.

### **Final Report**

The final version of the report will follow the format below and be in a range of **15-20 pages** in length, excluding the annexes:

1. Title page
2. Table of Contents, including List of Appendices, Tables
3. List of Acronyms or Abbreviations
4. Executive Summary with key findings, conclusions and recommendations
5. Background and Project Description
6. Purpose of Evaluation
7. Evaluation Methodology and Evaluation Questions
8. Key evaluation findings (organized by evaluation criteria)
9. A table presenting the key results (i.e. figures and qualitative results) achieved per objective (expected and unexpected)

10. Clearly identified conclusions and recommendations
11. Lessons Learned (in prescribed template)
12. Potential good practices (in prescribed template) taking into account gender specificities
13. Annexes (list of interviews, TORs, list of documents consulted, list of meetings and interviews attended, etc.)

The quality of the report will be assessed against the EVAL Checklists 4, 5, and 6.

The deliverables will be submitted in the English language, and structured according to the templates provided by the ILO.

## **MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

- Review the TORs and provide input, propose any refinements to assessment questions, as necessary, during the inception phase;
- Review project background materials (e.g., project document, 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 ILO EM and REO.
- Conduct field research, interviews, as appropriate, and collect information according to the suggested format, including leading on logistical arrangements;
- Present preliminary findings to the stakeholders;
- Prepare an initial draft of the evaluation report with input from ILO specialists and constituents/stakeholders;
- Conduct a briefing on the findings, conclusions and recommendation of the evaluation to ILO project team and ROAS;
- Prepare the final report based on the ILO, constituents' feedback obtained on the draft report.

*The ILO Evaluation Manager is responsible for:*

- Drafting the TORs;
- Finalizing the TORs with input from colleagues;
- Hiring the consultant;
- Providing the consultant with the project background materials in consultation with project staff, through uploading in specific space created for this purpose
- Participating in preparatory consultations (briefing);
- Assisting in the implementation of the assessment methodology, as appropriate (i.e., participate in meetings, review documents), in consultation with Project team;
- Reviewing the initial draft report, circulating it for comments and providing consolidated feedback to the External Evaluators (for the inception report and the final report);
- Reviewing the final draft of the report;
- Disseminating the final report to all the stakeholders – in consultation with ILO Lebanon;
- Coordinating follow-up as necessary.

*The ILO REO:*

- Provides support to the planning of the evaluation;
- Provide technical inputs as needed.

#### **Duration of Contract and Timeline for Delivery**

The collaboration between ILO and the Consultant is expected to start as of 24 June 2024 (or upon signature) until 15 September. The estimated number of required working days for this assignment is as below:

Tasks	Number of Working days
Kick-off meeting and preparations for assignment	1
Desk review of documents related with projects	3
Drafting Inception report	3
Interviews	8
Drafting report	7
Briefing of preliminary findings	1
Integration of comments and finalization of the report	2
Estimated Total number of Working days	25

### Supervision

The evaluator will work under the direct supervision of the Evaluation Manager on any technical and methodological matters related to this evaluation. The evaluator will be required to provide continuous updates on the progress of work and revert to the ILO with any challenges or bottlenecks for support. Coordination and follow-up with the evaluator will take place through e-mail or MS Teams or any other digital communication mean.

### Payment terms

- 20 per cent of the total fee against deliverable 1 above approved by the evaluation manager.
- 80 per cent of the total fee against deliverables 2 and 3 above, approved by the ILO Regional Evaluation Officer.

### 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” (See attached documents). The selected consultant will sign the Code of Conduct form along with the contract.
- UNEG ethical guidelines will be followed throughout the evaluation.

### REQUIREMENTS

The evaluator should have:



- Master's Degree in social sciences, economics, development studies, evaluation or related fields, with demonstrated strong research experience;
- Previous experience in evaluations for UN agencies is required. Evaluation experience with the ILO is an advantage;
- A minimum of 7 years' experience in conducting projects and programme evaluations, with demonstrated experience in development related programmes.
- Proven expertise on evaluation methods, value chain and market systems development, enterprise development and the ILO approach;
- Experience in the evaluation of market systems development interventions, in the context of the humanitarian-development nexus is an advantage;
- Knowledge of the ILO and its normative mandate, tripartite structure and technical cooperation activities is an advantage
- Knowledge of Lebanon and the regional context is an advantage;
- Full command of the English language (spoken and written) will be required.

### **How to apply**

The ILO is inviting qualified individual consultants having relevant experience in delivering similar services as mentioned in this Terms of Reference (TOR) to submit technical and financial proposals.

The applicant must submit the Technical Proposal and requested daily rate along with supporting documents requested (in manageable size – zip files).

The email subject should mention: (name of consultant - "Ref.: Bouzour Internal Mid-Term Evaluation. The proposals will be submitted by email to: [ayalal@ilo.org](mailto:ayalal@ilo.org) , [obeid@ilo.org](mailto:obeid@ilo.org) , [saadi@ilo.org](mailto:saadi@ilo.org) .

Deadline for submission by 17 June 2024 by 2:00 pm (Lebanon Standard Time).

Queries and questions from potential applicants on any section of this TOR are welcome. Please send relevant questions by 13 June 2024.

Read More at: <https://daleel-madani.org/civil-society-directory/international-labour-organization-0/calls/terms-reference-tor-mid-term-internal-project-evaluation-ilo-bouzour-project-building-inclusive> Copyrights © 2025 Lebanon Support. All rights reserved.



## Annex 7 : Lessons Learned (ILO TEMPLATE)

### BOUZOUR - Midterm Internal Evaluation

**Project DC/SYMBOL:** LBN/23/01/SWE

**Name of Evaluator:** Mohammad Muaz Jalil

**Date:** 01 March 2025

*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.*

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	MSD in Fragile Contexts Requires Adaptation and strengthening of AIMS approach
Brief description of lessons learned  (link to specific action or task)	Traditional MSD approaches relying solely on facilitation and partner-led sustainability are insufficient in fragile contexts like Lebanon. Bouzour's application of the ILO's AIMS approach—combining MSD with push strategies for MSMEs/farmers—helped, but in Lebanon's protracted crisis, even partners needed more direct support to survive. In such environments, direct support to partners—such as temporary subsidies, payroll support de-risking investments, and infrastructure support—must be integrated carefully, based on thorough analysis, and time-bound. To this end, Bouzour must continue strengthening 'push'/'direct' support for partners grounded on root cause analysis.
Context and any related preconditions	Amid economic collapse and war, partners like YY Regen and Nasr Rahme would have been unable to continue operations without Bouzour's structured financial support. These interventions helped stabilize essential market actors and allowed them to test scalable business models.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	MSD practitioners, donors, project designers in FCAS (fragile and conflict-affected settings).
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Traditional MSD facilitation alone is not sufficient when systemic constraints—such as lack of credit, macroeconomic instability, and insecurity—undermine partner capacity. The 'Push' element of AIMS needs to be used to support partners and vulnerable communities.
Success / Positive Issues -Causal factors	The AIMS approach enabled Bouzour to balance systemic change with practical support. Pilot models were protected from collapse and are now positioned for scale, with partners showing willingness to co-invest.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Future designs should allow budget flexibility for deeper risk-sharing (e.g. higher cost share, infrastructure support, payroll support) and public good investments, with the capacity for real-time adaptation in fragile environments.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	Energy Market Distortions Pose Risks to Commercial Solar Models
Brief description of lessons learned  (link to specific action or task)	Donor-subsidized energy solutions can distort markets and hinder private-sector innovation. Without regulatory clarity and level playing fields, promising models like solar rental schemes may fail to scale commercially.
Context and any related preconditions	YY Regen's rental-based solar model, supported by Bouzour, allowed cooperatives to access renewable energy. However, large donor subsidies for free solar installations elsewhere and regulatory restrictions on private electricity generation undermined long-term viability. Moreover, private sector-led solar electricity generation still lacks regulatory approval for continuous supply, restricting its long-term viability.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Renewable energy policymakers, donors, private solar firms, and MSD implementers.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Market distortion through grants and the absence of solar generation regulations hinders commercial scale-up and sustainability.
Success / Positive Issues -Causal factors	Despite constraints, Bouzour-supported rental models (e.g., with YY Regen) demonstrated user demand and opened a path to inclusive energy access. The partner has attracted investors and is planning to expand the model.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	ILO should consider stronger policy engagement and coordination with national energy stakeholders in future energy-focused projects or even within Bouzour. But this will require resources and time investment.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	Skilling as a Public Good in Fragile Markets
Brief description of lessons learned  (link to specific action or task)	In economically fragile contexts, skills development programs cannot rely on commercial models. Training must be treated as a public good in the short to medium term and financed accordingly through donor or pooled mechanisms.
Context and any related preconditions	Bouzour's Improve Your Agribusiness (IYAB) training aims to build farmers' business skills, but a limited viable commercial model exists to sustain the training beyond donor funding. Lebanon's financial market collapse and war further exacerbate this challenge. Bouzour can learn from international experiences, such as the funded LIWAY program in Ethiopia, and follow a mixed model.

Targeted users / Beneficiaries	TVET institutions, BDS providers, donors, and implementers.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Lebanon's public institutions are financially incapacitated. Private sector demand for paid training is low in agriculture.
Success / Positive Issues -Causal factors	Bouzour built a Master Trainer network and plans to develop a network of certified freelance trainers. Drawing from global examples such networks can attract donor & private sector funding and function semi-independently.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	ILO should allow blended models in fragile states, supporting both institutional training and freelance trainer ecosystems and leveraging branded training programs like IYAB/SIYB to increase sustainability

<b>LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT</b>	<b>Inclusive Market Access Requires Targeted Strategies for Women and Refugees</b>
Brief description of lessons learned  (link to specific action or task)	While Bouzour has successfully improved market access and income for Lebanese farmers, ensuring greater participation of women and Syrian refugees requires tailored interventions that address socio-economic and structural barriers.
Context and any related preconditions	Female representation is lower among farmers than among agricultural workers, and Syrian refugees face legal and social barriers to formal employment in agriculture. Bouzour's market models improved incomes and job stability, but participation by women and Syrian workers was uneven due to legal, social, and mobility constraints. Planned interventions in 2025 (gender-specific OSH awareness, women-led agri-enterprise support) aim to address this. A new gender strategy has also been launched.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Gender specialists, social inclusion advisors, program teams, and labour policy planners.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Systemic exclusion in land ownership, finance, and labour laws affect marginalized groups' access and advancement in value chains (identified in Gender Strategy).
Success / Positive Issues -Causal factors	Bouzour's Gender Strategy maps intervention typologies (gender-aware vs. gender-responsive), and 2025 interventions include female agripreneur support, OSH with a gender lens, and targeted training for women.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Future interventions should integrate specific strategies for promoting women's participation in farming and formalizing employment pathways for Syrian refugees in agriculture; this is already being planned and aligns with Bouzour's Gender Strategy.



### Annex 8: Emerging Good Practices (ILO TEMPLATE)

# BOUZOUR - Midterm Internal Evaluation

**Project DC/SYMBOL:** LBN/23/01/SWE

**Name of Evaluator:** Mohammad Muaz Jalil

**Date:** 01 March 2025

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

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Leveraging Rental-Based Models for Inclusive Energy Access
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	As part of Bouzour's Outcome 3 (solar adoption in agriculture), the project supported the emergence of portable solar rental solutions for cooperatives, guided by the ILO's Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS). The intervention focused on facilitating a market-based rental model through technical support, business planning, and demonstration effects—lowering the entry barrier for farmers and cooperatives to access renewable energy.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	In Lebanon's ongoing financial crisis and the devastating aftermath of war, most smallholder farmers and cooperatives face extreme liquidity constraints. The high upfront costs of solar systems, coupled with a dysfunctional banking sector, make asset ownership infeasible. The rental model offers a practical and inclusive pathway to energy access.
Establish a clear cause- effect relationship	The intervention incentivized solar providers to explore a new client base in agriculture through support in developing tailored rental solutions, engaging cooperatives, and demonstrating energy savings. Farmers benefited from improved affordability, and cooperatives gained operational stability—without relying on capital-intensive models.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Over 150 cooperative members benefited from lower energy costs (storage fees dropped from USD 5–6 to USD 3–3.5 per crate). The service provider reported a growing demand pipeline and aims to double outreach in 2025. The model also reduced diesel dependency and created stable conditions for cooperative-led storage and processing operations.
Potential for replication and by whom	Partners—including cooperatives, exporters, and energy providers—expressed strong interest in seeing the model replicated across other value chains and regions. Bouzour can scale this internally across other cooperatives and workstreams, including in the cherry, apple, and vegetable sectors. The model is highly relevant for fragile contexts with broken credit systems, and can be replicated by other projects or donors seeking market-based energy access strategies.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	ILO Programme & Budget Outcome 3 (Sustainable enterprises) and Outcome 4 (Productive employment); UNSDCF's Outcome 1 Enhanced Competitiveness and business environment of MSMEs and high potential Productive sectors' value chains of Prosperity

Other documents or relevant comments	N/A
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<b>GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT</b>	<b>Adaptive Programming in Crisis Contexts</b>
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	Bouzour demonstrated strong adaptive capacity in response to Lebanon's rapidly evolving economic and political crisis, aligning with the AIMS principle of context-specific facilitation. Interventions across greenhouse upgrades, recruitment, market access, and solar adoption were modified in real time to reflect shifting risks, access issues, and supply chain breakdowns—ensuring continuity of support under volatile conditions.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	In 2024, the conflict escalation and ongoing financial collapse forced project areas in the South and parts of Bekaa to shut down. Input shortages, inflation, and partner liquidity issues required rapid design adjustments.
Establish a clear cause- effect relationship	Bouzour pivoted to more affordable, locally fabricated greenhouse upgrades using welders; adjusted market-linkage strategies with the QOOT cluster to build new sourcing networks for farmers; introduced an economical solar rental model along with and, after the cessation conflict relaunched, paused OSH training targeting primarily women workers and recruitment-related pilots after the war stabilized. These actions protected value chains and enabled partners to remain operational despite major disruptions.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	MTR partner interviews confirm that without Bouzour's flexibility, partners and agri-SMEs might have suspended operations completely. Instead, Bouzour supported over 700 workers and 150 farmers despite Lebanon's multiple crises. Despite the conflict, the cherry export model with FAV and Nasr Rahme led to the volume export of 12 MT. Stakeholders cited Bouzour's adaptive response as key to their business survival and readiness to scale. Partners are also well-positioned to expand their businesses. The program is also on track across key log frame targets.
Potential for replication and by whom	This adaptive, facilitation-based programming model should be continued and scaled within Bouzour and across ILO's broader portfolio in fragile contexts. Similar projects should incorporate built-in feedback loops and flexible funding to respond to real-time risks and crisis
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	ILO P&B Outcome 3: Full and productive employment for just transitions, Outcome 4: Sustainable enterprises for inclusive growth and decent work, and Outcome 8: Integrated policy and institutional responses for social justice through decent work; UNSDCF (2023–2025), Goal (People and Prosperity), particularly Outcome 1, which emphasizes improving access to livelihoods, entrepreneurship, and sustainable energy for MSMEs and social and economic inclusion of vulnerable populations
Other documents or relevant comments	