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Addressing life-cycle vulnerabilities through social protection: Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon - Supporting Social Security and Institutional Reforms towards a Strengthened Social Protection System in Lebanon

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ACRONYMS

ALI	Association of Lebanese Industrialists
CESSRA	Center for Social Sciences Research and Action
CPD	Country Programme Document
EOSI	End of Service Indemnity
EU-MADAD	European Union, on behalf of the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to Syrian Crisis
EQ	Evaluation Question
ESSN	Emergency Social Safety Net
EUTF	European Union Trust Fund
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
ILO	International Labour Organization
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LCPS	Lebanese Center for Policy Studies
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
NCG	National Child Grant
NSPS	National Social Protection Strategy
NDA	National Disability Allowance
NPTP	National Poverty Targeting Program
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
PwDs	Persons with Disabilities
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee
OMT	Online Money Transfer
OPDs	Organisations of Persons with Disabilities
R&A	Rights and Access
ROAS	Regional Office for the Arab States
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SO	Strategic Objective

ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Guidelines
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) has launched an Independent **Final Cluster Evaluation** for the two projects: ‘Addressing life-cycle vulnerabilities through social protection - Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon’, implemented by ILO and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and ‘Supporting Social Security and Institutional Reforms towards a Strengthened Social Protection System in Lebanon’, implemented by ILO.. Both projects shared the same focus on social protection reform in Lebanon, and came to an end in March and June 2025, respectively. With the objectives of accountability and learning, this final cluster evaluation allows for a comprehensive assessment of progress towards the projects’ outcomes, providing an understanding of how different interventions have collectively contributed to strengthening the national social protection system in Lebanon.

Projects’ Description

The two projects under evaluation had been supporting the vision of the Government of Lebanon for an all-encompassing, inclusive and rights-based approach to the social protection. The project ‘Addressing Life-Cycle Vulnerabilities through Social Protection- Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon’ (LBN/21/01/CEF), implemented by ILO and UNICEF and funded by the European Union, on behalf of the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to Syrian Crisis (EU-Madad), supported the development and implementation of the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) based on a life-cycle approach. It designed and rolled-out the National Disability Allowance (NDA) and supported the design of the UNICEF-led National Child Grant (NCG) and the social pension. It promoted related societal awareness through the engagement of civil society actors and think tanks, assigning strategic implementation roles to Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). The project mobilized existing implementation mechanisms in response to the emergency situation and wide-scale displacement resulting from the military conflict in 2024.

The project ‘Supporting Social Security and Institutional Reforms towards a Strengthened Social Protection System in Lebanon’ (LBN/23/02/GBR) was implemented by ILO and funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). It aimed to achieve three strategic outcomes: (i) the development of a comprehensive gender-sensitive pension system (ii) support the development of measures towards sustainable health financing and universal health coverage, and (iii) improve the national system for the implementation of the National Disability Allowance and Social Grants.”

Evaluation Objective and Methodology

Clustering the evaluation of both projects, the objectives are accountability and learning. It assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and potential impact of the projects to understand how different interventions have collectively contributed to strengthening the national system. It allows for a more comprehensive assessment of progress towards common objectives and enables the identification of synergies and complementarities between the two projects, offering insights into how cross-sectoral reform efforts interact and reinforce each other. The evaluation

formulated lessons learned and practical recommendations to improve future programming in Lebanon. The primary clients are ILO, UNICEF, EU-Madad, the Embassy of the UK, FCDO, Government of Lebanon, central non-state actors and relevant constituents, such as civil society and OPDs.

The Final Evaluation systematically used the standard criteria of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee. A participatory mixed-method approach was employed, data collection included Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions with a wide range of stakeholders/ constituents. Human rights, inclusion, social dialogue and gender equality were mainstreamed into the evaluation, while also ethical considerations were prioritized, ensuring independence, confidentiality and security of information.

Main Findings

Relevance

The projects were highly relevant to Lebanon's fragile socio-economic context and aligned closely with national priorities and international development commitments. The projects addressed long-standing gaps in institutional weaknesses, limited coordination and inadequate coverage, particularly for PwDs, children and older people. The development and operationalization of the NSPS, alongside the roll-out of the NDA and supporting the design of the UNICEF-led NCG, the social pension and health insurance, demonstrated strategic alignment with the Government of Lebanon's vision for inclusive and rights-based social protection. The projects also prioritized gender equality, disability inclusion and rights-based targeting, making strong use of local structure, community engagement and disaggregated data. This process involved Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), civil society actors and institutions working to promote the rights and services of older persons. However, the Association of Lebanese Industrialists (ALI - Employer association) maintained that their views were not sufficiently considered in discussions around some of the aspects of the pension reform namely the End of Service Indemnity (EOSI). The ILO for their part maintained that many discussions around EOSI were carried out with ALI but no concrete agreement was reached. The evaluation believes that more efforts are necessary to bridge the disagreement with ALI. The projects responded well to the urgent needs of the long-fragmented and underfunded system and were seen by stakeholders as timely, necessary and well-aligned with beneficiary vulnerabilities and country priorities, making them both contextually and institutionally strategic.

Coherence

The projects demonstrated a high degree of internal and external coherence, both in design and implementation. Internally, they aligned with ILO and UNICEF strategic objectives, particularly around universal social protection and disability inclusion, and were implemented with a shared vision and coordinated delivery model. The sequential relationship between the EU-Madad- and FCDO-funded projects enabled knowledge transfer and built institutional momentum, allowing the latter to benefit from the foundations laid by the former, especially in scaling the NDA and advancing the role of the R&A centres. Externally, both projects were well-aligned with national frameworks, including the NSPS, Law 220/2000 on the rights of PwDs and with international frameworks such as the SDGs, EU-Madad priorities, FCDO strategies on disability and health and pertinent international conventions. Coordination between ILO, UNICEF and stakeholders was generally effective, especially with MOSA and the R&A centres. However, coherence gaps revealed in areas like employer organizations'

discussions and inter-ministerial dialogue, coordination relied heavily on informal or adhoc channels rather than structured platforms. This affected consistency, diluted accountability, and at times, limited sustained participation from key actors in decision-making. Despite these issues, the projects represented one of the most important multisectoral efforts in Lebanon's social protection sector.

Effectiveness

The projects delivered most planned outcomes and outputs, launched the NSPS, piloted the NDA as a new social assistance model, introduced reform to the design of the NCG, social pension and health insurance. The number of beneficiaries receiving NDA reached over 35,000 individuals through the NDA.¹ The projects supported digital Management Information System (MIS) tools, capacitated MOSA staff and R&A centres and produced over 40 policy and advocacy outputs. The established referral mechanisms, GRM structures and outreach models contributed to more inclusive service delivery and accountability. To some extent, the projects facilitated multi-sectoral coordination through participatory methods, partnerships with OPDs and responsiveness to community needs, however, limitations in engagement of some stakeholders in some areas emerged, such the inability to reach an agreement on the EOSI with employer organizations thus affecting the the pension reform dialogue and the limited involvement of OPDs from the call centre design, undermining balanced participation and weakening shared ownership of the reforms.

While the projects made significant progress in advancing key reforms in the design of the social pension, healthcare and social assistance, full policy integration across these components is yet to be achieved. Each pillar seem to have been advancing on its own trajectory and coordination mechanisms are still emerging. Coordination across entities, agencies and ministries on social protection remains a significant issue, which the projects attempted to address through the secondment of UN-paid focal points in ministries. While these arrangements may have facilitated a level of inter-ministerial coordination, they often lacked depth, they were neither meaningful nor institutionalized. Stakeholders noted that governance structures under the NSPS were not fully operational, which limited cross-sectoral alignment and slowed momentum toward a cohesive, integrated social protection system. Despite economic collapse and conflict in 2024, both projects demonstrated strong agile adaptive performance and responsiveness to crises through shock-responsive assistance.

Efficiency

The two projects under evaluation demonstrated efficient use of resources and strong adaptability in a complex operating environment in Lebanon. The ILO/UNICEF joint project funded by the EU (USD 26.8 million) prioritized direct support to vulnerable populations, with 69 percent allocated to NDA cash payments. The smaller ILO project funded by the FCDO (GBP 500,000) focused on upstream reforms and capacity strengthening, with strategic staffing and technical inputs. Although ILO faced staffing shortages, it adopted a cluster staffing model later in implementation, which allowed technical staff to work across multiple projects and themes, helping sustain delivery. At the same time, UNICEF was able to draw on internal support and use its own fast-track financial systems to quickly deliver

¹ According to the QIN Q1 2025 of the ILO-UNICEF joint project, the project reached 27,911 PwD under the regular NDA (15-30 age range) funded by the EU, 6,678 CwDs under the expanded NDA to children funded by UNICEF, and 131,729 children under the UNICEF child grant (*Haddi*) which was discontinued in February 2023 with plans to transition to a National Child Grant.

assistance. Resource allocation strongly aligned with the needs of women and PwDs, with high beneficiary satisfaction and gender-sensitive design features. Operational delays stemming from political instability delayed NSPS approval and conflict, which were mitigated through flexible planning, internal borrowing and no-cost extensions. Within ILO, the joint implementation of the EU and FCDO projects created synergies and enhanced the efficiency by sharing staff, avoiding duplication and strengthening national systems. Coordination between ILO and UNICEF under the EU-MADAD funded project was operationally efficient and complementary. Both contributed to policy development, capacity building, and efforts to embed social protection within national governance structures. While UNICEF focused on delivery systems, ILO supported policy reform and capacity-building. This dual-track implementation maximized impact, although coordination burdens sometimes strained staff resources. Coordination was managed primarily through direct, bilateral communication and technical working groups, although the lack of a formal joint Steering Committee increased the coordination burden on staff. Robust M&E tools, including ROMs, PDMs and real-time MIS, enabled responsive delivery and informed future programme planning.

Impact Orientation

The projects contributed to both immediate improvements in beneficiaries' lives and longer-term systemic social protection policy and institutional change. Through the NDA, 35,000 vulnerable individuals received regular, predictable financial assistance and were supported to withstand economic shocks, improve nutrition and education outcomes. This support helped to enhance dignity and autonomy among PwDs, women and children. The projects also fostered increased access to services via digital referral systems and strengthened grievance redress mechanisms, deepening beneficiary trust and engagement with public institutions. At a higher impact level, the endorsement of the NSPS, advancement of the UNICEF-led NCG and social pension reform, and institutionalization of the R&A centres helped shift Lebanon's social protection programmes from fragmented, donor-dependent assistance to a more integrated and nationally anchored system. Public dialogue on social protection was evidence-based broadened through knowledge and advocacy products. The participation of government stakeholders in their development has built capacity and allowed for a better identification of system gaps and greater understanding of the policy solutions needed. Furthermore, the establishment of the Social Protection Academy marked a lasting investment in institutionalizing government capacity strengthening means, noting the lack of capacity building for workers and employer organizations. Although structural and fiscal constraints continue to threaten the scale and sustainability of these impacts, the projects have positioned Lebanon on the right path and contributed to meaningful progress towards more inclusive and rights-based social protection. Notably, the exclusion of refugees and non-Lebanese populations from national systems still poses exclusion concerns and limits the full realization of universal protection.

Sustainability

The design and implementation of both social protection projects were majorly anchored around sustainability and continuation of results. The projects contributions to policy and institutional change are evident. This is specifically true with the development of the NSPS, institutionalizing reform across pension, health financing and social assistance and enhancing operational systems, individual capacities and coordination structures. The projects' deliberate strategy was to avoid building parallel systems and instead integrate the tools and processes within existing national institutions like within MOSA and the R&A centres, preparing them for full operational ownership. The Government of

Lebanon demonstrated growing fiscal ownership, it doubled its budgetary allocation, committing \$10 million to the NDA in 2025; 40 percent of its cost. While the projects were responsive and adaptive, yet, key risks to sustainability remain, including on-going fiscal constraints, the absence of a clear medium-term financing strategy and the need for continued technical assistance on several fronts in the current context, specifically, in contributory schemes. As such, no exit is envisioned in the near future for many of these reform areas. With regard to the NDA for example, a full transition to government ownership is contingent upon the development and strengthening of delivery systems.

Best Practices and Lesson Learned²

- The presence of shock-responsive social protection programmes is imperative to ensure effective usage and reach to beneficiaries in times of crisis and emergencies, especially important in the context of fragility and conflict. The NDA mechanism was leveraged by MOSA during the faced crises as platform, which could be further enhanced and supported to become more impactful and sustainable. Likewise, the UNICEF-led NCG, which was designed by the project, but not launched, has the potential to act as a shock-responsive social protection.
- The focus on comprehensive systems integrating the different social protection instruments (NDA, AMAN... etc.), along with a strong coordination mechanism, GRM and monitoring systems enable the continuous evolution of the system and ensure its relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Furthermore, flexibility and adaptability leads to complementarity and increased impact, for example, the project changed its approach to development of a unified registry due to EU direct funding to the same to the Government. The project adopted an adequate approach for the updating of the MIS for the R&A centres and the development of an MIS for MOSA.
- Adopting a structured inclusive coordination approach that emphasised the engagement of multiple stakeholders, particularly through partnerships with OPDs, enhanced programme design, outreach and service delivery. OPDs played a crucial role in the emergency response to the October 2024 crisis, mobilising support despite war-related delays. Operating on volunteer efforts, they facilitated coordination and advocacy, though their impact was constrained by the lack of sustainable funding. This experience highlighted the importance of institutionalising the role of OPDs within social protection system and securing dedicated financial resources to ensure long-term engagement.
- The integration of digital innovations to enhance efficiency, transparency and accountability in social protection delivery has been beneficial. For example, the project introduced a robust MIS to streamline beneficiary identification, payment processing and grievance redress mechanisms. The digitization of payment systems reduced cash disbursement delays, strengthening financial accountability, while digital referral systems improved linkages between cash assistance and essential services such as healthcare and education. Strengthened call centre further ensured that final beneficiaries could raise concerns and access timely support, reinforcing the role of technology in improving the effectiveness of social protection interventions.

² Please see Annex 6 for further details

Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

To enhance prospects of sustainability of the social protection programmes, ILO and UNICEF should support the Government in developing a realistic medium-term financing/ resource mobilisation strategy. This should begin with a thorough assessment of financing needs and a clear estimation of funding gaps to inform a phased and feasible approach. Rather than relying on external funding commitments, such strategy should aim to integrate social grants within broader economic and fiscal policies to enhance governmental ownership, ensure continuity and institutional buy-in. Involving social partners in this efforts is also important as a way to ensure ownership and propose creative solutions. In parallel, strengthening capacity within MOSA on financial planning, expenditure tracking and evidence-based policy-making is a crucial element in the process. This approach would enable the Government to engage with donors strategically while maintaining realistic expectations regarding external funding constraints.

Responsible unit(s): ILO HQ, ROAS & Lebanon CO, UNICEF Lebanon

Priority: High - Time implication: Short-term - Resource implication: Medium

Recommendation 2:

Future programming should institutionalize structured, multi-stakeholder engagement mechanisms from the outset, ensuring equal and balanced engagement with employers, workers, OPDs and different government stakeholders. This will strengthen ownership, design effectiveness and ensure no opportunities get missed in terms of access to employment and benefits for the target vulnerable populations, PwDs, women and elderly.. In these two evaluated projects, MOSA's leadership and R&A centre contributions were pivotal, but limited participation of employer organizations and uneven worker representation weakened the legitimacy and balance of key reforms, such as the NDA and pension law.

Responsible unit(s): ILO ROAS & Lebanon CO, UNICEF Lebanon

Priority: High - Time implication: Short-term - Resource implication: Medium

Recommendation 3:

Building on the successful implementation of the NDA and the emergency response, ILO and UNICEF should support MOSA to develop an institutionalised shock-responsive social protection framework, alongside pertinent pre-approved contingency funding, strengthened partnerships with OPDs and national actors, as well as capacity-building of OPDs and social workers to ensure inclusive emergency response. Establishing a digital platform for rapid beneficiary enrolment and payout during national crises will further enhance responsiveness and impact. This is particularly important given the fragile context in Lebanon and the ongoing regional conflicts and could be already considered as a core element of the new EU NDICI programme implemented by ILO and UNICEF.

Responsible unit(s): ILO ROAS & Lebanon CO, UNICEF Lebanon

Priority: High - Time implication: Medium-term - Resource implication: High

Recommendation 4:

ILO and UNICEF should work with the Government of Lebanon to operationalise the NSPS and the NCG through a phased targeted-approach. Given financial constraints, a targeted roll-out could focus on the most vulnerable groups, such as children with disabilities or younger age groups (e.g. 0-5 years). Exploring blended financing models, including donor contributions and government cost-sharing, can ensure sustainability. Additionally, leveraging the NCG as a shock-responsive mechanism in emergencies should be institutionalised, ensuring automatic activation in the event of crises.

Responsible unit(s): ILO ROAS & Lebanon CO, UNICEF Lebanon

Priority: High - Time implication: Medium-term - Resource implication: High

Recommendation 5:

To maintain effective coordination between the NDA, AMAN, ILO and UNICEF should support MOSA in developing a unified governance framework with clear roles, responsibilities and a harmonised targeting system. Enhancing integration between existing MIS platforms will allow for seamless beneficiary tracking, reduce duplication and improve service delivery, and would support in applying consistent eligibility criteria and targeting tools across the NDA, AMAN program to reduce overlaps. A joint GRM across programmes should also be enhanced to ensure equitable access to benefits and more efficient use of limited resources.

Responsible unit(s): ILO ROAS & Lebanon CO, UNICEF Lebanon

Priority: High - Time implication: Medium-term - Resource implication: Medium

1. INTRODUCTION

1. The Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) has launched an independent final evaluation for the two projects: ‘Addressing life-cycle vulnerabilities through social protection, Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon’, implemented by ILO and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and ‘Supporting Social Security and Institutional Reforms towards a Strengthened Social Protection System in Lebanon’, implemented by ILO. The first was funded by the European Union, on behalf of the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian Crisis (EU-MADAD), with a budget of EUR 20 million for 36 months. The latter was funded by the Embassy of the UK, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), with a budget of USD 633,865 for 12 months.
2. Both projects shared the same focus on social protection reform in Lebanon and came to an end in March and June 2025, respectively. With the objectives of accountability and learning, this cluster final evaluation assessed the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and potential impact of the projects and presented lessons learned, good practices and recommendations for future programming in Lebanon.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Country Context

3. Lebanon's socio-economic situation remains dire due to the severe economic crisis that the country has been facing since 2019, marked by a 38 percent contraction in GDP³ and fluctuating inflation rate reaching as high as 269% in April 2023 and 15.6 percent in February 2025.⁴ This sharp contraction of GDP led to the country’s downgrade from upper-middle-income to lower-middle-income status by 2022. The country is challenged by on-going regional conflict, political instability and government changes, the banking sector collapse, currency deflation and lack of reliable social security. Further, 14 months of military conflict has exacerbated what was already a dire economic situation and led to significant losses in capital across all sectors estimated at \$5.1B, which added another layer of complexity to Lebanon's situation.⁵
4. Basic services such as electricity, healthcare and clean water are severely disrupted alongside government’s fiscal challenges and governance issues.⁶ Unemployment has surged, nearly two-thirds of Lebanese individuals were reportedly unemployed (59 percent), women face significant burdens as primary caregivers, limiting their employment opportunities. As at March 2024, 24 percent of the Lebanese population, 38 percent of the Syrian refugee population and 40 percent of the Palestine refugee population were facing acute food insecurity and need urgent

3 World Bank <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2024/12/10/lebanon-s-economic-contraction-deepens-highlighting-critical-need-for-reforms-and-key-investments>

4 Trading Economics <https://tradingeconomics.com/lebanon/gdp-growth-annual>

5 UNOCHA. Lebanon Flash Appeal 2025 [https://www.unocha.org/attachments/96e91485-380d-4dab-93d9-37616359dc81/Flash Appeal LBN 202412.pdf](https://www.unocha.org/attachments/96e91485-380d-4dab-93d9-37616359dc81/Flash%20Appeal%20LBN%202412.pdf)

6 UN Lebanon. Multisectoral Needs Assessment 2024. https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&cx=b670719a572174706&q=https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/lebanon/multi-sectoral-needs-assessment-lebanese-households-lebanon-march-2024&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwiDoY_42d-MAxWMW0EAHa_YJSMQFnoECAYQAg&usg=AOvVaw07DcOIoJbYu0zF3N7u634A

humanitarian action to reduce food gaps, diversify food intake, protect and restore livelihoods and prevent acute malnutrition.⁷

5. All of that had pushed 80 percent of the population into poverty, disproportionately impacting marginalized communities including the unemployed, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), older persons and those with health issues, who lack adequate support due to gaps in Lebanon's fragmented social protection system. PwDs face particular socio-economic exclusion, worsened by inadequate employment policies and limited social protection. Despite the existence of Law 220, structural inequalities, discrimination and barriers disproportionately affect them and hinder their equal participation in the society, particularly women. Barriers in accessing the economy make them more vulnerable to poverty dependency on remittances across all deciles, but especially so in the lower income deciles.⁸
6. Lebanon's social protection system is fragmented and underfunded, struggling to meet the needs of both Lebanese citizens and Syrian refugees and with significant gaps in child benefits, disability allowances and pensions for private workers. The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) covers 56 percent of the population but suffers from structural weaknesses, such as the absence of an inflation-indexed pension system, inadequate family allowances and health insurance benefits, where over 42 percent are not covered by any health insurance.⁹ Despite the recent adoption of a pension reform law in 2023, its implementation remains dependent on timely operationalization. Further, social assistance in the country is limited, relying on donor-funded programmes. The rollout of the National Disability Allowance (NDA) started in 2023 providing targeted cash assistance to PwDs. However, broader social safety nets remain insufficient, with programmes such as the National Poverty Targeting Program (NPTP) and the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN), both merged into one program "AMAN", covering only 20 percent of the population.
7. Lebanon's social protection sector faces severe governance challenges, including fragmentation, inefficiency and corruption. The absence of integrated policies and weak institutional capacities have led to unequal benefits, duplication of efforts and poor resource allocation. Limited coordination between government agencies and non-state actors further hampers effective service delivery. Many social protection programmes still rely on international partners due to the government's constrained fiscal capacity and a lack of digitized systems limits responsiveness to emerging needs.

2.2 Projects' Strategy and Expected Results

8. The two projects under evaluation had been supporting the vision of the Government of Lebanon, through Ministry of Social Affairs (MOA), for an all-encompassing, inclusive and rights-based approach to the social protection. The projects contributed to reforms and addressed challenges

⁷ WFP IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis November 2024.

https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Lebanon_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Oct2024_Mar2025_Report.pdf

⁸ ILO <https://www.ilo.org/publications/living-disabilities-lebanon>

⁹ ILO https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@arabstates/@ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_780987.pdf

of the fragmented and underfunded social protection system, which failed to meet the needs of both Lebanese citizens and Syrian refugees.

‘Addressing Life-Cycle Vulnerabilities through Social Protection, Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon’

9. This EU-Madad funded project ‘(LBN/21/01/CEF) was implemented by ILO and UNICEF through a pass-through arrangement. It supported the development and implementation of the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) based on a life-cycle approach. It addressed the economic hardships, lifecycle vulnerabilities and gaps in services available to PwDs through social grants, in addition to poverty-targeting program AMAN,¹⁰ funded primarily through a World Bank loan and implemented by MoSA and WFP. The project promoted societal awareness related to life-cycle approaches through the engagement of civil society actors and think tanks. Co-design and strategic implementation roles assigned to Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), especially in shaping the targeting framework and feedback loops for the NDA.
10. The project was structured around three interlinked and complementary outcomes; (SO1) Strengthening the national social protection system by supporting the NSPS, establishing sector-wide coordination mechanisms, financing frameworks and a unified registry; (SO2) Designing and rolling out social grants for vulnerable populations, including disability allowances, child grants, and social pensions, while building referral systems for complementary services; and (SO3) Enhancing non-governmental stakeholder participation in social protection reform through evidence generation, capacity development and national consultations.
11. Under Outcome 1, the project interventions included the development and endorsement of the NSPS, and subsequent revisions to the first submitted draft, requiring lengthy and intensive engagement, particularly due to the change in government. In addition to the launch of a social protection reform dashboard to track key NSPS initiatives and the creation of coordination structures and technical units within ministries. Under Outcome 2, social grants were designed and implemented, with the NDA expanding in response to crisis in 2024. Under Outcome 3, conducted a number of studies on social protection, including on social registries, water injustice and child poverty, supported digital tools, in addition to the launch of the Social Protection Academy and capacity building on social protection, policy dialogue and meaningful engagement of civil society actors in shaping and advocating for a rights-based social protection system.
12. The project was coherent with the European Union Trust Fund (EUTF) for Syria, the UNICEF Strategic Plan and ILO Programme and Budget and adhered to human rights and leave-no-one-behind principles. Additionally, it aligned with the Convention on PwDs and supported progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 1: Poverty eradication, SDG 10: Reduced inequalities and SDG 5: Gender equality. At the national level, the NSPS was at the core of its design, the project aligned with the Government of Lebanon’s strategic objectives, as outlined in the Lebanon Crisis Response Plans and the Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework. The total budget was Euro 20 million, implemented over 40 months. The highest portion of the budget was allocated for the grants, transfers and contractual services (81 percent).

¹⁰ AMAN is a World Bank-funded emergency cash assistance programme launched in Lebanon in 2021 to support vulnerable households during the economic crisis. Implemented through DAEM, it delivers short-term aid through poverty-based targeting and a separate platform (DAEM), with limited institutional integration, sustainability, or inclusion of persons with disabilities.

‘Supporting Social Security and Institutional Reforms towards a Strengthened Social Protection System in Lebanon’

13. This FCDO-funded project (LBN/23/02/GBR) was implemented by ILO,, structured around three outcomes; (SO1) The development of a comprehensive pension system in Lebanon is supported through evidence generation, dialogue, and technical assessments, (SO2) Measures towards sustainable health financing and universal health coverage in Lebanon are developed on the basis of enhanced evidence, in collaboration amongst relevant stakeholders and (SO3) Underlying national systems for the implementation of the NDA and Social Grants are improved.
14. Under Outcome 1, implementation decrees were approved or drafted by the Council of Ministers, a design process was conducted for a potential National Child Grant (NCG), led by UNICEF, and support progress on the reform and implementation of the private sector pension scheme. . Two reports were produced: one capturing the series of dialogues conducted with stakeholders, and another on possible institutional design of a social pension based on consultations. Outcome 2 shifted focus from policy advocacy on universal health coverage to social assistance and system-building of health benefits management system at NSSF. Under Outcome 3, the project supported the extension of the NDA coverage to other age groups, it aimed to support the institutionalization of social grants, particularly the NDA. This included support to national delivery mechanisms and support to the emergency scale-up during the war, supporting the execution of government’s general budget allocation.. Measures to upgrade Rights and Access (R&A) centres information system were undertaken, Including an initial and comprehensive rapid assessments of R&A centres at the central and regional levels that informed the development and implementation of a targeted support plan. In addition, an MIS assessment and high-level business process design for the new R&A MIS.
15. The project contributed to the NSPS under its main pillars on Social Assistance and Social Insurance through reforms that were coherent with the 3 Results Framework Strategic Pillar on social protection. The project aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. The project contributed to SDG 1: Poverty eradication, SDG 10: Reduced inequalities and SDG 5: Gender equality. The total budget was USD 633,865 implemented over 12 months. The highest portion of the budget was allocated to staff and other personnel costs (44 percent).

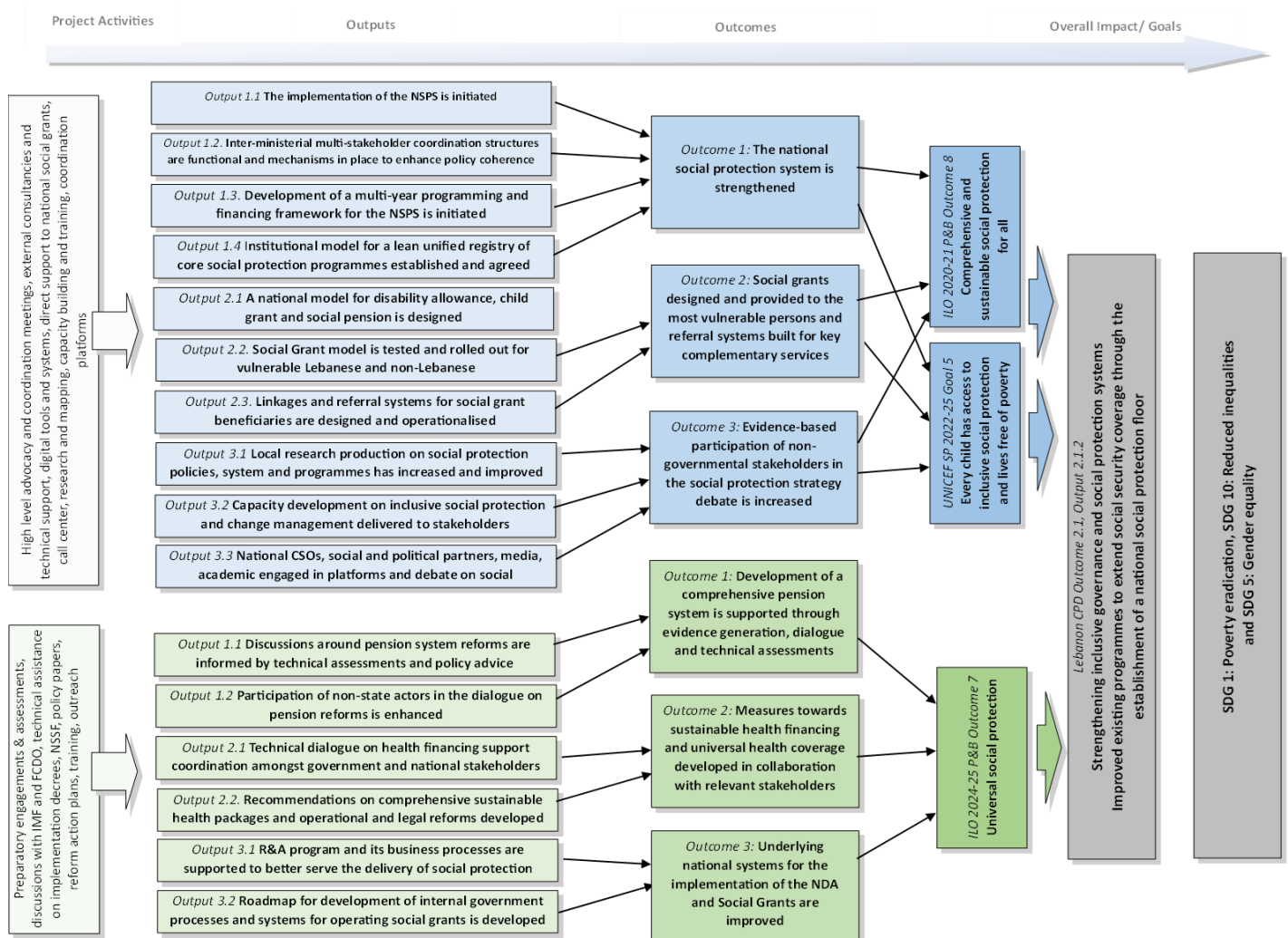
2.3 Constructed Theory of Change

16. The Theory of Change (ToC) of the project ‘Addressing Life-Cycle Vulnerabilities through Social Protection, Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon’_assumed that **if** the implementation of the NSPS begins, coordination structures and mechanisms are functional to enhance policy coherence, a medium-term programming and financing framework is initiated, a unified registry model is agreed upon, **and if** national models for key grants are designed and the Social Grant is tested and rolled-out for vulnerable populations with referral systems in place, **and if** research production improves, capacity development on inclusive social protection is delivered, and diverse stakeholders are engaged in national reform platforms, **then** the national social protection system will be strengthened, social grants will be provided to the most vulnerable persons with referral

systems for complementary services, and evidence-based participation of non-governmental stakeholders in the social protection debate will increase. **This will ultimately**, expand coverage of social protection in Lebanon, contributing to poverty eradication, reduced inequalities and gender equality.

17. The ToC of the project ‘Supporting Social Security and Institutional Reforms towards a Strengthened Social Protection System in Lebanon’ assumed that **if** pension reforms are informed by technical assessments and policy advice, with increased participation of non-state actors, **and if** technical dialogue on health financing supports stakeholder coordination, leading to recommendations on sustainable health packages and operational/legal reforms, **and if** R&A delivery processes and a roadmap for social grants operations are supported, **then** the development of a comprehensive pension system will be evidence-based, stakeholder collaboration will drive sustainable health financing and universal coverage, and national NDA and social grants implementation will improve. **This will ultimately** strengthen Lebanon’s social protection system for better coverage, adequacy and sustainability, contributing to poverty reduction, decreased inequality and gender equality.

Figure 1: Theory of Change combining both projects



3. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Evaluation Objectives

18. This cluster independent evaluation is launched by ILO ROAS serving two main objectives: accountability and learning. Specifically, the evaluation will assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and potential impact of the projects. Given their shared focus on social protection reform in Lebanon, evaluating the EU-MADAD-funded and the FCDO funded projects together allows understanding of how different interventions have collectively contributed to strengthening the national system. It allows for a more comprehensive assessment of progress towards common objectives. Additionally, it enables the identification of synergies and complementarities between the two projects, offering insights into how cross-sectoral reform efforts interact and reinforce each other.

3.2 Evaluation Scope

19. The evaluation assessed the projects' overall performance throughout their lifespan in line with their planned outcomes and outputs with a national coverage at the policy, institutional and end beneficiaries levels. It covered all aspects of the implementation highlighting the main challenges and good practices, giving special attention to the systems and the relationships with stakeholders and key actors in the field of social protection. The evaluation covered the full duration of both projects from January 2021 until June 2025.

3.3 Evaluation Clients

20. The primary clients of this evaluation are the ILO and UNICEF project teams, the donors EU-Madad and the Embassy of the UK and FCDO, the Government of Lebanon (including MOSA, Ministry of Labour, the National Social Security Fund and the PM's office), central non-state actors identified under the civil society platform and relevant constituents in country such as employer organizations, trade union, civil society and OPDs.

3.4 Criteria and Questions and Evaluation Matrix

21. The evaluation systematically used the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. It considered whether aspects of human rights, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) and disability inclusion were integrated. It adhered to the ILO evaluation policies and framework¹¹ and to the United Nations Evaluation Guidelines and Evaluation Norms and Standards.¹²

¹¹ ILO. 2024. Evaluation Policies. <https://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationpolicy/lang-en/index.htm#:~:text=The%20ILO%20applies%20the%20OECD,%2C%20efficiency%2C%20impact%20and%20sustainability.>

¹² UNFPA. UNEG/UNFPA review norms and standards <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/guidance-documents>

22. 34 Evaluation Questions (EQs) were followed to assess the projects and formulate findings as indicated in Table 1, based on an Evaluation Question Matrix (EQM) developed during the Inception Phase and approved by ROAS (**Annex 2**). The EQM was the center piece of the methodological design and played a crucial role before, during and after data collection.

Table 1: Evaluation Questions

EQs as in the ILO ToR	
Relevance and strategic fit	
1	How well did the projects' design align with the needs and priorities of agencies, stakeholders and key actors in the field of social protection?
2	To what extent, did the projects take into account the needs of PwDs in the planning of the intervention? Were gender considerations prioritized and integrated in the design? Was social dialogue triggered during the design phase and was it included in the project document? Was the design considerate of ILO's normative mandate highlighting any International Labour Standards?
3	How well has accountability to affected populations, complaints and feedback mechanisms and safe programming provisions worked in the programme?
Coherence	
4	How coherent were the ILO projects under evaluation in their planning, implementation and communication with stakeholders?
5	To what extent were the projects coherent with other plans and programmes in the area of disability inclusion and social protection internally (in the ILO, UNICEF, the EU, the FCDO) and externally (at country level: ministries and international and national stakeholders)
6	How coherent were the coordination efforts among the two agencies (ILO and UNICEF) at all levels and among the two agencies and other stakeholders?
7	How well did the projects align with national strategies and reforms, including the National Social Protection Strategy, the NDA rollout, and pension reforms?
8	To what extent did the projects promote policy coherence between different social protection components (e.g., pension reform, health financing, social grants)?
Effectiveness	
9	To what extent did the projects achieve their outcomes and outputs? Are there unexpected results?
10	How valid are the projects' rational/theory of change pathway and linkages based on the implementation of the projects? Is there evidence that the design and planned activities have led to the desired outputs and the achieved outputs have led to the outcomes?
11	How effective were the collaboration efforts with key actors in the social protection field and how did these relationships affect the achievement or non-achievement of results?
12	To what extent did the project support the elimination of barriers to access to key services, rights, information for vulnerable populations, and in particular for women and PwDs?
13	To which extent were the Cash for Employment (CFE) intervention selection criteria and targeting processes effective in achieving the planned results? How effectively were the inclusion and exclusion potential errors and risk of duplication or non-coverage managed during the implementation?
14	What improvements were made in the NDA and Social Grants delivery mechanisms?
Efficiency	
15	Were the resources allocated strategically to achieve outcomes? To what extent can the projects' achieved results justify the time, financial and human resources invested in the project?
16	How did the projects' governance structure including the M&E systems facilitate good results and efficient delivery?

17	To what extent does the allocation of resources reflect the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including women and persons with disabilities?
18	Did the projects face any administrative or operational bottlenecks, and how were they mitigated?
19	How did the joint implementation of EU and FCDO-funded interventions enhance efficiency, if at all?
20	Were there any delays in implementation, and if so, what were the primary causes?
Impact Orientation	
21	How likely are the projects to contribute to structural changes in Lebanon's social protection system?
22	Have the projects contributed to an increased social protection coverage for vulnerable groups?
23	What impact have the projects had on reducing poverty and inequality in Lebanon?
24	How are the projects impacting key actors in social protection to foster long-term impact on end beneficiaries?
25	Have the projects contributed to greater public trust in Lebanon's social protection system?
26	How have the projects influenced policy and national dialogue on social protection reform?
27	In the short-term: What immediate changes/benefits did beneficiaries experience from the projects?
28	In the long-term: what is the potential impact of the projects on the lives of beneficiaries as such as in the quality of life or social inclusion?
Sustainability	
29	Did the projects establish an exit strategy to ensure the sustainability of its efforts? What measures have been considered to ensure that the key components of the projects are sustainable beyond the life of the projects? Did the projects consider gender in planning its sustainable measures?
30	To what extent have national institutions assumed ownership over the project outcomes?
31	Have the projects contributed to institutional capacity-building to ensure long-term impact?
32	Can future projects be built upon the results of these projects, ensuring sustainability and optimal use of results? can the project be replicated in other contexts?
33	Have OPDs been included as partners to facilitate the identification of and reliable engagement with individuals with all types of disabilities?
34	What are the key risks to sustaining the projects' benefits, and how can they be mitigated?

3.5 Evaluation Approaches and Data Collection Methods

23. The final evaluation followed an inclusive, transparent and participatory approach to preserve the sense of ownership and set the stage to openly considered in future programming. A mixed-method approach for data collection and analysis was employed, with emphasis on qualitative data collection with quantitative data from secondary resources, mainly results of the progress reports and the Post Distribution Outcome Monitoring for the EU-Madad-funded project. The consultant spoke to a wide range of stakeholders/ constituents. The desk review of documents was an on-going process throughout the different phases of the final evaluation. Documents reviewed included the project document, progress and ROM reports, specific activity documents, legal and policy frameworks and documents. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were carried out based on the semi-structured guides (**Annex 3**), participants were identified in consultation with ILO ROAS (**Annex 4**), including the ILO and UNICEF teams, EU MADAD, FCDO, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Labour and the National Social Security Fund and OPDs. Cross-cutting issues were considered throughout the data collection and analysis, including gender equality and women empowerment, social dialogue, international labour standards and human rights.
24. The data analysis for Evaluation was qualitative in nature from primary and secondary data sources, organized around the 34 EQs and sub-questions generated in the EQM, the OECD/DAC

evaluation criteria and the project's two outcomes. The findings were cross-checked and triangulated by the integration of different information sources during the in-depth review of documents, notes of perceptions and opinions from KIIs and FGDs to increase the validity and reliability of results. Some quotes and human stories were also cited anonymously across the findings to support the analysis. Finally, technical support, guidance and coordination meetings with the ILO ROAS Evaluation Manager ascertained data analysis, credibility of sources and quality of deliverables.

3.6 Ethical Standards

25. For the conduct of this evaluation, the consultant adhered to the highest level of technical and ethical standards, which was applied to all stages of the evaluation process. The consultant fulfilled the criteria of professionalism, impartiality and credibility, and abided by the ILO's Code of Conduct for Evaluators signed as an integral part of the evaluation contract,¹³ which is in line with the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System (UNEG 2020).¹⁴ The consultant is also familiar with the unique aspects of the ILO and UNICEF and their evaluation policies and practices. The consultant does not have any links to project management or any other conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of the evaluation.

3.7 Evaluation Limitations

26. As with any evaluation or field work, certain limitations were faced, including:

- Limited access to KIIs respondents or limited availability of high-level respondents for interviews, mainly because of the long duration since the project started in 2021.
- Stakeholders ability to recall information, especially at policy level, hence risk of recall bias. A lot has happened in Lebanon during that period from the multiple crises to the war in 2024, it was difficult for many respondents, including some project staff, to recall and reflect on the work done, challenges, relationships...etc in responding to the evaluation questions.
- Reliable, high quality and complete secondary data, although most likely available, yet might have been missed and not shared with the evaluator due to staff turnover affecting the projects' institutional memory.

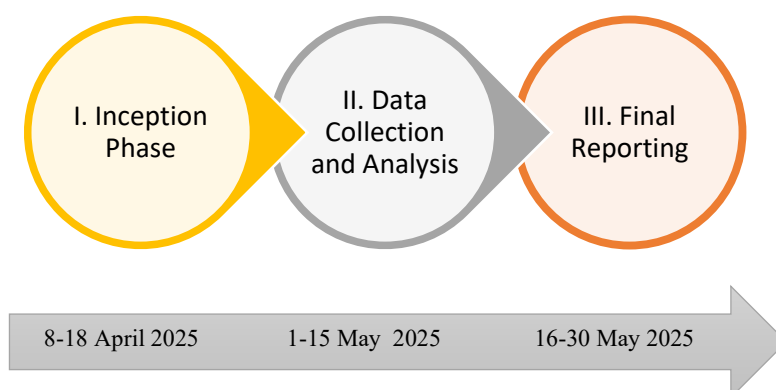
3.8 Evaluation Timeline and Deliverables

27. The final evaluation was conducted between April and June 2025 through three phases; inception, data collection, and analysis and final reporting, as illustrated in Figure 2. The detailed timeline of the evaluation activities is presented in **Annex 5**.

¹³ ILO. 2021. ILO Code of Conduct: Agreement for Evaluators. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746806.pdf

¹⁴ UNEG. Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_file.cfm?doc_id=302194#:~:text=The%20four%20UNEG%20guiding%20ethical,essential%20for%20responsible%20evaluation%20practice.

Figure 2: Timeline of Evaluation Phases



4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1 Relevance

1. How well did the projects' design align with needs and priorities of agencies, stakeholders and key actors in the field of social protection?

28. The two projects were designed in alignment with the Government of Lebanon's vision for a rights-based, integrated and sustainable social protection, demonstrating a needs-responsive approach that took into account the priorities prevailing capacities of national stakeholders and key actors. Capacity gaps were identified and continuously revised by ILO and UNICEF through vulnerability and social protection assessments,¹⁵ mappings and stakeholders consultations. These gaps included the weak legal framework, limited national budgets in light of the economic crisis, exclusion and low coverage, weak infrastructure and coordination systems, such as data management and Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) and operational service delivery capacities.
29. Together, through interlinked outcomes, the projects were strategically formulated at three complementary levels to support policy reform in the social protection sector, strengthen institutional capacities of relevant stakeholders, and address rising vulnerabilities in the short-term. The projects incorporated substantive elements of capacity strengthening into almost all of its outputs.
30. The two projects supported MOSA in achieving its mandate and the government's commitment to inclusive shock-responsive social protection by supporting the development and endorsement of the NSPS under the EU-Madad-funded project, Output 1.1: *Implementation of the NSPS*, Output 1.3: *Multi-year programming and financing framework for the NSPS* and Output 1.4: *Institutional model for a lean social protection unified registry*. In addition to piloting models for the NDA, the design of the UNICEF-led NCG and finalizing the long-awaited pension law under the EU-Madad-funded project, Output 2.1: *Models for disability allowance, child grant and social pension*

¹⁵ ILO. 2021. Vulnerability and Social Protection Gaps Assessment – Lebanon
https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40arabstates/%40ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_820467.pdf

developed, and FCDO-funded project Output 1.1: *Pension system reforms informed by technical assessments and policy advice*. Support to the social health protection structural reform, universal coverage and sustainable financing was also provided under the FCDO-funded project, Output 2.1: *Technical dialogue on health financing support* and Output 2.2: *Recommendations on health packages and operational and legal reforms*. Emphasis was also placed on evidence generation to support policy reform and decision-making.

31. Government social protection actors recognised the complexity of implementing the NSPS and the challenges associated with creating new national coordination systems among ministries. Both projects focused on advancing multi-stakeholders dialogue and coordination, engaging ministries, civil society, OPDs and academia; EU-Madad-funded project Output 1.2: *Inter-ministerial multi-stakeholder coordination structures* and Output 3.3: *National stakeholders engaged in platforms and debate on social protection reform* and the FCDO-funded project Output 1.2: *Participation of non-state actors in the dialogue on pension reforms is enhanced*.
32. Across most outputs, there was an urgency to strengthen the social protection institutional systems amid Lebanon's overlapping crises. Focus by both projects to support the R&A centres and MOSA systems was critical in enabling effective state-led delivery of services. They supported capacities of MOSA and R&A centres to integrate a shock-responsive approach to the NDA and NCG, initially designed for routine operations, to be adjusted for emergency response. Additionally, providing specialised trainings to their staff, developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and deploying experts to work closely with the national staff. For example, technical support was immediately deployed in response to the military conflict in 2024 enabling the R&A centres to provide much-needed assistance.
33. Analysis of KIIs under this evaluation shows that the design of the two projects was viewed by most stakeholders as necessary, well-targeted and practically-oriented to the pressing needs of the population and the mandates of their respective entities in the social protection sector. One government staff said: *"The needs of PwDs is what we work on, the interventions responded to this, which is part of our strategic objectives"*. Feedback also shows the importance of supporting public institutions in addressing structural weaknesses in institutional operations and functions. Another government employee said: *"For the work with the project staff we saw that it is very useful and there is focus on solving problems, it was not easy for the state to pay its contribution, projects' support helped us to pay for the beneficiaries for the first time"*. An NGO staff noted: *"Serving the beneficiaries and reinforcing the R&A centres do their job was essential"*.
34. However, this strong relevance was not equally perceived by employer organizations who expressed a lack of alignment with the private sector's priorities or consideration of the impact of the reform on the sector. One representative of employer organization said: *"I don't think anyone asked what we need in terms of the social protection, there were no activities for us as a concerned group, the projects can do more survey and advocacy to know the impact"*. This suggests that, while the project largely addressed major national needs, the employers as a stakeholder felt that their needs were not captured in the design. The ILO maintained during this evaluation that the priorities of employers organisations was heard and expressed in all meetings on social protection under EU Madad and/or FCDO however, as a result of the crisis, ALL supported proposals that are

not in line with international social security standards; one of which is, for example, opting out of social security and transitioning towards private insurance for healthcare coverage. This could not be supported by the ILO as it is not aligned with international standards. The evaluation is of the opinion that important differences in views and practices exist between the ILO and employers organisations making it necessary for the ILO to work harder on bridging the gap in understanding between the two entities to ensure stronger tripartite engagement.

35. The EU-MADAD-funded ILO/UNICEF joint project came in alignment with the UNICEF Strategic Plan, Goal Area 5: Every child, including adolescents, has access to inclusive social protection and lives free of poverty. It was also aligned with the ILO Programme and Budget, Outcome 7: Universal social protection and Outcome 8: Comprehensive and sustainable social protection for all. The joint project adopted the leave-no-one behind and human rights approaches, in alignment with guiding principles of the UNICEF and ILO organisations. It directly reinforced the ILO and UNICEF's priorities for sustainable, lifecycle and shock-responsive social protection system. Likewise, was the FCDO-funded project's alignment with the ILO priorities. The joint project is therefore aligned with the strategic objectives of both agencies; UNICEF's social policy programme and country programme document (2023–27), advancing its global commitment to universal child-sensitive protection, fiscal sustainability and data-driven planning Both projects also align with ILO's global and national priorities by enhancing social protection, decent work and rights-based reforms in Lebanon. Embedded within the ILO-supported decade-long country programme, the projects reflect ILO standards on contributory protection and inclusive social protection policies by operationalizing the NSPS for Lebanon and supporting the NDA, NCG, social pension and social health protection components, and through institutional strengthening and governance reform.

To what extent, did the projects take into account the needs of PwDs in the planning of the intervention? Were gender considerations prioritized and integrated in the design? Was social dialogue triggered during the design phase and was it included in the project document? Was the design considerate of ILO's normative mandate highlighting any International Labour Standards?

36. The design of both the EU-Madad-funded project and the FCDO-funded project incorporated measures to address the needs of PwDs and women through inclusive policy reform, inclusive targeting and eligibility criteria, outreach, tailored benefits and engagement with OPDs.
37. The design of the NDA aimed to provide regular and predictable cash support to individuals with long-term disabilities, recognizing disability as a basis for individual eligibility, regardless of household income or poverty assessments. The design addressed the specific needs of PwDs, embedding inclusion, accessibility and equity principles into both the targeting and the delivery mechanisms. While the NDA was targeted at individuals with disabilities regardless of gender, the design recognized that women with disabilities often face compounded barriers to accessing social protection. For that, the database and indicators ensured disaggregation by sex and disability type, with the aim of progressively linking the NDA to other services and benefits, thus addressing multidimensional vulnerabilities experienced by PwDs and women. As part of the NDA, community awareness sessions were also planned to challenge discriminatory gender norms.

Female social workers were specifically recruited to further strengthen gender-responsive service delivery and facilitate outreach in conservative communities. They received gender-sensitive training to support survivors of GBV, raise awareness about women's economic empowerment and advocate for women's rights and access to services.

38. On the health services and coverage, the FCDO-funded project advocated for legislations on universal health coverage that enshrine the right of PwDs and elder persons to sustainable social health protection, in line with international standards. Discussions related to the health packages design options took into consideration the needs of the vulnerable population groups of women and PwDs and that minimum health service packages would guarantee their access to essential care. The disability status was also considered for integration as a key vulnerability criterion in the household targeting formula, with the aim of ensuring that households including PwDs would be prioritized for enrolment. ILO staff during this evaluation noted that previous work was done with national actors (NSSF, TPA) on a full concept for the emergency response focused on the provision of an emergency health benefit package for vulnerable displaced people, which largely informed and advanced the project's engagement on Social Health Protection and discussions with NSSF, MOL and other actors and on the key institutional gaps that would need to be addressed. Being the backbone for outreach, registration and service delivery for PwDs via the Personal Disability Card (PDC) system, the R&A centres were specifically targeted with institutional capacity building and technical assistance aiming to enhance operational processes and upgrading data management systems that are the basis of the NDA targeting and coverage. Expanding the database was prioritized, including addressing gender disparities and ensuring more women with disabilities are included.
39. A strong emphasis on collaboration with OPDs is crucially evident in both projects in a participatory approach that aimed to enhance the relevance, accuracy and legitimacy of the registration and targeting processes, while minimizing the risk of excluding difficult to reach individuals. These organizations were actively engaged in shaping policy reforms, co-development and validation of disability eligibility and assessment tools and ensuring inclusive health coverage. In addition, the EU-Madad funded project intended to work through established civil society networks and platforms to ensure the perspectives of PwDs were meaningfully reflected in social protection policy dialogue and reform efforts. OPDs benefited from capacity building that aimed to enhance their ability to engage in policy advocacy and systems monitoring. OPDs have become able to organize, almost independently, their own policy dialogues and policy engagement events on social protection, reaching out to MOSA, which is more receptive and welcoming of such collaboration. As described by project staff, *"this was the result of numerous meetings, webinars, capacity building, discussions and development of a series of clear policy papers on Disability-inclusive Social Protection, all through the ILO/OPDs implementation agreement"*.
40. The projects were strongly aligned with ILO's normative mandate, particularly in reinforcing social protection as a human right and promoting long-term systemic reform consistent with international labour standards. Social dialogue was incorporated across stakeholder groups; government stakeholders were heavily involved in the design phase of the projects and primarily benefiting from the policy reforms and institutional capacity strengthening in response to their priorities. Dialogue and engagement of key civil society groups and policy experts working on

social protection, including Arcenciel, the Center for Social Sciences Research and Action (CESSRA), the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS) and Online Money Transfer (OMT). They helped in supporting engagement of policymakers by organizing roundtables and meetings with ministers and MPs as well as other key actors, with support from ILO. During KIIs, they confirmed that ILO and UNICEF's technical assistance helped embed equity, sustainability and institutional accountability in national frameworks. Workers' organizations, particularly through ACTRAV, were actively involved in the pension reform process and NSPS discussions once the projects were underway. During KIIs under this evaluation, worker organizations acknowledged being engaged in technical dialogue with ILO and contributing to shaping the pension legislation, saying *"We wanted to make sure that the workers' rights are represented"*.

41. Under the FDCO-funded project, activities focused on supporting the implementation of the pension reform. To date, only one decree has been approved and a second, addressing the list of competencies for the Board, was presented and discussed by ILO with employers. In line with their remarks, the strict allocation approach was removed from the draft, and the leadership experience added, as highlighted by the ILO staff. Contrarily, the interviewed employers' organisation perceived the normative framing as unbalanced and less aligned with private sector expectations, they reported a lack of engagement in identifying their needs or shaping activities, especially regarding pension reforms under the FCDO-funded project which they perceived to be imposed without adequate consultation. One employer representative expressed saying *"We do not think that the ILO is supporting us and feel that these reforms are pushed and going against the interest of the employers"*
42. Social dialogue was triggered during the design phase and was included in the FCDO project document. Several meetings were held with both workers' and employers' organisations to discuss the pension reform and the implications it could have on the constituents of both organisations. It is worth noting that irreconcilable differences continue to persist between employers' and workers related to the EOSI. According to the ILO the proposal of the employers' organisation related to the EOSI is not aligned with the standards of the ILO and differences of opinions and positions continue to cause friction between ALI as the representative of employers and the ILO.

2. How well has accountability to affected populations, complaints and feedback mechanisms and safe programming provisions worked in the programme?

42. The projects incorporated some mechanisms to ensure accountability to affected populations, notably through the formal call centre established at MOSA and the post-distribution monitoring (PDM) unit. The projects have supported PDC data verification and beneficiaries' enrolment at R&A and MOSA during the emergency expansion through the call centre ensuring that end beneficiaries could raise concerns and access timely support. Further, through the introduced project structured and transparent mechanisms, including clear payment schedules and an accessible call centre, the NDA fostered a renewed sense of trust in state institutions, as noted by the ROM of the EU-Madad-funded project in 2025. One MOSA staff commended it saying, *"We have a major call center for the complaints and we validated disability cards, so that those not included would become beneficiaries and this process from A to Z was supported by the technical teams of the ILO and UNICEF and we are very grateful"*. Involvement in the Call centre design or

operations was limited for the civil society, one stated *“We pushed to be involved in the call centre but we were not successful”*, yet they were involved in PDMs and review processes. They expressed that taking remedial actions in response to the findings of the PDMs was challenging.

4.2 Coherence

4. How coherent were the ILO projects under evaluation in their planning, implementation and communication with stakeholders?

43. The two projects demonstrated a sequential and complementary design, allowing for a natural progression and expansion of the scope of support to social protection in Lebanon. Together, they covered the social assistance, social insurance and financial access to health and education pillars of the NSPS, in addition to governance and institutional capacity cutting across. This sequencing enabled the FCDO-funded project to build on the evidence and operational knowledge learned from the EU-Madad one. This learning was also gained from other donor-funded projects such as PROSPECTS, ENABLE, EUTF WFP project on the NPTF, UNICEF’s *Haddi* programme and AMAN. The EU-Madad-funded project was part of the Cash Coordination Working Group and the Lebanon One Unified Inter-Organisational System for E-card (LOUISE) platform.
44. During implementation, the two projects demonstrated a high level of coherence and complementarity in their technical focus. For example, the key operational tools of the NDA were developed under the leadership of UNICEF, leveraging its technical expertise in this domain. The tools were piloted by the EU-Madad-funded project, gaining practical experience that fed into the FCDO-project embedding these tools into formal governance structures. This included institutionalizing the NDA, reforming pensions following the 2023 pension law enactment and strengthening social health protection. Additionally, both projects complemented Madad’s direct cash assistance by strengthening capacities of the R&A centres, which enabled shock-responsive adjustments during the war time in 2024. The complementarity allowed each project to focus on different but interlinked aspects; programme delivery and piloting, as well as system strengthening and legal reform under the NSPS umbrella. A key characteristic of both projects was the engagement of a wide range of national actors that was mutually reinforcing across both projects, with consistent and clear communication. Primarily MOSA, Prime Minister’s Office, OPDs and think tanks in the first project, then progressively and coherently, expanding to include the NSSF, the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health and employer organizations -to some extent- under the second.
45. In ILO, internal coherence is accounted for through the integrated cluster approach,¹⁶ which is enhancing leadership, resource efficiency, increasing consistency of technical reporting and communication and facilitating contributions into the broader picture. Donors appreciated this unified effort and the clarity it brought to coordination and partnership building, which was recognized by ILO staff saying that *“Donors want to come together, have a coherent space and to*

¹⁶ The ILO implemented the programme interventions through the ILO Social Protection cluster of the Regional office for Arab States in Beirut, with the ILO Deputy Director as the responsible official. Technical supervision and backstopping was provided by the regional social protection specialist.

be contributing to one piece of a bigger picture, no competition for visibility and space and avoiding wastage of resources into internal positioning”.

5. To what extent were the projects coherent with other plans and programmes in the area of disability inclusion and social protection internally (in the ILO, UNICEF, the EU and the FCDO) and externally (at country level, ministries and international and national stakeholders)

46. The outcomes of the ILO/UNICEF joint project were coherent with the EU-Madad/ European Union Trust Fund for Syria framework,¹⁷ contributing to four of its seven priority sectors; specifically, Livelihoods, Protection, Health and Social Cohesion. The project was also aligned with two out of the three EU-Madad target categories; access to direct services and local capacity strengthening. For the FCDO-funded project, it was aligned with the Government Strategy for International Development¹⁸ focusing on the priority area of climate change, nature and global health, including by strengthening country delivery systems, building stronger health systems and health security. The project is also aligned with the priority areas and the FCDO Disability and Rights Strategy 2022-2030.¹⁹
47. Both projects contributed to the achievement of the SDGs, more relatively to SDG 1: *End poverty*, and in particular target 1.3: *Implement nationally appropriate social protection system and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable*. It also contributes to SDG 10: *Reduced inequality*, in particular, target 10.4: *Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality*. The project contributes more generally to SDG 5: *Gender equality*, as well as to the Convention on the Rights of PwDs and the Convention on Social Security Minimum Standards and the Recommendation on Social Protection.
48. At their core, the projects were complementary to the AMAN program managed by MOSA and the NSPS under its social assistance and social insurance pillars. The social assistance pillar of the Strategy calls upon complementing income support to extremely poor households with social grants that address lifecycle vulnerabilities as key steps towards a rights-based approach that progressively realises access to social protection for all. The social insurance pillar of the strategy focuses on expanding access to contributory schemes that ensure income security across the life cycle. It prioritizes reforming the NSSF, extending coverage to informal workers, improving governance and sustainability and build a more inclusive and financially resilient system that protects individuals against risks like old age and disability. Additionally, the projects come in line with Lebanese Law 220/2000 on the rights of disabled persons.

6. How coherent were the coordination efforts among the two agencies (ILO and UNICEF) at all levels and among the two agencies and other stakeholders?

¹⁷ https://trustfund-syria-region.ec.europa.eu/index_en

¹⁸ FCDO. 2022. *Government Strategy for International Development*.
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/628208d68fa8f5562179576f/uk-governments-strategy-international-development.pdf>

¹⁹ FCDO. 2022. *Disability and Rights Strategy 2022-2030*.
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/627a63e9e90e0712dbfd4b3b/Disability-Inclusion-and-Rights-Strategy-2022.pdf>

49. Efforts by ILO and UNICEF under the EU-Madad-funded project appear to have been mutually reinforcing, backed up by strong alignment on the national vision and broader objectives, they were jointly invested in high-level policy dialogue and succeeded in supporting institutional processes and achieving results. Coordination between the two agencies was generally effective and constructive, despite the absence of a formal coordination structure at the national level (the Social Protection Partners Forum (SPPF) was largely inactive). Roles were clearly divided between them respecting thematic mandates, yet, some of project teams reported occasional bottlenecks in planning and information sharing, especially at the beginning, they were then overcome and cooperation continued to improve over time becoming increasingly complementary. The bottlenecks may have been progressively overcome through a combination of adaptive and informal mechanisms. Regular bilateral meetings and a clear division of responsibilities based on each agency's mandate allowed for more structured collaboration and establishment of thematic technical working groups (e.g. on communications, R&A, and data) provided targeted platforms for dialogue and problem-solving. Over time, staff from both agencies increasingly recognized each other's comparative strengths, which fostered mutual trust and led to a more complementary and effective partnership. The smooth collaboration between the two agencies and visible alignment throughout implementation was validated by the interviewed government staff under this evaluation. ILO and UNICEF's coordination extended to their other projects in Lebanon, including the ILO's PROSPECTS project on social stability and the UNICEF's *Haddi* programme, which promotes child protection through cash transfers to vulnerable families.
50. The evaluation accounted for the complementarity of roles between both agencies with clear leadership on specific components. This was important in ensuring effective coordination and collaboration, which significantly strengthened the overall impact of the programme. Both UNICEF and ILO contributed to policy development, capacity building and efforts to embed social protection within national governance structures. At the same time, Each agency led on specific thematic areas according to mandates, ILO focused on driving policy development and institutional capacity-building, embedding social protection within national governance structures. UNICEF strengthened these systems to effectively deliver services, remain responsive and adapt to emergencies. For example, the pension reform led by ILO and the NCG by UNICEF. UNICEF led on several operational aspects, including systems design and implementation, ILO also played a role in strengthening service delivery systems, particularly through its engagement with the R&A centres. Both agencies worked together on the R&A centres, which were previously almost unfunctional, and ensured that the NDA was shock-responsive, enabling a rapid emergency response. During interviews, UNICEF recognized ILO's leadership on technical matters and legal reform, and ILO acknowledged UNICEF's strengths in outreach and advocacy. However, staff from both agencies noted that highly integrated joint programming at the activity level placed burden on implementation teams; aligning every step of operations created delays and was seen as not needed sometimes. They held regular monthly meetings to make joint decisions on operational and strategic issues, showing alignment with each other and agreement on technical matters, that was evident to other actors.
51. Coordination between ILO, UNICEF and other stakeholders was generally effective and mutually reinforcing, despite the absence of a formal joint steering committee or an active social protection partners forum. The two agencies maintained close collaboration through bilateral mechanisms,

regular planning meetings, and technical working groups, which helped align their efforts with national counterparts such as MOSA, the Prime Minister's Office, NSSF and various line ministries. Both agencies were recognised for their leadership. ILO in policy and institutional reform, and UNIEF in outreach and delivery and their work was visibly complementary. However, coordination with some stakeholders, particularly employer organizations and OPDs, was less consistent or delayed, affecting the inclusiveness and legitimacy of certain reforms such as the pension and NDA. Overall, while informal coordination structures ensured adaptability and joint implementation, the lack of formal platforms at times limited cross-sectoral alignment, shared ownership and sustained engagement across all actors.

7. How well did the projects align with national strategies and reforms, including the National Social Protection Strategy, the NDA rollout, and pension reforms?

52. The design and implementation of the two projects were aligned with the Government of Lebanon's strategic objectives as reflected in the Lebanon Crisis Response Plans (LCRPs), including the most recent Lebanon two-year humanitarian stabilization framework (2024-2025). Specifically, Strategic Objective 3: *Support service provision through national systems*, and for the EU-Madad-funded project, Strategic Objective 2: *Provide immediate assistance to vulnerable populations*. The projects ensured assistance reaches the most vulnerable populations on the short- and long-term through direct assistance to target groups or promoting an inclusive sustainable social protection. They both supported the MOSA's institutional systems for effective and efficient service delivery. Beyond its intended outcomes, the EU-Madad-funded project also contributed to Strategic Objective 1: *Providing humanitarian assistance to meet critical need* as it supported MOSA during the military conflict in 2024 with the provision of emergency cash transfers to registered PwDs, establishing a data verification unit, enhancing the call centre processes and provision of assistive devices to displaced beneficiaries.
53. The projects were coherent with national priorities and the Government's vision for a rights-based, comprehensive and inclusive social protection in Lebanon. The social protection sector priorities of the country's Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework prioritised the launch of the NSPS, the NDA and the AMAN program reform. During interviews, government staff reflected that the NDA gained increasing national ownership and integration into broader social protection reforms, with strong ministerial support and alignment with the unified social assistance framework. MOSA recognized the project's impact and committed to its scale-up, including a doubling of government contributions in 2025. However, the implementation faced administrative delays due to rigid Ministry of Finance procedures, affecting the timely disbursement of funds. One government staff said: *"The Minister supported this project and the contribution which was made in 2024 will be doubled in 2025 and the child grants and the elderly grants will be used for state contribution for the NDA"*.

8. To what extent did the projects promote policy coherence between different social protection components (e.g., pension reform, health financing, social grants)?

54. Policy coherence across social protection pillars was promoted by the EU-Madad and the FCDO projects primarily through the development and endorsement of the NSPS, which served as a

unifying framework based on a life-cycle approach encompassing five pillars; social assistance, social insurance, social assistance, financial access to health and education pillars and labour activation. The projects contributed to this coherence by supporting the technical unit of the NSPS and R&A centres, piloting social assistance models and financing frameworks, coordinating with line ministries, and facilitating policy dialogue across sectors. Some cross-pillar integration was achieved, for instance, a pilot initiative, implemented across EU-MADAD and ENABLE, aims to link the NDA beneficiaries to short-term employment opportunities, thereby cutting across social assistance and labour activation. Coherence was also pursued through continuous institutional learning, enabled by the projects' long-standing engagement. For example, stakeholders mentioned that they were *"learning along the way"* and that the presence of ILO and UNICEF teams in multiple pillars allowed for emerging linkages and coordination opportunities. Coherence between the health and pension reform and other social assistance programmes remains limited but is under discussion and would be strengthened when the interministerial coordination between ministries is enhanced.

55. Analysis of feedback of the projects' staff shows that the policy-level design and implementation of the social protection programmes have clear alignment in some areas and A key next step is designing and establishing a solid governance model for its implementation and oversight. The EU-Madad-funded project worked at the macro policy level, engaging line ministries and the NSPS technical unit to operationalize national social protection pillars. The pilot to link NDA beneficiaries to short-term employment opportunities is a positive example of a coherent initiative cutting across social assistance and labour activation. The FCDO-funded project focused more on pilot initiatives, partnerships and capacity building, with integration yet to evolve within social protection system as a whole through the NSPS between social assistance, pension and health systems. One staff mentioned that *"Despite gaps, the policy frameworks are broadly consistent with ILO standards. The implementation is still evolving and efforts still maturing to bridge silos and strengthen linkages across pillars"*. The process of building referral pathways for social assistance beneficiaries to labour activation services is a long process that will require more efforts. Pension system law endorsed includes a link with health scheme contributions and benefits and covers people who are covered under the sickness and maternity branch. It identified gaps within existing systems at NSSF for provision of healthcare coverage and have hence consolidated a digital readiness assessment for both allowing for integrated recommendations on building and reforming the digital infrastructure at NSSF. In addition, ILO leveraged its financial assessment of the NSSF to inform the work on social health protection/sickness and maternity scheme.

4.3 Effectiveness

9. To what extent did the projects achieve their outcomes and outputs? Are there unexpected results?

EU-Madad-funded project: Addressing Life-Cycle Vulnerabilities through Social Protection, Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon

Outcome 1: The national social protection system is strengthened

56. The NSPS was endorsed and launched by the Government in 2023/2024 (Target of Output 1.1). The other outputs have been affected by the political vacuum and the war in 2024. ILO and UNICEF have navigated the situation by shifting towards emergency response and recovery, while applying a nexus approach that integrates the longer-term reform objectives within the current humanitarian relief efforts. As such, the important results achieved under these outputs were based on agility to the context and carefully planned mitigation measures, rather than correspondence to the original design.
57. An Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) was established (Target of Output 1.2) to oversee the implementation of the NSPS and the formation of a technical unit at the Prime Minister's Office, currently focusing on a plan for emergency response and recovery. This was followed by the appointment of technical leads on social assistance, social welfare, financial access to education, social health protection, social insurance, labour market activation and public finance, by the respective ministries. The project supported the development of TORs for the pertinent steering committees with the objective of providing strategic advisory on policy coherence, implementation and coordination of NSPS programmes. Coordination in-between social protection actors was done regularly with the involvement of the government partners through the SPPF, not through the IMC. IMC, technical unit and NSPS planning were interrupted more than once due to the war, displacements, elections and changing governments.²⁰
58. At a straggling pace was progress on the development of the financial framework and M&E plan for the NSPS (Target of Output 1.3) and the social protection unified registry (Target of Output 1.4), both were largely dependent on having more stable economic and political conditions. Following the NSPS adoption, only preparatory work began for the M&E and financing plans by the technical unit, including mapping of existing initiatives to inform costing and planning. The project has redesigned the Rights and Access Management Information System (RAIS), which is intended to become a core component of the unified registry, specifically for disability-related data. This ILO/UNICEF joint project led a full assessment, initiated technical planning for RAIS integration and coordinated with stakeholders to align RAIS development with the broader registry architecture.

Outcome 2: Social grants designed and provided to the most vulnerable persons and referral systems built for key complementary services

59. All the outputs led to the expected results. The design documents of three social grants (Target of Output 2.1) are near to finalisation; the NDA is designed, approved and rolled out reaching over 35,000 children and youth with disabilities. The NCG is designed by UNICEF, and design and cost options for a social pension are developed and the law 319 was issued establishing a contributory pension scheme for private sector workers with future expansion potential.
60. Since the launch of the NDA in April 2023, 27,393 PwDs received regular payments, and as of May 2025, there are 35,000 NDA beneficiaries, including Syrians, Palestinians and Lebanese (137 percent of Output 2.2 target). In response to the 2024 conflict, the Government allocated USD 5

²⁰ Through the new phase of the EU fund, ILO & UNICEF will continue to provide technical assistance to the technical unit on the preparation of mid-term implementation plans, M&E and costing, reactivating the IMC and other policy reform, with the increased stabilization of the context.

million from the national budget to expand coverage to 44,000 PwDs holding valid disability cards and children . This was a one-time emergency assistance. This allocation also included the expansion of the regular NDA to children aged 0 to 14 for 2 months with UNICEF committing an additional 6 months of funding. In doing so, the project provided technical support to R&A centres by establishing a temporary data verification unit, equipping it with IT tools, hiring and training call center staff and enabling daily processing of 1,000 files and validating data for 50,000 PwDs for integration into the future R&A Management Information System (MIS).

61. The project improved grievance handling, data validation and the effectiveness of the referral mechanism in place managed by UNICEF (Target of Output 2.3). In a pilot model, MoSA social workers were trained to assess the needs of NDA beneficiaries through household visits, resulting in over 60 percent of those requesting support being referred to services. Despite temporary suspension due to conflict, phone-based follow-ups continued. Further, ILO and UNICEF are piloting referral of working-age PwDs with short-term jobs via the KfW-led Cash-for-Work Working Group. Strengthening broader linkages and referrals will continue under the new EU programme. There is high potential that the mapping exercise coordinated with the inter-agency group and MOSA will improve the referral to existing PwD services, which are noted to be limited and not always accessible in Lebanon.

Outcome 3: Evidence-based participation of non-governmental stakeholders in the social protection strategy debate is increased

62. Overachieving its plan (Targets of Output 3.1), the project generated over 40 knowledge and advocacy products to advance public debate and policy on social protection in Lebanon. This includes two research studies, three position papers, three policy briefs, three internal political economy reports and nine articles (including one on the NSSF). In addition, seven position papers were produced through partnerships with OPDs. The participation of government and civil society in the development of these knowledge products has built capacity and a better identification of system gaps and greater understanding of the policy solutions needed. Public outreach was enhanced through infographics/visuals in Arabic and English, online and media campaigns and videos and held four public webinars/roundtables. Collaborative research included a pending national unified registry report, a paper on water injustice and a study on multidimensional child poverty to inform future social protection programming.
63. Capacity development programme on inclusive social protection and social assistance system design and implementation was delivered to 62 practitioners (Target of Output 3.2), including 88 individuals trained (61 females and 27 males), of which 56 were public sector officials and 20 civil society actors.. In partnership with ITC-ILO and Université Saint Joseph, a Social Protection Academy was established in 2024 to strengthen stakeholders' capacity for NSPS implementation with modern approaches to social protection and a strategy developed for its operations. Despite limited capacities of OPDs, several advocacy initiatives were partly produced with OPDs (Target of Output 3.3), engaged in social protection reform through disability inclusive campaigns, roundtables, training, focus groups, and position papers were developed by OPDs. Policy briefs, political positioning reports and the dashboard of SP initiatives tracking were developed by TPI.

FCDO-funded project: Supporting Social Security and Institutional Reforms towards a Strengthened Social Protection System in Lebanon

Outcome 1: The development of a comprehensive gender-sensitive pension system in Lebanon is supported through evidence generation, dialogue, and technical assessments

64. The project provided substantial evidence, dialogue and technical input for pension system reform. Exceeding target of Output 1.1). A financial assessment of EOSI liabilities was conducted addressing an emerging issue of settlement payments in light of the severe devaluation of the local currency and the gradual adjustment of salaries. The digital readiness assessment of the NSSF and business process review for pension scheme processes are underway. Policy recommendations directly informed reform technical support and dialogue with the Government, parliament and Civil Service Council. The decree to define the competencies of NSSF Board members was developed by the Civil Service Board with the technical assistance of the ILO. It is planned to be presented to the Government for adoption soon and will then serve as a basis for assessing and approving candidates for the Board.

Outcome 2: Measures towards sustainable health financing and universal health coverage in Lebanon are developed on the basis of enhanced evidence, in collaboration amongst relevant stakeholders

65. Due to the war, efforts initially planned for the implementation of the pension scheme were redirected towards emergency response activities. Improving the adequacy of health coverage was identified as a priority, given the growing need for healthcare services during the war. Since NSSF health benefits were significantly reduced following the 2019 financial crisis, the initiative aimed to enhance coverage for insured members by introducing a co-payment mechanism to bridge the gap between NSSF tariffs and actual hospitalization costs. Additionally, retired internally displaced individuals and their dependents were identified as the primary target population for this support.

Through discussions with the NSSF, a concept note on enhancing the NSSF's social health protection coverage was developed which discussed two aspects:

- How to reduce the operational burden on insured individuals by streamlining procedures, such as pre- and post-approvals. This would be done through a third-party administrator who would oversee the program and manage its operations.
- At the institutional level, efforts to digitize the sickness and maternity branch would strengthen the operational capacity and service delivery of the NSSF.

However, this note remained at a conceptual level and was not implemented. The ILO continues supporting NSSF in its efforts to digitize the sickness and maternity branch, as well as discussion related to NSSF's basic health benefits package.

Outcome 3: Underlying national systems for the implementation of the National Disability Allowance and Social Grants are improved

66. A comprehensive review of the R&A centres was conducted identifying gaps in service delivery, human resource capacity and information system's technology with proposed improvement plans. As part of operational support, data verification was completed for 30,000 PDCs, enabling effective expansion of the emergency NDA transfers (Output 3.1). Joint efforts by ILO, UNICEF and WFP led to align technical assistance for social assistance delivery within governmental and humanitarian programmes, including social grants internal processes and systems, with special attention to inclusion of PwDs, in line with the NSPS (Output 3.2).

10. How valid are the projects' rational/theory of change pathway and linkages based on the implementation of the projects? Is there evidence that the design and planned activities have led to the desired outputs and the achieved outputs have led to the outcomes?

67. The design of both projects was anchored around identifying and supporting several pathways to strengthen, expand and sustain social protection system in Lebanon. They both were set to support certain conditions necessary to achieve this goal, including establishing coordination and strategic management systems, promoting knowledge and evidence generation, building capacities of national actors and creating structured platforms for engagement, increasing trust in the system. The distinction between emergency humanitarian responses and sustainable social protection system was maintained in project implementation, with efforts to transition the NDA and child grants from humanitarian cash to nationally owned entitlements.
68. Based on implementation evidence, the ToC of both projects remained valid in light of the evolving context in Lebanon. There is strong indication that many of the planned activities contributed to the intended outputs, and in turn, these outputs laid the foundation for outcome-level results, particularly where institutional and stakeholder capacities existed or enhanced. However, the linearity of their pathways (from activities to outputs to outcomes) was challenged by political, economic and security disruptions, and required adaptive implementation.
69. For the EU-MADAD-funded project, the ToC assumed that initiating NSPS implementation, establishing coordination structures, designing grants and enabling inclusive stakeholder engagement would result in strengthened systems and improved social protection coverage. Despite significant disruptions (notably the 2024 war and government transitions), the project demonstrated a credible pathway from activities to outcome. For instance, the launch of the NSPS, the establishment of the IMC and deployment of technical leads across ministries reflect a functional Output 1.1 and 1.2 achievement. While the financial framework and unified registry (Outputs 1.3 and 1.4), the progress was challenged showing only partial achievement through preparatory work, such as the RAIS redesign, which validate the output's original pathway logic under unstable conditions.
70. Likewise, technical design and modelling of social grants (Outputs 2.1) show clear vertical linkages with the rollout of the NDA reached over 35,000 beneficiaries,²¹ and supported the design of the NCG by UNICEF demonstrating that activities led to tangible outputs (Output 2.2), which directly contributed to Outcome 2. The referral systems pilot and grievance mechanisms also illustrate that complementary services were operationalised (Output 2.3), reinforcing the ToC's hypothesis around integrated design delivery logic. Evidence of linear logic of the pathway from activities to Outcome 3 is also robust. The generation of over 40 policy products, the establishment of the Social Protection Academy increased evidence-based participation by non-governmental actors in policy debate validate Outputs 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3, underpinning the achievement of Outcome 3.

²¹ According to the QIN Q1 2025 of the ILO-UNICEF joint project, the project reached 27,911 PwD under the regular NDA (15-30 age range) funded by the EU, 6,678 CwDs under the expanded NDA to children funded by UNICEF, and 131,729 children under the UNICEF child grant (Haddi) which was discontinued in February 2023 with plans to transition to a National Child Grant.

71. For the FCDO-funded project, assessment of the ToC pathways remains cautiously positive. There is technical delivery of activities that led to achieving (or on track to achieving) their outputs, however the causal links to the outcome-level change was challenged by implementation realities in an extremely challenging context within a short timeline. Under Outcome 1, there is credible evidence that activities such as the EOSI study, the drafting of legal decrees and the development of a governance framework produced the intended output (Output 1.1), which was used in national dialogue and legislative planning, indicating progress towards Outcome 1, but actual policy influence is pending.
72. For Outcome 2, the causal pathway is less clearly validated, the delivery of the 2025 implementation plan and discussions around the design of a health benefits package options (Outputs 2.1 and 2.2) are notable achievements, but they have not yet led to policy influence. As such, the output-to-outcome pathway remains partial, fairly due to major context challenges. In contrast, Outcome 3 presents stronger evidence of causal progression. The activities related to the SOPs for disability services, assessments of disability data systems (Outputs 3.1 and 3.2) indicate that the project is contributing to tangible system-level improvements. These outputs have laid the groundwork for long-term institutional strengthening, supporting the credibility of this originally designed ToC, with prospects of achievement during the new phase of implementation beyond this ending project.

11. How effective were the collaboration efforts with key actors in the social protection field and how did these relationships affect the achievement or non-achievement of results?

MOSA and R&A centres

73. Collaboration with MOSA was highly effective and pivotal, it represented the strongest and most influential partnership for both projects. As the primary government actor, MOSA's leadership and ownership decisively shaped achievements, including the endorsement of the NSPS and the adoption and scaling of the NDA. MOSA's active efforts to enhance coordination, targeting, data systems, SOPs, and staff capacity advanced the social protection agenda in Lebanon through the projects. However, systemic challenges limited the full realization of the goals of the projects -and those of MOSA likewise- and affected inclusivity. This included financial constraints, fragmented coordination across ministries and a focus on the Lebanese populations, excluding other nationalities and refugees. Despite these challenges, MOSA's proactive engagement and normative commitment naturally made it the key driver of results, as put by one policymaker: *"The NDA is not a pilot. It's a structural part of our national vision now"*. Another one said: *"With this Strategy, we're not just fixing problems, we're building a system"*.
74. The collaboration with R&A centres was operationally effective as part of wider implementation mechanisms, with strong influence on achieving service delivery improvements for PwDs, and at the same time a critical beneficiary of both the EU-Madad-funded project that evolved into more structural support in the FCDO-funded project. The R&A centres' response and involvement in infrastructure upgrades, accessibility enhancements and staff training led to measurable gains in registration quality, outreach and communication with PwDs and beneficiaries. One centre staff explained this saying *"Now we can reach people with disabilities faster, but we still need consistent salaries to retain staff"*. However, ongoing resource shortages, unreliable infrastructure and low

staff remuneration weakened service continuity and limited the centres' ability to sustain improvements independently, which constrained the full achievement of intended results.

OPDs and NGOs

75. The partnership with OPDs and NGOs was highly effective in advancing disability-inclusive social protection, with a strong influence on advocacy, policy design and community mobilization and empowerment outcomes. OPDs' ownership aligned closely with their longstanding rights-based agendas, and their active participation in NDA design, implementation and monitoring has evidently contributed to advancing PwD rights -and women- on the national agenda. Inadequacy of government services meant that OPDs continued to fill critical service provision gaps.

Workers

76. The relationship between the project and the workers' representatives, including ACTRAV and trade unions, was moderately effective. Coordination was substantive in some areas, especially the pension reform and the NSPS, where workers played a crucial advocacy and technical role. ACTRAV and trade unions were engaged through formal consultations, technical dialogue and parliamentary follow-up, helping to shape legislation aligned with workers' rights. *"We were involved in the NSPS discussions... They did not consult us on the NDA, we could have contributed as it's linked to the labour market and employment quotas"*. However, their engagement in consultations on the NDA was missed, although it has implications for labour inclusion of PwDs and employment quotas. This exclusion was seen as a significant missed opportunity. In ACTRAV's view, workers' representation in the NSPS consultation was skewed toward elite trade unions, limiting the broader labour voice and interests, but they also noted that engagement improved in later stages but remained uneven.

Employer Organizations

77. Engagement with employer organizations was not perceived by employers as adequate and, in some cases, counterproductive, in view of the Association of Lebanese Industrialists (ALI). During KIIs under this evaluation, employers' organisation consistently reported exclusion from key consultations and decision-making processes, especially regarding the NDA and the pension reform law. While there was some initial engagement, such as early discussions with ILO technical staff, employers organisation feel that they were only presented with finalized document drafts, leaving minimal space for them to provide meaningful inputs. Statements provided by employers organisation were strongly negative, such as *"ILO never engaged us and preferred to engage semi-governmental entities like the Chamber of Commerce", "All their activities are ideological and focused on the government and the workers", "The ILO took the side of the NSSF and the workers... the result is the negotiations completely stalled"*. Contrarily, the ILO views that participation of employers' organisation in multi-stakeholder consultations provided valuable insights to validate social security frameworks. Tensions culminated in the breakdown of tripartite negotiations in relation to the end-of-service indemnities when the ILO allegedly proposed a 100 percent contribution by employer organizations, undermining a prior agreement at 22 percent, leaving them feeling sidelined in favour of a government and workers.
78. According to the ILO During the legislative phase, the selection of engaged partners was decided by the Head of the Parliamentary Committee leading the discussion on the draft law (and not the ILO). In line with existing practices, the Committee engaged with the Chambers of Commerce

(which is indeed not an independent body representing employers). The ILO SP team aimed to keep ALI informed through regularly briefings following each parliamentary session. Concerning the EOSI the ILO during this evaluation maintained that The ILO SP team conducted a financial assessment based on actual NSSF data which, also in line with ILO's social security standards and principles, informed recommendations regarding the EOSI. These recommendations did not call for a 100 per cent contribution by employers. Rather, the recommendations called for the full protection of workers' entitlements, so as to avoid further reductions of an already inadequate benefit. The recommendations also included several suggested financing mechanisms aimed at easing the financial burden on employers. The SP team shared findings and proposals with ALI on several occasions.

Development Partners

79. Collaboration with development partners was highly effective and essential, providing critical financial and technical support that enabled key achievements such as community rehabilitation, infrastructure upgrades and advocacy initiatives. Partners like CBM Germany and EU programmes contributed significantly to outreach and policy development, strengthening project implementation. Despite occasional coordination delays and reporting burdens, their involvement greatly enhanced project capacities. In addition, the engagement between the projects and the donors (EU and FCDO) was conducive to the adequate implementation of the project. Both EU and FCDO spoke highly of the sound relationship they have with the projects explaining that communication is sufficient and that they are always kept informed of progress and challenges. FCDO explained that the ILO and UNICEF enjoy good working relationship with all the stakeholders and are well positioned to work on social protection in Lebanon.

Think Tanks

80. The engagement of think tanks and academic institutions was effective in shaping the evidence base and advocacy environment for social protection reform. Their expert contribution to research, policy analysis and the *"Lebanon for all"* vision provided intellectual legitimacy and supported evidence-based inclusive policy development. While their operational role was limited, their influence strengthened the project's policy coherence and helped frame social protection as a national priority. Policy experts from CeSSRA, TPI, ARI, ANND, LOWER and HELPAGE supported the engagement of government policymakers.

12. To what extent did the project support the elimination of barriers to access to key services, rights, information for vulnerable populations, and in particular for women and PwDs?

81. Grounded in a rights-based approach, the projects made meaningful strides in reducing barriers and extending access for vulnerable PwDs to social grants, equally benefiting women and men by operationalising the NDA within Lebanon's evolving social protection. The NDA provided consistent, predictable financial support to eligible individuals to cover essential expenses, such as healthcare and food, many of whom reported that this was the first time they had benefited materially from holding a disability card. The projects strived to overcome complexity and physical or digital barriers in NDA service delivery. The design of processes ensured that registration was

made accessible through simplified procedures and support from community volunteers, trained staff or family members. Redemption points were available within reach for most beneficiaries in most cases, yet some still faced challenges related to transportation costs and service availability. This resulted in 93 percent of beneficiaries expressing satisfaction with the overall experience, 94 percent received their payments on time and 98 percent received the full amount, as indicated by the EU-Madad-funded project's PDOM.

82. Autonomy was promoted by educating beneficiaries about their rights and entitlements, communication channels were tailored to disability-needs addressing informational and procedural barriers, including through SMS alerts, posters at redemption points, in-person guidance, whatsapp groups and proxy persons management, helping them plan their expenses and adapt to changes. During interviews under the previous EU-Madad-funded ROM, beneficiaries referenced instructional videos, social media campaigns, and multilingual materials that clearly explained the NDA process. This clarity and consistency helped establish trust between PwDs and public institutions, an important development in a context historically demonstrated exclusion.
83. In addition, negative-gendered and exclusion social norms were challenged through community awareness sessions to challenge and promote equality. Accountability to affected populations was ensured through the call centre, while only half of the beneficiaries were aware of the hotline number, almost all of those who used it reported knowing how to report complaints and feeling safe doing so. While referral systems and management information systems were developed to facilitate access to complementary services, these mechanisms were not always fully resourced or activated. Recently, the project worked to connect beneficiaries with additional services that addressed their broader needs. This was done through a pilot referral system in which social workers conducted more than 500 household visits to assess needs and facilitate access to services such as healthcare, education and psychosocial support. These visits also served as a form of case management, allowing social workers to build relationships with beneficiaries and provide tailored support. The project also began exploring employment pathways for working-age PwDs by linking them with short-term job opportunities toward long-term inclusion and resilience.
84. At the systemic level, the project contributed to sustainable change for inclusive, life-cycle-based social protection committed through the NSPS, setting up coordination structures, implementation mechanisms, developing monitoring frameworks and building the capacity of government institutions. One of the most notable achievements was the ability to adapt during the 2024 conflict. Projects quickly shifted to a shock-responsive model, supporting R&A centres, issuing emergency top-ups and expanding coverage using government funds. The evaluation notes that the limited involvement of employer organizations in the project's design and implementation stages may have reduced opportunities for broader awareness-raising, coordination, and private-sector responsiveness. For example, representatives from employer organizations expressed unfamiliarity with the NDA and disability-related provisions, missing possible opportunities for potential integration of PwDs into formal employment.

13. To which extent were the referral mechanism pilot for NDA beneficiaries towards short-term employment opportunities effective in achieving the planned results? How effectively were the inclusion and exclusion potential errors and risk of duplication or non-coverage managed during the implementation?

85. PwDs are challenged by inaccessibility to jobs, unclear expectations and the need for tailored accommodations and acceptance by employers. Implementing partners and OPDs acknowledge that systemic labour market challenges exist, such as social stigma, lack of inclusive practices in the private sector and physical barriers. In response, a referral mechanism was conceptualized linking social assistance with labour activation geared towards long-term employment for young NDA beneficiaries. It is important to note that the referral mechanism was introduced as a pilot under the EU-MADAD-funded project, not designed for full-scale implementation at this stage, with initial implementation starting early 2025.
86. The selection process for the referral mechanism pilot for NDA beneficiaries to employment opportunities was intentionally structured around the existing NDA registry to minimize risks of duplication and to ensure that the validated, vulnerable individuals were targeted. One project staff noted this approach *“helped avoid ad-hoc, discretionary targeting practices that weaken programme credibility”*. Approximately 600 household surveys were conducted by social workers to determine employment interests, readiness, functional capacities and skills. These surveys informed the referral of around 80 individuals to financial education and employability training programmes. Job matching was carried out in coordination with civil society, UN agencies and MOSA, most job opportunities were only short-term (e.g. 40-day placements over 2 months), which may be intended to serve as a bridge to further economic participation. A consultant specializing in PwD employability was engaged to ensure that opportunities aligned with individual capacity and accessibility needs. However, the nature of the pilot depending on self-targeting where PwDs are expected to actively express interest or respond to outreach efforts meant that those with more severe disabilities, limited mobility or weak support networks may have been unintentionally excluded. In addition, the reliance on the existing age-based eligibility of the NDA excluded older PwDs or those who had not renewed their cards in time. During KIIs, the R&A staff acknowledged these limitations and suggested that eligibility expansion would be necessary in a future wider-scale phase.
87. At present, the pilot refers NDA beneficiaries to opportunities provided through the NGO sector; this is planned to be scaled up further with private sector participation for broader outreach and awareness and to create a more enabling inclusive employment environment for PwDs. There exists unfamiliarity among employers with disability-related needs or workplace accessibility. One representative of employers stated: *“We don’t know what kind of support is needed... no one discussed this with us”*.
88. Although the referral mechanism has not yet been independently evaluated as a standalone intervention, monitoring tools originally developed for the NDA under UNICEF’s leadership are being adapted to capture outcomes, including follow-up through the call centre, field visits and tracking. Implementing partners reported that lessons from early rollout, particularly around communication and accessibility are already informing modifications. According to one staff *“The*

feedback loop helped us understand why some dropped out early... accessibility and clarity of expectations were key”.

14. What improvements were made in the NDA and Social Grants delivery mechanisms?

89. The delivery mechanisms for the social grants, especially the NDA, in Lebanon have undergone significant transformation owed to the joint efforts of ILO and UNICEF with the MOSA and other partners. Furthermore, coordination under the umbrella of the NSPS is allowing integrated links between the different social assistance and insurance programmes and with wider basic services and referral systems, which is a work in progress under both the EU-Madad-funded and the FCDO-funded projects.
90. The NDA was launched in a context where no prior delivery infrastructure existed specifically for disability-targeted grants. The project established a dedicated delivery system based on adapted UNICEF systems, customized to suit national standards. A critical technical step involved the update and validation of the expired disability registry focused on the targeted age group, which enabled precise targeting and minimized leakage based on a standardized minimum inclusion and eligibility criteria. Currently, technical assistance is being provided by UNICEF and ILO to update the R&A MIS so that it could manage the complete NDA cycle, including service referrals..
91. The delivery system demonstrated flexibility during crises. Following the escalation of conflict in late 2024, NDA recipients received a \$100 emergency top-up. This response was executed without requiring new applications, supported by to real-time registry updates and digital payment systems. This validated the NDA’s utility as a scalable shock-responsive safety net.
92. The communication strategy was redesigned with accessibility at its core. Information was disseminated through inclusive formats to accommodate diverse disability types and the SMS sender ID was updated to reflect all implementing partners, improving transparency. Gender-sensitive strategies were embedded throughout the programme. These included prioritizing female social workers for outreach, accommodating childcare needs and holding awareness sessions to challenge gender norms. R&A personnel during this evaluation observed that, *“It was the first time that persons with disabilities saw official messaging in a language and format they could engage with”*. Beneficiaries in interviews under the EU-Madad-funded project ROM earlier in 2025 also noted the clarity of these tools, with one saying: *“The video was inclusive and used language we understood... we felt informed and respected”*.
93. The eight R&A centres, that were under-resourced and inactive, were revitalized by technical assistance from both projects through infrastructure and technological upgrades, staff capacity-building and systems integration, enabling them to renew over 50,000 expired disability cards, facilitated by technical assistance from ILO and UNICEF and digital appointment scheduling tools. In parallel, a Verification Unit was established within MOSA to manage case validation in a consistent manner across governorates. As reported by a government employee: *“This was a turning point, where we moved from inactive cards to cards offering a real gateway for accessing benefits”*. The call centre was revamped and digitized, facilitating faster complaint resolution and the ability to track and address bottlenecks.

4.4 Efficiency

15. Were resources allocated strategically to achieve outcomes? To what extent can the achieved results justify the time, financial and human resources invested in the projects?

94. The projects implemented by ILO and UNICEF were marked by careful and generally strategic allocation of financial and human resources with high level achievements, despite operating under severe economic and governance constraints in Lebanon. The EU-funded programme had a budget of approximately USD 26.8 million over three years, with around 81 percent (USD 21.7 million) allocated to grants, transfers and service contracts, and about 69 percent of the total budget directed specifically to NDA cash payments. This prioritization directly supported vulnerable populations and maximized immediate impact while also investing in long-term systems.
95. The FCDO-funded project had a much smaller budget of GBP 500,000 (USD 630,454) over one year, which was strategically aligned with broader system-building objectives complementing needed support identified based on actual experience and realities with a technical nature focussing on high-level dialogue, reform development and capacity strengthening. With that, 40 percent of the budget (approx. about USD 274,646) was allocated to staffing, while also leveraging internal ILO expertise and avoiding duplication by complementing the EU-Madad project's operational components. Furthermore, for the EU-Madad-funded project, both ILO and UNICEF experienced staffing shortages at some stage some key positions remained vacant for extended periods or were filled with short-term contracts, affecting continuity and momentum. Resource deployment also reflected contextual responsiveness.
96. Project staff staff noted that early underinvestment in human resources slowed progress, particularly as ILO lacked the internal departmental flexibility due to its regional staffing framework, while UNICEF managed to leverage internal departmental support. However, this was later addressed through a "cluster staffing model" that improved cross-theme collaboration and delivery. One ILO staff said: *"For most of the time, it was me and one person... the majority of the programme was implemented with very limited capacity."* Whereas UNICEF staff explained saying: *"We were able to mobilize support from other departments, which made a difference in meeting urgent needs. This isn't reflected in the budget but was essential".*

16. How did the projects' governance structure including the M&E systems facilitate good results and efficient delivery?

97. The governance structures and monitoring systems established under the ILO and UNICEF-led projects in Lebanon contributed to both effective coordination and adaptive delivery, despite operating under considerable structural and contextual constraints. The complementarity of roles under the EU-Madad-funded project between ILO and UNICEF with leadership on specific components was functionally clear and effective UNICEF led on driving policy development, institutional capacity-building and the operational delivery of the NDA and the NCG while ILO focused on technical assistance, policy development and system-building under the same project

and the FCDO-funded one. Both UNICEF and ILO contributed to policy development, capacity building and efforts to embed social protection within national governance structures.

98. Although a joint Steering Committee was envisioned in the design, it was never fully established due to government preferences for a more generalized national coordination structure. In its place, technical working groups were formed on key themes like communications, R&A and data management. This allowed for focused dialogue and technical engagement but increased the coordination burden on staff. As reported in the EU-Madad project ROM of 2025, the absence of a unified governance framework was taxing on staff time and energy. Day-to-day coordination was maintained through frequent project management meetings between ILO and UNICEF showing reliance on bilateral coordination, rather than a broader structured oversight mechanism.
99. M&E systems included tools such as Quarterly Information Notes (QINs), ROM missions, Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM), and a dedicated M&E consultant helped track progress, identify gaps and adjust course. For example, findings from the 2023 ROM were used to shape the project's no-cost extension and, along with findings from the 2025 ROM, were used to inform the planning of the next EU grant cycle. A common M&E framework was drafted late in the implementation phase to bring coherence to reporting across both agencies and improve alignment with outcome-level indicators. UNICEF's operational M&E for NDA delivery was responsive, participatory and embedded in national systems wherever possible. OPDs, R&A centres and social workers contributed to data collection, assessments and referrals that included real-time MIS tracking, hotline records and random post-distribution checks. In addition, the PDOM exercise provided in-depth data on user experience, satisfaction, usefulness and impact. For example, social workers followed up with PwDs via phone calls during conflict periods, and OPDs helped train staff and monitor the NDA through needs assessments and stakeholder consultations. There are signs that these systems enabled on-going improvements, such as enhancements to the GRM and proxy registration protocols. ILO's M&E activities, by contrast, were focused more on up-stream progress in policy reform, institutional change and inter-agency coordination.

17. To what extent does the allocation of resources reflect the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including women and persons with disabilities?

100. The allocation of resources under the EU-Madad- and FCDO-funded projects was strongly aligned with the needs of marginalized groups, particularly PwDs and children focusing on direct support and actual cash assistance. The majority of the EU budget, 69 percent directly allocated to NDA payments, making the most vulnerable the primary recipients of project spending. This reflects a targeted approach to addressing lifecycle vulnerabilities rather than poverty alone, which many interviewees saw as a shift toward a rights-based model. One implementing partner noted: *"Most of the money went directly to beneficiaries. It wasn't just about running a programme, it was actually reaching people"*.
101. From the beneficiary perspective, the impact of this resource targeting was clear. As reported in the PDOM, 85 percent of PwDs expressed satisfaction with the NDA. Interview feedback

consistently affirmed that this was *“the first time the system worked for us”*, reflecting a broader sense of trust and legitimacy among beneficiaries. 32 percent of NDA beneficiaries were women while over 50 percent of UNICEF-led NCG recipients were girls. Many cited improvements in financial independence, the ability to meet basic needs and greater participation in household decision-making. Women, particularly those with disabilities or caregiving roles, were specifically considered in service design. Female social workers were recruited and trained in GBV sensitivity to facilitate outreach to women in conservative communities and support gender-responsive programming.

18. Did the projects face any administrative or operational bottlenecks, and how were they mitigated?

102. Both projects encountered several administrative and operational bottlenecks, which were largely shaped by Lebanon’s fragile governance and compounded crises and limited institutional capacity and staffing constraints. These bottlenecks were significant but addressed through targeted mitigation strategies that are viewed as successful by the evaluation and interviewed stakeholders. One of the most pressing administrative bottlenecks was the delays caused by delayed NSPS approval, political vacuum and government changes, the war in November 2024 that shifted focus to emergency response, in addition to administrative difficulty in EU tranche disbursement. On the operational side, human resource constraints posed persistent challenges for a long duration of the EU-Madad-funded project. In response, ILO adopted a cluster staffing model later in implementation, allowing shared technical resources across social protection projects.

19. How did the joint implementation of EU and FCDO-funded interventions enhance efficiency, if at all?

103. The joint implementation of the EU-Madad and FCDO-funded interventions enhanced efficiency primarily through complementarity in design, integration of staffing and systems and strategic coordination across technical and operational domains. Rather than duplicating efforts, the projects were aligned at multiple levels, creating synergies that strengthened delivery and policy impact. The EU-Madad-funded project adopted a twin track approach of upstream policy reform of social assistance and direct delivery, especially the rollout of the NDA, while the FCDO-funded project targeted upstream reform in pensions and health financing. Their interlinked outcomes allowed for mutual reinforcement across short-term service delivery and long-term system building, avoided overlap and helped optimize resource use.

104. Efficiency was also improved through shared staffing and operational structures, integration of personnel across both projects enabled smoother coordination, particularly during emergency expansions such as the 2024 NDA emergency top-up, which both donors supported. As noted by an ILO staff during KII, *“we have the same people who have the overview of the programme as a whole... definitely staffing was helped”*. Moreover, the projects jointly supported MOSA’s institutional systems, including the R&A centres, call centre and emergency delivery capacities. However, staff also noted that coordination at the activity level sometimes became overly intensive.

20. Were there any delays in implementation, and if so, what were the primary causes?

105. Delays happening in the projects were unavoidable and caused by factors beyond their control. Despite this, ILO and UNICEF showed a high level of agility and flexibility and adapted effectively, ensuring progress under volatile and shifting conditions. The endorsement of the NSPS was delayed, it was expected in 2022 but was only approved in November 2023, consequently, this delay affected the rollout of several components of the EU-Madad-funded project. Periods of caretaker governments and political transitions created bottlenecks in decision-making, which was noted by stakeholders during the evaluation making advancing technical reforms difficult. Furthermore, the escalation of conflict late 2024 forced many development-oriented activities to pause, shifting focus towards emergency response. Therefore, progress was delayed in establishing coordination platforms, forming multi-stakeholder committees or technical working groups, finalizing needed terms of reference, conducting policy discussions, carrying out planned field assessments and deploying technical missions and travel got restricted. One staff member explained, *“It was not appropriate to go to the government and speak about implementation when everyone was busy with the response to the war”*.
106. At some point in the EU-Madad-funded project, in 2023, the project faced challenges in the timely disbursement of EU funding tranches, particularly due to expenditure thresholds that needed to be met before subsequent disbursements. This created liquidity gaps that threatened the continuity of NDA payments. To mitigate delays, ILO and UNICEF borrowed internally and front-loaded payments once funds were received, in addition to no-cost extensions, remote technical assistance, aligning timelines and staggered contracting and bridging mechanisms to face disbursement delays.

4.5 Impact Orientation

21. How likely are the projects to contribute to structural changes in Lebanon’s social protection system? 24. How are the projects impacting key actors in social protection to foster long-term impact on end beneficiaries?

107. The EU-Madad-funded and the FCDO-funded social protection projects have supported the Government of Lebanon to take concrete strides in reforming the social protection landscape, with structural transformation at the policy and institutional levels. While political instability, economic collapse, the war in 2024 and high staff turnover remain barriers to full institutionalization, the trajectory of structural change is positive. At the policy level, the endorsement and partial implementation of the NSPS marked a major milestone, laying the foundation for integrated, inclusive rights-based social protection pillars, for the first time. The design and roll-out of the NDA and supported the design of the NCG and the pension and health financing policies are significant steps towards institutionalizing state-led social assistance and insurance. The pension reform, passed in 2023, represented a systemic shift from lump-sum end-of-service payments to contributory pensions, including the self-employed for the first time. It revitalized NSSF’s relevance and aligned Lebanon’s system more closely with international norms. One project staff member noted: *“We worked with the parliament on the pension law... and if it was not for this support, it possibly wouldn’t have been accomplished”*. The government’s financial

contribution to the NDA in 2024 and its planned doubling in 2025 signal increased national ownership and commitment.

108. At the institutional level, multiple structural advancements were achieved. The projects supported the establishment of dedicated technical units within ministries, strengthened and revamped the R&A centres, established MIS, social protection reform dashboard and call centre systems. MOSA cadres and NGO staff were capacitated through structured capacity building, specialized training programmes, on-job support. The establishment of the Social Protection Academy served as a hub for training and collective dialogue, enhancing the capacity of civil society, media and academia to influence and understand policy reform processes. A strategy was developed for the Academy to embed and institutionalize capacity building on social protection. A foundational course was piloted, including Training of Trainers for national experts to sustainably lead on the development and delivery of the course, alongside an international social protection expert. These investments modernized registration, validation and delivery mechanisms and improved inclusiveness and accountability. During interviews, stakeholders from OPDs and MOSA highlighted another key shift, which is the shift of institutional mindsets from charity-based to rights-based approaches, recognizing social protection as a right for PwDs -or generally for people in vulnerable situations-, not a form of charity. *“Before, PwDs were viewed as needing charity. Now there’s a stronger understanding that this is about rights”*, shared one OPD representative. The rollout of social grants has also led to professional and personal growth among social workers, who reported better relationships with PwDs and increased trust within communities.

109. The project achieved an unintended outcome by strengthening Lebanon’s emergency response mechanisms beyond its original scope. It leveraged its social protection mechanisms to deliver rapid emergency assistance during the 2024 war (cash transfers and in-kind aid), integrated digital payment solutions to expedite distribution and enhanced coordination with local stakeholders, R&A centres and social workers to reach the most vulnerable. These efforts provided immediate relief and improved the country's capacity to respond to future crises and to build a system that functions effectively in normal context and in emergencies. Beyond immediate relief, the project contributed to institutionalizing shock-responsive social protection by linking emergency response to broader social assistance programmes, including efforts to expand outreach mechanisms, GRM and digital tools.

22. Have the projects contributed to an increased social protection coverage for vulnerable groups?

110. The projects have significantly expanded the scope, depth and inclusivity of Lebanon’s social assistance coverage, especially for PwDs, children, women and Syrian and Palestinian refugees. This was achieved through the design and operationalization of new social grants, institutional reforms, outreach innovations, national dialogue and digital systems. Together, these resulted in a systemic shift from fragmented social protection programmes to lifecycle rights-based protection that benefit vulnerable groups. The roll-out of the NDA represents a cornerstone of this expansion, where more than 35,000 beneficiaries benefited across nationalities; 27,911 PwDs under regular NDA (EU-funded) and 6,678 children with disabilities under expanded NDA (UNICEF-

funded), and 131,729 children from low-income families under the UNICEF child grant *Haddi*.²² Beneficiaries repeatedly emphasized the shift in the usefulness of the disability cards they hold, with the NDA through the EU-Madad-funded project, they received regular cash assistance and increased their trust in the Government systems.

111. Owing to the projects' efforts in revamping delivery mechanisms, minimum inclusion standards, updated disability registry and MIS tools, accurate disbursements were ensured to target vulnerable groups and referral to services was facilitated to health, education and psychosocial services. Targeting was strengthened by updating the outdated disability registry. As described in a staff interview, this update was pivotal, *"The registry was expired. Now it is 100% up to date"*. Card renewal and eligibility validation were institutionalized into a rolling monthly update cycle. For married girls under 18, a particularly vulnerable group, proxy mechanisms were adjusted to allow them to appoint trusted individuals to receive entitlements on their behalf. However, as noted in field interviews, default proxy assignment often went to male family members, reinforcing pre-existing power dynamics. *"We still need to revise proxy norms to reflect the girl's own agency,"* noted one R&A coordinator.

23. What impact have the projects had on reducing poverty and inequality in Lebanon? 27. In the short-term, what immediate changes/benefits did beneficiaries experience from the projects?

112. The NDA has brought meaningful support to PwDs by providing direct financial assistance that helped cover essential needs such as daily expenses, healthcare, education and personal items. This support has reduced dependence on family members, strengthened a sense of independence and improved the psychological well-being of beneficiaries, especially women facing unstable employment conditions. According to the EU-Madad-funded project ROM 2025, Final beneficiaries anonymously find that the assistance is helpful, yet insufficient to meet the full range of needs, particularly for those requiring regular medical treatment like physiotherapy or specialist consultations. The NDA provides temporary relief but does not offer a sustainable solution to their financial hardships nor complementary programmes, such as employment, upskilling or comprehensive healthcare coverage for self-reliance. It does not eliminate their reliance on other forms of assistance. Many beneficiaries express hope for an expansion of the social assistance programmes, both in terms of increased financial support and additional services, such as occupational therapy or assistive devices. The NDA allowed 24 percent of recipients to access services they previously could not afford and helped 31 percent gain greater financial independence and around 40 percent to improve the ability to meet their basic needs and seek healthcare within the past month.²³
113. Gender inclusion was embedded throughout. 32 percent of NDA recipients were women, and girls made up 52 percent of the UNICEF-led NCG beneficiaries. Female social workers led outreach in conservative regions, yet, challenges in reaching women with disabilities persisted and it is anticipated that there may be more women have disabilities but no cards. Syrian and Palestinian refugees were also included in the NDA but initially outside the NSPS scope. One Syrian mother

²² ILO Addressing life-cycle vulnerabilities through social protection, Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon. QIN 14, March 2025

²³ EU-Madad project: Addressing life-cycle vulnerabilities through social protection, Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon, PDOM 2024

said: *“The money helped me take my daughter for her vaccine. We had waited for months”*. One R&A staff member noted, *“It was the first time persons with disabilities saw official messaging in a language and format they could engage with”*. Importantly, the NDA acted as a platform for crisis response. During the 2024 conflict, a \$100 top-up was provided to all NDA recipients. This was executed without re-registration, thanks to real-time registry tools. 100\$ was also provided to all PwDs holding a valid PDC, beyond NDA beneficiaries and that money was proven to be extremely helpful for people during the emergency. As a result of this assistance, the NDA and the PDCs gained a lot of attention, whereby people started reaching out to the R&A centres to get or renew their cards. This was made possible through the government’s allocation to NDA, and with support of both projects, including operational and technical support to R&A centres and MOSA in a capacity surge and establishing quick remote processes to beneficiary data verification and enrolling them in the emergency expansion.

25. Have the projects contributed to greater public trust in Lebanon’s social protection system?

114. Historically, PwDs in Lebanon have faced a lack of governmental support, with rights often neglected or treated as charity rather than entitlements. Through the introduced project structured and transparent mechanisms, including clear payment schedules and an accessible hotline, the NDA fostered a renewed sense of trust in state institutions and influenced a shift in beneficiaries’ perceptions of the Government’s responsibility. Additionally, the OPDs’ engagement has led to a renewed sense of possibility for enhancing inclusion in public services and policies. Projects’ staff shared during the evaluation how the CSOs celebrated the endorsement of the NSPS by the Council of Ministers, how different groups and the media welcomed the passage of the long-awaited pension reform at the NSSF and how this reform brought a renewed sense of hope in the possibility of policy change, despite the challenging context. Activating the debate around universal social protection has also encouraged greater involvement and interest from various groups and stakeholders in contributing to this conversation.
115. On the other hand, social workers engaged in the project experienced personal and professional growth, with their perceptions of PwDs shifting positively with a stronger trust between PwDs, their families, and MOSA. However, social workers highlighted gaps in their training and the need for better logistical support, such as phones, laptops, and other essential tools, to effectively carry out their work. In addition, it helped to connect PwDs to essential services through streamlined coordination with UNICEF programmes, MOSA and Arcenciel. This has consequently led to fostering a sense of optimism and an improvement in their psychological well-being and confidence. From its side, the Government views the NDA’s success as contributing to rebuilding trust between the state and citizens, particularly among vulnerable groups. However, funding gaps threaten this trust, and the Government is aware that failing to meet expectations could lead to social discontent. One OPD representative stated: *“We were included in shaping the eligibility tools. That gave us trust that this isn’t just symbolic”*.

26. How have the projects influenced policy and national dialogue on social protection reform?

116. The projects played a central role in advancing multi-sectoral national coordination and policy dialogue in Lebanon creating spaces for technical and political engagement and facilitating cross-institutional collaboration, supporting MOSA's leadership role. The projects supported MOSA in coordinating with the Ministry of Finance, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the NSSF, sector ministries such as Education and Public Health, parliamentary committees and national stakeholders. This was done through technical working groups and inter-agency thematic coordination meetings such as disability, referral systems and MIS development. While a formal Steering Committee for the EU-funded project was not established, largely due to the government's preference for broader coordination frameworks, ILO and UNICEF adapted by maintaining regular joint planning and review meetings with MOSA and social protection partners through the SPPF. The FCDO-funded project specifically enhanced dialogue around pension reform, disability inclusion and sustainable health financing. The knowledge products developed through the projects, along with the engagement of local actors in their production or dissemination, have helped increase understanding of the existing system, clarify gaps, and support a better grasp of potential solutions.
117. The extent to which non-state actors were engaged varied, OPDs and NGOs participated in consultation sessions and contributed to shaping eligibility tools for the NDA, and in outreach, PDCs' renewal, service referrals and monitoring of the NDA implementation. Workers, represented by trade unions and ACTRAV for example, were consistently engaged by the ILO throughout the pension reform process, they actively participated in drafting, amending and negotiating the pension law, and were consulted in parliamentary and ministerial committees. This collaboration was viewed positively and considered impactful in achieving worker-centred reforms, as expressed by one interviewee: *"Working with the ILO does not end... they are present and involved in all things related to the workers"* and another said: *"We had a discussion about each step and we reached the common law which was issued in 2023"*. Nevertheless, their participation in the NDA was minimal. One worker representative stated: *"We were involved in the NSPS discussions... They did not consult us on the NDA, we could have contributed as it's linked to the labour market and employment quotas"*.

28. In the long-term, what is the potential impact of the projects on the lives of beneficiaries as such as in the quality of life or social inclusion?

118. The long-term potential impact of the projects lies in supporting a rights-based framing of social protection, expanding inclusion, building institutional systems and capacities, and helping vulnerable individuals meet their essential needs and participate meaningfully in society. The financial assistance alone may not eliminate poverty, but it laid foundational change for improved quality of life and social integration of vulnerable groups, particularly PwDs, children, the elderly and non-Lebanese communities. The projects contribution to rebuilding public trust, promoting inclusion and gradually shifting the perception of social protection from charity to rights and entitlement. PwDs began to see themselves as entitled to state support, which fostered their participation in public dialogue, a critical shift from the context where public support had long been inaccessible or ad hoc. Beneficiaries reported that receiving the NDA was not just financial relief, but a psychological transformation that enabled them to contribute to household expenses,

access basic healthcare and feel less dependent on others. As one staff expressed: *“It’s not going to get them out of poverty... but it is about hope and independence... they can dream”*.

119. The NDA’s inclusive delivery model helped reduce stigma and improve perceptions of PwDs among social workers and government actors. Social workers also described personal growth, improved communication with beneficiaries and a better understanding of disability. At the systemic level, national ownership over social protection is growing. The government doubled its contribution to the NDA in 2025, signaling institutional endorsement of continued coverage. This contributed to improved social cohesion. Findings from the ROM indicate that 85 percent of PwDs expressed satisfaction with the NDA, and over 40 percent reported improved access to basic needs and services, while 31 percent reported greater financial autonomy.

4.6 Sustainability

29. Did the projects establish an exit strategy to ensure the sustainability of its efforts? What measures have been considered to ensure that the key components of the projects are sustainable beyond the life of the projects? Did the projects consider gender in planning its sustainable measures?

120. Sustainability is at the core of these social protection projects, the design and implementation are majorly anchored around sustainability and continuation of results. The development of the NSPS and supporting national systems and priorities and helping to institutionalize reforms across pensions, health financing and social assistance, provides durable policy reform. The projects’ deliberate strategy was to avoid building parallel systems and instead integrate the tools and processes within existing national institutions like within MOSA and R&A centres. The handover of systems such as the MIS and the GRM, along with capacity-building, coaching and embedding procedures, while at the same time rolling-out social assistance (NDA and NCG) with short-term funding, all point to a phased exit and sustainability approach. These efforts were described as part of the broader goal to institutionalize service delivery rather than keep it dependent on external agencies.

121. For the NDA, the handover strategy relied on institutionalisation through capacity-building, joint governance structures and transition planning. MIS and payment systems are being rebranded and hosted with MOSA rather than UNICEF to reinforce government ownership. The process of institutionalizing the NDA MIS within MOSA has recently started. There is a pilot test of MOSA using UNICEF’s MIS payment module; in addition, the ILO continues supporting the design of the future R&A centres’ MIS. An staff member explained that these efforts aimed *“to empower MOSA with the tools and prepare the groundwork for handover”*. For the pension reform, institutional anchoring was sought through the development of operating models and transfer of business processes to the NSSF. From a financial perspective, the government doubled its budgetary allocation to the NDA in 2025—committing \$10 million, or 40 percent of programme costs. However, the 2025 ROM EU-Madded-funded project flagged that no long-term financial sustainability strategy exists yet, and donor dependency remains a key risk.

122. Gender considerations were systematically embedded across both the EU-Madad- and FCDO-funded projects. From the early design stages, the projects embedded gender-sensitive approaches within both the NDA implementation and NCG design, recognizing the compounded vulnerabilities that women—especially women with disabilities—face in accessing social protection. This also included disaggregated beneficiary databases, prioritisation of women-headed households in benefit targeting and recruitment and training of female social workers, which improved outreach in conservative areas and contributed to safer, more inclusive service delivery. Additionally, the NDA’s design integrated flexible delivery mechanisms to accommodate the caregiving responsibilities of women and mitigate GBV-related barriers to access. The Gender-based Risk Mitigation framework was also applied to address issues such as proxy collection arrangements, particularly for underage married girls.

30. To what extent have national institutions assumed ownership over the project outcomes?

123. MOSA has demonstrated increasing ownership over the outcomes of the EU-Madad- and FCDO-funded projects. This ownership is reflected through leadership in coordination, operational management and policy alignment, though full institutional autonomy remains constrained by structural limitations and fiscal constraints. MOSA has played a central role from projects’ design phase throughout implementation. The Ministry has led national dialogue and consultations for the development and implementation of the NSPS and overseen the operations of the NDA, both through regular operations and during emergency response, signalling high-level commitment to inclusive, lifecycle-based social protection. MOSA chaired technical committees, led operational planning and requested the transfer of grievance redress, payment, and MIS responsibilities to its own systems, underscoring a shift from donor implementation to national ownership. Operationally, staff from MOSA and R&A centres demonstrate functional ownership over delivery of services, they now lead day-to-day tasks related to targeting, registration and follow-up, as substantiated by one staff member who highlighted that: *“we removed the UN to ministry layer and now we are one team, the R&A call us for technical advice”*.

124. The 2025 EU-Madad funded project ROM review also noted that institutional capacities were clearly enhanced, with the government taking increasing control over design and operations of social grants, despite human resource shortages and dependency on incentive-based staffing models supported by UNICEF and ILO. Ownership by MOSA was crucial, demonstrating strong leadership, the Prime Minister’s Office and NSSF. It also lied with the civil service council that reviewed the law and identified their role at different stages of implementation, including development of the matrix of competencies, selection of government experts and recruitment of the investment committee. With the establishment of the new government, the Ministry of Labour played a more active role in the pension reform process. It chaired the Supervisory Committee on Pension Implementation, which included representatives from the Council of Ministers, employer organizations, worker unions and NSSF management. Senior representatives from the Ministry also participated in high-level policy dialogues, including bilateral and tripartite sessions organized by ILO, aimed at driving consensus and supporting the swift implementation of the new pension law.

125. Fiscal commitment to social protection has also grown, seeing Lebanon's 2024 national budget included allocations to the NDA, marking a first step toward domestic financing and demonstrating political will to institutionalize the programme. MOSA's interest in receiving weekly financial projections and cost scenarios from ILO and UNICEF demonstrates proactive fiscal planning, which, as known for the ILO and UNICEF, have been used in briefings with the Ministry of Finance and international institutions such as the IMF, reflecting strategic engagement in policy and budget discussions. The Government increased its financial contribution to the NDA in 2025, committing USD 10 million, which represents 40 percent of the total programme costs, as underscored by MOSA during KIs saying: *"There has been an increase to a 40 percent financing with 10 million in 2025 and there has been more support and rapid and multi-fold increase... this was not easy and this was the first time for us to pay for the beneficiaries"*. The evaluation accounts to the significant scale-up from earlier years and reflects growing national ownership and alignment with the objective of gradually transitioning from donor-dependent to state-funded social protection.

31. Have the projects contributed to institutional capacity-building to ensure long-term impact?

126. The projects were designed considering the prevailing capacities and limitations in the social protection programmes in Lebanon, which were effectively addressed throughout the lifetime of both projects, continuously tailored to emerging capacity gaps. They incorporated substantive elements of capacity strengthening into their six defined outcomes based on the institutional, human and financial capacity gaps of the government pertinent to social protection, which were identified at the start of the projects and emerged during implementation. The project supported the development and endorsement of the NSPS, reinforced the existing coordination structures and addressed limitations in current financial allocations through funding. The project has piloted the NDA, and supported the design of the NCG and social pension, and strengthened institutional capacities through assessments, developing SOPs and providing specialised trainings to MOSA and R&A staff.

127. The project has adapted to the limited human capacity of the government staff and operated through a small team of experts working closely with local partners to help build their capacities. Training, coaching, and mentoring were delivered on a weekly basis to social workers and MOSA staff, covering topics such as case management, communication with PwDs, GBV response, and GRM. These efforts enhanced professional skills and introduced new standards for service delivery. One staff member explained: *"It was not just the training... we speak with R&A on a daily basis... it's capacity building through action"*. Despite these gains, institutionalisation remains incomplete. The delivery chain still depends on external consultants, and deliverable-based payments to R&A staff when additional work was required on ground, highlighting a reliance on donor-driven capacity and may pose risks of dependency and to sustainability if donor funds decline.

128. Further, the projects supported capacities of the ministry and R&A centres to integrate a shock-responsive approach to the NDA and the UNICEF-led NCG, initially designed for routine

operations, to be adjusted for emergency response. Additionally, the project facilitated the transfer of technical capacities, ensuring government ownership of the social protection strategy. Due to financial constraints in relation to budget allocations to fuel, staff salaries, supplies, the project changed its course when necessary to make the most of the available resources. Finally, the project also placed emphasis on evidence generation to support policy reform and decision making in an inclusive and engaging manner. Adapting to the limited financial capacity of the Government, the project, in collaboration with MOSA, has been using a flexible approach for implementation.

32. Can future projects be built upon the results of these projects, ensuring sustainability and optimal use of results? Can the project be replicated in other contexts?

129. Future projects can and should be built upon the results of the EU-Madad- and FCDO-funded projects, as they have laid a substantive foundation for scalable and sustainable social protection in Lebanon, and to continue the reform frameworks based on the five pillars of the NSPS. A new EU-funded programme under the NDICI framework has most recently started with a design that directly builds on the achievements of these projects. This next phase aims to scale-up and further institutionalize the delivery systems of the social assistance programmes by transferring operational functions fully within MOSA, while both the NDA and related reforms. Likewise, the FCDO phase II collaboration also builds on results from phase I.

130. As for replication, several stakeholders during KIIs under this evaluation, including project staff, have emphasized that the efforts to reform the social protection in Lebanon were designed to evolve gradually, starting with manageable, smaller-scale flexible interventions (like the NDA for a limited age group), testing them and expanding based on lessons learned and capacities. The projects created the enabling environment -rather than just delivering cash or services- by focusing on strengthening institutional capacities of MOSA and R&A centres and focused on creating essential governance structures and management systems that enable sustainable and accountable implementation. For instance, the MIS, call centre, referral systems and eligibility tools. These are the "systems". Since the projects focused on offering a replicable model for developing inclusive, rights-based social protection programmes in stages, as well as based on evidence-generation and documentation. It can be adapted to other countries, offers a template for fragile, resource-limited, crisis-affected contexts with limited state capacity. One government staff noted, *"We want to have intra-country exchange with Palestine, Jordan, Iraq"*. The emphasis on non-discriminatory, rights-based design, strong MIS integration, and gradual expansion.

33. Have OPDs been included as partners to facilitate the identification of and reliable engagement with individuals with all types of disabilities?

131. OPDs were included as partners in both projects, their involvement spanned policy design, operational implementation and awareness-raising activities, identification of individuals with disabilities and broader engagement with the disability community. OPDs were engaged in ongoing dialogue and consulted during the initial design of the NDA frameworks to ensure the programme responded to the diverse needs of PwDs. Operationally, OPDs contributed directly to community outreach and training activities, for instance, they supported training for stakeholders,

like call center staff and social workers and provided guidance on accessibility practices. Their feedback led to practical adjustments, such as adapting payment procedures to accommodate persons with visual and hearing impairments. In addition, OPDs played a role in mobilizing PwDs to update expired disability cards, and their presence in R&A centres helped foster trust between beneficiaries and institutions. Overall, OPDs' inclusion provided a critical channel for improving accessibility, representation and legitimacy in the NDA's design and rollout. As one UNICEF staff noted: *"The consultations with the OPDs helped us to have an inclusive design, we learned from the OPDs during the design phase"*. Some OPDs viewed that their participation was not always consistent throughout the design and implementation cycle and that a more structured and institutionalized mechanisms should be in place to ensure their role in long-term system monitoring and disability policy development.

34. What are the key risks to sustaining the projects' benefits, and how can they be mitigated?

Sustaining the achievements of the projects are faced by structural, financial, institutional and political risks that could undermine the continuity of the social protection gains. Among the key risks identified are:

132. Fiscal constraints and competing priorities: While the government doubled its NDA allocation in 2025, Lebanon's macroeconomic crisis and limited fiscal space that threaten continued domestic financing of programmes implementation like the NDA and NCG. An interviewee from MOSA remarked: *"If we maintain the age group from zero to 30, we need some money and we don't have this money, we cannot continue to say that this project is holistic if we cannot afford it"*. There is also a risk of political trade-offs between programmes the diversion of donor and government resources toward short-term ones, like AMAN, funded by the World Bank and implemented through DAEM national platform. AMAN could attract financial support, political attention and staff time that might otherwise reinforce sustainable, government-led models like the NDA, weakening the momentum for inclusive, rights-based and nationally financed social protection reform. This could be mitigated by continued and strengthened advocacy for the integration of social protection into long-term national budgeting frameworks, in addition to continued resource mobilization for donors' co-financing in the medium term.
133. Institutional fragility and human resource dependency: Ministries, particularly MOSA, remain understaffed and rely on donor-funded incentives to retain skilled staff. Without a structural human resources solution, delivery risks stalling. This could be mitigated by formalizing staffing structures and gradually reducing reliance on incentives, build internal training systems, as well as institutionalizing and maximizing the role of the Social Protection Academy.
134. Political volatility and regional crises: The absence of a stable government and repeated changes interrupt reform trajectories and stall advocacy efforts and high-level policy discussions and delay programme implementation. Regional and external factors, such as war and economic turmoil also add to the complexity of the context and shifting priorities.

135. System maintenance and data governance: Sustainability of the enhanced and created systems, like the of MIS, call centre and disability registries depends on continued investment and local ownership. It is unlikely that MOSA will be able to allocate necessary resources to sustain the developed systems, without structural reforms and increased national investment, sustainability remains fragile. This could be mitigated by ensuring the systems are fully embedded in MOSA and R&A centres with essential staff capacities and clear data protocols in place before the complete exit of the ILO and UNICEF support, which could be extended and deepened during the new EU-fund.
136. Limited stakeholder engagement in later stages: OPDs, employer organizations and trade unions were engaged unevenly, risking a narrow accountability base. There should also be shaped by clearly defined TORs, roles and responsibilities and governance frameworks across all stakeholders and all reform efforts for the NSPS pillars.

5. BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

5.1 Best Practices

137. The presence of shock-responsive social protection programmes is imperative to ensure effective usage and reach to beneficiaries in times of crisis and emergencies, especially important in the context of fragility and conflict. The NDA mechanism was leveraged by MOSA during the faced crises as platform, which could be further enhanced and supported to become more impactful and sustainable. Likewise, the NCG, which was designed by UNICEF , but not launched, has the potential to act as a shock-responsive social protection.
138. The focus on comprehensive systems integrating the different social protection models (NDA, AMAN... etc.), along with a strong coordination mechanism, GRM and monitoring systems enables the continuous evolution of the system and ensures its relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Furthermore, flexibility and adaptability leads to complementarity and increased impact, for example, the project changed its approach to development of a unified registry due to EU direct funding to the same to the Government. The project adopted an adequate approach for the updating of the MIS for the R&A centres and the development of an MIS for MOSA.
139. Adopting a structured inclusive coordination approach that emphasised the engagement of multiple stakeholders, particularly through partnerships with OPDs, enhanced programme design, outreach and service delivery. OPDs played a crucial role in the emergency response to the October 2024 crisis, mobilising support despite war-related delays. Operating on volunteer efforts, they facilitated coordination and advocacy, though their impact was constrained by the lack of sustainable funding. This experience highlighted the importance of institutionalising the role of OPDs within social protection system and securing dedicated financial resources to ensure long-term engagement.
140. The integration of digital innovations to enhance efficiency, transparency and accountability in social protection delivery has been beneficial. For example, the project introduced a robust MIS to streamline beneficiary identification, payment processing and grievance redress mechanisms.

The digitization of payment systems reduced cash disbursement delays, strengthening financial accountability, while digital referral systems improved linkages between cash assistance and essential services such as healthcare and education. Strengthened GRM further ensured that final beneficiaries could raise concerns and access timely support, reinforcing the role of technology in improving the effectiveness of social protection interventions.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Criteria	#	Conclusion
Relevance	1	Both projects were highly relevant to Lebanon's deepening social and economic vulnerabilities, directly addressing structural gaps in the national social protection system. They responded to a fragmented and underfunded landscape with foundational reforms, notably the development of the NSPS and NDA and pension reform. This alignment with national priorities and relevance to contextual realities positioned the projects a cornerstone in Lebanon's inclusive social protection.
	2	The projects largely adopted a participatory and consultative normative approach, engaging a broad range of stakeholders including government institutions, civil society, OPDs, and worker representatives throughout design and implementation, albeit at varying extents. This inclusive strategy enhanced legitimacy and responsiveness. However, notable gaps remained, for instance, employer organizations were insufficiently involved in NDA and pension reform discussions and likewise OPDs in the call centre design, underscoring the need for more balanced structured stakeholder engagement.
	3	The integration of disability inclusion and gender-sensitive strategies into projects' design demonstrated strong alignment with ILO's normative mandates. The projects applied a lifecycle approach to social protection, prioritizing PwDs, children and older persons. This approach ensured a comprehensive coverage model and reflected global social protection trends, increasing the initiatives' relevance at both policy and beneficiary levels.
Coherence	4	The sequential implementation of the EU-Madad and FCDO-funded projects enabled effective knowledge transfer and progressive policy engagement. Operational lessons from the EU-Madad project, especially in piloting the NDA and supporting MOSA, were carried forward into the FCDO project to deepen reforms. Recognizing the central role of the R&A centres with work initiated during the EU-Madad project, the FCDO project explicitly integrated them into a focused, structured design, anchoring institutional reforms in accessible, inclusive service provision.
	5	Despite strong alignment with sectoral reforms under the framework of the NSPS, there is room for improved and more integrated cross-pillar planning and stronger inter-ministerial dialogue and coordination moving forward in social assistance, health financing and pension reform.

	6	The projects alignment ensured that project interventions reinforced global commitments while responding to Lebanon’s national reform agenda. They were well aligned with the EU-Madad Trust Fund’s priorities on livelihoods, protection and social cohesion, and the FCDO’s focus on disability rights and health system strengthening. Coherence with ILO and UNICEF strategic outcomes was also clear, advancing disability-inclusive social protection, universal health coverage and the rights-based approach of the NSPS.
	7	Coordination between ILO and UNICEF under the EU-MADAD funded project was operationally efficient and complementary. Both contributed to policy development, capacity building, and efforts to embed social protection within national governance structures. While UNICEF focused on delivery systems, ILO supported policy reform and capacity-building. This dual-track implementation maximized impact, although coordination burdens sometimes strained staff resources.
Efficiency	8	Resource allocation was strategic, with the majority of funds supporting direct service delivery (e.g., 69 percent for NDA payments). Despite resource constraints and economic instability, both projects optimized impact through adaptive planning and complementary mandates.
	9	Although a formal Steering Committee was not operationalized, technical working groups maintained coordination. Daily collaboration between ILO and UNICEF helped compensate for structural limitations.
	10	The cluster staffing model later adopted by ILO improved cross-theme collaboration and addressed earlier gaps in staffing. However, initial under-resourcing caused implementation delays and increased individual workloads, reducing early momentum.
Effectiveness	11	The projects delivered most planned outcomes and outputs, reaching over 35,000 beneficiaries through the NDA, launching the NSPS, supporting the NCG by UNICEF and pension reform and enhancing the call centre and referral systems. They supported digital MIS tools, capacitated R&A centres and produced over 40 policy and advocacy outputs. Despite economic collapse and conflict in 2024, both projects demonstrated strong adaptive performance and responsiveness to crises through shock-responsive assistance.
	12	While the projects made significant progress in advancing key reforms in pensions, healthcare and social assistance, full policy integration across these components is yet to be achieved. Each pillar seem to be advancing on its own trajectory, and coordination mechanisms are still emerging. Stakeholders noted that governance structures under the NSPS were not fully operational, which limited cross-sectoral alignment and slowed momentum toward a cohesive, integrated social protection system.
	13	For the first time, disability grants were disbursed through inclusive mechanisms with gender-sensitive outreach and accessible communications, strengthening rights-based service provision and social inclusion. Digitization of services, particularly through the MIS and e-payments, enhanced operational efficiency and transparency, such innovations reduced delays and enabled real-time monitoring, setting a foundation for future scaling of social protection delivery systems.

	14	The Theory of Change was validated through successful linkages between inputs, activities and outcomes. The piloting and scale-up of the NDA and the establishment of digital systems like MIS demonstrated that project assumptions largely held true and guided effective implementation.
Impact Orientation	15	The projects catalysed long-term systemic change by anchoring social protection in national policy frameworks. The launch of the NSPS, pension reform groundwork and R&A centre institutionalization marked a transition from fragmented donor-driven assistance to coordinated state-led social protection infrastructure with growing national ownership.
	16	At the individual level, the projects improved quality of life for vulnerable groups by providing regular, predictable cash support and strengthening linkages to essential services. Beneficiaries experienced greater financial stability, better access to health and education and increased awareness of their rights.
	17	The projects helped build public trust in state institutions through transparency, responsiveness and accountability mechanisms. The introduction of a grievance redress system, digitized payments and visible government involvement in delivery signalled a shift toward more citizen-centred and accountable model of social protection in Lebanon.
Sustainability	18	Institutional capacities were strengthened through investments in infrastructure, systems and staff trainings. The revitalization of eight R&A centres and introduction of new digital platforms ensure that many reform results will outlive project lifespans, especially if operational costs are secured. Most importantly, increased financial contributions from national budget to the NDA in 2024 and 2025 is a strong testament of increasing ownership and commitment.
	19	Employers' organization involvement in both the NDA and pension reform could have been stronger, employers' organisation believe that consultations were mostly reactive, weakening ownership and reducing opportunities to shape inclusive input. Employer representatives had strong positions around the unbalanced participation compared to that of workers and government stakeholders, not allowing to reflect on how the reform impacts their realities.
	20	Sustainability was implicit and an integral part of the projects' design, nevertheless a formal exit plan was lacking, which would have provided a more structured roadmap for phase-out. Continued donor dependence and insufficient domestic budget allocations pose major risks. Future programming should prioritize a phased financing strategy aligned with national fiscal realities.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1:

To enhance prospects of sustainability of the social protection programmes, ILO and UNICEF should support the Government in developing a realistic medium-term financing/ resource mobilisation strategy. This should begin with a thorough assessment of financing needs and a clear estimation of funding gaps to inform a phased and feasible approach. Rather than relying on external funding

commitments, such strategy should aim to integrate social grants within broader economic and fiscal policies to enhance governmental ownership, ensure continuity and institutional buy-in. Involving social partners in this efforts is also important as a way to ensure ownership and propose creative solutions. In parallel, strengthening capacity within MOSA on financial planning, expenditure tracking and evidence-based policy-making is a crucial element in the process. This approach would enable the Government to engage with donors strategically while maintaining realistic expectations regarding external funding constraints.

Responsible unit(s): ILO HQ, ROAS & Lebanon CO, UNICEF Lebanon

Priority: High - Time implication: Short-term - Resource implication: Medium

Recommendation 2:

Future programming should institutionalize structured, multi-stakeholder engagement mechanisms from the outset, ensuring equal and balanced engagement with employers and workers organisations, OPDs and different government stakeholders. This will strengthen ownership, design effectiveness and ensure no opportunities get missed in terms of access to employment and benefits for the target vulnerable populations, PwDs, women and elderly. In these two evaluated projects, MOSA's leadership and R&A centre contributions were pivotal, but limited participation of employer organizations and uneven worker representation weakened the legitimacy and balance of key reforms, such as the NDA and pension law.

Responsible unit(s): ILO ROAS & Lebanon CO

Priority: High - Time implication: Short-term - Resource implication: Medium

Recommendation 3:

Building on the successful implementation of the NDA and the emergency response, ILO and UNICEF should support MOSA to develop an institutionalised shock-responsive social protection framework, alongside pertinent pre-approved contingency funding, strengthened partnerships with OPDs and national actors, as well as capacity-building of OPDs and social workers to ensure inclusive emergency response. Establishing a digital platform for rapid beneficiary enrolment and payout during national crises will further enhance responsiveness and impact. This is particularly important given the fragile context in Lebanon and the ongoing regional conflicts and could be already considered as a core element of the new EU NDICI programme implemented by ILO and UNICEF.

Responsible unit(s): ILO ROAS & Lebanon CO, UNICEF Lebanon

Priority: High - Time implication: Medium-term - Resource implication: High

Recommendation 4:

ILO and UNICEF should work with the Government of Lebanon to operationalise the NSPS and the NCG through a phased targeted-approach. Given financial constraints, a targeted roll-out could focus on the most vulnerable groups, such as children with disabilities or younger age groups (e.g. 0-5 years). Exploring blended financing models, including donor contributions and government cost-sharing, can ensure sustainability. Additionally, leveraging the NCG as a shock-responsive mechanism in emergencies should be institutionalised, ensuring automatic activation in the event of crises.

Responsible unit(s): ILO ROAS & Lebanon CO, UNICEF Lebanon

Priority: High - Time implication: Medium-term - Resource implication: High

Recommendation 5:

To maintain effective coordination between the NDA, AMAN, ILO and UNICEF should support MOSA in developing a unified governance framework with clear roles, responsibilities and a harmonised targeting system. Enhancing integration between existing MIS platforms will allow for seamless beneficiary tracking, reduce duplication and improve service delivery, and would support in applying consistent eligibility criteria and targeting tools across the NDA, AMAN program to reduce overlaps. A joint GRM across programmes should also be enhanced to ensure equitable access to benefits and more efficient use of limited resources.

Responsible unit(s): ILO ROAS & Lebanon CO, UNICEF Lebanon

Priority: High - Time implication: Medium-term - Resource implication: Medium

ANNEXE I: TERMS OF REFERENCE



**International
Labour
Organization**

Cluster Final Independent Evaluation of:

Addressing life-cycle vulnerabilities through social protection – Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon

and

Supporting Social Security and Institutional Reforms towards a Strengthened Social Protection System in Lebanon

Terms of Reference

February 2025

Information	Details
Project title	Addressing life-cycle vulnerabilities through social protection – Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon Supporting Social Security and Institutional Reforms towards a Strengthened Social Protection System in Lebanon
DC Symbol	LBN/21/01/CEF LBN/23/02/GBR
Type of Evaluation	Independent Cluster
Implementing UN agencies	LBN/21/01/CEF: ILO and UNICEF
Timing of Evaluation	Final
Countries	Lebanon
ILO P&B outcomes	LBN/21/01/CEF: ILO 2020-21 P&B Outcome 8 “Comprehensive and sustainable social protection for all” LBN/23/02/GBR: ILO 2024-25 P&B Outcome 7 “Universal social protection”.
SDG (s)	1, 5, 8, 10
Duration	LBN/21/01/CEF: 36 months LBN/23/02/GBR: 12 months
Start Date	LBN/21/01/CEF: December 2021 LBN/23/02/GBR: April 2024
End Date	LBN/21/01/CEF: March 2025 LBN/23/02/GBR: March 2025
Administrative unit	RO-Arab States/DWT-Beirut
Technical Backstopping Unit	DWT Beirut
Collaborating ILO Units	SOCPRO
Donor	LBN/21/01/CEF: European Union, represented by the European Commission, on behalf of the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian Crisis, the “MADAD Fund” LBN/23/02/GBR: Embassy of the UK / Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (“FCDO”),
Evaluation Managers	Hiba Al Rifai
Budget	LBN/21/01/CEF: EUR 20 million LBN/23/02/GBR: GBP 500,000 - 633,865.56 USD

Introduction

Lebanon is facing an enduring economic and financial crisis, exacerbated by a protracted refugee situation. Since 2019, the sharp contraction of GDP led to the country's downgrade from upper-middle-income to lower-middle-income status by 2022. The Lebanese pound's devaluation, subsidy removals, and reliance on imports have triggered soaring inflation, reducing household purchasing power and increasing poverty levels. By 2022, 88% of the Lebanese population had low incomes, and over half lived in poverty, while 93% of Syrian refugees live with some degree of food insecurity. Many households are resorting to negative coping strategies, such as debt accumulation and child labor, to meet basic needs.

The crisis disproportionately impacts vulnerable groups, including the unemployed, persons with disabilities, older persons, and those with health issues, who lack adequate support due to gaps in Lebanon's fragmented social protection system. Women also face significant burdens as primary caregivers, limiting their employment opportunities. Weak governance, political instability, and strained public administration have further deteriorated public services and heightened social tensions, particularly regarding the country's refugee population.

Lebanon's social protection system is highly fragmented and had been primarily structured around formal employment. Prior to the crisis, The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) covered 56% of the population but suffered from structural weaknesses, such as the absence of a pension system, inadequate family allowances, and inadequate health insurance benefits. The economic crisis has eroded social security benefits, with many retirees receiving inadequate support due to currency devaluation. The recent adoption of a pension law in 2023 constitutes a major reform and its effective implementation necessitates coordinated efforts.

Social assistance in Lebanon is limited, relying on donor-funded programs. The rollout of the National Disability Allowance (NDA) in 2023 marked a significant milestone, providing targeted cash assistance to persons with disabilities. Social safety nets such as the National Poverty Targeting Program (NPTP) and the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) – now integrated into Aman – have also been expanded to cover around 20% of the population. These initiatives, primarily funded by international donors, lack long-term financial sustainability.

Lebanon's social protection sector faces severe governance challenges, including fragmentation, inefficiency, and weak institutional capacity. The absence of integrated policies have led to unequal benefits, duplication of efforts, and poor resource allocation. Limited coordination between government agencies and non-state actors further hampers effective service delivery. Many social protection programs still rely on international partners due to the government's constrained fiscal capacity, and a lack of digitized systems and data integration limits proper identification of beneficiaries and responsiveness to emerging needs.

Financing constraints further undermine Lebanon's social protection system. Pre-crisis, over 50% of social spending was allocated to public sector pensions, and a significant share was absorbed by fuel subsidies rather than direct income support. The crisis has drastically reduced social security contributions and fiscal revenues, necessitating urgent reforms to ensure sustainable funding for both social assistance and social insurance programs. The National Social Protection Strategy aims to establish a unified vision for social protection, which requires clear governance structures and a financing plan.

Projects background

► Addressing life-cycle vulnerabilities through social protection – Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon LBN/21/01/CEF

The Social grants project sought to achieve three main strategic outcomes: **SO1** National social protection system is strengthened, **SO2** Social grants are provided to the most vulnerable persons and

linkages/referral systems built for complementary services, and **SO3** Evidence-based engagement of non-governmental stakeholders in the social protection strategy debate is enhanced. The programme aimed at the higher, national strategic level, as well as delivering at the institutional and operational level. Under SO1, key initiatives included the adoption of the National Social Protection Strategy, and the development of its governance and implementation structures, to support and strengthen coordination, and with the aim of developing a medium-term programming and financing framework. Strategic Outcome 2 included the design and roll out of the National Disability Allowance for Lebanese PWDs, based on evidence and strategic policy direction, with the aim of ensuring articulation with the broader social protection system and necessary linkages with other services. Strategic Outcome 3 ensured a continuous engagement of non-state actors in evidence generation, policy design and development, as well as implementation and monitoring of the NDA.

Progress across these tracks was pursued concurrently, with flexibility to adapt to emerging challenges. Sustainability hinged on building national capacity, empowering local actors, and establishing effective coordination mechanisms, with the objective of ensuring the programme's continuation beyond initial donor commitments, including operational and financial strategies for embedding the social grants within government structures and securing future funding. The programme also prioritized inclusivity, gender equality, and support for capacity building.

The Theory of Change prepared at the design phase of the project identified several pathways to achieve the intended outcomes. The conditions listed below were considered necessary to meet in order to enhance impact, effectiveness, and efficiency of the project in the social protection system, a reduction in poverty and inequality, and increased trust and credibility in the system, contributing to the development of new social contract.

- Coordination and strategic management platforms are strengthened.

- Coherent social protection systems, including a unified registry of recipients, are implemented.

- Effective monitoring, evaluation, and evidence generation systems are developed.

- Citizens and non-state actors are given structured platforms for engagement in social protection design and implementation.

The ToC did identify multiple project's risks, each with specific mitigation strategies to ensure successful implementation and sustainability throughout contingencies. The identified risks included political risks, capacity risks, coordination risks, cross-border conflict risks, currency-related risks, and safety and protection risks. The project contributed to the ILO's CPO, LBN153 "Improved existing programmes to extend social security coverage through the progressive establishment of a national social protection floor", and to the ILO 2020-21 P&B Outcome 8 "Comprehensive and sustainable social protection for all". The activities under this project aligned with the framework of Recommendation 202 (2012) on Social Protection Floors. The project facilitated national dialogue on the development of a social protection system in Lebanon with the aim of addressing the four basic guarantees on income and health for children, persons of working age and the elderly.

The intervention primarily contributed to the progressive achievement of SDG 1 "End poverty in all its forms everywhere", and in particular target 1.3 "Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable". It also contributed to SDG 10, target 10.4 "Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality"; and more generally to SDG 5 on gender equality.

The initiative aimed at inclusiveness in a number of ways. Social Grants – by definition – target specific groups with lifecycle vulnerabilities who are often excluded from other opportunities, such as people with disabilities. Gender equality is a core principle of the programme, both in its design as well as its implementation, with efforts undertaken to ensure the National Social Protection Strategy contributes to gender justice, seek a gender balance within the pool of Social Grants recipients and beneficiaries of social protection reforms as well as other actors that engaged in the process, as well as promoting gender-

sensitive tools and mechanisms to create a protective environment, particularly for accessing transfers. A further feature of the initiative was strengthening outreach and identification of related vulnerable groups, addressing barriers to access resulting from discrimination based on gender and (dis)ability, including through support from civil society. Additionally, the interventions proactively engaged a wide range of government actors, civil society and academic organizations, technical experts, and social partners in Lebanon, creating an innovative platform of dialogue, and promoting this dialogue where previously weak or non-existent on the development of a national social protection system, policy engagement and advocacy, as well as programme level design and monitoring.

UNICEF and ILO implemented the programme interventions following Joint Programme standard procedures. A pass-through arrangement was signed by UNICEF and ILO, and UNICEF acted as the administrative agent, making UNICEF responsible for financial management, and in charge of consolidating and submitting reports to the EU and serving as the main point of contact during EU verification missions. For the ILO, the project was implemented by the social protection project team at the Regional office for Arab States in Beirut, with the ILO Deputy Director as the responsible official. Technical supervision and backstopping was provided by regional social protection specialist.

► **Supporting Social Security and Institutional Reforms towards a Strengthened Social Protection System in Lebanon - LBN/23/02/GBR**

The FCDO project aimed to achieve three strategic outcomes: **SO1** The development of a comprehensive gender-sensitive pension system in Lebanon is supported through evidence generation, dialogue, and technical assessments, **SO2** Measures towards sustainable health financing and universal health coverage in Lebanon are developed on the basis of enhanced evidence, in collaboration amongst relevant stakeholders, and **SO3** Underlying national systems for the implementation of the National Disability Allowance and Social Grants are improved.

The programme operated at both the national strategic level and the institutional and operational level. Under SO1, key initiatives included supporting discussions around policy, institutional, and system adjustments for the pension system reform through technical assessments and policy advice. Strategic Outcome 2 included supporting national dialogues on health financing and the development of improved and adequate health benefits with the aim of restoring coverage and ensuring long-term financial sustainability. Strategic Outcome 3 ensured support to the institutionalization of the National Disability Allowance (NDA), and strengthened the Rights & Access programme by improving delivery mechanisms.

The project acknowledged several risks, including severe security issues, political instability, capacity constraints, and coordination challenges that impeded implementation of partial components. However, ongoing stakeholder engagement, technical support, and flexibility in programming and use of financial resources helped mitigate these risks.

The project contributed to CPO LBN153 “Improved existing programmes to extend social security coverage through the progressive establishment of a national social protection floor” and to the ILO 2024-25 P&B Outcome 7 “Universal social protection”. The project also contributed to SDG 1 “End poverty in all its forms everywhere”, and in particular target 1.3 “Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable”, as well as SDG 10, target 10.4 “Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality”, and more generally to SDG 5 on gender equality. The project was guided by international standards, including ILO Convention 102 on Social Security and Recommendation 202 on Social Protection Floors.

This intervention contributed to the National Social Protection Strategy, focusing on Social Assistance and Social Insurance. Key reforms in pension systems, social health protection, and social assistance

addressed in this project were aligned with national recovery plans and ongoing IMF discussions. These reforms were also explicitly referenced in the 3RF Strategic Pillar on Social Protection.

The ILO implemented the programme interventions through the ILO Social Protection cluster of the Regional office for Arab States in Beirut, with the ILO Deputy Director as the responsible official. Technical supervision and backstopping was provided by the regional social protection specialist.

Evaluation Background

ILO considers evaluation as an integral part of the implementation of development cooperation activities. Provision is made in the project in accordance with ILO evaluation policy and strategy.

As both, the EU-MADAD funded joint project and the FCDO-funded project are coming to an end and in line with the ILO evaluation commitments, a final cluster independent evaluation is due (hereafter referred to as the evaluation).

Justification for clustering the evaluation of the projects

Clustering the evaluation of both projects presents several advantages, particularly in terms of efficiency, coherence, and resource optimization. Given their shared and complementary focus on social protection reform in Lebanon, evaluating them together allows understanding of how different interventions have collectively contributed to strengthening the national system. A cluster evaluation allows for a more comprehensive assessment of progress towards common objectives, such as enhanced dialogue on social protection reforms, improved governance structures, reformed pension systems, expanded social assistance programs, and enhanced institutional capacity. Additionally, it enables the identification of synergies and complementarities between the two projects, offering insights into how cross-sectoral reform efforts interact and reinforce each other. This approach streamlines the use of financial and human resources, avoiding duplication in data collection, reporting processes, stakeholder consultations. The latter is particularly relevant given the number of ongoing evaluations involving the same stakeholders, including:

A UNICEF-led Post-Distribution and Outcome Monitoring (PDOM) on NDA disbursements.

A European Union-led Results-Oriented Mission (ROM).

As such separate evaluations for **LBN/23/02/GBR** and **LBN/21/01/CEF** would create overlaps, duplications, and potential fatigue among stakeholders.

The evaluation should include project-specific sub-sections to ensure that individual contributions remain visible while still benefiting from an overarching and consistent analysis. Harmonizing the methodology and structuring the evaluation to recognize both collective achievements and distinct contributions can offer a unique understanding to the SP cluster as project implementor.

Objectives

The evaluation serves two main objectives: accountability and learning. It will follow the OECD-DAC criteria and assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and potential impact of the project. This evaluation will also identify lessons learned, good practices and provide recommendations for future consideration.

Specifically, the evaluation will examine the following aspects:

- **Relevance:** the responsiveness of the projects' objectives and design to the needs of the stakeholders, partners, and beneficiaries.
- **Coherence:** the internal and external coherence of the projects.
- **Effectiveness:** Results in terms of outcomes and outputs achieved; and how were these results achieved?
- **Efficiency:** use of resources (time, money, efforts, and management) in achievement of projected performance.
- **Sustainability:** Will the project's effects remain over time?

- **Potential impact:** How likely are the projects to contribute to change in the systems and the lives of the beneficiaries.

The evaluation will comply with ILO evaluation policy²⁴, and the UNEG ethical guidelines²⁵ will be followed.

Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation will assess the project's overall performance throughout their lifespan. It will cover all aspects of the projects' implementation highlighting the main challenges and good practices. This evaluation will give special attention to the systems and the relationships with stakeholders and key actors in the field of social protection and how they developed throughout the projects timeframe. The evaluation will integrate ILO's cross-cutting issues, including norms and social dialogue, gender equality, disability inclusion, and other non-discrimination concerns throughout its methodology and all deliverables. The geographical coverage is at national level aligning with the implementation coverage. The EU-funded project has been undergoing several processevaluative exercises including EU's Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) mission and UNICEF'S Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM), and a deep-dive on the project under the EU-Madad Evaluation. The scope of this evaluation will build on the results and data from all exercises.

Clients of the Evaluation

The primary clients of this evaluation are the ILO and UNICEF project teams, the donors EU MADAD and the Embassy of the UK / Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office ("FCDO"), the Government of Lebanon (including Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Labour, the National Social Security Fund, and the PM's office), central non-state actors identified under civil society platform, and relevant constituents in country such as civil society and organizations representing persons with disabilities (OPD).

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

Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The evaluation will follow the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria with emphasis on integrating gender. As mentioned above, the focus of the final evaluation will be on assessing the systems and relationships developed throughout the project timeline. The evaluation team is expected to refine and prioritize the below list of the evaluation questions during the inception phase to ensure the cluster approach is well captured and the scope is clearly defined.

1.1.1 RELEVANCE

- How well did the projects' design align with the needs and priorities of the ILO, stakeholders and key actors in the field of social protection?
- To what extent, did the projects take into account the needs of PwDs in the planning of the intervention? Were gender considerations prioritized and integrated in the design? Was social dialogue triggered during the design phase and was it included in the project document? Was the design considerate of ILO's normative mandate highlighting any International Labour Standards?

²⁴ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/policy/wcms_603265.pdf

²⁵ <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>

1.1.2 COHERENCE

- How coherent were the ILO projects under evaluation in their planning, implementation and communication with stakeholders?
- To what extent were the projects coherent with other plans and programmes in the area of disability inclusion and social protection internally (in the ILO, UNICEF, the EU, the FCDO) and externally (at country level: ministries and international and national stakeholders)
- How coherent were the coordination efforts among the two agencies (ILO and UNICEF) at all levels and among the two agencies and other stakeholders?
- How well did the projects align with national strategies and reforms, including the National Social Protection Strategy, the NDA rollout, and pension reforms?
- To what extent did the projects promote policy coherence between different social protection components (e.g., pension reform, health financing, social grants)?

1.1.3 EFFECTIVENESS

To what extent did the projects achieve their outcomes and outputs? Are there any unexpected results?

- How valid are the projects' rational/theory of change pathway and linkages based on the implementation of the projects? Is there evidence that the design and planned activities have led to the desired outputs and the achieved outputs have led to the outcomes?
- How effective were the collaboration efforts with key actors in the social protection field and how did these relationships affect the achievement or non-achievement of results?

1.1.4 EFFICIENCY

- Were the resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) allocated strategically to achieve outcomes? To what extent can the projects achieved results justify the time, financial and human resources invested in the project?
- How did the projects' governance structure facilitate good results and efficient delivery? And if not, why not?
- How efficient were the coordination efforts and communication between the two agencies at one level and with the key stakeholders on another level throughout the projects?
- To what extent does the allocation of resources reflect the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including women and persons with disabilities?
- Did the projects face any administrative or operational bottlenecks, and how were they mitigated?
- How did the joint implementation of EU and FCDO-funded interventions enhance efficiency, if at all?
- Were there any delays in implementation, and if so, what were the primary causes?

1.1.5 SUSTAINABILITY

- Did the projects establish an exit strategy to ensure the sustainability of its efforts? What measures have been considered to ensure that the key components of the projects are sustainable beyond the life of the projects? Did the projects consider gender in planning its sustainable measures?
- To what extent have national institutions assumed ownership over the project outcomes?
- How financially sustainable are the reforms supported by the projects (e.g., NDA cash transfers, pension reforms, health financing)?

- Can future projects be built upon the results of these projects, ensuring sustainability and optimal use of results?
- Have OPDs been included as partners to ensure meaningful participation of project beneficiaries in the design and implementation of interventions, and facilitate the identification of and reliable engagement with children and youth with all types of disabilities?
- What are the key risks to sustaining the projects' benefits, and how can they be mitigated?

1.1.6 IMPACT ORIENTATION

- How likely are the projects to contribute to structural changes in Lebanon's social protection system? How have the projects influenced policy development and national dialogue on social protection reform?
- Have the projects contributed to an increased social protection coverage for vulnerable groups?
- What potential impact could the projects have on reducing poverty and inequality in Lebanon?
- How are the projects impacting the key actors in social protection to foster long term impact on end beneficiaries?
- Have the projects contributed to greater public trust in Lebanon's social protection system?
- In the short-term: What immediate changes/benefits did beneficiaries experience from the projects?
- In the long-term: what is the potential impact of the projects on the lives of beneficiaries as such as in the quality of life or social inclusion?

Methodology

The evaluation will be carried out by an external independent Evaluation Team (ET). The evaluation will follow a mixed methods approach using both available secondary data and primary quantitative and qualitative data. Triangulation is expected to ensure the reliability and validity of findings. Gender will be mainstreamed throughout the evaluation process.

Any changes to the methodology should be discussed with and approved by the Evaluation Managers. The ET is expected to follow the below approach:

1.1.7 DOCUMENT REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The ET is expected to review and analyze the project-related documents. These include but are not limited to projects documents or concept notes with logical framework, work plans, progress and technical reports, financial reports, any materials/ studies/ events proceedings prepared or undertaken within the framework of the project.

1.1.8 BRIEFING AND INCEPTION REPORT DRAFTING

The ET will have initial consultations with the Evaluation Managers, the relevant ILO and UNICEF staff managing the project, and some key stakeholders. The objective of the consultations is to reach a common understanding regarding the status of the project, the priority questions, available data sources and data collection instruments and an outline of the final evaluation report.

1.1.9 INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Following the desk review and after the initial consultations as well as the approval of the inception report, the ET will hold virtual and in-person meetings with the identified key stakeholders including the ILO and UNICEF staff members. Individual or group interviews will be conducted based on the provided list of stakeholders.

1.1.10 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGDs)

The ET is expected to organize FGDs with the different groups of end-beneficiaries. The FGDs should consider gender, nationality, geographical coverage, and the thematic area. The ET is expected to lead on all logistics related to the FGDs; the project teams can play a facilitation role (on logistics) only.

1.1.11 DRAFTING THE EVALUATION REPORT

The ET will draft the evaluation report based on the outline agreed upon in the inception report. The evaluation manager will share the draft report with relevant staffs, partners and stakeholders and will consolidate their feedback. The ET will thereafter, amend the evaluation report and submit a final version to the evaluation manager.

1.1.12 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The ET will convene a workshop to present the evaluation findings and validate the interpretations. Details on the timing and scope of the workshop will be decided with the EM throughout the process.

Evaluation Timeframe

The evaluation is to commence in March and end in May 2025. The following table describes the tentative timeframe:

Tasks	Number of Working days
Inception phase: inception consultations, desk review, drafting and submitting an inception report	8
Revise and resubmit inception report	2
Data collection	6
Data analysis	6
Drafting and submission of the evaluation report	4
Revising the draft final report + presentation	3
Integration of all comments and finalization of the report	1
Total	30

Total estimated payable working days: 30 Days

Deliverables

The main outputs of the evaluation consist of the following (all in English):

- Deliverable 1: Inception Report along its comments log
- Deliverable 2: Draft evaluation report
- Deliverable 3: Draft 2 of the evaluation report along its comments log
- Deliverable 4: PowerPoint Presentation
- Deliverable 5: Final evaluation report with separate template for executive summary and templates for lessons learned and good practices duly filled in (as per ILO's standard procedure, the report will be considered final after EVAL's approval)

Payment Terms

- 20 per cent of the total fee against deliverable 1 above approved by the evaluation managers.
- 40 per cent of the total fee against deliverable 2 above
- 40 per cent of the total fee against deliverables 3, 4 and 5 above, the latter being approved by EVAL.

Management Arrangement

The ET will report to the evaluation manager from ILO and should discuss any technical and methodological matters with her. The ILO and UNICEF project teams will provide administrative and logistical support during the data collection. The ILO Evaluation Office will approve and sign off the final evaluation report.

Qualification

The ET is expected to have following qualifications,

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

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".²⁶ The selected consultant will sign the Code of Conduct form along with the contract.
- UNEG ethical guidelines will be followed throughout the evaluation.
- The consultant will not have any links to project management or any other conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of the evaluation.

²⁶ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_649148.pdf

ANNEX 2: EVALUATION MATRIX

► Evaluation Office

#	Question	Measures/ Indicators	Data Sources/ Collection Methods	Stakeholders
Relevance				
1	How well did the projects design align with the needs and priorities of agencies, stakeholders and key actors in the field of social protection?	- Evidence of the conduct of a context analysis, needs assessments or risk matrix to guide/ back the project design and if continuously updated. - Evidence of participation or consultation by different constituents and stakeholders in project design. - Alignment with the P&B and other national documents, UNSDCF, MOSA priorities, etc.	Desk review: P&B, PRODOC, progress reports, project publications, workshop or meeting reports, surveys. <u>Informant Interviews</u> FGDs	ILO and UNICEF staff Social Partners OPDs. Donors Government Researchers/ research institutions.
2	To what extent, did the projects take into account the needs of PwDs in the planning of the intervention? Were gender considerations prioritized and integrated in the design? Was social dialogue triggered during the design phase and was it included in the project document? Was the design considerate of ILO's normative mandate highlighting any International Labour Standards?	- Extent to which the project has considered inclusivity (women, men and vulnerable groups of different ages and nationalities). - Evidence of dialogue, participation or consultation with different constituents and stakeholders in project design and in specific social dialogue as in three constituents together - References in the project document, project outputs or monitoring reports to the ILO normative mandate - Extent of alignment by the project to the ILO normative mandate - Perception of ILO staff (P&B and SDGs), constituents and partners (SDGs).	Desk review: P&B, PRODOC, progress reports, project publications, workshops or meeting reports, surveys. <u>Informant Interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF staff Social Partners OPDs. Government Researchers/ research institutions.
3	How well has accountability to affected populations, complaints and feedback mechanisms and safe programming provisions worked in the programme?	- Evidence of a GRM system - Structure of GRM system - Independence of GRM system - Speed of complaints resolution	<u>Desk Review.</u> GRM system structure, sample of complaints, <u>Feedback from beneficiaries</u>	ILO and UNICEF Staff, government, OPDs
Coherence				

4	How coherent were the ILO projects under evaluation in their planning, implementation and communication with stakeholders?	• Evidence of synergies between both projects • Alignment with ILO country strategy and documents	<u>Desk review:</u> PRODOC, progress reports, project publications, <u>Informant Interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF staff. Constituents. Government UN and development partners.
5	To what extent were the projects coherent with other plans and programmes in the area of disability inclusion and social protection internally (in the ILO, UNICEF, the EU, the FCDO) and externally (at country level: ministries and international and national stakeholders)?	• References in the project document, project outputs or monitoring reports to the regional or national strategies, constituent policies in relation to social protection • Extent of alignment of project outcomes with Lebanon regional or national strategies, government policies.. • Evidence of linkages and working relations with other interventions by ILO and other agencies. • Evidence of integration of lessons learned in design included in project design documents.	<u>Desk review:</u> PRODOC, progress reports, project publications, national policies, strategies, research/reports. <u>Informant Interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF staff Social Partners OPDs. Government Researchers/ research. institutions.
6	How coherent were the coordination efforts among the two agencies (ILO and UNICEF) at all levels and among the two agencies and other stakeholders?	• Evidence of synergies between the two agencies. • Management structure of the project • Evidence of engagement with stakeholders	<u>Informant interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF staff Government EU, FCDO OPDs
7	How well did the projects align with national strategies and reforms, including the National Social Protection Strategy, the NDA rollout, and pension reforms?	• Alignment with national reform agenda including the SP strategy and pension reform • Approaches of projects to ensure this alignment.	<u>Desk review</u> national documents, NSPS, pension reforms, project documents, progress reports <u>informant interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF staff Government EU, FCDO OPDs
8	To what extent did the projects promote policy coherence between different social protection components (e.g., pension reform, health financing, social grants)?	• Evidence of coherence between policies • Evidence of complementarity between different components.	<u>informant interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF staff Government EU, FCDO OPDs
Effectiveness				
9	To what extent did the projects achieve their outcomes and outputs? Are there any unexpected results?	• Level of achievement of results against plan, based on logical framework, project document and revisions.	<u>Desk review:</u> PRODOC, progress reports, project publications.	ILO and UNICEF staff Social Partners Government counterparts

		• Extent to which the project approaches have enabled the achievement of results. • Evidence of positive or negative results beyond the project expected ones.	<u>Informant Interviews</u>	
10	How valid are the projects' rational/theory of change pathway and linkages based on the implementation of the projects? Is there evidence that the design and planned activities have led to the desired outputs and the achieved outputs have led to the outcomes?	• Causal linkages between the different levels of the ToC. • Extent to which the project approaches have enabled the achievement of results.	<u>Desk review:</u> PRODOC, progress reports, project publications. <u>Informant Interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF staff Social Partners Government counterparts
11	How effective were the collaboration efforts with key actors in the social protection field and how did these relationships affect the achievement or non-achievement of results?	• Evidence of collaboration between the project and social partners • Evidence of sound collaboration with government and OPDs • Extent to which coordination enabled/hindered achievement of results	<u>Desk review:</u> PRODOC, progress reports, project publications. <u>Informant Interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF staff Social Partners Government counterparts
12	To what extent did the project support the elimination of barriers to access to key services, rights, information for vulnerable populations, and in particular for women and PwDs?	• Evidence of identification of barriers in risk analysis • Evidence of concrete steps to address barriers	<u>Desk review</u> risk assessments, progress reports, ROM reports <u>Informant interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF staff Social partners Government
13	Question on selection criteria: To which extent were the CFE intervention selection criteria and targeting processes effective in achieving the planned results? How effectively were the inclusion & exclusion potential errors and risk of duplication or non-coverage -among others, managed during the implementation of the intervention?	• Evidence of development of selection criteria • Evidence of addressing exclusion errors • Extent of addressing non-coverage errors and risks	<u>Desk review</u> risk assessments, progress reports, ROM reports <u>Informant interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF staff Social partners Government
14	What improvements were made in the National Disability Allowance (NDA) and Social Grants delivery mechanisms?	• Evidence of upgrading of social grants delivery mechanisms	<u>Informant interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF staff Government including R&A centers OMT

Efficiency				
15	Were the resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) allocated strategically to achieve outcomes? To what extent can the projects achieved results justify the time, financial and human resources invested in the project?	• Analysis of staffing and organogram of the project • Analysis of budget expenditures against plan and evidence of timely disbursement of funds. • Timeliness of output implementation and extent to which delays have been accounted for by the project. • Feedback by staff on adequacy of human and financial resources.	<u>Desk review:</u> PRODOC, progress reports, M&E, financial reports. <u>Informant Interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF staff
16	How did the projects' governance structure and M&E systems facilitate good results and efficient delivery? And if not, why not?	• Evidence towards efficiency of project's described governance structure, points of strengths or weaknesses. • Perception of ILO staff and partners on governance structure. • Extent to which M&E system is developed and used, indicators were adequately developed and well defined. • Examples of changes as a result of M&E data generated.	<u>Desk review:</u> PRODOC, progress reports, M&E tools and reports, meeting notes. <u>Informant Interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF Staff
18	To what extent does the allocation of resources reflect the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including women and persons with disabilities?	• Analysis of budget expenditures against plan and evidence of timely disbursement of funds. • Timeliness of output implementation and extent to which delays have been accounted for by the project. • Feedback by staff on adequacy of human and financial resources.	<u>Desk review:</u> PRODOC, progress reports, M&E, financial reports. <u>Informant Interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF Staff
19	Did the projects face any administrative or operational bottlenecks, and how were they mitigated?	• Timeliness of output implementation and extent to which delays have been accounted for by the project.	<u>Desk review:</u> PRODOC, progress reports, M&E, financial reports. <u>Informant Interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF Staff
20	How did the joint implementation of EU and FCDO-funded interventions enhance efficiency, if at all?	• Evidence of complementarity between EU and FCDO funded interventions • Evidence of synergy between EU and FCDO funded interventions	<u>Desk review:</u> PRODOC, progress reports, M&E, financial reports. <u>Informant Interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF Staff

		Evidence of lack of overlap and duplication between the two projects.		
21	Were there any delays in implementation, and if so, what were the primary causes?	Timeliness of output implementation and extent to which delays have been accounted for by the project.	<u>Desk review</u> : PRODOC, progress reports, M&E, financial reports. <u>Informant Interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF Staff
Impact Orientation				
22	How likely are the projects to contribute to structural changes in Lebanon's social protection system?	- Evidence of signs that structural change continues and institutionalized. - Evidence of the ability and willingness to continue to reform efforts	<u>Desk review</u> progress reports <u>Informant interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF Staff Government Social partners
23	Have the projects contributed to an increased social protection coverage for vulnerable groups?	Evidence of change in coverage for PwDs, and other vulnerable groups (pension)	<u>Desk review</u> progress reports, surveys and studies conducted by the project <u>Informant interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF Staff Government Social partners
24	What impact have the projects had on reducing poverty and inequality in Lebanon?	- Evidence of contribution to structural change - Evidence of change in poverty and inequality	<u>Desk review</u> progress reports, surveys and studies conducted by the project <u>Informant interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF Staff Government Social partners
25	How are the projects impacting the key actors in social protection to foster long term impact on end beneficiaries?	- Evidence of change on capacity of local actors - Evidence of change in perceptions of local actors	<u>Desk review</u> progress reports, surveys and studies conducted by the project <u>Informant interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF Staff Government Social partners
26	Have the projects contributed to greater public trust in Lebanon's social protection system?	Perception of stakeholders regarding the social protection system	<u>Informant interviews</u> <u>FGDs</u>	End beneficiaries OPDs

27	How have the projects influenced policy development and national dialogue on social protection reform?	• Evidence of influence on reform initiatives • Evidence of influence on national dialogue	<u>Desk review</u> progress reports, surveys and studies conducted by the project <u>Informant interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF Staff Government Social partners
28	In the short-term: What immediate changes/benefits did beneficiaries experience from the projects?	• Feedback from beneficiaries regarding the NDA and other social grants and pension reform	<u>Desk review</u> : PDOM results <u>Informant interviews</u> <u>FGDs</u>	End beneficiaries OPDs
29	In the long-term: what is the potential impact of the projects on the lives of beneficiaries as such as in the quality of life or social inclusion?	• Feedback from beneficiaries	<u>Desk review</u> : PDOM results <u>Informant interviews</u> <u>FGDs</u>	End beneficiaries OPDs
Sustainability				
30	Did the projects establish an exit strategy to ensure the sustainability of its efforts? What measures have been considered to ensure that the key components of the projects are sustainable beyond the life of the projects? Did the projects consider gender in planning its sustainable measures?	• Reference to a clear exist strategy/ plan for the project and extent of its consideration of different components • Feedback from constituents about prospects of sustainability and potential ownership of project outputs by constituents (eg: budget allocations, procedures).	<u>Desk review</u> : Progress reports, project publications, national policies, published research. <u>Informant Interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF staff Government Social partners
31	To what extent have national institutions assumed ownership over the project outcomes?	• Feedback from constituents about prospects of sustainability and potential ownership of project outputs by constituents (eg: budget allocations, procedures).	<u>Desk review</u> : Progress reports, project publications, national policies, published research. <u>Informant Interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF staff Government Social partners
32	Have the projects contributed to institutional capacity-building in a way that ensures long term impact?	• Evidence of institutional capacity strengthening • Evidence of individual capacity strengthening	<u>Desk review</u> : Progress reports, project publications, national policies, published research.	ILO and UNICEF staff Government SP academy Social partners

			<u>Informant Interviews</u>	
33	Can future projects be built upon the results of these projects, ensuring sustainability and optimal use of results? can the project be replicated in other contexts?	• Feedback from constituents about prospects of sustainability and potential ownership of project outputs by constituents (eg: budget allocations, procedures). • Analysis of results and assessment of replicability	<u>Desk review:</u> Progress reports, project publications, national policies, published research. <u>Informant Interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF staff Government Social partners
34	Have OPDs been included as partners to facilitate the identification of and reliable engagement with individuals with all types of disabilities?	• Feedback from OPDs about their current role • Feedback from OPDs about the future of their work	<u>Informant Interviews</u> <u>FGDs</u>	ILO and UNICEF staff OPDs
35	What are the key risks to sustaining the projects' benefits, and how can they be mitigated?	• Extent to which the project considered and addressed financial and human risks that could affect continuation.	<u>Desk review:</u> Progress reports, project publications <u>Informant Interviews</u>	ILO and UNICEF staff Government Social partners

ANNEX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDES

ILO and UNICEF Staff

Name of Interviewee:

Position:

Country:

Date of Interview:

Consultant:

Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me about the ILO's projects (EU Madad and FCDO). We anticipate that it will take approximately 90 minutes to respond to these questions. If you need to break off the interview at any point, we will re-schedule and continue later. I am an independent evaluator and want to assure you that your answers are confidential and anonymous and will only be analysed by category of stakeholder. Should I need to directly quote you, this will only happen after receiving a written consent from you.

Before we start the formal interview, we would like to know your level of involvement with these projects

Relevance

How well did the projects' design align with the needs and priorities of ILO? And other actors in the field of social protection?

How are the normative values of the ILO reflected in the design of the project? How was social dialogue integrated during design?

How well has accountability to affected populations, complaints and feedback mechanisms and safe programming provisions worked in the programme?

Coherence

What are the synergies and coherence between the two projects (EU Madad and FCDO)?

What other projects are implemented by ILO/UNICEF EU and FCDO related to social protection and disability inclusion?

What were the coordination mechanism between UNICEF and ILO? What worked well? What can be improved?

How was the projects aligned with the GoL approaches and policies and strategies?

To what extent did the projects promote policy coherence between different social protection components (e.g., pension reform, health financing, social grants)?

Effectiveness

What was the collaborative efforts with social partners and other key stakeholders? Who were the stakeholders?

How did this collaboration affect the achievement of results? Were there any gaps?

To what extent did the project support the elimination of barriers to access to key services, rights, information for vulnerable populations, and in particular for women and PwDs?

To which extent were the CFE intervention selection criteria and targeting processes effective in achieving the planned results?

How effectively were the inclusion & exclusion potential errors and risk of duplication or non-coverage -among others, managed during the implementation of the intervention?

What improvements were made in the National Disability Allowance (NDA) and Social Grants delivery mechanisms?

Efficiency

Were the resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) allocated strategically to achieve outcomes? To what extent can the projects achieved results justify the time, financial and human resources invested in the project?

How did the projects' governance structure and M&E systems facilitate good results and efficient delivery? And if not, why not?

To what extent does the allocation of resources reflect the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including women and persons with disabilities?

Did the projects face any administrative or operational bottlenecks, and how were they mitigated?

How did the joint implementation of EU and FCDO-funded interventions enhance efficiency, if at all?

Were there any delays in implementation, and if so, what were the primary causes?

Impact orientation

How likely are the projects to contribute to structural changes in Lebanon's social protection system?

Have the projects contributed to an increased social protection coverage for vulnerable groups?

What impact have the projects had on reducing poverty and inequality in Lebanon?

How are the projects impacting the key actors in social protection to foster long term impact on end beneficiaries?

Have the projects contributed to greater public trust in Lebanon's social protection system?

How have the projects influenced policy development and national dialogue on social protection reform?

In the short-term: What immediate changes/benefits did beneficiaries experience from the projects?

In the long-term: what is the potential impact of the projects on the lives of beneficiaries as such as in the quality of life or social inclusion?

Sustainability

Did the projects establish an exit strategy to ensure the sustainability of its efforts? What measures have been considered to ensure that the key components of the projects are sustainable beyond the life of the projects? Did the projects consider gender in planning its sustainable measures?

To what extent have national institutions assumed ownership over the project outcomes?

Have the projects contributed to institutional capacity-building in a way that ensures longterm impact?

Can future projects be built upon the results of these projects, ensuring sustainability and optimal use of results?
can the project be replicated in other contexts?

Have OPDs been included as partners to facilitate the identification of and reliable engagement with children with all types of disabilities?

What are the key risks to sustaining the projects' benefits, and how can they be mitigated?

Social Partners (Employers and Workers organisations)

Name of Interviewee:

Position:

Country:

Date of Interview:

Consultant:

*Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me about the ILO's project **EU Madad and FCDO**. We anticipate that it will take approximately one hour to respond to these questions. If you need to break off the interview at any point, we will re-schedule and continue later, as we know that time is limited, and lives are increasingly busy. We also want to assure you that your answers are confidential and will only be analysed by category of stakeholder. Should we need to directly quote you, this will only happen after receiving a written consent from you.*

I would also like to stress that I am an independent evaluator, and as such, I do not work with ILO so anything positive or negative would never affect your opportunity now or in the future for collaboration with ILO.

Before we start the formal interview, we would like to know your level of involvement with ILO especially in this project

Relevance

How well did the projects' design align with the needs and priorities of your organisation?

Coherence

What other projects are implemented by your organisation related to social protection and disability inclusion?
To what extent did the projects promote policy coherence between different social protection components (e.g., pension reform, health financing, social grants)?

Effectiveness

What were the collaborative efforts with social partners and other key stakeholders? Who were the stakeholders?
How did this collaboration affect the achievement of results? Were there any gaps?
To what extent did the project support the elimination of barriers to access to key services, rights, information for vulnerable populations, and in particular for women and PwDs?
What improvements were made in the National Disability Allowance (NDA) and Social Grants delivery mechanisms?

Impact orientation

How likely are the projects to contribute to structural changes in Lebanon's social protection system?
Have the projects contributed to an increased social protection coverage for vulnerable groups?
What impact have the projects had on reducing poverty and inequality in Lebanon?
How are the projects impacting the key actors in social protection to foster long term impact on end beneficiaries?
How have the projects influenced policy development and national dialogue on social protection reform?
In the short-term: What immediate changes/benefits did beneficiaries experience from the projects?
In the long-term: what is the potential impact of the projects on the lives of beneficiaries as such as in the quality of life or social inclusion?

Sustainability

To what extent have national institutions assumed ownership over the project outcomes?
Can future projects be built upon the results of these projects, ensuring sustainability and optimal use of results?
Can the project be replicated in other contexts?
What are the key risks to sustaining the projects' benefits, and how can they be mitigated?

OPDs, NGOs and Research Institutions

Name of Interviewee:

Position:

Country:

Date of Interview:

Consultant:

*Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me about the ILO's project **EU Madad and FCDO**. We anticipate that it will take approximately one hour to respond to these questions. If you need to break off the interview at any point, we will re-schedule and continue later, as we know that time is limited, and lives are increasingly busy. We also want to assure you that your answers are confidential and will only be analysed by category of stakeholder. Should we need to directly quote you, this will only happen after receiving a written consent from you.*

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Before we start the formal interview, we would like to know your level of involvement with ILO especially in this project

Relevance

How well did the projects' design align with the needs and priorities of your organisation?

How well has accountability to affected populations, complaints and feedback mechanisms and safe programming provisions worked in the programme?

Coherence

What other projects are implemented by you related to social protection and disability inclusion?

To what extent did the projects promote policy coherence between different social protection components (e.g., pension reform, health financing, social grants)?

Effectiveness

What were the collaborative efforts with social partners and other key stakeholders? Who were the stakeholders?

How did this collaboration affect the achievement of results? Were there any gaps?

To what extent did the project support the elimination of barriers to access to key services, rights, information for vulnerable populations, and in particular for women and PwDs?

What improvements were made in the National Disability Allowance (NDA) and Social Grants delivery mechanisms?

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How have the projects influenced policy development and national dialogue on social protection reform?

In the short-term: What immediate changes/benefits did beneficiaries experience from the projects?

In the long-term: what is the potential impact of the projects on the lives of beneficiaries as such as in the quality of life or social inclusion?

Sustainability

To what extent have national institutions assumed ownership over the project outcomes?

Have the projects contributed to institutional capacity-building in a way that ensures longterm impact?

Can future projects be built upon the results of these projects, ensuring sustainability and optimal use of results?

can the project be replicated in other contexts?

Have OPDs been included as partners to facilitate the identification of and reliable engagement with individuals with all types of disabilities?

What are the key risks to sustaining the projects' benefits, and how can they be mitigated?

Government

Name of Interviewee:

Position:

Country:

Date of Interview:

Consultant:

*Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me about the ILO's project **EU Madad and FCDO**. We anticipate that it will take approximately one hour to respond to these questions. If you need to break off the interview at any point, we will re-schedule and continue later, as we know that time is limited, and lives are increasingly busy. We also want to assure you that your answers are confidential and will only be analysed by category of stakeholder. Should we need to directly quote you, this will only happen after receiving a written consent from you.*

I would also like to stress that I am an independent evaluator, and as such, I do not work with ILO so anything positive or negative would never affect your opportunity now or in the future for collaboration with ILO.

Before we start the formal interview, we would like to know your level of involvement with ILO especially in this project

Coherence

What other projects are implemented by ILO/UNICEF EU and FCDO related to social protection and disability inclusion?

What were the coordination mechanism between UNICEF and ILO? What worked well? What can be improved?

How was the projects aligned with the GoL approaches and policies and strategies?

To what extent did the projects promote policy coherence between different social protection components (e.g., pension reform, health financing, social grants)?

Effectiveness

What was the collaborative efforts with social partners and other key stakeholders? Who were the stakeholders?

How did this collaboration affect the achievement of results? Were there any gaps?

To what extent did the project support the elimination of barriers to access to key services, rights, information for vulnerable populations, and in particular for women and PwDs?

What improvements were made in the National Disability Allowance (NDA) and Social Grants delivery mechanisms?

Impact orientation

How likely are the projects to contribute to structural changes in Lebanon's social protection system?

Have the projects contributed to an increased social protection coverage for vulnerable groups?

What impact have the projects had on reducing poverty and inequality in Lebanon?

How are the projects impacting the government's social protection approaches to foster long term impact on end beneficiaries?

Have the projects contributed to greater public trust in Lebanon's social protection system?

How have the projects influenced policy development and national dialogue on social protection reform?

In the short-term: What immediate changes/benefits did beneficiaries experience from the projects?

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To what extent have national institutions assumed ownership over the project outcomes?

Have the projects contributed to institutional capacity-building in a way that ensures longterm impact?

Can future projects be built upon the results of these projects, ensuring sustainability and optimal use of results?

can the project be replicated in other contexts?

Have OPDs been included as partners to facilitate the identification of and reliable engagement with individuals with all types of disabilities?

What are the key risks to sustaining the projects' benefits, and how can they be mitigated?

ANNEX 4: EVALUATION PARTICIPANTS

Categories	Name	E-mail	Position	Institution	Location
Funding partner	Alexandra Irani (on maternity leave – temporarily covered by Tom Russel	tom.russell@fcdo.gov.uk	Social Development Adviser, Gender and Inclusion Lead	British Embassy Beirut	Beirut
Funding partner	Rayana Asmar, CPA	rayana.asmar@fcdo.gov.uk	Finance and Programme Manager	British Embassy Beirut	Beirut
Implementing Partner	Farah Al Shami	f.alshami@arab-reform.net	Social Protection Program Director	Arab Reform Initiative (ARI)	Beirut
Government	Dr. Pierre Baz	Pierre.baz.mosa@gmail.com	Adviser to the Minister	MOSA	Beirut
Government	Rania Fares	rania_fs@hotmail.com	Interim Manager	Rights and Access Program - MOSA	Beirut
Implementing Partner	Georges Xanthopoulos	georgesx@arcenciel.org	Programmes Director	Arcenciel	Beirut
Government	Nadeen Hilal, MD, MPH	nadeenhilal@gmail.com	Advisor to the Minister of Public Health	Ministry of Public Health	Beirut
Government	HE Nicolas Nahas	nicolas@nicolasnahas.com	Former Prime Minister Advisor	Presidency of Council of Ministers	Beirut
Government	Dr. Mohamad Karaki	karaki@rocketmail.com	NSSF DG - Lebanon	NSSF	Beirut
Government	Samir El Daher	Seldaher@gmail.com	Former Prime Minister Advisor	Presidency of Council of Ministers	Beirut

Government	Shawki Abou Nassif	chawkiabounassif@gmail.com	NSSF Cabinet and Financial Director	NSSF	Beirut
Government	Hassan Diab	h.diab@cnss.gov.lb	Member of NSSF Technical Committee	NSSF	Beirut
Government	Elias Ibrahim	Elie.brahim@hotmail.com	Administrative Controller/ Compliance Officer	Civil Service Board	Beirut
Social Partner	Salim Zeenni	N/A	President	Association of Lebanese Industrialists	Beirut
Social Partner	Paul Abi Nasr	N/A	Member of the Board	Association of Lebanese Industrialists	Beirut
Social Partner	Mounir Bssat	N/A	Member of the Board	Association of Lebanese Industrialists	Beirut
Social Partner	Dr. Bechara El Asmar	N/A	President	General Confederation of Lebanese Workers - CGTL	Beirut
	SAID Mustapha	said@ilo.org	Sr Spec	Workers' Activities	Beirut
	MEDINA CHECA Jose Manuel	medinacheca@ilo.org	Sr Spec	Employers' Activities	Beirut

Categories	Name	E-mail	Position	Institution	Location
EC Service	Sara Dominoni	sara.dominoni@eeas.europa.eu	OM	EU	Beirut

Implementing Partner	Luigi Peter Ragno	lragno@unicef.org	Chief Social Policy	UNICEF	Beirut
Implementing Partner	Khalil Dagher	kdagher@unicef.org	Social Protection Specialist	UNICEF	Beirut
Implementing Partner	Peter Rademaker	rademaker@ilo.org	Deputy Regional Director	ILO	Beirut
Implementing Partner	Rania Ignatios	ignatios.rania@gmail.com		ILO	Beirut
Implementing Partner	KARAME Joumana	karam@ilo.org	Programme Analyst	ILO	Beirut
Implementing Partner	Luca PELLERANO	pellerano@ilo.org		ILO	Beirut
Implementing Partner	Giulio Bordon	bordon@ilo.org	Social Protection Technical Officer	ILO	Beirut
Implementing Partner	Riwa Al Ghawi	alghawi@ilo.org	Social Protection Programme Officer	ILO	Beirut
Implementing Partner	Farah Serhan	serhan@ilo.org	Social Protection Officer	ILO	Beirut
Implementing Partner	Sarah Bou Ajram	sbouajram@unicef.org	Programme Officer – Social Protection	UNICEF	Beirut
Implementing Partner	Tala Kammourieh	tkammourieh@unicef.org	Reports Officer	UNICEF	Beirut
Implementing Partner	Hiba Taha	htaha@unicef.org	Programme Officer – Social Assistance	UNICEF	Beirut
Implementing Partner	Elie El Rawadi	eelrawadi@unicef.org	Programme Officer –	UNICEF	Beirut

			Social Assistance		
Implementing Partner	Antonio Franco Garcia	afgarcia@unicef.org	Social Policy Manager	UNICEF	Beirut
Partner Country	Dr. Pierre Baz	Pierre.baz.mosa@gmail.com	Adviser to the Minister	MOSA	Beirut
Partner Country	Rania Fares	rania_fs@hotmail.com	Interim Manager	Rights and Access Program - MOSA	Beirut
Other	Georges Xanthopoulos	georgesx@arcenciel.org	Programmes Director	Arcenciel	Beirut



ANNEX 5: TIMELINE AND WORKPLAN

► Evaluation Office



Evaluation activity	April 2025				May 2025				June 2025			
Inception	W-1	W-2	W-3	W-4	W-5	W-6	W-7	W-8	W-9	W-10	W-11	W-12
Kick-off meetings between consultant and ROAS												
Desk review of documents												
Evaluation methodology, guides, matrix, participants												
Submission of draft Inception Report												
ROAS review and feedback												
Submission of final Inception Report												
Data collection & Analysis												
Field data collection and mission for KIIs												
Data organization and analysis												
Data triangulation & in-depth analysis												
Submission of draft evaluation report by consultant												
Ppt on emerging findings for ROAS												
Reporting												
ROAS review and feedback												
Submission of final Evaluation Report, incorporating comments												
Submission of executive summary, lessons learned & good practices												
Approval of final submissions by EVAL												



ANNEX 6: LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES



Addressing life-cycle vulnerabilities through social protection: Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon - Supporting Social Security and Institutional Reforms towards a Strengthened Social Protection System in Lebanon

Project DC/SYMBOL: LBN/21/01/CEF and LBN/23/02/GBR

Name of Evaluator: Nahla Hassan

Date: 30 May 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	TEXT
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The presence of shock-responsive social protection programmes is imperative to ensure effective usage and reach to beneficiaries in times of crisis and emergencies.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	This is a good practice in Lebanon and relevant to the fragility of the context that is prone to economic shocks and conflict, which impact the socio-economic conditions. The projects addressed long-standing gaps in institutional weaknesses, limited coordination and inadequate coverage, particularly for PwDs, children and older people. The NDA mechanism was leveraged by MOSA during the faced crises, which could be further enhanced and supported to become more impactful and sustainable. Likewise, the NCG, designed by the project, but not launched, has the potential to act as a shock-responsive social protection programme.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The projects' support to the capacities and roll-out of the NDA and NCG, ensured their readiness to expand during crises, using the existing mechanisms and tools that were immediately deployed in response to the military conflict in 2024 enabling the R&A centres to provide much-needed assistance.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Despite economic collapse and conflict in 2024, both projects demonstrated strong, agile adaptive performance and responsiveness to crises through shock-responsive social protection that reached a wider scale of vulnerable populations, around 166,000 beneficiaries.
Potential for replication and by whom	Medium. It can be replicated by the Government of Lebanon in response to anticipated crises, nevertheless, the limited fiscal and institutional



Template 4.2: Emerging good practices

	capacities in the social protection systems in the country may limit the ability of the Government to replicate or expand the model on its own. In other countries, the ILO can support governments improve the readiness of their social protection systems to act as shock-responsive platforms, taking into consideration other elements identified for improvements in this evaluation.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	• ILO 2020-21 P&B Outcome 8 “Comprehensive and sustainable social protection for all” and ILO 2024-25 P&B Outcome 7 “Universal social protection” • UNICEF strategic objectives, particularly around universal social protection and disability inclusion. • EU-Madad priorities and FCDO strategies on disability and health. • National Social Protection Strategy • SDGs 1,5, 8 and 10
Other documents or relevant comments	



Addressing life-cycle vulnerabilities through social protection: Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon - Supporting Social Security and Institutional Reforms towards a Strengthened Social Protection System in Lebanon

Project DC/SYMBOL: LBN/21/01/CEF and LBN/23/02/GBR

Name of Evaluator: Nahla Hassan

Date: 30 May 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	TEXT
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The focus on supporting comprehensive systems that integrate the different social protection pillars designed under the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS), along with a strong coordination, Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) and monitoring systems, enabled the continuous evolution of the system and ensured its coherence, effectiveness and efficiency.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	This is a good practice in Lebanon as it aligned closely with the Government of Lebanon's vision for inclusive and rights-based social protection and the different pillars of the NSPS. Together, the two social protection projects by ILO and UNICEF covered the social assistance, social insurance and financial access to health and education pillars of the NSPS, in addition to governance and institutional capacity cutting across.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The two projects demonstrated a sequential and complementary design, allowed for a natural progression and expansion of the scope of support to social protection in Lebanon. The complementarity allowed each project to focus on different but interlinked aspects; programme delivery and piloting, as well as system strengthening and legal reform under the NSPS umbrella.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Despite economic collapse and conflict in 2024, both projects demonstrated strong, agile adaptive performance and responsiveness to crises through shock-responsive social protection that reached a wider scale of vulnerable populations, around 166,000 beneficiaries.
Potential for replication and by whom	High. There is a potential for both the Government of Lebanon and ILO to continue the enhancement of the social protection systems in the country, to ensure further alignment and effectiveness of the NSPS pillars, continuation of benefits and transitioning to the complete national ownership and management.



Template 4.2: Emerging good practices

Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO’s Strategic Programme Framework)

- ILO 2020-21 P&B Outcome 8 “Comprehensive and sustainable social protection for all” and ILO 2024-25 P&B Outcome 7 “Universal social protection”.
- UNICEF strategic objectives, particularly around universal social protection and disability inclusion.
- EU-Madad priorities and FCDO strategies on disability and health.
- Lebanon NSPS
- SDGs 1,5, 8 and 10

Other documents or relevant comments



Addressing life-cycle vulnerabilities through social protection: Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon - Supporting Social Security and Institutional Reforms towards a Strengthened Social Protection System in Lebanon

Project DC/SYMBOL: LBN/21/01/CEF and LBN/23/02/GBR

Name of Evaluator: Nahla Hassan

Date: 30 May 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	TEXT
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	Adopting a structured inclusive coordination approach that emphasised the engagement of multiple stakeholders enhanced programme design, outreach and service delivery.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Government social protection actors recognised the complexity of implementing the NSPS and the challenges associated with creating new national coordination systems among ministries. Inadequacy of government services meant that OPDs continued to fill critical service provision gaps.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	OPDs' active involvement fostered trust, encouraged disability card renewals, and ensured the NDA program met diverse needs, enhancing accessibility, representation, and legitimacy throughout its rollout. OPDs were key partners in both projects, contributing to policy design, implementation, and outreach. They helped identify persons with disabilities, trained stakeholders, advised on accessibility, and influenced adjustments like inclusive payment procedures. Their This experience highlighted the importance of institutionalising the role of OPDs within social protection systems and securing dedicated financial resources to ensure long-term engagement.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	The partnership with OPDs and NGOs was highly effective in advancing disability-inclusive social protection, with a strong influence on advocacy, policy design and community mobilization and empowerment outcomes. They played a crucial role in the emergency response to the October 2024 crisis, mobilising support despite war-related delays. Operating on volunteer efforts, they facilitated coordination and advocacy, though their impact was constrained by the lack of sustainable funding.
Potential for replication and by whom	High. Participation of OPDs in social protection design as it relates to the design, implementation and monitoring of the NDA and active labour market policies and programmes has the potential to continue to contribute to advancing PwD rights -and women- on the national agenda.

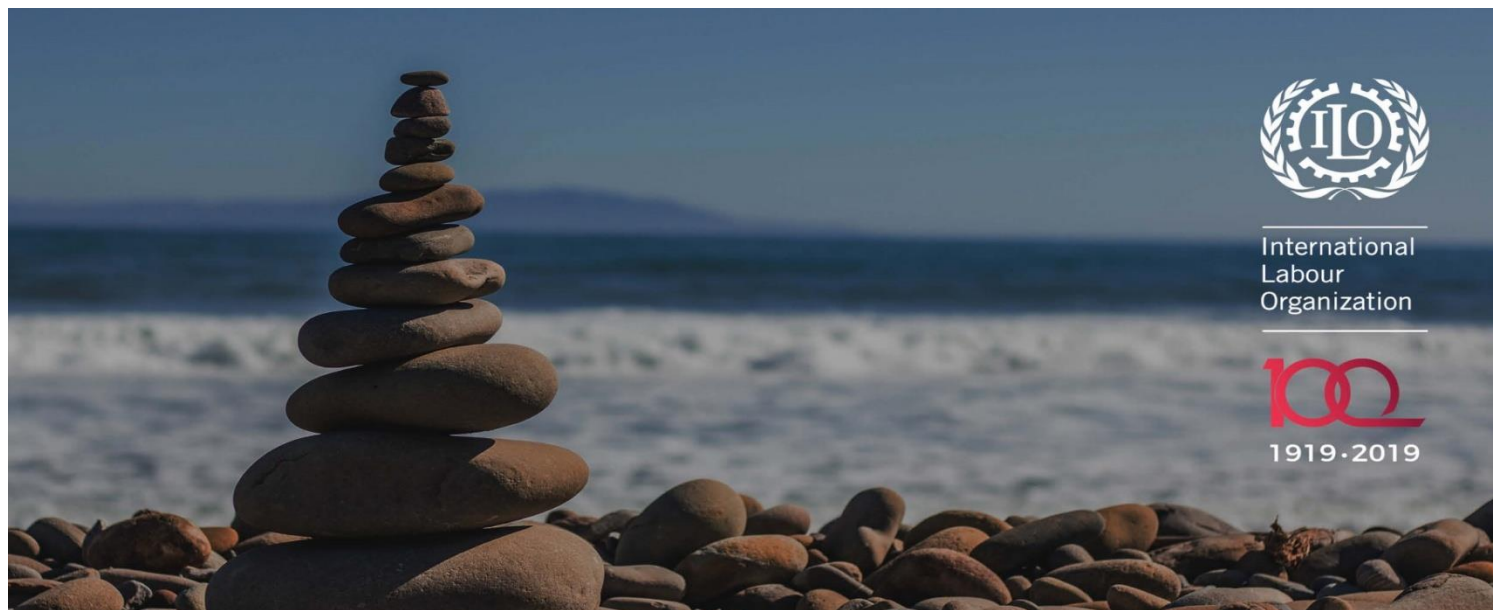


Template 4.2: Emerging good practices

Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)

- ILO 2020-21 P&B Outcome 8 “Comprehensive and sustainable social protection for all” and ILO 2024-25 P&B Outcome 7 “Universal social protection”.
- UNICEF strategic objectives, particularly around universal social protection and disability inclusion.
- EU-Madad priorities and FCDO strategies on disability and health.
- Lebanon NSPS and Law 220/2000 on the rights of PwDs.
- SDGs 1,5, 8 and 10

Other documents or relevant comments



This evaluation has been conducted according to ILO's evaluation policies and procedures. It has not been professionally edited, but has undergone quality control by the ILO Evaluation Office



EVALUATION
OFFICE

2 ILO EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE TEMPLATE	
Projects' Title: 'Addressing Life-Cycle Vulnerabilities through Social Protection: Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon' and 'Supporting Social Security and Institutional Reforms towards a Strengthened Social Protection System in Lebanon' DC Symbols: LBN/21/01/CEF and LBN/23/02/GBR Name of Evaluator: Nahla Hassan Date: May 2025 <i>The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.</i>	
GP Element	Text
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal, background, purpose etc.)	The integration of digital innovations in social protection delivery enhances efficiency, transparency and accountability has been beneficial.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Government social protection actors recognised the complexity of implementing the NSPS and the challenges associated with creating new national coordination systems among ministries. Inadequacy of government services meant that OPDs continued to fill critical service provision gaps.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Introducing a robust Management Information System (MIS) can enhance social protection by streamlining beneficiary management, reducing payment delays, improving accountability, and strengthening grievance systems. Digital tools also facilitate better service referrals, demonstrating technology's potential to increase the efficiency and responsiveness of social protection programs.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	The MIS helped to streamline beneficiary identification, payment processing and grievance redress mechanisms. The digitization of payment systems reduced cash disbursement delays, strengthening financial accountability, while digital referral systems improved linkages between cash assistance and essential services such as healthcare and education. Strengthened Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) further ensured that final beneficiaries could raise concerns and access timely support, reinforcing the role of technology in improving the effectiveness of social protection interventions.
Potential for replication and by whom	Medium. There is potential for replication and continuation by the Government of Lebanon, however hindered by fiscal and capacity constraints.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	• ILO 2020-21 P&B Outcome 8 "Comprehensive and sustainable social protection for all" and ILO 2024-25 P&B Outcome 7 "Universal social protection". • UNICEF strategic objectives, particularly around universal social protection and disability inclusion. • EU-Madad priorities and FCDO strategies on disability and health. • Lebanon NSPS. • SDGs 1,5, 8 and 10

Other documents or relevant comments	
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