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**Final Independent Evaluation for “Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national Social Protection system for Lebanon”
January 2020 – September 2022**

Final Report

Date of report: November 2022

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Disclaimer: The analysis and recommendations of this report are those of the evaluator and do not necessarily reflect the views of the UN in Lebanon.

List of Acronyms

3RF	Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework
RDNA	Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment
EFF	Extended Fund Arrangement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ILO	International Labour Organization
JP	Joint Programme
LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
LNOB	Leaving no one behind
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPTFO	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
NPTP	National Poverty Targeting Programme
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
OECD / DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development / Development Assistance Committee
OPDs	Organizations for People with Disabilities
RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
RC	Resident Coordinator
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SP	Social Protection
ToC	Theory of Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
WFP	World Food Programme

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Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

This is Final Report for the Final Independent Evaluation of the Joint Programme (JP) “*Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national Social Protection (SP) system for Lebanon*”¹ with the implementation period of 1 January 2020 – 1 September 2022, funded by the MPTFO through the UN SDG Fund. The Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs) includes UNICEF, WFP, ILO, UN Women, and UNDP, whereby UNICEF was the Joint Programme Focal Point, along with the Resident Coordinator’s Office (RCO).

The purpose of the evaluation was to explore the progress made towards the expected results of the JP, extract lessons learned, and propose recommendations for the future programming. The evaluation addressed the progress of the JP operated in highly complex and extremely challenging context in Lebanon, where the unfolding social, economic, political and financial crises were characterized among the top 3 most severe crises episodes globally in 150 years. Besides that, the social protection system in the country was largely absent with highly fragmented and duplicated efforts and with several attempts to initiate discussions on national strategy for social protection.

On this background, the JP aimed to achieve the following *outcome*: **establishment of a strengthened national SP system, that is inclusive, integrated, rights based, efficient and effective, with a specific emphasis on gender and people with disabilities (PwD).**

The JP’s expected *output* includes the following:

1. An integrated cross-sector national SP policy is developed for Lebanon, and supports the establishment of a rights-based, state-led gender and disability responsive SP system
2. Evidence to assess the fiscal, social and economic impact of gender-responsive SP reforms generated and used
3. Capacity of the GOL in implementing well-performing, scalable and replicable social assistance interventions that equally meet the needs of both women and men is developed building on the basis of the NPTP and related disability social safety nets
4. Equitable and innovative modalities for enhancing the adequacy and coverage of NSSF social insurance schemes amongst the working poor are developed in a gender and disability responsive manner
5. An innovative platform of dialogue for civil society and academia to provide contributions in the development of a national SP system is established

¹ <https://www.jointsdgfund.org/programme/transforming-national-dialogue-development-inclusive-national-sp-system-lebanon>

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was framed under the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, including relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. A systematic assessment of the long-term impact of the interventions on beneficiaries and their contexts was not part of the evaluation scope. The methodology included secondary data review and individual and group interviews (22 interviews in total with 11 male and 11 female key informants). The data collection was carried out during the period July – September 2022.

Special attention was provided to ensure that the evaluation employed gender and disability lenses with specific focus on two dimensions, namely, evaluation process and evaluation findings.

The coordination and logistical support was provided by the ILO Evaluation manager, while the Evaluation Management Group was established with the evaluation specialists from each PUNO to support the evaluation and provide high-level quality assurance of the evaluation.

FINDINGS

The findings of the evaluation are presented (i) from the change analysis perspective and (ii) contribution analysis perspective per evaluation criteria.

Findings: JP's progress per results framework

The JP demonstrated partial achievement of its main outcome but achieved a critical milestone for the establishment of the national SP system in Lebanon, namely, the design of the first ever National SP Strategy for Lebanon. The document was only preliminary approved by Cabinet with recommendation to make revisions for its preparation for submission to Parliament. The final approval was expected by the end of the year, in which case this document would serve as *the* reference point for all stakeholders when implementing any SP-related intervention in Lebanon.

Findings per evaluation criteria

The contribution analysis of the JP documented the following findings per evaluation criteria.

Table: Findings per evaluation criteria

<i>Evaluation criteria</i>	<i>Findings</i>
<i>Relevance</i>	<i>Finding #1: The intended results of the Joint Programme were highly relevant for the social protection needs in Lebanon.</i>
	<i>Finding #2: The relevance of JP has increased over the course of its implementation as the JP triggered a mobilization effect across a range of stakeholders to elevate SP into policy agenda</i>
	<i>Finding #3: For the Lebanese stakeholders the outcome of the JP resonated at very personal level</i>

Coherence and validity of design	<i>Finding #4: The design of the JP was largely coherent with three inadequacies: (i) missing a critical intermediary outcome necessary for the achievement of its more ambitious goal of establishment of social protection system in Lebanon; (ii) disconnect between the output 3 and its indicator 3.2, and (iii) overambitious claim of not only developing but also testing of various social insurance schemes</i>
	<i>Finding # 5: The JP design found a unique niche in the landscape of the SP-focused initiatives in Lebanon</i>
	<i>Finding # 6: The JP was unique and truly inclusive in its gender sensitivity and how PWDs contributed to the design of the SP system in Lebanon</i>
Effectiveness	<i>Finding #7: The JP largely accomplished its expected results</i>
	<i>Finding #8: The JP has demonstrated remarkable progress in shaping national vision on SP Strategy, given highly complex and fragmented context it operated in</i>
	<i>Finding #9: The attribution of the achievement of the intermediary results of the JP to the output 3 was imperceptible</i>
	<i>Finding #10: JP missed the opportunity to learn and inform SP Strategy future implementation by the lessons learned from the cash distribution modality</i>
	<i>Finding #11: The JP designed and implemented successful multi-stakeholder consultation process with CSOs and international partners on disability and age-related benefits</i>
	<i>Finding #12: Despite all efforts, the consultation process with the national authorities and CSOs for the development of the SP Strategy was perceived insufficient</i>
	<i>Finding 13: The development and adoption of a Strategy in a highly fragmented and competing context such as Lebanon was considered possible due to several success factors</i>
	<i>Finding 14: The reporting process was organized very smoothly however, the reports did not fully fit-for-purpose: it provided insufficient and often incorrect information on on what, when, by whom</i>
	<i>Finding 15: The JP managed to reasonably adjust its implementation during the COVID-19</i>
Efficiency	<i>Finding #16: Limited information was available on the financial management of the JP to conclude about cost-effectiveness of its implementation.</i>
	<i>Finding #17: Efficiency of internal coordination mechanism among PUNOs was high</i>
	<i>Finding #18: The design of the JP provided several win factors such as (i) mobilizing the advantages of various implementing organizations, (ii) delivering a bigger result which might not be possible if approached individually, (iii) additional political dimension with the engagement of the RC through common packaging and shared narrative</i>
Impact orientation	<i>Finding #19: Long-term effect on equitable gender relations and SDGs acceleration was conditioned to the adoption and quality implementation of the SP Strategy</i>
	<i>Finding #20: Disability inclusion in the JP not only marked a new level of engagement with the PWDs but also created some important preconditions for the disability inclusive social protection in Lebanon</i>
Sustainability	<i>Finding #21: The JP triggered few spin-offs managed by the PUNOs within their mandates to initiate implementation of the SP Strategy in Lebanon</i>
	<i>Finding #22: National ownership and capacity was created</i>
Coherence of UN Development system	<i>Finding #23: Active engagement of the RC was pivotal</i>
	<i>Finding #24: The JP ensured largely coherent approach of UN to the national SP priorities</i>
	<i>Finding #25: The JP successfully translated equity considerations throughout all its activities and results</i>

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There was a shared notion that the development and the (partial) approval of the SP Strategy by Cabinet marked a turning point in protection of the most vulnerable in Lebanon. Herewith the JP directly contributed to the SDGs acceleration by creating potential for transformative change across various SDGs. The joint format of the programme enabled contribution to the UN reform by providing a platform for the UN agencies to work as One UN strengthening and benefiting from the RC Office support at the same time. The JP achieved a strategic milestone of shaping shared vision towards SP system in Lebanon, mobilizing multiple stakeholders, raising expectations, and potentially establishing a common reference point for SP efforts across all stakeholders. The results of the JP resonate with all stakeholders at the individual level, creating the strategic ties and incentive to deliver.

There are several **recommendations** extracted from this evaluation **for the next steps for the SP Strategy implementation**:

1. Keep the momentum and continue developing of the Strategy Action Plan, Monitoring Plan and financing and costing for the implementation of the National Social Protection Strategy
2. Ensure the SP Strategy implementation plan is sufficiently integrated into the existing GoL's institutions (e.g. NSSF) and, if necessary, carry out feasibility analysis to identify optimal solutions for institutionalization of SP Strategy
3. Raise awareness of the CSOs to explain that shifting narrative from aid distribution to SP would not lose their benefits, creating thereby stronger push towards SP system in Lebanon
4. Raise public awareness to strengthen their role as right holders and create avenues for them to call duty bearers accountable in delivering SP Strategy.
5. Strengthen the SP platform by creating community and proactive civic space for policy reflections by the CSOs beyond only OPDs and nurture information transparency and knowledge sharing among SP stakeholders. On a short run, revitalize the dialogues with the CSOs and inform them about the progress of the SP Strategy approval.
6. Consider positioning SP Strategy governance mechanism at the inter-ministerial level to avoid political influence and to have mandate and convening power over ministries.
7. Ensure the momentum with the new RC and continue advocating with the GoL for the SP Strategy implementation.
8. Explore lessons learned from country-wide cash transfer implemented by WFP to define most optimal modalities for social grants and suchlike under the SP Strategy.
9. If considered relevant to partner up with NPTP, consider requesting and supporting the GoL with the evaluation of the institution program and its performance.

10. Consider supporting the GoL to carry out feasibility study to define data governance mechanism based on the IMPACT database and based on the efforts already implemented by the WFP in helping to adapt the IMPACT database to the needs of SP sector

There are also several **recommendations** extracted from this evaluation *for the similar interventions*:

1. Consult CSOs in the design process not after the design is finalized
2. Consider joint events under joint programmes through, for instance, joint dissemination of the results.
3. Consider better alignment of timelines between PUNOs.
4. Consider more critical analysis of partnership among UN agencies while engaging in JPs to ensure full alignment of interests and capacities to contribute.
5. Consider more structured approach to interagency dialogue to benefit from comparative and competitive advantages of each organization.
6. Ensure adequate financial reporting of JP initiatives.
7. Ensure adequate oversight of financial management.

Evaluation came up with the following **lessons learned and good practices**:

Lessons learned:

1. If UN is prepared to act as one and is led/represented by the RC, the bargaining power of the PUNOs increased
2. If PUNOs don't wait till the end of the process to start political process and embrace 'endorsement layer by layer' approach, then the process to negotiate the final product for approval is more smooth
3. If the power of good communication by listening and giving significance well understood and implemented by the PUNOs, then national partners engage in a more meaningful way
4. If the importance of educating and raising awareness of people is understood and implemented by the PUNOs, then additional pressure from the right holders implemented towards duty bearers deliver upon expectations.
5. If inviting representatives from various agencies come with more detailed request of the expertise and role that is expected from those representatives, then right people designated and therefore, meaningful discussions could be implemented.

Good practices:

1. Involvement of OPDs in developing products that are directly related to their needs
2. Instrumental role of RC in reaching out to highest executive level in the country

3. Inter-agency coordination mechanism but introducing more nuanced requirements on representation of the government agencies and more structured consultation process

Introduction

This document presents the Final Report for the Final Independent Evaluation of the Programme “*Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national Social Protection (SP) system for Lebanon*”² with the implementation period of 1 January 2020 – 31 January 2022. The no-cost extension was granted to the programme till 30 September 2022. The programme is funded by the Joint SDG Fund through the The Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO)³ and implemented as the Lebanon’s SDG Fund Joint Programme (JP). The Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs) includes UNICEF, WFP, ILO, UN Women, and UNDP, whereby UNICEF is the Focal Point role, sharing this role with the Resident Coordinator Office (RCO). The total budget of the programme is USD 2,7 million. The Programme national partner was the Ministry of Social Affairs of Lebanon.

The final independent evaluation was commissioned jointly by the PUNOs on behalf of the Lebanon’s SDG Fund JP to explore the progress made towards the expected results of the JP, extract lessons learned, and propose recommendations for the future programming.

The independent evaluation was carried out during the period of July – August 2022 by an independent consultant contracted by the PUNOs.

Background and Programmed Description

It is critical to evaluate the progress of the JP against its operational context. This section explains the challenging and highly complex development and humanitarian context in Lebanon and provides a brief overview of the programme progress vis-à-vis its results framework.

Background

Lebanon is amidst its worst ever economic, social, and political crisis that defines the unprecedentedly complex and challenging context for the JP. The unfolding of the social,

² <https://www.jointsdgfund.org/programme/transforming-national-dialogue-development-inclusive-national-sp-system-lebanon>

³ <https://mptf.undp.org>

economic and financial crises started in mid-2019 and continued during the JP's implementation period. In 2021 the Lebanon financial and economic crisis was ranked among the top 10 and possibly top 3 most severe crises episodes globally in 150 years.⁴ Both the economic and social situation is qualified as catastrophic. The local currency has lost up to 90% of its value.⁵ The GDP contraction is highest among 193 countries, reaching up to 58,1% from 2019 to 2021.⁶ Over the period of 2009-2021 the price increase of the consumer goods in Lebanon reached 544.36%.⁷ As a result, over 82% of the population lives in multidimensional poverty as of 2021.⁸ Health and education system collapsed. The situation is exacerbated by the socio-economic challenges caused by over 1,5mil Syrian refugees and pre-existing population of an estimated 180,000 Palestinian refugees,⁹ majority of which lives in extreme poverty. The Lebanon spending on national social safety nets was at 0.44% of GDP compared to the average regional spending at 1%¹⁰ before the start of JP in 2018, indicating the degree of priority it received in the political agenda.

The economic crisis has been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, the blast of the Beirut port in August 2020. The recent war in Ukraine has heightened the food security risk across the globe and caused sharp price rise in Lebanon, elevating Lebanon to the top 10 countries in the world most heavily impacted by food price inflation in 2022 (122%).¹¹ Political turbulations and frequently changing government of Lebanon provided additional factor of complexity in the context of the programme. The last parliamentary elections were held in May 2022, but the formation of new government was yet to be finalized, meaning the current one continues its role of a 'care-taker'. The overall situation created extreme dissatisfaction among population as well as demand and expectations towards the political elites and the international stakeholders for immediate efforts to stabilize the situation and recover from it. The World Bank has labeled the crisis in Lebanon as a 'deliberate depression'¹² arguing that the depression was self-imposed or '*... more precisely, imposed onto the general population*

⁴ Lebanon Economic Monitor: The Great Denial, WB, 2021

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/36862/LEM%20Economic%20Monitor%20Fall%202021.pdf>

⁵ Managing Lebanon's Compounding Crises, Crisis Group, 2021 <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/lebanon/228-managing-lebanons-compounding-crises>

⁶ Lebanon's Crisis: Great Denial in the Deliberate Depression, WB, 2022 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/01/24/lebanon-s-crisis-great-denial-in-the-deliberate-depression>

⁷ <https://www.worlddata.info/asia/lebanon/inflation-rates.php>

⁸ Multidimensional poverty in Lebanon (2019-2021), ESCWA Policy Brief, 2021

https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/news/docs/21-00634- multidimensional_poverty_in_lebanon_policy_brief_en.pdf

⁹ Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020, UN, <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/lebanon-crisis-response-plan-2017-2020-2020-update>

¹⁰ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialprotectionandjobs/publication/the-state-of-social-safety-nets-2018>

¹¹ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/b5de315c82b1a3bb32bf30057aad9b74-0320012022/original/Food-Security-Update-LXVIII-Aug-11-2022.pdf>

¹² Lebanon Economic Monitor: The Great Denial, WB, 2021

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/36862/LEM%20Economic%20Monitor%20Fall%202021.pdf>

by the elite that has long ruled the country and captured the state and its associated economic rents...”.

The JP was introduced in Lebanon in 2020 when there was no social protection system in the country, except some scattered schemes with low coverage and lack of coordination resulted in high fragmentation and duplication of assistance:

- *National Social Security Fund (NSSF)* operating under the tutelage of the Ministry of Labor since 1963 with the focus to provide limited financial securities in the form of the sickness and maternity fund, the end-of-service indemnity fund, and the family allowances fund.
- *National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP)* co-managed by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (PCM) and the Ministry of Social Affairs as a first state programme providing social assistance to the poorest population. At the inception of the JP the NPTP was reaching the bottom 10,000 households with food assistance.

Acknowledging the criticality of establishing a comprehensive social protection system in Lebanon, all strategic agreements of the international donor community with the Government of Lebanon have included special provisions on equitable and accessible social protection: (i) the Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF),¹³ (ii) the United Nations Strategic Framework (UNSF) Lebanon 2017-2020¹⁴ and the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023 – 2025¹⁵ for Lebanon; (iii) the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2019¹⁶ and the new round of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) 2022-2023,¹⁷ and (iv) the staff-level agreement on Economic Policies¹⁸ reached between the IMF and the Government of Lebanon. With this, there was a ‘window of opportunity’ opened in 2019 to implement targeted efforts towards building a comprehensive, inclusive, and right-based social protection system in Lebanon.

Programme Description

The “Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national Social Protection (SP) system for Lebanon” was designed to achieve the following outcome: **establishment of a strengthened national SP system, that is inclusive, integrated, rights based, efficient and effective, with a specific emphasis on gender and people with disabilities (PwD).**

The JP’s expected *output* includes the following:

¹³ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lebanon/publication/lebanon-reform-recovery-reconstruction-framework-3rf>

¹⁴ <https://lebanon.un.org/en/110428-united-nations-strategic-framework-unsf-lebanon-2017-2020>

¹⁵ <https://lebanon.un.org/en/179417-united-nations-sustainable-development-cooperation-framework-2023-2025>

¹⁶ <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/lebanon-crisis-response-plan-2017-2020-2019-update>

¹⁷ <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/lebanon-crisis-response-plan-lcrp-2022-2023>

¹⁸ <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2022/04/07/pr22108-imf-reaches-agreement-on-economic-policies-with-lebanon-for-a-four-year-fund-facility>

1. An integrated cross-sector national SP policy is developed for Lebanon, and supports the establishment of a rights-based, state-led gender and disability responsive SP system
2. Evidence to assess the fiscal, social and economic impact of gender-responsive SP reforms generated and used
3. Capacity of the GOL in implementing well-performing, scalable and replicable social assistance interventions that equally meet the needs of both women and men is developed building on the basis of the NPTP and related disability social safety nets
4. Equitable and innovative modalities for enhancing the adequacy and coverage of NSSF social insurance schemes amongst the working poor are developed in a gender and disability responsive manner
5. An innovative platform of dialogue for civil society and academia to provide contributions in the development of a national SP system is established

As a JP that is funded through the UN SDG Fund¹⁹ it was also aligned with the UN SDG Fund priorities, namely with the Outcome 1: *Integrated multi-sectoral policies to accelerate SDG achievement implemented with greater scope and scale*. The acceleration of the achievement of the SDGs in Lebanon was seen through establishing social protection system to: *directly contribute* towards the achievement of the impact on poverty alleviation (1.3.1)²⁰ and inequality reduction targets (10.4.1)^{21,22} as well as *indirectly contribute* towards universal healthcare coverage (SDG3),²³ reduced discrimination against women (SDG5)²⁴ and support decent work (SDG8),²⁵ whereby:

- 1.3 target related the implementation of the nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.
- 1.5 target related to the building of the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations, and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters
- 5.1 target related to the ending of gender discrimination
- 8.5 target related to the decent work for all women and men including young people
- 10.4 target related to the adoption of the policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality
- 16.6 target related to the development of the effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels

¹⁹ <https://www.sdgfund.org>

²⁰ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal1>

²¹ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal10>

²² <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/?Text=&Goal=10&Target=10.4>

²³ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal3>

²⁴ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>

²⁵ <https://sdgs.un.org>

Evaluation Methodology and Questions

- **Methodology**

Evaluation objectives: (i) to provide systematic and evidence-based review of the progress made towards the realization of the JP outcome; and (ii) provide strategic recommendations for the future programming and planning towards strengthening social protection in Lebanon.

Evaluation scope: The evaluation scope included all the activities managed under the JP programme. Geographically, the scope covered the whole country of Lebanon during the period of 1 January 2020 – 1 September 2022.

Evaluation design: The evaluation design applied the following analytical approaches:

- Results-based approach with the focus on the ToC and the progress made by the JP vis-à-vis its results framework. A reconstructed ToC was developed by the evaluator to indicate more nuanced ToC that was more calibrated to the implementation of the JP and captured additional directions of activities explored by the JP team.
- System-based approach with the focus on JP and its interaction and interlinkages with the complex external context.
- Participatory approach with the focus to ensure that all partners and stakeholders were represented adequately in the data collection process. Special attention was provided to ensure that the evaluation employed gender and disability lenses with specific focus on two dimensions:
 - (i) *results-focused*, e.g. with the focus on how gender sensitive was the JP and how JP advanced the rights of the target groups and particularly PWDs (*the right holders*);
 - (ii) *process-oriented*, e.g. to ensure adequate representation of both duty holders and right bearers in the evaluation process, ensure gender-disaggregated data, etc.

The evaluation was framed under the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, including relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. A systematic assessment of the long-term impact of the interventions on beneficiaries and their contexts was not part of the evaluation scope as it was too early to explore the impact of the JP. Only early signals of the impact of the JP were considered for this evaluation. The evaluation was carried out in conformity with the requirements of the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, namely, internationally agreed evaluation principles, goals, and targets; utility; credibility; independence; impartiality; ethics; transparency; human rights and gender equality; national evaluation capacities; and professionalism.

Limitations: There were few limitations along the evaluation process:

- *Availability of key informants:* it was a challenging process to book key informants for the interviews. It was particularly challenging to book representatives from the Government of Lebanon. To counterbalance this risk, evaluation paid careful attention to data triangulation.
- *Quality of JP narrative and financial reports:* The detailed financial reports were not required under this JP and therefore, they were not available. Additional data mining from each PUNO regarding the financial management of their share in the JP budget was not possible due to limited time for this evaluation. The narrative reports were substantially lacking factual information on the progress of the JP to clearly define who, what, when and why questions.

Data collection: Data collection methods included desk review and interviews (22 in total whereby 11 male and 11 female key informants were interviewed) with key informants based on availability sampling, i.e. interviews were carried out with those informants who made themselves available for this evaluation. The **triangulation principle** of utilizing multiple sources for data and methods was applied to validate evaluation findings.

Data analysis: The analysis of data was carried out using two compatible strategies:

- *Change analysis* to demonstrate the progress made by the JP vis-à-vis its results framework; and
- *Contribution analysis* to make reasonable conclusion about the contribution the JP has made or not to both intended and unintended outcomes based on evidence and along the evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence and validity of design, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact orientation and coherence of UN Development system.

Evaluation governance and quality assurance: An **Evaluation Management Group** was established with the evaluation specialists from each PUNO to support the evaluation and provide high-level quality assurance of the evaluation. The **ILO Evaluation Manager (EM)** provided coordination and logistical support in getting access to all needed resources for the evaluation.

- **Evaluation questions**

Table 1 below provides the evaluation questions.

Table 1: Evaluation questions

<i>Evaluation Criteria</i>	<i>Evaluation Question</i>
Criterion: RELEVANCE	Are the JP's intended results aligned with national priorities and the needs of the most vulnerable population in the country? What measures have been taken to ensure alignment?

Are we doing the right things?	To what extent have persons with disabilities, in particular children and women with disabilities, been consulted through their representative organizations?
Criterion: COHERENCE and Validity of design How well does the intervention fit?	Are the programme strategies and structures coherent and logical?
	Does the programme make a particular use of a monitoring and evaluation framework? How appropriate and useful are the indicators in assessing the programme progress? Are indicators gender sensitive? Are the means of verification for the indicators appropriate? Are the assumptions for each objective and output realistic?
	To what extent did the programme design take into account: Specific gender equality and non-discrimination concerns, including inclusion of people with disabilities, relevant to the programme context?
	What are the advantages of the JP vis-à-vis other on-going interventions in the SP field in Lebanon? Are there overlaps, duplications? What are the partnerships mechanism to promote synergies across various interventions in the SP field in Lebanon?
Criterion: EFFECTIVENESS and Progress Are the things we are doing working?	What progress has the programme made towards achieving the overall outcome and outputs?
	To what extent did the programme contribute to support inclusion of persons with disabilities?
	To what extent did the programme respond emerging needs during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis?
Criterion: EFFICIENCY Are we doing things right?	To what extent have programme activities been cost-effective? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the outcome? To what extent can the programme results justify the time, financial and human resources invested in the programme?
	How efficient was the 'joint' programme vis-s-vis what would have been done as individual agency intervention?
Criterion: Impact orientation What difference does the intervention make?	What were the interventions long-term effects on equitable gender relations?
	To what extent has the programme contributed to accelerating the SDGs at the national level?
Criterion: SUSTAINABILITY Will the changes last?	Are the results achieved by the programme likely to be sustainable? What measures have been considered to ensure that the key components of the programme are sustainable beyond the life of the programme?
	To what extent was sustainability of impact taken into account during the design of the programme?
	How effectively has the programme build national ownership and capacity? In what ways are results anchored in national institutions and to what extent can the local partners maintain them financially at the end of programme?
Criterion: Coherence of UN Development System	Was the RC able to draw on the expertise and assets of the entire UN system to address the programme's development priorities?
	Was the RC and UNCT able to leverage the positive results of the programme and capitalize on it to promote a working model with stronger joint up approaches for analysis and support?
	Has the programme ensured a coherent UN support to national priorities and government?

Key evaluation findings

This section provides the evaluation findings through change analysis and contribution analysis based on OECD DAC evaluation criteria.

Key findings: change analysis

The achievement of the JP's outcome was envisaged through the delivery of the five outputs as illustrated in Table 2 below. The table also demonstrated in traffic lights the progress of the JP towards the end of its implementation period. The JP prodoc suggested that each work package would have its lead agency and support agencies, however, there were some deviations in practice: (i) the position of lead was shared between UNICEF and IL for the outputs 1, and 5; for the output 2 the UN Women was indicated in the TOR to lead these activities but in practice there was no lead PUNO and instead, various studies that were directly contributing to the design of the SP Strategy were jointly coordinated by UNICEF and ILO, while reviews from a gender perspective were led by UN Women. The activities under the outputs 3 and 5 were led as per prodoc by the WFP and ILO respectively.

Table 2: Joint Programme Progress

Outcome					
The establishment of a strengthened national SP system, that is inclusive, integrated, rights based, efficient and effective, with a specific emphasis on gender and PwD					
Outputs	Indicators	Baseline	Targets	Lead PUNO / support PUNOs	Progress
Output 1: An integrated cross-sector national SP policy is developed for Lebanon, and supports the establishment of a rights-based, state-led gender and disability responsive SP system	National gender-sensitive SP framework developed (incl # of thematic areas in the national SP framework that include gender perspective and disability)	0	1	Co-Leads: UNICEF and ILO Support: UNDP, UN Women and WFP	1
Output 2: Evidence to assess the fiscal, social and economic impact of gender-responsive SP reforms generated and used	Availability of evidence on economic and gender impacts of SP reforms	No info	2 studies	NO LEAD: UNICEF and ILO to lead SP related studies UN Women to lead gender	15

				related studies WFP to lead NPTF related studies	
Output 3: Capacity of the GOL in implementing well-performing, scalable and replicable social assistance interventions that equally meet the needs of both women and men is developed building on the basis of the NPTP and related disability social safety nets	3.1 Beneficiary tracking report for NPTP beneficiaries produced and shared with disaggregated data by gender	0	1 MoSA's Beneficiary Data Management system for NPTP	Lead: WFP	
	3.2 % of NPTP HHs, including women, men, and female-headed households, receiving food assistance monthly	23% of NPTP HHs	50% of NPTP HHs receiving food assistance monthly	Lead: WFP	
	3.3 Disability sensitive design adopted in the operations, access and implementation of the NPTP	0	1	Lead: WFP Support: ILO	
Output 4: Gender equitable and innovative modalities for enhancing the adequacy and coverage of NSSF social insurance schemes amongst the working poor are developed and tested	4.1 Social (health) insurance benefit reforms to enhance adequacy, financial sustainability, efficiency and responsiveness and gender responsiveness to the needs of the working poor adopted through national dialogue	0	1 on End-of-Service indemnity scheme 1 on health insurance scheme	Lead: ILO	
	4.2 Sector/employment-status based strategies/roadmaps for extension of social (health) insurance to vulnerable informal economy workers, especially women, developed and endorsed through national dialogue	0	2	Lead: ILO	

Output 5: A platform of dialogue for civil society and academia, which enables participation from women and people with disabilities, to generate and build on inclusive contribution to the national discussion is established.	Civil society platform established to increase non-state actor engagement; dialogue has gender and disability focus	0	1	Co-Leads: UNICEF and ILO	
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The JP made the following progress vis-à-vis its targets:

Output 1: The target for this output is **fully achieved** – the first ever National Social Protection Strategy for Lebanon was developed. Intensive consultations were organized by the ILO and UNICEF and the Beyond Group (a research organization contracted to facilitate the design of the document) with the wide range of civil society organizations, research institutions, external experts, other UN partners and international stakeholders but less so with the national authorities. The meetings were held under the high patronage of the Prime Minister of the country, which was possible to achieve through active personal engagement of the UN Resident Coordinator. The discussions were organized during the period of 2020-2021, following initial work on shaping national vision on SP Strategy carried out by UNICEF much before this JP. In May 2022 the Council of Ministers (CoM) of the Government of Lebanon (GoL) reviewed the SP Strategy and concluded that the current draft could be considered preliminary approved with some caveats, to address which a specially established Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee was set up under the CoM.²⁶ The final decision was expected in six-month time starting from May 2022. Apart from semantic changes proposed, the CoM proposed to explicitly mention that the beneficiaries of the SP system must be ‘citizens of Lebanon’ instead of ‘people in Lebanon’, which raised the issue of Syrian and Palestine refugees and if they could be covered under the proposed SP system.

Output 2: the targets of this output were **significantly exceeded** – several studies, analytical reports and advocacy papers were produced under the JP to inform the Strategy. More specifically: **(1)** Report “The Life of Women and Men in Lebanon: A Statistical Portrait”; **(2)** Guidelines on integrating gender in cash programmes; **(3)** Report “Women on the Verge of an Economic Breakdown” on the impact of economic crisis on women; **(4)** Report “Modeling and forecasting of budget and treasury revenues in Lebanon”; **(5)** analytical papers on (i)

²⁶ Documents that require state budget funding must be formally approved by the Parliament.

Gross Domestic Product, (ii) exchange rates used in the national accounts, (iii) changes to the methods of estimating GDP in 2020, (iv) national accounts estimates, (v) The expatriates' transfers: the impact of remittances and financial flow; **(6)** Social protection situational analysis; **(7)** policy paper "Towards social protection floor in Lebanon"; **(8)** technical note for discussion on "Bridging towards a new Pension System for Private Sector Workers in Lebanon"; **(9)** Draft Law Submitted by Virtue of Decree No. 13760 on Amending Certain Provisions of the Social Security Law and Establishing a Retirement and Social Protection Scheme; **(10)** positioning paper "Towards a Right-based Social Protection System in Lebanon"; **(11)** positioning paper "A Social Protection Emergency Response: A Bridge Towards a Comprehensive National Social Protection Plan"; **(12)** positioning paper "Towards a Rights-Based and Comprehensive Social Protection System for Lebanon"; **(13)** A glimmer of Hope amidst the Pain: Voices of older people on social protection and the need for a social pension in Lebanon (in partnership with HelpAge International); **(14)** Budget review policy brief "Social protection spending in Lebanon: a deep dive into State Financing of Social Protection"; **(15)** Baseline assessment report "Social Protection in Lebanon, From a Gender a Gender Perspective", **(16)** assessment of the Financial Position and Short Term Financial Risks faced by the NSSF in Lebanon, **(17)** assessment of disability inclusion in NPTP.

Output 3: the targets for this output are **reached partially**. Various interventions were made under the JP to build capacities of NPTP. More specifically, the JP supported to digitalize the NPTP registration process at a small scale and introduced post distribution monitoring system. For the first time a direct cash support was introduced through NPTP (the previous modalities included cost waver system, ad-hoc in-kind assistance, and one-time cash transfer), which is an important modality to be used for the SP Strategy. Through mobilizing larger range of donors, the cash support through NPTP was extended from initial 10,000 households (HH) at the inception of the JP to 50,000 HH in 2022 with the target to reach 75,000HH by the end of 2022. Besides the coverage, over the course of the JP the transfer value of the NPTP E-card assistance has increased from 15USD per individual to 20USD as of April 2022. The scale up was possible due to advocacy efforts and mobilization of a large group of donors (EU, Germany, Italy, Norway, Canada, etc.). To enhance the registration, reporting and monitoring processes within the NPTP, the JP reached out to some of the network of 230²⁷ Social Development Centers (SDCs) across the country, who were working directly with the NPTP beneficiaries.

No indication was found on disability sensitive design adopted in the operations, access and implementation of the NPTP.

Output 4: the target for this output was **achieved partially**. The achievement was partial vis-à-vis the output that required 'development and testing' while the progress only covered 'development' but not yet 'testing'. This was the element of inconsistency in the prodoc – the

²⁷ Based on information provided by WFP.

outcome expectation is to ‘test’, while the results framework was geared towards ‘design and development’ only. In any case, the change analysis and its conclusion was focused on actual progress vis-à-vis the claimed outcomes of the JP.

In the course of the JP’s implementation, the efforts were made to enhance the adequacy and coverage of the NSSF social insurance schemes. Towards this end, the end-of-service indemnity scheme in Lebanon was fully revised, concluding thereby the ongoing discussions in the country for the last 20 years. In the absence of a full-fledged pension system, a temporary arrangement was designed and introduced in the form of the pension reform for the private sector workers. The draft law was approved in the relevant parliamentary sub-committee in May 2022 pending final approval from the new Parliament.

The Unemployment insurance fund was established as the 4th scheme under the NSSF with the mandate to provide social security coverage in Lebanon and the draft legislation produced.

Reforms related to health insurance schemes were not introduced though a study on financial analysis of the health insurance scheme under the NSSF was carried out and recommendations provided for the health scheme reform taking into consideration the new economic reality in the country.

Under the JP a series of consultations were held, and national consensus was reached regarding establishment of Social Grants to target households with lifecycle vulnerabilities in Lebanon. Building on this achievement, ILO and UNICEF joint efforts with the European Commission (EC) to initiate a new project “Addressing life-cycle vulnerabilities through social protection – Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon” in 2021. The project was designed for 36 months with the budget of USD 26.8Million USD. The overall objective of the project was to reach wider coverage of social protection in Lebanon.

Through a lengthy process of public consultations, a consensus was reached about disability allowance in Lebanon. The proposal remained currently under discussion within the GoL.

In addition, technical assistance was provided to the NSSF by assessing their financial position and short-term financial risks. This result was not initially envisaged in the JP but was delivered in response to emerging needs. As indicated by the Key Points for Action from the Joint Social Protection Mission to Lebanon (April 2022)²⁸ and acknowledging the criticality of data and benchmarks, an initial agreement was reached with the WB to invest jointly in digitalizing the registration, reporting and monitoring system on the basis of the existing

²⁸ Carried out by UNICEF, ILO, WFP, WB and EU.

IMPACT system (the platform initially designed for vaccine distribution). This work has been actively promoted by the WFP in partnership with WB.

Output 5: the target for this output was **fully achieved**. An informal national platform was established under the JP with involvement of the eight organizations for people with disabilities (OPDs), which whom multiple consultations were organized to contribute to the design of the SP Strategy.

Additional results areas that were not envisaged in the initial programme design and introduced to the JP in response to emerging needs:

- (i) *Public awareness on their rights for social protection.* The efforts of the JP include the following: National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) Communication and Outreach Plan (developed but not published yet), NPTP e-card booklet, Booklet on NPTP beneficiary enrolment cycle, Hayat Card booklet, 1 banner and 1 poster on the registration and coverage of the NPTP, multiple media and social media publications about social protection.
- (ii) *Capacity development of the SP stakeholders.* In response to the needs expressed by the Ministry of Finance, the JP mobilized its resources to support the Macro-fiscal Department of the Ministry of Finance with the adjustments in the software they use for the state budget forecasts.

Also, technical assistance was provided to the Central Administration of Statistics (CAS) to ensure the production of essential data related to Consumer Price Index and the National Accounts.

Outcome: the JP's outcome was not realistic to be fully achieved within the limited timeframe and resources of the JP, and it was **achieved partially**. Instead, the JP **achieved an important intermediary outcome**, that was the establishment of the reference point for continuous efforts of establishing the national SP system in Lebanon by shaping a shared national vision, defining critical elements of a comprehensive SP system, creating ownership among key stakeholders and providing initial prioritization of actions through envisaging short-, medium-, and long-term objectives.

Key finding: contribution analysis

RELEVANCE

Finding #1: The intended results of the Joint Programme were highly relevant for the social protection needs in Lebanon.

At the inception of the JP, as found through the comprehensive study carried out by the ILO and UNICEF in 2021,²⁹ the existing SP system was characterized as highly fragmented and duplicating efforts; lacking overarching legal and policy framework; highly inefficient; lacking fiscal space for social spending and prioritization of investments to develop social protection floors. Also, the existing SP system in Lebanon was characterized as a ‘sectarian-based welfarism’ leaving a large portion of the population beyond its coverage, due to the gaps at policy, legislative and institutional levels. With support of the international donors, the predominant focus remained on providing short-term humanitarian response with less attention to more sustainable solutions. In this context, the need for a holistic approach to shape the SP system was growing to address lifecycle vulnerabilities alongside existing anti-poverty efforts. In the context of the growing demand towards a new social contract between the State and the citizen, social protection started to be seen as an accelerator to induce systemic transformative changes in Lebanon and the potential way-out of the deep crisis the country found itself. Already in 2018, the Government of Lebanon with support of UNICEF initiated the national dialogue on social protection in Lebanon to define a shared vision and multi-sectorial strategy for reforms in the field. At this strategic moment the JP rolled out its operations to give additional inputs and multi-stakeholder format to these commitments. ***“It has a huge importance for Lebanon in this historic moment” (testimony from an interview).***

The criticality of social protection in Lebanon has been conditioned in all strategic documents between the GoL and the international donor community, creating thereby strong normative context for the JP to deliver its results. Involvement of CSOs and specifically the organizations for people with disabilities (OPDs) in the national consultations ensured higher relevance of both the process of Strategy design and its focus and strategic priorities.

Finding #2: The relevance of JP has increased over the course of its implementation as the JP triggered a mobilization effect across a range of stakeholders to elevate SP into policy agenda

While the need for social protection was palpable in Lebanon already at the design phase, further decline in the socio-economic conditions of the population of Lebanon opened up a new ‘window of opportunity’ for the SP discourse. At the inception of the JP, the social protection in Lebanon was crude in terms of conceptualization and not visible as a policy area. During the implementation of the JP, through structured consultation processes and mobilization of a wide range of multiple stakeholders, first time ever a space was created for policy discussions towards shaping a shared vision for the SP future in Lebanon. UNICEF and ILO managed to establish various mechanisms of stakeholder mobilization from the national authorities, including MoSA, MOL, NSSF, CAS and others, to civil society organizations, including research institutions and OPDs. A structured consultation processes were set up to explore policy level implications and to discuss various critical issues on operational reforms

²⁹ Towards a social protection floor for Lebanon, 2021, ILO, UNICEF

(e.g. disability allowances, end-of-service indemnity, etc.). By the end of the JP, social protection was recognized as a critical policy area in Lebanon.

Finding #3: For the Lebanese stakeholders the outcome of the JP resonated at very personal level

All Lebanese stakeholders irrespective of their background, professional affiliation, age or gender emphasized their personal relation with the goal of JPs. Such an acknowledgment of the universal value of SP for everyone in Lebanon became a strong unifying factor for the stakeholders to mobilize their resources and get involved. This sentiment was recorded in the context where there was extremely little space for policy discussion and the predominant focus of CSOs was on service provision and not policy dialogue. ***“This is not a UN exercise. This is part of our life.” (testimony from an interview).***

COHERENCE AND VALIDITY OF DESIGN

Finding #4: The design of the JP was largely coherent with three inadequacies: (i) missing a critical intermediary outcome necessary for the achievement of its more ambitious goal of establishment of social protection system in Lebanon; (ii) disconnect between the output 3 and its indicator 3.2, and (iii) overambitious claim of not only developing but also testing of various social insurance schemes

The JP strategy was based on supporting the GoL and a wide range of stakeholders ***(i) to develop evidence, (ii) to foster dialogue and create policy space, and (iii) to support operational reform in the social protection field.*** This strategy was fully in line with the needs to address critical gaps hampering establishment of the SP system in Lebanon. The design of JP followed this logic with three critical inadequacies.

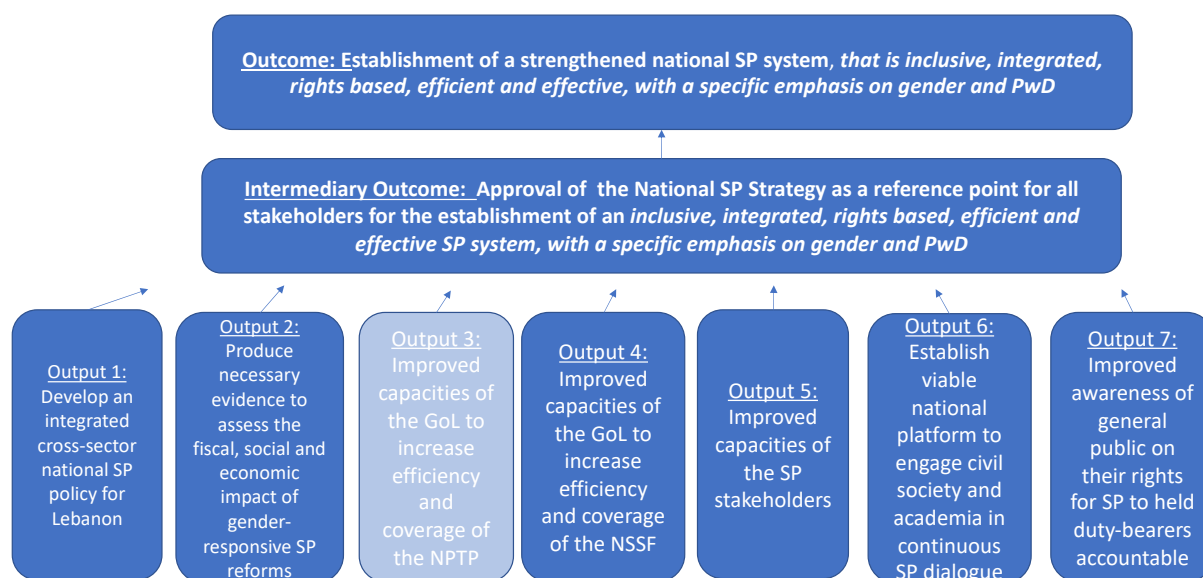
- The granularity of the expected outcome of the JP was too high and the JP design missed to acknowledge that delivery of this result was an incremental and long-term process beyond the capacities of the JP only. There was a need for a more nuanced understanding of the chain of outcomes that would lead to the expected goal such as the establishment of the SP system in Lebanon that was inclusive, integrated, right based, efficient and effective, with a specific emphasis on gender and PwDs. That critical missing outcome was the achievement of the shared vision among largely fragmented stakeholders and the high-level roadmap towards establishment of the system.
- The indicator 3.2 of the JP suggested that the number of households receiving food assistance through cash transfers expected to be increased from its baseline of 23% of NPTP registered households (HH) to 50% HH by the end of the JP. There was a disconnect between this indicator and the output. This indicator did not indicate the change of the output, which is ‘building capacity of GoL’. This couldn’t be the case if

the output would have been written as ‘advocacy on increasing coverage and scale of NPTP services’. Besides and more importantly, this output was slightly disconnected from the JP’s outcome. Even though NPTP was part of the social protection ecosystem in Lebanon, however, supporting enhancement of some of the processes for social safety nets fall out of logic of the system development for social protection.

- The output 4 was overambitious and not realistic given the limited timeframe of the JP. It suggested both development and testing of the gender equitable and innovative modalities for enhancing the adequacy and coverage of NSSF social insurance schemes.

The revised Theory of Change (ToC) of the JP in Exhibit 1 included the critical intermediary outcome to precondition the development of the SP system, as its high-level ambition. It also broadened the scope of the JP strategy to include the capacity development to a range of stakeholders beyond NSSF and NPTP as well as public awareness of the general population.

Exhibit 1: Revised Theory of Change



NB. The output 3 was included in the revised ToC as it was the part of initial design of the JP, though there was a mismatch with the JP’s outcomes.

Finding # 5: The JP design found a unique niche in the landscape of the SP-focused initiatives in Lebanon

In the highly volatile context in Lebanon with pressing humanitarian needs, the predominant focus of the GoL, donors and CSOs was on the provision of safety nets and humanitarian service. The JP was launched in times when there were no consolidated efforts invested into the SP system building in Lebanon, except early efforts of UNICEF to shape national dialogue

around SP. It required a commitment and persistence of the UNICEF and ILO followed by UNDP and UN Women to look beyond this short- and medium-term needs and to explore system development, maintaining a balanced focus on two concepts: social protection floor and social safety nets. With its system building focus, JP was standing out of all SP-related initiatives in the country. ***“This project was one of the best contributions of UN Agencies in Lebanon” (testimony from an interview).***

Finding # 6: The JP was unique and truly inclusive in its gender sensitivity and how PwDs contributed to the design of the SP system in Lebanon

At the early stages of the JP implementation, an informal platform of eight organizations for people with disabilities (OPDs) was established to be consulted for the development of the SP system. Their engagement was in two aspects: (i) design of the ST Strategy facilitated by Beyond group (contracted from mid 2019 till end of 2021), and (ii) design of National Disability Allowance facilitated by the ILO and UNICEF. The OPDs confirmed that it was the first time they were given space and voice to raise their concerns in the discussion about the social protection system in Lebanon. There was though, a general perception that the consultations organized for the SP Strategy were not sufficient and took place after the document got its shape. Important to take into consideration that the design of the SP Strategy took place under very challenging constraints posed by the COVID-19 restrictions and only few offline and two online meetings were possible to organize, while much of analytical work was also carried out by the Beyond Group and the PUNOs. After the first draft of the Strategy was shaped, no further follow-ups were organized with the OPDs. The OPDs considered this as a lost momentum to continue dialogue on SP in Lebanon. Instead, during the design of the National Disability Allowance the meetings with OPDs were organized by ILO and UNICEF regularly. The platform performed an advisory role and even if the recommendations provided by OPDs were later on revised by the GoL (e.g. with regards to the age group to be prioritized for the disability-related benefits), the OPDs highly priced this practice, emphasizing its unique nature in Lebanon. ***“This was first time in Lebanon to include OPDs in any programme development related to their needs” (testimony from an interview).***

The gender lenses were applied throughout the JP’s implementation. Particularly, the revision of the SP in Lebanon from a gender perspective informed the SP Strategy. Hiring the same consultancy company to revise the Strategy from the gender perspective came with advantages and disadvantages. Knowing the document in all its details by the Beyond Group was an advantage, however, not having the third actor to perform this task missed another fresh perspective on the Strategy.

EFFECTIVENESS

Finding #7: The JP largely accomplished its expected results

As indicated through the findings of change analysis the JP had fully achieved its outputs 1, 2, and 5. The output 3 was slightly outside the scope of the JP, however, there too was partial progress noted. The output 4 was overambitious for the JP scope. The outcome of the JP was achieved partially.

Finding #8: The JP has demonstrated remarkable progress in shaping national vision on SP Strategy, given highly complex and fragmented context it operated in

As the reconstructed ToC indicated, the JP has reached its intermediary yet still ambition outcome of shaping national vision on SP in Lebanon. This was the first ever SP Strategy in Lebanon and it was adopted by the GoL in May 2022, pending editing from the Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee before the end of 2022. The editing covers some semantic issues but also one critical point on the coverage of the SP Strategy and the responsibility of the GoL over Syrian and Palestine refugees. None of the parties, i.e. the GoL and the international donor community, seemed to have explicit position on this subject and it would require some compromises to find the most optimum solution for this issue. After the final editing, the SP Strategy would become the only reference source for the efforts on SP in Lebanon, providing a common ground for coordination among state and non-state actors. While the final approval of the SP Strategy was pending and uncertain, nevertheless, this was a major milestone towards establishment of the national SP system and a major success of the UN in Lebanon who set the scene for policy work in SP sector in Lebanon.

The facilitation of the process and actual writing of the document was contracted to Beyond Group, a prominent local consulting company. The development of the Strategy took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, which put additional constraints to the process of strategy development. While these risks were not completely under the JP's control, even modest consultations required significant efforts to be organized. The final results received traction from all stakeholders and raised expectations bar even higher. ***"It's one of the rare breakthroughs in the country at policy level" (testimony from an interview).***

Finding #9: The attribution of the achievement of the intermediary results of the JP to the output 3 was imperceptible

The output on capacity development of NPTP falls out of the JP's overall strategy approach, that was to shift from social safety nets interventions towards the SP system addressing lifecycle vulnerabilities. The activities under the output were rather stand-alone activities with limited linkages with the rest of the JP. Under this output some small-scale interventions were made to support NPTP with digitization (i.e. procurement of tablets for monitoring purposes), organization of several post-distribution monitoring surveys, training of social

workers on how to collect data for the post-distribution monitoring survey, development of one poster and one banner.

Finding #10: JP missed the opportunity to learn and inform SP Strategy future implementation by the lessons learned from the cash distribution modality

With the efforts and lobbying of WB and other partners, including WFP in Lebanon, for the first time was cash transfer mechanism introduced to be implemented by the WFP through the NPTP in the whole territory of Lebanon. There was also internal analytical report produced on lessons learned from using this modality, which was the modality for any social grants envisaged to be rolled out under the SP Strategy. No evidence was found that these lessons learned informed the SP Strategy on cash distribution modalities in Lebanon.

Finding #11: The JP designed and implemented successful multi-stakeholder consultation process with CSOs and international partners on disability and age-related benefits

The peculiarity of the local context was such that there was a large share of overlap and duplication of efforts, multiple coordination mechanisms and platforms, and often diffused roles of international partners. Despite this, the JP managed to define a few avenues for its continuous consultations with the experts through expert group discussions and with the partners through various inter-agency coordination platforms. Targeted discussions were organized on regular basis also for the discussion on operational reforms of the NSSF and specifically, for the development of social insurance schemes in Lebanon. The discussions were organized with the OPDs, the elderly group, and the expert group. The findings were further presented and discussed with international partners through multiple coordination platforms for donors and international partners in Lebanon.

Finding #12: Despite all efforts, the consultation process with the national authorities and CSOs for the development of the SP Strategy was perceived insufficient

The consultations on the SP Strategy were organized by the Beyond Group in close partnership and under supervision of UNICEF and ILO. The consultations were organized per each of the five pillars of the STSP Strategy with each meeting gathering over 50 persons – this format would serve for creating buy-in and for validation purposes but might not be very conducive to run detailed discussions. The sentiments expressed by the CSOs indicated their willingness to have had more stronger consultations, with possibility for input prior to the design of the document. Opinion was raised that in some instances ‘consultations’ were merely confused with ‘representation’ and the focus was on having more people in the room rather than on a meaningful discussion. ***‘This empties consultation from its purpose’ (testimony from the interview).*** Stronger sentiments were raised by the Government

representatives questioning the range of stakeholders consulted for the design of the SP Strategy.

During the consultation it became evident that there were differences in the narratives around right-based social protection, moreover, there were no common denominators of the terms and many efforts were invested by the Beyond Group and PUNOs to create a shared starting point for the discussions. In the context with multiplicity of different organizations and interests, blurred lines of responsibilities and no clear sense of direction, it was already a major achievement to manage to get different stakeholders around this theme. This notion was shared by all stakeholders.

Consultations were held with a wider group of UN Agencies through UNCT mechanism also including ESCWA, allowing more input and greater sense of 'delivery as one' among the UN partners. Also, through engagement in various existing donor coordination platforms, the SP and related issues were widely discussed. Even though the multiplicity of such coordination platforms considered more of a challenge to ensure donor efficiency and effectiveness, the JP managed not to diffuse its focus under the influence of various external parties while continuously emphasizing the criticality of the SP system development through all those platforms.

Finding 13: The development and adoption of a Strategy in a highly fragmented and competing context such as Lebanon was possible due to several success factors

The degree of effectiveness in delivering the expected outputs and outcomes of this JP could be explained by a few success factors that came together in this JP: (i) strong human resources and technical expertise within the PUNOs and also within the organizations consulted under this JP; (ii) professional and genuinely carrying staff of UNICEF and ILO who persistently rolled out the work around the design of the SP Strategy; (iii) direct coordination and communication lines with the national authorities from each PUNO allowing for speedy and timely exchange; (iv) pivotal role of the RC to mobilize highest political establishment for this JP; (v) access to the key documentation largely because they have already been developed by UN; (vi) good personal relationships with the national authorities, and (vii) tailored engagement with the GoL to invite their input but not to be dependent on intermediary approval processes.

Finding 14: The reporting process was organized very smoothly however, the reports did not fully fit-for-purpose: it provided insufficient and often incorrect information on what, when, by whom

The PUNOs were to produce quarterly reports, semi-annual reports, and annual narrative reports including very brief financial information. Given the budget per stakeholder, the

frequency of the reporting was considered as a burden to each PUNO. The structure of the report itself was rather cumbersome, requiring multiple repetitions. Another major issue was the information provided in each annual report by the PUNOs, which was more of a repetitive opinion statement and lacked precision and correct information about what, by whom, and when.

Finding 15: The JP managed to reasonably adjust its implementation during the COVID-19
During the COVID-19 lockdown the JP adapted its activities to the imposed constraints but kept them evolving. Meetings were predominantly moved to online format, which inevitably affected the JP's implementation by limited outreach, limited engagement of stakeholders, slowed responses and feedbacks and suchlike.

EFFICIENCY

Finding #16: Limited information was available on the financial management of the JP to conclude about cost-effectiveness of its implementation.

Table 3 below provides an overview of the total expenditure per PUNO vis-à-vis totally requested as of initial budget (see the prodoc) as of mid-September 2022.

Some high-level findings on the JP's cost-effectiveness include:

1. Only high-level financial data on SDG Fund allocations per PUNO was available – in each annual report there were two figures indicating total expenditure and total requested commitment sum.
2. Each PUNO committed its own contribution to the JP budget, information of which was not easily available and data mining required time not allocated for this evaluation. Hence, this information was not taken into consideration for this evaluation.
3. Table 3 indicated several major deviations from the initial budget, with major underreporting (over 50%) noted in the ILO budget as of mid-September 2022. After submission of the first draft of the final report, ILO provided more complete data on its expenditure indicating higher degree of budget delivery. This too suggested that the absence of financial reporting hampered insights in the financial management of the JP.
4. The 'Contractual services expenses' of UN Women were relatively high considering the products developed and this too raised question marks.³⁰
5. There was no indication of oversight over financial management of the JP.

³⁰ In the absence of detailed financial reporting made available to the evaluator in due time, no further conclusions could be made if the spendings were adequate or not.

Table 3: JP budget overview per PUNO

Budget lines	PUNOs									
	UNICEF		ILO		WFP		UNDP		UN Women	
	<i>As of prodoc</i>	<i>Factual</i>	<i>As of prodoc</i>	<i>Factual</i>	<i>As of prodoc</i>	<i>Factual</i>	<i>As of prodoc</i>	<i>Factual</i>	<i>As of prodoc</i>	<i>Factual</i>
Staff & personnel cost	208,748	214,077	280,000	214,778	30,000	67,300	0	0	32,916	5,528
Supplies commodities and materials	50,000	0	0	0	30,000	986	0	0	10,000	0
Equipment vehicles furniture and depreciation	0	106	5,000	4,906	50,000	34,633	0	0	5,000	0
Contractual services expenses	150,000	169,529	285,000	86,911	120,000	102,440	186,916	55,616	120,000	154,348
Travel	12,000	175	10,000	0	50,000	0	0	0	15,000	215
Transfers and grants	100,000	90,553	45,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
General operating	40,000	7,664	29,206	7,381	10,374	1,126	0	47,218	4,000	5,717
Indirect costs	39,252	33,747	45,794	21,978	19,626	13,422	13,084	7,198	13,084	13,084
GRAND TOTAL	600,000	515,852	700,000	335,954	300,000	219,906	200,000	110,032	200,000	178,892
Sum of transfer		600,000		200,000		300,000		200,000		200,000
Outstanding balance (total requested in the prodoc and total spend)		+84,148		+364,046		+80,094		+89,968		+21,108

Legends: red highlights indicate major deviations from the initial budget

Table 4: JP budget share of ILO: updates as of end September 2022

Staff & Personnel cost: 298,354.62

Supplies commodities and materials: n/a

Equipment vehicles furniture and depreciation: 36,831.66

Contractual services expenses: 304,876.78

Travel: 5,185.52

Transfers and grants: n/a

General operating: n/a (even though as of mid-September financial report from the MPTFO, there was 7.381 USD expenditure registered by the ILO)

Indirect costs: 35,823.62

This updated financial reporting from the ILO provided after the first draft of the evaluation report was prepared indicated further inconsistencies in the financial reporting under the JP.

Finding #17: Efficiency of internal coordination mechanism among PUNOs was high

All stakeholders agreed that the efficiency of the internal coordination among PUNOs was high due to effective efforts of UNICEF to provide timely and transparent information, organize quarterly and ad-hoc, when necessary, coordination meetings, provide timely updates and reminders, keep clear communication lines within PUNOs and with the external partners.

Very strong partnership was developed between UNICEF and ILO, operating with one voice and as a one team.

Finding #18: The design of the JP provided several win factors

As a joint programme, the JP allowed to several win factors: (i) mobilizing the advantages of various implementing organizations, (ii) delivering a bigger result which might not be possible if approached individually, (iii) additional political dimension with the engagement of the RC through common packaging and shared narrative. However, there were also efforts needed to overcome individual agency-based perspectives and delegate a share of decision-making to the collective bargaining power of the JP team and to accept the oversight role of the RC.

The win factors allowed establishing working relationships with the WB and also organizing a joint mission in April 2022 for shaping a harmonized donor approach towards building SP system in Lebanon through careful balance of system-based approach (pursuit by JP with strong support from the CSOs) and the social safety net approach (pursuit by the WB). The parties agree on the action points to explore in the next few years.

There were, however, no joint activities among all PUNOs together, not even for the presentation of shared results achieved as One UN, such as panel presentation of knowledge products.

IMPACT ORIENTATION

Finding #19: Long-term effect on equitable gender relations and SDGs acceleration is conditioned to the adoption and quality implementation of the SP Strategy

It was too early to express any evidenced conclusions on the long-term effect of the JP's results on equitable gender relations. However, it was possible to assume with a high degree of certainty that if the SP Strategy provisions would be fully adopted and put into implementation, then the long-term effects on equitable gender relations should be expected. Similarly with regards to SDGs acceleration – there was a potential for a multiplier effect across several SDGs through the roll-out of the SP Strategy. However, the expected transformative change through acceleration of SDGs was conditioned on the quality of the SP Strategy implementation.

Finding #20: Disability inclusion in the JP not only marked a new level of engagement with the PWDs but also created some important preconditions for the disability inclusive social protection in Lebanon

As evidence suggested, the design of the SP Strategy was carried out with direct engagement of the PWDs and organizations advocating for the rights and needs of PWDs. This engagement was considered by the PWDs as truly empowering, elevating PWDs' engagement with a development intervention to a totally new level. On additional note, the ILO and UNICEF have developed disability related social protection system to be realized as part of the SP Strategy. Besides, the new initiatives that were conceptualized for partnership purposes (e.g. new project on advocacy with the ILO) suggests that the impact on the level of activity of the PWDs and their further engagement in development of the SP sector in Lebanon was already noticeable. The JP's further impact on the quality of life of the PWDs through the implementation of the SP Strategy was expected but was yet to be observed if and when the SP Strategy would be realized.

SUSTAINABILITY

Finding #21: The JP triggered few spin-offs managed by the PUNOs within their mandates to initiate implementation of the SP Strategy in Lebanon

UNICEF and ILO continued successful partnership built within the JP to further establishment of the SP system in Lebanon. Hence, building on the achievements of the JP, UNICEF and ILO with the financial support from the EU initiated "Addressing life-cycle vulnerabilities through social protection – Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon" project to widen the coverage of social protection in Lebanon. The aim was set to be achieved *inter alia* through establishment of the inter-ministerial coordination mechanism to oversee the implementation of the SP Strategy and initiation of the implementation of the SP Strategy.

Another successful example was the new cash child grant launched by UNICEF in June 2021, known as "Haddi" meaning 'next to me'. The intention was to establish a child-focused grant mechanism under the Social Grants scheme in line with the concept SP Strategy developed under the JP. The new project aimed to reach over 130,000 vulnerable children and individuals and was implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs. The impact evaluation after six months of the Haddi implementation provided promising results, concluding that 'Haddi is helping to cushion the impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable households'. Meanwhile, Haddi allowed to shape and pilot mechanism of a child grant in Lebanon, it was important to highlight that Haddi was fully donor funded intervention and therefore, the long-term sustainability of it was questionable. Besides, the child grant

distribution used direct transfers from UNICEF avoiding existing national institutions, which might not be considered sustainable yet was less risky from fiduciary perspective.

UN Women included SP in their new Strategic Note (2023 – 2025) as a priority area of attention, which wasn't the case in the previous SN (2018 - 2022). UN Women and WFP signed UN-to-UN agreement to work together on integrating gender perspective into the NPTP's operations.

Through the JP funding, the local ILO team was established in Lebanon. The team continued its efforts towards shaping SP system in Lebanon beyond the JP and has already mobilized additional funding to further shape and implement SP system in Lebanon.

Also, OPDs continue their efforts of sharing disability responsive social protection system through a new project with ILO to develop an advocacy plan for OPDs on SP Strategy and to launch an advocacy campaign. Even though the funding decision for the project was pending, this was another indication of the momentum created by the JP among OPDs in Lebanon.

WFP, UNICEF and ILO indicated their intentions to partner up with the WB to establish a shared registration system for the beneficiaries based on the existing IMPACTS database. Acknowledging largely complex and politically loaded nature of data management for the SP, shaping a clear concept of data governance would determine the sustainability of the efforts in the SP field in Lebanon.

Finding #22: National ownership and capacity was created

The JP managed to generate a strong degree of national ownership and capacity throughout its implementation. While at the inception phase the meetings with stakeholders were largely around explaining what SP entails, at the end of the JP the stakeholders could largely navigate through the specifics of social protection system design. Engagement of national authorities and CSOs during the design phase, as well as the commitment of the MoSA to establish Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee to edit the SP Strategy indicate high level of national commitment. ***“Very impactful implementation” (testimony from an interview).***

COHERENCR OF UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Finding #23: Active engagement of the RC was pivotal

The RC considered SP the second most important issue in the country after financing reforms and performed instrumental role in holding SP high in the political agenda. The RC managed establishing and maintaining strategic ties with the GoL and specifically with the Prime Minister. For comparison, at least five meetings with the Prime Minister were held to discuss the importance of the SP system in Lebanon and to support the implementation of the JP.

Several high-level meetings were organized, whereby the invitations were signed by the PM, which in turn guaranteed presence of invitees.

As for the oversight of the JP, there was no need for the RC's engagement as the JP lead was managing the overall coordination and quality assurance in a smooth way.

Finding #24: The JP ensured largely coherent approach of UN to the national SP priorities

High complementarity and strong partnership between UNICEF and ILO become a driving force for the PUNOs to perform within the JP as one team. The contribution from the UN Women and UNDP were too in line with the set common objectives. Even though the WFP's part in the JP under the Output 3 slightly deviated from the JP's overall rationale, the JP was still recognizable by its efforts. ***“Flagship in our new cooperation framework” (testimony from an interview).***

Finding #25: The JP successfully translated equity considerations throughout all its activities and results

While designing the SP Strategy, efforts were invested in strengthening considerations of equity, which was in line with the SDG policy priority to “leave no one behind”. This approach was demonstrated throughout the JP's implementation with high level of engagement and inclusiveness, as well as in the delivered outputs through clear focus on gender equality and women empowerment and human rights with specific focus on women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons. ***“JP was the opening of the door and gave us a global view on equity ” (testimony from an interview).***

Conclusions and Recommendations

There was a shared notion that the development and the (partial) approval of the SP Strategy marked a turning point in protection of the most vulnerable in Lebanon. Herewith the JP directly contributed to the SDGs acceleration by creating potential for transformative change across various SDGs. The joint format of the programme allowed contributing to the UN reform by providing a platform for the UN agencies to work as One UN, strengthening and benefiting from the RC Office support at the same time. The JP achieved a strategic milestone of shaping shared vision towards SP system in Lebanon, mobilizing multiple stakeholders, raising expectations, and potentially establishing a common reference point for SP efforts across all stakeholders. The results of the JP resonates with all stakeholders at the individual level, creating the strategic ties and incentive to deliver.

There are several recommendations extracted from this evaluation:

Next steps for SP Strategy:

1. Keep the momentum and continue developing of the Strategy Action Plan, Monitoring Plan and financing and costing for its implementation

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
UNICEF, ILO, RCO	High	UN internal resources	2022-2023

2. Ensure the SP Strategy implementation plan is sufficiently integrated into the existing GoL's institutions (e.g. NSSF) and, if necessary, carry out feasibility analysis to identify optimal solutions for institutionalization of SP Strategy

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
UNICEF, ILO, RCO	High	RCO budget	2022

3. Raise awareness of the CSOs to explain that shifting narrative from aid distribution to SP would not lose their benefits, creating thereby stronger push towards SP system in Lebanon

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
UNICEF, ILO	Medium	Through on-going initiatives	On-going

4. Raise public awareness to strengthen their role as right holders and create avenues for them to call duty holders accountable in delivering SP Strategy.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
UNICEF, ILO, WFP, UN Women, UNDP	Medium	Through on-going initiatives	On-going

5. Strengthen the SP platform by creating community and proactive civic space for policy reflections by the CSOs beyond only OPDs and nurture information transparency and knowledge sharing among SP stakeholders. On a short run, revitalize the dialogues with the CSOs and inform them about the progress of the SP Strategy approval.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
UNICEF and ILO	High	Through EU-funded project on Social Grants	2022-2023

6. Consider positioning SP Strategy governance mechanism at the inter-ministerial level to avoid political influence and to have mandate and convening power over ministries.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
RCO	High	RCO budget	2022

7. To ensure the momentum with the new RC and continue advocating with the GoL for the SP Strategy implementation.

<i>Addressed to</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Resource</i>	<i>Timing</i>
<i>RCO</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>RCO budget</i>	<i>2022</i>

8. Explore lessons learned from country-wide cash transfer implemented by WFP to define most optimal modalities for social grants and suchlike under the SP Strategy.

<i>Addressed to</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Resource</i>	<i>Timing</i>
<i>UNICEF, ILO WFP</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Internal resources</i>	<i>2022</i>

9. If considered relevant to partner up with NPTP, consider requesting and supporting the GoL with the evaluation of the institution and its performance.

<i>Addressed to</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Resource</i>	<i>Timing</i>
<i>WFP</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>WFP with additional donor funding</i>	<i>2022-2023</i>

10. Consider supporting the GoL to carry out feasibility study to define data governance mechanism based on the IMPACT database and based on the efforts already implemented by the WFP in adapting the IMPACT database to the needs of SP sector

<i>Addressed to</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Resource</i>	<i>Timing</i>
<i>UNICEF, ILO, WFP</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Mobilize donor funding</i>	<i>2023</i>

For similar interventions:

11. Consult CSOs in the design process not after the design is finalized.

<i>Addressed to</i>	<i>Priority/Importance</i>	<i>Resource</i>	<i>Timing</i>
<i>PUNOs</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Internal</i>	<i>Aligned with respective project cycles</i>

12. Consider joint events under joint programmes through, for instance, dissemination of the results.

<i>Addressed to</i>	<i>Priority/Importance</i>	<i>Resource</i>	<i>Timing</i>
<i>RCO</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Internal</i>	<i>Aligned with respective project cycles</i>

13. Consider better alignment of timelines between PUNOs.

<i>Addressed to</i>	<i>Priority/Importance</i>	<i>Resource</i>	<i>Timing</i>
<i>RCO, lead agency in JPs</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Internal</i>	<i>Aligned with respective project cycles</i>

14. Consider more critical analysis of partnership among UN agencies while engaging in JPs to ensure full alignment of interests and capacities to contribute.

<i>Addressed to</i>	<i>Priority/Importance</i>	<i>Resource</i>	<i>Timing</i>
<i>RCO, UN Agencies interested in JPs</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Internal</i>	<i>Aligned with respective project cycles</i>

15. Consider more structured approach to interagency dialogue to benefit from comparative and competitive advantages of each organization.

<i>Addressed to</i>	<i>Priority/Importance</i>	<i>Resource</i>	<i>Timing</i>
<i>RCO, UN Agencies interested in JPs</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Internal</i>	<i>Aligned with respective project cycles</i>

16. Ensure adequate financial reporting of JP initiatives.

<i>Addressed to</i>	<i>Priority/Importance</i>	<i>Resource</i>	<i>Timing</i>
<i>RCO, UN SDG Fund, MPTFO</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Internal</i>	<i>Aligned with respective project cycles</i>

17. Ensure adequate oversight of financial management.

<i>Addressed to</i>	<i>Priority/Importance</i>	<i>Resource</i>	<i>Timing</i>
<i>RCO, UN SDG Fund, MPTFO</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Internal</i>	<i>Aligned with respective project cycles</i>

Lessons learned

1. If UN is prepared to act as one and is led/represented by the RC, the bargaining power of the PUNOs increased
2. If PUNOs don't wait till the end of the process to start political process and embrace 'endorsement layer by layer' approach, then the process to negotiate the final product for approval is smoother
3. If the power of good communication by listening and giving significance well understood and implemented by the PUNOs, then national partners engage in a more meaningful way
4. If the importance of educating and raising awareness of people understood and implemented by the PUNOs, then additional pressure implemented towards duty bearers to act upon expectations.

5. If inviting representatives from various agencies come with more detailed request of the expertise and role that is expected from those representatives, then right people designated and therefore, meaningful discussions could be implemented.

Good practices

1. Involvement of OPDs in developing products that are directly related to their needs
2. Instrumental role of RC reaching out highest executive level in the country
3. Inter-agency coordination mechanism but introducing more nuanced requirements on representation of the government agencies and more structured consultation process

Annexes

Annex 1: List of informants

<i>Name</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Role</i>
<i>UN partners / 11 interviews</i>		
UNICEF	Sarah Hague	Chief Policy
UNICEF	Yasmine Ibrahim	Social Policy Specialist
WFP	Hiba Douaihy	Programme Policy Officer
WFP	Fouz Koubeissy	Programme Policy Officer
WFP	Antoine Morelvulliez	Chief Social Protection
ILO	Luca Pellerano	Senior Specialist, Social Security
ILO	Rania Eghnatios	Social Protection Officer
UN Women	Jad Halabi	Project Manager
UNDP	Kawthar Dara	Public Finance Management Advisor
UN RCO	Rony Gedeon	Development coordination officer
UN SDG Fund	Nenad Rava	Head of Programmes
UN RCO	Najat Rochdi	RC
<i>Government of Lebanon / 3 interviews</i>		
UNSSF	Chawki Abou Nassif	CEO Finance Director
Ministry of Finance	Mireille Mouawad	Head, Macro-fiscal Department
Ministry of Social Affairs	Maya Nehme	Advisor to the Minister
<i>CSOs, external experts / 8 interviews</i>		
	Adib Nehme	Expert
YAB	Amer Makarem	President
IDA, AOPD	Ibrahim Abdallah	Disability Expert
CeSSRA	Marie-Noëlle AbiYaghi	Director
Arab NGO Network for Development	Ziab Abdel Samad	Director
<i>World Bank / 1 interview</i>		
World Bank	Haneen Ismail Sayed	Program Leader for Human Development in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan
<i>Beyond Group (facilitating design of the Social Protection Strategy) / 1 interview</i>		
Beyond Group	Gilbert Doumit	Director

Terms of Reference

for Final Independent Evaluation for “Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national SP system for Lebanon”

KEY FACTS	
Countries:	Lebanon
Project title:	Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national SP system for Lebanon
Project duration	32 months
Start date	20th January 2020
End date	30th January 2022
Donor	UN SDG Fund
Budget	2,700,000 USD

I. Background

1. Unprecedented economic crisis and eleven years into the Syrian refugee crisis, socioeconomic conditions have in many cases deteriorated in Lebanon. Having the highest refugee per capita in the world (almost 1:3), both refugees and local populations continue to be negatively impacted by the crises. Income vulnerability is estimated at 74% of the Lebanese population (ILO and CAS, 2021), unemployment rates have increased, and Lebanon ranks 140th of 149 countries in the 2018 World Economic Forum (WEF) gender equality index in 2018.
2. Lebanon spending on national social assistance remains at 0.44% of GDP (excluding fee waivers), significantly below the regional average of 1% (WB, The State of Safety Nets 2018). In addition, there is a lack of strategic vision and policy, lack of coordination and oversight and limited capacity for implementation. As such, national SP programs in Lebanon suffer from major coverage gaps alongside a parallel provision to refugees that is central to social stability and cohesion. While the social assistance program, the National Poverty Targeting Program (NPTP) is being gradually scaled up from the original 15,000 beneficiary households (1.5% of the population), most of the vulnerable population continue to face income insecurity without any access to social assistance benefits. The Government has been depending on existing structures used by development partners in delivering this assistance to the poorest Lebanese. A large share of workers, including migrant workers, also operate in the informal economy and are excluded from coverage of either the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), main social insurance schemes, or existing social assistance programs.
3. Women are particularly marginalized when it comes to social protection, as they are underrepresented in the formal labor market in Lebanon (at 23%, compared to 71% of men). The low labor participation rate limits women’s ability to directly access contributory schemes as well as employer-provided benefits. Key gendered issues within SP, such as gender discrimination within the NSSF, gender-sensitive public works and social assistance programmes are neglected by institutions, law, policies, and programmes in Lebanon.
4. Overall, this lack of an integrated national SP system in Lebanon coupled with significant Government underinvestment has led to fragmentation and duplication of assistance as well as increased vulnerabilities of the population not covered by social protection. The

business-as-usual approach would come with a substantial risk for the country and in particular for the most vulnerable – and greater socio-economic pressures could also lead to wider repercussions, such as further escalation of social tension brought about by the protracted refugee crisis and unrest associated with the escalation of the economic and financial crisis and the continuous delay in devising an appropriate response plan. Furthermore, opportunities for participation and inclusion of marginalized groups are an important challenge – women, those in rural areas, those in informal sectors, older people and people living with disabilities are particularly excluded from national discussions and debate on the social contract and rights.

II. Programme Background

5. The overarching strategy of Lebanon's SDG Fund programme is to support Government and a wide range of key stakeholders to develop the evidence, dialogue and operational reform necessary to establish a clear, strategic national vision for social protection in the country. The Lebanon SDG Fund is to enable UN agencies to support this historical shift in priorities, to address fragmentation and quality of the social protection system, and to call for the inclusion of marginalized groups.
6. The strategy varies from the usual approaches for two reasons, first that it shifts the focus of the UN's engagement in social protection from delivery of humanitarian cash transfers toward a broader national conversation on social protection systems, while at the same time learning important lessons from the humanitarian context and opening dialogue on linkages. Secondly, because it takes a clear position in promoting the Government in a leadership position on social protection, and in support of system-strengthening, which had not always been the case following more than 8 years of protracted humanitarian crisis.
7. The Lebanon SDG Fund programme serves as an SDG accelerator by supporting the creation of a currently absent national SP policy, mobilising increasingly coordinated UN efforts to strengthen the two main national programmes in place, NPTP and NSSF, and enhancing their gender and disability responsiveness. The development of a comprehensive social protection policy, if nationally owned and situated within evidence-based reforms, has the potential to bolster any potential national reform agenda and mitigate the impact of the protracted economic crisis, while promoting progress towards Agenda 2030 with a focus on leaving no one behind, through catalysing action on poverty, vulnerability and unemployment.
8. Key to the programme has been to ensure a focus on groups that are commonly left behind in Lebanon, with a broad emphasis on promoting an inclusive national development model. The programme aims to operationalize the Leaving No One Behind agenda, specifically focusing on gender, youth and those with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities face particular discrimination in Lebanon and national dialogue and programme reform has been to include a focus on this issue.
9. Upon completion of the programme, the social protection sector has been expected to be transformed through the leveraging of emerging yet nascent national dialogue on the need for a new social contract. The programme seeks to directly impact on building a – currently largely absent – social protection system that protects the well-being of the most disadvantaged in the context of reform and enables all segments of society to benefit from development.

III. Evaluation Background

UN considers evaluation as an integral part of the implementation of development cooperation activities. The joint programme document states that a final independent evaluation will be conducted, which will be used to assess the progress towards the results, identify the main difficulties/constraints, assess the impact of the programme for the targeted populations, and formulate lessons learned and practical recommendations to improve future engagement to the area of social protection in the country.

IV. Evaluation Purpose and objectives

The final evaluation will be conducted to examine the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and likelihood of impact of the joint programme. This evaluation will also identify strengths and weaknesses in the programme design, strategy, and implementation as well as lessons learned, good practices, and recommendations.

Specifically, the evaluation will examine the following aspects:

- **Changes in context and review of assumptions (relevance):** Is the programme design adequate to address the problems at hand? Were the programme objectives and design relevant given the political, economic, and social context?
- **Results in terms of outcomes and outputs achieved (effectiveness):** How has the programme contributed towards programme's intended results, particularly for the most vulnerable?
- **Use of resources in achievement of programme performance (efficiency):** How have the human/financial resources been used to fulfil the programme performance in an efficient manner?
- **Assessment of impact (impact):** To what extent is the programme likely to have contributed the long-term intended impact? To what extent did the programme contribute to the SDGs?
- **Sustainability:** Will the programme's effects remain over time? To what extent have the programme contributed the sustainable capacity and ownership of the government and other relevant stakeholders?
- **Coherence of UN Development System:** to what extent has the programme contributed the reinvigoration of the resident coordinator (RC) system and supported the empowerment of the RC? To what extent has the programme affected country-level programming for development towards a more integrated working model towards SDG achievement? To what extent has the programme contributed to coherence of UNCT's support to government?

The evaluation will comply with the UNEG ethical guidelines¹ and ILO evaluation policy².

V. Scope of Evaluation

The evaluation will look at all the programme activities, outputs and outcomes to date within the wider context of the country. The evaluation should take into consideration the duration from the beginning of the project (January 2020) till the commencement of the evaluation.

Persons with disabilities are among the most vulnerable groups, whom social protection plays a critical role in supporting. As cross-cutting themes, the evaluation will look at inclusion of people with disabilities and will also take specific note of integration of gender mainstreaming, contribution to SDGs and COVID-19 response.

VI. Clients of Evaluation

16. The primary clients of this evaluation are the Government of Lebanon, particularly Ministry of Social Affairs, and Inter-Ministerial Committee for Social Affairs, programme participating UN organizations, secretariat and donors of the SDG fund. The secondary clients include other major partners in social protection.

VII. Evaluation Criteria and Questions

17. The evaluation will follow UN Evaluation Group's (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation and the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria:

Relevance

- ❖ Are the programme's intended results aligned with national priorities and the needs of the most vulnerable population in the country? What measures have been taken to ensure alignment?
- ❖ To what extent have persons with disabilities, in particular children and women with disabilities, been consulted through their representative organizations?

Coherence and validity of the design

- ❖ ·Are the programme strategies and structures coherent and logical?
- ❖ ·Does the programme make a practical use of a monitoring and evaluation framework? How appropriate and useful are the indicators in assessing the programme progress? Are indicators gender sensitive? Are the means of verification for the indicators appropriate? Are the assumptions for each objective and output realistic?
- ❖ ·To what extent did the programme design take into account: Specific gender equality and non-discrimination concerns, including inclusion of people with disabilities, relevant to the programme context?

Programme progress and effectiveness

- ❖ What progress has the programme made towards achieving the overall outcome and outputs?
- ❖ ·To what extent did the program contribute to support inclusion of persons with disabilities?
- ❖ ·To what extent did the programme respond emerging needs during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis?

Efficiency

- ❖ To what extent have programme activities been cost-efficient? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the outcome? To what

extent can the programme results justify the time, financial and human resources invested in the programme?

❖ How efficient was the “joint” programme vis-à-vis what would have been done as individual agency interventions?

Impact orientation

❖ ·What were the interventions long-term effects on equitable gender relations?

❖ ·To what extent has the programme contributed to accelerating the SDGs at the national level?

Sustainability

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

❖ ·To what extent was sustainability of impact taken into account during the design of the programme?

❖ ·How effectively has the programme built national ownership and capacity? In what ways are results anchored in national institutions and to what extent can the local partners maintain them financially at end of programme?

Coherence of UN Development System

❖ Was the RC able to draw on the expertise and assets of the entire UN system to address the programme’s development priorities?

❖ ·Was the RC and UNCT able to leverage the positive results of the programme and capitalize on it to promote a working model with stronger joint up approaches for analysis and support? To what extent did the programme contribute to UN reforms, including UN Country Team coherence and efficiency?

❖ ·Has the programme ensured a coherent UN support to national priorities and government?

VIII. Methodology

This evaluation is summative and relies on both quantitative and qualitative approaches to respond evaluation questions and fulfil the purpose. It consists of,

- **Desk review of existing documents:** The evaluator will conduct systematic analysis of existing documents and obtain existing qualitative and quantitative evidence prior to primary data collection. The desk review also facilitates assessment of the situation and available data to plan the evaluation and develop the inception report.

- **Key information interviews:** Online or in-person individual interviews will be conducted with a pre-agreed list of stakeholders who have in-depth exposure and understanding of the programme and its context. Interview guide(s) will be developed during the inception phase to stimulate a discussion on concerned evaluation questions.
- **Preliminary finding briefing:** Upon completion of primary data collection, the evaluator will present preliminary findings to participating UN agencies and selected stakeholders. The evaluator will also collect further insight from the group to feed them into the final report.

Any changes to the methodology should be discussed and approved by the Joint Evaluation Management Group during the inception phase.

IX. Work Assignments

a) Kick-off meeting

The evaluator will have an initial consultation with the evaluation manager, joint evaluation management group and relevant programme officers involved in the programme. The objective of the consultation is to reach a common understanding regarding changes in contextual background, the status of the programme, the priority assessment questions, available data sources and data collection instruments and an outline of the final assessment report. The following topics will be covered: status of logistical arrangements, programme background and materials, and key evaluation priorities.

b) Desk Review

The evaluator will review programme background materials before conducting interviews. Documents to review include Joint Programme Document, progress reports, studies, analytical papers, reports, tools, and publications produced, and any other relevant background notes.

c) Inception Report

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

- Programme background
- Purpose, scope and beneficiaries of the evaluation
- Evaluation matrix, including criteria, questions, indicators, data source, and data collection methods
- Methodology and instruments
- Main deliverables
- Work plan

d) Primary Data Collection

Key Informant Interviews: Following the approval of the inception report, the evaluator will

conduct interviews with stakeholders. The list of interviewees will be determined during the inception phase, but the preliminary list of organisations includes Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Social Affairs, National Social Security Fund, organizations of People with Disabilities engaged through the program, UNICEF, RCO, ILO, WFP, UNDP, UNWOMEN, World Bank, and EU.

e) Preliminary finding presentation

Upon completion of data collection, the evaluator will provide a briefing of preliminary findings to the Joint Evaluation Management Group and programme officers of the programme.

f) Final Report

The final report will follow the format below and be in a range of **35-45 pages** in length, excluding the annexes:

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

10. Clearly identified conclusions and recommendations (identifying which stakeholders are responsible and the time and resource implications of the recommendations)

11. Lessons Learned
12. Good practices
13. Annexes (list of interviews, TORs, list of documents consulted, good practices and lessons learned in prescribed template, etc.)

The quality of the report will be assessed against UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports³ as well as the evaluation guidelines of participating UN organizations (e.g. ILO⁴). The deliverables will be submitted in the English language.

X. Evaluation Timeframe

The evaluation is to commence in July 2022 and complete in September 2022. The following table describes the timeline. Number of working days refer to level of efforts and do not necessarily accord with actual days.

<i>Responsible person</i>	<i>Tasks</i>	<i>Number of working days</i>	<i>Indicative date</i>
Evaluator & Evaluation manager	Kick-off meeting	0,5	6 June 2022
Evaluator	Desk review	8	
Evaluation manager	Summitting inception report		20 June
Evaluation manager	Review of inception report		1 July
Evaluator with the logistical support of programme staff	Interviews	7	
Evaluator	Data analysis & drafting report	5	

Evaluator	Presentation of preliminary findings	1	29 July
Evaluator	Drafting report	7	
Evaluator	Submission of the report to evaluation manager		8 August
Evaluation manager	Circulating the draft report to stakeholders		
Evaluation manager	Send consolidated comments to evaluator		19 August
Evaluation	Revising draft final report	0,5	25 August
Evaluation manager	Review of 2 nd draft		2 September
Evaluator	Integration of comments to finalize the report	1	8 September
Evaluation manager	Approval of the final report		15 September

Total estimated working days of consultant: 30 days

XI. Implications of the COVID crisis on the evaluation

The current COVID-19 pandemic restricts the mobility of staff and consultants. conduct this evaluation remotely relying on online methods such online surveys, telephone or online interviews, whereas for some country components it will be feasible to use a hybrid face to face/remote approach for collecting data.

³

<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/607>

⁴http://www.ilo.ch/eval/Evaluationpolicy/WCMS_571339/lang--en/index.htm

The Joint Evaluation Management Group may propose alternative methodologies to address the data collection that will be reflected in the inception phase of the evaluation developed by the evaluation team. These will be discussed and require detail development in the Inception report and then must be approved from the evaluation manager.

XII. Deliverable

The main outputs of the evaluation consist of the following:

- Deliverable 1: Inception Report, including data collection tools
- Deliverable 2: PowerPoint Presentation on preliminary findings
- Deliverable 3: Draft evaluation report
- Deliverable 4: Final evaluation report with separate template for executive summary and templates for lessons learned and good practices duly filled in

XIII. Payment Term

- i. 10 per cent of the total fee against deliverable 1 above approved by the evaluation manager
- ii. 30 per cent of the total fee against deliverable 2 and 3 above
- iii. 60 per cent of the total fee against deliverable 4 above approved by the Joint Evaluation Management Group.

XIV. Management Arrangement

The Joint Evaluation Management Group, chaired by the Office of the Resident Coordinator, will be responsible for the evaluation. The Group is supported by the evaluation manager as the administrative focal point. The evaluator will communicate with the Evaluation Manager to discuss any technical and methodological matters. The participating UN organizations will provide administrative and logistical support during the data collection.

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

- Review the ToR and provide input, propose any refinements to assessment questions, as necessary, during the inception phase
- Review programme background materials (e.g. programme document, progress reports).
- Prepare an inception report
- Develop and implement the evaluation methodology (i.e. conduct interviews, review documents) to answer the evaluation questions;
- Conduct primary data collection and collect information
- Present preliminary findings
- Prepare an initial draft of the evaluation report
- Prepare the final report based on the participating UN organizations and stakeholders' feedback obtained on the draft report.

The Evaluation Manager is responsible for:

- Drafting the ToR
- Preparing a short list of candidates in coordination with the Joint Evaluation Management Group
- Hiring the consultant
- Providing the consultant with the programme background materials in coordination with participating UN organizations
- Participating in preparatory consultations (briefing)

- Assisting in the implementation of the assessment methodology, as appropriate (i.e., participate in meetings, review documents)
- Reviewing the inception report, initial draft report, circulating it for comments and providing consolidated feedback to the External Evaluator (for the inception report and the final report)
- Reviewing the final draft of the report, and executive summary
- Disseminating the final report to all the stakeholders
- Coordinating follow-up as necessary

The Joint Evaluation Management Group consists of evaluation officers from participating UN organizations with technical capacity to assess the performance of the evaluator. The Group will:

- Provide support to the planning of the evaluation
- Finalize ToR
- Select the evaluation consultant
- Review and approve the draft and final evaluation report
- Disseminate the report as appropriate
- Ensure the impartiality and independence of the external evaluator

The Programme Officers involved in the joint programme are responsible for:

- Reviewing the draft TOR and providing input, as necessary

- Providing programme background materials, including studies, analytical papers, reports, tools, publications produced, and any relevant background notes
- Providing a list of stakeholders
- Participating in the preparatory briefing prior to the primary data collection
- Scheduling all meetings and interviews for the primary data collection
- Ensuring necessary logistical arrangements for the primary data collection
- Reviewing and providing comments on the initial draft report
- Participating in the debriefing on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations
- Providing translation for any required documents: ToR, PPP, final report, etc.
- Making sure appropriate follow-up action is taken

XV. Legal and Ethical Matters

- This evaluation will comply with UNEG 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”⁵. The selected consultant will sign the Code of Conduct form along with the contract.
- UNEG ethical guidelines will be followed throughout the evaluation.
- The external evaluator shall not have any links to programme management or any other conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of the evaluation.

XVI. Qualification

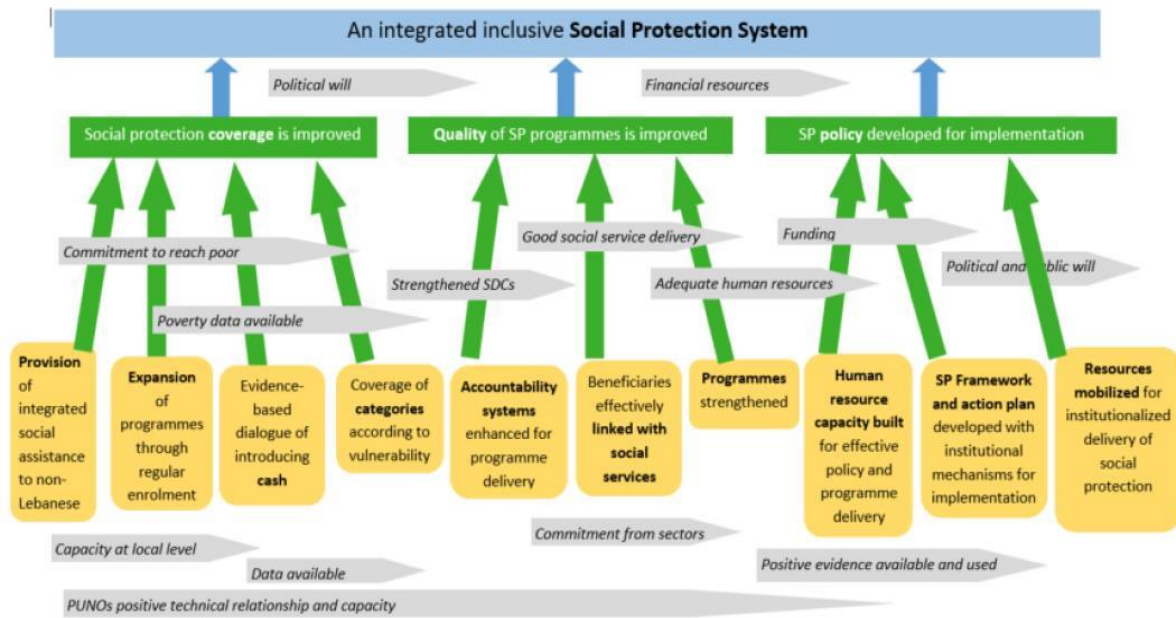
The evaluator is expected to have following qualifications,

- Proven experience in the evaluation of development interventions
- Expertise in social protection. Prior experience in the region, particularly in Lebanon, is asset.
- High professional standards and principles of integrity in accordance with United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards.
- An advanced degree in a relevant field.
- Proven expertise on evaluation methods.
- Full command of English. Command of Arabic is an advantage.
- The consultant should not have any links to programme management or any other conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of the evaluation.
- Previous experience in evaluations for UN agencies, particularly joint evaluations, is preferred.

⁵

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

Annex: Theory of Change



Annex 3: List of documents reviewed

- Prodoc as of November 29, 2019
- Progress reports: (i) quarterly reports for Q1 2020, Q2 2020, Q3 2020, and Annual report 2020; (ii) quarterly reports Q1 2021, Q3 2021, 6-monthly report January – June 2021, Annual report 2021, and (iii) 6-monthly report January – June 2022.
- “Social Protection in Lebanon: Bridging the Immediate response with long-term priorities” positioning paper, 2020, UN Lebanon
- National Social Protection Strategy for Lebanon: towards a rights-based, shock-responsive and sustainable system, 2022
- Modeling and forecasting of budget and treasury revenues in Lebanon, draft report, UNDP
- “The life of women and men in Lebanon: a statistical portrait” report,
- Social protection in Lebanon, From and Gender Perspective: Baseline assessment report, 2021
- Towards a social protection floor for Lebanon: Policy options and costs for core life-cycle social grants, policy note, 2021
- Bridging towards a new Pension System for Private Sector Workers in Lebanon: a temporary arrangement for EOSI reform, technical note, 2022
- PPP on Retirement Scheme
- Towards a rights-based and comprehensive social protection system for Lebanon: supporting the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities, positioning paper, OPDs, 2020
- A Social Protection Emergency Response: A Bridge Toward a Comprehensive National Social Protection Plan, Expert Group Position paper, 2020
- Towards a Rights-Based Social Protection System for Lebanon: Ensuring income and dignity in older age and moving towards an inclusive and rights-based social protection system, positioning paper, 2020
- Social protection spending in Lebanon: A deep dive into State Financing of Social protection, budget review policy brief, 2021
- Dollarization NPTP, WFP, 2022
- NPTP PDM Q2-Q5, WFP, 2021-2022
- NPTP Project Roadmap, WFP
- NPTP Risk assessment, WFP
- Analysis for an advanced NPTP information system, WFP
- Business requirements for the NPTP information system, WFP
- Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF)
- United Nations Strategic Framework (UNSF) Lebanon 2017-2020
- United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023 – 2025 for Lebanon
- Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2019
- Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) 2022-2023
- The staff-level agreement on Economic Policies between the IMF and the Government of Lebanon, 2022

Emerging Good Practice Template

Project Title: “Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national Social Protection system for Lebanon”

Name of Evaluator: M. Stepanyan

Date: September 2022

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

GP Element	Text
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	Involvement of OPDs in developing products that are directly related to their needs
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	This is the first time in Lebanon and within UN practice that the OPDs are consulted and their voices are heard in the intervention that is directly relates to their needs, namely, for the design of the SP Strategy
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Engaging OPDs allows to consult the end users, get their insights and shape such kind of products that best fits their needs and expectations
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	This practice will allow improving quality of the products developed for the PwDs and positively impact their lives
Potential for replication and by whom	This practice needs to be replicated by all UN agencies and their partners
Other documents or relevant comments	n/a

Emerging Good Practice Template

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Name of Evaluator: M. Stepanyan

Date: September 2022

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GP Element	Text
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	Instrumental role of RC reaching out highest executive level in the country
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Support from the highest executive level in the country is critical for an initiative that aims at system change and system development. To access such a high level in the national government, the role of the RC is instrumental to raise advocate, engage, and keep the momentum.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Engagement of the RC opens the door to any political and executive partner in the country, increasing the visibility of the project within the decision-makers
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Project became under the spotlight, which also helps to mobilize critical partners and the necessary level (e.g. political, technical, etc.)
Potential for replication and by whom	RCO, UN Agencies
Other documents or relevant comments	n/a

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Name of Evaluator: M. Stepanyan

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GP Element	Text
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	Inter-agency coordination mechanism but introducing more nuanced requirements on representation of the government agencies and more structured consultation process

Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Lebanon context is extremely complex in terms of players, interests, preferences, and expectations. There are also multiple coordination platforms In the highly divided context with different agenda holders, it is extremely difficult yet meanwhile extremely important to create mechanisms for engagement.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Adequate engagement mechanisms are necessary for dialogue.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	With regards to SP Strategy, the expected impact of the viable engagement mechanism suggests the buy-in of all key stakeholders, consideration of their needs and recommendations, and eventually, more balanced SP Strategy and its follow ups.
Potential for replication and by whom	There is a potential for replication among all development and humanitarian partners to ensure that any strategic document has been discussed openly and with the engagement of all stakeholders.
Other documents or relevant comments	n/a

Lesson Learned Template

Project Title: “Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national Social Protection system for Lebanon”

Name of Evaluator: M. Stepanyan

Date: September 2022

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

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	If UN is prepared to act as one and is led/represented by the RC, the bargaining power of the PUNOs increased
Context and any related preconditions	SDG Fund joint projects provides an opportunity for the PUNOs to joint efforts within shared sense of direction and create synergy by mobilizing comparative and competitive advantages of each Agency. When this shared vector is shaped for all PUNOs and the work is led by the highest UN representative in the country, the RC, the UN power to position itself strongly and to negotiate with the national authorities is much higher.
Targeted users /	Beneficiaries RCO, UN Agencies
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	It comes with compromising some degree of autonomy among UN agencies
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	Recognition of a bigger goal that could be achieved if acted collectively
Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	n/a

Lesson Learned Template

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Name of Evaluator: M. Stepanyan

Date: September 2022

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

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	If PUNOs don't wait till the end of the process to start political process and embrace 'endorsement layer by layer' approach, then the process to negotiate the final product for approval is smoother.
Context and any related preconditions	When there is a need to enter a lengthy legal and political endorsement process, it is advisable to start the process as early as possible. This implies continues dialogue with the national authorities explaining what is been done, the 'why' question, and the implications of the change expected. In this case, there is greater understanding and as a result acceptance of the process and its results.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	RCO, UN Agencies
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Might slow down the process to match with the acceptance level
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	Would create more ownership and shorten endorsement time
Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	n/a

Lesson Learned Template

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Name of Evaluator: M. Stepanyan

Date: September 2022

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

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	If the power of good communication by listening and giving significance well understood and implemented by the PUNOs, then national partners engage in a more meaningful way
Context and any related preconditions	In the context that is reach with highly educated experts that have strong vision and standpoint on the issues related to their expertise, it is important to create enabling environment for them to speak out. This requires good listeners but also an appreciation to be demonstrated at the personal level.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	RCO, PUNOs
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Might open up fierce competition among experts
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	Provides a possibility to collect the whole variability of options to find the most fit-for-purpose solution
Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	n/a

Lesson Learned Template

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Name of Evaluator: M. Stepanyan

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

LL Element	Text
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Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	If the importance of educating and raising awareness of people understood and implemented by the PUNOs, then additional pressure implemented towards duty bearers to act upon expectations.
Context and any related preconditions	To establish rights-based and inclusive social protection system there is a need that right-holder recognize and execute their rights by upholding duty bearers responsible. While working with the national authorities to develop their capacities, the importance remain high to support right-holders to recognize their rights.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	UN Agencies
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Calibrated awareness raising is necessary with carefully balanced approach to avoid overpromising and underdelivering.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	This approach can strengthen civil society and improve dialogue between right-holders and duty-bearers
Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	n/a

Lesson Learned Template

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Name of Evaluator: M. Stepanyan

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LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	If inviting representatives from various agencies come with more detailed request of the expertise and role that is expected from those representatives, then right people designated and therefore, meaningful discussions could be implemented.
Context and any related preconditions	Often when inviting representatives from various organizations, especially from the governmental ones, the representatives are those available rather than those with the right mandate and expertise.

Targeted users / Beneficiaries	UN Agencies
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Careful balance is required to avoid creating impression that the organization lose its freedom to nominate
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	Right experts would be in the room and the discussion will be elevated to higher quality level
Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	n/a