



Evaluation Report

ESCWA PROJECT EVALUATION:

“Addressing the challenges of the forcibly displaced and their host communities in the ESCWA region project”

April 2018 – December 2021

**Presented to the United Nations Economic & Social Commission
for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CCNRS	Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
GJPID	Gender Justice, Population and Inclusive Development
GCP	Governance and Conflict Prevention
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
KII	Key Informants Interviews
MSs	Member States
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa region
NFP	National Focal Point
NSOs	National Statistics Offices
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SPARK	Strategy, Planning, Accountability, Results and Knowledge
SIST	Statistics, Information Society and Technology
SEP	Shared Economic Prosperity
SAC	2030 Agenda and SDG Coordination
SC	Statistics Committee
CSO	Central Statistical Offices
SP	Sub-programme
TORs	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

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Executive summary

Evaluation overview

ESCWA provides a framework for the formulation and harmonization of sectoral policies, a platform for congress and coordination among its MSs, a home for expertise and knowledge, and an information observatory. The “Addressing the challenges of the forcibly displaced and their host communities in the ESCWA region project” is a project started in April 2018 and completed in December 2021. It targeted three countries among those affected by the Syrian Crises, (Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq) in addition to Palestinians from Syria. The project aimed to establish a Regional Observatory on forced displacement consisting of nationally based working groups. The research and analysis, in addition to the evaluations and policy recommendations provided by the Regional Observatory to be based and further developed by focus group discussions with representatives from the private sector, professional associations or syndicates as well as concerned CSOs. These deliberations fed into the outputs of the Regional Observatory that should produce a handbook which will form the basis of a capacity-building module targeting senior civil servants in three pilot countries.

Evaluation methodology

As mandated by the TOR, the aim of the evaluation is to assess the project’s design, implementation, outputs, and outcomes systematically and objectively. The evaluation of the project is undertaken in compliance with ESCWA’s Evaluation Policy, and in line with development best practice for transparency and accountability. This evaluation is also viewed as a learning opportunity for ESCWA. It is intended to help identify strengths and lessons learnt for the programme’s future similar work. The evaluation will address four of the DAC criteria (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability) covering the timeframe of the project from April 2018 to December 2021.

This evaluation was designed to be utilization focused. A mixed methods approach applied to respond to the evaluation questions. This was through an online survey (quantitative) and key informant interviews (KIIs) with 20 project stakeholders (ESCWA staff, partners, governmental officials and other internal and external stakeholders) participated through either surveys or interview. Some of those participants were purposely selected from the pool of informants shared by the project team to ensure full representation of the various stakeholders’ (partners) views, experiences, and perspectives, considering geography, gender, MSs and its role and function. The evaluation process was subjected to several limitations and constraints such as the limited interaction and reach out to project stakeholders with no travel budget and total remote field work. Closer consultation and engagement with project team and evaluation division was ensured with timely mitigation measures to avoid the delay of the process or the lack of responses from participants (as possible as it can be).

Findings and Conclusion

The evaluator has reached the following findings that were explored, triangulated and validated. The project reports and publications are highly relevant to the needs of MS. They are developed in a participatory way with representatives of MS and are in line with the regional priorities. The majority of the interviewed government officials acknowledged the publication’s relevance, and the importance of the big data topic and approach to their country’s needs. At the same time, they underlined the limited follow up except prior to an event or a report, and hence

the inadequate use of these data to influence policy on other topics such as SDGs agenda. On the other hand, the scope of the project was found to be highly relevant to ESCWA mandates, regional needs, and MS emerging priorities.

The project targeted three national statistics offices (NSOs) and expanded the knowledge to other 9 NSO due to the highly relevance of the bigdata topic. The expectations of NSO from the project were centered around technical support, capacity building, coherence approaches and fostering the utilization of bigdata to other topic relevant to the common regional priorities influenced by the SDG commitments which wasn't achieved. NSOs and other MS actors are satisfied with the support provided by the project, as it met most of their expectations when it comes to capacity building or technical support. However, the demands are much higher than the human and technical resources available in the project team to respond to the different expectations from the MS. Additionally, the follow up mechanism for the agreed commitments still needs to be strengthened, as currently there is a lack of accountability, authority, and resources to fulfill all agreed plans.

Overall, the capacity-building activities, in addition to the knowledge produced by the Regional Observatory, provided senior civil servants and decision makers with much needed analysis and access to development interventions that arrested the deterioration of the displaced and their host communities' human capital, allowing the lead ministries to better support decision makers and the donor community for better long term development interventions. An area for improvement is to have a solid data portal that support MS in SDGs reports using big data.

The project established a wide spectrum of collaborations with relevant regional partners from both UN and outside UN system. The project delivered all its outcomes; however, it was not successful in delivering on all its outputs stipulated in the project log-frame due to many reasons including: the changing priorities due to the dynamic context, the unrealistic activities drafted at the log-frame considering the available timeline and the establish partnerships and the limited connections and causality between project outputs and outcomes. As the project played a pivotal role in reshaping the priorities of NSO work of Lebanon and Jordan in dealing with the data related to Syrian refugees and has contributed to standardizing data analysis concepts utilizing the bigdata approaches.

The evaluation findings confirmed that almost all project interventions made explicit reference to gender considerations in the design, planning and implementation. NSO rated project's contribution to promoting gender equality and human rights through its scope and interventions as satisfactory to extremely satisfactory.

The agreement with Data Pop Alliance Foundation was an efficient partnership supported the project delivery and operational efficiency. In addition, cooperating with academia (Qatar Computing Research Institute) was effective as part of a signed MOU that allowed experts to analyze Facebook data for supporting project objectives. However, addressing MS technical assistance needs was not efficient, as it was challenged by the lack of technical and financial resources to provide such support against the growing demands coming from the national data commitments.

Despite sustainability wasn't a focus on the project log-frame or reports, the project created conditions likely to support the sustainability of the results generated. Social capital through the establishment of peer support groups, and investment at human capital through capacity-building of NSOs managing the delivery of data to policy makers were among those aspects improved by the project that are likely to continue to provide benefits. However, the gaps in responding to all needs related to bigdata institutionalization was beyond the project capacity and this work should be taken forward by other project on a phased manner.

One of the key messages enhanced by the project and was well received by MS is that bigdata can help monitor population's sentiment to the policies adopted and their response by the public, providing a pulse check of the main socio-economic indicators. Hence growing needs from MS.

Overall, the project has been satisfactorily praised by majority of the evaluation respondents from MS for being an effective think tank that delivers rigorous data and capacity building support that responded to national and regional requests in various thematic areas covered by the project mainly on refugees' issue, with hopes from MS to expand this to other topics relevant to SDGs.

The key lessons from the evaluations are: designing the project based on real beneficiaries' need can enhance the ownership and the likelihood of usefulness of the intervention. The project flexibility in learning and adjusting through the project course is an effective practice to the enhance project outcomes. Project sustainability mechanisms without practical implementation, institutional support and financial resources will remain just theories, and realistic project activities with clear causality relationship with project objectives can lead to better project outcomes.

It is recommended that **the project team** should consider the MS needs as a driving force for getting more attraction and application to bigdata tools and approaches. The team should develop a timeframe to conclude the expansion of the capacity building for other MS, with systematic follow up on all targeted MS, identify resources to fulfill such commitment. The team needs to re-examine its modus operandi moving into an integrated approach that links data as well as reflecting this at the project log-frame. The project team and ESCWA should also identify resources to fulfill such commitment in collaboration with the partner institutions in MS. Also, ESCWA should, consider mobilizing adequate resources to expand the project and the promising initiative to other MS after considering the lessons of the earlier phase to be able to implement the recommendations of the evaluation where relevant.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

ESCWA provides a framework for the formulation and harmonization of sectoral policies, a platform for congress and coordination among its MSs, a home for expertise and knowledge, and an information observatory. ESCWA fulfils this mission through its six clusters. The six clusters consist of the Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability (CCNRS), Gender Justice, Population and Inclusive Development (GJPID), Shared Economic Prosperity (GCP), Statistics, Information Society and Technology (SIST), 2030 Agenda and SDG Coordination (SAC), Governance and Conflict Prevention (GCP). ESCWA's permanent headquarters are in Beirut, with a membership of 20-Member States (MSs)¹, stretching from Morocco in the west to Iraq in the east. ESCWA positions and structures its work around three core functions:

- (A) Research and analysis (Think tank): ESCWA conduct research and produces studies and policy advice on all aspects of socioeconomic development. Knowledge is developed and shared with and for policymakers, civil society, experts and practitioners.
- (B) Regional consensus (Voice), ESCWA organizes high-level conferences, intergovernmental meetings and capacity-building workshops to tackle a wide range of development issues. ESCWA also provides a regional forum for senior officials of member States to coordinate their positions at regional and international conferences and summits.
- (C) Technical cooperation (Advisory): ESCWA offers technical and advisory services to its member States and responds to requests to support developmental efforts at national levels. ESCWA conducts training and capacity building activities and provides specialized assistance to the development of norms and standards, as well as the set up and implementation of policies and mechanisms.

1.2. The Project Scope

The “Addressing the challenges of the forcibly displaced and their host communities in the ESCWA region project” is a project started in April 2018 and completed in December 2021. It targeted three countries among those affected by the Syrian Crises, (Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq) in addition to Palestinians from Syria.

The project aimed to establish a Regional Observatory on forced displacement consisting of nationally based working groups. These working groups consist of experts that were planned to analyse existing data and research to ascertain the multi-dimensional impact of the forced displacement crisis, in addition to conducting evaluations of development assistance interventions undertaken during the last 7 years. Ascertaining the multi-dimensional impact and undertaking evaluation will be critical to deriving policies and programmes.

The research and analysis, in addition to the evaluations and policy recommendations provided by the Regional Observatory to be based and further developed by focus group discussions with representatives from the private sector, professional associations or syndicates as well as

¹ Namely: Algeria ,Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, the State of Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

concerned CSOs. These deliberations fed into the outputs of the Regional Observatory that should produce a handbook which will form the basis of a capacity-building module targeting senior civil servants in three pilot countries. The selection of the pilot countries is based on those most affected by the Syrian war, namely Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan. The project will also target Palestinians from Syria that live in Lebanon and Jordan through concerned state entities as well as CSOs.

Therefore, the overall objective of the project is to strengthen the capacities of concerned public institutions to develop and deploy long term development policies targeting the forcibly displaced and their host communities. The logframe of the project is as shown in the below figure.

Figure 1: Project Logframe

<u>Intervention logic</u>	<u>Indicators</u>	<u>Means of verification</u>
<i>Objective</i>		
<i>To strengthen the capacities of concerned public institutions to develop and deploy long term development policies targeting the forcibly displaced and their host communities</i>		
EA1 Public institutions of ESCWA Member States affected by forced displacements strengthened to deploy development strategies that address national socio-economic challenges associated with the massive influx of the forcibly displaced.	IA 1.1 At least one member State –drafts national policy associated with targeting the forcibly displaced and their hosts with development strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from Member States • Evaluations from participants from technical meetings on outputs rendered • A draft national policy on development strategy targeting refugees and their host
EA2 More effective responses by ESCWA Member States affected by forced displacement to arrest human capital deterioration of host and displaced communities	IA 2.1 At least 100 civil servants and CSO representatives acknowledge benefiting from capacity-building modules and focus groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Interviews with beneficiaries • List of workshops confirmed participants

1.3. The Evaluation Scope, Purpose and Use

As mandated by the TOR, the aim of the evaluation is to assess the project’s design, implementation, outputs, and outcomes systematically and objectively. The evaluation of the project is undertaken in compliance with ESCWA’s Evaluation Policy, and in line with development best practice for transparency and accountability. This evaluation is also viewed as a learning opportunity for ESCWA. It is intended to help identify strengths and lessons learnt for the programme’s future similar work.

The evaluation will address four of the DAC criteria (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability) covering the timeframe of the project from April 2018 to December 2021.

1.4. The Evaluation Questions

The evaluation scope is taking into consideration the below criteria and questions.

Relevance:

- 1- Were the objectives and expected accomplishments of the project clearly aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of member States, the sustainable development goals, and regional development agendas?
- 2- Were the activities and outputs of the project clearly aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of member States?
- 3- Did the design of the activities and outputs ensure that they contributed to achieving the expected accomplishments and objective of the project?
- 4- Did the achievement of the planned results address the identified needs of member States? If the results were different than the ones planned, did they still contributed to addressing the identified needs?
- 5- If the project had not been initiated, would member States have been able to achieve the results without it?
- 6- Do the objectives and expected accomplishments of the project align with ESCWA's mandate?

Effectiveness:

- 7- Was the project implemented according to plan? If not, was timely corrective action taken where necessary? Was additional support identified or provided to overcome implementation challenges?
- 8- What were the major factors that influenced the achievement of the project's objective, and what adjustments were made throughout the project's implementation to account for these factors?
- 9- What adjustments, if any, were made to the project as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 situation, and to what extent did the adjustments allow the project to effectively respond to the new priorities of member States that emerged in relation to COVID-19?
- 10- How did the adjustments, if any, affect the achievement of the project's expected results as stated in its original results framework?
- 11- Has the project made use of innovative means of delivery? How did this influence the achievement of results?

Efficiency:

- 12- Did the implementation of the project make effective use of time and resources to achieve results? Were there other implementation approaches that were likely to have been more economical?
- 13- To what extent and in what ways was the project successful in improving its operational efficiency, i.e. increased usage of integrated planning, monitoring and reporting tools, efficiency of program management systems and tools, etc?
- 14- Were there synergies or complementary efforts within ESCWA and with partners and other relevant entities that created efficiencies? To what extent was the work of the project duplicative or supportive of the work of other entities?
- 15- Was ESCWA the entity best positioned to conduct the project?

Sustainability

- 16- Do project beneficiaries and/or member States and/or stakeholders have ownership, capacity and resources to maintain the activity results after external funding ceases?
- 17- Did the project contribute to capacity building of local institutions and/or member States to continue to deliver quality services? What are other major factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project?
- 18- Were there mechanisms built into the project design to ensure it provides ongoing benefits? Were there additional actions that should have been taken to address this? Were any areas of the intervention clearly unable to be maintained over the long-term, and what lessons could be learned from these?
- 19- Are the beneficiary member States now able to build on the results achieved? Has the project led to the identification of future directions?

Cross cutting (Gender, Disability, Human rights)

- 20- To what extent were issues of gender, human rights and disability inclusion incorporated into the design, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation practices of the project, as well as the results achieved?
- 21- To what extent did the project respond to and affect the rights, needs and interests of different stakeholders, including women, men, youth, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups?

1.5. The Evaluation Users

It is envisaged that the following entities are ultimately the main users of the evaluation, namely:

- ESCWA’s implementing division and project team.
- Project stakeholder and executing entities (Arab NGO Network for Development)
- Concerned Member States
- Other stakeholders working on the same issues (UN agencies, development partners and regional organizations)

“Intended users are more likely to use evaluations if they understand and feel ownership of the evaluation process and findings [and that] they are more likely to understand and feel ownership if they've been actively involved. By actively involving primary intended users, the Evaluator is preparing the groundwork for use.”

Box 1: Patton, M.Q. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation*, 4th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

2. Evaluation Methodology

2.1. Evaluation Approach and Framework

This evaluation is designed to be utilization focused. Given the nature of the project support to the MSs, a mixed methods approach will be applied to respond to the evaluation questions. This was be through online survey (quantitative) and key informant interviews (KIIs) (qualitative), supported by review of relevant secondary data. The different data sources used for triangulation and validation of findings.

The evaluation was formative and covered the period from April 2018 to December 2021. The evaluation assessed the project against the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability:

Based on the evaluation findings, the report will provide actionable oriented recommendations for the project team that could influence its operations and implementation strategies. This evaluation employed a participatory approach in all stages with involvement of stakeholders including ESCWA, MSs, other ESCWA divisions, national governmental actors, and other relevant stakeholders.

This participatory approach is aiming at constantly engaging the intended users and evaluation steering team in order to:

- 1- Create ownership and buy-in among the key intended users.
- 2- Capture the **learning**, by allowing space to reflect on the project relevance, its implementation strategies and monitoring processes.
- 3- Re-focus the users’ attention on **effectiveness** and efficiency (meeting the project mandate) not just outputs and activities.

2.2. Evaluation phases

2.2.1. Inception phase

The preparatory phase of the inception mission took place between 1st Jan and 5th Feb 2022. The first week included sharing of the secondary documents. The second week was fully booked with series of introductory and guidance meetings were held virtually with the project team and evaluation focal point for this evaluation to brief the Evaluator about the scope.

This phase followed by an in-depth review of the secondary documents then an initial meeting with the project manager to validate answers to some questions as well as refining the scope of work and to agree on the expectations from the evaluation and allow for a reflective space on the Division's agenda and processes and the mission timeframe.

2.2.2. Field work and data collection

Data was collected through primary and secondary data collection methods.

Document Review: Pertinent key project documents explored during the inception phase were reviewed throughout the evaluation process. A well-organized pile of documents was shared by project team covering the design, planning, monitoring, implementation progress, and stakeholder's lists. A full list of the key documentation is provided in Annex 1. During the mission, the Evaluator received and requested further data related to the list of stakeholders and meetings conducted under the project, which delayed the process of drafting the inception report.

Primary data: Collected through (a) Conducting semi-structured interviews with key informants, and (b) Responses to an online survey.

- ✓ Approximately 20 project stakeholders (ESCWA staff, partners, governmental officials and other internal and external stakeholders) participated through either surveys or interview.
- ✓ Some of those participants were purposely selected from the pool of informants shared by the project team to ensure full representation of the various stakeholders' (partners) views, experiences, and perspectives, considering geography, gender, MSs and its role and function.

2.3. Data Analysis

The analysis relied on the data collected from the various sources identified above (interviews, records, e-survey and documentation review). Data collected from the various sources fed into the evaluation questions that were used to guide the findings (as per the ToR).

In order to better reflect the interviewees/ informants' perspectives on the project relevance, and effectiveness, the data collection tools relied on a 5-point scale system that captures the interviewees' and survey respondents' perspectives, insights and feedback on the various contributions to achieve the set objectives. The rating system boundaries ranges from "Highly Unsatisfactory (HU), Unsatisfactory (U), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Satisfactory (S) and Highly Satisfactory (HS). This is illustrated on both the Evaluation Questions Matrix (Annex 5) and the online survey questionnaire (Annex 4).

Gender and human rights dimensions were accounted for throughout the evaluation. Gender dimension was considered in the evaluation (a) design by identifying data sources (setting gender balance as a criterion for selecting key informants), (b) analysis by exploring means and ways gender and human rights are being integrated at the programmatic level in designing and implementing the project interventions and in its knowledge production, and (c) whenever feasible, data will be sex-disaggregated when reported.

The profile of the participants was as follows:

Table 1: Profile of the participants

What entity you represent?	%
Governmental representative/employer ممثل او موظف حكومي	68.75%
Parliament/Civil society برلماني او مجتمع مدني	12.50%
Project staff موظف بالمشروع	6.25%
Regional Development Partner/organization ممثل لأحد الشركاء الإقليميين	12.50%
Where are you from?	%
ESCWA من الايسكوا	12.50%
i) Other أخرى	25.00%
Iraq العراق	12.50%
Jordan الأردن	37.50%
Lebanon لبنان	12.50%
Grand Total	100.00%

3. Risk and limitations and mitigation

The evaluation process was subjected to several limitations and constraints such as the limited interaction and reach out to project stakeholders with no travel budget and total remote field work. Closer consultation and engagement with project team and evaluation division was ensured with timely mitigation measures to avoid the delay of the process or the lack of responses from participants (as possible as it can be). Table (3) captures the constraints and mitigation measures.

Table 2: Risks and Mitigation Measures

Potential limitations/ constraints	Mitigation Measures	Notes
Exclusion in the travel to field due to budget, health and security issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closely engage with evaluation team with clear selection criteria - Compensated by the on-line survey/ skype calls and prioritized for potential interviews. 	
Key interviewees availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proper planning - Clear and timely communication 	Timeframe is short
Potential low response rate for the online survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reach out to the wider pool of 100+ stakeholders in order to ensure a high no. of responses - Rely on multiple choice and rating approach in the survey 	Reminders were done to ensure a sufficiently representative and exploitable level of responses

4. The Quality Assurance Mechanism

As specified in the ToR, the quality of the evaluation was ensured by the close communication with ESCWA evaluation team/focal point, ensuring relevance as well as impartiality and fidelity of the implementation of the evaluation different milestones.

In addition, the evaluator will employ the UNEG Checklist for Evaluation Reports available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/607> to ensure the quality of the final report:

The evaluator reported directly to ESCWA evaluation focal point, which reports to the Executive Secretary. ESCWA evaluation focal point acted as sounding board and provided guidance and oversight. He engaged with the Evaluator throughout the evaluation process, provided feedback on developing the methodological approach. He reviewed the milestone submissions of this evaluation process at two stages upon (a) finalization of the draft Inception Report, and (b) finalization of the draft Evaluation Report, in addition to providing written feedback.

5. Evaluation Work Plan

The timeframe of the evaluation was (Dec 2021 – 30th April 2022), as per the below workplan.

Table 3: Evaluation workplan and timeline

Activity	Timeframe	Milestones/ Descriptions	Deliverables
1. Mission kick off	15 th Dec-21	Sending off the signed contract	
2. Desk review	15 th Dec – 15 th Jan	Extensive desk review of all project documents shared	
3. Series of meetings (Pre-inception phase)	15 th Jan – 30 th Jan	Conduct series of meetings with focal points to clarify the shared documents, refine evaluation questions/ protocol, methodology, field mission and draft the inception report.	
4. Inception report	6 th Feb-22	Submit the draft inception report (for review and feedback)	Deliverable 1– Inception Report
	12 th Feb 22	Receive feedback/ comments from the evaluation focal point	
	25 th Feb 22	Finalize submit a revised Inception Report	
5. Data Collection	25 th Feb – 5 th March	KIIs	
	25 th Feb – 20 th March	Online survey launching	
6. Data analysis	20 th Mar – 5 th Apr	Data analysis and drafting of Evaluation Report	
7.Evaluation Report	10 th Apr 22	Submit draft Evaluation Report for review and feedback	
	20 th Apr 22	Receive feedback/ comments from the Steering Group	
	30 th Apr 22	Submit revised and finalized Evaluation Report	Deliverable 2 – Final Report

6. Findings

Based on the primary and secondary data collection, the evaluator has reached the following findings that were explored, triangulated, and validated.

The evaluation findings were structured around four main headings covering the evaluation criteria relevance effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability and clustered around the evaluation questions. There has been no evidence of any differences in opinions and views among female and male respondents.

6.1. Relevance:

EQs: To what extent are project publications and data portals relevant and timely to the strategic needs and priorities of the region (member States and other actors)? To what extent is the work of the bigdata relevant to the needs of the region, did they still contributed to addressing the identified needs? Do the objectives and expected accomplishments of the project align with ESCWA's mandate?

The project reports and publications are highly relevant to the needs of MS. They are developed in a participatory way with representatives of MS and are in line with the regional priorities. The majority of the interviewed government officials acknowledged the publication's relevance, and the importance of the big data topic and approach. At the same time, they underlined the limited follow up except prior to an event or a report, and hence the inadequate use of these data to influence policy on other topics such as SDGs agenda.

The scope of the project was found to be highly relevant to ESCWA mandates, regional needs, and MS emerging priorities. An area for improvement is to have a solid data portal that can support MS in preparing SDGs report using big data.

The project scope was found to be highly relevant to ESCWA mandates, regional needs and MS emerging priorities. In specific terms, the project has used big data to address social and economic statistical needs, improved demographic, and population related data. It provided attention on cross cutting areas such as gender and disability, which are critical to the regional context.

An ESCWA SD staff said: *“This project created a state of debate among MS on using big data to improve decision making process based on a real time data”*

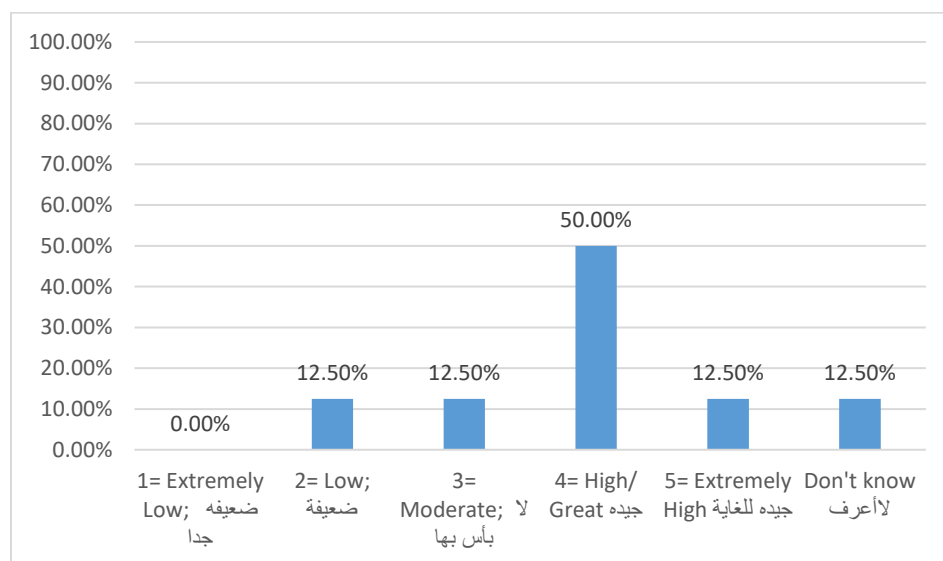
The project has produced key knowledge products that proved relevant and effective in responding to the regional needs related to Syria crises. One of the key publications was the (Big

data for Good. Can Big Data Illustrate the Challenges Facing Syrian Refugees in Lebanon)². Such publications were aligned with the global and regional mandates for the usage of big data with all ethical considerations. The usage of bigdata on Syria crises supported MS (mainly Lebanon and to some extent Jordan) critical social and population agendas. Moreover, such publications were developed in full consultation with member States based on specific priorities and needs identified by regional commitments and country level needs, hence enhancing stakeholder’s ownership.

An ESCWA project staff said: *“We didn’t issue these publications as a surprise; MS should be part of the process of report development, and we lunch such report through a workshop with representations from participated MS and other MS who can benefit from releasing such publication.”*

The quantitative data supported the finding of the relevance of the publications to MS. As more than 62% of the respondents confirmed that the project knowledge products/ publications were relevant or extremely relevant to the regional context (respond to regional priorities).

Figure 2 : Satisfaction on the relevance of the project produced publications



Such efforts ensured that member States have a better appreciation of the relevance of the project publications to their needs thereby strengthening their commitment to utilize them.

A governmental representative said: *“Through the big data tools we got through the project, the project was able to help Member States to make decisions”*

Overall, project publications were found to be relevant to the needs of the region, issued in a timely manner with proper data portal on refugees. However, the effort can be expanded to include other NSO other than Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, additionally to expand the effort to include other topics relevant to SDGs data.

² https://archive.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/big-data-challenges-syrian-refugees-lebanon-english_0.pdf

EQs: To what extent are the National Statistical Offices' expectations from the project being met? In terms of capacity building and advisory services? To what extent does the project respond to regional priorities regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

The project targeted 3 NSO and expanded the knowledge to other 9 NSO due to the highly relevance of the bigdata topic. The expectations of the national statistics offices (NSOs) from the project were centered around technical support, capacity building, coherence approaches and fostering the utilization of bigdata to other topic relevant to the common regional priorities influenced by the SDG commitments which wasn't achieved.

NSOs and other MS actors are satisfied with the support provided by the project, as it met most of their expectations when it comes to capacity building or technical support. However, the demands are much higher than the human and technical resources available in the project team to respond to the different expectations from the MS. Additionally, the follow up mechanism for the agreed commitments still needs to be strengthened, as currently there is a lack of accountability, authority, and resources to fulfill all agreed plans.

The work of this program targeted national Statistics authorities in Lebanon and Jordan mainly, together with other national producers of official statistics. National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of the MS together with other national information technology and data specialist were the primary national clients of the project. Overall, MS requests are centered around technical assistance, capacity building, and fostering regional learning influenced by the SDG commitments. Such expectations indicate a strong need from the bigdata tools provided by the project team to fulfill such wishes and to support MS capacity to produce timely, reliable and comparable statistics for policy and programme formulation towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) monitoring and reporting commitments.

A NSO representative mentioned *“The project work on big data, is highly relevant, they are doing great work and very responsive to our needs, they provide technical support and invite us to different workshops that are valuable for our work.”*

However, the continuity and persistent follow up to enforce such gained skills is not well functioning due to many reasons such as the limited awareness of the National Statistics Offices (NSO) of the existence of bigdata support by the project, also the limited project resources available to continuously follow up with MS leaving many potential users (NSO), including policymakers, behind.

A governmental representative mentioned *“Such capacity building process is very useful; however, it is intermittent, and we don't know about it except before an events or a workshop”*

Over the project life, the project team has executed more than 10 events ranging from capacity building to consultation meetings, forums and dialogues covering the different thematic areas with a noticeable increase in the number of events organized in the context of the Syrian refugees and 2030 Agenda.

6.2. Effectiveness

EQs: To what extent does the project leverage its relationships with its regional partners within and outside the UN system to coordinate for bigdata concepts to support the refugees case? What adjustments, if any, were made to the project as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 situation, and to what extent did the adjustments allow the project to effectively respond to the new priorities of member States that emerged in relation to COVID-19?

Providing advisory services and capacity building was a project core work. As a matter of fact, MS requests asked for capacity-building or advisory support to prepare, implement and undertake bigdata work on other topics such as transportations, household, labor force and other related vital

The project established a wide spectrum of collaborations with the relevant regional partners from both the UN and outside the UN system. The coordination efforts with those bodies to support MS to collect and report on Syrian refugees using bigdata.

The project has successfully delivered on all its outputs stipulated in the project log-frame. As the project played a pivotal role in reshaping the priorities of NSO work of Lebanon and Jordan in dialing with the data related to Syrian refugees and has contributed to standardizing data analysis concepts utilizing the bigdata approaches. In turn, the project used the convening power of bringing the key stakeholders and initiated a discussion on the future of bigdata and how it can be a drive for evidence-based policy making process. MS expressed that it would be beneficial for the project to continue focusing on a) developing data portal for SDGs indicators and a way of measurement using bigdata, and b) continuing the capacity building of MS NSOs.

data needed for the policymakers and government officials. MS expressed the need for a stronger capacity at the regional level to support their own efforts to achieve technical excellence nationally.

The satisfaction with the engagement of non-governmental partners was limited, as over 25% rated it as unsatisfactory or highly unsatisfactory.

Table 4 : Satisfaction on the engagement of non-governmental partners

With project support, Your satisfaction on Non-government partners of MS to review the national sustainable development agenda and social policies	%
1=Highly Unsatisfactory; غير مرضيه بتاتا	6.25%
2= Unsatisfactory; غير مرضية	18.75%
3= Moderately Satisfactory; مرضية الى حد ما	18.75%
4= Satisfactory مرضية	31.25%
5= Highly Satisfactory مرضية للغاية	18.75%
Don't know لأعرف	6.25%
Grand Total	100.00%

The workshops were perceived as effective interventions bringing together NSOs representatives with regional and MS counterparts. They were praised by the majority of respondents as promoting multi-stakeholder dialogue and learning among members of different

entities. In particular, the majority of the respondents emphasized the learning and skills building dimensions and the learning tools.

As expressed by one participants of an SD event *“the tools, guides and bigdata concepts has been promoting have great effects in building capacities of the individuals, not the processes of the institutions”*.

In addition, a governmental representative said: *“The project is providing useful resources, they emphasized on the importance of gender lens when dialing with the data, which was very useful”*

On the other hand, majority of the interviewed government officials were highly satisfied with the capacity building component and a bit skeptical about the effectiveness of the project knowledge products in supporting them to decide on developing evidence-based policies. They considered the content of the capacity building as a very useful tool for them, in addition to the depth data flow portal on Syrian refugees.

The capacity-building activities, in addition to the knowledge produced by the Regional Observatory, provided senior civil servants and decision makers with much needed analysis and access to development interventions that arrested the deterioration of the displaced and their host communities’ human capital, allowing the lead ministries to better support decision makers and the donor community for better long term development interventions.

A NSO representative mentioned: *“Publications are not the ultimate product utilized by the policy makers, however, the project provided us with a big data platform that allows analysis of big data sources in near real time helping policy makers to make decisions based on the current living conditions of the population, in addition to using big data sources to analyze the impact of policy making on the population as well”*.

From quantitative side, the below table shows the satisfaction of targeted NSO with the capacity building component received, as over 50% rated it as satisfactory or highly satisfactory while only 12.5% rated it as unsatisfactory.

Table 5: Satisfaction on project contribution to MS statistical capacities

The project contributed to the development by MS statistical capacities related to bigdata that contribute to the implementation of the Agenda 2030	%
1=Highly Unsatisfactory; غير مرضيه بتاتا	0.00%
2= Unsatisfactory; غير مرضية	12.50%
3= Moderately Satisfactory; مرضية الى حد ما	31.25%
4= Satisfactory مرضية	31.25%
5= Highly Satisfactory مرضية للغاية	18.75%
Don't know لأعرف	6.25%
Grand Total	100.00%

Targeted audience of the project was not limited to statistical authorities, the capacity building component included members of National Statistical offices, Ministries of Planning, Telecommunication and Health.

The main goal of the capacity building component was to present: 1. The concepts of Big Data and its applications to public policy; 2. Ethics and privacy and 3. The prototype platform that provides real-time data to policymakers on key selected variables on the basis of available data to respond to key needs amidst crises.

The regular meetings of the project stakeholders have created a momentum for exchanging experiences and enhanced the smooth flow of information, which has had clear implications on the coverage, quality, and timeliness of ESCWA bigdata work and publications.

The project was also presented within the Global Policy Dialogue Series on ‘Technological and Science-based Solutions to the COVID-19 Challenge’ on 29 October 2020 organized by UNDESA with the participation of the President of the UN Economic and Social Council, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, other UN entities and ministries of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, Interior and Safety, and Planning and International Cooperation.

Overall, beneficiaries were satisfied about the project and over 56% of respondents confirmed that the project was effective or extremely effecting in addressing a real data gap in their work needs.

Table 6: Overall rating of project effectiveness

Overall, how do you evaluate the EFFECTIVENESS of the project to your work needs? في النهاية - كيف تقيم فعالية عمل المشروع لاحتياجات عملك؟	%
2= Low; ضعيفة	6.25%
3= Moderate; لا بأس بها	25.00%
4= High/ Great جيدة	6.25%
5= Extremely High جيدة للغاية	50.00%
Don't know لأعرف	12.50%
Grand Total	100.00%

The project delivered all its outcomes; however, it was not successful in delivering on all its outputs stipulated in the project log-frame due to many reasons including: the changing priorities due to the dynamic context, the unrealistic activities drafted at the log-frame considering the available timeline and the establish partnerships and the limited connections and causality between project outputs and outcomes.

A full list of the progress against project indicators and key activities are fully provided in Annex 3.

EQs: To what extent does the project promote gender equality and human rights through its scope and interventions? Has the project made use of innovative means of delivery? How did this influence the achievement of results?

The evaluation findings confirmed that almost all project interventions made explicit reference to gender considerations in the design, planning and implementation. NSO rated project's contribution to promoting gender equality and human rights through its scope and interventions as satisfactory to extremely satisfactory.

Given the nature of the thematic areas addressed by the project, the evaluation findings confirmed that almost all project interventions made explicit reference to gender considerations in the design, planning and implementation, as well as in engaging with the stakeholders. Project publications, research and policy analysis promote equality and inclusiveness, are gender sensitive and rights focused and systematically present disaggregated data. A quick review of the master lists of stakeholders and participants in the project capacity building workshops or events revealed that the gender perspective was a central consideration embedded in almost all the thematic interventions and that participation was gender balanced. Female participants accounted for around 60% of the total number of participants of the project key events randomly selected by the evaluator to investigate.

On the quantitative side, over 62% of respondents rated project's contribution to promoting gender equality and human rights through its scope and interventions as satisfactory to extremely satisfactory.

Table 7: Satisfaction on project role in promoting gender equality and human rights

To what extent does the project promote gender equality and human rights through its scope and interventions?	%
1= Extremely Low; ضعيفه جدا	0.00%
2= Low; ضعيفة	6.25%
3= Moderate; لا بأس بها	12.50%
4= High/ Great جوده	12.50%
5= Extremely High جوده للغاية	50.00%
Don't know لأعرف	18.75%
Grand Total	100.00%

It is also worth mentioning that Several Council for the Orientation of Development and Ethics (CODE) meetings took place in February and November 2020 to ensure that the issues related to big data reflect and promote core ethical principles including participation of and relevance for concerned individuals and groups. Participants from UNHCR and other UN entities, National Statistical Offices, Ministries of Telecommunication, Interior, and universities in Jordan and Lebanon took part in these meetings.

6.3. Efficiency

External Dimension:

EQs: To what extent and in what ways was the project successful in improving its operational efficiency? Did the implementation of the project make effective use of time and resources to achieve results? Were there other implementation approaches that were likely to have been more economical? Were there synergies or complementary efforts within ESCWA and with partners and other relevant entities that created efficiencies? To what extent was the work of the project duplicative or supportive of the work of other entities?

The possibility of inducing a powerful change at MS level is often amplified when there is a joint program between project team and other stakeholder such as the agreement with Data Pop Alliance Foundation which was an efficient partnership supported the operational efficiency. In addition, cooperating with academia was effective (Qatar Computing Research Institute) as part of a signed MOU that allowed experts to analyze Facebook data for supporting project objectives. The effectiveness in addressing MS technical assistance needs was not efficient, as it was challenged by the lack of technical and financial resources to provide such support against the growing demands coming from the SDG data national commitments.

The evaluation further confirmed that all partners/collaborators highly praise the convening power of the project work to establish and build consensus among MS, in addition to the topnotch data analysis, research capacities and the substantive know-how and policy-advice.

A governmental representative said: *“Through the workshops led by the project, we get to know a very insightful experience from other countries on how they benefited from the bigdata, this gave us insights on how we can do the work more efficiently in our country”*

The project has successfully delivered on all its outputs stipulated in the log-frame within the planned budget. The project has been praised by 85% of the MS evaluation respondents for their relevance, quality, usefulness, and effectiveness.

The utilization of the bigdata and other project outputs were believed to be necessary but not sufficient to plausibly achieve the expected changes and to contribute to the expected accomplishments at the policy level, as links between data analysis work and the policy makers still has some gaps. The possibility of inducing policy change is often amplified when there is a joint program attended by both data specialist as well as policy makers which was a request by participants.

A governmental representative said: *“The project should continue conducting capacity building and expanding the range of targeted audience to include officials with the rank of general manager or above to have the ability to induce supportive environment for such promising initiative back in our country”*

On quantitative side, more than 60% of the respondents rated the project successfulness in improving operations efficiency as low to moderate.

Table 8: Satisfaction on the operational efficiency

To what extent was the project successful in improving its operational efficiency, i.e. increased usage of integrated planning, monitoring and reporting tools, efficiency of program management systems and tools, etc?	%
1= Extremely Low; ضعيفه جدا	12.50%
2= Low; ضعيفة	12.50%
3= Moderate; لا بأس بها	37.50%
4= High/ Great جيده	12.50%
5= Extremely High جيده للغاية	18.75%
Don't know لأعرف	6.25%
Grand Total	100.00%

The effectiveness in addressing MS technical assistance needs, is powerful, however, it is being challenged by the lack of technical and financial support to provide such support against the growing demands coming from the SDG data national commitments. The evaluation could not trace clear strategy to build on the capacity building and sustain their potential impacts especially with the turnover of participants attending the different capacity building components.

An ESCWA project staff mentioned *“We don’t have enough resources to address all the MS needs, we are so stretched, so sometimes you can see some topics fall between the cracks”*

At the same time, about 50% of respondents confirmed that the project contribution to enhancing the production and utilization of big-data concepts at country level as low to moderate.

Table 9: Satisfaction on the enhancement of bigdata work at countries level

To what extent has the project enhanced the production and utilization of big-data concepts at your country?	%
1= Extremely Low; ضعيفه جدا	0.00%
2= Low; ضعيفة	6.25%
3= Moderate; لا بأس بها	43.75%
4= High/ Great جيده	18.75%
5= Extremely High جيده للغاية	25.00%
Don't know لأعرف	6.25%
Grand Total	100.00%

As an efficient partnership strategy an agreement was signed between ESCWA and Data Pop Alliance on Sep 2019. This partnership, which was also joined by UNHCR and the Lebanese Central Administration for Statistics (CAS), aimed to assess how new sources of data and analytical approaches may shed light on the living conditions of refugees and host communities in Lebanon. The pilot Project utilized Call Detail Records from Alfa and Touch (two Lebanese) mobile phone operators. The assessment was published in form of a report Big Data for Good: can big data illustrate the challenges facing Syrian refugees in Lebanon? The report demonstrates the

various ways the data from telecommunication operators can be utilized for public policy making and was nominated for the WSIS Prizes 2021.

Another efficient example of the project was the program flexibility to adapt to the changing context. During the project extension, the project team has identified several COVID-19 policy responses in Lebanon and Jordan and developed methods and tools to analyze their effectiveness using Big Data sources. Led by ESCWA and DPA, the national statistics offices of Jordan and Lebanon have been closely involved in the project implementation. The project aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a selected number of government policies or decisions in response to the pandemic. The project also developed a prototype of a platform for policymakers to help formulate responses, implement, and monitor adopted policies (during crisis) by leveraging new kinds of data and analytical approaches. The project was presented to the ESCWA's intergovernmental committee on statistics as well as the intergovernmental committee on technology in a Webinar on localized big data for effective decision making in crisis situations.

6.4. Sustainability

EQ: Do project beneficiaries and/or member States and/or stakeholders have ownership, capacity, and resources to maintain the activity results after external funding ceases? Did the project contribute to capacity building of local institutions and/or member States to continue to deliver quality services? What are other major factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project?

Despite sustainability wasn't a focus on the project log-frame or reports, the project created conditions likely to support the sustainability of the results generated. Social capital through the establishment of peer support groups, and investment at human capital through capacity-building of NSOs managing the delivery of data to policy makers were among those aspects improved by the project that are likely to continue to provide benefits. However, the gaps in responding to all needs related to bigdata institutionalization was beyond the project capacity and this work should be taken forward by other project on a phased manner.

There is limited sustainability plan embedded through the project log-frame. The project annual work plan doesn't include indicators at the outcome level to monitor the sustainability efforts and the expansion of the capacities at the countries level. The resources available at the project team are insufficient to fulfill the dual mandate to implement and to ensure sustainability.

Despite the sustainability plan was that the project main output (the Regional Observatory which consists of the working papers and networks resulting from the focus group and capacity-building modules), should have established a mechanism for real time analysis (through the working papers/life documents) on the forcibly displaced/host communities' and their

development challenges including senior civil servants, CSOs, private sector representatives and political decision makers to be maintained by ESCWA beyond the project's life cycle. On ground, this hadn't fully achieved. This was also confirmed by participants views who confirmed that sustainability is limited and that more efforts need to be exerted to support the institutionalization of the work inside the NSO.

Table 10: Satisfaction on the project provided institutional support

To what extent has the project provided institutional and/or managerial support at MS level?	%
1= Extremely Low; ضعيفه جدا	0.00%
2= Low; ضعيفة	6.25%
3= Moderate; لا بأس بها	50.00%
4= High/ Great جيده	6.25%
5= Extremely High جيده للغاية	25.00%
Don't know لأعرف	12.50%
Grand Total	100.00%

On the positive side, the project created conditions likely to support the sustainability of the results generated. Social capital through the establishment of peer support groups, and investment at human capital through capacity-building of NSOs managing the delivery of data to policy makers were among those aspects improved by the project that are likely to continue to provide benefits. Additionally, there was some examples of sustainability practices induced by the project team, as the project on Syrian refugees and host community was discussed with UNHCR and UNCT in Lebanon. The Covid19 response policies effectiveness included the impact of refugees, such data was delivered through the NSOs in the two countries using the learned skills and data portal. The outcomes of the work were discussed at regional level expert group meetings of Statistics and Technology.

The project workplan didn't have any obligations (nor resources) to review and provide quality assurance for sustainability of such investment among MS. However, ESCWA should ensure that this is done systematically.

7. Conclusion

On relevance, the design of the project led workshops and proposed topics are highly relevant to the national concerns and priorities. These topics were initially proposed based on real needs and in full consultation with the representatives in the intergovernmental statistical committees to reflect priorities at both national and regional levels. This is in addition to the relevance of the bigdata work in addressing issues of global importance, as defined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

On effectiveness, the project was successful in achieving its expected outcomes and a few of its expected outputs due to many reasons including: the changing priorities due to the dynamic context, the unrealistic activities drafted at the log-frame within such timeline and the limited connections between project outputs and outcomes. The project team addressed such challenges through developing interventions relevant to the changing context such as big data report in Lebanon, however this didn't fully fit under the original project framework. On the capacity-building activities it was successful in reaching more than what was expected from the project. In addition, the knowledge produced by the Regional Observatory, provided senior civil servants and decision makers with much needed analysis and access to development interventions that arrested the deterioration of the displaced and their host communities' human capital, allowing the lead ministries to better support decision makers and the donor community for better long term development interventions. An area for improvement is to have a solid data portal that support MS in SDGs reports using big data.

On efficiency, the project capacity building component was highly efficient, the agreement with Data Pop Alliance Foundation was an efficient partnership supported the project delivery and operational efficiency. In addition, cooperating with academia (Qatar Computing Research Institute) was effective as part of a signed MOU that allowed experts to analyze Facebook data for supporting project objectives. However, addressing MS technical assistance needs was not efficient, as it was challenged by the lack of technical and financial resources to provide such support against the growing demands coming from the national data commitments.

On Sustainability, the project created conditions likely to support the sustainability of the results generated. Social capital through the establishment of peer support groups, and investment at human capital through capacity-building of NSOs managing the delivery of data to policy makers were among those aspects improved by the project that are likely to continue to provide benefits. However, the gaps in responding to all needs related to bigdata institutionalization was beyond the project capacity and this work should be taken forward by other project on a phased manner

One of the key messages enhanced by the project and was well received by MS is that bigdata can help monitor population's sentiment to the policies adopted and their response by the public, providing a pulse check of the main socio-economic indicators. Hence growing needs from MS.

Overall, the project has been satisfactorily praised by majority of the evaluation respondents from MS for being an effective think tank that delivers rigorous data and capacity building support that

responded to national and regional requests in various thematic areas covered by the project mainly on refugees' issue, with hopes from MS to expand this to other topics relevant to SDGs.

8. Lessons learned

The evaluation concluded some key lessons that can be further discussed with the project team and internally at ESCWA.

- **Designing the project based on real beneficiaries' need can enhance the ownership and the likelihood of usefulness of the intervention.** The project was addressing a real knowledge gap in member countries, introduced big-data concept which was highly relevance and well received by the member states.
- **The project flexibility in learning and adjusting through the project course is an effective practice to the enhance project outcomes.** The project team mitigated the challenges or the outdated logframe through introducing a more relevant interventions that weren't explicitly mentioned at the original project framework, such interventions were highly relevant to the dynamic context and highly appreciated by the MS.
- **The project sustainability mechanisms without practical implementation, institutional support and financial resources will remain just theories.** The project drafted sustainability mechanisms including capacity building, however this was only limited to those persons targeted with capacity building component without further commitments from their parent institutions, which resulted into capable personnel but with no institutional directions.
- **Realistic project activities with clear causality relationship with project objectives can lead to better project outcomes.** The project was successful in achieving its expected outcomes and a few of its expected outputs due to many reasons including: the changing priorities due to the dynamic context, the unrealistic activities drafted at the log-frame within such timeline and the limited connections between project outputs and outcomes.

9. Recommendations

The evaluation concluded some forward-looking recommendations that can be further discussed with the project team and internally at ESCWA.

- **Key Recommendations**

- 1) **Recommendation 1: The team should consider the MS needs as a driving force for getting more attraction and application to bigdata tools and approaches.** The design of the future interventions should build on the existing situation and priorities of the MS taking into account the utilization of the earlier investment in bigdata.
- 2) **Recommendation 2: The team should develop a timeframe to conclude the expansion of the capacity building for other MS, with systematic follow up on all targeted MS.** There was a delay in expansion to other countries (Iraq and Palestine as per project document) than Lebanon and Jordan, also there should be a follow up with those two countries through practical tasks relevant to the MS supported with on-the-job mentorship to ensure utilization of the bigdata tools and approaches.
- 3) **Recommendation 3: The team needs to re-examine its modus operandi moving into an integrated approach that links data as well as reflecting this at the project log-frame.** The project outputs level was lacking many of the captured progress related to bigdata, on the other hand, some of the stated outputs weren't having clear linkages with the project outcomes.
- 4) **Recommendation 4: The team and ESCWA should also identify resources to fulfill such commitment in collaboration with the partner institutions in MS.** The project should use other ESCWA resources more creatively by creating linkages with MS intuitions getting the synergy effect.
- 5) **Recommendation 5: ESCWA should, consider mobilizing adequate resources to expand the project and the promising initiative to other MS.** This should be after considering the lessons of the earlier phase to be able to implement the recommendations of the evaluation where relevant.

Annexes

Annex 1: List of Documents Reviewed

This is a preliminary list of documents reviewed in the inception phase. It will be further revised and built throughout the evaluation process.

- ESCWA Evaluation Policy
- ESCWA organigram Dec 2018
- Project report to 11th tranche development account project.
- Big data challenges- Syrian refugees.
- Policy brief “Big data”
- Capacity building workshops documents (Jordan, Iraq)
- Project summary activities
- Project technical report
- Project report table
- List of project workshops/events
- ESCWA data portal
- Evaluation TOR

Annex 2: Evaluation TOR



TOR- migration of
displaced.pdf

Annex 3: Review of the project indicators and key activities

Table 1 – Review of Performance Indicators

Expected Accomplishment	Indicator of Achievement	Target	Achieved at final evaluation
EA1 Public institutions of ESCWA Member States affected by forced displacements strengthened to deploy development strategies that address national socio-economic challenges associated with the massive influx of the forcibly displaced.	Number of member State –drafts national policy associated with targeting the forcibly displaced and their hosts with development strategy	<i>At least one country</i>	2 <i>Jordan and Lebanon enhanced capacity to draw on big data in evaluating policy effectiveness in response to COVID-19 which were used at drafting the national strategy for refugees and host communities.</i>
EA2 More effective responses by ESCWA Member States affected by forced displacement to arrest human capital deterioration of host and displaced communities	Number of civil servants and CSO representatives acknowledge benefiting from capacity-building modules and focus groups.	At least 100 civil servants and CSO representatives	217 <i>Based on project records, a total of 217 civil servants and CSO representatives of which 52 have confirmed (through written evaluations) having benefited from attending capacity building workshops.</i>

Table 2 – Review of project activities and outputs

Activity	Activity Status	Comment
<p><i>Please list all activities as per project document</i></p> <p>A1.1 One handbook produced. Handbook to tailor policies to address long term development challenges arising from refugees. Handbook consists of two parts. Part I types of development interventions deployed (what worked, what failed and what the gaps are); while part two provides recommendations on how to deploy cross-sectoral policies targeting the forcibly displaced and their hosts.</p>	<p>☒ <i>Delayed</i></p>	<p><i>MOU and partnership agreement signed in February 2020 with the International Security and Development Center (ISDC) to co-produce the following knowledge products, building on previous work thus undertaken: i) The long term development challenges facing refugees, IDPs and their hosts; ii) Gaps in development interventions since 2011 that targeted refugees, IDPs and their hosts, and iii) the risks facing the forced displaced and their hosts should the current socio-economic and political context prevail.</i></p>
<p>A1.2 Four national focus groups (with representatives from the private sector, professional syndicates and CSOs, municipal council representatives) conducted to discuss and further develop the handbook. Focus groups are also a mechanism to engage relevant stakeholders to generate political will on deploying cross-sectoral policies. Focus groups are nationally based and will have the evaluations (the first parts of the working papers) as the focus of discussions.</p>	<p>☒ <i>Delayed</i></p>	<p><i>Currently producing the draft background studies for the handbook and facilitators discussion guide to start with focus groups, to commence in mid-2021.</i></p>
<p>A1.3 One regional EGM conducted to advocate for cross-sectoral policies with the aim of developing regional cooperation synergies as well as facilitating the exchange of lessons learned (internationally and regionally) among conflict affected ESCWA Member States.</p>	<p>☒ <i>Completed</i></p>	<p><i>An EGM on “The Forced Displacement Crisis: Challenges, Options and Assessment Methodologies” took place on July 8, 2020.</i></p> <p><i>The EGM discussed the overall goal and processes of the project, including a preview of the main research pillars planned. The risk assessment on the challenges facing refugees and IDPs in the region (particular Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq). Leveraging new data sources, analytical approaches, and policy systems to appraise stressors (such as COVID-19). Human Capital Interventions and Options to Boost Resilience (the research approach to analyse human capital interventions to understand the nature and success of programming focused on supporting the maintenance and development of human capital amongst refugees, IDPs as well as host populations).</i></p>
<p>A1.4 Four national capacity-building workshops targeting senior civil servants and CSO representatives to strengthen their deployment of “win-win” cross-sectoral policies. The workshops will be interactive and based on a handbook. They serve to assess needs of public institutions</p>	<p>☒ <i>Delayed</i></p>	<p><i>To take place when handbook and facilitators guide have been finalized, and to commence during the last quarter of 2021. Meetings to be held in 2022-2023.</i></p>

<p>and generate political will to deploy cross sectoral policies targeting affected populations.</p>		
<p>A1.5 Four (national) technical assistance missions to Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon to assess gaps in handbook and capacity-building modules provided with the goal of suggesting mitigation measures.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed</p> <p>Funds reallocated</p>	<p><i>The funds were redirected to undertake activities related to COVID-19. Virtual meetings with member states, in particular with concerned civil servants from Jordan and Lebanon took place almost on a weekly basis in preparation of the Big Data and Syrian refugees project as well as in preparation of the policy effectiveness in response to COVID 19 for countries hosting large Syrian refugee populations, namely Jordan and Lebanon</i></p>
<p>A2.1 A handbook on arresting human capital deterioration of displaced persons and their host communities produced in the three target countries, including the Palestinians from Syria living in Jordan and Lebanon. The handbook will be based on two parts. Part one will evaluate types of development interventions used since 2011; while part two will provide recommendations on how to arrest human capital deterioration of the displaced and their host communities.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In progress</p>	<p><i>The substance should be ready by mid-2022.</i></p>
<p>A2.2 Four national focus groups conducted with local governance councils, CSOs working with host communities and the displaced. Findings of focus groups to feed into handbook. Focus groups will discuss evaluations of human development interventions that target the displaced and their hosts and that have been deployed since 2011. Focus groups main tasks is to develop policy recommendations and contribute towards generating the political will for their implementation.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In progress</p>	<p><i>One national focused group held in 6-8 October 2019 in Erbil, Iraq, involving 20 civil servants from central government and municipal council.</i></p> <p><i>Other meetings to be held in 2022-2023.</i></p>
<p>A2.3 One regional EGM conducted to validate handbook produced (on arresting human capital deterioration) with the aim of developing regional cooperation synergies as well as facilitating the exchange of lessons learned (internationally and regionally).</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed</p> <p>Funds reallocated</p> <p>Considering the pandemic, a regional meeting on policy effectiveness in crisis situations was conducted focusing on the two countries who host the greatest number of Syrian refugees in the Arab region.</p>	<p><i>ESCWA and Data-Pop- Alliance foundation in partnership with the Central Administration for Statistics in Lebanon (CAS) and the Department of Statistics in Jordan (DOS) organized a training workshop on “Leveraging Big data sources for policy evaluation and analysis in crisis settings” on 13-14 April 2021. More than 80 participants attended the workshop from Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia. The training workshop presented the concepts of Big Data and its applications to public policy especially as implemented in the project related to policy effectiveness in response to Covid19. The workshop was in partnership with Department of Statistics in Jordan and the Central Administration for Statistics in Lebanon.</i></p>

<p>A2.4 Four (national) capacity-building workshops targeting senior civil servants in the target countries to strengthen programmatic capacities of concerned ministries in arresting human capital deterioration of the forced displaced and their host communities. Workshops are to be interactive and serve to further develop policy interventions, strengthen the public sector to deploy them and create buy-in from the civil service.</p>	<p>☒ Delayed</p>	<p><i>Workshops to commence during the last quarter of 2022 and 2023.</i></p>
<p>A2.5 Four (national) technical assistance missions to Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon to assess gaps in handbook and capacity-building modules provided with the goal of suggesting mitigation measures.</p>	<p>☒ Delayed <i>Funds reallocated</i></p>	<p><i>The funds were redirected to undertake activities related to COVID-19. Virtual meetings with member states, in particular with concerned civil servants from Jordan and Lebanon took place almost on a weekly basis in preparation of the Big Data and Syrian refugees project as well as in preparation of the policy effectiveness in response to COVID 19 for countries hosting large Syrian refugee populations, namely Jordan and Lebanon.</i></p>

Annex 4: Online Survey Questionnaire

Brief introduction on the scope of the Survey questionnaire.

ESCWA is undertaking an independent evaluation of the Addressing the challenges of the forcibly displaced and their host communities in the ESCWA region project. While focusing on the project design, its implementation strategies, the evaluation examines the relevance and effectiveness of the project's work and explores other elements influencing or affecting its scope. The evaluation scope includes project's knowledge production, including usage of bigdata its engagement with (MSs) and its relevance to MSs needs and priorities.

ESCWA values your input to this survey to better understand its strengths and weaknesses and to be able to better serve the Arab region.

This message was sent to you as you participated in one of the project activities.

This survey takes no more than 5 minutes and all inputs to it are anonymous.

Thank you for your participation

تقوم الإسكوا بتقييم مستقل لمشروع تحديات الأشخاص المهجرين والمجتمعات المستضيفة في منطقتي الإسكوا . بينما يركز التقييم على المشروع وتصميمه والهيكل التنظيمي للتنفيذ، فإنه يدرس مدى ملاءمة أعماله وفعاليتها، ويستكشف عناصر أخرى تؤثر على نطاقه أو تأثيره. كما يشمل نطاق التقييم كافة الجوانب المتعلقة بإنتاج المعرفة في إطار المشروع وفيما يتعلق ب (البيانات الضخمة BigData) ومشاركتها مع الدول طبقاً لاحتياجاتهم وأولوياتهم.

نُثمن ونقدر الإسكوا مساهمتك في هذا الاستطلاع لفهم نقاط قوتها ونقاط ضعفها بشكل أفضل ولتكون قادرة على خدمة المنطقة العربية بشكل أفضل. تم ارسال هذه الرسالة لك لكونك شاركت في احد فعاليات هذا المشروع. لا يستغرق هذا المسح أكثر من 5 دقائق وسوف تُعامل كافة الاستمارات بسرية من دون الإشارة الى هوية المُشارك.

شكراً لكم على مشاركتكم.

1. Please check what applies to you: Are you?

- Project staff
- ESCWA Divisions (other than project team)
- UN Agency
- Regional Development Partner/ Organization
- Government
- Civil Society
- Academia/ Think Tank
- Parliament
- Other (specify) _____

2. Given project mandate and scope of work, how would you rate project support and contribution over the last 5 years, as described below, on a scale from 1 to 5? (1=Highly Unsatisfactory; 2= Unsatisfactory; 3= Moderately Satisfactory; 4= Satisfactory and 5= Highly Satisfactory).

بناءً على نطاق عمل المشروع، كيف تُقيّمون مساهمة أو مساعدة البرنامج للدول الأعضاء خلال الخمس سنوات الماضية (نرجو تقييمها على المقياس من 1 إلى 5، حيث 1- غير مرضية بتاتاً، 2- غير مرضية، 3- مرضية إلى حد ما، 4- مرضية و 5- مرضية للغاية)

No.	Statements	1 H US	2 US	3 MS	4 S	5 HS	Do not know	Comment
1	The project contributed to the development by Member States statistical capacities related to bigdata that contribute to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 ساهم المشروع في تطوير القدرات الإحصائية المتعلقة بالبيانات الضخمة، في الدول الأعضاء، والتي تسهم في تنفيذ خطة عام 2030.							
2	The project contributed to Increased engagement by MSs in intraregional consultations on SDGs ساهم المشروع في زيادة مشاركة الدول الأعضاء في المشاورات الإقليمية حول المواضيع المتعلقة بأهداف التنمية المستدامة							
3	With project support, Government officials of Member States are capable to better monitor, follow up and review their national sustainable development agenda and related policies. نظراً لمساهمة المشروع في الإسكوا، أصبح المسؤولون الحكوميون للدول الأعضاء قادرين على مراقبة ومتابعة ومراجعة الأجندة الوطنية للتنمية المستدامة بشكل أفضل							
4	With project support, Non-government partners of Member States are engaging with their governments in the follow up and review the national sustainable development agenda and social policies نظراً لمساهمة المشروع، أصبح الشركاء غير الحكوميين (مجتمع مدني وغيره) في الدول الأعضاء قادرين على مشاركة المسؤولين الحكوميين مراقبة ومتابعة ومراجعة الأجندة الوطنية للتنمية المستدامة بشكل أفضل							

3. Given project 's mandate and scope of work, how would you rate the level/ extent of the project various contributions over the last 5 years, as described below, on a scale from 1 to 5? (1= Extremely Low; 2= Low; 3= Moderate; 4= high/ Great and 5= Extremely High).

بناء على نطاق عمل المشروع في الاسكوا، كيف تُقيّمون درجة مساهمة أو مساعدة البرنامج للدول الأعضاء خلال الخمس سنوات الماضية (نرجو تقييمها على المقياس من 1 إلى 5، حيث 1- ضعيفة جداً، 2- ضعيفة، 3- لا بأس بها، 4- جيدة و 5- جيداً جداً)

No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Comment
		Extremely low	Low	Moderate	High/ Great	Extremely High	
5	To what extent has the project increased ability of MS to effectively respond to bigdata needs related to refugees? إلى أي مدى استطاع المشروع رفع قدرة الدول الأعضاء على الاستجابة بفعالية والتعامل مع الاحتياج الخاص بالبيانات الضخمة الخاصة باللاجئين؟						
6	To what extent has the project provided institutional and/or managerial support at MS level? لى أي مدى استطاع المشروع توفير الدعم المؤسسي و/ أو الإدارى على مستوى الدول الأعضاء؟						
7	To what extent are the the project knowledge products/ publications relevant to the regional context (respond to regional priorities)? إلى أي مدى جاءت منتجات المعرفة/ مطبوعات المشروع مُتّسقة مع السياق الإقليمي (مُستجيب للأولويات الإقليمية)؟						
8	To what extent are the events (conferences, workshops and meetings), organized by the project, relevant to influence the regional policies and agenda? إلى أي مدى تأتي نشاطات المشروع (ورشات عمل، مؤتمرات، اجتماعات...) مُتّسقة وقادرة على التأثير على البرامج والأجندات الإقليمية؟						
9	To what extent does the project respond to regional priorities regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? إلى أي مدى تستجيب تدخلات المشروع للأولويات الإقليمية فيما يتعلق بأجندة التنمية المستدامة لعام 2030؟						
10	To what extent were the project different interventions (publications, policy brief, capacity building workshops) coherent						

	and complement each other reinforcing the displacement topic forward on agenda in the region? إلى أي مدى كانت تدخلات المشروع (المطبوعات – الملخصات السياسية – ورش العمل وبناء القدرات) متسقة ومتكاملة مع بعضها البعض وتعزز وضع موضوع اللاجئين والمهجرين على أولويات الأجندة الإقليمية؟							
11	To what extent does the project promote gender equality and human rights through its scope and interventions? إلى أي مدى يُعزز المشروع المساواة بين الجنسين وحقوق الإنسان من خلال مجالات تدخلاته؟							
12	To what extent has the project been an effective platform to shape the regional agendas? إلى أي مدى وقّر المشروع منصة فعالة لتشكيل الأجندة الإقليمية؟							
13	To what extent has the project publications relevant for your needs and priorities? إلى أي مدى منتجات ومطبوعات المشروع ملائمة الى حاجتك وأولوياتك؟							
14	To what extent has project support capacity building of the national statistic officers? إلى أي مدى دعم المشروع بناء القدرات الخاص بمسؤولي الإحصاء الوطنية للدول الأعضاء؟							
15	To what extent has the project enhanced the production and utilization of bid-data concepts at your country? إلى أي مدى دعم المشروع مفاهيم إنتاج واستخدام البيانات الضخمة داخل بلدك؟							
16	To what extent was the project successful in improving its operational efficiency, i.e. increased usage of integrated planning, monitoring and reporting tools, efficiency of program management systems and tools, etc? إلى أي مدى نجح المشروع في تحسين كفاءته التشغيلية ، أي زيادة استخدام أدوات التخطيط والرصد والإبلاغ المتكاملة ، وكفاءة أنظمة وأدوات إدارة البرامج ، وما إلى ذلك؟							
17	To what extent were project beneficiaries and/or member States and/or stakeholders having ownership, capacity and resources to maintain the activity results after external funding ceases? مامدى تمتع المستفيدين من المشروع و / أو الدول الأعضاء و / أو أصحاب المصلحة بالقدرة والموارد للحفاظ على نتائج الأنشطة بعد توقف التمويل الخارجي؟							

18- Please list three issues the project should prioritize for the next phase.

- a)
- b)
- c)

19- -Please provide any other recommendations which might improve the project work:

- a)
- b)
- c)

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Annex 5: Evaluation Questions Matrix

Evaluation Criteria	ToR Questions	Source of data	Questions to				
			Project team	ESCWA	National s. O	Stakeholders	Other External Partners
Relevance	<p>1- To what extent are project publications and data portals relevant and timely to the needs of the region (member States and other actors)?</p> <p>To what extent is the work of the bigdata relevant to the needs of the region?</p> <p>✓ إلى أي مدى تكون المنتجات المعرفية / المطبوعات المشروع ذات صلة بالسياق الإقليمي (الاستجابة للأولويات الإقليمية)؟ (مقياس)</p> <p>✓ كيف تتواءم مجالات عمل المشروع مع الاحتياجات والأولويات المعرب عنها للدول الأعضاء في الإسكوا؟ إلى أي مدى تعكس الأولويات الإقليمية؟ (مقياس)</p>	Survey and/or interview	✓	✓	✓		
	<p>2- To what extent are the National Statistical Offices' expectations from the project being met?</p> <p>✓ Capacity building and advisory services</p> <p>✓ Data collection and production of bigdata setting</p> <p>✓ إلى أي مدى تكون نشاطات المشروع ذات صلة وثيقة بتوقعات مكاتب الإحصاء الوطنية؟ في ضوء</p> <p>✓ بناء القدرات والخدمات الاستشارية</p> <p>✓ جمع البيانات المتعلقة بالبيانات الضخمة</p>	Survey and interview	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<p>3- To what extent does the project respond to regional priorities regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? (scale)</p> <p>✓ What are these priorities? And how has the project responded?</p> <p>إلى أي مدى استجاب المشروع للأولويات الإقليمية فيما يتعلق بخطة التنمية المستدامة لعام 2030؟ (مقياس) وما هي هذه الأولويات؟ وكيف رد المشروع؟</p>	Interview	✓	✓		✓	

Evaluation Criteria	ToR Questions	Source of data	Questions to				
			Project team	ESCWA	National s. O	Stakeholders	Other External Partners
Effectiveness	4- To what extent does the project leverage its relationships with its regional partners within and outside the UN system to coordinate for bigdata concepts to support the refugees case? ✓ إلى أي مدى عزز المشروع علاقاته مع الشركاء الإقليميين والشركاء خارج الأمم المتحدة لدعم أكثر في متابعه التقدم نحو استخدام البيانات الضخمة لخدمة قضية اللاجئين والمهجرين؟	Survey and interview	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓ 4.1 Over the same timeframe, has the project contributed to any unexpected outcome/ result? What do you consider are the key project achievements over the last 5 years? ✓ خلال نفس الإطار الزمني، هل ساهم المشروع في تحقيق أية نتيجة مخطط لها / نتيجة غير متوقعة؟ ما هي الإنجازات الرئيسية للمشروع على مدى السنوات الخمس الماضية؟	Survey and interview	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5- To what extent does the project promote gender equality and human rights through its scope and interventions? (scale) مامدى فعالية المشروع في تعزيز المساواة بين الجنسين وحقوق الانسان في اطار عملها المتعلق بالبيانات الإحصائية؟	Record & Survey	✓	✓			
Efficiency	4.3 To what extent and in what ways was the project successful in improving its operational efficiency, i.e. increased usage of integrated planning, monitoring and reporting tools, efficiency of program management systems and tools, etc? ▪ إلى أي مدى وبأي طرق نجح المشروع في تحسين كفاءته التشغيلية ، أي زيادة استخدام أدوات التخطيط والرصد والإبلاغ المتكاملة ، وكفاءة أنظمة وأدوات إدارة البرامج ، وما إلى ذلك؟	Survey and interview	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Evaluation Criteria	ToR Questions	Source of data	Questions to				
			Project team	ESCWA	National s. O	Stakeholders	Other External Partners
Sustainability	<p>4.3 Do project beneficiaries and/or member States and/or stakeholders have ownership, capacity and resources to maintain the activity results after external funding ceases?</p> <p>▪ مامدى تمتع المستفيدين من المشروع و / أو الدول الأعضاء و / أو أصحاب المصلحة بالقدرة والموارد للحفاظ على نتائج الأنشطة بعد توقف التمويل الخارجي؟</p>	Survey and interview	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓