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Proposed programme plan for 2025**Summary**

The present document sets out the proposed programme plan for 2025 of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). It is set out in the format in which it will be submitted to the General Assembly of the United Nations in the coming months. It does not provide information on resource requirements, because only the Secretary-General of the United Nations can issue such information in his proposed programme budget, which is reviewed by the relevant United Nations intergovernmental bodies before approval by the General Assembly. The present proposal may therefore undergo amendments during that review process. The present document also provides some elements of programme performance in 2023, on the basis of which the plan for 2025 was formulated.

The Commission is invited to review the proposed programme plan for 2025 and make recommendations thereon.

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Proposed programme plan for 2025 and programme performance for 2023

Overall orientation

Mandates and background

- 22.1 The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is responsible for promoting inclusive and sustainable development in the Arab region. Its mandate derives from the priorities established in relevant General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions, including Council resolution 1818 (LV) establishing the Commission, and resolution 1985/69 amending its terms of reference to emphasize its social functions. At the seventh special session of the Commission, held in December 2022, member States welcomed a request by Djibouti to join the Commission. The recommendation was endorsed by the Economic and Social Council through resolution E/Res/2023/22, expanding the membership of ESCWA to 21 of the 22 members of the League of Arab States. Djibouti is the fifth least developed country (LDC) to benefit from the Commission's support.
- 22.2 The deadline for achieving the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is fast approaching, yet progress towards its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Arab region is uneven, with many challenges and gaps remaining to be addressed. The region has the human capital and resources necessary for achieving a just and dignified existence for all its people, anchored in shared prosperity. However, still-fragile development gains are jeopardized by conflict, political instability and social unrest, weak governance, social and economic disparities, and the impact of changing climate on ecosystems, natural resources, and production and consumption chains. Nonetheless, every challenge is also an opportunity, and the many sustainable development commitments reiterated by member States at the recent SDG Summit can be realized with the right support, tailored to national development trajectories and priorities. Guided by universal principles and rights, and the mandates entrusted to it, ESCWA is uniquely positioned to leverage the six proposed transitions to accelerate the achievement of the Goals by its constituency, including five Arab LDCs. Specifically, the Commission's expertise in areas such as climate action, transition to renewable energy and sustainable food systems, inclusive social protection and improved access to labour markets, and innovation and digital transformation, complemented by the deployment of interactive policy simulation tools and the subsequent enhancement of human and institutional capacities to catalyse evidence-based policymaking and decision-making, and its effectiveness in convening dialogue, building consensus, and advocacy, constitute an important asset for progress towards the Goals at the regional and national levels. Moreover, ESCWA remains committed to engaging, where appropriate, with all relevant stakeholders, thus harnessing whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, so as to reach jointly owned development solutions and outcomes.

Strategy and external factors for 2025

- 22.3 In line with the established mandates and in support of member States' ambition to achieve the Goals, the Commission's programme of work for 2025 will be centred around the following: defining and tabling novel policy options, including by providing critical evidence, underpinned by analysis and forecasting of trends, and expanding and consolidating its suite of interactive data-driven modelling and policy simulation tools and knowledge repositories [as outlined in result 2 under subprogramme 4]; providing technical advice and enhancing human and institutional capacities to utilize the wealth of information and tools in support of evidence-based decision-making, including by facilitating peer-to-peer exchanges of good practices within and beyond the region, and promoting South-South and interregional collaboration; leveraging the Commission's convening role to serve as a regional forum for setting norms and promoting inclusive dialogues at

- the national, subregional and regional levels, with the aim of brokering and forging consensus around viable development solutions; and advocating for principled rights-based whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to accelerate progress towards the Goals and their targets, while championing the Arab region’s perspective through a global lens. Thanks to its agile and projectized operating model, ESCWA will continue to prioritize high-impact interventions against the backdrop of the six transformations for the accelerated achievement of the 2030 Agenda, thus boosting the potential for delivering results with a multiplier effect and mainstreaming the particular needs of women, young people, older persons and persons with disabilities for more inclusive and equitable development outcomes.
- 22.4 Thematically, the Commission will focus on areas such as climate action; sustainable management of natural resources, including land and transboundary water; transition to new and renewable sources of energy and sustainable food systems; multidimensional poverty reduction and social protection; gender and social justice; equitable and inclusive social development, as part of the commitment to “leave no one behind”; macroeconomic, fiscal and trade policies, including by promoting improved regional integration, competitiveness of business environments, and opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs); innovative financing for development solutions, including sustainable debt management; information technology and statistics as a means to improve the availability and accessibility of evidence and transparency; digital transformation to enhance the capacity of public institutions; governance; the assessment and mitigation of transboundary risks, including conflict; and boosting the effectiveness and efficiency of public administration.
- 22.5 ESCWA will also ensure that the diverse and specific development needs of least developed and middle-income countries and countries in conflict are appropriately considered and addressed, including by supporting the five Arab least developed countries that are members of ESCWA in meeting the commitments of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2022–2031.
- 22.6 With regard to collaboration with other entities, in addition to sustaining its strategic engagement with intergovernmental organizations, such as the League of Arab States and its subsidiary bodies, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and its Development Assistance Committee, and regional financial development institutions such as the Islamic Development Bank, the Commission will promote South-South and triangular cooperation and further enhance its outreach to academic institutions and think tanks, including through the established Academic Network for Development Dialogue, civil society organizations, and the private sector, including the Union of Arab Banks and chambers of commerce in the Arab region, so as to ensure a participatory approach to identifying and guaranteeing inclusive ownership of development solutions and outcomes, so that no one is left behind. It will also encourage a whole-of-government approach and pursue new collaborations and partnership opportunities and initiatives, so as to expand the range of support it provides to member States, including by securing access to innovation and new technologies, knowledge, data and expertise, and additional financing for national and regional sustainable development priorities.
- 22.7 With regard to inter-agency coordination and liaison, the Commission will continue to play a lead role in the Arab region in implementing the Secretary-General’s reform agenda, as approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 72/279. As co-coordinator of the regional collaborative platform and its subsidiary issue-based coalitions, ESCWA will work closely with the United Nations Development Coordination Office and resident coordinator offices of the United Nations to promote complementarity and greater synergy of its own interventions with those implemented by United Nations country teams in the region, and by the World Bank, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and to ensure their full alignment with the commitments outlined within the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

- 22.8 With regard to external factors, the overall plan for 2025 is based on the following planning assumptions:
- (a) Global, regional and national development and political landscapes remain conducive for ESCWA to provide integrated policy advice and technical support, and to enhance member States' capacity;
 - (b) Arab member States, and Member States in general, remain committed to sub-, inter- and intra-regional collaboration on transboundary issues;
 - (c) Development partners remain engaged in joint initiatives and projects to support member States and sustainable development solutions;
 - (d) The operational environment, and by extension the Commission's ability to deliver its programme through available modalities, is not hindered by natural disaster, another global pandemic, or safety and security concerns owing to the spillover effects of conflict or political and social instability.
- 22.9 The Commission remains committed to integrating a gender perspective in all its activities, deliverables and results, including by supporting member States in developing inclusive gender-sensitive policy frameworks aimed at tackling a wide range of social and economic issues interlinked with women's empowerment [as outlined in unplanned result 2023 and result 3 under subprogramme 2, and result 1 under subprogramme 3]. In addition to generating relevant evidence and targeted and contextualized advocacy, ESCWA will continue to enhance the capacity of national actors and institutions and promote peer-to-peer learning on gender, social justice, population and inclusive development, as part of the global accountability framework for gender equality, in line with Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/16.
- 22.10 Guided by the Secretary-General's Disability Inclusion Strategy, ESCWA will continue to provide its member States with evidence-based policy recommendations and advocate for adoption of national policy frameworks promoting greater inclusion of persons with disabilities and their empowerment, through targeted interventions within national development and poverty reduction plans. This includes further work on enhancing access to labour markets and basic social services [as outlined in results 2 and 3 under subprogramme 2]. In addition, through the established Intersessional Group of Experts on Disability, the Commission will continue to foster cooperation and enable peer-to-peer exchanges for achieving greater disability inclusion in the Arab region.
- 22.11 The Commission's programme of work also incorporates specific considerations of the unique needs of young people and older persons, underscoring their inclusion and empowerment as vital conditions for inclusive sustainable development. In addition to enhancing youth access to employment opportunities [as outlined in result 2 under subprogramme 2], ESCWA will continue to engage with academic institutions to enhance young people's understanding of the principles of and interest in actively contributing, under a whole-of-society approach, to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda [as outlined in result 2 under subprogramme 5].

Evaluation activities

- 22.12 The following evaluations completed in 2023 have guided the proposed programme plan for 2025:
- (a) Internal evaluation of the ESCWA data strategy;
 - (b) Review of the Commission's executive management support function.
- 22.13 The results and lessons of the above-mentioned evaluations have been taken into account in the programme plan for 2025. For example, the evaluation of the Commission's data strategy indicated the need for an enhanced approach to the roll-out of various innovative modern technology-enabled tools, in particular through tailored capacity-building for civil servants in member States. ESCWA will also strengthen its internal monitoring, evaluation and learning framework to allow for a more

agile and adaptive implementation of all ESCWA strategies, including the assessed data strategy, the digital and innovation strategies, and the newly formulated SDG strategy. The review of the executive management support function enabled further streamlining of internal processes in support of mandate delivery, thus maintaining the spirit of and further consolidating operational enhancements stemming from the ESCWA reform.

22.14 The following evaluations are planned for 2025:

- (a) Thematic evaluation conducted by the entity of the ESCWA reform and its new operational model (as per the recommendations of an audit by the Office of Internal Oversight Services);
- (b) Evaluation conducted by the entity of one of the Commission's operational support functions (such as administration, including human resources and/or budget and finance; procurement) or one of its six subprogrammes.

Programme of work

Subprogramme 1

Climate change and natural resource sustainability

Objective

- 22.15 The objective, to which this subprogramme contributes, is to advance climate action and integrated and sustainable policies in the areas of water, energy and food security.

Strategy

- 22.16 To contribute to the objective, the subprogramme will undertake the following:
- (a) Deploy in-house expertise and, where relevant, collaborate with experts to assess the impact of and analyse trends, challenges and opportunities, and subsequently disseminate research-based knowledge products pertaining to issues such as the transboundary management of water and other natural resources, including land/soil; biodiversity; extractive industries and a just and inclusive energy transition; food security; circular economy pathways; climate adaptation, mitigation, and reducing climate vulnerability through innovative and accessible solutions for financing climate- and resilience-related interventions; and developing interactive, data-driven regional modelling platforms;
 - (b) Provide technical and policy advice and expertise to member States, and strengthen human and institutional capacities at the regional, national and sectoral levels, so as to use the knowledge, evidence and tools provided to identify and operationalize immediate medium- and long-term solutions, to mainstream climate and integrated natural resource management considerations into national and sectoral development plans and budgets, and to identify opportunities for financing climate change action and adaptation;
 - (c) Convene intergovernmental platforms and technical bodies to facilitate cross-sectoral dialogue, consensus-building, and peer-to-peer exchanges between policymakers and practitioners, experts, civil society and other development partners from within and outside the Arab region, with the aim of promoting sub-, intra- and inter-regional cooperation and coordination; and of fostering consensus on priorities and actions towards the development of transboundary and regional normative frameworks, which support and promote the sustainable management of water and other natural resources, transformative food systems, the transition towards circularity approaches, access to affordable, reliable and sustainable sources of energy, and improved resilience of countries and communities;
 - (d) Advocate the global agenda with national governments, regional intergovernmental bodies and other relevant stakeholders, including by supporting integrated regional reporting and monitoring of progress towards specific Goal targets; by promoting joint solutions and harmonizing positions; and by leveraging existing and building new partnerships to support the implementation of such commitments and mobilizing necessary resources;
 - (e) Through the Centre for Advancing Carbon Emissions Reduction, foster opportunities for regional collaboration to accelerate emission reduction and facilitate implementation of the circular carbon economy, as a key component for addressing emission management towards more sustainable and equitable development.
- 22.17 The above-mentioned work is expected to result in the following:
- (a) Adoption by member States of national policy frameworks and regional agreements related to climate action and natural resources sustainability; reduced emissions; transition to sustainable energy; and resilient food systems supported by sustainable agriculture;

- (b) Strengthened sub- and intra-regional cooperation on issues outlined in paragraph 22.17(a), supported by inclusive networks and participatory coordination mechanisms and platforms.

Programme performance in 2023

Arab member States are better equipped to access climate finance for water action

22.18 Through the midterm review of the Water Action Decade in 2023, climate finance for the water sector was identified as a priority accelerator for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. In response, the subprogramme, in partnership with the League of Arab States, the Islamic Development Bank, the Green Climate Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the Government of Sweden, launched the Arab Initiative for Mobilizing Climate Finance for Water. Recognizing the close interlinkages between water and climate change, and the vital role public finance plays in providing essential climate financing resources and catalysing other resources, the initiative focused on developing regional capacity to mobilize funding for water action under changing climate conditions. Concurrently, it works to foster understanding among national stakeholders to improve access to and the mobilization of climate finance for water, and analyses the climate finance flows and needs of Arab States for achieving their water-related climate goals.

22.19 Progress towards the objective is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.1).

Table 22.1

Performance measure

<i>2021 (actual)</i>	<i>2022 (actual)</i>	<i>2023 (actual)</i>
Shortfall in financing is identified as a key factor impeding progress on water security	Member States identify climate finance for water as a priority accelerator for the Water Action Decade and the 2030 Agenda	Five member States (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia) present their water and climate commitments to potential donors and multilateral development banks and climate funds at the Arab Forum for Mobilizing Climate Finance for Water

Planned results for 2025

Result 1: Increased use of regional knowledge platforms for informed climate action

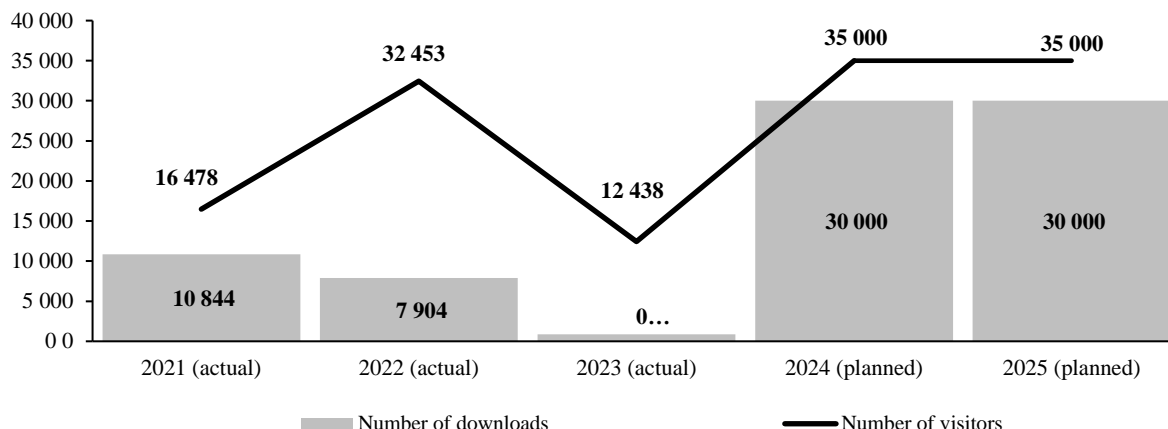
Programme performance in 2023 and target for 2025

22.20 The subprogramme's work contributed to at least 12,438 visits to regional knowledge platforms and 885 downloads, which did not meet the planned target of 31,000 visits and 29,000 downloads. Changes in the governance structure, which took place in 2023, resulted in open direct access to multiple datasets, and do not allow the full assessment of the subprogramme's performance against the set target.

22.21 Progress towards the objective for 2025 is presented in the performance measure below (figure 22.I).

Figure 22.I

Performance measure: number of visitors to regional knowledge platforms and number of downloads (Annual)



Result 2: Sustainable transition to new and renewable sources of energy underpinned by a transformed extractive industries sector

Programme performance in 2023 and target for 2025

22.22 The subprogramme's work contributed to member States having access to a suite of knowledge products and evidence on the role of minerals and raw materials in supporting the energy transition in the Arab region, to member States exchanging expertise and good practice, and to coordinating national actions at the regional level through the regional Group of Experts on Extractive Industries and a dedicated platform at the Middle East and North Africa Climate Week 2023, which met the planned target.

22.23 Progress towards the objective for 2025 is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.2).

Table 22.2

Performance measure

2021 (actual)	2022 (actual)	2023 (actual)	2024 (planned)	2025 (planned)
Regional Group of Experts on Extractive Industries (GEEI) is established	Member States have access to information on extractive industries in the Arab region	Member States gain access to a suite of knowledge products and evidence on the role of minerals and raw materials in supporting the energy transition in the Arab region	Member States formulate national policy frameworks in support of transforming the extractive energy sector towards a transition to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy systems	At least two member States implement policy recommendations and best practices for sustainable production of critical raw materials
	Strategic framework and roadmap for enabling just, inclusive, equitable and secure transition of the energy sector,	States exchange expertise and good practice, and coordinate national actions at the regional level		At least 20 experts in the fields of extractive industries and energy from member States report increased

2021 (actual)	2022 (actual)	2023 (actual)	2024 (planned)	2025 (planned)
	based on the circular carbon economy framework, is developed for one member State (Kuwait)	through GEEI and a dedicated platform at the Middle East and North Africa Climate Week 2023		understanding of means for a sustainable transition to new and renewable sources of energy and extractive industries sector transformation

Result 3: Transitioning to sustainable food systems in the Arab region

Proposed programme plan for 2025

22.24 Over 50 million people in the Arab region, or 1 person in 10, currently suffer from undernourishment, a number that is expected to increase in the absence of appropriate policy measures towards sustainable food systems. Sustainable food systems not only enhance food security but also safeguard the economic, social and environmental bases necessary to generate food security and nutrition for future generations. Recognizing the importance of a transition to sustainable food systems, the League of Arab States and its subsidiary Arab Organization for Agricultural Development committed to developing and adopting a regional food security and agriculture strategy. In 2023, the subprogramme, in collaboration with FAO, developed a regional tool for food security assessments.

Lessons learned and planned change

22.25 The lesson for the subprogramme was that assessing the status of food security alone is insufficient to enable informed policymaking on equitable food availability, accessibility, and nutrition; and that sustainability of natural resources, such as water and land, and production and consumption patterns are equally critical factors that contribute to food security. In applying the lesson, the subprogramme will collaborate with partners on the development of a regional methodology and an expanded tool for comprehensive assessments of food systems and their sustainability, based on the outcomes of food system consultations conducted with regional, national and local stakeholders. It will also engage with the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development to provide a platform for member States to exchange knowledge and best practice, and will develop their capacity to apply the tool at the regional and national levels. This will contribute to generating vital evidence and policy recommendations, enabling member States to undertake such a transition.

22.26 Expected progress towards the objective is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.3).

Table 22.3

Performance measure

2021 (actual)	2022 (actual)	2023 (actual)	2024 (planned)	2025 (planned)
-	-	Member States have access to a monitoring framework to assess food security (at the regional level)	Member States have access to a tool/methodology for comprehensive assessments of national food systems	At least one member State develops (or adopts) policies for transitioning to sustainable food systems
			At least one member State assesses its national food systems using the regional methodology/tool	

Subprogramme 2

Gender justice, population and inclusive development

Objective

- 22.27 The objective, to which this subprogramme contributes, is to achieve equitable and inclusive social development and reduced inequality, poverty and unemployment in line with the principle of leaving no one behind.

Strategy

- 22.28 To contribute to the objective, the subprogramme will undertake the following:
- (a) Develop knowledge products and policy options and solutions, underpinned by the analysis of trends, challenges and opportunities, and international norms and standards, on a wide range of issues pertaining to social inclusion and protection; social and gender justice, including in the contexts of crisis and climate change; poverty reduction; inequalities; labour market needs; migration; cross-cutting themes such as socioeconomic participation and empowerment of women, young people, older persons, and persons with disabilities, especially those in vulnerable situations, as a key pillar of inclusive and sustainable development, and of post crisis recovery; and support mandated reviews against global commitments and agreements;
 - (b) Provide technical and policy advice and expertise to member States, and strengthen national, human and institutional capacities to assess existing policy and legislative frameworks, so as to identify and operationalize viable legislation and development solutions and best practices, and to mainstream considerations related to inequality reduction, equal participation, social justice, protection, and the specific needs of those in vulnerable situations into national development plans and budgets;
 - (c) Enhance existing and develop new methodologies and interactive intelligent tools for simulation and analysis of proposed policy options and their likely impact on regional and national inclusive development trajectories;
 - (d) Engage member States and relevant stakeholders and development partners in dialogue to facilitate the exchange of good practice, including by promoting South-South collaboration and peer learning, and to advocate for the adoption of policy solutions and forge consensus on issues such as migration, poverty, social protection, social justice and equality, and the rights and social and economic empowerment of women, young people, older persons, and persons with disabilities.
- 22.29 The above-mentioned work is expected to result in the following:
- (a) National policy frameworks and strategies developed and adopted by member States to address structural inequalities, and promote social justice and greater social inclusion and socioeconomic empowerment and participation, while addressing the specific rights, of women, young people, older persons, persons with disabilities, and migrants, especially those in vulnerable situations;
 - (b) Enhanced coverage of peoples of the Arab region, in particular persons in vulnerable situations, by social protection programmes and poverty eradication policies, and their improved access to decent and equitable employment opportunities.

Programme performance in 2023

New legal frameworks on care economies boost gender justice and women's economic empowerment in Lebanon

- 22.30 The care economy is crucial for achieving social justice but it was not considered a priority in the Arab region, where the brunt of unpaid care work falls on women. This inequality in the division of care work has contributed to one of the lowest female labour participation rates worldwide, and has been further compounded by conflict, structural inequalities, and the COVID-19 pandemic (with the closure of schools and daycares, the majority of women found themselves in unmanageable situations and many lost or were forced to quit their jobs to care for their children, older adults and those with disabilities). Only then did the care economy become a priority in national and regional development agendas. To support member States, the subprogramme focused on generating knowledge and collecting best practices, supported by situational analysis, conducted in collaboration with relevant national authorities. On this basis, the subprogramme developed country-specific policy options for enhancing existing legal frameworks. Following the completion of a case study for Lebanon, a series of engagements took place with relevant line ministries, which resulted in two new laws, anchored in recognition of the care economy as a critical pillar of women's economic empowerment, being presented to the Lebanese Parliament for adoption. In addition, building on the national experience of Lebanon, and to raise awareness and elevate the discussion to the regional level, two training workshops were conducted for the subcommittee of the ESCWA Committee on Women.
- 22.31 Progress towards the objective is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.4).

Table 22.4

Performance measure

<i>2021 (actual)</i>	<i>2022 (actual)</i>	<i>2023 (actual)</i>
Lawmakers in Arab member States gain access to policy recommendations and knowledge on interlinkages between care economies and gender parity	National dialogue on care economy, gender parity and women's economic empowerment is established in one member State (Lebanon)	One member State (Lebanon) submits for parliamentary adoption gender equality and family-friendly laws, anchored in recognition of the care economy as a critical pillar of women's economic empowerment

Planned results for 2025

Result 1: Increased effectiveness and efficiency of social protection systems in the Arab region

Programme performance in 2023 and planned target for 2025

- 22.32 The subprogramme's work contributed to two member States (Tunisia and Yemen) identifying enhancements required to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their social protection systems, which met the planned target.
- 22.33 Progress towards the objective for 2025 is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.5).

Table 22.5

Performance measure

<i>2021 (actual)</i>	<i>2022 (actual)</i>	<i>2023 (actual)</i>	<i>2024 (planned)</i>	<i>2025 (planned)</i>
A total of 179 people (66 males and 113 females) train from 17 member States on tools to increase inclusiveness of social protection systems	Civil servants and social assistance professionals from three member States (Egypt, Jordan and Mauritania) train on the Social Protection Programme-Rapid Assessment Framework (SPP-RAF) to increase the inclusiveness of social protection systems	Two member States (Tunisia and Yemen) identify enhancements required to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their social protection systems	Two member States adopt measures to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their social protection systems	Two additional member States adopt measures to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their social protection systems
One member State (Jordan) analyses the inclusiveness of its social protection systems	Two member States (Egypt and Jordan) identify enhancements required to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their social protection systems, in particular those related to effective coverage of currently excluded groups			Arab member States exchange best practices on closing social protection gaps through an inter-regional peer-to-peer exchange forum

Result 2: Skills-focused approaches to boost access to employment opportunities**Programme performance in 2023 and planned target for 2025**

- 22.34 The subprogramme's work contributed to policymakers in 11 member States (Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) gaining access to evidence on factors affecting job markets (such as skill sets in demand and inclusiveness), which met the planned target.
- 22.35 Progress towards the objective for 2025 is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.6).

Table 22.6

Performance measure

<i>2021 (actual)</i>	<i>2022 (actual)</i>	<i>2023 (actual)</i>	<i>2024 (planned)</i>	<i>2025 (planned)</i>
Prototype of the artificial intelligence (AI)-based skills-to-jobs matching portal is piloted by one member State (Qatar)	Working-age populations in four member States (Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon and Qatar) are enabled to identify job opportunities based on their skills	Arab policymakers gain access to evidence on factors affecting the job market (skillsets in demand, inclusiveness)	At least 10 academic institutions in the Arab region utilize the Skills Monitor as part of their career-planning support to graduates	At least two member States adopt policies related to labour market and upskilling and re-skilling of young people and the working-age

2021 (actual)	2022 (actual)	2023 (actual)	2024 (planned)	2025 (planned)
	through an AI-based portal, namely the ESCWA Skills Monitor			population to match labour market needs

Result 3: Member States adopt a multidimensional approach to poverty reduction

Proposed programme plan for 2025

22.36 Many poverty reduction strategies have focused solely on income poverty, as measured by money-metric estimations of daily living income. However, there are many other factors, such as education, employment, health, housing, safety and security, that drive high levels of poverty in its many forms in the Arab region, where one in four people are considered as living in poverty. The subprogramme adopted a methodology (a multidimensional poverty index (MPI)), which measures the simultaneous deprivations people living in poverty face, and developed an accompanying policy tool (MPI Assist Tool (MAT)). MAT enables member States to use their microdata surveys to assess the incidence and depth of multidimensional deprivations within their populations, to track their status and growth, and to simulate shocks and various poverty reduction strategies.

Lessons learned and planned change

22.37 The lesson for the subprogramme was that, although some factors impacting poverty levels are regional and allow for comparative analysis, a one-size-fits-all approach cannot be applied across all member States owing to country-specific constraints and variations in the extent to which the different factors impact national poverty levels. In applying the lesson, the subprogramme will continue to engage with relevant ministries in member States and United Nations country teams to tailor MPI to national contexts and enhance country capacity to apply MAT. It will also promote incorporation in the MPI considerations of the specific needs of women, young people, persons with disabilities and older persons. Subsequently, the subprogramme will support member States in utilizing MPI and MAT to develop national policy frameworks for the reduction of poverty in all its forms.

22.38 Expected progress towards the objective is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.7).

Table 22.7

Performance measure

2021 (actual)	2022 (actual)	2023 (actual)	2024 (planned)	2025 (planned)
The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) and MPI Assist Tool (MAT) are developed	One member State (State of Palestine) pilots nationalized MPI	Two member States (Iraq and Somalia) adopt MPI to analyse poverty in all its forms	Two additional member States utilize MPI/MAT to assess drivers of poverty	At least two member States adopt policy frameworks/strategies for the eradication of poverty in all its forms
			One member State incorporates considerations of gender and disability inclusion in its MPI	Two additional member States utilize MPI/MAT to assess drivers of poverty

Subprogramme 3

Shared economic prosperity

Objective

22.39 The objective, to which this subprogramme contributes, is to achieve equitable economic growth, amplify regional interconnectedness and integration, and advance the effective implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in support of the 2030 Agenda.

Strategy

22.40 To contribute to the objective, the subprogramme will undertake the following:

- (a) Develop and provide knowledge products and evidence for policymaking related to trade, logistics and transport, including opportunities for greater regional integration; development planning, from a behavioural perspective; economic diversification and macroeconomic stability; debt sustainability and fiscal policy frameworks and initiatives, as means of enhancing fiscal space for investment in sustainable development priorities; and financing development initiatives, including the development of integrated national financing frameworks and toolkits, so as to enhance the efficiency of public spending in support of national development priorities and trajectories;
- (b) Enhance existing and develop new interactive data-driven platforms and policy simulation models on trade flows, taxation, debt optimization, social expenditure, impact of gender equality policies on economies, and contextualised economic modelling, among others; and promote the application of modern technologies, such as blockchain, as means to facilitate trade and logistics;
- (c) Provide member States with technical and policy advice and expertise, and strengthen national and local human and institutional capacities to deploy behavioural insights and available modelling, forecasting and impact simulation tools in support of decision-making and policy-development processes aimed at providing immediate medium- and long-term solutions to a range of national development challenges in the areas identified in paragraph 22.40 (a);
- (d) Promote greater collaboration and coordination at the national and regional levels, including through the exchange of good practice; and foster consensus on priorities and actions, and joint initiatives aimed at improving regional integration, facilitating trade, promoting innovative debt solutions, and securing funding for sustainable development initiatives.

22.41 The above-mentioned work is expected to result in the following:

- (a) Ensure evidence-backed national development planning; develop national policy frameworks developed and enacted by member States to tackle structural economic challenges; improve debt management and sustainability; enhance equity, efficiency and effectiveness of public expenditure; boost trade opportunities and economic diversification, including by enhancing operational environment for SMEs; and create fiscal space for social investment and the provision of an expanded range of basic social services;
- (b) Increase the contribution of SMEs to national and regional economies; and ensure greater economic participation and empowerment of individuals, including those in vulnerable situations.

Programme performance in 2023

Egypt develops the first Arab Integrated National Financing Strategy (in support of its national sustainable development plan)

- 22.42 Having adopted its first national Sustainable Development Vision 2030, the Government of Egypt requested support in formulating its evidence-based Integrated National Financing Strategy (INFS). In support of this ambition, the subprogramme, relying on the Commission’s policy and financing simulation tools, conducted 30 assessments aimed at discerning financing inequalities, fiscal space constraints, and funding shortfalls. This allowed for informed national discussions focused on opportunities, challenges and innovative approaches to finance national sustainable development commitments. The subprogramme also contributed to the dialogue by promoting a whole-of-government principled approach, anchored in the defined development priorities. Concurrently, the ESCWA tools deployed to support INFS in Egypt have been integrated into the global INFF guidance, and already have proved critical in the preparation of “deep dive” analyses/country reports, which played a catalyst role in member States defining transition pathways for an accelerated achievement of the 2030 Agenda (as referred to under subprogramme 5 performance in 2023). The subprogramme continues to support Jordan on a similar trajectory, with the above-mentioned assessments having already been finalized.
- 22.43 Progress towards the objective is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.8).

Table 22.8

Performance measure

<i>2021 (actual)</i>	<i>2022 (actual)</i>	<i>2023 (actual)</i>
One member State (Egypt) requests support with development of its Integrated National Financing Strategy for the SDGs	Two member States (Egypt and Jordan) have access to detailed assessments of national development financing tools	One member State (Egypt) develops a first-in-the-region Integrated National Financing Strategy
		Member States (globally) gain access to ESCWA methodology and tools to support the development of integrated national financing strategies

Planned results for 2025

Result 1: Improved effectiveness of economic policies from a gender perspective

Programme performance in 2023 and target for 2025

- 22.44 The subprogramme’s work contributed to one member State (the United Arab Emirates) making significant progress in its Global Gender Gap Index ranking, from 120th to 68th position (in the course of past six years), which met the planned target.
- 22.45 In addition, the subprogramme contributed to one member State (Morocco) increasing its Global Gender Gap Index score increased from 0.598 to 0.624, although it maintained its rank of 136.
- 22.46 Progress towards the objective for 2025 is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.9).

Table 22.9

Performance measure

<i>2021 (actual)</i>	<i>2022 (actual)</i>	<i>2023 (actual)</i>	<i>2024 (planned)</i>	<i>2025 (planned)</i>
Global Gender Gap Index scoring by member States ranges between 0.492 and 0.716 compared with the global gender gap score of 0.677	Two member States (Morocco and the United Arab Emirates) develop new policies to improve female economic participation	Improved ranking on the Global Gender Gap Index scoring of at least one of the two member States that developed new policies to advance female economic participation	Arab policymakers have access to a tool and the capacity to deploy it to simulate the broader impact of gender equality policies on national economies	Arab policymakers engage in peer-to-peer exchanges on best practices in addressing gender equality gaps through sectoral development policy frameworks
				Improved ranking on the Global Gender Gap Index scoring of at least one additional member State that developed new policies to advance female economic participation

Result 2: Contextualized economic modelling informs the development of economic, social and trade policies

Programme performance in 2023 and target for 2025

22.47 The subprogramme's work contributed to three member States (Mauritania, Oman and the United Arab Emirates) applying computable general equilibrium (CGE) models, which did not meet the planned target of four additional member States using CGE models. The target was not met because the subprogramme's work in support of a fourth member State (the Sudan) was impacted by a worsening security situation, which translated into slower-than-anticipated engagement and progress in the roll-out of a national CGE model.

22.48 Progress towards the objective for 2025 is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.10).

Table 22.10

Performance measure

<i>2021 (actual)</i>	<i>2022 (actual)</i>	<i>2023 (actual)</i>	<i>2024 (planned)</i>	<i>2025 (planned)</i>
Pilot web-based computable general equilibrium (CGE) model is used by Jordan	Two national CGE models are used by the State of Palestine and Yemen	Three additional member States (Mauritania, Oman and the United Arab Emirates) use CGE models	Three additional member States use CGE models	Two additional member States use CGE models

Result 3: Enhanced debt sustainability for increased investment in sustainable development priorities

Proposed programme plan for 2025

22.49 Gaps in SDG financing have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and global inflationary pressures, rising interest rates, and geopolitical uncertainty, straining public budgets and

jeopardizing resources available for development priorities and debt sustainability. Public debt in the Arab region increased sharply over the last decade to nearly half of regional gross domestic product (GDP), exerting significant fiscal stress on Arab middle-income countries that face growing and overlapping challenges, and Arab LDCs that either face high risk of debt distress or are already in debt distress. To date, the subprogramme has been supporting member States in the design and operationalization of debt swaps for climate action/SDGs and debt optimization initiatives, and by improving their readiness to access innovative financing instruments.

Lessons learned and planned change

- 22.50 The lesson learned for the subprogramme was that supporting member States requires both analysis and policy recommendations, tailored to national financial structures and processes and to platforms enabling knowledge sharing and peer-learning among practitioners in debt management offices from the region and relevant international experts and institutions. In applying the lesson, the subprogramme will further enhance the suite of knowledge products and standardized (yet contextualized to national needs) tools for sustainable debt management and optimization. It will also enhance institutional and human capacities to deploy the tools. Capitalizing on its convening ability, the subprogramme will avail platforms for peer-to-peer exchanges within the Arab region and beyond.
- 22.51 Expected progress towards the objective is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.11).

Table 22.11

Performance measure

<i>2021 (actual)</i>	<i>2022 (actual)</i>	<i>2023 (actual)</i>	<i>2024 (planned)</i>	<i>2025 (planned)</i>
Member States gain access to regional analysis of social expenditure and to tools for monitoring it and improving its allocative efficiency, debt sustainability, and innovative financing solutions	A network of debt managers and experts in the Arab region establish as a reference point for best practices and knowledge-sharing on debt sustainability in the Arab region	Member States gain access to regional and country-specific analyses on debt optimization and innovative debt solutions for enhancing fiscal space for investments in development priorities	Two member States have access to country-specific tools and improved capacity to utilize them to optimize debt and identify innovative debt solutions and sustainable debt financing strategies	Member States apply the standardized tools to identify innovative debt solutions and sustainable debt financing instruments

Subprogramme 4

Statistics, the information society and technology

Objective

- 22.52 The objective, to which this subprogramme contributes, is to strengthen the development of official statistical frameworks, improve the quality and availability of statistics, and advance the information society by accelerating the integration of technology and innovation for sustainable development in the Arab region.

Strategy

- 22.53 To contribute to the objective, the subprogramme will undertake the following:
- (a) Build the capacity of national statistical offices for the implementation of and adaptation to evolving international statistical standards, methodologies and best practices; and promote the

complementary use of innovative data science-enabled non-traditional data sources and geo-statistical data;

- (b) Provide policymakers and practitioners in member States with crucial socioeconomic indicators and policy recommendations, underpinned by analysis of challenges and opportunities stemming from the increased availability of emerging technologies pertinent to modernizing statistical systems, advancing digital government, enhancing e-accessibility, and accelerating inclusive digital transformation;
- (c) Enhance national, human and institutional capacities to produce and utilize quality statistics and data, including gender and disability statistics, for evidence-based policymaking related to social and economic development, science, technology and innovation for sustainable development, the information society and digital transformation; and provide technical expertise in support of the design and implementation of policy frameworks, statistical methodologies, strategies and plans to harness emerging technologies, digital technology and innovation for sustainable development, in line with national plans and priorities;
- (d) Convene intergovernmental and technical forums to foster consensus and facilitate dialogue and exchanges between policymakers and practitioners, experts, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders from within and outside the Arab region, so as to incentivize investments in data and technology and promote intra- and inter-regional cooperation, partnerships and coordination to increase value created from statistics, geospatially-enabled data and digital and emerging technologies in support of the regional perspective towards achieving the 2030 Agenda.

22.54 The above-mentioned work is expected to result in the following:

- (a) Improved availability of official statistics compliant with international statistical principles, geospatially and location-enabled non-traditional data, and SDG data and regional statistical outputs; and their use by member States and development partners for evidence-based decision-making and policymaking;
- (b) Member States designing and implementing sound national and regional policy frameworks deploying emerging technologies and innovation for digital transformation, digital accessibility, enhanced public institutions, and citizens' engagement in decision-making; and enabling socioeconomic development while ensuring cybersecurity.

Programme performance in 2023

Arab member States adopt Harmonized Consumer Price Index

22.55 While national consumer price indices provide an overview of domestic consumption patterns, they do not account for inflation trends and fluctuations in the cost of goods and services at the subregional and regional levels, which are equally important for domestic policymaking and economic integration and trade. The subprogramme developed a new index, the Harmonized Consumer Price Index (HCPI), anchored in a uniform basket of goods and services, and aimed at facilitating cross-country comparisons of inflation and ensuring consistency in the assessment of regional and subregional economic convergence. In addition to providing vital evidence for domestic macroeconomic policies, HCPI was designed to promote Arab-wide policy decisions, in particular those related to trade and cross-border economies. Subsequently, the subprogramme developed a tool and built the capacity of national statistical offices to utilize it for the establishment of national indices. As a result, HCPI was made available to 10 member States in the period 2011–2023, alongside subregional HCPIs for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and non-GCC subregions.

22.56 Progress towards the objective is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.12).

Table 22.12

Performance measure

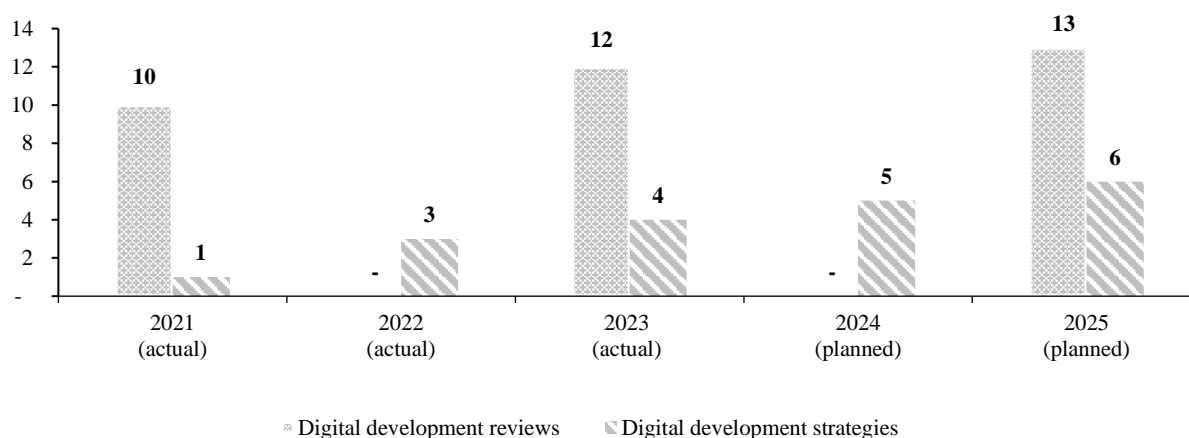
2021 (actual)	2022 (actual)	2023 (actual)
Standardized methodology for cross-country and regional comparisons of inflation and consistent assessments of consumer prices is developed	The Harmonized Consumer Price Index (HCPI) is piloted in six member States (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, the State of Palestine and the Sudan)	Ten member States (Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, the State of Palestine and the Sudan) utilize HCPI in support of evidence-based decision-making and policymaking in relation to national and cross-border economies and trade

Planned results for 2025**Result 1: Advancement of digital development assessments and strategies at the national and regional level in the Arab region****Programme performance in 2023 and target for 2025**

22.57 The subprogramme's work contributed to two additional member States (Algeria and Egypt) completing biennial national digital development reviews, resulting in a total of 12 member States having undertaken such reviews, and one additional member State (the State of Palestine) developing a national digital development strategy, which met the planned target.

22.58 Progress towards the objective for 2025 is presented in the performance measure below (figure 22.II).

Figure 22.II

Performance measure: number of member States that undertook biennial national digital development reviews and designed digital development strategies (Cumulative)**Result 2: Arab policymakers gain access to on-demand reliable evidence, enabled by artificial intelligence and geospatial capacity****Programme performance in 2023 and target for 2025**

22.59 The subprogramme's work contributed to launching the Data and Policy Support Hub of the United Nations Regional Collaborative Platform for Arab States, which provides a centralized regional data management and analytics platform via a network of interconnected components that work

together to capture, process, produce and use data to support decision-making and drive sustainable development in the Arab region, which met the planned target.

22.60 Progress towards the objective for 2025 is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.13).

Table 22.13

Performance measure

<i>2021 (actual)</i>	<i>2022 (actual)</i>	<i>2023 (actual)</i>	<i>2024 (planned)</i>	<i>2025 (planned)</i>
Member States gain access to eight interactive policy simulation tools	Member States gain access to additional national, regional and global (statistical and non-statistical) datasets	Member States gain access to centralized regional data management and analytics platform (the Data and Policy Support Hub of the United Nations Regional Collaborative Platform for Arab States)	Member States generate evidence and simulate (the impact of) policy options through at least five AI- and geospatial-enabled interactive tools	Member States have access to customized and contextualized national data and policy dashboards containing relevant data and policy tools (provided by United Nations entities in the region)

Result 3: Geostatistical evidence enhances decision-making and development planning in the Arab region

Proposed programme plan for 2025

22.61 Leaving no one behind requires data on the “what”, the “when” and the “where”. Together, these data dimensions help measure the issues that matter most in people's daily lives. To better target policies and development plans, decision-makers require access to evidence that is granular enough to highlight location-specific needs and challenges. In response, many national statistical offices in the Arab region began to transition from national to district and city statistics, but few, if any, have access to and the capacity to utilize modern technology, such as satellite imagery and earth observation. To address this gap, the subprogramme operationalized a geostatistical laboratory to consolidate and extend geostatistical information, available through open data sources, for synthesis, analysis and visualization of statistics.

Lessons learned and planned change

22.62 The lesson for the subprogramme was that enhancing the available statistical data with geostatistical information will enhance member States’ ability to develop targeted and localized development solutions. In applying the lesson, the subprogramme will collate and reconcile various layers of geostatistical information and provide it through a smart search engine leveraging machine learning, thus enabling multidimensional analysis of indicators related to society, economy and the environment. Concurrently, the subprogramme will build the capacity of national statistical offices to utilize the geospatial datasets for the production and dissemination of enhanced evidence for policymaking and development planning in the Arab region.

22.63 Expected progress towards the objective is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.14).

Table 22.14

Performance measure

<i>2021 (actual)</i>	<i>2022 (actual)</i>	<i>2023 (actual)</i>	<i>2024 (planned)</i>	<i>2025 (planned)</i>
-	Geostatistical laboratory for the Arab region is established	All member States have access to first 12 layers of geostatistical information	All member States have access to an additional 12 layers of geostatistical information, in particular those related to climate and environment	At least two national statistical offices in the Arab region produce geostatistical datasets
		Two member States (Jordan and Lebanon) initiate pilot projects to enhance their statistical datasets with geospatial information		

Subprogramme 5

2030 Agenda and SDG coordination

Objective

- 22.64 The objective, to which this subprogramme contributes, is to accelerate progress towards sustainable development in the Arab region in line with the 2030 Agenda, and to advance intraregional collaboration and a multi-stakeholder approach to key regional and subregional sustainable development issues.

Strategy

- 22.65 To contribute to the objective, the subprogramme will undertake the following:
- Advocate for the principles of the 2030 Agenda, in particular the commitment to leave no one behind and the people-centred approach to development; and leverage existing and build new and non-traditional partnerships with the private sector, including the Union of Arab Banks and other financial institutions, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, civil society, and academic institutions and thinktanks, so as to promote a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach;
 - Develop and disseminate knowledge products underpinned by the analysis of member States' progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, and promote the six transitions and transformative development solutions as means to accelerating inclusive and sustainable development in the Arab region;
 - Convene and ensure ongoing support to and follow-up on various platforms, within and in connection with the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, so as to facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement and dialogue and peer-to-peer exchanges within and outside the Arab region; to foster consensus on national and regional sustainable development priorities and actions; to promote sub-, inter- and intra-regional (South-South) and triangular collaboration and coordination; and to support cross-sectoral collaboration and alignment of national development priorities and plans with both the 2030 Agenda and resources available for their implementation;

- (d) Support and build individual and institutional capacities to conduct integrated monitoring and reporting, at the local, national and regional levels, of the progress towards specific SDG targets, including through building national and institutional capacity to conduct voluntary national reviews (VNRs); compile and disseminate policy recommendations; ensure that the Arab region's perspective is reflected through the global lens; and foster cross-sectoral coordination of the Commission's support to member States' efforts to achieve the Goals.

22.66 The above-mentioned work is expected to result in the following:

- (a) Enhanced commitment of policymakers and practitioners; regional intergovernmental organizations; the private sector, including financial institutions; academia and thinktanks; and civil society organizations in the Arab region and beyond to the principles of the 2030 Agenda;
- (b) Adoption by member States and development stakeholders of a more participatory whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to implementation of and follow-up on SDG priorities and related actions;
- (c) Improved utilization by Arab member States and relevant stakeholders of available dialogue and advocacy platforms as means of promoting consensus, peer-to-peer learning, and coordination at the national (institutional and cross-institutional) and sub, intra- and inter-regional levels and the global level; and mobilizing sustained and targeted financing for an accelerated achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

Programme performance in 2023

Investment opportunities for catalysing SDG progress to 2030

22.67 In preparation for the 2023 SDG Summit, the Secretary-General urged all member States to submit national commitments, including priority areas for investment, to catalyse the achievement of the Goals by 2030. To support member States in this endeavour, the subprogramme prepared deep-dive reports for three member States (Egypt, Jordan and Oman). The reports summarized each country's progress towards the Goals, simulated the costs of achieving the SDGs according to national priorities, and estimated the funding that could be secured through a menu of policy reforms, including tax reforms, trade policies, social spending efficiencies, and improvements to the business environment, tailored to each national context. Taking into consideration interlinkages between the SDGs, the subprogramme coordinated inputs across ESCWA to propose investment opportunities for each of the three countries, which will have multiplier effects on the achievement of the Goals and, by extension, result in spending efficiencies that can be used for financing other development initiatives. The subprogramme also worked with relevant United Nations country teams to support the formulation of national SDG Summit commitments that are both ambitious and achievable.

22.68 Progress towards the objective is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.15).

Table 22.15

Performance measure

2021 (actual)	2022 (actual)	2023 (actual)
-	-	Two member States (Egypt and Jordan) deliver their national commitments to catalyse the achievement of the SDGs by 2030
		One additional member State (Oman) benefits from foresight analysis and support to identify investment opportunities for catalysing SDG progress

Planned results for 2025

Result 1: Improved voluntary national review process through formalized intra-regional and inter-regional peer learning

Programme performance in 2023 and target for 2025

- 22.69 The subprogramme's work contributed to two additional member States (the State of Palestine and Yemen) benefitting from peer learning in the context of voluntary national reviews, which met the planned target.
- 22.70 Progress towards the objective for 2025 is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.16).

Table 22.16

Performance measure

<i>2021 (actual)</i>	<i>2022 (actual)</i>	<i>2023 (actual)</i>	<i>2024 (planned)</i>	<i>2025 (planned)</i>
Member States benefit from the first peer-learning activity on methodological issues of reporting on the 2030 Agenda	Two member States (Oman and the Syrian Arab Republic) engage in a twinning exercise (pilot voluntary national review (VNR) peer-learning initiative) to discuss solutions to challenges and identify best practices throughout the VNR process	Two additional member States (the State of Palestine and Yemen) benefit from peer-learning approaches to VNR (twinning and issue-based focus groups)	Two more member States apply VNR peer-learning approaches (twinning and issue-based focus groups)	Two more member States apply VNR peer-learning approaches (twinning and issue-based focus groups)
				Member States exchange best practices from within and outside the region on conducting VNRs

Result 2: University graduates play a part in a whole-of-society principled approach to achieving the Goals

Programme performance in 2023 and target for 2025

- 22.71 The subprogramme's work contributed to the Artificial Intelligence, Data Science and Computing Hub at the American University of Beirut, thus committing to integrating the shared principles and commitments of the Goals into its programmes, which met the planned target.
- 22.72 Progress towards the objective for 2025 is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.17).

Table 22.17

Performance measure

2021 (actual)	2022 (actual)	2023 (actual)	2024 (planned)	2025 (planned)
Systematic dialogue between ESCWA and academia is established, promoting academic institutions participation in SDG-related discussions	SDG-focused research by Arab academic institutions contributes to regional and national dialogues on achieving the 2030 Agenda	One university faculty in a member State (Artificial Intelligence, Data Science and Computing Hub at the American University of Beirut) commits to incorporating the shared principles and commitments of the Goals into its programmes	Two academic institutions in the Arab region incorporate shared principles and commitments of the Goals into their programmes	Academic institutions in at least four member States utilize the ESCWA Stories to promote principles of the 2030 Agenda and the Goals among young people

Result 3: Increased private sector investments in regional and national sustainable development priorities**Proposed programme plan for 2025**

- 22.73 Although vital for achieving the 2030 Agenda, private sector engagement in development initiatives within the Arab region remains limited and uncoordinated. The subprogramme analysed opportunities for and organized dialogue on enhancing the role of the private sector in delivering the SDGs in the Arab region. It also provided technical support to the Union of Arab Banks to fulfil its commitment to mobilize up to \$1 trillion in SDG financing by 2030.

Lessons learned and planned change

- 22.74 The lesson for the subprogramme was that to secure scaled-up private sector investments for regional and national sustainable development priorities, effective policy frameworks enhancing the alignment of private sector governance models, operating practices, and disclosure requirements with sustainable development objectives are required. In applying the lesson, the subprogramme will support member States in establishing a regional dialogue with private sector leaders, through the formation of an Arab business leaders coalition for sustainable development and engagement with the Union of Arab Banks, so as to promote consensus on investable sustainable development priorities and modalities to which the private sector could contribute. Having secured a regional-level commitment, the subprogramme will facilitate such dialogues at the country level to boost resources for acceleration of progress towards identified national SDG priorities.
- 22.75 Expected progress towards the objective is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.18).

Table 22.18

Performance measure

2021 (actual)	2022 (actual)	2023 (actual)	2024 (planned)	2025 (planned)
-	-	Union of Arab Banks commits to mobilize up to \$1 trillion in SDG financing by 2030	Member States and private sector leaders establish a regional policy dialogue on SDG priorities and opportunities for	At least one member State, together with representatives of the private sector, identifies a set of priorities and

<i>2021 (actual)</i>	<i>2022 (actual)</i>	<i>2023 (actual)</i>	<i>2024 (planned)</i>	<i>2025 (planned)</i>
			private sector contributions to the regional sustainable development trajectory	opportunities for private sector contributions to its national sustainable development trajectory

Subprogramme 6

Governance and conflict prevention

Objective

22.76 The objective, to which this subprogramme contributes, is to advance just, peaceful and inclusive societies, especially for people living under occupation or in conflict or post-conflict settings; to improve governance and strengthen effective, efficient and accountable public institutions; and to enhance service delivery.

Strategy

22.77 To contribute to the objective, the subprogramme will undertake the following:

- (a) Develop and provide evidence and policy recommendations to member States, relevant stakeholders and partners aimed at addressing challenges and utilizing opportunities to accelerate human development, with particular focus on mitigating the impact of conflict and occupation on the capacity for achieving the Goals, and on transboundary risks; improving governance and institutional capacities to deliver basic services and respond to shocks; strengthening regional cooperation in the field of effective governance and public administration; and boosting the competitiveness of the business environment, including consumer protection mechanisms;
- (b) Provide technical expertise, methodologies and tools, and enhance human and institutional capacities to identify and operationalize immediate, medium- and long-term solutions aimed at lowering risks associated with emerging socioeconomic, environmental and governance challenges and potential shocks; enhancing risk-informed national policymaking, development planning, transparency, accessibility and efficiency of State-run services; and improving the effectiveness of competition and consumer protection;
- (c) Foster consensus on priorities and actions required to minimize the impact of conflict and any risks and sudden shocks, including on the ability of member States to advance their national development agendas;
- (d) Support the five Arab LDCs that are ESCWA member States, within the framework of the Doha Programme of Action (2022–2031), in enhancing their institutional capacities for achieving the 2030 Agenda and graduating from the LDC category;
- (e) Build the capacity of Palestinian institutions to utilize a rights-based approach to development, so as to mitigate the social and economic impact of the Israeli occupation, including decreasing the asymmetric dependency and reliance on international aid.

22.78 The above-mentioned work is expected to result in the following:

- (a) Improved understanding and prevention of development challenges and risks, including conflict, and mitigation of their impact on national development trajectories;
- (b) More effective public institutions, in particular in the five Arab LDCs that are ESCWA member States, and their enhanced ability to deliver basic services in a transparent, accessible and inclusive way;

- (c) Operationalization of a contextualized rights-based approach to development planning and policymaking;
- (d) A more competitive business environment and more effective consumer protection.

Programme performance in 2023

Risk-informed policymaking and development planning in Libya

- 22.79 Institutional mechanisms for risk prevention and management are weak or non-existent, despite the multidimensional crises affecting many Arab countries. In 2021, nine member States (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, the State of Palestine, Somalia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen) requested¹ that the subprogramme, in collaboration with the League of Arab States, build national capacity for risk-informed policymaking and reporting. In response, the subprogramme developed a conceptual framework for quantifying risk, and published the Arab Risk Monitor that identifies the drivers of high vulnerability and low resilience, which are now available to member States.
- 22.80 Progress towards the objective is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.19).

Table 22.19

Performance measure

<i>2021 (actual)</i>	<i>2022 (actual)</i>	<i>2023 (actual)</i>
Nine member States (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, the State of Palestine, Somalia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen) request support to enhance their capacity in risk-informed policymaking and development planning	Member States have access to the Arab Risk Monitor, which identifies drivers of high vulnerability and low resilience	One member State (Libya) establishes a national risk team and operationalizes a proactive and risk-informed approach in its national policymaking and development planning to address current challenges and to improve resilience to shocks
		Nine member States launch an initiative to operationalize the implementation of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus by adopting a risk-informed human security approach

Planned results for 2025

Result 1: Policymakers determine development challenges at the national level

Programme performance in 2023 and target for 2025

- 22.81 The subprogramme's work contributed to three member States (Egypt, Lebanon and Yemen) applying the development challenges index (DCI) methodology to conduct national assessments, and subsequently produce national human development challenge reports, which met the planned target.
- 22.82 Progress towards the objective for 2025 is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.20).

¹ The subcommittee to support the attainment of the SDGs in Arab countries affected by conflict is a subsidiary body of the Committee on Sustainable Development of the League of Arab States.

Table 22.20

Performance measure

<i>2021 (actual)</i>	<i>2022 (actual)</i>	<i>2023 (actual)</i>	<i>2024 (planned)</i>	<i>2025 (planned)</i>
Countries use global indices, such as the Human Development Index, to evaluate the effectiveness of their national development plans	Member States gain access to a toolkit, which assesses the impact of improvements in specific dimensions and indicators on the overall performance on the global development challenges index (DCI) and a tool that allowed them to design and tailor their own national development challenge indices	Three member States (Egypt, Lebanon and Yemen) develop national assessments and national human development challenge reports, based on DCI findings	Civil servants in at least three member States use national development challenge indices, and integrate these indices in national development planning processes	Member States have access to regional assessments of the transformational growth challenges to development

Result 2: improved consumer protection in the Arab region**Programme performance in 2023 and target for 2025**

22.83 The subprogramme's work contributed to the publication of the Arab Business Legislative Frameworks report, and country profiles contained therein, outlining recommendations on how member States could improve national consumer protection frameworks, which met the planned target. In addition, member States gained access to the Arab Legislation Portal, which includes information on existing consumer protection laws and regulations in each Arab country.

22.84 Progress towards the objective for 2025 is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.21).

Table 22.21

Performance measure

<i>2021 (actual)</i>	<i>2022 (actual)</i>	<i>2023 (actual)</i>	<i>2024 (planned)</i>	<i>2025 (planned)</i>
The second Competition Forum for the Arab Region is attended by 16 member States	All 20 Arab member States participate in the third Competition Forum for the Arab Region	Arab policymakers have access to recommendations on how to improve national consumer protection frameworks	Member States exchange knowledge and good practice on consumer protection	One additional member State establishes or reforms its consumer protection laws or enforcement procedures
Three member States (Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia) implement new legislation on competition	One member State (Lebanon) introduces competition legislation and one additional member State (Kuwait) introduces further legislation on competition	Member States gain access to the Arab Legislation Portal, which includes information on existing consumer protection laws and regulations in each Arab country	Two member States establish or reform their consumer protection laws	

2021 (actual)	2022 (actual)	2023 (actual)	2024 (planned)	2025 (planned)
	One member State (Oman) expands its dedicated competition authority			

Result 3: Modernization of public administration systems for effective and transparent public governance and socioeconomic development

Proposed programme plan for 2025

22.85 The region continues to face numerous complex challenges in terms of public governance, including institutional fragility, limited development achievements, ineffective public administration, and weak reform and development plans. The subprogramme's normative and capacity-building activities to date have focused on streamlining the 11 principles of effective governance in public administration systems, so as to identify the challenges and gaps in institutional capacity and public governance, including in fragile, conflict-affected and post-conflict countries and LDCs.

Lessons learned and planned change

22.86 The lesson for the subprogramme was that changes in mindsets and public governance culture are necessary for effective, transparent and accountable institutions, which are fundamental to achieving sustainable inclusive socioeconomic development. In applying the lesson, the subprogramme will enhance the provision of its technical assistance to and promote the exchange of knowledge and best practices among member States, both at the regional and global levels, on reforming and modernizing public administration and enhancing the effectiveness, accountability and responsiveness of Arab public institutions for greater policy coherence, effectiveness and transparency measures as means to eradicate corruption in the public sector.

22.87 Expected progress towards the objective is presented in the performance measure below (table 22.22).

Table 22.22

Performance measure

2021 (actual)	2022 (actual)	2023 (actual)	2024 (planned)	2025 (planned)
-	-	Member States receive advice on workable solutions to systemic challenges facing their public administration systems for more effective public service delivery	At least one member State adopts transparency measures to combat corruption in the public sector	One member State adopts measures to reform and modernize its public administration system
				Member States engage in a regional community of practice on public administration modernization and reform, and effective and transparent public governance
