

**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Report

National Workshop on Social Expenditure Monitor of Jordan:

Mapping data and Methodology

Beirut, Lebanon, 28-30 September, 2020

Summary

ESCWA in collaboration with the national coordinators of the project, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Government of Jordan, organized a regional workshop entitled “National Workshop on mapping data for SEM from public budgets of Jordan” which was virtually held on September 28-29-30, 2020.

The aim of the meeting with representatives of Jordan was to discuss the indicators of SEM in Jordanian context, data compilation methodology and preliminary analysis of SEM of Jordan as well as identify data gaps and explore possible disaggregation of data sources/methods. Participants deliberated on means to improve the scope of SEM and its usefulness for policymakers.

The present report summarises key interventions and discussions and sets out the recommendations made by the participants.

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Introduction

1. Public social expenditure is an important means of implementation for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Its effectiveness depends on how informed and efficient public expenditure choices are, given fiscal space and macroeconomic policy coherence. To date, Member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) do not have a comprehensive mechanism for monitoring public social expenditure and for linking it to macroeconomic policy coherence. As a result, budget allocations sometimes support multiple and overlapping social programmes, and policies are often mismatched or inadequate for achieving social development priorities and realizing the SDGs. Given the pressure on public budgets across Arab countries, such expenditure management is unsustainable.

2. ESCWA's project entitled "Social Expenditure Monitor (SEM): An Integrated Framework for Supporting Macro fiscal Policies and the SDGs" responds to this challenge. A pioneering tool for Arab States, SEM provides a comprehensive mapping of public social expenditure to inform budgeting and social policy reforms. The establishment of SEM in a national context would require collection and analysis of data according to an agreed and adapted SEM framework.

3. In 2019, the regional SEM framework titled "Social Expenditure Monitor for Arab States: A Tool to Support Budgeting and Fiscal Policy Reform", in English and Arabic languages, was developed in course of discussion with representatives of Jordan, Tunisia and other Member States, UN agencies, and with inputs from regional and global experts. The framework is aligned with the SDGs, flexible and can be adapted to national specificities.

4. Jordan being one of the project partner countries, the SEM framework has been applied to it to compile data from the government budgets (central) over the period 2010 - 2020. As the first stage of implementation of the SEM, national workshop with different ministries/entities of Jordan would help improve the SEM in Jordan national context, methodological issues relating to compilation of data, and it would be an opportunity to discuss preliminary analysis of the data, identify data gaps and solutions and discuss the course of action for moving to other stages of implementation of the SEM.

5. In this context, ESCWA in collaboration with the national coordinators of the project, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Government of Jordan, organized a regional workshop entitled "National Workshop on mapping data for SEM from public budgets of Jordan" which was virtually held on September 28-29-30, 2020. The aim of the meeting with representatives of Jordan was to discuss the indicators of SEM in Jordanian context, data compilation methodology and preliminary analysis of SEM of Jordan as well as identify data gaps and explore possible disaggregation of data sources/methods.

6. The workshop was attended by representatives of several Jordan's governmental ministries and entities, the project team working on the Social Expenditure Monitor from ESCWA, and the UNCT nominations from UNRCO, Jordan (as per the list in the Annex).

I. Key Messages

7. Participants deliberated on means to improve the scope of SEM and its usefulness for policymakers. Key messages stemming from the discussions can be summarized as follows:

- a. With public finance being under stress along with the COVID-19 pandemic, it is now more challenging to meet the social needs of the society within the given budget. The SEM comes in hand

to see how the resources can be rationalized and how public resources can be rebalanced while maintaining macroeconomic stability.

- b. All files related to mapping of Jordan's budgets to SEM (word mapping documents/data/bridge tables) were shared with Jordan's team and were discussed during the workshop based on which the revised SEM indicators are prepared, given the maximum available information so far. ESCWA shall be happy to update the indicators upon receiving further comments or further disaggregated information if any. ESCWA can provide assistance to the review process through hiring national consultant/researcher if needed.
- c. Due to COVID-19, the 2020 budget expenditures has certain changes for which updated data from the Ministry of Finance is needed in order to apply the relevant changes to the 2020 SEM mapping.
- d. Representatives of Jordan's Ministry of Finance highlighted how lower public spending in Jordan were mirrored by lower capital expenditures and specified the importance of re-prioritizing the spending in the general budget by balancing the current and capital expenditures for future purposes. SEM monitors expenditures in a comprehensive manner to test the efficiency of the expenditures by simulating models and see what the changes are when there is re-shifting between current and capital expenditures. This is the main step after completing our data collection.
- e. As a result of the pandemic, there is a huge need and urgency to focus on 3 main ministries or entities which are: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and the National Aid Fund. The Ministry of Health is trying to tackle the medical aspect of COVID-19, the Ministry of Education is transforming the education system into a remote and online education, and the National Aid Fund is taking important measures to minimize the repercussions of the pandemic and its corresponding lockdowns on Jordanian households.
- f. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Jordan's revenues have been on a decreasing pattern, whereby the comparisons between 2020 and 2019 first quarter reveal lower revenues mainly due to the postponement of the income tax that should have been paid in April but was suspended to June, as well as the lower indirect tax collection due to closing borders and lower custom taxes. All this made alterations to the public budget and may affect estimated spending's as well as future forecasts of revenues. The 2020 budget mapping on social expenditure therefore needs to be revisited.
- g. There was also discussion about broadening the scope of social expenditure to include broader data than only central government budgets. It is a consideration for the upcoming period after finalizing the first baseline SEM in 2020. In this matter, national consultants in Jordan can be recruited to assist in speeding up the review and feeding process.
- h. ESCWA is filing the SEM information into a digital database which will be an interactive platform to visualize data in the form of graphs and charts. The digital platform will be helpful for the better understanding of the social expenditure data to inform decisions linking to the KPIs. Upon its completion ESCWA will share with the Ministry of Finance for clearance.
- i. There is a need for in-depth training on Social Expenditure Monitor to build capacity of officials to harmonize the understanding of the concepts, indicators and linkage of SEM to KPIs and SDGs in the context of Jordan. The training will help all, including officials responsible for programmes and results based budget units in the line ministries/entities. National workshops are planned to this effect as project activities over the course of 2020-2023. ESCWA is also considering preparation of video training modules on SEM.

- j. The mapping of beneficiaries to expenditures is a value addition of the SEM. The SEM shows that there are several missing beneficiaries to the expenditures of line ministries/entities. Data gaps will be filled as per available information from the line ministries, given the time constraint in 2020. For the future, the national workshops will facilitate how the line ministries can tailor the budget to incorporate the main beneficiaries according to each project/activity's expenditures.

II. Topics of Discussion

A. Overview of the framework of Social Expenditure Monitor (SEM)

8. Regarding expenditures targeting Syrian refugees in Jordan, which increased significantly as a result of the conflict in Syria that started in 2011, they are merged with expenditures services provided to Jordanians, such in the case of the ministry of education. Therefore, the disaggregation of expenditures by target groups is need, if available, in order to help in the analysis process at a later stage.
9. In the Jordanian budget, the expenditures on "activities" correspond to current expenditures and expenditures on "projects" correspond to capital expenditures. However, the definition of capital expenditure in the budget is not in accordance with the technical definition in economics. Therefore, in the SEM, the total capital expenditure aligning with the technical definition, was computed from the budget by including expenditures on non-financial assets only. In short, the dataset of SEM will be composed of (1) current expenditures and (2) expenditures on non-financial assets for each SEM indicators.
10. The mapping process of Jordan's Budget to the SEM indicators was mainly completed at the activity/project level which revealed further details about the programs offered by the respective entity. In many cases, only one or some of the activities/ projects of a particular program (i.e., not the whole program) were mapped to the SEM indicators depending on their relevance to the framework. The items in the budget were also used in the mapping process when activities/ projects could not exactly help identify the respective indicator and/ or beneficiary
11. In 2019, 29 government units were added to the general budget in the aim of enhancing transparency and controlling spending, of which 14 were mapped into the SEM framework. Therefore, the mapping of 2019 and 2020 Budgets include more entities as compared to the years 2010 - 2018.
12. It's important to note that during the workshop a snapshot of activities and projects mapped to each dimension were presented and the full list of projects and activities that were mapped to the monitor is listed in the budget mapping documents.
13. In Jordan, within each ministry/entity there exists the Administration and Support Services program which is mapped on the dimension level. In some cases, all activities/projects of a certain ministry/entity feed into a single dimension, so by default the Administration and Support Services program is mapped to the dimension specified. In other cases, a certain ministry has several activities/projects whereby each activity/project maps to a different dimension. In this case, the Administration and Support Services program cannot be clearly attributed to a single dimension. If the disaggregation of the administrative cost of activities/projects is not available within the ministries or entities, we can work together to develop a methodology on the matter in the near future.

B. Focused discussion on programmes and activities/projects related to data on Education dimension

14. The project of the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship "Connecting the Fiber optic network" is mapped to both indicators 1.7 "Research and use of technology on advancing education" and

2.7 “Research and use of technology related to health and nutrition” as the objective of the National Fiber Optics Network programme aims to build the basic infrastructure to provide health and education services. If data is available to disaggregate the expenditure by purpose (education or health), it will be of upmost beneficial for the SEM dataset.

15. It was highlighted that the Ministry of Labour has a project supporting private and public nurseries which supports female participation economically and provides a good environment for the kids, and that the Ministry of Social Development offers education services which needs be added and mapped to the education dimension of the SEM. However, data on such expenditures were not explicitly found in the budgets of those entities and would be of a great addition to the monitor if they could be provided by the respective ministry upon the review.
16. When it comes to primary and secondary education, some schools offer both levels of education which are sometimes included as part of the primary education expenditures and sometimes as part of the secondary education expenditures. These expenditures will be reported under **basic education** instead of primary and secondary education unless the Ministry of Education is able to provide us with the necessary disaggregated information.

C. Focused discussion on programmes and activities/projects related to data on Health and Nutrition dimension

17. Some projects and activities of the Ministry of Health include both the provision of primary health services as well as the provision of secondary health services. Therefore, in order to obtain a more accurate classification, it is necessary to provide more details that help distribute the expenditure between beneficiaries and purpose of expenditure.
18. It was noted that the programme “Serums, Vaccines, Medicines and Medical Consumables” also provides primary and secondary health care as it consists of a comprehensive package where each hospital and every health center receives medicines from this program. Further information is needed from the Ministry of Health to disaggregate the amounts that map to indicator 2.1 “Outpatient services (including residential care)” and those that map to 2.2 “Inpatient hospital services” accordingly.
19. When it comes to health insurance in the budget, it was mentioned that health insurance was provided to some families covered by the National Aid Program which is financed by the National Aid Fund, but is implemented by the Ministry of Health in some of the previous years. In the following years, however, these families have been financed from special allocations within the budget of the National Aid Fund.
20. It was noted that the Reproductive health and family control activities is not only concerned with reproductive health as it includes other aspects and it is hard to specify the amount which goes into Reproductive health but estimates can be provided on that regard by respective role players.
21. Further data disaggregation is needed regarding indicators 2.3 “Reproductive health care” and 2.4 “Discrimination against women and gender based-based violence” whereby these two indicators are of great importance with respect to Jordanian priorities. For instance, it was discussed that Reproductive health expenditure is also included in the primary health care programme within the Ministry of Health and within the Higher Population Council and therefore further disaggregation can help identify better allocations.

D. Focused discussion on programmes and activities/projects relating to data on Social Protection and Food Security

22. No data was found on indicator 5.2 “Unemployment benefits” for all the years that were mapped. If data is available in Jordan, guidance is needed in order to know further details regarding this matter.
23. Data on indicator 5.4 “Subsidies to food processors” was available from 2010-2017 only, but not in the latest years and data on indicator 5.5 “Subsidies to fuel (oil and gas)” was available for 2010 and 2012-2013-2014 only.
24. The Ministry of Social Development mentioned that the Centers for people with special needs also should be included in the health and education dimensions as it has services that goes into them, therefore further disaggregation is needed.
25. The Ministry of Labour suggested to include the Appropriate Work Environment programme’s project “Anti-human trafficking” in dimension 5 as in it is related to social protection more than 4.5 that it was mapped to.
26. In 2020, as a result of the pandemic, many sectors were interrupted which had a negative impact on households. A big number of households were affected which had no other source of income, so the programme offered financial assistance to the families affected by the pandemic, whereby 250,000 households benefited from this assistance. The financial assistance was for the months of March, April and May and costed around 380 million JD.

E. Focused discussion on programmes and activities/projects related to data on Housing and Community amenities

27. No data was found on indicator 3.8 “Research on housing and community amenities”. If data is available in Jordan, guidance will be needed in order to know further details regarding research in this matter.
28. At this point, the SEM only covered data from Ministries’ budget and not that of municipalities, the expenditures of the municipalities may include expenditures related to street lightning and those related to roads.

F. Focused discussion on programmes and activities/projects related to data on Labour Market Interventions and Employment Generation programmes

29. It was hard to identify the main beneficiaries for both indicators 4.2 “Training and skills upgrading, including on technology (on the job)” and 4.4 “Employment generation programmes” with the corresponding mapped indicators.
30. Data on indicators 4.1 “Incentives to encourage female employment” and 4.3 “Grants and other incentives to private enterprises/start-ups for job creation” were hard to find. If such expenditure is available in Jordan, guidance is needed in order to know further details.
31. The children project within the ministry of Labour aims to rehabilitate the kids that were working in the labour market, to examine the kid’s conditions, and to provide formal and non-formal education programmes that targets the kids’ parents. However, explicit details of data in the budget on such projects were not available and disaggregation was of hardship and therefore further assistance is needed.

32. The ministry suggests renaming indicator 4.5 “Research on labour market programs and policies” as per the programs it includes. The Ministry also indicated that it has information and details on each project and activity affiliated to it and is ready to provide them with everything the SEM team needs.

G. Focused discussion on programmes and activities/ projects related to data on Art, Culture and Sports dimension

33. There was a case of overlapping indicators between 6.1 “Cultural facilities and events” and 6.3 “Sport facilities and services” mainly regarding the *Sport tournaments, festivals and celebration* activity offered by the Ministry of Education since it includes both cultural and sports activities.
34. No data was found for indicator 6.5 “Research on advancing sports, culture and art”, if expenditure on it is available in Jordan guidance is needed in order to know under which entity it is found.
35. The representative of Jordan’s Ministry of Education highlighted that the Sports and Cultural Activities Administration are two separate administrations: (1) Sports administration and (2) Cultural activities administration where each administration has its own budget and its current and capital expenditures. However, in the published budget there is only one program available. Internally, the ministry can disaggregate between culture and sports, as they have the data and can split it easily, and they are ready to help if needed.
36. The representative of the National Aid Fund pointed out that it provides support to sport which is supervised by the Ministry of Youth. It provides financial assistance for the teams and clubs, there is around 15 youth centers spread across the country. Financial assistance is also provided to sport cities.

H. Focused discussion on programmes and activities/projects related to data on Environmental Protection

37. The budget of the Ministry of Environment is relatively modest as most of the projects are financed from outside the budget through international organizations, so the case of the Ministry of Environment is different than the other ministries when it comes to the financing resources, so how to treat these expenditures given that they are outside of the budget is a subject that needs discussion.
38. Based on what was previously mentioned, the expenditures that were mapped are only from the general budget and this dimension’s mapping it will be mainly from external sources.

III. Organization of the session

A. Date and venue

39. National Workshop on mapping data for SEM from public budgets of Jordan was virtually held on September 28-29-30, 2020 via KUDO.

B.Attendance

40. The workshop was attended by representatives of several Jordan's governmental ministries and entities, the project team working on the Social Expenditure Monitor from ESCWA, and the UNCT nominations from UNRCO, Jordan. Annex I to the present report sets out the list of participants.

C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

41. At this workshop, the participants adopted the agenda of the sessions as set out in Annex II.

Annex I

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Annex II

Agenda

Agenda	
Social Expenditure Monitor of Jordan: Mapping data and Methodology	
28 September 2020	
9.00 – 10.00	<p>Registration and Testing Online Connection [IMPORTANT] Since each participant will join from own location, we kindly request the participants to join the meeting at 9am sharp and ensure your online connection and familiarize yourself with the KUDO application which will be used for conducting the meeting. Each participant will receive a personalized link through email, prior to the meeting.</p>
10:00 – 10:15	<p>Welcome and opening remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ESCWA ➤ Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC), Jordan
10:15 – 11:15	<p>Session I: Overview of the Project and its usefulness for inclusive fiscal policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Social Expenditure Monitor and its usefulness for budgeting and fiscal policy decisions (ESCWA) ➤ Social expenditure and implications for budget in the context of COVID-19 (Jordan) ➤ Social Expenditure Monitor can support decision-making for inclusive social policy (ESCWA) <p>Discussion</p>
11:15 – 12:15	<p>Session II: Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mapping framework for Jordan data (ESCWA) ➤ Focused discussion on programmes and activities/projects related to data on Education dimension <p>Discussion</p>
12:15 – 12:30	Break
12:30 – 14:00	<p>Session III: Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Focused discussion on programmes and activities/projects related to data on Health and nutrition dimension (ESCWA) <p>Discussion</p> <p>Summary of discussions; identification of disaggregation of data (source/method)</p>
29 September 2020	
10:00 – 12:15	<p>Session IV: Social Protection and Food Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Focused discussion on programmes and activities/projects related to data on Social Protection and Food Security (ESCWA) <p>Discussion</p>
12:15 – 12:30	Break
12:30 – 14:00	Session V: Employment and Housing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Focused discussion on programmes and activities/projects related to data on Employment and labour market interventions <p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Focused discussion on programmes and activities/projects related to data on Housing and community amenities <p>Discussion</p> <p>Summary of discussions; identification of disaggregation of data (source/method)</p>
30 September 2020	
10:00 – 12:15	<p>Session VI: Environment protection; Culture, arts and sports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Focused discussion on programmes and activities/projects related to data on Environment protection <p>Discussion</p> <p>Summary of discussions; identification of disaggregation of data (source/method)</p>
12:15 – 12:30	Break
12:30 – 14:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Summary of discussions; Way Forward; Next steps for implementation of the project activities <p>Wrap up</p>