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ESCWA

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Socioeconomic Dialogue in Libya: Alternative Paths to Sustainable and Inclusive Development

Project Goal

The goal of the project is to provide and support a platform by Libyans to formulate, discuss, evaluate and advocate for a socioeconomic framework to achieve stabilization and development in Libya.

Expected Accomplishments

1. By the end of 2017, Libyan stakeholders have access to baseline research on key issues and policy needs for a transition from conflict to sustainable development.
2. By mid-2018, Libyan stakeholders validate proposals on a socioeconomic policy framework and set detailed policy agendas and priorities, and devise implementation strategies for transitioning out of conflict to sustainable development.
3. By mid-2019, Libyan citizens are able to provide feedback regarding the proposed socioeconomic frameworks in a structured manner, through organized surveys and public dialogues.

Estimated 3-year budget:
\$4 million

Background: The Challenge of Sustainable Development in Libya

To transition out of conflict and towards sustainable development, the Libyan society needs to negotiate a new social contract on its tremendous oil wealth and on other, equally vital, socioeconomic and development issues.

At minimum, these include the basic features of the economic structure, economic diversification and governance, and social and cultural transformations.

For the Libyan people to rally around the Government of National Accord

(GNA), a new plan to guide the socioeconomic trajectory of the country is essential. The Socioeconomic Dialogue in Libya project is aimed at supporting the country to create a development framework that is inclusive, transparent and equitable, and addresses the feelings of vulnerability among factions. Such a process can buttress the GNA, promote peace and improve the lives of all Libyans.

The project also seeks to address the impact of the crisis in Libya on neighbouring countries. Tunisia and Egypt, which have strong economic and geopolitical ties with Libya, have been challenged by declining trade and cross-border transactions, and by an influx of Libyan refugees that put a strain on their State budget and service delivery capacities. Security threats due to the instability in Libya have now also spread to the entire region and beyond.



A view of the old town of Benghazi Photo: UNSMIL/Iason Athanasiadis

ESCWA as a Natural Partner

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is well placed to undertake the project. Indeed, it can provide holistic research to support national socioeconomic efforts; use its convening power to marshal resources and expertise; draw on recent dialogue initiatives in the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Yemen; and leverage a wide network of specialists and experts in and outside the region.

A Socioeconomic Framework

There is no conventional definition of a socioeconomic framework. For the purposes of this project, the term is intended to include the policies that promote sustainable growth and development; the formal and informal institutions that govern the economy; the structures that determine the distribution and utilization of resources, endowments, income, wealth and opportunities; the orientation and diversity of economic activity; the bodies that ensure participation, inclusion, social protection, social justice and equity, sustainability and social integration; and the goals that Libyans hope to achieve through socioeconomic development.

Project Implementation

1. The project will be carried out in the context of existing planning efforts, first and foremost the Vision 2030 process.
2. The project will be an inclusive consultation process, bringing together civil society groups, politicians, researchers and academics, tribal leaders, human rights advocates, women's rights advocates, young people and private sector representatives.
3. The agenda for the reconstruction of Libya must include women as major actors in the development process. The project will promote the advancement of women and respond to social and economic discrimination.
4. Conflict in Libya may continue and even escalate, which requires contingency planning: the project timeline, projections and focus of discussions will be reactive to the changing situation on the ground.

Project Activities

Phase 1: Knowledge platform

The first phase of the project will include holistic and innovative studies of the current crisis and its socioeconomic impact. Sectors and population groups most affected by the crisis will be determined, and possible mitigation measures and post-conflict plans will be considered. This phase will stimulate debate and research on alternative socioeconomic frameworks for sustainable development in Libya.

Outputs will include:

- A database of relevant data and sources on the existing socioeconomic stance;
- An analysis of the Libyan socioeconomic and policymaking systems;
- An analysis of the root causes of conflict, determining stakeholders and drivers of change, from a socioeconomic viewpoint;
- Tools to assess the damage, losses, needs and risks;
- A quantitative and qualitative analysis of the structure of the Libyan economy;
- The establishment of a network of Libyan experts to discuss alternative socioeconomic frameworks and their associated policies and scenarios for the reconstruction of the country.

Phase 2: Policy dialogue on a new socioeconomic framework

The second phase of the project is participatory, aimed at ensuring acceptance, ownership and validation of potential solutions to socioeconomic challenges, and of the proposed scenarios. Activities will also build the capacity of stakeholders to engage productively in the process of constructing the socioeconomic policy framework.

Outputs will include:

- Multi-stakeholder dialogue on alternatives for sustainable socioeconomic policies and frameworks;
- A set of policy interventions and accompanying strategies validated by Libyan experts, including scenarios and projections of different policy combinations;
- Regular reports on developments in the Libyan socioeconomic landscape.

Phase 3: Outreach and engagement

The third phase of the project consists of outreach and strategic communication, aimed at promoting the outcomes among stakeholders and ensuring their commitment towards the transformation from armed conflict to dialogue and development. This phase will also serve to assess the links of this project with other interventions in Libya. It will also help to determine what training and technical support will be necessary for implementation.

Outputs will include:

- Assessment of the links between the proposed socioeconomic policies and strategies and the broader political and security negotiations facilitated by the international community;
- Outreach strategy for consultations with a broader range of Libyan stakeholders on the socioeconomic policy and strategy alternatives;
- Draft implementation mechanism to engage the political process and the general public in discussions on the socioeconomic future of Libya;
- Communication campaign about the new social contract and the selected socioeconomic framework.