

SDG11+ Sustainable Development Goals as a monitoring tool for area-based recovery interventions in Syria

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SDG11+

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Abbreviations

000	Control Durgou of Ctatistics
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
FAO	The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GoS	Government of Syria
EOSG	Executive Office of the Secretary General
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
(I)NGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
нн	Households
MIS	Municipal Information System
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
МоН	Ministry of Housing
MoLAE	Ministry of Local Administration and Environment
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MPWH	Ministry of Public Works and Housing
MSNA	Multi-Sector Needs Analysis
NUA	New Urban Agenda
NUP	National Urban Policy
LED	Local Economic Development
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PICC	Planning and International Coordination Commission
RPBA RPC	Recovery and Peace Building Assessment Regional Planning Commission
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UrbAN-S	Urban Analysis Network Syria
URF	Urban Recovery Framework
VLR	Voluntary Local Review
VNR	Voluntary National Review
VSR	Voluntary Subnational Review
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme

Terminology

Agenda 2030: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development supports global development across five core tenets of People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership (5Ps). The agenda was agreed upon in September 2015 and launched January 2016 and is scheduled to run until 2030.

Area-Based Approach: To provide multi-sectoral support in partnership with multiple stakeholders for the consideration of a whole population living in a specific geographic area with high levels of need.

Capacity Building: The process by which individuals and organizations improve skills and knowledge, as well as tools and equipment, required to complete work effectively.

City Specificity: A set of characteristics and features that distinguish an urban/regional settlement from another. Characteristics and features include geographical, administrative, economic, social, political, ethnic, religious etc. elements.

Indicator Number: The SDG indicator's corresponding number in the SDG11+ list.

Institutional Mechanism: The framework and process for governance within a country, including line ministries at the national level, governors on the governorate level and mayors, municipalities and neighbourhood committees on the urban, local level. Current governance levels and actors in a state which allow for possible assessments on how successful (or not) the mechanism operates.

Multi-Sectoral Approach: The collaboration between various sectors (e.g., health, environment and economy) to jointly achieve a policy outcome with all major stakeholder groups (e.g., government, civil society, business and academia) sharing a common vision and perspective.

National Urban Policies (NUPs): A coherent set of decisions through a deliberate government-led process of coordinating and rallying various actors towards a common vision and goal that will promote more transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long term.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The 17 global humanitarian and developmental goals as

part of Agenda 2030. The SDGs have a number of targets and indicators associated respectively to support the development of targeted policies and initiatives, and to measure and monitor success, providing a total of 169 targets and 232 indicators.

SDG Targets: The set of 169 targets divided across the 17 SDGs. 89 outcome-oriented targets, 62 as means of implementation targets and 18 targets related to processes and institutions.

SDG Indicators: The set of 232 indicators (currently) designed to enable measurement and monitoring of the 169 SDG targets.

SDG11+: An original concept for a monitoring and evaluation framework designed to support the implementation of Urban Recovery Frameworks, incorporating all relevant SDG targets and indicators. SDG11 (the goal for sustainable cities and communities) targets and indicators are combined with other urban-related targets and indicators across Agenda 2030. The framework allows for monitoring of the status quo and of initiatives and actions to assess progress of urban recovery.

Urban Recovery Framework: A framework to support cities and human settlements in recovery from man-made or natural disasters. Urban Recovery Ladder: A concept describing the stages of urban crises response towards recovery, from absorptive, adaptive to transformative phases. While sequential, actions that will contribute towards a transformative path – or bounce-forward measures, can be identified in the absorptive and adaptive phases and thus inform a strategic direction of the response.

Executive Summary

As the international response to the crisis in Syria is undergoing a gradual shift from humanitarian to early recovery, it is evident that new approaches are required for identifying intervention opportunities at scale, and that robust monitoring needs to accompany such interventions to ensure sound prioritisation and equal distribution of support. To address the multi-faceted needs in Syrian cities, impacting both vulnerable host and displaced populations, as well as service systems and management structures, there is an increasing recognition of the importance of 'area-based approaches' as tools to plan holistic multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder interventions in Syrian cities. At the city scale, Urban Recovery Frameworks (URF) has emerged as an approach that addresses institutional and policy requirements, as well as related recovery programming, to support resilient urban recovery at scale and the renewal of the social contract. Engrained in the URF approach is sound monitoring to accelerate effectiveness of programmes and accountability. The Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer a standardized monitoring framework to measure urban recovery and resilience programming impacts. Furthermore, the internationally supported process of SDG localisation fosters multi-stakeholder partnerships in support of follow-up on SDGs.

There is strong support for achieving as well as monitoring the SDGs at all levels of authorities, in particular as a tool to transition towards recovery and development. As Syrian cities are preparing to develop localised urban recovery plans, a coherent recovery monitoring framework is critical to align such post-war development goals with the longterm goal of sustainable development. But in practice, the data collection of SDGs at all levels in Syria is fraught with many challenges. For example, in the last Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2020, the description of achievements under SDG 11 was limited to a qualitative description of four national indicators.

In the absence of representative and disaggregated data at sub-regional levels, international partners

have developed urban analysis and profiling tools to inform on shock impacts and functionality in cities, and any potential opportunities or capacities that can be leveraged in area-based and holistic recovery approaches. While these studies provide qualitative analysis on Syrian cities, these are not designed around data collection that can easily be measured against comparative indicators.

The present paper examines some of these challenges – and opportunities - and makes suggestions for potential avenues to strengthen urban recovery monitoring across scales, to support policy coherence and aid effectiveness. As such, SDG11+ is suggested as a "light" monitoring framework for urban recovery, designed to enhance urban baseline data and improved targeting, by capturing activity outcomes against several levels of engagement – from the neighbourhood to city to national levels.

SDG11+ is a selection of 37 SDG indicators. The selection of indicators strikes a balance between understanding the status of both needs, services, systems and capacities at decentralised levels. The selected indicators monitor the recovery of basic and social services, social cohesion, governance and participation, as well as disaster recovery.

This paper recommends the adoption of an SDG11+based monitoring framework as an instrument for addressing major recovery gaps in Syria for four reasons:

- To highlight major gaps in the status quo and urban recovery ensuring sound prioritisation across sectors and equal distribution between most affected areas;
- To ensure successful vertical and horizontal coordination among administrative levels for area-based programming;
- 3. To be used as a tool for enhanced communication, between different authorities and agencies locally, sub-nationally, nationally, and internationally on urban recovery; and

4. To support accountability and transparency in local public service delivery, bringing voice and agency to communities and creating reassurances for an anticipated shift in the aid response that places a greater emphasis on absorptive, adaptive and transformative measures, framed within efforts aimed at supporting early recovery.

In support of the above, the paper presents a contextual analysis of current urban monitoring and institutional challenges in Syria. Introducing the concept of SDG11+, a potential application of such a monitoring framework is discussed against outlined current monitoring shortcomings. Further, how this tool can both fill gaps of current monitoring from local and international partners, and help inform such stakeholders' programming by providing granular city data against agreed upon indicators is discussed. This is accompanied by a limited case study of the city of Dar'a, one of the locations targeted by six UN agencies under the Joint Programme on Urban-Rural Resilience, to present how the SDG11+ framework can be utilised to monitor current challenges and the impact recovery actions can have on the city and its population. In addition, the paper reviews

how recovery actions impact the city's 150,000 population through a select set of indicators. The paper suggests a few implementation pathways for SDG11+ area-based monitoring, including Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), and urban and environmental observatories. Finally, the present paper advocates for continuing support to the implementation of Decree 107 and examines how a better implemented Decree 107 supports monitoring at different administrative levels.

The present paper suggests using SDG11+ to improve monitoring and coordination of urban recovery. For international organizations, SDG11+ is suggested as a complementary monitoring and evaluation framework to humanitarian monitoring frameworks, streamlining the tracking of urban recovery specifically in the context of the increasing realisation of the importance of 'area-based approaches,' and bridging the gap between Syria and the international community. Enabling multi-level governance as well as multi-stakeholder partnerships, along with participation and social inclusion, coherent policy creation and development effectiveness, SDG11+ is recommended as the monitoring component of the Urban Recovery Framework (URF).



Introduction

The impact of the conflict since 2011 has had a severe impact on urban Syria, disrupting economic activities and service delivery, and causing severe damages to the built environment, including private property, essential infrastructure and heritage assets. The estimated losses in gross domestic product (GDP) between 2011 and 2016 amount to four times the size of the country's GDP in 2010.1 In 2019, the country incurred the largest economic cost of violence in the world, estimated at 67 per cent of GDP.² Unemployment is extremely high (estimated at 50 per cent end of 2020)³ and a loss of jobs and income is causing substantial stress on many families across the country, including rise of food insecurity, exacerbated by the continuing devaluation of the Syrian Pound. Over half of the country's preconflict population has been displaced, creating the world's largest forced displacement crisis since World War II. In 2020, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated that 11.1 million people were considered in need of humanitarian assistance.4

The conflict has had a disproportionate effect on cities. The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, and particularly in urban areas. Cities already struggling to recover from the years of crisis have been faced with a substantial additional environmental and health concerns, with added strains on already over stretched basic and social services, and with lockdowns further aggravating people's ability to sustain livelihoods and ability to secure basic needs.

Urban Recovery Framework

The Urban Recovery Framework (URF) for conflict and crises affected countries is an enabling institutional and policy framework and related programming to support resilient urban recovery at scale, and the renewal of the social contract. It functions as a vehicle to clarify institutional roles and responsibilities, outlining local leadership, coordination, and accountability for responding to urban challenges. In Syria, the URF concept has been developed and contextualised by a multistakeholder consortium funded by the European Union in response to the enormous urban recovery needs the country is faced with.

The URF approach stresses that addressing multiple geographical scales (from community and neighbourhood, to city, regional, inter-city, and finally the national scale) are critical to promote an urban recovery towards a resilience and development path. As such, the URF considers both actions involving affected populations and communities, city wide systems and local governments, as well as national level policies and regulations. Moreover, the URF identifies area-based interventions across the humanitarian-development continuum, from absorptive measures responding to immediate needs, adaptive efforts to prompt recovery, to transformative interventions that facilitate bounceforward measures. The URF is thus a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach, cutting across both geographical scales and time scales. Key principles underpinning the URF include: 1. Build back better; 2. Geographic and social equity in programming; and 3. Empowerment of local authorities and communities.

¹ Syrian Arab Republic, PICC, Syria Voluntary National Review (VNR.). 2020.

² Institute for Economics and Peace. Global Peace Index 2020: Measuring Peace in a Complex World (Sydney, June 2020).

³ Syrian Arab Republic, 2021 Needs and Response Summary. 2021.

⁴ OCHA, "Syrian Arab Republic; Key figures". Available from: https://www.unocha.org/syr%C4%B1a. Accessed on 6 December 2021.

Ensuring progress of the URF through sound monitoring

To secure due progress of any urban recovery effort, and its inclusiveness and contribution to accountability across all levels of intervention, sound monitoring and review is engrained in the URF methodology. In Syria however, limited availability of comparable data and gaps in institutional capacities to collect and monitor interventions has prompted a review of options to best capture and keep track of urban recovery efforts.

This paper has been developed as part of a series of thematic papers initiated by the URF consortium. The papers seek to explore the impact of the conflict in Syria on cities, and recovery options in the areas of governance, environment, heritage, housing, infrastructure and returns. The present paper explores how urban recovery in Syrian cities can be supported by a monitoring and evaluation framework of localised Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (see Box 1 Agenda 2030 and the SDGs), incorporating 37 indicators from SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities, as well as indicators from other SDGs that will support the monitoring of multi-sectoral urban recovery efforts. This facilitates an areabased, holistic approach to urban recovery that at the same time contributes to localising Agenda 2030⁵ and the SDGs.

Box 1 Agenda 2030 and the SDGs

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was launched January 2016 and is scheduled to run until 2030. It aims at comprehensively supporting global humanitarian and developmental agendas across five core tenets of People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership (5Ps). Paragraph 34 in the Agenda 2030 recognises that "sustainable urban development and management are crucial to the quality of life of people" and that work with local authorities and communities to renew and plan cities and human settlements to foster community cohesion and personal security and to stimulate innovation and employment is key. Developed by the Open Working Group of the UN General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals, the 17 goals, and their attributable 169 targets and 231 indicators, are now into their seventh year of implementation. Stated in the Preamble, "the interlinkages and integrated nature of the SDGs are of crucial importance in ensuring that the purpose of the new Agenda is realised." It is important to note that "at least 105 of the 169 targets underlying the SDGs will not be reached without local and regional governments."



5 United Nations, "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Available from: https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda. Accessed 1 December 2021.

Monitoring Urban Recovery

Situation overview: Major urban data and monitoring gaps hinders urban recovery

All of the urban sectors in Syria have been severely impacted by the compounded crises. However, even though various stakeholders have studied such impacts, the lack of a harmonised reporting format between local, national and international stakeholders has complicated the process of including studies' results into strategic resource allocation processes. Moreover, the unavailability of comprehensive cross-sectoral datasets is an obstacle for devising and implementing resource efficient and transformative recovery actions that leverage the input of all stakeholders responding to people and systems' needs in urban Syria.

The following summarises the main reports and datasets relevant to the monitoring of urban recovery (and urban development), and their potential relevance in reporting against an SDG based indicator framework:

Government Led Monitoring

a. **The Syrian National Report on Sustainable Development**,⁶ was published by the Planning International Cooperation Commission (PICC), a state institution reporting to the Prime Minister's Office, in 2019. The executive report covers the Syrian context between 2010–2015, adopting an SDG targets-based approach to measure how the Syrian crisis impacted development and progress in the country. While caveats should be noted on the objectiveness of GoS collected data, (also see chapter on Institutional Challenges on limitations to data collection), the report noted the following on SDG11 indicators relevant to urban recovery that:

- 11.1: The percentage of average income spent on housing increased substantially and the cost of an average square meter of construction of apartment buildings rose four-fold.
- 11.2: Local and central roads were damaged, and the number of buses reduced from 940 to 603.
- 11.3: The number of new urban plans decreased from 189 to 23 between 2010 and 2015.
- 11.4: Heritage had been "sabotaged or robbed", while antiquities have been looted systematically.
- 11.7: Green spaces increased by 3.5 per cent due to urban plans remaining undeveloped, while desertification increased from 59 per cent to 74 per cent.
- b. **SyriaVoluntaryNationalReview2020.**⁷Avoluntary national review (VNR) is a government-led review of the national progress towards achieving the SDGs. A VNR includes a quantitative and qualitative review of all SDG indicators. It is part of the global monitoring process and standards elaborated to guide SDG implementation. Syria's first VNR was released by PICC in 2020.⁸ The VNR highlighted interconnections between the Syria national development programme post-conflict (Syria Strategy 2030) and Agenda 2030.

⁶ Syrian Arab Republic, PICC, Syrian National Report on Sustainable Development. 2020.

⁷ UN DESA, Handbook for the Preparation of Voluntary National Reviews. Proceedings from the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

October 2021.

⁸ Syrian Arab Republic, PICC, Syria VNR 2020. 2020.

The VNR was elaborated based on among others government-led surveys and institutional capacity assessments. According to the report, the process faced two main obstacles: the total time for its production being long (over two and a half years); and, secondly, the low availability of data. These challenges were noted to reduce the quality of data against the indicators. The VNR among others produced findings on SDG16, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, yet only limited findings and commentary on SDG11. As for the National Report on Sustainable Development however, caveats to the objectiveness to the GoS collected data pertains, especially reporting on SDG targets such as SDG16. For both the Syrian National Report on Sustainable Development and the Voluntary National Review, the data is not disaggregated at sub-national level.

c. **Municipal and Institutional data.** Due to limited capacities, municipalities in general collect data on an ad-hoc basis, and not according to agreed indicators or methodologies. The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) is responsible for collating data from the decentralised levels; however, these reporting lines has also been distorted due to limited capacities. As such there is no mainstreamed data that can be leveraged for urban recovery monitoring. (See Institutional Challenges for more on this).

International Organizations' Data and Monitoring

- d. **Urban Profiles.** To fill data and information gaps, the multi-stakeholder consortium UrbAN-S⁹ and the URF consortium, have elaborated urban profiling and analysis tools to provide comprehensive diagnosis across urban scales on functionality,¹⁰ conflict damages to the built environment, socio-economic needs, and current capacities to respond at national and local levels. Early on during the crisis, in 2014, REACH also published several "Urban Area Humanitarian Profiles" on northern Syria cities.¹¹
- e. UN-Habitat's programme on area-based urban recovery. Since 2016, UN-Habitat has sought to

broaden the range of urban recovery programmes and adopt more impactful approaches, with a focus on preparation of programmes through among others developing evidence-based recovery plans. The work encompasses among other the following components that has prompted urban data collection and analysis:

- i. Basic recovery plans at municipal and neighbourhood levels for more than 85 cities (including rapid damage and needs assessments together with municipalities and community participants).
- ii. Advanced recovery plans for Aleppo, Dar'a, Deir-ez-Zor and Homs Cities (including more detailed urban recovery profiles outlining strategic sector recovery (e.g., housing, environment, and heritage).
- iii. Area-based COVID-19 risk assessment with preparedness and response plan.

Combining and triangulating primary data from on-the ground consultations, satellite imagery, and data collection with secondary data review, the urban profiles and the analysis work of UN-Habitat offer analysis at the city and neighbourhood levels that can be measured against SDG targets. To exemplify, Table 1 provides a limited comparative study based on three recent city profiles produced by UN-Habitat, against three SDG11 targets. While the data does not capture the full target, it demonstrates how the profile data can be used for composite indicators to inform target progress.

Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS). f. The MICS is a program developed by UNICEF to assist countries filling data gaps in the monitoring of human development in general, and the situation of children and women in particular.12 MICS surveys were carried out in Syria in 1995, 2000 and the last one in 2006, a few years in advance of the crisis. The last survey sample counted 19.000 households (HH). The tool at the time (MICS3) collected data on 20 of the 48 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) indicators, and thus supported MDG monitoring for health and education related topics (e.g., child mortality and child labour). The latest iteration of this survey, MICS6, overlaps with the proposed

- 10 UrbAN-S, "Urban Functionality Index Technical Note". Available from: https://urban-syria.org/ Accessed 9 February 2022.
- 11 REACH, "REACH Releases Urban Area Humanitarian Profiles of Northern Syria Cities". Press release 28 August 2014.

⁹ UrbAN-S, "Adapting Urban Profiling to Syria". Available from: https://urban-syria.org/ Accessed 6 December 2021.

¹² World Bank Water Data, "Syrian Arab Republic - Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006". Available from: https://wbwaterdata.org/dataset/syrian-arab-republic-multiple-indicator-cluster-survey-2006-0. Accessed 6 December 2021.

SDG11+ monitoring framework (see SDG11+) on challenges such as access to services such as internet, energy use as well as access to water and sanitation. Its guidelines suggests that the smallest geographic unit of analysis should be the "region." It furthermore suggests presenting findings on a country level disaggregated between rural and urban areas.

g. *Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO).* The HNO is a yearly recurring needs analysis that compiles existing and specifically for its purpose developed data sources (e.g., Multi-Sector Needs Analysis (MSNA)), produced by various UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations ((I)NGO's). Its key compiled indicators to inform humanitarian programming are "People in Need" and "Severity of Needs", which are produced for the main humanitarian clusters as defined by the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (e.g., Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Shelter, etc.). Syria's latest 2021 HNO sampled 20,100 households. The smallest geographic unit of analysis for the HNO is the "subdistrict" level. The HNO documentation does not provide a mapping of HNO indicators to SDG indicators, but an initial comparison suggests most overlap occur on indicators related to WASH, Health and Housing.

Table 1 Limited comparative study of Dar'a, Aleppo and Deir-ez-Zor for three SDG11 targets

	Dar'a	Aleppo	Deir-ez-Zor
11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums	The housing deficit in Dar'a is 10,400 homes, approximately 33 per cent of buildings. ¹³	About 60 per cent of Aleppo's neighbourhoods are either severely or moderately damaged	23 per cent of the housing stock in Deir- ez-Zor has been heavily damaged or destroyed.
11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons	132,259 metres of road damaged (March 2019).	58 per cent of Aleppo's city roads were affected by the crisis, equating to 1,355km, along with 7,027 metres of bridges. The public bus service has resumed yet there are not enough vehicles to meet demand.	Public transportation is relatively sufficient now.
11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities	Dar'a city hosts nine parks equating to 10.2 per cent of open space for public use.	The city contains 45 parks, with the central park on the old Entilak road extending over four hectares.	Data unavailable.

13 UrbAN-S, Baseline Overview; Dar'a City. October 2021.

The above datasets and studies demonstrate that there are some available urban data that can inform baseline and progress on urban recovery, yet major gaps in comparable data at the decentralised levels, lack of guality data, and lack of institutionalised data collection persist. Moreover, the noted caveats to the GoS released reports are important to acknowledge, and in particular for data collection and reporting on "sensitive" indicators. Similarly, data collection at decentralised levels, such as UN-Habitat urban analysis work, show that while there are options to collect measurable data at the municipal level, and in particular on urban functionality indicators, building the capacities of local technical offices is essential to ensure sound data quality and comparability. This is further discussed in the Institutional Challenges chapter.

The urban profiling produced by international partners provides a qualitative analysis of the crisis impact on cities, however, as comprehensive monitoring and evaluation products they are incomplete (in part due to limited granular and comparable data availability). These profiles typically focus on most affected areas and neighbourhoods in addition to identifying locations where responses can have a multiplier effect for recovery, at the level of the city as a whole. For the purpose of measuring progress on urban recovery efforts the profiles could provide valuable baseline data and be further developed to be measured against select indicators. Datasets such as UNICEF's MICS study offers important comparable and disaggregated data. In Syria, the 2006 MICS data was representative at the regional levels, but not at the city or sub-city level. As noted above, the MICS6 guidelines, however, note a potential to disaggregate data between rural and urban. In Lebanon, UNICEF and UN-Habitat have collaborated on the development of neighbourhood profiles,14 where the MICS study formed the basis of representative HH data collected at the neighbourhood level. While also focused on most deprived neighbourhoods, this has provided granular data at sub-city levels that can both be used to compare neighbourhoods within the respective cities, and comparability of neighbourhood data against average data at national or regional levels. In Syria, MICS data was also collected pre-crisis, allowing for time-comparability.

Taking the above into account, there is a need to strengthen monitoring capacities and methodologies at the local and national level, and to support more indepth national studies as well as local comparative studies to better enable urban recovery through multi-governance and partnerships locally, nationally and internationally. While the current datasets and studies available do not provide mainstreamed data at central or decentralised levels that can be utilised to show urban recovery progress in a comprehensive and comparable manner, the above show there are potential in utilising parts of these datasets in an SDG based indicator framework.



14 UN-Habitat and UNICEF, "Lebanon Neighbourhood Profiles". Available from: https://lebanonportal.unhabitat.org/. Accessed 18 December 2021.

Institutional Challenges

After 2011, almost all regular reporting processes concerning urban indicators, such as access to and quality of services, population sizes, and green spaces broke down. Municipalities still collect data on an ad-hoc basis when there is a specific request tied to a potential implementation of a project. Maintaining the same level of data collection as pre-crisis on a regular basis is now considered too costly and risky if there is no commensurate reward. Furthermore, the compounded crisis has overwhelmed some municipalities, which suffer from a shortage of gualified staff. All this has broken the vertical reporting lines - from municipalities to subnational authorities (governorates and their related directorates) to the CBS and relevant line ministries - that underpinned the pre-crisis urban monitoring system. As a result, the credibility of much of the data reported upstream is regularly called into question by both national authorities and international actors. The breakdown of these reporting lines significantly hinders urban recovery, as it represents a large obstacle for planning investments to recovery of service delivery at scale and identifying and addressing needs on the ground. Moreover, the lack of reporting lines and unreliable data is a hindrance to sound accountability and transparency between local authorities and their constituencies.

Table 2 provides an overview of the institutions currently responsible for collecting data related to the Sustainable Development Goals, urban indicators generally, and the problems experienced in data collection.

Table 2: Institutions and responsibilities related to SDGS

Institution	Role
Planning and International Coordination Commission (PICC)	PICC is, among others, responsible for reporting on progress related to SDGs nationally and to international organizations. It also monitors the contribution of development plans towards the SDGs. PICC receives data from the CBS and directly from various line ministries. PICC reports directly to the Prime Minister's office.
Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS)	CBS receives data related to the SDGs from governorates and sometimes from line ministries directly. The department is responsible for developing yearly reports on social and economic indicators, but has recently largely relied on extrapolation of existing data due to the large amount of data gaps.
Regional Planning Commission (RPC) (Under MoH)	RPC is responsible for the development of studies and assessments to feed into regional and spatial plans, as well as developing the national spatial framework. Sometimes, RPC develops strategic plans on request (e.g., a national industrial plan) for which SDG indicators should be taken into consideration.
Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (MoLAE)	MoLAE is responsible for requesting, elaborating and executing plans at municipal level, as well as regional and national plans. The development of local plans, since Decree 107, has been devolved to municipalities and governorates.

Governorates and their related directorates	Governorates reports to the CBS through MoLAE or directly. After 2011, regular and standardized reporting on key indicators broke down. This is particularly concerning for demographic data, which relies on population registries that are rarely up to date. This is caused partly by the complexity of monitoring rapid demographic changes on the ground due to the recent instability and ongoing, frequent population movements. Governorates procure data from municipalities sporadically among others to support the development of investment projects, however, this data is procured without adequate measures to ensure the reliability of the data.
Municipalities	Municipalities should in theory collect and collate data from all urban sectors to report both to the concerned directorates in the governorate and the line ministries through their technical directorates. The municipalities collect their data through their technical offices for all services and infrastructure sectors, and Mukhtars who keep track of the registration of people within their neighbourhoods. This is however not systematized and happens only on request. Sometimes a special body (public or private) can do the whole data assessment for a specific requested project.
Neighbourhood committees	Neighbourhood committees in practice currently play no specific role in reporting data because of their lack of capacity and awareness of their need to fulfil this function. However, decree 107/2011 in the Article 88 specifies a role for these committees in contributing to the service plan of the neighbourhood to the municipality council, in addition to monitoring and following up on other neighbourhood affairs. This differs for cities whose population exceed 1 million inhabitants (in particular Aleppo and Damascus) because of their more extensive institutional structures at their municipal line directorates.

Decree 107/2011

In 2011, Decree 107 (also known as the Local Administration Law) was issued, stipulating a set of changes to the reporting system to foster decentralisation of some key governance functions. (See also: URF Local Governance Paper). It defined an increased economic and administrative independence of municipal local councils, supervised by decentralised government. It also foresaw a role for neighbourhood committees in planning and data collection. However, the lagging implementation of Decree 107 has led to a de-facto halt on the decentralisation of some key functions, including:

- The coordination of investment projects between governorates and municipalities, which should have been coordinated through a national framework, developed by RPC and PICC.
- The capacity of municipalities to develop and finance plans. Even though municipalities are de-jure mandated to create plans, linkages

to resource allocations from subnational and national levels remain tenuous. Decisions related to critical expenditures for municipalities are instead taken by those holding the budgets i.e., local and national authorities. As a result, municipalities are restricted to implementing small interventions such as fixing pipelines, replacing street-lighting and collecting solid wastes.

• The empowerment of communities for developing service plans. Without this process, residents lack an avenue to influence decisions made by authorities, who often do not take account of local challenges and opportunities.

In short, the breakdown of the bottom-up vertical information flow (on urban indicators generally and SDGs specifically) combined with the continuing top-down decision-making process continues to obstruct sound decision making on urban recovery. Decree 107 also foresaw the set-up of urban observatories conceived as entities to support data analysis and collection at the local level. It was expected that one observatory will be established for each of the major cities. For smaller cities, it was expected that one observatory would serve a set of cities close to each other. Even though Decree 107 also does not define roles and responsibilities of these observatories, they were expected to collate and analyse data on urban and environmental challenges, compute spatial indicators, and report these to the regional level.

In anticipation of a recovery from the crisis, municipalities are expecting technical and financial support from national authorities to support the transfer of administrative and financial authority. This opportunity could be leveraged by the evidencebase and implementation of a URF. Conversely, the implementation of a monitoring framework based on a limited set of SDG indicators could act as a pilot for the wider rebuilding of the urban monitoring system in Syria.



SDG11+

In support of the ongoing efforts to develop and promote contextually adaptive and responsive urban recovery models, and in response to the above outlined challenges and need for improved comparable data, the SDG11+ indicator framework has been developed as a tool for connecting URF objectives with local initiatives and national monitoring. The SDG11+ has been elaborated based on the model of SDG16+, developed by the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (see Box 2 The Pathfinders' SDG16+).¹⁵ The SDG11+ suggest a "light" monitoring framework for urban recovery, aimed to capture activities and outcomes at several levels of engagement, from neighbourhood to city to national scales. While monitoring of the full achievements of sector interventions as part of urban response (e.g., water system upgrades) would need a more detailed set of indicators, the intent of SDG11+ is to have a limited set of indicators that will allow for comparability of progress.

Box 2 The Pathfinders' SDG16+

The concept of a 'plus' (+) framework is modelled on SDG16+ developed by the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (the Pathfinders), hosted at New York University's Centre on International Cooperation. SDG16+ outlines a roadmap to deliver the 2030 Agenda targets for peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. The 36 SDG targets selected incorporate the 12 targets of SDG16 plus 24 other targets from the goals relevant to peace, justice and inclusivity.

Advantages of using the SDGs principally to develop a monitoring framework on urban recovery are fourfold:

- a. Flexibility: The selected indicators span across key thematic areas and principles relevant to urban recovery, and their usability at city and neighbourhood levels. In application, the set of indicators allows for flexibility to omit indicators without contextual relevance or impossible to measure, while still being able to report overall progress on urban recovery.
- b. Adopted by the international community: The SDG indicators are already accepted nationally (as affirmed by the commitment to the VNR process), and thus facilitate data exchange and comparison between different administrative levels. As an internationally accepted set of indicators, many survey tools and methodologies

are already available to measure the indicators.

- c. Linking urban recovery to development: Utilising an SDG-based monitoring framework, that links urban recovery to the resilience and development agendas, will support identification of adaptive and transformative action beyond humanitarian support timelines. In a context such as Syria, for the time being, the focus will remain largely on absorptive measures, framed within the aid architecture for early recovery. However, there is a need to already reflect on possible future adaptive and transformative measures, in anticipation of a future Recovery and Peace Building Assessment (RPBA) phase.
- d. **Supporting the localisation agenda:** In line with the commitments made at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit to "empower national and local humanitarian action"¹⁶ and the global SDG localisation process supported by UN-Habitat,

¹⁵ Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, "The Roadmap for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies – A Call to Action to Change our World". Available from: http://www.sdg16.plus. Accessed 18 December 2021.

¹⁶ Agenda for Humanity 2016, "World Humanitarian Summit". Available from: https://agendaforhumanity.org/summit. Accessed 9 December 2021.

comprising among others the Global Urban Monitoring Framework based on SDGs and UN-Habitat's City Investment Facility, the application of an SDG-based monitoring framework will entail a capacity strengthening of, among others, local governments.

This paper's strategy uses Agenda 2030 and a set of SDG indicators as a cross-cutting tool to monitor and evaluate urban settlements' status quo and recovery interventions.

To be considered successful for the monitoring of urban recovery in Syria, the SDG11+ framework should at least perform the functions of:

- a. A planning tool able to identify gaps in urban recovery in cities. In identifying broad trends, themes and threats, the application of the urban recovery monitoring tool will support ministries, directorates, and international organizations in better allocation of resources across cities.
- b. A coordination tool for area-based programming. In creating such a tool, multi-sectoral challenges of prioritisation, timing, sequencing, and coordination of urban recovery programming, as well as inequities in recovery between neighbourhoods, can be identified. As part of area-based planning, the framework can support the development of a shared vision (i.e., city recovery plans) based on quantifiable indicators, and indirectly support the localized implementation of the SDGs.
- c. A communication tool to increase coordination between Syrian local and national government and international organizations for urban recovery. A shared indicator base supports the role of Syrian municipalities in following up, monitoring, and evaluating the impact of urban recovery projects to achieve better targeted, more balanced, and longer-term impacts, as well as support cooperation and collaboration between local and national authorities with international organizations and donors to identify and understand urban recovery needs
- d. A monitoring tool to enhance accountability and transparency between central and decentralised government and affected communities. Comparable data can help monitor spatial injustice in policies and planning, and thereby contribute towards reduced spatial injustice in programming. This will support accountability and transparency in local public service delivery, and bring voice and agency to affected

communities in support of a shift in the aid response that places a greater emphasis on absorptive, adaptive and transformative measures, framed within efforts aimed at supporting early recovery.

SDG 11+ design

SDG11+ is designed to capture the major gaps for urban recovery through a small but significant selection of SDG indicators, including 37 indicators which draws from thirteen different sustainable development goals. The indicators draw especially on SDG11 (7 indicators), SDG6 and SDG 16 (5 indicators each). To support the enhancement of urban baseline data and improved targeting, the indicators are sorted against the level of engagement (neighbourhood, city and national levels) (see Box 3 Indicators' applicability at geographical scales).

All SDG11+ targets and indicators are outlined in Table 3 SDG11+ Monitoring Framework. An example of the use of SDG11+ to monitor a locally led implementation of an urban recovery plan is made on the case of Dar'a. (See Linking SDG11+ to Urban Recovery Actions, the case Dar'a City). Box 3 Indicators' applicability at geographical scales

Neighbourhood level

Indicators that capture interventions at the sub-city/neighbourhood scale. Interventions could for instance be rehabilitation of houses, where indicators capture number of buildings rehabilitated or number of households benefitting from house rehabilitation at sub-city levels. Capturing data at the sub-city level will enable comparison on urban recovery progress between most affected neighbourhoods, identifying gaps and/or inequity in response programmes.

City Level

Indicators that will capture systems strengthening, for example the rehabilitation of wastewater treatment infrastructure, primary and secondary water networks or hospitals, which usually serves multiple neighbourhoods at a time, or interventions aimed at strengthening local economic development (LED) at the city scale or environmental management. It also includes capacity strengthening and support to local administrative and technical offices, such as capacity support to municipal technical offices, recovery and digitisation of cadastral records and so forth.

Several indicators at neighbourhood and city levels can also be spatially mapped, for instance mapping of housing rehabilitation activities, infrastructure upgrades and LED activities, which will support identification of gaps and communication of urban recovery needs and activities in cities.

National level

Neighbourhood and city indicator data can be used to aggregate national level progress data on the SDGs and overall urban recovery, as well as be used for comparability between cities and with national average to inform policies and funding allocations. As noted in Monitoring Urban Recovery, caveats pertain to using data from neighbourhood and city levels for national average where cities and neighbourhoods have been selected due to their urban recovery needs.

SDG Target	Humanitarian Sector	URF Pillar	SDG Indicator	Indicator Description
SDG 1.1	Early recovery	Economy	1.1.1	Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural)
SDG 1.4	Protection	Housing	1.4.2	Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure
SDG 1.4	WASH	Infrastructure and services	1.4.1	Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services
SDG 2.1	Food security	Economy	2.1.1	Prevalence of undernourishment
SDG 3.7	Health	Infrastructure and services	3.7.1	Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods

Table 3 SDG11+ Monitoring Framework

SDG Target	Humanitarian Sector	URF Pillar	SDG Indicator	Indicator Description
SDG 3.8	Health	Infrastructure and services	3.8.1	Coverage of essential health services (defined as the average coverage of essential services based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access, among the general and the most disadvantaged population)
SDG 3.9	WASH	Infrastructure and services	3.9.2	Mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene (exposure to unsafe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH) services)
SDG 4.1	Education	Infrastructure and services	4.1.1	Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex
SDG 4.2	Education	Infrastructure and services	4.2.2	Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex
SDG 4.a	WASH	Infrastructure and services	4.a.1	Proportion of schools with access to: (a) electricity; (b) the Internet for pedagogical purposes; (c) computers for pedagogical purposes; (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; (e) basic drinking water; (f) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (g) basic handwashing facilities (as per the WASH indicator definitions)
SDG 6.1	WASH	Infrastructure and services	6.1.1	Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services
SDG 6.2	WASH	Infrastructure and services	6.2.1	Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water
SDG 6.3	WASH	Environment	6.3.1	Proportion of wastewater safely treated
SDG 6.4	WASH	Infrastructure and services	6.4.1	Change in water-use efficiency over time
SDG 6.b	WASH	Infrastructure and services	6.b.1	Proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management
SDG 7.1	Early recovery	Infrastructure and services	7.1.1	Proportion of population with access to electricity
SDG 7.1	-	Environment	7.1.2	Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology
SDG 8.3	Early recovery	Economy	8.3.1	Proportion of informal employment in nonagriculture employment, by sex
SDG 8.5	Early recovery	Economy	8.5.2	Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
SDG 8.6	Education	Economy	8.6.1	Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training
SDG 8.7	Education	Economy	8.7.1	Proportion and number of children aged 517 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age
SDG 10.1	Early recovery	Economy	10.1.1	Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40 per cent of the population and the total population

SDG Target	Humanitarian Sector	URF Pillar	SDG Indicator	Indicator Description
SDG 11.1	Shelter	Housing	11.1.1	Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing
SDG 11.2	-	Infrastructure and services	11.2.1	Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
SDG 11.3	-	Governance and civil society	11.3.2	Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically
SDG 11.4	-	Heritage	11.4.1	Total expenditure (public and private) per capita spent on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by type of heritage (cultural, natural, mixed and World Heritage Centre designation), level of government (national, regional and local/municipal), type of expenditure (operating expenditure/investment) and type of private funding (donations in kind, private non-profit sector and sponsorship)
SDG 11.6	WASH	Environment	11.6.1	Proportion of urban solid waste regularly collected and with adequate final discharge out of total urban solid waste generated, by cities
SDG 11.6	WASH	Environment	11.6.2	Hazardous waste generated per capita and proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment
SDG 11.7	-	Governance and civil society	11.7.1	Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
SDG 12.4	-	Environment	12.4.2	Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g. PM2.5 and PM10) in cities (population weighted)
SDG 15.3	Food security	Environment	15.3.1	Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area
SDG 16.1	Protection	Governance and civil society	16.1.3	Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months
SDG 16.1	Protection	Governance and civil society	16.1.4	Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live
SDG 16.5	-	Governance and civil society	16.5.1	Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months
SDG 16.5	-	Governance and civil society	16.5.2	Proportion of businesses that had at least one contact with a public official and that paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials during the previous 12 months
SDG 16.7	-	Governance and civil society	16.7.2	Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group
SDG 17.1	-	Governance and civil society	17.1.2	Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes

Complementarity with existing monitoring frameworks

The elaboration and application of a SDG11+ monitoring framework would require due consideration to its complementarity and any possible duplications with existing monitoring frameworks, as well as possible support to the implementation of policies and programmes. In Syria, this includes among others the following:

- a. **Complementarity with HNO.** An SDG based monitoring framework on urban recovery could complement and inform the HNO and subsequent humanitarian strategies and planning, with a set of indicators that focus on recovery rather than strictly humanitarian needs. Conversely, reporting data from the HNO to an SDG Framework may not be possible, as the latter is to be presented on a smaller unit of analysis (see SDG11+).
- b. **Complementaritywith MICS**. With representability at sub-national level, and a possible urban disaggregation, MICS data can inform a SDG11+ on certain indicators (especially on indicators relevant to public service delivery). Moreover, any potential representative household data collected at neighbourhood or city levels could be built on MICS questionnaires and data collection methodology (see International Organizations' Data and Monitoring), resulting in important comparable data at decentralized levels.

For both the MICS and the HNO, comparison on a selection of indicators may be possible with the SDG11+ on higher geographical scales ('region' or 'district' level). Table 3 SDG11+ Monitoring Framework provides an overview of all SDG11+ indicators, as well as their overlap with the MICS and HNO.

c. Sector/cluster reporting. While the use of a SDG11+ would capture some sectoral data, it will not allow for capturing all dimensions of an SDG indicator in a given sector. As an example, SDG indicator 6.1.1 measures the proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services. Even though the recorded percentage of the population with access to water can be high, its affordability is not completely addressed in the provision of "available when needed".¹⁷ Other elements not recorded under this indicator (which may be desirable for municipalities for instance) include infrastructure performance measures, such as equality of access, leakages, or sustainability of the outcomes.¹⁸

Key Institutional Implementation Pathways for an SDG-based urban recovery framework

An incremental rebuilding of the institutional foundations underpinning the reporting processes will be critical for both reducing humanitarian needs and improving urban recovery. This rebuilding represents an opportunity to build back better in an accountable and transparent manner. It allows the reformed reporting system to take into consideration, among others, Decree 107/2011 (see section Decree 107/2011 below), the Sustainable Development Goals (including SDG11+), and the present needs of urban recovery planning and investment. The coordination of integrated regional planning frameworks covering various administrative levels including national (MoLAE and PICC), subnational (RPC), municipal and at the community (neighbourhood) level would be supported by data from a "light" monitoring framework in the form of SDG11+.

The following new and existing tools are promising to implement an SDG-based urban recovery framework:

a. For local and subnational governments, the implementation of Urban Observatories as foreseen by Decree 107. Syria has a long history

¹⁷ For a description of the provision "available when needed", see: JMP, "JMP Methodology: 2017 update and SDG baselines". March 2018.

¹⁸ E.g., "water trucking" or "bottled water" are since the transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the SDGs considered as "improved water sources", but its delivery may be costly, supported by external actors and not financially sustainable.

of using spatial indicators ("Planning Principals") to guide decision making going back to the 1960s. These indicators set standards in relation to, among others: proximity and capture areas of schools and health centres, and the types of facilities (e.g., main hospital, clinics or health centres, educational buildings, and all services required for residential areas) needed to serve populations of a certain size. These standards were used most effectively for developing urban extensions and improved standardized service delivery throughout Syria. However, the indicators have also been criticized for leaving too little room for the differentiation of service needs according to different types of contexts (e.g., rural areas, coastal areas, secondary cities), and reduced the population density that cities could achieve under normal circumstances. Before the crisis, a modernisation process set in motion by the Ministry of Local Administration addressed these concerns, but a final revised set of indicators had not been approved. As a result of the crisis, most of these spatial indicators stopped being produced. Even though the previous iteration of these spatial indicators were flawed, ongoing efforts to formulate an improved version (with potential inclusion of SDG11+ indicators) which would be applied not only to city extensions, but also retroactively to existing urban areas with high, emerging population pressures are promising to support decision making. Under the guidance of urban observatories, these indicators can furthermore play a role in driving more sustainable urbanisation.

b. Implementation of Decree 107/2011. The implementation of Decree 107/2011 should enable the production of urban data and its reporting from the local towards the national level, while allowing decentralized authorities to act on this data and develop better investment and development plans. As such, this process will also be instrumental to monitor advances in urban recovery, as measured by SDG11+. Utilising data produced by local authorities promulgated by the Law 107, could support evidence-based and equitable decision-making related to national investments, as well as local investments and the administration of municipal budgets. The following section describes one of these data and planning processes foreseen under a successful application of Decree 107:

- A neighbourhood committee, as stipulated i by Decree 107/Article 88, is mandated to identify local needs, such as the absence of street lighting, problems with drinking water and sanitation networks and uncollected solid wastes, and reports these to the municipal council's executive office. SDG11+ could provide a baseline and inform implementation of Article 88, allowing neighbourhood committees to suggest annual service plans for their specific neighbourhoods. Specifically, the monitoring framework could help in the preparation of local indicators in coordination with neighbourhood committees.
- ii. The municipal council's executive office is tasked to estimate budget requirements to address identified needs. The Municipality is able to bear the cost and can allocate resources for interventions. However, in cases with e.g., severe damages to the built structures in a neighbourhood, or overburdened and damaged infrastructure networks, the request for budgetary support is raised to the governorate level.
- iii. At the governorate level, the Governor reacts through relevant technical service directorates and is responsible to call for the formation of a committee to review proposed interventions. The directorates are again responsible for project design, taking into consideration the respective city strategy related e.g., to lighting and electricity, solid waste treatment and water. The governorates are by this process responsible for ensuring equity in allocations (i.e., rural and urban) and that interventions follow set standards, such as amount of water per capita etc. Extracted data from an SDG11+ framework could thus support the monitoring of needs and interventions in lieu of equity principles in budgetary allocations.
- iv. **The RPC** is responsible to integrate national level policies and plans within subnational plans, mapping spatial impacts of each sectoral intervention based on data of the subnational urban observatory data and the CBS, which report to PICC for monitoring of SDG achievements.
- c. Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR) to establish baseline data for urban recovery by local authorities with support of international actors. As referenced in the foregoing Monitoring Urban

Recovery chapter, Syria completed its first VNR in 2020. A VLR is the same assessment implemented at the local level (and a voluntary subnational review (VSR) is the same at the subnational level). In the context of monitoring urban recovery, the internationally supported VLR process would be a useful tool to develop a baseline for SDG11+ indicators in advance or parallel of urban recovery planning.

- d. **National Urban Policies (NUPs).** The preparation of NUPs, covering housing, urban expansion and other city-specific policies, could be supported by baseline data and initial urban monitoring data from a SDG11+.
- e. **Participatory local planning.** Several urban recovery initiatives, among others spearheaded by UN-Habitat, are grounded in the active engagement of local communities together with local authorities in identification of both needs and responsive planning options. Applying SDG11+ data could form an important basis for sharing data with communities on the impact of local authorities' projects and service delivery efforts. Capacitating neighbourhood committees (for instance through the use of digital tools), in line with the stipulations from Law 107, to utilise data for active monitoring of local action will help progress accountability at the local levels.

Box 4 Application of SDG11+ in current programmes showcase the potential application of SDG11+ in area-based programming initiatives.

Box 4 Application of SDG11+ in current programmes

Joint Programme on Urban Rural Resilience

The UN Joint Programme on Urban and Rural Resilience in Syria intends to strengthen resilience through a multi-sectoral, integrated and area-based approach based on a participatory, local and bottom-up planning process. Being the only joint programme in Syria to date through coordinated financing administered via the UN Multi Partner Trust Fund, the JP offers an enabling platform to enhance synergies, coherence and efficiency through joint analysis and framework, coherent planning, joined-up implementation and coordinated financing, building on the added value and capacity of the six participating UN agencies (FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, and WFP), under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator to support integrated responses to multifaceted resilience issues in the country. The programme is currently piloted in Dara'a and Deir Ez-Zor.

The UN's flagship resilience programme has spearheaded area-based recovery planning processes in partnership with local communities, identifying priority interventions in most affected areas. The interventions are designed in an integrated and area-based approach to maximize efficiency and effectiveness through coherent planning and joined-up implementation through coordinated financing. Through a conflict-sensitive governance structure as well as a due diligence/risk management system, the programme promotes a principled and yet pragmatic way where the joint programme puts into practice effective resilience mechanisms.

Activities stemming from these area-based plans include creating spaces to enhance social cohesion among youth of different backgrounds, support to gender based violence (GBV) survivors, support to children with disabilities and teachers' training, trainings for women and youth to enhance entrepreneurship in agriculture and livelihoods, support to employment creation and small businesses, and rehabilitation of critical infrastructure that improves access to services, supports mobility and enhances social cohesions and return preparedness.

Adaptation Fund

In July 2021 UN-Habitat signed an agreement with the Adaptation Fund to implement the project 'Increasing the climate change resilience of communities in Eastern Ghouta in rural Damascus to water scarcity challenges through Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) and immediate adaptation interventions.' In partnership with UNDP and FAO, the project aims to reduce climate change vulnerabilities to water availability challenges in Eastern Ghouta.¹⁹ To manage water and land resources efficiently, also considering future climate change risks and population trends in this area, the project aims to develop an integrated natural resource management strategy for the subregion. Complementing the strategy, the proposed project will directly build the resilience of selected communities though the implementation of concrete no-regret adaptation activities including the treatment of wastewater, which is currently polluting water resources in the area, and the establishment of water efficient irrigation systems.

For the above-mentioned programmes, applying SDG11+ as a monitoring tool would support coherent monitoring in different urban (and rural areas) of interventions following the area-based intervention logic, allowing for comparability of geographies as well as longitudinal monitoring. Moreover, using the set of indicators part of SDG11+ would support a coordinated monitoring with local authorities' interventions, communities' engagement, and gaps identification through spatial mapping of the indicators.



¹⁹ Adaptation Fund, "Increasing the climate change resilience of communities in Eastern Ghouta in Rural Damascus to water scarcity challenges through integrated natural resource management and immediate adaptation interventions." Available from: https://www.adaptation-fund.org/ project/climate-change-resilient-communities-through-integrated-natural-resource-management-in-eastern-ghouta-in-rural-damascus-syria/. Accessed 8 January 2022.

Linking SDG11+ to Urban Recovery Actions, the case Dar'a City

Dar'a was one of the first localities to be affected by the crisis in 2011. Over the course of the crisis, Dar'a became one of Syria's most important cities, among others due to its strategic location on Syria's southern border with Jordan. Dar'a's economy is built on livestock, heritage, and agriculture. Dar'a's farming activity, enabled by the water-rich Houran planes, occupies the city's surrounding, where farmers own relatively small plot sizes of approximately half a hectare. Due to its long-standing strengths in the production of vegetable, wheat, and livestock breeding, Dar'a's local producers play an important role in national and international produce markets.



Figure 1 Dar'a land use map. Source: UN-Habitat

Urban Recovery challenges in Dara'a.

This analysis highlights how SDG11+ indicators can inform recovery actions in Dar'a, drawing on existing urban analyses developed by among others UN-Habitat, the UrbAN-S consortium, etc.^{20,21} Dara'a is also one of two locations targeted by six UN agencies under the Joint Programme on Urban-Rural Resilience.

In general, the pattern of destruction and recovery of the city underlines the need for a spatial analysis of crisis impacts on a city level, as there is a major north/south divide when it comes to almost all urban recovery challenges. The housing and service sector in the north of the city is currently more stable, whereas there has been limited recovery in the southern parts of the city. This coincides with a divided city economy: the majority of residents in the north are employed in the governmental sector, while in the south most residents are employed in commerce and crafts.

Housing

SDG indicator 11.1.1: Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing.

Housing ownership in the city reached more than 70 percent before the crisis, yet major housing, land and property (HLP) grievances were important factors leading up to the demonstrations and subsequent crisis in 2011. Housing in the south is now under severe stress as it was disproportionally affected during the crisis (Figure 2). Some areas, such as Dar'a Refugee Camp²² have been completely destroyed, forcing its population to flee, among others to Dara'a City. As a result of such damages and consequent intra-city displacement, many neighbourhoods are now severely overcrowded, and some groups are excluded from basic services. For example, almost half of the residents in the Al Shahid Basil Al Assaad neighbourhood are forced to rent at high and increasing costs, as demand for housing continues to increase as formerly displaced people start to return. Overall, the municipality has reported a deficit of 10,400 houses, suggesting that more than 56 thousand people may not be able to access adequate and affordable shelter. Indicative for this shortage is that 4,500 families have taken shelter in public buildings, including schools. Somewhat contrary to expectations, Dar'a did not see a significant growth of informal settlements which may be attributed to the low employment generation capacity of the city.

Indicator 11.1.1 can be utilized to develop baselines and set goals for both the city as a whole, separate neighbourhoods, or areas (e.g., for area-based approaches). The indicator supports both overall measures (an overall reduction of people living in slums, informal settlements etc.) as well as inequality measures (e.g., a reduction within southern areas, or among the refugee population). A reduction of the proportion of the urban population in inadequate housing would require a range of urban recovery actions, including the following:

- Continuation of a detailed housing damage assessment, thereby building technical capacity.
- Restoration and rehabilitation work of homes for returnees in severely affected neighbourhoods to reduce inequality of access on a city level to housing.
- Inclusion of attention to tenure rights in the rehabilitation of houses.
- Coordination with supporting monitoring indicators related to infrastructure and services.
 For example: the increase of housing capacity in one neighbourhood can reduce the demand on housing in another.

²⁰ UN-Habitat, Dar'a City Profile. 2020.

²¹ Urban-S. Dar'a Factsheet and Baseline Overview. 2020.

²² Dara'a refugee camp is an 1.3 km2 within Dara'a city, dating back to 1948 when Palestinian refugees arrived in Southern Syria. UNRWA, "Dara'a Camp". Available from: https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/syria/deraa-camp. Accessed 17 December 2021.

Figure 2 Map of housing damage in Dar'a



Infrastructure and Services

SDG indicator 4.a.1: Proportion of schools with access to (a) electricity; (b) the Internet for pedagogical purposes; (c) computers for pedagogical purposes; (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; (e) basic drinking water; (f) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (g) basic handwashing facilities

SDG indicator 6.1.1: Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services.

SDG indicator 6.2.1: Proportion of population using (a) safely managed sanitation services and (b) a hand-washing facility with soap and water

SDG indicator 7.1.1: Proportion of population with access to electricity

SDG indicator 11.2.1: Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities

The functionality of infrastructure and services clearly show the divergent impact on the north and the south of Dar'a. In the south, four out of seven neighbourhoods have non-functional electricity provision, non-functional healthcare services, and non-functional education services (Figure 3). Overall, only about 36 per cent of school-aged children can be accommodated, with one in two schools nonfunctional. Furthermore, only about 65 per cent of the population has access to drinking water while many southern neighbourhoods do not have readily available access to water at all. Finally, four neighbourhoods fully rely on water trucks due to the damage to the networks. The SDG indicators related to infrastructure and services such as 6.11, 7.11 and 11.2.1 could be used to develop baselines and urban recovery goals to address and monitor such challenges. In particular, a set of neighbourhood level indicators and goals (e.g., a 50 per cent improvement in the proportion of population with access to water and electricity in the worst served neighbourhoods) may be useful for urban recovery and area-based recovery planning. Achieving such ambitions would require the identification of both upstream (e.g., activating pumping stations and water treatment plans) and downstream interventions (e.g., neighbourhood network repairs), including for example:

- The provision of electricity to pumping stations in the short (through the provision of highcapacity generators) and long term (through the rehabilitation of the energy grid).
- The rehabilitation of the main water tanks and storage, cleaning manholes in the Sahari area and replacing damaged water or sewage lines.
- The restoration of the water network in particular in the southern Al Mansheyal neighbourhood.

Improving the access to basic services relies on cross-sectoral programs. For example, improving access to infrastructure in southern neighbourhoods will only be successful if implemented in conjunction with housing rehabilitation in the same area.

Figure 3 Infrastructure and services functionality map

Environment

SDG indicator 3.9.1: Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution
SDG indicator 6.3.1: Proportion of wastewater safely treated
SDG indicator 11.6.1: Proportion of urban solid waste regularly collected and with adequate final discharge out of total urban solid waste generated
SDG indicator 11.7.1: Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age and persons with disabilities

Dar'a has substantial environmental challenges stemming from damages to its sewage and solid waste collection functions. Solid waste management is not functional in Al Balad and the river valley, while sewage and waste pollution, including at informal dumps along the Al Zaidi River banks, is affecting freshwater sources and irrigation (Figure 4). Furthermore, an estimated 1.7 million tonnes of debris are still uncleared in the city. With regards to collection, solid waste collection and disposal operations are very challenging as only four waste collection vehicles and two compressors are available to collect solid waste generated by 100,000 people in Al Mahatta. Finally, only about ten per cent of the city's open space is for public use. The following urban recovery actions would contribute to an improvement in the city-wide indicators 11.6.1 and 11.7.1:

- Relocate the temporary landfill in Tel Arar to the main landfill on the Jordanian border, enhancing solid waste management along the valley.
- Support a medical waste treatment plant, disposing of fertilisers produced in the main landfill and support the municipality with vehicles and their maintenance parts for waste collection.
- Establish landfills in areas that still depend on temporary sites for collected wastes and rehabilitate existing landfills.
- Rehabilitate well-connected gardens, parks and open public spaces.

Figure 4 Environmental management map Dar'a

Conclusion

This policy paper has detailed how a monitoring and evaluation framework supporting the localisation of the SDGs can be successfully utilised to support the recovery of Syrian cities towards resilience and sustainable development, through an area-based, multi-sectoral approach. Since 2011, the country has faced numerous challenges yet now, almost a decade on, there are opportunities for progress in neighbourhoods, municipalities, and cities across the country. Clear challenges remain evident, however, not least due to the ongoing crisis in certain areas of the country. Bureaucracy, unclear communication with local communities, absence of follow-up and a framework or mechanism between governorates and municipalities are all institutional challenges that need to be addressed.

There is a growing recognition that, in the Syrian context, the most effective way to meet the resilience needs of vulnerable populations is by reconnecting them to selected and critical basic services, through an enhanced emphasis on the system of local public service delivery. To do so, international aid actors are required to engage at a technical level with local authorities, in order to access key service providers, systems and infrastructures and to restore their minimum functionality/continuity in a way that ensures more equitable, inclusive and accountable service provision.

Local authorities in Syria have, under the auspices of MoLAE, started the development of urban recovery plans in some cities. Simultaneously, various international actors have started the development of area-based recovery plans, which aim to deliver on early recovery, on a sub-city level. A harmonized SDG11+ indicator framework can support both these processes, so that interventions' contribution towards urban recovery is measured in a mainstreamed manner.

With Agenda 2030 and the New Urban Agenda overarching, as well as alignment with other global agendas, the unique SDG11+ tool can be utilised for any city in Syria. SDG11+, consisting of a selection of 37 SDG indicators, provides an opportunity for monitoring and evaluation that can:

- a. Highlight major gaps in the status quo and urban recovery ensuring sound prioritisation across sectors and equal distribution between most affected areas;
- b. Ensure successful vertical and horizontal coordination among administrative levels for areabased programming; and
- c. Be used as a tool for capacity building and communication, between different authorities and agencies locally, sub-nationally, nationally, and internationally on urban recovery; and
- d. Support accountability and transparency in local public service delivery, bringing voice and agency to communities and creating reassurances for an anticipated shift in the aid response that places a greater emphasis on absorptive, adaptive and transformative measures, framed within efforts aimed at supporting early recovery.

By doing this, SDG11+ will contribute towards coherent policy making and aid and development effectiveness, as well as contributing to participation and social inclusion.

The present paper describes how key legislation, such as Decree 107 enabling the decentralisation of governance, can contribute to better SDG monitoring, while highlighting the challenges therein. Pathways for implementation of SDG monitoring, including new Voluntary National Reviews and Voluntary Local Reviews, would be accelerated if urban and environmental observatories are implemented, as stipulated in Decree 107.

The current situation in Syria, with, for example, continually rising unemployment, devaluation of the Syrian Pound and near-hyper-inflation, and with the Covid-19 pandemic greatly exacerbating issues in the country's urban areas, is extremely challenging. Meaningfully applying this paper's monitoring and evaluation framework, along with recommended pathways and actions, will represent an important step to ensure sound, well-targeted, and cost-efficient urban recovery interventions at scale to foster resilient and inclusive cities for the future.

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Annex 1: SDG16+ Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies

Hosted at New York University's Center on International Cooperation, the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies have been in operation since 2017. The Pathfinders use "SDG16+" as the main interface for framing the SDGs worldwide, incorporating both SDG16 as well as other peace, just and inclusive targets within Agenda 2030. As stated in the description of SDG16+; "SDG16 was not designed to be isolated from other goals [...] an integrated perspective strengthens the case for universality", and further "implementation requires integrated approaches and collaborative partnerships." The SDG16+ thus encompasses 36 SDG targets (the 12 from SDG16 plus 24 from seven other SDGs) that "directly measure an aspect of peace, inclusion and access to justice." Figure 5, Figure 6 and Figure 7 show the 36 targets used to measure Peaceful Societies, Just Societies and Inclusive Societies respectively. The concept and methodology for the SDG16+, as well as consultations with involved stakeholders, has been used to conceptualise and develop SDG11+.

Figure 5 SDG16+ composite SDG targets for Peaceful Societies

Figure 6 SDG16+ composite SDG targets for Just Societies

Figure 7 SDG16+ composite SDG targets for Inclusive Societies

