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ANNEX

**Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) –
Global Europe
Exceptional Assistance Measure regarding Syria**

1. IDENTIFICATION

Action: Support for Stabilisation and Reintegration in north-east Syria

Action Reference: NDICI CR 2021 / 25

Cost: EUR 18 500 000 (European Union contribution).

Budget Line: 14 02 03 10

Duration: Maximum 18 months. The authorising officer responsible may decide to extend this period twice by a further period of up to six months, up to a total maximum duration of 30 months, under the conditions laid down in Article 23(6) of Regulation (EU) No 2021/947.

Lead service: FPI

2. ACTION SUMMARY

The action aims to support the reintegration of persons returning to their areas of origin in north-east Syria, including individuals released from camps, and to avoid radicalisation and discrimination, ensure social cohesion, access to health and protection from risks posed by landmines and unexploded devices. Since the end of 2020, a significant number of Syrian nationals held in the Al Hol camp have been allowed to return to their areas of origin in the north-east of the country. However, no mechanism for preparing their release or ensuring an adequate follow-up has been put in place with the risk that individuals become or remain vulnerable to radicalisation and discrimination. Returnees experience difficulties in finding livelihood opportunities and securing children's education. Moreover, further efforts are needed to ensure that primary health care is available and to ensure that landmines and explosive remnants of war are removed to enable all internally displaced persons to safely return and rebuild their lives.

This action, consisting of four components, will support the reintegration of individuals and further stabilisation efforts in north-east Syria. The first component will target women released from the Al Hol camp and will establish a women-led and women-owned committee in Deir ez-Zor to coordinate local mediation and reintegration support efforts through a community-based approach. The second component will aim at decreasing the level of

isolation of persons still living in the Al Hol camp. The third component will support the delivery of basic health services and maternity care to the population in north-east Syria, and it will lay the foundation for a more sustainable health sector through the harmonisation of protocols and practices and capacity building of health workers. The fourth component will enhance mine action (manual and mechanical clearance, removal of rubble in urban areas and mine education) in several contaminated locations in north-east Syria to allow for a safe return of internally displaced persons.

3. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

3.1 BACKGROUND

Since the end of 2020, the self-declared Autonomous Administration in north-east Syria has allowed a significant number of Syrian nationals held in the Al Hol camp to return to their areas of origin in the north-east of the country. The majority of these persons are women and children, either individuals or families, with different backgrounds with respect to community of origin, socio-economic status and affiliation to Da'esh (persons that arrived in the camps before the defeat of Da'esh in 2019 are considered as non-affiliated, whilst persons that arrived afterwards are normally labelled as “families of combatants”). The aim of these releases has mainly been to reduce the population in the camps, decrease tensions and improve the security situation in the camps. Releases have taken place following different mechanisms: until October 2020 a tribal sponsorship system allowed residents to leave under the sponsorship of a leader from their tribe, upon application to and approval by camp management. Since October 2020, the self-administration has set up a system by which individuals are allowed to submit an application for departure to the camp administration and are released following a security screening. However, no mechanism for preparing the release or for ensuring substantive follow-up to it have been developed and families and individuals that leave the camp receive little assistance or support for reintegration, with the risk that individuals become or remain vulnerable to radicalisation and discrimination even after leaving the camp.

Returnees experience difficulties in finding livelihood opportunities and securing children's education due to stigma and perceived risks by host communities. According to recent studies, local communities display sympathy towards the wives and children of former combatants that belong to the same community or tribe, but are very sceptical towards the enrollment of children in local schools for fear of extremist ideologies. Moreover, the majority of returnees, specifically women heads of household, are unemployed and face significant challenges to find employment or to sustain themselves and their children also due to the lack of a male chaperon or “provider”. Some individuals lack identity documents or other civil documents, including property documents. Suspicion and negative perceptions of returnees are quite common; anecdotal evidence shows that returnees are often blamed for security incidents and for providing fertile ground for the (re-) emergence of Da'esh or likeminded groups.

The situation in north-east Syria remains extremely fragile. Communities continue to face the impact of fighting that led to the destruction of basic services and civilian infrastructure, including health care facilities. On the one hand, the lack of health care hampers the return of internally displaced people (IDP); on the other hand, returns of IDPs and persons released from camps put additional pressure on health care providers. The health sector remains weak, both in terms of service delivery, as well as capacity and quality of practices and procedures.

Moreover, returnees face significant risks of death or injury from explosive devices when transiting through or returning to areas which witnessed high levels of violence and conflict. While the full extent of contamination in the country is not fully known, the 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)¹ estimates that approximately one in two people are exposed to risks related to explosive contamination, especially in relation to agricultural land and roads. The contamination includes improvised mines and booby traps that are difficult to identify but sensitive enough to be triggered by a child's footstep. The 2021 HNO reports that farming/herding, moving/travelling, collecting scrap metal and playing, are the most commonly reported activities at the time of incidents.

3.2 RATIONALE FOR CRISIS RESPONSE ACTIONS UNDER THE RAPID RESPONSE PILLAR OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION INSTRUMENT

The situation in north-east Syria - including the urgent need to support the reintegration of persons returning to their areas of origin in north-east Syria, inter alia individuals released from camps to avoid radicalisation and discrimination, and to reduce the risk of tensions arising in host communities, as well as the provision of primary health care and the removal of mines and explosive remnants of war - is of concern, constituting an exceptional and unforeseen situation in the sense of Article 4(4) of the NDICI Regulation. An adequate response cannot be provided under any other European Union Instrument due to the urgency with which the funds are required and due to available resources already being firmly committed.

Annex IV, paragraph 1, points (h), (j), (l), (m) and (p) of Regulation (EU) No 2021/947 specifically provides for the use of the NDICI rapid response pillar to support (h) civilian measures related to the demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants and their families into civil society, and where appropriate their repatriation, as well as measures to address the situation of child soldiers and female combatants, (j) measures to address, within the framework of Union cooperation policies and their objectives, the socio-economic impact on the civilian population of anti-personnel landmines, unexploded ordnance or explosive remnants of war. Activities financed under the Instrument may cover, inter alia, risk education, mine detection and clearance and, in conjunction therewith, stockpile destruction, (l) measures to ensure that the specific needs of women and children in crisis and conflict situations, including preventing their exposure to gender-based violence, are adequately met, (m) rehabilitation and reintegration of the victims of armed conflict, including measures to address the specific needs of women and children, and (p) support for measures to address the potential impact of sudden population movements with relevance to the political and security situation, including measures addressing the needs of host communities.

¹ [2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic | HumanitarianResponse](#)

3.3 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risks	High, medium, low	Mitigation
Armed conflict with airstrikes and shelling in selected areas delays or prevents the implementation of activities or access to areas of operations. The security situation in the Al Hol camp deteriorates and project staff becomes a target. Partners are denied access to the camp by camp authorities.	Medium	The security situation will be closely monitored and implementing partners will develop contingency plans with provisions to reduce, redeploy and/or suspend activities depending on the impact of the security developments.
The COVID-19 situation delays activities and prevents the deployment of staff (lockdowns, restrictions, overwhelmed medical facilities).	Medium	Appropriate precautionary measures will be taken by implementing partners according to pre-defined operating procedures.
Access permissions to area of operations blocked/denied due to a change in the political situation, or shift in control of territory between different actors.	Medium	The action will be based on continuous risk analysis and monitoring of the political and security situation. Communication with the EU will be timely and accurate. Activities will be suspended in case political developments in the region do not allow for EU non-humanitarian assistance to be provided.
Disruption of money transfers systems, inability to access cash.	Medium	Sufficient cash reserves will be ensured
Risk of bribery, robbery, burglary of facilities and loss of assets.	Low	Security policies will be developed. Implementing partners will vet contractors and diversify supply chains.

4. OBJECTIVES

4.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the action is to support persons returning to their areas of origin in north-east Syria, including the reintegration of individuals released from the camps, and to avoid radicalisation and discrimination, ensure social cohesion, access to health and protection from risks posed by landmines and unexploded devices.

4.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- 4.2.1 Facilitate the reintegration process of Syrian female-headed households returning from Al Hol camp to Deir ez-Zor;
- 4.2.2 Decrease the level of isolation of persons living in the Al Hol camp through social activities linking people inside the camp with communities outside the camp and through the broadcasting of interactive radio programmes;
- 4.2.3 Improve health care services, harmonise practices and enhance the capacity of healthcare staff;
- 4.2.4 Reduce the threat from landmines and unexploded ordnance and increase safe access to key infrastructure, villages and agricultural areas across north-east Syria.

5. ACTION COMPONENTS AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The main expected results/outcomes include:

Expected Result (1): Community networks of women are reinforced and .

Activities (indicative):

- 5.1.1 Establishment of a women-led sub-committee to the existing civil society platform to facilitate reintegration efforts;
- 5.1.2 Training and livelihoods activities for women heads of households;
- 5.1.3 Social engagement activities for children.

Expected Result (2): Al Hol camp residents, returnees, and community members will be better equipped to navigate life, choose positive alternative pathways and develop stronger social networks.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.2.1 Radio programming in Al Hol Camp and a selected location in north-east Syria which is a focal point for returnees;
- 5.2.2 Resilience-building workshops and mental health activities for women and children in Al Hol camp;
- 5.2.3 Interactive theatre and sport activities in the Al Hol camp and selected locations in north-east Syria.

Expected Result (3): The population in north-east Syria, including the most vulnerable ones and displaced persons, have access to improved health care.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.3.1 Delivery of essential health services in selected locations and facilities;
- 5.3.2 Harmonisation of healthcare strategies and guidelines, including supply chain management protocols and data collection tools;
- 5.3.3 Delivery of mental health and psychosocial support in selected healthcare facilities in north-east Syria;
- 5.3.4 Assessment of healthcare workforce's capacity and delivery of in-service training and supportive supervision;
- 5.3.5 Support to local health committees and health actors.

Expected Result (4): Improved access to cleared land and infrastructure in rural and urban areas for conflict affected communities and humanitarian and stabilisation actors in targeted areas.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.3.1 Conduct of technical surveys, impact surveys and demarcation of minefields;
- 5.3.2 Search and clearance of critical infrastructure;
- 5.3.3 Stockpiling demolition of collected devices;
- 5.3.4 Delivery of sessions on mine risk education in targeted areas;
- 5.3.5 Capacity building of partner organisations to coordinate and manage mine action in north-east Syria.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures².

6.1.1 Grant: direct award (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant

The grant will contribute to achieving objective 4.2.1 in section (4) and expected result 1 in section (5).

(b) Type of applicants targeted

Potential applicants for funding are non-governmental organisations with experience in the dialogue and mediation and consolidated presence in north-east Syria.

(c) Justification of a direct grant

² www.sanctionsmap.eu Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website, it is the OJ version that prevails.

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because **the action entails crisis management aid as referred to in Article 195(a) and as defined in Article 2(21) of the Financial Regulation** at the date of the Financing Decision.

6.1.2 Grant: direct award (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant

The grant will contribute to achieving objective 4.2.2 in section (4) and expected result 2 in section (5).

(b) Type of applicants targeted

Potential applicants for funding are non-governmental organisations with experience in the communication and consolidated presence in and access to the Al Hol camp north-east Syria.

(c) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because **the action entails crisis management aid as referred to in Article 195(a) and as defined in Article 2(21) of the Financial Regulation** at the date of the Financing Decision.

6.1.3 Grant: direct award (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant

The grant will contribute to achieving objective 4.2.4 in section (4) and expected result 4 in section (5).

(b) Type of applicants targeted

Potential applicants for funding are non-governmental organisations with experience in mine action and consolidated presence in north-east Syria.

(c) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because **the action entails crisis management aid as referred to in Article 195(a) and as defined in Article 2(21) of the Financial Regulation** at the date of the Financing Decision.

6.1.4 Indirect management with a Member State Organisation

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with an entity which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria: extensive experience in supporting the health sector in north-east Syria; knowledge of the sector and network of local partners; capacity to operate in north-east Syria, including to monitor the implementation of activities and procure needed materials/equipment. The implementation by this entity entails improving access to primary health care, dialysis, obstetric and neo-natal services, training health professionals and contribute to lay the foundation for a more sustainable health sector in north-east Syria, as indicated in objective 4.2.3 and expected result 3 in section 5.

6.1.5 Changes from indirect to direct management mode due to exceptional circumstances (one alternative second option)

The implementation modality at 6.1.4 (indirect management with a Member State Organisation) can be replaced with implementation modality 6.1.1 (Grant: direct award – direct management) where the preferred modality cannot be implemented due to circumstances beyond the Commission’s control.

6.2 INDICATIVE BUDGET

The total European Union contribution under this Financing Decision **will not exceed EUR 18 500 000**. A breakdown among components is provided hereunder, and is indicative.

Indicative budget breakdown

Components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
Component 1: Support for the reintegration of women-headed families returning from Al Hol composed of		
6.1.1 – Direct grant (direct management)	1 500 000	N/A
Component 2: Building resilience in Al Hol camp composed of		
6.1.2 – Direct grant (direct management)	2 000 000	N/A
Component 3: Support to health services in north-east Syria composed of		
6.1.3. – Indirect management	5 000 000	N/A
Component 4: Integrated mine action in north-east Syria composed of		
6.1.4 – Direct grant (direct management)	10 000 000	N/A
Total	18 500 000	

6.3 ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The action shall be implemented under direct management for objective/components 1, 2 and 4 and indirect management for objective/component 3. It will be devolved and sub-delegated to the **European Union Delegation in Syria**, with the support of the Commission for the conclusion of the contracts implementing the action.

6.4 PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS MONITORING AND REPORTING

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process and part of the implementing partner’s responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final

reports. Each report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (outputs and outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the Logframe matrix. The report shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

6.5 EVALUATION

Having regard to the nature of the action, an evaluation will not be carried out for this action or its components.

The Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

6.6 AUDIT

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

The financing of the audit shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

6.7 COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU.

This action shall contain communication and visibility measures which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action, to be elaborated at the start of implementation.

In terms of legal obligations on communication and visibility, the measures shall be implemented by the Commission, the partner country, contractors, grant beneficiaries and/or entrusted entities. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, the financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

The Communication and Visibility Requirements for European Union External Action (or any succeeding document) shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

Acknowledging that activities financed under this action will be politically sensitive and/or may constitute a security risk for the implementing partner/beneficiaries, the communication and visibility plan for this measure should develop a differentiated approach to satisfy the requirements from the legal obligations to which EU external funding is bound to without putting at risk the actions supported by this measure.

7. COMPLEMENTARITY, COORDINATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The action complements humanitarian support provided by the EU to vulnerable people in north-east Syria by addressing gaps both in geographical terms, as well as sectors. The first component will be implemented in areas located in east of Deir-Ezzor governorate, where few or no actors are operating. The second component will complement humanitarian aid provided to persons in the Al Hol camp. The third component will fill critical gaps in the health sector and will complement activities supported by DG NEAR in north-west Syria. The fourth component will support mine risk education activities carried out by DG ECHO and will contribute to address the massive levels of contamination in north-east Syria.

The action complements other EU and EU Member States' interventions in north-east Syria and is in line with recent discussions on how to enhance stabilisation. The good coordination of this action will be ensured through regular exchanges with the EU Delegation in Syria, other EU services and EU Member States, as well as existing coordination mechanisms on the mine action in north-east Syria. The action is in line with current efforts by the Global Coalition against Da'esh in north-east Syria.