**Evaluation of the**

**UN Joint Support to the Jordan National Response to the Syria Crisis**

**Prepared for UNDP Jordan**

**28 June 2017**

**Abbreviations & Acronyms**

AIMS Aid Information Management System (e.g. JORISS-type aid system)

CVA Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment

EDP Executive Development Plan

FfD Financing for Development

GOJ Government of Jordan

HMIC Higher-Middle Income Country

HRCU Humanitarian Relief Coordination Unit, MOPIC

JORISS Jordan Response Information System for the Syria Crisis

JRPSC Jordan Response Platform for the Syria Crisis

JP UN Joint Support Programme to the Jordan National Response to the Syria Crisis

KPI Key Performance Indicator

LM Line ministry

MOPIC Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

NGOs Non-Governmental Organisations

ODA Official Development Assistance

PBA Programme-Based Approach

PFM Public Financial Management

PIU Project Implementation Unit

PSS Project Summary Sheets (part of the JRP)

TA Technical assistance

TF Task Force

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**Summary**

The Jordan Response Plan (JRP) continues to be a relevant and essential tool for managing the response to the Syria crisis. There is universal appreciation for Government’s leadership of the JRP which has strengthened national ownership and made the resilience approach operational.

In many sectors there is clearly a strong appetite amongst Government officials to institutionalize the principles of development effectiveness. The JRP has in numerous cases led to a change in mindset and has opened a new window of opportunity for MOPIC to lead the strengthening of mainstream development management processes in collaboration with its international partners.

The considerable achievement of establishing the JRP is tempered by Government’s own acknowledgement that setting the process in motion has been at the expense of developing its own capacities. While the JRP has successfully established the institutional framework for producing a Plan that provides a credible basis for resource mobilisation, these achievements are likely to be sustainable if MOPIC and other government institutions take the necessary actions to maintain and sustain results achieved.

Next steps in the JRP’s evolution and its linkages to wider development management are to be determined by MOPIC. This process should include dialogue with partners. Decisions taken now will determine the JRPs path in the short-term. Depending on MOPIC’s level of ambition and its preferred approach to capacity development/substitution, these decisions could also significantly impact on development management practices over the longer-term. On the one hand, interviews demonstrated strong indications of interest from the UN and other donors for supporting more holistic and long-term planning. On the other, these changes have considerable ramifications and must be approached with due care and consideration. The Government of Jordan must decide where to strike the balance.

***Findings***

***1. Effective Government leadership of the JRP has made the resilience approach operational.*** There is near-unanimous recognition of the value and benefit of the resilience concept. Impressive results in establishing the JRP’s institutional framework can be attributed largely to the Secretariat, which has enabled GOJ to take on the risks associated with adopting the resilience approach and transforming it into an operational GOJ-led plan.

***2. Capacity development results have been limited, despite this being the project’s overall objective.*** There has been a readiness and acceptance to focus on getting things done. While the Secretariat have recorded few explicit capacity gains, however, there have been some tacit capacity development successes of major significance related to JRP institutional capacity (‘rules of the game’) and signs that line ministries are embracing improved development management and coordination practices.

***3. The JRP has been highly effective. But it is not sustainable even over the medium term and is at risk of becoming less relevant and effective as the situation evolves.*** The JRP process retains value but needs to become more forward-looking to address issues that undermine its effectiveness and impact. GOJ commitment is variable as the JRP becomes somewhat jaded and formulaic, especially where Task Forces do not mobilize resources. In managing the process, personality too often dominates over process so that coordination has not always proceeded smoothly. The Secretariat has come to be seen closer to Government and has possibly acquired its own set of interests that undermine its facilitating role in supporting the multi-actor JRPSC platform.

***The main finding related to the project’s outputs concerns JORISS***, which divides opinion. JORISS tracking functions require further improvement. Despite some significant concerns, users remain engaged and the Secretariat has made encouraging efforts to reach out to users to address problems and make the system responsive. Measures are already in place to strengthen monitoring and reporting of higher-level results.

**Programme management**

Oversight needs to be much stronger. A lack of rigor in managing progress reviews has resulted in missed opportunities to secure further gains for the JRP. Mandatory reporting and dialogue at management level have not been effective. Communication breakdowns and confusion over reporting lines have resulted in a climate of suspicion and mistrust. Recommendations focus on the need to understand the extent to which these are systemic management issues before identifying remedial actions. Genuine project management expertise is required going forward.

**Unintended consequences**

Beyond applying and managing the resilience approach, the JRP has changed mindsets and established foundations for a profound change in development management practices. But while MOPIC has effectively championed the cause of resilience, it has itself benefited little from the approach. Nevertheless, a nascent culture of aid effectiveness has taken hold, especially at line ministry level. 3 years in to the JRP exercise, adaptive behaviors are increasingly observed as ministries work directly with their donors to mobilize and programme resources across the EDP and JRP with more flexibility. The UN has also positioned itself in the JRP to good advantage.

**Recommendations**

1. The JRP remains highly relevant and support should be maintained. Next steps must be based on a clear Government vision for building on the JRP and institutionalizing new practices and priorities. Enhanced reporting of results can inform proactive evidence-based resource mobilisation efforts that may mitigate growing donor fatigue.

2. Reformulation of project support is as an opportunity to look beyond JRP consolidation to support national development management capacities. Using the JRP experience to inform the strengthening of national development management processes is a strategic opportunity. The Jordan Compact is an additional policy area that can be used to advance the JRP into new territory.

3. Addressing longer term development challenges requires looking beyond ODA. GOJ and its partners must identify a more strategic role for ODA in supporting national development. ODA comprises only a small share of total development finance – domestic revenues, private sector investment and remittances are all much larger – but can be employed to leverage other development actors as a part of a broader national planning and budgeting framework.

Scenarios for providing future support to the JRP and development management are presented on page 36 of the report and should be read in conjunction with this summary.

**Evaluation of UN Joint Support to the Jordan National Response to the Syria Crisis**

**Final Report (26 June 2017)**

**1**. **Introduction**

A mission was hosted by UNDP Jordan during the period 18-28 June to evaluate the UN Joint Support Programme to the Jordan National Response to the Syria Crisis. This report is intended to be forward-looking with a view to informing future support to the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) and the management of the Jordan Response Plan (JRP). Many findings and recommendations apply equally to strengthening wider development management objectives, policies, practices and capacities of the Government of Jordan (GOJ).

The evaluation was intended to be robust yet constructive, reviewing implementation and achievements of the UN Joint Support Programme (JP) while taking account of relevant contextual factors.

This document reports findings, lessons learned and recommendations in line with GOJ goals and the UN Joint Support Programme’s own objective, i.e.:

***GOJ Goal***: To respond to the impact of the Syria crisis within a resilience framework by mobilizing, managing and coordinating resources via the Jordan Response Plan (JRP p7).

***JP specific objective***: Strengthen MOPIC capacity to lead the Government of Jordan’s response to the Syria crisis through policy advice, strategic planning, aid coordination, monitoring and evaluation, information management and advocacy (ProDoc p8).

**2**. **Methodology**

The evaluation was chiefly directed at assessing higher-level results related to capacity development at MOPIC. The JP objective and 4 outputs guided evidence collection and analysis:

1. Enhanced MOPIC capacity to lead the response to the Syrian crisis.

2. MOPIC’s information management is strengthened enabling tracking of donor commitments and implementing partners’ interventions through a comprehensive information management system.

3. MOPIC’s M&E capacity is strengthened, ensuring timely monitoring and evaluation of results.

4. Enhanced MOPIC capacity for public outreach on the needs of Jordanian vulnerable communities and Syrian refugees.

OECD/DAC evaluation criteria have been applied: i.e. relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Globally agreed aid/development effectiveness principles agreed in Paris (2005), Accra (2008) and Busan (2011) provide an additional analytical perspective: i.e. ownership and partnership, alignment with priorities and use of national systems, harmonisation, mutual accountability and transparency, and application of results-based approaches. A series of findings (based on evidence) and recommendations on the JP objective and outputs are presented.

The evaluation was based on: (a) a desk study of documentation (Annex 1), both programme-specific and related to the wider context; (b) application of relevant development effectiveness principles and evaluation norms; and (c) a series of interviews. Evidence from the document review informed an Inception Report and a model of the evaluation based on a Theory of Change (Annex 2). A set of specific interview questions (Annex 3) was developed based on the JP project document, progress reports and relevant evaluation/effectiveness principles.

**Interview size and composition (n=47)**



Interviews were conducted with 47 respondents (Annex 4) from Government (MOPIC and Task Forces), the JRP Secretariat, UN agencies, NGOs and donors. These discussions adopted a semi-structured format based on questions included in the Inception Report but they also provided an opportunity to document the insights of the interviewee based on their own experience and perspective.

Interviewees were mainly from the UN agencies (including Task Force secretariats) and Government staff that lead or manage Task Forces. Reported findings are based only on statements that have been validated by at least one additional source but in most cases are informed by a much wider evidence base.

***Independence of the Evaluation***

The evaluation was conducted by a UNDP staff member. This was deemed necessary after an advertisement had not identified a suitably qualified candidate. The evaluator was professionally acquainted with the current Country Director of UNDP Jordan for a brief period in 2006-2007.

The Terms of Reference guided the evaluation. No further influence was exerted in designing the evaluation model or during the mission. The list of meetings was prepared by the JRP Secretariat but was augmented at the request of the evaluator (including to talk by Skype with former UN staff involved in JRP design and programme implementation). Interviews were not attended by any UN, GOJ or JRP Secretariat official.

The evaluator is confident that he has been able to conduct this exercise with independence subject to being guided on interviewee selection and limited by the time provided. Readers are invited to form their own conclusions on the independence and integrity of the evaluation by studying this report, particularly its findings and recommendations.

***Limitations of the Evaluation***

The evaluator’s usual caveat - ‘more research is needed’ – applies. The evaluation is largely based on a snapshot – i.e. the current status – and has only a limited sense of longer-term dynamics and the direction of travel. A relatively small number of interviewees provided input (47 in total). Within MOPIC, the main counterpart, only 3 counterparts were interviewed. This precludes any deep insight into the MOPIC perspective on potential for using the current JP (and the complementary EU programme) as a basis for future support. Similarly, not all UN agencies that support the Joint Programme were available to offer their perspectives on performance or future directions. Interviews with GOJ officials supporting 5 Task Forces provided relatively consistent feedback and that body of evidence is considered to be credible.

***A basis for further discussion. Not the final word.***

While this evaluation’s findings are considered to be robust they would benefit from further validation, especially across other Task Forces where there is a diversity of experience. To the extent that these findings can contribute to a further dialogue about future JRP support there will be significant value in widely disseminating this report as a basis for discussion. This evaluation can in no way be considered to be the final word on the JRP or the performance of the Secretariat.

**3. Status of the UN Joint Support Programme**

The UN Joint Programme (JP) has been operational since January 2015. In line with the JP project document, the overall objective is to strengthen Government capacity to manage the JRP.

The JP supports the Jordan Response Platform for the Syria Crisis (JRPSC) as a “multi-partner convening body” that is comprised of ministries, donors, UN agencies and others. The JP is also seen as a “basis to strengthen [GOJ] capacity for donor coordination” in general.[[1]](#footnote-1) The Humanitarian Relief Coordination Unit (HRCU) and the Aid Coordination Section of the International Cooperation Department are therefore identified in the project document as the key counterparts in terms of developing sustainable capacity in national institutions.

The JP project document noted that there is a “need to place greater emphasis on capacity development … [so that] … Capacity development is thus the main component of the strategy”. It was expected that capacity diagnostics (at institutional/organisational/individual levels) would provide the framework for capacity support so that the JP will ensure “that the transfer of the key functionalities … can be sustained by the Government and be used as a foundation for a functional national aid management system”. Four outputs are identified to support the overall and specific objectives. Guiding principles and cross-cutting themes are also identified. An expectation of identifying a clear exit strategy is provided for in the JP project document.

The JP principally comprises a programme team (currently 8 members) that forms the JRP Secretariat, which is hosted by MOPIC. Terms of Reference for the Secretariat staff list their collective responsibilities as including, inter alia, the provision of policy advisory services related to the production of the JRP, establishment and maintenance of the Jordan Response Information System for the Syria Crisis (JORISS)[[2]](#footnote-2), cross-Government support to Task Forces, support to reporting, monitoring and evaluation, and communications and outreach.

The 2015 and 2016 Annual Reports are similar in format, tone and content. They are very short on detail but identify substantial progress. Highlights include the production of the JRP, the deployment and management of JORISS and communications/outreach activities.

Capacity work reported by the Secretariat at the end of 2015 included recommendations submitted to MOPIC on organisational structure and staffing with a capacity development plan pending. Risks were identified with associated countermeasures (but without any deeper analysis of the extent to which they may be undermining results). At the end of 2016, the Secretariat reported more Task Force activity and improvements to JORISS (with more projects being managed through the system) with increased focus on analysis and knowledge management.

Recommendations are near-identical for both years: increasing support to line ministry capacity; utilizing UN cross-sectoral support; extending outreach efforts to secure donor engagement; and intensifying resource mobilisation efforts.

**4. Key findings and lessons learned**

**Finding 1. Effective Government leadership of the JRP has made the resilience approach operational. The impressive results at the technical level in establishing the JRP’s institutional framework can be largely attributed to the Secretariat.**

***There is near-unanimous recognition of the value and benefit of the resilience concept***

All interviewees recognized the importance of the resilience concept and acknowledged the ownership of the GOJ in translating it into a clear and relevant policy to be implemented through the Jordan Response Plan (and its predecessor, the National Resilience Plan). The GOJ can now be seen to be actively managing the response to the Syria crisis; it is no longer reacting but guiding. The resilience approach is therefore widely regarded as a best practice. Extending support to host communities while maintaining programmes directed to the refugee response has proven to be invaluable in maintaining a highly visible profile on the international stage.

Relevant lesson – the resilience approach must maintain and build its political capital. This can be done by: (i) using the JRP to generate compelling and robust evidence on the successes of the approach; (ii) using evidence on unmet needs to compel the international community to live up to the commitments they have made to support Jordan; and (iii) identifying innovative new forms of media and dissemination strategies that burnish the GOJ’s profile and reputation.

***The JP and the Secretariat have enabled GOJ to accept more risk***

Understanding the resilience concept – somewhat fuzzy in its earliest applications - and its subsequent translation into public policy through the JRP represented a major undertaking and a new way of doing business. Would GOJ have been so willing to take on this task without the Secretariat and its formidable and experienced staffing complement? One interviewee noted that resilience is “not a complicated concept but touches upon huge vested interests.” Without strong UN backing from the RC/HC, 13-agency support to the JP and a strong and committed technical support team it may be that the GOJ would have experienced some difficulty in designing the JRP, convening all relevant actors and rolling out the JRP’s associated machinery.

Furthermore, prior to the Syria crisis, there was a very limited culture or practice of multi-partner dialogue in the generic aid coordination sense. A 2013 UN Country Team study found that, “There is no aid effectiveness policy … the absence of a structured dialogue and exchange during the national planning process between the Government and the donors makes it challenging for the donors to align their assistance . The [aid coordination] function has not been carried out due to the fact that there is no personnel.” While development officials with an international background may take the machinery for granted, for Jordan this was a big step into uncharted waters.

Relevant lesson – The GOJ is to be commended for its willingness to take on a highly uncertain undertaking in adopting the resilience approach and the JRP. The value of the UN is evident in its early support to GOJ in managing this risk by assisting a member country to identify goals and to provide political backing together with credible technical expertise.

***The JRP has successfully translated the resilience approach into a GOJ-led operational plan…***

The JRP is held in high regard and its contribution to date has been recognized. It has established effective GOJ leadership over the response effort and has made the resilience approach operational. The merits of the JRP that were specifically and consistently identified during the evaluation include: (i) the translation of a political commitment into a workable framework for setting goals, prioritizing needs, mobilizing resources and implementing activities; (ii) linking the continuing humanitarian response effort to the more protracted and complex resilience work that supports host communities; and (iii) becoming an increasingly collaborative exercise.

Relevant lesson – GOJ’s strong political commitment to the JRP has helped to ensure a consensus around establishing the partnership-based approach in key sector/thematic areas. As the situation evolves, GOJ must be ready to respond to changing circumstances through increasingly institutionalized processes that can quickly adapt their working practices.

***…but the JRP is much more besides***

Most Jordanian interviewees expressed a strong sense of pride in the JRP and the values that it represents. A significant majority of interviewees agreed that the JRP has introduced new ‘rules of the game’ for managing partnerships in Jordan. Specifically, it has: (i) established a multi-actor institutional framework (the Joint Platform and the Task Forces) that allows for a more coherent and effective dialogue on priority needs and programming; and (ii) provides an entry point for longer-term strengthening of national development management processes beyond the Syria crisis.

Relevant lesson – “Necessity is the mother of invention”. Responding to the Syria crisis has resulted in many good practices emerging. These include policy dialogue, information sharing, an expanded line ministry role in resource mobilisation and programming, peer learning, and more robust approaches to monitoring and learning. In many Task Forces, these new responsibilities and working practices are highly appreciated and have become established thanks to the JRP. They need to be codified and institutionalized to be sustainable.

***Attribution for developing the Jordan Response Plan is assigned largely to the Secretariat***

The role of the Secretariat in leading and managing all technical aspects of the JRP’s production and implementation is acknowledged. For the overwhelming majority of interviewees the JRP is fully synonymous with the Secretariat. Appreciation for the efforts and achievements of the Secretariat were consistently and strongly expressed by MOPIC and other GOJ officials. The personal commitment and efforts of the Secretariat are so frequently singled out for praise that this emerges as an important finding of this evaluation.

Relevant lesson – Putting in place a team with strong leadership and technical capacities is a good way to get things done. The argument for and against Project Implementation Units rumbles on but GOJ’s preference in this case was to ensure an essential task was completed. Further discussion with GOJ regarding the use of PIUs is necessary as a means of clarifying longer-term GOJ commitments to – and modalities of - capacity development.

**Finding 2. Capacity development results have been limited. Despite this being the JP’s overall objective. This is because there has been a readiness and acceptance on both the ‘demand’ and ‘supply’ sides of the capacity equation to focus on getting things done through gap-filling.**

***The JP and the Secretariat have recorded few explicit capacity gains…***

MOPIC is not yet ready to fully manage the JRP. The ProDoc’s stated objective is “Enhanced MOPIC capacity…”. Line ministries and TFs to some extent draw either on: (a) capacities already internal to the organisation; or (b) external staff (e.g. UN TF secretariats).

The work of the Secretariat has focused on the production of the JRP with almost no planned, deliberate and explicit attention placed on the JP capacity development objective, unless there are plans by MOPIC to hire the secretariat national staff beyond the project duration

MOPIC staff are reportedly over-whelmed with other responsibilities, particularly the main counterparts in the HCRU, and so there are no staff to train, mentor or work with on a ‘learning by doing’ basis. Public sector incentives and motivation were issues that were raised frequently by interviewees. Pay differentials between PIU staff and public servants have also contributed to the tendency towards gap-filling. With the notable exception of the HRCU staff member that manages JORISS approvals, capacity to achieve organisational objectives is manifested almost exclusively through gap-filling roles of Secretariat staff.

Relevant lesson – The old development cliché about “giving a man a fish…etc” is relevant here in exposing the underlying trade-off between completing an urgent task and building longer-term capacities. As above, the use of PIUs and TA staff as a tool for capacity development or substitution needs to be a topic for further discussion with GOJ.

***…yet there have been some tacit capacity development successes of major significance***

Viewing capacity development at the institutional level, the Secretariat has successfully facilitated the establishment of a system of rules, processes and tools that brings together a large and diverse set of development actors. Beyond a 2015 self-assessment of needs for MOPIC/HRCU and Task Forces, however, focus on producing the Plan has been to the exclusion of sustained, deliberate and coordinated efforts directed at strengthening Task Force capacities. The JRP preparation process nevertheless now appears to be firmly embedded in the workflow of line ministries (e.g. convening Task Force members to conduct the CVA and sector strategies) and development partner agencies (e.g. contributing to PSS preparation). This a formidable achievement, even if it may be something of an ‘unintended consequence’.

While the Secretariat have steered this process, the attribution goes at least in part to the Task Forces themselves. While they have invariably found the Secretariat to be responsive and supportive, there have been few structured capacity-related initiatives that respond to the needs of Task Forces. Yet it is observable that many Task Force staff in line ministries have secured some learning as a result of their exposure to JRP work, including of the more tacit kind related to managing partnerships and participating effectively in multi-actor processes.

Relevant lesson – Institutional capacity is in place but is still fragile. It is almost certainly not sustainable unless it is codified to become part of routine working practices beyond the scope of the Syria response. If line ministries can formalize these procedures and incorporate them into their own working practices in line with their own calendars, structures and programming requirements then these institutional capacities across Task Forces can also strengthen organisational capacities within line ministries.

***Understanding the capacity conundrum***

How has the Secretariat been able to continue its work for 2½ years without making any concerted effort to secure the JP’s overall capacity development objective?

The answer is four-fold. First, it must be acknowledged that the JP has only been in place for just over 2 years and has taken some time to become established and form working relations with other parts of GOJ, donors and implementers. Second, there has been a complicit acceptance by MOPIC, the UN and the wider development partner community that a higher priority was placed on ‘getting things done’, principally the Jordan Response Plan. Third, to the extent that this understanding was sometimes more tacit, the almost complete absence of project management and oversight meant that deviation from project goals has been able to continue unchecked by JP Steering Committee members to the present time. Fourth, the Secretariat has understood that the JRP’s institutional capacity ‘by-product’ in the Task Forces (see above) may represent a ‘good enough’ capacity development response in the circumstances.

With the benefit of hindsight, the original JP project document reflects some of the ambivalence that existed from the outset about the Secretariat’s capacity development role. While capacity-relevant activities were included in the original workplan they did not extend beyond needs assessments. Greater emphasis was, perhaps with good justification, placed on getting things done.

Relevant lesson – Capacity development is an internal process of change. It is not an externally-driven TA-led exercise. Two years is an insufficient period on which to base definitive capacity-related findings. The role of the UN or any other development partner is to facilitate this change in collaboration with the GOJ lead. There needs to be authentic and on-going dialogue between the GOJ and the UN about commitments to capacity objectives.

But challenges of motivation, incentives, vested interests and bureaucratic inertia are very real and have been noted as constraints by the Secretariat. The preference to ‘do’ rather than to ‘facilitate’ is the result. This could have been more openly discussed instead of simply being assimilated into the Secretariat’s *modus operandi*. Solutions that meet the interests of all parties could then have been identified, including, for example: (i) the possibility to formalize capacity substitution and maximize its contribution to mobilizing resources and to JRP implementation; (ii) to dedicate resources to explicitly re-enforcing the institutional arrangements established at line ministry level by the JRP process; and/or (iii) to identify a longer-term and incremental approach for moving towards capacity development.

**Finding 3. The JRP has been highly effective. But it is not sustainable even over the medium term and is at risk of becoming less relevant and effective as the situation evolves.**

***The JRP process retains value but needs to become more forward-looking to address issues that undermine its effectiveness and impact***

The JRP’s institutional framework has succeeded in formulating, implementing and rolling over a costed plan to support the GOJ response to the Syria crisis. If support to refugees and host communities becomes a longer-term need, as many interviewees feel is likely, then the JRP needs to become more institutionalized at MOPIC and across GOJ. Currently the JRP and its associated machinery are highly unlikely to be sustainable even in the medium term without continued external support to the Secretariat function and the work of the UN agencies that facilitate the Task Forces as secretariats.

As the Syria crisis becomes more protracted and the JRP prepares for its 4th iteration, there is a need to begin now to move beyond the Plan to consider two critical emerging needs: (a) resource mobilisation; and (b) implementation and results. They can be mutually reinforcing but neither can be viewed as merely technical undertakings.

No-one seems to have an authoritative and definitive figure on aid flows to Jordan, much less be able to use this information to inform policy and decision-making. Resource mobilisation directly associated with the JRP has in very few instances been evidence-based or proactive. Producing the plan with cost estimates is necessary but not sufficient as a basis for mobilizing funds. GOJ still feels constrained, for example, by the inability to produce a comprehensive report on the overall resource picture and to be able to plan using a set of reliable future commitments.

Priority capacity support is required to inform targeted messaging for resource mobilisation strategies that are tailored to specific needs and informed by donor priorities and practices as well as other relevant considerations. Recording lessons of implementation, and more importantly the results achieved, will produce the findings – for example related to livelihoods associated with the Jordan Compact - that may reinvigorate the dialogue at the political level and support the resource mobilisation effort.

For MOPIC and line ministries involved in the response the JRP has presented a capacity development window of opportunity. Just as the resilience concept informs GOJ-led programmes, it is equally relevant to their own organisations and can be viewed as an opportunity to increase capacities and to improve organisational performance. But this window may already be starting to close. There are reports of line ministries – particularly those that have experienced difficulties in mobilizing resources – becoming more passive in the JRP process. The JRP product is therefore compromised and is no longer regarded as a high-quality analysis of the situation and a prioritized articulation of needs. A new set of behaviors that could be regarded as ‘gaming the system’ have come to be accepted as pragmatic responses while donor fatigue is also a trend identified by a wide range of GOJ and other observers (see Unintended Consequences for a further discussion).

Relevant lesson – To consolidate institutional gains and to secure future support there must be immediate efforts to provide a more coherent capacity response to enhance the resource mobilisation effort. More deliberate and concerted support is also needed for the Task Forces and to the results reporting function. The JRP – of finite duration and funding – presents an opportunity to strengthen MOPIC and GOJ development management capacities. For line ministries involved in the Task Forces, this can be managed either as: (a) part of a wider sector support plan; or (b) through the UN JP (and its EU-funded component) or its successor.

Given the Secretariat’s difficulties to date in moving to a capacity development mode of operating, combined with the potential to institutionalize capacities into organisational work processes beyond the scope of the JRP (planning, mobilisation, appraisal, programing, monitoring, there is some appeal in mobilizing sector capacity support directly for those line ministries where this is a realistic proposition (i.e. there is high-level commitment to reform within the ministry and an external partner that is suitably placed to facilitate and support the process).

***Government is not homogenous and commitment to the JRP is variable***

Task Force performance is highly variable. In the most impressive cases, Task Forces have experienced the JRP and the establishment of the Task Force as a revelation. Exposure to new approaches to partnering and dialogue on policy and implementation has been strongly welcomed. In some cases, Task Forces are now becoming actively involved in supporting and monitoring implementation. There is a latent demand for greater evidence on results that can inform future JRP work and, potentially, be assimilated into routine organisational working practices.

Conversely, some Task Forces feel let down by the process, which has come to be seen as a bureaucratic burden. While relations with the JRP Secretariat are reportedly constructive, there has been little practical support to strengthen capacity or make the Task Force engagement in the JRP a more meaningful exercise. For Task Forces that struggle, this has a cumulative effect as meetings are infrequently held and members report being uninformed and unable to follow-up on agreements made at meetings.

Understanding more about these Task Force dynamics is beyond the scope of this evaluation but appears to depend to a large extent on a line ministry’s ability to use the JRP as a vehicle for resource mobilisation. In some cases, even apparently trivial issues such as translation have been cited as decisive factors in under-performance. JRP Secretariat support has also been variable and there has not been the same level of effort (either capacity development or gap-filling) as provided to MOPIC.

The relationship between the Task Force Chair and the UN-provided secretariat is an important factor in determining performance. It strongly influences partnering dynamics as well as the ability to attend to practical Task Force matters. UN-supported secretariats are in most cases appreciated as a valuable technical resource. But, especially where Task Force host ministries have limited capacities and resources, there is a general feeling that ‘holding the pen’, combined with UN technical and administrative capacity, has resulted in the JRP exercise strongly favoring the UN agencies in being able to steer their preferred PSSs into the JRP.

Relevant lesson – Reinvigorating the JRP exercise must be addressed at both MOPIC and Task Force levels. JRP relevance depends to some degree on it establishing some results tracking/reporting tools and these will require the collaboration of the Task Forces. If resources can be mobilized, then more dedicated Task Force support can be provided beyond the current level provided by the Secretariat (2 persons covering WASH and Education).

Facilitating Task Force access to pooled services/support such as translation services may also be an efficient way to address performance bottlenecks. More strategic and long-term, however, is to the need to begin to think about how Task Force good practices can become more established in mainstream work of the line ministry and therefore be informed and supported by coherent sector support programmes that extend beyond the scope of the JRP.

***Need to institutionalize the process.***

A forward-looking effort to institutionalize processes to a greater extent is very much needed. Furthermore, In many cases, the JRP has been seen to be managed in a top-down style. For some interviewees it has also been somewhat heavy-handed at times. Accounts of confrontation with the Secretariat were shared with the evaluator (for example, the management of budget revisions and efforts to reconcile numbers on external support). Differences appear to have been managed in some cases less on their technical merits and more as a battle of wills in the style of Game of Thrones.

There are simultaneous reports of a highly responsive Secretariat that can also be too directive. An occasionally confrontational management style alienates those that are considered to be important actors in the process and is considered to be detrimental to achieving the Secretariat’s immediate objective, i.e. to facilitate the Syria crisis response. In some cases it has resulted in some actors participating only passively. (When combined with resource mobilisation challenges, this has resulted in some Task Forces increasingly reverting to ‘copy & paste’ approaches to JRP preparation).

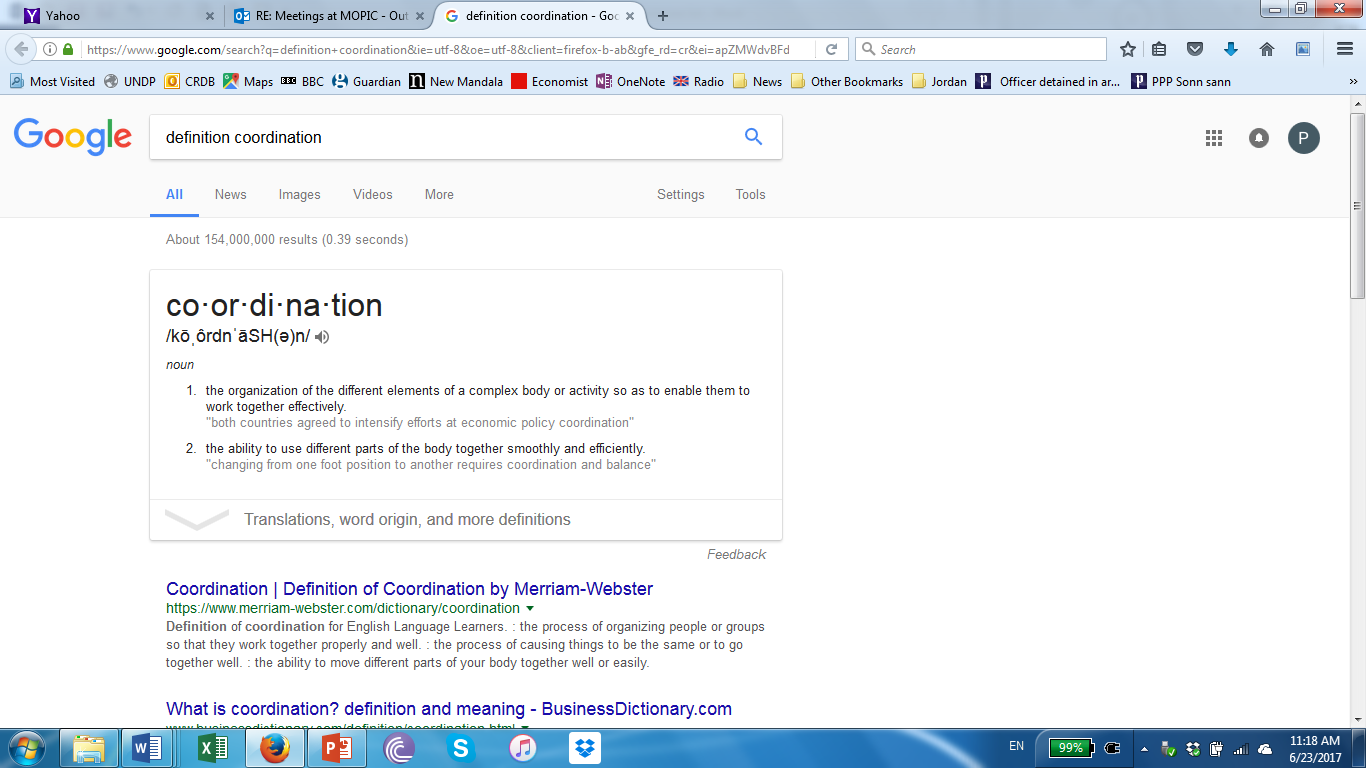
To its credit, the Secretariat has acknowledged these issues and, in mitigation, has observed that it is partly a result of the many and significant pressures – unseen by others – that are placed on the Secretariat during JRP formulation. Nevertheless, responding to the need for institutionalized systems and processes that provide predictable, relevant and structured support is a clear priority for the next stage in the JRP’s evolution.

Relevant lesson – This evaluation is not intended – or qualified - to pass judgment or to arbitrate. It flags these issues in good faith so that they may be aired, validated and resolved in a constructive manner in the best interests of providing effective and sustainable support to the crisis response. There is now a risk that ego- and personality-driven perspectives will (or already have) displace calm reflection and a partnership-based consensus-driven approach to managing the resilience approach in the interest of beneficiaries (refugees and host communities).

There is a need to institutionalize practices to become less discretionary and more structured and rules-based. Within a setting characterized by a set of shared set of objectives, there must also be opportunities for dialogue that can accommodate differences of opinion.

***Coordination has not proceeded “smoothly and efficiently”. It can be fraught and tense.***

Following on from the findings and lessons reported immediately above, let us pause and reflect for a moment on what coordination really means. What would effective coordination of the JRP process look like?



Source. Google search for “definition of coordination”

There is significant scope for improving coordination by emphasizing and making operational the need to “work together efficiently”. Regular high-level dialogue has potential to make a greater contribution. New working practices, such as an extended calendar for JRP preparation that would reduce pressure on all parties and increase the quality of the process, were frequently identified by interviewees. Using the ‘off-periods’ in the JRP calendar for training, solicitation of feedback, supporting peer learning and identifying future needs (capacity and implementation) were high-value opportunities proposed by line ministries, UN agencies, donors and NGOs.

Similarly the potential to work together more “smoothly”. To date there have arguably been inefficiencies – PSS preparation, transaction costs of an increasingly mechanical ‘cut & paste’ JRP preparation process, for example – that could be improved through improved communications and a generally more inclusive and collegial approach to managing relationships.

Relevant lesson – The Secretariat needs to position itself more neutrally as a facilitator and technical resource, with Government asserting its leadership role. As the JRP now turns to focus on implementation and monitoring of results, the lessons and experiences of agencies involved in this part of the response must be more formally incorporated into the JRP process.

There needs to be a feedback and learning mechanism so that the JRP workflow and its facilitation by the Secretariat can be reviewed and discussed. Formalized learning and feedback mechanisms could be considered as additions to the JRP process, mainly to be utilized during the ‘quiet time’ outside of JRP preparation. More active high-level dialogue – in formal settings as well as informally - between MOPIC and the UN RC/HC (as Platform co-chairs) is required.

***The Secretariat positioning and role***

As the lesson immediately above has stated: “The Secretariat needs to position itself more neutrally as a facilitator and technical resource”. Almost every interviewee identified the Secretariat as Government or as close to Government as makes no difference.

The Secretariat needs to accommodate and respond to the perspectives and needs of non-GOJ actors (even if ultimately the GOJ maintains the sovereign right to lead etc).The Secretariat’s own view is that this has enabled upstream influence and the possibility to promote change from within. For some observers this is not problematic. The Secretariat’s expertise and steady hand is widely valued. It also means that the Secretariat, acting on its own authority and enabled by MOPIC with an uncontested technical mandate, has been able to design and roll out a complex planning arrangement. It can make decisions and respond more quickly than is usually the case for a Government-led process. This has undoubtedly contributed to the efficient management of the annual JRP exercise. Certainly the track record of three successful JRP processes suggests that the Secretariat is a competent process manager.

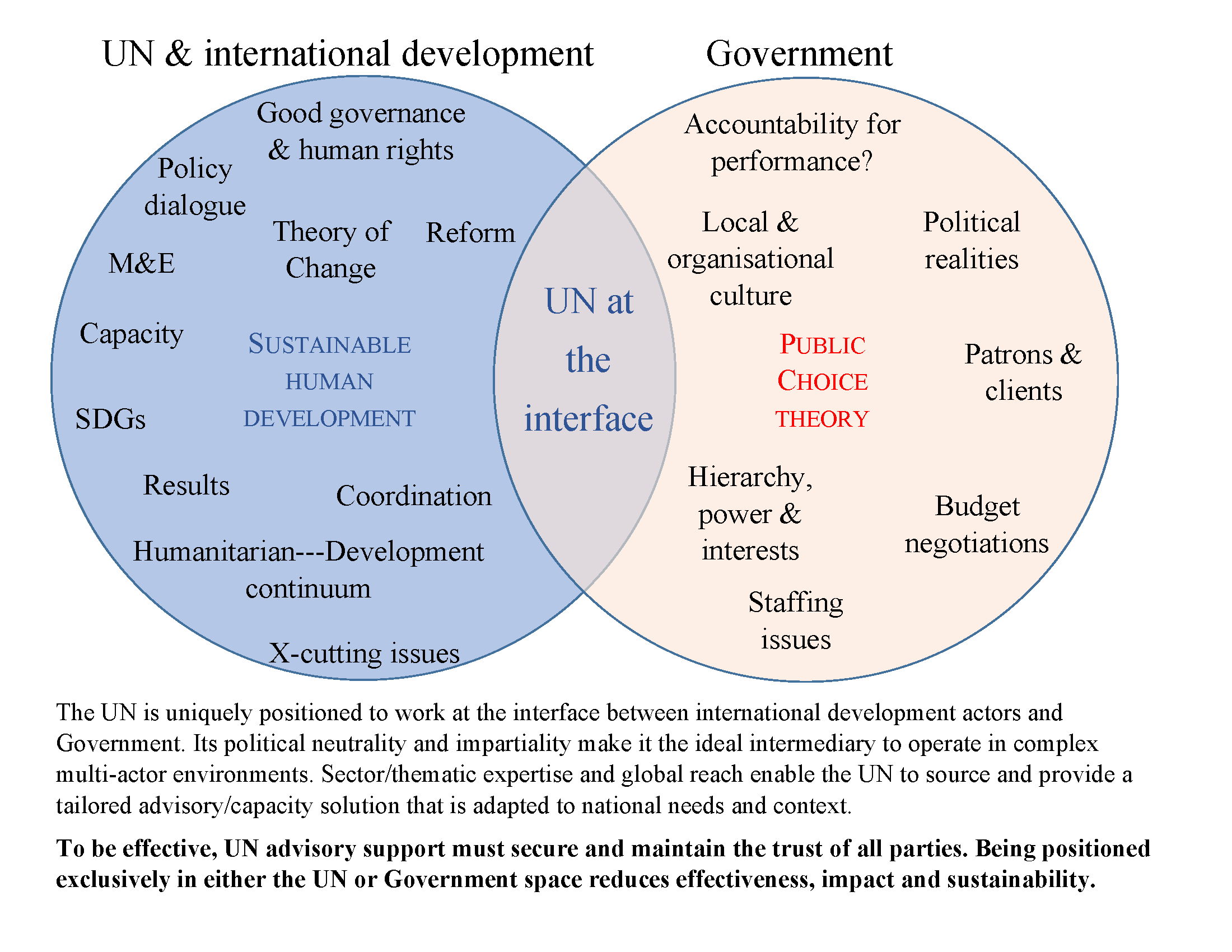
Influence – possibly even power – has been acquired by the Secretariat through its proximity to MOPIC management and its ability to secure GOJ’s trust and confidence. For many, perhaps most, interviewees, however, the costs of the Secretariat’s identity as Government has mostly outweighed any perceived benefits. It has become increasingly dominant in the management, preparation and implementation of the JRP. At the same time the Secretariat has been able to insulate itself against any views that it considers to be contrary to its vision of how the JRP should be managed or evolve. As a result, the JRP process has not moved forward towards delivering and documenting results as might otherwise have been the case. The Secretariat possibly now even has its own agenda and a vested interest in maintaining the current management arrangements instead of looking to strengthen MOPIC and wider GOJ capacities.

Non-GOJ interviewees noted that they have become less likely to approach the Secretariat staff over time as their UN identity has been replaced by an association to MOPIC. It was observed by about half of the interviewees that a previously collegial and responsive approach has dissipated over time to be replaced by a more didactic and top-down management style.

The identity of the Secretariat as the technical body assigned to support the JRPSC as a “multi-partner convening body” has therefore become somewhat compromised. The extent to which this has happened and the degree to which it is desirable depends on perspective. But the multi-partner convening premise of the Platform has indisputably become diluted.

One rationale for establishing the Secretariat as a UN Joint Programme is that its UN identity – technically strong, politically neutral - would be in the interests of all stakeholders. This includes GOJ who, while demonstrating leadership of the JRPSC, may see value in the UN’s technical strengths and the ability to convene and facilitate a multi-partner exercise. In this way, the qualities of a UN-supported Secretariat may have been expected to complement the leadership capacities of the Government, rather than to simply augment them.

***Worried that two worlds will collide? Call the UN.***



More generally, the UN is considered to be well-suited to positioning itself as a facilitator and intermediary between Government and the international development community. This is often clumsily described as ‘comparative advantage’. Nevertheless, the complexities of understanding and operating effectively in both of these different yet confusing worlds (stylized in the diagram above) are not to be underestimated. Being able to remain firmly positioned at their interface is a defining feature of the UN’s role in providing effective institutional support.

Moving too far to the left (being too close to donor interests) compromises the ability of UN support to engage constructively with Government and achieve shared goals. Moving too far to the right (too close to Government) undermines confidence in the ability of the UN to be an effective broker that is fundamental to the success of a multi-actor initiative such as the JRPSC.

Relevant lesson – Success in projects that focus on multi-actor processes depend on securing the trust of Government and then using this to build wider alliances. There is value in remaining centrally positioned between the Government and the development community. Leave Government to govern and attend to issues of compliance. The contribution of the UN is provide strong technical support to ensure quality and impact as a complement to Government’s compliance role.

***Gauging the project’s performance against the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria***

The design of this evaluation is based on the OECD/DAC Guidelines for Project and Programme Evaluations. These Guidelines adopt 5 criteria that provide a lens through which the project’s performance can be viewed.

Based on these criteria, a summary of the evaluations findings is presented in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Relevant evaluation findings** |
| **Relevance** | The project has supported the GOJ commitment to leading the Syria response and making the resilience approach operational. It is therefore highly relevant. |
| **Effectiveness** | The establishment and management of the JRP is directly attributed to the project and it’s Secretariat. Capacity development objectives are still to be fully realized. |
| **Efficiency** | Almost the entire budget has been used to staff a team of 8 (currently comprising only 1 international). The IT system is locally designed and managed. The share of the project costs in the total Syria response is less than 0.05%, as there is no evidence of inefficient or disproportionate spending, e.g. on travel, vehicles, excessive offices/supplies etc. |
| **Impact** | The contribution of the project to supporting the Jordan response to the Syria crisis is significant. The JRP provides the basis for leadership, policy, planning, resource mobilisation and coordination of the entire response effort. |
| **Sustainability** | The Secretariat mange all aspects of the process with few GOJ staff or resources. Some valuable institutional processes have been established around the multi-stakeholder platform but they have not yet taken root. There is evidence of a change in mindset towards adopting new practices but capacity is still latent. |

**5. Findings related to the Joint Programme outputs**

In addition to the findings and lessons associated with the management of the JRP process, the UN-supported JP has four outputs that have also been reviewed as part of this evaluation exercise. The outputs are as follows:

1. Enhanced MOPIC capacity to lead the response to the Syrian crisis.
2. MOPIC’s information management is strengthened enabling tracking of donor commitments and implementing partners’ interventions through a comprehensive information management system.
3. MOPIC’s M&E capacity is strengthened, ensuring timely monitoring and evaluation of results.
4. Enhanced MOPIC capacity for public outreach on the needs of Jordanian vulnerable communities and Syrian refugees.

The Secretariat comprises a highly talented, experienced and motivated team of 8 persons. Issues related to their performance are addressed in the self-contained chapter on Programme Management.

***Output 1. Enhanced MOPIC capacity to lead the response to the Syrian crisis.***

There is an important distinction to be made between leadership and management. The JP has not made satisfactory progress towards meeting its technical capacity goals related to strengthening Government capacity to manage the JRP (see previous Chapter).

Yet, as a result of the JRP, the GOJ has arguably become better equipped to lead the exercise. From a political perspective, the JRP has burnished the credentials of the GOJ and has enabled the GOJ leadership at the very highest level to influence the dialogue on the international stage. This result can therefore be attributed to the JP and the Secretariat. Even if it does appear to be somewhat indirect, it is integral to the Theory of Change and undoubtedly highly significant.

Future work might therefore focus more explicitly on the political aspects of the JRP. Four years into the process the JRP needs to talk more about results. It must be able to produce evidence that can support the Government’s efforts to ‘follow the money’, i.e. to make a stronger case for support based on the issues that of interest to the international community such as livelihoods.

***Output 2. MOPIC’s information management is strengthened enabling tracking of donor commitments and implementing partners’ interventions through a comprehensive information management system.***

No issue addressed in the course of this evaluation has divided opinion as much as JORISS. Interviews sometimes careered into the world of therapy rather than remaining grounded in technical appraisal and calm reflection. “Ah, let me tell you about JORISS…”.

There are different levels on which to think about JORISS as a tool and therefore different criteria on which to gauge its success and future potential in supporting information management.

**80% of public sector information systems fail**

Why is this so? Because some or all of the following conditions are not met:

* Management’s leadership & commitment
* Unsustainable (especially if externally staffed & funded)
* Not fit for purpose (does not satisfy the real policy need)
* Failure to consider non-ICT aspects
* Not enough time and resources available
* Human resources, systems and capacities
* Not suited to capacity and ICT endowment
* Not suited to organisation & user workflow
* Not suited to organisational culture (e.g. information transparency)

The owner perspective. JORISS serves a necessary role in managing project approvals and has established itself as a welcome addition to HCRU/MOPIC capacities. It is therefore primarily a control tool, supporting an indisputably essential function to bring coherence and accountability to a complex funding and implementation environment. In addition to its control functionality, the wider value of JORISS, according to MOPIC, is the ability to produce reports that inform and support the coordination effort.

JORISS has been streamlined into the workflow process and has supported efficiency (it is operated by a single MOPIC staff member). Approvals for projects that require no further clarification are granted in about 3 weeks (this is the time reported by MOPIC for passing through all stages of the approvals process). The system is also now hosted on GOJ servers.

Constraints recognized by MOPIC include the fact that JORISS does not give a full picture of resource commitments. It does not track disbursements reliably (with a view to later measuring results). Predictability is a concern as forward planning at the strategic level is less structured and donors – encumbered by their own practices – are unable to provide reliable and timely figures.

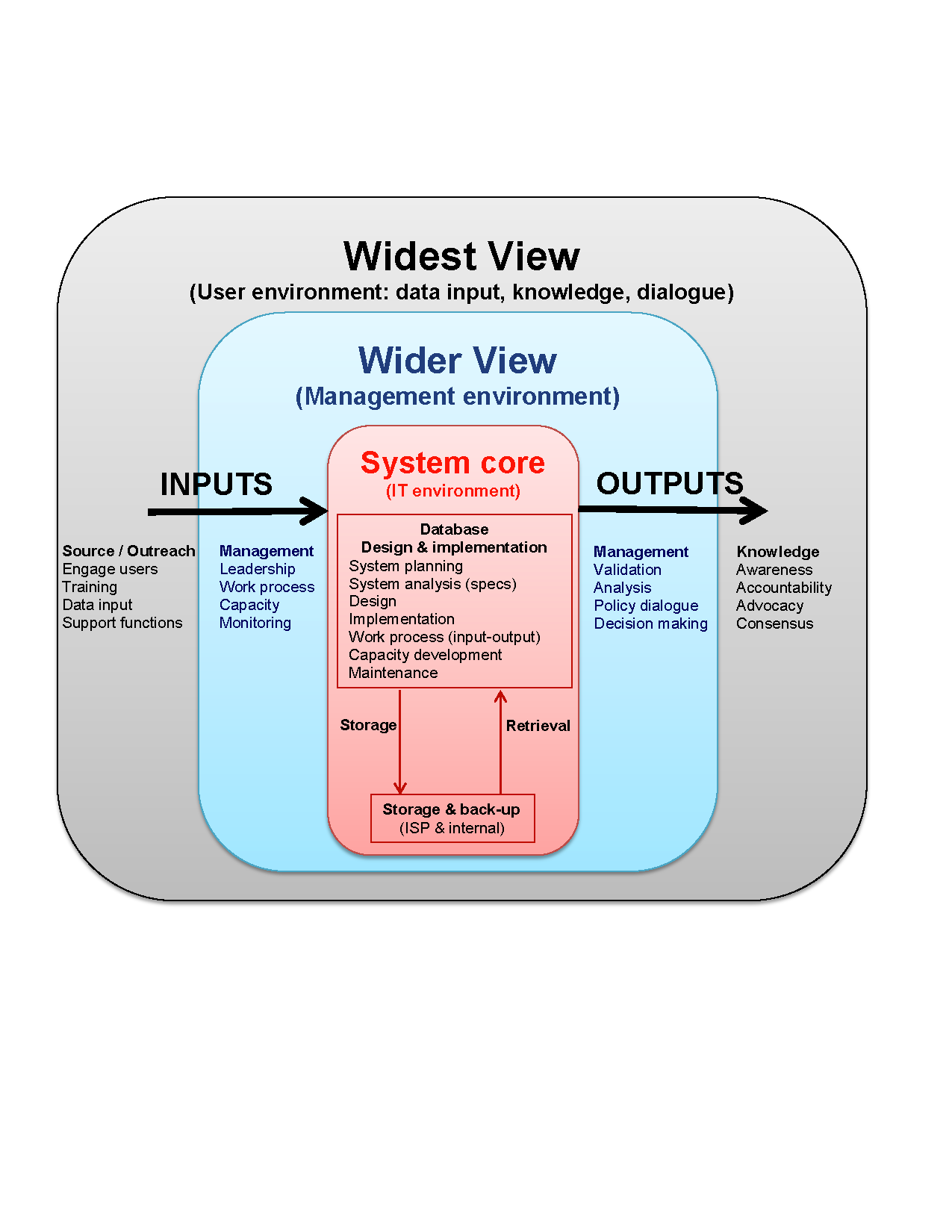
The user perspective. While acknowledging the need for the JORISS tool, all non-MOPIC users expressed concerns that it can be time-consuming, frustrating and a moving target (changing templates and data requirements). Approvals can be time-consuming: up to 5 months in 2015, reduced to up to 3 months in 2016. Some NGOs have employed full-time ‘fixers’ to address this problem, leaving those that cannot afford this function at something of a disadvantage. In exceptional cases there is also concern that bottlenecks in the approval system may create an opportunity for rent-seeking practices. Increased transparency in the overall approval process – including the stages external to JORISS – would be welcomed.

The policy-maker perspective. The resilience approach to emphasise the impact on host communities is universally welcomed. Yet JORISS does not lend itself to financial tracking or deeper reporting. It provides an incomplete record of assistance and does not aggregate contributions across projects to Key Performance Indicators referenced in the JRP. It has sometimes been used as a well-intended but ultimately crude approach to translate an agreeable policy objective – supporting host communities – into an insufficiently flexible practice, i.e. a minimum of 30% of all resilience projects dedicated to supporting host communities.

The developer perspective. The Secretariat engages an IT expert with responsibilities to design, adapt and maintain the system. Suggestions for further system improvements are welcomed but need to be identified, prioritized, programmed and deployed in a structured way under the authority of MOPIC. There are some concerns over sustainability. At the organisational level, these can be mitigated by developing manuals and using widely-used software and hardware solutions (which is the Secretariat approach). At the individual level, the lack of a MOPIC IT expert counterpart is problematic; perhaps the solution is to accommodate the practice of outsourcing IT expertise, which is a common practice in many countries for accessing expert services such as IT support.

Each perspective is valid. The challenge is two-fold. First, there is a need to establish consensus around the identity and role of JORISS. Approvals, alignment, tracking, reporting: these are all necessary functions that are either only partially functional or beyond the current specifications of the system. Second, the wider system (JORISS and beyond) must be compatible with current and evolving needs, especially tracking and reporting, which are becoming more urgent if the JRP is to maintain its relevance. (See the core-wide-widest perspective of an information system, below).

**A wide socio-technical view of an information system is necessary**



Source. Adapted for the evaluation, derived from Heeks (2002)[[3]](#footnote-3)

To assure the usefulness and sustainability of JORISS, an overarching perspective needs to be adopted based on the widest possible view of the system. That is to say that JORISS must be understood and managed as a socio-technical system that must serve the needs of owners, users and policy-makers if it is to be effective and sustainable. The diagram above shows that IT may lie at the core of the information system environment but it must be connected to the wider user environment. In the case of JORISS, for example, it must draw from available information (e.g. sector, location, KPIs), it must bring structure and coherence using an IT solution, and then be able to present reports that respond to users’ needs related to tracking, monitoring and reporting.

There is encouraging recent evidence that MOPIC and the Secretariat are increasingly accommodating the socio- aspects of the JORISS system. A September 2016 consultation and a recent survey and user feedback exercise directly influenced improvements to JORISS in an effort to make the system more relevant (e.g. through geo-coding) and user-friendly (e.g. accessing the whole user portfolio). Early feedback has been positive. Further improvements can still be made as owners, users and developers freely acknowledge. On-going examples include improving reporting functionality of the system by automating PSS integration that will support more aggregated reporting on implementation in line with JRP sector goals.

Fully evaluating JORISS is beyond the scope of this current exercise. Recent improvements have been made based on a constructive and useful consultation exercise that highlighted the goodwill on all sides. The recent new deployment of JORISS needs to be tested by users before further comment on the technical side can be credibly provided.

However, experience shows that the opportunity to solicit feedback and improvements clearly exists and there is evidently willingness on all sides to engage constructively. Given that the EU-funded component of the MOPIC support managed by UNDP is developing an aid management tool (the Aid Management Platform provided by the Development Gateway Foundation), the following recommendations seem relevant to JORISS and to supporting medium-term aid information system deployment in MOPIC[[4]](#footnote-4):

1. 80% of public sector information systems fail.[[5]](#footnote-5) Government commitment and engagement during the design and deployment stages, as well as in using the system to inform management and policy, is critical to success. Designing the technical IT solution is the relatively straightforward part. Understanding and agreeing the opportunities for JORISS and the Development Gateway systems to form a coherent and holistic solution is now an urgent task. It is important to keep in mind that Development Gateway is a private entity whose contractual obligations are limited to the IT side. It has no role (and only a reputational interest) in addressing issues of ownership, commitment or embedding the system in Government workflow and culture.
2. Establish a formalized JORISS User Technical Working Group. This group should be chaired by MOPIC and comprise of representatives from line ministries and experienced users (mainly implementers). It can be use used as: (i) a mechanism for providing constructive feedback; (ii) supporting MOPIC in designing, testing and de-bugging new deployments; and (iii) an advisory body on future system improvements to be presented to MOPIC management for decision-making. It could play a future role in determining specifications and supporting the roll-out of the Development Gateway system.
3. Strengthen JORISS-specific outreach to users by offering more frequent trainings (taking account of high staff turnover in user offices) and additional resources to the Help Desk during peak periods. Identify a constructive solution that encourages those implementers who remain outside of the JORISS system to enter their projects into the system and/or to provide data that permits reconciliation of the overall picture of support.
4. Monitor the approval workflow with a view to reducing delays while strengthening project GOJ appraisal functions. Consider for example, a fast track for *de minimis* projects below a certain threshold that exempt projects beneath a defined threshold value and endorsed by the line ministry from requiring further approval.
5. Consider evolving user needs. This may include, for example, support to resource mobilisation efforts in the Task Forces (by allowing for more detailed sub-program financial status reporting) and to monitoring and reporting on project implementation. The Secretariat’s on-going work to automate PSS inputs to JORISS is a useful initiative to support more results-based reporting in the future.

***Output 3. MOPIC’s M&E capacity is strengthened, ensuring timely monitoring and evaluation of results.***

The JRP exercise produces and manages a formidable set of data of information. The JRP document is itself evidence that these inputs are efficiently and effectively managed to produce a credible and operational plan. Monitoring and reporting, however, has to date been largely an exercise in reporting JORISS data (financial aggregates).

Beyond the planning stage, it is recognized by the Secretariat and other stakeholders (especially Task Forces) that there is significant unmet potential to facilitate a shift in the JRP’s emphasis from a Plan to a Report mode. This can be achieved by developing capacities, producing tools and establishing processes that focus on the production and use of evidence.

The challenge with regard to this JP output has been in translating data into useful information (beyond financial aggregates) and then into knowledge, i.e. products and tools that inform the decisions and behaviors of JRP actors in line ministries and donor/implementer agencies.

The Secretariat is responding to this challenge. Working in collaboration with the JORISS specialist, there is an on-going exercise to ensure that data entered on a wider range of project fields, especially performance indicators, can be aggregated and analyzed to establish and develop a more meaningful reporting function. With improved JORISS functionality and outreach it is conceivable that reports may be produced by end-2017 that can inform decision-makers on implementation progress and challenges as well as to inform more targeted resource mobilisation strategies.

Beyond JORISS and MOPIC, there is a growing interest in the Task Forces in turning the attention from planning towards monitoring and reporting on results. After 4 years of the JRP exercise this is felt to be timely. A major role for the JRP secretariat will be to establish procedures and support mechanisms to inform substantive, effective and relevant reporting of the JRP that extends beyond JORISS-derived financial aggregates.

***Output 4. Enhanced MOPIC capacity for public outreach on the needs of Jordanian vulnerable communities and Syrian refugees.***

This has been the weakest area of implementation and currently there is no staff member assigned to this function. Noting the political imperatives to begin producing and reporting evidence on results, achievements and challenges, the crafting of informed and well-targeted messaging through the public outreach function is essential. Major achievements were in place such as the web-site update, production of success stories, increased number of visitors to the web, preparing and providing support to several meetings with journalists.

As a natural extension of the monitoring and reporting role it will become increasingly important to develop relevant and timely information products for a wide range of development actors as well as wider society. Both the process and the product involved in recounting the story of the JRP’s achievements and future priorities will bring the JRP full circle by promoting a more reflective and learning-focused approach.

Sourcing this expertise should be given some consideration. Given, for example, the potential contribution to be made by an appropriately creative type of person and the obvious career benefits of working on such a high-profile issue, it seems plausible that a gifted and dynamic young intern with perspectives from outside of the UN and public sector would be relatively easy to find.

**6. Programme management: Findings and Recommendations**

There have been deficiencies in programme management. These appear to have been systemic throughout the lifetime of the project.

The JP encountered obstacles against many of its capacity development objectives (see Finding number 2) that have not been fully disclosed, either to the Board or to other stakeholders. MOPIC’s strong preference for gap-filling and weak project oversight has resulted in the JP’s stated objective of strengthening GOJ capacity being pushed to the margins of project activity. As a result, these deviations have persisted over time and the JP has followed the course of least resistance, i.e. to directly manage the JRP process by gap-filling.

***The failure to exercise effective oversight, or to convene meaningful reviews of JP progress with MOPIC, has resulted in missed opportunities to secure further gains for the JRP***

A failure to make explicit the effective absence of concerted capacity development work has excluded any possibility of establishing more authentic goals for the JP. An opportunity to strengthen the JRP or to enhance the process in other ways has been foregone as: (a) there was a perceived need to maintain at least an illusion of business as usual; and (b) resources could not then be more strategically re-programed to activities more in line with national priorities.

Putting to one side the validity of the capacity objective and the *de facto* decision to discard it, a more timely discussion of these challenges would have allowed for a pragmatic accommodation of the realities of the situation within MOPIC and a recalibration of capacity goals and support over the medium-term.

Potential activities that may have been scaled-up in the absence of direct capacity development include augmenting the resource mobilisation effort, an area in which GOJ has struggled. Providing more direct support to Task Forces (either through the JP or via UN-supported secretariats) may have strengthened an increasingly jaded JRP exercise and enhanced the quality of the final Plan, for example by extending outreach efforts to secure improved donor engagement (especially in Task Forces that currently struggle to mobilize funds or to manage and follow-up Task Force work).

***Mandatory reporting and dialogue at management level have not been effective***

Mandatory reporting on substantive progress (for example the 2015 and 2016 annual reports) has been flimsy. (This is in contrast to strict approval and accounting for every Secretariat expenditure). Staff reporting lines have not been made clear or operational. The result is an information asymmetry between the JP team and the quality assurance function that has been allowed to increase over time. Yet, there has been little follow-up to acquire further insights or to establish an increased understanding of JP status, challenges and opportunities.

At the strategic level, effective communications between the RC/HC and the Secretariat’s Senior Coordinator need to be more established to to maintain its impartiality . This is an opportunity for the UN as a more facilitating and neutral positioning of the Secretariat to complement GOJ’s leadership role rather than simply serving as its instrument (e.g. by being able to play an intermediary role, to innovate, to facilitate partnerships and to moderate dialogue). The emphasis on “Joint” also implies a recognition of a partnership-based approach as integral to the ability to build institutional and organisational capacity that can facilitate and manage a complex multi-stakeholder process.

Meetings of the Steering Committee have taken place but have evidently not proven to be an effective governance arrangement for managing the JP and supporting the Secretariat. Risks identified in the Joint Programme document, for example, include donor fatigue, resistance to a joint platform approach and GOJ TF leadership concerns. Some or all of these issues need to be monitored and followed-up in discussion between the two JRPSC co-chairs if necessary.

***Communication breakdowns and confusion have resulted in a climate of suspicion and mistrust***

Discussions over the extension of the JP have been protracted and left the staff feeling isolated from the UN in general and from UNDP specifically. While clarifications have been provided, an air of uncertainty remains. The motivation for, and timing of, this evaluation was unclear to some Secretariat staff, for example, meaning that it was received as a possible precursor to “shutting us down”.

The EU-funded component was intended to have been programmed as a pooled resource but is anyway designed to work in close collaboration with the JP. Yet, the onset of the EU-funded programme has unnecessarily added to this feeling of isolation and suspicion in the Secretariat. Mistrust and communication breakdown have become an increasing problem so that, even with assurances from the UNDP management, concerns remain and messages are sometimes misinterpreted or rejected as a misrepresentation.

A little off-topic but still relevant is the obvious dissatisfaction with UNDP amongst some senior MOPIC officials with regard to non-JP activities. Over a period of two or more years there appears to have been several incidents that resulted in MOPIC’s displeasure with UNDP. Consequently, there is a sense that UNDP programme management is too top-down and indifferent to MOPIC’s needs. Examples were provided but the evaluation was unable to reconcile or validate them due to a shortage of time. At a minimum there is a clear need to re-establish communication, re-build the relationship and to address any programme management shortcomings that appear justified.

Improved communications appear to be the minimum requirement if UNDP is to effectively manage relations with MOPIC, the JP staff and with the JP/EU co-funding partners. Re-programming of both JP and EU components presents an opportunity to establish a common understanding on the future of UN(DP)/EU support to MOPIC, the JRP and wider development management and planning functions.

***“The greatest asset of the UN is its staff”***.[[6]](#footnote-6)

The Secretariat comprises a highly talented, experienced and motivated team of 8 persons. All team members are demonstrably committed to supporting Government in responding to the Syria crisis by doing their jobs to the best of their ability.

Formal performance management of JP staff, chiefly to measure outputs against TORs, appears to have been almost entirely absent. Reporting lines are blurred and can cause tension, for example when project management responsibilities are inappropriately assigned and/or shirked. This is a partial explanation for why the programme has been able to drift – and continue drifting – away from its core capacity development objective.

Staff mentoring and professional support has usually worked well and most staff report high levels of satisfaction for the support and advice they receive on a day-to-day basis from senior Secretariat staff. Informality seems to be more applicable than corporate HR approaches. While informality is not itself a problem it cannot be a substitute for objective and equitable performance management that more reliably serves the interests of the individual staff member and ultimately the programme itself, especially when they are by no means mutually exclusive.

As referenced in the previous section on communication, Secretariat team performance, at both collective and individual levels, is compromised by poor relations with UNDP. The Secretariat team also report considerable concerns, frustration and stress related to the security of their positions. Morale is low for some staff and they are actively seeking alternative employment. Clarifications about the future of the JP need to be clarified soonest and, if relevant to the future of the JP, contract extensions need to be discussed at the soonest possible time because: (a) staff rightly feel they are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity; and (b) there is a very real risk that the Secretariat’s own capacity will be lost if they identify alternative means of employment.

***Recommendations***

The most important and potentially far-reaching programme management recommendation is to strengthen the project management aspects.

Dedicated on-site project management, reporting and coordination support could promote implementation and results, both within MOPIC and across the UN, in the following ways:

1. Having responsibility for – but not being part of – the JP and the Secretariat would provide some level of distance from day-to-day implementation issues, allowing for greater professional distance on a personal level.
2. Ensure proper work-planning in partnership and consultation with MOPIC. Ensuring that UN(DP) is receptive and responsive to MOPIC priorities (and relationship management).
3. Tracking progress against agreed targets and facilitating production of meaningful reports. Then following up these reports within UNDP to ensure project quality assurance.
4. Preparing project teams and MOPIC counterparts for Steering Committee meetings so that all issues of concern are tabled.
5. Finance management – currently Secretariat staff appear to have roles that are either ineffective or irregular. Handing this function over will improve fiduciary oversight while releasing Secretariat staff from doing this (or rather not doing it even though they have been requested to, which places junior staff in a difficult position).
6. Identifying synergies across UN activities especially related to the SDGs.
7. Managing consultants and ensuring that TORs are prepared and discussed with MOPIC. Collaborative mission planning (currently these are points of some contention).
8. Ensuring timely work completion and navigating drafts through the commenting stage to a conclusion (MPIC is currently very concerned about this and sees it as a transparency issue).
9. Strengthening HR and welfare functions (including contract management) so that project staff have an accessible point of contact outside of the Secretariat.
10. Consider a shift to NIM for MOPIC over the medium-term so they can plan, implement and finance their own affairs.

More proximate recommendations for improved JP programme management and performance include the following:

* Efforts on both sides to clarify and resolve the main areas of concern in a face-to-face meeting. This could possibly take the form of an away-day or some similar approach that provides all staff with an opportunity to directly interact with UNDP counterparts (in a format more conducive than a 1-hour meeting in the UNDP offices).
* Clarifications and a further understanding of programme management issues related to reporting, management and the performance of the Steering Committee. It seems plausible that these are systemic and extend beyond the JP, in which case a more holistic solution to strengthening JP management arrangements may be appropriate.
* Regular scheduled meetings between the Senior Coordinator and UNDP (and possibly with the RC/HC Office) counterparts. These meetings are to have an agenda and be minuted by UNDP and then shared with all Secretariat staff.

Additional longer-term improvements may also be secured by widening the pool of co-funding partners. This may anyway be necessary due to financial realities of resource mobilisation but it could have the additional value of promoting a more dynamic project environment (i.e. through the Steering Committee) that is of greater value to MOPIC, Secretariat and all co-funders.

**7. Unintended consequences**

***Beyond applying and managing the resilience approach, the JRP has changed mindsets and established foundations for a profound change in development management practices in Jordan***

The JRP’s mandate in applying the resilience approach is to support the national response to the Syria crisis and its impact on host communities. Beyond achieving this objective, evidence from the Task Forces shows that in some (but not all) cases, there has been a profound change in mindsets and behaviors. Specifically, this refers to understanding the value of a more open, collaborative and transparent approach to managing partnerships and development cooperation resources.

This presents a window of opportunity for MOPIC as the lead agency on all planning and development management issues. At an appropriate time, MOPIC may wish to reflect more strategically on the good practices associated with the JRP and the potential to codify, adapt and apply them to national planning arrangements.

***The JRP is increasingly recognized as more than a technical exercise***

Reflecting on its years of experience in producing and steering the JRP exercise, the Secretariat recognizes that the process is more than technical. There are many layers of hidden issues related to conflicting public and private agendas – within GOJ, donors and implementers – as well as issues of relative power, proximity, access and resources.

Looking forward to an increased focus on implementation and results, and potential resource shortfalls, the JRP cannot assume an apolitical environment and make no accommodation for the likely responses and behaviors of key actors engaged in the process. Establishing and maintaining a neutral position for the Secretariat is likely to become even more challenging as the JRP evolves.

***A nascent culture of aid effectiveness has taken hold in the absence of concrete capacity development***

Before the Syria crisis, aid flows were around 3-4% of GDP, lower than the current level but still high for an HMIC (see Annex 5). Post-2012, ODA disbursements have peaked at around double that level but may now be declining (see chart below).

Prior to the crisis there was reportedly a limited level of interest in the aid effectiveness agenda (UN Country Team report 2013). Interviews conducted for this evaluation, however, particularly with the Secretariat and MOPIC, suggest that the increased inflows associated with the Syria response, combined with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, have raised awareness and deeper levels of commitment to the aid effectiveness and Financing for Development agendas.

Further strengthening of aid management capacities is a worthwhile undertaking and is the objective of the EU-funded component of the UNDP-managed MOPIC support. Assuming that these ODA resources will decline over the medium term, however, implies taking care to avoid investing in too heavy a system of aid coordination with its excessively high transaction costs.

***MOPIC has effectively championed the cause of resilience. Yet it has benefited little itself from the approach.***

Tempering the above observation related to acknowledging the relevance of aid effectiveness principles is the accumulation of PIUs. The PIU approach has fallen under increased scrutiny as aid and development effectiveness principles have been applied. Chiefly, this is because, while PIUs may promote task completion in the short-term, they often silo a ministry, undermining longer-term national systems and capacities. Additionally, the engagement of international TA and national project staff (with significantly higher salaries) contributes to a set of behaviors that are detrimental to longer-term capacity development. Short-term gap-filling then becomes longer-term capacity substitution.

This observation applies in the case of the JRP Secretariat. As a result of MOPIC staffing constraints, a narrow focus on HRCU and the necessity to ‘get things done’, MOPIC has not benefited from the resilience objective of using the response and the resources it brings to become a stronger institution. There has been a tacit – if not explicit – understanding that getting things done is of a far greater urgency than developing capacities.

While this may have been a relevant and appropriate response during the earliest stages of the Syria crisis, there is now an opportunity for MOPIC to utilize available funds to strengthen national planning capacities. The choices that MOPIC makes now regarding its approach to capacity development and its use of PIUs will have long term consequences on institutional capacities in the ministry.

***The coordination genie is out of the bottle***

Task Force staff in line ministries reported that they increasingly complement MOPIC’s mandated role in dialogue with donors, resource mobilisation, programming and appraisal. Whether formally or informally, this has empowered line ministries and, within the boundaries of the EDP and other national planning frameworks, given them an increased sense of purpose in leading the response to address their sector-level needs.

Beyond the scope of the JRP, it may prove difficult to row back on these practices and to reassert older arrangements. It may be more opportune to review these working practices to consider how they can reinforce and strengthen national planning practices in the future.

***Adaptive behaviors are increasingly observed***

There are interesting and notable examples of how behavior has changed and working practices have been adapted to accommodate the JRP. The first is an extension of the point raised above concerning line ministries coordination work. As they have faced resource mobilisation constraints, many have taken a pragmatic yet creative approach that allows priority projects some degree of flexibility to be financed through either the EDP or the JDP, as refugee support or as resilience, by adjusting the relative emphasis of the project objectives and targeting. Donors have also adopted a more flexible approach to EDP-JRP programming and the recording of their support.

The second example concerns the relationship between the Inter-Sector Working Groups, chaired by UNHCR, and the JRP. The sector working groups continue their work, with ad hoc GOJ representation, and have established and adapted linkages with JRP coordination arrangements at the level of budgeting, dialogue and log-frame planning (including JRP PSS preparations).

The third example concerns the UN more broadly. The UN supports the Task Forces by providing secretariat support and other capacity inputs. As such, their role in the PSS preparation and prioritization exercise is particularly active. Among Task Force leads and non-UN members there is a strong perception – even an assertion – that the UN is proficient at ‘gaming the system’ by ensuring that priorities in line with their own mandates (sometimes projects at an advanced stage of formulation) are well incorporated into the PSS exercise. In the project formulation and approval stage, the UN has also been able to remain outside of formal JORISS approval processes.

In all cases, the best response from MOPIC may be to focus on strengthening and rationalizing its own planning, mobilisation and programing functions. In this way it can credibly lead the coordination work in line with its mandate and, with improved outreach on data collection, ensure alignment between national/JRP priorities and the programming of external resources.

***Failings in the management of the UN Joint Programme have resulted in missed opportunities***

UN interviewees report that, beyond supporting GOJ, their original motivation in formulating and funding the Joint Programme was to make available the full range of UN values and competencies to MOPIC. This included expertise in capacity development, managing cross-cutting issues and navigating across the humanitarian-development continuum. Insufficient reporting, irregular meetings of the Steering Committee, poor communications between the respective managements, and a tacit acceptance of the capacity substitution model have meant that these objectives have not been realized.

A frank and open exchange about the reality of the situation has not taken place. Had it done so, it may have allowed for a pragmatic response to be formulated in order take advantage of important non-capacity opportunities. These could have included increasing UN support to sector dialogue, moving forward the monitoring/results agenda and supporting GOJ with a more pro-active response to supporting resource mobilisation.

**8. Recommendations**

The UN Joint Programme has made some impressive and highly valued contributions to the JRP. These include establishing the JRP institutional framework and the ‘rules of the game’ for its management. Dialogue convened by GOJ has been a significant success with a direct impact on Plan quality and implementation follow-up. JORISS is unfinished business but has demonstrated that it has the flexibility to be adapted, improved and extended to additional monitoring tasks. Most significant, GOJ has grown in confidence and is now able to exert credible leadership.

The recommendations presented in this chapter are therefore informed by the principal finding that the JRP remains highly relevant and therefore must continue to be supported. This section develops options for consolidating progress and extending support to other areas of the JRP such as resource mobilisation, aid coordination and monitoring. It also considers possible pathways towards using the JRP as an entry point for strengthening wider development management capacities in Government.

Globally-endorsed aid and development effectiveness principles are introduced as an additional perspective in which to consider the strengthening of GOJ leadership and JRP management.[[7]](#footnote-7) These principles must not be viewed as prescriptive but, rather, should be used flexibly to establish a common understanding on partnership roles and to establish norms related to working practices. If they prove to be a relevant and workable framework for managing partnerships then a more formal Partnership Code could be considered at a later time.

Partnerships do of course matter. Indeed, they are critical. No matter the direction taken in the future, an important recommendation is the importance of consolidating and strengthening the relationship between the Minister at MOPIC and his JRPSC counterpart, the UN RC/HC. This will be necessary to ensure the JRPSC function continues to run smoothly and can adapt to future changes, challenges and opportunities.

**Recommendation 1. The JRP remains highly relevant. Next steps in its consolidation and extension must be based on a clear message from MOPIC that sets out the wider Government vision for building on the JRP and accommodating new practices and priorities.**

There is a compelling case for maintaining and extending support to the JRP. At the same time, the many observations that the process is at risk of becoming jaded in approach and too limited in scope means that an effort to reinvigorate the process is also required. Institutionalizing and reinforcing the gains recorded to date – especially in aid coordination - through the application and extension of the resilience concept is a logical next step.

Consolidating the JRP’s good practices is a minimum requirement. With signs of growing donor fatigue, resource mobilisation needs to become more proactive and have a more useful set of tools (including JORISS) at its disposal; with more complete information, a targeted approach may yield better resource mobilisation results. MOPIC (HCRU) has itself identified the need to improve M&E systems to be able to analyse outputs and gauge their impact on beneficiaries (possibly based on establishing a more workable set of KPIs for programming all support in the 12 Task Forces).

A higher level of ambition would include a focus on reporting results. Decision-making needs to become more evidence-based through production of more complete and timely information on finance, implementation and results. In this way GOJ can continue to assert its leadership, including on the international stage, by referencing evidence on achievements and remaining challenges. An increased results orientation can also lead to more sophisticated learning, feedback loops and gap analysis that can be incorporated into future needs assessments.

Anticipating a shift in stance towards emphasizing capacity development in the future, assessments of need and change readiness (i.e. commitment and capacity foundations) are required. These can clarify the perspectives and priorities of management regarding organizational change with regard to the JRP as well as key development processes (national planning, resource mobilisation, partnership management, outreach and facilitation of sector programmes, information management related to inputs, implementation and results). This will ensure a full view is formulated that can allow MOPIC management and its UN partners to best identify scope, sequencing and implementation arrangements, including the need for TA.

The JP Secretariat has observed that change takes time and capacity development must therefore be incremental. Foundations must be strong and a ‘do no harm’ approach needs to be taken so that fragile gains are not eroded. An indication from MOPIC of a coherent policy towards the use of PIUs and external advisory support will help to modify and align expectations so that gap-filling can be treated in a less dogmatic fashion and used where it makes sense to do so. Resource mobilisation and coordination of implementation can be further strengthened by continuing to build on the culture of dialogue that now exists.

There are good foundations on which to build and established practices can be codified before they dissipate. JRP-inspired entry-points include building on the value of a multi-stakeholder programme-wide process with respect to policy dialogue, sector-wide planning, and results-based monitoring. Monitoring of the resilience component can be strengthened by building on existing monitoring capacities where possible and applying them to the JRP context. Reporting, for example, can draw on the established practices and good lessons related to the refugee component of the 3RP. Qualitative lessons can be derived from increased use of experience sharing amongst peers to build on the highly-appreciated – yet under-utilised – format of the Dead Sea JRP preparation workshops. In this way a clearer picture across the entire refugee-resilience continuum can inform the direction and management of the JRP with positive spillovers for the EDP process too.

**Development effectiveness principles in the context of JRP consolidation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Principle** | **Action** |
| Ownership | MOPIC establishes its JRP and capacity priorities |
| Partnership | Continued JRP support to institutionalize key processes across GOJ |
| Alignment – priorities | Reinvigorate the JRP to reflect current needs and priorities |
| Alignment – systems | Extend the JRP’s scope to resource mobilisation, and results-based M&E |
| Harmonisation | Record all support in JORISS and work with a common set of KPIs |
| Mutual accountability | Produce a first report on results that have been achieved |
| Managing for Results | Establish/strengthen monitoring and learning activities in line ministries |
| Predictability | Confirm longer-term needs and mobilize/record/analyse commitments |

**Recommendation 2. Reformulation of the Joint Programme (and the EU-supported UNDP-managed component) should be viewed as an opportunity to look beyond JRP consolidation to support MOPIC’s development management capacities.**

Using the JRP experience to inform the strengthening of development management and national planning processes is a strategic opportunity. Recognizing the achievements made – and further work to be done – in linking humanitarian support to the resilience effort has already begun to influence planning and policy. The Jordan Compact will in turn extend the resilience approach to look further along the development continuum towards issues of livelihoods, vocational skills, competitiveness, private sector development and trade facilitation.

There are therefore opportunities and challenges as GOJ considers options to forge stronger links with national and sector planning processes. One example is in policy towards utilizing funds that GOJ is preparing to access through the Global Concessional Financing Facility. This will lower the cost of borrowing but will require planning beyond the scope of the JRP as well as appropriate debt management strategies and integration into the national budget.

This expanded scope, which uses the JRP as a basis for working on longer-term development management, might begin with a scan of the policy and organisational environment to understand more about the current national, sector and thematic planning environment. There may be considerable value in identifying options for strengthening and rationalizing national planning arrangements while also localizing and integrating the SDGs.

As stated in the first recommendation, what is possible depends largely on MOPIC’s own vision and a clear statement of its priorities. Is there a grand bargain to be struck? There are likely to be significant vested interests in the current arrangements and resistance is likely. Dialogue between MOPIC, the UN and other partners is therefore essential to establish a common understanding of what is possible in terms of policy direction, pace and sequencing of change. Only then can an appropriate UN-supported response be designed and implemented in partnership with MOPIC.

In a more risk averse scenario, incremental options are also viable. These could include creating closer and formalized linkages between the JRP, the Jordan Compact and the EDP that stop well short of integration. In this way the benefits of synergies in strengthening national planning are maximized while avoiding a process-heavy integration approach that may encounter significant resistance to change. Frequent reviews can accommodate the ‘do no harm’ approach and allow a step-by-step approach to be taken.

**Development effectiveness principles in the context of strengthening development management**

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| --- | --- |
| **Principle** | **Action** |
| Ownership | MOPIC reviews planning processes to set new vision |
| Partnership | Continued JRP support extending to wider development management |
| Alignment – priorities | Support to MOPIC is redesigned to secure the JRP and address national issues |
| Alignment – systems | Mechanisms to place external resources on-plan and on-budget are identified |
| Harmonisation | All partners commit to working with GOJ planning and coordination processes |
| Mutual accountability | MOPIC-led processes report on results and provide a platform for dialogue |
| Managing for Results | A national results framework provides an entry point for coordinated action |
| Predictability | The budget is the tool for managing loans and all non-JRP GOJ grants |

**Recommendation 3. Addressing longer term development challenges requires looking beyond ODA mobilisation and management. GOJ and its partners must identify a more strategic role for ODA in supporting national development. (Beyond the scope of the JRP, do not become distracted with building a top-heavy aid coordination machinery).**

Focusing too narrowly on aid management is a distraction. Beyond the immediate needs of the Syria crisis, managing the totality of development finance flows within a coherent national planning framework represents a more strategic choice for GOJ and MOPIC. While aid coordination is more narrowly concerned with the use of donor funds, including for the responding to the Syria crisis, longer term development management can consider how these resources can leverage other flows and support a policy agenda that addresses longer-term objectives.

Jordan clearly has its own unique set of circumstances associated with the regional context and geo-politics but, in general, a Higher-Middle Income Country does not receive ODA in the kind of volumes that requires a heavy machinery of aid management (e.g. high-level meetings, donor scrutiny of national and sector plans, proliferating sector groups, time-intensive database work).

Some form of coordination arrangement is required, however. As noted in the earlier section on unintended consequences, even before the Syria crisis Jordan’s aid/GDP ratio was significantly higher than the HMIC average (around 3.5% annually compared to less than 0.5% for the HMIC group, see also Annex 5). Yet the graph below also shows that about half of the current ODA flow is made up of humanitarian aid and budget support (with refugee-related WASH and education also increasing in recent years). These flows are likely limited to the duration of the crisis. In the case of budget support, which is largely provided as loan finance and integrated into the budget, PFM and fiduciary capacities are rather more essential than aid coordination).

Source. OECD/DAC Creditor Reporting System

The financing of development in the HMIC context generally focuses more on the management of domestic resources (ODA management is one small part of the national planning and budget exercise). Development planning requires a focus on multiple streams of development finance. Chief amongst these is domestic revenue, together with private sector investments, FDI and remittances. The graph below shows, for example, that ODA is very small when compared to other development finance flows in Jordan over the last decade.

There is a significant policy agenda that ODA providers can support to strengthen the management of these flows and ensure greatest development impact (see, for example, the GOJ’s Roadmap to Implement Sustainable Development Agenda 2030). Effective management of all development finance flows is key to supporting the implementation of this Agenda. Domestic revenues, for example, are stagnating as a share of GDP (but are still 4 times larger than ODA). This indicates a potential role for ODA in strengthening revenue management, and budgeting, i.e. with a focus on building GOJ systems rather than on coordinating and programming ODA in isolation.

Similarly, there is a role for ODA to contribute to public policy to promote private sector development and attract FDI (e.g. by boosting competitiveness and strengthening the business environment). It is noteworthy that the sharp decline in FDI inflows came before the Syria crisis but have stabilized somewhat since that time. There are a range of policy options that can also contribute to the effort to maximize the development impact of remittances (by promoting its link to investments in education and productive assets).

Source. World Development Indicators

The policy response should emphasise managing all development finance sources in a coherent national planning framework for greatest overall impact. The size of the aid management machinery should be commensurate with the aid portfolio. The focus on aid management should therefore be limited to: (a) positioning ODA resources to support policy and capacity in managing the wider development agenda; (b) applying effectiveness principles – predictability, alignment, managing for results, etc. – more artfully in a GOJ-wide context; (c) a temporary – if protracted – boost to MOPIC capacity to manage the humanitarian response and resilience; and (d) using the JRP as an entry-point to establish and strengthen capacities across line ministries.

**Development effectiveness principles in the wider development finance context**

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| --- | --- |
| **Principle** | **Action** |
| Ownership | GOJ facilitates a broad alliance of partners around a national vision |
| Partnership | GOJ maintains partnering arrangements with all public & private actors |
| Alignment – priorities | Dialogue around the national vision is complemented by public policy initiatives |
| Alignment – systems | Public sector reforms facilitate public and private investment |
| Harmonisation | The national vision informs more diverse and dynamic public/private partnering |
| Mutual accountability | GOJ-led processes report provide a platform for dialogue |
| Managing for Results | A national results framework provides an entry point for coordinated action |
| Predictability | The budget is the tool for managing all public resources and policy dialogue |

**9. Scenarios for future support to the JRP and development management**

This section sets out three scenarios for support to MOPIC and the plan/policy/M&E functions across GOJ. They are of course in no way intended to be seen as a set menu, a la carte options are also available. Across all features of the project model (e.g. duration, location, staffing, capacity focus, main objectives, and programme management) a ‘direction of travel’ is indicated in terms of ambition and scope. This can of course be applied selectively and flexibly depending on MOPIC preferences and priorities.

One factor that will limit flexibility is of course the issue of financial resources. Regardless of the approach taken, more donors and partners should be invited to support the project. In addition to financial considerations, a larger and more diverse pool of co-funders will make the project environment more dynamic, transparent and effective with positive spillovers into the JRP partnership.

In formulating the next phase of support, an absolutely critical part of the process will be the dialogue with MOPIC senior management. While the importance of good working relations are perhaps self-evident, the experience to date suggests that this has been rather difficult for MOPIC and UNDP. Given the sensitivities of the JRP, the introduction of the EU component and wider UNDP relations with MOPIC, the reformulation needs to mark the beginning of a new era in MOPIC-UNDP relations. (The aid effectiveness framework applied in the Recommendations chapter can help to guide partnering behaviors).

Guided by the Findings and Recommendations chapters, more project-specific factors to be taken into account include: (a) identifying an appropriate capacity development approach; (b) positioning of the project team within MOPIC; (c) the relative balance between supporting MOPIC and line ministries; (d) fully harmonizing the UN and EU components of support within a single budget/plan/monitoring arrangement; and (e) managing the system specifications, workflow processes and reporting uses of the JORISS and Development Gateway information systems.

Looking forward, assistance may be better directed at the level of MOPIC management, supporting organizational development rather than specific functions. Scenarios 2 and 3 therefore recommend locating the project under the leadership and management of the MOPIC Secretary General. In all scenarios, support to the JRP is maintained but with the emphasis changing according to the proposed overall project focus. Given the complexities of the objective – and likely associated reforms – in scenario 3, a provision is made for the position of a senior policy adviser to support the Secretary General and provide access to high-level technical support.

An exit strategy is not discussed in any of the support scenarios presented. It has proven to be a somewhat false premise. More realistic and achievable is to ensure that project activities are programmed in a realistic way so that it is feasible for them to be brought to a conclusion during the lifetime of the project. This is not exclusive of sustainability considerations but provides for setting goals that are more modest than “sustainable capacity for ever more” and acknowledges that for public sector organisations in every country, reform, change and adaptation are constants rather than one-off events.

**Potential models of support to MOPIC: managing the JRP, strengthening aid coordination & development management**

|  | **JRP consolidation** | **Institutionalizing partnerships and**  **results approaches** | **Strengthening national**  **development management** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level of ambition** | An increasing level of ambition in project design. Similarly increasing expected impact on institutional resilience and capacity. | | |
| **Objectives** | Consolidate JRP processes and extend to resource mobilisation, monitoring and reporting. Explore further opportunities for the medium-term. | Institutionalize and codify JRP practices and extend development capacities to support broader development planning and aid management. | Review and strengthen national development management to promote GOJ mobilisation and management of all development finance in line with national plans and SDGs. |
| **Duration** | 1 year | 2-3 years | Up to 5 years |
| **JRP focus** |  | | |
| Incremental ‘do no harm’ consolidation | Links to wider coordination & policy | Progressively integrated into national plan/budget system |
| JRP support consolidated with more TF support to res-mob and reporting on results and JORISS development | JRP extended. JORISS & AIMS reporting on results. Application of effectiveness principles to sector programmes & coordination. | JRP codifies practices and links them to national plan and coordination arrangements |
| **Project team location and focus** | Team reports to SG, MOPIC   * Located at HCRU for JRP * Located at ACU for AIMS   JRP rollover with additional resource mobilisation, results focus. JORISS-AIMS linkages and workflows. | Located in the Office of the SG, MOPIC  Single project team with counterparts in HRCU, ACU.  Full-time LM staff in [4] ministries (partnership and coordination needs assessment in year 1) | Located in the Office of the SG, MOPIC  Single project team with counterparts in Plans & Programs Dept, HRCU, ACU.  Full-time LM staff in [6] ministries (development management needs assessment in year 1) |
| **Staffing** | Current staff complement renewed based on a satisfactory performance review and MOPIC endorsement.  Additional staff to support ACU policy work, AIMS deployment and LM support (potential for 4-month contract to support some TFs during JRP rollover). | New Tors based on project re-design  Project manager for all UN(DP)  Knowledge management & research (Jordan Compact)  NGO outreach and support desk [2 staff supporting JORISS and learning from practice of implementers]  Full-time LM support [4 ministries] | As per scenario 2, plus  Senior Policy Adviser to MOPIC (increased autonomy, coordinating with and reporting to project but without any management responsibilities) |
| **Capacity focus** | An incremental ‘do no harm’ approach that includes gap-filling (esp for JORISS development and in TFs with possible full-time support for 4-month JRP preparation period). Translation, CVA support to TFs.  Supporting TF organic growth in areas such as implementation, monitoring, data management, & resource mobilisation.  A capacity and change readiness assessment to identify post-project options. | Needs assessment of MOPIC and LMs concerning partnerships and aid management (including AIMS)  Incremental strengthening of links to Jordan Compact  Capacity and change readiness strategy for MOPIC.  Gap-filling shifting to capacity development based on assessments in Year 1 | Intermediate capacity goals to be reviewed and revised annually.  Review of national planning frameworks and opportunities for use of national, sectoral and thematic plans.  Linking budget and aid processes to national results frameworks. |
| **Sustainability focus** | JORISS (staff and system) and AIMS linkages to be assessed including staffing needs. | Establish wider MOPIC-led development management and coordination practices with corollary in LMs | Management of all development finance flows via a more coherent & streamlined national planning framework that references SDGs |
| **Risks** | Business as usual. Requires clear deliverables  Full integration of the (previously separate UN/EU) components requires active and experienced project management.  AIMS and ACU support will only be in early stages. | Locate at SG level to secure overall coordination focus.  Partnership Code – to codify and apply effectiveness principles and practices in a relevant and meaningful way.  Use of JORISS and AIMS for tracking – ensuring the job gets done without overlaps. Clarifying HRCU and ACU division of labour and procedures for data sharing. | A ‘grand bargain’ is needed. MOPIC must set out a vision for strengthening national leadership of the development management mandate.  Gradually assimilate Task Force policy, coordination, M&E and resource mobilisation functions into mainstream LM work.  Identifying the right mix of qualified national staff supported by PIU/TA. |
| **Project management** | Increased meeting frequency of co-chairs of JRPSC (JRP component)  More active and robust Steering Committee  Review of UNDP CO oversight to address systemic issues | As per scenario 1, plus  Engage professional project manager | As per scenario 2, plus  Assess prospects for a transition to NIM |
| **Resourcing** | Open to all UN agencies, donors and development partners. Increased presence and diversity will have beneficial impact on steering and managing the project with positive spillovers into the JRP and wider development management processes. | | |

**10. Conclusions**

This evaluation has recorded the experiences and perspectives of many people - Jordanians and international alike – who are personally invested in contributing to the response effort. It is sincerely hoped that this report provides a credible record that accurately and faithfully represents all inputs received.

The analysis is presented in good faith. Its immediate aim is to contribute to the discussion about the future of JRP management and the most suitable modality of support. Looking to the future, this evaluation also begins to consider potential for using a successor project as an entry-point over the longer-term to strengthen wider GOJ development management capacities.

This report’s findings and recommendations have been used to outline possible pathways to structure further support. All are potentially viable depending on levels of GOJ commitment and resource availability.

There are three concluding messages:

1. The Jordan Response Plan continues to be a relevant and essential tool for managing the response to the Syria crisis. There is universal appreciation for Government’s leadership of the JRP which has strengthened national ownership and made the resilience approach operational.
2. In many sectors and Task Forces there is clearly a strong appetite amongst Government officials to institutionalize the principles of development effectiveness. The JRP has in numerous cases led to a change in mindset and has opened a new window of opportunity for MOPIC to lead the strengthening of mainstream development management processes in collaboration with its international partners.
3. The considerable achievement of establishing the JRP process is tempered by Government’s own acknowledgement that setting the process in motion has been at the expense of developing its own capacities. While the JRP has successfully established the institutional framework for producing a plan that provides a credible basis for resource mobilisation, these achievements are unlikely to be sustainable.

Next steps in the JRP’s evolution and its linkages to wider development management are to be determined by MOPIC. Ideally this process will include dialogue with partners. Decisions taken now will determine the JRPs path in the short-term. Depending on MOPIC’s level of ambition and its preferred approach to capacity development/substitution, these decisions could also significantly impact on development management practices over the longer-term. Resources are available for strengthening MOPIC’s own resilience. But any kind of change must be approached thoughtfully and incrementally. The Government of Jordan must decide where to strike the balance.

1. Aid Coordination and Effectiveness in Jordan – Assessment, Framework and Plan of Action (February 2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.jrpsc.org/information-management/> describes JORISS as “an online system that allows users to submit their projects online, track the status of their request for approval and report on their project progress”. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. # See R. Heeks (2002), Information Systems: Failure, Success, and Local Improvisations

   [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The status of the Development Gateway system is unclear at the time of writing but this report is prepared in such a way to offer an approach that can support the GOJ/MOPIC response in the event that the work will procced. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. In addition to the Heeks article, see also the Goldfinch article referenced in Annex 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Putting Ethics to Work – A Guideline for UN Staff (2012), page 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. These are derived from the Paris, Accra and Busan principles: Ownership, partnership, alignment of priorities, alignment with systems, harmonisation, mutual accountability, managing for results and predictability. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)