

Economic Empowerment Panorama Hub (Ecorama Hub)

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Background and Context:

Irbid is located in the northern part of Jordan with boundaries extended to the Jordanian Syrian borders. The refugee population in the urban settings is around 80 percent of the refugees in Jordan compared to around 20 percent in the camps. Irbid city hosts the second largest refugee population in Jordan after Amman city with around 55,000 refugees registered with UNHCR and about 125,000 refugees in the entire governorate. Irbid city is home to 650,000 Jordanians who share the same limited opportunities and the same job and employment challenges with the refugees. Irbid city has 30 established public parks with total space of 250 Dunam¹ which are public areas that serves the Jordanian and Syrian families in different locations.

The refugees and local community face many challenges in finding employment and income opportunities in Jordan generally and in Irbid as well due to the high unemployment rate which reaches 22.3 percent among Jordanians as per the Department of Statistics' last screening in 2023² while it reaches 28 percent among Syrian refugees and 36 percent among Non-Syrians³. The refugees often lack access to formal markets, capital, and networks. In addition, the work permits do not allow them to work in all sectors or in all levels. To address these issues, several organizations have been providing training and development programs for refugees and local community graduates, such as skills development, entrepreneurship, and vocational education, fund provision for Home Based Business and Licensing. However, these programs are not enough to ensure the economic empowerment and integration of these groups. There is a need for a platform that can connect them to customers, suppliers, and partners, and enable them to showcase and sell their products and services alongside Jordanians. In addition, the platform should be organized on a level beyond the refugees and host community's financial capacity.

Project Objective:

This project is consistent with the UNHCR livelihood strategy 2024 – 2026 which focuses on Advocacy and coordination to reach Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG8) on the Decent Work and other relevant SDGs. UNCHR is looking into more engagement of sustainable entities such as the private sector and the local authorities to enhance livelihood opportunities.

The Ecorama Hub will be operating in a space provided by the municipality that is open for the refugees and Jordanians. It will consist of 2 separate rooms, one to display the refugees and livelihoods projects and one for a digital hub. The objectives are:

- To provide information on the projects and services offered by the organizations working on livelihoods and economic empowerment in order to strengthen the collaborative work between the different stakeholders of the Economic Empowerment in Irbid, avoid duplication and create synergy with the private sector.
- To provide to the refugees and local communities who have completed various training and development programs from different organizations a space to display their products, skills and competencies to have a marketing and networking platform to support connection with possible employers, clients, accelerators and incubators projects.
- To create a Digital Hub to offer digital and connectivity services to refugees and Jordanians such as writing CVs, participating in online training, and applying for jobs using digital platforms. This will empower them with the skills needed and could enhance their opportunities in the marketplace internally and abroad.
- To offer career development counseling

¹ https://irbid.gov.io/?page_id=6424

² DOS: <https://dosweb.dos.gov.io/category/unemployment-rate/>

³ UNHCR: <https://shorturl.at/iBZ68>

Expected Outcomes and Impact

- The Ecorama Hub will be operating in a public park owned by the municipality and accessible to families including refugees. People who served in the location will be refugees and host community members and engaging in similar activities and services, this will enhance and empower social cohesion and inclusion in the place and services.
- This project will serve as an inclusive space for refugees and host community members supported by the different stakeholders in Irbid.
- The project aims at increasing self-reliance, social cohesion and facilitate jobs opportunities and incomes.
- The Ecorama will be a landmark in the city of the coordination among the different parties including the UNHCR, the Municipality, the International and National NGOs as well as the private sector. It will serve as evidence of the collective work among the partners in the Irbid area.

Innovative Solutions:

- Sustainable Digital Hub for those interested in development and career-building using digital services and environment-friendly space.
- Create Urban Joint Application System (webpage) and digital marketing platform to support Home Based Businesses and startups. The Webpage will present the Ecorama Services and will help connect with potential employers and clients.

Ecorama Hub Activities

1. **Visibility and showcase activity:** each organization will maintain visibility on their running activities, reach out to new people and serve a new caseload in a different location.
2. **Marketing space:** Refugees and local communities who graduated from economic empowerment projects provided by the operational partners in Irbid and the northern area, will be able to display their products and services, such as handicrafts, food, clothing, accessories
3. **Digital Hub:** Access to computer and digital connections as well as career development support by providing training and mentoring sessions on topics such as product development, quality control, marketing, customer service, financial management, etc. Refugees and Jordanian can also receive counseling in CV writing, job interview preparedness, and exchange knowledge and opportunities.
4. **Job matching and talent hunting:** The private sector will reach out for talent hunting and/or organize job matching events in the location.

Partners involved:

- Irbid Greater Municipality to ensure sustainability
- Economic Empowerment Sub-Working Group (EESWG) members who are the main potential partners for this project.
 - Action Contre La Faim - Action Against Hunger- (ACF)
 - Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI)
 - Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
 - Education for Employment (EFE)
 - Fin Church Aid (FCA)
 - Good Neighbors
 - Internal Medical Corps (IMC)
 - International Labor Organization (ILO)
 - Intranational Rescue Committee (IRC)
 - Islamic Relief Jordan (IRJ)
 - Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development Jordan River Foundation (JRF)
 - Luminus Technical University College (LTUC)
 - Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

- Orange Business incubator
- Shamal Start
- The Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- World Vision (WV)
- Yarmouk University Innovation Center
- Zinc Business incubator

- **The Private Sector**

Target group and number of beneficiaries (direct or indirect):

The Ecorama Hub will benefit the partners who provide the services as well as the people graduated from their projects which could reach a few hundred people (refugees and host community). In addition, the space will be open to refugees and Jordanians who want to acquire market skills such as learning CV writing, job application, and interview techniques. However, the expectation is to reach out to many more refugees and the local community, especially those interested in the services or looking at the activities.

Methodology of implementation

Ecorama Hub is a joint project under the **Economic Empowerment Sub-Working Group (EESWG)** and UNHCR is leading this project in collaboration with the Irbid Greater Municipality. The participation is open to the main stakeholders such as the EESWG members and the interested private sector. The joint project will require joint efforts, financial support and coordination. The presence of the partners in the Ecorama Hub will be on rotation based on an agreed schedule.

To this end, UNHCR will conduct systematic and comprehensive stakeholder consultations with local authorities and the communities from the early stage of project design throughout implementation. To materialize the project into reality, the project will undergo the following steps and reflected in the table after:

- **Planning phase:**
 - **Initiation** of the project goal, definition, concept note, and targeted stakeholder.
 - **Design** the project by matching the goal with the strategic partners and the targeted group.
- **Prototyping the Project:**
 - **Build** the project initialization with stakeholders, discussing and confirming the available resources, and agreeing on the process and timeline.
 - Set up and ready the location with the needed furniture and review the needs, train the respective staff, and test the opening ceremony.
 - Schedule the project activities and agree on the initial plan.
- **Implementation:**
 - Opening and Go live.
 - Implementing the activities
 - Review and adjustment when needed.

Timeline with actions

Action	Timeline	Party
Develop the Concept Note	May-June	UNHCR
Discuss with the municipality	April-June	UNHCR
Review Concept Note and obtain municipality administrative approval to use the location	June	Municipality
Discuss with potential partners and obtain internal approval	July	UNHCR/ EESWG partners
Allocate location needs	July	UNHCR and Municipality

Review the available resources and infrastructure	July	UNHCR and Municipality
Make necessary budget calculations	July	EESWG members + UNHCR
Set up (maintenance and furniture)	August	EESWG members + UNHCR
Soft opening and quality check	August	EESWG members + UNHCR
Opening	September	

*Timeline may be delayed depending on internal discussions of partners, there will be a need to advocate and discuss with their management at Amman level

Estimated Cost

Needed item/service	Quantity	Unit cost	Total Estimated cost (JOD)	Notes
Furniture (30 – 40 stations)			14100	
Tables	40	60	2400	
Chairs	120	40	4800	
curtains			0	
Air conditions (stand AC)	4	1250	5000	
Screens	3	500	1500	
Water cooler	4	100	400	
Utilities (water-electricity)				provided by Municipality
Digital infrastructure (10 stations)			4190	
Laptops	10	250	2500	
Video Projector	1	350	350	
Monitors	4	150	600	
Internet connection facilities	1	600 per annum	600	in case no sponsor
electricity connectors	20	7	140	
Online training platform			0	Free platforms only
Total			18290	
Infrastructure (phase 2 - if extra budget)			13800	
Electrical solar system	1	10000	10000	renewable power source and rely on green energy. (It is open for any other ideas to support green building such as recycling units and rain harvesting)
Floor covers	400 sqm	7	2800	
Renovation and rehabilitation			0	Building infrastructure, painting, doors, and windows, etc. [upon the last meeting, the hall is not in need for such work]
Playing area	1		300	Lump sum

Commented [MC1]: router

Commented [MAA2R1]: I mean all costs related to internet service (installation and running)

Commented [MC3R1]: it should be costed because we are not sure Orange will do it for free

Webpage/domain	1	700	700	in case no sponsor [it may cost few additional annual fees]
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Commented [MC4]: facebook page?

Commented [MC5R4]: to monitor the traffic on the page

Commented [MAA6R4]: Website in addition to social media platfomrs

Commented [MC7R4]: same should be costed