ISWG Minutes of Meeting
November 2025

Inter-Sector Working Group Jordan

ISWG Meeting Note and Action Points

Date / Time / Venue	**Monday, 03 November 2025, 10:00 - 11:30, UNDP office**
Attendees	Inter-Sector Coordinator, Sector Coordinators, Leads/Co-Leads of the Shelter, WASH, Food Security Basic Needs, Economic Empowerment, Education Sectors, Health, Protection, , UN Women Gender expert, Azraq Field Coordinator, UNDP representative, and JIF representative

Summary of Recommendations and Outcomes

- **Proposed Phased Plan**: **Phase 1** (Now – Before Christmas): Sectors co-chairs to consult their sectors' Partners to define priorities and budget estimates for 2026. **Phase 2** (Early January): Based on the agreed priorities, teams will review and revise specific indicators. The early January timeline also serves to wait and see if any feedback on the overall plan (JRP) comes from the government after the meeting.
- **IACU**: Provide a brief note outlining the guiding questions and proposed timeline for the sectoral discussions.
- **Key Messages & Actions**: Sectors to initiate the 2026 revision of sectoral plans and target. Start internal work immediately to clarify internal priorities and budget targets. **Emphasizing Building Upon Existing Work**: The team had already completed a prioritization exercise in June. The bulk of the heavy lifting has already been done. The current task should not be overly complicated. It primarily involves reviewing, refining, and adjusting the existing outcomes, rather than starting from scratch. Concrete Steps: The suggestion is to avoid overcomplicating matters and instead directly "return to what was done, refine it, revisit it, and discuss with partners what needs adjustment."

Meeting agenda as follows:

- **Operational Updates - 2026 planning**
- **Sectors' Updates**
- **AOB**

General Updates:

Ms. Virginia provided a general update on the following:

1. **Regional and political shift taking place**: Gaza ceasefire.
2. Syrian President Ahmed Al-Sharaa visited the US and participated in the United Nations General Assembly, and he also visited Russia, which indicates an interest of Russia in the Syrian affair.
3. **Funding of the 3RP**: Based on the partners reporting on JFT, a total 227.42 million has been funded for the Jordan 3RP. This amount represents approximately 24.8% of the total funding required for the 2025 plan.
    i. Critical Data Reporting Issue: All data is based on organizational reporting, which is currently incomplete. It is understood that some organizations are not reporting regularly.
    ii. Action Required: It is very important to maintain the follow up with the partners to be punctual in their reporting cycles to ensure accurate and complete data.

iii. Top Three Donors (to date): 1. United States 2. United Kingdom 3.European Union

4. **Return situation**:
   - Overall Trend: The return situation has been relatively stable, without significant changes in the past few weeks. A small number of citizens have recently returned, a movement partly attributed to the school calendar.
   - Return Statistics: A Total number of UNHCR registered refugees returning to Syria since the fall of the Assad Government (8 December 2024-08 November 2025) is **169,010 individuals**, with over **3,167 returns in November 2025 so fa**r. Nearly **165,000 refugees** returned since the start of 2025.Over the past three weeks, the number of weekly returns has remained relatively stable, averaging between 2,500 and 3,000 individuals per week
   - Demographic Breakdown: Of the total returnees, around 70,000 are children under the age of 18. This means that approximately 43% of the overall returning refugee population is children.
   - Destinations within Syria: Returnees are primarily going back to a few specific areas: Daraa: ~41% Homs: ~20% Rural Damascus: ~11%.
   - Intention to Remain in Syria: Based on intention surveys and regular analysis conducted by colleagues inside Syria, 90% of returnees express the intention to stay in Syria permanently. This indicates they are not willing to go back to Jordan.
   - Historical Context & Future Outlook: Historically, there has always been movement and exchange between Jordan and Syria due to economic reasons, family links, and support networks. We will likely see Syrians coming back to Jordan for various reasons, such as study, business, or other temporary purposes. However, the current data specifically on registered refugees who have returned shows a strong intention for permanent repatriation.
   - **Pilot cash assistance for voluntary return**: In relation to cash assistance for voluntary return, it was highlighted that UNHCR and IOM continue to provide transport assistance, alongside the ongoing pilot project for cash assistance. To date, 2,150 refugees have benefited from this pilot initiative, with 95% of recipients having already departed. As of earlier this week, the pilot project has been expanded to cover the full populations of both camps.
5. **Government**: Waiting for the government' s guidance on the future of the JRP.
   i. Proposed Planning Figures: An approach" of 30% has been tentatively adopted as a baseline for 2026 planning.
   ii. Flexibility: The 30% figure is not final and can be revisited. These are initial, tentative planning figures shared with the bureau There is time to review and adjust these figures based on further discussions. **Proposed Next Steps**: Each sectoral group conducts internal discussions with their respective partners and stakeholders, based on their own internal priorities, and then submit a revised planning proposal.

Recommendations to the 2026 Planning

Summary of recommendations:

- **Food Security**: The Food Security sector is already operating under significant funding constraints. the WFP sector chair expressed concern that any further substantial reduction in the planning benchmark would critically undermine their ability to deliver effective aid. therefore, appealing for future planning figures to be set with a realistic view of the sector's operational needs, **Health**: For JRP, a 50% reduction is excessive, while the refugee population may have decreased (~30% reduction), the Jordanian population in need remains. For 3RP, they acknowledged a 30% reduction as a potential benchmark. They favor a consultative

approach where all sector members can voice their priorities, even for de-prioritized activities. Time: JRP 6-8 weeks, 3RP 4 weeks of sectoral work.

- **UNICEF**: The education co-chairs commented that a 30% reduction would be a realistic option based on current realities. Confirms agreement to use 30% as a preliminary "ballpark figure" for the current planning phase, with the understanding that this figure is subject to review and adjustment later. Next Steps: Communicate the conclusion of supporting the 30% benchmark to the education community. Emphasizes the importance of respecting and applying the same methodology (i.e., the 30% benchmark) across the entire organizations.
- **Economic Empowerment**: the co chair asked for a clear guidance—such as guiding questions and a timeline—to help proceeding effectively and deliver the task on time. They advocated for a more flexible, smarter, and communication-conscious approach to budgeting, opposed simplistic, across-the-board budget cuts, and called for a process centered on "prioritization." This approach allows for a more rational allocation of resources.
- **JIF**: Unsure whether sectors should create a separate plan for "returns" or just integrate it into the main framework. They recall government discussions about creating a dedicated "platform for returns," but nothing concrete materialized. Answer: This task is in progress. It would be better to adopt the country-centric, bottom-up aggregation model they had previously experienced.

Action for the 2026 Planning

Summary of action:

- **Regional Strategic Overview**:
  i. Content includes: strategic priorities for the next year. sectoral focus areas. The overall budget and the overall targeted population figures.
  ii.
  iii. Process Summary: Framework First, Details Later. Step 1 (Now): Set the "big picture" by mid-December—the strategic priorities, total budget, and overall targets. Step 2 (Later): Allow individual sectors to subsequently "dig in" and develop their specific indicators and detailed breakdowns based on their particular needs.

SECTORS' UPDATES:

1. **Economic Empowerment**: Understanding return plans is essential for the Economic Empowerment sector to design relevant programs (e.g., livelihoods for those staying vs. those planning to return). However, this depends on the government intentions. Proposed Solution: Establish an on-demand expert system. Sectors should inform coordinators of specific topics (e.g., gender, returns) in advance, so the right experts can be invited to provide precise information. Noted that the "sectoral update" part of meetings is taking much longer than a year ago, confirming that partners are increasingly hungry for updates to guide their planning. New Collaboration Suggestion: Proposed that the Economic Empowerment group should liaise with colleagues inside Syria to help establish connections and better understand the needs of potential returnees, as there is high interest but a lack of guidance.
2. **JIF:** Follow-up to the Global Refugee Forum. The primary goal is to amplify refugee voices to influence the pledges and discussions at the upcoming Senior Officials Meeting in Oslo (November 18th-19th).
   JIF will host a series of refugee dialogues across Jordan. Participants will include a diverse range of people, including Syrian refugees, migrants, and residents of Jordan, to gather varied perspectives. The focus will be on facilitated discussions about "what to do next," moving beyond a simple list of needs, which are already well-documented.
   Following the Oslo meeting JIF will hold a dissemination event to share the report's findings and discuss the outcomes from Oslo and the INGOs perspective, particularly on returns and ongoing support.

JIF is collaborating with embassies and donors, inviting their representatives to participate in the discussions to ensure the dialogue has a direct impact.

3. **WASH:** They have been providing updates to partners on "returns" and facility support through the "Boston Group". The current posture is a "wait and see" approach, awaiting partners to present their plans for the next year under new guidance, especially since some have already scaled back work in the camps.

   They are attempting to connect with actors not purely on the humanitarian side (e.g., entities focused on climate resilience, farmers), reflecting a strategic shift to address long-term challenges. The biggest unknown is the "future of the camps" and the overall response plan.. the sector chair warned that the existing water system is already in "deficit." And expressed fear that a sudden decision (e.g., large-scale population movement) could be made by higher authorities, leaving the WASH sector with a very short preparation time, which would be a big challenge.

   The sector chair strongly advocated for the immediate development of an internal contingency plan as a practical step to prepare for a potential humanitarian challenge.

4. **Education**: The education sector is currently finalizing the new Education Sector Plan (ESP) for 2026-2030, with a validation workshop scheduled for December. This comprehensive plan, developed jointly by the Ministry of Education and partners, spans four key domains - from early childhood to higher education - while establishing digital transformation as a central pillar aligned with the national Economic Modernization Vision.

   Concurrently, the ministry is advancing its commitment to digitalization through the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Compact, where digital transformation has been designated as the primary focus area. This strategic document, slated for submission in early January, aims to fundamentally modernize Jordan's education system while promoting greater equity in learning opportunities across the population.

   Within the regional framework of the Doha Process for Syrian refugees, Jordan has identified four priority intervention areas that will guide its educational response. These include ensuring continuity of both formal and non-formal education pathways, building the capacity of Syrian education professionals to facilitate potential future reintegration, and strengthening inclusive education systems for children with disabilities across host and refugee communities.

   The education sector is currently implementing winterization maintenance plans for camp schools in preparation for the upcoming winter season.

5. **Health**: Funding cuts: nearly $20 million in March, which were reduced to $15 million by August after some donors restored support for certain projects. The gap was managed by inviting new partners (such as national charities and church organizations) to fill the voids and redistributing the caseload among different actors.

   All health indicators are currently stable. There have been no disruptions in access to health services for both camps. Despite it being November, there is absolutely no clarity on which donors will continue their support into next year or to what level. This uncertainty even extends to irregular donors.

   Due to the unclear future, planning is based on the "current situation." The primary goal is to strive to maintain a minimum level of services, particularly for emergency life-saving and emergency obstetric care.

6. **Protection (the Child Protection Sub-Working Group)**: The process of merging the GVB with the Child Protection Sub-Working Group has been completed and endorsed by the Protection Sector and partners.

   Partners are now conducting a protection gap analysis. The results of this analysis will inform the development of the 2026 Protection Work Plan.

   Upcoming Campaign: Partners are preparing programs for the "16 Days of Activism" campaign. And PSA training has been conducted for all partners.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) and the Family Protection Department (FPD), they held a meeting to increase the number of case referrals from partners to these government bodies.

AOB:

The next ISWG monthly meeting scheduled on December 17th and the place to be confirmed.