

Overview:

The Urbanization project is an original and innovative project, launched by UNHCR and the European Union Trust Fund in 2017, for a period of 3 years. The project aims to facilitate the transition of operations from humanitarian interventions, towards '**Development**', working on the logic of strengthening the **nexus** between the two.

The project has been developed on the basis of a model which will revitalise the local economy which has been deeply affected by the Boko Haram conflict in the region. The general objective is to create an environment which is favourable to entrepreneurship, training, and direct and indirect employment throughout the region of Diffa.

The project supports the ownership of the locally elected authorities of the process of urban planning including the creation of land parcels, as well as legal land ownership for displaced and host populations. The project also strengthens their capacities in terms of resource mobilisation, encouraging investment in the local economy of the region.

The project is seen as a potential contributor to stability in the region, addressing root causes of instability and population displacement including economic instability, the consolidation of peaceful coexistence and development.

Overall Targets (by 2020):

- 1) Provide **legal access to land for housing to 6,000** vulnerable displaced and host beneficiary households (land parcels of 200m²);
- 2) **Construct of 4,000 social houses** for the most vulnerable in the region, **in 7 communes**;
- 3) Ensure access to training and skills in various construction techniques to 2,000 people;
- 4) Support the local authorities in managing urban development;
- 5) Strengthen the public water provision systems in the 7 target communes, supporting the national initiative to expand the public water distributions network.

Key Dates:

- July 2017: Beginning of Project
- November 2017: Launch Workshop (Joint UNHCR / Conseil Regional)
- March 2018: Creation of the 'Pilot Committee' under the leadership of the Conseil Regional of Diffa region
- March 2018: Launch of 'Briquetterie' for the fabrication of hydraform bricks in Diffa town, and training of first trainees in Diffa town
- March 2018: Launching of urbanization project in commune of Gueskerou (Asaga)
- August – October 2018: Physical Verification of Beneficiaries

Partnerships and Coordination:

The 'Pilot Committee' is under the leadership of the Conseil Regional of Diffa and is responsible for the overall coordination of the project. This committee includes the various communal authorities and Regional Directorates present in Diffa, as well as the locally elected Mayors. It also includes the UNHCR and all partners working on the project. The Committee is an essential tool for strengthening the leadership of the Conseil Regional and the communes, as well as linking the various existing coordination mechanisms within the region.

UNHCR is working with two key implementing partners for this project, CISP and APBE. The microfinance institute ASUSU is involved in facilitating the payment of workers employed through the project.

The EU Trust Fund for Africa is also supporting a complementary project to ensure access to basic services for beneficiaries in the Diffa region, being implemented through a Consortium of NGOs (ACTED, Concern, REACH and WHH).

Further partnerships are underway around this project, including with the World Bank through the IDA 18 Funding (Projet d'Appui aux Réfugiées et Communautés Hôtes – PARCA), as well as other UN Agencies, INGOs and NGOs.

- **350** people trained : **200** in construction, **150** in production of hydraform bricks in Diffa town
- **286** people trained: **32** site leaders, **254** in construction & production in the 'construction sans bois' techniques in Chetimari & N'Guigmi
- **300** people have access to the formal economy and financial services through new accounts with the micro-finance institute ASUSU
- **410** Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) installed on the Urbanization site in Diffa town, to provide temporary /transitional housing for beneficiaries engaged in construction of their houses
- **284** houses currently under construction at the Urbanisation site in Diffa town (from foundation level to complete)
- **207,000** hydraform bricks created using 4 hydraform machines at the Urbanization site in Diffa town

Progress:

(See key figures) Beneficiaries are proud to be participating in training and engaged in paid work, while also working on the construction of their own houses. They report that the regular salary enables them to cover the basic needs of their families, and that they are no longer dependant on humanitarian aid. Most have now opened bank accounts with a locally based microfinance institute, which provides access to the formal economy. So far, over 600 people now have access to paid labour on a regular basis through the project.

A physical verification exercise of all beneficiaries was completed in September, while the BIMS biometric registration of all beneficiaries in the Diffa commune will be finalized in October. This will also ensure that all beneficiaries have access to identity documentation (including the number of the parcel of land allocated to them).



Diallori Bello is a Nigerien returnee. He worked as a mason in Nigeria for many years, but was forced to flee Boko Haram in 2013. Now he works as a Head Mason on the Diffa Urbanization site, where he will eventually live with his wife and 5 children (UNHCR / Louise Donovan)

The two main construction techniques being used are 'Hydrafrom Construction' (Diffa commune) and traditional construction "Without Wood" (Chetimari and N'Guigmi communes). Different sites are being used for both methodologies, while beneficiaries gain from the experience of learning diverse production and construction techniques.





Examples of two construction techniques – Traditional “construction sans bois” (Chetimari – houses 18m²) and “Hydraform Construction” (Diffa Town – houses 24.5m²). Both techniques are adapted to the context and sensitive to the environment (UNHCR).

Challenges:

It has been noted that despite the presence of Refugee Housing Units (RHU) at the site in Diffa town, not all beneficiaries have yet moved to the site. This is reportedly due to a lack of toilets available, which is currently under discussion with the Consortium. Water trucking is already providing access to adequate levels of water for those present at the site.

The implementing partner CISP, operating in the communes of N’Guigmi and Chetimari, reported challenges in attracting beneficiaries to the sites due to a lack of water availability. In N’Guigmi, this has been resolved with the establishment of a well with a solar pump. In Chetimari, a ‘mini AEP’ water system has been completed, with financing from the EU Trust Fund for Africa, enabling adequate access to water.

Although construction is well underway, with 25 teams working on the construction of houses on parcels in the various communes, delays have been registered in terms of the supply chain. Materials, labour, etc. are mainly sourced in the region (also injecting much needed finances into the local economy), however some technical elements must be ordered from overseas. This has resulted in some initial delays in the implementation, which have been mainly resolved.



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(EUTF)

