Evaluation of the European Union External Action

Final Report

Evaluation of the Emergency Social Safety Net Programme, January 2018–March 2020 (ESSN-2)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

3RP: Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan
ACM: Applicant Contact Monitoring
BOW: Bag-of-Words
CCTE: Conditional Cash Transfers for Education
CFM: Complaints and Feedback Mechanism
CVME: Comprehensive Vulnerability Monitoring Exercise
DG ECHO: Directorate-General European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DG NEAR: Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
DGMM: Turkish Directorates General for Migration Management/ PMM: Presidency for Migration Management in the Ministry of Interior – Turkey
DGPC (or Nüfüs): Directorate General for Population and Citizenship, Ministry of Interior
DHR: Disability Health Report
ECA: European Court of Auditors
EIE: Education in Emergencies
ESSN: Emergency Social Safety Net
ESSN MTR: ESSN Mid-Term Review 2018/2019 (prepared on behalf of WFP by Nick Maunders, Dr Karin Seyfert, Dr Meltem Aran and Nazli Aktakke)
EQ: Evaluation Question
EU: European Union
EUD: European Union Delegation
FGD: Focus Group Discussion
GAP: Gender Activities Plan
GoT: Government of Turkey
HH: Household
HIP: Humanitarian Implementation Plans
IFRC: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IP: International Protection
IR: Interim Report
ISAIS: Integrated Social Assistance Information System
JMC: Joint Management Cell
KII: Key Informant Interview
LCSI: Livelihoods Coping Strategy Index
LGBTI: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex
LDA: Latent Dirichlet Allocation
LLE: Lessons Learned Exercise
M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation
MEB: Minimum Expenditure Basket
MoFLSS: Ministry of Family, Labour, and Social Services (changed to MoFSP below)
MoFSP: Ministry of Family and Social Policies
NGOs: Non-Governmental Organisations
NLP: Natural Language Processing
PAB: Pre-Assistance Baseline
PDM: Post-Distribution Monitoring
PAB: Pre-Assessment Baseline
PDPC: Provincial Directorate of Planning and Coordination
PDMM: Provincial Directorate of Migration Management
RCSI: Reduced Coping Strategies Index
SASFs: Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations
SDA: SASF Discretionary Allowance
SOPs: Standard Operating Procedure
TEC: Temporary Education Centre
ToC: Theory of Change
ToR: Terms of Reference
TL: Turkish Lira
TP: Temporary Protection
TRC: Turkish Red Crescent
TWG: Technical Working Group
UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VAM: Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
WFP: World Food Programme
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ABSTRACT

This report is an independent evaluation of the second phase of the Emergency Social Safety Net programme (referred to as ESSN-2) covering the period January 2018-March 2020. The evaluation was launched by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) in June 2020 and finalised in April 2022. It draws upon evidence from documentation review, data analysis, social media analysis, key informant interviews, focus groups and workshops, to provide a retrospective assessment of the ESSN-2 by presenting the evolution of the programme compared to its first phase of implementation and assessing the extent to which it achieved its objectives.

The evaluation concludes that the ESSN was overall relevant, coherent, effective and efficient with noticeable improvement compared to the first implementation phase, ESSN-1. Nonetheless, the ESSN-2 was negatively impacted by the challenging economic context, and several existing shortcomings persisted.

Strategic recommendations targeted at future (large-scale) cash programmes are to 1) incorporate better linkages with development programmes, 2) better communicate information with host communities, 3) better anticipate shocks and be more shock-responsive, 4) better capitalise on economies of scale and 5) pay more attention to certain vulnerable groups.
1 Introduction

This is the final report for the Evaluation of the Emergency Social Safety Net programme, covering the period January 2018-March 2020. The evaluation was launched by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) in June 2020. The work was undertaken by ICF with support of Ankey Consulting.

1.1 Objectives of the evaluation

The aim of the evaluation is to provide a retrospective assessment of the second phase of the Emergency Social Safety Net programme (referred to as ESSN-2), covering the period between January 2018 and March 2020.

This evaluation established a retrospective assessment of the ESSN-2, presenting the evolution of the ESSN-2 programme compared to its first phase of implementation and assessing the extent to which it has achieved its objectives. In addition, this evaluation has identified potential learning elements relevant for the third implementation phase of the ESSN, and more broadly the further development of EU humanitarian cash policy, as well as future Safety net programming.

1.2 Methodological approach and validity of the evaluation results

The evaluation was designed to respond to a specific set of evaluation issues and questions, as articulated in the Terms of Reference (ToR). A variety of research tools and sources of information were used to build a rich and comprehensive evidence base for this evaluation covering a wide range of stakeholders. In total, the evaluation team reviewed approximately 150 documents and seven monitoring databases of indicators related to the ESSN. ICF also performed a social media analysis to understand perceptions about the programme amongst end beneficiaries and other stakeholders. In addition, ICF engaged with over 70 stakeholders through a series of individual and group telephone interviews. The remainder of this section summarises the methodology used.

Figure 1. Methodological approach

Source: 2021, ICF

1.2.1 Documentation review

As part of the desk review, the evaluation team looked at a range of secondary sources of evidence. The majority of documents were provided by DG ECHO or the World Food Programme (WFP), while some were publicly available and found online. They were classified into the following categories:
• **DG ECHO documentation:** Humanitarian Implementation plans (HIPs) and their annexes as well as policy documents and guidelines (e.g. Cash and Vouchers¹, Protection², Gender³) were reviewed.

• **Project documentation:** Single Forms for the ESSN-1 and ESSN-2 and related annexes as well as DG ECHO internal appraisals (FichOp) were reviewed.

• **Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) reports:** 51 evaluation and monitoring reports were reviewed to extract evaluative evidence related to the ESSN.

• **Other publicly available documents:** 63 publicly available documents were reviewed to capture information gathered by third parties such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other Commissions services. In addition, databases from UNHCR, IOM and the Turkish authorities were explored and used for this analysis.

Annex 1 provides the full list of documents reviewed as part of this evaluation.

1.2.2 **Data analysis**

A series of databases were analysed to inform the answers to different evaluation questions. The main databases were:

• **HOPE and EVA databases:** managed by DG ECHO: these databases provide logistical and financial information relating to DG ECHO funded humanitarian actions.

• **Application Contact Monitoring (ACM):** the ACM surveys used a sample of beneficiaries collected monitoring data regarding the application process and receipt of the ESSN transfers, and any issues associated with the programme in general.

• **Weekly Application Reports:** the weekly application reports provided data on the number of beneficiaries applying to the ESSN each month, and whether their application was successful or not. This was broken down by gender, age, and location. Data on complaints regarding the ESSN was also collected via the call centre, Facebook, and the website under these reports.

• **Comprehensive Vulnerability Monitoring Exercise (CVME):** CVME was conducted within the scope of the ESSN, to assess the socio-economic vulnerability of the refugee population in Turkey and estimate the refugees’ needs.⁴

• **Pre-assistance Baseline (PAB)/ Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM):** the PAB/PDM surveys were conducted by the WFP to provide an assessment of the effects of the ESSN assistance on beneficiary households (HHs) over the course of two years, using data of refugees living off-camp before and after receiving the ESSN cash assistance.⁵

• **Protection Issues and Referral Cases:** this data was collected to assess the presence of any protection issues faced by beneficiaries of the ESSN, and to monitor the number of beneficiaries receiving the transfer through a referral.

1.2.3 **Social media analysis**

The social media analysis consisted of collecting social media data and analysing it with text analytics techniques to understand perceptions about the programme amongst end beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

Social media data was collected using the Talkwalker social listening tool and through manual collection. Talkwalker provides data and insights from numerous countries and platforms and provides access to

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¹ DG ECHO (2013) Cash and Vouchers: increasing efficiency and effectiveness across all sectors
² DG ECHO (2016) Improving protection outcomes to reduce risks for people in humanitarian crises
³ DG ECHO (2013) Gender: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance
⁴ WFP (June 2020) CVME 5
⁵ WFP (November 2018) PDM 5
historical data tracing back as far as two years. Due to Facebook’s privacy restrictions, however, Talkwalker does not provide access to Facebook historical data. Therefore, for this analysis, Twitter data was collected through Talkwalker and covers September 2018-March 2020 and Facebook data was collected manually and covers January 2018-March 2020. Table 1 provides an overview of the methodology applied to analyse the data. Annex 3 describes the methodology in more details and presents the key findings.

Overall, the social media analysis provided useful insights and captured beneficiary perspectives on a number of elements of the ESSN programme such as the targeting criteria, the amount of cash, or the application process.

Table 1. Social Media Analysis Applied Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Analysis Technique</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Use case</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bag-of-Words (BoW)</td>
<td>Term frequencies</td>
<td>Social media content (e.g., posts and relevant pages and handles)</td>
<td>Showcases user priorities, engagement, awareness, and opinions toward topics</td>
<td>Like surveys, lack of representativeness in sample (e.g., sampling bias) and true intent expressed in content (e.g., satisficing or social desirability bias)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visualisation of term frequencies using word clouds</td>
<td>Free text responses (e.g., surveys)</td>
<td>Uncovers trends and insights not otherwise apparent to the human eye</td>
<td>Impact is difficult to measure, often relying on proxies to capture outcomes of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Term correlation matrices and heatmaps</td>
<td>Naturally supplements existing data or serves as an alternative to traditional surveys</td>
<td>Naturally supplements existing data or serves as an alternative to traditional surveys</td>
<td>Privacy standards outlined in ToR and user agreements reduce access to data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2.4 Consultations

As part of the consultations, two rounds of key informant interviews (KII) were organised to gather the views of a wide range of stakeholders.6

- **A first round of consultations** (KII with 37 stakeholders) was organised to complement the desk review and engage with framework (WFP, IFCR) and local implementing partners (Turkish Red Crescent (TRC)); leading academic experts and think tanks; DG ECHO staff and other Commission services (e.g. Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR); UN agencies (non-framework partners, e.g. UNHCR, World Bank) and national authorities. The objective of the consultation was to gather key stakeholders’ views on the extent to which the ESSN-2 was relevant, effective, efficient, and coherent, and whether it provided EU added value and was sustainable.

- **A second round of consultations** (KII with 34 stakeholders and two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)) was organised as part of the field missions to engage with national/ provincial authorities and actors (SASF staff, local NGOs) as well as refugees (beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries), to ensure their voices are reflected in the evaluation and explore satisfaction with the implementation of the ESSN-2. To understand how the ESSN-2 was implemented in different areas of the country, five provinces were selected including Gaziantep, Istanbul, Sanliurfa, Bursa

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6 Due to Covid-19, the evaluation team was not able to travel to Turkey and undertake field visits. While there were no restrictions to travelling within Turkey, from a safety perspective and ethical point of view, remote and online tools were preferred.
and Antalya. In addition, the second round of KIIIs also included DG ECHO field staff, WFP and TRC staff; the discussions focused on the gaps identified in the analysis produced at the end of the Desk phase.

1.2.5 Validity of the results

Complementary research methods were used to enhance the reliability and validity of the data collected and to provide the basis for cross-verification, corroboration and triangulation of the evaluation results. The vested interests of different stakeholder groups were taken into account to address potential bias and to ensure objectivity.

Overall, based on the review of the methods and tools presented below, it is considered that the evaluation results are valid, as in the vast majority of cases, they are confirmed by multiple sources of evidence. However, as with any evaluation, there were limitations to the methodologies and research tools applied. This section provides an overview of the research tools together with an assessment of their limitations and strength and the measures put in place to mitigate these and ensure the validity of the evaluation results. Given these methodological caveats and limitations, caution was exercised when interpreting data and producing findings.
Table 2. Overview of the research tools and the strength of the evidence collected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research tools</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Strength of the collected evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary data collection tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document review</td>
<td>• Review of a large sample of secondary sources</td>
<td>• <strong>Strong quality.</strong> The literature was mainly shared by DG ECHO and the WFP as well as identified through a ‘snowball’ search, based on the WFP and DG ECHO websites, internet searches, recommendations by the stakeholders consulted. The evaluation team is confident to have captured the most relevant documents. Some challenges were encountered as documents did not always make a clear distinction between implementation phases (ESSN-1 or ESSN-2). While some documents clearly specified the period covered (such as for example the ESSN evaluation (November 2016- December 2017), other reports did not give clear indications in this regard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>• Analysis of six databases</td>
<td>• <strong>Strong quality.</strong> The data provided by the WFP allowed the evaluation team to quantify the impacts of the ESSN-2 using tangible indicators covering multiple time periods over the implementation phase. Monitoring data was also included, which provided an insight into the change in the number and demographic of beneficiaries over time. This data was also integral in capturing an insight into the main issues experienced by beneficiaries regarding the transfer, and the reasons for this. Survey data collected by the WFP, although based on samples, is representative of ESSN beneficiary and non-beneficiary population. Therefore, the results obtained from the analysis of these databases can be extrapolated to the population in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media analysis</td>
<td>• Text analytics of selected social media pages</td>
<td>• <strong>Medium quality.</strong> The social media analysis provided useful insights and captured refugees’ perspectives on a number of elements of the ESSN programme such as the targeting criteria, the amount of cash, or the application process. However, it was not possible to disaggregate the data between beneficiary and non-beneficiary and the analysis lacks representativeness due to the sampling bias arising from the approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary data collection tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultations</td>
<td>• DG ECHO HQ and field: 11</td>
<td>• <strong>Medium quality.</strong> 76 stakeholders were consulted, including six beneficiaries and one non-beneficiary. The KIIIs were organised in two rounds reflecting the stages of the evaluation and the data needed at each stage. Annex 2 presents the detailed list of interviewed stakeholders. The evaluation team attempted to organise FGDs with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries using the Kızılaykart Facebook page to reach out to potential participants. While 209 people originally registered their interest, only 15% (32) were beneficiaries of the programme. On that basis, ICF drew a sample of non-beneficiaries to organise one FGD and grouped all the beneficiaries that registered into three groups (based on gender and age). However, only six beneficiaries and one non-beneficiary attended the FGDs. Notwithstanding the challenges faced in the organisation of the FGDs, the lack of representativeness and the limited number of participants, the discussions were fruitful and provided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research tools</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• National NGOs: 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• National university/research centre: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Refugees 7 (6 beneficiaries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Strength of the collected evidence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interesting insights which confirmed the findings from other sources. It also provided some examples to illustrate them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regarding the KII with national authorities, it took several weeks to reach out to the right representatives. Once the right person was identified, several attempts were made to schedule interviews via phone and email, but only three representatives agreed to take part to an interview. Hence the perspective of the Turkish authorities is missing in this evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validation workshop</td>
<td>• The validation workshop was organised on 24 November 2021 with the ICF evaluation team and DG ECHO HQ and field staff (16 participants).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Strong quality.</strong> The workshop involved DG ECHO HQ and field staff. The set-up of the workshop allowed the evaluation team to collect very good feedback on the key findings of the evaluation. The workshop also allowed to have a first discussion on the recommendations stemming out of the evaluation and test their relevance, feasibility, practical implementation and desirability. This was a key source of information to revise the draft findings and recommendations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3 The structure of this report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** provides a snapshot of the ESSN-1 (baseline) and the ESSN-2;
- **Section 3** presents the evaluation findings to all the evaluation questions in the following order: relevance, coherence, EU added value, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability and added value. For each evaluation question, a short table summarising the judgement criteria, the strength of evidence and our key conclusions is included;
- **Section 4** presents the conclusion and five strategic recommendations stemming out of this evaluation together with a series of recommendations to operationalise them.

This report is accompanied by a series of **Annexes** including:

- Annex 1: List of documents reviewed;
- Annex 2: List of stakeholders consulted; and,
- Annex 3: Social media analysis.
2 Overview of the ESSN

The ESSN was established in September 2016 through a collaborative agreement between DG ECHO, the WFP, the TRC, and the Government of Turkey (GoT), as a means of supporting humanitarian social assistance by delivering monthly multi-purpose cash transfers to socio-economically vulnerable refugees in Turkey. Figure 2 provides an overview of the programme’s characteristics while Table 3 provides an overview of the ESSN objectives and activities, and Figure 3 overleaf illustrates the key milestones in the evolution of the ESSN, from its inception in September 2016 to the end of the second phase, the ESSN-2, in March 2020.

Figure 2. Characteristics of the ESSN programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modality</th>
<th>Cash</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of cash transfer</td>
<td>Multi-purpose cash transfers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of payments</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer amount</td>
<td>TL 120 per family member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top-ups(^{8})</td>
<td>Periodic top-ups based on family size (quarterly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Severe Disability Allowance TL 600 (monthly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery mechanism</td>
<td>Debit card (Kızılaykart)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiary</td>
<td>Out of camp vulnerable registered refugees identified on the basis of socio-proxy criteria (see EQ.1.a) or using the Assistance and Solidarity Foundations (SASF) Discretionary Allowance (see EQ.1.b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipient</td>
<td>HH head</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The primary objective of the ESSN is to save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies by improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable refugees through predictable and dignified support addressing basic needs. The programme established four expected results and a series of activities as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. ESSN objectives and activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Summary of activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provision of monthly basic needs assistance to vulnerable households through multi-purpose cash transfers</td>
<td>Operational aspects of the cash transfer, such as reviewing the adequacy of the transfer values, sensitisation, identification of beneficiaries through, for example, HH verification visits, identification and referral of protection cases (complementary role), and contracting of financial service and implementing partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{8}\) The ESSN quarterly top-ups were introduced in February 2018, initially at the level of 250TL for households of 1-4 members, 150 TL for households of 5-8 members, and 50 TL for households of 9+ members. In August 2019, the value of the quarterly top-ups was increased to 600TL for households with 1-4 members, 300 TL to households of 5-8 members, and 100 TL for those with 9+ members.
Exit strategy refers to the process of moving from emergency to rehabilitation and development. In the context of the ESSN, the exit strategy would entail reducing the dependency of beneficiaries on humanitarian assistance (and funding) by DG ECHO, towards them being supported by other donors, including DG NEAR and the GoT, in terms of accessing employment, receiving livelihoods assistance and protection.

By March 2020, approximately 1.7 million direct beneficiaries were targeted under the ESSN programme. Their eligibility for the programme was based on targeting criteria, which led to both

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9 Exit strategy refers to the process of moving from emergency to rehabilitation and development. In the context of the ESSN, the exit strategy would entail reducing the dependency of beneficiaries on humanitarian assistance (and funding) by DG ECHO, towards them being supported by other donors, including DG NEAR and the GoT, in terms of accessing employment, receiving livelihoods assistance and protection.

10 WFP (2017) Single Form 2017/00972/RQ/01/03
exclusion errors (i.e. the share of beneficiaries who do not need assistance but who are identified as in need based on the targeting method chosen) and inclusion errors (i.e. the population who are in need of assistance but are not included in the targeted group.

Table 4 presents the distribution of the beneficiaries by age and gender under ESSN-1 and ESSN-2. The total budget for ESSN-1 was €357,405,438, with the actual expenditure totalling €352,451,140 (98.7%). The total budget for ESSN-2 was €1,006,797,949, with the actual expenditure totalling €1,001,333,538 (99%).

Table 4. Age and gender breakdown of direct beneficiaries of ESSN-1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Estimated percentage of target group</th>
<th>Female percentage</th>
<th>Male percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ESSN-1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants and young children (0-59 months)</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (5-17 years)</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults (18-49 years)</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly (&gt; 50 years)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ESSN-2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants and young children (0-59 months)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (5-17 years)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults (18-49 years)</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly (&gt; 50 years)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 below provides an overview of selected indicators using data collected at the end of ESSN-1 and the start of ESSN-2 (baseline), and at the end of ESSN-2 (end-line). Baseline figures were obtained from the ESSN-1 Final Report, and CVME Round 2 (September 2017-November 2017). The CVME 2 data collection period occurred just before the start of ESSN-2 (January 2018) and can thus be used as baseline measurement upon which we can benchmark the progress made during the implementation of ESSN-2 (January 2018-March 2020). End-line figures were obtained from the ESSN-2 Final Report and CVME Round 5 (November 2019-February 2020). The data collection period occurred during the second half of the implementation of the ESSN-2 and can thus be used to observe changes in key indicators which took place over the implementation period.

Given that the CVME 2 uses a clustered sampling frame at the neighbourhood level, the results are not representative of the refugee population beyond the sample. This limits the extent to which the findings found in this study can be extrapolated to the wider refugee population. However, according to the WFP, the similarity between the sample and the broader population in terms of their demographic characteristics indicate that it is likely that the results between the sample and the wider population are similar. The total sample size is 600 HHs, consisting of 240 beneficiaries.

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120 non-applicants, and 240 ineligible HHs. CVME 5, however, uses a two-stage sampling method which ensures nationwide representativeness.

Table 5. Evaluation of ESSN Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>ESSN-2 Baseline</th>
<th>ESSN-2 Final</th>
<th>Evolution</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographic Indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Syrian: 90.6%</td>
<td>Syrian: 88.9%</td>
<td>Slight changes</td>
<td>ESSN-1 Final Report, ESSN-2 Final Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iraqi: 6.5%</td>
<td>Iraqi: 6.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Afghan: 2.2%</td>
<td>Afghan: 3.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iranian: 0.2%</td>
<td>Iranian: 0.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other: 0.5%</td>
<td>Other: 0.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender of HH head</td>
<td>Men: 83%</td>
<td>Men: 83%</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>CVME 2, CVME 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women: 17%</td>
<td>Women: 17%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average HH size</td>
<td>5.8 members</td>
<td>5.7 members</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>ESSN Application Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reduction in vulnerabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH living below MEB</td>
<td>74.5%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>ESSN-1 Final Report, ESSN-2 Final Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main income source</td>
<td>ESSN assistance: 48%</td>
<td>ESSN assistance: 53%</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>CVME 2, CVME 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-agricultural</td>
<td>Unskilled worker: 22%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>casual labour: 25%</td>
<td>Semi-skilled work: 17%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skilled work: 22%</td>
<td>Skilled worker: 3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other: 6%</td>
<td>Other: 5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median debt</td>
<td>350 TL</td>
<td>1820 TL</td>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>ESSN-1 Final Report, ESSN-2 Final Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of coping strategies(^{15})</td>
<td>No coping: 17%</td>
<td>No coping: 12%</td>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>CVME 2, CVME 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stress: 75%</td>
<td>Stress: 43%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crisis: 35%</td>
<td>Crisis: 37%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{14}\) Please note that this value refers to the ESSN-1 Baseline (September 2016), rather than the ESSN-2 baseline (January 2018). This is because the measurement of the MEB changed between ESSN-1 and ESSN-2. During ESSN-1 the MEB was not updated to reflect inflation, and fixed at a value of 316 TL per capita (i.e. the MEB in September 2016). As the progress values on this indicator at the end of ESSN-1 are benchmarked to this MEB, they are not comparable with those collected from ESSN-2.

\(^{15}\) Baseline sums to more than 100% in CVME 2 but not CVME 5. This represents a change in the grouping of beneficiaries by coping strategy over the different phases of the CVME survey.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>ESSN-2 Baseline</th>
<th>ESSN-2 Final</th>
<th>Evolution</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to basic needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food consumption groups</td>
<td>Acceptable: 95%</td>
<td>Acceptable: 98%</td>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>CVME 2, CVME 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borderline: 4%</td>
<td>Borderline: 2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor: 1%</td>
<td>Poor: 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing quality: good or acceptable housing</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>CVME 2, CVME 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Wider integration into society**

| Multi-dimensionally poor households                                    | 69%             | 43%          | Decrease | CVME 2, CVME 5 |
| Illiterate HH head                                                     | 15%             | 21%          | Increase | CVME 2, CVME 5 |
| School absence for more than a year                                   | 27%             | 22%<sup>16</sup> | Decrease | CVME 2, CVME 5 |


<sup>16</sup> In the case of CVME 5, this indicator was changed to measure the proportion of those absent from school for more than a semester. Therefore, these two values are not directly comparable.
3 Evaluation findings

This section presents the findings from our research, based on the different sources of information (see section 1.2). Each evaluation question starts with a summary of key findings per judgement criteria as well as an assessment of the strength of evidence, using a colour code system following ranking:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking of evidence</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>High quality body of evidence, large or medium in size, highly or moderately consistent, and contextually relevant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Quality – includes evidence includes high quality studies and evaluations and/or good quality soft data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Size – large or medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Consistency – similar messages emerge from different pieces of evidence. There might be some areas of dissonance / divergence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Moderate quality studies, medium size evidence body, moderate level of consistency. Studies may or may not be contextually relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Quality – good quality soft data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Size – medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Consistency – similar messages emerge from different pieces of evidence. There might be some areas of dissonance / divergence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>The evidence is limited to a single source of questionable quality (i.e. there is an obvious risk of bias) or, is mainly anecdotal in nature, or there are many sources of evidence but the information they provide is highly contradictory and it is not possible to distinguish their quality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, where relevant, the section includes a baseline, i.e. the information against which progress has been assessed.

3.1 Relevance

3.1.1 EQ1.a - What progress has been made during the second phase of the programme to reach the most vulnerable registered refugees?

Table 6. EQ1.a Key conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgement criteria</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>Key conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JC1a.1 The most vulnerable refugees' needs are explicitly identified in the needs' assessments conducted as well as in DG ECHO strategic documents</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>• While the ESSN-2 initial needs assessment did not consider different types of vulnerabilities and associated needs, adjustments were made in subsequent assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• There were still shortcomings as the needs assessments did not explicitly include other types of vulnerabilities (e.g., minors, children with special needs, LGBTI, refugees with chronic illnesses) and were not based on an in-depth analysis of the ability to cope with shocks and stresses at HH level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC1a.2 A clear definition of the target group is provided both</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>• The definitions of the target group remained clear, coherent and based on evidence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
within strategic documentation as well as at programme level

| JC1a.3 The ESSN-2 targeting criteria were appropriate in identifying a relatively poorer and more vulnerable population | S | • The target group was similar in character to the ESSN-1’s but 46% larger.  
  • The most vulnerable refugees were prioritised by using a target system that relied on demographic information. The choice of approach was reasonable (given the need for a quick scale-up and the lack of needs assessments) but inevitably led to inclusion and exclusion errors (in spite of the expansion of the eligibility criteria in June 2017).  
  • The homogeneity of the refugee population in terms of poverty required a constant monitoring of the adequacy of the target criteria.  
  • Important adjustments were made in ESSN-2 (compared to ESSN-1) to reduce exclusion and inclusion errors and take into account some specific vulnerabilities in the targeting assessment, by introducing the Severe Disability Allowance, TK Referral and Outreach teams, and the Assistance and Solidarity Foundations (SASF) Discretionary Allowance.  
  • Exclusion errors were lower than in ESSN-1 and inclusion errors slightly higher. This was mostly due to the revision of the target criteria at the end of 2017.  
  • Gender-sensitivity of the programme improved over time, with several steps taken in ESSN-2 to ensure gender mainstreaming into the design, implementation, and monitoring of the ESSN activities.  
  • The ESSN-2 capitalised on lessons learnt and weaknesses identified to address application barriers and improve the targeting mechanism. |

Baseline

- By the end of the ESSN-1 the programme had about 1.3 million direct beneficiaries (around 37% of the registered refugees at the time) targeted according to a relatively clear definition of the target group.
- The eligibility for the ESSN was based on six demographic criteria\(^\text{17}\) using proxy indicators for vulnerability. Initially, to be eligible to apply for ESSN assistance, a HH should meet one of the following criteria:

---

\(^{17}\) A targeting working group – comprised of WFP, UNICEF, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and TRCS – decided on targeting criteria in April–May 2016. The decision was
- single woman (between 18 and 59) with no other people in the family;
- single parent with no other adults (between 18 and 59) in the family and at least one child under 18;
- elderly people, 60 years or above, with no other adults in the family;
- family with two or more disabled people (disability of 40% or more, evidenced by a disability health board report from an authorized state hospital);
- family with four or more children, or family that has a high number of dependents (i.e. children, elderly and disabled), i.e. families that have more than 1.5 dependents for every able-bodied adult).\footnote{WFP, OPM (2020) ESSN Mid-Term Review 2018/2019.}

- However, while the use of the initial demographic criteria allowed the swift, transparent and high coverage roll-out and operation of ESSN-1, available evidence suggested that exclusion errors and inclusion errors were relatively high, with the exclusion error reaching 44\%, and the inclusion error 24\% (using as reference the minimum expenditure basket (MEB) for an average-sized HH of six members).\footnote{WFP (2020) Considerations for ESSN Targeting and Pathways to Graduation Implications of changes to existing targeting criteria for the ESSN and how to address exclusion and inclusion errors.}

- Stakeholders across all groups (GoT, United Nations, donors and NGOs) considered that the criteria were therefore too strict\footnote{WFP, OPM (2018) Evaluation of the DG ECHO funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in Turkey, November 2016- December 2017.} and, in June 2017, the criteria (in particular the number of disabled HH members and the dependence ratio) were relaxed by the Programme (i.e., the minimum number of disabled people was reduced to one and the dependence ratio changed to equal to or higher than 1.5). By October, the exclusion error had dropped significantly (from 44\% to 18\%).

- The design of the programme did not explicitly consider the particular needs of various specific vulnerable groups such as women\footnote{The introduction of the eligibility criterion ‘single woman (between 18 and 59) with no other people in the family’ was not a direct consequence of efforts to consider the needs of women in the design of ESSN.} and people with disabilities, amongst others. These weaknesses were acknowledged, and special efforts were subsequently made to properly capture the specific needs of vulnerable refugees (e.g., in 2017 the ESSN Taskforce commissioned a survey of the needs of those living with disability; the results of this survey led to the introduction of the Severe Disability Allowance).\footnote{WFP, OPM (2018) Evaluation of the DG ECHO funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in Turkey, November 2016- December 2017.}

The ESSN-2 capitalised on lessons learnt and weaknesses identified and made progress in terms of covering most vulnerable refugees mainly by increasing the share of refugees targeted, and by adjusting its targeting approach (JC1a.6). This has been highlighted in the literature and by Kilis, and included, among others, the introduction of the SASF Discretionary Allowance, of the Severe Disability Allowance and the TK Referral and Outreach teams.

The target group of ESSN-2 was defined as:

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\footnote{informed by a regression analysis on the pre-assistance baseline (PAB) data collected through a survey conducted in the southern provinces of Hatay, Kilis, Gaziantep and Şanliurfa between June and October 2015.}
The target group was considered clearly defined and remained similar in character to the target group in ESSN-1, but became significantly larger over the period of implementation (JC1a.2). By end March 2020, the programme had reached 1.73 million beneficiaries, 46% more than the beneficiaries of ESSN-1 in November 2017 (1.3 million), as shown in Figure 4 (the ESSN-2 target was also set 30% higher than that of ESSN-1).25,26

Figure 4. Registered refugees (individuals) and ESSN-2 coverage in Turkey


The increase of the percentage (and therefore the number) of refugees accepted into the ESSN-2 was particularly pertinent. By covering more refugees, it somewhat compensated the effects of the deterioration of the economic situation and the protracted nature of the crisis on the registered refugees during the ESSN-2 period, as the economic crisis eroded their capacity (when compared to the baseline) to recover from shocks and remain capable of meeting their subsistence, health, and educational needs (see EQ2, EQ7 and EQ8).

In addition to increasing the coverage of the programme, strong emphasis was placed on improving the programme's precision (i.e., its capacity to identify and reach the most vulnerable) by refining the targeting approach. This included the introduction of the SASF Discretionary Allowance and of the TK Referral & Outreach teams.

The SASF Discretionary Allowance was introduced in December 2018 as a second tier of targeting, and it allowed each SASF office to select a small share of households excluded by the programme’s demographic targeting to be included as ESSN beneficiaries. The TK

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23 The WFP’s definition of the target group is slightly more restrictive as it indicates that the refugees need to be out of camp refugees. Out of camp refugees represent the vast majority of the refugees in Turkey (over 98%), of which only a very small share was targeted by the WFP/TRC off-camp Kızılaykart and through other NGO basic needs assistance programmes at the time of the introduction of the ESSN. In-camp vulnerable refugees are and have been covered by other projects such as the Kızılaykart “In-camp Food Assistance Programme” launched in 2012.
24 DG ECHO (2017) HIP for Turkey.
Referral & Outreach teams were introduced in the beginning of 2018 and helped addressing barriers faced by individuals in applying to ESSN (e.g., obtaining the Disability Health Reports (DHRs) or increasing awareness of the programme among refugees).

These efforts, together with the changes in the eligibility criteria, led to some progress in the targeting of beneficiaries (JC1a.6) and ensuring that cash transfers covered the most vulnerable registered refugees (JC1a.4). However, evidence suggests that more progress could have been achieved if the uptake of the SASF Discretionary Allowance would have been faster, stronger, and more homogenous across SASF offices and provinces (see EQ1b).

The proportion of ineligible (on the basis of the demographic criteria) applicants with a monthly expenditure below the Turkish MEB (exclusion error) decreased significantly in October 2017 due to the changes in the targeting criteria under the ESSN-1, after which it experienced fluctuations with an overall decreasing trend (see Figure 5). This decline may only be very slightly attributable to the SASF Discretionary Allowance (due to its slow take-up, see EQ1b for more details) and was most likely due to other factors such as an increased knowledge and understanding of the application procedure and criteria, and increased support in applying for the programme.

**Figure 5. Evolution of the ESSN exclusion error (May 2017 – March 2020)**

Source: WFP (2020) Considerations for ESSN Targeting and Pathways to Graduation Implications of changes to existing targeting criteria for the ESSN and how to address exclusion and inclusion errors.

Explanatory note: The graph depicts three exclusion errors, each calculated using a different reference value as a proxy for vulnerability. The blue line represents the exclusion error calculated using MEB as a proxy indicator for vulnerability and is the reference used in the present report. As a comparison, World Bank moderate and extreme poverty lines have also been used: the red line represents the exclusion error calculated using the WB extreme poverty line as a proxy for vulnerability; and the green line represents the exclusion error calculated using the WB moderate poverty line as a proxy for vulnerability. The stricter the threshold used, the higher the exclusion error. Therefore, the exclusion error using the WB moderate poverty line is higher than the exclusion error using MEB and the latter higher than the exclusion error using the WB extreme poverty line. Differences in the trends of the three exclusion errors can be explained by the different variability of the thresholds (i.e., WB moderate poverty line, MEB and WB extreme poverty line) in the evaluation period.

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27 Exclusion error (EE) is a proxy indicator to assess the share of vulnerable ESSN applicants that were ineligible for the cash assistance based on the demographic criteria. It is defined as the proportion of non-beneficiaries of the ESSN, in spite of having applied for it, who have a monthly expenditure below the Turkish MEB. The calculation of this rate is notoriously complex. The following calculation was used to determine the exclusion error: \[ EE = \left( \frac{\text{nr of rejected applicants who are below MEB}}{\text{total number of rejected applicants}} \right) \times 100. \]

28 WFP (2020) Considerations for ESSN Targeting and Pathways to Graduation Implications of changes to existing targeting criteria for the ESSN and how to address exclusion and inclusion errors.

29 WFP (2020) Considerations for ESSN Targeting and Pathways to Graduation.
Conversely, the proportion of ESSN beneficiaries who had a level of monthly expenditure above the Turkish MEB, and therefore should not have benefited from the ESSN (inclusion error)\textsuperscript{30}, increased sharply after changes to the criteria were introduced in 2017, until the end of 2018, after which it declined.

**Figure 6. Evolution of the ESSN inclusion error**

\[\text{IE} = \left(\frac{\text{nr. of beneficiaries who are above PL}}{\text{total number of beneficiaries}}\right) \times 100.\]

Source: WFP (2020) Considerations for ESSN Targeting and Pathways to Graduation Implications of changes to existing targeting criteria for the ESSN and how to address exclusion and inclusion errors.

The observed inverse relation between inclusion and exclusion errors after the changes to the eligibility criteria in 2017 is a well-known and common occurrence when using categorical targeting, and has been the object of many evaluations of targeting mechanisms, as highlighted by the WFP paper "Considerations for ESSN Targeting and Pathways to Graduation".\textsuperscript{31} The trade-off between exclusion and inclusion errors, means that with an automated targeting mechanism, often exclusion errors can only be reduced to the detriment of the inclusion error and vice-versa.

In spite of these shortcomings, the adopted targeting methodology – automated based on demographic information - was overall considered reasonable, given the volume of the potential applicants to the programme, the need for a quick roll-out and scale-up, the lack of needs assessments and the characteristics of the refugee population.\textsuperscript{32} The **ESSN-2 targeting criteria were regarded as more appropriate (when compared to those used when the ESSN was introduced)** to identify a relatively poorer and more vulnerable population (JC1a.3). The ESSN Vulnerability Profiling exercise conducted in 2018 confirmed that existing targeting criteria covered 68.6% of the highly vulnerable population, which took into account not only the economic

\textsuperscript{30} Inclusion error (IE) is a proxy indicator to assess how many non-vulnerable beneficiaries should not be beneficiaries of the ESSN. It is defined as the proportion of ESSN beneficiaries who have a level of monthly expenditure above the Turkish MEB. This is an estimate of the proportion of beneficiaries who may not necessarily require ESSN assistance to subsist at or above the MEB. The following calculation was used to determine the inclusion error: \text{IE} = \left(\frac{\text{nr. of beneficiaries who are above PL}}{\text{total number of beneficiaries}}\right) \times 100.

\textsuperscript{31} WFP (2020) Considerations for ESSN Targeting and Pathways to Graduation Implications of changes to existing targeting criteria for the ESSN and how to address exclusion and inclusion errors.

vulnerability but also food security and high-risk coping strategies. Similarly, the WB analysis of the PAB data demonstrated a strong relationship between the demographic criteria and the economic status of HHs. That study also found that the ESSN targeting criteria were to some extent effective in identifying poorer and more vulnerable refugees.

**Figure 7. Percentage of extremely poor HHs (as identified in PAB) receiving ESSN assistance**

![Graph showing percentage of extremely poor HHs receiving ESSN assistance over time](image)

*Source: PDM-9 Panel Report. Percentages based on samples weighted to reflect the ESSN population.*

Nevertheless, the homogeneity of the refugee population in Turkey in terms of poverty and their multiple and complex vulnerabilities posed significant challenges to targeting, as HHs regularly move across poverty quintiles (and possibly above or below the poverty line) as a result of even small changes in health, income-earning options, etc.

The World Bank and WFP study revealed that “exclusion error” HHs were more vulnerable than the eligible extremely poor families, as a result of higher levels of coping strategies, lower food consumption, and higher dependency on debt for their basic needs, partly because eligible HHs receive assistance.

A number of groups that, in the context of a cash programme, would normally be considered as vulnerable (such as small families, people with chronic diseases, nomadic/roaming communities, seasonal workers who do not have an address, the LGBTI communities facing discrimination and with difficulties in accessing the job market, and HH with unemployed young adults (in particularly female)) were not automatically considered eligible to access ESSN-2 assistance, as they did not meet the demographic criteria. This limitation has been partially mitigated within the ESSN-2 through the SASF Discretionary Allowance, and outside the ESSN through specific projects focusing on some specific vulnerable groups or through other supporting mechanisms. The Meta-Analysis of the Impact And Lessons Learned For Implementation of the ESSN, concludes that the implementation of appeals mechanism could have further helped addressing these exclusion errors and ensure that such cases would get swift remedial action. The criteria for programme inclusion were the topic of considerable discussion on social media, with family structure and how it impacts inclusion being the predominant focus of online discussions around the eligibility criteria. Non-

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34 WFP (2020) Considerations for ESSN Targeting and Pathways to Graduation.
37 WFP (2020) Considerations for ESSN Targeting and Pathways to Graduation.
39 Strategic Mid-term Evaluation of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, 2016-2019/2020
40 By the end of 2019 the basic needs of more than 0.7 million refugees were met through other support mechanisms than ESSN.
beneficiaries, primarily those in a 4-person HH with 2 children, lamented their rejection from the programme, stating that the costs of living, principally rent and utility bills did not increase significantly enough with the arrival of more children to warrant the acceptance threshold. Current beneficiaries and beneficiaries who have recently had their assistance stopped due to children turning 18, discuss the financial pressure they experience when aid is cut off. This financial pressure may lead to older children abandoning further education opportunities and seek jobs to support the family. Beyond the specifics of criteria, there are commenters who believe that the framework for assistance should be more inclusive; and that everyone who has temporary protection should benefit, irrespective of other personal circumstances. Some expressed a willingness to receive less in financial assistance for this to be possible. One commenter promoted the usage of the hashtag #distribute_them_to_all but it did not appear to gain much traction. These opinions were also expressed by the Focus Group participants.

It was also pointed out by KIlS that a refinement of the targeting criteria should be considered in order to cover refugees currently excluded from the programme. The Facility MTE suggested (based on simulations) that possibly a more inclusive and uniform targeting strategy would have been more suited. The WFP argued that in face of budgetary constraints, this would have led to a reduction of the transfer value per HH and possibly reducing the programme's impact in helping the most vulnerable meet their basic needs.45

In June 2020, a WFP study analysed the extent of the vulnerabilities in HHs and considered the exclusion and inclusion errors, while also assessing various options to improve the eligibility criteria. Most of the options considered (i.e., lowering the age limit to 55 and older, continued eligibility for children who turn 18, parents with 2 children, couples over 50) would have led to a net reduction of the targeting errors (i.e., the reduction in exclusion errors would be higher than the increase in the inclusion errors). However, the paper concluded that if all aspects and potential consequences were to be taken into account, changing the criteria might in fact not be the best approach. It argued that a broader use of the SASF Discretionary approach to verify the decision to exclude applicants might actually yield better overall results (as this mechanism has the potential to significantly reduce exclusion errors while not increasing inclusion errors). The paper finally recommended that any modification to the criteria and approach should be done in the context of a broader graduation/exit strategy.46

Regarding the ability of the programme to identify and address the specific needs of particularly vulnerable groups, some progress has been made in ESSN-2 compared to ESSN-1 (JC1a.1). While the ESSN-2 initial needs assessment did not consider different types of vulnerabilities and associated needs, adjustments were made in subsequent assessments. The 2019 HIP for Turkey considered physical vulnerability, specifying that "Specific attention will also be paid to the measures ensuring inclusion of people with disabilities in proposed actions".45

This was reflected in the Severe Disability Allowance introduced in September 2018 to support HHs with a severely disabled HH member, who had higher total HH expenditures than other ESSN beneficiaries. Similarly, the WFP's 2018 vulnerability criteria assessment46 evolved from a purely economic focus to incorporating food security and

42 Strategic Mid-term Evaluation of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, 2016-2019/2020
43 OPHI and WFP (2021). Meta-Analysis of the impact and lessons learned for implementation of the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme in Turkey (2016–20), Part 2: Focus Areas 2 and 3, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and World Food Programme (WFP).
44 WFP (2020) Considerations for ESSN Targeting and Pathways to Graduation
45 DG ECHO (2019) HIP for Turkey
46 It is worth noting that some challenges linked to access to data to conduct comprehensive needs assessment remained valid under the ESSN-2. However, WFP was able to use the findings from ongoing monitoring activities and surveys to identify further types of vulnerabilities and associated needs and inform the design of the programme (Pre-Assessment Baseline (PAB),
high-risk coping strategies. This analysis informed the design of additional targeting mechanisms, such as the SASF Discretionary Allowance (see EQ1b).

**Furthermore, evidence shows that the gender-sensitivity of the programme has improved over time (JC1a.5).** Under the ESSN-2, the WFP took several steps to ensure gender mainstreaming into the design, implementation, and monitoring of the ESSN activities. This included:

- The appointment of a gender specialist for a period of six months who conducted an in-depth analysis of the gender-differentiated needs of the target beneficiaries of the ESSN.
- An assessment of the main gender gaps internal to the WFP and the TRC in terms of capacities to enhance gender equality in programming and operations as well as a series of gender training.
- The establishment of a Gender Results Network to support the implementation of a Gender Action Plan.
- The disaggregation of all key result indicators by gender.
- The collection and analysis of sex- and age-disaggregated data as part of the monitoring exercise.
- The consultation and participation of relevant gender and age groups in the M&E exercises.

Nonetheless, some shortcomings persisted. Needs assessments did not fully address gender-specific needs nor did they explicitly include other types of vulnerabilities – such as minors, LGBTI, refugees with chronic illnesses. To further emphasise the gender-sensitivity of the ESSN-2, the literature review and KILs highlighted some elements that could be introduced, such as analyses of gender and age-specific intra-household (HH) dynamics and access to livelihoods and of vulnerabilities and needs at individual level (not only at HH level), as well as a systematic identification and referrals of cases to protection services (see also EQ7), and support to SASF to ensure systematic translation and gender balance in the teams of social workers to perform household visits.

Minors represented about 60% of the beneficiaries, and while their educational needs were specifically addressed by the Conditional Cash Transfers for Education (CCTE) programme (which provided cash payments to eligible families, on the condition of regular school attendance of their children, see EQ3), other vulnerabilities and basic needs of this group (e.g., child labour, children with special needs and/or requiring Special Education) were not specifically addressed by the ESSN or the CCTE (the condition of school attendance may not always have been economically attractive or practically feasible).

**Furthermore, needs assessments were not based on an in-depth analysis of the ability to cope with shocks and stresses at HH level.** This might not have been possible given the scale of the programme, but these assessments would have been particularly important as, given the homogeneity of the target population, events such as unemployment, an accident or an illness can move a HH income from a higher quintile to lower one.

Finally, some of the barriers preventing the most vulnerable refugees from applying to ESSN remained to some extent (e.g., literacy, requirements such as only allowing applications for ESSN assistance in the provinces where applicants registered for temporary or international protection), despite improvements brought by the introduction of the TK Referral & Outreach teams.

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Comprehensive Vulnerability and Monitoring Evaluation (CVME), Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM), Survey on Social Cohesion and Communications, process monitoring, see EQ11 for further information on data collection.)
### 3.1.2 EQ 1.b - Have the SASF Discretionary Allowance and Severe Disability Allowance launched in 2018 allowed a diminution of exclusion errors?

#### Table 7. EQ1.b Key conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgement criteria</th>
<th>Key conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JC1b.1 SASF discretionary allowance have contributed to minimise ESSN-2 exclusion errors</td>
<td>• The slow and low uptake of the SASF discretionary allowance (only 30% of the quota had been allocated as of March 2020) significantly limited its impact on reducing the exclusion errors. This was mostly due to resource constraints, reluctance of the SASF staff to use this allowance and low levels of awareness amongst civil society actors (which limits referrals).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC1b.2 The prioritisation of SASF applicants is based on clear criteria and categorisation system</td>
<td>• The beneficiaries of the SASF discretionary allowance were identified and prioritised based on a clear categorisation system and data shows they were in fact significantly smaller and more fragile HHs, with debt levels higher than those of ESSN beneficiaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC1b.3 The ISAIS (Integrated Social Assistance Information System) which analyses HHs’ vulnerabilities following monitoring HH visits, effectively supported the implementation of the SASF Discretionary Allowance system</td>
<td>• KIIIs agreed that the use of the ISAIS was very useful to support the implementation and monitoring of the SASF Discretionary Allowance system, in spite of some drawbacks related to the classification of the HH into groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC1b.4 The Severe Disability Allowance has contributed to minimise the ESSN-2 exclusion error</td>
<td>• The Severe Disability Allowance is seen mostly a mechanism to adjust the transfer value to HHs with severely disabled members (about 0.5% of ESSN beneficiaries in March 2020). The positive impact of the Severe Disability Allowance was acknowledged both in available literature as well as through the KIIIs undertaken in the context of this evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC1b.5 Challenges concerning the Severe Disability Allowance have been identified and are being addressed</td>
<td>• Some challenges concerning the Severe Disability Allowance were identified (e.g., barriers faced by refugees to obtain the DHR such as language and translation of documents) and recommendations were made to address them. The extent to which these recommendations have been implemented is not clear.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Baseline**

- In ESSN-1, exclusion errors were considered high and there was no discretionary mechanism to identify excluded vulnerable HHs. Throughout 2017, collective efforts of the WFP, the TRC and the Ministry of Family and Social Policies (MoFSP) were undertaken to identify improvements to the ESSN to reduce the identified exclusion errors and define a process.
through which it was possible to identify and assist the most vulnerable HHs not meeting the ESSN demographic criteria.\(^{47}\)

- The evidence collected during 2017 suggested that HHs with severe disabled members had higher total HH expenditures compared to all ESSN beneficiaries (resulting in higher debt levels and a more frequent use of coping strategies). No mechanism was available yet to further support these HHs in 2017.

The three main changes introduced as part of the ESSN-2 (compared to ESSN-1) – the SASF Discretionary allowance, the TK Referral & Outreach teams, and the Severe Disability Allowance – were generally considered important improvements to address the needs of the most vulnerable.

The SASF Discretionary Allowance was introduced in November 2018 and its implementation began in December 2018. It worked as a second tier of targeting to reassess exclusion and inclusion decisions taken based on demographic criteria only. Each SASF office was entitled to a quota of allowances set to 5%\(^{49}\) of the total applications that had been received by the office by October 2018. Consequently, the number of Discretionary Allowances each SASF office could give was capped to 5% of the total number of applications, with the total quota for all SAFS totalling nearly 24 thousand HHs.

**The decision to enrol a previously excluded vulnerable HH onto the ESSN-2 was based on a clear categorisation system and on clear criteria (J1b.2).** The SASF Discretionary Allowance targeting mechanism involved an initial visit by SASF staff who interviewed the excluded HHs. The visits intended to assess the HHs’ socio-economic status and vulnerability through a questionnaire. On the basis of the information collected by the SASF staff during the visit, the family was categorised as “A, B, C or D” (by the Decision Support Mechanism Algorithm, an automatic system using comprehensive algorithm/formulas developed by the GoT for use with Turkish citizens) with only HHs in “category A” being selected as possible beneficiaries of the allowance. The use of the ISAIS (Integrated Social Assistance Information System) to analyse HH vulnerabilities based on information collected during HH visits, was seen by KIIs as very useful to support the implementation and monitoring of the SASF Discretionary Allowance system (J1b.3).

**Overall, the SASF Discretionary Allowance was effective in identifying the poorest HHs (JC1b.1).**\(^{50}\) Data showed that the allowance’s recipients were in fact significantly smaller and more fragile HHs, with debt levels higher than those of ESSN beneficiaries (see Table 8). Evidence also suggests that the performance of the mechanism improved over time.\(^{51}\)

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\(^{47}\) WFP (2017) Single Form 2017/00972/RQ/01/03.

\(^{48}\) The 5% quota is set for each individual SASF office.


\(^{50}\) WFP, OPM (2020) ESSN Mid-Term Review 2018/2019.

Table 8. Comparison of SASF Discretionary Allowance and ESSN beneficiaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household composition</th>
<th>SASF discretionary allowance receiver</th>
<th>ESSN beneficiary</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Household size</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>-2.1***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Dependency ratio</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>-1.2***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least one member works</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td>-6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expenditure</td>
<td>1,419.3 TL</td>
<td>1,911.9 TL</td>
<td>-492.6***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita expenditure</td>
<td>345.1 TL</td>
<td>316.3 TL</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total food expenditure</td>
<td>624.5 TL</td>
<td>865.3 TL</td>
<td>-240.8***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita food expenditure</td>
<td>149.7 TL</td>
<td>139.8 TL</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hh incurs debt</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>-11.3***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt share (debt/monthly expenditure)</td>
<td>598.1</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>535.9***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of observations</td>
<td>111.0</td>
<td>2,150.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The ESSN MTR (2018-2019), table 3; elaborated based monitoring data appended with PDM7

However, the rigidity of the targeting mechanism received some criticism, with SASFs reporting they regularly identified highly vulnerable cases that had not been classified as category A.\(^{52,53}\) This is particularly problematic in urban settings – for instance in Istanbul, given the proximity to facilities such as ATMs, schools and hospitals and the availability of a toilet inside accommodations, the system would (by default) fail to classify very vulnerable HHs within “category A”. KIs showed that some staff members exercised flexibility when using the categorisation system to include vulnerable HHs, who would otherwise not fall under “category A” if the criteria were strictly followed. According to the reviewed documentation, DG ECHO and other stakeholders discussed the recommendation to reduce the rigidity of the categorisation system by also including category B families in the coverage of the SASF Discretionary Allowance, or by giving more “weight” to the recommendations put forward by the social workers undertaking the visits.\(^{54}\) In addition, they also recommended to adapt the questionnaire and to focus more on “vulnerability questions” rather than “location questions” to overcome the difficulties faced by vulnerable HHs living in cities (as highlighted above). A few KIs also considered that the targeting approach should have considered all the dynamics of the participation of refugees in the informal labour market.

Despite its relatively effective targeting and its high potential to reduce exclusion errors without increasing inclusion errors, the slow uptake of the SASF Discretionary Allowance (see Figure 8) limited its impact (JC1b.1). Findings indicate that the performance of this allowance improved over time, but its uptake was still low at the end of ESSN-2. As of March 2020, less than 1.7% of beneficiaries had been added through the SASF Discretionary Allowance mechanism, which represented about 30% of the quota allocated to this allowance.

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\(^{53}\) DG ECHO (September 2019) Short Mission to Istanbul on the SASF Allowance.
\(^{54}\) ICF (2020) ESSN-2 Portfolio analysis.
The evidence indicates that there were several reasons for this slow uptake:

- Difficulties in carrying out the HH visits, mostly due to insufficient staff time, budget, and other resources (such as interpreters) prevented many SASF offices from visiting HHs and therefore from making use of their quota. This was particularly problematic in offices with a significantly large number of ESSN applications.
- Reluctance from some SASF staff to use their quota as, for example, some found the quotas insufficient to cover all the excluded vulnerable HHs (and considered that it would be unfair to only select a share of those), others decided to save quota for an event of a further influx of highly vulnerable refugees, or they did not see the need to use it as the exclusion error among their applicants was low.
- Initial limited awareness of this allowance amongst civil society actors.

A higher uptake of the SASF Discretionary Allowance might have reached if a different approach to allocating quotas to each SASF office had been adopted. Instead of assigning quotas solely as a function of the total applications, other aspects could have been considered (as well or instead), such as for example the total number of rejected applications, the total number of HHs identified and classified as vulnerable according to the ISAIS system in each district and/or the capacity of SASF offices to make use of it.\(^{55}\)

In addition to exclusion errors, evidence suggests that some vulnerable refugees did not apply for the ESSN due to lack of awareness of the programme, insufficient understanding of the criteria and difficulties to overcome the barriers to application. The introduction of TK Referral and Outreach teams in early 2018 increased awareness and addressed access barriers, and consequently contributed to reduce exclusion errors\(^{56}\).

**The third key change introduced in 2018 was the Severe Disability Allowance. This allowance was introduced to specifically address the needs of HHs with a member with a severe disability (i.e., with a disability rate higher than 50% flagged on a valid DHR).**\(^{57}\) As

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\(^{56}\) This finding is supported by the significant reduction (from 20% at the baseline to 9% in April 2018) of the proportion of SASFs or SCs not following standard application procedures and by the reduction from 12% to 10.3% of the surveyed non-applicant HHs who state lack of awareness of the ESSN and/or lack of understanding of ESSN application procedures as their main reason for not applying (indicator 1.5, see Table 14 for further details).

\(^{57}\) The DHR certifies the level of disability as assessed by a board of doctors from an authorised state hospital. Refugees pay TL200 for the report. However, ECHO-funded Individual Protection Assistance partners (IPA partners) may cover the direct and indirect costs of obtaining a DHR.
these HHs have increased costs caused by the care for the disabled family member. The Severe Disability Allowance is therefore mostly a mechanism to adjust the transfer value to ESSN HH beneficiaries with severely disabled members (JC1b.4).

The assistance provided through the Severe Disability Allowance amounts to 600 Turkish Lira (TL) (USD 108) per person per month. At the end of Q1 2020, the Severe Disability Allowance reached 9,687 beneficiaries (see Figure 9), representing less than 1% of the total ESSN beneficiaries (with some variability between regions).

**Figure 9. Severe Disability allowance beneficiaries (individuals)**

![Severe Disability Allowance beneficiaries chart]

*Source: ESSN quarterly monitoring*

The positive impact of the Severe Disability Allowance was acknowledged both in available literature as well as through the KILs undertaken in the context of this evaluation. According to the ESSN MTR (2018-2019), this allowance allowed to reduce the disparities between HHs with a severe disability member and the average ESSN HH beneficiary. In particular, the report showed that, following the Severe Disability Allowance top-up, disabled beneficiaries were (see Figure 10):

- Less likely to reduce the number of meals they ate;
- Less likely to reduce portion size compared (the gap with ESSN beneficiaries narrowed compared to pre-allowance levels);
- Less likely to incur debt; and
- More likely to rely on cash assistance as main income source instead of unskilled labour.

Nevertheless, as shown in Figure 10, HHs with at least one disabled family member receiving the Severe Disability Allowance still performed worse than average ESSN beneficiaries but saw their situation improve between 2018 and 2019, while it deteriorated for the average ESSN beneficiaries.
The MTE explained that the Severe Disability Allowance was intentionally designed to align with the Turkish carer allowance and the DHR is a feature in both transfers. The burdensome but necessary process of obtaining the DHR as well as the decision on where the eligibility cut-off lies, were conscious design decisions that came with the intention of aligning with the Turkish system.


However, since the MTR (2018-2019), the process of obtaining a DHR has been revised. Doctors can now sign the DHR report online after having seen the patient, which means that these reports can automatically be delivered to SASFs.


While evidence suggests that the Severe Disability Allowance reached the most vulnerable disabled beneficiaries, some issues with obtaining the DHR may have prevented some disabled individuals from benefitting from it. In fact, in June 2019, 18% of the 17,977 cases referred to the TK Referral and Outreach teams related to problem with acquiring DHRS.

The WFP and the TRC identified the hospitals’ capacity to meet refugee demands for DHRS as the primary barrier to accessing the Severe Disability Allowance top-up, with capacity-related issues resulting in long appointment waiting times for applicants. Furthermore, while the TL200 fee charged for obtaining a DHR was not reported as the main financial barrier, refugees mentioned that the associated indirect costs, such as travel costs and expenses related to making and keeping a number of doctors’ appointments, constituted an important burden for them. Finally, refugees faced some specific challenges to obtaining the DHR, such as difficulties getting documents translated and language barriers. In addition, the ESSN MTR (2018-2019) also found it likely that there was a further eligible group who were either borderline ‘severe’ and not classified as such, or who were actually ‘severe’ but unable to overcome the barriers to application.

While awareness of beneficiaries that the Severe Disability Allowance was not accessible without a DHR was high, they showed an overall lack of understanding of the disability assessment process (i.e., why they had been given a specific disability rating). In this context, the ESSN MTR (2018-2019) recommended to develop targeted communication materials that clearly explain the different disability levels, in order to make the Severe Disability Allowance application process more understandable for applicants. Evidence that would allow assessing the extent to which this recommendation has been implemented was not available (JC1b.5).

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58 The MTE explained that the Severe Disability Allowance was intentionally designed to align with the Turkish carer allowance and the DHR is a feature in both transfers. The burdensome but necessary process of obtaining the DHR as well as the decision on where the eligibility cut-off lies, were conscious design decisions that came with the intention of aligning with the Turkish system.


60 However, since the MTR (2018-2019), the process of obtaining a DHR has been revised. Doctors can now sign the DHR report online after having seen the patient, which means that these reports can automatically be delivered to SASFs.


3.1.3 EQ2 – To what extent have DG ECHO and its partners been successful in adapting and adjusting the approach to identify and address the evolving basic needs of the refugees?

Table 9. EQ2 Key conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgement criteria</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>Key conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JC2.1 Changes in approaches under the ESSN-2 have been consistently informed by evidence-based participatory needs assessments</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>• Findings collected through monitoring actions and reporting mechanisms have informed corrective actions and programme improvement, such as the SASF Discretionary Allowance, the Severe Disability Allowance, and the increase in the amount of the quarterly top-ups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC2.2 The appropriateness of the humanitarian response was (at least partially) attributable to DG ECHO’s flexibility in responding to changing needs on the ground</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>• ESSN-2 provided a certain degree of flexibility to adapt to changing and evolving needs on the ground. However, most KILs highlighted that underlying lengthy and complex processes led to delays in introducing changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC2.3 Efforts were invested in ensuring that the ESSN-2 considered the beneficiary perspectives with regard to their basic needs as well as the perspectives of the host community</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>• Similarly to the ESSN-1, participatory needs assessments were neither designed nor implemented under the ESSN-2. However, evidence suggests that in ESSN-2 improvements were made to capture beneficiary experiences with the ESSN. The main tools included site visits, monthly focus group discussions, Post Distribution Monitoring data, CVME, the ESSN Facebook page and website, the TRC Call Centre, and ad hoc surveys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC2.4 Due attention was also given to other vulnerabilities and special needs</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>• The perspective of local communities (in the context of the “social cohesion element”) was captured indirectly through stakeholder consultations and to a limited extent also directly through the social cohesion survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC2.5 The ESSN-2 provided relevant cash support to beneficiaries over time to cope with contingencies and shocks</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>• While the provided amount was a relevant contribution to minimise the effect of the price shocks, it was considered to be insufficient to fully compensate the loss of purchasing power.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Baseline**

- Although formal participatory needs assessments were not designed or implemented under the ESSN-1, there is evidence that the views of beneficiaries as well as the opinions of other stakeholders were taken into account and informed programme modifications.

- The flexibility of the ESSN-1 was not evaluated but the changes made to the targeting criteria in 2017 demonstrate a certain degree of flexibility of the programme.

- The cash support to beneficiaries was adjusted in 2017 to help beneficiaries cope with the deterioration of the Turkish economy.
Similarly to the ESSN-1, participatory needs assessments were not designed or implemented to inform the ESSN-2, but beneficiary experiences within the ESSN were directly captured throughout the implementation of the programme, through various means (JC2.3). The main tools include site visits, focus group discussions (monthly FGDs), PDM data (quarterly reports), CVME, the ESSN Facebook page and website, the TRC Call Centre, and ad hoc surveys. The description of the different surveys and data collection exercises can be found in EQ11.

Whilst, as can also be seen from the Theory of Change (ToC, see section 3.4.2 below), social cohesion was not explicitly a part of the ESSN’s objects and expected outcomes, it was assumed that the ESSN would contribute to socio-economic improvements for both communities – albeit in an indirect way for the local host communities as they would benefit from the ESSN allowances being spent in their market. The perspective of local communities was captured directly only to a limited extent, for example through the social cohesion survey and ad-hoc consultations with local authorities, communities and religious leaders but not with individuals (due to the sensitivity of the programme and the potential tensions that those consultations could trigger). The programme also collected the views of beneficiaries and host communities indirectly through stakeholders between 2018 and 2020. In fact, KIs generally felt that they were involved in the revision of the ESSN-2 programme.63

Evidence from literature and KIs indicates that information from the different monitoring activities and feedback mechanisms were used to inform corrective action and programme improvement (JC2.1). For instance, the CVME led to the development of the SASF Discretionary Allowance, the Vulnerability Profiling exercise, the gender analysis, and subsequent beneficiary projection and capacity assessment work. In addition, direct complaints led to changes, such as the translation of ATM information from Turkish to Arabic and allowing beneficiaries to withdraw cash from two additional national bank ATMs free of charge. The Severe Disability Allowance and the TK Referral and Outreach teams were also introduced and designed based on information collected through monitoring and feedback mechanisms.

There is general agreement in literature and among the consulted stakeholders that the ESSN-2 provided a certain degree of flexibility to adapt to changing and evolving needs on the ground (JC2.2). Key examples include: the introduction of the SASF Discretionary Allowance to address exclusion mechanisms; the introduction of the Severe Disability Allowance to address the additional expenses related to having to care for a disabled HH member; the TK Referral and Outreach teams to address application barriers and other issues related to ESSN faced by vulnerable refugees; to increase the value of the quarterly top-ups, to help beneficiaries cope, to some extent, with the high inflation levels.

Nevertheless, due to the magnitude of the programme, the number of stakeholders involved in the decision making, the scrutiny from the line Ministries and associated authorities, most KIs highlighted the lengthy process and delays to introducing changes. A few KIs reported additional limitations to the flexibility of the ESSN, such as the strict targeting criteria leading to exclusion errors, the lack of funding dedicated to building institutional capacity and support localisation of aid, and the fact that the HIP instrument prevented multi-annual programming.64 Finally, the necessity to align the ESSN assistance to the assistance provided by the Turkish authorities to their citizens also limited the flexibility of ESSN-2 to respond to changing needs. Hence, the amount of cash

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63 ICF (2021) Key Informant Interviews, round 2 (Field phase).
64 HIPs are developed on a yearly basis. However, as of 2016, DG ECHO allowed actions to have a duration of up to 24 months. Hence, DG ECHO accepted a number of extensions to both the ESSN-1 and the ESSN-2, with the latter exceeding 24 months. Nonetheless, according to the WFP those extensions happened close to the deadline which prevented the added benefit of enabling WFP to plan ahead for a longer time frame.
provided through the ESSN was only partially based on the needs of refugees, and this was done to ensure social cohesion.

The flexibility of the ESSN-2 was in fact highly relevant given the worsening of economic parameters over the evaluation period, in particular the rising inflation, that negatively affected the beneficiaries and their ability to meet their basic needs. As described under EQ8, the main welfare indicators (e.g. nutritional status, health status, debt level) worsened, mainly due to the need of refugees to dedicate a greater proportion of their income to covering food needs. Consequently, negative coping strategies increased such as borrowing money and buying food on credit.65

As mentioned above, the ESSN was to some extent able to mitigate the negative effects of the economic and health crisis by adjusting the amount of cash provided through quarterly top-ups. The changes to the quarterly top-ups were considered to be overdue and insufficient to fully compensate the loss of purchasing power, nevertheless they were a relevant contribution to minimise the effect of the price shocks (see EQ8). The evaluation did not find further evidence of other specific actions taken in the context of the ESSN-2 providing relevant temporary cash support in order to help beneficiaries cope with unexpected and temporary contingencies and shocks (such as illness, loss of job, death of a HH member) (JC2.5). Figure 11 below shows the changes in the assistance provided over time.

**Figure 11. Evolution of ESSN cash assistance transfer value and top-ups**

![Graph showing the evolution of ESSN cash assistance transfer value and top-ups from 2016 to 2020.]

Source: ICF based on desk research. Note: the top-up of 1000 TL provided in response to the Covid-19 pandemic took place under the ESSN-3 and is out of scope of this evaluation.

### 3.2 Coherence

#### 3.2.1 EQ3 - To what extent is the ESSN programme consistent with DG ECHO’s strategy for Turkey as described in the relevant HIPs and with the Facility’s objectives?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10. EQ3 Key conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Judgement criteria</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC3.2 The ESSN-2 design was aligned with the objectives of DG ECHO’s strategy for Turkey as set out in the HIPs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JC3.1 The ESSN-2 was overall coherent with other refugee assistance interventions</th>
<th>S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in close cooperation with local partners and national authorities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The multi-layered management structure of the ESSN-2 facilitated the coordination between implementing partners and with national authorities and other actors implementing refugee assistance interventions in the country. The WFP and the TRC also worked closely with other partners on the ground, also making use of the 3RP coordination mechanism. This avoided duplication of efforts and ensured the coherence and complementarity with other refugee assistance interventions in the country.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC3.4 The programme continued to be coherent with national policies and progress was made in further aligning the ESSN-2 to the national social safety net system (in view of evolution into wider livelihood programming in the longer term)</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The ESSN-2 was complementary to the national social assistance programmes in Turkey, as they cover different population groups. Whilst the programme was not fully aligned with national social assistance programmes, it is coherent. Some measures implemented under the ESSN-2 led to further alignment and coherence compared to the baseline.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Some room to further exploit synergies was identified; these mostly concerned issues that were addressed but not completely eliminated under ESSN-2 (e.g. protection referrals and progress towards an exit strategy and the nexus with development programmes). Coordination with local authorities could also be strengthened.</td>
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<tr>
<td>JC3.3 Tensions between the ESSN-2 design and the humanitarian principles were identified, dealt with and minimised</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The strong dependency on the GoT was potentially at odds with the principle of independence, but this ‘tension’ was justified given the central role of the GoT in hosting and providing assistance to refugees in the country. The improved access to the ESSN-2 compared to the baseline ensured further alignment with the principles of humanity.</td>
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**Baseline**

- The design and implementation of the ESSN-1 was in line with DG ECHO’s strategy for Turkey. The HIPs for Turkey identified it as a priority action in the country and the programme contributed to DG ECHO’s main objective, i.e. to improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable refugees (and other persons of concern) through predictable and dignified support addressing basic needs and protection.

- The ESSN evaluation found that the ESSN-1 was coherent with other refugee assistance in Turkey, both under the Facility and as part of the 3RP. By focusing on covering basic needs, it allowed NGOs to focus on providing complementary protection and livelihood support activities. The programme was also found to be in line with and complementary to national assistance programmes; while it remained distinct from them, it built on the well-developed well-established administrative systems and processes, allowing to exploit synergies for the identification and registration of applicants and beneficiaries under the ESSN and the
Ministry of Family, Labour, and Social Services (MoFLSS) social assistance programmes (e.g. using the SASF).

- Room for further complementarity was found when it came to linking the ESSN with other protection programmes or other in-kind support provided to refugees (including on job creation, vocational and language training and refugee livelihood activities).

- The ESSN evaluation (November 2016–December 2017) identified several issues with the ESSN-2 design and the humanitarian principles. The tensions mostly concerned the principle of humanity, due to the application-based system and the application barriers identified by the evaluation. Assuring independence of humanitarian action was judged to be potentially challenging as the Facility combined political, developmental, and humanitarian objectives; however, the evaluation found that the ESSN-1 maintained a humanitarian identity and did not become a political instrument.

Like the ESSN-1, the ESSN-2 is in line with the objectives of DG ECHO’s strategy for Turkey (JC3.2). The programme continued to be recognised as the EU’s humanitarian flagship programme in the country, allowing the EU to address the basic needs of refugees and persons under international protection in Turkey throughout its implementation. It also reflected the HIP strategy concerning the involvement of national and local actors and engagement with Turkish authorities, and the links with other humanitarian and development interventions.

DG ECHO’s strategy for Turkey focusses on addressing the needs of vulnerable refugees and their host communities, in close cooperation with the Turkish authorities. The ESSN was devised to contribute to this objective, to help the most vulnerable refugees cover their basic needs. Since its inception in 2016, the ESSN has become the EU’s humanitarian flagship programme addressing the basic needs of out-of-camp refugees and persons under international protection.

The document review shows that the pivotal role of the ESSN has continued to be recognised in DG ECHO’s HIPs for Turkey throughout the implementation of the ESSN-2. Unlike previous HIPs, the 2018 HIP for Turkey (i.e. the year in which the ESSN-2 was launched) did not specifically say that DG ECHO would continue to address the basic needs of persons under temporary protection via the ESSN. However, the document identified protection interventions as one of the three main areas for action, also acknowledging the positive effects of the ESSN-1 on its beneficiaries’ ability to cover their most basic needs. The HIPs for the following years – 2019 and 2020 – indicated that addressing the basic needs of refugees and persons under international protection would be a priority in the country, referring to the ESSN as the main tool to do so.

The HIPs for Turkey (2018 – 2020) also highlighted the importance of involving national and local actors, an approach which is particularly important in the case of humanitarian and development assistance in Turkey, as the GoT remains the largest provider of assistance to refugees in the country. This strategy has been embedded in the design and implementation of the ESSN, implemented in partnership with the TRC, through government-owned systems. Under the ESSN-2, this approach continued and was in fact enhanced through the progressive handover of the programme to the TRC (see EQ6).

The management structure of the ESSN-2 comprised a multi-layered coordination mechanism which helped the WFP and the TRC to work together and coordinate with national authorities and other actors providing refugee assistance in the country, including through the Facility, the 3RP and national programmes (JC3.1). The management approach – with the WFP and the TRC sitting at the same table and national authorities being

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66 DG ECHO (2021) Factsheet for Turkey.
68 DG ECHO (2021) Factsheet for Turkey.
strongly involved – was considered innovative when compared to other similar interventions, and while generating practical challenges for the WFP, it was deemed to have worked well and to have led to rapid decision-making.

The management structure of the ESSN-2 comprised multiple levels of coordination (see Figure 12). At the highest strategic level was the **Steering Committee**, which replaced the former **Governing Board**, maintaining its structure. It gathered DG ECHO and representatives of agencies involved in the implementation of the ESSN.

Its permanent members – DG ECHO, WFP, TRC, MoFSP, Directorates General for Migration Management (DGMM) and Nüfus – met every two months to discuss key issues. Other actors were involved depending on the topic on the agenda.

It was the only body allowed to take strategic decisions on issues concerning the programme design (e.g. amending the eligibility criteria or cash transfer value). The Steering Committee also ensured coordination and provided strategic guidance on priorities for the humanitarian aid provided by DG ECHO and mid to long-term assistance by DG NEAR, facilitating coordination with other programmes under the Facility.

At a more operational level, the **ESSN Task Force** was established in 2016 to ensure a link to the wider humanitarian response provided under the 3RP. It held bi-monthly meetings, inviting other actors providing assistance to refugees where relevant. Under the ESSN Task Force, TWGs were set up as ad-hoc structures to tackle technical issues linked to the needs of the programme (several examples are shown in Figure 12).

The day-to-day operational management of the ESSN lied on the hands of the WFP and the TRC, who worked together through the **Joint Management Cell (JMC)**.

**Figure 12. ESSN-2 management structure**

Source: ICF elaboration

The ESSN management approach sat the framework partner (WFP) and the local implementing partner (TRC) together at the same table as equals (under the Joint Management Cell and the ESSN Task Force) and allowed the GoT to be part of the Governing Board / Steering Committee. When compared to other humanitarian / development programmes, this approach can be considered innovative as local partners and national authorities are usually given a less prominent role in the programme. This is because Turkey is not a ‘conventional’ recipient of development / humanitarian assistance: it is a middle-income country and it is leading the refugee response in the country

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caused by conflict across its borders.\textsuperscript{70} As a result, the GoT was given a role in the strategic leadership of the programme – through the Governing Board / Steering Committee – as well as the operational management – through the TRC.

The strong influence of national authorities in the ESSN decision-making process generated operational challenges for the WFP, the main one being the comparatively more prominent role given to political considerations (e.g. during discussions of the Steering Committee), which forced the WFP to take some distance from the TRC in order to ensure political impartiality and accountability.\textsuperscript{71} Despite this, the experience was considered positive overall. Key informants consulted pointed out that the cooperation between the WFP, the TRC and the relevant ministries worked well. It was in fact identified as a success factor (see EQ6), as having all relevant authorities participate in the decisions led to all actors speaking with one voice and facilitated fast decision-making and response. This contributed, for instance, to the rapid increase of the number of beneficiaries in a short period of time.\textsuperscript{72}

More generally, stakeholders consulted noted that there had been constant coordination between all actors involved throughout the evaluation period, with some expressing that overall coordination and the quality of partnerships improved over time (see also EQ6).\textsuperscript{73} At a strategic level, the Steering Committee continued to constitute a valuable forum for raising field issues to national level, therefore facilitating joint approaches to cross-sectoral issues (i.e. affecting two or more Ministries). It also ensured coordination with other assistance programmes in the country.\textsuperscript{74} At an operational level, the Joint Management Cell and the ESSN Task Force contributed to achieving effective cooperation and facilitated the progressive handover of responsibilities from the WFP to the TRC (see EQ6). The ESSN Task Force and technical working groups were also seen as useful forums to share information and maximise the opportunities to improve coordination.\textsuperscript{75} The main weakness of these task forums – as argued by one KII (round 1) – is that beneficiaries were not sufficiently included into the conversation.\textsuperscript{76} Another KII (round 2) noted that the transparency and impartiality of the coordination structures could be improved.

**Beyond the ESSN coordination structures, the WFP and the TRC also worked closely with other partners on the ground, including but not only through 3RP coordination structures. This contributed further to improved coordination and coherence compared to the ESSN-1 (JC3.1).**

The ESSN was set up within the 3RP and following the standard refugee response model, which appears to have facilitated coordination with other actors active on the ground and helped avoid duplication of actions or cross payments.\textsuperscript{77} As the WFP acted as the basic needs sector lead within the 3RP, the ESSN became the backbone of the basic needs response in the country. According to KIs, the ESSN Task Force became the go-to shop for different agencies, allowing local and international actors to benefit from efficient and effective coordination under the ESSN.\textsuperscript{78}


\textsuperscript{71} ICF (2020) Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase).

\textsuperscript{72} ICF (2020) Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase).

\textsuperscript{73} Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase); ICF (2021) Key Informant Interviews, round 2 (Field phase).

\textsuperscript{74} Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase). 

\textsuperscript{75} Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase).

\textsuperscript{76} As explained under Q2, participatory needs assessments were not incorporated under the ESSN-2. However, the evidence gathered suggests that improvements were made to ensure that the experiences of beneficiaries were considered (e.g. site visits, monthly focus group discussions, CVME, TRC Call Centre).

\textsuperscript{77} Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase).

\textsuperscript{78} DG ECHO (2021) SingleForm 2017/00972/FR/01/01; Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase).
The evidence gathered does not suggest major differences in the way that the WFP and the TRC cooperated with other partners under the Facility and the 3RP, but it does provide several examples proving that efforts to ensure coordination with other actors on the ground (e.g. UNICEF, UNHCR) continued throughout the ESSN-2 implementation period, contributing to improved coherence over the years. For instance, in many locations, the WFP and the TRC worked together with UNICEF and UNHCR to organise joint sessions covering the ESSN, the CCTE programme and the government-led verification exercise. According to one KII (round 1), this type of cooperation was very useful at the beginning of the programme, as it allowed the WFP and the TRC to clarify doubts and answer questions about the ESSN. With time, the need for clarifications reduced, but their presence at core meetings was still deemed of vital importance to ensure coordination with other actors.

**ESSN-2's operations continued to be generally coherent with the results of other similar assistance programmes, although some missed opportunities to better link it to integration and livelihood programmes in the country were identified. Evidence of exploited synergies between the ESSN-2 and other cash transfer and in-kind assistance programmes targeting refugees was found (JC3.1)**

Stakeholders consulted generally considered the ESSN-2 to be coherent with other refugee assistance programmes. This was the view of a majority of national and local authorities interviewed, but also framework and implementing partners and representatives from the Commission, who noted that the programme was planned in a manner that ensured coherence with other relevant programmes and that by focusing on basic needs, it allowed other cash transfer and in-kind assistance programmes to focus on other needs or population groups.

The evaluation found evidence of complementarity and exploited synergies between the ESSN-2 and other similar programmes, although most of the examples identified were already present under the ESSN-2. Already at design stage (i.e. ESSN-1), amendments to existing or upcoming programmes were made to avoid any overlaps and ensure better complementarity. For instance, some Facility partners and local actors were providing cash assistance to cover basic needs through what was known as a special needs fund (SNF). With the launch of the ESSN, a differentiation was made between cash assistance to cover basic needs (i.e. ESSN) and other cash programmes to focus on protection. Similarly, a proposal for an EU 60 million programme to provide in-kind and cash assistance to Syrian refugees (under the HIP for Syria) was modified to avoid any overlaps with the then-forthcoming ESSN. The cash components were removed, and the project was eventually transformed into in-kind support to refugees in urban areas and the creation of the Bagcilar Community Centre in Istanbul.

Since its inception, efforts to ensure the complementarity between the ESSN and other similar programmes have continued. A key example of this is the CCTE programme, a conditional cash transfer programme funded by the EU which targets vulnerable refugee children in Turkey. As explained in the box below, the objectives of both programmes are complementary and efforts to ensure complementarity and exploit synergies between the two have been made throughout the evaluation period.

**Complementarity with the Conditional Cash Transfers for Education (CCTE) programme**

The CCTE provides cash assistance to vulnerable refugee children attending Turkish public schools or Temporary Education Centres (TEC). Its main objective is to maintain school attendance and

80 ICF (2021) Key Informant Interviews, round 2 (Field phase).
prevent the drop out of vulnerable refugee children and to some extent to improve school enrolment for out-of-school children. Its objective is therefore different to that of the ESSN-2, as the latter focuses on basic needs whereas the CCTE focuses on education.

The CCTE and the ESSN-2 were designed in close coordination, to align and build complementarities between them. They were also designed to build on some of the existing administrative processes, systems and institutions used to provide social transfer programmes to Turkish citizens. An example of these synergies is the fact that they use the same debit card (i.e. Kızılaykart) to make cash payments to the beneficiaries.

The evidence collected confirms close collaboration with Government agencies, TRC, UN agencies and NGOs, including DG ECHO framework partners, at central and local levels to maximise coverage, encourage complementary programming and conduct referrals. The CCTE was included as a standing agenda item at ESSN Task Force meetings, enabling UNICEF and TRC to update partners on the programme. The WFP convened monthly programme meetings, bringing together the ESSN and CCTE teams to exchange good practices and lessons learned, explore synergies between the programmes, and address shared challenges.

KILs also referred to more recent examples of cash-based assistance programmes designed to complement the ESSN. For instance, partly in response to the COVID-19 crisis, the UNHCR set up in April 2020 – right after the end of the second phase of the ESSN – a cash-based programme to help non-ESSN beneficiaries cope with the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis. Although the programme was much smaller than the ESSN – by the end of March 2021 it had assisted over 88,700 vulnerable HHs – it sought to fill in a gap left by the ESSN, targeting refugees that were not eligible for the ESSN.

The evidence reveals however limited progress regarding the missed opportunities identified by the ESSN-1 evaluation to further link the ESSN with the livelihood and integration programmes implemented under the Facility (see more details below and under Q7). Several measures were put in place to embed the philosophy of a transition from the ESSN to socioeconomic support (e.g. skills development, technical training, labour market integration), such as a series of workshops between DG NEAR and DG ECHO in November 2018 and 2019 and the drafting of joint implementation programmes. However, the actual implementation of this philosophy progressed rather slowly.

The ESSN-2 continued to be overall coherent with national social assistance programmes, with certain (justifiable) differences (JC3.4). The high degree of coherence was also facilitated by the continued cooperation between the WFP, the TRC and national authorities over the evaluation period.

The ESSN was implemented in close cooperation with Turkish authorities from its inception, building on the national social assistance policy and institutions while remaining distinct from it. According to the ESSN-2 Final report (SingleForm), the implementation through the Turkish protection system and the use of national databases and systems allowed to leverage safety net infrastructures in place and ensure and facilitate complementarity with other assistance programmes implemented in the country.

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87 The programme initially targeted 65,000 vulnerable HHs (representing approximately 286,000 individuals), but the assistance was subsequently extended. The figure at the end of March 2021 amounted to 88,779 HHs.
88 ICF (2020) Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase).
89 ICF (2020) Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase).
Key informants consulted for this evaluation – including national and local authorities as well as NGOs – perceived the ESSN-2 to be overall coherent with national assistance policies. Differences between the ESSN-2 and the national programmes still existed, for instance, in relation to the type of beneficiaries (HHs vs individuals), the eligibility criteria (demographic vs individual vulnerability criteria), the amount received by beneficiaries (higher for ESSN beneficiaries than under national social assistance programmes) as well as to the type of assistance (i.e. one channel under the ESSN vs a plethora of channels under the national system, which is more fragmented). These differences were generally considered as justified, especially given the different nature – and therefore objectives – and size of the ESSN as opposed to other national programmes.

The only exception concerned the disparities in the amounts received by ESSN beneficiaries relative to beneficiaries of other national social assistance programmes (with the first group receiving higher amounts). According to a small number of KIs – namely local authorities and NGOs – this had created tensions between Syrians and the host community (see EQ3 and EQ9). In the view of one local actor, the difference was significant enough to have affected the coherence of the ESSN-2 with national programmes.

Certain measures implemented over the course of the ESSN-2 resulted in a higher degree of coherence with national programmes compared to the ESSN-1. Most of the examples identified related to measures adopted towards the end of the ESSN-1 which yielded results under the ESSN-2.

One of the main examples is the introduction of the SDA, conceived at the end of the ESSN-1, but formally adopted in 2018. Whilst prior to its adoption, refugees with disabilities had already been covered by the ESSN through the demographic criterion, the introduction of the SDA led to a further degree of alignment between the ESSN-2 and the Turkish system, more specifically with its career allowance. – This is in spite of the fact that the two allowances are not fully aligned, given that under the ESSN, the allowance is granted to a whole HH as opposed to an individual (see EQ1b).

Another important development related to the use of a cross-check mechanism to prevent beneficiaries from receiving assistance from one than more donor to cover the same need. This mechanism – known as the “duplication matrix” – was developed in August 2017 to solve the issues around the lack of access to beneficiary data by donors and NGOs active on the ground. The platform, maintained by the MoFSP, enables local NGOs to cross-check beneficiary data on their behalf to avoid duplication of efforts by asking the TRC to run a check. During the ESSN-2 implementation period, the level of awareness about the existence and functioning of this mechanism increased amongst NGOs to the point that nowadays all international NGOs are aware and make frequent use of it. KIs carried out for this evaluation suggest however that not all NGOs were familiar with it or considered it sufficient to ensure coherence, as several NGOs consulted which are active on the ground referred to their limited access to beneficiary data as an aspect that hindered further coherence with national programmes.

The last example relates to the continued collaboration between the WFP, the TRC and national authorities to address issues identified during the ESSN-1 or to enhance cooperation in the medium and long term. Several examples can be highlighted:

90 ICF (2020) Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase); ICF (2020) Key Informant Interviews, round 2 (Field phase).
92 ICF (2020) Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase); ICF (2020) Key Informant Interviews, round 2 (Field phase).
93 ICF (2020) Key Informant Interviews, round 2 (Field phase).
94 ICF (2020) Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase).
95 ICF Validation workshop.
96 ICF (2020) Key Informant Interviews, round 2 (Field phase).
• TK Referral and Outreach teams were introduced in early 2018 to increase awareness and facilitate access to the programme for eligible ESSN beneficiaries, building on the work and responsibility of pre-existing TRC field operation teams (see EQ6);

• The WFP and the TRC:
  - continued to collaborate with DGMM around registration issues, including referral of cases to PDMMs;
  - continued to provide operational support to SASFs where requested, for example through the provision of translators, as well as through additional staff and vehicles to conduct HH verification visits;
  - maintained the provision of technical support to the MoFSP through the secondment of staff, the profiles of which have been identified in preliminary consultation with MoFSP with a view to enhance short and longer-term capacity in key areas such as financial management and legal expertise; and,
  - provided capacity support to DGPC through the provision of translators to provincial- and district-level DGPC offices where required by seconding TRC contracted staff.

Despite the overall positive assessment and the coherence gains of the ESSN-2 compared to the ESSN-1, there is still some room to exploit further synergies with international interventions and national programmes (JC3.1 and JC3.4).

Several KIIs (round 1) referred to the issues around protection referrals (see EQ7) and the slow progress towards the transition to development and the exit strategy (see EQ7 and EQ14) as areas where further synergies could have been exploited. This signals that although some progress was observed in this area under the ESSN-2, room for further complementarity still exists.

Field KIIs also pointed at room for further coherence in relation to the practical implementation of the ESSN across all regions and cities. KIIs suggest that, while the WFP and the TRC cooperated extensively with national authorities, coordination with local authorities was less common. Several NGOs consulted also referred to differences in the way that the ESSN was implemented across different regions. Although the KIIs did not elaborate further, it can be assumed that these differences concerned the way that the discretionary (SDA) and the severe disability allowances were implemented in practice. Regarding the SASF Discretionary Allowance, not all SASF used their quota to the full extent. As for the severe discretionary allowance, the differences in the implementation are likely to be related to the obstacles that some beneficiaries faced in the beginning to obtain the required medical certificate, effectively preventing them from benefiting from the allowance (see EQ1b). As these issues were subsequently addressed, it can be assumed that the differences across cities reduced.

The implementation of the ESSN-2 was overall in line with the humanitarian principles. Tensions with the principle of humanity identified under the ESSN-1 were mostly addressed during the second phase of the programme. Potential tensions with the principle of independence still existed, although they were deemed justified (JC3.3).

While recognising the benefits it generated, and acknowledging the central role of the GoT in hosting and providing assistance to refugees in the country, several key informants consulted saw the strong dependency on the GoT as potentially at odds with the principle of independence. In particular, one KII (round 1) highlighted that it had made it more difficult to gather information on the needs of certain minority groups (e.g. LGBTI and ethnic groups), resulting in difficulties to fully address their needs (see EQ1a). The approach was largely justified, however, on account of the

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98 ICF (2020) Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase).
99 ICF (2020) Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase).
pivotal role that the GoT played in managing the overall refugee situation, and the benefits generated by their strong involvement and reliance on existing national systems.\textsuperscript{100}

Tensions with the principle of humanity had also existed at the beginning of the programme (ESSN-1), mostly due to the initial barriers that many beneficiaries experimented to access the ESSN-1. However, in the view of the key stakeholders that referred to these tensions, the measures adopted during 2018 – 2020 to increase awareness about the programme and reduce exclusion errors (e.g. through local leaders and outreach teams and the introduction of additional allowances (see EQ1)) ensured full alignment with the principle of humanity.\textsuperscript{101}

3.2.2 EQ4 - How well aligned were ESSN’s operations with DG ECHO’s cash transfer policy and other thematic policies during the evaluation period?

**Table 11. EQ4 Key conclusions**

<table>
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<th>Judgement criteria</th>
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<th>Key conclusions</th>
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| JC4.1 ESSN-2 operations were coherent with DG ECHO’s thematic and sector policies (protection, gender, disability) and in particular with DG ECHO’s cash transfer policy | S | • The ESSN-2 was largely aligned with DG ECHO’s policies and guidance on the provision of (large-scale) cash transfers, although some deviations existed.  
• ESSN operations were mostly in line with DG ECHO’s protection guidelines. Remaining issues concerning exclusion errors and protection referrals signal room for further alignment, but this improved compared to the ESSN-1.  
• The ESSN-2 was only partially coherent with DG ECHO’s guidance on gender-sensitive aid policies, as it did not formally incorporate a gender approach.  
• The introduction of the Severe Disability Allowance (2018) ensured the alignment with DG ECHO’s recent guidelines on inclusion of people with disabilities. |
| JC4.2 Deviations or inconsistencies with DG ECHO’s thematic/sector policies were minimal and, where occurred, they were justified and/or adjustments were made to address them | M | • The deviations from the guidance on the provision of (large-scale) cash transfers were deemed to be justified and/or their impact minimised by the existing operational arrangements.  
• Issues linked to the collection of data allowing for comprehensive needs assessments persisted. |

**Baseline**

- The ESSN evaluation (November 2016- December 2017) found that it was closely aligned with the good practice principles set out by DG ECHO with regards to the vision and operational model for cash assistance set out in DG ECHO’s guidance, i.e. DG ECHO global cash and vouchers evaluation, DG ECHO’s ten principles on multi-purpose cash grants (MPGs), the Enhanced Response Capacity operations manual on MPGs, and the guidance on implementing cash assistance at large scale.

\textsuperscript{100} ICF (2020) Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase).

\textsuperscript{101} ICF (2020) Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase).
The ESSN evaluation (November 2016–December 2017) did not analyse the degree of alignment with other relevant thematic policies existing at the moment, such as DG ECHO’s Thematic Policy Documents No 6 (Gender – Different needs, adapted assistance, adopted in July 2013) or No 8 (Improving protection outcomes to reduce risks for people in humanitarian crises, adopted in May 2016). However, it concluded that the design of the ESSN-1 has not considered the specific needs or constraints faced by particular vulnerable groups such as women or persons with disabilities.

In implementing the ESSN, DG ECHO’s relevant thematic and sectoral policies ought to be considered, namely those that concern cash transfers, the inclusion of a gender perspective in all humanitarian interventions, and the consideration of the specific needs of persons with disabilities. Even if the ESSN-2 was not – strictly speaking – a protection programme, the guidelines on protection measures are also relevant as the programme incorporates a protection element.

The KKIIs showed that EU staff were aware of the existence and content of these guidelines, which they tried to follow to the extent possible. They also revealed that among the framework partners, only the WFP was made aware of the applicable guidelines.102

**ESSN-2 was largely coherent with DG ECHO’s policies and guidelines applicable to the provision of (large-scale) cash transfers (JC4.1), although some justified deviations continue to exist (JC4.2).**

DG ECHO’s Thematic Policy Document No 3 – adopted in 2013 – sets guidelines for the provision of humanitarian assistance through the provision of cash transfers and vouchers.103 Together with the ten common principles for multi-purpose cash-based assistance to respond to humanitarian needs,104 they lay down the main considerations that should inform cash-based interventions. Additional guidelines applicable to large-scale cash transfers were developed in parallel to the ESSN-1 and published after the programme had already started.105

The KKIIs and document review showed that ESSN-2 operations were well aligned with DG ECHO’s guidance on (large-scale) cash transfers, but not fully. Two main aspects where divergence existed were identified, although both cases were deemed justified and unproblematic. The first element which diverged concerned the need to consider the particular needs of vulnerable population groups, with the second being the need to ensure the separation between the different components of the delivery of cash transfers.

Concerning the first element, the eligibility criteria under the ESSN-2 did not change with respect to the first phase of the programme and remained based on demographic characteristics. This target system was in line with the requirement to establish common targeting criteria contained in the large-scale cash transfers guidelines but fell short on the requirement to conduct individual vulnerability or needs assessments set by the Thematic Note on cash policies.106 The misalignment with the Thematic Note can however be justified by the nature of the ESSN and the need for a rapid scale-up to reach a large and scattered population, circumstances that made the demographic-based targeting criteria the most appropriate option.107

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102 ICF (2020) Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase).
105 DG ECHO (2017) Guidance to partners funded by the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) to deliver large-scale cash transfers.
Moreover, as explained above (see EQ1a and EQ1b), although the design of the ESSN-2 did not consider the specific needs of the most vulnerable groups, some adjustments were made during its implementation to correct this, leading to some improvement regarding the use of needs assessments to inform changes (see EQ1b) and the adoption of new measures to address the specific needs of some of – even if not all – the most vulnerable refugees, i.e. through the SASF Discretionary Allowance or the Severe Disability Allowance (see EQ1a). As a result, the misalignment with this specific element of the Thematic Note was reduced compared to the baseline.

For the second element, the guidance on large-scale transfers recommends a multi-partnered approach which also separates functions for better efficiency across the three main components of the programme, notably programming (component A), implementation (component B), and independent M&E (component C). The ESSN-2 was implemented through a diverse partnership (WFP, TRC, MoFLSS, HalkBank) with clear, distinct functions. However, the document review and KIIIs reveal that there was no separation across components, with partners covering different components in a non-exclusive manner.\(^{108}\)

This divergence from this requirement of the large-scale cash transfer guidelines was also justified and its impact largely minimised thanks to the way in which the ESSN-2 was implemented in practice. The guidance itself acknowledges that it can be partially applied, recognising that the option of continuing to operate delivering a programme from start to finish through a humanitarian partner should be possible where it is considered to increase the effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency of the assistance. In the case of the ESSN – according to DG ECHO staff and representatives from the WFP consulted for this evaluation – the separation across components was not possible.\(^{109,10}\) Moreover, the evidence collected suggests that the variety of partners implicated in the different activities and the oversight provided by the WFP was considered sufficient to ensure independent monitoring (see EQ11 for more details on the various monitoring mechanisms implemented throughout the implementation of the ESSN-2 and how these informed some of the changes adopted).\(^{111}\)

In terms of efficiency, the guidance refers to the Total Cost to Transfer Ratio (TCTR) as a standard way to measure it, indicating that a combined efficiency ratio of well above the minimum 85:15 should be achieved for Components A and B. The improvement in this ratio observed under the ESSN-2 (from 85.4% under the ESSN-1 to 88.7% under the ESSN-2) (see EQ12) resulted in a higher degree of alignment with the guidance under the ESSN-2 when compared to the baseline, as noted by several KIIIs (round 2).

A last element that warrants some reflection is the requirement laid down by the Thematic Note to conduct a needs assessment which is based on multiple contextual factors to determine whether in-kind or cash assistance is better suited. This is in line with the general objective of the large-scale cash guidance, i.e. to ensure that assistance gets to beneficiaries more effectively, efficiently, and directly, in a manner that is appropriate to the context and the phase of a crisis. The guidance prompts to consider several aspects, including the easiness with which beneficiaries can access local markets and services, or the inflation in the country. In the case of the ESSN, the country context (i.e. upper middle-income country) and the existence of a well-developed financial service sector – with strong capacity and national coverage – offered the opportunity to implement a multi-
purpose cash programme to address the assistance needs of the refugee population.\(^{112}\) One could argue however that the hyperinflation that has affected the Turkish lira (TL) since 2018 – with the subsequent loss of beneficiaries’ purchase power as the MEB increased (see EQ1b and EQ8) – impacted the suitability of cash transfers as implemented under the ESSN-2 (i.e. with limited flexibility to adapt to the raising prices), rendering the transition into other types of assistance even more necessary.

**ESSN-2 operations were also largely coherent with DG ECHO’s protection guidelines.**

Some issues linked to exclusion errors and protection referrals remained, which affected its alignment with the specific objectives laid down in the protection guidelines. However, the improvements in these areas led to a higher degree of alignment with the protection guidelines was strengthened compared to the ESSN-1.

The ESSN aimed to address the needs of the most vulnerable refugees, thus incorporating a protection approach, in line with DG ECHO’s HIPs for Turkey which stressed the need to mainstream protection issues in all humanitarian actions. More specifically, the ESSN aimed to reduce protection risks faced by vulnerable refugees by minimising negative coping strategies and exposure to external threats through the provision of basic needs assistance. Component 4 of the ESSN protection approach was specifically aimed at finding solutions to accessing the ESSN, while referring persons with needs outside of the ESSN programme and cases requiring specialised protection assistance to other service providers.

Field KIIIs conducted for this evaluation confirmed that although it was not its primary objective, by covering the basic needs of refugees, the ESSN-2 – like its predecessor – allowed other humanitarian actors to focus on protection related services.\(^{113}\) Against this background, the improvements made under the ESSN-2 concerning the exclusion errors and protection referrals which affected the implementation of the ESSN-1 (see EQ1a and EQ1b) reflected positively on the degree of alignment of the practical implementation of the ESSN-2 with the protection principles, relative to the baseline. Nonetheless, as some issues remained, some degree of misalignment was still observed.

Another element to consider is whether the ESSN created unintended protection risks. The document review pointed to anecdotal evidence suggesting that the registration system and eligibility criteria might have led to protection risks for specific groups of beneficiaries (e.g. by leading men to marry under-aged women because the demographic criteria assumes that the HH is composed of a single father and his daughter, as the real relationship is not always checked).\(^{114}\) However, the information available is too limited to assess whether this was indeed the case and whether or how the situation evolved under the ESSN-2.

**The ESSN-2 was partially coherent with policies and guidance on the inclusion of a gender-perspective on aid policies. The design of the programme did not fully integrate a gender perspective, taking into consideration gender only to certain extent. Some improvement in terms of ensuring gender mainstreaming was observed under the ESSN-2, reflecting positively on its coherence with the guidelines, but some shortcomings persisted.**

The general objective of the gender-sensitive aid policy guideline is to improve the quality of humanitarian operations by systematically tailoring responses to the specific needs of women and men of all ages, effectively helping the most vulnerable. One of the specific objectives concerns integration (i.e. gender-sensitive humanitarian responses must be adapted to the differentiated needs and risks, mindful of the diverse cultural backgrounds and coping mechanisms and designed to foster the capacities and potential contributions of various gender groups). As reflected in

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\(^{113}\) ICF (2020) Key Informant Interviews, round 1 (Desk phase).

documents reviewed, like the ESSN-1, the design of the ESSN-2 was not informed by a specific gender assessment, mostly due to the lack of gender-disaggregated baseline data and HH vulnerability assessments.\textsuperscript{115} Over time, some gender considerations were introduced, and several steps were taken to improve the gender-sensitivity of the ESSN-2 (see EQ1a), but these were not sufficient to achieve a full gender perspective. Examples of shortcomings in this area are the absence of gender and age specific intra-HH dynamics analysis and access to livelihoods assessments and the lack of specific coverage of the needs of the LGBTI community, as noted under EQ1a.\textsuperscript{116}

There is also partial alignment with the second specific objective, which relates to participation (i.e. to ensure the participation of women and men of all ages in the design, implementation, and evaluation of humanitarian operations). ESSN beneficiaries were not involved in the design of the programme, but their views were taken into account through monitoring as well as through the feedback mechanisms implemented.

The third specific objective concerns protection (i.e. to secure beneficiaries from risks related to the context or even arising from the relief operation itself, including sexual and gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse). In this sense, the observations presented above in relation to the protection principles are also relevant here.

**The initial needs assessment did not consider the specific needs of persons with disabilities, but subsequent adjustments ensured a high degree of alignment with DG ECHO’s guidance in this area.**

The initial needs assessment under the ESSN-2 did not reflect the different types of vulnerabilities and associated needs, including those of beneficiaries with disabilities. Persons with disabilities were covered by the programme as a result of the demographic criteria, but their specific needs were not specifically addressed.

This was later modified. In 2018, the Severe Disability Allowance was introduced to help HHs with a severely disabled member face their higher expenditures compared to other ESSN beneficiaries (see EQ1b), an adjustment that was also reflected in the 2019 HIP for Turkey which specified that “specific attention will also be paid to the measures ensuring inclusion of people with disabilities in proposed actions”. This action brought the ESSN in line with DG ECHO’s Operational Guidelines on this matter, adopted in 2019.\textsuperscript{117} Further alignment was then achieved when the practical obstacles to effectively access this allowance were solved (see EQ1b).

**Some challenges linked to access to data to conduct comprehensive needs assessment persisted under the ESSN-2.**

Efforts were made by the partners to provide disaggregated data by gender, age, and disability were observed under the ESSN-2. The WFP was able to use the findings from ongoing monitoring activities and surveys to identify further types of vulnerabilities and associated needs and inform the design of the programme PAB, CVME, PDM, Survey on Social Cohesion and Communications, process monitoring, see JC11.1 for further information on data collection). Nonetheless, the document review reveals that DG ECHO and WFP needs assessments did not include other types of vulnerabilities (e.g. children with special needs, LGBTI community, refugees with chronic illnesses –


\textsuperscript{117} DG ECHO (2019) Operational Guidance - The Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in EU-funded Humanitarian Aid Operations.
see EQ1a) and that they missed an in-depth analysis of shocks, stresses, and vulnerabilities at HH level.118

3.3  EU Added Value

3.3.1  EQ5 - What is the EU added value of the ESSN programme (i.e. the added value of a single EU intervention, compared to individual initiatives from the EU Member States)?

Table 12. EQ5 Key conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgement criteria</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>Key conclusions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JC5.1 The implementation of a single large-scale intervention such as the ESSN allowed to reach a vast number of beneficiaries compared to what could have been achieved by individual actions of Member States</td>
<td></td>
<td>• As a single intervention, ESSN-2 achieved significant results in terms of volume and scope of its reach: the number of ESSN-2 beneficiaries at 1.3 million and the volume of ESSN-2 funding at €1.179 billion were the highest ever covered by DG ECHO. Both values also represent a considerable increase compared to ESSN-1 and to other donor interventions in Turkey and cash assistance programmes worldwide. This success is predominantly due to the architecture of ESSN-2 as a single large-scale intervention and the speed of assistance enabled through DG ECHO. This made the assistance more effective and efficient in reaching a high proportion of refugees (around 50%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC5.4 The targeting criteria of the ESSN-2 also allowed to reach a relatively poorer and more vulnerable population of refugees</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Due to its targeting criteria, ESSN-2 reached poor and vulnerable refugees. 89% of extremely poor HHs received ESSN-2, the exclusion error decreased and inclusion error increased, also partly due to the change in the targeting criteria (and other factors). However, despite significant initial improvements, some difficulties in reaching the most vulnerable refugees still occurred in practice under the ESSN-2, likely due to the consequences of the economic crisis, affecting disproportionately some vulnerable refugees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC5.5 In the absence of DG ECHO funding a majority of actions would not have gone ahead or would have only gone ahead on a smaller scale or different scope, resulting only in a limited or partial addressing of identified needs</td>
<td></td>
<td>• The scale of support would have been much smaller without ESSN-2, and much more fragmented, thus leading to inefficiencies and potential gaps or overlaps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC5.2 The implementation of a single intervention allowed for increased efficiency (see EQ12)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• The use of a single intervention allowed to further improve the cost-effectiveness of the ESSN-2. This is as demonstrated by an increase in the cost transfer ratio. The cost transfer ratio increased by approximately 3 percentage points between ESSN-1 (85.4%) and ESSN-2 (88.7%). Using total ESSN-2</td>
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expenditures as a base, this reflects a cost-efficiency saving of €31 million. This cost-transfer ratio is similar to those of cash programmes implemented in other countries, however the ability to directly compare these programmes to the ESSN is limited due to their smaller scale and beneficiary cohort. Stakeholder views also support this finding.

| JC5.3 The implementation of a single intervention fostered strong coordination between actors, including the authorities (see EQ14) | S | • ESSN-2 achieved good results in terms of coordination, dialogue and advocacy with the GoT due to its nature as single intervention. Still, there is a need to further improve cooperation with authorities, in particular in relation to data access and the more strategic discussions between ESSN stakeholders and national authorities over the longer-term evolution of the programme. |
| JC5.6 Given the magnitude of the ESSN, it provides important lessons for future cash programmes. | S | • Significant efforts in ESSN-2 to capture lessons learned at programme level which have generated a wealth of information and potential to be used in other contexts.  
• Some transfer of learning from ESSN-2 has occurred, but it could be further improved. |

**Baseline**

- The number of beneficiaries reached by the ESSN-1 represented a significant increase compared to already existing activities in this field. Previously, basic needs support was provided to approximately 300,000 refugees (160,000 from the WFP/TRC off-camp 
  Kızılaykart and 140,000 through other NGO basic needs assistance programmes). The ESSN-1 was able to increase the coverage of refugees approximately fourfold, reaching 1.7 million by March 2020. The ESSN-1 therefore significantly increased the coverage of refugee compared to preceding cash assistance. However, the homogeneity of refugees and the scale of needs made targeting challenging and many vulnerable HHs remained excluded from ESSN assistance.
- The ESSN-1 was significantly more cost-effective than the preceding humanitarian assistance to refugees. The average cost transfer ratio across Commission funded basic needs projects in the region accounted for 79%. The primary driver of cost-efficiency was the scale.
- The ESSN-1 Evaluation (November 2016 – December 2017) showed that the cooperation with the Turkish authorities was overall good, from a technical point of view.

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120 WFP, OPM (2018) Evaluation of the DG ECHO funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in Turkey, November 2016- December 2017
Although it was the first implementation phase of the programme, the ESSN-1 already provided (through its M&E mechanisms) an opportunity to draw lessons, derive good practices and pointers for learning. The ESSN MTR (2018-2019), covering the period November 2016 to December 2017, was carried out to provide evidence-based findings to inform operational and strategic decision-making for the second implementation phase of the programme.\(^\text{124}\)

The implementation of a single large-scale intervention such as the ESSN-2 allowed to reach an unprecedented number of beneficiaries, a result which would have been very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve by single Member State interventions (JCS.1). While the initial aim of the ESSN-2 was to assist some 1.3 million refugees allowing them to cover their basic needs, the programme reached 1.7 million beneficiaries by March 2020, thus exceeding the original target by 30%. This also meant, as shown in Figure 13, that ESSN-2 achieved a coverage rate of around 50% of refugees in Turkey. The speed of such large-scale assistance disbursed under DG ECHO would not have been possible otherwise. This ensured that the basic needs of refugees have been met in a systematic way (see also EQ7), which also brings added value. The benefit from ESSN-2 was not only about meeting the basic needs of beneficiaries in a dignified manner, but also about enabling beneficiaries to better access education, health, government public services, and as integrating in the society (e.g. opening a bank account, see also EQ8). This is an added value showing that cash assistance can boost the ability of people to engage with the host community and not be isolated (although the impact on social cohesion is limited, see EQ9).

**Figure 13. ESSN-2 coverage rate**

![Graph showing ESSN-2 coverage rate]


At least 10 KIIIs (across the different stakeholder groups, showing a consensus) stressed the added value of implementing a single large intervention such as the ESSN in meeting the vast scale of needs of the refugee population in Turkey, also enabled through the involvement of DG ECHO which led to a very fast implementation on a large scale.

**A specific aspect of added value related to the use of specific targeting criteria under ESSN-2 which allowed to reach poor and vulnerable refugees** (JCS.4). The exclusion error of poor refugees decreased significantly in October 2017 after the change in the targeting criteria (see EQ1b). However, despite significant initial improvements, some difficulties in reaching the most vulnerable refugees still occurred in practice under the ESSN-2. As shown in the final ESSN-2 data,

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37% of extremely poor HHs remained excluded from the programme. At least four KIs also observed persisting difficulties in reaching the most fragile groups, which somewhat limited the added value of the ESSN-2.

Nonetheless, during ESSN-2, the data below shows an increase in the proportion of poor people excluded based on the extreme poverty line, which is likely due to the consequences of the economic crisis, affecting disproportionately some vulnerable refugees.

**Figure 14. Poor people excluded from ESSN-2**

Source: WFP PDM Cross Sectional Surveys.

The difficulties in reaching refugees living in extreme poverty should be however considered in the light of the economic downturn, which hit Turkey starting mid-2018. This triggered a considerable worsening in the welfare of refugee HHs overall and challenged the ESSN-2 capacity to reach extremely poor refugees in difficult economic circumstances (see also EQ6, JC6.3).

The unprecedented amount of funding in a humanitarian aid intervention under ESSN-2 permitted the implementation of activities at a scale that would not have been possible to manage on a bilateral/ single basis (JC5.5). This was already confirmed at the mid-term evaluation stage of ESSN-2. It pointed out that ESSN-2 enabled pooling of efforts and volume of financing which would have not come out from a single Member State. Also, without ESSN-2 funding, the GoT would not have been able to fund the refugee support and considered the scale and volume of support which was enabled with ESSN-2 funding.

At least five KIs undertaken in the context of this evaluation pointed out that, in the absence of the ESSN, the provision of aid would have only gone ahead on a very limited scale, resulting in partial addressing of identified needs. In particular, two interviewees stated that, if the ESSN stopped, “there would be nothing replacing this assistance for vulnerable refugees”. Another supporting argument in the KIs pointed out that other actors, such as UNHCR, provided more limited support and have therefore not been able to cover the same scale as ESSN-2. For example, starting in April 2020, UNHCR, partly as a response to the Covid-19 crisis in Turkey, provided one-off cash support to ESSN beneficiaries per HH and covered about 100,000 HHs. This helped mitigate their worsening economic situation, but the intervention relied and built up on the existing support provided by the ESSN.

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125 WFP (2021) Single Form 2017/00972/FR/01/01.
The implementation of a single intervention allowed for increased efficiency (JC5.2, see also EQ12). As discussed under EQ12, the cost-efficiency further improved in the second implementation phase of the programme as demonstrated by an increase in the cost transfer ratio (JC5.2). The cost transfer ratio increased by approximately 3 percentage points between ESSN-1 (85.4%) and ESSN-2 (88.7%). Using total ESSN-2 expenditures as a base, this reflects a cost-efficiency saving of €31 million. This cost-transfer ratio is similar to those of cash programmes implemented in other countries, however the ability to directly compare these programmes to the ESSN is limited due to their smaller scale and beneficiary cohort.128

The evidence collected indicated that the improvements in the cost-efficiency were largely driven by the increased scale of the ESSN-2. As already mentioned, above, this was possible thanks to the implementation of a large-scale single intervention. This implementation model also allowed an efficient roll out of new programme features such as the SASF Discretionary Allowance and the Severe Disability Allowance top-ups (see EQ1a). As highlighted in the WFP September IR 2020 and underlined in DG NEAR’s Mid-Term evaluation of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, the design and implementation of the ESSN built on the value of each implementing partner and relied on established national structures which gave room to cost efficiency and rapid scale up (i.e. ESSN-2 cost efficiency ratio reached 88.7 percent by exceeding the contractual requirement of 87.5 percent).

Indeed, a factor contributing to the increased efficiency was the continuing implementation of ESSN-2 through the existing Turkish social protection system structures. This leveraged the safety net infrastructure in place to deliver the ESSN-2 humanitarian assistance in an efficient and effective way. The single intervention model also enabled an effective performance in terms of regular monthly payments over the two-year period and translated into a high beneficiary satisfaction with the ESSN-2 application and payment procedures (see EQ9).

The implementation of a single intervention such as ESSN-2 fostered strong coordination between actors, including the authorities (see EQ14) (JC5.3). The implementation of a single intervention like the ESSN was beneficial to the establishment of fruitful cooperation and coordination with Turkish authorities. At least three KII’s observed that the ESSN-2 managed to achieve unprecedented results in terms of coordination, dialogue and advocacy with the GoT. Although positive achievements were reported, at least two KII’s also referred to a need to further improve cooperation with authorities, in particular in relation to data access (see EQ9).

Moreover, as further discussed under EQ Sustainability, whilst day-to-day cooperation on the ESSN-2 was considered fruitful, the more strategic discussions between ESSN stakeholders and national authorities over the longer-term evolution of the programme did not result in a concrete agreement on a way forward.

Given the magnitude of the ESSN, it provides important lessons for future cash programmes (JC 5.6. see also EQ11). Considering the magnitude of the ESSN continuation, significant attention was invested by partners in capturing the lessons learned through the implementation of the ESSN-2 including a formal Lessons Learnt Exercise and Meta Evaluation exercises (see EQ11 for further information on the process put in place).

Some of the elements that made the ESSN unique in comparison with other humanitarian cash programmes were indeed the very large volume of funding and the high number of beneficiaries reached, but also the sustained duration of the cash transfers. Another aspect that made the ESSN rather unique were the linkages that have been developed with the GoT since the outset of the programme. A focus on these issues has generated useful lessons learned for future cash programmes. A summary of the main findings of the WFP Meta-evaluation and other outputs from LLE is provided in the box below.

3.3.2 Summary of main lessons learnt from LLE and the WFP Meta-evaluation exercise

**Partnership with the GoT**

Absence of direct MoU with Government agencies and key national counterparts impacted on WFP’s ability to transfer knowledge and skills to GoT;  
TRC’s immense network and access in Turkey enabled the ESSN to scale-up quickly;  
TRC’s auxiliary role to the GoT enabled access to government data, but also posed some challenges in relation to the adherence to humanitarian principles and complexities between the TRC’s fulfilling its auxiliary role as well as being an implementing partner;  
TRC’s intermediary role impacted the flow and the time needed to make critical decisions at key junctures of the project scale up and implementation process;  
DG ECHO’s active engagement in the design and the implementation of the ESSN brought positive impacts in terms of engaging all the relevant ESSN partners. It could have enabled greater coordination between the WFP and national stakeholders by ensuring that WFP participates in all ESSN related meetings, including at the strategic level with the GoT.

**Communication**

The ESSN used effective communication channels despite some coordination challenges;  
The ESSN used diversified communication channels accessible and adaptable to the Syrian and other refugees’ conditions;  
Earlier clarification of roles and responsibilities among the M&E and Outreach teams could have reduced uncoordinated missions and duplication of efforts.

**M&E arrangements**

Strong Vulnerability Analysis, M&E methods and capacity ensured effective targeting and continued learning;  
Extensive field presence and participatory, iterative methods to engage with interlocutors resulted in effective relationships and strong data. This in turn informed programme advocacy, resulting in significant improvements to the original programme design (such as increase in transfer value in June 2017 and top-ups in August 2019, the introduction of quarterly top-ups and additional allowances); and  
These top-ups improved the quality of life of ESSN beneficiaries, seen through consistent reporting and multi-dimensional poverty indicator comparisons.

**The ESSN design**

The ESSN was designed to build on an existing system that entailed opportunities and constraints;  
The use of existing network of SASFs across Turkey enabled extensive reach and greater legitimacy for the ESSN;  
Given the well-established system in place for vulnerable Turkish citizens, making adjustments to address specific issues faced by refugees required lengthy and cumbersome procedures; and

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129 The MoU was not planned at the outset of ESSN. It is only in 2020 and as a lesson learned from the ESSN that the first MoU was signed between WFP and Turkey’s Ministry of National Education (MoNE) as well as İşkur (the national Employment Agency) for WFP’s livelihood work. This was followed in 2021 by a protocol with DGMM to support TRCO’s programming in the camps. See Annex A, META-ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT AND LESSONS LEARNED FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EMERGENCY SOCIAL SAFETY NET (ESSN) PROGRAMME IN TURKEY (2016–2020).
Given the permanently increased workload with constant or slightly increased capacity, SASFs could have benefited from more resources (e.g. translators, vehicles, etc.).

**HIP**

The annual HIP process impacted the ability of the project to plan in the long-term, making sustainability-related discussions difficult (e.g. changes to government systems, graduation etc.); and

The annual re-evaluation of the WFP’s role through the HIP process posed challenges for the partnership between the WFP and national stakeholders with each new cycle

**Exit strategy**

Considerations with regard to the graduation/transition of ESSN beneficiaries happened late and are challenging in the current climate;

Exit was not sufficiently considered at the time of programme design;

By the time the issue of exit from the ESSN started to be addressed by relevant stakeholders, socio-economic and geo-political challenges acted as a further obstacle to the implementation of long-term solutions; and

Longer-term strategies would require a stronger linkage between DG ECHO and DG-NEAR funding
### 3.4 Effectiveness

#### 3.4.1 EQ6 - To what extent have DG ECHO’s objectives (as defined in the HAR, the Consensus, the specific HIPs and the Decisions establishing the Facility, as well as the Management Framework for Turkey) been satisfied through the implementation of the ESSN programme?

#### Table 13. EQ6 Key conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgement criteria</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>Key conclusions</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| JC6.1 DG ECHO provided a critical mass of funding, under the ESSN-2, to address the humanitarian aid objectives set in strategic documentation | S | • ESSN-2 provided a critical mass of funding with over €1.2 billion, allowing for an unprecedented number of beneficiaries, and enabling a 50% coverage of refugees in Turkey.  
• Positive ESSN-2 contribution in stabilising and improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable out-of-camp refugee HHs, despite the recent rise in inflation resulting in a decrease of refugees’ purchasing power and their ability to access and pursue education.  
• More limited progress was recorded in supporting the integration of refugees within their host communities, contributing to social cohesion as well as progressing towards an evolution of the ESSN into wider livelihood programming. |
| JC6.2 The activities implemented were aligned with the objective of DG ECHO’s strategy for Turkey (see EQ3) | S | • Discussed under EQ3.                                                                                                                       |
| JC6.3 Although a number of obstacles to the implementation of activities was identified, the ESSN-2 was overall implemented as planned with existing obstacles mitigated | S | • Most of the ESSN-2 activities and outputs were overall effectively implemented/delivered on the ground.  
• Most intended results were achieved.  
• Significant efforts to address the main obstacles, not always successful (e.g., inflation).  
• the current transfer value and quarterly (increased) top-ups are still not sufficient to cover the basic needs of beneficiaries. |
| JC6.4 The implementation capacity of the partnership, coordination and management arrangements have been among the key drivers of performance | S | • The implementation of good management, partnership and governance structures identified as a main success factor. Major capacity issues were not reported under the ESSN-2 and enabled a successful delivery. |
| JC6.5 The quality of partnerships implementing ESSN-2 has improved over time        | S | • The quality of the partnership remained high throughout the ESSN-2.                                                                       |

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**Baseline**

*January, 2018*
With a budget of €357 million, the ESSN-1 was the largest cash programme ever funded by DG ECHO. Started in September 2016, with its critical mass of funding, the ESSN managed to reach an unprecedented number of beneficiaries (1 million by September 2018). The number of beneficiaries represented a significant increase over the coverage of refugees prior to the establishment of the ESSN (around 300,000).

The ESSN-1 managed to reach the objectives set at programme level and contributed to addressing DG ECHO’s humanitarian aid objectives in Turkey, which prioritised the improvement of living conditions of the most vulnerable refugees through predictable and dignified support addressing basic needs and protection.

Clear impacts were visible in terms of reduced poverty and vulnerability of refugees benefitting from the ESSN transfer, improvement of their welfare in terms of food security, lower debt levels, as well as on accessing education. In addition, positive impacts were also noticed with regard to increased rates of refugee registration. All expected results were reached, although some delays were encountered at the outset of the programme in reaching the intended number of beneficiaries.

Overall, the ESSN-1 worked well, especially considering the large numbers of refugees that were successfully reached. However, some obstacles to the implementation of activities were identified but all mitigated by the end of the first implementation phase. For instance, some application barriers were experienced by refugees mainly related to delays in registering; difficulties facing certain vulnerable groups in making applications; limited capacity and efficiency of registration institutions.

**Partnership:** The ESSN-1 was designed in conjunction with the GoT and was implemented through a partnership between WFP, TRC, the MoFSP and Halkbank. Partnership arrangements established were generally appropriate and the role of each partner was clearly described (improvements were noted as of April 2017 with the introduction of formal SOPs). Programme management and governance arrangements were also considered as largely effective and smooth coordination mechanisms were established at national and provincial levels. Strong and regular internal communication was critical for effective and accountable programming. The establishment of a JMC as well as of the ESSN Taskforce, co-chaired by the WFP and the TRC, reportedly contributed to achieving effective cooperation and coordination.

**Capacity** gaps identified under the first implementation phase were quickly surmounted, with a considerable growth of the TRC ability since the beginning of the programme, both in terms of numbers of staff and technical capacity. No major capacity gaps were reported at the end of the ESSN-1.

DG ECHO provided a critical mass of funding, under the ESSN-2, to address the humanitarian aid objectives set in strategic documentation (JC6.1). To address the humanitarian needs of out of camp refugees in Turkey, as of March 2020, €1.179 billion had been injected through the ESSN-2 assistance to beneficiaries.\(^\text{130}\) With this amount of funding, the ESSN-2 reached an unprecedented number of beneficiaries in the period under observation, with the number of ESSN beneficiaries steadily increasing from Q1 2018 to Q1 2020, see section 2.2. While the initial aim of the ESSN-2 was to assist some 1.3 million refugees allowing them to cover their basic needs, it reached 1.7 million beneficiaries by March 2020, thus exceeding the original target by 30%. The ESSN-2 funding enabled a coverage rate of 50% of refugees in Turkey (see JC6.3). However, although this overall target in relation to the number of beneficiaries was achieved and exceeded, several more specific objectives and targets of ESSN-2 to help the most vulnerable beneficiaries and

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improve their living conditions were not fully achieved. As shown below in Table 14, a number of targets set initially were missed, including the acceptable food consumption score of ESSN-2 beneficiaries, the debt levels experienced by ESSN-2 beneficiaries and the number of ESSN-2 beneficiaries living below the MBE.

The SASF Discretionary Allowance (SDA) and the Severe Disability Allowance provided as of 2018 under ESSN-2 also contributed to reach a vast number of particularly vulnerable refugees who were previously excluded from ESSN assistance, or who faced specific challenges due to having disabilities. This contrasted the negative effects of the economic crisis, which heavily impacted the refugee population as further described below. The SASF Discretionary Allowance also contributed to (at least partially) minimising the identified exclusion errors (see JC1.b). The total number of beneficiaries of the SASF Discretionary Allowance reached 28,312 by Q4 2019, while the number of impaired beneficiaries provided with Severe Disability Allowance reached 9,228 by the end of the ESSN-2.\footnote{Based on figure provided in the ESSN quarterly monitoring.}

The activities funded under ESSN-2 were largely effective and positively contributed to DG ECHO’s short-term objectives of stabilising and improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable out-of-camp refugee HHs, despite the recent inflation resulting in a decrease of the purchasing power of refugees (see JC6.3 and JC8.1 for more information). More specifically, as showed by WFP monitoring data, cash transfers and top-ups helped beneficiaries in covering their essential needs, as foreseen in DG ECHO HIPs. Overall, the ESSN beneficiaries’ welfare increased, as further outlined under JC8.1 below, in terms of nutritional status, health status, use of coping strategies and empowerment to access and pursue education.

On the other hand, more limited progress was recorded in supporting the integration of refugees within their host communities, contributing to social cohesion as well as progressing towards an evolution of the ESSN into wider livelihood programming (as outlined under EQ8). Especially in the absence of a clear exit strategy (see EQ8 for more information) and with the Turkish economy severely hit by inflation and recession (see JC8.3), the outcomes identified under the ESSN-2 might have been insufficient to generate sustainable solutions for refugees as envisaged in the strategic documentation (such as providing livelihood support as well as promoting the well-being and self-reliance of refugees). The impact of the ESSN-2 on the welfare of beneficiaries was increasingly limited by the deterioration of the economic situation with some indicators (such as food consumption, debt levels, access to coping strategies, etc.) showing more negative trends compared to the ESSN-1 as further highlighted under JC8.1. In this context of economic uncertainty, evidence also showed that the ESSN-2 might have even created some dependence to cash assistance and generated limited incentives to integrate into the labour market.

More information on the extent to which the ESSN-2 ToC was achieved and the outputs/outcomes delivered, is provided under JC6.3 below.

Although a number of obstacles to the implementation of activities was identified, the ESSN-2 was overall implemented as planned with existing obstacles mitigated (JC6.3).

\subsection*{3.4.2 Level of achievement of the ESSN-2 ToC}

Most of the ESSN-2 activities and outputs were overall effectively implemented/delivered on the ground. As outlined in 0, most of the target values for indicators listed in the ESSN-2 SingleForm request\footnote{WFP (2017) Single Form 2017/00972/RQ/01/03.} were achieved or partially achieved at the final stage (this was the case for out 20 of total 29 objective and result indicators). This was despite the persistence of some obstacles such capacity gaps within national institutions and the persistence of application barriers. For half or 14 out of 29 indicators measuring ESSN-2 achievement, target values set at the start were
exceeded by the end of the programme. In addition, in most indicators where baseline information from ESSN-1 was available, improvements were achieved in the respective aspects of the ESSN-2 compared to the baseline situation under the ESSN-1.

The evidence collected showed nine indicators were not fully achieved by the end of the ESSN-2 (relating to both specific objective and result indicators). They were primarily related to the acceptable food consumption score of ESSN-2 beneficiaries, the debt levels experienced by ESSN-2 beneficiaries and the number of ESSN-2 beneficiaries living below the MBE. The indicator relating to the lack of awareness amongst the non-beneficiaries was also not achieved against its target. Still, the situation of beneficiaries as measured by these indicators improved under the ESSN-2 compared to the baseline situation under the ESSN-1 (where the baseline situation was available). Furthermore, for three indicators, the target was missed by a relatively low margin. Overall, the lack of achievement was mostly due to the deterioration of the economic situation and the consequent loss of purchasing powers of beneficiaries, challenges analysed below.
## Planned vs achieved outputs and outcomes

Green: full achievement, yellow: close to target, orange: target missed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Baseline ESSN-1</th>
<th>Target value (Nov 2017)</th>
<th>Interim value (Nov 2018)</th>
<th>Final value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific objective indicators (9)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/9 Percentage decrease in mean Livelihoods Coping Strategies Index (CSI), disaggregated by gender of the head of HH</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Overall: 31% Male h.HH: 31%</td>
<td>Overall: 31% Male h.HH: 31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ESSN: Female h. HH 75%; Male h. HH 78%</td>
<td>Female h. HH 85%; Male h. HH 88%</td>
<td>Female h.HH 85% Male h.HH 88%</td>
<td>Female h.HH 85% Male h.HH 85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/9 Percentage of the target population with acceptable food consumption score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>84%, Female h.HH 81% Male h.HH 85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/9 Percentage of beneficiary HHS not incurring new debt to meet basic needs</td>
<td>Male h. HH 24.7%; Female h. HH 24.3%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>Female h. HH 28.5%; Male h.HH 26.0%</td>
<td>24.5%, Female h.HH 23.5%; Male h.HH 24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/9 Percentage of HHS confirming that their debts are more manageable since they started receiving assistance under the ESSN</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>81% all Male h.HH 70%; Male h.HH 83%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/9 Percentage of individual beneficiaries with per-capita expenditure below Minimum Expenditure Basket</td>
<td>74.5% (74.5 male h.HH, 74.5% female h.HH)</td>
<td>Less than 50% for both male &amp; female h.HHS</td>
<td>66.2% Male h.HH 66.1%; Female h.HH 66.5%</td>
<td>54.8%, Female h.HH 55.8%; Male h.HH 54.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/9 Percentage of individual beneficiaries with per-capita expenditure below the World Bank Upper Middle Income Country (UMIC) poverty line, $5.5/day (284 TL), disaggregated by gender of the head of HH</td>
<td>75.7% (Male h.HH:75.2%; Female h.HH:76.3%)</td>
<td>54% (Male h.HH: 52%; Female h.HH: 59%)</td>
<td>66.2% Male h.HH 66.1%; Female h.HH 66.5%</td>
<td>66.2%, Male h.HH 66.1%; Female h.HH 66.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/9 Percentage of surveyed beneficiaries who are informed about key aspects of the programme (awareness of their entitlement and/or how to contact the programme)</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95% Exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/9 Percentage of beneficiaries reporting that ESSN assistance is delivered in a safe, accessible, and dignified manner</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/9 Percentage of extremely poor applicant HHS (as identified in PAB) receiving ESSN assistance</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>82.7%</td>
<td>82.7% Exceeded</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Results (4)

**RESULT 1 Provision of monthly basic needs assistance to vulnerable HHS through multi-purpose cash**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Interim</th>
<th>Final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 1.1. Percentage of total applications received through Service Centres</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36.10</td>
<td>36.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 1.2 Number of individuals identified as eligible for ESSN assistance</td>
<td>1,010,894.00</td>
<td>1,790,000.00</td>
<td>1,750,000.00</td>
<td>1,750,008.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

135 the cells are marked in green for the interim value when the target value was exceeded already at the interim stage.
### Evaluation of the Emergency Social Safety Net Programme

**January 2018 - March 2020 (ESSN-2) - Final Report**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Achieved</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Percentage of exclusion error in HH targeting</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.5% exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Percentage of ESSN cards distributed, actual versus planned</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>98.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Percentage of surveyed non-applicant HHs who state lack of awareness of the ESSN and/or lack of understanding of ESSN application procedures as their main reason for not applying</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Total value of cash redeemed by targeted beneficiaries as a percentage of entitlement</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>98.32% Exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Percentage of applicants who were notified about the outcome of their application by SMS</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>98% Exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>Number of vulnerable refugees facing barriers in accessing the ESSN provided with support to apply to /access ESSN assistance</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>84% Exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>Number of impaired ESSN beneficiaries provided with top-up disability assistance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>4,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>Development of mechanism for interim cash assistance to vulnerable refugees, if agreed by ESSN partners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Result 2: Support for national partners in implementing the ESSN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Achieved</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Number of JMC work streams where TRC has taken ownership of core day-to-day tasks and WFP maintains oversight role</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Number of additional staff seconded to support MoFSP, SASFs, AFAD and/or DGPC, actual versus planned</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Percentage of TRC ESSN programme staff hired, actual versus planned</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>82% Exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Number of technical trainings and workshops conducted as a proportion of total planned</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Percentage of people that can demonstrate knowledge as a result of the trainings and workshops</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>93.30% Exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Percentage of people trained disaggregated by sex, actual versus planned</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Post-2018 strategy developed in collaboration with ESSN partners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Percentage of visited Service Centres and SASFs with issue recorded by WFP</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Joint roadmap developed and agreed upon for transfer of ESSN implementation from WFP to IFRC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**RESULT 3: Efficient and effective coordination for improved efficiency of humanitarian response**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.1. Percentage of JMC meetings held, actual versus planned</th>
<th>92%</th>
<th>95%</th>
<th>95%</th>
<th>95%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.2. Percentage of identified cases in need of specialised protection assistance or other services that result in active referrals to relevant actors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>97% Exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3. Number of external (non-ESSN stakeholder) organisations attending at least one ESSN Task Force per month</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22 Exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4. Number of sectoral and thematic coordination mechanisms participated in by WFP</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22 Exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5. Percentage of surveyed SASF staff who feel coordination and communication within the ESSN are appropriate and timely</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83% Exceeded</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESULT 4: Monitoring and evaluation of ESSN activities for increased accountability and learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.1. Number of PDM rounds completed and timely shared</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2. ESSN 2018 quarterly reports produced</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3. Number of CVMEs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4. Impact evaluation report (mid-term)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5. Mid-term review final report</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 15 in overleaf shows the level of achievement of the ESSN-2 ToC. The study team used three different colours to show the degree of realisation of the components:

- Text coloured in green shows the elements of the ToC that were achieved over the evaluation period;
- Text coloured in yellow shows the elements of the ToC that were achieved only partially; and,
- Text coloured in red shows elements of the ToC that could not be achieved.

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134 A ToC explains how activities are understood to produce a series of results that contribute to achieving the final intended impacts. Also, the process explains how change is understood to come about, rather than only linking activities to expected results.

*January, 2018*
Figure 15. Achievement of the ESSN-2 ToC

Target groups:
The most vulnerable Syrian and non-Syrian refugees and beneficiaries of temporary protection, living outside camps.

General assumptions:
Changes at the individual/household level are visible and measurable. Beneficiaries are effectively reached and are receptive to the interventions implemented. Effective targeting of cash transfers. Cash transfers are delivered in a timely manner. Efforts to implement coherent and coordinated interventions with other HAs and Turkish authorities are invested. Learning mechanisms were put in place for the design of ESSN 2 (building on previous interventions).

External:
The economic situation in the country remains fairly stable (e.g., fall of the Turkish lira, rising inflation, etc.). The political situation in the country and region remains fairly stable. Limited occurrence of new mass influxes.

Preconditions:
Right partners are available on the ground and can access the population in need. Funding is sufficient to meet the objectives and cover needs. Capacity is sufficient to scale up cash transfers. The benefits of using cash transfer modalities have been assessed and are supported politically.

General objectives:
To help the TR government better plan and manage the overall refugee response, enhancing the effectiveness of support provided to refugees. Specific objectives: To stabilize and improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable out-of-camp refugee households. To explore opportunities to improve linkages between the ESSN and livelihoods programming, and facilitate access of ESSN beneficiaries to employment.

Inputs: The budget of ESSN 2. WFP was the framework partner responsible, together with implementing partners. Support and monitoring was provided by DG ECHO HQ and field offices.

Source: ICF (2021)
As showed in Figure 15 above, the provision of the monthly cash assistance led to tangible outcomes on the ground in terms of improving the welfare and living conditions of ESSN beneficiaries. However, while the baseline showed a steady and regular improvement in most indicators over the years, under the ESSN-2, the deterioration of the economic situation led to more limited impacts in terms of welfare of beneficiaries compared to the ESSN-1, as further elaborated under JC8.1. Beneficiary HHs were also, in some instances, more sensitive to changes in the macroeconomic conjuncture, pointing to high levels of vulnerability.

This pattern of achievement was also confirmed in the field level consultations undertaken for this evaluation. According to DG ECHO interviewees in the field, ESSN-2 activities were overall implemented effectively and as planned. Contracts had to be modified, but the changes were mainly of a budgetary nature. At field level the programme was successfully implemented, and beneficiaries received their allowance on a monthly basis, as well as top-ups. DG ECHO monitoring of implementation activities were effectively carried out through regular field monitoring missions and joint monitoring missions, where DG ECHO thematic experts were also present.\textsuperscript{35}

The validated ToC also showed that the ESSN-2 was less/only partially successful in:

- Creating synergies with job creation, vocational and language training, and refugee livelihoods activities (as further outlined under EQ relating to sustainability);
- Supporting the socio-vocational integration of refugees within their host communities, also through exploring better linkages to livelihoods programming, and contributing to social cohesion (further elaborated under EQ9 below);
- Enhancing national response capacities and progressing towards an evolution of the ESSN into wider livelihood programming. As outlined under the sustainability section of this report, difficulties were experienced with the GoT, which should take over the assistance of a large part of ESSN beneficiaries from DG ECHO, in a situation in which a large part of the beneficiaries will still need assistance and no return to Syria seems to be foreseeable in the near future.

3.4.3 Implementation obstacles were identified and strategies were adopted to mitigate them (JC6.3).

Three main obstacles to the implementation of ESSN-2 activities were identified, namely:

- High inflation rates, which heavily impaired the positive effects triggered by the regularity and the predictability of the ESSN-2 support; as a result, the transfer value of monthly cash assistance payment was not in line with MEB calculations;
- Capacity gaps within national institutions despite capacity building efforts invested by the programme (JC6.4); and
- Persistence of application barriers experienced under the ESSN-1 in particular related to registration.

The subsections below explored these obstacles and analysed the strategies put in place by partners to mitigate their negative effect.

Implementation obstacle and mitigation strategy 1: inflation

Over the ESSN-2, the Turkish economy experienced high levels of inflation, reaching a high of 25.2% in October 2018. As a result, the value of the Turkish Lira (TL) depreciated from 4.54 TL per €1 in January 2018 to 6.76 TL per €1 in March 2020, amounting to a depreciation of approximately 49% against the Euro. The decrease in the value of the TL restricted the purchasing power of the ESSN transfer in relation to the MEB, which increased by 31.2% over

\textsuperscript{35}DG ECHO 2/3 interviews.
the implementation period from 294 TL in Q1 2018 to 386 TL in Q1 2020. Although the fall in the exchange value of the TL relative to the euro did increase the value of the ESSN-2 grant in TL, these gains were used to extend the provision of the ESSN-2 beyond its initial end date, rather than increasing the value of the transfer to reflect the rise in the MEB.

The decrease in the purchasing power triggered, in turn, an increase in the use of coping strategies amongst beneficiaries, such as buying food on credit, borrowing money to cover basic needs, and withdrawing children from school (see JC8.3). Analysis of PDM data suggested that the increase in the use of livelihood coping strategies over the period was more pronounced amongst beneficiaries than non-beneficiaries (see JC8.3). This could be explained by the reliance of beneficiaries on the ESSN-2 transfer as opposed to other means of income generation to meet their basic needs. Furthermore, on average beneficiaries had a relatively higher vulnerability status compared to non-beneficiaries due to the requirements of the ESSN-2 targeting criteria (i.e. single women, single parents, families with a high number of dependents). These demographic differences also meant that beneficiaries were more at risk of being adversely affected by economic shocks, and consequently more reliant on coping strategies.

The risk of inflation, as well as possible impacts on programme implementation were factored in the ESSN-2 proposal. However, while the proposal took into account “expected steady inflation risks”, ESSN partners might not have anticipated the amplitude of the economic crisis and the consequent impact on programme implementation. The initial request of the ESSN-2 included inflation as one of the risks of implementation of the programme as follows: *inflation devaluing the transfer value and partners / budget not allowing revision of transfer value for social cohesion or financial reasons lessen the impact of the assistance*. Within the request, mitigation measures were highlighted as follows:

- Closely tracking inflation of the Minimum Expenditure Basket;
- Data will continue to be used for advocacy purposes to support appropriate review of the transfer value to ensure inflation does not significantly undermine purchasing power;
- Revision of periodic top-ups;
- Introduction of new allowances.

As further detailed under JC8.1 and JC8.3 below, the worsening of economic parameters heavily impaired the positive effects triggered by the regularity and the predictability of the ESSN-2 support. Programme monitoring detected the start of a backward movement in the main welfare indicators, mainly due to the need of refugees to devote a greater proportion of their monthly income to cover food needs. Evidence also showed that beneficiary HHs remained more sensitive to changes in the macroeconomic conjuncture (compared to non-beneficiaries), as further outlined under JC8.1.

In this context, within the first twelve months of the ESSN-2, mitigation strategies were put in place to moderate these negative effects. Evidence showed that partners quarterly monitored economic trends as well as changes in welfare indicators such as the MEB, food consumption and food security scores, debt levels, Livelihoods Coping Strategy Index (LCSI) and Reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI), etc. Following the negative evolution of these indicators, discussions took place over the 2018-2019 period with regard to possible changes in the transfer value. While the value of the transfer was not increased, both the Severe Disability Allowance and an increase in the quarterly top-ups were introduced in 2018-2019 to mitigate inflationary pressures (see EQ1.b for more information on the Severe Disability Allowance and quarterly top-ups).

Through a variety of tools put in place (PDM, CVME, focus groups, etc), the WFP continuously monitored the situation and assessed the impacts of inflation on beneficiaries. Based on the

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136 WFP, 2020, 2017/00972/IR/02/01.
137 WFP quarterly reports.
evidence collected, in 2018, the WFP started advocating for an increase in the value of assistance within the ESSN Steering Committee. These advocacy efforts, however, remained unsuccessful given the government’s concerns that any assistance to refugees remained comparable with Turkish welfare assistance in order to mitigate any risk of tension between ESSN beneficiaries and host communities. Such concerns were also raised by stakeholders consulted in the scope of this evaluation (as highlighted in section 3.5 below).

In early 2019, the ESSN Transfer Value Working Group was tasked with exploring and developing options to address this issue. Following their assessment, in July 2019, the Steering Committee decided to increase the quarterly top-up transfer value for all ESSN beneficiaries rather than further advocating for an increase in the transfer value. This option was deemed the most relevant as it:

- Covered the smaller HHs which are the most vulnerable;
- Did not constitute a regular transfer but a quarterly payment; and
- Was less problematic in terms of social protection and cohesion concerns.
- Throughout the course of implementation of the ESSN-2, advocacy activities were successfully carried out with the aim of introducing two new/complementary allowances aimed at reducing the exclusion errors identified under the ESSN-1.
- The SASF Discretionary Allowance was introduced in November 2018 and started to be implemented in December 2018 (see EQ1.b)\(^{33}\). Additional top-ups called Severe Disability Allowance were also provided as of 2018 for beneficiaries with severe disability (classified as more than 40% disability rate) and where their disability was flagged as “severe” on a valid DHR.\(^{140}\) As mentioned above, in July 2019, ESSN quarterly top-ups were increased to mitigate the impact of inflation on beneficiary HHs.
- Such increase was described as a significant milestone in the WFP documentation,\(^{141}\) a result stemming from “a year of continued advocacy on the part of WFP and international stakeholders to the refugee response in Turkey”. Interviewees (DG ECHO) also confirmed that advocacy activities carried out by the WFP were considered effective in broadening the scope of assistance to ESSN beneficiaries and minimising exclusion errors.

However, ultimately, despite significant mitigation strategies and despite the increase in quarterly top-ups introduced in July 2019, the percentage of the MEB covered by the ESSN-2 transfer still fell from 43% in Q1 2018 to 35% in Q1 2020. In monetary terms, this increased the gap between the value of the MEB and the value of the transfer and income received by beneficiaries from 14.2 TL in January 2018 to 99.6 TL in February 2020.

As pointed out by the vast majority of interviewees (NGOs, SASF, TRC and local authorities) the current transfer value and quarterly (increased) top-ups were still not sufficient to cover the basic needs of beneficiaries. This was confirmed by the FGDs where participants mentioned that the increase in prices, especially renting prices, made the cash assistance insufficient. As one participant pointed out: “I was paying 600 TL for house rent five years ago and today I am paying 900 TL.” Another participant added: “Although the renting and bill prices increased, the aid remained the same. I am paying the remaining part from my

\(^{138}\) WFP, 2020, 2017/00972/IR/02/01.

\(^{139}\) Each SASF office was entitled to a quota of allowances calculated as 5% of total applications received by the SASF by October 2018. As of September 2019, 19% of the total quota had been used. Monitoring data also showed that, as of December 2019, almost 30,000 beneficiaries were benefitting from this allowance.

\(^{140}\) This assistance provided with the Severe Disability Allowanceamounts to 600 Turkish Lira (TL) (USD 108) per person per month. At the end of Q1 2020, the allowance reached 9,228 representing less than 1% of ESSN beneficiaries.

\(^{141}\) WFP, 2020, 2017/00972/IR/02/01.
The six benefiting organisations include: Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), MoFSP, TRC, DGMM, DGPC, and SASF.

Similarly, the findings on the effects of inflation were echoed in the social media analysis undertaken in the evaluation. The difficult financial circumstances were both addressed directly and alluded to. The high costs of living, in particular the ability to pay for rent and utilities, came up frequently. Some commenters also directly raised the issue of rising prices due to inflation, the aid amount remaining the same, and the financial pressure this brings. As seen in Figure 16, showing the percentage of all comments in each quarter that discussed finances and the inflation rate in Turkey in the same timeframe, finance-related comments increased as the inflation rate began to rise in 2018. However, comments containing these words picked up again in Q3 of 2019 as inflation was decreasing. This suggests either a delayed effect in experiencing the difficulties of increased inflation, or that increased inflation was only a partial reason for the increase in frequency of this corpus in comments.

**Figure 16. The social media analysis of inflation effects on beneficiaries**

![Graph showing social media analysis of inflation effects on beneficiaries]

*Source: ICF. 2021. Social media analysis.*

**Implementation obstacle and mitigation strategy 2: Capacity gaps within national institutions (JC 6.4)**

The development of capacity of national partners was one of the main expected results outlined in the original Intervention Logic of the programme. Capacity building activities delivered during the evaluation period mainly included the secondment of staff, development of SOPs on different operational aspects of the ESSN, formal technical and soft skills training session, provision of hardware support to MoFSP (e.g. computers, work stations), provision of interpreters to SASFs and support during HHS’ visits\(^{142}\), etc. However, despite these efforts, capacity gaps still occurred at different levels:

- At DGMM level, capacity gaps were identified\(^{145}\) in particular with regard to the speed of registration of refugees, the (case) management of new registrations as well of verified refugees, the ability to provide adequate information through call services, etc.

- At SASF level, common capacity gaps included a lack of translators as well as insufficient human resources (social workers) to conduct the verification visits and, in particular, female social workers to be able to constitute gender-balanced teams to conduct HHS’

\(^{142}\) The six benefiting organisations include: Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), MoFSP, TRC, DGMM, DGPC, and SASF.

visits.\textsuperscript{144} DG ECHO monitoring reports showed that the additional number of beneficiaries triggered by the ESSN was not always matched with additional resources and that such gaps impacted on the ability of SASF offices to smoothly handle ESSN procedures. Gaps were reported consistently throughout the implementation period till the latest monitoring visit conducted in June 2020.\textsuperscript{145}

The capacity gaps outlined led not only to delays in accessing ESSN-2 benefits for applicants but also what the WFP described as an overall “lack of consistency of implementation across all SASFs nationwide”. At Interm Report stage, in 9% SASF visited, WFP/TRC monitoring staff recorded issues, and by end of the ESSN-2 this was reported in 14% of visits. The majority of issues related to SASFs not abiding by standard application procedures.\textsuperscript{146} Although this marked an improvement compared to the ESSN-1, it was still considered as a challenge for the implementation of the second phase of the programme, as further highlighted below.

Capacity gaps at SASF level were also confirmed by the ESSN MTR (2018-2019): “some SASF offices report that resource considerations (specifically insufficient SASF staff time to conduct the necessary HH visits and transport) were a constraint to the rollout of the allowance”\textsuperscript{147}

**Implementation obstacle and mitigation strategy 3: Application barriers**

The baseline showed that some application barriers were experienced, under the ESSN-1, mainly related to delays in registering and difficulties facing certain vulnerable groups in making applications. Under the ESSN-2, such obstacles continued to persist, although additional efforts were invested to overcome them (see EQ 2, JC2.4). The difficulties identified were mainly attributed to the capacity gaps outlined above\textsuperscript{148} as well as to awareness issues as further presented under EQ 10, JC10.1 and JC10.2. As shown in Figure 17, the main reasons for not applying for the ESSN-2 assistance related to refugees being not registered with the respective Turkish authorities. Only 6% did not apply because they did not know the ESSN. Approximately one-third did not apply due to “other” reasons. These reasons included having their applications rejected by SASF; believing that they were ineligible or previously being ineligible; and being new arrivals to Turkey.

**Figure 17. Reasons for not applying for ESSN assistance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not registered with DGMM</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not registered with the population</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not know about the ESSN</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not understand how to apply</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not need assistance</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members not on the same</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In order to overcome the persisting application barriers, further efforts were invested under the ESSN-2, capitalising on the lessons learnt and activities implemented under the first implementation phase to overcome the identified barriers to accessing assistance.\textsuperscript{149} In particular, TK Referral and Outreach teams were introduced in early 2018\textsuperscript{150} with the main

\textsuperscript{144} DG ECHO (2020) Internal ECHO appraisal ESSN-2.
\textsuperscript{145} DG ECHO (2020) Internal ECHO appraisal ESSN-2.
\textsuperscript{146} WFP (2018) Single Form 2017/00972/IR/01/01.
\textsuperscript{147} WFP, OPM (2020) ESSN Mid-Term Review 2018/2019.
\textsuperscript{148} DG ECHO (2020) Internal ECHO appraisal ESSN-2.
\textsuperscript{149} WFP, 2020, 2017/00972/IR/02/01.
\textsuperscript{150} WFP, OPM (2020) ESSN Mid-Term Review 2018/2019.
purpose of **supporting refugees to overcome barriers to accessing the ESSN-2 programme**. The new teams built on the work and responsibilities of the pre-existing TRC field operation teams, whose functions were subsequently redefined to avoid overlaps. The number of staff working within TK Referral and Outreach team offices steadily grew across the SASF nine offices.\(^{151}\)

TK Referral and Outreach teams’ advocacy efforts also included raising awareness of authorities with regard to new developments under the ESSN-2, such as the SASF Discretionary Allowance, change in registration procedures in some provinces as well as modifications in relevant regulations. According to the ESSN monitoring data, by the end of the ESSN-2, a total of 7,649 visits to SASFs, PDMMs, PDPC offices, municipalities and Social Service Centres were carried out (see Desk Report JC 10.2). Evidence suggests that these efforts were overall effective and enabled a better understanding of ESSN procedures by local authorities. An indication of improved general awareness of the ESSN comes from data on the percentage of WFP/TRC monitoring visits, which recorded that the proportion of SASFs not following standard application procedures fell from a baseline figure of 20% to 14% by the end of the ESSN-2. Stakeholders consulted (TRC, SASF) confirmed that the advocacy work conducted by TK Referral and Outreach teams on the ground contributed to improving the awareness of both refugees and local authorities not only about the access criteria but also about the correct application of the ESSN procedures. However, most of the focus group participants pointed out that, despite partners efforts, major obstacles still existed in practice, in particular related to registration with the competent authorities and delays in getting notified about the outcome of their application.

Finally, following the introduction of the SASF Discretionary Allowance and the identification of issues with regard to its application (see Desk Report)\(^{152}\), WFP/TRC also conducted additional advocacy activities with SASF offices at the local level in order to improve the practical application of the new allowance. According to the ESSN-2 Interim Report\(^{153}\), following such efforts, the allowance was extended to an additional 7,000 HHs between December 2019 and March 2020.

Despite these positive developments, some KILs pointed out that advocacy efforts towards SASF offices were still considered insufficient. Two (TRC) interviewees observed that, in order to improve the use of the quota by SASFs, there was a need to conduct further advocacy activities targeting staff and raise their awareness on how to manage the application process of the allowance. Evidence showed that a high proportion of refugees facing barriers were provided with outreach support and that the number of solved cases steadily increased to reach 84% by the second quarter of 2019 as showed in Figure 18.\(^{154}\)


\(^{152}\) As outlined in the Desk report (see EQ 1.b) the overall impact of such allowance was limited due to the relatively small number of households that were reached by the end of the ESSN-2.

\(^{153}\) WFP, 2020, 2017/00972/IR/02/01.

Figure 18. Outreach Cases and percentage of cases resolved

Source: ESSN MTR (2018-2019)

While the establishment of the TK Referral and Outreach teams certainly marked a step forward in overcoming obstacles to the implementation of activities, some weaknesses still persisted in this area. A July 2019 DG ECHO monitoring visit, highlighted some weaknesses mainly related to insufficient communication between the TK Referral and Outreach teams and the HHs during the handling of their cases. However, subsequent monitoring visits reported improvements in outreach activities in visited locations. As outlined, “the capacity of partners on the outreach component has improved since the last monitoring, they indeed demonstrated a good capacity to fine-tune their methodology in order to improve the effectiveness and the efficiency of the activity”.

Finally, on this point, the ESSN MTR (2018-2019) also highlighted that the introduction of the TK Referral and Outreach teams might not be enough in the light of application barriers identified and needs to be complemented by continued high level advocacy to address structural barriers. As noted, many of the obstacles faced by applicants were structural in nature and requiring political decisions to resolve.

The application barriers persisting to face the people in need of assistance were also identified in the social media analysis performed in this evaluation, pointing to barriers experienced in relation to meeting the criteria for programme admittance, fairness and inclusivity of admittance to the ESSN-2 and the operational barriers. Social media discussions about the criteria for programme acceptance were frequent and permeated throughout comment threads. Family structure and how it impacts programme approval was the predominant focal point in discussions around criteria. Non-beneficiaries, primarily those in a 4-person HH with 2 children, lamented rejections from the programme citing that the costs of living, principally rent and utility bills, did not increase significantly enough with the addition of more children to warrant the acceptance threshold. Current beneficiaries and beneficiaries who had recently had their assistance stopped, discussed the financial pressure HHs experienced when aid was cut off due to children turning 18. This financial pressure might also lead to older children abandoning further education opportunities to take up work to support the family.

Social media discussions about the fairness and inclusivity of programme acceptance were also frequent. References to needs were frequent with opinions given on what it meant to be needy, and therefore deserving of financial assistance. Some commenters believed that the criteria as a proxy for neediness resulted in a disparity of outcomes as some refugees who

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were in need of aid do not receive assistance whilst others who are less in need do receive assistance because they meet the criteria. The terms of operational barriers to applications, comments on social media indicated two pain points for beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries: changing location and communication following application.

The implementation capacity of the partnership, coordination and management arrangements have been among the key drivers of performance (JC6.4). Building on experience under the ESSN-1, evidence collected showed that the ESSN-2 management and governance arrangements were considered largely effective and enabled a smooth coordination amongst partners. In particular, with the progressive handover of responsibilities to the TRC (as further outlined below), the JMC played an important role in this phase of the programme by progressively switching its focus from operational coordination towards more thematic collaboration.\(^{157}\) By fostering closer working relationships between the WFP and the TRC, the JMC resulted in building of technical capacities, close monitoring of implementation and quicker decision-making to resolve issues/take forward priorities. One KII mentioned that the JMC was essential in complementing TRC’s gaps in terms of coordination and ensuring a harmonised management approach.\(^ {158}\) KIIs also found that cooperation with the MoFSP was effective and smooth during the evaluation period, with the implementation of “good management and governance structures” identified as a main success factor.

Major capacity issues were not reported under the ESSN-2. However, the WFP\(^{159,160}\), such IT staff to facilitate required system changes, and programme assistants in technical fields\(^{159,160}\) which were confirmed by the field level consultations which pointed at capacity issues on the ground. The role of the TRC within the ESN has progressively increased, however there was limited evidence on how the WFP capacity building activities have contributed to the improvement of skills and capacity of the partners. An interviewee\(^{159,160}\) were carried out since the beginning, to improve the capacity of the TRC and the SASFs. With regard to the latter, the lack of capacity often came from the fact that the employees have other tasks to carry out, such as social assistance services for Turkish citizens. Under the ESSN-2, coordination and management arrangements mainly focused on work streams’ transition from a “starting state” to a “steady state” as well as progressing with the handover of specific tasks and responsibilities to the TRC, with technical guidance provided by the WFP.\(^{161}\) This new focus created some challenges linked to the need to regularly fine-tune the partnership to ensure that respective roles were appropriately perceived and enacted.\(^ {162}\) In order to overcome these challenges, the SOPs developed during the first implementation phase were revised to reflect the evolution of the operational processes. The WFP regularly checked and updated ESSN SOPs in line with operational needs and changes.\(^ {163}\)

As part of the broader capacity-development work, day-to-day tasks as well as JMC Work Streams have been progressively handed over to the TRC with oversight and technical support from the WFP.\(^ {164}\) Evidence collected showed that some (limited) inefficiencies were identified during the handover process with “TRC being somewhat reluctant over the concept of capacity strengthening in view of handing over of Work Streams”.\(^ {165}\) According to a monitoring visit, “over

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\(^{158}\) Interview 14.

\(^{159}\) WFP (2018) SingleForm 2017/00972/IR/01/01.

\(^{160}\) DG ECHO 1/3 interviews.

\(^{161}\) WFP (2018) SingleForm 2017/00972/IR/01/01.

\(^{162}\) WFP (2018) SingleForm 2017/00972/IR/01/01.

\(^{163}\) Such as such as application and assessment; beneficiary enrolment; payments; sweepbacks; FSP reporting platform; M&E; referrals; and beneficiary communications.

\(^{164}\) WFP (2018) SingleForm 2017/00972/IR/01/01.

time, TRC colleagues would spend much more time in the secondary office than in the JMC, which delayed progress and stymied momentum on capacity development-related initiatives.”

An analysis of the final handover phase however, showed that these limited inefficiencies were surmounted and that all workstreams were successfully handed over to IFRC/ TRC. The WFP took responsibility for the ESSN implementation until 31 March 2020 while IFRC from 1 April 2020.

Strategic thinking concerning the final handing over of Work Streams started in September 2019 with a formal roadmap approved in Q4 2019 while the practical handover mainly took place in the first quarter of 2020. IFRC documentation showed that only limited areas of work still needed further fine-tuning by April 2020: “new work around targeting and data access could not be finalized in Q1/2020, as these require more longer-term discussions and agreement from a programmatic and political point of view.”

Evidence showed that the high quality of the partnership was sustained under the ESSN-2 (JC 6.5). ESSN-2 partners demonstrated very high-level commitment to implementing the programme and their longstanding presence in Turkey and good relations with beneficiaries and local authorities were identified as successful factors in the implementation of the ESSN-2. The design and implementation of the ESSN-2 has shown that GoT stakeholders and national authorities played a key role in the success of the programme.

This was also confirmed in the field level consultations undertaken for this evaluation. KIIIs in the field concluded that coordination amongst the ESSN partners was consider effective; the governance structure was clear, there were regular contacts between the different partners and the roles were well defined. As DG ECHO representatives, TRC interviewees confirmed that the coordination amongst the ESSN-2 partners was effective, that regular contacts were made and roles between partners were well defined. They also confirmed that capacity building activities were put in place which were very beneficial for TRC staff. The ESSN partnership – between the WFP, the TRC and the MoFLSS – was considered effective and contributed to the success of the programme. One representative from a national authority and two from the provincial authorities indicated that coordination and collaboration between DG ECHO, the Turkish authorities, and the implementing partners were successful. A provincial authority representative mentioned that coordination at operational level could have improved if a common database with beneficiaries’ data would have been in place. Capacity building activities were considered positive by three representatives from the authorities. According to a few public authorities’ representatives, the quality of the ESSN-2 partnership contributed to the success of the programme. Continuous improvements were also made, thanks to this partnership.

The ESSN-2 partnership between DG ECHO and the WFP was considered as very successful. The WFP team was highly committed to implement the programme and made use of all its knowledge, resources, and capacity; they were also extremely open in sharing useful information with DG ECHO and other partners. The collaboration between the WFP and the TRC was more complex, and communication was at times problematic; this however did not have an impact on the implementation of the ESSN-2.

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168 September 2019, Meeting ECHO, WFP and IFRC on handover process.
172 DG ECHO 2/3 KIIIs.
173 National and provincial authorities, 3/12 KIIIs.
174 DG ECHO 1/3 KIIIs.
3.4.4 EQ7 - To what extent has DG ECHO’s intervention contributed to increasing access of refugees to government and non-government services (basic needs, health, education, protection), throughout Turkey?

Table 14. EQ7 Key conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgement criteria</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>Key conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JC7.1 ESSN-2 transfers improved access to other services (basic needs, health, education, protection) throughout Turkey</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>• The ESSN-2 had positive (but rather limited) impacts on the ability of beneficiaries to access health, education, and protection services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC7.2 Special protection cases were consistently identified and referred to other providers</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>• Specific protection identification and referral mechanisms were put in place but did not operate successfully. The ESSN-2 referrals accounted for a small percentage of protection workload in Turkey, stakeholder view of a missed opportunity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC7.3 By further accessing education, training and/or employment opportunities the ESSN-2 beneficiaries were overall better equipped (compared to non-beneficiaries) to integrate into the Turkish society</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>• Access to further opportunities was rather limited, integration into society limited.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Baseline

- The ESSN-1 transfers positively impacted on access to education. PDM data showed that beneficiary HHs were more likely to keep children in school preserving them from having to work and that they were less likely to have to cut education expenses. The percentage of beneficiaries having to withdraw children from school decreased by 55% in the period May 2017–January 2018. Similarly, pre-ESSN assistance, almost 40% of beneficiaries reported cutting education expenses while this rate dropped down to 22% by January 2018. However, no information was available on the extent to which this triggered improved integration opportunities.

- The ESSN evaluation (November 2016- December 2017) showed that the referral of protection cases by the ESSN-1 to other service providers developed slowly and remained inconsistent (in spite of referrals being explicitly included as an activity in the original ToC of the ESSN-1). The evaluation therefore included a recommendation to the WFP to continue to engage with the MoFLSS to strengthen referral mechanisms and to include referral pathways for refugees from SASFs, to a broad range of providers, both inside and outside GoT services.

The ESSN-2 transfers improved access to other services (health, education, protection) throughout Turkey (JC7.1). In addition to addressing the basic needs of beneficiaries (see also JC8.1), the ESSN-2 also had positive (but rather limited) impacts on the ability of beneficiaries to access education, health and protection services. A recent report on the

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effects of ESSN cash transfers on national and local economy in Turkey\textsuperscript{176} showed that, as a result of the programme, refugee HHs became more likely to send their children to school. Overall, the ESSN cash transfers triggered an increase in the number of students per school or class at primary and middle school levels. This was confirmed by latest 2020 CVME data which showed that ESSN beneficiaries had the lowest percentage of absence from school compared to non-applicants and ineligible refugees. Also, ESSN beneficiaries had the highest number of students that benefited from the CCTE.

However, as for the other impacts described in this report, these positive results were curbed by the increased use of coping strategies by beneficiaries following the worsening of the economic situation in Turkey. PDM data showed that, as refugees needed to devote a greater proportion of their monthly income to cover food needs, they had to cut on education expenditure (+13%) and withdraw children from school (+43%) in the period January 2018-March 2020, as depicted in the graphs below. Despite these negative trends, ESSN-2 beneficiaries were slightly more likely to keep children in school and not cutting educational expenses compared to non-beneficiaries.

\textbf{Figure 19. Percentage of refugees withdrawing children from school}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure19.png}
\caption{Percentage of refugees withdrawing children from school}
\end{figure}

\textit{Source: WFP PDM}

\textbf{Figure 20. Percentage of refugees reducing education expenditure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure20.png}
\caption{Percentage of refugees reducing education expenditure}
\end{figure}

\textit{Source: WFP PDM}

\textsuperscript{176} WFP and Sabanci Universiteti (2019) The effects of ESSN cash transfers on national and local economy in Turkey.
With regard to health, the proportion of referrals classified as health referrals constantly increased over the evaluation period, from 29% in Q1 2018 to 37% in Q1 2020. Evidence also showed that the ESSN-2 transfers were associated with higher availability of health services and with better public health shown by lower mortality rates in some regions. Health outcomes are further described under JC8.1 while protection outcomes are outlined below (see EQ 7, JC7.2).

The field level consultations with local authorities in Turkey reported positive trends in the access of refugees to government and non-government services. These were observed by public authorities, thanks to their participation in the ESSN-2 programme, beneficiaries’ confidence increased; they had access to language trainings and vocational training. This was contradicted by the findings from the FGD where the (few) beneficiaries reported having difficulties to access additional GoT services, including looking to enter a Turkish language course, register and obtain for health services.

Despite significant efforts in the area of protection, special protection cases were not consistently identified and referred to other providers (JC7.2). The ESSN-2 intended to scale up the protection mainstreaming/referral component by:

- Mainstreaming protection into all areas of the programme;
- Identifying barriers to access to services and specific protection issues at individual, HH, or systemic level;
- Increasingly referring persons requiring specialised protection assistance to other service providers; and,
- Reducing protection risks faced by vulnerable refugees by minimizing negative coping strategies and exposure to external threats.

This more prominent focus on protection, compared to the ESSN-1, was found to be in line with recent (2018-2019) DG ECHO HIPs, which called for further mainstreaming of protection aspects on the ground disregarding of the sector or objective of humanitarian interventions.

A significant step forward in attaining stronger results in this area was achieved with the establishment, in Q3 2017, of a formal ESSN referrals system in partnership with TRC’s Protection team (which operated separately from the ESSN programme), to ensure that cases identified during the application, assessment (HH verification) and card distribution stages of the ESSN programme were referred for assistance.

Through this referral system, cases were identified by a range of staff including: TRC Service Centre staff in contact with refugees during the application phase; TRC Call Centre staff; TK Referral and Outreach teams; as well as the WFP and TRC monitoring staff during HH visits, CVME interviews and focus group discussions. A total of 8,621 cases with protection needs were identified and referred to protection NGOs and governmental actors by the end of the ESSN-2, as showed in Figure 21. Most of the cases referred concerned health-related assistance/support (37%) followed by ID related protection cases, family reunification and child labour. Figure 22 shows that over the ESSN-2 implementation period, in addition to increasing in absolute terms, the number of referrals constantly increased as a proportion of the number of ESSN-2 beneficiaries.

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177 WFP Quarterly Monitoring Reports.
179 National and provincial authorities, 4/12 KIIs.
181 The 2019 HIP, for instance, introduced a requirement for new proposals to put in place referral systems to ensure linkages with relevant services, existing outreach systems and complementary measures.
Figure 21. Number of referrals under ESSN-2

Source: ESSN quarterly monitoring

Figure 22. Number of referrals during evaluation period as a proportion of ESSN beneficiary HHs

Source: ESSN quarterly monitoring, ESSN Application Data.

Evidence from the ESSN MTR (2018-2019) showed that TRC and WFP referral processes were found to be effective and complementary. On the other hand, the TK Referral and Outreach teams were found to be less effective in the identification of possible protection cases as they only contributed to 6% of the total referrals.

While improvements were noticed in this area, compared to the ESSN-1, the ESSN-2 referrals accounted for a small percentage of the protection workload in Turkey. Protection NGOs reported that a very small proportion of their protection workload came from ESSN referrals.182 Consultations undertaken in the context of the ESSN MTR (2018-2019) showed that interviewed

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protection NGOs received only three to five cases per month through the ESSN-2 protection referral scheme. They added that most of their beneficiaries came from refugees directly approaching the organisation rather than from referrals.\(^{183}\)

Other evidence\(^{184}\) referred to ESSN's results in this area as a “missed opportunity”, given the magnitude of the ESSN-2 and the systematic HH verification visits.\(^{185}\) In this context, a DG ECHO monitoring visit carried out in 2019 outlined the need for more systematic linkages with existing coordination mechanisms, including within the protection sector and existing service mapping.\(^{186}\)

The WFP Meta Learning Exercise\(^{187}\) pointed out that the WFP could not sufficiently act on the protection workstream because they lacked access to data on complaints and protection case data. At the same time, the TRC had a parallel system and different definitions for complaints and Protection cases. In addition, the TRC and the WFP had different definitions of what was included under the Protection sector and widely different approaches to addressing Protection concerns under the ESSN-2.

The field report also confirmed that the contribution of the ESSN-2 programme to protection referrals was less effective than expected\(^{188}\). In the design phase, DG ECHO expected that providing cash assistance would have been an entry point to detect possible protection cases, but this was not formalised and only happened to a limited extent. As the process of registration and delivery of cash was rather anonymous, and the scale of the programme did not allow WFP/TRC to visit beneficiaries on a regular basis, they were unable to identify and refer protection cases systematically. Some of the interviewees from DG ECHO\(^{189}\) recognised that this could have been done as part of a separate activity, with a dedicated partner having specific expertise. Furthermore, TRC interviewees expressed similar views as DG ECHO representatives; they stated that protection referrals were limited, given the lack of specific priorities in this sense\(^{190}\).

By further accessing education, training and/or employment opportunities, albeit to a limited degree, ESSN-2 beneficiaries were to some extent overall better equipped (compared to non-beneficiaries) to integrate into the Turkish society (JC 7.3)\(^{191}\). As mentioned under JC7.1, evidence showed that to some extent ESSN-2 beneficiary HHs became more likely to send their children to school and keep them in school after receiving assistance, compared to non-beneficiary HHs. The cash transfer from the ESSN-2 allowed them to some extent to cover the basic needs and thus leave financial room to cover additional costs, such as education. As mentioned in the latest WFP social cohesion report, “the more educated the refugees are, the more likely they are willing to share building with the host community”. The report showed that refugees with a higher education level were more likely/ willing to work with Turks, accept children's friendship between the two communities, feel safe in their neighbourhoods, etc\(^{192}\).

Although immediate impacts on integration could not be corroborated, given the protracted nature of refugee displacement, the effects of increased education opportunities could be observable in the longer term. With regard to employment opportunities, recent livelihood survey

\(^{185}\) DG ECHO (2020) Internal ECHO appraisal ESSN-2.
\(^{188}\) DG ECHO 2/3 KIIs.
\(^{189}\) DG ECHO 1/3 KIIs.
\(^{190}\) TRC 1/6 KIIs.
\(^{191}\) See also JC9.1 and JC9.2 for more information about refugees' integration into the Turkish society and the evolution of social cohesion-related issues.
\(^{192}\) WFP (2020) Social cohesion in Turkey: refugees and the host community Online survey findings rounds 1–5.
findings\textsuperscript{193} showed that the situation of ESSN beneficiaries within the Turkish labour market was still very fragile. In fact, ESSN beneficiaries were more likely to:

- Be vulnerable and dependent on external assistance;
- Have a more limited income compared to non-beneficiaries (TL1024 compared to TL1102 for non-beneficiaries); and,
- Work on a part-time basis only.

With regard to the first point above, PDM data showed that, during the evaluation period, the percentage of beneficiaries having the ESSN-2 as their main income source slightly increased (from 16\% in January 2018 to almost 18\% in March 2020). Access to training opportunity was also limited. When asked about training courses, only one in ten respondents had previously attended training. At least six KILs undertaken in the context of this assignment also confirmed that lifelong learning and vocational training opportunities for ESSN beneficiaries were very limited during the evaluation period. At least five KILs pointed out that the ESSN assistance might have even generated negative effects on beneficiaries, creating dependence and generating insufficient incentives to integrate into the labour market.

3.4.5 EQ8 - To what extent has the ESSN contributed to the capacity of beneficiaries to meet their basic needs, ensuring food security, and reducing negative coping strategies after four years of implementation?

### Table 15. EQ8 Key conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgement criteria</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>Key conclusions</th>
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</table>
| JC8.1 ESSN-2 beneficiaries are better off in terms of food security and HHs are less likely to use stress, crisis and (especially) emergency negative livelihood coping strategies | S | • The ESSN-2 contributed to the capacity to meet basic needs, but has been declining over time.  
• The cash transfer and top-ups provided under the ESSN-2 helped beneficiaries to cover their basic needs. Overall, the beneficiaries’ welfare increased.  
• The deterioration of the economic situation led to more limited impacts in terms of welfare compared to the ESSN-1. |
| JC8.2 Activities linked to the provision of the ESSN-2 debit card and monthly allowance were overall effectively implemented with limited inefficiencies identified | S | • Overall, the debit card and monthly allowance payments were implemented more smoothly compared to the ESSN-1, with almost 100\% beneficiary satisfaction under ESSN-2.  
• |
| JC8.3 The monthly transfer value might no longer be sufficient, in the light of the stagnation of the Turkish economy, to continue to effectively address the basic needs of refugees | S | • See EQ13, J13.3. |

\textsuperscript{193} WFP and TRC (2019) Livelihood survey findings.
The welfare of the ESSN-1 beneficiaries improved. On average, beneficiaries were better off after the transfer, more food secure, had lower debt levels and were less likely to resort to negative coping strategies. In comparison the welfare of non-beneficiaries declined. The ESSN-1 also reportedly reduced stress levels among the beneficiaries as the ESSN programme brought some predictability to the lives of refugees. Furthermore, data from CVME2 suggested that the ESSN transfer helped reduce debt levels amongst beneficiaries. The median level of debt amongst beneficiaries was TL600, compared to TL1000 amongst both non-applicants and ineligible applicants.

The process linked to the provision of the ESSN debit card and monthly allowance was overall effectively implemented. Evidence collected through the ESSN evaluation (November 2016–December 2017) showed that beneficiaries were satisfied with regard to the notification and card delivery process and that cash transfers have been delivered reliably.

However, congestion and queues were reported at the start of the programme when the bulk of cards were distributed. Throughout the implementation of the ESSN-1, changes have been introduced to address some of these issues. For example, good practices were developed to address overcrowding; negotiations by the TRC with Halkbank to include Arabic as a language in their ATM service; and various measures to reduce barriers to enrolment for vulnerable groups.

The adequacy ratio of the ESSN-1 transfer was 85.4%. The size of the ESSN cash transfers was considered sufficient to significantly raise beneficiaries’ budgets, measured as a proportion of pre-transfer expenditure levels. The increase of the transfer amount, in June 2017, was introduced with the intention to mitigate the inflationary pressures. However, evidence also showed that, by the end of the ESSN-1, the expenditure levels of beneficiaries were still not reaching the MEB. The average ESSN transfer value in December 2017 was TL133, or 71% of the estimated gap in ability to meet needs.

The cash transfer and top-ups provided under the ESSN-2 helped beneficiaries to cover their basic needs, although this contribution declined over the evaluation period, thus affecting their food security (JC8.1). Overall, the beneficiaries’ welfare increased at least initially under the ESSN-2, including (as outlined in the initial ToC, see JC6.3):

- Improved nutritional status compared to non-beneficiaries as well as to baseline data;
- Improved health status thanks to an increase in access to health/protection services (though referral);
- Reduced debt of HHs compared to non-beneficiaries; and,
- Coping strategies reduced and stabilised compared to PAB data.

The ESSN-2’s positive impact on beneficiary HHs in terms of improving their food security was noted already at the point of its mid-term evaluation. At the midpoint, the ESSN-2 beneficiaries were more food secure, had lower debt levels and were less likely to resort to

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195 Such as (i) working long hours with low salary and without any insurance; (ii) reducing both the quality and the quantity of food consumption; (iii) borrowing from relatives and shops in their neighbourhood; (iv) taking their children out of school; (v) living in substandard housing; and (vi) selling their assets.
197 WFP (Q4 2017) ESSN Market Bulletin.
negative coping strategies. In comparison, the welfare of non-beneficiaries had declined according to most measures of welfare analysed in the mid-term evaluation.

A similar conclusion was reached by the time of the ESSN Meta Learning Exercise. The latter concluded that the ESSN-2 cash assistance successfully supported beneficiary HHs to better meet their basic needs in the initial period of the ESSN-2. Initially, the ESSN-2 beneficiary HHs managed to increase their food consumption and promote nutritional well-being as compared to the ESSN-1. Moreover, beneficiary HHs relied less on negative coping strategies both in the short- and long-term. Similarly, the debt level for beneficiaries remained lower than for their counterparts following the start of assistance. These achievements were however affected by the macro-economic downturn and gradually worsened.

The RMPI analysis in the framework of Meta Learning Exercise also demonstrated the ESSN-2’s initial positive impacts by showing that the assistance has led to significant improvements in food security, living standards, and education. The unintended impacts of the ESSN assistance were assessed from a variety of angles, including labour participation, fertility rates, social cohesion, external money injections, and potential impacts on non-applicants; the assessment also included the findings on the movement of children from ineligible to eligible HHs. The analysis provides some indications that the ESSN assistance may have served as a disincentive to ESSN beneficiaries from seeking formal employment due to their desire to retain their eligibility status and maximise their short-term income. However, no significant impact was found for fertility rates and early marriage.

The effects on RMPI were also analysed to explore the potential impact of the programme on those who had not applied (yet). Nearly 80% of eligible non-applicants were living in multidimensional poverty, a higher rate than among eligible applicants (62.9%). The predicted potential impact of the ESSN on multidimensional poverty was significant, even for eligible non-applicants. Eligible non-applicants were shown to have higher levels of deprivation in the dimensions of food security, income resources, and living standards than eligible applicants. The above findings supported the claim that the ESSN cash assistance has fulfilled its purpose to help beneficiary HHs meet their basic needs in the face of old (being a refugee) and new hardships (the economic context). Nevertheless, it is also shown that its impact has been weakened over time as the relative purchasing power of beneficiaries has declined.

Kils also confirmed the positive impact of the ESSN-2 transfers on the well-being of beneficiaries. As commented by one interviewee: “the aid definitely enabled Syrians in need to take a breath and survive.” Another interviewee mentioned that “the ESSN has definitely stabilised refugees’ situations and prevented negative coping mechanisms for the beneficiaries. However, there is not enough visibility about the results and impacts of the programme.”

The social media analysis undertaken in the context of this evaluation confirmed that beneficiaries’ lives have been positively impacted by the ESSN-2 cash transfers. Some beneficiaries commented with regard to how the programme enhanced their lives and allowed them to lead a normal, dignified life and to feel like a member of society

“The help has caused many people to leave tents and live in homes, I thank you with success”.

“All thanks, appreciation and respect... to the institutions and humanitarian organisations and bodies that contribute to helping people in need and draw smiles on their faces to be able to practice their lives normally”.


200 Interview 26.

201 Interview 11.
However, while the baseline showed a steady and regular improvement in welfare indicators over the years, under the ESSN-2, the deterioration of the economic situation led to more limited impacts in terms of welfare compared to the ESSN-1. Most indicators followed a similar pattern a marked improvement between 2017 and 2018 following the start of the assistance (up to the end of the ESSN-1); a decline during the second half of 2018. This can be attributed to high inflation and increased cost of living (see JCB.3 for more information); and recovery until March 2020 following an increment in quarterly top-ups in 2019.

The subsections below provide more information on the main trends in specific welfare-related indicators, which can be summarised as follows:

- Although the economic situation heavily impacted on beneficiary HHs, the latter were still better-off on all major indicators by the end of the ESSN-2 in comparison with the PAB (May 2017), with the exception of debt levels and

- The situation for beneficiary HHs improved compared to non-beneficiary HHs (although the latter on many indicators remained still better off compared to the ESSN-2 beneficiaries) since the start of the programme. At the same time, beneficiary HHs were, in some instances, more sensitive to changes in the macroeconomic conjuncture, pointing to their higher levels of vulnerability.

**Improved nutritional status (dietary diversity enhanced)**

The proportion with acceptable food consumption among beneficiaries increased from 77% in May 2017 to 89% in January 2018 and then reversed due to the economic slowdown, but has since recovered, reaching 84% in the final PDM (see Figure 23). Only a slight overall increase was reported for non-beneficiaries in the period 2017–2018 (+2%) while the indicator increased by 7% in the same period for beneficiaries, thus demonstrating the positive impact of the ESSN-2 assistance on food security.

**Figure 23. Proportion of refugees with acceptable food consumption**

![Graph showing the proportion of refugees with acceptable food consumption for beneficiary and non-beneficiary HHs.]

Source: PDM data

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Figure 24. Percentage of HHs with an acceptable Food Consumption Score (FCS)

![Graph showing percentage of HHs with an acceptable FCS]

May-17 | Nov-17 | Jan-18 | Aug-18 | Dec-18 | Mar-20
---|---|---|---|---|---
PAB | PDM1 | PDM2 | PDM4 | PDM6 | PDM9

Source: PDM-9 Panel Report. Percentages based on samples weighted to reflect the ESSN population.

**Improved health status of the target group thanks to an increase in access to health/protection services (through referrals)**

As mentioned under JC7.2, the ESSN-2 somewhat increased protection referrals, ensuring that HHs/individuals in need (including healthcare) were referred to appropriate external service providers. Monitoring data showed that, on average, 35% of all referred cases (or approximately three thousand referrals) were cases in need of health-related assistance/support. The steady increase in the proportion of health-related referrals out of the total referral cases (see Figure 25) over the evaluation period can be attributed to two main factors:

- An increase in the number of beneficiaries under the ESSN-2; and,

- Increasing demands for obtaining a DHR or updating current reports in order to access the Severe Disability Allowance under the ESSN which was launched in August 2018.  

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Recent studies on the impact of the ESSN on health showed a range of positive health-related impacts:

- The ESSN transfers were associated with higher odds of healthcare-seeking behaviours among beneficiaries. This was confirmed by CVME (rounds 3 and 2) data which showed that the proportion of refugees seeing doctors varied by eligibility groups and was slightly higher amongst beneficiaries, compared to ineligible applicants and non-applicants.

- The programme also had an overall positive effect on public health outcomes as captured by reduced mortality rates.

- While healthcare-seeking rates for both adult and child illness were high, around half of refugee HHs in Turkey reported that they had no recent health expenditures. Health expenditures among refugees were very low relative to those reported in the two other major refugee-hosting countries in the region – Jordan and Lebanon.

The ESSN-2 transfers could also be associated with overall better health conditions of refugees. As indicated by CVME data, over the period August 2018- February 2020, beneficiaries reported having experienced sickness to a lesser extent compared to ineligible and non-applicant refugees (see Figure 26).

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209 However, please note that other report in this area (see WFP 2019 report on Multi-purpose cash assistance and health) noted that while in many cases, beneficiaries had higher care-seeking rates than non- beneficiaries, such differences were not always statistically significant.
212 The most important factor contributing to these findings was identified as the Turkish Government’s free health access policy for all refugees registered in Turkey.
While, on one hand, positive health outcomes were associated with the ESSN-2 transfers, it is important to also point at the negative effects of the economic downturn. In this context, as further outlined below, refugees increasingly recurred to coping strategies to manage the cut in purchasing power. For the ESSN-2 beneficiaries this included a reduction of almost 50% in health expenditure in the period May 2017-March 2020 according to PDM data. However, given the low health expenditures reported overall, the differences were generally of small magnitude and therefore may be of limited public health importance.

**Reduced debt of HHs**

Following a substantial decrease in the median debt among beneficiaries from May 2017 to April 2018, the trend reversed throughout 2018 and beneficiary debt exceeded the baseline figure by TL300 (see Figure 27). Non-beneficiary debt showed similar trends, however, the median debt increased more sharply for ESSN beneficiaries from April 2018 till September 2019 (+TL450) compared to non-beneficiaries (TL220). Considering that beneficiaries’ debt levels were still lower compared to those of non-beneficiaries, it seemed that, overall, the cash assistance effectively protected beneficiaries and facilitated better debt management.

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213 WFP PDM data.
Similarly, when looking at HHs borrowing money in the last three months (see Figure 28), the ESSN-2 beneficiaries were slightly less prone to borrowing money compared to non-beneficiaries, although this difference became negligible by end of the ESSN-2. In addition, the proportion of ESSN-2 beneficiaries borrowing money has remained broadly stable over the duration of the ESSN-2. This could be due to the ESSN-2 cash transfer providing a stable and predictable source of income to beneficiaries, despite the decrease in its purchasing power due to significant negative inflation effects (see EQ 6, JC6.3).

Figure 28. HHs borrowing money in the last three months over the evaluation period

Given the negative effects of the economic downturn on HHs, the perception of the positive impact of the ESSN transfers amongst beneficiaries on debt management also deteriorated substantially in the period under observation. For example, since 2018, the percentage of beneficiary HHs confirming that debts were more manageable after the ESSN transfer decreased substantially (from 79.7% to 54%, see Figure 29). The highest drop was reported in the last part of the implementation period, reflecting the trend in the median debt showed above.
**Figure 29. Percentage of HHs confirming that debts are more manageable after the ESSN**

![Graph showing percentage of HHs confirming debt manageability](image)

*Source: ESSN Post-Distribution Monitoring Panel PDM Analysis (May 2017 – March 2020)*

**Coping strategies stabilised or reduced**

Different indicators were collected by the ESSN programme to monitor trends with regard to coping strategies. Recent data indicates that the Livelihoods Coping Strategies Index (LCSI) has decreased overtime, with a greater decrease amongst the ESSN-2 beneficiaries (~31% from May 2017 to March 2020) than for non-beneficiaries (~11% in the same period see Figure 30).

Important to note is also the lowest value of the Index by the end of the ESSN-1 and its improvement under the ESSN-2, compared to the ESSN-1 baseline situation.

**Figure 30. Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (LCSI)**

![Graph showing LCSI](image)

*Source: ESSN Post-Distribution Monitoring Panel PDM Analysis (May 2017 – March 2020)*

Figure 31 below presents the top five most frequently used livelihood coping strategies, for the ESSN-2 beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. The top three strategies were increasingly used by the majority the ESSN-2 beneficiaries over the evaluation period. By the end of the ESSN-2, over
70% of the ESSN-2 beneficiaries coped with insufficient income and reduced food expenditures, bought food on credit and nearly 60% borrowed money to cover their basic needs. This indicates that the sufficiency of the ESSN-2 cash transfer to cover the basic needs was deteriorating over the evaluation period (see also JC8.3). At the same time, the use of other two top coping strategies – reducing expenditure on health and food – was less widespread amongst the ESSN-2 beneficiaries (by over 20% and around 40% of beneficiaries respectively) and to some extent declined over the evaluation period (with respect to expenditure on health).

**Figure 31. Use of five most frequent Livelihood Coping Strategies (LCS)**

Source: PDM Panel Surveys. ICF analysis. Percentages based on samples weighted to reflect the ESSN population.

Consumption-based Coping Strategy data from March 2020 (see Figure 32) also shows that the ESSN-2 beneficiaries had to adapt their consumption strategies to handle the impacts of the economic downturn, in particular by relying on cheaper food, reducing the number of meals or their portion, especially amongst adults to enable a sufficient food consumption for children.
Figure 32. Consumption-based Coping Strategy (March 2020)

Source: ESSN Post-Distribution Monitoring Panel PDM Analysis (May 2017 – March 2020)

Activities linked to the provision of the ESSN-2 debit card and monthly allowance were overall implemented more smoothly compared to the ESSN-1 (JC8.2). As the initial “ramp-up” phase came to an end with the first implementation phase, the programme maintained a "steady state" of implementation where regular operational processes ran smoothly and according to the defined timelines\(^{216}\).

The overall effectiveness in the provision of the ESSN-2 debit card and monthly allowance was reflected in the high percentage of beneficiaries reporting\(^{217}\) that the ESSN assistance was delivered in a safe, accessible and dignified manner (+3% from baseline as showed in Figure 33).

\(^{216}\) WFP (2018) Single Form 2017/00972/IR/01/01.

\(^{217}\) According to the WFP IR, this indicator aims at measuring the proportion of beneficiaries that have not experienced any protection challenges, (any act of violence, coercion, deliberate deprivation, disrespect that undermines safety, dignity and integrity of beneficiaries perpetrated by any actor) as a result of being beneficiaries of the ESSN programme or during the application process. It is measured by asking beneficiaries about their subjective perception and experience with other actors, such as programme stakeholders or community members.
Figure 33. Percentage of beneficiaries reporting that ESSN-2 assistance was delivered in a safe, accessible, and dignified manner


Other indicators also point at high beneficiary satisfaction with the overall ESSN-2 process, including:

- Out of the beneficiaries who have contacted the ESSN programme\textsuperscript{218} through an official channel for assistance, 87% expressed satisfaction with the response;
- Among all applicants, 82% reported that they received notification on whether their application was approved or not. The majority was informed through SMS\textsuperscript{219};
- Only a limited percentage of ESSN-2 beneficiaries (8%) reported that they encountered issues while redeeming the cash assistance, pointing to wrong pin and their card becoming stuck in the ATM as the main challenges\textsuperscript{220}. This is further illustrated in the Figure 34.

Figure 34. Issues related to receiving ESSN-2 assistance


A range of mechanisms/tools were put in place to ensure a high level of effectiveness when implementing the programme on the ground. One of them was the Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CFM), which was already established under the ESSN-1, and served two purposes:

\textsuperscript{218} WFP (2020) Applicant Contact Monitoring surveys data (November 2019-February 2020).
\textsuperscript{219} WFP, ESSN Quarterly Monitor reports.
\textsuperscript{220} WFP, ESSN Quarterly Monitor reports.
1. Improve the effective implementation of transfers to beneficiaries; and
2. Improve programme revisions as complaints and feedback collected were analysed and regularly reported to JMC.

In total, 139,527 complaints were received through CFM channels since the beginning of the ESSN programme\(^{221}\) (mainly through the call centre or by asking SASF staff), of which around 3,200 during the ESSN-2. This represents a small volume, considering the high overall number of ESSN-2 beneficiaries of over 1.7 million. As implementation progressed, the number of bank-related complaints decreased, whereas the number of complaints relating to the application and selection processes increased.

**Figure 35. Number of complaints during ESSN-2**

Source: ESSN Weekly Monitoring Data. Change in method of data collection during Q1 2018 this data point was not included. Due to break in data series the data with ESSN-1 is not directly comparable.

**Figure 36. Type of complaints by category**

Source: ESSN Weekly Monitoring Data. Change in method of data collection during Q1 2018 this data point was not included. \(N\ (2018\ Q2) = 296, N\ (2020\ Q1) = 389\).

Informal complaints were also put forward during DG ECHO monitoring visits. For instance, DG ECHO monitoring visits reported complaints from SASF offices about insufficient support being provided by programme partners despite an increased workload triggered by the ESSN.\(^{222}\)

Another tool, which aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the ESSN and further strengthen the overall process, was the *one-time re-verification exercise*, intended to ensure that the ESSN continued to reach its intended beneficiaries. The exercise was put forward at proposal stage, together with other control mechanisms, to verify card distribution reports against signed card collection forms.

However, the WFP IR findings showed that progress was limited with regard to the re-verification exercise.\(^{223}\) While changing PIN codes was discussed with Halkbank, a list of beneficiaries who reset their PIN codes within the past was not provided at IR stage. In addition, some coordination

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\(^{223}\) WFP (2018) Single Form 2017/00972/IR/01/01.
activities between MoFLSS and SASF, concerning the prioritisation of visits to holders of uncollected cards/ dormant accounts, were put on hold prior to elections. Final progress on the verification exercise could not be further explored due to the lack of evidence.224

3.4.6 EQ9 - To what extent has the ESSN contributed to social cohesion between the refugee population and the host community?

Table 16. EQ9 Key conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgement criteria</th>
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<th>Key conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JC9.1 The ESSN-2 was able to improve social cohesion</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>• The ESSN-2 had a limited impact on the social cohesion and socio-vocational integration of beneficiaries and the host community, but it is important to bear in mind the humanitarian context, where cash assistance is one of many cohesion factors. It can be expected that the situation would have been much worse without the ESSN, especially given the harsh consequences of the economic crisis that hit Turkey during ESSN-2.</td>
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<tr>
<td>JC9.2 Beneficiaries feel more integrated in the host community compared to the situation at the start of the programme</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>• Beneficiary perceptions with regard to the levels of integration and adaptation to life in Turkey remain mixed.</td>
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Baseline

- The ESSN-1 evaluation (November 2016-December 2017) showed some evidence of host community tensions and negative reactions to the ESSN in some locations.225 These tensions were mainly triggered by a misunderstanding that ESSN benefits are paid by the GoT. The evaluation did not find evidence that the ESSN-1 contributed directly to refugees’ integration. However, by reducing the use of negative coping strategies and enabling refugees to have a more dignified existence among neighbours in the Turkish community, the ESSN may have contributed indirectly to integration through positively influencing the perceptions of refugees. The ESSN-1 may also have contributed to integration by enabling refugees to think beyond their ‘survival needs’ and concentrate their efforts on learning the language, looking for a job and socially integrating themselves within the community.226 Beneficiaries associated the ESSN’s impact with improved financial security rather than with a significant effect on the refugees’ everyday interactions with Turkish society.227

The protracted nature of the displacement of the Syrian refugees in Turkey posed new and diverse challenges to authorities, humanitarian actors and receiving host communities who, similarly to refugees and IDPs, were struggling to adjust to the long-term social, economic, and demographic changes associated with displacement.228

**Because of its importance, social cohesion was reflected in the strategic planning for Turkey and the region** For example, the strategic objectives of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (RRP) for the 2021-2022 period were revised to reflect the emphasis on strategic priorities related to inclusion into the national systems, support to self-reliance and promotion of social cohesion. Similarly, the EU strategy in Turkey also placed strong emphasis on promoting increased interaction and understanding between the Syrian refugees and host communities so as to facilitate co-existence and reduce the risks of social tensions. The promotion of social cohesion was identified as a cross-cutting outcome within the Facility strategy.229

At the same time, the dimension of the integration was not always systematically reflected in the specific planning relating to the ESSN-2 implementation (e.g. HIP Turkey 2017). Despite this reflection at the strategic level, evidence showed that, overall, **the ESSN-2 had a limited impact on the integration of beneficiaries in the host community (JC 9.1)**. The success of cash-based humanitarian assistance needs to be considered in the context where it plays one of many contributing roles to improving social cohesion and integration with the host community. Still, the ESSN-2 assistance meant that an additional €1.1 billion was invested in the context of the host society which also benefited economically. This is especially given that the assistance money was spent mostly by the ESSN-2 beneficiaries directly in the local economy to purchase local goods and services. In that sense, the ESSN-2 contributed to economic cohesion, especially in communities which were less developed. Analysis showed a multiplier effect ranging between 1.86 to 2.10 which implied that for each TRY 1 transferred through the ESSN programme, TRY 1.86 to TRY 2.1 worth of output was generated within the Turkish economy.230

Furthermore, in the absence of a counterfactual, it can be expected that the situation would have been much worse without the ESSN, especially given the harsh consequences of the economic crisis that hit Turkey during ESSN-2.

**Tensions between refugees and the host community however aggravated during the evaluation period due to unfavourable circumstances**, with negative attitudes by the host community increasing as the economic situation worsened across the country, also further described below. The ESSN-2 partners struggled to mitigate these developments through communication and outreach efforts to the local communities.

Available data indicated that relations between the refugees and the host community in Turkey improved in the **first three rounds of the social cohesion survey** (July 2017– January 2018), i.e. up to the start of the ESSN-2. However, this positive trend reversed in the following rounds (February and June 2019), probably influenced by: i) the economic slowdown that resulted in competition for limited informal employment opportunities between refugees and the host community; ii) the protracted nature of Syrian displacement; and iii) the political pre-election discourse around refugee returns in early 2019.231

A similar decline in the acceptance by the host community is noted in the Syrian barometer waves conducted in 2017 and 2019 in Turkey.232 The fieldwork with the refugee and host population found a considerable decrease in the level of acceptance and solidarity, with an

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228 World vision, Social cohesion between Syrian Refugees and Urban Host Communities in Lebanon and Jordan.
229 European Commission (2018), Facility for Refugees in Turkey Updated Strategic Concept Note.
increase in host society's anxieties towards the refugee population. This is especially demonstrated in increasing anxiety against the Syrians' permanent stay in the country and increasing politicisation of the refugee question.

The growing discontent against Syrian refugees was confirmed by both national polls and media. For example, a 2017 poll showed the existence of a widespread perception, within the Turkish society (71% of respondents), that Syrian refugees undermined employment prospects for Turkish workers. According to a May 2018 poll, nearly 80% of respondents wanted a quick return of Syrians to their country. Moreover, in a September 2018 poll, 83% of Turks said they viewed Syrian refugees negatively.

The 2020 WFP social cohesion report further outlined that the percentage of host community members who thought refugees were more vulnerable than the Turkish poor decreased over time, perhaps due to the fading of the "emergency" associated with the longer stay of refugees and the ESSN assistance.

The social media analysis confirmed growing discontent amongst the Turkish population. In one Facebook comment, the usage of the Twitter hashtag #Suriyellire40 (#Syrians40) was discussed. Analysis of this hashtag showed it first appeared in August 2019 and has been used by disgruntled Turkish citizens who believe their government had spent $40 billion on Syrian refugees which should have been directed towards their own citizens. The hashtag, however, did not gain much traction, as it was used 284 times. There was an equally unsuccessful attempt to revive it in March 2020.

Similarly, the majority of the KILs undertaken in the context of this evaluation pointed out the tensions between host and refugee communities occurring alongside the ESSN-2 delivery of cash-based assistance. However, this has to be seen in the context where the ESSN was not the only programme implemented in Turkey, as the Turkey Facility included several large-scale socio-economic programmes which, although mostly targeted at refugees, were also accessible to Turkish citizens. Still, six interviewees stated that the ESSN should have invested further efforts to promote social cohesion, especially given the protracted nature of refugee displacement and aid. In particular, interviewees mentioned that more efforts should have been invested in clearly communicating why the assistance was provided and by whom it was financed in order to mitigate misperceptions amongst the host community.

DG ECHO monitoring visits also confirmed the existence of “important tensions” between the two populations with host communities perceiving preferential assistance towards the refugee population particularly in localities where high socio-economic vulnerabilities prevailed. In districts with high socio-economic tension between host communities and refugees, it appeared that host communities still lacked knowledge on how the assistance was funded, while refugees were unaware of how exactly they were deemed eligible for the ESSN.

The ESSN MTR (2018-2019) also showed that the ESSN might have even generated some possible negative impacts on social cohesion, with a perception by Turkish citizens of additional benefits provided to refugees, which was a factor inhibiting the rollout of further assistance to refugees. At the final reporting stage, however, the analysis on potential effect on social cohesion demonstrated that social cohesion improved through 2017 and 2018, before it deteriorated from 2019 onwards. This was likely influenced by the worsening economic

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235 Broken into categories, one-third said the GoT should send back the refugees "no matter what," while 45% said the GoT should return the refugees only to safe zones set up by Turkey on the Syrian side of the border.
239 WFP (2021) SingleForm 2017/00972/FR/01/01.
As an example, in the Marmara region, the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) worked to dissipate misconceptions on assistance entitlements by conducting meetings with both beneficiaries and the host community. Stakeholder consultations conducted during the Field Phase confirmed the above, as the majority of interviewees (TRC and local authorities) observed some tensions between Syrians and Turkish citizens, particularly in areas with a vast presence of refugees. Four interviewees (NGOs and SASF) pointed out that misinformation with regard to the source of funding was the main cause of tensions and discontent amongst the host communities. “The biggest misconception is obviously the perception that the GoT provides the aid.”. One interviewee referred to the negative role of media in exacerbating these misconceptions and existing tensions: “Media make it seem to people as if refugees live in luxury thanks to the assistance provided and this issue affected the cohesion process negatively as it raised the social tension between refugees and host communities”.

However, four interviewees (SASF, TRC and two local authorities) also observed that such tensions somewhat dissipated thanks to the implementation of projects, including when they were funded by the Livelihoods programme. This was including activities such as language courses for refugees, as well as activities raising the awareness of the host community with regard to the contribution of refugees to the local economy as well as on the sources of aid. Although the complementarity between the ESSN and the Livelihoods programming was not systematically ensured, the potential of such linkages highlights the importance of complementary and integrated programming in addressing social cohesion related issues, in addition to the humanitarian aid provided by the ESSN-2.

Refugee perceptions with regard to the levels of integration and adaptation to life in Turkey remain mixed (JC 9.2). The latest CVME (Round 5) data showed that while about half of refugees felt they had adapted to life in Turkey, the other half either did not feel that they adapted or were undecided. The majority of refugees (at least 60%) had a wide social network within the refugee community while less than one third (about 30%) had a network with the Turkish community. Moreover, CVME results also showed that the relationships between refugees and Turkish nationals were not extensive, as 30% of refugees mentioned having a Turkish friend from whom they could get advice. This percentage reduced as the subject of interaction changed (i.e. when degree of friendship would be required). 21% of refugees had a Turkish friend they could talk to when emotionally upset and 15% one they could visit.

Furthermore, according to the Syrians barometer, the majority of the host population (65%) surveyed stated that the Syrian refugees were either very little or not at all integrated into the Turkish society (only 2.3% of Turkish respondents stating that Syrians have completely integrated and 10.9% believes that they have “integrated to a large extent”). When the same question was directed at the Syrians, they produced a completely different picture where they believed themselves to have been successfully integrated into Turkish society. The combined share of Syrians surveyed who stated either that Syrians had “completely” or “to a great extent” integrated was 51.6%. Another 36.9% suggested that they had “partially” integrated, whilst the rate of those who believed that Syrians had integrated “to a very little extent” or “not integrated at all” was only 8.5%.

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240 As an example, in the Marmara region, the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) worked to dissipate misconceptions on assistance entitlements by conducting meetings with both beneficiaries and the host community. By regularly conducting this kind of activities and providing information about the ESSN and other assistance, tensions reportedly decreased among refugees and host communities. Moreover, the International Blue Crescent (IBC) developed a two hours programme including a “Get to Know Each Other” exercise with informal games for participants, a Theatre Forum (Group activity that enables participants to reflect on social issues) followed by discussions and a role play exercise on real conflict issues. Source: WFP, 2019, Annex 38 ESSN Task force best practice.


Three KIIIs indicated that, following ESSN assistance, ESSN beneficiaries were better equipped to integrate within the society. According to an interviewee “those receiving ESSN support, seem more open and more enthusiastic about integration into society.” Interviewee added that “recipients of ESSN aid feel much safer and start to think that they belong to this community”.

Interviewees in the field visit consultations had mixed views when asked about the extent to which the ESSN-2 was able to improve social cohesion. At least four interviewees (TRC and local authorities) highlighted the positive impact of the programme on meeting refugees’ basic needs, which, in turn, improved social cohesion. “Since refugees’ basic needs are being met through the ESSN, they get the chance to join the social life in Turkey. In this way, the programme strengthened social cohesion between the refugees and host communities”.

Nevertheless, while some positive impacts were identified, the majority of the stakeholders consulted (TRC, NGOs and local authorities) stated that the ESSN-2 was not successful in contributing to social cohesion between the refugee population and the host community in particular because of the dependency created amongst ESSN beneficiaries. However, this is also due to the nature of cash assistance, which is only one of many factors that may support cohesion.

Indeed, in order to further social cohesion, interviewees suggested that the ESSN-2 should maximise its linkages with (livelihoods) programmes that aim to increase the self-reliance of refugees and improve their employability such as vocational training, business incubators, family planning, etc. As a local authority specified “we should primarily provide employment for these refugees instead of making them needy. We should conduct programmes that let them earn their own life. It is important to teach them a profession instead of providing continuous assistance”. Similarly, an NGO added “the assistance should not seem like a monthly salary”. This of course should go hand in hand with the availability and scale of such opportunities available to refugees.

In addition, the consultation pointed at an overall need to improve the coherence between the ESSN and actions which support refugees’ access to the formal labour market, such as access to language courses or vocational training. This could, in turn, increase the impact on the local economy and contribute to improve social cohesion between the refugee and the host population. The use of cash jointly with other interventions allows to respond to crisis-affected people in a more holistic and coherent way. As also mentioned in the 3RP strategy 2021-2022 for Turkey, “livelihoods support that reduces competition for jobs and brings communities together will be essential in strengthening social cohesion in the next years”.

3.4.7 EQ10 - To what extent are refugees, local authorities, Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations and citizens aware of the EU’s presence and contribution through the ESSN? (Visibility)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 17. EQ10 Key conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judgement criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCB.1 Refugees are aware of the ESSN programme and that it is funded by the EU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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243 Interview 22.
244 Interview 20.
245 UNHCR, Harvey and Pavanello, 2018, Multipurpose Cash and Sectoral Outcomes
246 UN, 3RP, TURKEY COUNTRY CHAPTER 2021-2022.
Communication activities included printed materials in appropriate languages distributed through SASF, service centres, community centres and NGOs; an ESSN website, Facebook page and WhatsApp groups; and a free-of-charge helpline providing information in six languages for receiving and resolving queries and complaints. The content of the material included details about the programme, the organizations involved, the support available, eligibility and who can apply, the application process, and the call centre.

The link between the ESSN-2 visibility and level of its awareness is not explicitly evidenced, the impacts are due to the cash provided rather than its publicity.

Baseline
- The ESSN-1 evaluation showed that communication activities were implemented slowly at the onset of the programme mainly due to the capacity gaps. Following the recommendations of the capacity assessment carried out in 2017, programme partners have placed more emphasis on sensitisation activities and have established clear guidelines for the management of social media communication. These efforts have proven successful. There was a high level of awareness of the ESSN among all refugees, both applicants and non-applicants with only 5% of non-applicants reporting that they did not know about the ESSN-1.

- Communication and sensitisation of national authorities, including SASFs, was reportedly weak in the beginning of the ESSN-1 as staff lacked basic knowledge of the ESSN programme and were not consistently applying the correct processes for receiving and assessing applications. No information about the level of awareness of the ESSN amongst authorities, local actors and citizens was reported at the end of the first implementation phase.

The ESSN-2 visibility and communication activities generated a high level of awareness amongst refugees (JC 10.1). From the very beginning of the Facility, visibility and communication were key priorities to convey the message of the "EU's continuing strong support to refugees and host communities in Turkey". In this context, under the ESSN-2, further efforts were invested, compared to the baseline, to increase the awareness of both refugees and local authorities about the programme and its application process. Communication activities under the ESSN-2 included:

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247 Communication activities included printed materials in appropriate languages distributed through SASF, service centres, community centres and NGOs; an ESSN website, Facebook page and WhatsApp groups; and a free-of-charge helpline providing information in six languages for receiving and resolving queries and complaints. The content of the material included details about the programme, the organizations involved, the support available, eligibility and who can apply, the application process, and the call centre.


• Community-level outreach in priority districts through information sessions for refugee populations, local authorities, civil society, and other stakeholders; and,

• Social media outreach through the ESSN and other Facebook pages and groups.

The introduction of the TK Referral and Outreach teams was a significant step forward in this context. In fact, in addition to removing barriers of individuals during the ESSN application process, the newly established teams were also responsible for conducting awareness raising activities (targeting beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, applicants, local and central authorities, NGOs, etc.). Evidence showed that the TK Referral and Outreach teams were particularly effective in reaching refugees residing in remote areas, where access to information is otherwise limited (in line with the priorities established within the ESSN-2 proposal).

In addition to the TK Referral and Outreach teams, the Call Centre continued to serve as the major contact point for the ESSN. The dedicated Facebook page also provided information to the affected population, as well as responding to individual queries (although page visits dropped during the period under observation). In addition, the ESSN website gained visibility during the evaluation period. Figure 37 shows a trend of growth in Facebook followers, ESSN website visits as well as 168 calls during the evaluation period.

![Figure 37. Trends in ESSN communication channels (normalised data)](image)

Source: ICF calculations based on ESSN quarterly monitoring reports

The share of surveyed beneficiaries who were informed about key aspects of the programme (awareness of their entitlement and/ or how to contact the programme) increased considerably by the end of the ESSN-1 and remained above baseline levels during the ESSN-2 (see Figure 38). By Q3 2019, this percentage dropped to 90%, which was the target value set in the ESSN-2 proposal.251

Figure 38. Percentage of surveyed beneficiaries who considered that they were informed about key aspects of the programme

Source: WFP CVME.

According to Applicant Contact Monitoring survey data\(^{252}\) (November 2019-February 2020), a relatively high percentage of applicants (70\%) were aware of official ESSN “contact channels”, in particular the call centre and SASF offices. On the other hand, other official channels such as the ESSN website, Facebook page or field staff were not considered as frequently by participants.

Finally, with regard to non-applicants, CVME data showed that only 5\% of non-applicants stated “lack of awareness about the ESSN” as their main reason for not applying and about 7\% reported “lack of awareness about the application process” as their main reason.\(^{253}\)

In addition to targeting refugees, the **TK Referral and Outreach teams’ sensitisation efforts also included raising the awareness of authorities** with regard to new developments under the ESSN-2, such as the SASF Discretionary Allowance, change in registration procedures in some provinces as well as modifications in relevant regulations. According to ESSN monitoring data, by the end of the ESSN-2, a total of 7,649 visits to SASFs, PDMMs, PDPC offices, municipalities and Social Service Centres were carried out (see Figure 39).\(^{254}\)

Figure 39. Visits undertaken under the ESSN-2 of authorities, offices and local units

Source: ESSN quarterly monitoring

Evidence suggested that these efforts were somewhat effective and enabled a better understanding of ESSN procedures by local authorities. An indication of improved general awareness of the ESSN comes from data on the percentage of WFP/TRC monitoring visits, which

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recorded that the proportion of SASFs not following standard application procedures fell from a baseline figure of 20% to 14% by the end of the ESSN-2.255

Overall, while available documentation reported positively the ESSN-2 sensitisation activities, the ESSN MTR (2018-2019) also suggested that further efforts should be invested by the TRC with regard to monitoring and reporting of the TK Referral and Outreach teams’ awareness raising activities. Information generated through monitoring and reporting “should be used by management to analyse the impact of Referral and Outreach sensitisation activities and its relationship to other ESSN communication and training activities”. By the time of final stages of the ESSN-2, this appears to have improved with the TK Referral and Outreach teams taking a fuller responsibility for their communication and sensitisation activities.256

Monitoring visits undertaken in 2019 also reported some areas for improvement with regard to awareness raising activities implemented on the ground.257 Such monitoring visits questioned the clarity of information provided to different beneficiaries as the latter reportedly have to seek further clarifications with SASFs or other local offices. It was observed that the communication strategy was not always adapted to the audience and their level of understanding of humanitarian activities in general and of the ESSN in particular. The monitoring report concluded that awareness raising activities should be better adjusted/ targeted to different types of audiences.

With regard to information dissemination towards muhtars (the highest elected authority of a village) it was found that, in some instances, awareness raising activities were limited to handing over a leaflet. The monitoring report called for more efforts to be invested to ensure that recipients actually understand the process of the application as well as the criteria in order to be able to explain them to refugees seeking information. In addition, other recommendations stemming from the monitoring visits related to:

- Better communication on the duration of the ESSN to beneficiaries, SASFs, local authorities, humanitarian stakeholders, etc. as visits found that most of these stakeholders believed that the ESSN could stop soon; and,

- Considering the sustainability element of the ESSN and the future involvement of livelihoods and employment actors (including private sector etc.), ESSN partners should better target their communication activities to these new key actors as their knowledge of the programme was found to be limited.

DG ECHO monitoring visit conducted in Q3 2019 reported that SASFs awareness of the EU financial support was very low as most local authorities believed that the support provided (in terms of seconded staff, vehicles, etc.) came from the TRC directly.258 Similarly, the overall awareness of EU financing amongst other stakeholders (private sector, livelihood actors, etc.) was also found very low. The DG ECHO monitoring visit also reported that the TRC did not sufficiently communicate on the role of the EU and visibility efforts were almost non-existent.

An overall lack of awareness of EU funding, in particular within the Turkish community was flagged by at least five KIs undertaken in the context of this evaluation. As explained by one interviewee: “very few people know about EU’s presence and contribution through the ESSN even if these are explained within brochures and posters”259 Another interviewee explained: “refugees may know that aid comes from the EU to a greater extent compared to the local

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256 Annex A, meta-analysis of the impact and lessons learned for implementation of the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme in Turkey (2016–2020)
259 Interview 8.
community. The latter thinks that the government is funding the Kızılay card and this creates discontent.”

3.4.8 EQ11 - To what extent has the monitoring and reporting system implemented by the WFP and the TRC supported a sound and timely management of the ESSN’s, including informing any necessary adjustments? Does it ensure a high level of protection and data protection of ESSN’s beneficiaries?

Table 18. EQ11 Key conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgement criteria</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>Key conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JC11.1 Monitoring, evaluation and reviewing mechanisms allow for an effective assessment of progress made in achieving the objectives of the ESSN-3</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>• Comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and reviewing mechanisms not only allowed for an effective assessment of progress made by the ESSN-2 but also for an effective assessment of impacts of the ESSN transfers on beneficiaries over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC11.2 Measures were put in place to take stock of evaluation findings and informing revisions / redesign of actions (building upon the first phase of the programme)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>• A range of actions were taken to take stock of evaluation findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC11.3 Procedures/ measures were put in place to effectively protect the personal data of beneficiaries</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>• Turkish authorities used the existing national rules to effectively protect personal data of beneficiaries, this has affected the full access to personal data of beneficiaries by other ESSN-2 actors, such as the WFP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC11.4 A learning mechanism was put in place to allow lessons learnt to be collected and used in the future to scale up or replicate similar programmes in other contexts</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>• A formal learning mechanism was put in place with extensive evidence collected to inform future implementation of similar programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mixed take up of lessons learnt within DG ECHO.</td>
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</table>

Baseline

- The ESSN evaluation (November 2016-December 2017) outlined that strong internal monitoring systems tracked the performance of the ESSN-1 and supported constant review and adjustments during programme implementation. Monitoring arrangements were well developed in the ESSN design and prioritised as a fourth expected result of the programme. The implementation of the monitoring mechanisms by the WFP and the TRC was effective and relevant findings regularly informed programme changes. Although some delays were faced in establishing functioning monitoring and evaluation processes, effective mechanisms were put in place by April 2017.

- A special unit within the WFP was responsible for the regular provision of feedback and ensured that ESSN-1 partners could respond and modify the programme’s design or undertake actions to address issues arising from monitoring data. This included, for example, activities to address issues around lack of sensitisation of communities and SASF;

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260 Interview 17.

January, 2018
errors and gaps in targeting; the transfer value and barriers to application and enrolment for vulnerable HHS, etc.

- GoT restrictions to the WFP accessing HH data, based on data privacy legislation led to some challenges with regard to accountability. The constraints in accessing monthly data on ineligible applicants reportedly compromised the WFP’s ability to ensure full accountability to donors. While the TRC served as an intermediary between the GoT and the WFP with regard to this matter, it has only been authorised to share an anonymised sample of 3% of the applicant data.

- No formal learning mechanism was put in place under the ESSN-1.

Overall, monitoring, evaluation and reviewing mechanisms not only allowed for an effective assessment of progress made by the ESSN-2 but also for an effective assessment of impacts of the ESSN transfers on beneficiaries over time (JC11.1).

While a comprehensive monitoring system was already put in place under the ESSN-1, under the evaluation period, these monitoring were further developed to reflect changes in the programme. For example, additional surveys were launched following the introduction of Severe Disability Allowance top-ups and M&E SOPs were updated, in particular, to include specific guidance about the newly implemented Applicant Contact Monitoring surveys.

Monitoring was multi-dimensional and covered:

- The practical implementation of the programme – process/ on-site monitoring and card distribution monitoring to ensure efficient and timely implementation of the ESSN-2 in line with the established SOPs and humanitarian principles. This type of monitoring was conducted, inter alia, through regular visits to SASFs, SCs and HalkBank offices, HHS’ visits as well as through FGDs; and,

- The impacts of the programme – outcome monitoring was incorporated into the system, including an analysis of indicators on food security, livelihoods, poverty, health, education, protection, etc., thus ensuring a holistic approach to monitoring the impacts the assistance on beneficiaries. Moreover, the continuity of monitoring of indicators allowed for trend analysis and studying the direct impact of the ESSN over time, which is uncommon for humanitarian interventions.

Monitoring efforts were coordinated at various levels. At field level, tin-person data collection was conducted jointly by WFP and TRC field staff while phone call surveys were conducted by TRC call centres. The WFP was overall responsible for monitoring and accountability towards the donors. Within the WFP, the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping/ Monitoring and Evaluation (VAM/ M&E) unit was responsible for providing the evidence required to plan and adjust programmatic interventions. The box below provides an overview of the main monitoring efforts undertaken under the ESSN-2.

3.4.9 Main ESSN monitoring tools

**Pre-Assistance Baseline (PAB) survey** – The PAB data was collected between February and May 2017 before the distribution of assistance; a total of 8,690 surveys were covered, including 5,297 non-beneficiary HHS and 3,393 beneficiary HHS identified as eligible to receive ESSN assistance. The data was drawn from a sample of assessed ESSN applications submitted until May 2017 and was representative of the applicant population encompassing 1.6 million refugees. Questions regarding the demographic profile of the applicant HHS, Dietary Diversity, Food Consumption Score, Consumption Coping Strategies, Livelihood Coping Strategies, Income sources, Expenditures, Debt, Poverty are asked to the participants;
Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) – PDM surveys gather information about indicators such as HHs’ food consumption scores, diet diversity score, coping strategies, debt levels, etc. The main aim of the surveys is to identify the impacts of the ESSN on the welfare of beneficiaries. The PAB and PDM samples include both eligible and ineligible applicant HHs, with the ineligible HHs serving as a comparison group. Both surveys are conducted by phone from the TRC Call Centre;

PDM outcome monitoring exercise conducted following the panel survey approach, interviewing the same set of beneficiary and non-beneficiary throughout the programme implementation. This allows longitudinal insight into the effects of the ESSN cash transfers;

Comprehensive Vulnerability Monitoring Exercise (CVME) – the CVME is designed to complement the PAB/ PDM surveys in two key ways: the first is providing more detailed information from a variety of sectors; the second is collecting information from non-applicants, which allows insight into barriers to applications. The CVME aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the determinants of refugee vulnerability in Turkey. It includes data on the status of respondents’ health, education, income, expenditure, debt, living conditions and food security in order to build a picture of refugee socioeconomic vulnerability across Turkey. It also serves to better understand the ESSN performance in key areas, and identify unmet needs;

Social cohesion surveys – such surveys monitored the context and perceptions of refugees and the host community over the implementation period;

Applicant Contact Monitoring (ACM) surveys – the ACM surveys collected HH experiences and perceptions with regard to the application and distribution processes, plus crosscutting indicators such as gender, protection, and AAP. The ACM surveys are conducted within the CVME;

Pre-disability assistance baseline survey – in order to monitor the effect of the Severe Disability Allowance, WFP/TRC selected a sample of those HHs intended to receive the top-up and conducted a pre-disability assistance baseline survey using the same methodology as the ESSN PAB. This small sample will be used as the benchmark to ensure the effect of the disability top-up can be measured through PDM surveys every 3 months;

Joint monitoring missions – the WFP and the TRC are regularly visited Service Centres and SASFs; all visits identified by WFP monitoring teams were recorded into the online MEDS system;

Performance Survey – an initiative launched by the ESSN Task Force. More information to be collected in the next phase of the assignment.

Quarterly ESSN monitoring reports – are produced by the WFP based on PDM, CVME, FGD and process monitoring data collected by the WFP and the TRC throughout the individual quarters. They also provide information from economic monitoring.

With regard to evaluation, the following studies were completed and published:

- The 2018 Impact Study,262 conducted jointly with the World Bank, had two objectives: first, to provide an assessment of the vulnerability situation of refugees eligible for the ESSN; and second, to evaluate how well the ESSN targeted, supported, and protected the most vulnerable refugees; and,

- The ESSN MTR (2018-2019) specifically explored four programmatic developments, namely: (1) SASF Discretionary Allowance, (2) outreach teams, (3) protection referrals and (4) the Severe Disability Allowance. In addition, the evaluation also examined the impact of the 2018 economic slowdown in Turkey on ESSN beneficiaries.

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January, 2018
• the WFP meta-analysis of the impact and lessons learnt from implementation of the ESSN in Turkey (2016-2020) was published in 2021.

The present assignment, being the final evaluation of the ESSN-2, takes stock of the findings of these studies.

**Measures were put in place to take stock of evaluation findings and informing revisions / redesign of actions (building upon the first phase of the programme) (JC11.2).** Evidence showed\(^{263}\) that results monitoring data, analysis and reports as well as other knowledge products outlined above enabled the continuous reconfiguration of the programme in line with evolving beneficiary/ contextual needs and demonstrated programme effectiveness (see JC2.2). For instance\(^{264}\) the CVMEs, in addition to providing a deeper understanding of refugee needs and vulnerabilities, also served as key inputs for the development of the SASF Discretionary Allowance as well as other top-ups. Moreover, process/ on-site monitoring, card distribution monitoring and ACM informed revisions to the implementation process. This contributed to improving the overall effectiveness of cash transfers and mitigated the risks of obstacles in the process (including fraud, corruption, misuse, etc.).

**Procedures/ measures were put in place to effectively protect the personal data of beneficiaries (JC11.3), but the high level of data protection caused some implementation challenges.** The ESSN was designed in line with the regulations and policies of the GoT on personal data protection.\(^ {265}\) As in the baseline, the WFP relied on data-sharing agreements between the GoT and the TRC established specifically for the ESSN-2 and could not access data that personally identified beneficiaries. Available literature showed that, during the ESSN-2, data sharing within the strict national rules and regulations continued to be a critical challenge and a key risk in terms of delays, transparency, accountability and the WFP oversight of processes.\(^ {266}\)

In this context, a 2018 ECA report\(^{267}\) called the Commission to insist that “the Turkish authorities grant implementing partners of the cash-assistance projects full access to the data on eligible beneficiaries, in order to improve the accountability and efficiency of the monitoring framework of these flagship projects”.

Difficulties relating to data sharing and accessibility were also confirmed by two KIs. Interviewees consulted during the Field Phase pointed out that the procedures/ measures put in place by the ESSN-2 to protect the personal data of beneficiaries were effective and in line with Turkish legislation on data protection, a framework which was considered to be very stringent. As one interviewee put it “the cooperation between TRC and the Turkish authorities allowed for the establishment of the most secure environment for data handling”.

However, because the data protection procedures/ measures put in place were so restrictive, the **WFP could not directly access beneficiaries’ personal data.** Interviewees in the field visit for the evaluation (SASF, TRC and local authorities), who pointed out that the data protection regime led to the difficulty to mainstream the different cash assistances in place and provide a unique register of beneficiaries.

In this context, innovative approaches to the beneficiary verification cycle had to be put in place. The WFP therefore developed a comprehensive checklist working with masked IDs (a system called ‘unique number’), which enabled cross-checks without the full visibility of beneficiaries’

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\(^{264}\) WFP (2018) Single Form 2017/00972/IR/01/01.


\(^{266}\) WFP (2018) SingleForm 2017/00972/IR/01/01.

\(^{267}\) ECA (2018) The Facility for Refugees in Turkey: helpful support, but improvements needed to deliver more value for money.
data. Such unique number, generated automatically by the system and associated to each beneficiary receiving assistance, combined the five digits of the bank card with the three digits of the ID Card of the beneficiary. According to two interviewees (TRC), such verification system proved effective and mitigated accountability risks posed by the data protection regime in place.

A learning mechanism was put in place to allow lessons learnt to be collected and used in the future to scale up or replicate similar programmes in other contexts, although it’s use is still to be improved (JC11.4).

While the TRC and the WFP already informally engaged in some activities to capture lessons learned within JMC work streams, a more formal learning mechanism was established in 2018. Evidence showed that the WFP invested considerable efforts in capturing lessons learned from the implementation of the ESSN-2 programme. More specifically, the Lessons Learned Exercise (LLE) looked at how the Task Force achieved its objectives by engaging with humanitarian actors outside of the ESSN and the various coordination mechanisms created to assist refugees in Turkey. It documented good practices, lessons learned, gaps and recommend ways forward.

The LLE called the Task Force to take on a “stronger Knowledge Management function by facilitating the systematic collection and sharing of challenges, lessons learned and good practices through information management capacity”. It also suggested to strengthen the ESSN Portal to also serve as information sharing repository for ESSN-related lessons learned, good practices and stories from the field.

In addition to the LLE, during the evaluation period, the WFP produced several outputs aimed at identifying and sharing lessons learned from the ESSN implementation such as: the Monitoring Multi-Purpose Cash Guide, a guide on WFP regional best practices, including a specific Turkey case study, which documents best practices and challenges; and the Essential Needs Assessment Interim Guidance Note and the MEB Interim Guidance Note, both released in 2018 and containing examples and lessons from the ESSN.

However, while promising steps have been taken with regard to capitalising upon the ESSN lessons, evidence also showed that there is a sense that more efforts need to be invested, going forward, to improve the use of the available findings within DG ECHO.

More specifically, the evidence and lessons gathered from both WFP’s monitoring activities and additional studies was considered by DG ECHO as “disjointed and does not enable full view of the programme’s innovations, achievements and lessons learnt. Furthermore, the potential utility of the tools, methodologies and resources developed in the course of the programme has not been explored beyond the ESSN framework”. In this context, discussions took place at strategic level on: 1) how to best capitalise on the lessons learned in the next implementation phase of the programme; and 2) how to mainstream these lessons to replicate large cash transfer programmes in other contexts.

The WFP Meta-analysis of the impact and lessons learnt from implementation of the ESSN in Turkey (2016-2020) marked a first step in this direction. The study consolidated the impact, knowledge and lessons learnt from the ESSN implementation, in order to provide a relevant platform to disseminate such lessons to the humanitarian, development and academic community. In addition to the establishment of a formal learning mechanism in 2018 (the LLE),
the WFP launched a variety of studies looking at different aspects of the programme. Table 19 presents the most important studies/reports in this area.

### Table 19. Recent studies capturing the ESSN lessons learned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Overview of content/coverage of the study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WFP and OPHI, February 2021, the ESSN Meta-Analysis</td>
<td>The study aimed at consolidating the impact, knowledge and lessons learnt from the ESSN implementation in order to provide a relevant platform to disseminate such lessons to the humanitarian, development, and academic community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCG and WFP, April 2019, JMC review</td>
<td>The study aimed to look at areas of success and areas for improvement with regard to the functioning of the JMC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFP, Capacity Strengthening Under the ESSN</td>
<td>The report assessed capacity building and handover tasks since the start of the ESSN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring Multi-Purpose Cash Guide</td>
<td>A guide on WFP regional best practices, including a specific Turkey case study, which documents best practices and challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential Needs Assessment Interim Guidance Note and the MEB Interim Guidance Note</td>
<td>Both released in 2018 and containing examples and lessons from the ESSN on needs assessment and methodology to calculate the MEB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFP, 2019, Best Practices and Case Studies paper</td>
<td>The paper outlined examples of key challenges with regard to barriers to accessing ESSN assistance. It aimed to demonstrate the significant efforts and ongoing, collaborative work taking place at different levels and with various humanitarian actors collectively working to remove barriers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFP, 2019, CBT learning exercise</td>
<td>The exercise explored the added value of the essential needs approach undertaken under the ESSN-2 and how it could be applied in other contexts.</td>
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</table>

Interviews with stakeholders confirmed that WFP’s efforts in capturing lessons learned at programme level generated a wealth of information, which has the potential to be replicated in Safety net programmes in other contexts. However, evidence collected as well as some interviewees (TRC) also pointed out that, currently, further efforts should be invested in order to:

- Improve the coherence of and consolidate the available findings, and
- Mainstream and share such information externally.

With regard to lessons learned at strategic level, within DG ECHO, the ESSN programme positively impacted on the development/implemention of EU cash assistance policy and agenda in recent years. As one interviewee (DG ECHO) put it “ten years ago DG ECHO did not have a cash assistance policy. Today, ECHO has one and the lessons learned from the ESSN are very instrumental to the development of policies and guidelines of DG ECHO”. However, interviews also pointed out that the absorption of lessons learned within the institution was not sufficient at this stage and that more efforts should be invested, within DG ECHO, to:

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• Capitalise on the ESSN and its lessons for wider cash assistance programmes; and
• Build a more systematic internal knowledge management system.
3.5 **Efficiency**

3.5.1 **EQ12 - To what extent has ESSN’s cost-effectiveness improved in the last two years of programme implementation? What factors have affected the cost-effectiveness of the response and to what extent?**

This EQ considers notions of cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Cost-efficiency relates to whether the allocation of resources (DG ECHO funding) was allocated in a manner which ensured that the value of the costs associated with providing the ESSN transfer were minimised. In other terms, that as little money as possible was spent facilitating the delivery of the transfer. Cost-effectiveness relates to the cost of achieving quantifiable outputs associated with the programme (i.e. the cost of providing one beneficiary with a cash transfer per month).

**Table 20. EQ12 Key conclusions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgement criteria</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>Key conclusions</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| JC12.1 Following the ECA’s recommendations and the evaluation of the ESSN-1, measures were implemented resulting in an improvement in cost-effectiveness compared to the first phase of implementation of the programme (for example related to overheads claims and cash transfer fees) | S | • The cost transfer ratio increased by approximately 3 percentage points between the ESSN-1 (85.4%) and the ESSN-2 (88.7%). Using total ESSN-2 expenditures as a base, this reflects a cost-efficiency saving of €31 million.  
• This cost-transfer ratio is similar in comparison to those of cash programmes implemented in other countries, however the ability to directly compare these programmes to the ESSN is limited due to their smaller scale and beneficiary cohort.  
• Net of expenditures going directly to cash transfers (i.e. considering only the programme costs per beneficiary), the average monthly cost per beneficiary was €2.92 for the ESSN-1 and €2.45 for the ESSN-2. This represents an increase in the cost-effectiveness of the programme of 16.1%.  
• In particular, cost savings were realised amongst cash and voucher costs, and direct support costs between ESSN-1 and ESSN-2.  
• Capacity development (also referred to as capacity strengthening) costs increased by almost ten-fold between the two phases of the ESSN. However, this increase in costs is reflective of the expansion of activities to enhance outreach and improve awareness of the programme.  
• Whilst the proportion of funding spent on indirect support costs fell from 7.0% to 6.5% between the ESSN-1 and the ESSN-2, these costs still represented over €61 million of the total ESSN-2 budget. As indirect costs are applied using a flat rate, their distribution cannot be verified and has not been further broken down in the financial annexes provided by the WFP.  
• ESSN-1 and ESSN-2 expenditures were both slightly below budget, with 99% of the budget being utilised in both cases. In ESSN-2, the areas going over
The main drivers of increases in cost efficiency were the economies of scale resulting from the size of the ESSN; improvements in capacity development; increased familiarity with the programme during the second phase of implementation; and improvements in project management.

The main barriers to further increases in cost efficiency were the high rate of indirect support costs; and inefficiencies resulting from the duplication of actions amongst partners.

None of the evidence collected provided information on the existence of feedback loops and shared good practices used to drive efficiency.

### Baseline

A breakdown of the costs for the ESSN-1 is presented below in Table 21, detailing the budgeted expenditure and the actual expenditure for each of the main cost categories. Based on the figures in Table 21, cost transfer ratio for the ESSN-1 was calculated to be 85.4%. This means that for every €1 spent on the ESSN-2 programme, approximately €0.85 was transferred directly to beneficiaries. This met the requirement agreed by the WFP and DG ECHO that a minimum 85% of programme costs would be directly transferred to beneficiaries. Actual expenditure over the implementation of the ESSN-1 was similar to the budgeted expenditure. The amount spent on cash and voucher transfers totalled 99% of the budgeted amount, whilst cash and voucher costs (101%) and direct support costs (103%) marginally exceeded the budget.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Actuals</th>
<th>Actuals as % of budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and voucher transfers</td>
<td>€305,642,500</td>
<td>€300,973,721</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and voucher costs</td>
<td>€16,557,500</td>
<td>€16,736,021</td>
<td>101%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity development and augmentation</td>
<td>€1,105,325</td>
<td>€971,011</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct support costs</td>
<td>€10,382,000</td>
<td>€10,712,836</td>
<td>103%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect support costs (7%)</td>
<td>€23,358,113</td>
<td>€23,057,551</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total costs</td>
<td>€357,045,438</td>
<td>€352,451,140</td>
<td>98.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost transfer ratio</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
<td>85.4%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WFP Request for complementary information – Final Report ECHO/TUR/BUD/2016/91012 - Emergency Social Safety Net Assistance to refugees in Turkey

Table 22 presents the indicators used to measure cost-effectiveness. The average cost per beneficiary per month during the ESSN-1 inclusive of the transfer was calculated to be €19.99. Net of expenditures going directly to cash transfers (i.e. considering only the programme costs per
beneficiary), the average monthly cost per beneficiary was €2.90.

### Table 22. ESSN-1 Cost Effectiveness Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Costs inclusive of transfer</th>
<th>Costs exclusive of transfer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total costs</td>
<td>€352,451,140</td>
<td>€51,477,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of beneficiaries</td>
<td>1,175,254</td>
<td>1,175,254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average cost per beneficiary</td>
<td>€299.89</td>
<td>€43.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td>Q4 2016 - Q4 2017</td>
<td>Q4 2016 - Q4 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of months</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average cost per beneficiary per month</strong></td>
<td><strong>€19.99</strong></td>
<td><strong>€2.92</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WFP Request for complementary information – Final Report ECHO/TUR/BUD/2016/91012 - Emergency Social Safety Net Assistance to refugees in Turkey

Although the ESSN-1 was significantly more cost-efficient than preceding humanitarian assistance to refugees, The ESSN MTR (2018-2019) highlighted that, given the exceptional scale of the programme, the administrative costs of the ESSN-1 were considered high (€9 million for direct support costs and €25 million for Indirect Support Cost charged by the WFP).^274^ A report conducted by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) (2018)^275^ provided some recommendations for the WFP to improve cost efficiency and budget equity and to consider alternative cost models to allow the WFP to remain competitive in large budget programmes such as the ESSN. These included:

- Negotiating a reduction in the percentage of indirect costs charged by the UN implementing partner for the implementation of the ESSN;^276^
- Ensuring that the cash transfer fee (for the ESSN) was paid only when duly justified and necessary;
- Negotiating with partners a reduced level of pre-financing that was better aligned with the projects’ expected cash outflows.

The cost-efficiency of the ESSN improved during the second implementation phase of the programme, as demonstrated by a 3% increase (from 85.4% to 88.7%) in the cost transfer ratio between the ESSN-1 and the ESSN-2 (JC12.1). The main drivers of this rise included the economies of scale resulting from the increased size of the programme, and increased familiarity with the programme during the second phase of implementation. Given the scale of the expansion of the ESSN from ESSN-1 to ESSN-2, the increase in cost efficiency may be smaller than what could be expected under these circumstances. The main barrier to the accrual of further efficiency gains was the maintained high rate of indirect support costs charged by the WFP, which constituted 6.5% of direct ESSN-2 costs (JC12.2).

The breakdown of costs for the ESSN-2 is presented in Table 23. The cost transfer ratio based on actual expenditure was 88.7%, which reflects a cost-efficiency saving of €31 million with regard to the 85.4% ratio achieved during the implementation of the ESSN-1. The cost transfer ratio

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^275^ ECA (2018) The Facility for Refugees in Turkey: helpful support, but improvements needed to deliver more value for money.
^276^ The indirect support cost rates for WFP and of other UN agencies are set by their respective Executive Boards. A change in this rate would require an overall amendment by WFP’s Executive Board, and is not something that can be negotiated on a project-by-project basis.
was also higher than the average 79% across other Commission-funded basic needs projects in the region.\textsuperscript{277}

Based on an analysis of ESSN-2 financial data provided by the WFP, the cost transfer ratio for the ESSN-2 was similar to those achieved by other cash-based humanitarian programmes supporting refugees, as per the comparative overview presented in Table 24 below. However, given that these programmes targeted a significantly lower number of beneficiaries than the ESSN-2\textsuperscript{278} (the largest project still being 19 times smaller than the ESSN-2), they were unlikely to experience the same efficiency gains resulting from developing economies of scale. Furthermore, the familiarity with the ESSN amongst organisational and implementing partners before and during the ESSN-2 should, all things being equal, have also contributed to further efficiency gains. Therefore, while cost-efficiency did improve from the ESSN-1 to the ESSN-2, considering the size of the programme and the fact that it was a continuation, one could have expected a higher cost-transfer ratio than similar (new or smaller) cash-based humanitarian aid actions.

On the other hand, it is also critical to highlight that owing to the size of the ESSN as the largest cash-based humanitarian programme in the world, there are no alternative programmes of such ilk with which it can be directly compared to in terms of efficiency. Consequently, it is not possible to conclusively determine whether or not the ESSN-2 was more or less efficient than any other programmes of such size and scope. Furthermore, each of the delivery partners implementing the actions presented in Table 24 have their own financial frameworks and architecture, and consequently the cost ratios reported below may not be directly comparable in terms of their calculation.

The evaluation confirmed that \textit{cost reductions were realised amongst cash and voucher costs and direct support costs between the ESSN-1 and the ESSN-2 (JC12.1)}. Findings from the KILs suggest that the reductions in the number of international staff and travel costs played a role in reducing programme costs, contributing to improvements in the transfer cost ratio relative to ESSN-1. \textit{Costs for capacity development (also referred to as capacity strengthening) increased by almost ten-fold between the two phases of the ESSN.} The driver of this increase was the amount spent on Cooperating Partner Costs, which amounted to 97% of all costs associated with capacity strengthening under the ESSN-2. This can be attributed to the fact that several activities were introduced under the ESSN-2 to enhance awareness and improve outreach, which thus added to its costs. Capacity building activities further included the secondment of staff, development of SOPs on different operational aspects of the ESSN, training sessions targeting technical and soft skills, the provision of hardware support to MoFSP (e.g. computers, work stations), and the provision of interpreters to SASFs and support during HHS’ visits.

Furthermore, the proportion of funding spent on indirect support costs fell from 7% to 6% between the ESSN-1 and the ESSN-2. This percentage, although allowed as per DG ECHO’s financial standards,\textsuperscript{279} in the context of the ESSN-2 represented over €61 million. The detailed distribution of these costs is not available in the financial annexes provided by the WFP, and consequently it is not possible to ascertain if the size of the indirect costs was proportional to the activities undertaken during the ESSN-2, given that it was a single action covering only one sector (MPCs). Possibly, there may be scope for DG ECHO to consider whether the application of the standard flat rate for indirect costs is appropriate (and cost-efficient) when it concerns actions such as the ESSN, which exceed €1 billion euro in funding. This is particularly relevant.

\textsuperscript{277} European Court of Auditors (2018). Special Report: The Facility for Refugees in Turkey: Helpful support but improvements needed to deliver more value for money.

\textsuperscript{278} Over the ESSN-2 implementation period the number of targeted individuals ranged from 505,828 (Q1 2017) to 1,731,944 (Q1 2020).

\textsuperscript{279} Unless otherwise specified in the agreement, eligible indirect costs are declared on the basis of a flat rate of max 7% of the total eligible direct costs, see: https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/ngo/action-proposal/fill-in-the-single-form/13-financial-overview-of-the-action.
considering that the ESSN-3, which is led by a different framework partner, has allocated 3.7% to indirect support costs, or €33.4 million on a total budget of €900 million.\(^{280}\)

**Table 23. ESSN-2 Cost Efficiency Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Actuals</th>
<th>Actuals as % of budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and voucher transfers</td>
<td>€892,912,881</td>
<td>€888,495,812</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and voucher costs</td>
<td>€6,718,486</td>
<td>€6,653,865</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity strengthening</td>
<td>€10,575,430</td>
<td>10,513,373</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation costs</td>
<td>€26,845,406</td>
<td>€26,136,494</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct support costs</td>
<td>€8,297,918</td>
<td>€8,419,740</td>
<td>101%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect support costs</td>
<td>€61,447,828</td>
<td>€61,114,254</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>€1,006,797,949</td>
<td>€1,001,333,538</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost transfer ratio</strong></td>
<td>88.7%</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: ECHO/TUR/BUD/2017/91009 ESSN2 Final Report Annex*

**Table 24. Comparison of Cost-Transfer Ratios across Cash-Based Humanitarian Aid Programmes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Main delivery partner</th>
<th>Number of beneficiaries</th>
<th>Cost transfer ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Multi-purpose Cash Transfers for all asylum seekers</td>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>83%(^{281})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>UNHCR-WFP Joint Cash Programme for Basic Needs</td>
<td>UNHCR, WFP</td>
<td>56,000</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>UNHCR Cash Programme for Basic Needs</td>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Between the ESSN-1 and the ESSN-2, the average cost per beneficiary per month increased from €19.99 to €21.80 (Table 25). This corresponds to the introduction of the quarterly top-ups and the Severe Disability Allowance during the tenure of the ESSN-2. Net of expenditures going directly to cash transfers (i.e. considering only the programme costs per beneficiary), the average monthly cost per beneficiary was €2.92 for the ESSN-1 and €2.45 for the ESSN-2. This represents an increase in the cost-effectiveness of the programme of 16.1%.

\(^{280}\) Based on FicheOp information extracted on 7 December 2021.

\(^{281}\) This was the minimum target set by the delivery partners, as opposed to the actual cost transfer ratio.
Table 25. ESSN-2 Cost Effectiveness Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Costs inclusive of transfer</th>
<th>Costs exclusive of transfer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total costs</td>
<td>€1,001,333,538</td>
<td>€112,837,726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of beneficiaries</td>
<td>1,705,008</td>
<td>1,705,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average cost per beneficiary</td>
<td>€587.29</td>
<td>€66.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td>Q1 2018 – Q1 2020</td>
<td>Q1 2018 – Q1 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of months</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average cost per beneficiary per month</td>
<td>€21.75</td>
<td>€2.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


ESSN-1 and ESSN-2 expenditures were both slightly below budget, with 99% of the budget being utilised in both cases. During the ESSN-2, the areas in which an overspend occurred were Direct Support Costs, specifically in relation to WFP staff and staff related costs (JC12.1). Initially, the ESSN-2 was scheduled to run from January 2018 to January 2019, but the weakening of the TL meant that the ESSN-2 had the capacity to absorb more beneficiaries over a longer period of time without affecting costs. As such, the programme was extended to March 2020 where it covered 301,583 HHs comprising of 1,731,994 individuals.

Improvements in cost-efficiency were largely driven by the increased scale of the ESSN and the deteriorating Turkish economic situation. Few barriers to cost efficiency were identified, with the high rate of indirect support costs being the main obstacle to further efficiency gains (JC12.2). Findings from the desk review and the KILs suggest that the main drivers of cost efficiency in the implementation of the ESSN-2 included:

- **Economies of scale**: As the number of beneficiaries receiving the ESSN increased from ESSN-1 to ESSN-2, the total value of the transfer administered to beneficiaries almost tripled (see Table 26). In parallel, the total costs of administering the transfer doubled (increased by 219%). Therefore, as the ESSN grew, the costs of the programme constituted a smaller proportion of the total expenditure during the ESSN-2 relative to ESSN-1.

Table 26. Evolution of ESSN Costs and Transfers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESSN programme</th>
<th>Transfers</th>
<th>Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESSN-1</td>
<td>€300,973,721</td>
<td>€51,477,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESSN-2</td>
<td>€888,495,812</td>
<td>€112,837,726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Change</td>
<td>295%</td>
<td>219%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- **Devaluation of the Turkish Lira**: as evidenced by spending of ESSN-2 funds, the devaluation of the TL has resulted in exchange rate gains that allowed WFP/ TRC to continue monthly basic needs MPC transfers and periodic top-ups to eligible beneficiaries.
under the ESSN-2 beyond the initial end-date of the Action set at 31 January 2019. This allowed for the provision of the transfer to continue for a longer period than initially anticipated without incurring significant additional costs.

- **Capacity development**: although the WFP had offices in the field and a presence in camps, the TRC had to invest in growing their capacity to match this level of involvement. This included investment in vehicles, translators, and offices. Therefore, at the beginning of the implementation period cost efficiency was relatively low, but this improved throughout the duration of the ESSN-2 as the longer-term efficiency gains from capacity building were realised.

- **Familiarity with the programme**: due to the establishment of efficient processes over the course of the ESSN-1, the ESSN-2 was able to reach higher numbers of beneficiaries in addition to increasing the sophistication of the type of support provided to refugees. This improvement was also helped by increased familiarity of beneficiaries with the ESSN as a whole. Regarding the establishment of the ESSN, one KII stated that “ESSN-1 was then critical for the rollout of the Facility’s support to refugees, and ESSN-2 allowed the programme to get to cruising speed”.

- **Project management**: WFP/TRC, in collaboration with external consultants, worked on a system which would be as effective as possible about streamlining the processes worked on by different teams across the programme. This included developing actions plans as a means of bringing different entities together and allowed them to break the workload into workstreams to have more focus on certain elements.

The main barriers to cost efficiency included:

- **Indirect support costs**: The WPF/TRC indirect support costs accounted for a rate of 6%, or over €61 million, which increased the amount of money spent on the programme that did not reach the beneficiaries. KIIIs noted that a reduction in these costs would increase the cost transfer ratio of the programme, and thus its overall cost efficiency.

- **Duplication of actions**: There was some overlap between the actions of the TRC and the WFP. For example, there were cases where two sets of teams were collecting the same data, which led to an unnecessary duplication of costs. Between ESSN-1 and ESSN-2 the WFP made some changes regarding programme implementation to improve on the issue of duplication, although it has not yet been eradicated.

3.5.2 **EQ13 - Was the size of the budget allocated by DG ECHO to this programme appropriate to what the actions are set out to achieve? Was the size of the monthly allowance proportionate to the needs identified during the second part of the programme?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 27. EQ13 Key conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Judgement criteria</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| JC13.1 The amount and share of overall DG ECHO humanitarian budget allocated to the ESSN during the evaluation period was reasonable and proportionate in relation to the humanitarian needs | M | • The share of total DG ECHO funding directed towards the ESSN decreased from 11% over ESSN-1 to 9% over ESSN-2.  
• The KIIIs confirmed that the size of the budget was appropriate in light of the objectives of the ESSN and its expected results. The level of funding did equip the ESSN-2 to cover over half of the registered |

285 Interview 1.  
286 Interview 10.
refugees in Turkey, surpassing their initial target of 1.3 million beneficiaries.

- However, despite the scope of the ESSN-2 in terms of the number of beneficiaries reached, at an individual/HH level the action was not sufficient to provide beneficiaries with adequate funds to meet their basic needs, with the transfer covering approximately 35-45% of their monthly requirements.

- Despite attempts to increase the transfer to a higher value, this did not occur, to maintain the alignment of the value of the ESSN transfer with the social security allowances granted to Turkish citizens.

JC13.2 The monthly transfer value and quarterly top-ups might no longer be sufficient, in the light of the stagnation of the Turkish economy and the impact of Covid19 pandemic, to continue to effectively address the basic needs of refugees (see EQ8)

- The adequacy ratio followed a steadily declining trend between ESSN-1 and the end of ESSN-2. It fell from 47% in Q1 2017 (ESSN-2), to 43% in Q1 2018 (ESSN-2), and finally to 35% on Q1 2020 (ESSN-2).

- This is reflective of the skyrocketing cost of the MEB as a result of sustained levels of high inflation in Turkey over the ESSN-2 implementation period.

- Despite the introduction and subsequently the increase in quarterly top-ups over the ESSN-2 implementation period, the adequacy of the transfer in relation to the MEB continued to fall. This indicates that the top-ups provided to counteract the impact of inflation on beneficiaries were in fact not sufficient to stabilise the adequacy ratio, and that over time the real value of the ESSN transfer fell.

- Owing to these significant inflationary pressures, average adequacy ratio of the ESSN (39%) was lower than those of similar cash-based humanitarian programmes.

- Evidence from the KII's suggests that attempts by actors to push the transfer to a higher amount were not successful, as to maintain the alignment of the value of the ESSN transfer with the social security allowances granted to Turkish citizens.

**Baseline**

- Over the ESSN-1 implementation period, funding for the ESSN-1 amounted to 31% of DG ECHO's total spending on humanitarian actions in Turkey.²⁸⁷

- The adequacy ratio of the ESSN transfer over the ESSN-1 implementation period experienced a slight downward trend, ranging from 47% in Q1 2017 to 44% in Q4 2017.

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²⁸⁷ ICF calculations based on DG ECHO funding specified in HIPs and total ESSN-1 costs. Total ESSN-1 costs (see JC12.1) were calculated as a proportion of the total HIP spending over the implementation period.
The evidence collected shows that the share of the DG ECHO budget allocated to the ESSN was sufficient in terms of its coverage of refugees in Turkey (JC13.1). Over the course of ESSN-2, the transfer was administered to approximately 50% of registered refugees in Turkey (see Figure 40). However, due to significant inflationary pressures within the Turkish economy and the consequent large increase of the cost of the MEB, the value of the ESSN transfer itself diminished over time and became a less effective instrument in helping beneficiaries meet their basic needs (JC 13.2). DG ECHO funding to the ESSN-1 constituted 11% their global funding directed towards humanitarian actions between September 2016 and December 2017.\(^{288}\) Subsequently, DG ECHO funding to the ESSN-2 constituted 9% their global funding directed towards humanitarian actions between January 2018 and March 2020.\(^{289}\) The decrease in this proportion is due the scaling up of global DG ECHO funding over the period 2016-2020. The funding for the ESSN-1 represented 6% of the €6 billion allocated to the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, whilst for the ESSN-2 this figure amounted to 17%.\(^{290}\)

Evidence from the KILs confirmed that the size of the budget was appropriate with regard to the objectives of the ESSN and its expected results. The level of funding provided equipped the ESSN-2 to cover over half of the registered refugees in Turkey, reaching 1.79 million in Q4 2019, surpassing their initial target of 1.3 million beneficiaries. However, on the one hand some KILs stated that this level of funding could be extended further to cover a larger number of refugees, whilst on the other hand it was noted that in some cases the transfer did not cover basic needs. The social media analysis also highlighted issues regarding the high costs of living, in particular the ability to pay for rent and utilities. Some commenters directly raised the issue of increased financial pressure as a result of inflation, and the absence of increases to the base ESSN transfer amount (TL120). This indicates that monthly allowance should also take into consideration the high levels of inflation in Turkey (11.75% in September 2020), as over time this has reduced the purchasing power of the cash received by refugees.

**Figure 40. ESSN-2 Coverage Rate Q1 2018-Q1 2020**

![Graph showing ESSN-2 coverage rate from Q1 2018 to Q1 2020]

*Source: ESSN Beneficiary Data, UN Refugee Data*

As the budget was allocated in Euro, the depreciation in the value of the TL meant that the monthly cost of the programme was less than expected and that the initial level of funding

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\(^{288}\) Total DG ECHO funding for global actions was calculated as the sum of the funding provided by DG ECHO HIPs under “Global decisions” and “Worldwide modifications” over the ESSN-1 period (September 2016 to December 2017).

\(^{289}\) Total DG ECHO funding for global actions was calculated as the sum of the funding provided by DG ECHO HIPs under “Global decisions” and “Worldwide modifications” over the ESSN-2 period (January 2018 to March 2020).

provided by DG ECHO could allow for the length of the programme to be extended and cover a
higher number of beneficiaries (see also JC12.2 above).

However, in light of the stagnation of the Turkish economy, the monthly transfer value and quarterly top-ups are no longer sufficient to continue to effectively address the basic needs of refugees (JC13.2).

Following the depreciation of the TL, the country experienced negative GDP growth rates starting from the last quarter of 2018 and continuing into mid-2019 (see, Figure 41). Inflation rates increased severely from the beginning of 2018, reaching a peak of 25.4% in Q3 2018. The inflation rate only fell to single digit levels in Q3 2019 and stabilised at 11-12% during the last months of implementation of the ESSN-2. The depreciation of the TL and the consequent inflation resulted in a loss of purchasing power for both Turkish citizens and refugees. As shown in Figure 41, the MEB for refugees in Turkey increased from 294 TL at the start of the ESSN-2 (Q1 2018), to 286 at the end of the programme (Q1 2020). The rise in prices reduced the scale of the ESSN-2 in real terms, which had a visible negative impact on the welfare of ESSN-2 beneficiaries. As mentioned under JC8.1, monitoring data captured an increased recurrence of different coping strategies by HHs in later 2018 and early 2019 as well as a worsening of food security indicators and debt levels.

Figure 41. Quarterly Inflation and MEB Values

Source: ESSN Market Bulletin Q1 2020, accounting for 22% deflation factor

The adequacy ratio followed a steadily declining trend between ESSN-1 and the end of ESSN-2. It fell from 47% in Q1 2017 (ESSN-2), to 43% in Q1 2018 (ESSN-2), and finally to 35% on Q1 2020 (ESSN-2) (see, Figure 42) This is reflective of the skyrocketing cost of the MEB as a result of sustained levels of high inflation in Turkey over the ESSN-2 implementation period. Despite the introduction and subsequently the increase in quarterly top-ups over the ESSN-2 implementation period, the adequacy of the transfer in relation to the MEB continued to fall. This

\[ \text{MEB} \times \text{Inflation} = \text{Adjusted MEB} \]

\[ \text{Adopted MEB} = \frac{\text{Adjusted MEB}}{\text{Inflation}} \]

\[ \text{Inflation} \]
indicates that the top-ups provided to counteract the impact of inflation on beneficiaries were in fact not sufficient to stabilise the adequacy ratio, and that over time the real value of the ESSN transfer fell. Owing to these significant inflationary pressures, the average adequacy ratio of the ESSN-2 (39%) was lower than those of similar cash-based humanitarian programmes (see Table 28).

**Figure 42. Adequacy ratio of ESSN transfer and top-ups**

Source: ESSN financial data, ESSN Market Bulletin Q1 2020 (accounting for 22% deflation factor). Calculations are based on transfer amount for an average HH of six people.

### Table 28. Comparison of adequacy ratios across Cash-Based Humanitarian Aid Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Main delivery partner</th>
<th>Number of beneficiaries</th>
<th>Average adequacy ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>ESSN-2</td>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>1,700,000</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Multi-purpose Cash Transfers for all Asylum Seekers</td>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>UNHCR-WFP Joint Cash Programme for Basic Needs</td>
<td>UNHCR, WFP</td>
<td>56,000</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>UNHCR Cash Programme for Basic Needs</td>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This insufficiency of ESSN-2 assistance is further evidenced by the view of beneficiaries (see Figure 43). Half of the ESSN-2 beneficiaries considered that the ESSN-2 assistance was not sufficient at all or barely sufficient to cover their basic needs. For a third of beneficiaries, the assistance was somewhat sufficient. In contrast, for less than one fifth of ESSN-2 beneficiaries stated that the assistance was mostly or completely sufficient. There was no significant variation in the perceptions of ESSN beneficiaries regarding the sufficiency of the transfer between Q2 2019 to Q4 2019.
Figure 43. Perceived sufficiency of ESSN-2 assistance in helping to meet basic needs


The proportion of ESSN beneficiaries living below the MEB was also estimated using two methods, namely a panel survey (Figure 44) and cross-sectional survey (Figure 45) analysis. Although the values measured by two methods differ (indicating between 40 and 50% of ESSN beneficiaries below the MEB), the broad trends were the same. The proportion of ESSN beneficiary households living below the MEB declined significantly up to the start of the ESSN-2 when it stabilised afterwards, until the end of ESSN-2 period. In addition, this proportion living below the MEB has consistently remained higher for ESSN beneficiaries, compared to non-beneficiaries.

Figure 44. Percentage of ESSN beneficiary HHs living below the MEB (panel survey analysis)

Source: WFP PDM Panel Surveys. ICF analysis. Percentages based on samples weighted to reflect the ESSN population. Representative samples of EESN beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.
Defined as persons with a disability level of 50% or above and with a severe impairment (indicating they cannot perform daily activities without the support of a carer).

![Figure 45. Percentage of ESSN beneficiary HHs living below the MEB (cross-sectional survey analysis)](image)

Source: WFP PDM Cross Sectional Surveys. ICF analysis. Percentages based on samples weighted to reflect the ESSN population.

The social media analysis confirmed that the loss of purchasing power as a consequence of inflation hit ESSN beneficiaries hard. The high costs of living, in particular the ability to pay for rent and utilities, came up frequently within social media posts. Some commenters directly raised the issue of rising prices due to inflation and the financial pressure this brought to HHs:

“Why don’t you apply increases to monthly aid, with the same percentage of increases applied to salaries and wages to counter inflation, the cost of living and the increase in prices?”

“Is it possible that, after the rising house rent and food prices, the transfer is still 120 lira?”

Two KIIIs conducted in the context of this evaluation also pointed out that the transfer value might no longer be adequate for the objectives of the ESSN. As expressed by one interviewee: “with the money given, only half of the materials that could be purchased previously, can be purchased now.”

Attempts to push the transfer to a higher amount were not realised, to maintain the alignment of the value of the ESSN transfer with the social security allowances granted to Turkish citizens. Some KIIIs suggested that in order for the ESSN transfer to have the intended impact, it would be essential for the allowance to consider inflation and the evolution of the economic situation in Turkey. This was corroborated by findings from the portfolio analysis, which indicate that rising inflation levels and the devaluation of the Turkish Lira have negatively affected refugees’ ability to meet their basic needs. There is no evidence to suggest that beneficiaries were consulted to ensure that the MEB reflected their real-life needs.

Moreover, prior to the introduction of top-ups, an imbalance existed between smaller and bigger HHs in the adequacy of the benefit. Increasing the grant size to larger HHs was essential in ensuring that HH needs were met, and also in mitigating the impact of relatively high levels of inflation. Between May and August 2019, the size of HH top-ups received by beneficiaries doubled for every additional HH member over 5 members, and more than doubled for HHs for every additional member between 1 and 4 members.

From August 2018 top-ups were provided to ESSN beneficiaries with severe disabilities,\(^{293}\) amounting to assistance of TL600 in addition to regular ESSN payments. Based on estimations of the MEB for individuals with severe disabilities, the adequacy ratio of the ESSN transfer for beneficiaries with severe disabilities increased from 37% in Q2

\(^{293}\) Defined as persons with a disability level of 50% or above and with a severe impairment (indicating they cannot perform daily activities without the support of a carer).
2018 to 62% in Q3 2018 as a result of the introduction of disability top-ups. The purpose of the top-ups was to allow these HHS to provide necessary care to disabled individuals within their family while still meeting their basic needs. It was proposed to raise this top-up value to TL1,027, however this would present social cohesion issues as, in addition to the regular ESSN payment, would result in the total transfer exceeding the minimum wage and national assistance.

3.6 Sustainability/Connectedness

3.6.1 EQ14 - To what extent have challenges, opportunities and lessons learnt been capitalised upon under the ESSN 2 to inform the longer-term evolution of the ESSN from safety net to livelihoods programming?

Table 29. EQ14 Key conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgement criteria</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>Key conclusions</th>
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</table>
| JC14.1 The ESSN-2 was able to capitalise upon the emerging challenges, opportunities and lessons learnt in order to progress on its evolution path into wider livelihood programming |  | • In the ESSN-2, a clear transition/graduation strategy into a wider livelihood programme or other types of programming was still missing.  
• However, when compared to ESSN-1, slow but important progress towards a common transition/graduation strategy of the ESSN was made. During the evaluation period, first the GoT and subsequently the Facility proposed a draft sustainability strategy for the ESSN. By the end of the ESSN-2 conversations were taking place to agree on a common strategy, but these discussions had not produced many concrete results. |
| JC14.2 Cooperation with development actors and national authorities was fostered in this context |  | • Day-to-day cooperation with the Turkish authorities and local authorities worked well.  
• Challenges were encountered when discussing a possible transition/graduation strategy with the GoT. |
| JC14.3 The cash assistance provided under the ESSN-2 contributed to bridging the humanitarian and development divide in line with the nexus |  | • The focus on the alignment of ESSN-2 with the Turkish systems and policies, and the improved coordination with DG NEAR notably in the context of C-ESSN, to some extent contributed to bridging the humanitarian and development divide in the long term.  
• Linkages between the ESSN and other development DG NEAR-funded projects in the context of the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey remained insufficient. |
The ESSN evaluation (November 2016–December 2017)\(^{294}\) found that, under the ESSN-1, little progress was made on determining the future of the programme or shaping an exit strategy (which was one of the core activities included within the ESSN logical framework).

Recommendations\(^{295}\) were put forward in this area and called the WFP and implementing partners to take a strategic decision on the primary objective of the ESSN, and to develop and implement a transition strategy, with the final objective of handing over both humanitarian and non-humanitarian activities to the national authorities.

The same evaluation also showed that the cooperation with the Turkish authorities was overall good, from a technical point of view. Differing views emerged regarding the financial aspects, as Turkish authorities did not have the capacity to absorb ESSN beneficiaries and replacing DG ECHO funding with national funding.

While DG ECHO’s actions are focused on responding to immediate crises, the importance of sustainability and resilience is increasingly being emphasised. This requires to consider the wider context and long-term goals when developing humanitarian interventions. For this reason, even though addressing longer term issues is not at the core of DG ECHO’s mandate, the sustainability of its action and, in particular, of the ESSN are seen as important.\(^{296}\)

Achieving sustainability and reinforcing resilience can be done through the application of the concept of linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) or the nexus, which calls for the linking of humanitarian assistance and development. However, according to the “Evaluation of the European Union’s Humanitarian Response to the refugee crisis in Turkey”\(^{297}\), the conventional view of a sequential transition from humanitarian to development programming does not provide an adequate framework for the ESSN, as Turkey is not a developing country nor a recipient of conventional development, and because of the active and significant involvement of the GoT in the refugee response. The study concluded that the appropriate development link, capable of promoting local integration as a durable solution, would be one that links international programming (humanitarian or development) with national systems funded from national budgets.

The 2018 and 2019 Turkey HIPs highlighted the need to plan for the inclusion of refugees into existing national mechanisms and indicated that partners should develop a clear exit strategy for the sustainability of the ESSN and its transition into the national system.\(^{298}\) However, as in ESSN-1, the design of the ESSN-2 did not incorporate a clear transition/graduation strategy agreed upon by all parties. This was seen as a major shortcoming. In addition, particularly in the context of the Turkey Facility, for which a 3 + 3 year programming approach was agreed overall and where it was clear from the onset that the refugee situation would be protracted, the use of the annual HIP mechanism\(^{299}\) affected the extent to which longer term goals related to access to employment and linkages to livelihoods programming could be adequately addressed by the framework and implementing partners, and by DG ECHO itself.


\(^{298}\) ICF (2020) ESSN-2 Portfolio analysis.

\(^{299}\) Whilst the ESSN-2 lasted longer than one year, the HIPs initially called for proposals not exceeding 16 months, which also frames the extent to which framework and implementing partners can truly think ahead and implement a long-term vision.
Nevertheless, lessons learnt were capitalised and, when compared to ESSN-1, slow but important progress towards a common transition/graduation strategy of the ESSN has been made in the evaluation period (JC14.1).

During the ESSN-2, the GoT published a draft sustainability strategy for the ESSN, following which the Facility outlined a draft sustainability strategy for the ESSN at the 12th Steering Committee. At the end of the evaluation period negotiations were still ongoing and no strategy had been agreed upon by all parties.

One of the main challenges on the path towards more sustainable livelihoods was the absorption of refugees into the formal Turkish economy. In fact, by February 2020 only about 4% of the working-age refugee population had obtained work permits, with the remainder mostly relying on labour income earned informally and irregularly. In this context, two clear issues were highlighted by some reviewed sources: the difficulties, for both employers and refugees, surrounding the issuing of work permits (mostly due to legal procedures, employment quotas, and fees, some of which were resolved in the course of the ESSN-2), and the potential disincentive created by the ESSN for refugees to seek formal employment, as one of the requirements to be eligible for the ESSN was to “not be employed with a valid work permit”. Some refugees may have decided not to participate in the formal labour market to retain their eligibility and maximise their short-term income by receiving the ESSN transfer. Furthermore, the ESSN did not include any form of conditionality or incentive for beneficiaries to follow training or seek a formal job (see EQ8).

In addition, several demand barriers (e.g., lack of language skills, recertification of existing degrees, etc.) as well as supply barriers – worsened by the 2018 economic slowdown – hindered the integration of refugees into the formal economy in the evaluation period. Evidence suggests that linkages between ESSN and opportunities provided by other agencies (some of them funded by DG NEAR) to overcome these barriers (e.g., vocational and language training) and other livelihood-related challenges were not fully and systematically explored (see EQ7) and remained insufficient at the end of ESSN-2, although some progress was made compared to the ESSN-1 (JC14.3).

Since 2019, regular meetings have taken place between the two Directorates-General to discuss the long-term evolution of the ESSN, and in 2020 (as a result of preparatory work carried out in 2018 and 2019) DG NEAR negotiated and signed a direct grant called Complementary Emergency Social Safety Net (C-ESSN) which is a pilot cash programme implemented through the Kizilaykart Platform, managed by the EU Delegation and implemented by the Turkish authorities. The programme was designed to eventually take over the support of the extremely vulnerable refugees in Turkey, whereby the ESSN would focus on the remaining vulnerable cases.

In addition, DG NEAR has been focusing on ways to reduce the number of ESSN beneficiaries, in view of a possible future phasing out of the ESSN in Turkey. On the one hand, this was to be achieved by transferring those considered able to work to skills development, technical training, and labour market integration projects, and on the other hand, by transferring the most vulnerable part of ESSN beneficiaries to a social assistance direct grant (the afore mentioned C-ESSN).

Nevertheless, evidence suggests that there is room for improvement in the linkages between the ESSN and DG NEAR-funded projects (e.g., improved access to health services for Syrian refugees in Turkey, Living and Working Together: Integrating SuTPs to Turkish Economy, Building

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300 Exit strategy from the ESSN program. FRIT office of the presidency of Turkey and MoFLSS. 20/12/2018.
302 This represents an important shifting in the long-term ESSN strategy from the initial strategy of full handover to the Turkish system to the formulation of alternative and parallel solutions.
303 Facility Steering Committee (2019). 12th Steering Committee meeting note.
304 CVME 5.
Tomorrow).\textsuperscript{305} Management appeared to be somewhat fragmented, with multiple venues for interaction and oversight, and the structure and procedures also did not promote the capitalisation from each other's learned lessons.\textsuperscript{306}

With the notable exception of the link between ESSN and C-ESSN, the linkages between technical staff from DG NEAR and DG ECHO were sub-optimal to some extent, with no formal requirement for regular meetings/visits/interactions at this level\textsuperscript{307}, nor for their involvement in commenting on each other’s proposals or programme designs.\textsuperscript{308} The contracts that DG NEAR signed with the World Bank, the Agence Francaise de Développement and other development agencies to implement the livelihoods projects, could have been better coordinated with the ESSN, for example in terms of identifying and targeting those ESSN beneficiaries with the highest chance of accessing employment, or by introducing specific incentives for selected ESSN beneficiaries to take part in training activities, etc. Data protection was however identified as an important obstacle to realise any possible form of targeting, and additional efforts and negotiations with the data controllers would have been required to make the use of personal data for purpose possible.

Furthermore, according to the WFP, the improvements in the coordination between DG ECHO and DG NEAR remained invisible to the ESSN implementing partners.\textsuperscript{309} A WFP representative indicated that the following could have contributed to the achieving the graduation of ESSN beneficiaries and strengthening the links to livelihoods programming: 1) set a percentage of all participants under DG NEAR’s actions to be from ESSN; 2) revise the automatic exclusion from the ESSN when a beneficiary finds a job (for example, keeping automatic exclusion for those accepting a formal job, but allow a 6-12 months phase-out for the other situations); 3) have specific indicators in the logframes of both ESSN and DG NEAR projects on targets of people to be graduated from assistance.

One concern regarding the transition/graduation of the ESSN is the current dependency of the beneficiaries on the ESSN transfer. Approaches to make ESSN beneficiaries more autonomous, transitioning towards formal employment, and gradually reducing the ESSN transfer were being studied during the ESSN-2, but a decision was not taken (see EQ15).\textsuperscript{310} TRC representatives pointed out that additional livelihood activities specifically aiming at making ESSN-beneficiaries autonomous would be highly beneficial. Evidence shows that a reflection on this subject started towards the end of the ESSN-2. For example, the WFP paper on graduation strategies considered that opportunities to improve the employability of HHs benefitting from ESSN assistance could be further promoted:

“Households with working capacity should be prioritized for referrals to employability and/or active labour market programmes (ALMPs). Synergies with DG-NEAR-funded projects will be particularly important, given these have as one of their objectives, supporting ESSN transition. If DG NEAR could indicate the number of opportunities and if a set percentage could be reserved for ESSN beneficiaries, a better decision about a change in eligibility criteria could be made, ensuring the number of to be excluded households and employment opportunities is balanced. In any case, it will be key to use both pull (active referral) and push (communication that assistance will end) factors to facilitate transition”\textsuperscript{311}

\textsuperscript{305} List of projects committed/decided, contracted, disbursed in the context of the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey available at https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2022-02/Facility%20table_January%202022.pdf
\textsuperscript{307} However, DG ECHO field office and EUD reported to have weekly meetings on ESSN/C-ESSN, a development seen as a success relative to the approach followed in other projects.
\textsuperscript{310} WFP (2020) Considerations for ESSN Targeting and Pathways to Graduation.
\textsuperscript{311} WFP (2020) Considerations for ESSN Targeting and Pathways to Graduation.
Another key aspect in the graduation/transitioin concerned the cooperation with national and local public authorities. This cooperation was embedded in the programme design to promote sustainability and longer-term programming, for example by including the MoFLSS and the TRC as ESSN partners, and by implementing the ESSN in alignment with the Turkish social protection systems, using the existing national and local infrastructure. The programme also relied on the Turkish Integrated Social Assistance Information System (ISAIS) and SASF and TRC social workers to register, verify, and enrol beneficiaries. Operational decisions on the ESSN were taken in consultation with the GoT, including the value of the transfers and the communications with beneficiaries.

During the evaluation period, KIs reported good and close cooperation and day-to-day collaboration between the ESSN implementing partners and the national and local authorities (JC14.2). The alliance with the TRC in particular was seen as a key enabling factor of the ESSN. This good level of cooperation may have overall contributed to the resilience and sustainability of the programme for the following reasons:

- The framework partner (WFP) gained further insights about how the Turkish social system works and was able to propose adaptations to the ESSN, to further align it with the Turkish social system. The main changes introduced to the ESSN were highly aligned with the Turkish social protection systems (see EQ15 for further details), thus increasing national ownership.\(^{312}\)
- The strengthening of capacity, engagement and autonomy of the TRC staff through capacity building activities and, importantly, through the TRC taking up leadership of five out of seven work streams in 2018 (Beneficiary communications; Enrolment and verification; Protection; Registration and application; Management support) and core daily tasks during the evaluation period (while the WFP maintained oversight of these activities and kept a leading role for the M&E and Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping work streams).\(^{315}\)
- The more positive attitude from local and national actors towards the programme, due to good cooperation, fostered the reduction of some barriers to the transition of the programme.

However, negotiations with the national authorities on a possible transition of the ESSN into the national social system were difficult, with the latter insisting on the continuation of EU funding also beyond the ESSN for cash and socio-economic measures. Several factors can be identified that made the situation more challenging, namely:

- The scale of the refugee population (which was still increasing over the implementation period of the ESSN-2) and the continuing precarious situation of the majority of those refugees;
- The economic crisis, which also led to some social tensions (see EQ9);
- Different motivations and expectations regarding the transition of the programme and insufficient alignment regarding the main objectives of the strategy (whether it was an exit strategy, a transition strategy or a graduation strategy and what would each option really encompass from both sides);
- Other political factors, in the context of the wider agreement between the EU and Turkey and the deterioration of the relationship between the EU and Turkey.


\(^{313}\) DG ECHO (2021) SingleForm 2017/00972/FR/01/01.
3.6.2 EQ15 - What could be further achieved (enabling factors, tools, mechanisms, change in strategy, etc.) to better align the ESSN activities with government systems and reach a higher level ownership?

Table 30. EQ15 Key conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgement criteria</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>Key conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional improvements (tools, measures, coordination mechanisms, etc.) can be</td>
<td></td>
<td>• The ESSN moved towards further alignment with Turkish social assistance policies and systems (e.g., the introduction of the SASF Discretionary Allowance) in the evaluation period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identified to ensure the further alignment of the ESSN-2 with Turkish Government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>social assistance policies</td>
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Baseline

- The ESSN was implemented through the Turkish social protection systems, building on the national capacity of the MoFLSS (and SAFS at local level), to perform the registration of beneficiaries.

- Further integration was recommended in literature\(^{314}\), including strengthening of referral mechanisms for refugees from SASFs to a broad range of providers, both inside and outside the GoT. This should include the referral of highly vulnerable HHs either not able to apply for (or deemed not eligible for) ESSN assistance.

The ESSN-2 moved towards further alignment with Turkish social assistance policies and systems, with a few differences remaining. This encouraged a higher level of ownership by the Turkish authorities and contributed to facilitating a possible transition of the ESSN into the national system.

The key changes introduced during the ESSN-2 implementation period were all designed and implemented in close cooperation with the Turkish authorities, and with careful consideration of the Turkish national systems and policies, building on those when possible:

- The SASF Discretionary Allowance built on a similar mechanism used by the Turkish social assistance, including SASF visits to collect information on potentially vulnerable HHs, the system and criteria to categorise the vulnerability of individuals/HHs, and the use of the Turkish ISAI5 (Integrated Social Assistance Information System) to analyse HHs’ vulnerabilities following SASF HH visits.

- The Severe Disability Allowance requirements such as the use of the DHR to certify the level of disability of refugees were set to be in line with the Turkish system.

- The TK Referral and Outreach teams were established in close collaboration with Governmental agencies and benefited from a strong coordination system between the actors involved.

- The use of top-ups instead of increasing the amount of the monthly transfer and the cap on the amounts transferred resulted from efforts to align ESSN amounts with the Turkish social protection programme and the benefits provided by the Turkish state to poor Turkish citizens.

\(^{314}\) The information was mainly collected from the WFP-OPM mid-term evaluation (covering the period November 2016-December 2017), the special 2018 ECA special report, PAB and CVME data as well as ESSN Market Bulletins.
The ESSN-2 also contributed to strengthening the capacity of the TRC and SASF through training and workshops, and even led to some adjustments to the Turkish social system, which contributed to leveraging the safety net infrastructure in place for vulnerable Turkish citizens. The fact that the TRC took over the leadership from the WFP over five out of seven ESSN workstreams (see Q14 above) further illustrates the increasing alignment with the Turkish national system.

The progress made during the evaluation period also paved the way to another key development, namely the Turkish authorities taking responsibility for the implementation of the C-ESSN (see EQ3), a cash programme funded by DG NEAR for the most vulnerable refugees.

Further alignment between ESSN activities and the GoT systems could include:

- Taking an individual approach instead of targeting criteria for future programming, especially if the cohort of beneficiaries can be reduced
- Further increasing the direct involvement of the Turkish authorities in the implementation of the safety net and livelihoods programming – with the C-ESSN being an important first step.
- Adopting a more systematic approach to moving ESSN beneficiaries out of the programme, and into livelihoods programmes (national or EU) aimed at integrating them into the formal labour market – specifically targeting those who are deemed able to work and in sectors where there is shortage of labour supply. The reduction in the ESSN beneficiary cohort and the higher share of employed Syrians under Temporary Protection will show the Turkish authorities that efforts are being made to reduce their dependence on the cash programmes.
- Agreeing on a transition strategy which is gradual, with sufficient interim review moments, and deemed acceptable by all parties involved, with the decrease in EU humanitarian funding in part being compensated by DG NEAR or other EU funding streams.
4 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

This section includes the overall conclusions of the evaluation, by evaluation criterion, whilst the summary findings related to each specific EQ have been presented in section 3 above.

Overall, the evaluation found that the ESSN was relevant, coherent, effective and efficient with noticeable improvement compared to the first implementation phase, ESSN-1. Nonetheless, the ESSN-2 was negatively impacted by the challenging economic context and several shortcomings still persisted.

Relevance

The ESSN-2 capitalised on lessons learnt and weaknesses identified in the ESSN-1 to make progress in terms of covering most vulnerable refugees. Compared to the previous phase, the share of refugees benefiting from the ESSN-2 increased significantly, and by end March 2020, the ESSN-2 was covering more than 1.7 million refugees. The targeting approach was further improved through the introduction of two key changes in 2018: the SASF Discretionary Allowance and the TK Outreach and Referrals teams.

These efforts, together with the changes in the eligibility criteria in October 2017, led to some progress in the targeting of beneficiaries and in ensuring that cash transfers reached the most vulnerable registered refugees. However, while the SASF Discretionary Allowance was effective in identifying the poorest HHs, its slow, weak and uneven uptake across SASF offices and provinces limited its impact (only 30% of the total quotas had been used by end of March). The main reasons were: (a) the lack of SASF resources to carry out HH visits, (b) the rigidity of the selection criteria to enrol a previously excluded vulnerable HH onto the ESSN-2, and (c) the suboptimal approach to assign quotas across SASF offices.

Regarding the ability of the programme to identify and address the specific needs of particularly vulnerable groups, some progress has been made in the ESSN-2 compared to the ESSN-1. The gender sensitivity of the programme has improved over time and under the ESSN-2, the WFP took several steps to ensure gender mainstreaming into the design, implementation, and monitoring of the ESSN activities. Nevertheless, some shortcomings persisted, as needs assessments and the programme design did not fully address gender-specific needs nor did they explicitly include other types of vulnerabilities – such as minors (which were about 60% of the beneficiaries), LGBTI\textsuperscript{315}, refugees with chronic illnesses.

Another key change introduced in 2018 was the Severe Disability Allowance. This allowance was introduced to specifically address the needs of HHs with a member with a severe disability as these HHs have increased costs caused by the care for the disabled family member. The Severe Disability Allowance was a successful mechanism to adjust the transfer value to ESSN HH beneficiaries with severely disabled members and reduce the disparities between those HHs and the average ESSN HH beneficiary.

The ESSN-2 also provided a limited degree of flexibility to adapt to changing and evolving needs on the ground, which were collected regularly from beneficiaries and other stakeholders through various means. The ESSN-2 did not have an embedded mechanism to provide immediate cash support to help beneficiaries cope with unexpected and temporary contingencies and shocks (such as illness, loss of job, death of a HH member). The changes to the quarterly top-ups introduced to minimise the effect of the devaluation of the Turkish Lira and of the increasingly high inflation, while relevant, were considered to be overdue and insufficient to fully compensate the loss of purchasing power.

Coherence

\textsuperscript{315} These considerations were to some extent pre-empted by the political context.
The design of the ESSN-2 was in line with DG ECHO’s strategy in Turkey over the evaluation period; it continued to be the EU’s main humanitarian programme in the country, allowing the EU to address the basic needs of refugees and persons under international protection in Turkey, in close cooperation with local partners and national authorities.

Helped by the various coordination mechanisms existing under the ESSN-2 management structure (i.e. Steering Committee, ESSN Task Force, Joint Management Cell and technical working groups) and the 3RP coordination mechanism, the WFP and the TRC worked closely together throughout the evaluation period and cooperated with other actors on the ground, including national authorities and other local partners implementing refugee assistance in the country. The management approach under the ESSN-2 – which featured close cooperation between the WFP and the TRC and the strong involvement of national authorities – worked well and supported decision-making, although it generated certain operational challenges for the WFP.

In terms of results, ESSN-2’s operations were overall coherent with and complementary to the results of other similar assistance programmes in Turkey and with existing national social assistance programmes. Certain measures adopted at the end of the ESSN-1 and under the ESSN-2 led to an improvement in the degree of alignment with national social assistance programmes and collaboration between DG ECHO and DG NEAR, although room for further improvement was identified. This was mostly linked to the remaining issues around protection referrals and the slow progress towards the exit strategy and the link with integration and livelihood programmes in the country.

The alignment of the ESSN-2 with humanitarian principles improved compared to the baseline. Potential tensions with the principle of independence (as a result of the strong dependency on the GoT) were the only ones that remained under the ESSN-2, but they were deemed justified. Similarly, the alignment of the ESSN-2 with DG ECHO’s relevant policy and thematic guidance (i.e. on cash transfer policies, protection, gender mainstreaming and the consideration of the specific needs of persons with disabilities) improved during the evaluation period and was deemed to be overall satisfactory. Nonetheless, certain room for further alignment could still be observed, notably in relation to gender mainstreaming.

**Effectiveness**

The ESSN-2 was effective as it provided a critical mass of funding with over €1.2 billion, reaching an unprecedented number of beneficiaries (1.7 million), and enabling a 50% coverage of refugees in Turkey. Most of the ESSN-2 outputs were overall effectively implemented on the ground and most of the expected results, identified in the Theory of Change, were achieved. The programme contributed to stabilising and improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable out-of-camp refugee HHs, despite the recent inflation resulting in a decrease of the purchasing power. However, as a result of the economic crisis, the transfer value and quarterly (increased) top-ups became insufficient to cover the basic needs of beneficiaries.

The ESSN-2 had positive (but rather limited) impacts on the ability of beneficiaries to access health, education, and protection services. However, specific objectives and targets of ESSN-2 to help the most vulnerable beneficiaries and improve their living conditions were not fully achieved. As shown above in Table 14, a number of targets set initially were missed, including the acceptable food consumption score of ESSN-2 beneficiaries, the debt levels experienced by ESSN-2 beneficiaries and the number of ESSN-2 beneficiaries living below the MBE. Also, limited progress was recorded in contributing to social cohesion as well as progressing towards an evolution of the ESSN into wider livelihood programming and into employment.

The visibility and communication activities of the ESSN-2 helped to generate a high level of ESSN-2 awareness amongst the refugees. However, the ESSN-2 awareness amongst Turkish citizens, authorities and local actors was low, leading to negative perceptions and tensions with the refugees. The monitoring and evaluation activities were extensive and comprehensive, identifying important lessons for DG ECHO.
EU-added value

The added value of the ESSN-2 was demonstrated through it achieving significant results in terms of volume and scope: the number of ESSN-2 beneficiaries at 1.7 million and the volume of ESSN-2 funding at €1.179 billion. Both values also represented a considerable increase compared to ESSN-1 and to other donor interventions in Turkey and cash assistance programmes worldwide. The added value was predominantly due to the architecture of the ESSN-2 as a single large-scale intervention and the speed of assistance enabled through DG ECHO. This made the assistance more effective and efficient in reaching a high proportion of refugees (around 50%). The scale of support would have been much smaller without ESSN-2, and much more fragmented, thus leading to inefficiencies and potential gaps and overlaps. The ESSN-2 added value was also resulting from the cost efficiencies achieved, improved partnerships and coordination mechanisms, and offering important lessons for cash assistance in the future.

Efficiency

The efficiency of the ESSN improved from the ESSN-1 to the ESSN-2, with the cost transfer ratio increasing from 85.4% to 88.7%. The efficiency of the programme was similar in comparison to those of cash programmes implemented in other countries, however the ability to directly compare these programmes to the ESSN is limited due to their much smaller scale and beneficiary cohort, and the different financial frameworks of the respective framework partners. The main drivers of increases in cost efficiency were the economies of scale resulting from the size of the ESSN, and increased familiarity with the programme during the second phase of implementation.

Key barriers to further increases in cost efficiency were the continuation of the use of a flat rate mechanism to determine indirect support costs (of max 7% of the total project value), and inefficiencies resulting from the duplication of actions amongst partners. Furthermore, the sufficiency of the ESSN transfer and top-ups in assisting beneficiaries in meeting their basic needs decreased over the ESSN-2 implementation period. This is reflective of the skyrocketing cost of the MEB as a result of sustained levels of high inflation in Turkey during this time. As a result, the adequacy ratio of the ESSN-2 was lower in comparison to other cash-based programmes implemented in the region.

Sustainability

The design of the ESSN-2 did not incorporate a clear exit strategy, and in spite of some important progress towards a common transition or graduation strategy of the ESSN (with the GoT and the Facility independently outlining a sustainability strategy), by the end of March 2020 negotiations were still ongoing and no strategy had been agreed upon by the parties. These negotiations were difficult, with the GoT insisting on the continuation of EU funding also beyond the ESSN. These challenges did not spill over to other levels, with KIs reporting close cooperation and good day-to-day collaboration between the ESSN implementing partners and the national and local authorities.

The linkages between the ESSN and DG NEAR-funded projects remained insufficient by the end of the ESSN-2, although some progress had been made compared to the ESSN-1. As in ESSN-1, DG NEAR-funded projects did not specifically target (a share of) ESSN beneficiaries, nor were ESSN-2 beneficiaries screened for their suitability to be integrated in DG NEAR’s livelihoods programming, also due to unresolved data protection issues. One important step was the design of the C-ESSN pilot cash programme that was to eventually take over the support of the extremely vulnerable refugees in Turkey.

The ESSN-2 moved towards further alignment with Turkish social assistance policies and systems, with a few differences remaining. This encouraged a higher level of ownership by the Turkish authorities and contributed to facilitating a possible transition of the ESSN into the national system.
4.2 Recommendations

As requested in the terms of reference, this section presents five key strategic recommendations which have come out of this evaluation. Each recommendation is accompanied by a short background setting out the rationale and a series of suggestions on how to operationalise it.

1. DG ECHO cash assistance programmes should incorporate better linkages with development programmes

The ESSN-2’s operations were overall coherent with and complementary to the CCTE (and other much smaller cash assistance programmes in Turkey) as well as with existing national social assistance programmes. However, despite the improvement in the degree of alignment with national social assistance programmes resulting from measures adopted at the end of the ESSN-1 and under the ESSN-2, some room for further improvement was identified. This was mostly linked to the remaining issues around protection referrals and the slow progress towards an ESSN exit strategy (with the GoT and the Facility independently outlining different strategies for the ESSN) and its link with integration and livelihood programmes in the country.

Although some progress has been made compared to the ESSN-1, the systemic linkages between the ESSN and DG NEAR-funded projects 316 necessary to facilitate access of ESSN beneficiaries to livelihoods programming and (self) employment, remained insufficient. This constitutes a missed opportunity in terms of supporting their socio-vocational integration, which was already hampered as a result of the deteriorating economic situation in Turkey. One promising step, however, was the design by DG NEAR of the C-ESSN pilot cash programme, implemented by the Turkish authorities, that eventually took over the support of the extremely vulnerable refugees in Turkey.

This evaluation identified areas for improvement for future cash programmes, especially those of a larger scale:

- For crises which from the start are expected to become protracted, DG ECHO should consider adopting a multi-annual programming approach, also allowing for projects to exceed 18 months, as this would provide more funding predictability and allow for a better and more systematic development of an exit strategy and nexus.

- Cash programmes that are likely to last multiple years should, from the start, also include measures to identify, assess and assist beneficiaries to exit the programme (i.e. those who have the highest chance of becoming autonomous), and put in place linkages to livelihoods / integration programming by national or other international stakeholders. This could include some form of conditionality, targeting of beneficiaries, and preparatory measures. Very importantly, this also includes making sure that a share of places in livelihoods / integration projects is earmarked for cash beneficiaries and that other forms of social assistance become available to those unable to work.

- Include in the relevant HIPs a clear reference to the need to establish a nexus to development and livelihood programming, as well as to mainstream national assistance programmes if such are available.

- Develop a clear exit strategy, in close consultation and coordination with all relevant stakeholders active on the territory. This strategy is likely to require substantial advocacy and consensus-building to make sure that it is feasible and acceptable. It needs to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

- If possible, set aside specific funding for the process of developing the nexus / the implementation of the exit strategy, for all stakeholders involved (including the end

316 e.g. the projects Improved access to health services for Syrian refugees in Turkey, Living and Working Together: Integrating SuTPs to Turkish Economy, Building Tomorrow.

January, 2018
beneficiaries to support their transition from cash to social assistance and/or socio-vocational integration support).

2. DG ECHO and partners should better communicate information with host communities

While awareness of the ESSN-2 amongst the refugees was high, awareness of the programme amongst the host community remained low throughout the ESSN-2, which may have contributed to negative perceptions and tensions with refugees, especially as the economic crisis worsened.

Further effort should be invested into targeted communication, visibility and outreach activities directed towards the host community – local citizens, communities, and authorities. DG ECHO could require framework partners to include relevant activities in their projects. In the case of the ESSN-2, possibly such communication could have been organised as part of the Turkey Facility overall, in consultation with the Turkish authorities.

The host community should, directly and transparently, be informed about the support being provided by the EU, its main features, the size of cash and other assistance and the main sources of funding. This would help to clarify the rationale and extent of the support provided, and counteract negative stereotypes and attitudes towards refugees and claims of their beneficial treatment compared to the host community. Due care should be paid to the messaging, so as to not achieve the unintended effect of further acerbating relations and hindering social cohesion.

3. Cash assistance programmes should better anticipate shocks and be more shock responsive

Cash programmes such as the ESSN-2 operate in volatile economic contexts where economic shocks (in this case, inflation) can significantly decrease the purchasing power of refugees and negatively affect their welfare and ability to cover their basic needs.

Due consideration should be given whether future programming should include a shock reserve. This would entail introducing a specific financial allocation put aside from the planned activities to allow the programme to react to sudden shocks and changes in economic context which are beyond the control of the programme. In such circumstances, the reserve could be used to top-up the cash assistance in a rapid and time limited way (i.e. a one-off top-up, possibly spread over a few payments) to allow for a flexible response to unforeseen economic shocks.

In the case of the ESSN-2, a one-off top-up to make up for the loss in purchasing power may have been more acceptable in the eyes of the Turkish authorities, which were reluctant to agree to a structural increase of the ESSN amount granted, given that Turkish beneficiaries of social protection were not receiving any additional financial support. For future cash programming, the latter could be triggered on indicators (e.g. in relation to the MEB) or inflation indexing mechanism to be agreed during set-up.

4. Large DG ECHO cash assistance programmes should better capitalise on economies of scale

Economies of scale were found to be one of the main drivers of efficiency of the ESSN-2. However, given the scale of the expansion from ESSN-1 to ESSN-2, the increase in cost
efficiency was possibly somewhat smaller than what could be expected given the exceptional size of the programme and the fact that the ESSN-2 was entirely modelled on the ESSN-1. One barrier to the accrual of further efficiency gains was the use of a flat rate to determine indirect support costs (of max 7.0% of the total project value, 6.5% in case of ESSN-2).

Several options for future cash programmes of such scale could be considered:

- DG ECHO should consider, when a cash programme exceeds a certain value, whether the flat rate of max. 7% could be lowered, for example to the just under 4% that the ESSN-3 appears to be running at.
- Alternatively, a more flexible approach could be considered: rather than imposing a fixed lower share, when inviting framework partners to submit a proposal for a large-scale cash programme, this % could be the subject of negotiations to arrive at a share which is considered feasible by both parties.
- DG ECHO could develop additional guidelines on how to reduce indirect costs in case of large cash programmes, based on the lessons learnt as part of the ESSN (including the change of framework partner leading the project, which this evaluation did not have the opportunity to examine).

5. Cash assistance programme should pay more attention to certain vulnerable groups

The criteria used to select beneficiaries were not in line with those recommended (i.e. based on individual vulnerability or needs assessments) in the Thematic Note on cash policies, using demographic targeting criteria instead. The evaluation found this justifiable, given the unprecedented number of beneficiaries concerned, but also noted that this did lead to some inclusion and exclusion errors, and complaints about the criteria not always leading to the selection of the most vulnerable persons.

Progress has been made in the ESSN-2 compared to the ESSN-1, in terms of the ability of the programme to identify and address the specific needs of particularly vulnerable groups, who could also benefit from additional allowances. The gender sensitivity of the programme has improved too under the ESSN-2, and WFP took several steps to ensure gender mainstreaming into the design, implementation, and monitoring of the ESSN activities. Nevertheless, some shortcomings persisted, as the needs assessments and the programme design did not fully address gender-specific needs nor did they explicitly include other types of vulnerabilities – such as minors (which were about 60% of the beneficiaries), LGBTI, refugees with chronic illnesses.

To further emphasise the gender-sensitivity of the ESSN, some elements could be introduced:

- Analysis of gender and age-specific intra-household (HH) dynamics and access to livelihoods,
- Analysis of vulnerabilities and needs at individual level (not only at HH level),
- Systematic identification and referrals of cases to protection services, and
- Support to SASF to ensure systematic translation and gender balance in the teams of social workers to perform household visits.

When adding new elements and tasks to the programme, it will be important to ensure that sufficient resources are available, either within the framework partner and its implementing partners, or within national or local authorities, to implement these and to raise awareness about the changes.

For future large-scale cash programmes, DG ECHO should:
• Consider whether the Thematic Note on cash policies requires updating, allowing for demographic targeting in similar circumstances.

• Alternatively, reflect on whether framework partners should be asked to adopt a more individualised approach, in spite of the high additional burden this may create. For example, a first demographic targeting exercise could be followed by individualised checks of those ‘at the margins’ of the criteria used, or for those who are in need or vulnerable for other reasons.

The introduction of the SASF Discretionary Allowance and the Severe Disability Allowance provide examples of such approach, but future large-scale cash programmes could include this from the start.

Also, it will be important to ensure that sufficient capacity (e.g., social / humanitarian workers and other relevant staff) are available to support a more individualised approach.
ANNEX 1 LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

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BMG (April 2019) JMC review executive summary

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Support to Life (2016) Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Istanbul, Support to Life


Terres Des Hommes (2016) Because We Struggle to Survive – Child Labour Among Refugees of The Syrian Conflict


The World Bank and Turkey’s Ministry of Family and Social Policy, Turkey’s Integrated Social Assistance System


UN, 3RP, Turkey country chapter 2021-2022 of the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme in Turkey (2016–2020)

UNHCR, Harvey and Pavanello, (2018) Multipurpose Cash and Sectoral Outcomes

UNHCR (2016) Turkey National Refugee Youth Consultation Summary Report


UNHCR (2020) Turkey: Key Facts and Figures
UNICEF (2016) Turkey Crisis Situation Report
WFP quarterly reports
WFP (2017) SingleForm 2017/00972/RQ/01/03
WFP (2017) Assistance to Vulnerable Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey
WFP (2018) SingleForm 2016/01199/FR/01/01
WFP (December 2019) CBT Learning Exercise
WFP (January 2019) ESSN Focus Group Discussions: ESSN Assistance, Livelihoods and Social Cohesion
WFP (2019) JMC review compendium
WFP (June 2019) Focus Group Discussions: Protection Issues and Gender
WFP, June 2020, Considerations for ESSN Targeting and Pathways to Graduation
WFP (2020) 2017/00972/IR/02/01
WFP (2020) Considerations for ESSN Targeting and Pathways to Graduation
WFP (2020) Social cohesion in Turkey: refugees and the host community Online survey findings rounds 1–5
WFP (2021) SingleForm 2017/00972/FR/01/01
WFP, IFRC (2020) Joint WFP-IFRC Roadmap for ESSN Handover
WFP et al. (2018) Lessons Learned Exercise: Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) Task Force Coordination in Turkey
WFP et al. (2020) COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN TURKEY: Analysis of Vulnerabilities and Potential Impact Among Refugees
WFP, OPM (2020) ESSN Mid-Term Review 2018/2019
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WFP and TRC (2019) Livelihood survey findings
WFP, TRC, John Hopkins University (2019) Multi-purpose cash assistance and health, valuating the effect of the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme on access to health care for refugees in Turkey


WFP and OPHI (February 2021) the ESSN Meta Analysis

World vision (2019) Social cohesion between Syrian Refugees and Urban Host Communities in Lebanon and Jordan

## ANNEX 2 LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

### Table 31. First round of KIIs

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<thead>
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<th>Category</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
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<td>INGOs and UN agencies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Deutsche Welthungerhilfe</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
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<td>National authorities</td>
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<td>National NGOs</td>
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<td>Refugee Rights Association</td>
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<td>İstanbul Bilgi University Center for Migration Research</td>
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### Table 32. Second round of KIIs

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*January, 2018*
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ANNEX 3 SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

This annex describes the approach taken for the social media analysis, outlining the search terms and pages, the method followed and its limitations as well as the key results.

Methodology

Search terms and pages

Social media data was collected using the Talkwalker social listening tool and through manual collection. Talkwalker provides data and insights from numerous countries and platforms and provides access to historical data tracing back as far as two years. Due to Facebook’s privacy restrictions, however, Talkwalker does not provide access to Facebook historical data. Therefore, for this analysis, Twitter data was collected through Talkwalker and covers September 2018-March 2020 and Facebook data was collected manually and covers January 2018-March 2020.

The terms and hashtags used to extract social media data are found in Table 33 including the languages each was translated into. Social media searches contained different combinations of these words in each of the languages in an effort to capture the most relevant data related to the programme.

Table 33. Search terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Turkish</th>
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<tr>
<td>WFP</td>
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<td>IFRC</td>
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<td>TRC</td>
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<tr>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>crescent card</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>red card</td>
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<td>#SUY</td>
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</table>

All data was collected in the source language – Arabic, English or Turkish. Twitter and Facebook data that was in either Arabic or Turkish was translated into English using Google Translate. Facebook data was translated a second time using the in-page Facebook translate function to
assist with comments that did not straightforwardly translate the first time with Google Translate. The double translation provided marginally better results than relying on a single source of automated translation. In addition, the translation was checked by a native speaker.

The following Facebook pages were searched for relevant posts from January 2018 to March 2020. Those highlighted in blue returned results, while those not highlighted did not yield results. For those that did not return results, this may be due to a lack of posting about the programme but also may be due to other reasons such as page translations or a use of images. If images containing information about the programme were used in posts and there was no corresponding text, these would not have been captured.

**Table 34. List of Facebook pages reviewed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social media</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Link</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Kizilaykart</td>
<td><a href="https://web.facebook.com/Kizilaykart.SUY/">https://web.facebook.com/Kizilaykart.SUY/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Turk Kizilay</td>
<td><a href="https://web.facebook.com/hilalahmartr/">https://web.facebook.com/hilalahmartr/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>DRC Turkey</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/pg/DRCTurkey/posts">https://www.facebook.com/pg/DRCTurkey/posts</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>UNHCR Turkey Information Board</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/unhcrturkeyinfo/post">https://www.facebook.com/unhcrturkeyinfo/post</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>UNHCR Turkey</td>
<td><a href="https://web.facebook.com/TURKEYUNHCR/">https://web.facebook.com/TURKEYUNHCR/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Syrians in Turkey community</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/pg/TurkeySyr/posts/">https://www.facebook.com/pg/TurkeySyr/posts/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Refugee Support Centre Multeci Destek Dernegi</td>
<td><a href="https://web.facebook.com/RSCTurkey/">https://web.facebook.com/RSCTurkey/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>SGDD-ASAM</td>
<td><a href="https://web.facebook.com/asamsgd/">https://web.facebook.com/asamsgd/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>WFP</td>
<td><a href="https://web.facebook.com/WorldFoodProgramm">https://web.facebook.com/WorldFoodProgramm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>IFRC</td>
<td><a href="https://web.facebook.com/IFRC/?ref=search&amp;__t">https://web.facebook.com/IFRC/?ref=search&amp;__t</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Turkish Red Crescent</td>
<td><a href="https://web.facebook.com/TurkishRedCrescent/">https://web.facebook.com/TurkishRedCrescent/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>KADAV</td>
<td><a href="https://web.facebook.com/KADAVistanbul/">https://web.facebook.com/KADAVistanbul/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Refugee Rights Turkey</td>
<td><a href="https://web.facebook.com/refugeerightsturkey/p">https://web.facebook.com/refugeerightsturkey/p</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The UNHCR Turkey Information Board, Turk Kizilay, and Syrians in Turkey pages discuss content about a wide range of topics therefore comments were only extracted from posts that mentioned the programme. If comments were made about the programme on posts about a different subject area, these were not picked up. All comments were extracted from posts about the programme except if only emojis were used or if isolated punctuation such as "." was used.

The Kizilaykart Facebook page posts almost entirely about the programme therefore a sample of the posts and post comments were extracted across the monitored timeframe. As with the other pages, comments consisting of only emojis or isolated punctuation were not collected. It was found that the word ‘done’ was frequently added as a comment on posts. These were removed from the dataset.

308 comments were extracted across the Facebook pages and are shown by year below:

**Table 35. Number of comments extracted**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: ICF analysis of the Kizilaykart Facebook page*

For the analysis of stakeholders, 898 tweets were extracted through Talkwalker from Twitter, 575 of these were by WFP and 232 were by TRC.

**Limitations**

Social media provides access to current and unprompted feelings and opinions. It offers a potential vast amount of data that can be extracted for analysis; however, social media users are not representative of populations therefore biases will exist making it difficult to infer
findings more widely. To mitigate this shortcoming, as social media analysis works well in combination with other methods, findings were triangulated with those occurring from the desk research and interviews and will be further corroborated by the interviews and focus groups planned in the next phase of this evaluation.

**Data analysis methods**

**Table 36. Social Media Analysis Applied Methodology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Analysis Technique</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Use case</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bag-of-Words (BoW)</td>
<td>Term frequencies Visualisation of term frequencies using word clouds</td>
<td>Social media content (e.g., posts and relevant pages and handles)</td>
<td>Showcases user priorities, engagement, awareness, and opinions toward topics</td>
<td>Like surveys, lack of representativeness in sample (e.g., sampling bias) and true intent expressed in content (e.g., satisficing or social desirability bias)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Term correlation matrices and heatmaps</td>
<td>Free text responses (e.g., surveys)</td>
<td>Uncovers trends and insights not otherwise apparent to the human eye</td>
<td>Impact is difficult to measure, often relying on proxies to capture outcomes of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Naturally supplements existing data or serves as an alternative to traditional surveys</td>
<td>Privacy standards outlined in ToR and user agreements reduce access to data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Automates a traditionally time-consuming qualitative process</td>
<td>Nuanced insight can be missed in application of data science tools to big data (e.g., misclassification of sentiment scores or true meaning lost in translation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentiment Analysis</td>
<td>Bing, NRC, and VADER supervised machine learning Visualisation of positive and negative sentiment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic modelling</td>
<td>Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) unsupervised machine learning Visualisation of topics identified by algorithm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data analysis: Stakeholders*

**WFP**

575 tweets about the ESSN programme were posted by WFP on Twitter in the period September 2018 – March 2020. WFP post from multiple, typically regionally focused, accounts and most of their posts (83%) were from their Turkish account. Posts about ESSN across WFP accounts occurred at a minimum of 12 times per month. The peak (shown in the figure below), of 50 posts, occurred in May 2019 and coincided with Ramadan with content promoting how the programme allowed beneficiaries to observe Ramadan in accordance with cultural norms.

The most used hashtag was #SUY (ESSN) with 364 uses, followed by #IncredibleOrdinary with 21 uses. #IncredibleOrdinary was frequently used in tweets alongside profiles of beneficiaries explaining how the programme improved lives at the individual level. The other format of WFP
content was programme broadcast and promotion which included mentions of partners and overarching benefits and achievements.

TRC

Through the Kizilaykart, TRC Turkish, and TRC International accounts, 232 tweets were posted on Twitter in the period September 2018 – March 2020. Most of the tweets (94%) came from the Kizilaykart account. Tweets were posted about the programme every month, with the lowest monthly occurrence in June 2019 (4) and the highest in November 2018 (43), illustrated in the figures below.
Like WFP, TRC also used Twitter for programme broadcast, achievements, and personal profiles of beneficiaries. Apart from this type of content, the content posted by TRC differed from WFP. Analysis of TRC post word frequencies revealed high usage of words relating to the practical implementation of the programme such as providing key phone numbers and the work of staff on the ground. Additionally, the words ‘child’, ‘family’, ‘school’, and ‘education’ all occur in the 20 most frequently used words\(^{317}\) and demonstrate the importance to the TRC of promoting the programme as a means of keeping children in education so that they do not prematurely enter the workforce.

\(^{317}\) These are after stop words such as ‘the’ have been removed as well as collection words. These are words such as the programme name which were used to extract data from Twitter. Collection words will be found in every tweet and skew the word frequency analysis if they are not removed.
As of September 2019, 33,500 questions had been addressed through Facebook. This number is from Kizilaykart’s own promotion on Twitter.

The corresponding Kizilaykart Facebook page (91,958 followers) created 377 posts from January 2018 – March 2020 and replied to questions from the community that were posted in the comments. Posts containing programme information (this includes eligibility, how to apply, and process for changes in circumstances) was the predominant type of content. The figures below demonstrate that the lowest number of posts occurred in January and February of 2019 (2 per month) and the highest in March 2020 (34). Monthly posts increased from July 2019 of which more than 60% were images rather than text-based posts. The images are in poster format and contain programme information in multiple languages.
Data analysis: Beneficiaries & non-beneficiaries

To start, the translated text data from the Facebook pages was pre-processed. This included lemmatisation and stemming\(^{319}\) and the removal of stop words and white space to normalise the text and ensure the analysis was not biased due to unnecessary words. After the data was pre-processed, the text was tokenized\(^{320}\) to allow for Natural Language Processing (NLP) methods to be used. The dataset was then analysed using a BoW model\(^{321}\) to gauge the most frequently occurring words across comments and gain insight into areas of principal concern for the commenters.

---

\(^{319}\) Reducing inflectional forms of words to their base form.

\(^{320}\) Tokenisation is the process of splitting up text into smaller chunks and turning them into a numeric document-term matrix to make analysing less computationally expensive.

\(^{321}\) Text is represented as the multiset of its words. Grammar and word order are disregarded, only multiplicity is kept.
To investigate themes in the text, topic modelling was applied to the comments. LDA topic modelling is an unsupervised machine learning NLP technique which lets computer algorithms discover topics in text. The aim of LDA topic modelling is to identify a combination of words which form a topic – therefore a topic is an abstract concept which requires interpretation. The y-axis shows the algorithmically identified top words that make up each topic, while the x-axis shows their respective contribution (beta) to that topic. The beta is the topic-per-word probability distribution obtained from the model.

As can be seen below, the topics show a focus on gratitude towards the host country, discussions around finances and standards/criteria. The following analysis explores these areas in further detail.
The following sub-sections highlights the key topics identified, describes the main findings (in the blue box) as well as the method utilised.

Programme Admission: Criteria

Discussions about the criteria for programme acceptance are frequent and permeate throughout comment threads. Family structure and how it impacts programme approval is the predominant focal point in discussions around criteria. Non-beneficiaries, primarily those in a 4-person HH with 2 children, lament rejection from the programme citing that the costs of living, principally rent and utility bills, do not increase significantly enough with the addition of more children to warrant the acceptance threshold. Current beneficiaries and beneficiaries who have recently had their assistance stopped, discuss the financial pressure HHs experience when aid is cut off due to children turning 18. This financial pressure may lead to older children abandoning further education opportunities to take up work to support the family. Whilst not a significant voice in the comments, it is mentioned that the acceptance threshold provides an incentive for beneficiaries to increase the birth rate in order either to qualify or remain qualified for the programme.

Standards (and the synonym criteria) is one of the top ten most used words across the dataset and occurs in 32 of the comments (10% of all comments). These comments were isolated for further analysis and it was found that the numbers two and four were some of the most
frequently occurring words in these comments. Moreover, the top three bigrams contain these numbers - family & 4, two & child, four & people occurring 8, 7 and 7 times, respectively. These bigrams were also found to have high occurrences in the dataset as a whole (two & child - 34 times, family & 4 - 9 times) indicating that family structure was being discussed not only in combination with standards or criteria. As the below example shows, even though the words standards or criteria are not used, the comment relates to programme non-acceptance due to family size.

*Peace be upon you brother, we are a small family of a father, mother and two children, why aren't you helping us.*

The dataset containing standards and criteria was therefore expanded to also include the following words discussing family structure in order to more accurately capture discussion of this subject area: two children, two sons, family 4, family four, four people, 4 people, 3 kids, 18 (years old)

This returned 96 comments (31% of all comments) which are represented as a word cloud shown below.

These comments were also transformed into a correlation heatmap to show frequently occurring words and how they relate to one another.

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322 An N-gram is a sequence of N tokens (or words) and a 2-gram, or bigram, is a two-word sequence. Analysis of bigrams across the dataset reveals pairs of words which frequently occur together.

323 The word cloud represents the different word frequencies – the larger the word the greater its prevalence in the data, the smaller the word the lower its prevalence

324 The highest possible positive correlation is 1, which indicates a perfect positive relationship between words. The highest possible negative correlation is -1, which indicates the words are perfectly negatively associated with each other. The strength of each correlation is shown by shade (red shades are negative, blue shades are positive, and deeper shades denote stronger correlations).

---
As to be expected, because they appear frequently together in comments, high correlations include two and child, 4 and family, four and people. Other fairly-high/ high correlations include:

- Family structure: 18 and stop
- Acceptance criteria: Change and standard
- Home-related finances:
  Money and bill, money and house, money and rent
  Increase and please, increase and bill
  Rent and bill, rent and money
- Opinion: Justice and get
ANNEX 4 TERMS OF REFERENCE

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR CIVIL PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN AID OPERATIONS – DG ECHO

ANNEX I

Terms of Reference

for the evaluation of the Emergency Social Safety Net programme,

January 2018-March 2020 (ESSN-2)
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1. BACKGROUND

1. The legal base for Humanitarian Aid is provided by Article 214325 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and the Humanitarian Aid Regulation (HAR); Council Regulation No. 1257/96).326 The objectives of European Union (EU) humanitarian assistance are outlined there and could – for evaluation purposes – be summarized as follows: From a donor perspective and in coordination with other main humanitarian actors, to provide the right amount and type of aid, at the right time, and in an appropriate way, to the populations most affected by natural and/or manmade disasters, in order to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity.

2. The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid327 (the Consensus) – which has been jointly developed by the Council, the MS, the European Parliament and the Commission – provides a reference for EU humanitarian aid, and outlines the common objectives, fundamental humanitarian principles and good practices that the European Union as a whole pursues in this domain. The aim is to ensure an effective, high-quality, needs-driven and principled EU response to humanitarian crises. It concerns the whole spectrum of humanitarian action: from preparedness and disaster risk reduction, to immediate emergency response and life-saving aid for vulnerable people in protracted crises, through to situations of transition to recovery and longer-term development. The Consensus has thus played an important role in creating a vision of best practice for principled humanitarian aid by providing an internationally unique, forward-looking and common framework for EU actors. It has set out high-standard commitments and has shaped policy development and humanitarian aid approaches both at the European and Member State level. Furthermore, with reference to its overall aim, the Consensus has triggered the development of a number of humanitarian sectoral policies328.

3. The humanitarian aid budget is implemented through annual funding decisions adopted by the Commission, which are directly based on Article 15 of the HAR. In general, there are two types of financial decisions: decisions adopted in the context of non-emergency situations (currently entitled World Wide Decisions (WWD)), and decisions which are adopted in emergency situations. The WWD defines inter alia the total budget, and budget available for specific objectives, mechanisms of flexibility. It is taken for humanitarian operations in each country/region at the time of establishing the budget. The funding decision also specifies potential partners, and possible areas of intervention. The operational information about crises and countries for which humanitarian aid should be granted is provided through ‘Humanitarian Implementation Plans’329 (HIPs).

329 http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/funding-decisions-hips_en
They are a reference for humanitarian actions covered by the WWD and contain an overview of humanitarian needs in a specific country at a specific moment of time.

4. Actions funded by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) are implemented by Humanitarian Partners on the basis of framework agreements. These actions cover assistance, relief and protection operations to help people in third countries on a non-discriminatory basis, particularly the most vulnerable among them. Priority is put on people in developing countries, victims of natural disasters, man-made crises, such as wars and outbreaks of fighting, or exceptional situations or circumstances comparable to natural or man-made disasters. Furthermore, the actions should comprise preparations for risks or prevention of disasters or comparable exceptional circumstances.

5. DG ECHO has a worldwide network of field offices that ensure adequate monitoring of projects funded, provide up-to-date analyses of existing and forecasted needs in a given country or region, contribute to the development of intervention strategies and policy development, provide technical support to EU-funded humanitarian operations, and facilitate donor coordination at field level.

6. DG ECHO has developed a two-phase framework for assessing and analysing needs in specific countries and crises. The first phase of the framework provides the evidence base for prioritisation of needs, funding allocation, and development of the HIPs.

The first phase is a global evaluation with two dimensions:

- Index for Risk Management (INFORM) is a tool based on national indicators and data which allows for a comparative analysis of countries to identify their level of risk to humanitarian crisis and disaster. It includes three dimensions of risk: natural and man-made hazards exposure, population vulnerability and national coping capacity. The INFORM data are also used for calculating a Crisis Index that identifies countries suffering from a natural disaster and/or conflict and/or hosting a large number of uprooted people.

- The Forgotten Crisis Assessment (FCA) identifies serious humanitarian crisis situations where the affected populations do not receive enough international aid or even none at all. These crises are characterised by low media coverage, a lack of donor interest (as measured through aid per capita) and a weak political commitment to solve the crisis, resulting in an insufficient presence of humanitarian actors.

The second phase of the framework focuses on context and response analysis:

- Integrated Analysis Framework (IAF) is an in-depth assessment carried out by European Commission's humanitarian experts. It consists of a qualitative assessment of humanitarian needs per single crisis, also taking into account the population affected and foreseeable trends.

7. Since the entry into force in 2013 of the new EU Financial Regulation (FR), the Commission is also able to receive External Assigned Revenue (ExAR) under Article
21(2)(b) of the FR. The FR was revised in September 2016, increasing the flexibility within the EU budget to further support e.g. rapid response to crises.

8. **Education in emergencies** has traditionally been one of the least funded humanitarian sectors. In light of this, Commissioner Stylianides made a commitment in July 2015 at the Oslo Summit on Education for Development ("Addressing the Unfinished Agenda – Delivering Quality Education for All") to increase the EU’s humanitarian funding for education in emergencies from 1% to the global target of 4%. This target was already reached in 2016. In 2017, this amount reached 6% of the annual humanitarian aid budget, and the goal was to increase it to 8% in 2018, and then 10% in 2019.

9. **Health** is both a core sector of humanitarian aid interventions, and the main reference for measuring overall humanitarian response. With the global trends of climate change and a growing and ageing population, together with the increasing frequency and scale of natural disasters and the persistency of conflicts, humanitarian health needs are continuing to increase. Given the significance of Commission humanitarian health assistance for the health sector in emergencies, and of the sector for Commission humanitarian health assistance, the Commission developed a set of Guidelines (operational in 2014) to support an improved delivery of affordable health services, based on humanitarian health needs.

10. **Protection** is embedded in DG ECHO's mandate as defined by the HAR and confirmed by the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. Its objective is to reduce physical and psychological insecurity for persons and groups under threat. When providing general assistance, humanitarian actors must ensure that their actions do not undermine protection, nor exacerbate existing inequalities (do-no-harm principle). The 2009 funding guidelines for humanitarian protection activities and the 2016 thematic policy document define the framework in which DG ECHO may support protection activities, including the type of partners and the kind of activities it may finance. DG ECHO supports non-structural activities aimed at reducing the risk, and mitigating the impact of human-generated violence, coercion, deprivation and abuse of vulnerable individuals or groups in the context of humanitarian crises.

11. **Urban areas** are complex settings to implement humanitarian assistance and are different from rural areas in terms of needs and vulnerabilities of the affected people. Furthermore, capacities, methods, and preparedness of local actors, institutions, and partners vary considerably between cities in Turkey. Humanitarian actors, including DG ECHO, have developed and an extensive range of policies, practices, standards and tools for humanitarian work that are often more adapted to rural areas, but far less to urban areas. In the past few years a number of studies have been conducted to explore the drivers of urbanization and its consequences and implications to humanitarian aid. Some

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of these studies have formulated suggestions on how international humanitarian aid can best engage with the changing settlement patterns.

12. The Commission policy has shifted from a linear humanitarian-development approach – **Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD)** – to resilience building. The Communication Lives in Dignity: from Aid-Dependence to Self-reliance provides a strategy for how the EU can best support refugees and displaced people in long-drawn-out situations such as the Syrian crisis, aiming to foster **resilience and self-reliance**. The Communication on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development stresses that better relief can contribute to development; better development can reduce the need for emergency relief; and better rehabilitation can facilitate the transition between the two. The EU’s contribution to international efforts in protracted crises and post-crisis situations could be improved by better integrating the long-term perspective into relief operations, adaptation of development programmes and instruments to allow for quicker and more effective take-over from relief interventions and improved donor coordination.

13. Strengthening the **gender** approach within the EU humanitarian aid is a commitment made in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, which highlights the need to integrate gender considerations, to promote the active participation of women in humanitarian aid and to incorporate protection strategies against sexual and gender-based violence. A Commission Staff Working document has been established to address this issue.

14. The **cash and voucher** aid approach (See DG ECHO Thematic Policy document no 3) ensures humanitarian aid reaches directly those with the greatest need in a timely manner. DG ECHO uses cash and vouchers and other alternative forms of humanitarian assistance only after thoroughly evaluating all options. It recognises that cash and voucher programmes have to be cautiously planned in order to prevent unintended inflation, depression or social imbalances in local markets while reaching the most vulnerable groups (women, children and the elderly). In 2017, a specific Guidance note for partners on the delivery of Large-Scale Cash Transfers was published which complemented the EU’s policy position and existing guidance on the use of cash transfers. More recently in February 2019 the EU Cash Compendium was developed. It presents a selection of 13 recent case studies on the EU’s humanitarian cash assistance.

15. Ensuring the **visibility** of EU humanitarian action, including visibility on project sites, is of strategic importance. To ensure a high level of accountability and to underpin a continued strong support among key stakeholders and the wider public, visibility of and communication about EU humanitarian assistance are priorities and a contractual

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obligation of DG ECHO’s partners. To be effective it must be implemented in close cooperation between the EU’s humanitarian partners and DG ECHO. For this purpose DG ECHO has developed a Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union-funded Humanitarian Aid Actions.\textsuperscript{339}

2. THE REFUGEE CRISIS IN TURKEY

As the conflict in Syria enters soon its ninth year, Syrians continue to represent one of the largest displaced populations in the world, with about five million six hundred thousand Syrians\textsuperscript{340} registered as refugees in neighbouring countries including Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt, and 6 million displaced within Syria. A Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) for the Syria crisis was first launched in December 2014. The 3RP is a nationally led, regionally coherent framework.

According to the Turkish Directorate-General of Migration Management (DGMM), over the last six years about 4 000 000 Syrians and non-Syrians have been registered by the authorities in Turkey\textsuperscript{341}, making Turkey the country hosting the highest number of refugees in the world for the fifth consecutive year. Given the prevailing unstable security situation in Syria, and with no comprehensive political agreement, conditions for safe, dignified and voluntary returns are not currently in place.

As of December 2019 there were 3 576 370 Syrians\textsuperscript{342} under Temporary Protection in Turkey. According to DGMM statistics, İstanbul is the largest host province, with 479 420 TP refugees registered, followed by Gaziantep with 454 361 and Hatay with 439 983. These numbers refer to registered refugees only; there is likely also a large number of unregistered refugees in Turkey.

\textsuperscript{340} https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/113
\textsuperscript{341} Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) was adopted in April 2013 and fully came into force in April 2014. The LFIP for the first time introduced a legal concept of “temporary protection” in Turkish law and thereby provided the basic underpinning of a proper domestic law basis for Turkey’s de facto “temporary protection” practices in regards to refugees from Syria since March 2011. Since then a “Regulation on Work Permit of Refugees Under Temporary Protection” has been issued in the Official Journal No. 2016/8375, dated 15 January 2016. When it comes to other nationalities of protection seekers outside of the group-based Temporary protection framework, they are subject to the International protection procedure administered by Turkey’s Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) on the basis of the LFIP.
\textsuperscript{342} https://en.goc.gov.tr/temporary-protection
The non-Syrian refugee population in Turkey has also been steadily growing over the past decade. As of February 2019, there are 368,230 refugees and asylum seekers from various countries, the vast majority being from Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and Somalia, who are under the status of international protection applicants in Turkey. The refugee population is quite homogenous regarding economic vulnerability. Previous analysis from the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) shows that 71% are economically vulnerable, with 86% working in the informal sector and so at risk of exploitation.

Around 63,000 Syrian refugees are hosted near the Syrian border in 7 temporary accommodation centres run by the Turkish authorities. Most refugees - Syrian or of other nationalities – live outside the camps however and face many challenges. Registered refugees have access to public services, including education and healthcare. However, registration with local authorities can be challenging, and the language and culture barriers make access to public services difficult.

As regards socioeconomic conditions in the country, the Turkish economy grew in both the first and second quarters of 2019 after experiencing a recession in the second half of 2018. The monthly improvement from June 2019 to July 2019 is reported to be the highest in the last 3 years and economists are optimistic about the upcoming months. The yearly inflation rates decreased through 2019, finishing at 9.26% in September 2019343. Despite the improvements above, the slowdown in the economy is also reflected in the unemployment rate, with this year recording the highest levels in the last ten years. The unemployment rate

in Turkey increased to 13.8 percent in September 2019 from 11.4 percent in the same month of the previous year, as the number of unemployed rose by 817,000 to 4.57 million and employment fell by 623,000 to 28.44 million.

DG ECHO’s Integrated Analysis Framework for 2019 identified high humanitarian needs in Turkey. The vulnerability of refugees is assessed to be high with possible deterioration foreseen. Turkey’s INFORM risk index ranks at 52/191 with a 5/10 grade, and UNDP Human Development Index at 0.806 for 2018.

3. THE EUROPEAN UNION’S RESPONSE

3.1. THE EU FACILITY FOR REFUGEES IN TURKEY

The 15 October 2015 EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan344 and the 18 March 2016 EU-Turkey Statement345 describe the EU and Turkey’s cooperation on migration management and shared responsibility for assistance provision to refugees in Turkey.

The 24 November 2015 Commission Decision346 established the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey (“the Facility”). The Facility is not a fund, but a coordination mechanism. It is designed to ensure that the needs of refugees and host communities are addressed in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. Its stated specific objective is “to enhance the efficiency and complementarity of support provided to refugees and host communities in Turkey”.

The actions funded under the Facility are managed by different departments of the European Commission, as follows:

- The Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) manages the humanitarian aid leg of the Facility;
- The Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) manages the Instrument for Pre-Accession and the EU Regional Trust Fund for Syrian Refugees;
- The Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) manages the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace.

Under the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey, DG ECHO and DG NEAR work together to implement a humanitarian-development nexus approach through coherent programming priorities and a division of labour and financing, in line with their respective mandates.

The total budget coordinated under the Facility is EUR 6 billion (EUR 3 billion for the period 2016-2017 and EUR 3 billion for the period 2018-2019). The first tranche mobilised EUR 1

346 A list of relevant Commission Decisions may be found under “Key Facility Documents” here.
billion from the EU budget, and EUR 2 billion from the Member States. For the second
tranche, the EU budget provides EUR 2 billion and the Member States EUR 1 billion.

An up-to-date list of projects (committed and contracted) may be found here.

3.2. HUMANITARIAN AID UNDER THE FACILITY

EUR 2.4 billion has already been allocated to the humanitarian pillar of the Facility for an
implementation period of 2016-2019. So far, the EU has contracted 64 humanitarian projects
with 21 humanitarian organisations under the Facility to support refugees and vulnerable
people in Turkey. It is providing aid to refugees and persons eligible for subsidiary
protection\(^\text{347}\) in urban and rural areas of Turkey, mainly those living outside the camps. DG
ECHO’s intervention in Turkey is articulated around four main components:

1. Facilitating access for refugee populations to the government social welfare system and
   providing means by which the vulnerable populations can meet their basic needs;

2. Supporting transitional primary health care service delivery and developing models for
   specialized health services required by the most vulnerable;

3. Facilitating access for refugee populations to formal education systems by reducing
   barriers and providing the means for at-risk children to be able to go to school; and

4. Outreach, intake, case management and referral of vulnerable refugees and persons
   eligible for subsidiary protection to specialised support services form the core of
   protection as a strategic objective.

Those protection activities are mainstreamed through the three other DG ECHO priority
areas under the Facility: Education, Health and Basic Needs. Supporting Protection aims at
developing a deeper understanding of refugee needs and ease the regularisation of their
status, as well as serving as entry point, to both DG ECHO funded actions and those services
offered by the Government of Turkey (GoTR).

DG ECHO allocated Facility resources under the following Humanitarian Implementation
Plans (HIPs) for the period under evaluation:

- Financial decision: ECHO/TUR/BUD/2017/91000, EUR 782 357 929
- Financial decision: ECHO/TUR/BUD/2018/91000, EUR 51 166 870
- Financial decision: ECHO/TUR/BUD/2019/91000, EUR 991 879 195

3.3. THE EMERGENCY SOCIAL SAFETY NET PROGRAMME

The Facility’s flagship humanitarian programme is the Emergency Social Safety Net
(ESSN), the largest ever EU humanitarian programme, with a total of EUR 1.84 billion
financed by the European Union and its Member States under the Facility.

\(^{347}\) Direct assistance to vulnerable host communities is addressed under the non-humanitarian pillar of the Facility
The ESSN originally aimed at providing assistance to 1.3 million refugees. The programme was first implemented in two parts covering the following periods: 1) 1 December 2016-31 December 2017 with a budget of EUR 348 million, and 2) the one being evaluated, 1 January 2018-31 March 2020, also called “ESSN-2”, with a budget of EUR 1 billion. The ESSN addresses basic needs (food, non-food items and services) by providing cash assistance. The project is implemented across Turkey by WFP in partnership with the Turkish Red Crescent and the Turkish authorities. It is considered an innovative programme because it is a hybrid humanitarian aid programme embedded in the national social-protection system.

The objective of the ESSN is to support the most vulnerable registered Syrian and non-Syrian refugee households in Turkey, to stabilize or improve living standards through provision of monthly cash assistance. The programme aims for the cash transfer to achieve a number of immediate outcomes including meeting their basic needs, ensuring food security of beneficiaries, and reducing negative coping strategies. Secondary outcomes focus on the inclusion of households into the Turkish economy and eventual transition of the ESSN into a Turkish-led social safety net system.

The programme targets refugees living outside the camps, that is, the vast majority of them, whose opportunities to enter the national labour market are limited. It provides a stable and predictable source of income to cover their basic needs. In practice, refugees receive a monthly fixed amount (about €19 per person, the amount being variable on the basis of the exchange rate), quarterly family top ups and disability allowance for the severely disabled (600 TL for 8152 individuals: circa 91 EUR). They use a debit card to withdraw cash at ATMs or to pay in shops. As of December 2019, the ESSN has reached over 1.74 million vulnerable refugees across Turkey.

Figure 2: ESSN Theory of change developed by WFP

January, 2018
The ESSN is implemented by WFP, whose main roles are oversight, monitoring and ensuring the accountability of the ESSN. WFP provides technical advice and guidance on the implementation of the programme and provision of the assistance. The main implementing partner is the Turkish Red Crescent (Kizilay), responsible for planning, preparation, and actual monthly cash transfers. The governance of the ESSN is ensured by an ESSN Governing Board co-chaired by DG ECHO and the Turkish Government, with participation of WFP and Turkish Red Crescent. WFP has one country office, three Area Offices and four Field Offices. WFP ensures central programme management and support through the Country Office and Joint Management Centre (JMC) based in Ankara as well as nationwide coverage for operations across the country.

In line with commitments of the Grand Bargain and the DG ECHO Cash guidance note, DG ECHO will continue funding the ESSN to respond to the basic needs of refugees in Turkey. After 4 years of implementation under WFP’s leadership, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) will be the new lead partner for the next phase of the ESSN programme (ESSN-3). The Turkish Red Crescent will remain the main operational partner and the implementation of the programme will continue in close cooperation with the GoTR. WFP is currently handing over the management of the programme to IFRC and the first cash transfer by IFRC is expected to be carried out in April 2020.

3.4. HUMANITARIAN AID AND EVALUATION CONSTRAINTS

While Turkey is a middle-income country with capacity to integrate refugees into a range of services, there remain gaps in some specific sectors due to the scale of the crisis.

A major constraint is the regulatory environment for NGO partners. NGOs face difficulties receiving permits and authorisations both at the national and local level, including NGO registration and work permit requests for Syrian and foreign workers. NGOs face restrictions on conducting household visits, outreach, and case management, limiting the availability of real-time household level data to inform programming.

4. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

4.1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Based on Art. 30(4) of the Financial Regulation and Regulation (EC) 1257/96, the purpose of this Request for Services is to have an independent evaluation of the second phase of the Emergency Social Safety Net programme (ESSN-2). Thus, the evaluation will cover activities from 1 March 2018 up to 31 March 2020.

Specifically, the evaluation will examine the relevance, coherence, EU added-value, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability348 of the actions, and will:

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348 As defined in the Better Regulation Guidelines, Chapter VI, Section 3: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/better-regulation-guidelines.pdf
• provide a structured and comprehensive retrospective assessment of the second phase of the ESSN from an accountability perspective;

• Provide DG ECHO with potential learning elements for the further development of DG ECHO’s cash policy and its implementation during the third phase of the programme (ESSN-3 will start on 1 April 2020 until 31 March 2021).

The key users of the evaluation report include inter alia DG ECHO staff at HQ, regional and country level, the Steering Committee and the Secretariat of the Facility, national stakeholders, the participating implementing partners (both international and national), and other humanitarian and development donors and agencies.

The evaluation will use the results of other evaluations (including the mid-term evaluation mandated by WFP) and studies as they become available (see section 4.4). In particular another evaluation (Strategic mid-term evaluation of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey) will be undertaken in parallel to this evaluation, hence both studies should complement and inform each other. Due to the scope and innovativeness of the programme, ESSN (alone or as part of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey) has been the focus of a number of studies and assessments. The contractors are therefore encouraged to build as much as possible on existing data and analysis.

The information requested in the evaluation questions listed below is the main subject of this evaluation. The findings of the evaluation must be presented in the report in the form of evidence-based, reasoned responses to each of the evaluation questions. Conclusions should be directly linked to recommendations, if applicable.

4.2. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Relevance
1. What progress has been made during the second phase of the programme to reach the most vulnerable registered refugees? Have the SASF Allowance and Severe Disability Allowance launched in 2018 allowed a diminution of exclusion errors?

2. To what extent have DG ECHO and its partners been successful in adapting and adjusting the approach to identify and address the evolving basic needs of the refugees?

Coherence
3. To what extent is the ESSN programme consistent with DG ECHO’s strategy for Turkey as described in the relevant HIPs and with the Facility’s objectives?

4. How well aligned were ESSN’s operations with DG ECHO’s cash transfer policy and other thematic policies in place during the evaluation period?

EU Added Value
5. What is the EU added value of the ESSN programme (i.e. the added value of a single EU intervention, compared to individual initiatives from the EU Member States)?

Effectiveness
6. To what extent have DG ECHO’s objectives (as defined in the HAR, the Consensus, the specific HIPs and the Decisions establishing the Facility, as well as the Management Framework for Turkey\textsuperscript{349}) been satisfied through the implementation of the ESSN programme?

7. To what extent has DG ECHO’s intervention contributed to increasing access of refugees to government and non-government services (basic needs, health, education, protection), throughout Turkey?

8. To what extent has the ESSN contributed to the capacity of beneficiaries to meet their basic needs, ensuring food security, and reducing negative coping strategies after four years of implementation?

9. To what extent has the ESSN contributed to social cohesion\textsuperscript{350} between the refugee population and the host community?

10. To what extent are refugees, local authorities, Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations and citizens aware of the EU’s presence and contribution through the ESSN? (Visibility)

11. To what extent has the monitoring and reporting system implemented by WFP and TRC supported a sound and timely management of the ESSN’s, including informing any necessary adjustments? Does it ensure a high level of protection and data protection of ESSN’s beneficiaries?

**Efficiency**

12. To what extent has ESSN cost-effectiveness improved in the last two years of programme implementation? What factors have affected the cost-effectiveness of the response and to what extent? The methodology applied for responding to this question must be based on the Cost-effectiveness guidance for DG ECHO evaluations\textsuperscript{351}, which is to be adapted to and applied proportionally to the current exercise.

13. Was the size of the budget allocated by DG ECHO to this programme appropriate to what the actions are set out to achieve? Was the size of the monthly allowance proportionate to the needs identified during the second part of the programme?

**Sustainability/Connectedness**

14. To what extent has the ESSN contributed to meet the Facility’s transition objectives during the second part of the programme?

\textsuperscript{349} The Management Framework for ECHO’s operations in Turkey will be shared with the contractor during the inception phase.

\textsuperscript{350} OECD describes a cohesive society as one that works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward social mobility.” https://www.oecd.org/dev/inclusivesocietiesanddevelopment/social-cohesion.htm

\textsuperscript{351} https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c0bcc4e2-e782-11e6-ad7c-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-45568954
15. What could be further achieved (enabling factors, tools, mechanism, change in strategy, etc.) to better align the ESSN activities with government systems and reach a higher level ownership?

4.3. Other tasks under the assignment

The Contractor should:

- Provide an analysis of the quality of the different partnerships involved in this programme through a multi-evaluation criteria lens: coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and also coordination;
- Identify the main lessons learnt through this second part of the implementation of the ESSN. What has worked or not and what were the major critical success factors? How can the identification and documentation of good practices be further improved?
- Identify the main factors limiting or enhancing the success of the programme over the period covered by the evaluation;
- Provide a statement about the validity of the evaluation results, i.e. to what extent it has been possible to provide reliable statements on all essential aspects of the intervention examined. Issues to be referred to may include scoping of the evaluation exercise, availability of data, unexpected problems encountered in the evaluation process, proportionality between budget and objectives of the assignment, etc.;
- Make a proposal for the dissemination of the evaluation results;
- Provide a Turkish translation (in addition to the English version) of the Executive Summary, done by a professional translation agency, once it has been approved by the responsible body;
- Provide a Power Point presentation in electronic form together with the final report, covering the main conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. The evaluator may be requested to present the evaluation results to DG ECHO's staff and/or stakeholders;
- Provide an abstract of the evaluation of no more than 200 words.

5 4.4 Data available

- Post-distribution monitoring surveys
- On-going and previous evaluations, studies and case studies:
  - Mid-term evaluation of the DG ECHO funded Emergency Social Safety Net in Turkey (Nov 2016-Dec 2017), published by WFP in 2018;
  - Mid-term Strategic Evaluation of the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis.
  - Evaluation of the European Union's humanitarian response to the refugee crisis in Turkey, 2016-2017;
  - Lessons learned exercise: ESSN Task Force Coordination in Turkey, published by NORCAP and the gFSC in August 2018;
  - Mid-term review of the ESSN (2018-2019), to be published by WFP in Feb, 2020
5. MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION OF THE EVALUATION

The Evaluation function of DG ECHO is responsible for the management and the monitoring of the evaluation, in consultation with the Unit responsible for the evaluation subject, ECHO C2. The DG ECHO Evaluation function, and in particular the internal manager assigned to the evaluation, should therefore always be kept informed and consulted by the evaluator and copied on all correspondence with other DG ECHO staff.

The DG ECHO Evaluation manager is the contact person for the evaluator and shall assist the team during their mission in tasks such as providing documents and facilitating contacts.

A Steering Committee, made up of Commission staff involved in the activity evaluated and of representatives of Facility Secretariat (DG NEAR), will provide general assistance to and feedback on the evaluation exercise, and discuss the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.

6. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

6.1. METHODOLOGY

In their offer, the bidders will describe in detail the methodological approach they propose in order to address the evaluation questions listed above, as well as the tasks requested.

This will include a proposal for indicative judgment criteria\(^{352}\) that they may consider useful for addressing each evaluation question. The judgement criteria, as well as the information sources to be used in addressing these criteria, will be discussed and validated by the Commission during the Inception phase at a workshop facilitated by the evaluator. This workshop will also give the evaluation team the opportunity to refine the evaluation.

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\(^{352}\) A judgement criterion specifies an aspect of the evaluated intervention that will allow its merits or success to be assessed. E.g., if the question is "To what extent has DG ECHO assistance, both overall and by sector been appropriate and impacted positively the targeted population?", a general judgement criterion might be "Assistance goes to the people most in need of assistance". In developing judgment criteria, the tenderers may make use of existing methodological, technical or political guidance provided by actors in the field of Humanitarian Assistance such as HAP, the Sphere Project, GHD, etc.
questions, discuss the intervention logic, and analyse external factors at play. Due to the volume of secondary sources available, it is recommended that the bidders explore rigorous methods to aggregate data and build on existing analysis.

The methodology should also promote the participation in the evaluation exercise of the main stakeholders concerned, i.e.

- WFP
- National NGOs and the Turkish Red Crescent;
- Final beneficiaries (refugees) and/or their representatives;
- GoTR and its relevant ministries, national and provincial institutions.
- The Facility Steering Committee members and Secretariat;
- The World Bank;
- Other state donors in the region;

The methodological approach will be refined with, and validated by, the Commission during the Inception phase.

The evaluation team shall undertake an inception visit and a field visit to Turkey. The details of the missions will be discussed and agreed with the Commission during the inception phase, and will be refined in the inception and desk reports. The travel and accommodation arrangements, the organisation of meetings, and the securing of visas will remain the sole responsibility of the contractor. During the evaluation exercise, the consultants should meet with the relevant staff at the EU Delegation to Turkey, DG ECHO’s field experts, DG ECHO’s partners and GoTR for discussion of observations arising from the evaluation. The evaluation team is required to share their preliminary findings with the NGOs/IOs concerned during a debriefing at the end of the field phase. The purpose is to promote dialogue, mutual learning and ownership and to build capacity of the Commission’s partners.

6.2. EVALUATION TEAM

In addition to the general requirements of the Framework Contract, as referred to in section 10.1 below, the team should include experts knowledgeable of the Turkish context as well as beneficiary data protection expert.

7. CONTENT OF THE OFFER

A. The administrative part of the bidder’s offer must include:

1. The tender submission form (annex C to the model specific contract);
2. A signed Experts' declaration of availability, absence of conflict of interest and not being in a situation of exclusion (annex D to the model specific contract).

B. The technical part of the bidder's offer should be presented in a maximum of 30 pages (excluding CVs and annexes), and must include:

1. A description of the understanding of the Terms of Reference, their scope and the tasks covered by the contract. This will include a graphic reconstruction of the intervention logic of the Commission's humanitarian activities concerned. It will also explain the bidder's understanding of the evaluation questions, including a first proposal of judgement criteria to be used for answering the evaluation questions and the information sources to be used for answering the questions. The final definition of judgement criteria and information sources will be validated by the Commission during the inception phase;

2. The methodology the bidder intends to apply for this evaluation for each of the phases involved, including a draft proposal for the number of case studies to be carried out during the field visit, the regions to be visited, and the reasons for such a choice. The methodology will be refined and validated by the Commission during the desk phase;

3. A description of the distribution of tasks in the team, including an indicative quantification of the work for each expert in terms of person/days;

4. A detailed proposed timetable for its implementation with the total number of days needed for each of the phases (Desk, Field and Synthesis).

C. The CVs of each of the experts proposed.

D. The financial part of the offer (annex E to the model specific contract) must include the proposed total budget in Euros, taking due account of the maximum amount for this evaluation. The price must be expressed as a lump sum for the whole of the services provided. The expert fees as provided in the Financial Offer for the Framework Contract must be respected.

8. AMOUNT OF THE CONTRACT

The maximum budget allocated to this study is EUR 250 000.

9. TIMETABLE

The indicative duration of the evaluation is 8 months. The duration of the contract shall be no more than 9 months.

The evaluation starts after the contract has been signed by both parties, and no expenses may be incurred before that. The main part of the existing relevant documents will be provided after the signature of the contract.
In their offer, the bidders shall provide an indicative schedule based on the table below. Taking into consideration the limited availability of WFP Turkey staff after March 2020, it is crucial that the evaluation team can be mobilised as soon as the contract is signed and is available to travel to Turkey on short notice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2020</td>
<td>Kick-off</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2020</td>
<td>Inception mission to Turkey (to be confirmed during the kick-off)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>Draft Inception Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>Inception meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2020</td>
<td>Draft Desk Report</td>
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<td>May 2020</td>
<td>Desk Report meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2020</td>
<td>Draft Field Report</td>
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<td>July 2020</td>
<td>Field Report Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2020</td>
<td>Draft Final Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2020</td>
<td>Draft Final Report meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2020</td>
<td>Final Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2020</td>
<td>Possible presentation of the conclusions and recommendations to DG ECHO Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. PROVISIONS OF THE FRAMEWORK TENDER SPECIFICATIONS

1) **Team composition**: The Team proposed by the Tenderer for assignments to be contracted under the Framework Contract must comply with Criterion B4 (see Section 5.2.4 of the Tender Specifications for the Framework Contract).

2) **Procedures and instructions**: The procedures and instructions to the Tenderer for Specific Contracts under the Framework Contract are provided under Section 6 of the Tender Specifications for the Framework Contract.

   - Sections 6 – 6.4 are fixed and must be fully taken into account for offers submitted in response to Requests for Services. E.g. the **Award Criteria** are presented under Section 6.2.2;
• Section 6.5 is indicative and could be modified in a Request for Services or discussed and agreed during the Inception Phase under a Specific Contract.

3) **EU Bookshop Format:** The template provided in Annex M of the Tender Specifications for the Framework Contract must be followed for the Final Report. Any changes to this format, as introduced by the Publications Office of the European Union, will be communicated to the Framework Contractors by the Commission.

**11. RAW DATA AND DATASETS**

Any final datasets should be provided as structured data in a machine readable format (e.g. in the form of a spreadsheet and/or an RDF file) for Commission internal usage and for publishing on the Open Data Portal, in compliance with Commission Decision (2011/833/EU)\(^{353}\).

The data delivered should include the appropriate metadata (e.g. description of the dataset, definition of the indicators, label and sources for the variables, notes) to facilitate reuse and publication.

The data delivered should be linked to data resources external to the scope of the evaluation, preferably data and semantic resources from the Commission's own data portal or from the Open Data Portal\(^{354}\). The contractor should describe in the offer the approach they will adopt to facilitate data linking.

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\(^{353}\) If third parties' rights do not allow their publication as open data, the tenderers should describe in the offer the subpart that will be provided to the Commission free of rights for publication and the part that will remain for internal use.

\(^{354}\) For a list of shared data interoperability assets see the ISA program join up catalogue (https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/catalogue/repository/eu-semantic-interoperability-catalogue) and the Open Data Portal resources.
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The European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations – ECHO

ECHO Mission

The primary role of the Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) of the European Commission is to manage and coordinate the European Union’s emergency response to conflicts, natural and man-made disasters. It does so both through the delivery of humanitarian aid and through the coordination and facilitation of in-kind assistance, specialist capacities, expertise and intervention teams using the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)

:https://twitter.com/eu_echo

:https://www.facebook.com/ec.humanitarian.aid

:https://www.instagram.com/eu_echo/

:https://www.youtube.com/user/HumanitarianAidECHO


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