Grand Bargain Localization Workstream Country-Based Dialogue

Northwest Syria

Final Report
June 2021

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Following the call for nominations for co-facilitators for a dialogue process about localization launched in November 2020, a joint application was submitted by The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), CARE, Syria Relief and NGO Forum in Northwest Syria, and accordingly Northwest Syria (NWS) was selected as one of the focus countries for the localization dialogue.

The dialogue project aims to initiate discussion between parties involved in responding to the humanitarian crisis in Northwest Syria to assess where the response stands in terms of its localization and provide recommendations and actions to increase localization effectiveness and commitment to the Grand Bargain localization workstream.

A team of co-facilitators was established to lead the dialogue process. The team consisted of:

Donor / FCDO:
- Thomas White, Humanitarian Advisor.
- Duncan Bell, Humanitarian Advisor.
- Kate Wilkinson, Humanitarian Programme Manager.

INGOs / CARE:
- Tue Jakobsen, CARE Turkey Assistant Country Director.
- Monzer Koulkou, Partnership Manager.
- Aleksandar Milutinovic, CARE Turkey-interim Assistant Country Director.

SNGOs / Syria Relief & Syrian NGO League (SNL):
- Mazen Alhousseiny, Syria Relief Organizational Development Manager.
- Ashraf Msalam, SNL Steering Committee member.

NWS NGO Forum:
- Iyad Agha, NGO Forum Coordinator.
- Razan Sbaiti, Partnership Coordinator.

The co-facilitators designed a set of activities to achieve the objective of the dialogue by identifying baselines and leading discussions and action planning.

The main activities were:

- Introductory session with parties involved in the NWS response to introduce the planned dialogue.
- Surveys identifying baselines and key perceived areas for improvement.
- Focus Group Discussions with key actors to review identified gaps and highlight areas of improvement.
- Workshops with key actors to discuss highlighted areas and provide recommendations.
- A consultation session with UN agencies to discuss their role and recommendations.

This report provides an overview of the dialogue and details undertaken activities and resulting recommendation.

2. Activities

2.1. Introductory Session:

The co-facilitators organized an introductory workshop to kick-off the localization dialogue. NWS response actors from donors, INGOs and National NGOs who later formed the parties of the dialogue participated in this workshop which ensured that all contributors were on the same page and aware of the purpose of the dialogue. The introductory workshop covered the following areas:

- Definition of locally lead humanitarian responses (localization).
- Introduction to the Grand Bargain and localization workstream/process.
- Introduction to localization workstream dialogue and the co-facilitators.
- Outline of key objectives, activities and expected outputs of the dialogue.

2.2. Surveys

Separate surveys were designed to address different actors as surveys were sent to donors, INGOs and National NGOs responding to the humanitarian crisis in NWS. All surveys focused on the same areas, but the questions were tailored to ensure relevance to the targeted audience.

All surveys were developed based on the Localization Performance Measurement Framework of the Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR). Questions within the survey entailed a focus on the following areas

- *Partnership*
- *Funding*
- *Capacity*
- *Coordination*
- *Policy, influence and visibility*
- *Participation*

2.2.1. Donors Survey:

Four of the main donors of the NWS response participated in this survey, (see detailed results in Annex 1). Based on survey results, the following areas of improvement were highlighted:

1. Funding management.
2. Humanitarian planning and decision making.
3. Humanitarian Coordination structures.

2.2.2. INGOs Survey:

Ten INGOs working in NWS participated in this survey (see detailed results in Annex 2). Based on survey results, the following areas of improvement were highlighted:

1. Partnership modalities and quality.
2. Capacity building.
3. Humanitarian coordination.

2.2.3. National NGOs Survey:

Thirty-three National NGOs working in NWS participated in this survey (see detailed results in Annex 3). Based on survey results, the following areas of improvement were highlighted:

1. National NGO Financing.
2. Strategic partnership.
3. Capacity building.

2.2.4. UN Agencies Survey:

Four UN Agencies working on the NWS humanitarian response participated in this survey (see detailed results in Annex 4). The results of the UN agencies Survey were presented and discussed in a follow up dedicated exercise

2.3. Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

After the analysis and identification of improvement areas, the co-facilitators coordinated three separate FGDs to present and discuss survey results and analysis and agree on focus areas with different actors.

2.3.1. Donors FGD

Following the presentation and discussion of survey results, different donor representatives provided insights on their individual processes and inputs on identified areas and ways to contribute to improving localization in the NWS response.

Donors briefed on their different strategies and methods of dealing with humanitarian planning and funding and tackled areas related to the existing level of communication with National NGOs and process and flow of funding including what drives the different funding decisions and how the humanitarian coordination structure plays a role in humanitarian and financial planning.

The FGD identified key issues that require attention in order to address areas for improvement and achieve desired outputs. The issues were:

- *Humanitarian coordination and representation.*
- *National NGOs influence on humanitarian planning and decision-making.*
- *Financial planning.*

2.3.2. INGOs FGD

The survey results were presented to INGO representative who in turn used the FGD as an opportunity to discuss INGOs role in localization and share experiences of dealing with partnerships and sub-awards with NGOs from various angles while doing a deep-dive into the

Different INGO representatives provided inputs on the specifics of partnership management within their respective organizations and how different modalities can apply within the NWS context. INGOs explained the different levels of National NGOs engagement in programmatic planning and how that can be improved along with the different tools used to maximize the effectiveness of a co-beneficial partnership especially with systematic evaluation and monitoring exercises.

areas for improvement in order to come up with proposed actions. INGOs collectively agreed on the following three issues that needs to be addressed:

- *National NGOs influence on donors and programmatic planning.*
- *Partnership modalities.*
- *Partnership evaluation and monitoring.*

2.3.3. National NGOs FGD

National NGO representatives reviewed the survey results and discussed the core issues highlighted, while probing for ways to address them and improve partnership and localization in line with the Grand Bargain.

Representatives of National NGOs brought to the table the differences between partnership and contractual relationships and emphasized the critical role of National NGOs in humanitarian planning and leadership but also questioned the effectiveness of the current national representation in humanitarian coordination. National NGOs raised the issue of capacity building as a part of partnership and not only a means to quality project implementation and explored humanitarian financing from the perspectives of direct and multi-year funding and who financing can support the sustainability and independence of National NGOs.

National NGOs agreed on the need to address the below points to contribute to better localization:

- *Sharing and supporting capacity building.*
- *Multi-year funding.*
- *National NGO overhead costs.*

2.4. Workshops

The co-facilitators analyzed the FGD outputs and identified issues/questions and grouped the outputs into three overarching themes, as follows:

a. *Financing*
b. *Partnership and capacity building*
c. *Humanitarian planning and decision-making*

Each thematic area above would be covered in a separate workshop, where relevant issues would be discussed and recommendations would be provided.

The co-facilitators designed three workshops in the same structure where FGD outputs related to the concerned theme of the workshop would be presented to stakeholders (donors, INGOs and National NGOs) and issues that were identified would be posed to the larger group along with separate, sub-groups explore each of the issues and in turn, come up with recommendations

2.4.1. First Workshop: Financing

The first workshop addressed the issues identified under the financing theme. The following are each of the areas with key discussion points made by participants.

- *Multi-year funding*

Multi-year funding is not implemented for local organizations, but rather is implemented on an annual basis, which has an impact on longer-term partnerships.

A lack of transparency from INGOs on prime agreements with regards to timeline and funding is causing funding stability concerns for National NGOs contributing to a continuous search for funds, even amidst project implementation. INGOs do not always have multi-year funding guarantees from donors even for multi-year projects due to annual donor budgets and plans. Other barriers have prevented INGOs from making commitments to National NGOs despite the potential preference to do so. The dynamic nature of the crisis and constantly changing circumstances of the response causes many revisions to planned programs and proposals. While many donors are not providing multi-year funding, this is something to consider going forward while looking at improving financial transparency in partnership.

- *Overhead costs*

Overhead coverage does not trickle down to National NGOs and indirect costs of these NGOs are often not covered.

National NGOs require overhead costs to cover indirect costs necessary for their organizational sustainability, capacity development and growth, as such costs cannot be covered through regular program budgets. This has become increasingly important for National NGOs with demanding expectations of increased quality and compliance resulting in incurring additional costs, such as auditing and compliance practice fees. This cannot be achieved if National NGOs are viewed as only implementation agents. Though some INGOs do cover limited over-head costs, but in most cases when indirect costs are allowed, these costs covered under itemized budget lines rather than overhead costs. To add, some INGOs are limited in what they can provide and usually incur budget shortfalls to cover indirect costs due to funding and policy limitations. There remain donor and INGO concerns over transparency, monitoring and risk management when it comes to providing blanket overhead costs.

- *Financial planning and transparency*

National NGO financial planning is negatively affected by a lack of clarity on donor and INGO plans and by short-term funding cycles.

National NGOs face multiple obstacles in financial planning, especially short-term programming and funding. Additionally, the lack of investment in their capacities beyond project implementation is a limitation, as this investment would aid them in diversifying funding sources and timelines. Some donors have certain systems in place for National NGOs to apply for funding directly and many contribute to existing pooled fund mechanisms (e.g., the Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund), which provide National NGOs with less competition in the quest for funding.

2.4.2. Second Workshop: Partnership and Capacity Building

The second workshop addressed the issues identified under the partnership and capacity building theme. The sections below highlight each of the areas with the key discussion points made by participants.

- *Partnership modalities*

Partnership modalities need to develop and take the next step to foster strategic relations and move from contracting to real partnership.

The implementation of partnership principles is key for successful partnership, and in order to do so there is a need to define these principles and their limitations in the context of the response in NWS. Partnership principles contextualized to align with the NWS specific context and the cross-border nature of the response, would guide a process of partnership modalities that in turn improve the complementarity and trust between partners and help in fully implementing transparency and a more productive partnership between INGOs and National NGOs when it comes to joint humanitarian response planning and implementation.

- *Sharing and supporting capacity building*

Much has been done in terms of the capacity building of National NGOs in terms of tools and activities, but actions are needed to take it to the next level and enhance sharing and supporting capacity building in priority areas.

There are different methods of capacity building funding, as some donors/INGOs have allocated and dedicated amounts for capacity building whereas others do not. Also, INGO staff often play a role in building their partners' capacities. Some donors provide dedicated capacity building grants, while others include these in larger programs. Many NGOs utilize their own internally developed tools to assess partner capacities despite the existence of a unified Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) tool created and continuously developed through various partnership coordination platforms. The unified tool has been used by some NGOs after some adaptations are made, however, many others deem it to be too extensive and detailed for application. Capacity building can also be seen as a two-way exercise as there are many larger and well-equipped Syrian NGOs that are arguably better placed to respond to the needs of the population. The idea of only one-way capacity building from international to local is something that can be reconsidered.

- *Partnership monitoring and evaluation*

Monitoring and evaluating partnerships are key to building a healthy and productive relationship between actors when proper tools and procedures are available to support the process and the implementation of necessary actions consistently.

Many National NGOs report that pre-award assessments or capacity assessments made prior to taking partnership decisions are heavily based on the local partner's existing capacity leading to the elimination of smaller and newer National NGOs who do not necessarily possess the required pre-existing capacity, but still have much potential. This leads to a select number of larger and more experienced National NGOs being contracted, thus limiting the chance of others and consequently limiting the growth potential of local civil society and humanitarian response capacity.

Different tools are used to monitor and evaluate partnership including individual INGO tools and a collectively developed tool through the NGO Forum Partnership Working Group. These tools often offer the chance for effective monitoring and evaluation, which allows for two-way inputs to evolve partnerships. Monitoring and evaluation, when carried out properly, plays a massive role in taking partnership forward and should result in more say for local partnership management and program design.

2.4.3. Third Workshop: Humanitarian planning and decision-making

The third workshop addressed the issues identified under the humanitarian planning and decision-making theme. The sections below highlight each of the areas with the key discussion points made by participants.

- *Humanitarian coordination representation*

National NGOs play an essential role in humanitarian coordination for the Northwest Syria humanitarian response. They must be empowered to present their opinions and positions at different levels of the coordination structure.

National NGOs need to ensure that appropriate staff (possessing the right credentials) are selected to take part at different stages and areas of humanitarian coordination to ensure meaningful participation. INGOs play a key role in empowering their partner staff to attend coordination meetings and encouraging them to speak openly and honestly. The coordination structure includes mechanisms that enable National NGOs to be in leading positions in humanitarian coordination for Northwest Syria.

- *National NGOs influence on humanitarian planning and decision-making*

National NGOs need to have a sustainable influence on humanitarian response planning through the cluster system. Clusters provide the platform for local influence on planning

especially through certain National NGOs taking on co-lead roles in different clusters adding a different perspective to humanitarian planning that positively impacts the development of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).

National NGOs are actively involved in cluster coordination and occupy many co-lead positions enabling their input in humanitarian planning and decision-making at this level despite the limited influence on the HRP due to the approval process. National NGOs play an active role in cluster coordination, which stems from their inherent advantage in terms of direct field implementation and deep understanding and experience of Syrian culture and context. However, the humanitarian community needs to have more mechanisms and tools in place to ensure that inputs are representative of population needs and inclusive of all local organizations' inputs to ensure that decisions and actions do not serve individual interests in terms of response planning.

- *National NGOs influence on donors and programmatic planning*

Outside of humanitarian coordination, National NGOs have limited influence of programmatic planning and specific response decisions and such decisions and priorities are often dictated by donor strategies or INGO proposals. National NGOs are able to provide valuable inputs to humanitarian program plans and some INGOs work closely with their local partners to identify response and program priorities. However, there is a certain level of capacity that could be built into these local partners in order to facilitate more autonomous and independent program plans that may feed into larger response plans.

Program planning is conducted differently from one donor or INGO to another. While some utilize a more participatory and contributory approach, others adopt a more prescriptive approach where programmatic priorities and plans are identified early on and cascaded down for implementation. As local partners, it can be difficult for national NGOs to voice priorities or needs directly to donors, who often prefer inputs from the contract holder.

2.4.4. UN Agencies Consultation Session

Four representatives of UN Agencies representing UNFPA, UNHCR, UNDP and OCHA's Syria Cross Border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF) attended a consultation session to review the outputs of the survey, discuss their roles in humanitarian response localization in NWS, and identify improvement opportunities.

The representatives and NWS NGO Forum team discussed the importance of UN funding for National NGOs and how partners and projects and selected and managed through process guided by the Annual Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). Some UN agencies have worked with National NGOs for a long time and established strong partnerships.

UNFPA emphasised the critical role of National NGOs in the NWS response and highlighted that there many smaller and grassroot NGOs who rely only on UN funding and are partnered with through and existing small grants scheme and selected based on standardized micro-assessments which guide capacity building efforts. Eliminating third party.

UNHCR stressed their belief and commitment to localization and highlighted the existence of sustained partnership. Also, the role of National NGOs in humanitarian coordination and the existence of national cluster co-leads can only help grow the role of National NGOs and ensure their inclusion in humanitarian planning and decision making.

SCHF raised points related to the need of further exploring mechanisms to improve National NGOs access funding including more direct and multi-year funding while ensure that proper explanations, measure and policies are in place to govern the management of multi-year and overhead funds to ensure risk mitigation and quality programming. The issue of capacity building was also raised encouraging further improvement of existing practices through strategies and benchmarks to help move beyond training. Humanitarian coordination localization was also an important point raised to ensure a larger role for National NGOs.

3. Recommendations

All three workshops resulted in a number of recommendations that are intended to address issues and identify areas for improvement in order to advance the localization process within the humanitarian response in Northwest Syria in line with the Grand Bargain. The recommendations are classified below by the relevant stakeholder in order to take relevant actions were possible.

3.1. To Donors

1. *Explore the possibility of increasing multi-year projects providing minimum funding guarantees for the duration of projects to enable stable partnership.*
2. *Systemize the inclusion of National NGOs in donor planning to increase transparency and effective collaboration.*

3. *Increase information dissemination from donors to National NGOs through meeting with local partners and utilizing existing coordination platforms and clusters.*
4. *Explore ways to introduce direct funding from donors to National NGOs and identify specific capacity requirements.*
5. *Work with INGOs and National NGOs to explore ways of providing the local partners with overhead costs and how that can be properly implemented with a risk mitigation structure.*
6. *Explore the possibility of allocating a dedicated portion from each grant to be used for capacity building activities as appropriate to the size and nature of the planned response.*

3.2.   To INGOs

1. *Standardize the overhead process to be more consistent and comprehensive in coordination with donors and partners.*
2. *Explore potential policies to apply structured flexibility in partner overhead spending timelines.*
3. *Set-up mechanisms to facilitate transitioning multi-year funding to National NGOs as per funding agreements and donor.*
4. *Carry out joint proposal development processes with local partners, whenever possible.*
5. *Share OCA results with partners and agree on required actions and progress reporting.*
6. *Provide capacity building to local partners beyond program implementation and expand into overall institutional capacity building.*
7. *Review processes of proposing, planning and approving capacity building activities with HQs to improve timeliness and effectiveness.*
8. *Ensure the inclusion of capacity building activities in sub-grants with a focus on the institutional capacity and sustainability of local partners rather than strictly project implementation capacity.*
9. *Expand on utilizing existing NGO coordination platforms to provide capacity building to a larger audience of National NGOs.*
10. *Consider creative, out-of-the box areas in partner selection processes including access, field input, reputation, and potential.*

3.3.   To National NGOs

1. *Develop clear and auditable policies and apply tools to monitor accountability and mitigate risks associated with overhead funding.*
2. *Work closely with INGO partners to apply tools to measure impact of proposed capacity building activities.*

3. *Explore ways of setting up consortia and work together to share experiences and capacity and improve the quality of both implementation and advocacy components.*
4. *Ensure continuous development of internal systems with focus on accountability and risk mitigation, HR and duty of care, and internal financial controls including the avoidance of excessive use of cash.*

3.4.   To NWS NGO Forum

1. *Work with INGO and National NGO partners to define partnership principles application and limitations in the NWS context.*
2. *Review existing OCA tools to fit the need and the different purposes of INGOs*
3. *Work with INGOs and National NGOs to mainstream the use of all partnership tools including OCA and Monitoring and Evaluation tools.*
4. *Explore possible improvements to existing practices and measure to ensure the effectiveness of cluster co-leads in fostering collective decision making.*
5. *Explore ways to empower National NGOs and NWS hub inputs in general to the HRP.*

3.5.   To UN Agencies

1. *Explore ways of implementing multi-year funding to National NGOs, where possible, in line with HRP and ensuring flexibility based on funding availability and partner performance.*
2. *Seek ways to channel down overhead funding in line with existing policies on both UN and National NGO sides.*
3. *Work to move beyond the contracting method and the focus cost cutting towards agreement that reflect partnership rather than vendor relationship.*
4. *Work with all actors to find way of improving capacity building activities within UN grants to move beyond training and focus on National NGOs as institutions.*
5. *Work with the existing coordination platforms and global clusters to explore ways to improve humanitarian coordination localization.*

3.6.   Grand Bargain recommendations:

1. *Define, identify and standardize localization comprehensively and develop measures to assess progress against such benchmarks.*
2. *Engage local actors/National NGOs for active participation in decision-making processes*
3. *Unify understanding of localization given different understandings by stakeholders were common.*

4. *Support future localization dialogue efforts for NWS based on interest and engagement by donors and NGOs, including workshops and other robust activities.*
5. *Enhance advocacy efforts around the Grand Bargain between HQs and country/region, specifically from stakeholders who are already part of such commitments.*
6. *Extend the Grand Bargain agreement and establish a clear framework for the renewal of the Grand Bargain to ensure more concrete results and effective follow-up.*
7. *Establish unified measurable framework and review the progress more frequent and regular basses.*
8. *Identify Local context learning opportunities and adjust commitment accordingly.*
9. *Develop risk mitigation and risk management tools and foster risk sharing environment between donors, INGOs and local actors.*

The co-facilitators will prepare a paper with the recommendations to be endorsed by the Humanitarian Liaison Group for Northwest Syria (HLG) and will carry out regular follow-up on actions and progress.

***

4. Annexes

Annex 1: Donor survey

Four donors Participated in the Donor Survey, the participants were:

FCDO – United Kingdom
USAID – United States of America
Federal Foreign Office – Germany
Department for Stabilization and Humanitarian Aid – The Netherlands

The full results of the survey are the following:

1. To what extent do your funding agreements promote the principles of: Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented Approach, Responsibility and Complementarity (1 is least, 5 is best).

Q 1

1	2	3	4	5
0	0	0	4	0
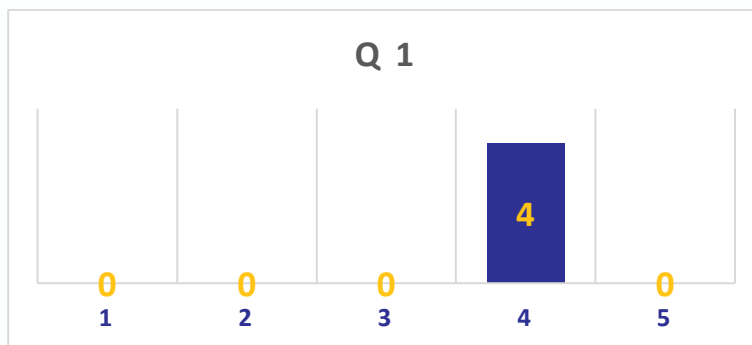
2. The implementation of projects been monitored frequently: e.g. review meetings, surveys, TPM, etc. (1 is least, 5 is best).

Q2

1	2	3	4	5
0	0	1	0	3
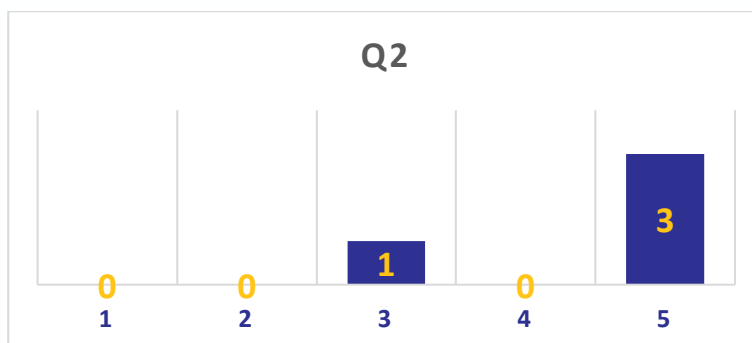
3. Have you increased the number of funding mechanisms being made available to Syrian NGOs? (1 is least, 5 is best).

Q 3

| Value	1	2	3	4	5
Count	1	0	2	1	0
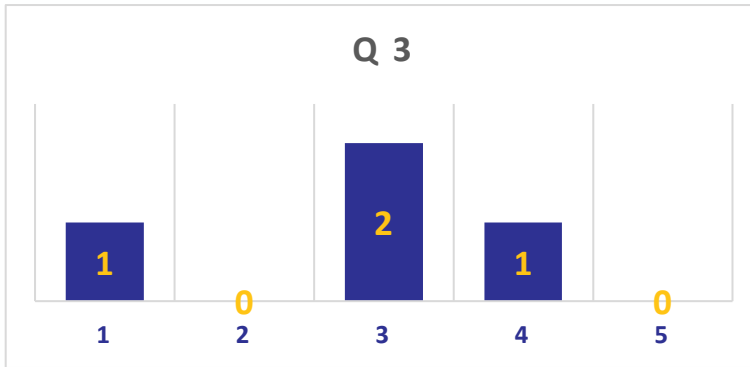
4. Do you insist your partners pass on support costs to SNGOs including institutional costs (e.g. NPAC)? (1 is least, 5 is best).

Q 4

Value	1	2	3	4	5
Count	2	0	2	0	0
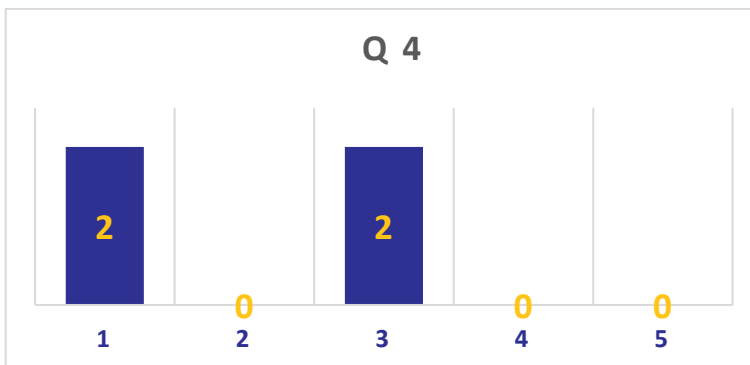
5. Do you think your implementing/downstream partners have sufficient overhead costs? (1 is least, 5 is best)

Q 5

| Value	1	2	3	4	5
Count	0	3	1	0	0
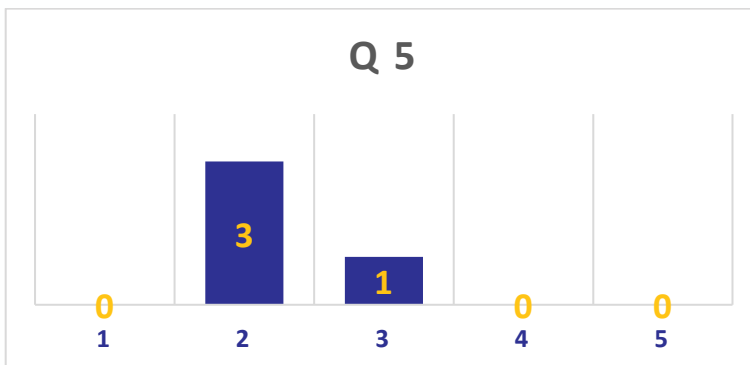
6. Do you support/influence increased participation in the existing humanitarian leadership and coordination fora (1 is least, 5 is best)

Q 6

1	2	3	4	5
0	0	0	3	1
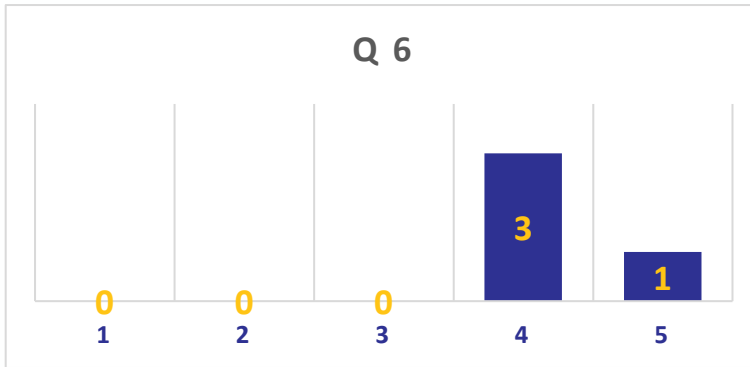
7. Do you support Syrian NGOs to be in co-lead positions in clusters and working groups? (1 is least, 5 is best)

Q 7

1	2	3	4	5
0	0	2	2	0
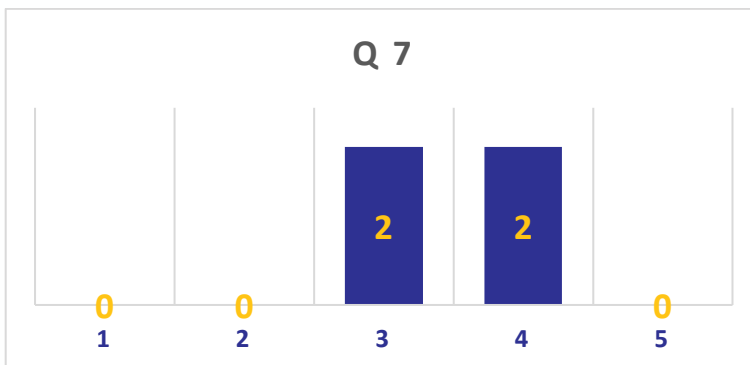
8. Do you support enabling SNGOs in HLG and Clusters mechanisms? (1 is least, 5 is best)

Q 8

1	2	3	4	5
0	0	0	3	1
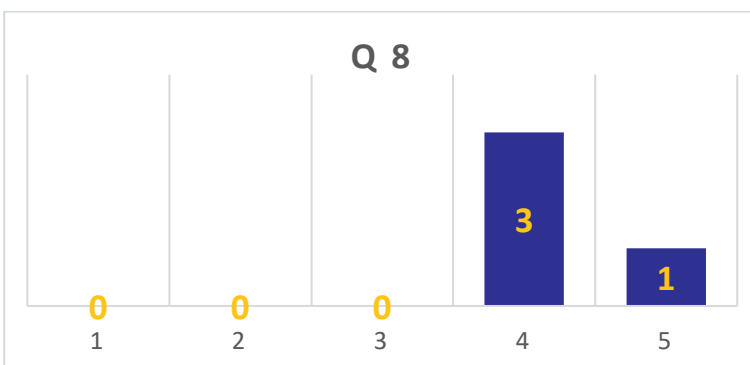
9. Do you provide opportunities to hear from your downstream partners directly and let them advocate to you? (1 is least, 5 is best)

Q 9

| Value	1	2	3	4	5
Count	0	0	1	3	0
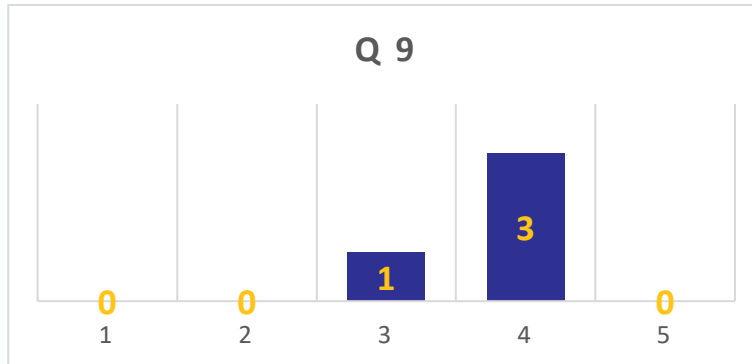
10. How do implementing partners participate in planning of the proposed project? do you deem this as sufficient?

o At the donor level, there is a lack of visibility on prime and sub-partners' coordination to develop proposals. BHA does not have a direct relationship with sub-partners and thus cannot require prime partners to coordinate proposal planning with sub-partners.

o Since a large part of our funding is provided unearmarked and our country specific funding is provided mostly to the pooled fund, we as a donor are not much involved in planning. We do however support implementing partners to be part of the planning process.

o The level of participation in the planning process differs. It depends on the respective project. We hear that the implementing partners have a large role in the planning process as they are often having more experience and context specific expertise.

o SNGOs have limited participation in planning at a strategic level for FCDO- we consult through the Forum and other ad hoc discussions, but this isn't formalized. INGOs lead project planning and allocate budgets to SNGOs. SNGOs will contribute to planning through Clusters and with INGOs, but currently have limited decision-making power.

11. Do you provide multi-year funding to partners? If so, do your partners provide multi-year funding to their downstream partners? What are the barriers for doing so?

o Although programmatically optimal to design programs for more than 12 months, particularly for a protracted humanitarian crisis like Syria, the fiscal timeline prevents BHA from providing multi-year funding. BHA typically provides 12 months of funding, and in rare cases 18 months. This is due to the lack of foresight of available funding after every 12-month fiscal year cycle.

o We do provide multiyear funding with regards to our unearmarked funding and a collective of NGOs. I am not aware if they provide multiyear funding to their downstream partners but very good point to address with them!

o Yes, Germany provides multi-year funding to partners who in turn also have multi-year contracts with their downstream partners.

o The UK provides multi-year funding to direct partners. Direct partners are not required to provide multi-year funding to their downstream partners and most don't.

o The main barrier for doing so appears to be risk management- direct partners are ultimately responsible for their downstream partners and need to ensure they have sufficient capacity and capability to manage UK funding. It also likely gives direct partners more control over their resources. There are no institutional barriers that stop UK funded partners from providing multi-year funding commitments to downstream partners.

12. Is the level of capacity building of Syrian NGOs acceptable to you? Would you like to see more done in this space?

o Yes, meaningful capacity building is needed.

o I am not fully aware of the level of capacity building so I would not be able to answer this question.

o Generally, we encourage our partners to continuously engage in capacity building activates with implementing partners and we also explicitly fund them. The level of capacity building is acceptable to us.

o No, we would like to see more done in this space. Partners do provide some capacity building support to their SNGO partners, but this is limited. The UK supports (and would consider funding) system-level capacity-building initiatives (e.g., on AAP). The UK also funds some inter-agency mechanisms which build capacity on safety and security etc.

13. Are your guidelines and conditions translated into Arabic for use by downstream partners?
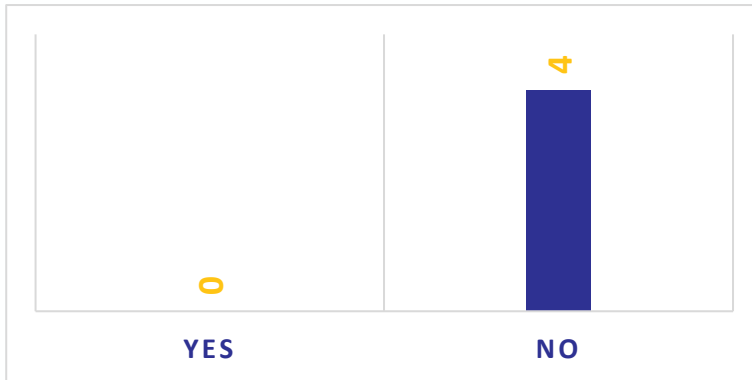
14. What do you think are the most three challenges that we face in applying Localization in NW Syria?

o 1-SNGOs' Role in the Coordination Structure 2. SNGO Community Organization/Coordination/Advocacy 3. Compliance Capacity Building
o Lack of monitoring and oversight capacity (we as a donor cannot travel to NWS) and capacity in the region in general, lack of knowledge on local partners and possibility to a need's assessment on the ground, lack of certification of financial accountability of local partners.
o Legal and operative constraints that prevent donors from direct funding of Syrian NGOs. Staff shortage on the donor side (priority for projects with large financial volume, preference for INGOs with longstanding reputation and knowledge of donor's conditions).
o Funding SNGOs is currently unrealistic for the UK for two reasons:
o 1- SNGOs are not operating at the same multi-sectoral capacity as INGO partners. SNGOs tend to be smaller and operate in less sectors. The UK can only have a limited number of direct partners, so partnering with INGOs gives us greater scale and flexibility. 2- SNGOs are less likely to pass UK due-diligence. Partners must meet the UK's compliance and risk management requirements. We have tried to do fund SNGOs directly in the past but failed to do so because of their lower capacity.
o SNGOs are currently in a competitive space for funding and often receive funding from the same donor through multiple agreements with different direct partners. How INGOs/ UN agencies coordination partnerships with SNGOs needs improving.

15. From your opinion, how we can overcome these challenges?

o 1. Greater involvement of SNGOs in coordination bodies to amplify SNGO perspectives 2. Greater cohesion among the SNGO community to strengthen SNGOs' advocacy 3. Provide meaningful compliance capacity building programs.

o At this stage this will be quite difficult because of the travel restrictions to Syria. We can nevertheless advocate to our partners to include national partners and provide the same modality of funding to downstream partner as we give to our partners and to encourage partners to include national partners in planning processes.

o Tricky one. Do not have a good answer at this point.

o We currently have a system which is designed for direct implementation but that doesn't work in practice in NW Syria. INGOs/ UN agencies are largely working through SNGOs. We therefore need an innovative system that better reflects the remote, partnership-led nature of the response.

o More capacity-building is needed to support SNGOs to meet donor compliance.

16. What three areas have we succeeded in in localizing the NW Syria humanitarian response?

o Operational Capacity: SNGOs are the operational backbone of the NWS response.

o For the reasons mentioned before, in NWS we provide funding only through the SCHF and the collective of NGOs (Dutch Relief Alliance), specific localization has been limited. We are in constant dialogue with these partners to include

o 1) Large amount of delivery done through local organizations
2) NGO Forum representing collective views of S/NGOs
3) Strong inter-agency platform supporting the whole response

17. What are the best practices in Localization for your organization in NW Syria?

o 1. Currently funding 2 SNGOs 2. Held open/honest calls with 10+ SNGOs following release of the Syria Supplementary Guidance to demystify BHA priorities, the application process and pre-award survey process and timeline. 3. Provided FFP/OFDA application guidelines trainings to all interested organizations in Turkey, including SNGOs

o Providing multi-year funding to partners

18. What is your capacity building efforts for local partners?

- o 1. ISHA 2. Directly funding 2 SNGOs 3. All organizations are welcome to contact the DART ahead of submitting a concept paper to better understand the application process, pre-award survey process and clarify any questions about direct funding 4. Previously hosted application guidelines trainings for non-partners to better understand USAID application/funding process and compliance requirements.
- o We commit financial resources to capacity building. Partners need to address capacity building strategies in a proposal section.
- o Direct partners do provide some capacity-building support to partners, but this is likely to be insufficient.

19. What issues would you like to see discussed in the donor level localization focus group discussion?
- o Would like to hear directly from SNGOs (a) what feasible and concrete actions can be taken in the short- and long-term to advance localization applicable to coordination, capacity building, and other necessary initiatives beyond funding and (b) what are the ideas/misconceptions about why donors do not support/fund SNGOs, so donors have the opportunity to confirm realities or deny misconceptions.
- o How to overcome the challenge of involving in localization within the limitations and administrative/financial requirements of our government and without delegating the risk to partners.
- o How to address lack of capacity-building support (linked to how we can increase direct funding to SNGOs)
- o How to strengthen partnership approach
- o How to increase decision-making by SNGOs in response and project-level

Annex 2: INGOs survey

Ten INGOs Participated in the Survey, the participants were:

1. Save the Children International.
2. Medical Relief for Syria.
3. World Vision International.
4. Mercy Corps.
5. Syrian American Medical Society.
6. CARE.
7. Relief International.
8. Global communities.
9. War Child.
10. Disaster Ready.

The full results of the survey are the following:

1. Partnerships

1.1 Quality in relationships

1.1.1 (1) Do INGOs have more power in partnership than their implementing partners?

1.1.2 (2) Are partnership agreements designed to match with the principles: Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented Approach, Responsibility and Complementarity

1.1.3 (3) Is the partnership been monitored frequently: e.g., review meetings, surveys, TPM, etc.
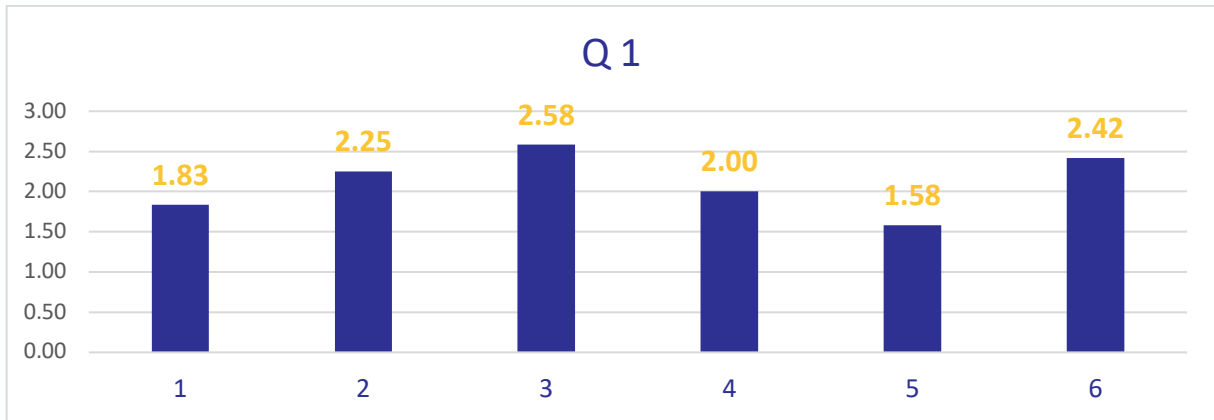
1.1.4 (4) Is there improvement on the concerns about the partnership found through the monitoring tools

1.2 Shift from project-based to strategic partnerships

1.2.1 (5) Has the partnership shifted from project focus to strategic objective focus with including organizational development

1.3 Engagement of partners throughout the project cycle

1.3.1 (6) Does the implementing NGO routinely asked to participate in all aspects of the project cycle: from the design till completion

Q 1

2. Funding

2.1 Quantity of funding

2.1.1 (1) Is there any increases in humanitarian funding to International NGOs

2.1.2 (2) Do INGOs/UN agencies share their partnership projects amount in comparison to their direct implementation ratio publicly

2.1.3 (3) Do INGOs increasing their partnership modality programs in comparison to their direct implementation

2.2 Quality of funding

2.2.1 (4) Do INGO/UN provide funding for Syrian NGOs for any new humanitarian response within 2-weeks from the approved agreement date

2.2.2 (5) Do INGO/UN provide funding for the operating costs of the Syrian NGOs including relevant institutional costs

2.2.3 (6) Are the overhead costs shared equally between Syrian NGOs and INGO/UN with no reporting requirements

2.2.4 (7) Are the provided funds adequate to meet quality standards for the project's implementation

2.2.5 (8) Are INGOs/UN transparent enough with the financial transactions and budgets with Syrian NGOs

2.2.6 (9) Do INGOs/UN agencies allow flexibility for Syrian NGOs to make reasonable adjustments during project implementation

2.2.7 (10) Do INGOs/UN agencies reflect their multi-year funding to their implementing partners
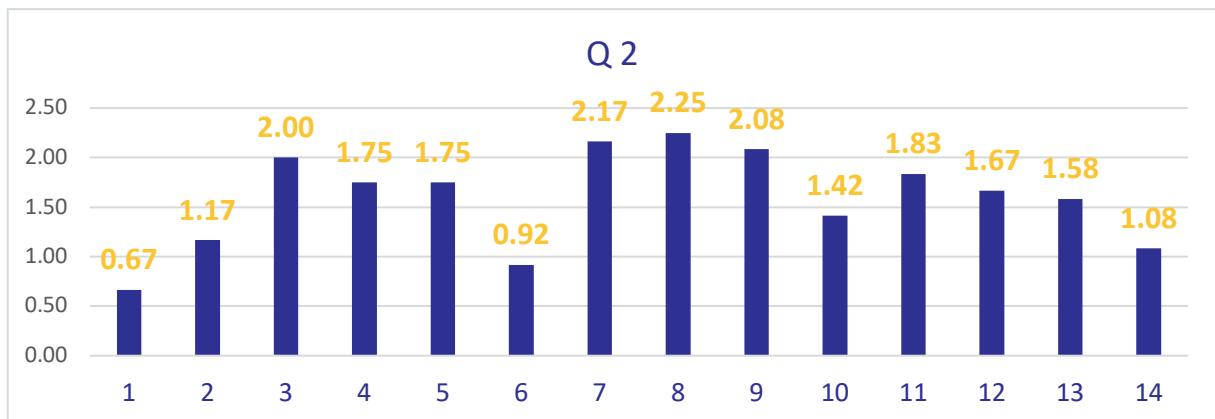
2.2.8 (11) Do INGO/UN actively seek to strengthen the financial sustainability of Syrian NGOs

2.4 Risk management

2.4.1 (12) Do Syrian NGOs have robust financial management systems and accounting procedures

2.4.2 (13) Do Syrian NGOs have effective systems in place to mitigate and manage risk

2.4.3 (14) How is the pace of change in organizational culture/reduction of donor barriers to fund Syrian NGOs directly

Q 2

Category	Value
1	0.67
2	1.17
3	2.00
4	1.75
5	1.75
6	0.92
7	2.17
8	2.25
9	2.08
10	1.42
11	1.83
12	1.67
13	1.58
14	1.08

3. Capacity

3.1 Performance management

3.1.1 (1) How is the effectiveness of Syrian NGOs performance management strategies

3.2 Organizational development

3.2.1 (2) Is organizational development a core objective of partnerships between Syrian NGOs and INGO/UN

3.2.2 (3) Are capacity assessments routinely used by INGO/UN on Syrian NGOs

3.2.3 (4) Is organizational development coordinated and results are cumulative for Syrian NGOs

3.2.4 (5) Is there successful organizational development results for greater Syrian NGOs autonomy

3.3 Quality standards

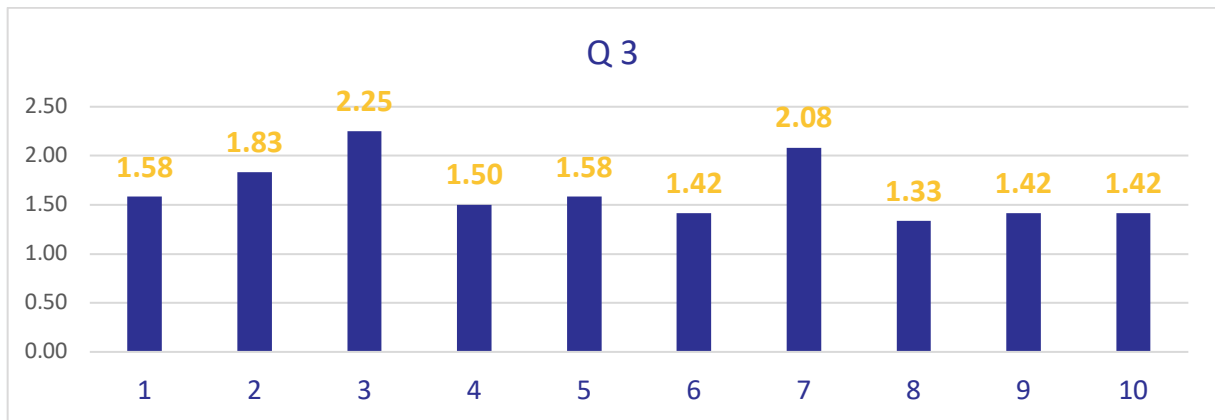3.3.1 (6) Are standards contextualized and available in Arabic

3.4 Recruitment and surge

3.4.1 (7) Do INGO/UN organizations have ethical recruitment guidelines and use them

3.4.2 (8) is the recruitment of local staff within INGO/UN taking into consideration the gaps of Syrian NGOs capacities

3.4.3 (9) INGO/UN support Syrian NGOs surge mechanisms

3.4.4 (10) INGO/UN use innovative approaches to support Syrian NGOs surge

Q 3

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1.58	1.83	2.25	1.50	1.58	1.42	2.08	1.33	1.42	1.42

4. Coordination and complementarity
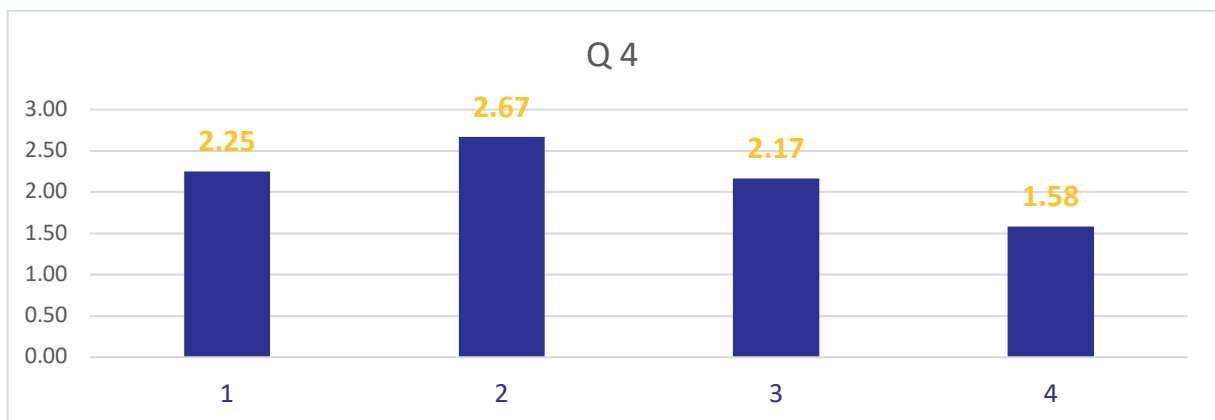
4.2 Humanitarian coordination

4.2.1 (1) INGOs/UN agencies provide encouragement and support for SNGOs to enable them to participate in cluster mechanism

4.2.2 (2) Syrian NGOs are active members of clusters and are represented in Working Groups

4.3 Collaborative and complementary response

4.3.1 (3) Humanitarian response is delivered in a collaborative & complimentary way between INGO/UN and Syrian NGOs

4.3.2 (4) Response strategies outline the roles of Syrian NGOs in strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus

Q 4

	1	2	3	4
Value	2.25	2.67	2.17	1.58

5. Policy, influence and visibility

5.1 Influence in policy, advocacy and standard-setting

5.1.1 (1) INGOs/UN agencies support SNGOs to play leading role in national humanitarian advocacy

5.1.2 (2) INGOs/UN agencies support SNGOs to play leading role in the contextualization of humanitarian standards
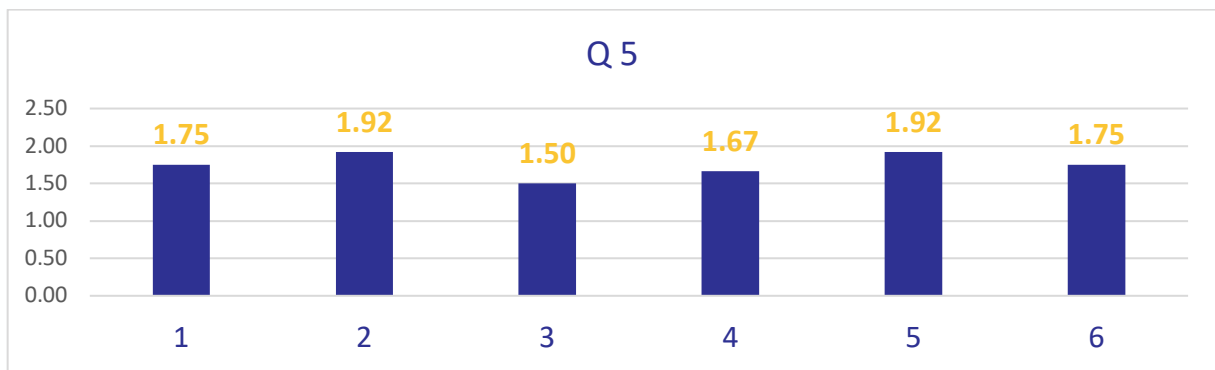5.1.3 INGOs/UN agencies support SNGOs to influence donor priorities for Syria

5.2 Visibility in reporting and communications
5.2.1 (3) INGOs/UN agencies support SNGOs to play leading role in communicating national humanitarian issues
5.2.2 (4) INGOs/UN agencies accredited SNGOs in their reports for the work they undertake
5.2.3 (5) Syrian NGOs are promoted by their INGO/UN partners in communications materials

Q 5

Category	Value
1	1.75
2	1.92
3	1.50
4	1.67
5	1.92
6	1.75

6. Participation
6.1 Participation of communities in humanitarian response
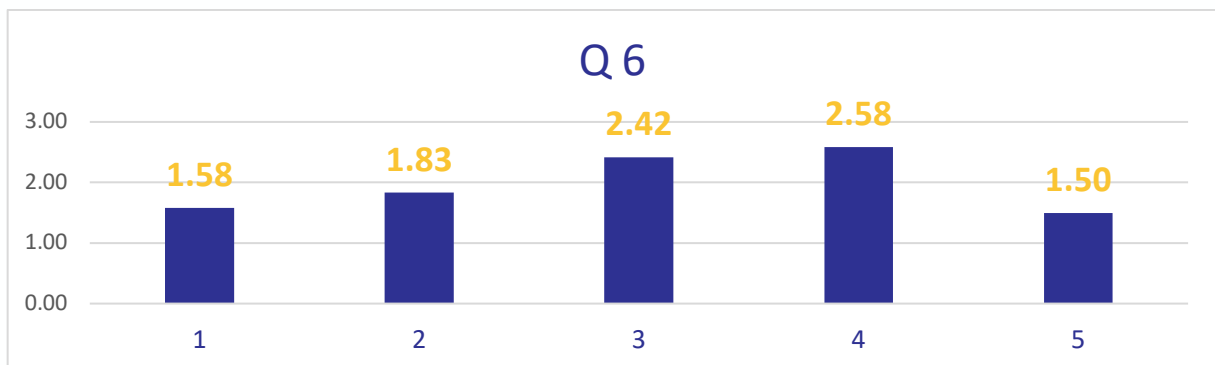6.1.1 (1) Affected people have a say in the assistance that they receive
6.1.2 (2) Affected people have information about programs and participate in them
6.1.3 (3) Affected people can provide feedback or make complaints

6.2 Engagement of communities in humanitarian policy development and standard-setting
6.2.1 (4) Humanitarian decision-making is informed by the views of affected people
6.2.2 (5) Humanitarian policies and standards are informed by affected people

Q 6

Category	Value
1	1.58
2	1.83
3	2.42
4	2.58
5	1.50

Annex 3: National NGOs Survey

Thirty-five National NGOs Participated in the Survey, the participants were:

1. Kudra.
2. Muzun for Humanitarian and Development.
3. Hope Revival Organization.
4. Human Rights Guardians.
5. ELAF for relief and Development.
6. Orange.
7. MIDMAR.
8. Amal for Relief and Development.
9. Independent Doctors Association.
10. White Hands/ Beyaz Eller.
11. Horan Foundation.
12. Syria Bright Future.
13. Shafak.
14. Violet for Relief and Development.
15. Social Development International.
16. Mercy Without Limits.
17. Syria Relief and Development.
18. Bonyan Organization.
19. MISK Humanitarian Organization.
20. Silk Road.
21. Syria Relief.
22. Al Resala Foundation.
23. Mattar for Relief and Development
24. Binaa.
25. Alsham Foundation.
26. Hand in Hand for Aid and Development
27. Takaful Al Sham Foundation.
28. POINT organization.
29. Big Heart Foundation.
30. IYD Humanitarian Relief Association.
31. Syrian Civil Administration Development Center.
32. Kareemat Orgnaization.
33. Justice and Sustainable Development Organization.

The full results of the survey are the following:

1. Partnerships

1.1 Quality in relationships

1.1.1 (1) Do the Syrian NGOs have some power in partnerships (means that the partnerships are not dominated by the INGO/UN)?

1.1.2 (2) Are partnership agreements designed to match with the principles: Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented Approach, Responsibility and Complementarity

1.1.3 (3) Is the partnership been monitored frequently: e.g., review meetings, surveys, TPM, etc.

1.1.4 (4) Is there improvement on the concerns about the partnership found through the monitoring tools

1.2 Shift from project-based to strategic partnerships

1.2.1 (5) Has the partnership shifted from project focus to strategic objective focus with including organizational development

1.3 Engagement of partners throughout the project cycle

1.3.1 (6) Does the Syrian NGO routinely participate in all aspects of the project cycle: from the design till completion
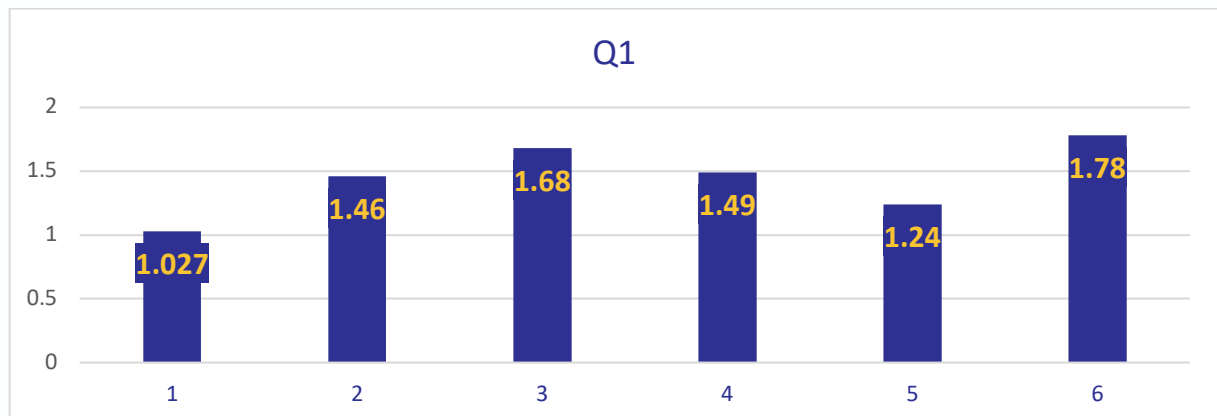
2. Funding

2.1 Quantity of funding

2.1.1 (1) Is there any increases in humanitarian funding to Syrian NGOs

2.1.2 (2) Do the INGO/UN publish the % of funding that they pass to Syrian NGOs in any platform

2.1.3 (3) Is there any increases in the number of funding mechanisms being made available to Syrian NGOs

2.2 Quality of funding

2.2.1 (4) Do INGO/UN provide funding for Syrian NGOs for any new humanitarian response within 2-weeks from the approved agreement date

2.2.2 (5) Do INGO/UN provide funding for the operating costs of the Syrian NGOs including relevant institutional costs

2.2.3 (6) Are the overhead costs shared equally between Syrian NGOs and INGO/UN with no reporting requirements

2.2.4 (7) Are the provided funds adequate to meet quality standards for the project's implementation

2.2.5 (8) Are INGOs/UN transparent enough with the financial transactions and budgets with Syrian NGOs

2.2.6 (9) Is there flexibility for Syrian NGOs to make reasonable adjustments during project implementation

2.2.7 (10) Are the multi-year funds available for Syrian NGOs to financing for preparedness, stability and quality

2.2.8 (11) Do INGO/UN actively seek to strengthen the financial sustainability of Syrian NGOs

2.3 Access to 'direct' funding

2.3.1 (12) Have Syrian NGOs witnessed changes to access direct funding

2.3.2 (13) Have Syrian NGOs witnessed changes to access funding through just a single intermediary

2.3.3 (14) Is there any increases of direct access to Syrian NGOs from donors
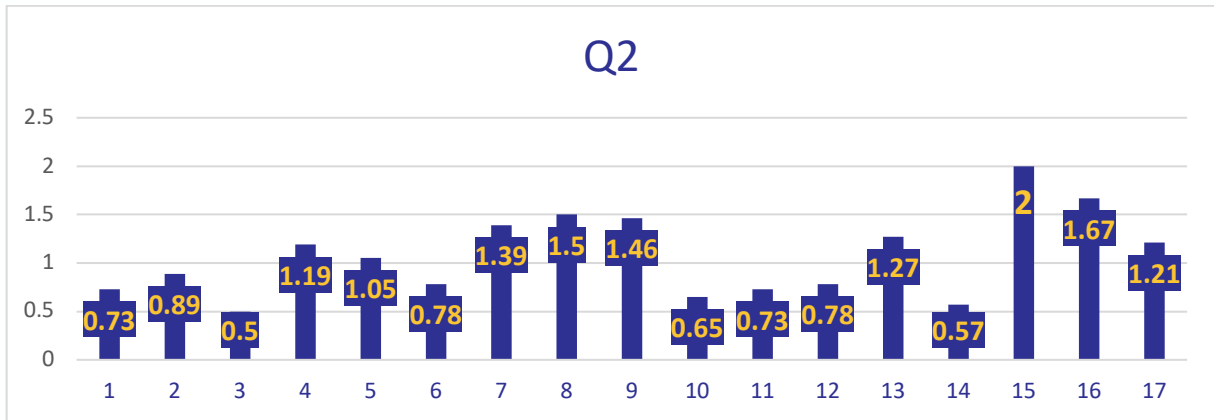
2.4 Risk management

2.4.1 (15) Do Syrian NGOs have robust financial management systems and accounting procedures

2.4.2 (16) Do Syrian NGOs have effective systems in place to mitigate and manage risk

2.4.3 (17) How is the pace of change in organizational culture/reduction of donor barriers to fund Syrian NGOs directly

Q2

3. Capacity

3.1 Performance management

3.1.1 (1) How is the effectiveness of Syrian NGOs performance management strategies

3.2 Organizational development

3.2.1 (2) Is organizational development a core objective of partnerships between Syrian NGOs and INGO/UN

3.2.2 (3) Are capacity assessments routinely used by INGO/UN on Syrian NGOs

3.2.3 (4) Is organizational development coordinated and results are cumulative for Syrian NGOs

3.2.4 (5) Is there successful organizational development results for greater Syrian NGOs autonomy

3.3 Quality standards

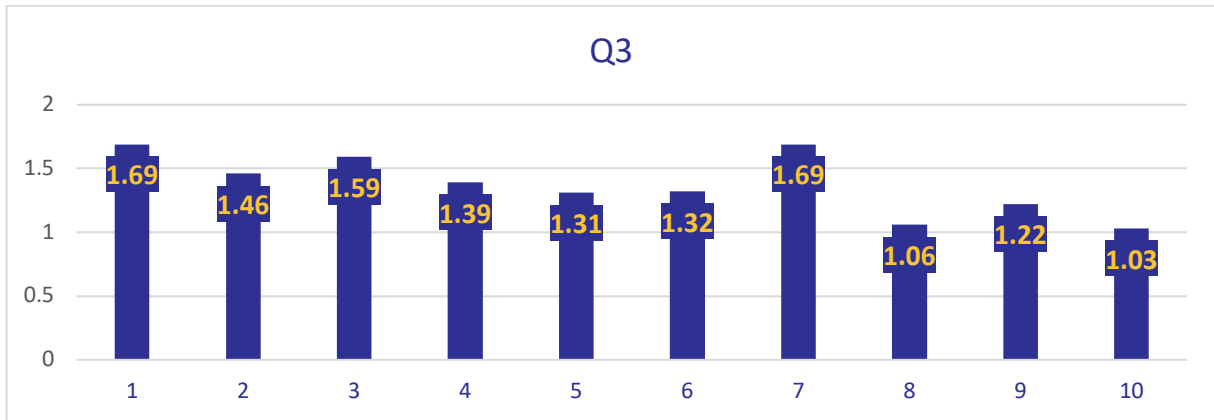3.3.1 (6) Are standards contextualized and available in Arabic

3.4 Recruitment and surge

3.4.1 (7) Do INGO/UN organizations have ethical recruitment guidelines and use them

3.4.2 (8) is the recruitment of local staff within INGO/UN taking into consideration the gaps of Syrian NGOs capacities

3.4.3 (9) INGO/UN support Syrian NGOs surge mechanisms

3.4.4 (10) INGO/UN use innovative approaches to support Syrian NGOs surge

Q3

4. Coordination and complementarity

4.1 Humanitarian leadership

4.1.1 (1) Support is provided to Syrian NGOs to participate in the existing humanitarian leadership and coordination fora

4.1.2 (2) Syrian NGOs are members of HLG

4.1.3 (3) Syrian NGOs are in co-lead positions in clusters and working groups

4.2 Humanitarian coordination

4.2.1 (4) HLG and clusters provide an enabling environment for Syrian NGOs

4.2.2 (5) Syrian NGOs are active members of clusters and are represented in Working Groups

4.3 Collaborative and complementary response

4.3.1 (6) Humanitarian response is delivered in a collaborative & complimentary way between INGO/UN and Syrian NGOs

4.3.2 (7) Response strategies outline the roles of Syrian NGOs in strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus

Q 4
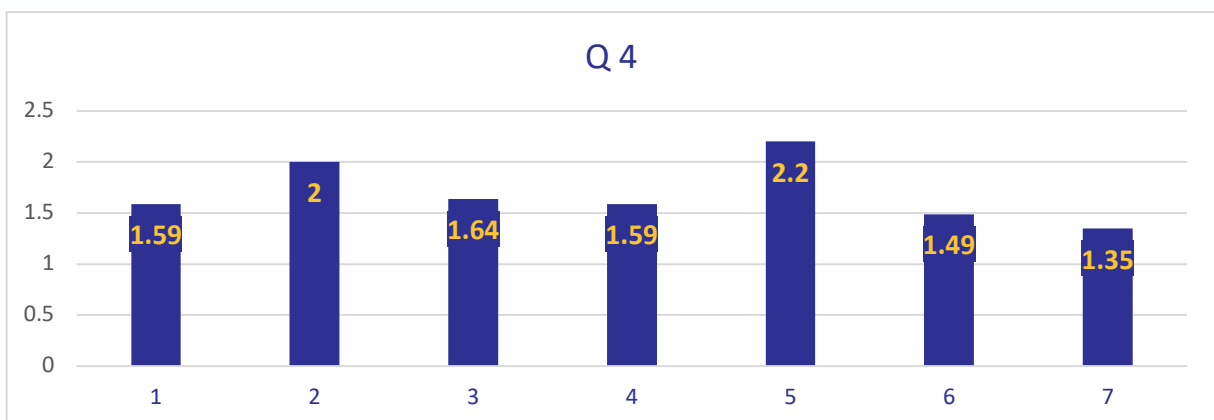
5. Policy, influence and visibility

5.1 Influence in policy, advocacy and standard-setting

5.1.1 (1) Syrian NGOs play a lead role in national humanitarian advocacy

5.1.2 (2) Syrian NGOs play a lead role in the contextualization of humanitarian standards

5.1.3 (3) Syrian NGOs influence donor priorities for Syria

5.2 Visibility in reporting and communications

5.2.1 (4) Syrian NGOs play a lead role in communicating national humanitarian issues

5.2.2 (5) Syrian NGOs are credited in reports for the work they undertake

5.2.3 (6) Syrian NGOs are promoted by their INGO/UN partners in communications materials
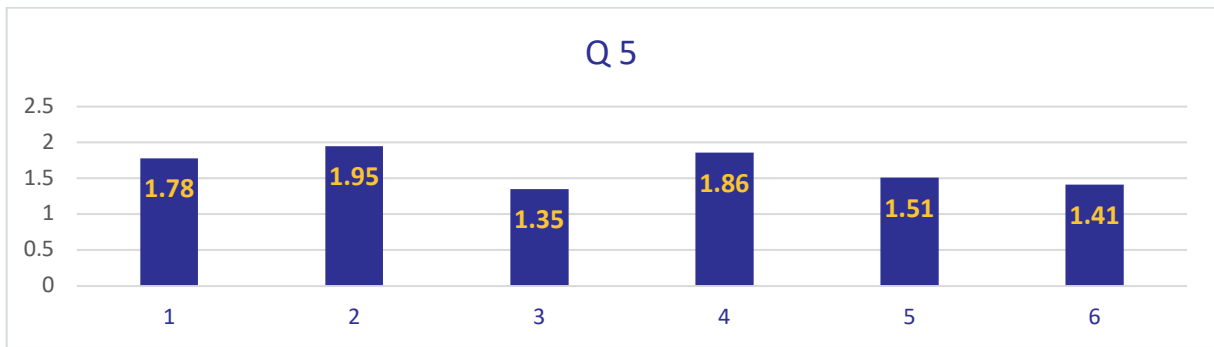
Q 5

1	2	3	4	5	6
1.78	1.95	1.35	1.86	1.51	1.41

6. Participation

6.1 Participation of communities in humanitarian response

6.1.1 (1) Affected people have a say in the assistance that they receive

6.1.2 (2) Affected people have information about programs and participate in them

6.1.3 (3) Affected people can provide feedback or make complaints

6.2 Engagement of communities in humanitarian policy development and standard-setting

6.2.1 (4) Humanitarian decision-making is informed by the views of affected people

6.2.2 (5) Humanitarian policies and standards are informed by affected people

Q 6

1	2	3	4	5
1.78	1.68	2.3	1.46	1.57
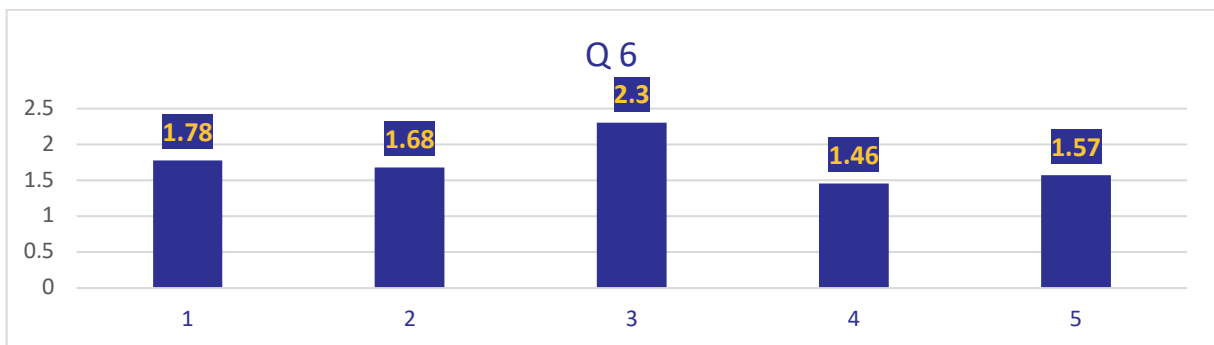
Annex 4: UN Agencies Survey

Four UN agencies Participated in the Survey, the participants were:

1. UNFPA.
2. IOM.
3. WFP.
4. UNICEF.

The full result of the survey is the following:

1. Partnerships

1.1 Quality in relationships

1.1.1 (1) Do INGOs have more power in partnership than their implementing partners?

1.1.2 (2) Are partnership agreements designed to match with the principles: Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented Approach, Responsibility and Complementarity

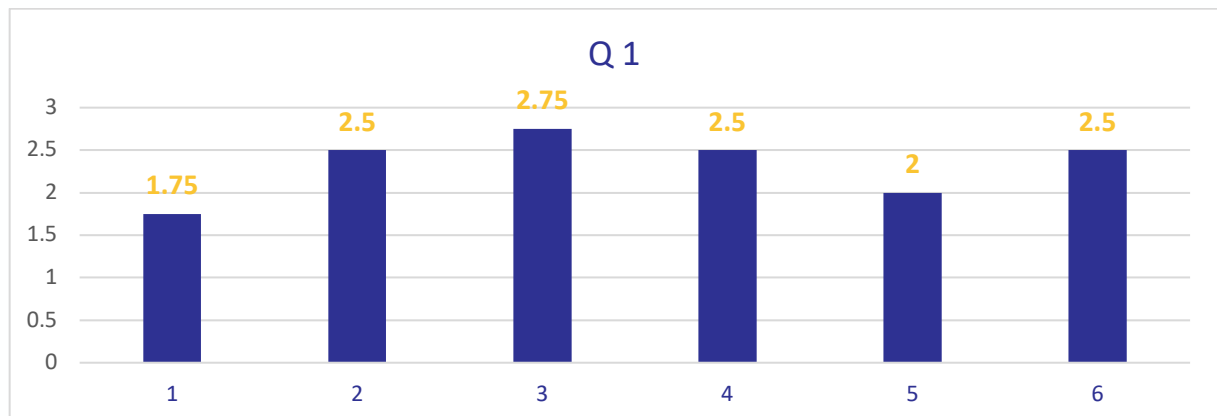1.1.3 (3) Is the partnership been monitored frequently: e.g., review meetings, surveys, TPM, etc.

1.1.4 (4) Is there improvement on the concerns about the partnership found through the monitoring tools

1.2 Shift from project-based to strategic partnerships

1.2.1 (5) Has the partnership shifted from project focus to strategic objective focus with including organizational development

1.3 Engagement of partners throughout the project cycle

1.3.1 (6) Does the implementing NGO routinely asked to participate in all aspects of the project cycle: from the design till completion

Q 1

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	1.75	2.5	2.75	2.5	2	2.5

2. Funding

2.1 Quantity of funding

2.1.1 (1) Is there any increases in humanitarian funding to International NGOs

2.1.2 (2) Do INGOs/UN agencies share their partnership projects amount in comparison to their direct implementation ratio publicly

2.1.3 (3) Do INGOs increasing their partnership modality programs in comparison to their direct implementation

2.2 Quality of funding

2.2.1 (4) Do INGO/UN provide funding for Syrian NGOs for any new humanitarian response within 2-weeks from the approved agreement date

2.2.2 (5) Do INGO/UN provide funding for the operating costs of the Syrian NGOs including relevant institutional costs

2.2.3 (6) Are the overhead costs shared equally between Syrian NGOs and INGO/UN with no reporting requirements

2.2.4 (7) Are the provided funds adequate to meet quality standards for the project's implementation

2.2.5 (8) Are INGOs/UN transparent enough with the financial transactions and budgets with Syrian NGOs

2.2.6 (9) Do INGOs/UN agencies allow flexibility for Syrian NGOs to make reasonable adjustments during project implementation

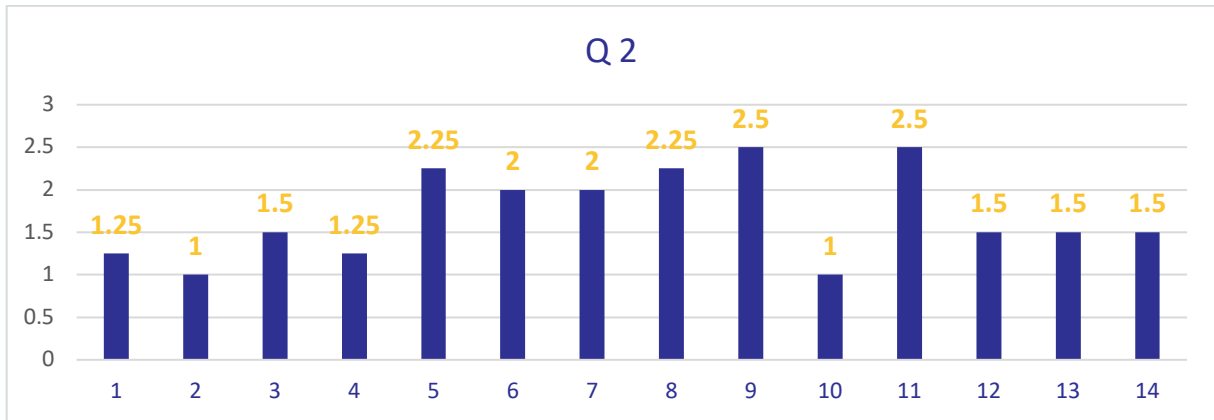2.2.7 (10) Do INGOs/UN agencies reflect their multi-year funding to their implementing partners

2.2.8 (11) Do INGO/UN actively seek to strengthen the financial sustainability of Syrian NGOs

2.4 Risk management

2.4.1 (12) Do Syrian NGOs have robust financial management systems and accounting procedures

2.4.2 (13) Do Syrian NGOs have effective systems in place to mitigate and manage risk

2.4.3 (14) How is the pace of change in organizational culture/reduction of donor barriers to fund Syrian NGOs directly

Q 2

3. Capacity

3.1 Performance management

3.1.1 (1) How is the effectiveness of Syrian NGOs performance management strategies

3.2 Organizational development

3.2.1 (2) Is organizational development a core objective of partnerships between Syrian NGOs and INGO/UN

3.2.2 (3) Are capacity assessments routinely used by INGO/UN on Syrian NGOs

3.2.3 (4) Is organizational development coordinated and results are cumulative for Syrian NGOs

3.2.4 (5) Is there successful organizational development results for greater Syrian NGOs autonomy

3.3 Quality standards

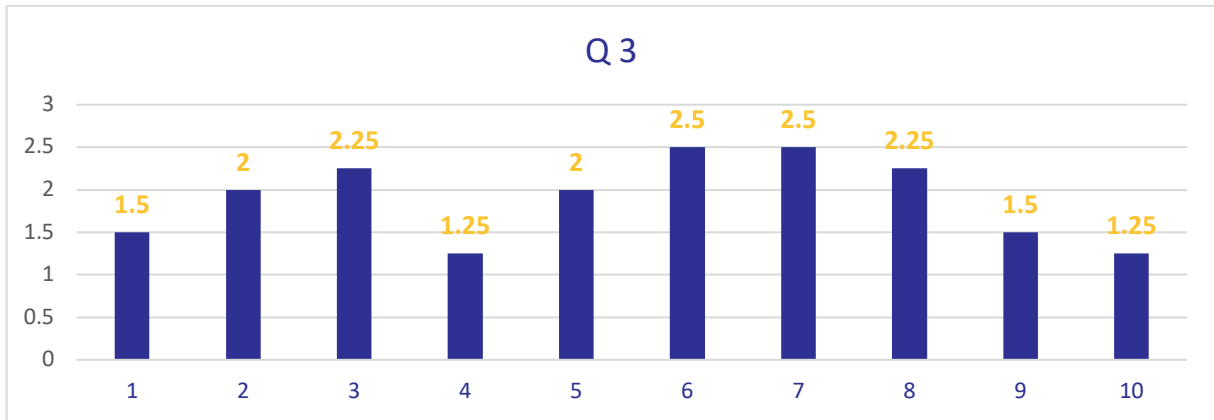3.3.1 (6) Are standards contextualized and available in Arabic

3.4 Recruitment and surge

3.4.1 (7) Do INGO/UN organizations have ethical recruitment guidelines and use them

3.4.2 (8) is the recruitment of local staff within INGO/UN taking into consideration the gaps of Syrian NGOs capacities

3.4.3 (9) INGO/UN support Syrian NGOs surge mechanisms

3.4.4 (10) INGO/UN use innovative approaches to support Syrian NGOs surge

4. Coordination and complementarity
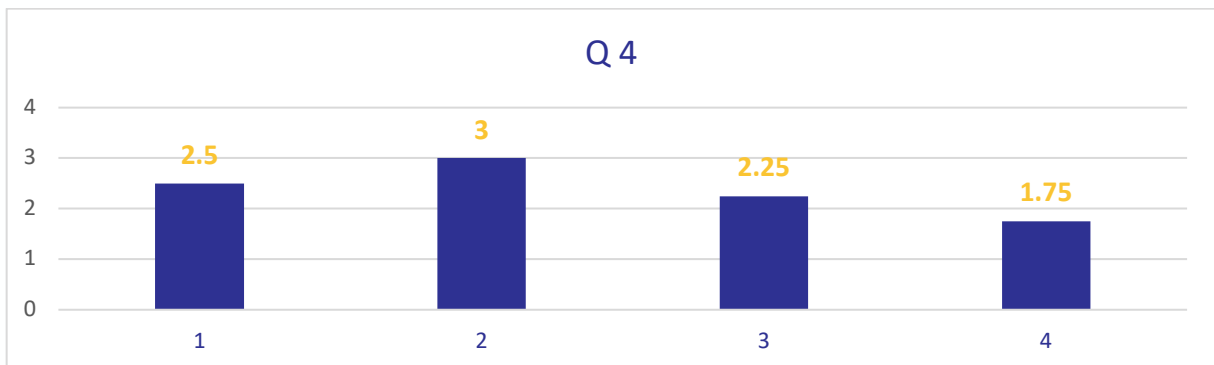
4.2 Humanitarian coordination

4.2.1 (1) INGOs/UN agencies provide encouragement and support for SNGOs to enable them to participate in cluster mechanism

4.2.2 (2) Syrian NGOs are active members of clusters and are represented in Working Groups

4.3 Collaborative and complementary response

4.3.1 (3) Humanitarian response is delivered in a collaborative & complimentary way between INGO/UN and Syrian NGOs

4.3.2 (4) Response strategies outline the roles of Syrian NGOs in strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus

5. Policy, influence and visibility

5.1 Influence in policy, advocacy and standard-setting

5.1.1 (1) INGOs/UN agencies support SNGOs to play leading role in national humanitarian advocacy

5.1.2 (2) INGOs/UN agencies support SNGOs to play leading role in the contextualization of humanitarian standards
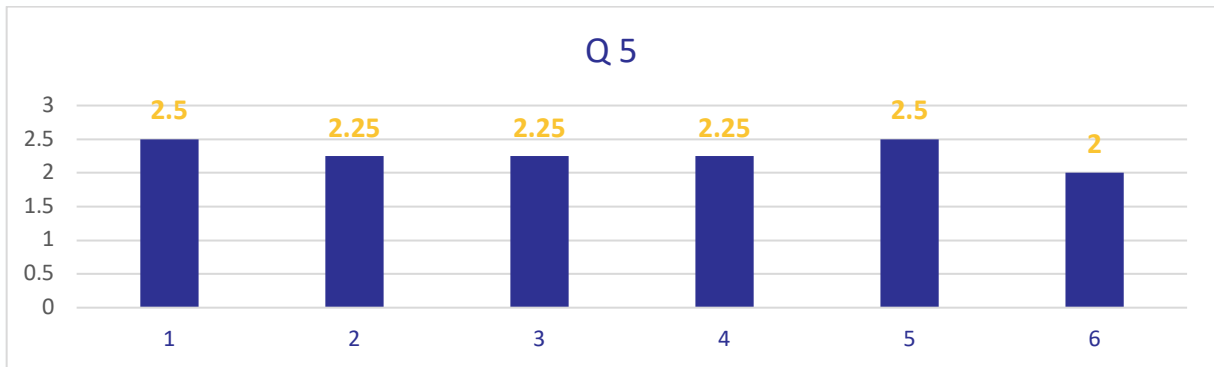
5.1.3 INGOs/UN agencies support SNGOs to influence donor priorities for Syria

5.2 Visibility in reporting and communications

5.2.1 (3) INGOs/UN agencies support SNGOs to play leading role in communicating national humanitarian issues

5.2.2 (4) INGOs/UN agencies accredited SNGOs in their reports for the work they undertake

5.2.3 (5) Syrian NGOs are promoted by their INGO/UN partners in communications materials

Q 5

Category	Value
1	2.5
2	2.25
3	2.25
4	2.25
5	2.5
6	2

6. Participation

6.1 Participation of communities in humanitarian response

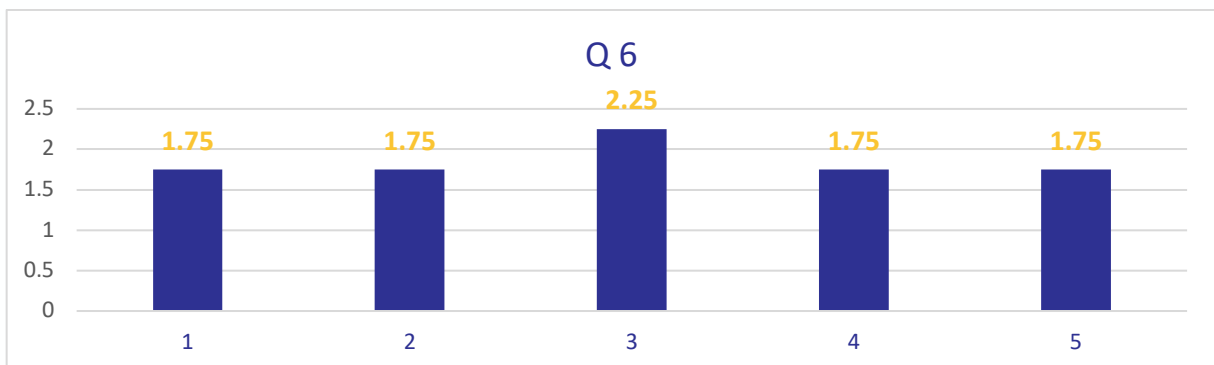6.1.1 (1) Affected people have a say in the assistance that they receive

6.1.2 (2) Affected people have information about programs and participate in them

6.1.3 (3) Affected people can provide feedback or make complaints

6.2 Engagement of communities in humanitarian policy development and standard-setting

6.2.1 (4) Humanitarian decision-making is informed by the views of affected people

6.2.2 (5) Humanitarian policies and standards are informed by affected people

Q 6

Category	Value
1	1.75
2	1.75
3	2.25
4	1.75
5	1.75

Annex 5: List of participants

Donors:

Following is the list of donors who participated in all, some or one of the FGDs and Workshops:

- UK-FCDO.
- ECHO.
- US-BHA.
- Ireland.
- Sweden.
- Germany.
- France.
- Switzerland.

INGOs:

Following is the list of INGOs who participated in all, some or one of the FGDs and Workshops:

1. CARE.
2. GOAL.
3. Save the Children International.
4. War Child.
5. Concern Worldwide.
6. World Vision International.
7. Relief International.
8. Mercy Corps.
9. International Rescue Committee.
10. Norwegian Refugee Council.
11. Halo Trust.
12. Welthungerhilfe.
13. Global Communities.
14. Humanity inclusion.
15. Medical Relief for Syria.
16. Médecins du Monde.

National NGOs:

Following is the list of National NGOs who participated in all, some or one of the FGDs and Workshops:

1. Syria Relief.
2. Hand in Hand for Aid and Development.
3. Alsham Foundation.
4. Shafak.
5. Syria Relief & Development.
6. Violet for Relief and Development.
7. Horan Foundation.
8. Bahar.
9. Bonyan Orgnaization.
10. Hope Revival.
11. Woman Support Association.
12. International Humanitarian Relief
13. Takaful Alsham Foundation.
14. Physicians Across Continents.
15. Syria Bright Future.
16. Syrian NGO League.

UN Agencies:

Following is the list of UN agencies who participated in all, some or one of the FGDs and Workshops:

1. UNFPA.
2. UNHCR.
3. OCHA/SCHF.

***