

Recruitment of a consultancy company to conduct a rapid skills gap analysis among Syrian enterprises in Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Homs and Hama

Terms of reference

February – April 2025

ILO Office for Arab States

► Background

The Syrian Arab Republic has endured a protracted and devastating conflict since 2011, resulting in widespread destruction and a profound humanitarian crisis. Over half the population faces food insecurity, and millions remain displaced. Approximately 1 million Syrians are internally displaced as of December 15, 2024. The humanitarian crisis has been accompanied by an economic collapse. Syrian pound has depreciated dramatically, leading to hyperinflation and eroding the purchasing power of Syrians. Economic growth has plummeted, with GDP shrinking by around 64% since the onset of the conflict. The conflict has also severely disrupted trade. Imports have plummeted by approximately 70%, while exports have decreased by as much as 84%. The manufacturing and industrial sector, traditionally an important job generator for the country, have continued to operate, albeit at a reduced scale. The sector has been severely affected by the destruction of facilities, infrastructure and the disrupted market linkages as a result of the international sanctions.

The fall of the Assad regime brings new opportunities and hope to rebuild the future of the country and its devastated economy. The ILO in collaboration with various UN agencies are continuing to respond and resuming humanitarian activities as security permits. In addition to humanitarian aid, coordinated support is crucial to ensure that Syrian returnees can reintegrate into their communities and contribute to local economic recovery. The return of a skilled labour force may present a unique opportunity for Syria to recover its human capital, which was severely impacted by the prolonged conflict. Besides and as expressed by employers and business membership organizations in Syria, the private sector has a growing demand for a skilled workforce to boost productivity and foster economic recovery, particularly in key sector such as garment, agrifood, construction and engineering among others.

The ILO in partnership with UNHCR has started a skills profiling of displaced people and returnees from neighbouring countries. The aim of this intervention is to facilitate access to decent job opportunities and helping returnees rebuild their lives in Syria, particularly through job training, skill-matching, and the promotion of decent work practices.

The Damascus Chamber of Industry (DCI) plays an essential role to ensure private sector development in Syria. DCI aims at supporting the growth of industrial sector and represent manufacturers in meetings with policy makers with the objective of creating a business environment conducive to private sector development and job creation. Together with its peer organizations in Aleppo, Homs and Hama, they are joining forces to support the recovery of the industrial sector. They have expressed an urgency to be provided with skilled workforce that can be integrated industries and contribute to the recovery of the sector. This assignment will look into federate efforts from this employers and business membership organizations and will also invite any other relevant business organization (Syria Business Council, International Chamber of Commerce) to participate and provide inputs to the main findings.

► Objectives of the assignment

The ILO seeks to recruit a company to support regional Chamber of Industry in Syria in conducting a skills gap analysis among their members to identify potential gaps which lead to employment opportunities. Special focus will be given to the garment sector in Aleppo and Damascus. The company will need to identify and collect skills gaps data following a questionnaire provided from at least 30 industries from Damascus, 30 from Aleppo and 30 from Homs/Dara. The regional chambers will participate in the selection of the companies and will guide the work of the consultancy company. They will also receive data and will participate in the information sessions and validating the results of the intervention.

This assignment will include the following key activities:

- 1) Conduct face to face or virtual meetings with regional chambers involved in collaboration with ILO and explain the intervention and support the identification of the 90 factories/companies participating in the assignment in collaboration with regional chambers (at least 10 of them from Damascus and Aleppo should be from the textile and garment sector)
- 2) Participate in the kick-off event organized in partnership with Aleppo and Damascus Chamber of Industry to explain this intervention
- 3) Finalize the questionnaire and research tools including any comment and suggestion from ILO, regional chambers or experts assigned to this intervention.
- 4) Produce an implementation plan with a clear schedule and duration of each activity and share it with the ILO for endorsement.
- 5) Identify, train, recruit and supervise data collectors involved in the demand skills gap assessment in all locations indicated above
- 6) Implement the data collection exercise in the 4 governorates and adopt quality control mechanism ensuring the accuracy of data collected.
- 7) Take stock and coordinate with the skills profiling (supply side) assessment conducted in partnership with UNHCR and incorporate any corrective or improvement change if needed in the implementation plan or tools provided.
- 8) Undertake any in-country missions if needed to provide support to the data collection process and to have a good understanding of the field work.
- 9) Consolidate and gather all raw data forms into one folder and submit it to the ILO.
- 10) Clean all the raw data forms and consolidate all clean ones in a folder and submit it to the ILO.
- 11) Develop a final assessment report listing all the findings of the assessment and providing recommendation for specific skills needs amongst companies and factories for potential employment opportunities split by industrial sectors.
- 12) Producing a skill gap assessment brief for the Chamber of Industries with the identification of most common profiles and occupations demanded per sector and potential recommendations enabling the filling of these vacancies.
- 13) Participate in a validation workshop on the assessment reports mentioned in person or virtually and incorporate any feedback to the final report.

► Deliverables

No.	Key Technical Deliverables	Date
1	Minutes of the meetings with regional chambers and validation of questionnaire and data collection methodology	By 25 th February 2025
2	Participation in the kickoff meeting in Aleppo and Damascus	By 28 th February 2025
3	A detailed implementation plan	By 2 nd March 2025
4	Selection list including CVs of data collectors, attendance sheets of training provided and implementation of the survey in the field- (initial raw data collection produced)	By 28 th March 2025
5	Final skills gap assessment report in English and Arabic	By 10 th April 2025
6	Workshop reports and participants lists for 2 validation workshops (Aleppo and Damascus)	By 10 th April 2025
7	A skill gap assessment brief summarizing main information per governorate in Arabic and English	By 20 th April 2025

The assignment and all their deliverables are expected to be completed withing 2 months from the contract signing date.

All data and information received from ILO for this assignment are to be treated confidentially and are only to be used in connection with the execution of these Terms of Reference (TOR). The contents of written materials obtained and used in this assignment may not be disclosed to any third parties without the express advance written authorization of the ILO. All intellectual property rights arising from the execution of these TOR are assigned to the International Labour Organization. The intellectual property rights of the materials modified through the assignment remains with the International Labour Organization. The Consultant shall deliver the following documents in English and Arabic:

► Company Qualifications

The company and the research team should possess the following qualifications:

- Proven experience in designing and implementing field research and data collection in Syria
- In-depth knowledge of the Syrian skills development and education system
- Capacity to mobilize and train data collector in different Syrian governorates
- Analytical proven experience, particularly in skills development subjects
- Experience in curriculum development and instructional design for technical training programs.
- Excellent communication and presentation skills.
- Excellent Arabic and English writing skills

► Timeframe and payment calendar

Deliverables	Payment	Estimated date of delivery
Deliverables 1, 2 and 3	25%	By 2 nd March 2025
Deliverable 4	60%	By 28 th March 2025
Deliverables 5, 6 and 7	15%	By 20 th April 2025

The cons consultant will require previous written authorization from ILO and UNDSS clearance. The travel costs and accommodations will be borne by ILO (subject to below explained UN thresholds) to a maximum number of 6 days during the contract and based on reimbursement upon the submission of the receipts and invoices of the expenses approved by ILO. The transportation to Syria is equal to 200 USD per a car with a driver from Lebanon to Damascus, and the per diem according to UN rate is equal to 236 USD, so the total is 1416 USD as per mission costs and 400 USD per transportation.

► Reporting

The Consultant will work under the guidance of the ILO Senior specialist, Employers' activities from the Regional ILO office for the Arab States and the General Manager of DCI and the supervision of the ILO team. He/she will work in close coordination with the Syria country coordinator and the Occupational Safety and Health Specialist based in Beirut.

► Selection Process

The ILO will shortlist qualified companies based in Syria. All proposals should include a detailed methodology description, team assigned to the intervention and a detailed financial budget breakdown, inclusive of any taxes and logistic- travel costs, including transportation and accommodation in the field if requested. Shortlisted companies may be invited for presentations or interviews. Interested companies should send its proposal to Mr. José Manuel Medina Checa, medinacheca@ilo.org by maximum **16th February 2025**.