



Summary of DFID's Regional Programme in the Middle East and North Africa 2012-2015

June 2013

Why we work regionally in the Middle East and North Africa

With a large and growing population of 385 million people, the Middle East and North Africa is a diverse region of 19 mostly middle and upper income countries, in which Gulf oil and gas states sit next to poorer countries like Yemen.

The Arab Spring marked a historic turning point for the region. While the context and impact was distinct in each country, the drivers were common. The Arab Spring was fuelled by calls for economic and social justice, alongside civil and political liberties.

Despite strong economic growth of almost 5% GDP a year over the last decade, this did not generate the number and quality of jobs needed to respond to a growing population, and many of the benefits were captured by a privileged few. This led to rising unemployment, particularly amongst women and young people, and a high dependence on the informal sector for jobs. Added to this, poor and middle class households have remained vulnerable to economic shocks such as rising food and commodity prices.

The Arab Spring hit economies of the region hard. Hopes of rapid job creation have been dashed while insecurity rises. The transition to open societies and open economies may take many years, but in the meantime, Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia need immediate confidence-building measures, including economic stabilisation and early political reform. Countries will need longer term policy changes to deliver growth and social justice. When the violence is over, Syria may need support to build legitimate and workable institutions, in a similar way to Libya.

DFID will work through the G8, the European Union, and international financial institutions, providing technical support to stimulate further investment and help them make an effective response to the Arab Spring, which secures long term economic, political and social change in the region.

What we will achieve

Over the next three years, UK support will help:

- Extend business services to 1,200 enterprises;
- Provide 50,000 people with microloans, of which 18,000 will be women;
- Create up to 39,000 new jobs;
- Provide up to 40,000 people with new skills; and
- Ensure the international financial institutions and the European Union provide an effective package of support for countries in transition.



UK aid has supported voter outreach and education in the recent elections in Egypt. This woman casts her vote in Al-Fayoum Governorate. Photo Credit: Maurice Chamamah / The Carter Center.

Who we will work with

The UK's work in the region will be centred on the joint DFID/Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Arab Partnership. We will work with international institutions to provide technical assistance, or directly with country partners. Our funds will support wealth creation, initially focusing on Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Jordan and Morocco, helping to ensure that growth is sustainable and benefits poor people.

We will work with the FCO/DFID/Ministry Of Defence Conflict Pool to support conflict prevention, stabilisation and peacekeeping activities.

We will also strengthen our partnership with the Gulf States and regional institutions, recognising their key role in providing development and humanitarian support across the world.



UK aid is supporting the Transitional Government in Libya. There will be a strong focus on young people such as these children carrying a 1km long flag in Benghazi, Libya. Photo credit: DFID

Currently the DFID Syria programme is focussed on a major humanitarian response and supporting cross-Whitehall non-humanitarian efforts for Syria and countries affected by the crisis. If the situation changes dramatically, further conflict reduction, stabilisation, and economic support may be needed.

How we will work

More than ever, in the current financial climate, we have a duty to show that we are achieving value for money in everything we do.

The Middle East and North Africa Regional Programme will deliver value for money, and improve practises on monitoring and evaluation and

transparency by:

- Working with our partners to ensure that value for money considerations are embedded and monitored rigorously during implementation of programmes;
- Improving the evaluation of our programmes and ensure we share lessons learned; and
- Publishing clear, concise information about our programmes on the DFID website.

More information

For a more detailed breakdown of the Middle East and North Africa's Operational Plan, please visit

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development>

There are separate Operational Plans for DFID's Palestinian programme and for DFID Yemen.

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