FCDO EVOLVE Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Programme

Final Evaluation Report

25 August 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SREO Consulting Ltd. (SREO) would like to express its gratitude to GOAL for the opportunity to undertake this evaluation in Northwest Syria of its FCDO EVOLVE Programme, and for their cooperation throughout this evaluation. SREO takes full responsibility for all omissions and errors.

Author: Nathalia Quintiliano
Reviewed by: Pierre-Yves Malgorn and Eoin O'Donnell

ABOUT SREO

SREO Consulting Ltd. (SREO) is an independent monitoring & evaluation and research consultancy committed to serving humanitarian, stabilisation and development actors operating in the most challenging environments worldwide by providing unbiased and actionable data, analysis and research. Our international team combines local insight with interdisciplinary expertise to deliver information from those in need to those who need it most.

Contact: comms@sreoconsultingltd.com

ABOUT GOAL

Founded in 1977 in Ireland, GOAL is an international humanitarian agency that currently works in 14 countries. GOAL works with the most vulnerable communities to help them respond to and recover from humanitarian crises and to assist them in building transcendent solutions to mitigate poverty and vulnerability. GOAL's purpose is to save lives and empower communities to develop resilience and greater control over their lives and livelihoods. GOAL aims to increase the resilient wellbeing of the world's poorest people and focuses on those who are excluded or marginalised, particularly those who are vulnerable due to socio-economic status, gender, or age.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
AoO	Area of Operation
BHA	Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance of the United States Agency for International Development
BoQ	Bills of Quantities (BoQs)
CCRM	Community Complaints and Response Mechanism
CFM	Community Feedback Mechanism
CFU	Colony Forming Units
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
FCRM	Feedback and Complaint Response Mechanism
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FRC	Free Residual Chlorine
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
HTH	High Test Hypochlorite
HTS	Hayat Tahrir al-Sham
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ISF	Infrastructure Stabilisation Fund
KII	Key Informant Interview
l/p/d	Litres of water per day, per person
MCPA	Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSNA	Multi Sectoral Need Assessment
NCDs	Non-Communicable Diseases
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTU	Nephelometric Turbidity Units
OFDA	Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance

PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PWD	People with disabilities
SSI	Semi-structured Interview
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SYP	Syrian Pound
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
TVA	Technical and Vulnerability Assessment
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNOCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WoS	Whole of Syria
WHO	World Health Organisation
WSWG	WASH Sector Working Group

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GOAL contracted SREO Consulting Ltd in April 2021 to evaluate the EVOLVE Programme. Funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the project supported four existing Water Units and 50 water networks across Idleb, providing management and operations assistance (minor repairs, consumables, staffing and water quality tests). EVOLVE has also implemented the Infrastructure Stabilisation Fund (ISF) to prevent further deterioration and rehabilitate the water infrastructure, expanding the water network connections to reach more beneficiaries. In addition, the project provided emergency assistance in the form of hygiene kits to internally displaced people and hygiene awareness sessions to the general community.

This evaluation assessed GOAL's performance and delivery against its stated objectives at the impact, outcome, and output level, the degree to which the theory of change was effective, and the project's overall impact on the target population. Also, this study documented lessons learned and best practices to inform future GOAL programming. More specifically, the study assessed:

- Whether communities could access safe drinking water, meeting the minimum standards of 25 litres per day due to the programme activities (recently increased to 35 litres per day, per person (l/p/d), due to COVID-19 standards)
- If newly displaced people receiving hygiene kits were able to meet their hygiene needs
- If the beneficiaries who attended hygiene promotion sessions found them valuable and relevant, and
- If the project provided value for money across different activities, including, but not limited to, Water Unit support and water trucking activities.

SREO used a participatory, mixed-methods approach for this evaluation, using primary and secondary sources and qualitative and quantitative data. Data collection focussed upon six key locations – Armanaz, Kafr Takharim, Salqin, Kniseh (Mhambal), Qourqeena and Idleb. SREO conducted 390 beneficiary surveys, 20 Key Informant Interviews (KII) with project implementers and stakeholders, 45 Semi-structured Interviews (SSI) with project beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, and a range of on-site observational checklists.

Findings

SREO framed the evaluation around the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the project in terms of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability. Key findings include:

- According to the information provided by survey respondents, beneficiaries could access, on average, 46 l/p/d from the water networks. However, when the data was disaggregated by location, it was possible to observe that frequency and quantity of water were not consistently delivered across, and neither within, its area of operation. Areas like Kafr Takharim, Armanaz and Salqin, all supplied by Salqin Water Unit, are receiving intermediate (> 30 l/p/d), basic (> 15 l/p/d and < 30 l/p/d) and substandard (< 15 l/p/d) water quantities through the network services, showing that even though almost all beneficiaries have access to safe water, adequacy and uniformity is still lacking in some locations. The report highlights that one possible explanation for this discrepancy is the fact that one area can be supported by different water stations, and some water stations lack the capacity to pump enough water to the catchment

population, even when working at maximum capacity. 9% of total beneficiaries interviewed by SREO are still getting less than 15 l/p/d from the water networks (having to complement with water trucking or other sources of water), and 3% of total beneficiaries still exclusively rely on GOAL-supported water trucking to cover their water needs.

- 22% of the surveyed IDPs beneficiaries reported receiving hygiene kits from GOAL (18% of total beneficiaries). All but four participants said the kits met their basic needs for one month. When asked for more details, the beneficiaries explained that the items in the kit, specifically the laundry powder, were not enough to cover their family needs for a whole month (4, 7, 8 and 9 family members). It is noteworthy that hygiene kits were made to cover households of up to 6 members. 61% of the hygiene kits beneficiaries selected the laundry powder as the most useful item in the kit, followed by the soap bar (13%), the dishwasher liquid (11%) and the adult shampoo (9%). 67% selected the toothbrushes for kids as the least useful item, followed by the towel for the bathroom (7%), toothbrushes for adults (7%) and toothpaste (7%). On a scale from 1 to 5, being 1 very unsatisfied and 5 very satisfied, 40% of beneficiaries rated the composition of the hygiene kits 5, 25% rated it 4, while 35% ranked it 3 (see Fig. 4).

- 18% of the interviewed beneficiaries reported participating in Hygiene Promotion sessions, and all found the information received during the sessions relevant and valuable.

- SREO explored the project's Value for Money approach in terms of Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Equity, and concluded the EVOLVE Programme approach makes savings without compromising the effectiveness and sustainability of the project, maximising its outcomes and impact per input. The programme's outputs have contributed significant value for beneficiaries in terms of saved income and improved health. The resources allocated to the project corresponded to its needs and were utilised in a cost-effective manner.

- GOAL beneficiaries gave very positive appraisals of the services provided by GOAL, and all participants informed that none of their household members had been diagnosed with leishmaniosis, polio or cholera in the past two weeks. Likewise, all beneficiaries affirmed that none of their children suffered from diarrhoea within the past two weeks.

- Beneficiaries of the EVOLVE Programme demonstrated high levels of satisfaction with the services received. 90% of the water network beneficiaries were either very satisfied or satisfied with the water availability. 9% were neutral, and 1% was either unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. When asked why they were unsatisfied, beneficiaries reported that they needed more pumping days. 95% of the water trucking beneficiaries were either satisfied or very satisfied with the water availability, while 5% were neutral. No beneficiaries reported paying for the water network services. All beneficiaries of the water networks were either satisfied or very satisfied with the water quality, compared to 97% of the water trucking users. The remaining 3% were neutral. When invited to give suggestions and recommendations to the Programme, almost all beneficiaries suggested increasing pumping hours and pressure to raise water quantities.

- EVOLVE expected to make change through three pathways: Improved Utility Operations, Improved Governance and Accountability, and Emergency Response. Data suggests that all assumptions were plausible in most of its rationale. However, in the Improved Governance and Accountability pathway there was one assumption not supported by the data, which is that building the capacity of the local staff to make sure they have the needed skills to operate the

water stations and ensuring the Water Unit complaints and response mechanisms are in place, and the target populations know how to use them will contribute to (a) improve the technical skills of the local staff and (b) the local community and the Water Unit will use the available complaints and response mechanisms. Even though assumption (a) is supported by the collected data, beneficiaries' survey showed that among 390 beneficiaries who knew at least one form of providing feedback, only two reportedly submitted a complaint, and 40% did not know which Water Unit was responsible for the water supply.

Relevance

EVOLVE Programme was in line with, and complementary to, the context and the strategies for development and humanitarian programmes in Syria and have remained relevant through responsive and flexible programming. Accordingly, its outcomes and outputs are aligned with its intended results, corresponding directly to the needs of the targeted beneficiaries. Overall, GOAL has ensured stable, clean water provision to people in need, strengthened the water network to enable future water provision and trained water unit staff to maintain and deliver water to communities across Idlib. The programme is well regarded by the WASH cluster and other donors in Northwest Syria and is seen as an essential part of the overall WASH response in the region.

Effectiveness

GOAL has effectively provided year-round access to safe drinking water to approximately 765,807 beneficiaries per year, including up to 822,461 between April 2020 and March 2021. GOAL responded well to the WASH needs in its areas of operation, contributing to achieving most of the project's outcomes and outputs. One of the main challenges faced by the project was the high influx of IDPs combined with the COVID-19 outbreak. The IDPs influx increased the catchment population by 20%, while COVID-19 increased household's water needs from 20 - 25 l/p/d to 35 l/p/d. Nonetheless, EVOLVE was able to achieve an average of 54 l/p/d, thus demonstrating how the project was able to shift approaches to respond to changing needs as they emerged. However, unmet needs remain, particularly in remote areas with no connection to a water network and elevated locations where the water pressure is weak. GOAL continuous efforts are still needed to address water pumping and pressure issues as well as secure access to safe water within the local communities. Overall, the intervention has strengthened resilience and improved access to safe water to beneficiaries. The supported activities were implemented effectively, thereby contributing to the project's expected results. The project indicators were able to measure achievements of the programme's intended outputs and outcomes.

Efficiency

GOAL's Water Units approach contributes to efficiency. When compared to other methods of water distribution, improving the operational capacity of existing water infrastructure is the most cost-efficient alternative to maximise the value of existing assets, benefiting from its capacity to deliver water in greater volumes while reaching a larger number of beneficiaries in a more reliable basis. Water Units approach also benefits from purchasing economies of scale. Procuring larger quantities of inputs (in bulk) provided significant cost advantages, decreasing consumables' unit costs without compromising quality and maximising project's efficiency. Moreover, regular repairs, maintenance and rehabilitation prevents physical loss caused by leakages and assets depreciation, resulting in more water reaching more beneficiaries for the same costs. EVOLVE programming provides a solid base for assets utilisation and resources sharing where considerable cost savings can be achieved: spare parts, equipment, water

tests and human resources equipment can be shared across water stations. Likewise, Human Resources, especially technical staff, can be allocated to different water stations according to the project's needs. GOAL has consistently demonstrated sound awareness of risks in the operating environment and has managed these risks, particularly aid interference, in a proactive and transparent way.

Impact

In general, improvements in water accessibility and quality, in association with hygiene behaviour change, have significant effects on public health by reducing or irradicating various illnesses, such as diarrhoea, bacterial and parasitic infections, among others. GOAL beneficiaries gave very positive evaluations of the services provided by GOAL. Beneficiaries informed that none of their household members had been diagnosed with polio or cholera in the past two weeks. Likewise, none of their children has suffered from diarrhoea or leishmaniosis in the past two weeks. Furthermore, the project reduces harmful coping mechanisms by facilitating access to water trucking to households who lack network connection and educating the local community about the risks of resorting to unsafe water and poor hygiene practices. Another observed impact highlighted by most of the KIs is the increase of beneficiaries' purchase capacity, as the money not spent on water is usually reallocated to other immediate needs.

Sustainability

Adopting a rehabilitation approach for water infrastructure through the pre-existing Water Units is an inherently sustainable approach, especially being complemented with capacity building, aiming to enable communities to access safe and adequate water on demand. However, Water Units rely on financial factors such as the availability of funds to conduct regular maintenance, repairs and eventual replacement of the infrastructure. It also depends on the quality of the infrastructure and the availability of spare parts and inputs for reliable services, which is currently a challenge in Syria. Current fuel shortages and the low quality of the fuel available nationally would impact the Water Units capacity to provide the needed inputs to function independently in an efficient manner. Also, it is understood that to provide this service independently the Water Unit would need to collect fees and monetise the water distribution. A cost-recovery component is crucial for a sustainable response. However, the local context remains unstable with the presence of HTS. Building stronger linkages with a group accused of Human Rights violations, aid diversion, aid interference for political gains, etc, especially linkages related to collecting money from the local community, can be viewed as a breach of humanitarian principles of neutrality. Looking ahead, GOAL should be considering future rounds of funding and the continuation of the Programme, and beyond that, to work on appropriate and gradual exit strategies in the future considering the context on the ground.

Recommendations

The below list is a summary of Section 5 of this report and concentrates on recommendations that can be put in action by GOAL and other stakeholders involved in implementing WASH programming in Northwest Syria. More recommendations have been suggested on Section 5 directed to donors, prospective donors and other relevant stakeholders. Recommendations were suggested according to different possible scenarios for the present and near-future developments of the Syrian conflict.

Improving GOAL feedback mechanisms

a. ***Assumption:*** *GOAL successfully secures funding to continue the EVOLVE Programme and future WASH Programming*

Target: Primarily GOAL, but other implementing organisations could also find useful.

Recommendation: Find ways to promote feedback mechanisms where all individuals have an adequate and equal opportunity to voice their concerns and to express their preferences. As overall the preferred channel of communication appears to be in-person, consider conducting an information and communication assessment with vulnerable people (women, older people, persons with disabilities, people living in remote areas, etc.) as they might prefer different channels. If following the assessment data suggests they also prefer to give feedback in person, consider finding ways to actively seek for their feedback through outreach activities.

Recommendation: Ensure resources and appropriate channels to create a safe and confidential space for reporting. Consider reinforcing and promoting private areas and/or channels for feedback and complaints and reiterate the confidentiality of the information being shared. As the CFM handles routine and serious complaints, it is important that those who want to report misconduct, fraud, or other sensitive subjects are aware of all channels where their privacy is respected, reinforcing that they are protected from retaliation.

Improving EVOLVE general project effectiveness and future WASH programming

Target: Primarily GOAL, but other implementing organisations could also find useful.

Recommendation: Consider adopting a WASH commodity voucher distribution modality which would offer the possibility for beneficiaries to exchange their voucher against a range of hardware items (e.g. water filters, tanks, pumps, pipework, plumbing fixtures and fittings, etc.) to improve household WASH infrastructure, water quality and hygiene practices. Such an activity would include identifying and interviewing local suppliers of WASH items through a Rapid Market Assessment (RMA), checking stock availability, assessing how effectively the local supply chain for the WASH commodity voucher modality might function, and from there, entering into negotiations and agreements with selected suppliers. The WASH commodity voucher distribution should be intended as a transitional measure – neither an early-stage emergency response, nor a long-term development intervention. The approach should be market-based, serving to stimulate demand for WASH goods and support the market to meet that demand. GOAL needs to make sure that a general demand for WASH services exist and that the supply-side of the WASH market is capable of providing the goods required, with some support. Improving WASH markets and availability requires a longer-term approach to strengthening or developing the market system as a whole. This might include, for instance, advocacy and outreach to identify development actors willing to engage in longer-term WASH-market development actions, supporting markets in providing a wider diversity of products, strengthening the capacity of suppliers, developing appropriate public-private partnerships, supporting trade associations, and stimulating demand with further awareness and promotional campaigns. GOAL could also support/consolidate the network of service providers (hardware shops) in order to influence them in setting lower prices. This could take the shape of longer-term framework agreements to make the approach more sustainable.

Recommendation: Consider formalising WASH committees unrelated to the local authorities in the AoO and provide them with WASH capacity-building so they can arrange with the Local Council or among themselves for small repairs and maintenance at the community / building / household level. WASH Committees could fill the gap between the local communities and the Local Councils and engage the community towards a greater sense of ownership of its WASH facilities, identifying areas of improvement and voicing alternative solutions considering the specific needs of

neighbourhoods/buildings/households in a formal manner (i.e., need for booster pumps, water tanks, etc.)

Recommendation: In the interest of transparency and programme effectiveness, information from monitoring should be regularly shared with affected communities. Monitoring carried out by GOAL themselves or TPM contractors could further enhance transparency and quality and encourage their ownership of the information. The sharing of accurate, timely and accessible information strengthens trust, increases understanding, deepens levels of participation and improves the impact of a project. It can help to reduce the number of formal complaints received and is a key to being transparent. GOAL should define and document its processes for sharing information, for example: its commitment to accurate and timely information sharing; what information it will share with the people it seeks to assist and other stakeholders; how decisions will be made about when and how to share information; and the criteria used in deciding not to share information. GOAL policies and strategies should outline how staff members are being developed to facilitate community engagement and decision-making, listen to affected people and manage negative feedback. Feedback from crisis-affected communities should also inform strategy and programme development.

Recommendation: Make training available around disability awareness and inclusion to staff involved in project implementation and project monitoring. GOAL should systematically disaggregate data collected to identify gaps in accessibility for persons with disabilities. GOAL could develop specific indicators to measure progress in reaching and including persons with disabilities.

Recommendation: In order to manage water demand more effectively, community awareness campaigns focused on water conservation and domestic water management should be carried out to create an environment of social sanctioning of illegal connections and discourage wastage. These activities would be organised through awareness sessions, posters/leaflets, door-by-door campaigns, Facebook page and distribution of newsletters with project related messages to all citizens. GOAL would combat illegal water usage, tackle water pollution and regulate water consumption and wastage. Some respondents were vocal about the issue of water wastage, especially by shops and homes that had better access to water (i.e. those located in lower areas of the community).

Recommendation: Introduce booster pumps when needed to improve water pressure for households located in high areas. A key concern across the beneficiary survey was that those who live in homes that are higher struggle to have the same access to water as those who are lower, hence the need for GOAL to increase its efforts to ensure that water is equitably pumped to these locations as it is to other homes.

Recommendation: Natural resources should be properly managed to support sustainable WASH service delivery. GOAL together with the Water Units should identify and assess ecosystem-related risks to drinking water quality (e.g., Water Safety Planning, etc.) and assess vulnerability to climate-related impacts (including droughts) been assessed for the domestic water supply service. A proper mapping of the identified risks should be done to address management of source watersheds and/or aquifers. The water demand should be controlled so that the sustainable yield of local water resources (e.g. groundwater, surface water, springs) is not compromised (i.e. extraction is less than recharge). The competing water demands (e.g. domestic verses productive) should be considered and related planning should take place to address potential areas of conflict. Climate-related adaptation measures could be incorporated in the development of water supply services (including design, sizing, and siting of built infrastructure, management of water resources and the environment, etc.).

Recommendations: Water systems supported by GOAL should systematically comply with standards and norms in terms of infrastructure, siting, and public health risk (e.g. boreholes adequate distance from contamination sources, spring boxes and system intakes adequately protected, source is not at risk of flooding). The conduction line and the distribution network should for instance be designed and constructed in line with local standards and norms to prevent ingress of contaminants (e.g. positive pressure, minimal leaks, covered diversion boxes, break pressure tanks, check values, no informal connections, etc.) The roles and responsibilities with regard to the relevant monitoring and enforcement should be clarified with the Water Units and relevant operators.

Lessons Learned

WASH project implementers should maintain its Water Unit approach in future WASH programming. Investing in existing infrastructure is a priority in the sector and very cost-efficient. When complemented with capacity building and cost-recovery activities, the Water Unit approach contributes greatly to sustainability.

Cost-recovery activities in Greater Idleb are a delicate topic that must be discussed considering the situation on the ground. HTS has been accused of Human Rights violations, aid diversion, aid interference for political gains, etc., and the decision of halting the cost-recovery component of the EVOLVE Programme seemed sensible. In the meantime, organisations could offer intense cost-recovery capacity building sessions and WASH-cost training to the Water Units managerial staff. That would be a way to prepare the Water Units for a future cost-recovery components while still contributing to sustainability.

Currently, all four Water Units supported by GOAL are completely dependent on fuel and chlorine imports to remain functioning. Considering the short-term of the Security Council Resolution 2285 (2021), and the constant fighting between the security actors in Syria, organisations should investigate alternatives in terms of route and supplier to prevent water shortages due to disruption in the project's supply chain. Investigating alternatives to fuel imports would be ideal, but its feasibility depends on the situation on the ground.

Water adequacy is still a challenge in some locations. Although the data suggested a few explanations for these discrepancies, WASH implementers could further investigate the exact causes – in the data, it was mostly related to Salqin Water Unit – and verify the possibility to address it.

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

This report records the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for the Final Evaluation of the GOAL FCDO EVOLVE Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Programme. Funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the programme supported four existing Water Units and 50 water networks across Idleb, providing management and operations assistance (minor repairs, consumables, staffing and water quality tests). EVOLVE has also implemented the Infrastructure Stabilisation Fund (ISF) to prevent further deterioration and rehabilitate the water infrastructure, expanding the water network connections to reach more beneficiaries. In addition, the project provided emergency assistance in the form of hygiene kits to internally displaced people and hygiene awareness sessions to the general community. This first section provides the background and context of the programme, and a description of the Theory of Change.

1.1. Context of the intervention

Conflict background and main actors

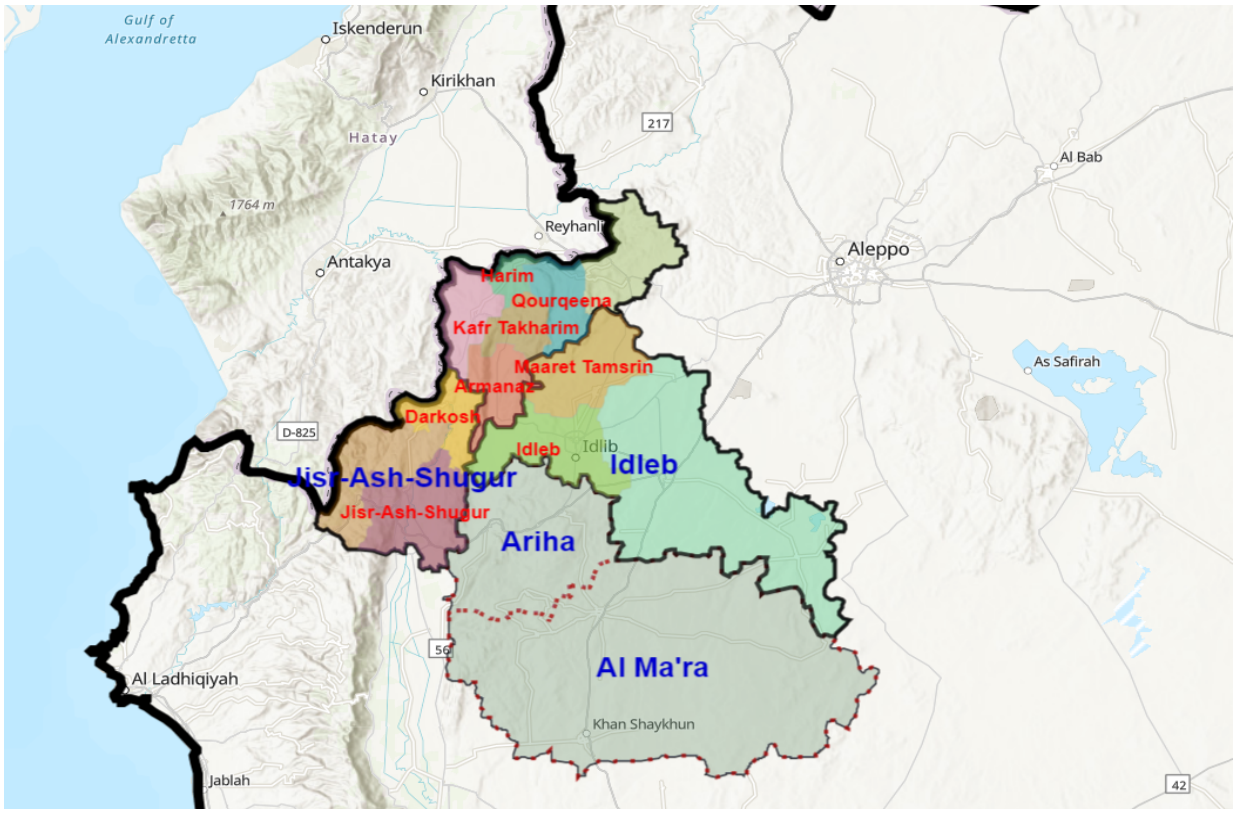


***Figure 1**: Map of GOAL EVOLVE Area of Operation, Idleb governorate [taken from GOAL Inception briefing presentation]*

Situated at Syria's northwest, Idleb holds strategic importance to all parties involved in the hostilities. With the advances of the regime in the opposition-held areas in southern Syria and Homs City, tens of thousands of activists and fighters who refused the terms of surrender of the so-called reconciliation

agreements[1] relocated to Idleb, making the governorate the last redoubt of the rebellion against Assad. Idleb also hosts a cross-border operation point from Turkey through the Bab Al-Hawa gate, currently the only border crossing point in Syria open to humanitarian aid as per Security Council Resolution 2585 (2021)[2]. In addition, two important highways - the M5 that crosses the country north to south and the M4 that crosses the country east to west – go through the governorate. For the regime, recapturing Idleb is a key military objective as it would represent a significant milestone in its campaign to re-establish links between Damascus, Aleppo and Latakia, regaining control over all of Syria's territory.

Idleb is also a strategic location to Turkey, a regional patron with multiple aims in the country. Since 2016, Turkey has created four zones of control/influence and conducted four direct military interventions in northern Syria[3]. Particularly in Idleb, Turkey's most immediate objective is to keep a new refugee crisis away from its domestic environment[4]. In the beginning of 2018, when the EVOLVE Programme started, Idleb was one of the four "de-escalation zones"[5] created following the first round of trilateral meetings between Turkey, Russia, and Iran, known as the Astana talks. These zones were supposed to improve the humanitarian situation for the civilian population and encourage peace talks. However, the parties broke the agreement and large-scale offensives restarted by mid-2018. In September 2018, a new agreement between Russia and Turkey determined demilitarised zones in parts of Idleb. The agreement involved the establishment of Turkish observation posts to monitor the ceasefire, disarming the rebels and granting free movement on the M4 and M5 highways. However, the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), Idleb's most prominent armed group and former al-Qaeda affiliate, rejected the Sochi agreement and broke the ceasefire by attacking the Turkish-supported groups and taking control of most of Idleb.

During 2019, the HTS consolidated its position as the most dominant local actor in Idleb. On top of military control, it has also developed an administrative and service provision body responsible for civilian functions called the Salvation Government[6]. Through this structure, the armed group maintains its administrative authority over the area. Despite its attempts to distance itself from al-Qaeda, the HTS is perceived as a terrorist organisation by the United States, European Union, United Nations and Turkey,[7] and has been accused of several human rights violations, seizing property and houses, and of diverting aid to support patronage networks. From late 2019 to March 2020, violence escalated following military offensives conducted by the regime and its allies[8]. The attacks pushed back rebel positions and created one of the worst humanitarian crises since the beginning of the conflict, displacing roughly one million people, of which 80% were women and children. A new ceasefire agreement between Turkey and Russia has quelled most of the violence, establishing a security corridor stretching 6 km to the north and 6 km to the south of the M4 highway, where Russian and Turkish patrols were carried out[9]. Nonetheless, armed confrontations and IED attacks continue. Since August 2020, Turkey patrols the corridor without Russia. As of March 2021, HTS and other anti-regime groups control the

[1] Carter Center (The), Special Report. Internal Conflict in Northwest Syria, | Sep 2018 – Aug 2019
[2] https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2FRES%2F2585(2021)&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop
[3] US CRS, Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and U.S. Response, 25 March 2019
[4] M. Murat Erdoğan, "Syrians Barometer 2017: A Framework for Achieving Social Cohesion With Syrians in Turkey", 2017
[5] RI, Losing Their Last Refuge; Inside Idlib's humanitarian nightmare, September 2019

6 Lund, A., From Cold War to Civil War:75 Years of Russian-Syrian Relations, Swedish Institute of Internationals Affairs, July 2019
7 UN Security Council, The List established and maintained pursuant to Security Council res. 1267/1989/2253, generated on: 19 April 2021
8 uS CRS, Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and U.S. Response, 12 February 2020
9 Al Monitor, Turkish forces withdraw from largest base in northeast Syria, 20 October 2020

northwestern part of Idlib governorate, while the regime controls the southern parts of the governorate, including the vital M5 highway.

WASH context and linkages with other relevant interventions

Despite being under pressure due to population growth and urbanisation, Syria had a functioning water network structure to attend to its population before the war. According to the indicators used to track the Millennium Development Goals, Syria provided more than 90%[10] of its population with access to drinking water. However, a decade of war has led to the deterioration of the water network infrastructure, mainly due to the lack of power supply, unavailability of spare parts and lack of financial and human resources needed to maintain and repair old generators, pumps and pipes. An assessment conducted in 2020 estimated that 2.3 million people in Idleb governorate need WASH services, and according to a WASH Cluster[11] household-level survey conducted in 2018, 78% of respondents stated they did not have access to sufficient water during the previous month. In addition, 67% of households still rely on unsafe water sources to meet their daily water needs, making it the governorate with the most significant proportion of households whose primary source of water comes from water trucking (62%)[12]. Specific WASH needs were mainly related to water quality (3.3 million people), water quantity (1.4 million people), heavy financial burden linked to purchasing water (7.5 million) or need for hygiene supplies (6.4 million people).

Access to sufficient and affordable safe water is a challenge for host communities and IDPs alike. Still, newly displaced populations require emergency WASH assistance, considering that informal settlements usually experience worse WASH conditions, often lacking hygiene items and receiving poor quality and/or insufficient water. The situation was aggravated in January 2021, when heavy rainfall and strong winds caused widespread floods in Idleb governorate, affecting 142,000 IDPs across 407 IDP sites in Northwest Syria.

The EVOLVE Programme was aligned with the Humanitarian Needs Plan 2020 and WASH Cluster 2020 strategies to "provide improved access to WASH services as a result of repair, rehabilitation and operational support to WASH systems", as well as with Grand Bargain's priority to "provide support to the leadership, delivery and capacity of local responders through the project's capacity building component". GOAL also demonstrates complementarity with its interventions on the ground through the support received from UNOCHA in supporting 15 water stations in Idleb, and through OFDA support in providing access to clean water in Idleb through the provision of fuel to water stations and contributions to the Infrastructure Stabilization Fund (ISF) to enable continuation of services. OFDA is supporting the same 4 Water Units (50 water stations) supported by FCDO in Idleb with approximately 11% of total budget. In addition, the programme is complemented by GOAL's larger Syria Response Programme addressing a multitude of life-saving basic needs through a multi-sectoral and integrated programming approach, encompassing food security, shelter, nutrition, and emergency support, with a variety of cash-based assistance and in-kind modalities.

10 Millennium Indicators, 1990 - 2015
11 Northwest Syria: Multisectoral Rapid Assessment, 2020
12 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2021

1.2. Project Overview

Key Details

Project Title	EVOLVE Programme
Grant (Y1 – Y4)	£12,261,048
Duration	Feb 2018 – March 2021
Primary Sectors	WASH
Donor	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)
Project Location	Idleb, Syria
Project Outcome 1	Community water systems are efficiently and effectively managed, and the community is informed of these services and has sustained access to safe drinking water and hygienic conditions, and displaced persons can meet their basic needs. ● Number of individuals provided with clean drinking water meeting a minimum standard ● % Households that reported that the hygiene kits met their personal basic hygiene needs ● Percentage of beneficiaries who receive support reporting that relief commodities or cash transfers were appropriate to their basic needs.
Project Outcome 2	Humanitarian NGOs present in Northwest Syria are enabled to deliver more effective humanitarian responses. ● Percentage of active NGO Forum members and donors who agree that the NGO forum delivers on its mandate through the Advocacy Working Group (AWG) and Partnership Working Group (PWG).

EVOLVE's approach was organised around supporting pre-conflict Water Units and infrastructure available in Idleb, as well as their staff members. Each Water Unit is a body that oversees and manages the administrative and technical aspects of multiple clustered or independent water stations, ensuring even distribution of water across villages and technical standardisation. The water station is where the water is physically pumped and distributed to the villages through the connected pipelines (water networks). These technical and administrative structures were deteriorating due to a lack of investment before and during the war. After conducting financial analysis to understand the most efficient approach, GOAL concluded that even with the costs of staffing, technical oversight and water testing, the Water Unit approach would be more effective and efficient than supporting water trucking and water stations directly.

Since 2018, the project faced revisions regarding its outcomes and outputs. The original proposal submitted in 2017 contained components including a) provision of fuel via e-voucher; b) a matching fuel fund programme; and c) resourcing of cost recovery. The fuel e-voucher intervention was excluded from the Programme as GOAL moved from procuring fuel in Syria to Turkey in 2018. The matching fund was removed due to budgetary restrictions following discussions with FCDO. In addition, the cost-recovery component was removed in 2019 when Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) took control of most of Idleb, as FCDO felt that such activity could potentially result in undue influence from HTS over the intervention.

Therefore, these interventions and all activities and indicators related to them have been removed following FCDO agreement.

The project key activities for year 4 were:

a. Provide inputs (fuel, oil, water treatment materials, salaries, High Test Hypochlorite (HTH), and procure materials to conduct emergency repairs to enable the stations to pump water for 91 villages.

b. Initiate and maintain an Infrastructure Stability Fund that water stations can apply to upgrade or invest in their stations and water networks.

c. Organisational capacity building to ensure Water Units and stations have the technical skills necessary to manage the stations.

d. Enable displaced persons to meet their hygiene needs through the distribution of hygiene kits. Hygiene promotion activities will be conducted alongside the distribution of hygiene kits.

e. Ensure community complaints and response mechanisms led by the local Water Units are in place to promote responsiveness to community needs as an adjacent function to GOAL's Community Complaints and Response Mechanism (CCRM).

f. Contribute to strengthened humanitarian coordination and advocacy through ongoing support to the NGO Forum.

In the last year, the project focused on five of its eight outputs:[13]

- **Output 1:** Efficiency, viability and coverage of stations improved due to the provision of inputs at water stations and the implementation of repairs, upgrades, and network expansion.
- **Output 2:** Water Units provide transparent and accountable oversight and incorporate community feedback towards water supply management.
- **Output 3:** GOAL retains the capacity to respond to identified WASH or other emergency needs in its area of operation (AoO).
- **Output 4:** Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) activities conducted.
- **Output 8:** Humanitarian organisations have increased capacity for coordination, partnership, and advocacy.

EVOLVE's specific outcomes and outputs can be found in **Annex 5**.

The EVOLVE Programme supported four Water Units in Idleb by providing inputs and conducting regular maintenance and repairs to the water infrastructure. The project provided safe water to approximately 823,258[14] beneficiaries from April 2020 to March 2021. In the fourth year of the programme, support to Water Units happened through the following inputs (see table 2 for previous years):

[13] Outputs 5,6, and 7 were completed in previous years following the receipt of additional short-term funding from FCDO.

[14] From WASH Area of Operation – GOAL Project Document

- Regular provision of consumables (see table 1)
- 253 purchase requests for maintenance and repairs to Water Units and water stations through the Emergency Repairs Fund, totalling $ 247,160.81 under this fund during Y4 (see table 2).
- Wages for 265 staff members, totalling $76,315/month in staffing costs.
- Capacity-building sessions for technical and administrative staff.

Table 1: *Input consumption and cost for Y4*

Parameters Y4	Fuel	Oil	Chlorine	Water testing consumables (DelAgua kit)
Total consumption (per litre)	5,900,000	55,171	7,060	223
Average cost per month	$ 388,416.67	$ 8,505.53	$ 1,364.93	$ 1,243.17
Average price per litre / kg / unit	$ 0.9	$ 1.9	$ 2.3	$ 66.66

Table 2: *Emergency Repairs Fund expenditures per Water Unit, per year*

Water Units	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total	Number of PRs
Darkosh	$ 5,225.00	$ 55,773.44	$ 47,980.84	$ 45,246.49	$ 154,225.76	143
Harim	$ 5,660.00	$ 56,771.79	$ 35,765.53	$ 47,816.65	$ 146,013.97	124
Idleb	$ 1,600.00	$ 44,387.49	$ 39,379.66	$ 50,730.71	$ 136,097.86	65
Salqin	$ 20,264.00	$ 84,473.41	$ 74,510.82	$ 103,366.96	$ 282,615.18	187
Total	**$ 32,749.00**	**$ 241,406.12**	**$ 197,636.85**	**$ 247,160.81**	**$ 718,952.77**	**519**

As per project documents, GOAL pumped around 120,000,000 litres of water per week and provided up to 492,000 litres of fuel per month. Salqin was the Water Unit that received most investments under the Emergency Repairs Fund (see Fig. 2). This makes sense considering that Salqin is the Water Unit covering most beneficiaries (321,817) across 31 villages (see table 3). Salqin Water Unit staff said that, since the beginning of the project, they have replaced pumps, tanks, conducted minor repairs, rehabilitation work and solved several technical issues before the water stations could provide safe water to the population.

***Figure 2**: Emergency Repairs Fund expenditures per Water Unit, per year*

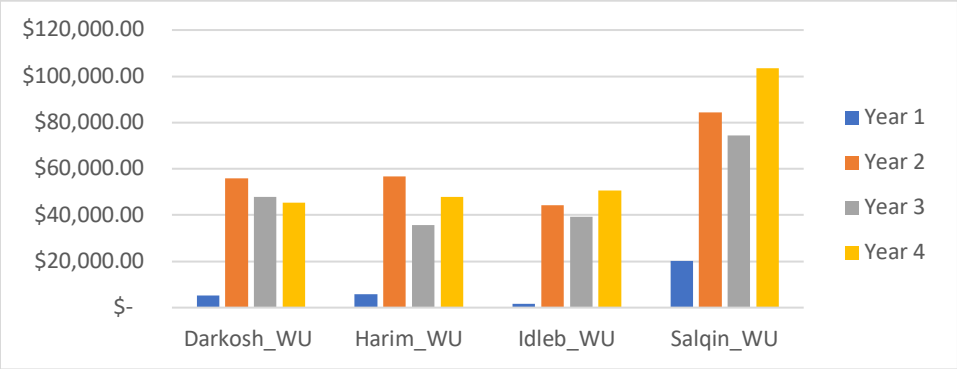


***Table 3:** Water Units coverage*

Water Unit	# Water stations[15]	# Villages	# Beneficiaries
Salqin	21	31	321,817
Idleb	2	3	225,626
Harim	14	16	151,115
Darkosh	13	36	124,700

At the beginning of GOAL's EVOLVE intervention, the purchase of fuel was made in Syria, through a supplier in Marit Nassan, in Idleb. However, the Syrian suppliers faced difficulties regularising their business and providing GOAL with the needed vendors' registrations and formal documentation required to form partnerships. Furthermore, the fuel provided by national suppliers in Syria was considered of poor quality and unrefined, which does not meet international standards. Poor quality fuel may damage equipment, increasing the number of repairs and preventable costs. The alternative of importing fuel from Turkey, where companies would be able to provide the supporting documentation required by GOAL, was not feasible as the Turkish government forbade fuel commercialisation between Turkey and Syria. However, following Turkey's military operations in Afrin in 2018, one Turkish supplier was granted permission to work in Syria. In addition, the Turkish government notified GOAL in 2018 to stop using Hawala to transfer money from Turkey to Syria, which made transfers to Syrian suppliers unfeasible. As a result, GOAL decided to import all fuel from Turkey to provide greater reassurances on the fuel source and quality and allow payments to be made through regular bank transfers to the supplier's account, avoiding agents and all of the additional charges associated with this process.

In addition, GOAL has maintained an ISF to finance upgrades/investments (transformers, generators, extension of network) of water stations and water networks to complement emergency repairs. The ISF was established to prevent further deterioration of water infrastructure and to support clean water access for new beneficiaries. According to project documents, 15 projects were awarded ISF-related grants, of which seven were in Salqin, three in Darkoush, one in Harim and four in Idleb, totalling more than 86,465 GBP (113,522 USD) in investments and supporting 277,010 beneficiaries by extending the water network to neighborhoods that were not receiving publicly supplied water. GOAL conducted several meetings with the four Water Units to refresh their information about the ISF process, the application procedure, forms to be used and explain more about the project format and to ask them to start the preparation for it. GOAL gave the Water Units the period of approximately a month to submit all their projects. The submitted project requests from the Water Units were in Arabic, they included a

[15] From Water Station Community – Project Document

description of the project, needs and justification, assessment with cost, beneficiary numbers and work schedule, BOQ and letter from Local Council. Support letters from Local Councils were considered in the selection criteria, along with a high level of community complaints submitted regarding WASH coverage in that area. Additionally, projects with higher numbers of new households added to the network were given higher scores. GOAL WASH Team agreed on the following evaluation criteria:

a. Proposed project is in GOAL's area of operation
b. Project description and needs findings are provided (including support letters from local councils and complaints from the community regarding water coverage)
c. Technical assessment is provided, BOQ and details about the work and specifications needed.
d. Work plan and schedule of activities are provided.
e. Cost of activities are provided
f. Beneficiaries number and cost vs beneficiaries ratio
g. New added beneficiaries to the network through the proposed project
h. Water network coverage
i. Risk assessment and consideration
j. Does the project add value and reduce operation cost?
k. The priority rank given by the WU during submission

The WASH teams in Turkey and Syria reviewed all the projects together through a series of internal meetings and prepared the evaluation sheet, including translation from Arabic to English. The evaluation sheet with the scoring was sent to the WASH Coordinators for their approval. The WASH Coordinators submitted it to the Head of Programmes for review and approval and the file contained a first sheet summarizing all the projects submitted to GOAL and a second sheet with list of projects recommended by the WASH team based on the scores and the available budget. After gaining the Head of Programme approval, the WASH team shared this file with the WASH cluster. The WASH cluster facilitated coordination with partners who may plan to undertake rehabilitation works to promote coordination and avoid duplication. The WASH Engineers inside Syria undertook a re-assessment of the approved projects to verify the technical assessment submitted and the BOQs. BOQs were edited if required by GOAL's WASH Team. The WASH team then raised the PRs for the approved projects and finalized BOQS. Once approved by the WASH CO, the procurement department started the procurement process based on each PR value. The WASH Community mobilization team informed the Local Councils of the selected projects and their scope. During the implementation, the Water Units team and GOAL WASH, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Logistics teams were responsible to monitor and evaluate the contractor´s work. The GOAL WASH supervising engineers (WASH Engineers) monitor the works on a daily basis, ensuring they were delivered within the time schedule, to a high level of quality and adherence to contractual terms e.g., BOQ specifications, time and compliance with GOAL's policies.

1.3. Theory of Change

The Theory of Change was developed by GOAL during the project proposal period. The project's outputs and outcomes were designed to contribute to EVOLVE's long-term objective to *save lives, protect civilians, reduce* suffering, and build resilience. Alongside funding, the project provides a range of networking and technical assistance, aiming to improve the Programme's effectiveness and develop and strengthen the local capacities. The Theory of Change proved to be measurable and plausible in most of

its rationale and underlying assumptions. EVOLVE expected to make change through three pathways that are described below:

- *The Problem Statement*

  The Syrian conflict has (a) exacerbated management and financial challenges faced by the water utility system in Idleb Governorate, placing over half a million residents at risk of disruptions and/or cessation of water to meet their household basic needs, as well as (b) leaving displaced households without the means to meet their basic needs.

- *Pathway 1: Improved Utility Operations*

  This pathway describes how investing in the Water Unit infrastructure through the provision of consumables, staff allowances, emergency repairs, finance upgrades, and network extensions will contribute to a) a reduction in the amount of time that the water facilities will be closed, (b) increase the availability of skilled and motivated staff and (c) improve efficiency and viability of the water stations.

  KIIs with Water Units staff suggest that the provision of inputs contributed to longer pumping hours. Water Units and water stations staff were highly satisfied with GOAL support and confirmed receiving training and capacity building in technical and administrative skills, suggesting assumption b is correct. Viability and efficiency of WATER UNIT were definitely supported by GOAL. In fact, an average of 46 litres/p/d across project locations has been observed by SREO and supported by GOAL's MEAL reports. However, this number is not consistent across all locations: 11% of total beneficiaries interviewed by SREO are still getting less than 15 litres/p/d from the water networks (having to complement with water trucking or other sources of water), and 3% of beneficiaries still exclusively rely on GOAL-supported water trucking to cover their water needs.

- *Pathway 2: Improved Governance and Accountability*

  This pathway describes how building the capacity of the local staff to make sure they have the needed skills to operate the water stations and ensuring the Water Unit complaints and response mechanisms are in place, and the target populations know how to use them will contribute to a) improve the technical skills of the local staff and (b) the local community and the Water Unit will use the complaints and response mechanisms.

  As mentioned above, KIIs with Water Unit and water stations staff, as well as with GOAL staff members suggest that the supported staff have the needed skills to conduct repairs and rehabilitation work, as well as support the Water Unit and water stations in the event of an electrical or mechanical breakdown, supporting assumption a. Regarding the CFM, the assumption that having a feedback mechanism in place will make them use it is not necessarily correct. Among 390 beneficiaries who knew at least one form of providing feedback, only two reportedly submitted a complaint, and 40% did not know which Water Unit was responsible for the water supply. Moreover, KIIs with beneficiaries showed that some of them did not know about feedback mechanisms. In addition, as observed before on this report, most beneficiaries identified in-person methods of providing feedback. It is highly recommended to reinforce feedback mechanisms where the user's identity is preserved.

- *Pathway 3: Emergency Response*
  This pathway describes how providing emergency support to IDPs will meet IDP households' basic needs during their first month of displacement.

  99% of the interviewed beneficiaries who received hygiene kits reported that it was enough to cover their household needs. Those who disagreed commented that the quantity of laundry powder was not enough to cover their family's needs (+4 household members).

1.4. Evaluation Questions

The evaluation questions were provided by GOAL within the Terms of Reference (ToR) for this study and derive from the assumptions in the Theory of Change. All evaluation questions intersect with the DAC evaluation criteria, as indicated in Table 4. Evaluation sub-questions can be seen in **Annex 1**.

Table 4: *OECD-DAC Criteria*

OECD-DAC Criteria & Evaluation Questions	
Criteria	**Evaluation Question**
Relevance / Appropriateness	The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the intervention has achieved its objectives and its results, including any differential results across groups.
Efficiency	The extent to which the intervention delivered, or is likely to deliver, results in an economical and timely way.
Impact	The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.
Sustainability	What aspects of GOAL's WASH programme are 'sustainable' for target communities?

2. PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODS

2.1. Evaluation purpose and use

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess GOAL's performance and delivery at the impact, outcome and output level of the FCDO-funded EVOLVE Programme according to five of the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria. Illustrated in the following objectives:

- Assess if the community were supported to access clean and safe drinking water meeting the minimum standards 25 litres per day as a result of the programme activities (recently increased to 35 litres per day, per person (l/p/d), due to COVID-19 standards).
- Assess if the newly displaced people provided with hygiene kits were able to meet their hygiene needs as a result
- Assess if the beneficiaries who attended hygiene promotion sessions found them useful and relevant
- Assess the project value for money across different activities including, but not limited to, Water Unit support and water trucking activities

The secondary purpose of the evaluation will be to help GOAL to improve its future programming through informing wider lessons learned and best practices generated through this project guided by the following:

- How has the project maintained its relevance and adapted, and continued to deliver effectively?
- What have been the challenges, and how should GOAL approach this differently based on this experience?
- To draw conclusions and obtain lessons learned to inform future GOAL programming.

EVOLVE Programme prospects

GOAL was informed in advance by FCDO about their decision to withdraw funding from GOAL Syria's WASH programme by May 2021. In the interim period, GOAL established an exit strategy committee and a WASH funding committee. The exit strategy committee focused on the necessary steps GOAL should take in the run up to prepare for FCDO withdrawal, such as preparing a communication plan, assets recording, handover documentation, vulnerability scoring and prioritisation of future funds. The WASH funding committee focused on approaching stakeholders and advocating for WASH programming in Idleb.

GOAL had an existing grant with BHA which supported the FCDO WASH programme by adding 20% to the fuel budget line. Towards the end of the BHA grant, GOAL had accrued some grant underspend, from the other sectors. GOAL advocated to BHA to use the grant to further fund the WASH programme. BHA accepted and GOAL was able to fund 50 water stations for April, May and June. With a further modification to the BHA grant, GOAL was able to fund 31 water stations in July and August. Furthermore, GOAL was successful with securing a second BHA grant which will enable GOAL to run 31 water stations in September and October, and then 14 water stations until the end of May. In addition, GOAL was also successful in granting funds from OCHA and ECHO, which will run nine and 18 water stations respectively from 1st July until the end of February and March 2022, respectively.

Finally, GOAL is also in the final preparations for the connection of Idleb city water stations to the electrical networks. If successful, GOAL will then connect all remaining stations. The monthly cost savings (which is expected to be around 37%) will, if allowed by the donors, go back into the grants.

Evaluation audiences

Primary audiences: FCDO, GOAL, UNOCHA and BHA are the primary audiences of this evaluation.
Secondary audiences: Prospective donors and development / humanitarian organisations involved in WASH programming in Syria. GOAL approached donors and relevant humanitarian and development actors to advocate for WASH funding in Idleb. Some of the actors include: the Office of the Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis (UNOCHA), Syrian Democratic Council (SDC), European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), WASH Cluster, CARE, Mercy Core, World Vision, among others.

2.2. Methodology

SREO used a participatory, mixed methods methodology, which includes both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Using multiple methods allowed SREO to triangulate varieties of data across sources, to verify or nuance findings and thereby lead to more informed conclusions and actionable recommendations.

Evaluation Phases

The evaluation inception phase has involved the desk review of technical and programme literature, including project proposal, donor reports, log frame, mid-term evaluation, etc. SREO designed all data collection tools and submitted them to the client for review. Prior to deployment, field teams received a training brief on the work package and data collection tools, including but not limited to objectives of the tools, methodologies and sampling, locations and re-trainings on data collection protocols and ethical requirements.

Data collection was conducted in six subdistricts in Idleb. For this study, SREO conducted satisfaction surveys at the household level to assess the programme's overall impact and performance, including the quality of the implementation, beneficiary satisfaction level and the relevance, accessibility, effectiveness, and appropriateness of services delivered. Surveys also included a section for Complaint and Feedback Mechanisms to understand whether they exist and to what effect beneficiaries are able to provide feedback to the implementing organization. SREO prefers statistically valid sampling with a 95% Confidence Level and a 5% Margin of Error based upon target beneficiary numbers or the population catchment area for general services. Hence, we conducted 390 household surveys distributed proportionally across six project locations in Idleb, as shown in Table 5, below. In addition, SREO used stratified snowball sampling to identify and include respondents who belong to different areas within these villages, which allowed SREO to assess beneficiaries' access to the service provided, and vulnerable groups. SREO also included respondents from multiple age groups and persons with disabilities.

Table 5: Survey numbers per location

Water Unit	District	Sub District	Village Name Cluster	# of respondents
Salqin	Harim	Armanaz	Armanaz	65
Salqin	Harim	Kafr Takharim	Kafr Takharim	65
Salqin	Harim	Salqin	Salqin	65

Darkosh	Ariha	Mhambal	Kniseh (Mhambal)	65
Harim	Harim	Qourqeena	Qourqeena	65
Idleb	Idleb	Idleb	Idleb	65

In addition, SREO conducted 20 KIIs with project implementers and stakeholders in Idleb to understand project design and implementation; challenges faced, cross-cutting themes, project effects and areas for improvement along with partner coordination efforts. SREO also conducted 45 Semi-structured interviews with project beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries living in the project locations and with an Infrastructure Stabilisation Fund panel member. The list of interviewed key informants is included in **Annex 6**. SREO included households representing different profiles, such as female heads of households, households with people with disabilities (PWD), IDPs / host communities / returnees, and different ages. Participants were identified jointly with local focal points based upon the extent of their involvement with the program activities and the beneficiary's willingness to participate in an extended interview.

SREO's field researchers used observational checklists to verify the existence and conditions of WASH infrastructure (water station equipment, consumables for operation and maintenance, water station facilities infrastructure, etc.). These checklists were based on sector-specific standards, structural integrity and safety protocols for WASH facilities and infrastructure. In addition, photos and videos were used to document facilities' infrastructure.

2.3. Ethical and Safeguarding Considerations

SREO's data management policy outlines how SREO assures that its data management practices support the ethical handling of the data SREO collects through its work. This includes but is not limited to: a) Deletion of data on field staff devices to ensure personal data cannot be intercepted by other actors in the field who may seek to obtain this information; b) Secure storage on SREO's server; c) Deletion of data at the end of the project. SREO's work is underpinned by *Do No Harm* principles essential to conflict-sensitive settings, ensuring confidentiality of information, privacy and anonymity of study participants by making sure the respondent data is not traceable back to its source nor made public without each participants' permission, lest it harm them and/or their community.

Data was collected in an appropriate and respectful manner, taking into account cultural, ethical and legal concerns. All tools included an introductory paragraph that informed each participant about the purpose of the survey and their privacy rights. The interviewer did not conduct surveys with anyone before obtaining their informed consent, and no one was interviewed if they did not consent. SREO strongly believes that respondents have a moral right to refuse to answer questions in part or whole. This means that participants have the right to not only choose whether to participate, but also whether they would like to answer each individual question on the survey. For each question, a code is provided for "Do not know/Refused." All participants were assured that participation was voluntary and there would be no negative consequences if they chose not to participate. Moreover, respondents could decide at any time to withdraw from participating in the evaluation, even after the data had been collected. Their consent prevails along the whole process.

SREO's practices state commitment to safeguarding, including a zero-tolerance statement on harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse that is part of the company's code of conduct. Furthermore, SREO field staff takes regular, mandatory training, making sure all Field Researchers have the relevant experience and knowledge of current safeguarding practices. SREO's Data collection, *Do no Harm,* Data Protection and Conflict Sensitivity protocols can be found in **Annex 4.**

SREO's project team structure, the Managing Director is responsible for managing the project contract, providing methodological inputs as needed. One lead Programme Manager, supported by other Programme Manager and Data Analyst covered all technical aspects of the project from inception to conclusion – including client communication, data collection methodology and sampling, tool design / revision, data quality control and reporting.

2.6. Risks and Limitations

COVID-19 Outbreak

Data collection protocols considered COVID-19 travel restrictions, curfews and lockdowns in Northwest Syria and took appropriate precautions to protect the health of staff, participants and the public. Moreover, SREO followed sector-specific guidelines on COVID-19 preparedness and response shared by UN agencies for humanitarian operations in Syria, with a field approach informed by the health and safety measures shared by the World Health Organisation and the US Centre for Disease Control.

These measures were communicated to all field staff located globally and are as follows:

COVID-19 Guidelines

- Staff feeling ill or with flu-like symptoms must inform their Coordinator immediately. He/she will not conduct any fieldwork and will undergo home quarantine for 14 days.
- Maintain social distancing of at least 1 m during fieldwork and otherwise.
- Avoid conducting Focus Group Discussions in-person to limit social gathering.
- Conduct/record KIIs over phone / Zoom if curfews are in place.
- Regular and thorough washing of hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as masks and gloves, and keep hand sanitisers during fieldwork.
- Avoid contact with at-risk populations (pregnant, elderly, those with underlying conditions).

The evaluation method was tailored to the context of COVID-19 by conducting SSIs instead of FGDs to avoid group gatherings and conducting surveys and KIIs using social distancing.

Security & Risk Mitigation

Security is at the forefront of nearly every decision made at SREO. SREO has a rigorous security assessment process where security information is triangulated from three sources: initial reports, media outlet reports, and eyewitness reports. Should a security concern be reported by a SREO Field Researcher while working on this project, the incident would be immediately flagged to GOAL and data collection would be paused. The life and wellbeing of SREO's Field Researchers, implementing staff, and project participants were paramount to any data being collected and therefore, all Field Researchers have been instructed to protect themselves ahead of any data. In the event of a security concern, SREO and GOAL would mutually assess the situation and agree whether and how to continue data collection.

To reduce risk, SREO:

- Ensured that field staff operated in their local areas, so they have a good understanding of the local security context, language and culture, and that they worked in pairs.
- Carried out regular checks with contacts on the ground to gather information on the security environment.
- Was in regular contact with other service-providing organizations and NGOs operating in the same areas to triangulate potential risks.
- Had a Field Supervisor in charge of staying up to date on all potential threats.

SREO had sufficient access and permission to work across Northwest Syria, and GOAL's targeted locations are routinely visited by SREO team to conduct baselines, periodic monitoring, and evaluations. Still, because the context in which this evaluation was conducted is volatile and subject to various risks that may impact proper data collection, SREO had prepared some mitigation strategies to limit, as much as possible, adversities that may affect the evaluation. Fortunately, during this study, SREO's Field Researchers did not report any challenge in data collection or access to project locations.

Table 6: Risk Matrix

Risk identified	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation / Contingency
Limited or no access to certain targeted locations due to the risk profile and access constraints including heightened security risks.	Low	High	SREO's field team structure utilizes local researchers on the ground familiar with conducting research in this specific context and with limited access. Coordination of communication will be ensured at field coordinator, field supervisor, and field researcher level. The security situation in northern Syria is still in flux due to the multitude of armed actors. SREO field teams and coordinators stay up to date on the security situation. Field teams will immediately pause fieldwork in case of an incident, seek safety and report it to SREO.
Project participants do not want to partake in the assessment.	Low	Moderate	SREO will ensure to inform assessment participants of what the assessment entails. Project implementation staff will ensure to over sample when selecting potential interviewees for the assessment. SREO will make sure to obtain informed consent before any data is collected.
Local authorities prevent SREO to undertake the assessment.	Low	Low	SREO's field team structure utilizes local researchers on the ground familiar with conducting research in this specific context and SREO has longstanding relationships with the relevant authorities including those at the municipal, provincial and regional levels, and with security actors. This typically allows SREO researchers to move with minimal difficulty.

Covid-19 spreads and prevents face-to-face interviews.	Moderate	High	GOAL and SREO have established rules based on international guidelines on how to mitigate risks linked with the spread of the disease. If face-to-face interviews cannot be conducted, interviewees will be expected to conduct interviews via phone/whatsapp and internet and phone credit will need to be provided.

3. FINDINGS

Analysis began with quantitative analysis of the survey data to identify trends in response to key questions, differences across age and gender groups and location. First, SREO technical specialists manually reviewed checklists to determine key observations about the implementation of the project – for instance, spot checks on the water stations conditions. Next, qualitative data from the interviews were used to provide nuance to findings using a different perspective, identifying strengths to exploit or gaps to close in continued programming and provide context to explain trends in quantitative data. Following the individual analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data, findings from the various sources were triangulated and cross-referenced to one another, helping to inform, explain, and strengthen key findings. Conclusions were drafted last to ensure that they are based on evidence from all sources and balanced against desk review data.

3.1. Demographics

SREO interviewed 390 EVOLVE Programme's beneficiaries, of which 53% were women and 47% men. Beneficiaries were equally distributed across six villages: Armanaz, Kafr Takharim, Salqin, Kniseh, Qourqeena and Idleb. Most respondents were between 20 and 40 years old (70%), while 30% were between 41 and 62 years old, and 90% were married. On average, households had five or more family members. SREO conducted the Washington Group questions to create an overall disability status by identifying respondents who presented difficulties performing basic actions. Overall, 25% of survey respondents reported having some or a lot of difficulty performing at least one of the following actions: Seeing (even wearing glasses); Hearing (even if using hearing aid); Walking or climbing; Remembering or concentrating; self-care (such as washing or getting dressed). Among those who face difficulties, 44% are related to walking or climbing, 23% are related to seeing, 16% are related to hearing, 9% are related to self-care, 6% are related to concentrating and 2% are related to communicating.

The survey did not suggest significant discrepancies between those who reported having disabilities and those who reported no disabilities. Likewise, no discrepancies have been observed in terms of gender or age groups. This pattern has been observed throughout most layers of data analysis: household location is the most significant factor to determine water accessibility.

3.2. Safe water access

Most respondents (96%) interviewed by SREO reported having access to a water network. Across all locations, the water network complemented with water trucking was the most common water source selected by respondents (62%). 34% of beneficiaries reported relying exclusively on the water networks, while 3% of respondents – all located in Qourqeena - reported to depend solely on water trucking services. As Qourqeena village is supplied by only one water station, those who live far from it are less

likely to access the water networks. To address this issue, households within the GOAL-supported Water Unit's administrative area that had no access to the networks can arrange water trucking service to access water. However, those who need water trucking services must cover the transportation costs and pay directly to the service provider.

Table 7: Most common water sources per location

Location	Exclusive water Network	Water Network + Water trucking	Exclusive water trucking	Private Well
Armanaz	30%	70%	0%	0%
Idleb	12%	88%	0%	0%
Kafr Takharim	34%	62%	0%	4%
Kniseh	69%	31%	0%	0%
Qourqeena	26%	54%	20%	0%
Salqin	35%	65%	0%	0%
Total	**34%**	**61%**	**3%**	**1%**

On average, respondents estimated that 74% of the water consumed in their household come from the water networks supported by GOAL, and 68% stated that the water received through the network would be sufficient to cover their water needs. KIIs with water networks beneficiaries brought light to this finding by explaining that, for many people, the water provided by GOAL is adequate to cover household chores and drinking needs *if* families take action to ration water consumption on a daily basis. Nonetheless, a few beneficiaries stated they did not have enough storage capacity to keep all the water needed until the next pumping day, despite receiving enough water through the network. In contrast, other beneficiaries said that the water pressure is so weak that there is not enough time to fill their tanks at total capacity.

The frequency of which respondents receive water varies from once every three days to once every 30 days, depending on the location. Across all locations, 47% of the beneficiaries received pumped water every week, followed by every two weeks (16%) and every 20 days (14%). For each pumping day, beneficiaries get, on average, 7.3 hours of piped water, which allows them to fill 16 barrels (one barrel holds 220 litres) (see Table 8). Even though the water availability is not consistent across the Water Units, all interviewed respondents knew when and where they would next get water, and 93% declared that they always had sufficient water in the previous month. However, when asked if all people in their communities could access a water network, 16% of respondents said no. The most common explanations given by the participants across all locations were related to the lack of connections in the villages' outskirts (77%) and/or the low pressure when pumping water to elevated stories (23%).

"There is a programme that informs us about the pumping schedules. We know in advance when our turn will come." Salqin beneficiary

Table 8: Availability of the water networks reported by beneficiaries

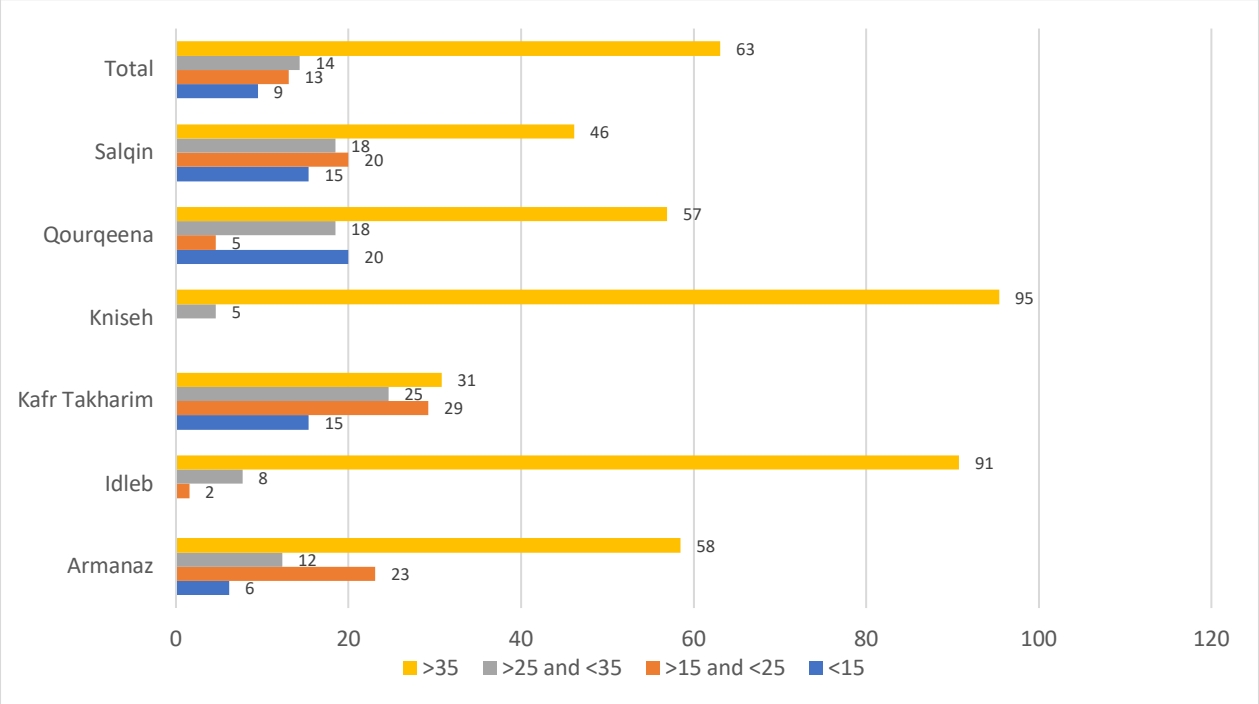
Village	Average household's % of water coming through the water networks	Average frequency of water pumping (range)	Average hours/pump	Average quantity (barrels) / pump

Armanaz	75%	Once every 15 to 30 days	9h	20 barrels
Idleb	77%	Once every 3 to 7 days	7h	13 barrels
Kafr Takharim	73%	Once every 15 to 30 days	11h	16 barrels
Kniseh	81%	Once every 7 days	3h	17 barrels
Qourqeena	67%	Once every 7 days	2h	11 barrels
Salqin	69%	Once every 7 to 30 days	11h	16.5 barrels

The EVOLVE Programme intended to provide its beneficiaries with at least 25 l/p/d. However, in June 2020, following the WASH Cluster recommendations to mitigate the risks of COVID-19, the quantity increased to 35 l/p/d. To verify if the surveyed beneficiaries had access to this quantity, SREO calculated the volume of water (in litres) usually collected for domestic use per day by all households in the sample and divided by the number of household members. Nonetheless, it is important to highlight that these numbers reflect beneficiaries' self-reported perceptions and not necessarily accurate numbers. Overall, 63% of the surveyed households had access to more than the 35 l/p/d threshold. On average, households reportedly received 54 l/p/d in the previous month. These numbers align with the post-activities monitoring reports conducted by GOAL during Y4.

However, when disaggregated by location, it is possible to observe the discrepancies across the area of operation, such as Salqin, Armanaz and Kafr Takharim, all served by Salqin Water Unit. As seen in Fig 4, beneficiaries from the same locations reported receiving different quantities of water, showing that even though almost all beneficiaries have access to the water networks, adequacy is still lacking in some cases.

Figure 4: % of beneficiaries receiving different levels of water network l/p/d per location



This discrepancy has been supported by the KIIs with beneficiaries that mentioned that some areas received more support than others, such as this beneficiary from Armanaz, who stated:

"Our most pressing concern is water. In Armanaz, there are some areas and side streets here that receive water once or twice per week. But there are areas (like mine) that only receive water every 15 days, and when it does come, the pressure is too weak. We are very grateful to GOAL, but I don't understand why this area is less serviced." Armanaz beneficiary

Furthermore, a few beneficiaries from Armanaz highlighted a decrease in the frequency of which water is being pumped compared to previous years. Possible influencing factors for this decrease mentioned by KIIs are (a) the increase by almost 20% of GOAL's catchment population due to high numbers of IDPs influx, (b) the challenge of getting accurate figures in terms of population numbers that may lead to incorrect water demand planning by the Water Units and (c) the impact of COVID-19 outbreak on water needs, putting pressure on water networks that were already functioning at total capacity, considering the budget limitations. Moreover, some large cities are supported by more than one Water Unit, and sometimes even multiple water stations, which might create differences in the level of services depending on the location (elevated or remote areas) and the infrastructure conditions, as some water stations might not have been through the rehabilitation process.

Nonetheless, beneficiaries of the EVOLVE Programme demonstrated high levels of satisfaction with the services received. 90% of the water network beneficiaries were either very satisfied or satisfied with the water availability. 9% were neutral, and 1% was either unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. When asked why they were unsatisfied, beneficiaries reported that they needed more pumping days. 95% of the water trucking beneficiaries were either satisfied or very satisfied with the water availability, while 5% were neutral (see Fig, 4 and 5 below). No beneficiaries reported paying for the water network services.

"Water shortage, I have been through this situation before. I'm 49 years old; water was coming every three months. In that period, diseases increased, such as lice, allergies and skin diseases. Currently, the situation is much better." Qourqeena beneficiary

The quality of the water provided by EVOLVE is reportedly high and safe for consumption. According to project documents[16], from April 2020 to the end of March 2021, GOAL conducted extensive water quality monitoring exercises, carrying out bacterial, chlorine and turbidity levels analysis in 3,335 households across 91 villages in Idleb. Although 99.9% of the tests showed no signs of coliforms in the water, five samples detected coliform bacteria. Nonetheless, the quantity found per 100ml is still within the acceptable range according to WASH standards. Coliform bacteria presence indicates that pathogens could be present in the water system. Levels of turbidity (10 NTU) have also been found in five different household samples, all in the Alghafir neighbourhood (0.1%), adding a potential difficulty in adequate water treatment (see table 9). This is important because 96% of the beneficiaries reported not taking any measures to make the water safer to drink at the household level. Only a very small proportion of beneficiaries stated that they boil the water before drinking (3%), and only one beneficiary uses a water filter (0.2%).

[16] Water tracking 2020 - 2021

Table 9: Quality of water as reported by GOAL water quality monitoring tracker

Quality Test	Minimum water quality standards	Findings at the household level
Total Coliform bacteria	< 10 CFU/100ml	99.9% presented 0 CFU/100ml 0.1% of the samples (n= 5 households) detected the presence of coliform bacteria, ranging from 3 CFU/100ml to 10 CFU/100ml.
Free Residual Chlorine (FRC)	≥ 0.2 – 0.5mg/l	99.9% presented FRC within range. 0.1% of samples (n= 3 households) presented FRC slightly < 0.2 or > 0.5mg/l
Turbidity	Less than 5 NTU	99.9% presented 5 NTU. 0.1% of the sample (n= 5 households) presented 10 NTU.

When asked about the quality of the water services, more than 99% of the interviewed beneficiaries informed that the water appears clear, pure, and without cloudiness or haziness. The remaining 0.7%, all from Qourqeena, stated that the water seems mostly clear and pure, but there appears to have some sediment (e.g. sand, limescale). Likewise, 98% of respondents did not observe unnatural tastes nor smells in the water, except for six beneficiaries from Qourqeena (1.6%) that mentioned the water coming through the network tasted and smelled of chlorine. Nonetheless, 100% of the respondents believed that the water provided by GOAL EVOLVE Programme is safe to drink.

Among those who use water trucking services, 92% reported that the water seems clean, pure and without cloudiness or haziness, while 8% mentioned the water appears mostly clean but there appears to have some sediment (e.g. sand, limescale). In addition, 97% stated no unnatural taste in the water, and 92% reported no unnatural smell. Still, all water trucking beneficiaries believed the water coming from the trucking services supported by GOAL is safe to drink.

All beneficiaries of the water networks were either satisfied or very satisfied with the water quality, compared to 97% of the water trucking users. The remaining 3% were neutral. When invited to give suggestions and recommendations to the Programme, almost all beneficiaries suggested increasing pumping hours and pressure to raise water quantities (see Table 10).

Table 10: Beneficiaries' suggestions during SREO survey

Suggestion	# of respondents	% of respondents
Increase pumping (hours + pressure)	389	99.7%
Project continuation	349	89.5%
Network extension	5	1.3%
Hygiene Kit distribution	4	1.0%
Provide water trucking	3	0.8%

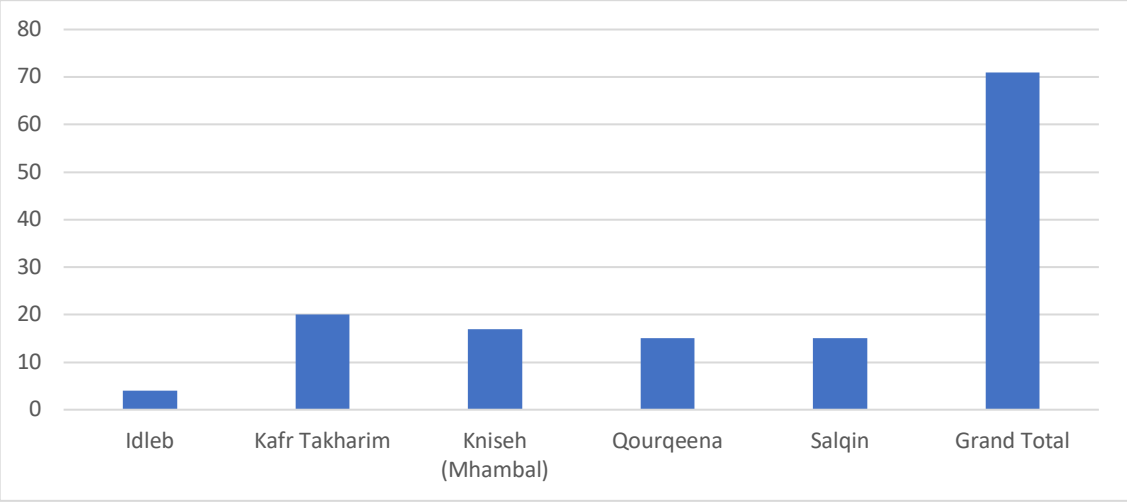
Distribute storage tanks for IDPs	1	0.3%
Connect water stations with the public electrical grid (as now it has electricity)	1	0.3%

3.3. Hygiene Promotion Activities

In addition to access to safe water, good hygiene practices help protect communities from severe disease. As such, the EVOLVE programme was complemented with the distribution of hygiene kits and hygiene awareness-raising sessions to local communities. According to project documents17 shared by GOAL, from April 2020 to March 2021, GOAL delivered 1,968 awareness-raising sessions to 17,505 beneficiaries (of which 5,803 were men, 4,625 were women, 3,822 boys and 6,490 girls). The sessions were conducted in schools, door-to-door, at emergency distribution points and with shopkeepers. SREO conducted two KIIs with hygiene promotion project staff, and both provided a comprehensive detail about this project component. They described how awareness sessions delivered by GOAL had been adapted to incorporate COVID-19 precautions and public health messages to reduce the risk of transmitting the coronavirus. In addition, they referenced Telegram groups created in each location to share COVID-related information, and how Water Units were updating their Facebook accounts to share COVID-19 prevention messages.

18% of the interviewed beneficiaries reported participating in hygiene promotion sessions (see Fig. 5), and all found the information received during the sessions relevant and valuable. When asked if they could cite at least two critical times for handwashing, all beneficiaries could identify at least two or more (before eating, after using the toilet, etc.). Most hygiene promotion participants reported safe water storage practices (99% - n=388/390), mentioning they keep water in roof tanks or cisterns or narrow-mouthed containers (e.g. jerry cans). Nonetheless, two beneficiaries reported storing water in open containers, which is not in line with WASH best practices.

Figure 5: Hygiene Promotion activities participants per location, as per beneficiary survey



KIIs with beneficiaries of hygiene promotion activities demonstrated a good understanding of the health risks associated with consuming unsafe water and having poor hygiene standards. All survey

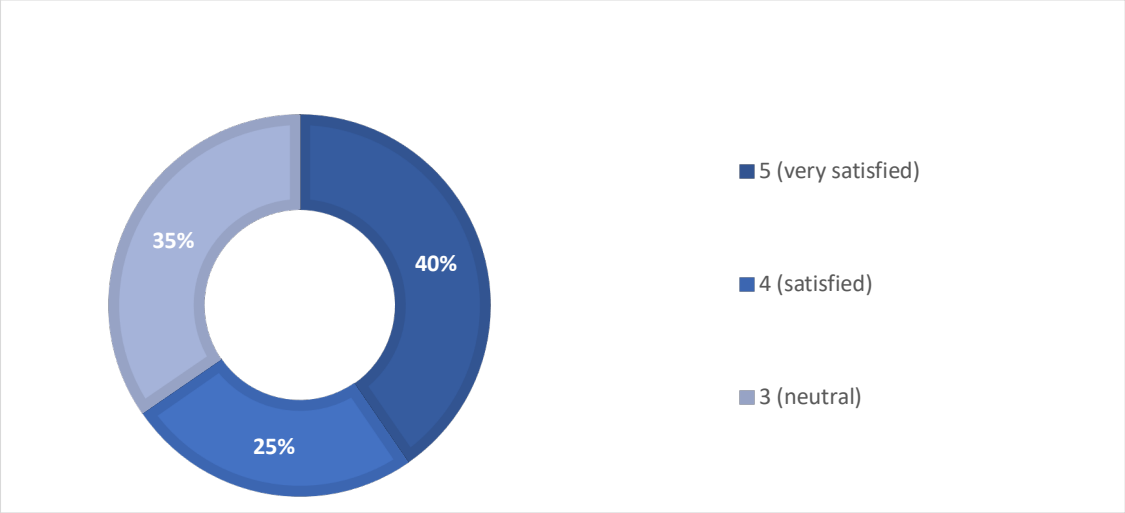
[17] GOAL Hygiene Promotion database

respondents reported that none of their children under five years old suffered from diarrhoea in the previous two weeks. In addition, all survey participants reported not suffering from cholera, polio or leishmaniasis in the past two weeks.

In Y4, distribution of hygiene kits was part of the emergency response targeting displaced people who had been affected by heavy rainfall and strong winds that caused flooding in Northwest Syria's IDP camps at the beginning of 2021. According to project documents[18] and KIIs with GOAL's hygiene promotion team, from January to March 2021, 2,000 households received 2,000 hygiene kits to cover their immediate hygiene needs. One thousand kits were sent to A'zaz and Sharan (Aleppo), while the remaining kits were sent to Maaret Tamsrin, Idleb.

22% (n=26/115) of the surveyed IDPs beneficiaries reported receiving hygiene kits from GOAL (18% of total beneficiaries, n=50/390). All but four participants said the kits met their basic needs for one month. When asked for more details, the beneficiaries explained that the items in the kit, specifically the laundry powder, were not enough to cover their large family needs for a whole month (4, 7, 8 and 9 family members). Overall, 65% of participants who received GOAL kits were either very satisfied or satisfied with the kits' content, and 35% were neutral. No beneficiary reported to be unsatisfied with GOAL's kits (see Fig. 6). 61% of the hygiene kits beneficiaries selected the laundry powder as the most useful item in the kit, followed by the soap bar (13%), the dishwasher liquid (11%) and the adult shampoo (9%). 67% selected the toothbrushes for kids as the least useful item, followed by the towel for the bathroom (7%), toothbrushes for adults (7%) and toothpaste (7%).

Figure 6: Beneficiary satisfaction (ranking from 1 to 5)



3.4. Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms

The Theory of Change for the EVOLVE Programme includes an output committing the project to improving governance and accountability. As part of this objective, GOAL has adopted an agreed set of standards for a Complaint and Feedback Mechanism (CFM) by which Water Units commit to provide,

[18] Emergency Distribution timeframe, 2021

promote and manage appropriate channels where beneficiaries and project stakeholders can raise questions, complaints, concerns, and give feedback. Overall, the designed standards are predominantly aligned with Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS): CFM policy, referrals, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined in a written document, timeframes for different types of feedback have been established and Water Unit teams have been trained to facilitate the communication between beneficiaries, Water Units and GOAL. All these measures help establishing a good relationship with beneficiaries, showing accountability and predictability in the ways their questions will be handled. However, GOAL's CFM policy makes no explicit reference to using proactive approaches to ensure feedback channels are open to vulnerable groups. Also, no dedicated form for reporting sexual exploitation and abuse exists at the Water Units level.

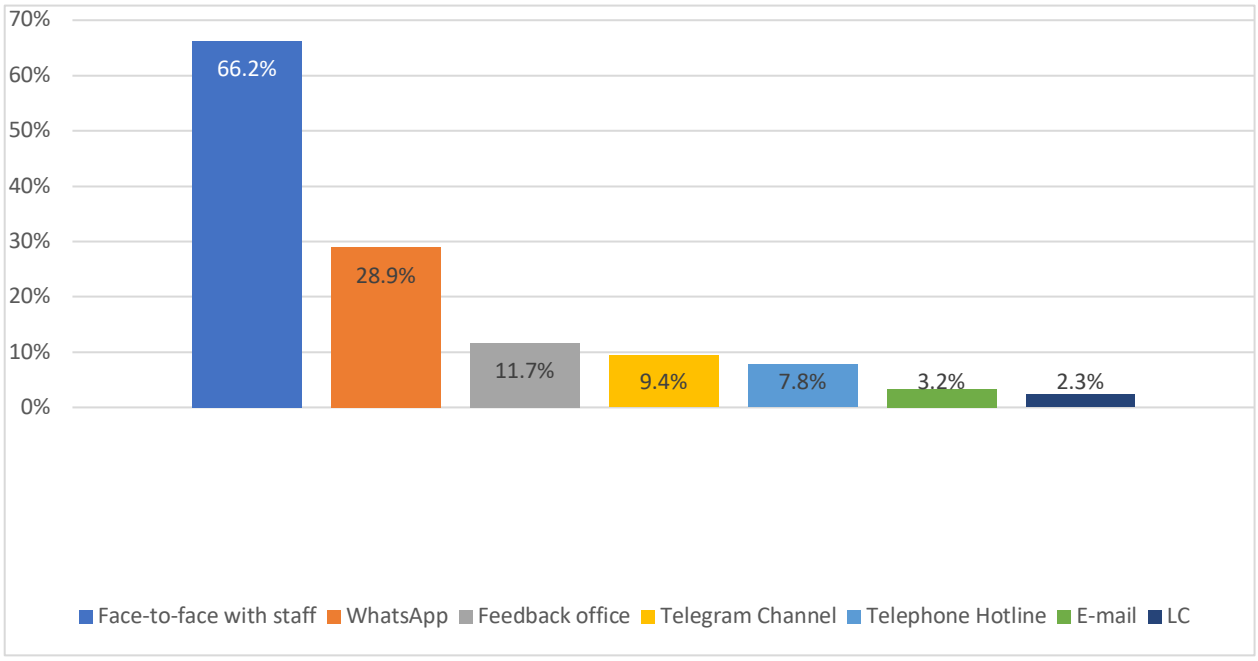
GOAL uses several methods to receive complaints and feedback in its area of operation. Beneficiaries may present feedback: through the Water Units (via Facebook, Telegram or in-person), through GOAL (via email, WhatsApp, hotline and in-person, either in the office or during field visits), and through the Local Councils. Whistle-blowers can use Complaints officers, mobile complaints teams and Speak up line going direct to Dublin. All serious claims are escalated to HQ. To advertise the different channels through which beneficiaries could share feedback, GOAL relied on leaflets and brochures distributed at the Local Councils, Water Units and water stations. The information was also displayed on billboards located in front of the Water Units, posters located at the community level (mosques, etc.), and on social media posts through the Water Units' Facebook accounts.

To assess the effectiveness of the CRM in practice, SREO asked beneficiaries to provide their views on the feedback mechanism. In general, awareness of feedback mechanisms among beneficiaries was high, with 79% being able to name at least one correct means of providing feedback. When asked which channels were available for feedback, the majority (66%) of respondents said in-person with the WATER UNIT staff, followed by WhatsApp (29%) and going to GOAL's office in person (11%). Hotline and email were only identified by 3% and 2%, respectively (see Fig. 7). Three beneficiaries (0.7%) from different locations affirmed to have submitted a complaint to the Water Units in the past. All three reported going in person to complain about a system malfunctioning, and all said that the response was immediate and satisfactory. Overall, the Water Units have built public confidence among the users. The management of the Water Units is seen by the community as being transparent and accountable to them.

While it is positive that beneficiaries are aware of at least one form of providing feedback, efforts should be made to diversify the range of mechanisms that beneficiaries can use. In-person approaches may discourage individuals who want to complain about a sensitive topic, such as fraud or misconduct, and may not be convenient for specific groups, such as people who live far from the Water Units, persons with disabilities and older people. Moreover, even though In-person complaints seem to be the most well-known method among beneficiaries, 43% of respondents were unsure which Water Unit was responsible for providing water to their neighbourhoods.

GOAL has updated its SOPs mainly concerning Local Councils and interference mitigation, by splitting between sector and type of interference. GOAL has also hired additional investigators for local level investigations and has updated the structure to enhance the management of fraud cases. GOAL has even hired an investigator at HQ who speaks Arabic and is able to translate the field reports – limiting issues with translation.

Figure 7: Feedback channels identified by the beneficiaries



4. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1. Relevance

Definition	Evaluation Questions
The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries.	To which extent the project was aligned with national priorities, plans and/or strategies? To which extent the project's activities, outputs and expected results correspond with the needs and problems of targeted areas and populations? To which extent were the activities and outputs consistent with the intended impact/results? How have other targeted groups benefited from the project? Has the project solved its problems defined by the project analysis?

The EVOLVE Programme was in line with and complementary to the context and the strategies for development and humanitarian programmes in Syria[19] [20] and have remained relevant through responsive and flexible programming. Accordingly, its outcomes and outputs are aligned with its intended results, corresponding directly to the needs of the targeted beneficiaries. Moreover, the relevance of the EVOLVE Programme was also demonstrated through variously adapting activities in planning and implementation stages to meet the needs of the local context. For example, in the following areas:

Water accessibility and quality

The lack of safe and adequate water consumption in the local communities is one of the sector priorities, and Idleb is the location with most WASH needs. EVOLVE provided the targeted communities with safe water by providing inputs to the existing water networks. Interviewed beneficiaries reported having access to - on average - 46 l/p/d of pumped water in their households. However, water access is not consistent across all locations (see Effectiveness). 34% of respondents stated that they get water exclusively from the water networks, and 61% affirmed they get most of their water from the water networks and supplement it with water trucking, also supported by GOAL. No differences regarding gender, age groups or persons with disabilities have been identified.

The water provided to the communities has been extensively monitored, with more than 3300 spot checks conducted at the point of consumption (households) in the past year. The tests were conducted to detect bacterial hazards, residual chlorine, and physical hazards such as turbidity (haziness). The result of the tests proved the excellent quality of water provided by GOAL, with 99.9% of the water presenting good results and 0.1% presenting acceptable results by minimal standards. In addition, 98% of the beneficiaries of the water network and 96% of the beneficiaries of the water trucking supported by GOAL stated that, based on its appearance, the provided water is clean, pure, with no unnatural smell or taste. However, a small number (4%) of beneficiaries identified abnormal taste or smell of chlorine. Even though it is not harmful to the beneficiaries, it may lead users to seek better tasting but unsafe water sources[21].

[19] Syrian Arab Republic: 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syrian-arab-republic-2020-humanitarian-response-plan-december-2020
[20] Syria Humanitarian Response Plan 2021 https://hum-insight.info/plan/1044/ge/6091
[21] Sphere Handbook, 2020

Support and investment in WASH infrastructure

Supporting WASH infrastructure is one of the main focuses of the 2021 Syrian Humanitarian Needs Overview[22]. WASH systems in Syria suffered from years of conflict, little maintenance and investments. Supporting water systems through chlorine treatment provision, repairs, rehabilitation, and capacity building strengthens a centralised distribution approach that is more equitable, accessible, and sustainable to the local communities. EVOLVE invested GBP 1,045,377.75 (USD 1,437,905.54) in four Water Units throughout the years, including GBP 179.689.68 (USD 247,160.82) in the fourth year through its Emergency Repairs Fund. In addition, the ISF awarded grants to 18 water stations to expand its water network connections and include more beneficiaries. GOAL provided High Test Hypochlorite (HTH) for water treatment, wages and training for 261 staff members, allowing the distribution of safe water services to an average of 765,807 beneficiaries per year.

Hygiene Promotion

Sickness and death can be prevented by individual behaviour and good hygiene practices (especially at the household level), as well as awareness of public health risk. Accordingly, GOAL's intervention has been complemented by hygiene promotion activities, including the distribution of hygiene kits to 2000 newly displaced people that have been affected by the floods in the Maaret Masrin camps, covering their immediate water needs. In addition, GOAL offered awareness-raising sessions to promote health-seeking behaviour in schools and IDP settings, spreading messages on how to prevent waterborne diseases and to promote good hygiene practices generally. Furthermore, the project delivered awareness sessions to 4,625 women and 6,490 girls. This is particularly important because women are, in general, responsible for preparing food and handling water in their households, as well as being the caretaker of children, PWD, and elderly household members. As a result, they are more vulnerable to contaminated water but can also prevent the spread of diseases if they present good hygiene practices. Hygiene promotion activities became even more relevant following the COVID-19 outbreak. Awareness-raising sessions were adapted to prevent viral transmission, including in the areas of key messages reinforcing handwashing, the usage of masks and social distancing.

4.2. Effectiveness

Definition	Evaluation Questions
The extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its objectives and its results, including and differential results across groups.	How effective was the intervention in strengthening resilience and improving access to safe water to beneficiaries? To which extent the project results chain (logical framework) was effective and leading to the intended results and impact. What factors have affected project implementation? What was done to mitigate the impact of these issues? To which extent the supported interventions were implemented effectively, thereby contributing to the project's expected results? To what extent the monitoring of the project implementation contributed to learning and accommodated changes throughout the implementation? To what extent were project indicators able to measure achievements of their intended outputs and outcomes?

[22] 2021 Syrian Humanitarian Needs Overview."

The EVOLVE Programme has improved access to safe drinking water to approximately 765,807 beneficiaries per year, contributing to strengthening the resilience of Syrian households. Overall, GOAL responded well to the WASH needs in its areas of operation, being able to shift approaches several times to accommodate changing needs as they emerged. Nonetheless, unmet needs remain, particularly in remote areas with no connection to water networks and elevated locations where the water pressure is weak. As such, GOAL's continuous efforts are still needed to secure access to adequate, safe water within the local communities.

GOAL has effectively provided regular operational services and inputs that allowed Water Units to keep systems running at reasonable performance levels and to a reliable schedule, receiving very positive feedback from beneficiaries. Basic water needs have been largely met despite the very challenging conditions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak and the high influx of IDPs into the project's catchment area, resulting in a sudden increase in water demands. To address these challenges, GOAL reallocated resources from less urgent project components, such as making small savings in staff and elsewhere, and also granting more funds to focus on increasing the water pumping capacity and ensuring adequate water supply to beneficiaries. Even though water adequacy has not been evenly secured across project locations, GOAL has managed to provide 91% of beneficiaries with enough water to cover their basic water needs while meeting the minimum standards (at least 15 l/p/d). Still, 9% of project beneficiaries are still getting substandard water services (<15 l/p/d) while 63% is reportedly getting equal or over 35l/p/d[23]. These discrepancies in water provision within the serviced communities have been noticed by beneficiaries, with some highlighting that some areas are better serviced than others. While this does not appear to have caused any specific disagreement among beneficiaries, at least 16% of respondents felt that some community members were left unsupported.

Almost all beneficiaries surveyed by SREO suggested more pumping hours to project beneficiaries. However, GOAL focused its intervention on meeting basic water needs for as many people as possible, as opposed to providing extra water coverage to current beneficiaries. Nonetheless, the project context allows for modification of pumping capacities based on future funding mechanisms related to either Water Unit-sourced resources (e.g. user or governmental) or via GOAL (or other NGO) supports. Specifically, as the infrastructure is already functional and the human resources available, water provision can be adapted based on the inputs or resources available.

GOAL's emergency response component allowed the project to respond rapidly to WASH emergencies through the provision of hygiene kits. Following a Rapid Needs Assessment conducted in January 2021, GOAL distributed 2,000 kits to IDPs affected by the floods in Northwest Syria, allowing them to meet their basic hygiene needs. In addition, GOAL complemented its emergency response by conducting hygiene promotion sessions to the local communities. Due to COVID-19 outbreak, awareness sessions were adapted to incorporate COVID-19 risk mitigation, which interviewed beneficiaries considered very relevant. Furthermore, GOAL allocated funds for M&E activities and conducted regular field visits to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the EVOLVE Programme. M&E approaches involved post-activity monitoring, water quality monitoring, needs assessments, water user's surveys and FGDs with project beneficiaries to assess satisfaction rates and promote feedback. EVOLVE's approach to M&E was effective in ensuring that its findings informed programming decisions, helping the project to keep its relevance and provide informed responses to the constant changes on the ground.

GOAL has also succeeded in ensuring high levels of water quality to project beneficiaries, effectively monitoring water quality parameters in different points of the water distribution process. Furthermore,

[23] These are based on self-reported numbers provided by beneficiaries.

the rehabilitation of Water Units and water stations provided through the ISF has also contributed to the effectiveness of programming. For example, by rehabilitating and expanding the water networks, GOAL has contributed to project objectives in relation to enhancing the viability of water stations, increasing pumping capacity and reaching more beneficiaries. Likewise, EVOLVE achieved most of its impact and outcome indicators, contributing to saving lives, protecting civilians, reducing suffering and building resilience. Overall, data suggests EVOLVE succeeded in contributing to most project objectives. However, constant changes in the local context have made GOAL change its output indicators to better respond to beneficiaries' priorities. Although the flexibility benefitted the overall project relevance, it was a challenge to follow up on EVOLVE's planned vs. achieved output indicators throughout the years.

Another project component that contributes to the project's effectiveness is GOAL's Complaints and Feedback Mechanism. The policy is well structured, explicitly detailed and provides guidance on how to handle different categories of feedback and complaints, showing consistency and standardisation in how feedbacks are handled. Moreover, roles and responsibilities of those involved are clearly defined, linking the mechanism to M&E activities, which helps incorporate users' feedbacks into regular M&E programming. Also, the policy ensures that submitted complaints receive a timely and appropriate response, contributing to the development of beneficiaries' trust in the organisation and improving the overall relationship with the local community. Nonetheless, efforts should be made to promote awareness of the multiple available channels where beneficiaries can provide feedback, as data suggests most beneficiaries are only aware of in-person methods of communication with Water Units/GOAL. Promoting multiple channels can help ensure that no voice goes unnoticed, while promoting community empowerment and maximising the effectiveness of the mechanism.

4.3. Efficiency

Definition	Evaluation Questions
The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economical and timely way.	To which extent the resources allocated to the project correspond to its needs? To which extent the project's resources were utilised in a cost-effective manner? Which types of interventions have proved to be more cost-efficient? Were there any other ways to spend the resources, especially financial ones, to get more and better impacts?

GOAL's Water Units approach contributes to project's efficiency in the mid and log-term. When compared to other methods of water distribution, improving the operational capacity of existing water infrastructure is the most cost-efficient alternative to maximise the value of existing assets, benefiting from its capacity to deliver water in greater volumes while reaching a larger number of beneficiaries in a more reliable basis. A financial assessment conducted by GOAL in 2018 concluded that even though supporting Water Units requires regular provision of consumables, it was still the most economic approach in the long term.

The Water Units approach also benefits from purchasing at economies of scale. Procuring larger quantities of inputs (in bulk) provides significant cost advantages and decreases consumables' unit costs without compromising quality. This is boosted through rehabilitation or network expansion work conducted under the ISF, as this contributes to the spreading of costs over a larger number of stations, thus maximising the project's efficiency. Moreover, regular repairs, maintenance and rehabilitation prevents physical loss caused by leakages and assets depreciation, and results in more water reaching more beneficiaries for the same costs. EVOLVE programming provides a solid base for assets utilisation

and resources sharing whereby considerable cost savings are achieved in relation to spare parts, equipment, water tests and human resources equipment shared across water stations. Likewise, human resources, especially technical staff, can be allocated to different water stations according to the project's needs.

Fuel is the most expensive input provided by EVOLVE, and its consumption is closely monitored through the fuel reconciliation tool, preventing wasting resources. GOAL's decision to change its fuel supplier from Syria to Turkey in 2018 was a sound approach to improving efficiency over time. Syrian suppliers could provide little reassurances on the availability, quality, and sources of the fuel. Poor quality fuel causes wear, premature engine failure and decreased performance to the water infrastructure, resulting in more repairs and maintenance costs. Nonetheless, there are possible risks associated with relying upon a single supplier, as any disruption in the supply chain operations or even political shifts could potentially leave Water Units vulnerable to fuel shortages. This is specifically relevant considering the short-term extension of border-crossing operations. Furthermore, it would be an unfeasible alternative for the Water Unit to maintain in the event GOAL ceases its support.

GOAL's procurement process conforms to standard good practices in its finance and purchasing procedures, having approval lines for different expenditure mechanisms according to pre-established purchasing thresholds. Contractors are selected through competitive processes and managed with due diligence. In addition, GOAL arranges performance-based contracts, and suppliers / contractors are only paid when the services are delivered and functioning over time, resulting in efficient translation of inputs into outputs. Nonetheless, Water Unit staff members expressed frustration when referring to the time taken to run procurement processes and get the needed approval from the board members. A Water Unit Manager suggested splitting the ISF into two rounds to spread the administrative burden throughout the year. Key informants revealed that, in some cases, the procedural requirements become a barrier to fulfilling simple emergency repairs activities that could be immediately repaired often get delayed due to procedural requirements. For future projects, GOAL could consider reinforcing realistic expectations about the timelines for procurement processes, while exploring ways of fast-tracking small, urgent purchases.

Assumptions regarding beneficiary numbers have changed a few times during the programme cycle due to population's movements and the lack of accurate figures. It is noteworthy that changes in assumptions about beneficiaries' numbers can improve or worsen cost-efficiency without any real change in service levels. The high influx of IDPs has increased the catchment population by almost 20%. GOAL had already reallocated funds from other relevant project's components to ensure enough inputs were provided to meet 25 l/p/d in the first six months of Year 4 project implementation. However, following the WASH Cluster recommendations, minimum standards increased to 35 litres/p/d, posing significant pressure to the networks supply capacities. Despite the challenges, GOAL has shown adaptability to changing contexts on the ground, such as moving funds internally, following FCDO agreement, to meet beneficiaries' urgent needs.

Value for Money

SREO explored the project's Value for Money approach in terms of Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness and Equity. As SREO did not have any other project benchmarks to draw quantitative comparisons, the Value for Money analysis was based on desk review and qualitative data. SREO verified project documents and to what degree Value for Money was considered, and what aspects of the EVOLVE programme contributed to Value for Money throughout the project cycle. As per the findings in the following table (Table 10), the EVOLVE Programme demonstrates a high level of awareness of, and commitment to, Value for Money practices during project design and implementation, maximising its

outcomes and impact per input. GOAL EVOLVE did not specifically reduce consumable costs across the years, however, the devaluation of the Syrian Pound, the economic crisis and other contextual challenges have affected the prices of consumables across the country. Still, according to GOAL project documents, consumables unit prices presented minimal variation, which can be considered as a successful achievement.

Table 10: Value for Money considerations

Economic Considerations	Effectiveness Considerations	Efficiency Considerations	Equity Considerations
Financial assessment conducted to analyse the most cost-efficient approach to water supply. Key inputs are purchased in bulk, reducing unit costs while maintaining quality. Comprehensively monitored total and unit costs of inputs, staffing and services. Contractors / suppliers selected with due diligence. Standard good practices in Procurement. Fuel reconciliation tool to avoid loss of resources.	Water Units approach strengthens an equitable water distribution process. Project has achieved most of its objectives. Project outputs contribute to poverty and inequality reduction and envision sustainability in the long-term, improving public health and livelihoods. 99% of beneficiaries were either satisfied or very satisfied with the project.	Performance-based contracts for cost-efficiency. Contractors are paid upon quality check over a certain time. Average costs of fuel and total cost per beneficiary reduced over time, making a strong case for cost-efficiency. Procuring fuel from Turkey instead of Syria. Better quality fuel reduces needs for maintenance and repairs over time.	Water Units approach is the most equitable form of water provision, as it is affordable and reliable. However, households that are either far from the networks or in elevated locations face more barriers to access water.

4.4. Impact

Definition	Evaluation Questions
The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.	To which extent did the project achieve its intended results and contribute towards achieving its objectives? What impact has the project had on the most vulnerable households, including women? How did the project impact local markets and the local economy? What aspects of the project could have been done differently to achieve a better impact? Have any positive or negative long-term effects been produced by the project's activities, whether directly or indirectly, intended or unintended?

Improvements in water accessibility and quality in association with hygiene behaviour change have significant effects on public health by reducing or irradicating various illnesses, such as diarrhoea, bacterial and parasitic infections, among others. GOAL beneficiaries gave very positive appraisals of the services provided by GOAL, and all participants informed that none of their household members had been diagnosed with leishmaniosis, polio or cholera in the past two weeks. Likewise, all beneficiaries affirmed that none of their children suffered from diarrhoea within the past two weeks. These improvements in health have a positive impact in various other aspects that are complex to quantify, such as reducing mortality, stunting, poverty, inequality, increasing school attendance and nutritional status. In addition, it prevents labour productivity losses due to health issues.

One of the main benefits associated with the project is time saved gathering water. Since households typically assign this task to women and children, the extra time can be particularly beneficial for them. Similarly, the provision of water services for free or for a small fee in the case of water trucking allows beneficiaries to meet other household needs, which might help them build small reserves and promote financial resilience against shocks in the future.

Hygiene kits and hygiene promotion beneficiaries were very satisfied with the services. Among those who received the kits, 99% said it was enough to cover their hygiene needs for a month. Furthermore, beneficiaries who participated in health promotion activities were able to identify critical times for handwashing, hygiene risks such as water-borne diseases and what can be done to prevent them and have also shown safe water storage practices. The positive impact of hygiene promotion activities can be noticed beyond its direct beneficiaries: KIIs with non-beneficiaries have also shown that people who have not participated presented good knowledge about hygiene practices.

The project was faced with the Covid-19 crisis in the middle of its implementation. GOAL has adapted its approach to incorporate a Covid-19 response and has successfully offered Hygiene Promotion activities to beneficiaries. Covid-19 hygiene promotion activities contributed to boosting the awareness-raising activities promoted by GOAL. As Covid-19 was not part of the EVOLVE Programme project proposal, all the benefits originating from these activities can be considered an unintended positive impact from the project. No negative impacts have been observed.

4.5. Sustainability

Definition	Evaluation Questions
The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.	Is the enhanced capacity of the water systems sustainable? If yes, what are the factors that enable sustainability? Were the human capacity building efforts adequate to ensure the sustainability of the water stations supported by the project? What were the challenges that limited the sustainability of the supported water stations?

Adopting a rehabilitation approach for water infrastructure through the pre-existing Water Units is an inherently sustainable approach, aiming to enable communities to access safe and adequate water on demand. In principle, sustainability was one of the strongest characteristics of the EVOLVE Programme, especially when it's complemented with capacity building. However, sustainability goes beyond the availability of infrastructure. Water Units rely on many different factors being in place and working together, especially financial factors such as the availability of funds and the ability of users to pay for

services. Where one or more are missing, there is a risk the service might fail completely, as it did during the war.

Water Units infrastructure need to be regularly maintained and eventually replaced. It also depends on the quality of the infrastructure and the availability of spare parts and inputs for reliable services. Current fuel shortages in Syria and the low quality of the fuel available nationally might impact the Water Units capacity to provide the needed inputs to function independently in an efficient manner. Although GOAL's alternative approach of importing fuel from Turkey is efficient, it might not be feasible in the event GOAL ceases its support.

Also, it is understood that to provide this service independently, the WATER UNITs would need to collect fees and monetise the water distribution. Therefore, preparation for cost-recovery is critical to understand the feasibility of this process. Transitioning from a free service to a paid one requires a deep understanding of what it takes to make it affordable. In other words, WATER UNIT need to know that if they want to provide 35 litres/p/d and have it available for 8 hours a day, then there are administrative and financial costs to implementing that in terms of staff capacity building, operation and maintenance, and rehabilitation/upgrading. In the meantime, the idea of user fees needs to be embedded with beneficiary communities in advance, as most will not be financially prepared for an immediate transition.

GOAL had to exclude its cost-recovery component due to the political context, which can be seen from findings as a correct decision. Although strong engagement with local authorities to build their ownership and capacity should be a key priority, the political situation remains unstable and exit strategies that involve building stronger linkages with military or political actors carry risks and may be viewed as a breach of humanitarian principles of neutrality and 'do no harm'. In this respect, maintaining and building strong links with coordination forums is vital, and is something that has been part of EVOLVE programme through the cluster and NGO Forum initiatives. Furthermore, in terms of short to medium strategy, GOAL should consider future rounds of funding and the continuation of the programme based on the level of ongoing WASH needs and the reliance of WASH activities on international humanitarian resourcing. Concurrently, appropriate and gradual exit strategies need to be developed and implemented to ensure adequate handover and eventual phase out from activities.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

FCDO support to the EVOLVE Programme ceased in May 2021. Currently, the EVOLVE Programme continues through the support of a BHA grant to run 31 water stations during September and October, and then 14 water stations until the end of May 2022. GOAL was also successful in granting funds with OCHA and ECHO until February and March 2022, respectively. This section focuses on recommendations that can be acted upon in the current project cycle, but also in future programming. These recommendations obviously rely on funding available to undertake them, but also on the development of the ongoing conflict in Syria, for which SREO developed a few assumptions in terms of future scenarios. The following are the more likely assumptions for the short-term[24]:

The local security context is unlikely to shift. Stability in Northwest Syria heavily depends on Russia-Turkey (especially in the Astana talks) and USA-Turkey engagement, and all seem keen to maintain the *status quo*[25]. Turkey's extensive military deployment should be enough to dissuade the Syrian government from launching new attacks in Idleb's zone. However, if the Syrian government decides to launch a new campaign, the conflict could easily escalate. Moreover, the fact that these players also have other regions of interest (such as the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea), can impact the Syrian context.

The consolidation of the HTS is to be watched closely. The group maintains its influence over the Idleb zone, and it remains like that with the support of Turkey. Since the HTS expanded control over Idlib province in 2019, international donors shifted from supporting the resiliency of communities to providing more purely humanitarian support. However, the HTS became an unlikely ally to the regional actors against Al-Qaeda, as the group has been combating Al Qaeda-linked groups in the Northwest. This could possibly grant them more legitimacy in the long term, which would have an impact on how stakeholders could engage with local authorities, as local authorities in most of Idleb province are linked to the HTS. Nonetheless, stakeholders should continue to be cautious when it comes to engaging with the group, if they decide to do so.

The UN cross-border operations will remain until July 2022, but no guarantees of further extension. The Assad regime has long obstructed what is known as the "cross-line" aid, which are supplies crossing from government-held parts of Syria into non-government-held areas. This makes the UN cross-border operations essential to the delivery of humanitarian aid to people in need in the opposition-areas. However, Security Council members have been struggling to approve the extension of the UN resolution, as the Syrian government and its allies insist that aid be delivered by a government-affiliated organization – such as the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC). Also, escalating violence can also potentially disrupt the cross-border supply lines.

The recommendations below are listed according to its level of priority.

Improving sustainability

[24] Erkman, Heras, Semenov. "Security Scenarios for Syria, 2021-2022", June, 2021

[25] Lyse Mauvais, "HTS seeks greater engagement with the West, but the impact on humanitarian access is uncertain," Syria Direct, May 3, 2021

a. ***Assumption:*** *The HTS consolidates its position in Idleb and gain more legitimacy among donors and local community* ***or*** *another opposition group that is not designated as a terrorist group by donors takes territorial control.*

Target: GOAL and other stakeholders implementing WASH programming in Idleb.

Recommendation: To ensure sustainability, promote extensive water demand management and cost recovery mechanisms to Water Units and local authorities with the objective to ensure the improvement of the service for end users, the sustainability of the water supply services, the conservation of water resources and the strengthening of water operators' capacities. Promotion and sensitisation of user fees/cost recovery mechanisms within beneficiary communities and among all key stakeholders should be part of the first stage of planning for eventual implementation of such structures. Moreover, GOAL and other implementing organisation should focus on connecting the water stations to the electrical grid where this is possible.

Target: Donors and prospective donors.

Recommendation: Donors should seek to fund stabilisation aid programmes to assist long-term reconstruction efforts and ensure the sustainability of the Water Units through cost-recovery programming and capacity building. Moreover, donors should focus on connecting the water stations to the electrical grid where this is possible.

b. ***Assumption:*** *The HTS consolidates its position in Idleb but maintains its designation as a terrorist group and lacks legitimacy among donors.*

Target: Donors and prospective donors, GOAL and other stakeholders implementing WASH programming in Idleb.

Donors, GOAL, and other implementing organisations should continue to focus on building the capacity of the Water Units and water stations staff. In the meantime, donors, GOAL, and other implementing organisations should focus into connecting the water stations to the electrical grid where this is possible. Training in GIS customer database creation and update, calculation of water balances, non-revenue water reduction strategic approach and decentralized customer services could be conducted for the operators and staff responsible at managerial level. Direct engagement with the HTS-linked local authorities should happen – if at all – with cautious, to avoid aid diversion and reputational costs.

c. ***Assumption:*** *The UN cross-border operations are disrupted due to conflict escalation or the non-extension of the Security Council Resolution 2285.*

Target: GOAL, implementing organisations

Recommendation: Consider creating a contingency plan in light of possible disruption of the Bab Al Hawa lifeline or non-renewal of The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution. The EVOLVE Programme relies on imported fuel and chlorine to keep the water stations functional. This poses a risk as any disruption in the supply routes may cause shortages or higher prices of fuel and chlorine due to loss of cross-border access. GOAL and implementing organisations should consider connecting the water

stations to the electrical grid where this is possible and consider other sources of fuel and chlorine supply to ensure the functionality of the water stations in the event of loss of cross-border access.

Target: Donors and prospective donors

Recommendation: Major donors should seek more consistent negotiations among themselves to expand access in Northwest Syria, reopening previously closed cross-border points and extending the mandates. High-level coordination is needed to ensure that warring parties cannot use aid as leverage.

Improving GOAL feedback mechanisms

b. Assumption: *GOAL successfully secures funding to continue the EVOLVE Programme*

Target: Primarily GOAL, but other implementing organisations could also find useful.

Recommendation: Find ways to promote feedback mechanisms where all individuals have an adequate and equal opportunity to voice their concerns and to express their preferences. As overall the preferred channel of communication appears to be in-person, consider conducting an information and communication assessment with vulnerable people (women, older people, persons with disabilities, people living in remote areas, etc.) as they might prefer different channels. If following the assessment data suggests they also prefer to give feedback in person, consider finding ways to actively seek for their feedback through outreach activities.

Recommendation: Ensure resources and appropriate channels to create a safe and confidential space for reporting. Consider reinforcing and promoting private areas and/or channels for feedback and complaints and reiterate the confidentiality of the information being shared. As the CFM handles routine and serious complaints, it is important that those who want to report misconduct, fraud, or other sensitive subjects are aware of all channels where their privacy is respected, reinforcing that they are protected from retaliation.

Improving EVOLVE general project effectiveness and future WASH programming

Target: Primarily GOAL, but other implementing organisations could also find useful.

Recommendation: Consider adopting a WASH commodity voucher distribution modality which would offer the possibility for beneficiaries to exchange their voucher against a range of hardware items (e.g. water filters, tanks, pumps, pipework, plumbing fixtures and fittings, etc.) to improve household WASH infrastructure, water quality and hygiene practices. Such an activity would include identifying and interviewing local suppliers of WASH items through a Rapid Market Assessment (RMA), checking stock availability, assessing how effectively the local supply chain for the WASH commodity voucher modality might function, and from there, entering into negotiations and agreements with selected suppliers. The WASH commodity voucher distribution should be intended as a transitional measure – neither an early-stage emergency response, nor a long-term development intervention. The approach should be market-based, serving to stimulate demand for WASH goods and support the market to meet that demand. GOAL needs to make sure that a general demand for WASH services exist and that the supply-side of the WASH market is capable of providing the goods required, with some support. Improving WASH markets and availability requires a longer-term approach to strengthening or developing the market system as a

whole. This might include, for instance, advocacy and outreach to identify development actors willing to engage in longer-term WASH-market development actions, supporting markets in providing a wider diversity of products, strengthening the capacity of suppliers, developing appropriate public-private partnerships, supporting trade associations, and stimulating demand with further awareness and promotional campaigns. GOAL could also support/consolidate the network of service providers (hardware shops) in order to influence them in setting lower prices. This could take the shape of longer-term framework agreements to make the approach more sustainable.

Recommendation: Consider formalising WASH committees unrelated to the local authorities in the AoO and provide them with WASH capacity-building so they can arrange with the Local Council or among themselves for small repairs and maintenance at the community / building / household level. WASH Committees could fill the gap between the local communities and the Local Councils and engage the community towards a greater sense of ownership of its WASH facilities, identifying areas of improvement and voicing alternative solutions considering the specific needs of neighbourhoods/buildings/households in a formal manner (i.e., need for booster pumps, water tanks, etc.)

Recommendation: In the interest of transparency and programme effectiveness, information from monitoring should be regularly shared with affected communities. Monitoring carried out by GOAL themselves or TPM contractors could further enhance transparency and quality and encourage their ownership of the information. The sharing of accurate, timely and accessible information strengthens trust, increases understanding, deepens levels of participation and improves the impact of a project. It can help to reduce the number of formal complaints received and is a key to being transparent. GOAL should define and document its processes for sharing information, for example: its commitment to accurate and timely information sharing; what information it will share with the people it seeks to assist and other stakeholders; how decisions will be made about when and how to share information; and the criteria used in deciding not to share information. GOAL policies and strategies should outline how staff members are being developed to facilitate community engagement and decision-making, listen to affected people and manage negative feedback. Feedback from crisis-affected communities should also inform strategy and programme development.

Recommendation: Make training available around disability awareness and inclusion to staff involved in project implementation and project monitoring. GOAL should systematically disaggregate data collected to identify gaps in accessibility for persons with disabilities. GOAL could develop specific indicators to measure progress in reaching and including persons with disabilities.

Recommendation: In order to manage water demand more effectively, community awareness campaigns focused on water conservation and domestic water management should be carried out to create an environment of social sanctioning of illegal connections and discourage wastage. These activities would be organised through awareness sessions, posters/leaflets, door-by-door campaigns, Facebook page and distribution of newsletters with project related messages to all citizens. GOAL would combat illegal water usage, tackle water pollution and regulate water consumption and wastage. Some respondents were vocal about the issue of water wastage, especially by shops and homes that had better access to water (i.e. those located in lower areas of the community).

Recommendation: Introduce booster pumps when needed to improve water pressure for households located in high areas. A key concern across the beneficiary survey was that those who live in homes that are higher struggle to have the same access to water as those who are lower, hence the need for GOAL to increase its efforts to ensure that water is equitably pumped to these locations as it is to other homes.

Recommendation: Natural resources should be properly managed to support sustainable WASH service delivery. GOAL together with the Water Units should identify and assess ecosystem-related risks to drinking water quality (e.g., Water Safety Planning, etc.) and assess vulnerability to climate-related impacts (including droughts) been assessed for the domestic water supply service. A proper mapping of the identified risks should be done to address management of source watersheds and/or aquifers. The water demand should be controlled so that the sustainable yield of local water resources (e.g. groundwater, surface water, springs) is not compromised (i.e. extraction is less than recharge). The competing water demands (e.g. domestic verses productive) should be considered and related planning should take place to address potential areas of conflict. Climate-related adaptation measures could be incorporated in the development of water supply services (including design, sizing, and siting of built infrastructure, management of water resources and the environment, etc.).

Recommendations: Water systems supported by GOAL should systematically comply with standards and norms in terms of infrastructure, siting, and public health risk (e.g. boreholes adequate distance from contamination sources, spring boxes and system intakes adequately protected, source is not at risk of flooding). The conduction line and the distribution network should for instance be designed and constructed in line with local standards and norms to prevent ingress of contaminants (e.g. positive pressure, minimal leaks, covered diversion boxes, break pressure tanks, check values, no informal connections, etc.) The roles and responsibilities with regard to the relevant monitoring and enforcement should be clarified with the Water Units and relevant operators.

6. LESSONS LEARNED

- WASH project implementers should maintain its Water Unit approach in future WASH programming. Investing in existing infrastructure is a priority in the sector and very cost-efficient. When complemented with capacity building and cost-recovery activities, the Water Unit approach contributes greatly to sustainability.

- Cost-recovery activities in Greater Idleb are a delicate topic that must be discussed considering the situation on the ground. HTS has been accused of Human Rights violations, aid diversion, aid interference for political gains, etc, and the decision of halting the cost-recovery component of the EVOLVE Programme seemed sensible. In the meantime, organisations could offer intense cost-recovery capacity building sessions and WASH-cost training to the Water Units managerial staff. That would be a way to prepare the Water Units for a future cost-recovery components while still contributing to sustainability.

- Currently all four Water Units supported by GOAL are completely dependent on fuel and chlorine imports to remain functioning. Considering the short-term of the Security Council Resolution 2285 (2021), and the constant fighting between the security actors in Syria, organisations should investigate alternatives in terms of route and supplier to prevent water shortages due to disruption in the project's supply chain. Investigating alternatives to fuel imports would be ideal, but its feasibility depends on the situation on the ground.

- Water adequacy is still a challenge in some locations. Although the data suggested a few explanations for these discrepancies, WASH implementers could further investigate the exact causes – in the data, it was mostly related to Salqin Water Unit – and verify the possibility to address it.

ANNEX 1 – THE EVALUATION CRITERIA WITH SUB-QUESTIONS

OECD-DAC Criteria & Evaluation Questions		
Criteria	Definition	Evaluation Questions
Relevance / Appropriateness	The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries.	*To which extent the project was aligned with national priorities, plans and/or strategies?* *To which extent the project's activities, outputs and expected results correspond with the needs and problems of targeted areas and populations?* *To which extent were the activities and outputs consistent with the intended impact/results?* *How have other targeted groups benefited from the project?* *Has the project solved its problems defined by the project analysis?*
Effectiveness	The extent to which the intervention has achieved its objectives and its results, including any differential results across groups.	*How effective was the intervention in strengthening resilience and improving access to safe water to beneficiaries?* *To which extent the project results chain (logical framework) was effective and leading to the intended results and impact.* *What factors have affected project implementation?* *What was done to mitigate the impact of these issues?* *To which extent the supported interventions were implemented effectively, thereby contributing to the project's expected results?* *To what extent the monitoring of the project implementation contributed to learning and accommodated changes throughout the implementation?* *To what extent were project indicators able to measure achievements of their intended outputs and outcomes?*
Efficiency	The extent to which the intervention delivered, or is likely to deliver, results in an economical and timely way.	*To which extent the resources allocated to the project correspond to its needs?* *To which extent the project's resources were utilised cost-effectively?* *Which types of interventions have proved to be more cost-efficient?* *Were there any other ways to spend the resources, especially financial ones, to get more and better impacts?*
Impact	The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.	*To which extent did the project achieve its intended results and contribute towards achieving its objectives?* *What impact has the project had on the most vulnerable households, including women?* *How did the project impact local markets and the local economy?*

		What aspects of the project could have been done differently to achieve a better impact? *Have any positive or negative long-term effects been produced by the project's activities, whether directly or indirectly, intended or unintended?*
Sustainability	What aspects of GOAL's WASH programme are 'sustainable' for target communities?	*Is the enhanced capacity of the water systems sustainable? If yes, what are the factors that enable sustainability?* *Were the human capacity building efforts adequate to ensure the sustainability of the water stations supported by the project?*

ANNEX 2 – THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The Evaluation Framework shows how the data collection interacts with the evaluation questions.

Criteria	Questions	Methods
Impact	To what extent has the intervention generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects? Sub-questions to be considered: To which extent did the project achieve its intended results and contribute towards achieving its objectives. What impact has the project had on the most vulnerable households, including women? How did the project impact on local markets and the local economy? What aspects of the project could have been done differently to achieve a better impact?	Beneficiary Survey Desk Review (Monitoring Reports, etc.) KIIs with Community Leaders KIIs with GOAL staff KIIs with local Councils Semi-structured interviews with non-beneficiaries KIIs with Water Units and water stations

	Have any positive or negative long-term effects been produced by the project's activities, whether directly or indirectly, intended or unintended?	
Relevance	To what extent has the intervention objectives and design responded to beneficiaries and continued to do so if circumstances change?	Literature Review (Context) Project documents (Proposal, design, Theory of Change) Beneficiary Surveys KIIs with WASH Cluster and Local Councils KIIs with GOAL staff KIIs with Water Units and water stations Semi-structured Interviews with project beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.
	Sub-questions to be considered: To which extent the project was aligned with national priorities, plans and/or strategies? To which extent the project's activities, outputs and expected results correspond with the needs and problems of targeted areas and population? To which extent were the activities and outputs consistent with the intended impact/results? How have other targeted groups benefited from the project? Has the project solved their problems defined by the project analysis?	
Sustainability	What aspects of GOAL's WASH programme are 'sustainable' for target communities?	Desk Review (Monitoring Reports, assessments, etc) KIIs with GOAL staff KIIs with Water Units and water stations
	Sub-questions to be considered: Is the enhanced capacity of the water systems sustainable? If yes, what are the factors that enable sustainability? Were the human capacity building efforts adequate to ensure the	

	sustainability of the water stations supported by the project? What were the challenges that limited the sustainability of the supported water stations?	
Effectiveness	To what extent did the project achieve its objectives and its results?	Beneficiary Survey Desk Review (Monitoring Reports, assessments, etc) KIIs with GOAL Project staff KIIs with Water Units water station staff Semi-structured interviews with project beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries
	Sub-questions to be considered: How effective was the intervention in strengthening resilience and improving access to safe water to beneficiaries? To which extent the project results chain (logical framework) was effective and leading to the intended results and impact. What factors have affected project implementation? What was done to mitigate the impact of these issues? To which extent the supported interventions were implemented effectively, thereby contributing to the project's expected results? To what extent the monitoring of the project implementation contributed to learning and accommodated changes throughout the implementation? To what extent were project indicators able to measure achievements of its intended outputs and outcomes?	
	5. To which extent the project delivered, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way?	Desk Review (Financial reports, BOQs, budget, list of assets, etc)

Efficiency	Sub-questions to be considered: To which extent the resources allocated to the project correspond to its needs? To which extent the project's resources were utilised in a cost-effective manner? Which types of interventions have proved to be more cost-efficient? Were there any other ways to spend the resources, especially financial ones, to get more and better impacts?	KIIs Semi-structured interviews

ANNEX 3 – BENEFICIARY SURVEY

Background information

Field researcher name:	Text
Date of monitoring:	Today
Governorate:	Select from governorate list
District:	Select from district list
Community / Village / Town:	Armanaz / Kafr Takharim / Salqin / Kniseh (Mhambal) / Qouqeena / Idleb
Introduction	Note: Hello, my name is ${fr_name}. I work for an independent research company called SREO Consulting that was commissioned by GOAL to conduct an evaluation about their water supply project in Idleb. This survey will enquire about water supply availability, water quality, costs, and your level of satisfaction with the services. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions, I am interested in your genuine opinion and thoughts. Your participation is voluntary and anonymous. You can choose to not answer any/all questions if you want. However, we hope you will participate since your views will guide future programming. The survey will take **XX** minutes.
Do you consent to participate in this survey?	Yes No

Respondent demographics

District	Idleb	Demographic
Gender	Female Male	Demographic
Age	Integer	Demographic
Marital Status	Single Married Divorced Widowed Separated	
Residency Status	IDP Host Community Returnee	Demographic
Location of the household: What is your neighbourhood called? Which specific area (according to the water pumping section of the town) your house is located?		Demographic
Are you the head of household? - If not, what is the gender of the head of household? (male / female) - What is the age of the head of household? (interger) - What is the marital status of the head of household? (single, married, divorced, widowed, separated)	Yes / No	Demographic
How many people live in this household? (integer)		Demographic

# of male family members under 5 years old? (integer)		Demographic
# of female family members under 5 years old? (integer)		Demographic
# of female family members aged between 5 and 18 years old? (integer)		Demographic
# of female family members aged 5 and 18 years old? (integer)		Demographic
# of male family members aged between 19 and 59? (integer)		Demographic
# of female family members aged between 19 and 59? (integer)		Demographic
# of male family members 60+? (integer)		Demographic
# of female family members 60+? (integer)		Demographic
Do you or anyone in your household have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses? (select_one)	No difficulty Some difficulty A lot of difficulty Cannot do at all	Washington Group Questions
Do you or anyone in your household have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid(s)? (select_one)	No difficulty Some difficulty A lot of difficulty Cannot do at all	Washington Group Questions
Do you or anyone in your household have difficulty walking or climbing steps? (select_one) in this case	No difficulty Some difficulty A lot of difficulty Cannot do at all	Washington Group Questions
Do you or anyone in your household have difficulty remembering or concentrating? (select_one)	No difficulty Some difficulty A lot of difficulty Cannot do at all	Washington Group Questions
Do you or anyone in your household have difficulty (with self-care such as) washing all over or dressing? (select_one)	No difficulty Some difficulty A lot of difficulty Cannot do at all	Washington Group Questions
Using your usual language, do you or anyone in your have difficulty communicating, (for example understanding or being understood by others)? (select_one)	No difficulty Some difficulty A lot of difficulty Cannot do at all	Washington Group Questions
WASH		
What are the main sources of drinking water used by members of your household? (select_multiple)	Water mains/network Water trucks Other	Access to water
What are the main sources of water used for other purposes such as cooking and handwashing? (select_multiple)	Water network Water trucks Other	Access to water

If water tanker, how long does it take for members of your household to go there, get water, and come back?		
If water network is not selected, why do you not have access to a water network? (select_multiple)	Because there is no water connexion in my house. Because there is no water connexion in my neighbourhood. Because I cannot afford to pay for the service. The connexion to my house needs maintenance / repair. The connexion to my neighbourhood needs maintenance / repair. The water pumping station does not work / needs maintenance or repair. Others (please specify) I don't know	Access to water
What percentage of your water do you get from the water network? (0-100)		Access to water
Water Networks		
How often does your household receive water through the water network? (How many times per week)		Water availability and quantities
For each pumping day, how many hours water reach your home?		Water availability and quantities
How much water do you get each time the water is pumped into your home? (in barrels)		Water availability and quantities
When was the last time you received water through the water network? (in days)		Water availability and quantities
In the last month, has there been any time when your household did not have sufficient quantities of drinking water?	Yes, at least once No, always sufficient I don't know	Water availability and quantities
Is the water supplied through the water network sufficient to cover all your basic water needs? (drinking, cooking, bathing, etc) If not, why not?	Yes No	Water availability and quantities
Does everyone in your community have easy access to the water networks? If not, who does not have easy access?	Yes No	Water availability and quantities

Does your household have a water tank or another storage facility? How much water can be stored at maximum (in litres)?	Yes No	Water availability and quantities
Based on appearance, how would you describe the water you receive through the networks? **If the water seems cloudy / hazy, do you know why?** - My tank needs cleaning, - The network pipes are cracked and dirt enters - The well is in poor condition - Other (Please specify)	The water seems perfectly clear / pure (no cloudiness/haziness) Water seems mostly clear/pure but there appears to be some sediment (e.g. sand, limescale) Water seems cloudy/hazy Water has an unnatural colour (i.e. slightly reddish) Other (Please specify)	Water quality
How does the water taste?	There is no unnatural taste It tastes like chlorine It tastes very salty It tastes like some chemicals/burning sensation Other	Water quality
How does the water smell?	There is no unnatural smell Smells lightly of chlorine Smells strongly of chlorine Smells strongly of some chemicals Smells bad/has rotting smell Other	Water quality
Do you believe the water you receive from the network is safe to drink?	Yes No	Water quality
Do you or any other member of this household do anything to the water to make it safer to drink? If yes, what do you do? - Boil - Add bleach / Chlorine - Use water filters (ceramic, sand, etc) - Others (please specify)	Yes No	Water quality
Do you have to pay any fees for water supply through network? If yes, how do you have to pay (per month)? If yes, to whom do you have to pay? - Local Council	Yes No	Water costs

- Water Unit - Water Station - GOAL - Others (Please specify)		
Would you be willing to pay to have access to safe water from a functioning water network?	Yes No DK	
Water Trucks (skip logic)		
How often do you rely on water trucking? (days per week)		Water availability and quantities
How much do you rely on water trucking?	Delivery of all/most of the water used by my household Water to supplement my main water source Other (Please specify)	Water availability and quantities
How much water do you get each time you get the tank? (in barrels)		Water availability and quantities
Does your household have a water tank or another storage facility? How much water can be stored at maximum (in litres)?	Yes No	Water availability and quantities
Based on appearance, how would you describe the water you receive through the water trucking services? If the water seems cloudy / hazy, do you know why? - My tank needs cleaning, - The network pipes are cracked and dirt enters - The well is in poor condition - Other (Please specify)	The water seems perfectly clear / pure (no cloudiness/haziness) Water seems mostly clear/pure but there appears to be some sediment (e.g. sand, limescale) Water seems cloudy/hazy Water has an unnatural colour (i.e. slightly reddish) Other (Please specify)	Water quality
How does the water taste?	There is no unnatural taste It tastes like chlorine It tastes very salty It tastes like some chemicals/burning sensation Other	Water quality
How does the water smell?	There is no unnatural smell Smells lightly of chlorine Smells strongly of chlorine Smells strongly of some chemicals Smells bad/has rotting smell Other	Water quality

Do you believe the water you receive from the truck is safe to drink?	Yes No	Water quality
Do you or any other member of this household do anything to the water to make it safer to drink? If yes, what do you do? - Boil - Add bleach / Chlorine - Use water filters (ceramic, sand, etc) Others (please specify)	Yes No	Water quality
Do you have to pay any fees for water trucking services? If yes, how much do you have to pay (per month)? If yes, to whom do you have to pay? - Local Council - Water Unit - Water Station - GOAL Others		Water cost
Before the support from GOAL, how much did your household pay each month for water trucking?	Yes No DK	Water cost
Impact and Beneficiaries' Satisfaction		
How do you rate your satisfaction with the quality of the water coming through the water network? If un-satisfied, please specify.	Satisfied Neutral Un-satisfied	Satisfaction
How do you rate your satisfaction with the availability of water coming through the water network? If un-satisfied, please specify.	Satisfied Neutral Un-satisfied	Satisfaction
How do you rate your satisfaction with the quality of the water coming through the water trucking? If un-satisfied, please specify.	Satisfied Neutral Un-satisfied	Satisfaction
How do you rate your satisfaction with the availability of water coming through the water trucking? If un-satisfied, please specify.	Satisfied Neutral Un-satisfied	Satisfaction
How do you rate your satisfaction with the water network and station in your community? If un-satisfied, please specify.	Satisfied Neutral Un-satisfied	

Any of your children under 5 years old that have suffered from diarrhoea (pass 3 or more loose stools in the course of one day) in the past year? (skip_logic) If yes, how many times? Please detail.	Yes No	Impact
Has any of your family members been diagnosed with Cholera, Polio or Leishmaniasis in the past year? If yes, which one? (select_multiple) - Cholera - Polio - Leishmaniasis If yes, what was the age of the family member(s)? (text)	Yes No	Impact
Hygiene Promotion and Kits Distribution		
Have you participated in any hygiene promotion activities? If yes, would you be able to cite two critical times for handwashing? If yes, do you think the information is relevant to your needs? Yes No Don't know	Yes No	Hygiene
How do you store drinking water? (select_multiple) If in containers, what type of container? (select_one) - Narrow mouthed, unable to get fist inside - Wide mouthed - Both types (FRs ask to see the water containers) Are the containers covered? (Y/N) Are containers clean? (Y/N)	In containers (bucket, Jerry Can, pot, bottle) Roof Tank or Cistern No water stored	Hygiene
Have you received **hygiene kits?** If yes, please select the contents (select_multiple): (List to be provided by GOAL)		Hygiene

If yes, did the hygiene kit meet your household basic hygiene needs for one month? Yes No		
On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate the composition of the hygiene kits?	1 to 5	Satisfaction
Was the hygiene assistance received enough to cover your hygiene needs? Yes No (please specify)		Satisfaction
Accountability		
Are you aware of which Water Unit is responsible for providing water supply to this neighbourhood? If yes, please specify.	Yes No	Accountability
Are you aware on how to contact Water Units if you have to share complaint/concern or feedback about the water supply assistance? If yes, what are the methods which you are aware of? - Feedback Office - Telephone Hotline - Face-to-face with staff - E-mail - WhatsApp - None	Yes No	Accountability
Have you ever used the available feedback mechanism? If yes, what was the complaint about? What was the Water Unit response? Are you satisfied with their response? If not, please specify. Which channel did you use to make the complaint? - Feedback Office - Telephone Hotline - Face-to-face with staff - E-mail - WhatsApp - None		Accountability
Do you have any suggestions/comments about the WASH support provided by GOAL? If yes, please explain?		

ANNEX 4 – DATA COLLECTION AND QUALITY PROTOCOLS

SREO' field teams follow the steps below when conducting interviews with respondents. SREO does not like to specify the exact interview duration to the interviewer, as each respondent may need more or less time to understand the questions and respond. That said, the below steps are followed regardless of interview duration:

- **Informed Consent:** All tools will incorporate an introductory paragraph that informs each participant about the purpose of the survey and their privacy rights. The interviewer will not conduct surveys with anyone before obtaining their informed consent. No one is interviewed if they do not consent. No one is forced to answer questions – SREO strongly believes that respondents have a moral right to refuse to answer questions in part or whole.
- **Establish Rapport:** The SREO field researcher explains the purpose of the interview and how the data will be used and by whom. These statements can be crafted jointly between SREO and GOAL.
- **Phrasing Questions Carefully:** SREO field researchers avoid direct questions that elicit "yes" or "no" answers in order to get more detailed and free flowing information.
- **Using Probing Questions:** Probing questions encourage the informant to discuss their opinions, feelings, ideas, and to think critically. Field researchers may ask about an informant's attitude/opinion, repeat the question, pause for an answer, or use neutral comments to elicit as much information as possible.
- **Using Clarifying Questions:** Clarifying questions help provide details needed to understand the situation and to avoid misunderstanding/mistranslation. They are brief and factual.
- **Take Adequate Notes:** SREO field researchers take notes throughout the survey process, directly on the mobile tool, or by pen and paper. These notes include information specific to the overall situation in which surveying took place and can include information related to access, challenges, security, particular notes of positivity or negativity received, etc. No information that could identify a respondent is collected.

Do No Harm, Data Protection and Conflict Sensitivity

SREO's work is underpinned by Do No Harm principles essential to conflict-sensitive settings. We place prime importance to protection of beneficiary data and other mechanisms that must be factored when working in fragile contexts with vulnerable populations. A few core principles are highlighted below.

Informed Consent

SREO's field researchers always ask for a participant's informed consent before conducting a survey or interview, taking a photo, etc. Field researchers are provided a written statement to read to participants before conducting an interview or survey, which explains the activity, its purpose, and the rights of participants. They then explain to participants that they can decide what information to share or not share with the researcher and how their information will be used. Participants can end their participation at any time for any reason.

Confidentiality and Data Security

Confidentiality is one of the most important parts of data collection. SREO recognizes that respondent data must not be traceable back to its source or made public without each participants' permission, lest it harms them and/or their community. This is especially true in sensitive or volatile situations.

- No record or use of identifying (facial) photos;
- No record or use of participant names or other identifying information without permission;
- No comprehensive description of beneficiary cases that could be linked back to specific persons;
- No distribution of participant data to anyone other than the client;
- SREO's data security system is ISO 27001 and 27018 compliant.
- All data collected is stored on an encrypted cloud-based server that features daily back-up services ensuring that data is never lost.
- SREO offers to wipe its database of project data after project close-out.

Data quality assurance protocols

Pre-Data Collection Measures

- **Training:** Field Staff training prepares FRs to carry out each project effectively, efficiently and ethically. Field Coordinators train Field Supervisors on: How to Conduct Surveys/KIIs/FGDs; Do No Harm principles applied to data collection; data collection software needed (audio recording and upload); and the specific project sampling methodology. Supervisors then organize and cascade trainings to FRs in each region in person or by Skype. Briefly, training topics will cover the following:
- **Tool Piloting:** Tools are tested in all relevant languages by researchers, Field Coordinators and Researchers prior to deployment. They are tested for content and question sequencing, translation accuracy / clarity, length and appropriateness for intended participants.
- **Staff Structure:** SREO's outcome-based management and payment structure incentivizes FRs to follow data collection methodologies and do their best to collect valid and reliable data. Field Researchers are not paid based on the time they spend on a project but on their completion of tasks after a client approves a product, the same as SREO as a company. It is therefore in the whole project team's interest to collect quality data according to client specifications on time. Field team training and data review reinforce this structure.

In Field / Post-Data Collection Measures

- **Review / Translation on Rolling Basis:** Field Supervisors check the completeness of all datasets including tool conducted and length. This can be done quickly by looking at the recording timestamp and SVR. Participants will provide their basic demographic information at the beginning of the tool. Translators also detect errors in quality by flagging skipped or incomplete questions, poor group dynamics, participation drop-out or other discrepancies.
- **Stagger Fieldwork:** When working in multiple locations, SREO staggers fieldwork when time allows such that translators and researchers can check data more thoroughly to catch errors in methodology or particular field challenges not identified before.
- **Site Visit Reports:** FRs note sampling methodology and field challenges in SVRs, the first pieces of data reviewed by researchers.
- **Transcript Review:** When a researcher reviews a transcript, they can assess the quality of data by the depth of response to questions. Translators are trained not to summarize information, leading to data loss. Therefore, researchers will cross-check surface-level data with translators to assess whether there is a problem with translation or the data itself.

Field Access and Approach

SREO has sufficient access and permission to work across NW Syria. We work in each location targeted by GOAL routinely to conduct baselines, periodic monitoring and evaluations. We maintain field access to all districts in Idleb, where the project is being implemented.

SREO is registered and allowed to operate throughout northwestern Syria amongst a variety of local authorities. All NGOs, INGOs and other humanitarian actors must be registered with local governing authorities if they wish to work in opposition-held Idleb or Aleppo. This registration must be carried out with the approval of local governing forces and requires that a physical office be located and accessible to the organization's Syrian-based employees.

SREO has been registered with local authorities in Idleb and Aleppo since late 2017 and has a fully functional office located in Qah, Idleb, including internet and necessary technological infrastructure. This is what SREO has dubbed a "paperless" office, meaning, that no paper is produced or other physical copies of documents related to SREO's work or its partner's work inside Syria. This protocol has been established to ensure data integrity and security is maintained. Our permissions allow us to collect any sort of data in opposition-held regions.

SREO has continuously adapted its field approach to Syria's changing context since 2013. We maintain operational flexibility through a combination of:

- **Local Field Teams:** Field teams work within their areas of origin, which allows SREO to quickly deploy field teams to suit monitoring needs. It also means that field teams are less likely to lose access to field sites when travel routes are affected physically or politically
- **Multiple Registered Offices:** SREO has registered offices in Idleb, Raqqa and Hasakeh provinces, which are areas that require different registration processes for humanitarian and TPM providers to conduct fieldwork. This allows SREO to work without the administrative difficulties that non- registered organizations face.

ANNEX 5 – PROJECT LOGFRAME

EVOLVE						Justification
Impact Indicator 1		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Percentage of HOUSEHOLDSs in Water Unit Catchment areas reporting a child under five had an episode of diarrhoea in the past two weeks	**Planned**	N/A	N/A	N/A	8	NA
	Achieved	N/A	7	3	4	
Impact Indicator 2		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Percentage of HOUSEHOLDSs who report satisfaction with quality of water supply service from Water Units	**Planned**	75	75	75	75	NA
	Achieved	N/A	50	79	84	
Outcome Indicator 1		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Number of individuals provided with clean drinking water meeting a minimun standard	**Planned**	765303	765303	765303	765303	N/A
	Achieved	765303	765807	804781	822460	
Outcome Indicator 2		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
% of households that reported that the hygiene kits met their personal basic hygiene needs (updated on Y3 Q3)	**Planned**	75%	75%	75%	75%	N/A
	Achieved	N/A	N/A	N/A	75%	
Outcome Indicator 3		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Percentage of beneficiaries who receive support who report that relief commodities or cash transfers were appropriate to their basic needs	**Planned**	80%	80%	80%	80%	N/A
	Achieved	N/A	N/A	NA	85%	
Outcome Indicator 4		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Percentage of active NGO Forum	**Planned**	N/A	N/A	N/A	90%	

members and donors who agree that the NGO Forum is delivering on its mandate through the Advocacy Working Group (AWG) and Partnership Working Group (PWG).	**Achieved**	N/A	N/A	NA	74%	
Output Indicator 1.1		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Value (GBP) of fuel purchased for 50 Water Stations within Four Water Units (excluding trader fees)	**Planned**	£ 610,734	£ 839,239	£671,392	£671,392	All spending forecasts are reported to FCDO. Value overachieved due to overconsumption based against monthly estimates.
	Achieved	£ 709,336	£ 848,060	£737,196	£702,148	
Output Indicator 1.2		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Average water use for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene in any household	**Planned**	25	25	20	20	GOAL increased the water pumping as a response to COVID-19, as recommended by the WASH cluster.
	Achieved	28	31	30	29	
Output Indicator 1.3		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Percentage of water tests conducted that found no faecal coliforms per 100ml of water at household level	**Planned**	99	99	99	99	N/A
	Achieved	100	100	100%	100	
Output Indicator 1.4		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Number of supported Water Stations that are 90% operational as per their scheduled pumping hours per month	**Planned**	36	36	36	36	36 stations during Q4 were less than 90% operational. Maintenance and rehabilitation of pumps and generators were the largest contributors to water stations
	Achieved	40	39	35	30	

						being offline. 8 stations were in the 80% range All communities are notified about shortages in service provision. The monthly achievements Jan, Feb and March were 29, 28 33 respectively.
Output Indicator 1.6		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Additional number of households connected to the network receiving water at an average minimum standard under the Infrastructure Stabilisation Fund	**Planned**	N/a	N/a	N/a	790	GOAL overachieved on this indicator due to having more accurate information on population numbers prior to conception. Also, a greater number of ISF projects was completed than originally planned.
	Achieved	0	0	405	1353	
Output Indicator 1.7		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
% of households that have a member with disability in water station catchment areas	**Planned**	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	N/A. No target should be set for this indicator.
	Achieved	N/a	30%	33%	30%	
Output Indicator 1.8		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
% of ISF proposed rehabilitations referred to WASH Cluster that were implemented by other actors	**Planned**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	N/A
	Achieved	0	0	0	0	
Output Indicator 1.9		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Number of infrastructure rehabilitation projects for Water	**Planned**	**0**	**0**	0	8	GOAL managed to achieve more projects with the allocated budget than originally
	Achieved	0	0	6	9	

stations and water networks						planned. All projects were reviewed and vetted prior to implementation to ensure they reached the most vulnerable communities.
Output Indicator 2.2		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Number of Water Units sharing information on services and community feedback mechanisms using platforms accessible by the beneficiary community.	**Planned**	4	4	4	4	N/A
	Achieved	4	4	4	4	
Output Indicator 2.3		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Number of water units with an appropriate functioning water management system	**Planned**	4	4	4	4	N/A
	Achieved	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	
Output Indicator 2.8		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Percentage of beneficiary complaints registered by Water Units mechanisms that have been addressed within a reasonable time period	**Planned**	85%	85%	85%	85%	N/A
	Achieved	94%	96%	97%	97%	
Output Indicator 2.9		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Percentage of Households in Water Station Catchment Areas who are aware of water unit CCRM mechanisms for providing feedback about water supply services	**Planned**	80%	80%	80%	80%	
	Achieved	N/A	77%	64%	73%	
Output Indicator 2.10		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
	Planned	2	2	2	2	

Numbers of trainings and workshops to improve technical capacity conducted with Water Units	**Achieved**	0	2	2	3	No trainings were conducted in Q1 as a mitigation measure to COVID-19.
Output Indicator 3.3		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Percentage of individuals surveyed that rate the quality and composition of hygiene kits a 3 or above in a scale of 1 to 5 (sample size: 30% of beneficiaries of hygiene kits).	**Planned**	80%	80%	80%	80%	N/A
	Achieved	N/A	N/A	N/A	92%	
Output Indicator 3.4		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Percentage of households that have a member with a disability that received hygiene kits	**Planned**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Achieved	N/A	N/A	N/A	8%	
Output Indicator 3.7		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Percentage of IDP households that received hygiene kits also received hygiene promotion	**Planned**	100%	100%	100%	100%	N/A
	Achieved	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	
Output Indicator 3.8		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Percentage of hygiene promotion (HP) beneficiaries reporting that received HP messages are relevant to their needs.(updated on Y3 Q3)	**Planned**	70%	70%	70%	70%	HP post session monitoring interviews were put on hold as a mitigation measure to COVID-19.
	Achieved	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Output Indicator 3.9		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Number of individuals reached with hygiene kits	**Planned**	-	3,000	4,000	3,000	N/A
	Achieved	0	0	0	9,325	
Output Indicator 3.10		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Number of individuals reached with hygiene promotion activities	**Planned**	3750	3750	3750	3750	Hygiene promotion sessions were increased to
	Achieved	4749	3106	4217	5433	

						raise awareness on COVID-19.
Output Indicator 4.1		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Number of monitoring reports prepared based on continuous M&E data collection activities	**Planned**	1	1	1	1	As a mitigation measure for COVID-19, face to face interviews were put on hold during Q1, i.e. no PAM survey was conducted and therefore no report was generated in Q1.
	Achieved	0	1	1	1	
Output Indicator 4.2		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Number of project review workshops carried out	**Planned**	1	1	1	1	As a learning point from the review workshop help in Q1, it was decided that review workshops will be held after the end of the quarter, to ensure indicator achievements are updated and allow for better discussion and review of achievements. Therefore, the review workshop for Q4 will be conducted after the end of the grant.
	Achieved	1	0	1	0	
Output Indicator 4.3		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Number of Third Party Monitoring site visits	**Planned**	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	N/A
	Achieved	N/A	N/A	1	1	
Output Indicator 8.1		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Number of advocacy and information products produced and disseminated by the NGO Forum to stakeholders	**Planned**	2	2	2	2	The advocacy working group has been particularly active in the last
	Achieved	9	4	3	3	

including donors, governments, UN and UN agencies, and public as appropriate.						year in disseminating messages related to the humanitarian situation in NWS. This resulted in an unexpected number of documents produced, supporting the humanitarian needs of the local population, the critical question of the renewal of the UNSC resolution on cross border, and the support for Covid-19 preventive measures.
Output Indicator 8.2		**Milestone Y4-Q1**	**Milestone Y4-Q2**	**Milestone Y4-Q3**	**Milestone Y4-Q4**	
Number of partner tools developed by the PWG for dissemination and standardized use by NGO Forum members.	**Planned**	0	1	0	1	While the partnership working group planned to set few harmonized tools, at the end of the year we had three of them (OCA, partnership evaluation tool, risk review tool), which have been piloted and used by some NGO forum members.
	Achieved	1	0	0	3	

ANNEX 6 – INTERVIEWEES AND OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES CONSULTED

SREO conducted **20 KIIs with project implementers and stakeholders** in Idleb, as follows:

Category	Position	Location
GOAL Staff	WASH Programme Manager	Harim
	WASH D. Programme Manager	Harim
	WASH D. Programme Manager	Harim
	WASH D. Programme Manager	Harim
	Hygiene Promotion Officer	Harim
	Hygiene Promotion Officer	Harim
Water Unit Staff	Head of Water Unit	Salqin
	Head of Water Unit	Darkosh
	Head of Water Unit	Harim
	Head of Water Unit	Idleb
Water Station Staff	Water Station Manager	Kafr Takharim
	Water Station Manager	Idleb
Local Councils	Local Council Rep	Armanaz
	Local Council Rep	Kafr Takharim
	Local Council Rep	Salqin
	Local Council Rep	Idleb
	Local Council Rep	Qourqeena
	Local Council Rep	Kniseh (Mhambal)
WASH Cluster Representative	WASH Cluster Rep	Idleb
Community Leaders	Community Leader	Kniseh (Mhambal)
	Community Leader	Qourqeena

SREO also conducted 45 Semi-Structured Interviews (SSIs) as follows:

- 39 SSIs with beneficiaries
  - of which 15 were beneficiaries of the hygiene promotion activities and kits distribution
- 5 SSIs with non-beneficiaries to compare and contrast their needs and experiences
- 1 SSIs with a GOAL staff that participated in the Infrastructure Stabilisation Fund project's selection.

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ANNEX 8 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Annex 1 to ITT:

FCDO EVOLVE Final Evaluation

Terms of Reference (ToR)

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Founded in 1977 in Ireland, GOAL is an international humanitarian agency which currently works in 13 countries. GOAL has been working in Syria for over six years, focusing its efforts on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL), and Emergency Response interventions.

The present conflict in Syria has critically increased the water, sanitation, and hygiene needs of vulnerable populations throughout the country.

2.3 million people are in need of WASH in Idleb governorate. Sufficient access to affordable safe water, adequate sanitation, solid waste management and hygiene supplies remains a challenge to newly displaced individuals and vulnerable households alike. In Idleb governorate 85% of households still rely on unsafe water sources, such as water trucking, to meet their daily water needs. Communities not served with public water networks are more at risk of unsafe water consumption, use less water than communities with network water and spend significantly more on purchasing water. (HRP 2020)

The Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2019 show that Idleb is one of the governorates with the highest WASH needs, with only 13% of surveyed households having access to piped water and 45% relying on untreated water trucking.

Access to piped water has faced service interruption due to power cuts, and damaged water stations. In GOAL's areas, 33% of households rely on alternative or supplementary water sources alone due to lack of access to or frequent outages of piped water services. This, coupled with poor sanitation and hygiene services, increase the risk of negative coping mechanisms and incidence of preventable diseases.

In reaction to the aforementioned needs resultant from the Syrian conflict, GOAL began, in 2014, spearheading a large-scale humanitarian intervention across Northern Idleb.

1.2. GOAL's Programmes

GOAL Syria has implemented a large-scale WASH Programme in Idleb Governorate across the districts of Ariha, Harem, Idleb and Jisr-Ash-Shugur since 2014 (see Annex 1 of the TOR – Maps of the areas of operation) with funding mainly from the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), formerly the Department for International Development (DFID). The approach of this programme is to invest in the capacity of existing water systems to facilitate sustainability of programme outcomes. Under FCDO funding, GOAL supports four Water Units and some 50 sub-ordinated water stations with management capacity support, as well as operations and maintenance assistance including rehabilitation, minor repairs, staff salaries, fuel, water treatment chemicals and quality monitoring. This approach has proved to be effective in enabling over 763,310 people from the resident and displaced communities to access clean and safe drinking water at household level with (on average) not less than 25 liters of water per person per day (recently increased to 35 l/p/d, due to COVID-19 standards). This has been well received by local communities based on beneficiary community feedback that GOAL has received to date. With extensive technical capacity and track record in WASH programming, GOAL Syria has an established presence in the target areas **and** benefits from good relations with local communities, including Water Units and Local Councils. A survey with a representative sample of beneficiaries is conducted on a quarterly basis and is used to provide feedback from beneficiaries on the water they received and their satisfaction with the quality, quantity, and accessibility of the pumped water. Moreover, it gives the opportunity to provide feedback and flag any other issues. GOAL and Water Units' Community Feedback Mechanism channels are also available, through WhatsApp numbers and GOAL

offices, where beneficiaries can provide feedback and register complaints. GOAL started piloting a Telegram channel during September 2020, to share information related to programme assistance with the supported communities.
With the focus on building the capacity of local Water Units and also rehabilitating the water system in the area of operation, GOAL has implemented the Infrastructure Stability Fund approach which depends on implementing rehabilitation based on concepts and proposals from staff in the Water Units through an application process. GOAL complements these activities with community-based hygiene promotion to mitigate the risk of negative coping strategies that lead to modifying hygiene practices. GOAL is the only NGO providing continuous water infrastructure support to such a scale in the target area, other NGOs are working in other locations in Idleb Governorate.
The WASH programme is complemented by GOAL's larger Syria Response Programme addressing a multitude of life-saving basic needs through a multi-sectoral and integrated programming approach, encompassing food security, shelter, nutrition, and emergency support, with a variety of cash-based assistance and in-kind modalities.
The 50 water stations supported by the GOAL FCDO project are providing water currently to 123 villages and towns with the estimated number of beneficiaries as 763,310 individuals. As some of the 123 villages are small, they are not considered as separate communities by the HNO and WASH cluster. Both the WASH cluster and FCDO requested that GOAL use the WASH Cluster list of registered villages which merges the smaller villages with the nearest registered village making the number of villages reported as 91 villages (see Annex 2 – List of FCDO EVOLVE Project Villages and water stations and Annex 1 of the TOR – Maps of the areas of operation). All supported villages are in Idleb Governorate.
The EVOLVE project started on 6 February 2018 and runs until the 31 March 2021 and a mid-term evaluation was conducted in September 2019. The total budget for the EVOLVE project is **£12,261,048.**

2 DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

○ 2.1 Project Objectives

GOAL, with support from FCDO and other donors, has been supporting the operation of four Water Units serving the conflict-affected population of Idleb Governorate since 2014. A current estimated 763,310 individuals rely on the water pumped by 50 water stations within the four Water Units for their households' drinking and hygiene needs. The desired outcome of the programme is that **community water systems are efficiently and effectively managed, and the community is informed, invested and supportive of local institutions and has sustained access to safe drinking water and hygienic conditions.** Implementation of the programme will contribute towards the impact of 'Lives saved, civilians protected, suffering reduced and resilience built.' **Key activities implemented to achieve the aforementioned outcome include:**

- Providing inputs (fuel, oil, High Test Hypochlorite (HTH), salaries) to enable the stations to pump water for the 91 villages;
- Initiating an 'Infrastructure Stability fund´ that water stations can apply to for upgrading or investing in their stations and water networks. Maintains resources to enable emergency repairs conducted by GOAL;
- Supporting recent arrivals into Idleb with hygiene kits and hygiene promotion.

As part of the project strategy, these activities are measured through a series of Outcome and Output indicators (see Annex 3 - FCDO EVOLVE Logframe). The consultant must agree with GOAL on all indicators to be measured before data collection begins.

Year 4 of the EVOLVE programme focused on five of the eight Outputs in the Logframe as highlighted below. Outputs 5,6 and 7 were completed in previous years following receipt of additional short-term funding from FCDO.

Output 1: Efficiency, viability and coverage of stations improved due to the provision of inputs at water stations and the implementation of repairs, upgrades, and network expansion
Output 2: Water Units provide transparent and accountable oversight of and incorporate community feedback towards water supply management
Output 3: GOAL retains the capacity to respond to identified WASH of other emergency needs in its Area of operation (AoO)
Output 4: Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) activities conducted
Output 8: Humanitarian organizations have increased capacity for coordination, partnership and advocacy

GOAL has applied a thorough and focussed effort to equip the water system servicing Idleb city with the human and technical capacity needed for the provision of minimum clean water services to 90% of its population. It has organised the team in such a way as to provide constant watch over operations and respond immediately to frequent malfunctions due to worn-out installations. The project has repaired a significant portion of the main water pipes in the city.
GOAL, with support from FCDO (2014 - 2019), OFDA (2014-2016) and Norwegian Church Aid (2015 – 2017) and other donors, has been supporting the operation of these four Water Units serving Idleb Governorate since 2014. In addition to that, GOAL with support from UNOCHA is supporting 15 water stations in Idleb (no overlap with FCDO targeted areas), and through OFDA support is providing access up to clean water in Idleb through fuel support to water stations and contributions to the Infrastructure Stabilization Fund (ISF) to enable continuation of services. OFDA is supporting the same 4 water units (50 water stations) supported by FCDO in Idleb with approximately 11% of total budget. Food remains the most urgent need for the target population, which is addressed by GOAL through the Food Security Programming with support from Food for Peace (FFP), complementing GOAL's overall response.

○ 2.2 Evaluation Rationale and Purpose

The main purpose of this evaluation is to assess GOAL's performance and delivery, *at the Impact, outcome and output level,* of the FCDO-funded EVOLVE project according to five of the OECD DAC evaluation criteria ***(relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability)***. Illustrated in the following objectives:r

a. Assess if the community were supported to access clean and safe drinking water meeting the minimum standards 25 litres per day as a result of the programme activities (recently increased to 35 l/p/d, due to COVID-19 standards).
b. Assess if the newly displaced people provided with hygiene kits were able to meet their hygiene needs as a result
c. Assess if the beneficiaries who attended hygiene promotion sessions found them useful and relevant
d. Assess the project value for money across different activities including, but not limited to, Water Units support and water trucking activities.

The secondary purpose of the evaluation will be to help GOAL to improve its future programming through lessons learned and best practices generated through this project guided by the following:

a. How has the project maintained its relevance and adapted, and continued to deliver effectively?
b. What have been the challenges, and how should GOAL approach this differently based on this experience?
c. To draw conclusions and obtain lessons learned to inform future GOAL programming.

As this is the last year of the programme and it is not likely that FCDO funding will continue beyond March 2021, GOAL will also utilize the results of the evaluation to inform the approach to other donors to support the WASH intervention in the targeted areas in Idleb. The evaluation will also be used to support GOAL Syria WASH strategy.

Similarly, the evaluation findings will be used to inform BHA programming, as well as OCHA programming, which includes somewhat similar support to 15 water units in other locations.

2.2.1. Evaluation Objectives

- To assess how well the project has been implemented against the stated objectives in the proposal,
- To assess the intended and unintended positive and negative effects of the programme,
- To assess the degree to which the project's theory of change is working and the effects of the project on the conditions and behaviour of the target population, and
- To draw conclusions and lessons learned about the project's theory of change and overall effectiveness.

○2.3 Evaluation Scope

The evaluation will take place in the Idleb Governorate within the districts of Ariha, Harem, Idleb and Jisr-Ash-Shugur (see Annex 2). An exact list of target locations will be provided to the evaluator by GOAL before the evaluation start date.

The EVOLVE programmes Theory of Change - ***If*** Water Units and Local Councils are supported with inputs and technical assistance allowing continuation and extension of public services and supported to develop their financial and management systems and a strategic direction ***then*** households will have

access to safe water and hygienic conditions and utilities will be less dependent on donor funds for operation – should be the basis of the evaluation and organised around five of the OECD DAC evaluation criteria as follows, with suggested research questions outlined below:

- **Relevance:** Does the programme align with national and international priority concerns? Were targets in line with international standards in this sector, (if available?). The relevance of hygiene promotion activities to the beneficiaries. Did the most vulnerable have a say and provide feedback into project design and implementation?

- **Coherence:** How well does the programme fit with other GOAL interventions? The extent to which other interventions support or undermine the intervention. How consistent is the intervention with other actors' interventions in WASH? the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.

- **Effectiveness:** Did this programme effectively reach the most vulnerable households? Did the project address the highest priority needs of the affected population? Under which conditions and constraints are each of GOAL's modalities most appropriate among the most vulnerable populations, including but not limited to, female/child headed households, disabled? Were the monitoring and accountability mechanisms effective in providing timely data to inform programming decisions? To what extent did the project meet its targets and deliver outputs? To what extent did this project achieve the intended outcomes? What was the performance against the stated indicators? Are there any ill effects, including gender conflicts or unplanned impacts as a result of this project? Did the project create any tension between the benefited community and other communities? Did the gender of the head of the household affect household access to water provided by the project? did the gender of head of newly displaced household affect access to the emergency assistance hygiene kits?

- **Efficiency:** What evidence is available/can be determined on the cost effectiveness of the intervention? How do intervention costs compare with other modalities? What evidence is available that efficiencies were sought in programme design? Were adequate human and financial resources applied to delivering project outcomes? Were outputs delivered in a timely fashion? Was technology deployed to improve efficiency?

- **Value for Money Analysis**: Carry out a Value for Money (VFM) Analysis using FCDO's 4E methodology. The consultancy will have to share their VFM methodology before the start of the evaluation which will be utilised in conducting their analysis.

  Has the programme delivered Value for Money as expected? To what extent has equity been considered as part of the programmes overall Value for Money analysis? What evidence of Value for Money has been demonstrated further to the water unit analysis which was presented at the outset of the programme?

  Analysis for the economic value that the repeated assistance brings to the households, i.e. can the assistance actually improve the targeted households living situation by relieving them from some of their water expenditures which otherwise they have to pay, or the assistance is only expected to prevent further deterioration in their situation which without the households may be forced to adapt more severe coping strategies.

- **Sustainability:** What aspects of GOAL's WASH programme are 'sustainable' for target communities? To what extent has this project affected households' using negative coping strategies? To what extent does the project support the recovery of markets and market

systems? What recommendations can be drawn from the experience of water users/operators and GOAL staff on the longer-term sustainability of the water provision in Idleb?

The evaluation must also consider issues of mental and physical disability and, where possible, assess the intended or unintended effects of the project on those living with a disability. Furthermore, the effectiveness of GOAL's frequent data collection methods should be evaluated to gauge if they were suitable for monitoring all aspects of the project including if persons with disabilities are always included and to what extent. Therefore, the evaluation report must include a specific section with findings related to disability which highlights lessons learned and recommendations for GOAL to address any gaps and challenges in data collection and programme accessibility.

2.4 Evaluation Tasks, Deliverables and Timeline

1. Refine the evaluation objectives and research questions in consultation with GOAL Syria's technical and management teams.
2. Propose specific research questions regarding the programmes areas of focus based on the indicators (see Annex 3 - Logframe) and seek agreement from the GOAL Syria team.
3. Devise and test a methodology and evaluation tools, including VFM methodology to address the specific objectives and individual research questions of the evaluation.
4. Conduct secondary data collection, including using GOAL's existing project documents, monitoring data and the mid-term evaluation, to identify gaps in data coverage and knowledge.
5. Collect primary data to establish and quantify GOAL's performance against selected programme indicators and criteria outlined above.
6. Provide a draft report to programme management that will be incorporated into ongoing programme planning and evaluation, as well as recommendations for maximising social impact.
7. Facilitate a workshop to validate the initial findings of the evaluation with GOAL and other stakeholders. Due to the context of COVID-19, the workshop can be held remotely.
8. Incorporate GOAL feedback into a draft report and prepare a final report. The final report should both describe the results of the evaluation and provide actionable recommendations for improving GOAL's programme.

The following deliverables are required to be produced in line with the stated timeline below:

- Inception Report detailing evaluation design, methodology, tools, work plan and budget. This should be aligned with FCDO's Quality Criteria for Inception Reports (Annex 4).
- Draft Evaluation Report presenting the findings for comments. This should be aligned with FCDO's Evaluation Report Template.
- Presentation of initial evaluation findings to the country team.
- Final Evaluation Report incorporating comments from GOAL country team.

GOAL requests that the data collection for the final evaluation be conducted during the life of the programme to ensure that key stakeholders are available to provide feedback, and that beneficiaries are still receiving the services and can feed into their experience. This is especially relevant as this is the final year of the programme and it is expected that services will cease after March 31, 2021.

Activity	**Provisional Deadline**

Contract signing	7 March 2021
SUBMISSION: Draft Inception Report and Instruments	30 March 2021
GOAL/FCDO's Feedback on Draft Inception Report and Instruments	7 April 2021
SUBMISSION: Final Inception Report and Instruments	14 April 2021
Data collection, interviews and data analysis	15 April – 16 May 2020
Debrief meeting to present preliminary findings to the country team	17 May 2021
Data Analysis and Report Writing	18-31 May 2021
SUBMISSION: Draft Evaluation Report	31 May 2021
Workshop to present initial findings	1 June 2021
GOAL/FCDO's Feedback on Draft report	1-14 June 2021
SUBMISSION: Final Evaluation Reports and second report for external audiences	30 June 2021

3 METHODOLOGY

A recommended methodology is outlined below but the final methodology and tools to be used is to be determined by the evaluation team and will be contingent on the above tasks. GOAL recommends a mixed methods quantitative and qualitative approach that can measure achievements against targets and indicators.

3.1 Planning

Before arriving in country, the evaluation team will do the following:

- Review key internal and external documents. Reports generated from prior external evaluations and both internal and Third-Party Monitoring will be provided by GOAL prior to the evaluation start date and should help inform the evaluator's Inception Report. These reports include but are not limited to the following:
    - EVOLVE Programme Proposal and narrative reports
    - Annual FCDO Report
    - WASH Quarterly Monitoring Reports throughout the period of the project: providing quantitative information about household access to water sources water quality and quantity, with statistically representative samples for the served communities. Datasets will be made available to the evaluator.
    - Emergency responses monitoring reports (Post-Distribution Monitoring), which focus on newly displaced people who received combinations of emergency assistances including hygiene kits, the statistically representation level is per response. Datasets will be made available to the evaluator.
    - Evaluation's Terms of Reference.
    - The Project's Logistical Framework.
    - The external Mid-term Evaluation Report. The final evaluation might not necessarily follow the previous midterm evaluation's methodology; however, the evaluator can use the information in the report for comparison where relevant.
    - Relevant data from GOAL Syria's complaints and feedback mechanism.

- In partnership with the GOAL Syria MEL Coordinator (main point of contact for the evaluator), WASH Coordinator, Senior Programme Quality Coordinator and Programme Director, refine and finalise the specific evaluation questions to be explored from the scope described above.
- Propose to the MEL Coordinator and programme team the appropriate methodology to be developed for the Syrian context to evaluate the FCDO project and address the OECD DAC evaluation criteria.
- Identify and map the key stakeholders that the evaluation will take place with.
- Communicate with Local Stakeholders, such as Local Councils, informing them of the evaluation, its objective, and their role, if any.
- Prepare an outline of the data collection methods that are required and the relevant survey templates and participatory data collection guides to be used for data collection.
- The evaluator is to include a sub-section in their proposed methodology to highlight adaptations due to COVID-19, including staff and beneficiaries' protection, adaptations to proposed methodology, and how the evaluator plans to address the limitations of the adapted methodology.
- Develop a work plan consisting of key milestones required for data collection in order for logistics to be arranged by the MEL Coordinator.
- Submit the draft Inception Report to the MEL Coordinator and incorporate the feedback from GOAL.

On arrival in-country, the evaluation team will:

- Hold a short planning meeting with the MEL Coordinator and relevant programme teams, to review and amend the questions as needed for the data collection tools.
- Liaise with the MEL Coordinator and MEL Field Coordinator on the training and recruitment of the data collection staff and the use of mobile data collection for the proposed survey tools and qualitative guides.
- Hold a brief workshop with GOAL Syria's Senior Management Team to communicate evaluation methods, objectives, and outcomes. This will include a short description of the evaluation questions and methods proposed.

Post-site visit

- Data analysis, report development, prepare summary of findings and dissemination.

As previously mentioned, the main point of contact with GOAL will be the MEL Coordinator based in Jordan. Field focal points will be identified during the inception period.

3.2 Primary Data Collection

Areas of primary data collection in Syria will span across the FCDO project areas in Idleb Governorate (see Annex 1 and 2). GOAL recommends both quantitative and qualitative methods are used to better understand the mechanisms that produce certain results or may hinder greater results.

The Household survey should be based around a representative sample of 95% confidence level, a margin of error of 5%. To ensure sufficient participation of vulnerable groups, stratified sampling is to be used, with snowball sampling at the field level to identify participants from vulnerable groups, noting that as the programme is blanket targeting, no lists of beneficiaries are available. The evaluator is to ensure that weighting is applied.

An approximate sample of 385 community surveys, 36 community Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), 16 KIIs with water unit staff and Local Council members, 6 Project staff KIIs and six qualitative illustrative insights into the specific experiences of a small number of households (for example, a female headed household, a multi-generational household, an IDP household, a host population household, a

household with disability) are an estimate for this evaluation and similar to what was administered in the mid-term evaluation. The villages selected for the survey will take into consideration the access to the areas and COVID-19 measures. The FGDs will be conducted with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, the latter from areas that are not targeted by the WASH programme, to provide a descriptive comparison between their needs and experiences. Each FGD should include approximately 8-12 participants, depending on the topic and stakeholder group (number might be adjusted due to COVID-19 mitigation measures). FGDs will also be conducted separately for men, women, persons with disability, and other vulnerabilities as agreed during the inception period. This will be the main channel to obtain qualitative feedback on beneficiary experiences, including challenges and difficulties specifically faced by vulnerable groups.

Data collection through interviews and observation in GOAL areas of operation in northern Syria shall be carried out using digital data collection tools. These tools should allow for data collection offline and uploading of data once Internet connection is available.

GOAL's Third-Party Monitoring team will provide support on facilitating the communication between the evaluators and the stakeholders on the ground.

3.3 Data Analysis

GOAL expects all qualitative data should be rigorously analysed and should primarily focus on developing a deeper understanding about the effectiveness and relevance of the WASH programme, and providing recommendations for improving or strengthening the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the results of the programme. FCDO will be quality assuring the evaluation, the evaluator must therefore ensure rigorous understanding of the FCDO quality assurance process.

4 PRESENTATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This consultancy will take place at endpoint of the FCDO grant period from January to April 2021 and is expected to take approximately 12 weeks.

The findings of the evaluation must be shared with GOAL in the following formats:

- The submission of the Inception Report will be based on the FCDO Quality Assurance Inception Report template (see Annex 4)
- Draft Evaluation Report submitted to MEL Coordinator, for feedback and comments, 10 days after conclusion of field visit
- Closing workshop with GOAL staff to present initial findings and gather feedback after receiving the draft report.
    - ✓ Agree lessons learned and best practices that can be incorporated into relevant sectors' programming
    - ✓ Agree recommendations that will inform and improve GOAL's future programmatic strategy, with agreed action points and deadlines
- Final Evaluation Report: The report must be clear and concise, and the following sections must be included as a minimum: Executive Summary, Acknowledgements, Acronyms, Introduction and background, Methodology, Analysis of Findings, Recommendations, Annexes: ToRs, a timeline of the response, number of beneficiaries and stakeholders interviewed, templates of data collection tools used, a description of the methods employed a summary of survey results (if appropriate) and any other relevant materials. FCDO promotes the dissemination of findings
- GOAL therefore requests that a second version of the evaluation to be prepared for external use to share key findings with other actors in the Syrian response.

- The submission of the final evaluation will be analysed based on the FCDO Quality Assurance Final Evaluation Report template (see Annex 5).

5 DISSEMINATION AND USE OF FINDINGS

Results and recommendations will be made available externally to interested stakeholders such as the WASH Cluster and Water Units at the discretion of GOAL Syria's senior management. The final report and any primary data collected will be the property of GOAL Syria.
If particular sections of the evaluation are deemed useful or informative for the greater humanitarian community as lessons learned or opportunities to improve programming, GOAL reserves the right to create a separate report with excerpts from the final evaluation report to share with the wider community, including the Local Councils, and the targeted communities. At the key findings stage, GOAL may request that the consultant produce such a report along with the final evaluation report. Additionally, FCDO will have unlimited access to the material produced as part of the evaluation and reserves the same rights as GOAL to use and disseminate the findings from the evaluation and to create separate reports.
Recommendations obtained from the evaluation will be converted to time-bound action points. Follow up on the implementation of the action points will be the responsibility of the Sr. Programme Quality Coordinator.

6 DATA COLLECTION RISKS AND CONSIDERATION

The security situation in Northwest Syria is expected to be the main concern during data collection as a result of the current escalation of the conflict in Idleb. As a result, data collection may need to be paused or suspended, and itineraries changed to ensure the safety of enumerators. This could slow down the rate of data collection. GOAL's communication and transport team can be consulted for advice about any access restrictions that may happen before and during the evaluation period.
Reaching beneficiaries from previous emergency responses, due to the continuous movement of the internal displaced population, may be difficult during data collection, GOAL is suggesting to consider this challenge during the sampling and data collection processes.
A distance-based approach to evaluation management may be required as the evaluator might not be able to manage the entire evaluation in Syria directly. A skilled local team with experience in remote management and Syrian context will be key factor to mitigate this challenge.
Due to COVID-19 mitigation measures, it might be necessary to utilize remote monitoring methods, to reduce the risk of infection, and ensure a do-no-harm approach.

7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The evaluation team will make clear to all participating stakeholders that they are under no obligation to participate in the evaluation study. All participants will be assured that there will be no negative consequences if they choose not to participate. The evaluation team will obtain informed consent from the participants. The research team will ensure prior permission is received for taking and use of visual still/ moving images for specific purposes, i.e. for research report and presentations. The evaluation team will assure the participants' anonymity and confidentiality and will ensure the visual data is protected and used for agreed purposes only. In particular, the evaluation team will employ robust data security measures to further ensure participants' confidentiality and anonymity. The evaluation team is responsible for determining whether or not their proposed methodology would require Institutional

Review Board (IRB) clearance and will be responsible for clearing the process and training if such approval is required.
The evaluator is expected to demonstrate compliance to ethical considerations to the community, including the potential effect of gender and power dynamics on the participants and the data. The evaluator is solely responsible for the safety and security of their staff and must showcase a duty of care towards their staff. The evaluator is expected to have clear data protection protocols and policies that should be shared with GOAL during the tender process and inception phase.
The evaluator is expected to adhere to the principal of "Do No Harm". They should ensure that the basic human rights of individuals and groups with whom they interact are protected. This is particularly important with regard to vulnerable people. The wellbeing of researchers/ evaluators working in the field should also be considered and harm minimised.
Further to the considerations mentioned above, the evaluator is to adhere to FCDO policies on Ethics and Safeguarding[26], including the Child Safeguarding and Enhanced Due Diligence guidance for external partners. Furthermore, the evaluators are expected to adhere to FCDO's Ethical Guidance for Research, Evaluation and Monitoring Activities[27]

8 ASSUMPTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

- The maximum budget available for the evaluation is 60,000 GBP, including VAT.
- Field data collection teams are required by the evaluator inside Northwest Syria for primary data collection.
- Evaluators will have access to all necessary documentation and can take part **remotely** in relevant meetings in Turkey/Jordan.
- Evaluators will have access to key staff in the responding GOAL offices in Syria, Jordon and Turkey and partner offices to obtain adequate information provided
- Evaluators will be aware of the risks of conducting data collection within Syria, especially that the circumstances in the geographic areas are frequently changing due to insecurity
- The evaluation team will have access to members of the affected population for conducting interviews
- Evaluators will take confidentiality and objectivity into consideration during the process
- Security concerns could impact the timing and the scope of the evaluation. It is important for the team to remain flexible. They must be open to making changes to the schedule and itinerary such as visiting alternate sites, conducting remote reviews and interviews, etc.
- The consultant will be required to provide their own accommodation, food and transportation during field visits, as GOAL will NOT be able to provide this type of support.
- Evaluators are expected to make their own logistical arrangements, including travel, accommodation, etc. This pricing must be part of budget submission.
- GOAL will provide the contact information for Local Councils, Water Unit and GOAL staff members. The evaluators are to arrange communication with beneficiaries for the survey.
- Evaluators are to demonstrate they have put in place a quality assurance approach that includes explicit assessment of ethical risks and mitigation steps and report on the implementation of the approach as part of the process.

[26] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-enhanced-due-diligence-safeguarding-for-external-partners
[27] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-ethics-principles-for-research-and-evaluation

9 REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

For the purposes of this evaluation, GOAL welcomes international and national evaluators to apply.
The profile of the lead consultant is:

1. Individuals or firms in academia, social research, or humanitarian evaluation with a background in humanitarian aid, research methods, development economics, development studies, or other related fields
2. Extensive experience of conducting evaluations along DAC OECD evaluation criteria, ideally leading an evaluation team and experience of designing evaluation methodology/tools, data analysis etc.
3. Experience of working in humanitarian contexts and good understanding of humanitarian response work – both in programmes and operations
4. Demonstrable experience in conducting Value for Money and conflict sensitivity analysis, including sharing samples of previous evaluation reports, in particular VFM.
5. In-depth knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methods
6. Competent in using statistical packages for quantitative and qualitative analyses
7. Use of national consultants is essential for work within Syria due to security constraints and local and contextual knowledge
8. A gender balance of field enumerators is essential to conduct data collection with both male and female beneficiaries
9. Excellent presentation and writing skills
10. Capacity to work collaboratively with multiple stakeholders
11. Excellent analytical and writing in English
12. Knowledge of Arabic is considered a distinct advantage