

Chapter 14

Housing Sector in Syria

I- Background

The Syrian Arab Republic was among the first Arab countries to include housing issues in government policies since the 1950s. The Public Establishment for Housing was created in 1961 and was assigned the roles of securing lands to set up housing areas and provide their utilities, selling and distributing plots in addition to constructing, selling and utilizing housing units whether in-house or by subcontractors. However, these policies were limited to directives, procedures and plans, and have never been developed into established strategies with goals. Even clear directives have not been accompanied with specific implementation requirements.

The legislations and regulations issued till mid 1970s clearly reflected a vision focusing only on the social role of the state in this sector. This was manifested in providing facilities and exemption to secure suitable housings for low income groups, with minimum possible cost and collect these costs in long-term installments that suit their income.

This vision has changed. By year 2000, the Government gradually reduced this intervention by issuing several business-oriented legislations, without considering the social aspects.

This coincided with the Appropriation Law 60 of 1979, which faced enforcement difficulties and failed to meet its objectives, the matter that created a real crisis regarding the provision of required land for constructing. Furthermore, this was coupled with failures and delays by public construction companies in completing their housing projects for different reasons (internal and external). The same applies to the cooperative housing projects, particularly after 1985. Added to the above is the previous rent law, which led to a non-balanced relationship between owner and tenant, and caused complete disappearance of the leasing approach from the housing market in Syria, leaving tens of thousands of flats empty, which adversely affected the sector.

In spite of the success of a few housing projects, it was obvious that the implementation policies were inefficient, which had many implications, the worst of which was the ever expanding informal settlement areas.

The term "informal settlement areas" in Syria refers to houses built contrary to urban planning or building regulations. However, these areas have basic services (drinking water, electricity, telephone, sanitation ..) at reasonable levels and a fair number of the buildings have sound structure, a far cry from the "tin cities" found in other countries.

II- Housing Sector Performance during the 9th FYP (2000- 2005)

Since the year 2000, the government has shown significant interest in the housing sector and tried to develop a sound vision for its role based on good integration (rather than contradiction) between social and economic aspects. This meant the shift from the old approach of a purely social role (direct subsidies and exemptions, which are loss activities in economic terms) to an advanced role through creating conducive environments to spur activities and investments in this important sector, in order to bridge the quantity/quality gap between supply and demand in the sector, which would enhance the government role in this sector and its ability to strike a price balance in the market, hence creating better chances for limited income persons to own a residence.

The 9th FYP had general objectives, and below is an evaluation of what was achieved out of these objectives:

1st Objective

Satisfy part of the accumulating demand for houses through the presently empty or under-construction houses, through a series of policies and procedures leading for occupation.

Evaluation of procedures and results

Since the previous rent law was definitely one of the main reasons for empty houses (estimated at 500,000), a new rent Law 6 of 2001 was issued in order to maintain a balanced relationship between owner and tenant. The purpose is to facilitate the utilization of tens of thousands of empty flats. A transition period of 3 years was given to settle old rent cases. The positive effects began to be felt. Preliminary results of the general census showed a drop in the rate of empty houses from 15.7% to 13.9%. The final results of the census, to be issued soon, will include detailed reasons behind empty houses, in order to develop suitable policies to handle this situation.

2nd Objective

Provide new houses to be built by public, cooperative and private sectors, at economical areas (around 80 m²).

Evaluation

In 2002, the Public Establishment for Housing (PEH) launched the Youth Housing Project. The number of total applicants was about 60,000 in different governorates requesting apartments of 60-80 m². The total cost is around SYP 50 billion, 30% of which is funded by the government free of interest. Beneficiaries are expected to pay back in 25 years with monthly installments not exceeding 30% of average income in Syria. A monthly installment will range between 1500-2500 SYP. The apartments will be delivered over stages (5-7-10 years). The first group was due for delivery early 2006.

The high number of subscribers with the easy payment conditions reflected the viability of this policy in terms of economic and social aspects, taking into consideration that this group (limited income youth) is the main source of informal settlement expansion.

While the public sector, represented by the PEH, met its commitments in the Youth Housing Project and other projects (labor housing, savings housing, popular housing), the cooperative sector could not meet those commitments due to many difficulties including the lack of lands needed to implement its plans. Instead, the cooperative sector continued its focus on medium and large apartments (over 120 m²) with higher prices. As for the private sector, and until end of the 9th FYP, it had not made any contribution or commitment towards approved housing policies and plans. This is mainly due to lack of legal frameworks that organize or promote such contribution. Market indicators and variables are the only motivators for this sector, and they still favor expensive and spacious apartments for high-income groups.

3rd Objective

Consider vertical building expansion, particularly in major cities.

Evaluation

No tangible results can be noticed till now, in spite of continued debates regarding pros and cons of both vertical and horizontal expansion, particularly in terms of cost-effectiveness of high-rise buildings, population density, preservation of agricultural land etc. Until now, there are no amendments issued to urban planning guidelines or building codes, and on the contrary, limited vertical expansion (additional storey) are sometimes allowed to old buildings by virtue of administrative decisions.

4th Objective

Increase public sector participation, support cooperative sector and activate the private sector role in order to satisfy the housing needs of limited income groups according to their financial capability.

Evaluation:

The 9th FYP performance in this objective can be evaluated as follows:

Public housing sector (PEH)

The FYP stipulated that the public sector should provide 39344 houses, (15% of total planned houses). The most important steps taken to enable the public sector to fulfill this end were:

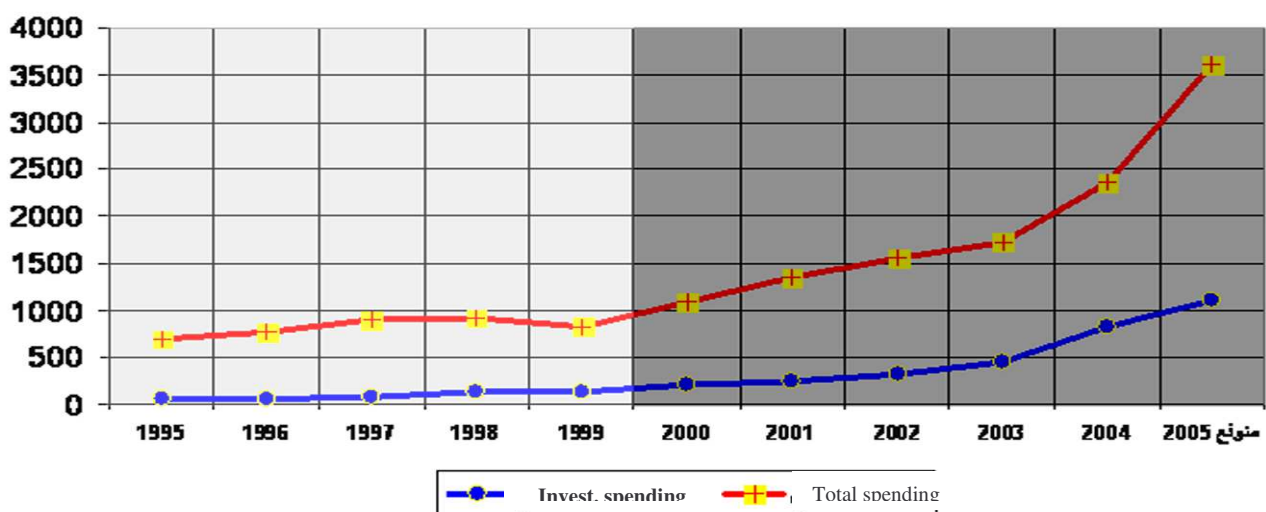
- Increase PHE capital from SYP 25 million to SYP 2.8 billion, to enable it to implement its ambitious plans and provide housing for limited income groups.

- Cover part of the financing required for PEH projects (youth and labor housing) through interest-free loans from the Public Debt Fund (SYP 300 million for labor housing annually and 30% of the SYP 50 billion Youth Housing Project), in order to keep the cost of houses within reach of limited income groups. However, the total amount of loans, given to PEH since its creation in 1961 until 2000, was around SYP 1.8 billion.
- Legislative Decree 27 of 2002 allowed the PEH to deposit its funds at any of the public banks operating in Syria.
- Legislative Decree 36 of 2002 extended the installments settlement period from 15 to 25 years and lowered the interest rate from 7.5% to a maximum of 5%. This led to 40% reduction in monthly installment.
- Legislative Decree 46 of 2002 made it possible for the tenants of labor housing to own their apartments at monthly installments of SYP 2000 for 25 years.
- Launch the most important and biggest housing project in Syria to provide for youth housings in different governorates (some 60,000 unit).

The PEH has been distinctive, especially after 2000, from other private and cooperative housing bodies, in that it focused on wider and more comprehensive housing concepts, through creating integrated urban communities with enough attractions and growth potential including all necessary services (commercial, cultural, social and recreational facilities). This reflected deep understanding and commitment to the development issues and comprehensive regional planning concepts and is considered a main support to the government efforts to ease pressure on major cities, which is far beyond their available resources.

The following diagrams show the growth of PEH activities during the 9th FYP, compared with the 8th FYP.

Total and investment spending 1995-2005 (million SYP)



Contrary to the planned, the contribution of this sector dropped dramatically as a result of land shortage. Also, consumer trust in the cooperative housing

sector has shaken due to malpractices by some coops. The activities in this sector were restricted to merely completing previous projects.

Due to this situation, it has become necessary to amend and develop the law governing cooperative housing, in order to re-activate this important sector.

Following is a table showing total accumulative activities for cooperative housing at all governorates, by 30/06/2004:

No. of Coops		No. of Members			
Housing	Summering	Member	Subscriber	Assigned	Beneficiaries
1144	263	202997	27009	57061	121175

- Source: Cooperative Housing Section, Ministry of Housing and Construction

Private Sector

Although the 9th FYP assigned this sector with 58% of the implementation plan (i.e. the construction of 154128 unit), this was not supported with the required regulatory framework to organize the private sector participation (developers, development companies). Furthermore, no formal lands were tendered to the private sector for development, which made the latter focus on informal settlement (away from effective controls) rather than on the housing needs of limited income groups or general housing requirements. The private sector also focused on real estate speculation, which caused a prices boom.

Generally speaking, the 9th FYP succeeded in meeting the public sector objectives, whilst both the cooperative and private housing sectors failed to meet their assignments, which amounted to 85-95% of the total planned houses.

Housing sector indicators Comparison between 1994 Census and preliminary results of 2004 census

	1994	2004
No. of housing units	2566 K	3701 K
No. of families	2205 K	3207 K
Occupied housing units	2055 K	3024 K
Vacant housing units	402 K	513 K
Houses, under construction	109 K	164 K
% houses connected to public sanitation network	62%	73.8%
% houses connected to water network	74%	88.3%
% houses connected electricity network	96%	98.5%
Average family size	9.25 persons	5.55 persons
Average persons per house	6.7	5.8
Average area per person (occupied houses)	14.4 sq. m	17.9 sq. m
Annual population growth rate	3.7%	2.58 %

- Source: Central Bureau of Statistics

The 2004 census made use of a specialist study, supervised by the census steering committee, to include new and important statistics regarding housing sector that will help, when final results are issued, to accurately describe this

sector in a manner that was not available in the past. This will provide more accurate indicators and parameters for future planning. We can refer to the following from preliminary census results:

	2004
% Permanent housing (less than 25 years old)	67.1%
% Ownership	85.6%
% Rent	7.7%

Status of Collective Informal settlement Areas (Source: MLAE- 2005)

City	Master Plan Area (hectare)	Expansion Areas (hectar)	Informal settlement Areas (hectares)	No. of Informal settlement areas
Damascus	10625 (within admin. Boundaries) 35000 Damascus Region	1450 (Kudsaya district appropriated on behalf of the PEH) 450 Artouz-Assad City	1270 (within admin. Boundaries)	28 (22 within admin. Boundaries)
Aleppo	17000	1416	3043	22
Homs	7284	3173	2227	11
Hama	6000	2000	762	2
Latakia	3500	1500	722	8
Idleb	1324	800	9.5	4
Hassakeh	3000	-	942	-
Deir Ezzor	3300	1126	25	2
Tartous	1876	198	22	4
Raqqa	2300	1350	675	2
Dar'a	2350	-	187	2
Sweida	1600	980	730	4

III- Difficulties Facing Housing Sector

- Lack of complete housing databases or databanks
- Lack of connection between housing and comprehensive regional planning, except for partial connections according to available parameters
- Lack of accurate connection between the housing process with the economic and social development concepts, except for PEH projects and particularly Youth Housing Project
- Multiple systems, legislations and parties concerned with housing process, and lack of a clear structure of the housing sector which defines roles of involved parties at various stages
- Weak legislations that help secure lands ready for development
- Inadequate supply with demand in housing market
- Weak and limited financing mechanisms and high interest rates
- Weak participation by public and cooperative sectors in housing plan
- Lack of clearly guided frameworks to provide facilities to the private sector to ensure its active participation
- Widespread informal settlement Areas and collective violations

- Speculative activities on existing houses that destabilize prices, due to the inadequate role played by the private sector that effectively comprises more than 75% of housing activities.
- High cost step for house ownership, to most citizens, mainly of limited income.
- Weak construction technologies, leading to effects on completion time and finishing quality.
- Deform the architectural identity of Syrian cities (cultural, environmental and geographic)
- Effects of Arab, regional and international economic variables, particularly the agreement to liberate intra-Arab trade and the Association Agreement with the EU.

IV- Future Vision for Housing Sector

Urban communities that are well-planned serviced and provided with utilities and infrastructure which guarantee attraction features and growth potentials. They reflect the cultural and civilized heritage of Syrian society, at good environmental conditions. Well connected to regional planning parameters and guarantee the right for every family to a decent house and promote the social aspect of the housing issue.

V- Long Term Objectives

- Complete and approve the national housing strategy and embark on its implementation, during 10th and 11th FYPs.
- Reorganize the informal settlement areas, through programs to improve or demolish and reconstruct as necessary, and provide housing for their tenants at the same areas or elsewhere.
- Strengthen the role of PEH to provide economy houses to limited income groups at easy conditions, and to expand the Youth Housing Project
- Expand and strengthen the participation of organized private sector in implementing housing projects, whether independently or through some kind of partnership. Attract Arab and foreign investments to contribute to the construction and development process.
- Strengthen the role of cooperative housing sector.
- Change the government role from directly providing housing to citizens of all groups, to the function of facilitating obtaining suitable housing according to citizen needs and requirements. This will be done by providing required serviced lands that are ready for construction and making available suited financing resources and condition. Also, by increasing the supply of ready houses at the housing market, and at the same time emphasize the social aspects of the housing issues.
- Activate all form of housing possession, instead of single form of ownership. Promote investments in houses for rent.
- Adopt policies that guarantee conservation of the environment and optimum use of natural resources.
- Adopt international housing specifications and standards, particularly regarding occupational and construction safety.

The above require the following to be done during successive FYPs:

- Review and update all legislations that obstruct above objectives
- Employ enough resources to secure services and utilities required for new urban expansion areas
- Encourage construction material industries and eliminate intermediaries.
- Update system relevant to contracting and engineering trades, measurement and standards systems and urban planning sections

VI-10th FYP

General Objectives:

1. Satisfy required housing needs and establish balance between supply and demand, qualitatively and quantitatively.
2. Restructure the housing sector in order to ensure efficient management.
3. Focus the public sector role on providing economy (lost cost) housing at favorable conditions, based upon social aspects to provide housing for low income groups.
4. Activate cooperative sector role and provide it with the necessary tools and elements to meet its plans.
5. Activate private sector role and make use of its efficiency and flexibility particularly regarding financing and execution.
6. Handle informal settlement areas and limit their expansion.
7. Increase the supply of land assigned for building and development.

Quantified objectives

The 10th FYP aims to meet the housing requirements during 2006-2010, in addition to covering for the accumulated deficits from earlier Plans, as follows:

Demand corresponding to population growth	408,000 unit
Deficits carried from previous FYPs	183,000 unit
Houses planned for replacement	63,000 unit
Contingency reserves at 8% of planned	33,000 unit
Grand Total	687,000 unit

These requirements will be met as follows:

Housing units under-construction at the 9th FYP	166,000 unit
1.5% of vacant houses for utilization	38,000 unit
Building new units	483,000 unit
Grand Total	687,000 unit

Notes:

Building new housing units: 483,000 by the public sector (at 10.3%)

- PEH, at 9.1%: 43,803 unit (completion a delivery), divided as follows:
 - 23,723 unit, already commenced since the 9th FYP to be delivered during 10th FYP
 - 18,655 unit to be commenced and completed within 10th FYP
 - 50,0052 unit to be commenced during 10th FYP and will count in supply.
- Occupational Housing (at 1.2%): 5,922 unit.
- Cooperative sector (at 12.4%): 60,000 unit
- Private sector (at 77.3%): 373,275 unit, to be built by individuals, real estate investment companies and real estate developers which will be licensed via real estate development and investment law.

Grand Total: 483,000 unit.

VII- Strategy

The present Syrian government considers housing sector as a major pillar in the development pyramid. The connection and relationship between economic development studies and housing policies are quite close. A defect in either one will definitely reflect on the other.

And in addition to reforming the qualitative and quantitative defect in supply and demand, and the need to embark on handling informal settlement areas and their negative consequences, the activities in the housing sector are hope to account for creating tens of thousands of jobs (more than 100 professions are related to this sector), and to help the younger age groups of the society to settle down. The sector is also expected to attract huge amounts of local, Arab and foreign investments in real estate development, services and building materials industries.

The following sub-strategies (stemming from the main strategy) are required to achieve the general and quantified objectives of the Plan:

Strategies related to first objective:

1. Adopt scientific need assessment methods based on accurate statistics and indicators.
2. Encourage possession by rent exert efforts to utilize vacant houses.
3. Encourage the use of modern building techniques and materials in order to cut execution time and cost.

Strategies related to second objective

4. Limit the reference parties related to public housing activities sector into one body.
5. Restructure the public construction companies to be more efficient and specialized.

6. Develop a conducive regulatory framework for the housing sector in accordance with objectives and variables.

Strategies related to third objective:

7. Expand PEH projects directed towards limited income groups

Strategies related to fourth objective:

8. Define the future legal framework for cooperative housing activities, in order to activate it within a competitive environment with the public and private sectors.

Strategies related to fifth objective:

9. Develop a legal, financial and administrative environment that will allow the private sector (individuals and companies) to actively participate in housing activities and eliminate obstacles.

Strategies related to sixth objective:

10. Focus on preventive solutions that handle informal settlement areas and limit them.

Strategies related to seventh objective:

11. Develop acquisition laws and provide them with required flexibility and efficiency.
12. Develop and activate mechanism for completion of master plans and preparing lands for development.

VIII-Policies and Work Plan

Meet the balance and mend the defect in supply and demand in housing market (qualitatively and quantitatively), in association with Strategies 1,2 and 3

- Establish center for housing studies, with a corresponding databank, to calculate the indicators required for planning the housing sector and provide statistical parameters to private sector investors.
- Complete the comprehensive regional planning process and connect its outputs to housing plans.
- Review rent law, study and analyze the phenomenon of more than 513,000 vacant units (depending on preliminary results of 2004 census) and the possibility to utilize them.
- Secure pre-requisite for implementing approved housing plans, particularly lands and building materials.
- Set up regulations and controls necessary to ensure completion of houses (public, cooperative and private sectors) that are under-construction, within specified times.

- Settle the modern construction materials and techniques that help in cutting cost and time of execution and improve standards, via holding and participating in specialized exhibitions locally and abroad.

Restructure the housing sector to ensure efficiency and adequacy with future demands, particularly the Arab, regional and international agreements (in association with Strategies 4, 5 and 6):

- Unify the public sector body that supervises housing, being the PEH and restructure it, in accordance with this role.
- Follow up implementation of procedures to improve the status of public sector construction parties, in order to increase management efficiency and increase its role in execution of comprehensive development plans.
- Liberate merchandise related to building and construction (particularly cement and steel) and grant licenses to the public sector for manufacture and import the same and review the role of intermediary establishments, taking into account their inability to provide said materials at regular intervals.
- Review contract systems and courts specialized to look into disputes arising from contracts, to be in accordance with international practices.
- Review regulations governing entry and exit and modernize implementation techniques.

Focus the main role of the state to draw and guide housing policies, secure pre-requisites, in addition to commitment to facilitate suitable housing availability for limited income groups at favorable conditions comparable with average income, in association with Strategy 7

- Define limited income groups and study their capacity to possess housing (ownership/ rent), develop suitable financing and borrowing policies and highlight the social impact of providing housing to limited income groups being the main feeding sources for informal settlement areas, via:
 - find suitable frameworks to direct private investments towards low-cost, economy housing (by facilities, certain exemptions).
 - Encourage limited income groups on self regulated construction, via providing required planned and serviced plots and lending policies that are suited to their capacities.
 - Enable the PEH to implement its programs and plans aiming to close the accumulated deficit gap, mainly via providing required lands.
 - Create special fund to support and finance social housing for limited income groups.

Reconstruct an effective, capable and competitive cooperative sector, in association with Strategy

- Amend housing cooperative law to ensure activating the sector and better contribution, via:

- Conduct a sector evaluation study that will analyze past performance, correct the causes of downfalls and study the successful experiences to be launching pads for the future role.
- Abandon the government subsidies policy preferential treatment based upon exemptions and exclusions from applicable regulations, and focus on the fact that the cooperative formula must be self competitive via reducing unwarranted expenses and by economic management.

Create suitable environment to activate the private sector role (local, Arab and international), in association with Strategy 9

- Issue special real estate legislation that will allow creational and establishment of local, Arab and international real estate investment companies that are capable of working and competing in Syria and abroad.
- Develop regulations for real estate services companies.
- Expand licensing for local manufacturing companies to provide the building materials for these activities (cement, steel, timber ...).

Control expansion of informal settlement areas and intervention to handle exiting areas, in association with Strategies 10 and 11

Take preventive and remedial procedures to handle this phenomenon:

Precautions:

- Solve causes for delays in completion of detailed master plans
- Solve causes for domestic migrations to major cities via adopting policies to develop the small townships and rural areas.
- Strict measures to prohibit violations and control the expansion of informal settlement Areas by providing solutions on their boundaries.
- Expand housing projects for limited income groups and government employees, being the main feeders for informal settlement areas.
- Adopt guided media policies to explain the downfalls of informal settlement Areas.
- Improve income levels.

Remedial

- Continue to provide utilities for existing informal settlement Areas, improve their status, in accordance with proposed solution for each area.
- Direct and encourage private investments to contribute in organizing the informal settlement Areas.
- Allocate a specialized and dedicated structure to study the areas and implement suitable solutions, in-house or by private sector, according to short and medium term programs.
- Coordinate with Arab and international parties and organizations to benefit from their experiences.
- Develop enough control measures to solve the environmental damages resulting from wrongful use of natural resources at informal settlement Areas.

Activate the mechanism to organize lands to be ready for development, in association with Strategies 12 and 13

- Create a specialized and dedicated structure for preparing lands ready for development (organized , serviced).
- Benefit from technological advances in topography and urban planning.
- Develop programs to qualify and train staff.
- Include qualified private engineering and consulting offices.
- Study and review acquisition laws to simplify procedure and improve justice.

IX- Reforms in Policies, Legislations and Institutional Required for Implementation

- Approve policies and legislations that open the door for the private sector to be the major contributor in organized housing activities.
- Gradually limit the government role to drawing housing policies and ensuring success requirements and refrain from detailed executive roles.
- Reconsider legislations and regulations that limit handling the components of housing to state bodies (land, building materials, services, ...).
- Complete banking and finance reforms, which will result in multiple and stable finance sources for housing.
- License for private and joint companies for real estate development and investment, in addition to private engineering and consulting bureaus of international caliber.
- Restructure public companies and establishments concerned with housing activities, eliminate duplication and intermediation and stress the economic management of the said companies/establishments.

X- Programs and Projects

The 10th FYP includes a plethora of programs and projects that constitute the implementation framework for the approved strategies and policies and to guarantee achieving its goals and measuring them. Following is the set of prioritized programs:

Priority	No. of Housing Units	Programs & Projects	Est. Investments Million SYP
P1	49725	PEH projects and other public sector	55732
	60000	Cooperative housing projects	67800
	373275	Private sector (individuals, real estate co.)	421801
P2	48178	PEH projects and other public sector	55732
	60000	Cooperative housing projects	67800
	374822	Private sector (individuals, real estate co.)	421801

It is planned that the above mentioned programs shall be financed as follows (Million SYP)

PEH Projects	P1	P2
Direct state financing from the investment budget	13804	14404
- Self finance from beneficiaries - Loans from Real Estate Bank	34637	34737
Employment housing projects		
Direct state financing from the investment budget of public bodies benefiting from housing	6000	6691
Cooperative housing projects		
- Loans from the Real Estate Bank - Self financing by subscribers to projects	67800	67800
Private Sector Projects		
- Finance by real estate companies (direct, local and foreign loans). - Self finance by beneficiaries.	423549	421801

XII- Plan Expected Achievements and Returns

- Increase GDP growth rates

will be the result of expected large investments from Arab, foreign and Syrian expatriates to work in this sector, after issuing the real estate development and investment law. USD billion 10 are expected to influx immediately after the law is issued.

- Contribute to creating jobs

The housing sector is an important sector that generate jobs. About one hundred professions are related to housing projects. It is expected that tens of thousands of new jobs will be created for engineers, technicians, craftsmen and those working in manufacture of building requisites, trading in building materials and ancillary services such as transport, storage, distribution ...

- Improve status of engineering and contracting

As a result of allowing private sector and issuing the real estate development and investment law, it is expected that:

- High quality (Arab and international) contracting, real estate and engineering experiences will be attracted.
- These companies will qualify and improve the status of local staff, in order to lower costs of foreign experts.
- The local contracting and engineering sector will be restructured in order to be able to survive and compete (including contracting companies, investment companies and consulting offices), the current simple and individual pattern will be replaced.
- Continued updates of most recent technologies and engineering mechanisms.

- Improve housing standards and time of completion

The adoption of modern execution techniques (e.g. pre-fabricated), building materials, pre-arranged insulation and finishing and reduction of in-situ works to the workable minimum will transform the housing activity from the trade/profession concept to the industry concept which will reduce losses, lower production costs, guarantee improved specifications and standards for all elements of the industry and most importantly will significantly reduce execution time.

- Commence treatment of informal settlement Areas

It is expected that during 10th FYP, and based upon the real estate development and investment law, there will be for the first time actual treatment to some of priority informal settlement areas. The treatment measures will help limit reduce the adverse effects (particularly unlawful consumption of electricity and water), improve technical and environmental conditions of the areas and improve quality of life for occupants.

XII- Expected Risks, Obstacles and Results

- Lack of coordination between concerned ministries regarding implementation of proposed policies and programs
- Unjustified slows or delays in taking key decisions, particularly regarding restructuring the housing sector.

XII- Follow Up Indicators for Performance and Returns

Adopt the indicators program issued by UN-HABITAT at the second congress (HABITAT-II) as a basis to analyze, evaluate and develop housing status, taking into account the following regional and local factors:

- Price of housing unit relevant to income
- Rent of housing unit relevant to income
- Per capita share of house surface area
- Permanent houses
- Percentage of seasonal housing
- Rate of land development to be ready for construction
- Expenditure on infrastructure
- Real estate lending measure
- Production rate of housing units
- Percentage of family owner-occupant
- Percentage of vacant/total housing units

Implementation Matrix

Strategies	Programs & Projects	Expected Returns	Indicators	Implementing agency	Timeframe
Adopt scientific need assessment methods	Establish a housing studies center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide studies and indicators to support planning and decision-making - improve implementation techniques and building materials - Improve staff efficiency - Establish a housing databank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of submitted studies - Effects of studies on decision making - Quantity and quality of courses and workshops - Quantity and quality of Center clients 	Ministry of Housing & Construction (MHC)	2006-2008
	Analyze results of 2004 general population and houses census	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accurate description of housing sector - Provide database for researchers and planners - Calculate deficits from previous plans - Calculate housing needs corresponding to population growth - Calculate houses to be replaced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % of unfinished housing units from previous plans - Rate of expandable units - % of non-permanent units 	MHC in coordination with Central Statistics Bureau	2006-2014
Promote the leasing approach and attempt to utilize vacant units	End the problem of having over 50,000 vacant unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilize as much as possible into utilization - Invest of frozen real estate assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % of reduced vacant units 	MHC	2006-2010
	Implement the new rent Law 6 of 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilize some of the existing vacant units - Increase % of rent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase % of rented units - % of rent to income 	Ministry of Justice	2006-2010
Encourage the use of modern construction materials and techniques	Organize specialized exhibitions	Introduce new materials and modern techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Execution quality - Speed - Modern look and aesthetics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MO Economy - MHC - MO Industry - Private sector 	2006-2010
Unify different public sector housing authorities in one body	Amend the PEH creation decree so that the PEH can handle all housing and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define sector reference - Reduce unwarranted structures and procedures - More efficient planning, decision- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer satisfaction - Efficiency of planning and follow up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council of Ministers - MHC - MLAE 	2006-2010

Strategies	Programs & Projects	Expected Returns	Indicators	Implementing agency	Timeframe
	development functions (urban planning)	making, follow up, evaluation and review - More flexibility, one-stop shop			
Restructure the public construction companies to become more specialized and efficient	Address the current situation of the public construction sector and restructure companies according to specialty	- Treatment of excess labor at companies - Treatment of delayed projects by companies	- Complete delayed projects - Companies work volume - Profit rates	- Council of Ministers - MHC	2006-2010
Enhance the legal environment for housing sector activities in accordance with objectives and variables	Stop the intermediary establishments regarding building materials	- Provide building materials on regular basis and at stable prices - Eliminate the black market of building materials	- Stable building materials prices	- Council of Ministers - MO Economy	2006-2010
	Amend the engineers classification and practice system	- Improve quality of engineering work - Establish engineering companies for studies and consulting qualified to work in Syria and abroad	- No. of licensed engineering and consulting companies	- Council of Ministers MHC - Engineers Syndicate	2006
	Amend contractors classification and practice system	- Improve quality of execution - Establish major contracting companies capable of working in Syria and abroad	- No. of licensed contractors	- Council of Ministers - MHC - Contractors Syndicate	2006
Expand PEH projects for limited income groups	Youth Housing Project	- Increase supply of economy units at favorable conditions - Encourage youth to settle at their original cities - Encourage youth to social settlement, marriage - Precaution to control informal settlement	- % of unit price relative to income - per capital share of unit floor area - Lowering of marriage age - Reducing domestic migration - Reducing informal settlement	- MHC - PEH	2006-2015
	Government employees project	- Settling workers to increase productivity	- Reducing informal settlements. - Worker productivity	- MHC (PEH)	2006-2010

Strategies	Programs & Projects	Expected Returns	Indicators	Implementing agency	Timeframe
		- Precaution against informal settlements			
	University staff project	- Provide decent housings for university professors - Stability of education process	- Stability of education staff	MHC (PEH)	2006-2010
	Alternate housing project for demolished units	- Assist city councils to implement vital development projects	- Lower % of projects delayed by occupations	- MCH (PEH)	2006-2010
	Justices housing project	- Provide decent houses for judges - Stability of judicial process	- Stability index for judicial staff	- MHC (PEH)	2006-2010
	Savings housing project	- Provide housings at favorable conditions (self finance + loans)	- % of unit cost to income - per capita share of floor area	- MHC (PEH)	2006-2010
Modernize and activate the regulatory framework for future cooperative housing activities, within competitive environment between public and private sectors	- Amend cooperative housing law	- Reactivate the cooperative housing formula on new basis - Provide individual houses at favorable conditions (self-finance + loan) - Set up controls for coops to limit unlawful practices	- Real estate lending index - Rate of establishing of housing coops - % of members, participants and assigned	- Council of Ministers - MHC - Coop Housing Union	2006
Develop legal, financial and administrative environment and eliminate obstacles to ensure effective private sector involvement	- Issue and implement real estate investment law	- Active participation of private sector - Provision of services and organized plots - Increase supply of housing units - Treat informal settlement Areas - Rehabilitate old residential areas - Create thousands of jobs - Attract local, Arab and foreign investments	- Rate of production of units - Rate of land development - Reduction of informal houses - Lower unemployment - Growth of ear estate investments	- Council of Ministers - MHC - Private Sector (Real estate investors)	2006
Focus on preventive measures to address	Apply law 1 of 2003 including strict	- Limit violations and check expansion of informal settlement Areas	- Lower rate of informal houses - Lower rate of violations	MLAE	2006-2010

Strategies	Programs & Projects	Expected Returns	Indicators	Implementing agency	Timeframe
the causes of informal settlements	measures against culprits				
	Encircle existing informal settlement Areas to check their expansion	Control expansion of informal settlement as a first step towards solution	- Lower rate of informal settlements	- MLAE - MHC	2006-2010
Introduce proper solutions for the existing informal settlement areas	Introduce a specialized company to intervene at informal settlement areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Study social implications of informal settlement - Set up suitable solutions for each area - Select suitable implementation methods, in association with private sector - Actual measures to treat the informal settlement areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lower rate of informal settlements - Volume of private sector investments in informal settlement areas 	- Council of Ministers - MLAE - MHC	2006-2008
Upgrade the appropriation laws to become more flexible and efficient	Apply law 26 of 2000 which amended Law 60 of 1979	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launch land development and construction - Allow owners to develop the land and build it by sharing and division 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase serviced areas available for construction - Rate of land development - Rate of divisible lands - Rate of organized lands 	MLAE	2006-2010
Develop and activate mechanisms to prepare master plans and prepare lands for construction	Establish dedicated company to prepare lands for construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase supply of serviced plots ready for construction - Treat one of the causes of informal settlement areas (lack of serviced lands) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rate of land development and preparation for construction - Increase in organized and serviced plots 	- Council of Ministers - MLAE	2006-2010