

# Early Economic Recovery in Opposition Controlled Areas between 2018 -2022

Policy Brief <sup>(1)</sup>

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## Introduction and Methodology

Early economic recovery aims to support local communities in returning to a stable and normal life, including preventing the community from returning to violence. The Early Recovery Report monitors projects implemented over a period of six months and is issued semi-annually, focusing on the main cities and towns in the "Euphrates Shield" And "Afrin" and Idlib governorate, which is witnessing remarkable economic activity, within **11 sectors** which are: social services, transportation, electricity, water and sanitation, housing and construction, agriculture and livestock, finance, industry, trade, internal displacement, and communications.

The report relied on the official identifiers of local councils and organizations operating on Facebook and Telegram. The data was analyzed according to two levels, the first at the level of economic sectors, and the second by geographical level. Among the monitored areas in the countryside of Aleppo: Marea, A'zaz, al-Bab, Jarabulus, Akhtar, Qabasin, Bza'a, Afrin, and Al Atarib. In Idlib Governorate: Idlib, Harem, Sarmada, Ma'arrat Misrin, Hazano, Salqin, Armanaz, Termanin, Atme, Al-Dana, Kah, Deir Hassan.

The report aims to analysis and understand the following:

1. **Monitor** the dynamics of the activities and works carried out in the region, thus measuring the development of local economies, and comparing regions and sectors with each other.
2. **Exploring** the ability of local and international actors to create a safe environment for living and working, and the ability of local councils to play a governance role and sign memoranda of understanding with companies and organizations that contribute to providing with the necessary projects.

## Distribution of Projects According to Sectors

Overall, **5,024 projects** were implemented in the countryside of Aleppo and Idlib between 2018 to 2022 through eleven economic sectors. The number of projects rose slowly with 338 projects in the second half of 2018 to 954 projects in the first half 2022 as shown in Figure No. (1) below.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Original paper published on September 21, 2022, in Arabic, <https://bit.ly/3qTNp4k>

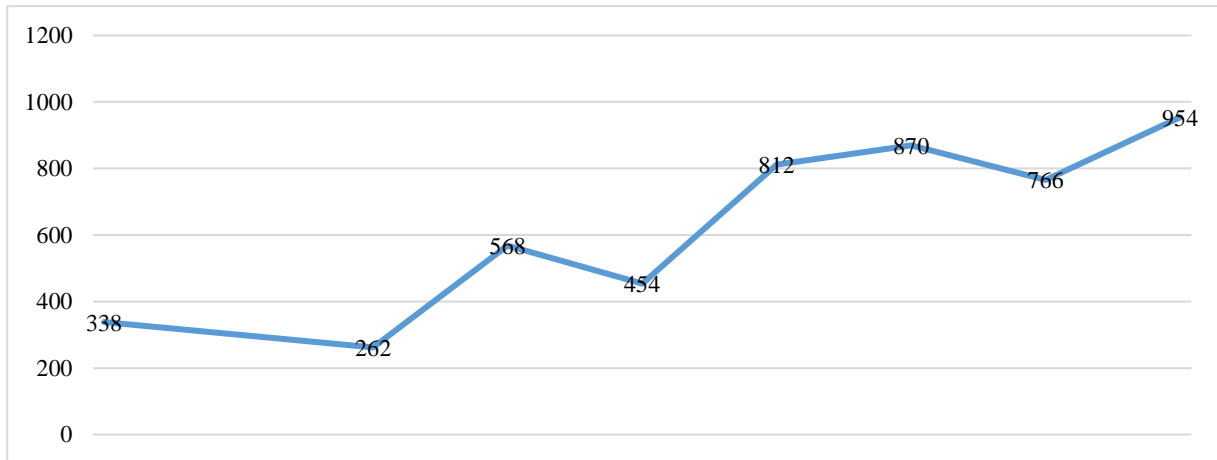


Figure 1: Early Recovery Index between 2018 and 2022

The highest percentage of projects were implemented in the **transportation sector** compared to the other sectors, as shown in Figure No. (2). These projects mainly contributed to the restoration of main and secondary roads destroyed by the war. These roads were vital to connecting villages and cities and facilitating civilian movement and trade. Water, sanitation, and trade projects came in second and third with **17%** each, and the internal displacement sector ranked fourth at **13%**.

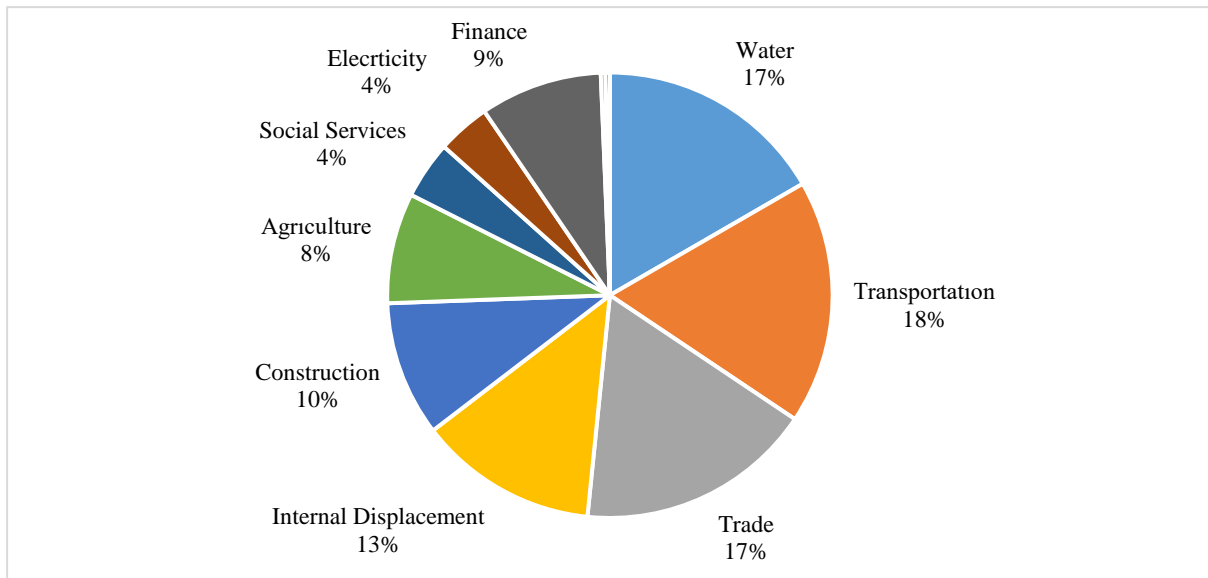


Figure 2: Distribution of projects in economic sectors

In more detail, Table No. (1) shows the sectoral survey on recovery projects during the observed period, where **891 projects** were implemented in the transportation sector, **865 projects** in the trade sector, followed by the water and sanitation sector with **837 projects**. These projects were central to the recovery process in the region as they extended new water and sewage networks, repaired old networks, performed periodic maintenance, and repaired faults if they occur, such as paving roads, sidewalks, and commercial markets with asphalt and

stone. Although these projects are still referred to as relief, they supported 1,293 camps, with a massive number of internally displaced persons, to access support and services. Projects related to construction were relatively low, around **487 projects** were implemented, that included residential complexes for those displaced and the issuing of licenses for commercial and residential buildings. Agriculture projects were also lower, as farmers are reluctant to farm, there were only **403 projects** during the observed period. The industrial, communications, and finance sectors are also suffering at the bottom of the index, due to the security situation and lack of investment in the region.

sector	122018	62019	122019	62020	122020	62021	122021	62022	total
water	69	42	87	78	165	182	123	91	837
Δ		-27	45	-9	87	17	-59	-32	
transportation	51	63	123	60	154	141	193	106	891
Δ		12	60	-63	94	-13	52	-87	
trade	27	24	54	71	193	185	169	142	865
Δ		-3	30	17	122	-8	-16	-27	
internal displacement	22	10	90	89	119	143	104	76	653
Δ		-12	80	-1	30	24	-39	-28	
construction	63	48	86	59	39	52	60	86	493
Δ		-15	38	-27	-20	13	8	26	
agriculture	32	21	43	46	56	64	61	80	403
Δ		-11	22	3	10	8	-3	19	
social service	36	22	41	18	33	26	17	17	210
Δ		-14	19	-23	15	-7	-9	0	
electricity	14	13	22	23	19	43	24	35	193
Δ		-1	9	1	-4	24	-19	11	
finance	16	17	17	9	31	27	10	319	446
Δ		1	0	-8	22	-4	-17	309	
telecommunication	1	0	4	0	2	6	3	1	17
Δ		-1	4	-4	2	4	-3	-2	
industry	7	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	16
Δ		-5	-1	0	0	0	1	-1	
total	338	262	568	454	812	870	766	954	5024

Table No. 1: The distribution of projects to the economic sectors between 2018 and 2022

## Distribution of Projects According to Regions

Figure No. 3 shows the distribution of projects between the countryside of Aleppo and Idlib between 2018 and 2022. The countryside of Aleppo had the largest percentage of projects with **55% about 2,757 projects** were implemented in many towns and cities, most notably Azaz, Al-Bab, Afrin, Jarablus, Qabasin, Bza'a, Marea and others. The remaining **2,267** were executed in Idlib, Sarmada, Dana, Atma, Harem and others in Idlib governance.

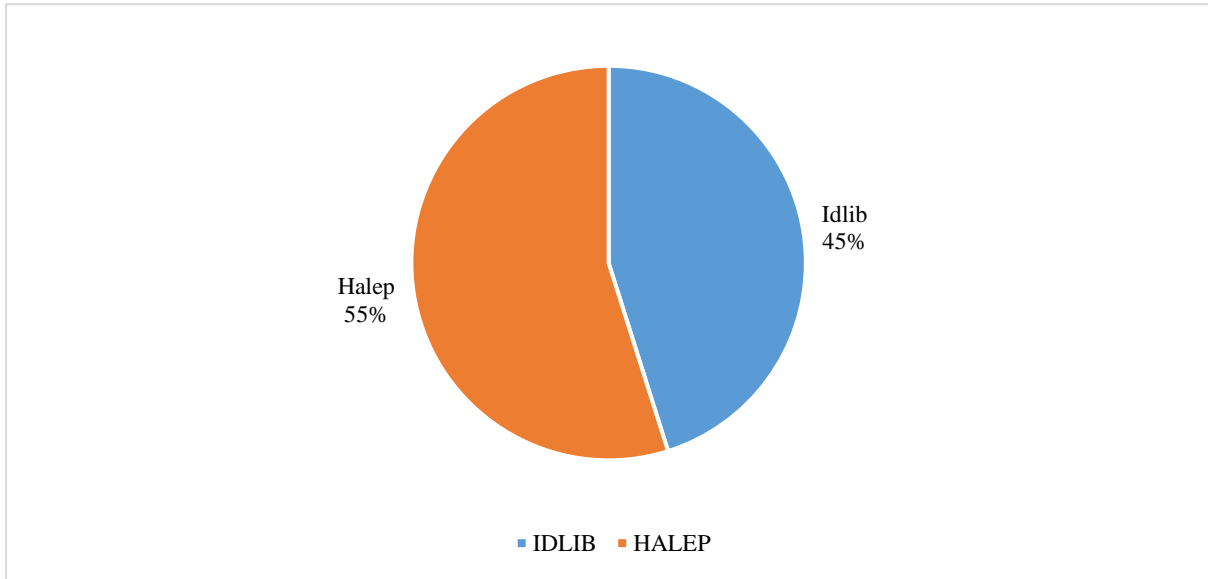


Figure No. 3 Distribution of projects in the countryside of Aleppo and Idlib between 2018-2022

Table No. 2 shows the detailed distribution of projects at the level of towns and cities, where the city of Idlib appears at the top of the index with **669 projects**, most of them in the sectors of internal displacement and trade. The city of Al-Bab, in the countryside of Aleppo ranked second with **598 projects** in the sectors of housing, construction, trade, water and sanitation, and then Azaz with **475 projects** in the sectors of water, transport, and electricity. A number of factors contributed to the discrepancy in the number of projects in cities and towns, including population density, displaced people and organizations, the centrality and importance of some cities before the revolution, the location of towns and cities on trade lines or near crossings, security situation, and lastly the concentration capital in some cities more than others.

city	122018	62019	122019	62020	122020	62021	122021	62022	Total
Idlib	0	6	73	95	132	131	125	107	669
Albab	65	51	99	50	56	81	85	111	598
Izaz	30	49	90	38	52	47	82	87	475
Bazaah	27	15	33	35	52	33	22	21	238
Aldanah	0	0	8	0	57	32	89	74	261
Efrin	0	12	13	35	50	43	32	44	229
Sermada	10	3	11	16	52	46	80	17	235
Soran	17	20	46	14	19	14	10	9	149
Jarablus	19	8	15	37	32	13	31	119	274
Akhtarin	0	17	29	31	17	28	31	15	168
Qabasin	21	20	12	0	34	34	14	22	157
Mare	34	8	20	10	10	21	6	8	117
Atamah	0	0	11	10	38	39	28	30	156
Harem	0	0	14	8	19	22	13	12	88

Table No. 2: The distribution of economic recovery projects in cities between 2018-2022

## Recommendations

Local councils and organizations have implemented important projects that pushed the early economic recovery process forward. Indicators of stability are also more apparent than before. With over four years of monitoring economic recovery activities, reports have highlighted the strengthened national negotiation papers while contracting investment companies to bring in investments. Furthermore, the industry, agriculture, communications, and finance sectors remain a significant challenge in the region's recovery and attracting funds and investments. This is due to the lack of policies and laws necessary to enhance confidence in the local economy and products, the shortage of raw materials, high prices of raw materials, and the decline in purchasing power, in addition to the fact that the region remains trapped in relief projects.

Among the report's recommendations is to support local councils with good governance policies and implementation within each sector. This would ensure and support workflow, helping them be more attractive for investments. Support in the financial sector would revitalize the other sectors and create a comprehensive identity for the region within the agricultural and industrial sectors. As a result employment opportunities would increase, thus supporting residents with more jobs and a sustainable livelihood.