

LABOUR MARKET ASSESSMENT: TABQA CITY

MAY 2024 | SYRIA

Context & Rationale

As Syria enters its 14th year of crisis, access to livelihoods has consistently been highlighted as a priority need of host communities and IDPs alike. However, the Early Recovery and Livelihoods Working Group (ERL WG) of the Northeast Syria NGO Forum noted that little systematic data exists on key indicators that would guide implementing partners' program design, such as:

- How demand for labour varies across economic sectors, and which sectors have the greatest potential to absorb new workers or Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).
- How demand for labour varies across types of employment, including permanent employees, temporary or seasonal employees, and casual or daily workers.
- Specific skills that employers are looking for, including both soft skills and sector-specific skills, and how they prioritize among these.
- The key constraints that employers face when seeking to hire workers.

This assessment seeks to shed light on these indicators for Tabqa city, to enable implementing partners to better tailor their interventions to existing needs.

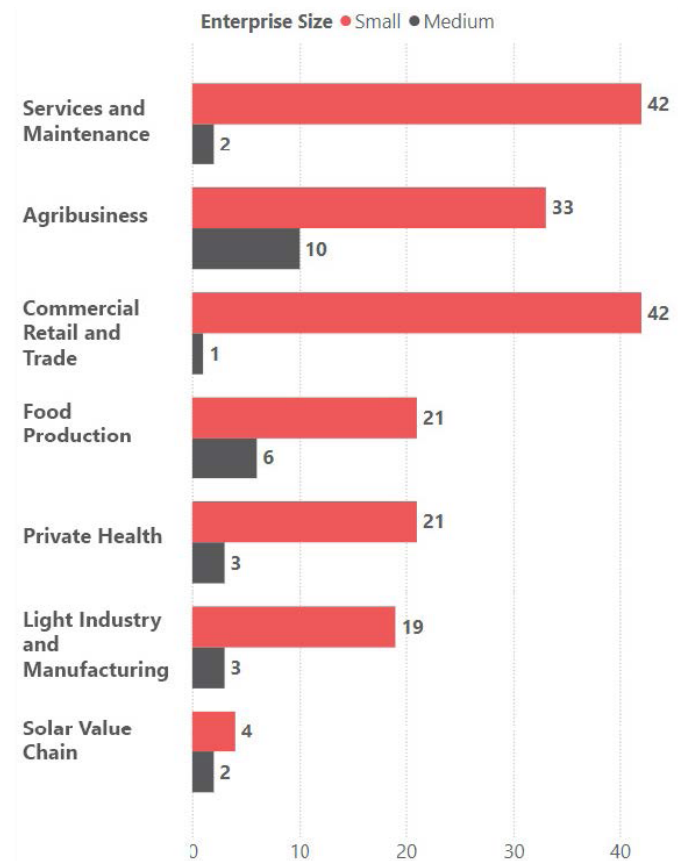


Chart 1: Number of completed surveys per sector and enterprise size

Key Messages

- **71% or 149 out of 209 interviewed businesses reported a 'lack of access to finance or loans' as the primary challenge they face across all sectors**, followed by 'lack of access to electricity, water, or fuel' with 56% (117 out of 209) of the interviewed businesses.
- **98% of respondents reported using verbal contracts as the primary type of labour agreement** between employees and workers. The remaining 2% reported using written and verbal contracts.
- **The top skill that interviewed businesses seek in employees, across all sectors, is work ethic (reliability, trustworthiness, etc.).** This applies when hiring employees under all three labour modalities (permanent; temporary or seasonal; and casual or daily), and was the case for small enterprises and medium enterprises.
- **Social connections are the main means for finding workers in Tabqa across all labour modalities.** 'Recommendations from friends and family' was the most common means, followed by 'recommendations from other business owners they trust', and 'recommendations by people they already know have worked with before' in the third place.

Key Definitions

- **Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs):** The International Financial Corporation (IFC) categorizes SMEs based on three attributes: the number of employees, total assets, and annual sales. The limited data on enterprises and the lack of a central repository of registered business makes it challenging to estimate the total assets and annual sales. Hence for this assessment, only number of employees will be used to define SMEs. Small Enterprises employ between four and ten paid staff, while Medium Enterprises hire between eleven and fifty paid staff.
- **Permanent employee:** A person who is expected to work for the business on a regular basis without a specific end date in mind. This includes full-time and part-time workers i.e., those working less than a full 40 hours every week.
- **Temporary or seasonal employee:** A person who is expected to work for the business during a specific time-frame, usually between one to six months. This includes full-time and part-time workers i.e., those working less than a full 40 hours every week.
- **Casual or daily worker:** A casual or daily worker is a person who is hired for a short time period, usually between one day or up to one month. Need for casual or daily workers may be regular or irregular.
- **Sector specific skills:** Technical, job-specific abilities and special attributes that are needed for performing an occupation in practice. Learners often acquire these as a result of their participation in post-basic education, including through highly specialized professional trainings or extra-school courses. These skills could relate to a specific job, task, or academic discipline (e.g. teacher, geographer, or medical doctor).
- **Core sectors:** Economic sectors that include many businesses of varying sizes and relatively consistent high demand. These sectors are well-established and expected to continue comprising a strong component of economic activity. The three core sectors identified during the scoping exercise were Commercial retail and trade (non-agricultural), Services and maintenance (non-agricultural), and Agribusiness.
- **Growth sectors:** New and emerging sectors that are assessed to have strong and growing demand, as well as opportunities to grow further if supported. Four growth sectors were identified during the scoping exercise: food production; solar value chain; private health; and light industry / manufacturing (non-food items).

Methodology Overview

Data collection for this assessment occurred in two stages. First, the ERL WG conducted scoping interviews with key informants in Tabqa to identify core sectors and growth sectors, researching the approximate number of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) existing in these sectors, and their locations in Tabqa. Second, from 21-25 April 2024, REACH enumerators conducted 218 interviews with SMEs in the identified sectors in Tabqa City, Raqqah Governorate, Northeast Syria, using a snowball approach.

Findings from this assessment are indicative and should not be generalized across the region. Further, the sampling took into account the data collected from the scoping interviews, but should not be seen as precisely representative of the relative size of the seven sectors in Tabqa.

The tool that was used for this assessment is available to partners to enable them to conduct livelihoods research of their own in other locations, resulting in more evidence-based, relevant, and effective programming in other locations in Northeast Syria and beyond.

To access the tool, please contact earlyrecovery.nes@gmail.com.

Challenges & Limitations

Ideally, the assessment would cover both the supply and demand sides of the labour market, and would cover a wide range of sectors. Capacity constraints have required the research team to limit the number of sectors that will be covered under the assessment and the number of interviews of different sizes of businesses within sectors. The fewer the number of interviews conducted per enterprise size and per sector, the less accurate the findings are likely to be.

The assessment applied a snowball approach which relies on the professional network of interviewees. Enumerators could have been referred to businesses that are similar to the ones they interviewed, thus skewing the findings.

The limited data on enterprises and the lack of a central repository of registered business makes it challenging to estimate the total assets and annual sales. Hence for this assessment, only the number of employees will be used to define SMEs. Small Enterprises employ between four and ten paid staff, while Medium Enterprises hire between eleven and fifty paid staff.

Similarly, while most respondents were men, women-run businesses in the sector may have been under-represented if they were home-based (and therefore harder for enumerators to identify), or it may be a result of conservative values and low ownership / management rates by women in the selected sectors in Tabqa.

Summary

- The **top challenges** that interviewed businesses reportedly face within their sector are **'lack of access to finance or loans'** (71% or 149 out of 209); **'lack of access to electricity, water, or fuel'** (66% or 117 out of 209); and **'uncertainty or instability in economic conditions (including depreciation of the Syrian Pound)'** (52% or 109 out of 209).
- The **top solutions** that interviewed businesses seek to improve their business are **'access to finance or loans to operate their business'** (82% or 176 out of 209); **'having better access to electricity, water, or fuel'** (66% or 139 out of 209); and **'access to new equipment and machinery'** (60% or 125 out of 209).
- **Verbal contracts are reportedly the primary type of labour agreement with employees and workers among surveyed businesses**, with 98% of respondents reportedly using verbal contracts and 2% reportedly having written contracts.
- **Demand for labour was different between interviewed growth sector and core sector enterprises.** Specifically, in the growth sector, a greater proportion of interviewed enterprises reported having needed permanent employees, a roughly equivalent proportion reported having needed temporary or seasonal workers, and a lower proportion reported having needed daily workers between April 2023 and April 2024.
- **The top skill that interviewed businesses seek in employees, across all sectors, was work ethic (reliability, trustworthy, etc.).** This was the case when hiring employees under all three labour modalities (permanent, temporary or seasonal, and casual or daily), and was the case for small enterprises and medium enterprises.
- **Social connections** appear to be central to finding workers in Tabqa. Of the interviewed businesses, **'recommendations from friends and family' was the most common means of attracting permanent employees, of attracting temporary or seasonal employees, and of attracting daily or casual workers.** The next-most common means of finding candidates for each of the three labour modalities were recommendations from other business owners they trust, followed by people they already know have worked with before.
- The **most common challenges in hiring permanent and temporary or seasonal employees**, according to interviewed businesses in Tabqa that needed to hire permanent employees and/or seasonal employees between April 2023 and April 2024, were the **high cost of hiring workers with the necessary skills; difficulty in finding trustworthy employees; and difficulty in verifying candidate's skills, experience, or qualifications.**
- Businesses that reported having needed to hire **daily or casual workers** between April 2023 and April 2024 similarly identified **'difficulty in verifying candidate's skills, experience, or qualifications'** as the top challenge, followed by 'the high cost of hiring workers with the necessary skills' and 'high turnover of workers (e.g. due to work pressure, low wages, etc.)'.
- **176 businesses out of 209 (84%) interviewed reported being officially registered** with relevant governmental entities. Most businesses that reported not being officially registered with relevant governmental entities were small enterprises under the services and maintenance sector (11 businesses out of 44) and the agribusinesses sector (11 businesses out of 43). In contrast, all the businesses within the private health sector reported being officially registered with relevant governmental entities.

Challenges that Businesses Face within their Sectors

The main challenges that interviewed businesses reportedly faced are primarily related to economic matters and infrastructure, rather than a lack of workers. The most-reported challenges were 'lack of access to finance or loans' (71% or 149 out of 209); 'lack of access to electricity, water, or fuel' (56% or 117 out of 209); 'uncertainty or instability in economic conditions (including depreciation of the Syrian pound)' (52% or 109 out of 209); and 'lack of access to new equipment and machinery' (37% or 78 out of 209). For more details, see chart 2 below.

However, there still appeared to be a need for skilled workers, as businesses also identified the following challenges:

- Unable to afford workers with needed skills/experience (26% or 54 out of 209)
- Lack of access to necessary materials or inputs (23% or 48 out of 209)
- Lack of workers with the skills/experience that I need (22% or 46 out of 209)
- High costs of doing business (21% or 43 out of 209)
- Lack of demand from buyers/consumers (20% or 42 out of 209)

However, the top challenges varied by sector:

- 'Lack of access to finance or loans' was the most-reported challenge across within the agribusiness sector (41 out of 43 businesses), commercial retail and trade sector (28 out of 43 businesses), and the food production sector (26 out of 27).
- 'Lack of access to electricity, water, or fuel' was the most reported challenge within the service and maintenance sector (29 out of 44 businesses) and the light industry and manufacturing sector (16 out of 22 businesses).
- 'Challenges related to transportation or road networks' was the most-reported challenge in

the solar value chain sector with all six businesses reporting it.

- 'Uncertainty or instability in economic conditions (including depreciation of the Syrian Pound)' was the most-reported challenge across the private health sector 15 out of 24 businesses.

Ownership or Rental of Business Premises

Among interviewed businesses, medium enterprises reportedly owned the business premises at a higher rate than small enterprises. More than half of medium enterprises, 55% or 15 out of 27, reported owning the venue, while around one third of small enterprises, 32% or 59 out of 182, reported the same.

Changes in Demand between April 2023 and April 2024

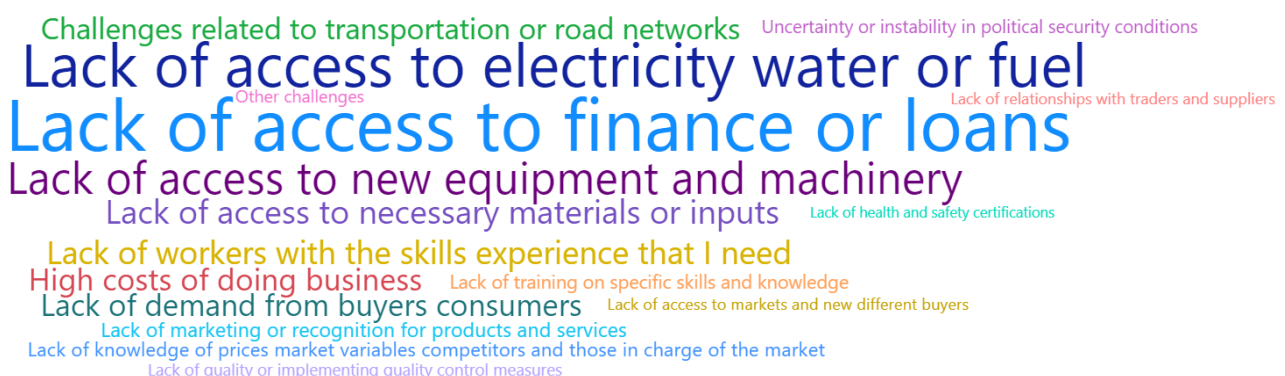
When businesses were asked to compare the level of demand for their services/products from April 2023 to April 2024, about half of the respondents (47%) reported that demand was lower than the previous year. Around one fifth (19%) stated that demand was the same, while one third (33%) indicated that demand was higher than the previous year.

There was considerable variation between sectors. Most interviewed businesses within the agribusiness sector (27 out of 43) and the solar value chain sector (4 out of 6) reported that the demand was higher than last year. In contrast, most interviewed businesses within the food production sector (21 out of 27) and the commercial retail and trade sector (24 out of 43) reported that demand was lower than last year.

Among respondents in the private health, services and maintenance, and light industry and manufacturing sectors, there was a lack of consensus on how demand for services / products in April 2024 compared to demand in April 2023.

Chart 2: Main challenges businesses face across all sectors

The text size is proportionate to the frequency with which the challenges were reported



Impact of the Change in the Number of Businesses on Demand for Services

In theory, as the demand for certain services or products increases, the market expands accordingly – new businesses are formed and existing businesses expand, thus increasing the competition between businesses working within the same sector. This can affect businesses differently, with some businesses suffering from a decrease in revenues due to increased competition, and others winning the competition and benefiting from the increase in demand regardless of the increase in competition.

52% of all respondents reported that the overall number of businesses operating within their sector increased between April 2023 and April 2024.



39% reported that the overall number of businesses didn't change.

9% reported that the overall number of businesses decreased.

In the solar value chain sector, the reported increase in number of businesses does not seem to have led to an overall reduction in demand. 5 out of 6 respondents in the sector indicated that the number of businesses in the sector increased from April 2023 to April 2024, yet demand for services/products provided by the enterprises was reportedly either much higher (3 out of 6), slightly higher (1 out of 6), or the same as it was in April 2023 (2 out of 6). Additionally, despite the increase in businesses, most respondents (4 out of 6) indicated that revenues were slightly higher than costs.

In the private health sector, an increase in businesses did seem slightly correlated to a decrease in demand: 15 out of 24 respondents in the private health sector indicated that the overall number of businesses had increased between April 2023 and April 2024, while 7 out of 24 indicated that it had stayed the same in that time.

Respondents within the private health sector were split on whether demand for services/products had changed much in that time: 9 out of 24 indicated that demand was slightly lower, 6 out of 24 indicated that it was slightly higher, and 6 out of 24 indicated that it was the same as in April 2023.

Similarly, there was variation in the private health sector on revenues vs. cost in 2023, with 15 out of 24 businesses indicating that revenues were slightly higher than costs, 7 out of 24 indicating revenues were slightly lower than costs, and 2 out of 24 indicating that they were roughly equal.

Variation in Demand for Labour Across Employment Modalities

Among the surveyed enterprises, the growth sectors' demands for labour was different than the core sectors' demands. Specifically, a greater proportion of surveyed SMEs in the growth sectors reported having needed permanent employees, a roughly equivalent proportion reported having needed temporary or seasonal workers, and a lower proportion reported having needed daily workers between April 2023 and April 2024.

- Demand for permanent employees: Among the 79 surveyed enterprises in the growth sectors, around two-thirds (66% or 52 out of 79) indicated that they had needed to hire permanent employees between April 2023 and April 2024. In contrast, around one third of the surveyed enterprises in the core sector (35% or 45 out of 130) reported that they needed to hire permanent employees between April 2023 and April 2024.
- Demand for temporary or seasonal employees was roughly the same among surveyed SMEs in the core sectors (38% or 50 out of 130) and growth sectors (35% or 28 out of 79).
- Demand for daily workers: a greater proportion of surveyed SMEs in the core sectors (33% or 43 out of 130) indicated having needed daily workers than did surveyed SMEs in the growth sectors (19% or 15 out of 79).

The number of interviewed businesses that sought to hire daily workers between April 2023 and April 2024 (11% or 22 out of 209) was smaller than the proportion of interviewed businesses that sought to hire permanent employees (41% or 86 out of 209) or temporary or seasonal workers (27% or 56 out of 209).

2.08 is the average number of permanent employees hired between April 2023 and April 2024 in Tabqa.

2.55 is the average number of temporary or seasonal employees hired between April 2023 and April 2024 in Tabqa.

2.23 is the average number of casual or daily workers hired between April 2023 and April 2024 in Tabqa.

Demand for Permanent Employees

Less than half (41%) of the businesses interviewed across all sectors reported having needed to hire permanent employees between April 2023 to April 2024. For more details, see chart 3 on page 7.

Within the **food production** sector, most interviewed businesses (78% or 21 out of 27) reported having needed to hire permanent employees between April 2023 and April 2024. These **food production** businesses generally require permanent employees with:

- Experience in preparing bakeries, pastries, cake, sweets production, dough, honey, and ice-cream.
- Experience in food processing, production, packaging, marketing, and sales.

Within the **private health** sector and the **light industry and manufacturing** sector, half of the interviewed businesses (12 out of 24 and 11 out of 22, respectively) reported having needed to hire permanent employees between April 2023 and April 2024. The required skills varied:

Within the **private health** sector, businesses indicated that permanent employees need to have specialized education and experience in the day-to-day management of pharmacies, medical laboratories, and clinics, such as: knowledge in medicines, taking patient's blood pressure, taking blood samples, etc.

Within the **light industry and manufacturing** sector, businesses indicated that permanent employees must have vocational skills related to each business' activity, such as knowledge in aluminium framing, wood cutting, and household furniture production.

The **solar value chain** sector is an emerging and growing sector in Tabqa. However, of the six businesses interviewed, only two indicated that they had needed to hire permanent employees between April 2023 and April 2024. They sought employees with experience in solar system installation, repairing, and maintenance.

Demand for Temporary or Seasonal Employees

Around a quarter of businesses in Tabqa (27%) reported having needed to hire temporary or seasonal employees between April 2023 and April 2024. This varied by sector:

- The greatest need for temporary or seasonal employees was within the food production sector (55%) and the agribusiness sector (49%).
- Within the commercial retail and trade sector, the services and maintenance sector, and the light industry and manufacturing sector, around one in five of surveyed businesses (18%-19%) reportedly needed to hire temporary or seasonal employees.

- Only one business within the private health sector reported having needed to hire temporary or seasonal employees, while none of the six businesses interviewed within the solar value chain sector reported a need for hiring temporary or seasonal employees.

Based on the nature of their activities, temporary or seasonal employees reportedly are hired during the following peak seasons:

- Within the agribusiness sector, interviewed businesses reportedly mostly hire temporary or seasonal employees for two, three, or four months, in February, March, April, and June. Depending on the business' activity, temporary or seasonal employees are expected to carry out physical labour, such as loading and unloading agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, livestock medicines), irrigating plants and livestock, spraying insecticide, setting fodder, milking cattle, cleaning the farm, seeding plants, vaccinating livestock, slaughtering and cutting chickens, etc.
- Within the food production sector, businesses interviewed reportedly mostly hire temporary or seasonal employees during Ramadan and Eid seasons, which differ annually. Temporary or seasonal employees are mostly tasked with supporting the permanent employees during peak seasons.

For more details, see chart 4 on page 7.

Demand for Casual or Daily Workers

Casual or daily labour is not a common labour modality in Tabqa among the interviewed businesses. Only 11% or 22 out of the 209 businesses interviewed reported having needed to hire casual or daily workers between April 2023 and April 2024, with a wide distribution across sectors:

- 9 businesses out of 43 within the agribusiness sector.
- 6 businesses out of 44 within the services and maintenance sector.
- 5 businesses out of 43 within the commercial retail and trade sector.
- 2 businesses out of 6 within the solar value chain sector.

Interviewed businesses reported a need for hiring casual or daily workers for a period between 31 and 90 intermittent days year-round according their needs. Among interviewed businesses, casual or daily workers are often expected to carry out physical labour.

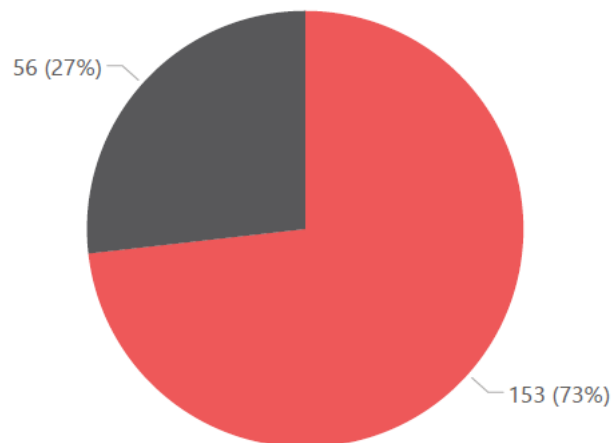
For more details, see chart 5 on page 7.

Chart 3: Enterprises' Need for Permanent Employees from April 2023 to April 2024



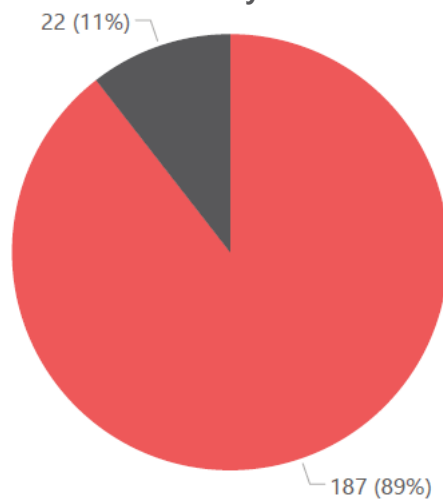
● There was no need for Permanent Employees. ● There was a need for Permanent Employees.

Chart 4: Enterprises' Need for Temporary or Seasonal Employees from April 2023 to April



● There was no need for Temporary or Seasonal Employees. ● There was a need for Temporary or Seasonal Employees.

Chart 5: Enterprises' Need for Casual or Daily Workers from April 2023 to April 2024



● There was no need for Casual or Daily Workers. ● There was a need for Casual or Daily Workers.

Sought-after Sectoral and Soft Skills, and Prioritization between Skills

Across all sectors, interviewed businesses reported work ethic (reliability, trustworthiness, etc.) as the top skill they look for when hiring employees under all three labour modalities (permanent, temporary or seasonal, and casual or daily), and both enterprise sizes (small and medium).

While there was variation in responses, around 40-50% of interviewed businesses sought both sector-specific and soft skills when hiring permanent employees, temporary or seasonal employees, or casual or daily workers. Of the remainder, there was a slight prioritization of sector-specific skills or experience among businesses when hiring for all three employment modalities.

For more details, see chart 6 and chart 7 on page 9.

Skills Sought in Permanent Employees

The most sought-after soft skills among the 86 businesses in Tabqa who reported having needed to hire permanent employees between April 2023 and April 2024 were work ethic (reliability, trustworthiness, etc.) (mentioned by 77% or 66 out of 86); time management (37% or 32 out of 86), communication skills (35% or 30 out of 86), literacy (33% or 28 out of 86), and teamwork (29% or 25 out of 86).

Regarding sector-specific skills or experience, the skills needed reflect the nature of each activity. For example, businesses working in the food production sector who reported having a need for permanent employees between April 2023 and April 2024 expressed 'experience in cooking and food preparing, production, and packaging' in addition to 'experience in food sales and marketing'.

Skills Sought in Temporary or Seasonal Employees

56 out of 209 (27%) businesses in Tabqa reported having needed to hire temporary or seasonal employees between April 2023 and April 2024.

By sector, the highest proportion of interviewed businesses that needed to hire temporary or seasonal employees between April 2023 and April 2024 was the food production sector (14 out of 27 businesses), followed by the agribusiness sector (21 out of 43 businesses).

Only one business within the private health sector reported so, while none of the six interviewed businesses within the solar value chain sector reported having needed to hire temporary or seasonal employees.

Within the food production sector, interviewed businesses that needed temporary or seasonal employees were split on what sorts of skills were most important for temporary

or seasonal employees, with half (7 out of 14) expressing that soft skills are more important than sector-specific skills, and half (7 out of 14) expressing that sector-specific skills or experience and soft skills are equally important when hiring temporary or seasonal employees.

In contrast, most interviewed businesses within the agribusinesses sector who reported need for hiring temporary or seasonal employees between April 2023 and April 2024 indicated that sector-specific skills or experience are more important than soft skills (15 out of 21).

The most sought-after soft skill that interviewed businesses look for when hiring temporary or seasonal employees between April 2023 and April 2024 is work ethics (reliability, trustworthy, etc.) which was mentioned by 86% or 48 out of 56 followed by teamwork (50% or 28 out of 56), flexibility (45% or 25 out of 56), time management (39% or 22 out of 56), and communication skills (25% or 14 out of 56).

The most sought-after sector-specific skills are mostly physical labour tasks and providing support to permanent employees.

Skills Sought in Casual or Daily Workers

Among interviewed enterprises, daily or casual labour was the least common labour modality in Tabqa. 22 out of 209, or 11% businesses interviewed reported having need for hiring casual or daily workers between April 2023 and April 2024. Results vary across the different sectors:

- None of the businesses interviewed across the food production sector, private health sector, and light industry and manufacturing sector reported having needed to hire casual or daily workers between April 2023 and April 2024.
- Some interviewed enterprises within the solar value chain sector (2 out of 6), the agribusiness sector (20% or 9 out of 43), the service and maintenance sector (14% or 6 out of 43), and the commercial retail and trade sector (12% or 5 out of 43) reportedly needed to hire casual or daily workers between April 2023 and April 2024.

The most sought-after soft skills for casual or daily workers among interviewed businesses in Tabqa who reported having needed to hire casual or daily workers between April 2023 and April 2024 were, in order, work ethic (reliability, trustworthiness, etc.), time management, teamwork, literacy, and flexibility.

Chart 6: Top Skills Enterprises Look for When Hiring Employees per Labour Modality

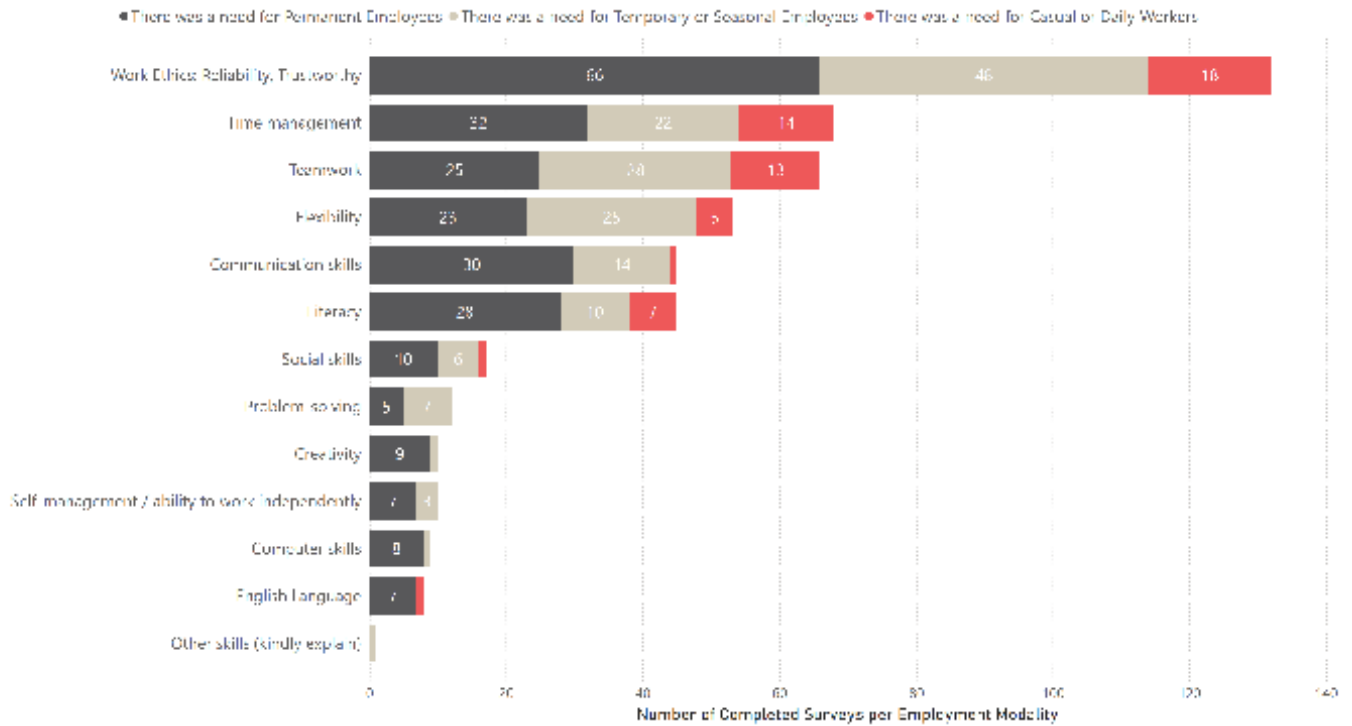
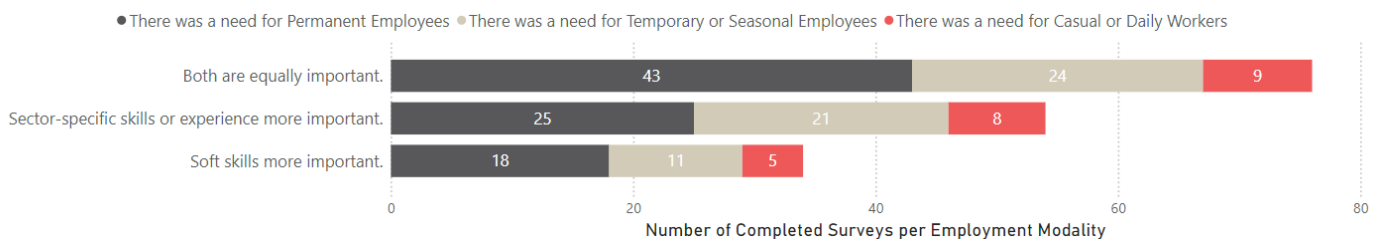


Chart 7: Top Skills Enterprises Look for When Hiring Employees per Labour Modality

The text size is proportionate to the frequency with which the challenges were reported



Chart 8: Importance of Sector-Specific Skills vs. Soft Skills When Hiring Employees (Disaggregated by Labour Modality)



On-the-job Training for Permanent Employees

45% or 94 out of 209 interviewed businesses reported not training their new permanent employees on sector-specific skills or on general skills. The remaining 55% or 115 out of 209 businesses reported providing training to new permanent employees as follows:

- Only sector-specific skills (43% or 50 out of 115)
- Both sector-specific skills and general/soft skills (32% or 37 out of 115).
- Only general/soft skills (24% or 28 out of 115).

The top sectors that reported providing training for new workers under permanent employment, are as follows:

- Solar value chain (all six businesses).
- Private health (21 out of 24).
- Commercial retail and trade (26 out of 43).
- Light industry and manufacturing (13 out of 22).
- Service and maintenance (21 out of 43).
- Food production (13 out of 27).
- Agribusiness (15 out of 43).

63% or 17 out of 27 medium enterprises and 54% or 98 out of 182 small enterprises reported providing training for new workers under permanent employment. The training topics are related to each business' activity/activities with focus on sector-specific skills more than general/soft skills.

Approaches to Employee Recruitment

Social connections appear to be central to finding workers in Tabqa. Of the interviewed businesses, 'recommendations from friends and family' was the most common means of attracting permanent employees, of attracting temporary or seasonal employees, and of attracting daily or casual workers.

The next-most common means of finding candidates for each of the three labour modalities were recommendations from other business owners they trust, followed by people they already know have worked with before. At a lower rate, but still across all sectors, businesses reportedly publish vacancy announcements on social media channels or WhatsApp groups. For more details, see chart 9 on page 11.

Challenges Businesses Face when Trying to Hire Employees

The challenges businesses face when looking for qualified candidates of all three labour modalities are similar.

Among businesses in Tabqa that reported having needed to hire permanent employees between April 2023 and April 2024, the most common challenges they reportedly faced were:

- High cost of hiring workers with the necessary skills (35 out of 86).
- Difficulty in finding trustworthy employees (34 out of 86).
- Difficulty in verifying candidate's skills, experience, or qualifications (29 out of 86).

Those same three challenges were raised by businesses that reported having needed to hire casual or daily workers between April 2023 and April 2024, albeit in different order: difficulty in finding trustworthy employees (8 out of 22), difficulty in verifying candidate's skills, experience, or qualifications (7 out of 22), and the high cost of hiring workers with the necessary skills (5 out of 22).

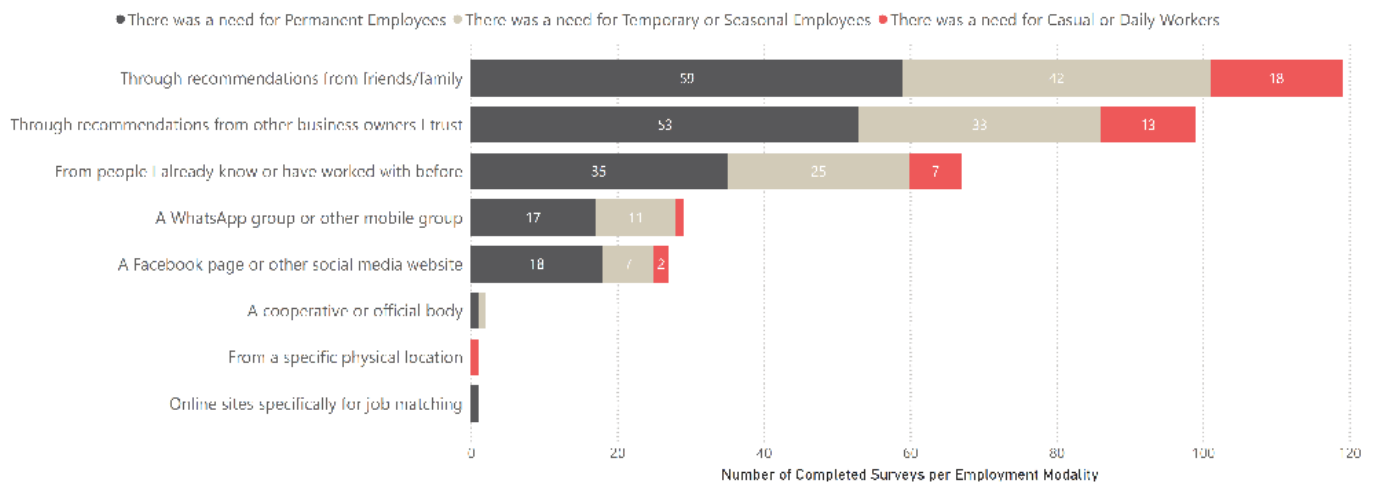
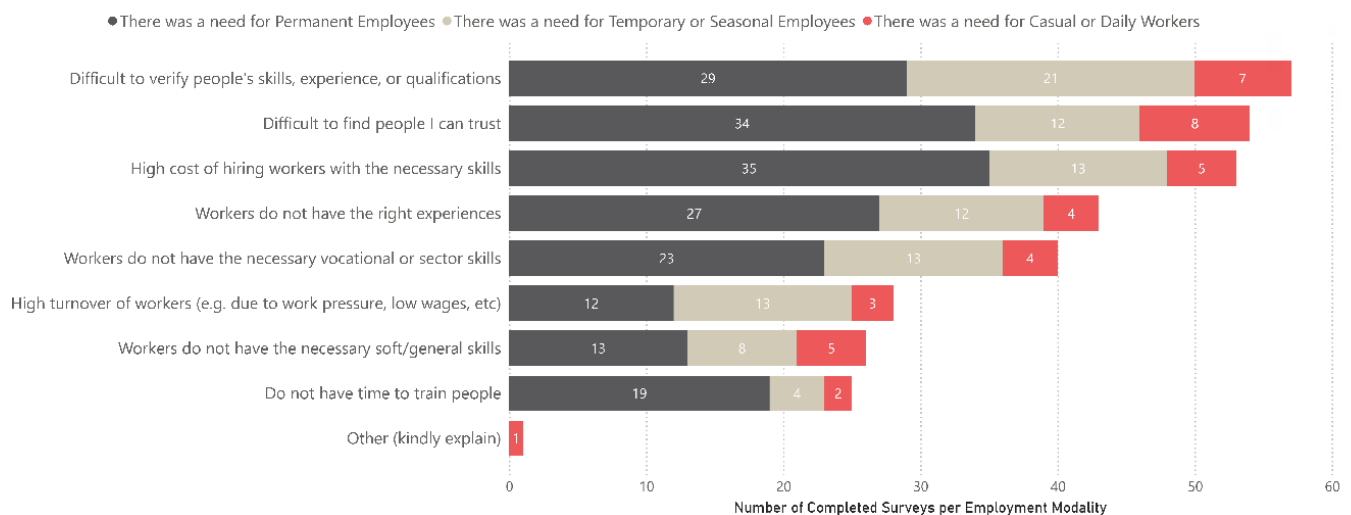
Businesses that reported having needed to hire temporary or seasonal employees between April 2023 and April 2024 similarly identified 'difficulty in verifying candidate's skills, experience, or qualifications' as the top challenge (21 out of 56), followed by 'the high cost of hiring workers with the necessary skills', 'high turnover of workers (e.g. due to work pressure, low wages, etc.), and 'workers don't have the necessary vocational or sector skills (13 out of 56 each).

For more details, see chart 10 on page 11.

Businesses' Preferred Solutions to the Hiring Challenges They Face

When asked about solutions that could help overcome the challenges businesses face related to hiring the workers under different labour modalities, respondents mainly focused on the following points:

- Provide vocational training opportunities for job seekers, to help them gain the experience they need to enter the labour market. Training can be provided by the relevant governmental entities (Vocational Training Centers) in cooperation with International NGOs. Training topics should mainly focus on technical and vocational skills but also cover the basic soft skills.
- Improve the role of the labour offices, so they can act as a hub for connecting jobseekers and employers.
- Develop a unified digital platform (or a social media page/channel) for vacancies in Tabqa where employers can publish available vacancies and jobseekers can apply.

Chart 9: Ways Businesses Utilize to Find Candidates per Employment Modality**Chart 10: Main Challenges Businesses Face When Seeking to Hire Employees**

Endnotes

¹ REACH, SYR HSOS Situation Overview NES, January-December 2023.

² Because there was no question comparing revenue in April 2023 and in April 2024, we cannot see whether revenues vs costs increased or decreased over time.



About REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).

Northeast Syria
Early Recovery & Livelihoods
Working Group



About NES Early Recovery and Livelihoods Working Group

The NES Early Recovery and Livelihoods Working Group (ERL WG) is a coordination platform for NGOs implementing livelihoods, recovery, and resilience-oriented activities aimed at improving household and community welfare and self-reliance. The ERL WG platform leads operational coordination of early recovery response activities; facilitates exchange of best practices, recommendations, challenges, and lessons learned among partners; provides technical guidance for design of livelihoods activities to ensure effective and context-sensitive approaches; and leads and supports joint research, assessments, and evidence-generation to inform partners' early recovery program design.