



Summary of Workshop

Towards Good Governance of The Litani River Basin

لأجل حوكمة رشيدة في نطاق حوض نهر الليطاني

7 and 8 September 2022

Organized by
the Economic and Social Fund for Development - ESFD

1. BACKGROUND

The Litani River Basin (LRB) is reeling from pollution, groundwater overexploitation and degradation that is impacting people's health and livelihoods.

Recognizing that strengthened governance is the basis for addressing the current degradation and economic hardship felt at the LRB, the Economic and Social Fund for Development (ESFD) is setting up local-local and local-national dialogue platforms. These platforms aim to enable local authorities, the Litani River Authority (LRA) and other stakeholders, through wide participation, including local people and civil society, to address the issues at the local level and advocate for policies that align national priorities with local needs.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

As a first step in the process, the ESFD organized a two-day workshop on 7 and 8 September 2022, gathering a wide range of stakeholders ranging from national government, embassies, local authorities, multilateral organizations and other international donors to launch and anchor the platforms in good governance values of participation and inclusivity and to maximize synergies.



3. OPENING

The workshop opened with speeches from ESFD Managing Director Mr. Haitham Omar, the LRA President Dr. Sami Alawieh, the President of the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) Mr. Nabil El Jisr, the European Union (EU) Minister Counsellor Head of Cooperation Mrs. Alessandra Viezzer, HE Minister of Industry Mr. Georges Boujikian, HE Minister of Environment Dr. Nasser Yassin, and HE Minister of Energy and Water (MoEW) Dr. Walid Fayad.

MAIN POINTS DISCUSSED:

- The ESFD is implementing the LRB Programme with 20 million EUR from the EU. This programme complements the government's efforts to address the river pollution in accordance with law 63/2016
- Speakers confirmed the challenges that local communities and authorities have been facing in the LRB since several years and concluded that the only way to achieve good governance and sustainable development is to engage local communities and a wide range of stakeholders in planning and implementation of solutions
- It is crucial to apply values and principles of good governance and transparency, environmental and water laws and hold polluters accountable
- Law 192 issued in 2020 supports governance and holistic management of the water sector including wastewater management and irrigation
- It is crucial to address the impact of the refugee crisis on the resources and deal with violations in cooperation with international agencies
- The Litani River degradation is historic and connected to surrounding socio-economic conditions.
- The Litani is a pillar for development in the LRB; this national wealth must be protected
- The pollution resulting from wastewater, solid waste and toxic fertilizers is anthropogenic and particularly weak on government's agenda
- National government entities are establishing wastewater and solid waste management with the support of international donors. Local authorities must complement these efforts to halt degradation and pollution
- The dialogue platforms will build trust, transparency and accountability between local and national stakeholders to collectively identify feasible solutions to the many challenges facing the LRB (e.g. environmental justice)
- For effective governance of the LRB, all stakeholders must uphold their responsibilities, build synergies and refrain from exchanging accusations to ensure good governance, and prioritise the safeguarding of the Litani

4. FIRST SESSION:

The Local-Local and Local-National Dialogue Platform: Objectives, Process and expected Outcomes,

Ms. Dima Sader – LRB
Programme Manager – ESFD



- Governance is exercising authority to manage resources
- The LRB suffers from decades of weak governance, translated in insufficient enforcement, weak coordination mechanisms, unclear institutional roles and the absence of an inclusive approach in basin management and protection
- The local-local dialogue aims at bringing together the UOMs (18) and the municipalities of the LRB (47) and the LRA around common priorities
- The local-national dialogue brings together local authorities, the LRA and central government to communicate local priorities and advocate for national level solutions

46 million m³

of wastewater per year produced in the LRB

4 million m³

of untreated effluents from 185 industries

50,000

in Bar Elias and Majdal Anjar suffer from polluted water

70,000 refugees

and 100,000 poor people on river side slums

- Objectives of the dialogue platform are:
 - Develop a road map and action plan for local sustainable development
 - Promote economic opportunities and job creation
 - Law enforcement
 - Advocacy
- Reversing the negative trends and reclaiming the main water source

- The dialogue process involves:



Themes of the committees will follow local priorities.

They started to be defined during the workshop. Proposed themes are:

- **Health and Environment** (pollution, solid waste etc.)
- **Service Delivery** (access to water, infrastructure, wastewater treatment and networks)
- **Economic development and job creation**
- **The regions can decide to change these themes and work on other priorities.**

During the workshop (Reference Day 2), the LRB was divided into three regions: Upper, Middle and Lower

- In each region, the formed committees:
- Will be supported to reach consensus on thematic action plans,
 - Conclude agreements to define roles and responsibilities, commitments and timelines for operationalization.



AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL:

- Activate the national committee in charge of abatement of the pollution in the Qaraoun and ensure participation of platform members.
- Secure the participation of delegates from the local-local platform in relevant parliament committees to enable them to voice concerns and mainstream regional priorities at the national level.
- Publish action plans and outcomes and communicate them widely to donors, international organizations and agencies
- Organize a final event to expose the results and recommendations of the dialogue platform and explore scenarios to ensure its sustainability by developing it into a formal structure.
- Consider the formation of a non-governmental organisation or similar structure for the LRB to secure the sustainability of platforms and allow fund-raising.



5. SECOND SESSION

In this open space session, local authorities and other stakeholders shared challenges and perspectives.

LEGAL CHALLENGES:

- **Lack of coordination** between public institutions and ministries
- **Concerned authorities** not enforcing the law
- **Conflict of authority** between the LRA and the Ministry of Energy and Water and Municipalities and Unions of Municipalities have jurisdiction over the river
- **Local technical committees'** work not supervised by the LRA which leads to conflict in responsibilities
- **No authority for municipalities** to continuously monitor industrial waste production and its treatment
- **Lack of laws** that support the use of the Litani water for hydropower to address the electricity crisis at least for the villages located on the riverbanks
- **Existing laws and regulations** are not sufficient to ensure comprehensive governance
- **Preserving the right** to use the water for domestic and agricultural purposes and establishing a legal framework to ensure efficient use of wells and irrigation water
- **Establishing a specialized environmental public** prosecution body and judges
- **Absence of application** decrees for water law 192/2020 to provide the water investment public institutions an effective role
- **Activate the role of municipal police** to stop violations that lead to pollution
- **Amend the application** decrees for the administrative structure of water institutions
- **Reviewing the procedures** for awarding construction permits to align with efficient use of water resources
- **The interference of politicians and parties**, which impedes law enforcement
- **Activate the role** of the Committee for the Abatement of Pollution in the Qaraoun Lake
- **Bureaucracy**
- **Difficulty** in applying the public procurement law

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES:

- **Wastewater** networks are incomplete
- One treatment plant for Baalbeck-Hermel is not sufficient, there is a treatment plant planned for Hermel
- There are very few and not properly functional treatment plants generally: **The treatment plant of Eiat** is not functional
- **Agricultural** pollution due to overuse of chemical fertilizers and little awareness about sustainable agriculture and permaculture
- **Irrigation** with polluted water. Water from treatment plants not fit for irrigation
- **Lack of awareness** and irresponsible behavior
- **Industrial pollution** (especially from slaughterhouses) and pollution from tourism establishments
- **Septic tanks** causing groundwater pollution
- **Lack of solid waste management**
- **Open burning** of waste resulting in emissions and air pollution
- **No monitoring and accountability**
- **Hospital waste**
- **Construction waste**
- The mixing of **polluted water in Yammouneh** with the Litani
- The mixing of **rainwater with wastewater channels**
- **Essential** to treat the pollution upstream first.
- Lack of power affecting the operation of wastewater treatment - **High cost** of operations with little environmental benefit
- **Health impacts** - high cancer and gastro-intestinal infection cases
- No land use **management to retain water** to recharge springs
- **Quarries**
- **Match technologies** with the local context

INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGES

- **Operating and maintenance** of wastewater treatment plants
- **Concerned authorities** not enforcing the laws
- **Lack of technical capacity** and experience to monitor and manage wastewater networks and treatment plants
- **Choosing complicated** and high-cost wastewater treatment systems
- **Networks design is inadequate and incompatible** with the treatment plants
- **Insufficient quantity** of treatment plants
- **Weak governance** and binding legal framework
- **Separating wastewater** networks from rainwater channels
- **The impact of lack of power** on the cost and ability to operate the plants
- **Absence of specialized plants** that treat industrial waste including slaughterhouses, tanneries, waste from olive mills, batteries etc.
- **Random implementation** of infrastructure projects by ministries, donors and the private sector

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

- **The influx and settlement** of refugees in the LRB
- **The lack of economic resources** for farmers and residents more generally
- **Absence of NGOs** specialized in agriculture and the environment
- **Lack of awareness and guidance** about environmental degradation and pollution in the Litani and their impacts on society
- **Barriers** to producing power in the LRB
- **Conflicts** between local communities and Syrian refugees
- **Lack of job opportunities**
- **Lack of participation** of women and youth in decision-making processes
- **Devaluation of the Lebanese currency** and its impacts on people
- **Lack of compliance** with standards by agricultural and industrial institutions to limit pollution
- **Inability to apply** modern and sustainable farming techniques and industrial production

FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

- **Insufficient funding** for new wastewater treatment plants along the basin
- **Securing a budget** to manage wastewater treatment plants
- **Lack of capacity** and resources to remove the violations and pollution (both liquid and solid)
- **Provide financial incentives** for farmers and industrialists to stop pollution in the LRB
- **Lack of financial laws** for the river or operating and maintaining the plants
- **Burdening the municipalities** with responsibilities that are not within their scope like bearing the costs of maintaining wastewater networks (role of ministry of works)
- **Lack of tax collection** for wastewater treatment by the Ministry of Energy and Water
- **Weak municipal budget** especially in light of the economic crisis and currency devaluation
- The choice of **wastewater treatment** plants with high operation cost
- **Irregular payment** of municipal dues by concerned ministries
- **Division of funding** to two parts: in Lebanese currency at the exchange rate of 1,500 per dollar, and one in foreign currency
- **Lack of consistent** funding to tackle the pollution sustainably
- **Lack of coordination** between the ministries and donors to reach an effective funding framework, where finances is invested in the right place

6. THIRD SESSION

Governance of the LRB: Current condition and Challenges.

Presentation by Eng. Nassim Abou Hamad, Head of Water Governance and Basin Management Department, LRA

- The LRA is an independent institution working under the umbrella of the MoEW
- Through law 63/2016, the LRA was mandated with the governance in the LRB and coordination with other stakeholders to tackle the pollution
- Through the water law 192, the LRA was mandated with the protection of water resources and collecting proof about violations

8,400 ha

of agricultural land is irrigated with polluted water

77%

of industrial establishments are operating without permits

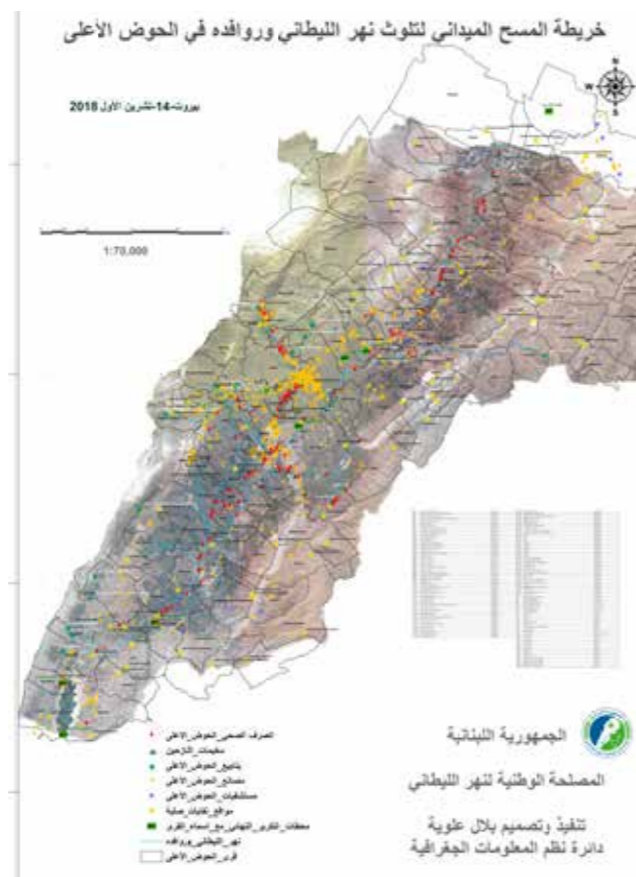
50 %

of wastewater networks not completed to date

■ Threats to the LRB include:

- Violations
- Leakage of insecticides and fertilizers
- Hospital and solid waste
- Wastewater
- Industrial effluents
- Water extraction
- Erratic digging for wells

- The LRA is continuously monitoring water quality and quantity in both the upper and lower basin, at the surface and underground



7. FOURTH SESSION

Solutions include:

- Libreating land from violations must continue
- Stricter measures must be applied with polluters especially those operating without permits
- The Ministry of Environment (MoE) is in the process of declaring the river a heritage site
- Internationally funded projects are underway to enhance farmers' capacity on good agricultural practices, such as the reduced use of fertilizers and pesticides
- The Directorate General of Urban Planning (DGUP) developed the master plan to organize land use identifying solutions and opportunities to local challenges and risks. There is major overlap between farmland, urban sprawl and land exposed to floods and landslides.. Construction should avoid farmland and valleys. Mountain tops should be considered instead
- Lands are still being lost mostly due to corruption and narrow interests. The DGUP often faces resistance by influential individuals and some municipalities. This results in degradation and food insecurity
- Responsibility should be shouldered by tens of villages, municipalities, local communities, refugee camps and the hundreds of industries and farms that discharge wastewater and industrial refuse directly into the river

- The CDR is establishing treatment plants. But massive awareness campaigns are needed to overcome the "Not In My Backyard (NIMBY) Phenomenon."
- The EU is funding maintenance and operations of wastewater treatment plants up to 2024
- A major constraint lays in the long time (2 years) to establish a treatment plant
- Domestic wastewater should be separated from other waste to avoid damaging plants

CHALLENGES

- Identifying areas that the treatment plants will serve
- Separating rainwater from wastewater networks
- Identifying funding to connect households to the network
- No capacity for water establishments to reception and maintain treatment plants
- Solid waste dumping in the networks
- Land appropriation

Current wastewater infrastructure projects:

UPPER BASIN:

Executed projects:

- Eiat
- Yammouneh
- Zahleh
- Jeb Jennine and Saghbine

Under execution:

- Tamnin 1
- Completing wastewater networks connected to Zahleh treatment plants
- Anjar Majdal Anjar 1
- Completing wastewater networks connected to Jeb Jennine, Saghbine, Aitanit, Ferzol and Ablah

Planned projects:

- Networks for Anjar Majdal Anjar
- Completing wastewater networks connected to Temnin
- East Zahleh / Kfarzabad treatment plant

LOWER BASIN:

Executed projects:

- Nabatieh 1
- Tyr 1 and 2
- Zawtar, Yohmor, Kfarsir

Projects under execution

- Marjayoun - Khiam treatment plant
- Sarafand



In light of the economic situation, caution should be used in dealing with small and medium enterprises to avoid undermining livelihoods

The MoE plans to decentralize solid waste management. Municipalities and UOMs must enforce sorting at the source, collect waste and establish sanitary landfills. There are very suitable areas for the purpose especially near the eastern mountain range

Local authorities must collect taxes to secure services even in the absence of legal tools

Following the inspection visits by the Ministry of Industry, local authorities must continue to monitor industries and watch for violations

DAY 2

On the second day, participants were divided into three groups to develop prioritization:

- Upper Basin
- Middle Basin
- Lower Basin

1. THE OUTCOME OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS

UPPER BASIN

PRIORITY	CHALLENGES	CAUSES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	REMEDIAL ACTIONS TAKEN
1.	Discharging solid and liquid waste in the river course Esta kid a solid waste sorting facility and landfill in tamnin fawqa	- Absence of wastewater treatment plants and solid waste facilities - Lack of awareness and cooperation by people, slaughterhouses and hospitals - Waste from slaughterhouses - The large number of refugees camps along the river.	Concerned ministries: Environment, Energy and Water and Bekaa water establishments, private sector, and people (citizens)	- Implementation of Zahleh, Ferzol and Ablah treatment plants - Start of implementation of Tamnin Tahta - Establish a solid waste sorting facility and a landfill in Baalbeck - Establish a solid waste sorting facility and a landfill in Tamnin Fawqa - Establish a treatment plant in Eiat - Law 80 / 2018 on solid waste management but lacking implementation decrees
2.	Lack of trust between people and public institutions	- Lack of just application of laws or bias in their application - Failure of public institutions in operating and monitoring public property - Political interference and the sectarian / confessional system	Public institutions and ministries and political bodies (judicial and security)	
3.	Municipalities are stepping in for Ministries and the state	- Devaluation of the currency and inflation - The shortcoming of ministries - Proximity between municipalities and people	Various ministries	
4.	-Low quantity of wastewater treatment plants and incomplete networks - Lack of power to operate the plants	- Low financial capacities - State deprioritizes pollution and does not take the issue seriously - High cost of fuel	Water establishments and Ministry of Energy and Water, CDR, LRA Donors and the process of selecting projects	- Planned treatment plants and - Treatment plants under construction - The contribution of certain political parties and local communities
5.	Municipalities and UOMs have no authority over the river	- Inadequate laws - The absence of decentralization - Lack of coordination and existence of ministry for planning	Parliament - Ministries / Cabinet - indifference - Local communities	- Issuing the polluter pays law (not applied) - The new water law 192 - Lawsuits against municipalities by the LRA

MIDDLE BASIN

PRIORITY	CHALLENGES	CAUSES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	REMEDIAL ACTIONS TAKEN
1.	Operating and maintaining treatment plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of funding - No taxation - Finding funding through donors, Similar to Zahleh plan - Power cuts - Low quantity of treatment plants - Inability for treatment plants to absorb the large quantity of wastewater that was multiplied by the refugee crisis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The water authority In the Bekaa 	The UOM must take on operation and maintenance
2.	The Syrian refugees and their settlement on the riverbanks	The lack of decision to facilitate their return to Syria	The international community, the geopolitical situation,	There is a plan to settle them
3.	No funding for treatment plants	Lack of funding	Concerned ministries	Studies



LOWER BASIN

PRIORITY	CHALLENGES	CAUSES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ACTIONS PLAN	REMEDIAL ACTIONS TAKEN
1.	Operating and maintaining treatment plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of human resources - Power cuts - No availability of fuel - Disruption of funding from donors for spare parts and maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concerned ministries - Concerned institutions including the water institution in the south 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pushing ministries to reception the treatment plants and secure the teams that will operate them. - Communication with donors to secure hydraulic power
2.	No authority for municipalities to participate in monitoring industries in a permanent manner in waste production and treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No role for the municipalities in issuing permits - The law doesn't give the municipality the right to sanction - The law doesn't allow the municipality to mobilize the police and security to stop violations - The law doesn't allow the municipality to increase taxation and fines in the absence of the judiciary - The lack of master plans to categorize land - The reluctance of municipalities to carry out their limited role of monitoring violations - Political interference to prevent certain municipalities from implementing the law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legislative authority - The government issuing decrees or circulars such as the decree of law 80/180 - Municipalities - Citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some municipalities have master plans - The activities of the LRA and the removal of violations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enacting the decentralization - Update of the municipal law and the decrees for public procurement - Making compulsory for municipalities to develop master plans for land use
3.	Implementing law 63 / 2016 to address the weak economic situation of farmers and LRB residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weak financial capabilities at municipalities and low awareness in the agricultural sector - Devaluation of the currency - Increase in the cost of labor - No support from the government and donor agencies 	The Ministries of Agriculture, Environment, Finance, and Interior and Municipalities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training for farmers to enhance agricultural awareness - Implement pilot projects - Collective planning between the Ministries, Municipalities and Local Authorities - Activate agricultural cooperatives with funding from donors - Complete and implement the study by AFD for the lower basin - Complete the Canal 800 irrigation project - Reforestation of the areas around the river

2. PLAN FORWARD AND TIMELINE (TO BE COMPLETED IN THE REGIONS)

REGION	ACTIVITY	DEADLINE
Upper Basin	Setting a timeline with Regional Coordinator	September 2022
	Communication with the other municipalities	October 2022
	Forming the committees through the general assemblies inviting members of civil society	November 2022
Middle Basin	Meeting between UOMs and other municipalities and stakeholders	October 2022
	Identify representatives of the concerned municipalities	November 2022
Lower Basin	Organize a meeting in the center of Jabal Amel Headquarters for all UOMs and Municipalities to plan the way forward	September 2022
Upper, Middle and Lower Basin	Create WhatsApp Groups for Each region (grouping UOMs, Municipalities and Regional Coordinators)	September 2022
	Distribute summary of Workshop	October 2022
	Create a google form for the recruitment of committee members	October 2022
	Action plans resulting from the committees' work	February 2023

