

A Road Map Towards a Socioeconomic Development Plan for the Union of Municipalities of Jezzine, South Governorate



الجمهورية اللبنانية
وزارة الشؤون الاجتماعية

In partnership with the
Ministry of Social Affairs



UN-HABITAT



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A Road Map Towards a Socioeconomic Development Plan for the Union of Municipalities of Jezzine, South Governorate

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The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is the United Nations agency for human settlements. It is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. UN-Habitat's programmes are designed to help policymakers and local communities get to grips with human settlements and urban issues and find workable, lasting solutions.

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Credits and acknowledgements

This booklet, which outlines strategic directions for the local socioeconomic development of the Union of Municipalities (UoM) of Jezzine, was made possible with the generous funding support of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), within the scope of the project "Improving Planning Capacities for Social and Economic Local Development" implemented between 2018 and 2023 by the UN-Habitat Lebanon Country Programme in close collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs.

UN-Habitat extends its gratitude to all individuals who participated in and contributed to the preparation and development of this booklet.

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Foreword by the Ministry of Social Affairs

The continuous fluctuations in the economic landscape in Lebanon have necessitated governmental institutions to rethink the forgoing socioeconomic model, which is based on the philosophy of rapid and temporary crisis response. With the increased pressing needs for social protection, aid and development, this obligates us to work towards meeting the expectations and the needs of the community relying on clear and prudent strategic planning that is realistically aligned with the available resources.

The Ministry of Social Affairs holds the responsibility and commitment of conducting developmental activities at all levels through its social developmental centres (SDCs). The ministry works in close coordination with international organizations, the local community, and local authorities.

Consequently, we seek the engagement and the involvement of relevant parties in our plans and our implementation procedures with the aim to jointly measure, evaluate and report on the performance of the ministry. This confirms our commitment to social responsibility, which contributes to achieving social stability and development.

Hence, we hereby share this booklet with you to present the analysis of data collected – and subsequently validated – with the participation of local stakeholders through different tools, including a survey with municipalities and a series of interviews and focus group discussions. The expected outcome of this exercise is to improve the socioeconomic conditions of communities and those concerned within the specified economic sectors in targeted municipalities and unions of municipalities. This will contribute to securing employment, job opportunities, skills development, and an enabling environment for entrepreneurial activities. This shall be undertaken through proper municipal planning developed in partnership with the SDCs and through the pursuit of possible funding for the implementation of such projects, yet ensuring the collaboration between the Ministry of Social Affairs, civil society organizations, and municipal councils.

Dr. Hector Al-Hajjar
Minister of Social Affairs

Foreword by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation

Knowing and analysing the resources and the challenges of the territory, planning in a participatory manner among public and private sectors and civil society organizations, designing sectorial strategies at local level where local and national level stakeholders are involved and prioritizing the interventions are a milestone before any intervention.

While this booklet is produced, Lebanon is facing one of the most severe economic and social crises: responding to individual needs is crucial, yet introducing reforms based on shared and agreed strategies is fundamental to ensure sustainability avoiding continuous adaption to emergencies.

In this context, the socio-economic focus given in developing the road map of the 10 Unions of Municipalities is really relevant. The adopted approach has enhanced the dialogue among the Unions of Municipalities, the Municipalities, the Social Development Centres of the Ministry Social of Affairs, the Lebanese Non-Governmental Organisations and stakeholders of the private sector.

The road map is the first step of a process towards interventions to be realised in the short-term and others bridging with long-terms strategies, whilst strengthening, orienting, and reforming the existing national systems.

The Italian Cooperation appreciates the role of the Ministry of Social Affairs in facilitating the process in collaboration with UN-Habitat. Italy has a longstanding cooperation with the Ministry in supporting the local development and welfare system for the provision of social services.

Italy looks forward to witnessing the continuity of the undertaken initiative through the concrete actions towards a local economic development.

Ms. Alessandra Piermattei
Head of Office AICS Beirut

Foreword by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme in Lebanon

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is pleased to collaborate with the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation to present a series of booklets that endeavours to capture the strategic directions of 10 unions of municipalities (UoMs) across Lebanon towards future socioeconomic development action planning. The directions, identified by the UoMs and local stakeholders themselves, through a bottom-up participatory approach, aim to point towards future potential socioeconomic action planning that can both mitigate and set a long-term vision for the response and recovery efforts to address the nationwide socioeconomic crisis at local levels.

At the time of writing, Lebanon continues to face numerous and deep protracted socioeconomic challenges; UoMs and municipalities are at the receiving end of their impact and equally at the forefront of a local response. These booklets compile an evidence base, as identified, and prioritized by UoMs, pointing towards the longer-term need to develop full-fledged socioeconomic action plans that target the needs of their communities across the sectors of health, education, agriculture, infrastructure, among others.

Each booklet provides findings and analyses undertaken by the local teams working at the level of each UoM related to the socioeconomic conditions of each UoM. The data and findings of the booklets were collected through a participatory approach, involving a variety of stakeholders, including the UoMs, municipalities, civil society organizations, academia, the private sector, and the Ministry of Social Affairs' social development centres (SDCs).

The booklets identify the socioeconomic strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of each UoM, and provide a baseline that can be used to guide further resource investment by UoMs, municipalities and external stakeholders. Culminating with a series of recommendations for each UoM, the booklets provide insight into which specific sectors UoMs should focus on advancing, based on pre-existing efforts made, availability of natural resources, and feasibility. If adopted, these recommendations could help lead to enhanced basic and social service provision, increased livelihood opportunities, and ultimately promote local socioeconomic development and community well-being.

UN-Habitat hopes that these booklets will be a valuable resource for UoMs as they develop and implement future socioeconomic action plans to improve the lives of their communities.

Taina Christiansen
Head of UN-Habitat Lebanon Country Programme

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AICS	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
CNRS-L	National Council for Scientific Research in Lebanon
DEM	Digital elevation model
EDL	Électricité du Liban
GIS	Geographic information system
IMF	Independent Municipal Fund
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SDC	Social development centre
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
ToT	Training of trainers
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UoM	Union of municipalities

Executive summary

The preparation of this booklet, which outlines strategic directions of the Union of Municipalities (UoM) of Jezzine in South Governorate towards future socioeconomic development action planning, was undertaken as part of a series of booklets prepared within the scope of the project “**Improving Planning Capacities for Social and Economic Local Development.**” The project was implemented between 2018 and 2023 by the UN-Habitat Lebanon Country Programme in close collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS).

The analysis and recommendations included in this booklet are a result of several meetings, interviews, focus group discussions, and brainstorming sessions conducted by the project team, which was composed of representatives of social development centres (SDCs) and UoMs, in addition to a UN-Habitat team.

With the support of a local field team – also composed of representatives of SDCs, UoMs and UN-Habitat – that was involved in data collection, the project team collected and analysed data through fieldwork, which included consultative meetings and technical sessions with all relevant groups: stakeholders, experts, local activists, and individuals from various segments of the local community. The stages of data collection and validation at the local level involved collection of information about the municipalities; conducting consultative meetings, interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders and representatives of local communities; analysing the collected data through a participatory rapid appraisal approach that defined the status of different sectors; and finally, the representatives of SDCs and UoMs proposing recommendations for specific sectors to help improve the socioeconomic situation in each UoM.

In the UoM of Jezzine, the consultations showed that the basic and social services are becoming weak due to the ongoing socioeconomic and financial crisis, and most of the sectors have been impacted in a way that the local authorities are not able to operate or to maintain effectively. To be able to improve the socioeconomic situation in the UoM of Jezzine, local stakeholders recommended to focus on the agriculture and tourism sectors. This was translated into strategic directions and a proposed road map for each of these sectors aimed at providing a vision for future action planning and interventions.

Project overview

Project objectives

The AICS-funded project as part of which this booklet was developed aimed to enhance the socioeconomic development conditions of local communities through strengthening the planning capacities at the level of unions of municipalities (UoMs) and municipalities, and by promoting collaboration between social development centres (SDCs) (affiliated to the Ministry of Social Affairs [MoSA]), local authorities and civil society organizations.

The scope of the project was adapted to meet the emerging needs of the country, to respond to the evolving socioeconomic, financial, and political crises crippling the country since 2019. To this end, the project’s focus shifted from the initial objective of developing full-fledged strategic plans covering all sectors for the targeted UoMs to highlighting mainly strategic directions in some key sectors that can contribute to future local socioeconomic development.

Geographical coverage

- Out of a total of 60 UoMs across all governorates of Lebanon that were invited to partake in the project, 38 responded and expressed initial interest in engaging in subsequent stages of the project to identify strategic directions for their future local socioeconomic development.
- Out of the 38 UoMs, 10 were eventually selected to identify strategic socioeconomic development directions, based on a number of criteria (See “Methodology” section below).

Beneficiaries

- Local communities, including men, women, elderly, youth, children, and people with disabilities
- UoMs
- SDCs
- Civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

Methodology

The aim of the series of booklets produced for the 10 targeted UoMs, which this booklet is a part of, is to analyse the local conditions of these unions and study the sectors and services that are essential components within them. These booklets provide a practical framework for taking future steps towards achieving sustainable and balanced development. Thus, the booklet series is the compilation of data and analysis about needs, gaps and challenges identified by the UoMs and other relevant local stakeholders, as well as recommendations that they have outlined to inform strategic socioeconomic development directions for their respective unions. Therefore, the booklets can serve as tools for decision-makers at both the local and national levels, as well as for development agencies to build upon when preparing their national and local programmes and policies. They were hence developed as part of the system-strengthening process of the project for UoMs to start the journey of enhancing their local socioeconomic development planning. The booklets do not intend to present full-fledged

Expected outcomes

- Identification of strategic socioeconomic needs and directions for local communities, led by their respective selected UoMs, SDCs and stakeholders active at the local level, to provide a bottom-up evidence base about their socioeconomic status and development opportunities.¹
- Dissemination of the produced evidence base to inform potential projects and secure further investment for their implementation by various internal and external stakeholders.

Timeframe

The project was implemented from 2018 to 2023, during which it was put on hold multiple times during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent socioeconomic crisis.

¹ As explained in the “Methodology” section below, the project did not aim to produce fully fledged socioeconomic action plans. The booklets developed to summarize the produced evidence base aim to lay the foundation for the future development of such detailed action plans by respective authorities or interested stakeholders.

strategic socioeconomic action plans; rather they outline the foundational elements and entry points upon which it is hoped that relevant stakeholders can continue building upon to support in future local socioeconomic development action planning efforts.

In consultation with AICS and MoSA coordinators, it was agreed to have the assessment of the UoMs focusing especially on the main productive sectors in each UoM. Hence, each of the booklets includes a general description of the state of basic and social services – the latter focusing on health, education and culture/public spaces – within the respective UoM, in addition to some recommendations for improvement of these services. For the productive sectors, each booklet includes a more detailed analysis of the state of the two sectors that were identified as key for the future local socioeconomic development of the respective UoM, in addition to more detailed recommendations and a proposed road map, based on the data collected and analysed during the field activities and in consultation with local stakeholders.

The assessment and analysis on socioeconomic development issues conducted to develop this booklet series adopted a participatory approach that focused on actively involving local stakeholders in the respective UoMs. Thus, most of the figures presented in the booklets were derived or estimated through data collected and analysed participatively with and by local stakeholders in the UoMs. This bottom-up evidence production process endeavoured to impart local knowledge for the purpose of obtaining an initial baseline regarding certain socioeconomic development matters for the respective UoM. More in-depth assessments will need to be undertaken in the future to further detail and elaborate on the data collected and analysed for the purposes of this booklet series.

In line with this participatory approach, the methodology that was used to develop these booklets included the following components and steps:

Selection of UoMs

1. Representatives of all 60 UoMs in Lebanon were invited to an initial project introductory meeting. Out of the 60, representatives from 54 UoMs attended this meeting, which was held remotely through Microsoft Teams, as initial project mobilization took place during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Out of these 54 UoMs, 38 submitted “Expressions of Interest” to participate in the subsequent steps of the project. These expressions included the submission of general information about the UoMs and a mapping of existing strategic and/or action plans.
3. Out of the 38 UoMs, 21 were excluded because they had existing relevant plans and programmes supported by various international entities and donors. Out of the remaining 17 UoMs, 10 were eventually selected to develop booklets outlining strategic directions for their future local socioeconomic development, based on a number of criteria, including population density, high number of Syrian refugees, high levels of poverty, low value of annual municipal budgets, and limited or no previous financial support from donors. Having UoMs represented from across all Lebanese governorates was also a criterion of selection. The 10 targeted UoMs include:

Akkar Governorate	North Governorate	Mount Lebanon Governorate	Bekaa Governorate	Baalbek-Hermel Governorate	South Governorate	Nabatiyeh Governorate
Joumeh	Caza Zgharta	Jord El-Aala –Bhamdoun	Qalaat El-Istiqlal	Chamal Baalbek	Caza Jezzine	Iqlim El-Tuffah
Jord El-Qaytaa		Chouf El-Souayjani				
		Iqlim El-Kharroub El-Chamali				

Table 1. 10 UoMs selected under this project.

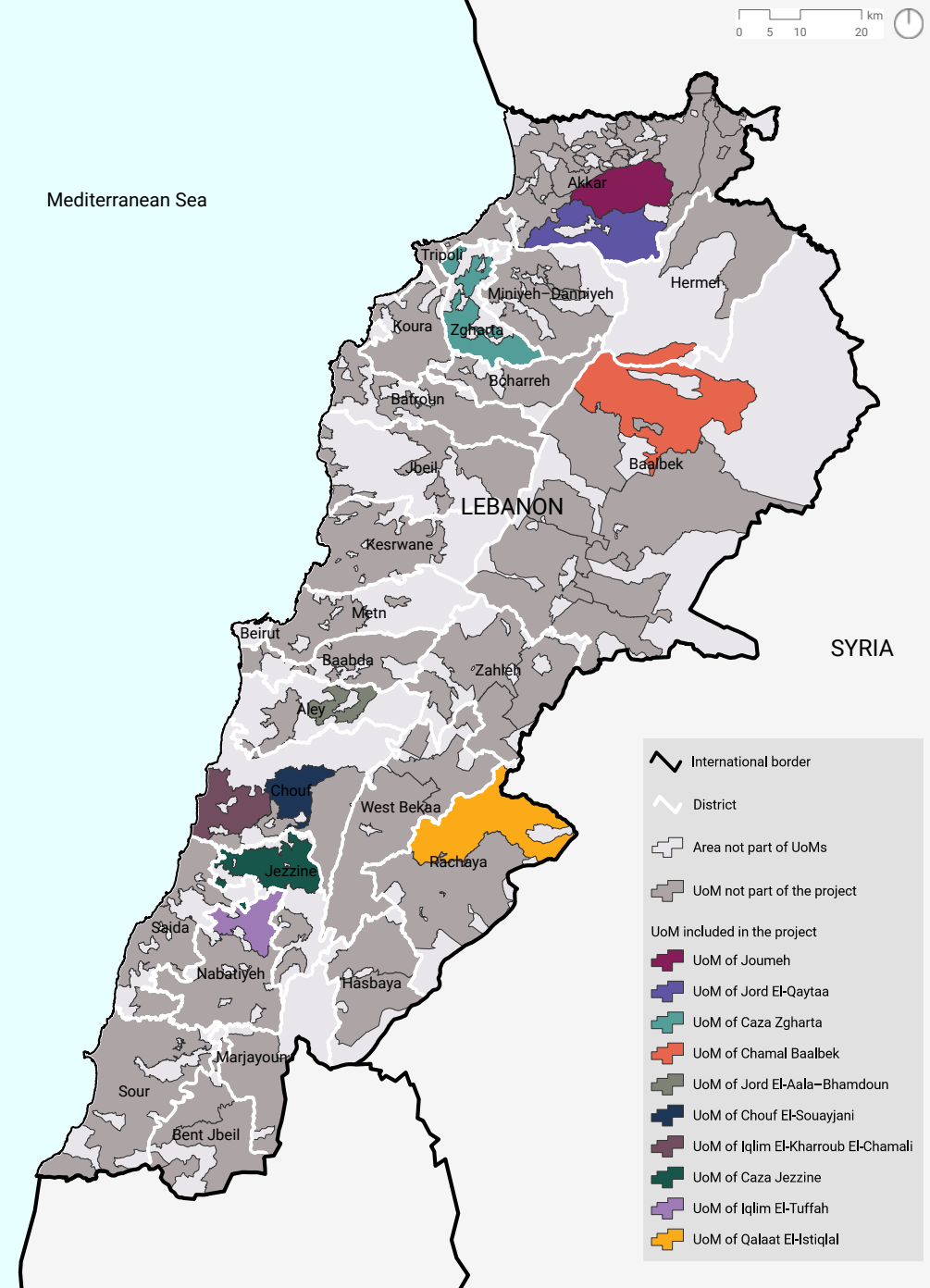


Figure 1. Location of 10 UoMs selected under this project. Source: UN-Habitat (2023).

2 This information was collected mainly through the information sheets that UoMs had previously submitted as part of the “Expression of Interest” phase explained above. Some information – mainly related to other financial support from donors – was also based on the knowledge of UN-Habitat area coordinators, as part of their regular work with UoMs.

Preparation and training

1. A project coordination team – consisting of 7 SDC coordinators designated by MoSA,³ 11 representatives⁴ from 10 UoMs, and 8 UN-Habitat staff members – was established to lead, implement, and monitor project activities and progress (Figure 2).
2. Besides the project coordination team, 10 field teams were established for each of the 10 UoMs, consisting of 10–12 individuals representing municipalities, associations, organizations, cooperatives, clubs, and educational establishments active in their respective UoM (Figure 2). Their role was to assist in collecting information related to each municipality within their respective UoM, participate in extensive consultations, and in general guide and support field-based activities.
3. A detailed training curriculum on life and technical skills was developed by UN-Habitat to conduct workshops for the project coordination team at UoM level (representatives of participating UoMs/municipalities, SDCs and UN-Habitat). In addition, survey questionnaires and templates were developed in Arabic for data collection.
4. Based on the developed training curriculum, the following workshops were conducted between 2019 and 2023:
 - One workshop was conducted to develop the soft skills of the members of the project coordination team, including on communication techniques, community mobilization approaches, meeting moderation techniques, and public speaking techniques. This included the use of a broad range of communication tools, tips and guidelines.
 - One workshop was conducted to develop the planning capacity of the members of the project coordination team, in terms of developing and rolling out the participatory field assessments, including on constituting a representative field team, undertaking stakeholder mapping exercises, etc. Participants were trained on the use of tools and templates, including different diagrams, to outline the criteria for the creation of field teams, and their respective roles.
 - Four workshops were conducted to develop the capacity of the members of the project coordination team through regular coaching and training of trainers (ToT). Topics included the following: initiating and maintaining contacts with local community stakeholders, undertaking primary and secondary data collection, documenting key gathered information and data, and carrying out data analysis. During these workshops, multiple tools were developed together with the field teams, including, among others: a municipal survey questionnaire; field assessment checklists; forms to record field observations and remarks; protocols and guidance for conducting focus group discussions and key informant interviews; problem tree analysis tool; strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis, etc.
 - Ten workshops were conducted to develop the capacity of field teams to use templates and tools to help facilitate the local stakeholders in their respective UoM to set the UoM's vision, identify its strategic directions, and prepare road maps for prioritized strategic directions and sectors for the UoM to focus on.



³ Representing each of the seven governorates covered by the project.

⁴ All UoMs nominated one representative for the project, except for Jord El-Qaytaa UoM, which nominated two representatives as focal points at the request of the union's president.

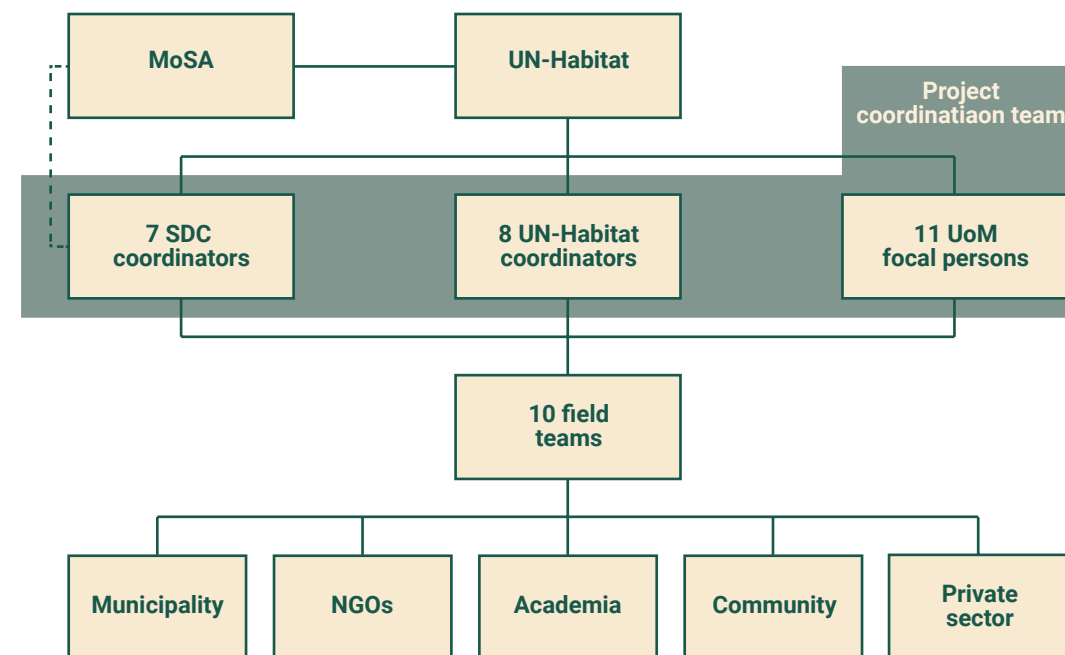


Figure 2. Stakeholders involved in the development of booklets as part of the project.

Data collection, analysis and validation

1. Following the workshops, survey questionnaires were filled with each of the 142 municipalities that are part of the 10 targeted UoMs. The surveys aimed to gather general information about municipalities under the 10 UoMs (e.g. population, resources, projects).
2. After filling the surveys, the project team conducted 52 focus group discussions, 61 consultative sessions, and 20 individual meetings with UoM presidents. The purpose of these activities was to collect additional data from different relevant stakeholders and to discuss the situation and challenges of different sectors in the UoMs.
3. Following data collection, the project coordination team met several times to analyse the general local context as well as the services and sectors of each UoM, using the participatory rapid appraisal methodology.⁵ Strategic directions were thus formulated to support and enhance the socioeconomic status of the union. Additionally, strengths, weaknesses and available opportunities within all sectors were assessed. Depending on the existing resources and opportunities within each UoM, specific sectors were identified in each UoM, for which clear future directions were defined.
4. With regard to maps included in the booklets, the UN-Habitat Geographic Information Systems (GIS) team supported in the production of a set of general maps for each of the booklets to depict the context, topography and land cover/land use of each UoM. The GIS team also updated the boundaries of the UoMs based on their municipal composition. This was done based on available data from the survey with municipalities, open sources, and other relevant secondary data sources.

Based on the data collected and analysed, a booklet was produced for each of the 10 UoMs, including identified and proposed strategic directions and priority interventions. Thus, 10 UoMs successfully participated in the entire process, resulting in supporting and enhancing their capacities in setting strategic directions focused on socioeconomic needs, with a view to identify evidence-based entry points to enhance the socioeconomic conditions of mainly vulnerable areas affected by the multiple crises.

⁵ Participatory rapid appraisal is a learning process that empowers people to conduct their own analysis to create the information base they need for participatory planning and action.

Overview of the Union of Municipalities (UoM) of Jezzine

Geographical location and land cover/land use

Located in Lebanon's South Governorate, the UoM of Jezzine consists of 30 municipalities (Figure3). The size of the municipal councils of the 30 municipalities varies; the majority have 9 members (Wadi Jezzine, Aray, Btadine El-Lokoch, Midane, Benwete, Machmoucheh, Sabah, Haitoura, Zhelte, Snaya, Kattyne w Hideb,

Rimat w Chkadif, Saydoun, Maknuniyeh, Homsiyeh, Azour, Anan, Sfaray, Kfarfalous, Ain El-Mir El-Estabel, Lebaa, Choualiq, KfarJarra, Karkha, Mjaydel), others have 12 members (Roum, Jernaya), a couple of them have 15 members (Qaitouleh, Bkassine) while Jezzine-Ain Majdaleyn has 18 members.

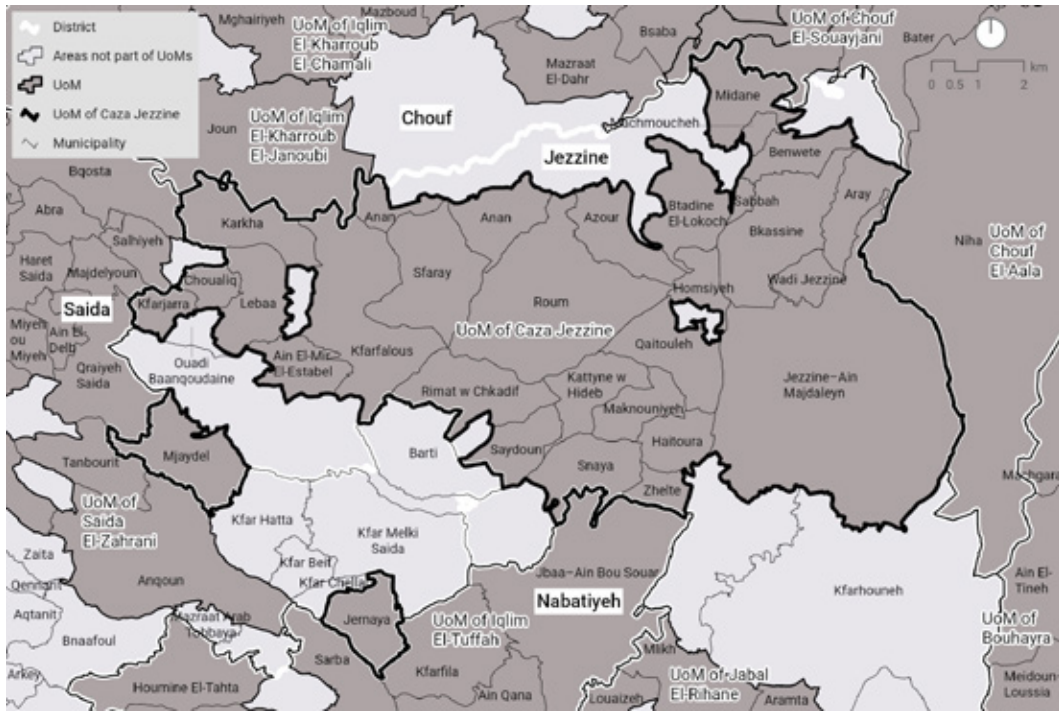


Figure 3. UoM of Jezzine with its municipalities.
 Source: UN-Habitat (2023). The boundaries of the UoM of Jezzine based on its municipal composition were updated by the UN-Habitat GIS team, relying on available data from the survey with the municipalities, open sources, and other relevant secondary data sources.

The total area of the UoM is approximately 102.03 square kilometres. Its elevation varies from around 39 metres at the coast to around 1,681 metres at the highest point in Mount Tomat (Figure 4).

The UoM stretches from Kfarjarra on the coast to Jezzine in the mountains, bordered by the regions of Chouf, Iqlim El-Tuffah, Sidon and Iqlim El-Kharroub. The UoM of Jezzine covers the western foothills of Mount Niha, as well as

a significant part of Mount Rihan. It stretches from the outskirts of the city of Sidon and the boundaries of El-Zahrani District in the west to the peaks of the Western Lebanon Mountain range, including Mount Tomat in Niha. To the east, it borders the Bekaa region. The southern boundary is defined by the Litani River at Jarmaq, marking the border with the Marjayoun and Hasbaya districts. The northern boundary is determined by the Awali River, marking the border with the Chouf region.

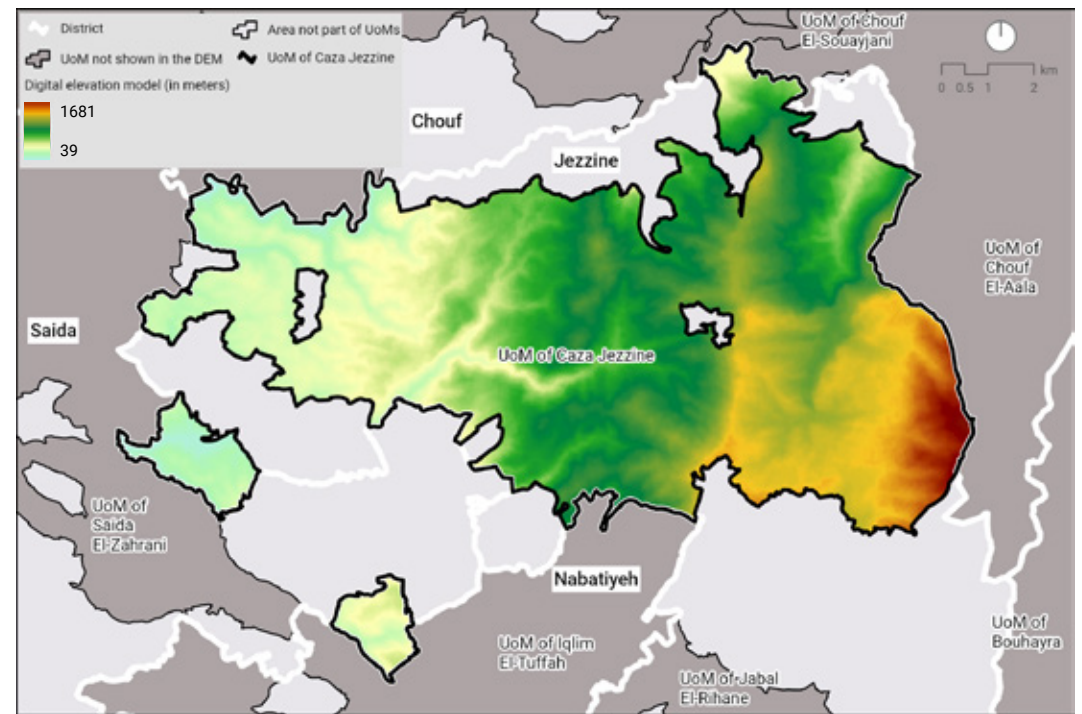


Figure 4. Digital elevation model (in metres) for the UoM of Jezzine.
 Source: UN-Habitat (2023). Digital elevation model (DEM) taken from the Advanced Spaceborne Thermal Emission and Reflection Radiometer (ASTER) Global Digital Elevation Model Version 3 (GDEM V3), with a spatial resolution of 30 metres, downloaded from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) website (<https://lpdaac.usgs.gov/products/astgtmv003/>).

The UoM of Jezzine is noteworthy for its unique geographical location and can be accessed through multiple routes. This unique location results in a climate often referred to as “medically

recommended.” This climate is particularly beneficial for individuals with asthma, other respiratory diseases, and pulmonary conditions.



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Figure 5. Satellite image of UoM of Jezzine.
 Source: UN-Habitat (2023). The high-resolution satellite image displayed in this map was extracted from Esri online World Imagery.

The UoM is also known for its green environment, beautiful nature, and dense and rich forests, which cover most of its area (Figures 5, 6 and 7). The union is particularly renowned for its pine forests, located most densely in Bkassine, which are considered as a major source of attraction for tourists.

Wooded lands cover 60 per cent (61.28 km²) of the UoM's total area, while agricultural areas span 17 per cent (17.66 km²) and artificial areas account for 8 per cent (7.85 km²). Unproductive areas (unused plots) make up 10 per cent (9.65 km²) and grassland 5 per cent (5.42 km²) of the UoM's area (Figures 6 and 7).⁶

⁶ The figures are based on the land cover/land use classification system level 1, calculated by the National Center for Remote Sensing in the National Council for Scientific Research in Lebanon (CNRS-L) in 2017. According to that classification, the category "artificial areas" includes urban areas (urban fabric), activity areas (industrial or commercial area, port area, airport), non-built-up areas (dumpsites, landfills, urban extension and/or construction site, urban vacant land), and artificial, non-agricultural vegetated areas (green urban area, and sports and leisure facilities). "Agricultural areas" include field crops, permanent crops, intensive agriculture, and agricultural units. "Wooded land" includes dense wooded land, clear wooded land, scrubland, and burned wooded land. "Grassland" includes both dense and clear grassland. "Unproductive areas" include bare rocks, bare soils, beaches, and dunes.

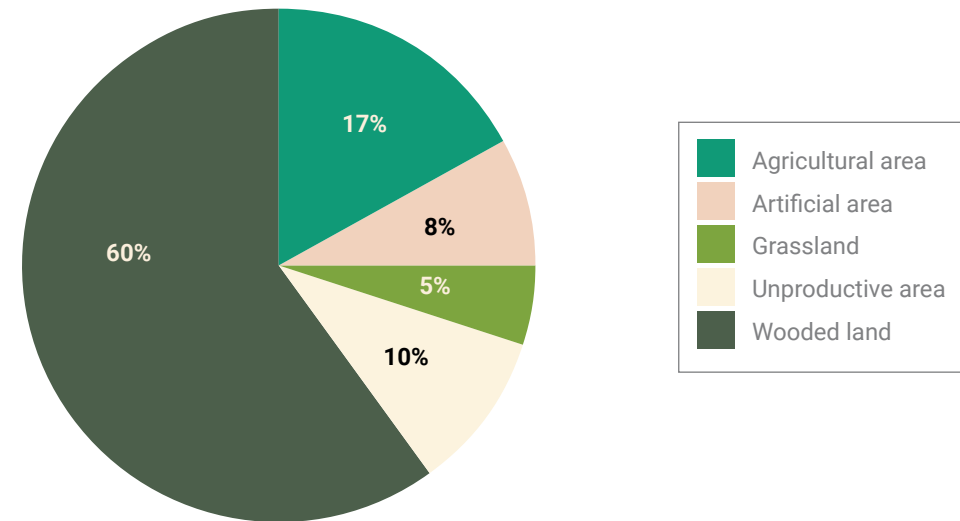


Figure 6. Land cover/land use as a percentage of the total area of the UoM of Jezzine.
 Source: Calculation made by UN-Habitat (2023) based on the Land Cover/Land Use Map of Lebanon, scale 1:20000, Classification System Level 1, National Center for Remote Sensing, CNRS-L (2017).

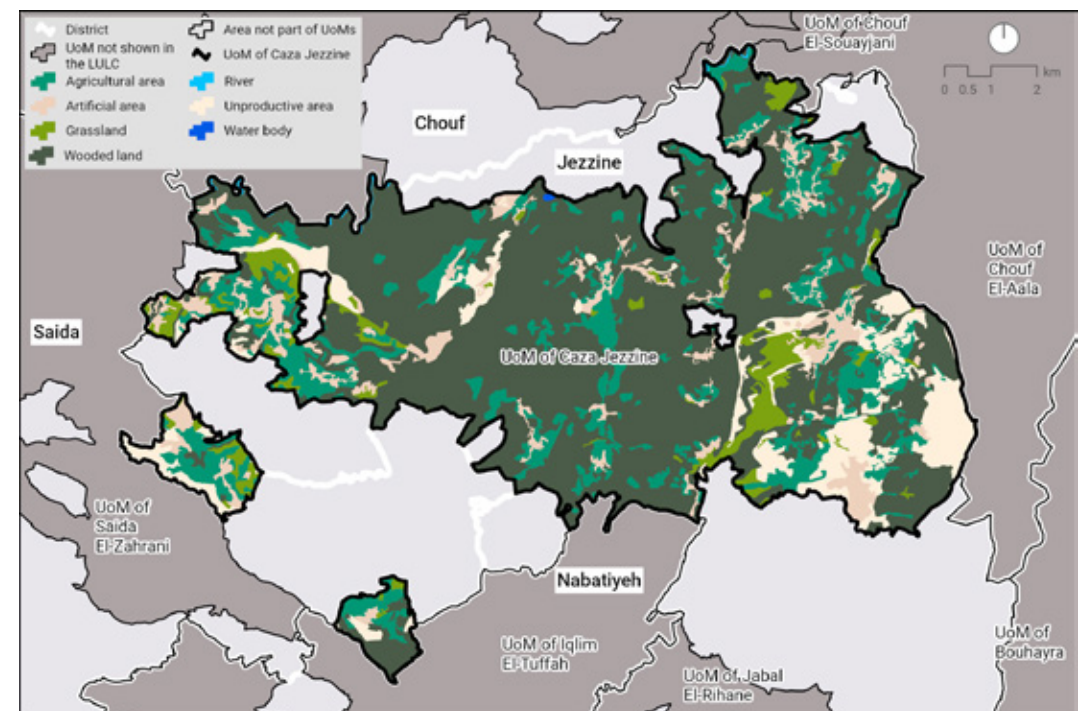


Figure 7. Land cover/land use within the UoM of Jezzine.
 Source: UN-Habitat (2023), adapted from Land Cover/Land Use Map of Lebanon, scale 1:20000, Classification System Level 1, National Center for Remote Sensing, CNRS-L (2017).

Population overview

The total population of the UoM of Jezzine is approximately 23,000, with non-Lebanese (mostly Syrian refugees) constituting around 3,000, according to surveys conducted with the 30 municipalities of the union. The relatively low population density in the union can be attributed to various factors, including significant emigration, economic challenges, internal displacement, and the union's distance from the capital, Beirut. Additionally, the union experiences harsh winters.

In terms of the age distribution of the population in the UoM of Jezzine, children (up to 14 years old) constitute approximately 30 per cent of the population, youth (15–24 years) make up around 25 per cent, adults (25–63 years) account for about 25 per cent, and the elderly (64 years old and above) are estimated to be around 20 per cent of the total population, according to the survey filled by the municipalities' mayors (Figure 8).

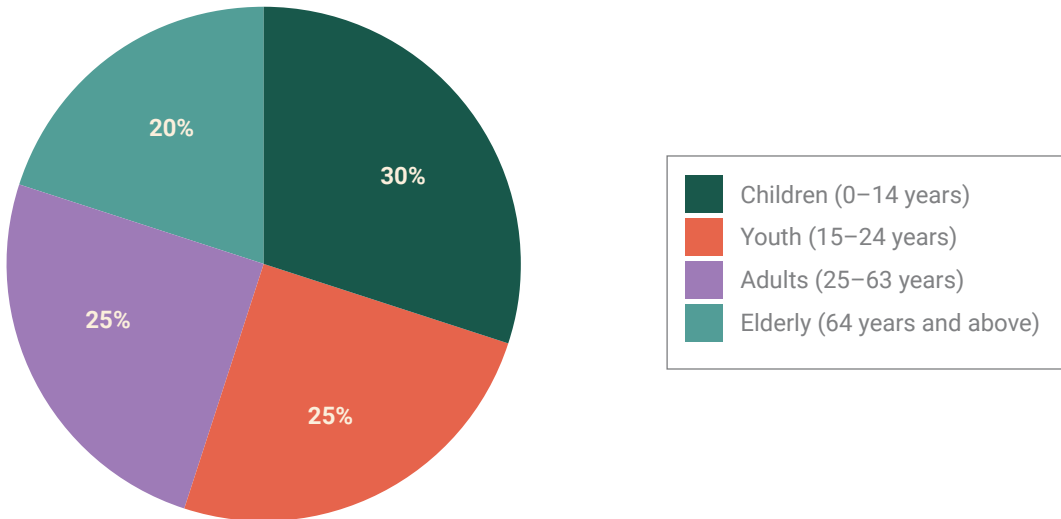


Figure 8. Distribution of the UoM of Jezzine's population by age. Source: Survey conducted with municipalities.

Approximately 50 per cent of the registered population in the UoM of Jezzine live outside of Lebanon – in Europe, Australia and South America – according to the survey conducted with the 30 municipalities of the union. The migration of

expatriates from the union began during World War I and saw a significant increase during the Israeli occupation of the area. This trend has continued to grow, especially with the ongoing economic downturn in the country.

Basic services: Current state and recommendations for improvement

The state of basic services in the UoM of Jezzine is considered excellent. Overall, the union has access to all essential services, which are of good quality at reasonable costs, thanks to continuous support from donor organizations, although the support levels may vary among sectors and municipalities. However, like other regions in Lebanon, the UoM faces challenges in covering the operational and maintenance costs of basic services provision.

Water

Public water networks are available within the UoM, and their overall condition is good compared to other areas of the country. These networks are entirely separate from sewage lines. The South Lebanon Water Authority, which is under the Ministry of Energy and Water, manages and maintains these networks. The water sources are diverse, including wells in Jezzine village, sub-wells in the other villages, and water from the Tasse Spring. The UoM benefits from regular water supply to all homes and establishments, with support from donor organizations, given the limited central funding from the relevant ministry. However, the large geographical area of the UoM and the lack of support from the government pose challenges in securing continuous funding for the maintenance required for the water sector.

To maintain the current state of the water sector, the local stakeholders who were engaged in the assessment and analysis process that informed the production of this booklet recommended to keep providing support to the South Lebanon Water Authority through international organizations, such as UNICEF, to carry out the required maintenance.

Roads and transportation

The condition of the roads in the UoM is generally good. The main road from Sidon to Jezzine village is excellent, and the UoM is working on rehabilitating some secondary roads with funding from the World Bank. There are no major transportation difficulties among the municipalities of the union. Public transportation, such as the Saouy Zentout bus service, facilitates the movement of residents between the different villages of Jezzine district including the main route between Sidon and Jezzine. However, a primary challenge is the lack of direct public

transportation connections between Jezzine district and Beirut.

The roads in the union are lit, in contrast to many other regions in Lebanon. These roads receive power through Bisri and El-Awali power plants for approximately 20 hours per day. Additionally, several coastal towns within the UoM have installed solar-powered street lighting.

Within this context, local stakeholders engaged in this project considered it essential to keep seeking the assistance of expatriates through personal initiatives and contributions to carry out maintenance and rehabilitation work, in addition to World Bank funds allocated to the rehabilitation of main and secondary roads within the union.

Buildings and facilities

The structure of buildings and establishments varies in the UoM of Jezzine. The number of floors in buildings ranges from four floors in coastal areas like KfarJarra to three floors in mountainous areas like Jezzine village, along with numerous independent housing units. The union is characterized by the extensive use of red roof tiles, especially in mountain villages.

In terms of compliance with construction regulations, there are no major violations in the union. According to the data provided by the UoM, the majority of the population adheres to legal requirements, with over 80 per cent of the UoM's areas being organized, recognizing the importance of preserving the heritage character of buildings.

Regarding non-residential buildings and facilities, they encompass industrial, commercial and touristic establishments, such as restaurants and small hotels,

predominantly located in Jezzine village, in addition to buildings of public institutions (municipalities, schools, etc.). Moreover, the municipalities of the union contain historical buildings like churches and other heritage landmarks, such as mills and olive presses.

The majority of the population in the UoM are property owners, with an ownership rate of 85 per cent, while the remaining individuals are seasonal or permanent visitors who rent property. Some areas struggle with the issue of old rental agreements,⁷ which often contributes to the closure of some businesses and thus hinders economic activity.

One general recommendation made by the local stakeholders who participated in the project was to preserve the heritage aspect of the buildings in the union.

Electricity

The public electricity networks within the municipalities and villages of the UoM are in a relatively good condition but require periodic maintenance. Electricité du Liban (EDL) contracts with Murad company for this purpose. Generated by Bisri and El-Awali hydroelectric power plants, power is supplied for approximately 20 hours per day. For the remaining hours, it is supplied by private generators present in all villages, under municipal and UoM supervision. The UoM of Jezzine faces electricity shortages during the winter, due to natural factors that cause frequent disruptions. Additionally, approximately eight coastal villages within the UoM suffer from a severe lack of electricity supply, according to the survey conducted with the municipalities, primarily due to technical and logistical challenges preventing these villages from being connected to the local power plant.

Within this context, the local stakeholders who participated in the project recommended to use the available resources and funds from international organizations to increase the production of renewable energy and to connect the remaining eight villages to the existing power plants.

Sanitation and solid waste management

Sewage networks are available in all municipalities of the UoM, and around 80 per cent of establishments and buildings are connected to these networks, according to the survey conducted with the municipalities. While the Jezzine village and its surroundings, including Bkassine, Wadi Jezzine, Homsiyeh, Btadine El-Lokoch and Haitoura, are covered by sewage networks, the coastal villages rely primarily on septic tanks. The UoM is working to connect the remaining buildings and establishments that still rely on septic tanks to the sewage networks.

The UoM is responsible for collecting and transferring the sewage to the eight existing sewage treatment plants located in Wadi Jezzine, Roum, Benwete, Qaitouleh, Btadine El-Lokoch, Snaya, Azour and Midane. Furthermore, the UoM is actively working on securing a grant from the World Bank to cover the regular maintenance fees of the above-mentioned treatment plants.

With regard to solid waste management, a private company, New Trading and Contracting Company (NTCC), is responsible for collecting and transporting the waste generated in the union to a specialized facility in Sidon, IBC for waste treatment. The UoM pays these contracted companies directly from its share in the Independent Municipal Fund (IMF).⁸ However, one significant problem lies in the delayed payment of dues by the IMF to the contracted companies. Unlike several other areas in Lebanon, the municipalities in the UoM of Jezzine do not have landfills within their boundaries. Some municipalities, like Bkassine, Azour and Midane, sort organic waste at the source.

To improve the sanitation situation, the local stakeholders who participated in the project proposed to seek the support of international organizations (e.g. United States Agency for International Development [USAID], the United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] and the World Bank) to provide the necessary assistance for connecting all villages and municipalities to sewage networks and treatment facilities and for ensuring regular maintenance of treatment facilities.

As for solid waste management, the local stakeholders advised to expand the practice of sorting at source adopted by some municipalities to other areas, which would be highly beneficial, as it contributes to the production of organic fertilizers, essential for various types of agriculture.

Telecommunications

Cellular and internet services are relatively good in the UoM of Jezzine, thanks to the presence of an adequate number of transmission stations in the area.

Municipalities and UoMs have no control on this sector, which is run by the central government through the Ministry of Telecommunications.



⁷ After the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990), Rent Laws No. 159 of 1992 and No. 160 of 1992 were introduced in an effort to guarantee access to housing to households residing in Lebanon. Law No. 160/1992 temporarily extended all rental contracts concluded before 23 July 1992, a situation that persisted for the subsequent 30 years and is now commonly called “old rent”.

⁸ The IMF is one of the sources of finance for municipalities and UoMs in Lebanon. Fees collected by the government on behalf of the municipalities are aggregated in the IMF, from which money is then redistributed back to municipalities and UoMs.

Social services: Current state and recommendations for improvement

Health care

Health services in the UoM of Jezzine are provided through 11 health-care centres, including both public and private facilities. Among them, there are two MoSA-affiliated SDCs in Jezzine village and Labaa, according to the survey conducted with the municipalities. Other health-care centers are linked to civil and religious entities, such as the Lebanese Red Cross Dispensary in Jezzine village, and Order of Malta Lebanon' dispensary in Roum. Additionally, there are two mobile dispensaries that serve various areas within the union and are under the supervision of Caritas and Order of Malta Lebanon. These centres offer a variety of almost free medical services, including check-ups, first aid, and medication. In Jezzine village, there is a public hospital under the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), providing some hospital services and emergency care. Residents seek other hospital services in hospitals located in Sidon and Beirut. The main challenge in the health-care sector is the severe shortage of medicines.

Within this context, the local stakeholders who participated in the project recommended to provide the necessary support to the public and private health-care facilities to address the shortage of medicines.

Education

The state of the education sector in the UoM of Jezzine is considered relatively good with the existence of 12 educational institutions, including 9 public and 3 private schools (covering all stages of education) in addition to one technical institute, according to the survey conducted with the municipalities. More specifically, the private schools are run by religious orders and private owners. Three of the 12 facilities are secondary schools: one run by a religious order, one public, and one run by private owners. The only technical institute, located in Jezzine village offers specialties in accounting, nursing, hospitality, mechanics, and electrical engineering.

Despite the closure of some schools in

recent years due to the economic crisis, the existing facilities are considered sufficient. The educational facilities in the union are generally in good condition, well-equipped, and properly heated during the winter season using oil-fired heating systems. The sector benefits from public-private partnerships, with private enterprises and individual initiatives supporting educational institutions.

Education services are accessible to everyone, whereby illiteracy and school dropout cases do not constitute a major challenge in the union. However, the primary issue lies in the absence of universities, leading to the migration of youth to cities. Results in the official exams are relatively good, with a passing rate generally exceeding 70 per cent. The existence of effective parental committees plays a crucial supportive role in all schools. The cost of transportation to schools is relatively low compared to other regions of the country. The UoM provides assistance to external associations to support students in various aspects sometimes covering part of their transportation costs and tuition fees.

The local stakeholders who participated in the project advised to keep the assistance of the UoM to students and to work on establishing higher-education institutions in the union.

Culture and public spaces

The UoM of Jezzine boasts a number of public spaces managed by municipalities, including parks, gardens and libraries, all of which are considered safe and easily accessible according to the interviews with the mayors. There are diverse and non-partisan associations and organizations active in the union. They are spread across different areas of the union, engaged in religious, sports and social activities, mostly focused on the younger population. The UoM consistently collaborates with all these associations and fosters cooperation among them.

The local stakeholders who participated in the project encouraged the UoM to continue collaborating with these associations and to increase the coordination between them.

Local economy and livelihoods: Current state

This section provides an overview of the key local economy and livelihood challenges and needs in the UoM of Jezzine, with a particular focus on the agriculture and tourism sectors, which have been identified through fieldwork and the outcomes of meetings and discussions with relevant parties to provide real opportunities to drive the process of socioeconomic development forward in the union. Recommendations to improve these two sectors will be presented separately in the next section.

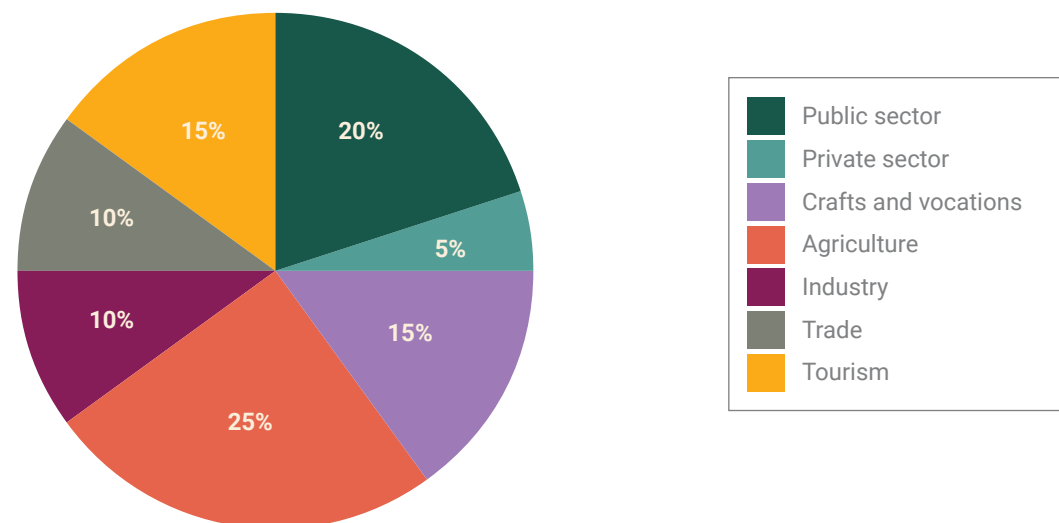


Figure 9. Distribution of employment by sector in the UoM of Jezzine.

Source: Survey conducted with municipalities and the strategic development plan for Jezzine region from 2012 to 2022.

Public sector

Approximately 20 per cent of the workforce in the UoM of Jezzine are employed in the public sector, according to the survey conducted with municipalities in the union and the UoM of Jezzine Strategic Plan (Figure 9). The workforce is equally distributed between males and females (50 per cent each). The age distribution is as follows: 50 per cent of public sector employees are young (21–24), 30 per cent are adults (25–63), and 20 per cent are elderly who have retired, yet still receiving their pensions, according to data collected through the survey with the municipalities of the union.

Public sector employees work in a wide range of administrative bodies, including the military, Internal Security Forces, General Security, State Security, personal status offices, telecommunications, schools, hospitals, municipalities, and public service positions in forestry centres, civil defence, SDCs, water

authorities, power stations, etc. Most of these institutions are located in Jezzine village.

Private sector

The private sector accounts for approximately 5 per cent of the total workforce across the UoM of Jezzine, according to the survey conducted with municipalities in the union and the UoM of Jezzine Strategic Plan (Figure 9). It includes employment in private schools, companies, banks, restaurants, and various other establishments located within or outside the union's municipalities. The gender and age distribution of employees in the private sector is balanced, with an even split between males and females (50 per cent each). Regarding age groups, 55 per cent of private sector employees are young (18–24) and 45 per cent are adults (25–64), according to data collected through the survey with the municipalities of the union.

Crafts and vocations

Around 15 per cent of the total workforce in the UoM of Jezzine is involved in the crafts and vocations sector, according to the survey conducted with municipalities in the union and the UoM of Jezzine Strategic Plan (Figure 9). This includes traditional Jezzine crafts. The majority (around 70 per cent) of employees in these fields are young (18–24), while the remaining 29 per cent are adults (25–64). Female representation in the crafts and vocations sector is nearly non-existent, accounting for less than 1 per cent, according to data collected through the survey with the municipalities of the union.

Agriculture

The agriculture sector is a vital source of income for households in the UoM of Jezzine. About 25 per cent of the total workforce is engaged in this sector, according to the survey conducted with municipalities within the union and the UoM of Jezzine Strategic Plan (Figure 9), due to the availability of agricultural land, constituting 17 per cent of the union's total land area (Figures 6 and 7). Most agricultural lands in the union are privately owned. Various cash crops are cultivated in the union, including pine, olives, grapes, apples, and various other fruit trees. The workforce engaged in these agricultural activities is predominantly (around 75 per cent) young (18–24), while the remaining 25 per cent are adults (25–64). Female representation in this sector is almost absent, according to data collected through the survey with the municipalities of the union.

Furthermore, there has been a notable interest of many young people to engage in agricultural work in the union, with a significant focus on agritourism. Many farmers welcome tourists and visitors to their land, providing them with insights into their crops and production processes. Many farmers also construct walking paths for hikers within their land, which assists in expanding their product distribution.

Some of the significant challenges faced by the agriculture sector in the UoM of Jezzine is the scarcity of water resources, the persistence of traditional irrigation methods, and limited reclamation of unused land.

Industry

The percentage of workers in the industry sector in the UoM of Jezzine is limited, at around 10 per cent of the total workforce, according to the survey conducted with municipalities of the union and the UoM of Jezzine Strategic Plan (Figure 9). Workers in the industry sector are mostly (75 per cent) young (18–24), with the remaining 25 per cent being adults (25–64). Female involvement is entirely non-existent in this sector, according to data collected through the survey with the municipalities of the union.

There is a lack of large factories or manufacturing facilities; instead, the sector primarily includes stone and rocks quarries, and old artisanal industries concentrated in the Jezzine village. The industry sector faces challenges, such as difficulties in product marketing and a lack of competitiveness with the other markets providing similar products.

Trade

Businesses, predominantly small and medium-sized enterprises, are scattered across most areas of the UoM of Jezzine. They range from clothing stores, food markets, and shops selling building materials to meat and vegetable shops, bakeries, beauty products stores, home furnishings shops, cell phone stores, fuel stations, flower shops, and plant nurseries.

Employees in the trade sector make up no more than 10 per cent of the total workforce, according to the survey conducted with municipalities in the union and the UoM of Jezzine Strategic Plan (Figure 9). Workers in the trade sector come from various age groups, with 45 per cent being young (18–24), 40 per cent adults (25–64), and 15 per cent elderly (65 and above), according to data collected through the survey with the municipalities of the union. Notably, this sector has equal participation from male and female employees.

This sector faces declining sales, due to the reduced purchasing power of the local population caused by the ongoing economic crisis and the low population density in the union.

Tourism

The workforce employed in the tourism sector remains limited, accounting for less than 15 per cent of the overall labour force in the UoM of Jezzine, according to the survey conducted with municipalities in the union and the UoM of Jezzine Strategic Plan (Figure 9). Of the tourism sector workforce, 65 per cent consist of young individuals (18–24), while 30 per cent are adults (25–64), and 5 per cent are elderly (65 and above). Notably, 55 per cent of the workforce is male, while 45 per cent are females.

Despite the presence of natural resources in the UoM of Jezzine, such as waterfalls, springs, caves, valleys and hiking trails, as well as archaeological sites, the available touristic facilities are limited to restaurants, chalets, hotels and resorts. There is also a small number of individuals, mostly young, who serve as tourist guides.

The main challenges faced by this sector can be attributed to the large geographical distance of the UoM of Jezzine from major cities in the rest of the country and the lack of a national-level communication and marketing strategy for the UoM, despite the existence of numerous opportunities in terms of natural, infrastructural and human resources in the union. In addition, the existing institutions within the UoM lack initiative.

Moreover, this sector has been overshadowed by the pressing issues faced by municipalities, particularly in light of the ongoing economic crisis and the lack of governmental support.

Remittances from abroad

According to the interviews with municipal officials, around 50 per cent of the registered population in the UoM of Jezzine comprise expatriates residing outside Lebanon. As the economic situation continues to deteriorate across the country, the union has experienced a significant surge in the inflow of remittances from expatriates to Lebanon. This increase is motivated by their desire to support their families living in Lebanon amid financial hardships. The majority of expatriates who provide financial assistance belong to high-income classes, with only a small fraction falling within the middle-income class. Recently, independent funds have been established by certain associations to receive financial support from expatriates and carry out essential public projects for municipalities and the union. These projects encompass the maintenance of public lighting networks, roads, and sewage systems.



Recommendations for sectors identified as key for future local socioeconomic development

Based on the consultative meetings and workshops held with representatives from municipalities within the UoM of Jezzine, there was consensus on adopting the following vision for local socioeconomic development:

“ Jezzine: a leader in protecting its environment and natural habitat, offering a good quality of life and wellbeing for its inhabitants and visitors, achieved through unity and cooperation for the common good of the area, building on its agriculture and tourism sectors as the backbone of the local economy. ”

To achieve this vision, it was recommended that municipalities, civil society, and the private sector must come together, along with local communities, working collaboratively to foster local socioeconomic development based on the region's assets and available opportunities. According to the results of the process followed during the project within the UoM of Jezzine, it was suggested that there should be a focus on developing the agriculture and tourism sectors due to the available human, natural and material resources that can be harnessed and enhanced.

Working towards achieving agricultural and tourism development necessitates creating a road map for each sector (see the subsections “Proposed Agriculture Sector Road Map” and “Proposed Tourism Sector Road Map” below) that includes multiple stages to be implemented within a logical timeframe and according to the availability of funding. The road map for both the agriculture and tourism sectors was envisioned to encompass strategic interventions linked to four key factors or aspects:

1. Infrastructure
2. Existing institutional framework
3. Natural resources
4. Local human resources

This section of the report outlines the strategic directions for the available productive sectors within the UoM of Jezzine. It places a particular focus on the agriculture and tourism sectors, both of which present opportunities for local socioeconomic development. These directions have been identified and proposed based on the analysis of the existing situation of these sectors, as presented in the previous sections.

As for the other sectors (such as industry, trade, and crafts and vocations), they will undoubtedly continue to play a role in the socioeconomic development of cities and villages in the UoM of Jezzine. However, there is potential for their development in alignment with the UoM's vision and goals with regard to agriculture and tourism.

Regarding the industry sector, while it may not be a primary driver of the UoM's economic development, it can play a complementary role and add value to other sectors within the economic cycle. Local industries can serve other sectors, helping to provide employment opportunities for the youth. Therefore, local stakeholders engaged in the project considered that it is essential to support medium-sized industries to sustain and grow, develop traditional craftsmanship to meet local market demands, and encourage young people to acquire these craft skills as professions, particularly those related to the manufacturing of tableware. Furthermore, attracting investors in the agricultural food industry was highlighted as a vital step. This includes providing value-added products, such as pine nuts and extra virgin olive oil, for which the UoM of Jezzine region is known for, and which can compete in the local and regional markets.

To enhance the trade sector, local stakeholders participating in the consultation meetings confirmed that it is important to empower traders to develop their practices and align their market prices with other cities and regions' prices. This will lead to enriching the marketing strategies, and guide young people towards investing in the sector, especially in modern businesses that are currently unavailable. To achieve this, they proposed motivating young

people and women to establish small business projects through networking and coordination with organizations operating in this context. They also recommended training local traders on the fundamentals of buying, selling, marketing and conducting feasibility studies for their projects. They considered such steps as helpful to increase their income and create employment opportunities for youth in the UoM of Jezzine.

In general, if the UoM and relevant municipalities prioritize the development of the agriculture and tourism sectors, local stakeholders considered that it is imperative that other basic and social services are also available to help retain residents in their villages and attract other groups to work in the aforementioned sectors.

Moreover, they argued that if the union intends to attract investments from outside the region, it is essential that basic services, such as roads, water and electricity, are available and well-established, as is already the case in the UoM of Jezzine and continue being maintained. According to local stakeholders, efforts should also be made to develop a sustainable solid waste management plan, complete sewage networks, and maintain wastewater treatment plants at the UoM level. Additionally, they highlighted that it is necessary to work on enhancing health-care services in existing centres and clinics – especially the governmental ones, such as the MoSA-affiliated SDCs– providing them with the needed medications and developing their physical and human resources.



Agriculture

As highlighted above in the overview of the current state of various sectors within the UoM of Jezzine, including their available resources and potential opportunities, the agriculture sector presents a significant opportunity for the local population to enhance its economic well-being and create job prospects for both the youth and families. While many families engage in agriculture on a non-professional level, there is the potential for a substantial advancement in this sector through specific interventions, programmes and projects. In order to attain sustainable agricultural development, according to local stakeholders who participated in the project, concerted efforts are required, involving municipalities, civil society associations, cooperatives, the private sector, and the relevant ministry, in addition to the need to establish partnerships with donor organizations to secure the required funding and work collectively. Overall, emphasis was placed on taking into consideration the different components of agricultural development, including land, people, and technical support, as well as the establishment of the necessary legal frameworks and regulations.

Local stakeholders who participated in the project emphasized the need to adopt water-efficient practices, particularly in irrigation. This

requires coordinated efforts from municipalities and other relevant entities to safeguard groundwater, increase water reserves, implement a modern irrigation system, focus on rainwater conservation, recycle household wastewater, and encourage farmers to use reclaimed wastewater for irrigation purposes. In this regard, the development of rain-fed and irrigated farming through the support of available agricultural research centres in the union was highlighted. This should be complemented by technical programmes offered by donor organizations and relevant public institutions, such as ministries.

According to local stakeholders, it is also important to encourage the reclaiming of uncultivated lands while providing the necessary infrastructure, including roads, water and electricity. Additionally, they considered that it is essential to make endowment lands available for investment at reasonable prices.

At the level of human resources, local stakeholders highlighted the need to develop agricultural knowledge among farmers, training them in modern agricultural techniques, and guiding them to optimize their use of fertilizers, water resources, and medications to increase their agricultural outputs. They also emphasized

the importance of training youth interested in modern agricultural work on agricultural skills, with the aim of creating employment opportunities in the union. Other recommendations included the revitalization of the role of agricultural and livestock cooperatives to support this sector and the development of the local cottage industry.

Furthermore, local stakeholders emphasized the high importance of supporting farmers in marketing their agricultural products. This can be achieved, according to them, by securing foreign markets for the farmers' products and providing training to livestock breeders for the production and use of locally manufactured animal feed to reduce dependence on imported feed. The establishment of an institution with a recognized brand for packaging and exporting agricultural products domestically and internationally was also recognized to be crucial. Embracing new methods for marketing agricultural products, such as utilizing social media, and maintaining strong connections with the private sector, as well as ensuring continued collaboration with agricultural cooperatives beyond the UoM's jurisdiction, were all identified as crucial steps for stimulating agricultural trade, particularly given the UoM's accessibility to various neighbouring regions across different districts.

Additionally, local stakeholders considered it vital to capitalize on the production of pine nuts, high-quality apples, and olive oil. They also recommended the introduction of new crops suitable to the union's climate and geography, such as arborio trees for animal feed and other fruit-bearing trees. In addition, they mentioned the need to introduce high-value crops like apples, dwarf grapes, walnuts and chestnuts. Furthermore, they argued that supporting initiatives related to the production of organic fertilizers through the establishment of a facility can reduce the costs associated with purchasing fertilizers.

Regarding animal husbandry, providing support to this sector to elevate its role within the agriculture sector was considered as essential. This entails activating veterinary medicine, offering training to farmers on proper animal care, implementing routine health check-ups, and promoting beekeeping while ensuring the quality of honey before it enters the market.



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Proposed agriculture sector road map

Level of difficulty to implement	Budget to implement
High	High
Moderate	Moderate
Low	Low

Short time to achieve

- Activating coordination and collaboration between relevant ministries and municipalities
- Establishing an agricultural committee within the UoM to engage with stakeholders

Medium time to achieve

Relying on solar energy as a source for operating wells for irrigation

Enhancing the work of agricultural cooperatives and activating their role

Developing rain-fed agriculture, especially pine, and introducing new crops suitable for climate change

Training farmers on modern crops and agricultural techniques

Collaborating with ministries and municipalities to develop a sustainable plan for infrastructure maintenance

Building a strong relationship with the Ministry of Agriculture and enhancing cooperation

Involving local development-oriented NGOs in the collaboration process

Guiding youth to reduce migration

Activating relationships with expatriates and involving them in financing and marketing projects

Providing clean water for irrigation

Establishing relationships with agricultural faculties within universities to assist in conducting agricultural research

Preserving and investing in natural resources in the UoM

Training residents on food processing and home-based food production

Constructing and maintaining agricultural roads

Collaborating with civil defence and other relevant authorities to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to prevent and combat fires

Protecting groundwater resources from pollution

Preparing and implementing regular awareness campaigns to encourage residents to engage in agricultural activities

Treating wastewater and using it for the irrigation of specific crops

Supporting small-scale farmers through easy loan programmes

Limiting urban expansion at the expense of agricultural lands

Developing and implementing advertising and informational campaigns about the importance of agricultural products in the union

Establishing and relying on modern irrigation systems for agriculture

Working on establishing specialized agricultural and livestock cooperatives

Preserving the soil by establishing proper waste disposal sites

Setting up reservoirs for rainwater and snow accumulation

Building relationships with donor organizations to secure funding for the implementation of projects

Creating reserves to preserve natural resources

Establishing agricultural refrigerators affiliated with agricultural cooperatives

Encouraging youth to engage in agricultural cooperatives and enter the job market

Integrating the use of modern technology in agriculture

Long time to achieve

Striving to establish centres for agricultural training and guidance

Improving the agricultural marketing process through targeted training on packaging and labelling techniques, as well as exploring opportunities to access new markets outside the union

Infrastructure

Institutional framework

Natural resources

Human resources

Tourism

Despite the numerous challenges facing the tourism sector, the availability of infrastructure in the UoM of Jezzine, such as electricity supply, sewage systems, water supply, well-maintained roads, and lighting networks – along with the natural assets, historical landmarks, cultural heritage, and touristic facilities available – can provide real opportunities for developing this sector. Prioritizing its development can significantly contribute to overall economic growth of the union.

According to local stakeholders engaged in the project, the current situation calls for serious efforts to restructure existing and develop new touristic institutions, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge related to the quality standards of tourism services. It is vital to activate the role of municipalities and the private sector in the union to shed light on this sector. Local stakeholders stressed on the importance to transform the municipalities within the UoM of Jezzine into prominent touristic destinations, enabling them to compete effectively with other regions and attract tourists. They argued that this transformation can be achieved through the development of various tourism projects, activities and services, with an expanded focus encompassing environmental, rural, cultural, religious and archaeological tourism. Additionally, they emphasized the crucial role of the Tourist Office, established through collaboration between the UoM of Jezzine and the Ministry of Tourism, in providing guidance to tourists. This office receives visitors and directs them to various touristic attractions in the union, thereby creating new employment opportunities for the local youth employed in these different sites.

Local stakeholders who participated in the project also proposed integrating the agricultural and tourism sectors. They argued that skilled individuals within the UoM can be effectively employed in this regard, while also attracting expatriates to invest in both agriculture and tourism.

In addition, local stakeholders considered that it is important to examine successful tourism development experiences in different other regions of Lebanon for adaptation and learning.

Additionally, strengthening coordination and collaboration with neighbouring UoMs was emphasized, aiming to create joint tourism development plans that consider the specific characteristics and culture of each union, taking into consideration their landmarks, natural resources, and human potential.

Furthermore, local stakeholders advised to put concerted effort to rehabilitate touristic sites, protect forests and green areas, and make the best use of these natural resources. The implementation of a mechanical system for waterfalls to ensure they do not dry up during the summer months was also highlighted. Other recommendations were also mentioned, including improving restaurant services and accommodations, extending the working hour of markets, and providing public restrooms and rest areas.

Furthermore, local stakeholders considered that it is essential to leverage the available human resources. Training should be provided to employees in touristic institutions and restaurants to ensure they understand the importance of offering top-notch services to tourists, thus guaranteeing their continued attraction. Additionally, empowering and supporting tour guides is crucial.

Thus, various measures can be taken, and improvements can be made to help enhance the UoM of Jezzine's position as an important destination on the national tourism map. A key first step identified by local stakeholders was for the union, in collaboration with local NGOs, to seek funding. The funding does not need to be substantial but should suffice to develop a realistic tourism plan based on the available resources outlined above. This plan should encompass well-organized activities and enticing tourism programmes, and it should involve a comprehensive tourism communication strategy utilizing visual and social media. The plan should also demonstrate flexibility, allowing for phased implementation based on priorities and the financial resources at hand. Additionally, it should take into account the economic and financial conditions prevailing in Lebanon.

Local stakeholders argued that during the formulation of the strategic tourism plan, the UoM of Jezzine, in partnership with both the private and civil society sectors, can initiate various activities and interventions to invigorate the tourism sector. These actions encompass:

1. Establishing a dedicated tourism committee that includes representatives from municipalities, the union, local NGOs, and youth associations, as well as other interested individuals. This committee should play a central role in coordinating and liaising with relevant bodies in the tourism sector.

2. Identifying and mapping natural, heritage, cultural and historical touristic sites. University graduates with expertise in GIS can assist in this endeavour.

3. Marketing the union through diverse media channels and positioning it on the national tourism map. Students from local universities and some business institutions can contribute to crafting a tourism information plan, including materials such as posters, brochures, advertisements on television, and social media.

4. Encouraging municipalities and local associations to establish and maintain walking trails and preserve the existing assets within forests and woodlands.

5. Creating guesthouses, particularly in homes with unused rooms.

6. Activating the local homemade jam industry and advancing agricultural and food manufacturing.

7. Reviving cultural, entertainment and sports activities in the union, including organizing annual festivals to attract expatriates with origins from the union's different towns, motivating them to invest in and support the local tourism sector.



Proposed tourism sector road map

Short time to achieve

- Building a strong relationship with the Ministry of Tourism and enhancing cooperation
- Establishing a local committee within the union to communicate with stakeholders

- Activating the role of the first responders for quick intervention in case of wildfires

Level of difficulty to implement	Budget to implement
High	High
Moderate	Moderate
Low	Low

Medium time to achieve

- Maintaining roads that connect towns and lead to landmarks and touristic areas
- Ensuring permanent lighting at night within touristic landmarks
- Relying on solar energy as a source to provide energy for touristic areas and facilities

- Enhancing cooperation between municipalities and the private sector
- Striving to develop a tourism plan for the union
- Building relationships with existing universities to support tourism guidance for university students
- Activating municipal and official accountability to prevent encroachments on touristic landmarks, forests, groves, springs, rivers, etc.
- Building relationships with donor organizations to facilitate the implementation of projects

- Conserving forest wealth and investing in it
- Protecting and maintaining existing rivers and springs
- Limiting urban sprawl at the expense of forested areas
- Preserving and protecting the existing archaeological and heritage landmarks in the union
- Establishing reserves to preserve natural resources and attract visitors and tourists
- Working on issuing and implementing municipal regulations to preserve natural resources and areas

- Training and empowering youth to provide tourism services
- Establishing walking trails for recreational walking
- Training residents on food processing and home-based food production
- Organizing regular touristic festivals
- Preparing and implementing regular awareness campaigns to encourage residents to engage in the tourism development process
- Preparing and implementing advertising and informational campaigns about touristic sites and tourism-related activities in the union
- Encouraging families to establish guesthouses to promote local tourism
- Activating relations with expatriates and encouraging them to invest in tourism projects

Long time to achieve

- Providing basic services in the union (clean water, electricity, roads, sanitation, solid waste collection, etc.)
- Striving to establish a fixed transportation link from major cities to the union to promote tourism
- Securing human resources to protect and preserve touristic and archaeological landmarks

- Working on increasing and encouraging investments in tourism projects

Infrastructure

Institutional framework

Natural resources

Human resources



Conclusion

The developed roadmaps in the 10 booklets clearly show that advancing local socio-economic development in the 10 unions be it in the agriculture, industry, or tourism sectors is indeed a complex and lengthy process, yet not impossible. This path requires collective and proper local strategic visioning coupled with clear commitment by all stakeholders and serious efforts at different levels, in addition to significant financial resources and solid coordination local structures and mechanisms.

It is also evident from the roadmaps that UoMs, with the contribution from municipalities enrolled, could initiate primary steps that do not require significant funding but still support and contribute to the implementation of the overall vision on the long run.

It should also be clear to the unions and to the other local actors that the implementation of the roadmaps requires collective efforts from all. This includes local communities, municipalities, UoMs, SDCs, civil society organizations, and the private sector. To facilitate this collaboration, it's proposed to create a local advisory body (committee) for each identified sector. It is advised that the committee to be established by the UoM and include representatives of local public and private entities and institutions. The main role of these committees will be to lead and develop practical action plans to commence the implementation of the road map for each respective sector. Members of these committees must commit to providing the time and efforts necessary to achieve progress at the level of each sector.

The next step would entail that each committee individually contacts concerned ministries under each sector to learn more about the ministries' strategies and plans and their financial and human capacity to support and guide the union in the process of tourism, industry, and/or agricultural development, especially with regard to developing local strategies for the three sectors.

Based on outcomes of the meetings with relevant ministries, the designated committees would make the necessary contacts with relevant universities and donors to seek the potential financial and technical support aiming to developing a strategy and an executive plan for each sector.

Realistically speaking and with the commitment of local actors, the above-mentioned tasks from the creation of local committees to establishing partnerships to identifying entities supporting the development of the sector strategy, should not exceed a period of six months. The strategy to be prepared for each sector is expected to propose a detailed doable business plan with a reasonable timeline and a clear budget.

