

UN-Habitat
Lebanon Country
Programme

20
24

Overview



UN-HABITAT

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The **United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)** is the United Nations programme working towards a better urban future. Its mission is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all.

As towns and cities continue growing at unprecedented rates across the world, affecting social, political, cultural and environmental trends, sustainable urbanization has become one of the most pressing issues of the global community in the 21st century. Urbanization, often seen as a challenge, can hold immense opportunity for resilience and economic growth, equality and prosperity, if sustainably managed. In 1950, one-third of the world's population lived in cities. Just 50 years later, this proportion was risen to one-half and is expected to continue growing, reaching two-thirds, or around 6 billion people, by 2050. Cities are hubs for production and consumption – economic and social processes that generate wealth and opportunity. But they also experience and contribute to challenges, such as diseases, crime, pollution and poverty. Wars and natural disasters are also increasingly urban. In many cities, especially in developing countries, slum dwellers number more than 50 per cent of the population and have little or no access to adequate shelter, water and sanitation, among other services. It is in urban areas, especially those facing more challenges, that UN-Habitat is mandated to make a difference for the better.

UN-Habitat Lebanon overview

UN-Habitat has been working in Lebanon since 2006, establishing its country programme following the 2006 July War, when it contributed to the wide-scale recovery and reconstruction of south Lebanon, through housing reconstruction, shelter provision, infrastructure projects, and technical assistance at the municipal level, among other interventions.

Since then, the UN-Habitat Lebanon Country Programme has expanded to meet emerging urban needs and address long-standing urban challenges through a humanitarian, development and peace nexus approach, by integrating research and normative work into

operational implementation. This has included more than a decade-long multisectoral and area-based urban crisis response programme in light of the world's largest displacement crisis caused by the onset of the war in Syria in 2011, resulting in Lebanon hosting more than 1.5 million refugees. In addition, UN-Habitat's work has been aimed at responding with targeted interventions to meet new and emerging needs since 2019 – due to the multilayered and complex governance, socioeconomic and financial crisis in Lebanon, marked by steady deterioration of social stability and national and sub-national systems, as well as other shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2020 Beirut Port explosion.

In 2024 and beyond, UN-Habitat focuses on supporting and implementing interventions related to urban crisis response needs across the country in a context of multiple compounding crises, with longer-term sustainable urban development principles as a foundation – bridging the humanitarian and development divide. A particular focus on climate change adaptation and mitigation programming has been expanded through applying nature-based solutions-oriented and other climate-sensitive interventions.

In response to the expanding instability in the Arab region, and the vast spillover of the war in Gaza into Lebanon – resulting in enormous human, social, economic and environmental losses and challenges affecting various parts of the country, including numerous towns and cities – UN-Habitat aims to engage by providing immediate, medium- and long-term actions and solutions through the agency's urban response, recovery and reconstruction expertise.

UN-Habitat Lebanon key focus areas

- 1. Improved urban crisis response, stabilization, regeneration and development**
- 2. Enhanced urban planning, management and governance**
- 3. Enhanced climate action and green urban solutions**



Women participating in the urban farming project "Marfeh" in Tripoli

Focus area 1:

Improved urban crisis response, stabilization, regeneration and development

To ensure a more cohesive response to crises across the urban realm, address newly emerging and long-standing urban vulnerabilities, and promote sustainable urban development, UN-Habitat focuses on urban regeneration and resilience-building, while enhancing social stability. A continued and enhanced focus on effective urban crisis response, recovery and reconstruction – through a multisectoral and area-based approach – will remain.

1.1 Reduced urban vulnerabilities and spatial inequality

This sub-priority focuses on improving shelter conditions, infrastructure, and access to basic services, particularly in urban areas that are disadvantaged and/or disproportionately affected by crises, including displacement. Efforts include rehabilitation of housing; upgrading of public spaces; and improvements of water, electricity, wastewater, stormwater and transportation networks. Engaging local authorities and communities, area-based multisectoral interventions aim to address compounded infrastructure deficiencies and other challenges in an integrated and participatory manner, and to enhance resilience, especially in vulnerable areas.

1.2 Enhanced social stability

UN-Habitat works to mitigate community tensions, improve human security (related to food, tenure, employment, etc.), strengthen community resilience, and improve liveability by creating and upgrading public spaces, rehabilitating community centres, promoting urban farming, and supporting income-generating opportunities and local economic development initiatives. It also promotes housing, land and property (HLP) rights, with a special focus on the rights of women and displaced people.



A residential-heritage building being rehabilitated as part of the "BERT" project in Beirut

Focus area 2: **Enhanced urban planning, management and governance**

To promote sustainable urbanization in Lebanon, UN-Habitat focuses on improving urban planning, management, and governance systems, aligning them with national reform processes.

2.1 Enhanced inclusive, risk-resilient urban planning

This sub-priority strengthens urban planning and development through data-driven decision-making. UN-Habitat uses multisectoral data to guide urban and territorial plans and strategies, focusing on housing, sustainable transport, public spaces, waste management, and economic growth – with an emphasis on resilience-building, inclusivity and community participation. This sub-priority also focuses on land governance planning challenges related to urban sprawl.

2.2 Strengthened local and subnational governance

UN-Habitat collaborates with municipalities and unions of municipalities (UoMs) to strengthen governance through technical assistance, action planning support, and capacity-building in urban planning, geographic information systems (GIS), HLP rights, public space management, etc. Since 2007, Regional Technical Offices (RTOs) – established at the municipal or UoM level – have played a key role in improving local governance, service delivery, and urban interventions across the humanitarian, peace and development nexus.

2.3 Enhanced policies and reforms for sustainable urbanization

To promote sustainable urbanization, UN-Habitat envisages through this sub-priority to upscale its interventions at the national level and influence urban policy reform and transformation. Reforming the country's urban realm is a cross-cutting national priority that requires a thorough review and reform of existing legal urban frameworks and tools, as well as of institutional structures, in addition to the generation of data to support evidence-based policymaking.

*A permaculture demonstration site under
the "Resilient Water Solutions" project*



Focus area 3: Enhanced climate action and green urban solutions

UN-Habitat aims to support national, subnational and local authorities in tackling environmental challenges, addressing climate risks, and improving energy efficiency. Efforts include tangible climate action interventions, capacity-building, knowledge production, and policy-linked advocacy.

3.1 Climate change adaptation for urban communities

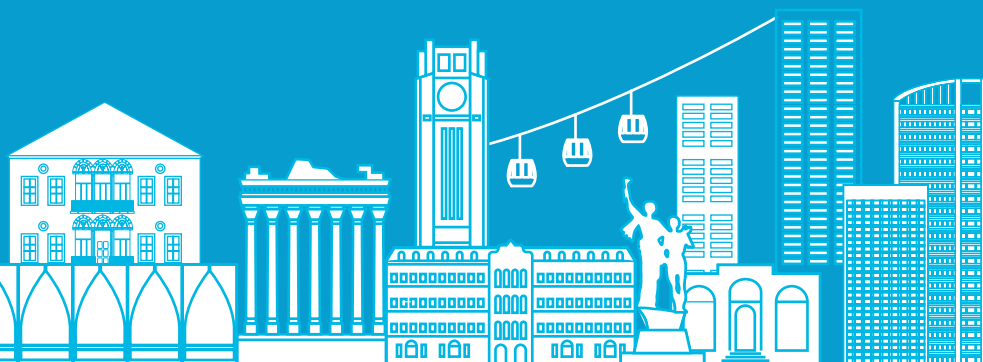
UN-Habitat promotes climate adaptation measures for vulnerable communities, integrating climate vulnerability and risk assessments into urban planning. Key initiatives include water harvesting, wastewater reuse, and nature-based flood control. Also, the development of green public spaces and urban farming aims at helping reduce heat island effects, improve air quality, and enhance urban biodiversity, while supporting social stability and food security.

3.2 Climate change mitigation in cities

UN-Habitat focuses on sustainable transportation through public transit, non-motorized mobility, and electric vehicles. Energy-efficient buildings, renewable energy, and sustainable production patterns are promoted. In addition, UN-Habitat supports green infrastructure, solid waste management (especially in coastal areas), and nature-based mitigation solutions like greening initiatives.



SELECTED PROJECTS



City-to-City Partnership: Zurich and Tyre 2017–2024

Donor: Municipality of Zurich, Switzerland

Partner: Municipality of Tyre

Budget: US\$ 1,002,342

Target area: Tyre, South Lebanon

Beneficiaries: ~ 130,000 individuals

The City-to-City Partnership aims to support the Municipality of Tyre in coping with the Syrian refugee crisis through sharing knowledge and expertise on the best possible practices for soft mobility and social cohesion between host and refugee communities.



Focus areas: 1, 2

Sectors: Public space; Planning, governance and policy; Energy; Mobility and transport



Volunteers at the Al-Fayhaa Fire Brigade centre rehabilitated under the "MERP" project

Safeguarding evidence of housing, land and property rights of Syrian refugees | 2021–2024

Donor: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Partners (Lebanon): Sawa for Development and Aid, The Popular Aid for Relief and Development, UTOPIA Organisation, Lebanese Organization for Studies and Training and Basmeh & Zeitooneh
Budget (Lebanon): US\$ 1,304,649
Target areas (Lebanon): Bekaa, Baalbeck El Hermel, South of Lebanon, North of Lebanon, Akkar, Beirut and Mount Lebanon
Beneficiaries (Lebanon): ~ 42,000 individuals

Using a land and property recording tool, the project documents the claims of Syrian refugees living in Lebanon to their residential and non-residential properties in Syria. This is done through a rigorous participatory and voluntary enumeration process, at no fee for the beneficiaries. This project is designed to support potential future efforts to repossess properties illegally occupied, transacted or destroyed or to claim compensation.



Focus area: 2

Sectors: Housing, land and property (HLP); Planning, governance and policy



Municipal Empowerment and Resilience Project (MERP) 2019–2024

Donor: EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (MADAD/EU)
Key partners: UNDP, Lebanese Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, targeted UoMs
Budget: US\$ 8,511,462
Target areas: Tripoli, Matn, and Tyre
Beneficiaries: ~ 240,250 individuals

The project aims to strengthen the long-term resilience of subnational authorities in Lebanon as well as communities, including refugees and displaced persons affected by the Syria crisis.



Focus areas: 1, 2, 3

Sectors: Energy; Social stability; Environment; Planning, governance and policy



Resilient water solutions against climate change in Jordan and Lebanon | 2021–2024

Donor: Adaptation Fund

Partners (Lebanon): ESCWA, UNICEF, Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute, Municipality of Zahleh

Budget (Lebanon): US\$ 6,986,755

Target area (Lebanon): Zahleh, Bekaa

Beneficiaries (Lebanon): ~ 560,000 individuals

The project aims to respond to climate change impacts and vulnerabilities in Lebanon and Jordan by developing climate and gender mainstreamed master plans, and demonstrating concrete adaptation measures to the communities, especially women and youth, while avoiding potential tensions over resources and employment opportunities.



Focus areas: 1, 2, 3

Sectors: Energy; Environment; Food security and agriculture; Water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH); Planning, governance and policy



Enhanced capacities of local authorities and communities for social and economic inclusion of migrants in border cities through safe and accessible public spaces: The case of Latin America and Western Asia | 2021–2024

Donor: 13th Tranche of the United Nations Development Account (UNDA)

Partners (Lebanon): Municipalities of Bebnine, Mehamrah, and Bar Elias

Budget (Lebanon): US\$ 227,000

Target areas (Lebanon): Bebnine and Mehamrah, Akkar; Bar Elias, Bekaa

The project focuses on public spaces to enable local authorities to provide a safe, beneficial and upgraded living environment for all. It includes public space assessments, participatory public space planning, the development of public space designs, capacity-building, as well as knowledge sharing and learning activities.



Focus area: 2

Sectors: Housing, land and property (HLP); Public space; Planning, governance and policy





A residential-heritage building being rehabilitated as part of the "BERYT" project in Beirut

Beirut Housing Rehabilitation and Cultural Heritage and Creative Industries Recovery (BERYT) | 2022–2025

Donor: Lebanese Financing Facility administered by the World Bank

Partner: UNESCO

Budget: US\$ 12,750,000

Target area: Beirut

Beneficiaries: ~ 15,000 individuals

The project aims to support the rehabilitation and affordable provision of 12 prioritized historical residential buildings for the most vulnerable and to provide emergency support to creative practitioners and entities in the cultural sector in the areas heavily affected by the Beirut Port explosion.



Focus areas: 1, 2

Sectors: Livelihoods; Housing, land and property (HLP); Social stability; Heritage and culture



Ensuring safe public spaces and adequate housing in Beirut City | 2022–2025

Donor: Italian Agency for Development Cooperation

Partners: UNESCO, Directorate General of Antiquities, Directorate General of Railways and Public Transport, Order of Engineers and Architects

Budget: US\$ 2,397,267

Target area: Beirut

Beneficiaries: ~ 300,500 individuals

This project supports Beirut's recovery by upgrading residential buildings and public spaces affected by the Beirut Port explosion, including the Mar Mikhael Train Station. Priority is given to vulnerable groups while engaging local men and women in the reconstruction process to restore livelihoods.



Focus areas: 1, 2

Sectors: Water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH), Public space; Housing, land and property (HLP); Heritage and culture; Planning, governance and policy, Transport and mobility



Improved access to municipal and social services to enhance preparedness and crisis response capacities 2022–2025

Donor: Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Lebanon

Partners: Municipality of Zahleh, Bekaa Water Establishment, Lebanese Civil Defence

Budget: US\$ 1,000,000

Target areas: Zahleh, Bekaa

Beneficiaries: ~ 61,500 individuals

This multiphase project aims to enhance the overall well-being, safety, health and security conditions of inhabitants of Zahleh, Bekaa. This will be achieved through improved operations of public facilities by providing reliable and renewable energy supply to water utilities, health-care facilities, and public spaces as well as providing urgent support to reinforce the capacity and operations of the Bekaa regional Civil Defence Centre in Zahleh.



Focus areas: 1, 2, 3

Sectors: Basic assistance; Energy; Environment; Water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH), Public space



Mitigate rising risks and tensions among urban host and refugee communities in Shalfeh, Tripoli, through the promotion of urban farming, adequate water, and renewable energy solutions | 2023–2024

Donor: Government of Japan

Partners: Al Fayhaa UoM, Dar El Zahraa, Islamic Awkaf Department in Tripoli

Budget: US\$ 900,000

Target area: Abi Samra, Tripoli

Beneficiaries: ~ 5,000 individuals

The project aimed to promote urban farming and adequate water and renewable solutions within the urban community of Shalfeh located in Abou Samra, Tripoli, while alleviating resource pressure and contributing to the reduction of rising tensions among communities.



Focus areas: 1, 2, 3

Sectors: Water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH), Education; Basic assistance; Food security and agriculture; Energy; Social stability



Women participating in the urban farming project "Marjeh" in Tripoli

Enhancing climate change resilience through water-related interventions and non-conventional nature-based solutions in areas hosting displaced people in Jordan and Lebanon 2023–2025

Donor: Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)

Partners: Municipality of Zahleh, Bekaa Water Establishment

Budget: US\$ 272,500

Target area: Zahleh, Bekaa

Beneficiaries: ~ 395,000 individuals

The project aims to develop climate change resilience and water sustainability in Lebanon and Jordan. This will be achieved through increased utilization of sustainable sources of water through rain harvesting and photovoltaic system structures, in addition to increased use of non-conventional nature-based agricultural practices in Lebanon.



Focus areas: 2, 3

Sectors: Basic assistance; Food security and agriculture; Water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH); Environment; Energy



Reducing marine litter in the Mediterranean through waste wise cities Lebanon (REMAL) 2022–2025

Donor: German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

Partners: Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy; Lebanese Ministry of Environment; Technical University of Berlin, Habitat Unit (TU Berlin)

Budget: US\$ 3,898,086

Target areas: 13 coastal UoMs

Beneficiaries: ~ 7,300,000 individuals

The project aims to reduce marine litter in Lebanon by supporting coastal UoMs and the national government in the implementation of the Integrated Solid Waste Management Law of Lebanon – Law No. 80 (2018). In the long term, the aim is to improve resource efficiency and the management of municipal solid waste in Lebanon's coastal areas.



Focus areas: 2, 3

Sectors: Planning, governance and policy; Environment



Improving the ability of public facilities and institutions to better respond to emerging needs and emergencies in Greater Beirut, through strengthened operations capacities 2024–2025

Donor: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland

Partners: Lebanese Civil Defence, Municipality of Beirut

Budget: US\$ 180,000

Target area: Greater Beirut

Beneficiaries: ~ 1,360,000 individuals

The project aims to support and reinforce the operations of public facilities in Greater Beirut, mainly including civil defence centres in Greater Beirut and the Municipality of Beirut. The project enhances the provision of protection, firefighting and municipal services largely deteriorated due to the multifaceted crises in Lebanon.



Focus areas: 1, 3

Sectors: Basic assistance; Energy; Social stability; Environment



Arab regional programme on good land governance in support of inclusive development, peace and stability – Phase 2 | 2024–2025

Donor: German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation (BMZ)

Partner: National Commission for Lebanese Women, others to be determined

Budget: US\$ 81,750

Target areas: Nationwide

The programme aims to improve the capacity of regional and national land governance stakeholders to manage land to foster peace, stability and socioeconomic development, particularly for women, youth and displaced people. It came as a continuation of Phase 1, which saw the implementation of the Women and Land Campaign in 2021–2022, aiming to raise awareness and initiate a multi-level dialogue about women's HLP rights in Lebanon.



Focus area: 2

Sectors: Housing, land and property (HLP); Planning, governance and policy



Key funding partners

2022–2024



ADAPTATION FUND



Funded by the European Union



From
the People of Japan



Funded by



Embassy of Switzerland in Lebanon



EXAMPLES OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS (2022–2024)

~7,300,000

Individuals directly or indirectly benefitting from all projects



12 Community and cultural centres rehabilitated

37 Photovoltaic systems implemented

~10,744

Individuals supported on addressing housing, land and property issues

44 Institutions consulted on policy dialogues



2,480
Energy yielded per year (MWh)



~50,000

Women who benefitted from capacity-building activities

3 Regional Technical Offices established

45



Residential heritage units under renovation applying a Build Back Better approach

~1,533
CO2 offset through renewable energy projects (metric tons annually)

8 Rainwater harvesting systems installed



290

Municipalities engaged in project implementation

5 Urban farming plots upgraded



25



Research and normative reports, including policy guides, published



20

Municipal basic services and local economic development projects

10 Road maps towards a socioeconomic development plan for UoMs



9 Civil defence and fire brigade centres benefitting from rehabilitation, renewable energy, equipment, etc.

100 Public spaces mapped and assessed

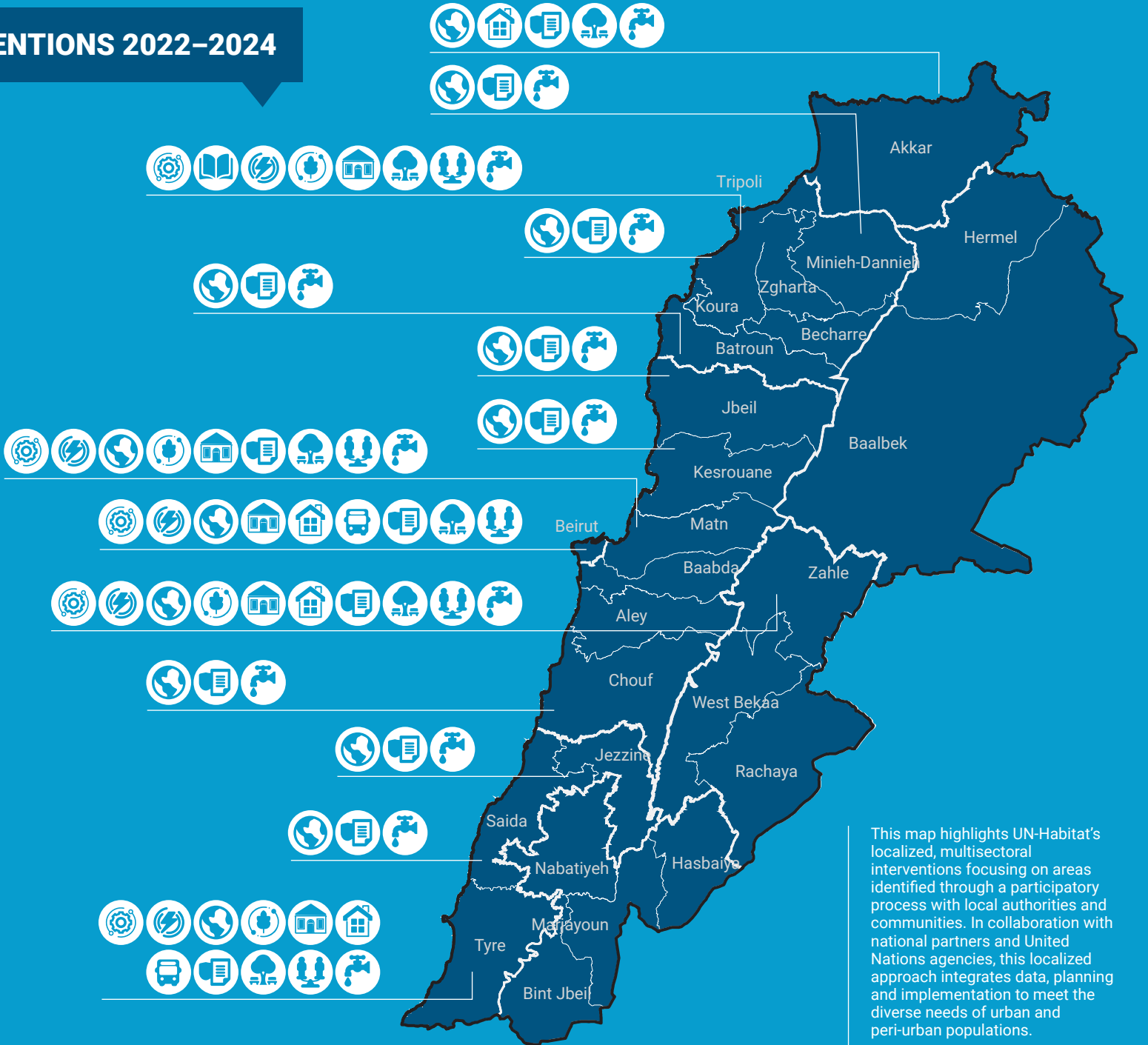


12 Master plans reviewed and developed



MULTISECTORAL INTERVENTIONS 2022-2024

-  Basic services
-  Education
-  Energy
-  Environment
-  Food security and agriculture
-  Heritage and culture
-  Housing, land and property (HLP)
-  Livelihoods
-  Mobility and transport
-  Planning, governance and policy
-  Protection
-  Public space
-  Safety
-  Social stability
-  Water, sanitation and hygiene




This map highlights UN-Habitat's localized, multisectoral interventions focusing on areas identified through a participatory process with local authorities and communities. In collaboration with national partners and United Nations agencies, this localized approach integrates data, planning and implementation to meet the diverse needs of urban and peri-urban populations.

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