

# NATIONAL URBAN POLICIES PROGRAMME IN LEBANON

## Diagnosis Report

2018





The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is the United Nations agency for human settlements. It is mandated by the UN 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 the human settlements and urban issues and find workable, lasting solutions.

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# **NATIONAL URBAN POLICIES PROGRAMME IN LEBANON**

## **Diagnosis Report**

**2018**

## UN-HABITAT FOREWORD

On behalf of UN-Habitat Lebanon, I am pleased to present the National Urban Policies Programme (NUP) diagnosis report.

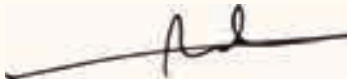
In 2017, within the framework of a regional initiative, UN-Habitat Lebanon launched the "National Urban Policies Programme", aiming at devising national urban policies as a framework for urban planning practices that enforce resiliency, sustainability, accessibility, and prosperity for all city dwellers.

The programme capitalizes on existing urban planning frameworks and practices at the national, regional and global levels to recommend more efficient, sustainable and practical urban policies.

This report builds on a thorough understanding of the Lebanese context and an in-depth analysis of the main urban issues providing recommendations for future NUP activities and action.

We hope that this will pave the way for building knowledge and strengthening partnerships to achieve coherent and integrated national urban policies in Lebanon.

Tarek Osseiran  
Country Programme Manager  
UN-Habitat Lebanon



## MINISTRY OF PLANNING FOREWORD

The Ministry of State for Planning congratulates the partnership facilitated by UN-Habitat to the development of the diagnosis report. More than 88% of the population in Lebanon reside in urban areas and this rate is expected to multiply in the coming years.

Urban sprawl, fragmented planning strategies and the weak legislative framework, coupled with the protracted nature of the Syrian crisis, have placed significant pressure on urban services. New settlements are developing, resulting in different geographies. These spatial transformations and the increase in population necessitate strong governance and planning systems. The current situation requires collaboration between the public and private sectors. The private sector has an important role to play in the development process as it holds the nation's economy and can promote functionality and sustainability of infrastructure.

In order to promote inclusive and multisectoral development we believe that the strategic partnership with UN-Habitat and collaboration with various urban and development experts during the first year of the programme is the first milestone towards promoting and mainstreaming efficient national policies.

Minister Michel Pharoan  
Minister of State for Planning



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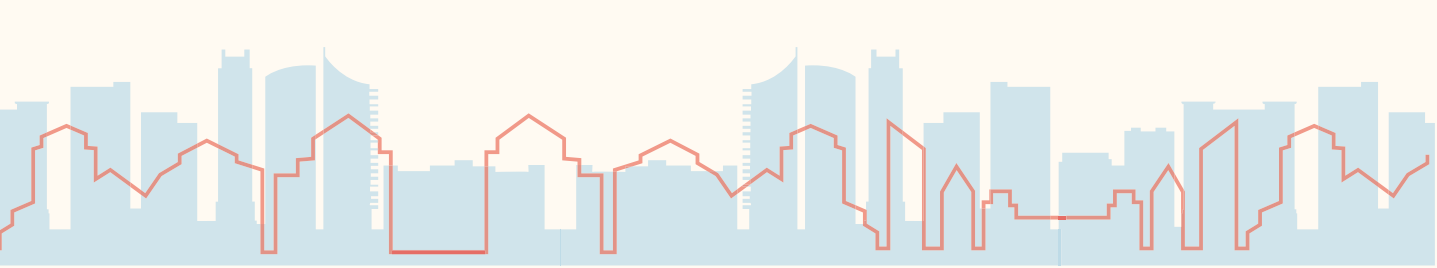
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

<b>AUB</b>	American University of Beirut	<b>NUA</b>	National Urban Agenda
<b>BRT</b>	Bus Rapid Transit	<b>NUP</b>	National Urban Policy
<b>CAA</b>	Civil Aviation Authority	<b>NWSS</b>	National Water Sector Strategy
<b>CAS</b>	Central Administration of Statistics	<b>OCFTC</b>	<i>Office des Chemins de Fer et des Transports en Commun</i> [Office of Railways and Public Transport]
<b>CDR</b>	Council for Development and Reconstruction	<b>PPDA</b>	Participatory Platform for Diagnosis and Action
<b>CIP</b>	Capital Investment Program	<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>CSKC</b>	Civil Society Knowledge Centre	<b>SISSAF</b>	Support Programme for Infrastructure Sector Strategies and Alternative Financing
<b>DGA</b>	Directorate General of Antiquities	<b>SWM</b>	Solid waste Management
<b>DGLMT</b>	Directorate General of Land and Maritime Transport	<b>TAVMA</b>	Traffic and Vehicle Management Authority
<b>DGUP</b>	Directorate General of Urban Planning	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>EDL</b>	<i>Electricité Du Liban</i> [Electricity of Lebanon]	<b>UNDESA</b>	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>EIA</b>	Environmental Impact Assessment	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization [of the United Nations]	<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>GBA</b>	Greater Beirut Area	<b>UNRWA</b>	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product	<b>UoM</b>	Union of Municipalities
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environmental Fund	<b>UTDP</b>	Urban Transport Development Project
<b>GoL</b>	Government of Lebanon	<b>DGRB</b>	Directorate General of Roads and Buildings, within MoPWT
<b>HCUP</b>	Higher Council of Urban Planning	<b>DGU</b>	Directorate General of Urbanism
<b>IDAL</b>	Investment Development Authority of Lebanon	<b>MUNI</b>	Municipalities
<b>(I)NGO</b>	(International) Non-governmental Organization	<b>TAVMA</b>	Traffic and Vehicle Management Authority
<b>IPTEC</b>	IPT Energy Center		
<b>LWA</b>	Litani Water Authority		
<b>MEA</b>	Middle East Airlines		
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa		
<b>MoA</b>	Ministry of Agriculture		
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Environment		
<b>MoEW</b>	Ministry of Energy and Water		
<b>MoF</b>	Ministry of Finance		
<b>Mol</b>	Ministry of Industry		
<b>MoIM</b>	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities		
<b>MoPWT</b>	Ministry of Public Works and Transportation		
<b>MoSA</b>	Ministry of Social Affairs		
<b>NERP</b>	National Emergency Recovery Plan		
<b>NPMPLT</b>	National Physical Master Plan of the Lebanese Territory		



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

More than half of the world’s population (55%) live in urban areas. This percentage is estimated to reach 68% by 2050. Urban population has grown at a fast rate from 751 million in 1950 to 4.2 billion in 2018—54% of them live in Asia, followed by Europe and Africa with 13% for each continent. North America is considered one of the most urbanized regions in the world as 82% of its inhabitants reside in urban areas. Both Latin America and the Caribbean are ranked second in terms of urban population (81%), followed by Europe (74%) and Oceania (68%) (UNDESA, 2018).

International and grassroots organizations, in addition to some national governments, have acknowledged challenges and opportunities associated with rapid urbanization. They are calling for the recognition of the issue as a global challenge that needs to be managed through the development of adequate policies and cooperation frameworks. Opportunities include enhancing the local economy, social and basic urban services including the provision of better housing options. These are contrasted by urban challenges, such as pressure on the provision of services and haphazard urban development (UN-Habitat, 2016). Within this context, in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Goal 11 has been introduced in 2016 aiming at making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Similarly, the declaration of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) adopted at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) held in Quito, Ecuador, in 2016 stressed on the central role of urban policies as frameworks for governmental interventions, incentives and regulations (UN, 2017).

Recognizing the importance of urban policies, UN-Habitat has been engaged in a process of assisting national governments to develop them. According to the UN-Habitat National Urban Policy (NUP) Guiding Framework (UN-Habitat, 2016, p. 3) NUP is defined as “a coherent set of decisions derived through a deliberate government-led process of coordinating and rallying various actors for a common vision and goal that will promote more transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long term”(UN-Habitat, 2014).

Although the guiding framework proposes a process for NUP to operate, it highlights the significance of tailoring the process according to each context. The NUP process is shown in Figure 1. The first phase is the diagnosis phase where the main aim is to understand the context and identify challenges, opportunities and recommendations. The second phase is policy formulation that entails evaluation of policy options, consensus building and assessment of resources. The third phase is policy implementation that includes developing the implementation plan and process. Phase 4 is the final stage, including evaluation of the process and institutional learning. The entire NUP cycle will revolve around participation

of all concerned stakeholders and beneficiaries, capacity development for sustainable urban policy, and acupuncture projects, which are small-scale strategic interventions that can produce reform in policy interventions and urban planning (UN-Habitat, 2016).

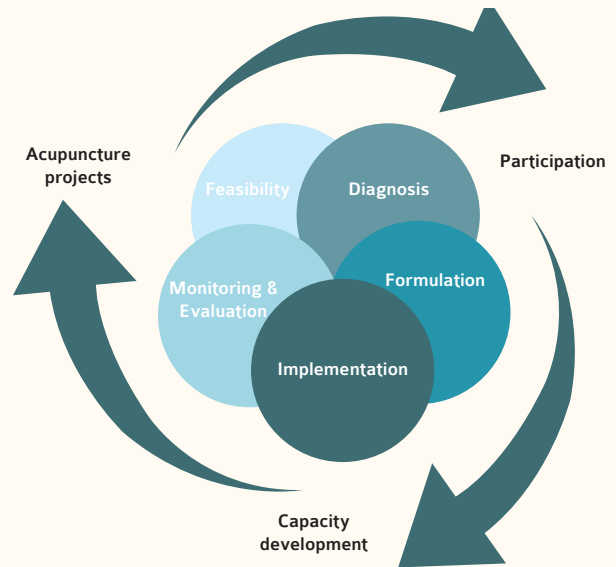


Figure 1 The NUP process. Source: UN-Habitat (2016)

This framework that is advocated by UN-Habitat and inspired by the NUA principles (Figure 2) promotes compact and inclusive urban growth.



Figure 2 NUP relevance to SDGs, highlighting SDG 11. Source: Adapted from UN-Habitat, Cities Alliance, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Government of Liberia, 2017, p.7.

This would be achieved through recognizing and responding to new urban geographies and city boundaries in light of population growth towards more inclusive planning. According to UN-Habitat, the NUP framework increases governmental coordination and enhances institutional processes that enable the implementation of proper legal and regulative instruments.

Within this context, UN-Habitat launched the Regional Program on National Urban Policies in the Arab states in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in the beginning of 2016, targeting five Arab states: Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Sudan and Morocco (Figure 3). The NUP program seeks to address weak areas of policymaking for governments to manage urban challenges, including urban sprawl, informal settlements, inefficient infrastructure, vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters, and others.

In 2017, a three-year NUP Program was launched by UN-Habitat Lebanon. The UN-Habitat team approached the Ministry of State for Planning to gain endorsement and propose partnership. Under the patronage of the prime minister of Lebanon, the program was launched at the Grand Serail, which is the headquarters of the prime minister in Lebanon. During the diagnosis phase, UN-Habitat has been partnering with the ministry since the launch. The program

presents a timely opportunity to understand urbanization in Lebanon and in the region in relation to other cities developing the NUP process, capitalizing on the regional nature of the program. This would foster collaboration, coordination and exchange of experiences between Arab states, resulting in more targeted NUP approaches and policy directions as this would unfold the full potential of development.

Since the constitution of the Lebanese Republic in 1926, the country's recent history has been marked by the rise and expansion of its capital Beirut. Before the 1970s, Lebanese policies were mostly directed towards strong economic and political liberalism. Lured by the privacy of the Lebanese banking system, the economy was growing rapidly mainly as a result of capital from nearby countries (oil, rent and others) and Lebanese expatriates. It was mostly capitalized on real estate and infrastructure development. During 1970s, the Lebanese economy relied on its service sector; a few social policies were developed at the time. In the period of 1958–1964, during the mandate of President Fouad Chehab, there was an aim to reassert the role of the state through regional development policies, containing the expansion of Beirut and creating social institutions. Within this scope, a five-year development plan was initiated. Despite reform efforts, this resulted in inequality in the Lebanese population, contributing to considerable rural-urban migration (Piellen & Fawaz, n.d.).



**Figure 3** MENA region map, NUP areas highlighted.

*The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.*

In the last century, Lebanon has hosted many communities from the broader Near East fleeing persecution and war (Armenians, Syrians, Assyrians, Kurds, Iraqis, Palestinians and more recently Syrians). These populations have settled mostly in urban areas, especially Beirut and its immediate surroundings. This urban sprawl has led to the city's expansion and the increase in urbanized land. For example, from 1963 until 2005, Jounieh agglomeration's area has multiplied by 7, Saida by 5.4, Nabatieh by 3.9, while Beirut has nearly doubled (Faour, 2015). During 2014, urban areas hosted an estimated 88% of Lebanon's population (UN-Habitat, 2014). Rapid population growth in cities has had considerable impact on the environment, economy and social stability in urban areas, with consequent challenges related to sustainable urban and territorial development and urban policies.

The "urban" is not considered a legal or administrative category in Lebanon. Furthermore, urban policy is not recognized as a category of public policy either by central or by local authorities. Yet, despite the fact that there is no

unified agency for planning, some policies have attempted to integrate the urban dimension. Policies have however addressed some urban issues in relation to urban regulations (e.g. the new decentralization law that is further elaborated in the Context Analysis section).

On the level of urban governance, in 2016, a Minister of State for Planning was elected, but was not provided with adequate resources to operate. At the time of writing, given the political vacuum, the ministry is not functioning. Given the lack of an official planning institution, urban issues are addressed by ministries, central government agencies or local authorities. The multiplicity of actors and the lack of coordination among actors have led to the fragmentation of policies, pursuing conflicting and sometimes opposing objectives. In a country marked by the presence of various religious, ethnic and political communities, such contradictory policies can instigate tension between social groups.<sup>1</sup> In their focus on local and fragmented matters, such policies rarely address intrinsic cross-sectoral issues.



<sup>1</sup> The current Lebanese political system is based on confessionalism, a form of consociationalism, which encompasses power-sharing arrangements between various confessional sects within a state (Salamey, 2009).

## FRAMEWORK FOR REPORT ANALYSIS

National Urban Policy is comprehensive and cross-sectoral as it recognizes the need to work on integrated and inclusive approaches. As part of the three-year NUP Program in Lebanon, this diagnosis report aims to propose a framework for the country by which policies could operate. It represents a key outcome of the NUP in Lebanon, developed in the first year of the process.

Urban policies can be defined as public policies adopted and/or implemented in urban settings; yet, the issue is more complex. Urban sprawl has rendered the “urban” harder to define, especially with fading demarcations between urban and rural areas. Moreover, urban policies greatly differ in the way they are produced. Some are developed at high governance levels (international, national, regional) and adapted according to context specificities to respond to urban density, morphology, culture and politics.

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned challenges in defining and examining urban policies, this report proposes the analysis of these policies in the Lebanese context based on the three NUA pillars explained below. Also, it identifies and analyzes urban policy frameworks, thus exploring ways in which urban policies relate to spatial planning policies and social agendas in the country.

NUA pillars are chosen as a framework for diagnosis, as they are comprehensive and cover all developmental sectors, including: urban regulations, urban economic development, and planning & design of urban environment and services.

Examining public policies from the urban regulations perspective sheds light on how institutional structures and

legal tools frame urbanization and urban development. The presence of strong institutional structures and regulations shapes the way populations, groups and stakeholders contribute to the making of the urban realm. The urban regulations framework takes into consideration existing national and local institutions, their responsibilities and prerogatives, and the regulative tools at their disposition in the law.

Observing urban policies from the urban economic development lens allows understanding the bases and dynamics of wealth production, formal and informal job and goods markets, and public-led urban economic development initiatives. In addition, it focuses on municipal finance (revenue enhancement, e-government systems, tax system, and land registration for land value capture), hence linking urban planning with the productive capacity of cities.

From the dimension of planning and design of the urban environment and services, urban policies necessitate strategic coordination among different public and other private, civil society and international actors. This poses a key question on how planning and implementation of urban policies can ensure inhabitants’ accessibility to urban services (housing, energy, water, transportation, etc.).

Additionally, this three-tier analysis explores issues of governance and social justice. Moreover, actors and geographies are analyzed based on their role in producing and implementing urban regulations, their contribution to economic development, and their provision of urban services.



## Production Process

The production of this diagnosis report involved four key steps:

- Desk review: This consisted of a thorough review and analysis of documents related to the fields of urbanization, urban regulations, urban economic development, urban services, planning and design in Lebanon. They included existing laws and regulations, mandates of public planning institutions, and national/international reports and plans.
- Analysis validation: The validation of secondary data analysis and of the general adopted NUP approach was undertaken through weekly coordination and working sessions between the NUP consultants to Lebanon and the UN-Habitat team.
- Biweekly coordination and working meetings with the Minister of State for Planning.
- Consultations: Steering and Technical Committees (composed of planners and experts from diverse developmental fields) were established by UN-Habitat to advise on the NUP process throughout the diagnosis phase. The Steering Committee is political in nature to validate the NUP process, while the Technical Committee provides feedback on deliverables.



**Technical Committee:**

The Technical Committee acts as an advisory board to support in the validation of project outcomes and review of findings. Its main role includes: review of the diagnosis findings and proposing recommendations accordingly, scope of work and procedure validation, and provision of detailed technical expertise on activities and action plans. The committee is coordinated by UN-Habitat and supported by the consultant. It consists of professionals and qualified experts from diverse backgrounds and fields, including academics, policy analysts, environmental and resilience experts, and economists.

Technical Committee meetings were conducted on a bimonthly and ad hoc basis. Two official Technical Committee meetings took place in November 2017 and March 2018. The committee advised on the diagnosis analysis approach, report outline, policy priorities, and foreseen NUP roadmap.

**Steering Committee:**

The Steering Committee acts as a political committee that oversees and validates project deliverables based on the project's scope. One of its main roles includes ensuring facilitation and management of issues outside the control or capacity of project management. It functions as the political body that supports and lobbies for the implementation of the NUP Program.

The committee is led by the Office of State for the Ministry of Planning and is composed of high-level stakeholders, including ministerial representatives and major planning stakeholders. The committee meets at least three times per year during program initiation, mid-term meeting for process validation, and closure of phase one. One Steering Committee meeting was held and chaired by the Minister of State for Planning in February 2018.

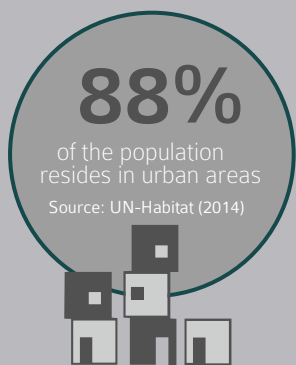


# COUNTRY PROFILE: KEY FIGURES AND FACTS



**5.9 million**

Total population Source: GoL & UN (2018)



**2%**

Annual GDP growth  
Source: World Bank (2016)

**225km**  
Coastline

**25%**

Displaced Syrians

Source: GoL & UN (2018)



**1%**

Palestine refugees  
from Syria

Source: GoL & UN (2018)

**25%**

Vulnerable Lebanese

Source: GoL & UN (2018)

**4%**

Palestine refugees  
in Lebanon

Source: GoL & UN (2018)



**USD 9,550**

GDP per capital

Source: International Monetary Fund (2015)

**Figure 4** Lebanon country profile. Source: Adapted from UN-Habitat, Cities Alliance, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Government of Liberia, 2017, p.4.







# Part I: Lebanon: Context Analysis

# PART I:

## LEBANON: CONTEXT ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

Various factors have shaped demographic growth in Lebanon over the past 50 years, including: increase in immigration rates, consecutive waves of rapid urbanization due to rural exodus, suburbanization, conflict-induced displacement and influx of refugees from neighboring countries. During this period, urbanized areas (Figure 5) expanded from 221 km<sup>2</sup> in 1963 to 741 km<sup>2</sup> in 2005 (Faour, 2015) and are expected to reach 884 km<sup>2</sup> in 2030 (DAR & IAURIF, 2004).

According to the National Physical Master Plan of the Lebanese Territory (NPMLPT), which was published in 2004, urban sprawl is expected to increase from 250 km<sup>2</sup> to 300 km<sup>2</sup> by 2030 pre-Syrian crisis, that is an estimated growth from 42% to 50%, respectively (DAR & IAURIF, 2004). Moreover, it is estimated that extensions of 100 km<sup>2</sup> to 120 km<sup>2</sup> (40% to 50%) of urbanized lands will be required to host urban populations. Based on national projections released in 2004, the annual growth rate of the population in Lebanon is expected to be around 1% between 2000 and 2030, with the estimated population count exceeding 5 million by 2030 (DAR & IAURIF, 2004). However, the country's population has already surpassed that figure, reaching 5.9 million in 2018 (GoL & UN, 2018) mostly due to the influx of displaced Syrians. This will most likely have significant implications on urbanization patterns and service provision.

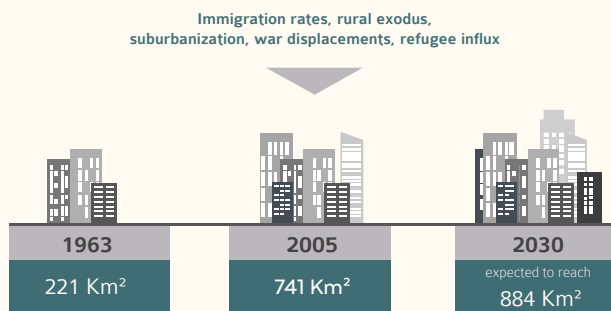


Figure 5 Urbanization patterns in Lebanon. Source: DAR & IAURIF (2004)

In Lebanon, 87% of the population is concentrated in urban areas, with 64% residing in large urban agglomerations, namely Beirut and its suburbs, Tripoli, Saida, Zahle and Tyre

(UN-Habitat, 2008). In addition to Lebanese residents, these cities host a considerable number of Palestine refugees<sup>2</sup> living inside and outside camps, and most recently, displaced Syrians and Palestine refugees from Syria (registered by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) until 2015 and 2016, respectively).

This rapid urbanization in Lebanon has taken four forms:

- (1) flow of refugees and rural migrants, and concentration of urban poor populations—including foreign workers—in informal neighborhoods;
- (2) development of high-rise towers in central areas and gentrification;
- (3) densification of popular neighborhoods, with youth seeking better job opportunities;
- and (4) urban sprawl mainly in middle- and lower-middle-class residential areas.

### Flow of refugees and rural migrants

Lebanon has received refugee populations since the 1920s. Some of the camps hosting refugees—especially Armenians, Syrians and Palestinians—have constituted Lebanon's very first informal neighborhoods (Kevorkian, et al., 2005). Palestinian camps, for instance, maintained their status as extra-territorialities governed by an international agency (UNRWA), which reinforced their demarcation and informality (Dorai, 2008; Hanafi & Long, 2012).

Unprecedented rural migration between the late 1950s and 1970s has led to the development of more informal neighborhoods. In Beirut, these neighborhoods developed into "misery belts" (Bourgey & Pharès, 1973). The fast development of Beirut's economy and the economic stagnation in rural areas led hundreds of thousands of rural dwellers to move to Beirut seeking jobs. Some of these rural migrants settled informally in the suburbs, near industries or main roads (Bourgey, 1985; Nasr & Nasr, 1976).

In the 1970s and 1980s, displaced populations fled the Israeli invasions in South Lebanon to the southern suburbs of Beirut, creating one of the largest informal neighborhoods (Charafeddine, 1991, Clerc-Huybrechts, 2008; Fawaz, 2008; Fawaz, 2013). Some of the informal neighborhoods and camps were destroyed during the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990); however, they still represent 25% of the Greater Beirut Area (GBA)<sup>3</sup> (Fawaz, 2013). The lack of affordable and social housing has also led to the development of informal neighborhoods in and outside Beirut.

<sup>2</sup> Persons who were displaced and fled to Lebanon due to the 1948 Palestine war, as well as their patrilineal descendants.

<sup>3</sup> The GBA is not a recognized official perimeter, but it is usually identified as the area going from Khaldeh in the south to Nahr El-Kaleb in the north.

## Development of high-rise towers in central areas and gentrification

Additionally, the concentration of high-end developments proliferated large urban agglomerations: Beirut Central District, Dbayeh Marina, Dam w Farz area in Tripoli, the Wastani development and New Boulevard areas in Saida, Ksara in Zahle, etc. In a country marked by its strong service sector, developments to cater to the restaurants and nightlife businesses have grown in such areas in Beirut as Gemayzeh, Mar Mikhael, Hamra, Badaro and Antelias, among others, as well as across neighborhoods in Jounieh, Jbeil, Batroun, Zahle, etc. Such activities have significantly transformed the neighborhoods, contributing to their gentrification (Bonte & Le Douarin, 2014; Krijnen & De Beukelaer, 2015).

Gentrification is also the result of high-end residential developments in the form of towers in Beirut neighborhoods (Krijnen & Fawaz, 2010). This has represented a massive phenomenon during the 2005–2015 period, whereby more than 150 towers were under construction within the administrative boundaries of Beirut alone (Ashkarian & Moujahed, 2016). In the peripheries, on the slopes of Mount Lebanon, a large number of high-end residential gated communities have also emerged.

## Densification of popular neighborhoods

Neighborhoods that preserved their pre-war urban fabric have attracted populations and investments due to their dynamic commercial streets and diverse services, thus increasing their density. These neighborhoods face challenges due to the threats of gentrification and the increase in the number of poorer populations. In this case, larger apartments are informally subdivided into smaller units and rented to migrant workers, refugees or poor households (UN-Habitat & IFI/AUB, 2015; UNHCR & UN-Habitat, 2014). With the increased demand on the housing market in such neighborhoods, the “old rent” law has provided stability and protection for most of their residents. The law prohibits increasing rent for tenants who have contracts prior to 1993; thus, it is estimated to concern around 160,000 housing units<sup>4</sup> in Lebanon. However, the law was amended in 2014,<sup>5</sup> and is expected to bring considerable change to these neighborhoods (Clerc, 2015).

## Urban sprawl

Post-war rapid urbanization has led to sprawl in urban and rural areas (Faour, 2015; Verdeil et al., 2016). Higher land prices have contributed to the extension of urban agglomerations

further to their periphery. This sprawl is mainly taking place on natural lands of the Mount Lebanon slopes or agricultural lands. On the other hand, sprawl in rural villages has been caused by the flow of remittance money, the construction of secondary houses and the development of touristic resorts. Given the absence of adequate urban environmental policies and regulations to ensure that urbanization respects environmental standards, urban sprawl has had significant effects on the environment (Kouyoumjian & Hamzé, 2012; MoE, UNDP & ECODIT, 2011; Verdeil, et al., 2016). In addition, congestion in central areas and on highways is contributing to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions (Charabekh et al., 2017). This haphazard urbanization has consequences in terms of vulnerability to natural disasters (flooding, earthquake, etc.) (Abdallah, 2016; Abdallah & Hdeib, 2015). Additionally, the lack of regulating quarries that produce stone, sand and gravel materials for the construction industry has led to the destruction of natural mountain lands. Other threats to the environment include solid waste dumps and waste water that mostly spills in rivers and the sea, polluting these water resources (MoE, UNDP & ECODIT, 2011).

The Syrian crisis has had a considerable impact on the already weak infrastructure and service sector in Lebanon. It has contributed to densification of poor urban areas, the development of informal settlements across Lebanon, and urban sprawl in city peripheries. Also it has had negative impacts on agricultural areas, especially in the Bekaa Governorate, located about 30 km east of Beirut, and Akkar Governorate, around 130 km away from Beirut (MoE, 2014).



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<sup>4</sup> According to Clerc (2015), no exact figure is known; the Association of Renters states 170,000 units and that of landlords 81,000. However, the parliamentary commission in charge of the study of the law has adopted the figure of 160,000 housing units used in this diagnosis report.

<sup>5</sup> The new rental law of 2014 aimed at liberalizing the rental market and terminating “old leaseholds”.

## “Urban” policy in Lebanon

The development of urban policies in Lebanon started during the post-Tanzimat era. During the time, public policy aimed at supporting the vision of Ottoman administrations for coastal Mediterranean cities to represent Ottoman modernity (Chambers & Polk, 1968; Hanssen, Philipp & Weber, 2002). As such, Beirut witnessed considerable change, including the development of new streets, transportation services, infrastructure, gardens, and education and health facilities (Davie, 2001; Fawaz, 1982; Fishfish, 2011; Kassir, 2003). The post-Tanzimat Ottoman administration also introduced municipalities, which were instituted at first in Deir El-Qamar, which is a village south-east of Beirut, and eventually spread across all major cities in Lebanon. Municipalities brought significant changes to governance, allowing for participation of local representatives in the management of city affairs. However, municipalities were marginalized once the State of Greater Lebanon was founded under the French Mandate in 1920. Ministries and central institutions were established and thus urban affairs were approached in a more centralized and sectoral manner.

Today, urban planning in Lebanon remains exercised in a highly centralized manner. The main concerned actors include the local authorities (municipalities and unions of municipalities), the Directorate General of Urban Planning (DGUP), the Higher Council of Urban Planning (HCUP), the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), and other sector ministries—Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MoPWT), Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM), etc.

The DGUP is responsible for developing and reviewing master plans all over Lebanon. These master plans provide guidelines and recommendations that require reinforcement based on mandatory laws, policies and regulations. The HCUP consists of representatives from several ministries as well as specialists in urbanization, and is responsible for advancing recommendations that guide urban planning at a national level. To regulate urban growth, the CDR was assigned to develop the NPMPLT, which was adopted in 2009 and is considered to be a national “general guiding framework” to urban planning and land use in Lebanon (DAR & IAURIF, 2004). Figure 6 summarizes planning evolution in Lebanon.

Local authorities also have a significant role in urban planning and development, especially in light of increasing donor interest in partnering with municipalities to develop local development plans. However, local authorities face major challenges, including the scarcity of clear public policies, the fragmented nature of decision-making processes, the large number of planning institutions lacking a shared vision, and the lack of coordination. In fact, in a context of *laissez-faire* economic policy combined with top-down approaches towards urbanization policies, recurrent political crises and massive rural migration led to inadequate planning,

that is increasingly guided by market forces and informal arrangements.

The absence of the “urban” as an administrative and legal category in Lebanon and the absence of an official authority to govern urban areas undermine the possibility of developing comprehensive urban policies. Another challenge is that available data is aggregated at the cadastral, municipal or regional levels, while data at the level of urban agglomerations is lacking. In complex settings, urban areas necessitate specific policies that address their complexity. In this regard, initiatives have been developed on a voluntary basis by public central and local authorities in collaboration with international actors. These have included deliberations around regulations, strategies and actions aimed at addressing “urban” issues. However, these remain inadequate in the face of rapid urbanization, urban sprawl and the resulting challenges in Lebanon.

The following sections cover structural, institutional, economic and operational issues that underlie urban policies.





Figure 6 Lebanese planning timeline.

## Urban Regulations

Urban regulations encompass legal and regulatory urban space frameworks. These mainly include regulations related to property rights, construction, planning and the protection and management of common goods (such as urban heritage, seashores, urban nature, etc.). The following section provides an overview of these regulations and the central and local institutions responsible for applying them. The section focuses on local institutions, taking into consideration their important role in the production of urban spaces.

## National institutional and legal frameworks for urban policies in Lebanon

While there is no law that is specific to urban issues, many laws include legal texts that address them (Lamy, 2014). Texts specifying the production and management of urban spaces<sup>6</sup> mainly include: real estate property code (1930), building code (2004), code on urban planning (1983), code on the environment (2002), decree on the protection of the coastline (1966), laws on the protection of natural sites (1939) and forests (1966), decree on the protection of historic monuments and antiquities (1933), decree on the location of certain industrial and commercial buildings (1932) and the ministerial decree on the NPMP (2009).

In the absence of a ministry or central institution mandated with urban development, this responsibility has been taken on formally and informally by various institutions. The following section discusses some of the main legal texts and institutions concerned with urban issues.

## Real estate property and building code

The 1930 real estate property code defines land and its use in Lebanon. It reflects a shift from the traditional Ottoman land use and ownership models to the post-Tanzimat and French rule model. The creation of cadasters under French rule triggered a large movement of subdivision of historically communally used lands (called *mushaa*) considered as private real estate property or state property ownership (owned by central institutions or municipalities) (Clerc-Huybrechts, 2008; Irby, 1971).

The transformation of agricultural and grazing lands in the peripheries of urban areas, especially in Beirut, into real estate property caused the development of a profitable real estate market that speculated on the demographic growth of the city and its sprawl (Fawaz, 2013; Khuri, 1975; Phares, 1977). This was also a source of conflict between different municipalities that claimed ownership of vast historic *mushaas*.<sup>7</sup> Limited municipal resources to buy or maintain public spaces and green areas have contributed to the lack of minimum standards of greenery-to-population ratios or public spaces across main cities in Lebanon.

Building regulations in Lebanon have also contributed to urban sprawl and the development of building typologies that do not harness social activities and community life (Lamy, 2015). Based on modernist prescriptions, namely the building code (2004) and the code on urban planning (1983), building regulations encourage urban forms that disconnect buildings and streets from each other. Except for specific decrees on locations of certain commercial and industrial buildings or in local master plans, buildings can develop anywhere on the plot and take any form, provided they respect minimum distances from the street and neighboring plots. Moreover, specifications for use of ground floors of buildings as parking lots further alienate the building from the street, discouraging the use of these open spaces as public spaces.

<sup>6</sup> Other texts focusing on urban infrastructure, social, health, educational, sport and cultural services affect the way urban policies are produced in Lebanon. This document will address some of these texts when discussing policies in particular service sectors.

<sup>7</sup> These conflicts around *mushaa* lands are still occurring today.

## Spatial planning laws, institutions and main public tools

### Planning institutions

Several stakeholders shape the existing planning framework in Lebanon. Within this context, the governance dynamic is complex; it includes central government agencies, local authorities and others. Figure 7 simplifies the relationship between these actors, showing major planning stakeholders that will be described in more detail below.

The Ministry of State for Planning was formed in 2016. Ideally, this authority should be the umbrella under which all planning projects/initiatives operate. However, despite its responsiveness and activeness, the ministry is not provided with adequate capacities, and lacks the human and financial resources to fulfill this role. Hence, the DGUP retains its role as the central spatial planning administration in Lebanon. It is headed by a Director General and comprise: the Central Administration (Headquarters) and the Regional Offices.

The DGUP reports to the HCUP headed by the Director General. The HCUP certifies and approves any master plan before its submittal to the Council of Ministers. Its key responsibilities include spatial planning and the application of the urban planning and building codes. According to decree number 10490, the DGUP has the following responsibilities:

- Elaborate master plans for Lebanese villages and cities and define land uses according to the demographic, economic and social conditions of the regions. This work is done in collaboration with municipalities and technical offices.
- Provide necessary studies for road networks through the Department of Planning, ensuring provision of internal, regional and primary roads applied by the MoPWT, and for national roads, some of which are applied by CDR and MoPWT.
- Monitor the implementation of plans in collaboration with municipalities, line ministries, mohafazahs (governorates), qada's (districts) and Unions of Municipalities.
- Report to and request approval from the HCUP concerning developed master plans.
- Support municipalities in municipal project studies and supervise the planning and implementation phase.
- Supervise the work of DGUP technical offices and units.

DGUP Regional Offices are self-supported administrative units in the qada's and mohafazahs, reporting directly to the Central Administration. Their main mission is to assist local municipalities—within their jurisdictions and administrative perimeter—in legal, planning and technical matters. However, in practice, their main role is to review building permits and construction documents, and to secure their formal approval by the local municipalities.

The role of the DGUP is mainly technical, operating within a rigid structure and outdated mandate (UN-Habitat, 2013). Moreover, no clear collaboration mechanisms with key planning actors have been defined. This also applies to the DGUP's relation to municipalities, which is often affected by political representation and technical/legal issues.

Since 1962, the HCUP is the authority that holds a discretionary decision-making margin regarding many aspects of spatial planning in Lebanon, especially master plans and large infrastructure projects. The HCUP also has an arbitration role with respect to DGUP decisions regarding the application of the building code. HCUP's feedback and validation are mandatory regarding all proposals for modification of urban planning and building laws and procedures.



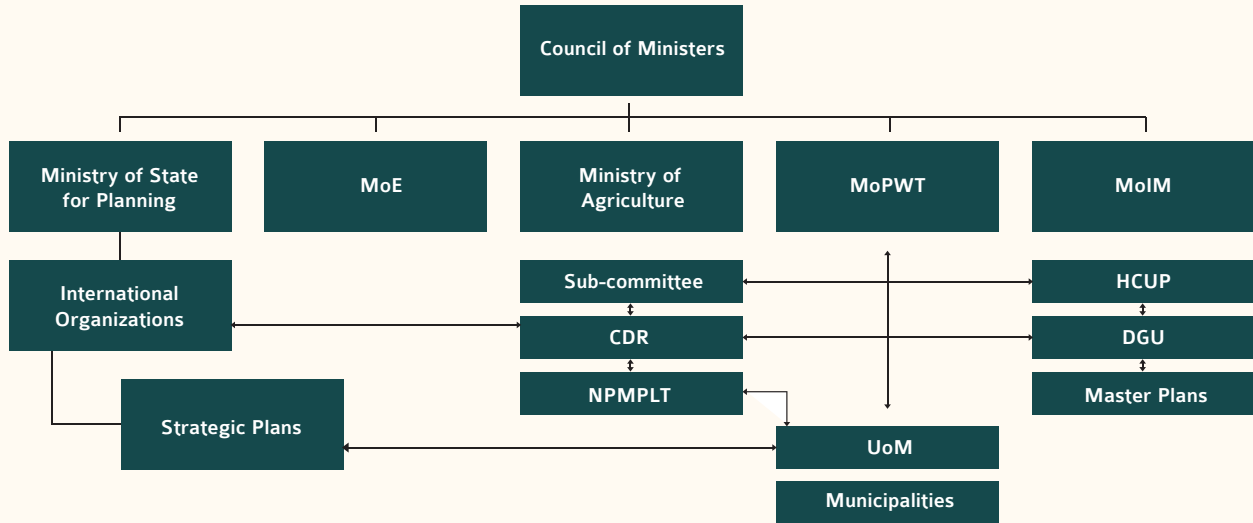


Figure 7 Main stakeholders involved in urban planning in Lebanon

## Spatial planning laws and main tools

The Urban Planning Code (1983) replaced the 1962 law and remains the most important planning law. Unlike other decrees that focus on city and town planning, this code addresses planning at the level of the entire Lebanese territory. It focuses on zoning and definition of street networks, while also imposing additional requirements for certain areas and plots. Master plans and detailed plans are mandatory for cities and towns that are considered administrative centers of *qada's*, in addition to certain touristic villages and those with prominent archeological sites. However, they are considered optional for other urban and rural areas.

In practice, the law has had limited implications. Only 15% of the Lebanese territory is covered by 180 master plans, while 85% is either not planned or has partial plans covering specific areas<sup>8</sup> (Public Works, 2018). While the law requires plans to have ministerial decree recognition, a large number of the developed plans remain unrecognized, rendering them legally contestable.<sup>9</sup> Political pressures and individual gains have also paved the way for the increase in amendments to master plans<sup>10</sup> and provision of exceptions for specific plots falling under such plans (Farah, et al., 2016).

Within the context of the rising role of municipalities,<sup>11</sup> the number of master plans has been on the rise since 2005. Given that municipalities are involved in local affairs,

they have developed—individually or with the support of consultants—master plans that are submitted to the HCUP for approval. To date, most of the master plans submitted to HCUP are prepared by municipalities rather than DGUP. However, multiple unjustified amendments to implemented master plans could hint at prioritization of individual interests in the development of master plans (Public Works, 2018).

As of 1971, a ministerial decree allowed for the allocation of plots in unplanned areas with surface exploitation ratios of 40% and total construction ratios of 0.8 of plot surface.<sup>12</sup> This has greatly contributed to urban sprawl and fragmentation of forest and agricultural areas. In 2005, the HCUP issued a decree to limit land exploitation ratios to 25% and 0.5 of plot surface. However, higher ratios are evident in municipal master plans (Public Works, 2018).

<sup>8</sup> Concerning an industrial area, for example.

<sup>9</sup> In fact, master plans are of different typologies and each has its own legal status and its own set of regulations and conditions (UN-Habitat, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> With a median of three amendments per master plan and, in some cases, reaching 17 amendments.

<sup>11</sup> Municipal elections were suspended for 33 years, only to return in 1998.

<sup>12</sup> For certain touristic villages, ratios were maintained at 30% and 0.9, respectively.

Besides the DGUP and the HCUP, other public institutions have been directly involved in framing planning in Lebanon. This is mainly the case of the Ministry of Planning and the CDR. The Ministry of Planning, which was first established under President Fouad Chehab in the 1960s, aimed at providing five-year plans that articulate all the ministries' actions in coordination with different ministries. At the center of this new centralized planning and public policy was the concept of "development". Spatial planning and policy at the level of the Lebanese territory aimed at serving social and economic development and curbing the massive rural migration of the 1950s and 1960s. However, it was soon perceived as a failing institution incapable of controlling a dominant economic laissez-faire culture, rapid urbanization and political opposition, leading to its marginalization (Verdeil, 2009).

The need for a governmental agency capable of coordinating reconstruction efforts was heightened as of the first years of the Lebanese Civil War. Hence, the CDR was established in 1977 as an autonomous public entity, with its own structure and budget, operating directly under the authority of the Council of Ministers. The CDR's field of intervention has been wide, ranging from road and transportation infrastructure, energy and water to socioeconomic services and public facilities. Its primary mandate was the production of a national master plan for the development of the Lebanese territory, as well as the coordination between large ministerial projects and support with their execution.

The CDR gained a central role in defining urban policy in Lebanon during the post-war reconstruction period, coordinating the majority of projects, while the roles of DGUP and HCUP were marginalized. Large infrastructure and urban projects were planned, at times with little to no reliance on master plans and land use plans. The post-war reconstruction unfolded based on a new planning approach inspired by neoliberal values of global positioning and city marketing (Huybrechts, 2002; Huybrechts & Verdeil, 2000; Schmid, 2006). Reconstruction was an opportunity to position Beirut regionally, thus contributing to boosting the economy at the city and national levels. Large-scale urban projects were perceived to attract international investors, providing the necessary infrastructure to foster economic growth and the creation of a global city.

Three projects that had started during the war spearheaded the reconstruction process: the reconstruction of the destroyed Beirut City Center and of the informal settlements in its southern suburbs, in addition to land reclamation. With limited public institutional capacities, the projects necessitated the intervention of the private sector to share resources and expertise.

The 1983 law (Urban Planning Code) allowed for establishing two types of institutions with capacities to undertake land development and reconstruction operations: real estate companies (Article 21) and public authorities (Article 22). A real estate company should be constituted by a ministerial decree, which also specifies its physical perimeter within which real estate owners would be compensated or become stockholders in the established company. The public administration, which holds a minimum share of 25% of the real estate, has the option of being integrated in the company. The real estate company would then engage in the development/reconstruction operations, and the public shares would be restituted as public land (Figure 8).

Three companies were founded based on the above-explained law: SOLIDERE for the reconstruction of Beirut City Center, LINORD for the development of the coastline of the northern suburbs of Beirut, and SIDON for the coastline development of Saida. SOLIDERE remains functional, while the others suspended operations. Large plots of land have been reclaimed from the sea by SOLIDERE. The politically backed company and its approach to developing the city center have been controversial (Beyhum, Salaam & Tabet, 1996; Rowe & Sarkis, 1998; Schmid, 2006). More specifically, many have considered that the high-end development excluded communities that had been able to access the heart of the city in the past.

In a context of political opposition to the SOLIDERE model, the government used Article 22 in 1996 to create ELYSSAR, the public authority for the reconstruction and development of the southern suburbs of Beirut. The ELYSSAR decree allowed property owners to maintain their real estate ownership. It prioritized provision of social housing where populations are set to relocate. Although the project master plan was prepared, it was suspended due to local resistance (Deboulet & Fawaz, 2011; Harb, 1998).

The political tension and recurrent wars with Israel led to a crisis, impacting the reconstruction projects in the end of the 1990s. The government was pressured to develop a comprehensive national vision<sup>13</sup> for the Lebanese territory to seek donor support. This laid the grounds for long-term development and provided a framework for public policy. Hence, the CDR developed the NPMPPLT in 2004, which was adopted by a ministerial decree in 2009. The orientations of the NPMPPLT were ideally set to be respected by public administrations and authorities.

The NPMPPLT promotes balanced development across different cities and regions, while ensuring complementarity in roles (DAR & IAURIF, 2004). This plan was a first in defining areas as "urban", "rural", "agricultural" and "natural". The NPMPPLT provided special recommendations to urban areas in terms of land use and possible morphological patterns.

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<sup>13</sup> The vision document was required from CDR, according to the 1977 law, and from DGUP, according to the 1983 law.



## New Planning Approach

### Post-war reconstruction: Large-scale urban

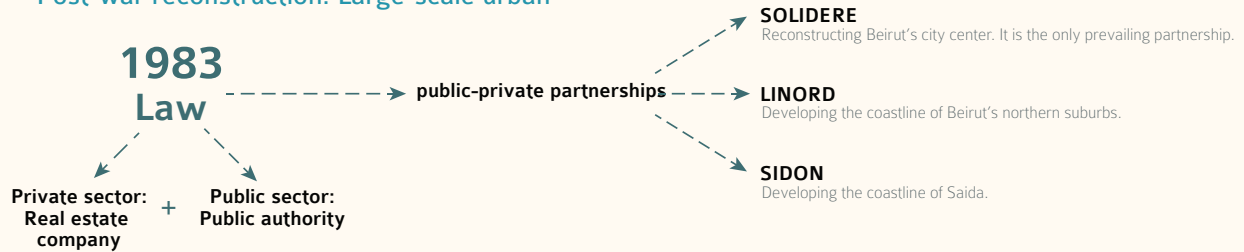


Figure 8 New planning approach.

More importantly, the plan defined a hierarchy of urban areas: (1) The Central Urban Area (CUA), including the Beirut agglomeration and other urban areas in Mount Lebanon connected to it; (2) The gate-cities of the CUA: Jbeil and Saida; (3) Tripoli as the large metropolis of the North; (4) The growth centers of Zahle and Nabatieh; and the patrimonial cities of Baalbek and Tyre. In addition to these agglomerations, the NPMPLT recognized the existence of smaller towns, many of which constitute administrative centers of qada's. The outlined plan defined the economic roles of urban areas and

addressed environmental risks through the analysis and provision of protection parameters for consideration within local master plans.

The implementation of the NPMPLT has been impeded by the following factors: lack of strict measures to ensure that the plan is binding, the series of events and urban changes in Lebanon that should be reflected through updating the plan, the limited financial resources to implement the plan, and political divisions.



## Legal texts and the protection of the “urban commons”

The following section examines legal texts pertaining to urban common goods that usually include public amenities and spaces of built-up and natural properties.

The main legal text addressing protection of common goods in urban areas is the 2002 code of the environment and its related decrees (2012) on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Impact Assessment. In the past, the 1932 decree on locating industrial and commercial buildings, and the local master plans, were the only tools to protect urban areas from pollution. In contrast, the 2002 law set social and environmental impact assessments tools, which focus on implications of projects on neighboring populations and the environment. The tools promote participatory public consultation and stakeholder engagement in the process.

Although EIA studies address heritage buildings, more specific laws target the protection of heritage, including the law of 1933 that defines all buildings and monuments prior to 1700 to have heritage value. Registration of historic monuments at the Directorate General of Antiquities (DGA) protects them from demolition or alteration, which would require approval by the DGA. Upon registration, owners of these buildings are financially compensated. This law however has been inadequate in ensuring protection of heritage sites, neighborhoods, landscapes and mainly heritage buildings. This is due to the limited resources of the DGA to compensate owners, in addition to the considerable rise in real estate values. In 2017, a draft law was issued by the cabinet that is yet to be approved by the parliament. It intends to mediate between developers, owners, activists and urban planners through the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). Adopting this method would allow heritage

property owners to sell “air rights” that they can’t use as they protected to developers/investors. These rights are transferred to another site for developing a project in a non-vulnerable neighbourhood (O’Regan, 2018). However, the new decree still fails to respond to many concerns of urban heritage advocates, as it does not address modern-era built heritage or intangible heritage. As for urban commons, such as coastal line and beaches, decree 4810/1966 reserves the maritime domain for the public; as such, it does not allow for privatization of the coastline. The text provides an exception for land recognized by HCUP as public utility to be used for touristic and industrial purposes with certain conditions for construction, subdivision and exploitation.<sup>14</sup> However, the decree opened the way for exceptions. Decree 169/1989 also threatened the public maritime domain, as it authorized the occupation of the public domain located on the coastline in the so-called “zone 10” in Beirut to any owner of 20,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The NPMPLT recognizes a number of coastal areas as having exceptional value and recommends prohibiting any changes to their natural configuration. However, in practice, privatization of the shoreline through touristic resorts and gated beach complexes is on the rise, while prohibiting public access to such spaces (Lamy, 2017; Verdeil, Faour, & Dictaphone, 2016).

Although forests cover nearly 13% and other woodlands 10% of the Lebanese territory (FAO, 2010), only 2% of them are considered part of natural reserves and hence are protected by specific natural reserve laws. A forest code exists in Lebanon since 1949; it details the exploitation rules to protect forests. Cutting trees and wood commercialization are therefore only authorized through a permit. However, the code has been weakly applied, with forests left barely protected, thus paving the way for urban sprawl. In 1996, law 558/1996 was adopted, aimed at increasing forest protection. Law 92/2010 also bans any land uses inside burned forest areas to prevent future acts of arson.



<sup>14</sup> For example, for a permit to be granted to the landowner in maritime public domain, its area should be greater than 7,500 m<sup>2</sup>, with at least 100 meters of sea frontage and 60 meters of depth. The purpose of this decree was to further detail the legal regime governing the public maritime domain drafted in 1925.

## Local institutional frameworks for urban policies: Towards decentralization?

Decentralization was elaborated within the 1977 municipal law and set as an objective by the 1989 Constitution for the Lebanese state system, through the Taif Agreement (National Accord Document).<sup>15</sup> Local authorities gained prominence following a large civil society movement lobbying for their empowerment, and the first post-war municipal elections were held in 1998. While some municipalities succeeded in fulfilling the role of an absent central state in the provision of local services, others have failed to do so. Gaining support from local authorities, civil society movements, political parties, international organizations and donors, decentralization is deliberated through a process of law propositions in parliamentary committees. Decentralization and autonomy of local authorities, along with their respective administrative and legal frameworks, lie at the core of urban regulations. In the following section, we present the main characteristics of Lebanon's deconcentrated local administrations and decentralized local authorities and the proposed decentralization law.

In Lebanon, the local level is administered primarily through deconcentrated antennas and administrations affiliated to central institutions. The deconcentration of authority was declared through decree 116/1959. The main deconcentrated administrations are at the mohafazah (i.e regional) level and the qada' (i.e subregional) level. The Lebanese territory is divided into nine mohafazas and 25 qada's.

Recently, the central government has intensively invested in the creation of local deconcentrated administrations. This aims at bringing more services closer to the population. For example, health and education centers affiliated to the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) have played a key role in social and health service provision to low-income populations and in urban areas. The process of service provision, however, has proved to be costly, considering the lack of adequate human and financial resources at the qada' level; thus, major service provision remains at central and regional levels.

In the present state of the legislation, decentralized local authorities are municipalities and unions of municipalities.

### Mukhtars:

Another important local entity is the mukhtar who is an elected civil servant. Mukhtars were historically dominant notables representing family clans and communities in rural areas and urban neighborhoods. Prior to the establishment of municipalities, they were the only interface between local populations and the central state. Today, they still play a main intermediary role between state institutions and inhabitants and in developing neighborhood policies.

### Municipalities:

The municipality is defined by law as "a local administration that enjoys within its geographical boundaries the power delegated to it by law. It enjoys moral personality and administrative and financial autonomy within the limits defined by law" (Art. 1 of the 1977 law). Municipality responsibilities include "all actions of a public nature or with a public interest within the municipal boundaries", according to Article 47 of the 1977 law. There are two major bodies in a municipality: the decision-making represented by the council and the executive authority represented by the president. Councils can issue decisions; however, they are only effective upon central approval.

The 1977 law stated that a municipal council should be established in every town and city, and allowed municipalities to group into "unions of municipalities". As such, every town and village has the right to have a municipality provided that its population exceeds 300 persons.

Articles 49 and 52 of decree 118-1977 provide municipalities with wide jurisdictions at the local level for public operations, namely budgeting, urban planning, and issuing terms of reference for services and selling municipal properties. Since their first post-war election in 1998, municipalities have proved to be efficient local actors in service delivery and development projects. However, they face major challenges in terms of human resource and financial capacities. While larger municipalities, often located in urban areas, and constituting 30% of the municipalities provide services and are involved in investment and various development projects and partnerships, the remaining small municipalities (70%

<sup>15</sup> The Taif Agreement (1989), based on which the constitution of the Lebanese Republic was amended, includes a series of provisions responding to the need to restructure administrative divisions in Lebanon and enhance administrative decentralization. In practice, according to the Taif Agreement, the Lebanese model combines aspects of deconcentration at the level of the eight mohafazahs (governorates) and the 25 qada's, with administrative decentralization at the municipality level.

of municipalities) undertake basic activities limited to road maintenance and networks rehabilitation (Harb & Atallah, 2015).

## Union of Municipalities (UoM)

More than two thirds of the municipalities are grouped under unions of municipalities,<sup>16</sup> with 58 UoMs established in Lebanon by 2018.

According to the Municipal law (Article 118), a UoM is composed of several neighboring municipalities and is established, or dissolved, by virtue of a ministerial decree that the Minister of Interior and Municipalities advises, on his own initiative, or at the request of the member municipalities. Nevertheless, the law allows for every UoM to lead joint programs and projects that benefit all or some of its member municipalities. To this end, the UoM council can issue decisions that become legally binding to member municipalities (Article 128).

There are no legal texts or requirements for numbers of members, the geographical area, or population size of the union. This is reflected in the different sizes and scales of UoMs, with around 65% comprising 10-member municipalities or more, and the smallest union consisting of only three municipalities. This impacts the resources of unions and their capacity to provide services. It is also reflected in the wide differences in budgets (ranging from USD 0.15 million to USD 26 million), number of employees (ranging from 1 to 161), number of departments (ranging from 1 to 5) and number of specialized committees in the union council (ranging from 3 to 24) (UPLoAD & DRI, 2018). Moreover, the law does not limit the work and interventions of municipal unions to specific sectors and matters, which gives the UoMs more freedom to develop their work in various sectors and identify public projects that have common interests to member municipalities, including planning, expropriation and management of mushaa land, among others.

## Local authorities and central state actors

Municipalities and UoMs are key local actors in urban development and policymaking. Several barriers hinder their efficiency and involvement in the development process, namely:

- **Capacity building:** The majority of municipalities lack adequate human resources in terms of required expertise and competencies. This is due to the bureaucratic public administration recruitment, the lack of adequate qualifications at the human resource level and the very low wages compared to the private sector. This reflects negatively on the quality of municipal work and service delivery.
- **Financial resources:** Article 1 of the Municipal Law grants municipalities some financial independence. Municipalities receive direct and indirect taxes.<sup>17</sup> As most taxes are imposed irregularly, they frequently hinder the process of municipal planning and budgeting. Additionally, dependence on rental value and construction permit fees encourages urban sprawl in return for increased financing municipal budgets.
- **Lack of administrative autonomy:** The legislative decree no. 118/77 and its amendments authorizes municipalities to manage any work having a public character or utility within their area. However, excessive central institution control of the majority of administrative, financial and technical aspects challenges municipal relations to the central state.
- **Scales of municipalities:** Municipalities can be divided into three levels according to urban scale, expansion trends, and the prevailing local political context:
  - **Small municipalities** are primarily located at the peripheries and are witnessing a continuous decline in population size. In these municipalities, the number of registered voters exceeds the number of residents. These municipalities often lack human and financial resources.
  - **Small and medium-size municipalities:** With the number of residents exceeding the number of registered voters, these municipalities are either the administrative capital of a qada' or located in the suburbs of big cities. Although these municipalities

<sup>16</sup> "The Legislative Decree No. 118 of 30 June 1977, on municipalities, authorizes the creation of federations to allow them to undertake projects that exceeds the financial possibilities of municipality." Localiban, 25 February 2009 Federation of municipality. Updated 26 January 2016.

<sup>17</sup> Direct taxes include fees on housing rental values, pavement and sewers, construction permits and advertising licenses and are very limited. Indirect taxes are transferred from state administrations to municipalities through the Independent Municipal Fund.

have more resources due to large tax revenues, urban pressure constitutes a major threat to their sustainability.

- **Major cities** have significant resources and large-scale administrative bodies, in addition to experience in the field of municipal work. As vital economic hubs in Lebanon with high demographic density, they require continuous efforts to face urban transformations and respond to development needs.

The legal framework of local government actors does not adequately address the different roles, collaboration mechanisms and structures of these institutions. This has implications on efficiency and accountability. Some heads of unions and mayors believe that the work of the union is primarily technical, and develop the union to assume a leading role in development and planning. However, others believe that the work of unions is an extension of the work of municipalities, limiting services to the municipal level, while assigning the union with a minimal coordination role.

Nevertheless, most unions are filling gaps resulting from weak national policies. While central government institutions are facing major political, financial and organizational challenges limiting their capacity of intervention, local authorities have been taking the lead in responding to the demands of the population, especially in the provision of infrastructure and social services. In this context, international donors contribute by supporting and partnering with local authorities to set new effective development policies. Finally, the recognition of the significance of municipalities as decision makers and their direct interface with the population have led some political parties to establish partisan “municipal bureaus” that would assist municipal councils and administrations in training programmes, including links to international donors and networking.

### Perspectives on decentralization reform and the proposed decentralization law

A proposed decentralization law was drafted in 2013, which proposes large reforms for defining and operating local authorities. The suggested reforms provide sustained financial mechanisms and more equitable representation in municipal councils by giving quotas for non-registered residents and women. It also suggests the abolition of the UoM and its substitution by the qada'-level directly elected regional councils. These councils are given considerable prerogatives to plan and implement regional and local development

policies. Although the law proposes improvements, it is challenged by the current territorial and political context.

Many qada's, especially in the coastal area, lack comprehensive sustainable development strategies for their territories.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, in many cases the perimeters of qada's contradict with the principle of sustainable environmental management, especially of water resources. Perimeters often divide river basin geographies, rendering sustainable management extremely difficult. Finally, the top-down definition of perimeters breaks the flexibility that allowed municipalities to come together as UoMs. Councils at the qada' scale could also be controlled by political parties thus marginalizing local notables and actors. Therefore, for decentralized authorities to address territorial—especially urban—development challenges, there is a need to reconsider the way the perimeters of these authorities are defined.

## Urban Economic Development

Lebanon's economy is liberal and relies heavily on the private sector. The urban economy is dominated by the service sector where most of the country's workforce is employed, followed by trade, industry and agriculture. The majority of economic activity is concentrated in Beirut agglomeration, which comprises one third of the total population in Lebanon (Dewailly, 2016). Additionally, the informal<sup>19</sup> and migrant economy in cities is a major contributor to the national Gross domestic product (GDP) (Rossis, 2011). Economic decline and high social tensions are increasingly pressuring the government for action and reform. On the regional level, it is unclear how existing political transformations will affect Lebanon's political economy and whether they would provide enough momentum to call for more equitable and inclusive urban economic development.

### Urban-based economy

#### A laissez-faire economy seeking a regional role

Lebanon's economy is marked by a laissez-faire approach, which allowed for the accumulation of wealth and situated Lebanon and its capital Beirut as an important regional hub for financial services. Reconstruction in the post-war period was focused on reasserting Beirut's role as a platform for regional business activities. However, the disruption of peace due to Israeli wars, emergence of other regional economic

<sup>18</sup> For example, the coastal Metn area is clearly more linked—in terms of development opportunities—to the urban areas to its north and south and to Greater Beirut than to the high mountain villages. The latter area, in turn, is part of a high mountain territorial strategy involving villages in the qada' of Baabda.

<sup>19</sup> Informal economy includes all economic activities and jobs that are outside the realm of state regulation.

hubs (e.g. Dubai) and internal political divergence around reconstruction policies led to the weakening of the capital's foreseen role.

### Benefiting from geopolitical “opportunities”

As of the 19th Century, Beirut was considered a lead city within the context of European capitalism infiltration to the Levant. This was facilitated by the close proximity of Beirut Port to Damascus,<sup>20</sup> the presence of consulates and European missionaries, and the existence of a local bourgeoisie mastering European languages (Fawaz, 1982; Kassir, 2003; Traboulsi, 2012). These trends were maintained and reinforced during the French era and after independence. While the civil war weakened Lebanon’s regional role, the flow of “political money” coming from regional and international states in support of different warring factions still shapes political activity in the country (Dibeh, 2005; Picard, 2000).

After 1989, post-war reconstruction had major implications on the Lebanese economy (Corm, 2004; Gaspard, 2004). Macro-level projects and housing demand considerably fueled economic activity in the 1990s and after the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon (Verdeil, Faour, & Velut, 2007). After 2000, economic growth was also attributed to other major events, including the following: rise in oil prices leading to the reinvestment of Gulf countries’ capital in Lebanon, increased job opportunities for Lebanese in Gulf countries leading to increased remittances for Lebanon and finally the flow of international aid money to support the implications of the Syrian crisis in Lebanon since 2012 (Abdallah, 2013).

Remittances and capital were mainly invested in real estate development, tourism and other quick return-on-investment activities, especially in Beirut agglomeration (Krijnen & De Beukelaer, 2015; Verdeil, Faour, & Velut, 2007). Such investments have allowed for economic growth, the

creation of jobs and expansion in specific sectors. However, this haphazard economic development had considerable repercussions on the socioeconomic milieu (Dewailly, 2016), primarily the agricultural and industrial sectors that were severely affected by the economic orientations of open borders (DAR & IAURIF, 2004), as shown in Figure 9.

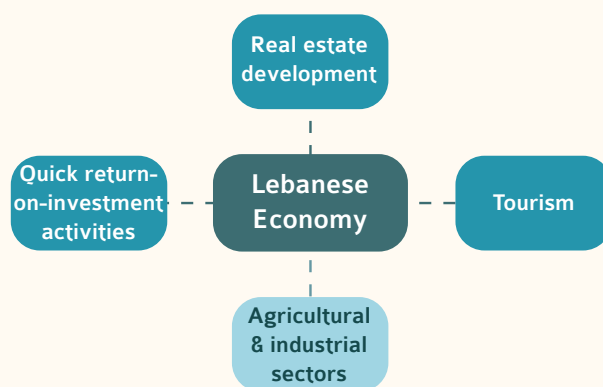


Figure 9 The Lebanese economy. Source: UN-Habitat (2018)

### The disproportionate place of Beirut in the economy

Beirut’s economy has been in relatively continuous growth, providing the highest number of job opportunities in Lebanon. However, other Lebanese cities have lost their strong economic roles in the Levant. The transformation of the economy of the peripheral regions in the Bekaa, South and North regions, together with the change in agricultural production, also led to massive exodus from these regions towards Beirut during the 1950s–1970s.

Despite governmental efforts towards decentralization and the increase in administrative job creation across regions,



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<sup>20</sup> Hence, the port was in close connection to main Middle Eastern transportation and commerce routes going east to Iraq, south to Jordan and the Gulf and north to Turkey and northern Syria.

migration towards Beirut and Greater Beirut continued. This is namely due to access to education and the job market. The development of highways has also increased influx to Beirut, with many commuting daily from various areas, including Tripoli, Saida and Zahle. Additionally, 85% of imported and exported products pass by the port or the airport of Beirut. The regional ports of Tripoli, Saida and Tyre experience minimal activity and remain marginalized, resulting in imbalanced territorial planning (Dewailly, 2016).

## A highly informal economy

The Lebanese economy is characterized by weak regulatory institutions, severe corruption and informality. The informal economy represents a large portion of economic activities in the country.<sup>21</sup> It has recently reached an estimated 30% of the GDP, contributing to more than 50% of the workforce (Abou Jaoude, 2015; Angel-Urdinola & Tanabe, 2012; Dibeh, Fakh & Marrouch, 2016; Saliba, Sayegh & Salman, 2017).

In a context of high unemployment and relatively increasing requirements for formally establishing new businesses, the informal sector rapidly inflated, as it represents an easy doorway to markets for many low-income workers and entrepreneurs. In 2004, 70% of employment for the 15–24 age group was in the informal sector (Angel-Urdinola & Tanabe, 2012). Many sectors—including construction, agriculture, tourism and industry—have strongly relied on informal flexible arrangements in securing the bulk of their workforce.

In summary, although informality may contribute to business development, it leads to considerable uneven and illegal practices, such as temporary jobs, harsh working conditions, and lack of formal contracts. Such practices deprive workers of work security or social protection. This process usually develops with the support of political or illicit networks, impeding intervention from formal and legal public institutions.

## New urban geographies

Urban economy is strongly anchored in consumption services, real estate speculation and rent capture. These have shaped urban spaces with commercial strips, shops and large-scale centers increasingly developing along highways and neighborhoods. Furthermore, new developments are taking place in the heart of neighborhoods and threaten commercial streets and businesses (Fadel, 2011).

The development of this commercial activity should not be dissociated from another important dynamic of urban economies in Lebanon: real estate speculation. It has generated a considerable amount of capital for property owners/investors, especially in Beirut and Mount Lebanon. In the context of rapid urban growth and limited availability of land in Greater Beirut,<sup>22</sup> land prices have risen considerably in the last two decades. This land speculation has affected many economic sectors, mainly the construction sector (Ashkar, 2015; Clerc, 2013; Krijnen & De Beukelaer, 2015; Marot, 2015). Bank credits for housing, especially those assisted by subsidies by Banque du Liban, have increased demand, allowing this sector to develop despite high land prices. Recently, the economic crisis and the slowdown in demand, especially for high-end housing, has placed significant pressure on this sector. As a result, Banque du Liban and the Public Corporation for Housing<sup>23</sup> have minimized the provision of subsidies and credits.

Informal economic activities have also contributed to shaping the urban geography. Such activities include low-quality artisanal activities (carpentry, ironwork, car repair shops, etc.) and improvised retail shops. These usually service local communities and in some cases have become important economic centers for certain products and services and are thus integrated in the formal sector. This is the case for many small furniture manufacturers in Ouzai and Tripoli. Informal economic activities are also concentrated in Palestinian camps. In the war period, some Palestinian camps, like Chatila, housed important industrial activities.

Public authorities address informal activities in various ways. A common scenario, especially in areas with informal settlements, is to ignore these activities as closing them will lead to severe tensions and resistance from local populations. However, in other cases, such activities are banned, especially regarding street vendors and under the pressure of tax-paying businesses. In other cases, local authorities could organize informal markets, setting regulations on the way the marketplace will be used and imposing minimal fees on sellers.

The income of migrant populations in urban areas and their informal housing markets play an important role in urban economic growth. Many migrants, including the displaced Syrians, are accommodated in old informal neighborhoods with the help of informal “developers”. Often, the “owners” in these neighborhoods are moving out to be replaced by migrant renters (Deboulet, 2012). Besides informal neighborhoods,

<sup>21</sup> Figures on the informal economy are limited and lack precision.

<sup>22</sup> Greater Beirut is the urban agglomeration comprising the city of Beirut (Beirut Governorate) and the adjacent municipalities within the Mount Lebanon Governorate. Thus, it does not constitute a single administrative unit; it spreads south, east and north of Beirut City. To the west, the Mediterranean Sea serves as a natural boundary.

<sup>23</sup> This public agency offers long-term subsidized credits for low- and middle-income households aiming to buy houses within the limit of USD 180,000.

old city centers have also witnessed spatial transformations. Such changes involve building typologies and cohabitation of dwellers from different cultural and social backgrounds that at times promote cultural diversity and other times are a source of social conflict (UNHCR & UN-Habitat, 2014).

More importantly, these migrants contribute to what is often referred to as “cosmopolitanism from beneath”, especially in Beirut (Bret, 2012, deboulet, 2012, Dahdah, 2012). Migrant workers tend to concentrate in certain areas with affordable housing markets and transportation services. In the case of some neighborhoods like Dora, one can observe the concentration of migrant meeting places and ethnic shops. This copresence between different cultures in popular and informal neighborhoods is marked by harmony but at times also tension. However, it is mostly marked by situations of precariousness and poverty.

## Urban economic development initiatives

The description of the urban economy dynamics has shown an overall retreat of state actors in controlling and orienting urban economies and the presence of a large informal economic sector in urban areas. However, public actors shape urban development dynamics, be it directly through specific urban development and livelihoods enhancement projects or indirectly by supporting particular economic sectors and activities.

### A neoliberal urban economic development policy

During the post-war reconstruction phase, the state actively developed an economic development model for the country, focusing on urban areas and especially Beirut. The model, based on neoliberal principles, defined policies in several sectors for nearly all successive governments since the 1990s. As materialized in the 10-year Horizon 2000 plan, launched in 1992, this economic development model involved the attraction of direct foreign investment (especially of expatriates and Arab Gulf countries) and the support of particular sectors, mainly tourism, business services and real estate (Labaki, 2003; Najem, 2007).

This phase focused on large infrastructure projects as a means for economic growth. For example, very large investments were made in the port of Beirut and a 120,000 m<sup>2</sup> tax-free zone was also to be built near the port. Additional tax-free zones were later opened in the port of Tripoli and in Salaata. Also, Beirut airport was renovated.

At the time, macro-level urban development projects (SOLIDERE, ELYSSAR, LINORD) were planned, in addition to facilities that would situate Beirut as an events destination, such as a renovated Sports City and a Beirut Conference Center. Such tourism businesses were exempt from taxation as well as from customs fees, and touristic buildings requiring post-war renovation were provided with permits and tax exemptions to be allowed to expand their surface area by up to 20%. The support to this sector is still a prevalent policy today with the Central Bank of Lebanon providing loan guarantees for large touristic projects up to USD 10 million and Investment Development Authority of Lebanon (IDAL's) Kafalaat Program<sup>24</sup> offering an additional USD 400,000 for loan guarantees. In addition, through the provision of permits, investors of large touristic facilities are allowed to privatize seashores.

The real estate sector was a main contributor to the economy, especially during the post-war reconstruction. The promises of the Horizon 2000 plan and the capital it was anticipated that it would attract, raised expectations for large revenues. The real estate sector, which was marked by stagnation in the 1980s, has shown yearly rises between 1991 and 1994 only to face a crisis and stagnation in the late 1990s due to geopolitical challenges (Clerc, 2013). The market declined in 2003 with prices becoming steep in the 2006–2008 period, quasi-doubling in a few years. This period attracted Lebanese expatriate and foreign direct investments, especially from Gulf countries in the real estate sector. In 2011, the Syrian crisis and the decline in oil prices discouraged investors and led to a severe crisis in the real estate sector by 2017, contributing to an economic decline (Mikhael & Antonios, 2018).

Mutual interests resulted in partnerships between planning public authorities and real estate/private investors. With the lack of the enforcement of urban planning regulations, and within a system favoring the real estate market, concerned public authorities were flexible with real estate developers (Krijnen & De Beukelaer, 2015). Developers took advantage of high construction ratios, leading to arbitrary building developments. This has also contributed to the development of highways and rapid transit roads, leading to increased sprawl. The lack of specific taxes on rapid speculative gains in this sector caused real estate prices to remain high despite the fall in demand (Ashkar, 2015; Clerc, 2013; Marot, 2015).

The real estate sector has further benefited from strong public financial support, especially with Banque du Liban's stimuli for housing property acquisition. Since 2013, six USD 1 billion stimulus packages were introduced by the Central Bank to support the economy. These stimuli facilitated credits to many sectors, including energy and education. Investments however were mainly geared towards the real estate sector.

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<sup>24</sup> As Lebanon's national investment promotion agency, IDAL provides local and foreign investors with a range of incentives and business support services to launch and develop their businesses in the country (IDAL, 2018).



The laissez-faire nature of the Lebanese economy did not undermine state intervention in Lebanon. Even the construction and finance sectors, which are considered to be dynamic, robust and independent, now depend on state policy and investment. The banking sector in Lebanon has highly invested in the lucrative business of crediting Lebanese public debt, making it dependent on Ministry of Finance and Banque du Liban policies. Also, the construction sector is dependent on public investment in infrastructure and public subsidies. Furthermore, public investments in infrastructure, which are funded through international long-term credits and grants as per the Paris CEDRE conference, are perceived by market actors and policymakers as a last hope to avoid recession.

### Other urban economic development initiatives

Recently, public actors at the national and local levels have been involved in urban economic development initiatives.

At the level of the central government, no particular ministry or agency is in charge of urban economic development. Since Horizon 2000, policies remain sectoral and no programs or projects address urban economic development. However, some initiatives have contributed to urban economic development, such as the Cultural Heritage and Urban Development (CHUD) project. The project, funded by the World Bank in partnership with other international agencies,

aims at bringing economic development dynamics through the rehabilitation of historic city centers (Al-hagla, 2010; Daher, 2007). Initiated in 2003, this project is still ongoing. It has involved important investments in the cities of Tripoli, Jbeil, Saida, Sour and Baalbek and significantly contributed to the conservation of the historical urban fabric.

With the assistance of international actors, many UoMs and large municipalities have adopted strategic planning methods to engage with local actors in setting development objectives for their areas. This has helped orient their actions and encourage private investment. Municipalities such as Jbeil and Tyre have heavily invested in activities that would transform some of their neighborhoods into international touristic attractions. Other local authorities have engaged in interesting initiatives, such as the establishment of economic incubators focusing on green economy, hi-tech, cultural activity, etc.

Projects supporting the Syrian crisis response, introduced other types of urban economic development projects, focusing on issues such as refugee and host communities' livelihoods. Such projects highlighted the importance of linking economic development to issues of social stability.

Despite the implementation of various projects in Lebanon, the urban economy remains challenged by unemployment, difficulties for low-income entrepreneurs in accessing formal markets, and real estate speculation.



## Urban Planning and Design

This section explores urban planning and design mechanisms and ways in which they address urban development and the provision of public services towards integrated sustainable development.

### New practices, actors and approaches

The Lebanese planning framework is driven and shaped by three main nexuses (Figure 10) that are interlinked and at times overlap:

- A central government that is encouraged by neoliberal orientations.
- The network of local actors that values local knowledge and context-based interventions.
- Civil society initiatives aimed at reforming existing planning and development mechanisms despite their fragmentation and divergent aims.

This section provides an overview of each of these nexuses and lists major examples of urban activism.

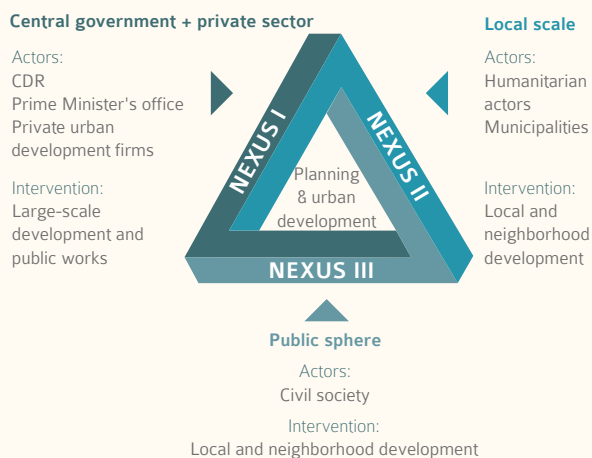


Figure 10 Planning and urban development nexus.

### Three nexuses

- **Nexus 1:** was evident in the 1990s, revolving around the CDR, the Prime Minister's office and large consulting and urban development firms. It emphasized large-scale planning with one of the main outcomes being the NPMLT that was drafted in 2005. Plans at the national scale also include the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, led by the Office of the Prime Minister, as a response to the Syrian crisis. In this case, different sociopolitical and

religious entities are involved as they have contributed to large-scale projects, including investments in real estate markets and the provision of low-cost housing around main cities in Lebanon (Karamé, 2011).

- **Nexus 2:** emerged in the 2000s after the proposition of the new decentralization law drafted in 2013. It is anchored around the local scale, involving local authorities such as municipalities and UoMs that contribute to planning and development of various sectors, including infrastructure, land management, economic development, and environmental protection (Harb & Atallah, 2015). Despite challenges,<sup>25</sup> local authorities have been considered key local partners, especially by international organizations, non-profit organizations and research institutions.
- **Nexus 3:** developed during the early to mid-2000s by civil society, which has emerged to counter the existing sectarian-based political system and weak government. This nexus often assists and at times substitutes the central government. Lebanon's civil society is rising to become one of the main factors contributing to the stability and resilience of the Lebanese political system (Karam, 2018). Moreover, in the recent Lebanese parliamentary elections (May 2018), civil society actors have engaged in municipal elections as independent actors. Furthermore, humanitarian actors—including NGOs and international agencies—have also actively supported central and local authorities and NGOs through times of crisis, such as the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon and the 2011 onset of the Syrian crisis. (Farah et al., 2017; Fawaz, 2016).

## Urban development activism in Lebanon: Major examples

### "Beirut Madinati"

Beirut Madinati is one of the most prominent/visible political organizations that was formed during the 2016 municipal elections to contest the 24 seats of the Beirut councils. Many of its members include experts from various fields of development and planning, university professors and/or professionals who are not politically affiliated. The group proposed a development program for its electoral campaign aimed at promoting livability in Beirut. Main issues addressed by Beirut Madinati include: mobility, greenery & public space, housing, waste management, natural heritage, community spaces & services, socioeconomic development, environmental sustainability, health & safety, as well as governance. Although they collected only one third of the votes during the municipal elections, they have formed

<sup>25</sup> As mentioned earlier in the report, challenges include lack of adequate financial and human resources. Moreover, state control and abrupt legal frameworks impede municipal reform (Harb & Atallah, 2015; UPLoAD/DRI, 2018). Also, municipalities are highly politicized, and profitable real estate investments take precedence over developmental attempts and initiatives.

a strong advocacy base in Beirut. In sum, the group has a comprehensive and integrated program, and an electoral body that seeks reform (Madinati, 2018).

### **“You Stink” social movement/campaign**

In 2015, amid the peak of the solid waste crisis caused by the closure of Beirut and Mount Lebanon waste dump in Naameh (south Beirut), a social movement called “You Stink” launched a campaign to sensitize people on the crisis and halt corruption in the solid waste sector (CSKC, 2018).

The group consists of young activists with experience in political mobilization and members of civil society organizations, including environmental and human rights groups. The main goal is to lobby for ending the ongoing garbage crisis through raising awareness on corruption and abrupt solid waste practices by mobilizing the community to protest and call for their basic rights as citizens to live in a healthy environment. In August 2015, the number of protestors was estimated at 100,000 people who were calling for a revolution against the corrupt system (CSKC, 2018).

“You Stink” has three major demands from the government:

- Ending the solid waste crisis.
- Protecting the rights of protestors.
- Empowering responsible institutions by developing a new law that strengthens the role of local authorities.

### **NAHNOO – Reopening Horsh Beirut**

NAHNOO, an NGO established in 2009, aims at promoting social cohesion and acting as a platform for youth to participate in the development of their communities through good governance, public spaces, and cultural heritage. One of the main milestones achieved by this Lebanese Non-governmental organization (NGO) is the reopening of Horsh Beirut<sup>26</sup> by obtaining an official decision from Beirut Municipality to open the park to the public,<sup>27</sup> while raising awareness of the significance of citizens’ right to access public spaces. Despite plans to reopen the park in 1995 and again in 2002, the park remained closed to the public. For this reason, NAHNOO initiated the advocacy campaign “Horsh Beirut for All” in 2010 and eventually succeeded in convincing the municipality to reopen the park in 2015 (NAHNOO, 2018).

### **The Civil Coalition Against the Highway Project “Hekmeh-Turk” Axis “Fouad Boutros” Road**

The Civil Coalition Against the Highway Project “Hekmeh-Turk” Axis (“Fouad Boutros” Road) joins actors from various backgrounds related to urban development opposing the highway project. The highway project, adopted by decree no. 8228 on 30 May 2012, is considered to rupture the existing urban fabric rather than providing sustainable solutions. The coalition contributed to the development of studies and proposals, and engaged in media campaigns to support its cause. The coalition is supported by a large community in Beirut, Achrafieh, Rmeil and Medawar, and remains active. However, the decision regarding the highway is still pending (Stop the Highway, Build the Fouad Boutros Park, 2018).

The main aims of the coalition include:

- Replacing the highway project with the construction of the “Fouad Boutros Park” on already expropriated lands and buildings, adding public and green spaces.
- Lobbying for alternatives to the highway construction by convincing the CDR and the municipality to construct an integrated transport network along the Charles Malek Avenue in Beirut.
- Promoting the need for public transportation in Beirut, encouraging dialogue between the municipality and the citizens for rethinking urban development in the city in a participatory approach.

<sup>26</sup> Before the 1975 civil war outbreak, Horsh Beirut was the only large green space in the capital of Beirut. It was considered a place for gatherings (festivals, and leisure). In 1982, an Israeli raid destroyed a sizable portion of it, decimating a number of trees. By the end of the war, Beirut Municipality signed an agreement with the Regional Council of Ile-de-France to rehabilitate the park with an initial plan to reopen it to the public in 1995.

<sup>27</sup> Reopening phases: 2010: campaign team forms; 2011: public activities start; 2012: Beirut mayor publicly vows to reopen Horsh Beirut; 2013: Beirut municipal council issues decision to initiate the tendering process for the preservation of Horsh Beirut; September 2015: Horsh Beirut reopens to the public every Saturday June; 2016: Horsh Beirut reopens daily.

## Urban services: Right to the city

Rapid population growth and urban migration have necessitated more involvement from authorities to address pressure on urban service provision. The following section provides an overview of major basic urban services, including water, waste water, solid waste, and electricity. Housing has been elaborated in previous sections as it is linked to real estate and planning regulations as well as the urban economy.

### Water and waste water

The water sector is regulated by two laws, the 221/2000 law and the 2018 Code of Water. Law 221 merged existing 21 water authorities in four water establishments (North, South, Bekaa, Beirut and Mount Lebanon), assigning them the responsibility of managing water in their territories.<sup>28</sup> It also provided the Litani Water Authority (LWA) with the responsibility to manage work in all rivers in Lebanon.

These establishments were offered financial and administrative autonomy; however, they faced various challenges, including weak human and financial resources jurisdictions. Also, their mandate often overlaps with municipal local water committees. The latter were present before creation of water establishments and some of them are still functioning as their respective municipalities refuse to be part of these establishments. Management of the water sector is weak, with responsibilities—scattered among different ministries and administrations, including the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Ministry of Environment (MoE), Ministry of Industry (Mol), MolM and the CDR,<sup>29</sup>—that have no clear mandates.

The Code of Water, issued in April 2018, constitutes a major regulative bottleneck for this sector. Although the code addresses water monitoring, encouraging private participation in water management and creating local water associations for irrigation, additional coordination among existing institutions is required. Currently, water sector inefficiency and its environmental damage are estimated at 3% of the GDP (World Bank, 2012). The new Code of Water could present an opportunity for the decentralization of water management. The latter requires empowerment of local actors and authorities through strategic planning and capacity building to enhance their participation in the process.

### Service provision

Only 79% of the population in Lebanon has access to water (World Bank, 2012). This ratio reaches 87% in Beirut (Allès, 2016) and only 66% in the southern suburbs of Beirut (Verdeil, 2013). Water provision in the public network is also intermittent and varies greatly between regions. In Beirut, this could be limited in summer to three hours a day (Allès, 2016). Lack of coverage of the public network is compensated by purchasing water from the private sector and other informal means. Thus, households resort to purchasing bottled water as public tap water is not available. Also, informal wells with no permits are common among households. This lack of control and corruption have led to the proliferation of tens of thousands of wells that serve both agricultural and domestic uses (World Bank, 2009).

Additionally, procedures set by the MoEW for providing well permits are frequently bypassed; monitoring agents are bribed to allow well digging, or people use political support to force the issuance of a permit. This situation is on the rise especially in the highly populated GBA due to the increased water outages and growing population (Farajalla et al., 2015).



<sup>28</sup> The Water Establishment of Beirut and Mount Lebanon includes the present muhafazahs of Beirut, Mount Lebanon and Jbeil-Kesrwan; the Water Establishment of the South, that of the South and Nabatieh; the Water Establishment of the North, that of the North and Akkar and the Water Establishment of the Bekaa, that of the Bekaa and Baalbek-Hermel.

<sup>29</sup> This is due to the fact that water issues intersect with those of agriculture and pollution and that these laws should have been followed by decrees to specify and adjust roles and mandates. But this has not been done.

## Solid waste management

Solid waste management (SWM) in Lebanon is characterized by the lack of appropriate laws and decrees and a fragmented management. Both governmental and a local institutions have responsibilities for managing SWM; this frequently results in overlapping mandates. The central government is the main authority for SWM with CDR as the main actor in charge of it. Also, municipalities in Lebanon lack the human and financial capacities to manage this sector in a context where end users lack awareness on the significance of individual sorting practices (Verdeil, 2013).

Lebanon produces around 6,500 tons of solid waste per day, a quarter of which is in the central areas of Beirut agglomeration. Of this waste, 52% is organic, while 32% is made of recyclables (glass, paper, cardboard, metal and plastics). However, only 15% is recycled, 35% is landfilled and 50% is dispersed in more than 800 uncontrolled open dumping sites (Abbas et al., 2017; Human Rights Watch, 2017; UN-Habitat & Muhanna Foundation, 2015).

Within the context of the National Emergency Recovery Plan (NERP),<sup>30</sup> in 1994, the CDR contracted a private company, SUKLEEN, to collect and treat waste in Beirut. The MoE was also involved in setting a strategy for SWM. It proposed an emergency plan that enlarged SUKLEEN's service area to Mount Lebanon (with the exception of Jbeil), the Amroussiyyeh (Mount Lebanon) and Bourj Hammoud (Beirut) sites were closed and a new sanitary landfill site was opened in Naameh, Chouf area (Mount Lebanon). SUKLEEN's contract for operating SWM in Beirut and Mount Lebanon was regularly extended; yet, it did not cover other municipalities in Lebanon.

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, several regulative frameworks<sup>31</sup> were proposed or adopted for the SWM sector in Lebanon:

- Plans and reform attempts: Several plans were issued by the MoE, including the 2006 master plan for SWM, the 2010 Waste to Energy Plan and the 2014 Plan for Waste Decentralization and Waste to Energy. In 2014, the CDR identified six service areas and organized tenders for their operation by private companies. The tendering process was repeated three times. After the validation and announcement of results, it was rejected by the government due to public pressure in summer 2015.

- Crisis of summer 2015: Naameh site closed as it was fully saturated. SUKLEEN halted its operations and garbage filled the streets. Massive protests forced the government to seek an emergency response plan. In an attempt to contain the crisis, the government decided on the following: (1) involving local authorities in SWM, (2) opening two new dumpsites in Costa Brava (near the airport) and Bourj Hammoud to be transformed into landfills claimed on the sea, and (3) develop waste-to-energy. This plan ended the crisis in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, but did not present a sustainable solution.



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<sup>30</sup> CDR launched the program in 1992.

<sup>31</sup> Decree 9093/2002 and Ministerial Decision 16/2003 provide municipalities with incentives to take charge of SWM in the territory under their mandate. Decree 5243/2001, Decree 8018/2002, Decision 6/1/2003, Decree 13389/2004, Law 34/2008, and Decree 8471/2012: Such regulations are focused on hazardous and industrial waste management. Law 251/2014 provides authorities the capacity to control and penalize environmental pollution mainly targeted towards environmental prosecutors and judges. Decree 8003/2012 develops one of the most important comprehensive documents. It entails an Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan. This document was not voted into law 48/2017. As a result of the solid waste crisis in 2015, a new law emerged in order to reorganize the division of roles between CDR and municipalities.

- Interventions of local authorities: As of the 2000s, some municipalities developed initiatives for solid waste sector reform (Giannozi, 2017). For example, in 2000, Zahle Municipality, with the support of international organizations, established a treatment plant to replace the existing open dumping site. This site, which was enlarged and upgraded in 2007, serves as a recycling and composting facility as well as a sanitary landfill (Farah & Gemayel, 2016). Another case is the city of Saida, which hosts the first large-scale waste-to-energy site in Lebanon. This facility resulted in removing the hazardous “waste mountain” and servicing towns and villages in the area and its vicinity. Also, by partnering with local stakeholders, Bikfaya and Beit Mery municipalities managed to implement and operate recycling centers disposing of nearly all municipal solid waste (Farah & Verdeil, 2016). Although such examples demonstrate successful attempts of SWM by local authorities, sustainability remains a prevailing challenge, as financing is mainly attained from international donors.
- Solid waste policy document: In 2018, a policy document set the vision and objectives for the sector in 2025 and 2035. By 2025 and 2035, the vision aims at reaching around 25% and 35% recycling capacity and 35% and 50% waste-to-energy, respectively. The policy paper also emphasizes the role of local authorities, as municipalities are held accountable for the reduction of waste production, encouraging reuse, sorting at source as well as the collection and transport to treatment sites and landfills (MoE, 2018).

### Alternative methods for SWM

- Private enterprises and NGOs: Small ecofriendly organizations, including private enterprises and NGOs specialized in solid waste recycling, are on the rise. They recuperate recyclable sorted waste from households and businesses, treat them and sell them back as raw material to industries (Giannozi, 2017; Salem, 2018).
- Informal sector: Informality takes various forms, including garbage that is dumped in street containers, informal enterprises, waste traders in wandering trucks and others. The informal channel, especially in the Beirut agglomeration area, is considerable as it is estimated to reach 500 tons per day, 80% of which is diverted into recycling (Azzi, 2017; IFI, 2017).

### Economic and environmental challenges to SWM

#### Economic:

- Politically affiliated operators profit from solid waste, primarily when they bill households or public institutions to remove waste out of the streets, and when selling it back as recycled material or energy.
- “Waste mountains” are transformed into land that would cover the sea and motivate developers to design large-scale urban projects, such as SOLIDERE,<sup>32</sup> LINOR<sup>33</sup> and prospectively Bourj Hammoud<sup>34</sup> (Verdeil, 2017).
- The new economy developing around recycling represents a potential for innovation and job creation. However, given the large informality in this sector and the harsh competition, reform would be challenging.

#### Environmental:

- Open-air dumpsites and burning are major causes of air, soil and groundwater pollution, which has detrimental effects on the health of the population (Human Rights Watch, 2017; UN-Habitat & Muhanna Foundation, 2015). Massive “waste mountains” and landfilling at Costa Brava and Bourj Hammoud are heavily contributing to the pollution of the Mediterranean.
- Proposed solutions to solve SWM are controversial. The Saida plant represents an example of the use of waste-to-energy and incineration techniques, and several municipalities in Lebanon are aiming to adopt such technologies, as in the case of Beirut. However, misuse of new technologies has high environmental and public health risks.

Although current regulative frameworks and strategies are lobbying towards the modernization of the sector in Lebanon, more sustainable SWM initiatives are required. There is a strong will among local authorities, innovative “green” enterprises and civil society organizations for experimenting with new practices and schemes. However, such attempts remain marginal given the current governmental/institutional framework and the absence of a clear national policy, coupled with the lack of funding.

<sup>32</sup> Currently, Beirut’s waterfront district has its origin as an open-air dumping ground for the refuse and rubble of Lebanon’s Civil War, known as the Normandy landfill. After the war ended, SOLIDERE was delegated by the CDR with the redevelopment of the space and reclaiming of the land to transform the dump into a vast (1.7 million m<sup>2</sup>) private waterfront district.

<sup>33</sup> The development of Waterfront City Dbayeh is part of LINOR project, which can clearly be seen as an extension to Beirut Port beginning in 1990 and ending in 2015.

<sup>34</sup> In Bourj Hammoud, the garbage mountain and landfill that extend into the Mediterranean are currently being demolished to provide filler for new land reclamation.

## Electricity

Electricité du Liban (EDL) was founded by decree 16878/1964 and monopolized the electricity sector. The Litani River Authority and a few other private companies were held responsible for generating hydroelectric power from dams. During post-war reconstruction, the state invested in reforming the production and distribution mechanisms in EDL. Despite the large sums invested<sup>35</sup> that resulted in increasing the budget deficit,<sup>36</sup> EDL was never able to ensure a full coverage. Within this context, privatization was advocated by the government as a rapid solution for the electricity crisis (Verdeil, 2016). Decree 462/2002<sup>37</sup> created a major regulation change, which encouraged the intervention of the private sector, limiting the role of the government to a regulatory one. Despite the approval of the law, there was no consensus between concerned governmental stakeholders on issues of privatization and regulation.

In 2010, the MoEW produced a policy paper for the electricity sector that was approved by the government. The paper highlighted the need for additional public investment and reform, while lobbying for privatization of services in order to find a balance between public and private provision. The paper supported the administrative reform of EDL. It lobbied for positioning the company under the supervision of the Higher Council of Privatization, in addition to encouraging Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and Service Providers (SPs). It also called for transition to green energy (Bassil, 2010).

In order to implement this policy, decree 181/2011 was passed, allowing for investment plans and transmission projects. Renewable energy was encouraged through the creation of a center in the MoEW dedicated to its development and the provision of financial incentives to households and the private sector. New dams planned in the National Water Sector Strategy (NWSS) were also expected to produce hydroelectric energy. The above investments were insufficient, as the government had to rely on an additional supply of 370 MW from rented electricity production plants. The improvement in supply was estimated to be 28% for the period of 2009–2017, far from meeting the large demand of 46% (Abi Khalil, 2017).

### Alternative electricity service provisions

Insufficient service delivery and the inability of the government to meet demand has resulted in informal electricity production through the use of private generators (Gabillet, 2010; IFI,

2017). With the support of municipalities, informal generator providers engaged in electricity production on a very large scale.

### Economic pressure on households

Coping mechanisms, such as relying on private generators and informal activities, are not sustainable. Additionally, EDL's cut-offs and the market of informal electricity generators have a direct impact on household budgets (World Bank, 2009). Moreover, EDL's coverage is not equitable. For example, Beirut municipal area benefits from 21-hour coverage, while neighboring suburbs suffer from 12-hour cut-offs.

### Hazardous environmental impact

Electricity-related energy production is a major contributor to greenhouse gases (GHGs) (MoE, 2016). It is also a main source of air pollution. Some production units, especially that of Zouk, have been the subject of many controversies because of their impact on public health and contribution to the rise of chronic and lethal diseases in some areas.

At the local level, electricity generators are a major source of nuisance and pollution (IFI, 2017). As reported by the MoE (MoE, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Ecodit, 2011), GHG emissions from informal generators exceed those from MoEW infrastructures. Municipalities are active in minimizing the effects of electricity infrastructure on neighborhoods by imposing the use of silencers and smoke filters by generator providers. Finally, the electricity sector also impacts urban economies. Given the real estate sale and rent prices, electricity prices are major challenges for small and micro-businesses.



<sup>35</sup> Between 1992 and 2009, the state spent USD 8 billion for reforming the electricity sector, USD 1.6 billion in investments and nearly USD 6 billion in subsidies to electricity bills (Bassil, 2010).

<sup>36</sup> The average annual deficit of EDL is estimated at USD 1.5 billion.

<sup>37</sup> The law offers a transition mechanism from public to private control of the sector through the creation of "privatized companies". It calls for the creation of the National Electricity Regulatory Authority (NERA), a public autonomous entity to supervise the implementation of the law.

## CONCLUSIONS

Urban policy is not recognized as a separate category of public policy in Lebanon. The terminology of “urban” is nearly absent from Lebanese laws. This poses a major challenge to identifying and developing urban policies as guiding frameworks for economic development and urban planning and design.

Regulatory tools related to urban areas are limited to land use planning, while Lebanese legal frameworks are weak and outdated. Corruption and the lack of accountability and transparency in Lebanon constitute major challenges to urban policy as they allow for bypassing laws with exceptions given by or to “powerful” and “well-affiliated” individuals.

While various institutions have attempted to address urban issues, a vacuum persists at the institutional level, as there is no public institution that is solely entrusted with the responsibility for planning in Lebanon. The DGUP and CDR are the main institutions involved in setting plans and strategies for territories in Lebanon, with the CDR assigned the responsibility to produce a master plan for the development of the Lebanese territories. The work of the DGUP is focused on land use planning and regulation, while the CDR is highly involved in large-scale project implementation. Both institutions face several challenges in the fulfillment of their mandates, as detailed in previous sections.

Local authorities have played a significant role in urban development, frequently engaging in setting strategic plans for their territories. These local players also face challenges as they operate in a context where laws are outdated, dating back to 1977. Furthermore, their autonomy is restricted by the control of central administrations, and the fact that they rely on international aid often hinders the sustainability of their plans and actions. Thus, in addition to their inadequate capacities, national and local institutions in Lebanon operate within a framework that renders their contribution to urban policymaking and implementation weak and fragmented.

Despite their marginalization as main drivers of the economy and urban development, Lebanese state authorities still play a central role in the economy. Approximately a quarter of the Lebanese workforce is employed in the Lebanese state. More importantly, the private sector relies heavily on state investments and projects (particularly in infrastructure/construction) and many markets depend on its subsidies (as is the case for housing). However, public debt poses a major challenge to the state for sustaining this role.

Local authorities and humanitarian agencies have also initiated local economic development initiatives, many of which succeed in engaging local economic networks, yet with limited impacts on business development and job creation. Urban economy in Lebanon should expand beyond the real

estate market to promote integrated urban development based on valuing common goods.

Beyond the central state, diverse actors—such as local authorities, civil society and grassroots initiatives—are involved in planning and management of urban spaces and service provision, contributing to building resilience in Lebanon. Given the weak planning system and outdated urban policies, these aforementioned initiatives have a minimal impact and fail to address urban challenges in a holistic manner. Moreover, while these practices provide opportunities for addressing urban issues, they remain fragmented and often provide short-term solutions, because of their different rationales and the nature of their project-based funding.

The synthesis shows that the main problem hindering urban development in Lebanon is not the lack of projects or initiatives. The main challenge lies at the governance level, including the absence of clear, updated planning regulations and the absence of political will. Policies and planning efforts need to be directed towards enhancing and reforming coordination mechanisms and guiding frameworks. This would promote the attainment a unified vision for development projects.







SNACK



# Part II: NUP FRAMEWORK FOR LEBANON

## PART II: NUP FRAMEWORK FOR LEBANON

### OVERVIEW

Given that one of the major challenges is related to governance and that the country lacks the structure and grounds to implement national urban policies, central and local authorities, academics and communities need to be trained on the NUP process and the ways in which they can utilize it. Setting the basis for NUP would create an enabling framework for the formulation and implementation of policies. In parallel and with the support of the regional office, UN-Habitat Lebanon would work on establishing coordination mechanisms that foster an exchange of experiences as to achieve integrated regional and national policies.

As mentioned in the beginning of this report, according to UN-Habitat's NUP framework, the NUP process entails four phases (diagnosis, policy formulation, policy implementation, followed by monitoring and evaluation). This report covers the first phase that lasted one year. After UN-Habitat completes the necessary national training for planning counterparts and regional peer-to-peer exchanges in spring 2019, NUP would enter its second phase. In the formulation phase, a specific sector would be chosen as a pilot study to test the NUP (transportation, for example)—Appendix 1 provides the rationale behind the possibility of choosing the transportation sector.

This section elaborates on a set of recommendations that capitalize on existing opportunities, including:

- Several existing frameworks, including the NPMPLT, which addresses territorial development in Lebanon until 2030.
- Local authorities and actors contributing to a successful provision of services and territorial management.
- Diversity of actors responding to needs and problems. For example, Lebanon's response to the Syrian crisis is significant, as it has allowed for the exploration of different coordination platforms and the lobbying for new practices while collectively dealing with complex problems.
- Available state funding, be it in the context of the response to the Syrian crisis or in terms of grants and long-term credits, as in the case of the Paris CEDRE conference.

Reforming existing assets and countering predominant challenges necessitates an NUP framework, including:

- A political economy that addresses urban areas and development beyond rent capture—especially of real estate values and monopoly of services—by protecting urban common goods to produce urban economic value.
- An institutional approach seeking to embed the urban dimension in existing institutions and regulations.
- Building on the existing bricolage planning practices and transforming them to strategic and sustainable action plans.

Developing this NUP framework necessitates further research and consultations with relevant actors in the next phase of NUP Lebanon. The following section suggests recommendations for the upcoming phase.

### Recommendations

The political economy of Lebanon is clearly complex and is impacted by political agendas, communitarian concerns and Middle Eastern geopolitics. The following recommendations focus on embedding the urban dimension in existing institutions and regulations and promoting more strategic interventions.

### Institutional reform

#### Establishing a ministry/agency for territorial and urban planning and development

It is highly recommended that an institution, affiliated with the Council of Ministers and in charge of NUP formulation and implementation, is established. Key responsibilities of the proposed institution include:

- Coordination and alignment between different ministerial strategies and key planning stakeholders.
- Review of planning documents and updating the NPMPLT for it to serve as a strategic development plan rather than a land use master plan. Additionally, include precautionary planning principles in the NPMPLT, such as disaster risk management.
- Drafting urban law and planning regulations with relevant authorities to promote inclusive and sustainable planning.
- Implementation of national urban policies to address critical urban issues, including housing, urban economic development, city and neighborhood planning, etc.
- Reconsidering the roles of planning stakeholders, defining clear mandates and non-overlapping functions between planning stakeholders.

## Empowering and supporting local authorities

Local authorities can potentially play an important role in urban development. In order for them to fulfill such a role, they need empowerment and support from central authorities. This requires:

- A new decentralization law which provides local authorities with larger mandates and the means to achieve them. Such a law should consider at least two important issues:
  - Build on existing local governance mechanisms to address urban/rural issues. This necessitates taking into consideration the different scales of planning, local capacities, and territorial offerings.
  - Consider residents' votes and representation in local authority councils as this is key to making local authorities truly representative and accountable to the population.
- Ensuring support for local authorities through capacity building, financial support and employment of technical expertise. The law allows for the establishment of technical offices at municipal levels. Many of these offices were established with the support of UN/international agencies; however, their sustainability should be ensured. It is also recommended that such offices are established at the mohafazah or qada' level and funded by ministries, such as the MoIM or the MoPW.

## Integrated planning approaches

To promote integrated strategic planning and collaborative work dynamics, the following is proposed:

### Encouraging knowledge capitalization

The lack of available data presents one of the main challenges impeding territorial and urban development. This is attributed to political issues related to power-sharing among political actors, in addition to the limited budgets of the Central Administration of Statistics (CAS) and of local authorities.

While data on the Lebanese population is scarce, data on the Syrian refugee population in Lebanon is abundant, with many actors in the Syrian crisis response contributing to making such data available. Moreover, information regarding territorial offerings and sectorial issues are scattered among various actors, such as administrations, universities,

international organizations and NGOs. The following points demonstrate suggestions for knowledge capitalization:

- **Integrated documentation centers** which would be established within ministries to ensure availability and provision of data. For example, the DGUP would then provide updated data relevant to urban planning, while the MoIM would provide data through such centers relevant to municipal work. The MoE, for instance, is already developing a similar center with a focus on water issues. This can be merged to become a part of a larger center, so that data can be consolidated in one place.
- **Territorial and urban observatories**<sup>38</sup> should be established at the level of local authorities. Observatories aim at organizing and sharing data in relation to a certain issue (heritage, youth, environment, etc.).
- Capacity building and support to existing centers for knowledge development and sharing, such as the CAS, as there is a lack of updated data especially on the quantitative level.

## Involving the private sector

The private sector could be a major contributor to and actor for ensuring an integrated planning process. Such examples include public-private partnerships (PPPs); however, their role should be clearly identified within the process in order to ensure efficient involvement. It is important to identify which development sector requires partnering with the private sector, and accordingly resources would be allocated to complement the role of the public sector rather than overlap with it.

## Allowing the emergence of local actor networks around particular territorial and urban issues

The "Participatory Platform for Diagnosis and Action" (PPDA) is proposed for the purpose of the fulfillment of the above recommendations. This is further detailed as follows:

<sup>38</sup> According to UN-Habitat (2018), "an urban observatory is a network of stakeholders responsible for producing, analyzing and disseminating data in a meaningful set of indicators that reflect collectively in prioritizing issues on sustainable urban development. Data and information resources produced by the local networks are used to support decision-making and formulation of better-informed policies. An urban observatory is therefore a focal point for urban monitoring at the local, national or regional scale".

## PPDA Proposal and Methodology

The proposed approach introduces an ad hoc participatory platform joining concerned actors together to discuss and engage in building collective strategies for dealing with common urban and territorial problems. The objective is to provide a diagnosis of the issue and provide recommendations, while strengthening networks around common problems in the process. Participants would include public, private and civil society actors who could provide important resources (financial, real estate, expertise, social and political support, etc.) to implement alternative solutions, effective strategies and policies. This approach is relevant to the Lebanese context whereby the diversity of actors with different interests and resources can be built on and considered as an opportunity rather than a challenge.

Different models have been developed worldwide to address complex governance and ways by which plurality can be considered as an asset. These models differ according to:

- **Process:** participatory diagnosis,<sup>39</sup> collective implementation of an action,<sup>40</sup> collective learning mechanisms.
- **Territory:** a predefined large urban area or a neighborhood,<sup>41</sup> or a territory perimeter that will emerge along the process and where the issue at hand defines the territory.<sup>42</sup>
- **Development and organization:** orchestrated by a central authority exterior to the territory or from within, initiated and developed by concerned actors themselves.<sup>43</sup>

This report details the proposed participatory diagnosis and collective implementation phases, which would be led by a central authority that is considered external and independent from the local authority. The relevant territory or geographic scale would be defined gradually in a participatory manner throughout the process.

The proposed methodology for setting up and operating such platforms could be adopted by national authorities, such as the DGUP or the Ministry of Planning.

## PPDA Phases Identification of a territorial issue

The PPDA process would be initiated by a national authority in charge of orienting urban and territorial strategies and policies. Within the current institutional framework, this responsibility falls under the DGUP.<sup>44</sup> As such, the process could be initiated by the DGUP, which would identify a priority territorial issue (e.g. river pollution, transportation, protection of environment, etc.) that local authorities and national institutions lack capacity to address and thus would benefit from a PPDA process. The process could also start with a local authority or national institution that would raise concerns around an issue and officially request the DGUP to intervene and address it.

## Appointment of a PPDA moderator

The PPDA process requires a person to facilitate and guide the process. The PPDA moderator could be a DGUP staff member or external consultant. The moderator should have the skills to moderate discussions, create and strengthen networks among key stakeholders, and of course his/her expertise and knowledge of the identified territorial issue would be an asset.

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<sup>39</sup> Participatory diagnosis engages actors as part of the diagnosis through the production of data. The nature, length and scale of participation differs, varying from community project workshops to citizen juries, to processes that require millions of euros and extensive efforts, such as those organized by the French Commission Nationale du Débat Public.

<sup>40</sup> This could be done through common funding or by each party selectively funding a specific issue/action.

<sup>41</sup> This refers to interventions at large-scale urban areas and territories, such as strategic planning by UoMs. This could be implemented by the inclusion of diverse governance mechanisms, as is the case of Durban in South Africa (Beall, Parnell & Alibertyn, 2015), or through the negotiation and adaptation of actions of main actors to bring a territory together, as in the case of planning of Almere Oosterwold in the Netherlands (Jansma et al., 2013). Local initiatives at a neighborhood level could also be orchestrated into a larger project through the creation of a local "meeting place" or "common endeavor", as the case of the "Maisons de Quartier" in Belgium.

<sup>42</sup> An example of such models is the French Syndicates Intercommunaux de Services that groups municipalities for addressing a particular issue. Hence, one municipality can be in different syndicates, each covering a different territory: one for solid waste, the other for water, etc.

<sup>43</sup> This model is described by Boelens (2011) regarding Mainport Rotterdam, as an actor-relational approach to planning, where private and local associative actors were behind the development of the area and private actors gradually joined in. Another example are the neighborhood-scale self-organized "territorial basic organizations" recognized in the Bolivian planning system (Farah, Cabrera & Teller, 2014).

<sup>44</sup> This could also fall under the responsibility of a possible future ministry of planning and territorial and urban affairs.

## Scenarios report

A scenarios report would be developed by the PPDA moderator with the support of experts. The report would provide an overview of the history, major present challenges and impacts related to the issue. Additionally, it will present three different scenarios around the issue, based on different technological solutions/options, territorial scales and regulative models. For example, regarding transportation, solutions/options could focus on physical interventions (such as roads, highways, tunnels and bridges), or encouraging soft mobility, car sharing and walkability. Many scenarios and visions could be developed for transportation, various ways of implementing them, and different territorial scales at which they would function to be economically and operationally feasible.

## Discussion groups

The scenarios report will then be presented to different groups consisting of key stakeholders, experts and institutions for discussion, input and validation. It is important to distinguish and consult with two types of discussion groups: sector-based or territorial-based. Territorial urban issues are complex and multisectoral, thus necessitating the need to understand their relevance and implications to different sectors and requiring various sector-based discussions.

A territorial issue also represents challenges and is of relevance to various localities. Thus, it is important that each of these local territories involves different actors (such as local authority, civil society and neighborhood association representatives, and local economic actors) in discussion groups. Participants would be encouraged to highlight their concerns and propositions, and more importantly to provide feedback and mention preferences in relation to proposed scenarios.

## Policy formulation and synthesis document

The discussion sessions would feed into the synthesis document that would be developed by the moderator. The document will:

- Evaluate policy options based on the concerns of discussion participants.
- Formulate policy proposals through a synthesis of the opportunities and limitations of the different scenarios and recommendations for adopting them.
- Identify actors and establish strong networks for the adoption and implementation of the chosen proposed scenario.

## Validation of the scenario by a high-level planning authority

The DGUP or another high-level planning authority could be the appropriate authority to validate the orientations of the synthesis report.

## Setting the participatory platform

Once the orientations of the policy report are validated by the DGUP, the moderator will then start contacting the selected actors to be members of the platform. This platform will work on:

- Discussing and setting a planning, design and development strategy to be elaborated through urban and territorial local policies: The platform could call on experts to develop orientations of the synthesis report into a strategy. The platform will discuss, follow up on and validate the proposed strategy.
- Defining roles and regulative frameworks: The strategy will require the involvement and mobilization of the resources of various members. Hence, the importance of formalizing the involvement of the actors through different types of (legal or informal) contractual engagements.
- Following up on designating roles and responsibilities to ensure efficient strategy implementation.

## An integrated multisectoral platform

One of the main aims underlying the national urban policies program in Lebanon is providing a tool for concerned governmental and planning stakeholders to integrate urban developmental projects/efforts to foster joint programming rather than patchwork planning.

As proposed in the Recommendations section, such platforms would operate under a higher planning authority. This authority can be either an appointed ministry or agency for territorial and urban planning development. Since the main role of this entity is to ensure integrated planning, a designated individual or committee would be appointed to coordinate and communicate with sectoral PPDA moderators, ensuring they are working within the same planning vision on multisectoral national strategies.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Case Study: Transportation Policy in Lebanon

This section provides an overview of the transportation sector in Lebanon, taking transportation policies in Greater Beirut agglomeration as a case study. It demonstrates the limitations of urban policies in Lebanon and the need to provide a new approach to address them on the governance and technical levels. It highlights complementarities and contradictions between existing, ongoing and planned projects, concluding with recommendations for the transportation sector in Lebanon.

### National

#### Transportation in Lebanon: Facts and figures (Center for Transport Excellence, UITP & RTA, 2016)

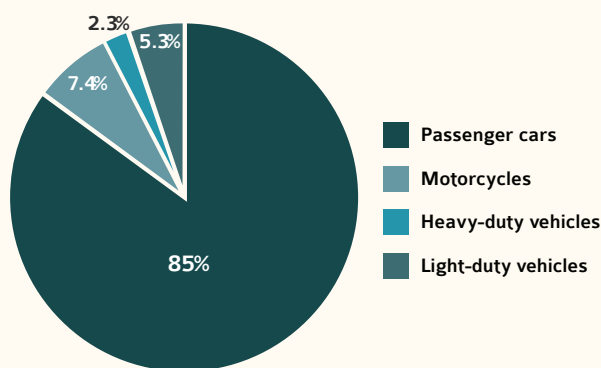
- Increase in the total number of vehicles by 540% (after the 1970s);
- 86% of the total number of vehicles are privately owned;
- 300 private cars per 100 people;
- USD 820 million commercial investment in cars or about 7.5% of the GDP;
- Private cars constitute 10% of total imports in Lebanon;
- 13.85% of the average Lebanese household income is spent on car purchases;
- USD 2 billion per year (approximately 15% of the GDP) cost incurred due to congestion;
- Traffic accidents constitute 1.5% of the GDP.

“Lebanon’s infrastructure is the second main constraint to growth” (World Bank, 2017, p. 3).

Transport plays a major role in the overall development of the country. It is closely linked to wider political, economic and social agendas and is considered a potential contributor to the national economy (CDR, 2006).

Lebanon has witnessed a rapid increase in transport demand and road traffic. Road transport lacks adequate infrastructure for non-motorized vehicles (UNDP & IPTEC, 2016) and the majority of vehicles are personal cars. According to the 2012 vehicle fleet database of the MoIM, the total registered number of vehicles in Lebanon amounts to 1.58 million (UNDP & IPTEC, 2016). Passenger cars constitute the highest share of total fleet (85%), as shown in Figure 11. The country’s traffic is mainly concentrated along coastal roads and major urban areas. This is reflected in the high congestion and pollution rates as well as increased operational costs (MoE, 2015). Cost incurred due to road congestion is estimated at USD 2 billion per year, which constitutes approximately 15% of the GDP (Center for Transport Excellence, UITP & RTA, 2016).

According to the Urban Transport Development Project (UTDP), passenger vehicles reached 434 per 1,000 persons in 2012, and it is expected that both vehicle fleet and the average number of daily motorized trips per person will rise by 60% in the upcoming 30 years (CDR & ELARD, 2017). This requires the provision of additional road and parking spaces. It also presents environmental and economic concerns, especially in a context lacking energy-efficient transport (UNDP & IPTEC, 2016).



**Figure 11** The 2012 vehicle fleet distribution in Lebanon per type of vehicle. Source: MoE, GEF & UNDP (2015)

The cost of environmental degradation in Lebanon was estimated to be close to USD 485 million per year, which constitutes 2.9 percent of the GDP. The most significant negative impacts on health are caused by urban air pollution with a mean estimate of USD 145 million per year or 0.87% of GDP (Sarraf, Larsen & Owaygen, 2004).

### The road network

Lebanon’s road network is composed of 22,000 km of roads, which are divided into classified roads within the mandate of the MoPWT, and non-classified roads that are governed by municipalities and different local authorities. This network remains undermaintained and overcapacitated in and around core urban areas. In addition, previous studies identified several gaps and opportunities that could contribute to creating an integrated road system (CDR, 2006).



## Institutional framework

In Lebanon, transport projects are randomly divided between the central government, local authorities, and ministries (CDR, 2006). The main authorities that are responsible for construction and management of the road network are the MoPW, Office des Chemins de Fer et des Transports en Commun [Office of Railways and Public Transport] (OCFTC), the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the MoIM, the CDR and the municipalities. The existing institutional framework is marked by the dilution of responsibilities. This is attributed to the absence of a defined transportation authority and the lack of coordination between funding, implementing and operating agencies, which in turn results in the complex fragmentation

of transport-related responsibilities across different actors (Table 1). In this regard, the implementation of a shared public transport network faces major obstacles (TMS Consult, 2018).

In addition to overlapping mandates, the institutional framework has a negative effect on the overall functionality of the transport system. This includes the lack of integration between urban transport modes and components, such as infrastructure, vehicle fleet, freight and passenger movement, as well as the inadequate transport system management function and road safety measures.

**Table 1 Government functional responsibilities for land transport. Source: CDR (2006)**

Mode/Function Process	Roads	Traffic Management	Parking	Public Transport	Para' transit	Freight	Accidents	Urban Transport	Vehicle Registration	Rail Transport
Policy	DGRB	TAVMA DGRB		DGLMT	DGLMT	DGLMT		DGLMT		DGLMT
Regulation	DGRB	TAVMA DGRB	DGU	DGLMT	DGLMT	DGLMT	DGRB		MoIM TAVMA	OCFTC
Planning	DGRB CDR		TAVMA	OCFTC						
Financing	MoF CDR	MoF CDR		OCFTC MoF			MoF CDR			
Project Preparation & Implementation	DGRB CDR MUNI						DGRB CDR MUNI			OCFTC
Operation Management		MUNI	MoIM TAVMA	OCFTC			DGRB MUNI			
Maintenance Management	DGRB	MUNI	MoIM TAVMA	OCFTC			DGRB MUNI			
User Information		MoIM TAVMA	MoIM TAVMA				MoIM TAVMA		MoIM TAVMA	

## Main actors

The MoPWT consists of: the Directorate General of Land and Maritime Transport (DGLMT), the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the Directorate General of Roads and Buildings (DGRB) and the DGUP (Euromed, 2004). Those directorates are governed by different administrations with weak coordination, namely between urban planning and transport planning bodies, which are under different jurisdictions. Planning is nearly absent in Greater Beirut (Jounieh to Khalde and east to 400-meter altitude). There is no entity formally assigned to organize and integrate planning in the GBA, which is problematic since planning of transport infrastructure for the city is the responsibility of the central state but should be undertaken by authorities at the metropolitan level (Nakkash, 2016).

The Office des Chemins de Fer et des Transports en Commun (Office of Railways and Public Transport, OCFTC) was initially created to manage the railway system. Later, its mandate extended to manage the bus network as well. OCFTC is part of the MoPWT, but is considered to be an independent body since the MoPWT does not control the activities of the OCFTC (Euromed, 2004). Regardless, OCFTC's role is fading today; its main function consists of running a minuscule bus fleet and following court cases regarding encroachments made upon the railway's right of way.

As for the financing of transportation projects, MoF is responsible for the allocation and disbursement of funds for several institutions, namely the CDR, MoPWT, MoIM, and municipalities as well as other maintenance and development contractors. These institutions carry on different projects or various parts of the same project without a clear coordination platform. Within the MoIM, the TAVMA is responsible for managing traffic-related matters. In addition, the MoIM is responsible for implementing plans and regulations devised by the MoPWT regarding the operation of vehicles on the road network.

The CDR operates outside the government ministry structure and is directly accountable to the Council of Ministers through the Prime Minister. The CDR receives funds separately (from donors and project funders) rather than through the MoF, and its work is facilitated by its institutional autonomy and extended jurisdiction.

The existing allocation of roles and responsibilities of different functional units involved in the development of transport solutions must be clarified. The provision of transport facilities and infrastructure must be a sequential process such that the final solution is achieved after passing through stages of construction or procurement, contract, design, planning, financial allocation, justification, scheme selection, strategy and overall policy definition.

As mentioned previously, this report will take transportation in Greater Beirut as a pilot study where most services are centralized. The section that follows provides an overview of the sector, highlighting main challenges as an entry point for elaborating the significance of formulating a transportation policy in GBA.

## Greater Beirut Area (GBA)

GBA contains more than 40% of the population in Lebanon (UNDP & IPTEC, 2016). Additionally, traffic flow intensities reveal that most of the trips in Lebanon are concentrated in Greater Beirut where travel demand is growing. Traffic conditions in GBA are mostly congested at the entrances to Beirut where traffic volume reaches 230,000 passenger-car-unit crossing the north coastal highway and 5,000 at the southern highway (UNDP & IPTEC, 2016).

Public transport use in Greater Beirut amounts to approximately 5%; yet, it should be 40% to ensure efficient transportation in cities (Semaan, 2018). Thus, Greater Beirut is affected by cumulative actions that encourage the use of private cars. Post-war reconstruction plans (1990s) did not include any initiatives to limit the presence of private cars in cities nor to encourage collective means of transport. Today, several projects have been implemented to ease congestion and improve travel time and accessibility. However, the rate of motorization is increasing, mainly due to the lack of other reliable modes of transport, the deficiency of land transport policies and the social stigma attached to the use of public transportation. In the current patterns of transport activity, based mainly on passenger vehicles, the Lebanese transport sector causes a heavy environmental and economic burden on the government and the population. Hence, it would be crucial to develop an integrated, carefully designed portfolio of policies and incentives as a national transport strategy for Lebanon (UNDP & IPTEC, 2016).

## Major transportation projects

This section briefly elaborates nine proposed or implemented transportation projects introduced by official entities or international actors shown in Table 2. More details about each project are elaborated upon in Appendix 2: Major Transportation Projects. Most of these projects aim to develop new, efficient transportation systems that foster

sustainability, safety and accessibility. These projects often target the rehabilitation and maintenance of the road network and traffic management with a focus on the GBA. Six grassroots transportation projects are also highlighted, which focus on encouraging public transportation, ensuring road safety and neighborhood upgrading (Table 3).

Table 2 Transportation projects proposed by Lebanese Government or international actors.

Projects/Initiatives	Author/Initiator	Year	Law/Decree	Municipal coverage	Status
NPMPLT	CDR	2009	Article 3 of Decree 5/77 dated 31 January 1997 Article 4 of Decree 69/83, dated 22 September 1983	National	Not implemented
Railway Project (Tripoli, Tabarja, Beirut)	European Investment Bank/MoPWT	2016		National Northern Corridor	Phase one ongoing & detailed design for first section Beirut-Tabarja
Urban Transport Development Project (UTDP)	CDR, MoPWT, MoIM	2005–2013		Municipal Beirut	Ongoing
Liaison Douce/PDD	Habib Debs, commissioned by the Municipality of Beirut	2011		Municipal Beirut	Not implemented
Support Programme for Infrastructure Sector Strategies and Alternative Financing (SISSAF)	EU-funded project for Government of Lebanon	2013		National	Study
Public Bus Transport Network for Greater Beirut and its Associated Facilities Project	TMS Consult/MoPWT	2013		Greater Beirut	Ongoing
Road Transport Sector and Air Pollution	UNDP, ESCWA, MoE, IPT Energy Center	2016		Greater Beirut	Study
Greater Beirut Urban Transport Project (BRT)	CDR, World Bank	2017–2018		National	Approved
CEDRE	Government of Lebanon	2018		National	Proposed

## Grassroots Transportation Initiatives

Table 3 Transportation initiatives by grassroots and Lebanese NGOs.

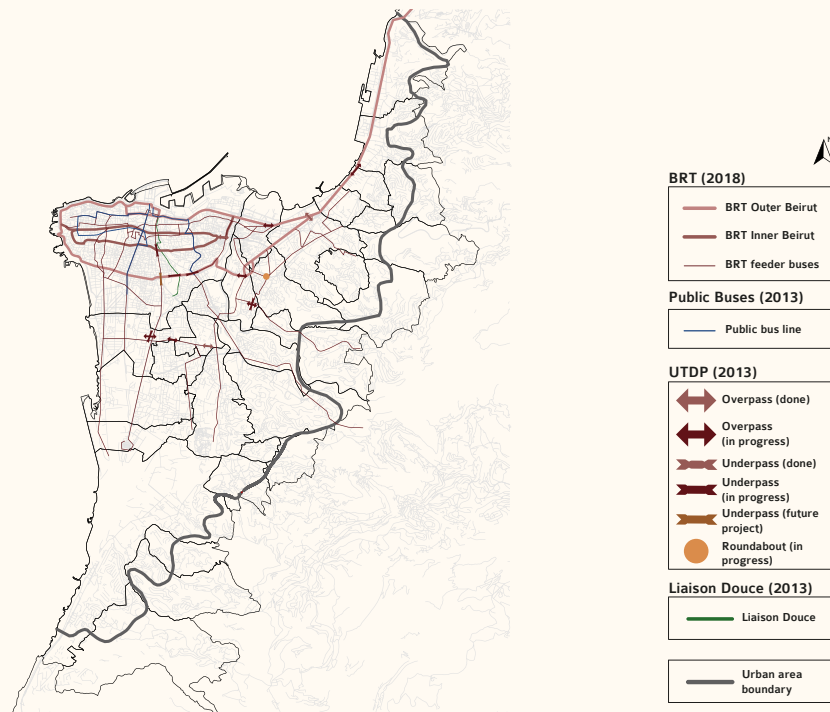
Themes	Initiative Name	Year	Objective	Scope	Main Projects
<b>Public Transport Grassroots</b>					
	Yalla Bus (Yalla Bus, 2017)	2017	- Alleviate traffic congestion. - Enhance public transportation. - Encourage the use of buses.	Beirut	A bus application, whose main features include: - Bus number. - Path and cost of travel. - Online seat booking.
	The Bus Map Project (Bus Map Project, 2018)	2015	Raise awareness of existing transit options by mapping van and bus routes.	Beirut	<u>Short-term</u> : help non-users understand the transport system. <u>Long-term</u> : build up an association of bus passengers who lobby for the right of public transport users.
	Zawarib (Zawarib, 2018)	2017	Make Beirut more accessible through maps.	Beirut	Maps that highlight landmarks and hotspots, ranging from restaurants and pubs, to museums and shops. They are known for the bus map of Beirut & its surroundings.
<b>Road Safety</b>					
	Kunhadi (Kunhadi, 2006)	2006	Lower the road car crashes toll in Lebanon and better community understanding of road safety issues.	National	-Maghdoushe Target ZERO Pilot Project - Taxi Night - Installation of a safe crossing in Zouk Mikael, Badaro, Sassine, and AUB - Installation of retro-reflective markings on Palma Highway - Highway awareness against drunk-driving.
	YASA (Yasa, 2018)	2002	Create safety awareness and commitment from the community to reduce global burden of unintentional injuries.	International	Several conferences, exhibitions and workshops, including different actors on traffic and safety transportation issues.
<b>Neighborhood Upgrading</b>					
	AUB: American University of Beirut Neighborhood Initiative (Neighborhood Initiative, 2011)	2011	Solve the environmental problems affecting Ras Beirut.	Beirut, Ras Beirut specifically	- Jeanne d'Arc, a pedestrian-friendly street model. - Bliss Street improvement task force. - Neighborhood congestion studies.

The following maps (Figures 12 and 13) demonstrate major transportation projects (planned/proposed) for Municipal Beirut and GBA. They highlight similarities and gaps of transportation projects by delineating road and area coverage.

**Representation of Transportation Projects in Beirut:**



**Figure 12** Transportation projects in Municipal Beirut.



**Figure 13** Transportation projects in GBA.

*[The urban area boundary is a term used by UN-Habitat Lebanon to define city limits by the continuously built-up area that extends beyond municipal limits.]*

After overlaying projects on maps to represent them on a spatial level, the following relationship diagram (Figure 14)

serves as an assessment that would reveal linkages and contradictions between them.

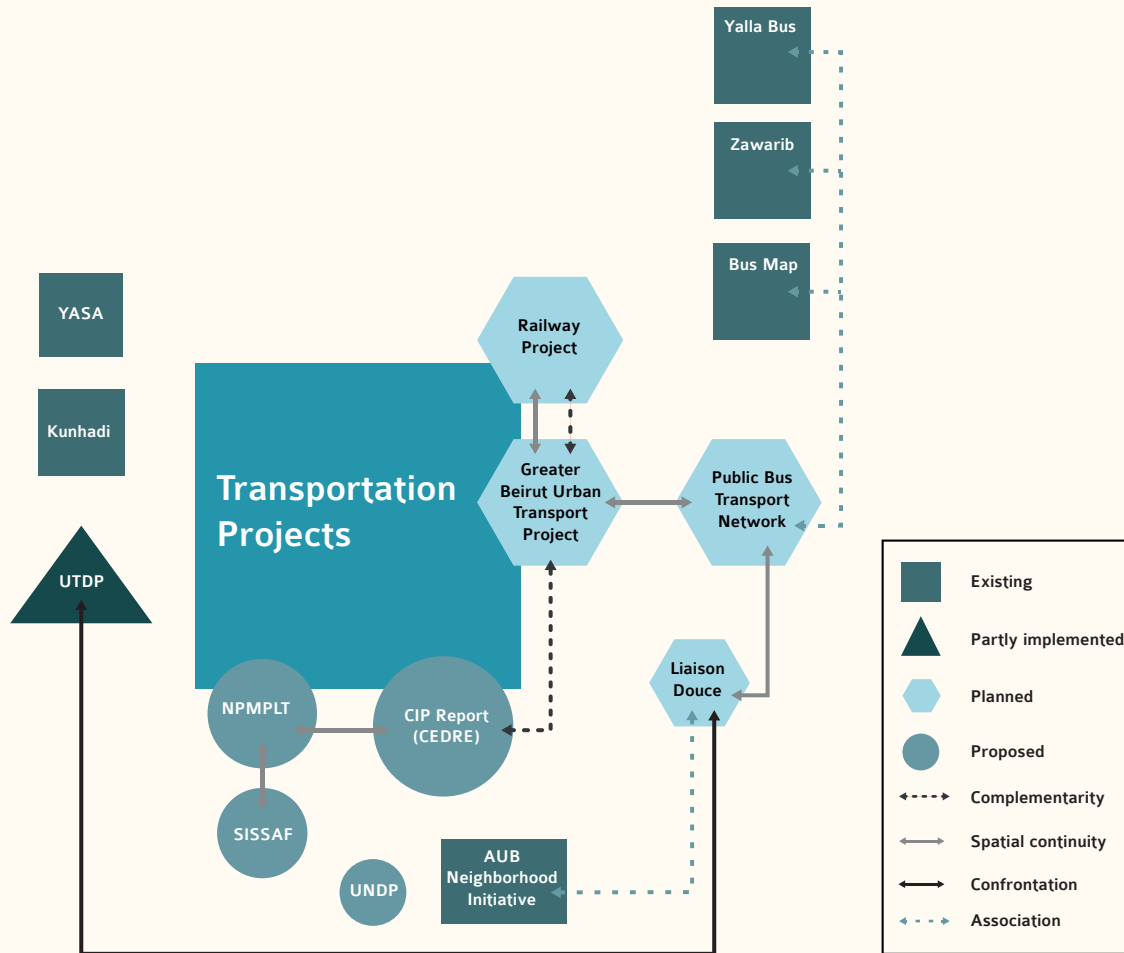


Figure 14 Transportation projects relationship diagram. Source: UN-Habitat (2018)

The NPMPPLT, the Support Programme for Infrastructure Sector Strategies and Alternative Financing (SISSAF) and the Capital Investment Programme (CIP) reports are proposed studies that are not yet implemented. They address different sectors, including the transport sector, to achieve balanced development. Focusing on the transport sector, all three studies/plans share similar objectives and propose interrelated projects to fulfill a comprehensive vision that can respond to urban growth. These projects complement one another and in some cases, create spatial continuity. Conversely, the Road Transport Sector and Air Pollution campaign focuses solely on projects that can be implemented or actions that can be taken to mitigate the negative effects of the transport sector on the environment.

Furthermore, projects such as the Greater Beirut Urban Transport Project focus on creating a network of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) between Beirut and the North. Similarly, the

Beirut–Tripoli Railway project aims to revive the coastal railway line. The Public Bus Transport Network aims to provide diverse, secure, efficient and effective public transport services in the GBA. All three projects address the issue of traffic congestion by introducing efficient urban and public transport systems to improve mobility in GBA, especially at the entrances of Municipal Beirut. The three projects overlap in many sections, proposing similar actions. Moreover, these projects serve the objectives set by the NPMPPLT, the CIP report and the SISSAF report, creating a complementary relation between them.

Other projects (such as the Liaison Douce and the Jeanne d’Arc Street rehabilitation implemented by American University of Beirut’s (AUB’s) Neighborhood Initiative) highlight the importance of the pedestrian experience and the use of public transport. These projects conflict with the Urban Transport Development Project (UTDP) that mainly focuses

on constructing overpasses and underpasses to facilitate the traffic flow. Such plans increase reliance on private cars in the city. Finally, grassroot initiatives (such as Yalla Bus, Zawarib, and Bus Map) promote the use of buses, public and shared transportation in order to reduce traffic in Municipal Beirut. These initiatives can facilitate the operation of the Public Bus Transport Network and the BRT project, when implemented.

The relationship diagram (Figure 14) also shows NGOs, such as Kunhadi and YASA that focus mainly on promoting road safety and easing traffic flows. These NGOs have an individual agenda that separates them from other projects or initiatives.

## Recommendations

The transport sector in Lebanon faces several challenges, namely the absence of coordination between urban and transport planning, particularly in GBA, and the lack of urban policies that guide public service providers and other stakeholders. The gaps and overlaps of the roles and responsibilities that exist among involved authorities and institutions resulted in the absence of a unified national approach. In addition, the lack of a central monitoring body and the presence of a weak regulatory framework and enforcement tools led to the implementation of conflicting projects, a weak transportation system with negative impacts, especially noted in urban areas, and an unregulated licensing system, among other problems. Additionally, the fact that the Lebanese government does not have a clear annual budget impedes the possibility of initiating large-scale and long-term transportation projects, especially projects that involve land expropriation.

In this regard, the Lebanese government needs a national transport policy that responds to current challenges and sets the ground for future transportation interventions. One of the

main priorities would be institutional reform and restructuring the roles of concerned stakeholders (public and private entities, transport beneficiaries). This reform would entail affordable, effective and sustainable arrangements targeting the improvement of the overall efficiency of the transport sector to serve national economic and social objectives.

Hence, a comprehensive set of recommendations could pave the way for an integrated sustainable plan through unified efforts. These recommendations include:

- **Urban Transportation Observatory:** An Urban Transportation Observatory would be established, bringing together local authorities, civil society, academic institutions and relevant central institutions to engage in the participatory diagnosis through the production of data and/or sharing of thoughts. This would also entail defining a large urban area or a territory perimeter based on transportation in Greater Beirut.
- **Greater Beirut Transportation Intercommunal Agency:** A governance body would be established as an inclusive decision-making platform, consisting of stakeholders involved in transportation in Greater Beirut. These stakeholders would represent the political, social, economic and environmental spectrum. They would follow up on, validate and eventually implement transportation scenarios and policies proposed during the process. This governance body can also be replicated to other cities in the future.
- **Encourage walkability/soft mobility:** This would involve eliminating excess parking spaces in the city center, as these encourage the use of private cars, and introducing new vehicle-free pedestrian areas, similar to the ones in Central Beirut District.



## Appendix 2: Major Transportation Projects

### National Physical Master Plan (DAR & IAURIF, 2004)

The NPMPLT constitutes the basis for urban planning policy in Lebanon. The plan proposes territorial development based on three concepts: unity of the country, balanced development and rational use of resources. With respect to the transportation sector, the NPMPLT proposes a transportation network that aims to provide national transport services for export, import and international transit; establish an integrated transport system that maintains strong interurban links between cities, proposes alternative transportation means and other necessary projects to ease traffic in GBA; maintain and rehabilitate the national road network; plan road projects that direct the expansion of cities and villages and alleviate traffic in Tripoli, Zahle-Chtaura and Nabatieh.

#### *Main objectives*

- Transform the old railroad between Beirut and Antelias into a closed corridor, as a first stage, for public bus transports serving specifically Beirut and the upper regions of Metn.
- Construct a new coastal road between Bourj Hammoud and Antelias.
- Widen the coastal road crossing Zouq and Jounieh.
- Initiate the project of the Arab expressway between Laylakeh and Aley.
- Develop medium and high-capacity buses in order to reduce road traffic problems, especially along the interurban axes.
- Take measures for progressively shifting the activity of small cars towards the taxi practice (point-to-point trajectory) and towards the absorption of the so-called "taxi-service" (random multiple stop trajectory).

### Urban Transport Development Project (CDR, 2013)

The UTDP is funded jointly by the World Bank and the Lebanese government. It aims to improve Beirut's urban transport system on the operational and economic levels and to facilitate the traffic flow within the GBA.

#### *Main objectives*

- The implementation of a centrally controlled traffic management system in GBA.

- Technical assistance for transport planning, public transport regulation, air-quality management and transport feasibility studies.
- Improvement of main traffic junctions (road projects, rehabilitation works and construction of tunnels and bridges).
- The implementation of an on-street parking management system consisting of pay and display units (electronic parking meters) to regulate parking usage in numerous high-density areas throughout the GBA.
- Future projects: train network.

### Support Programme for Infrastructure Sector Strategies and Alternative Financing (SISSAF, 2013)

SISSAF aims to develop an integrated land transport system that supports the Lebanese economy; promotes sustainability, safety and accessibility; and preserves a healthy environment. As such, the Land Transportation Strategy will enable the implementation of comprehensive visions and interrelated projects. It prescribes not only specific outcomes, but also responsive guiding principles that can be integrated in other environmental, economic and social strategies.

#### *Main objectives*

- Provision of integrated procedures, which consider the correlation between transportation and three key aspects of sustainability: environment, economy and society.
- Congestion mitigation, improving air quality, ensuring safety, supporting green technology and use of clean fuels, and securing affordable access to transport networks.
- Efficient land transportation systems and physical linkages between residential areas, education centers, industrial zones, and services sectors that are expected to stimulate competitiveness and economic growth.
- Creating a sustainable funding mechanism, establishing a Donors Coordination Group and promoting PPPs.
- Promoting the shift towards a sustainable, affordable public transport, and providing a comprehensive traffic management strategy.
- Enhancing the institutional and human capital to drive the transport vision, and support land transport development.
- Improving road and rail networks and ensuring their maintenance, and facilitating traffic to provide access to the whole territory.



## Liaison Douce (Vandervaeren, 2014)

Liaison Douce was initiated in 2011 through an agreement between the Ile-de-France region and Beirut Municipality. The project aims to link Horsh Beirut to Beirut's downtown through Damascus Street by providing alternative means of transportation. It highlights the importance of the pedestrian experience by proposing pocket public spaces along the route. The project would facilitate mobility through the use of public transport, promoting a safer environment, and creating a meeting space between Achrafieh and Ras el-Nabeh for the citizens of Beirut.

### **Main objectives**

- Redesigning Damascus Street to integrate pedestrians, bicycles and buses.
- Improving traffic flow into adjacent neighborhoods through the improvement of intersections and traffic directions. This also includes reorganizing and rethinking parking in publicly owned lots and on-street parking.
- Regulating traffic at the city level through the development of a well-organized and dedicated bus network, including bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly roads.

## The Public Bus Transport Network for Greater Beirut Project (MoPWT & MoIM, 2014)

This project aims to provide diverse, secure, efficient and effective public transport services in the GBA.

### **Main objectives**

- Introduction of an improved licensing and enforcement system for the public transport services.
- Identification of 20 routes that serve the project area (551 km).
- Deployment of a BRT on Beirut's northern and southern gates, connecting Jounieh to Jiyeh.
- Procurement of 250 buses and construction of 911 bus stops on 20 routes with defined schedules.
- Preparation of Terms of Reference (TOR) for launching a tender for private operators.
- Preparation of ToR for launching a tender for the telematic system, including ticketing system (GPS for buses, variable message signs for bus stops, operation control center).
- Construction of the coastal railway line.

## Beirut–Tripoli Railway Project (EGIS & GICOME, 2016)

Beirut–Tripoli Railway project aims to revive the coastal railway line that has been out of operation for several decades by reconstructing the railway line with both passenger and freight trains. This project entails two plans, medium-term and long-term ones. The medium-term plan is an intermediate stage preceding the long-term vision.

### **Medium-term plan**

- Implementation of a public transport system with dedicated lanes.
- Establishment of a Land Transport Authority (LTA).
- Financial measures to secure a sustainable development plan for the public transport sector in Lebanon.

### **Long-term vision**

- Implementation of efficient urban transport systems in the GBA, and in the urban areas of Tripoli and Zahle-Chtaura.
- Implementation of two links for cargo transport, one from Tripoli to the northern borders and the other from Riyak to the eastern borders.

## Road Transport Sector and Air Pollution (UNDP & IPTEC, 2016)

UNDP has collaborated with IPTEC, the energy center of IPT, to launch a national campaign for “Air Pollution Reduction in Lebanon Through Efficient Energy Use in Land Transportation”. The campaign aims at promoting solutions with low environmental impact and encouraging the adoption of energy-efficient policies and measures in transport in Lebanon. The campaign addresses the institutional and legal framework of the transport sector in Lebanon, highlighting existing laws and regulations that bind Lebanon to multilateral environmental agreements Middle East Airlines (MEAs) for environmental protection.

### *The campaign proposes different mitigation strategies*

- Scrappage programme: It consists of recycling end-of-life vehicles (ELVs) and adopting a strategy for renewal of car fleet.
- Deployment of fuel-efficient and hybrid electric vehicles.
- Development of a mass transport system by revitalizing the Railway and Public Transport Authority (RPTA) and developing the supply channels of bus mass transit system.
- Establishment of well-designed bus stops so that they do not obstruct walkways or traffic.
- Setting up of a regulatory framework for mass transit sector: Induce or initiate legislative reforms in urban planning laws, expropriation laws, and traffic laws.

## Greater Beirut Urban Transport Project (BRT) (World Bank, 2017)

The Greater Beirut Urban Transport Project is a comprehensive public transport project for GBA that focuses on a network of BRT solutions between Beirut and the North on the Northern Highway and the outer ring road of Beirut with complementary feeder lines/buses for the first phase. The second phase of the project aims to extend the BRT lines to the southern and eastern suburbs of Beirut with complementary feeder lines/buses. The CDR is designated to manage the implementation of the BRT. However, the capacity of the BRT Project Implementation Unit will be further assessed during the project appraisal, and if necessary, measures will be put in place to enhance CDR in-house capacity. Additionally, the CDR team will be supported by the World Bank team.

### *Main objectives*

- Address the issue of traffic congestion and improve urban mobility on Beirut’s northern entrance and within the city.
- Improve connectivity between various Lebanese regions.
- Provide affordable reliable transport.

## Capital Investment Programme (CIP) (CEDRE, 2018)

The CIP is a key pillar of the government’s vision for stabilization and development against the background of the Syrian crisis and the effects it has had on Lebanon. The CIP is limited to projects in the physical infrastructure sectors for which funding from external lenders and donors or private investors are sought. It comprises new projects for infrastructure investment that will eliminate the gaps that exist between the demand for and supply of infrastructure services. As such, it reduces the cost to the economy of the lack of adequate infrastructure in different sectors, namely transport, water and irrigation, waste water, electricity, telecom, solid waste, tourism and industry. The transportation strategy includes the following objectives:

### *Main objectives*

- Finalizing the classification of all roads into international, primary, secondary, local and municipal in order to start rehabilitation and improvement projects.
- Constructing new links and roads, which present their own added strategic value rather than merely complementing and/or enhancing the operation of the existing classified network.
- Public transport projects: Supplementary projects that serve the larger strategy of the BRT project.
- Parking projects: Overground and underground parking projects within Beirut and Tripoli.
- Maritime and airports, such as the development of Kleyat Renee Mouawad Airport, the expansion of Saida Port, and the development of a touristic port in Jounieh.

## Appendix 3: Minutes of Meetings

### Technical Committee preparatory meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, November 14, 2017

**Location:** Office of the Minister of State for Planning, Conference Room

**Duration:** 2 hrs; 3–5 p.m.

**Attendees:** Hosted and chaired by the Office of the Minister of State for Planning, Minister Michel Pharoan; organized and attended by UN-Habitat: Tarek Osseiran, Marwa Boustani, Maya Majzoub, Watfa Najdi; the consultants: Leon Televizian, Jihad Farah; Technical Committee members: Christine Mady, Fadi Hamdan, Lamia Mansour, Mona Fawaz, Michel Samaha, Sami Feghali, Sami Atallah.

**Absent:** Ghaleb Faour and Nasser Yassine.

**Meeting objective:** The meeting joins together relevant stakeholders to coordinate a shared vision to address major urban planning issues in Lebanon and promote a well-oriented National Urban Policy for Lebanon. Committee members will engage in a discussion of main urban development challenges in Lebanon to identify urban policy priority areas and plan together on the way forward. The endorsement of the programme by the Office of the Minister of State for Planning is an opportunity that would provide a platform for deliberating and synchronizing planning efforts.

#### Main topics discussed:

- Presentation of UN-Habitat NUP framework & rapid diagnostic.
- Discussion and validation of rapid diagnostic findings.
- Way forward: Issues and policy priorities for discussion & planning consultative meetings.

#### Opening and introductory discussion

Minister Pharoan initiated the meeting with a brief speech that sums up the current situation in Lebanon, highlighting the important work that has been done so far by the ministry and stressing the need for the NUP program as a tool that can guide future strategic plans in Lebanon. "Although we are 30 years late, I am completely aware of the importance of this project and the valuable opportunity it presents to introduce a change in the planning sector on a national level."

Mr. Osseiran thanked the Minister for his continuous support and briefly introduced the objective of the project. The consultant presented the background paper and the diagnostic report in which he underlined the need to establish an integrated framework that combines major planning

actors from different sectors in order to fill the gaps in the Lebanese planning system and the associated urban issues.

The report was divided into three sections:

- The context: various planning actors and their conflicting and overlapping areas of influence and fragmented framework.
- The NUP pillars: urban legislation, urban economy, and urban planning and design.
- The proposed approaches for NUP Lebanon.

One of the main barriers impeding the implementation of the NUP or any other strategic plan (such as the NPMPLT) is the construction law of the 1970s that allows construction on all lands with no restrictions. It is important to mention that in 2000, the Higher Council for Urban Planning proposed a law that lowers the surface exploitation factor from 40% to 25% and the general exploitation factor from 0.8 to 0.5 in agricultural lands.

Additionally, the institutional framework of governorates does not take into account the ecological aspect, particularly areas classified as *château d'eau* or that have natural significance. Several violations are observed in this case, namely cutting trees, establishing landfills and quarries, uncontrolled sprawl, etc. It has been noted that looking at the experience of different agencies and strategies or plans, it is clear that the common barrier that prevents effective implementation is weak governance.

#### *Suggested NUP Lebanon approaches by consultant:*

- **NPMPLT approach:** Translating policies of the NPMPLT adopted by the government in 2009 into applicable plans that can be implemented.

**Argument:** SDATL requires an update as the numbers in the present document date back to the late 1990s and early 2000s.

#### *In this regard, the committee pointed out several projects on the national level:*

- A ministerial committee working on updating the NPMPLT. However, the work is currently put on hold.
- The World Bank and CDR commissioned The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS) to rate the level of development of governorates in Lebanon and their relative potential. This was done through the use of macro data, where images from satellites were used to observe

activities going on in each governorate (night light vision). Studying the performance of each governorate, particularly rural areas, and their relation to their potential helps direct future interventions and investments.

- World Bank with Habib Debs and Charbel Nahas are studying the impact of displaced Syrians on the NPMPLT (updating the NPMPLT with recent data and numbers on the influx of refugees).
- Agence Française de Développement (AFD) is working on a program called Urban Planning Financial Intervention (UPFI).

It is important to note that these projects represent preparatory studies to devise future strategies and not actual policies. Additionally, in most of these projects there is coordination with the CDR.

In reference to the project funded by the World Bank and led by the LCPS, the committee discussed the relevance of the governorate scale to current planning approaches and whether an intervention on the scale of the mohafazah is more successful from a sustainable planning point of view. Dr. Farah also asked why we do not develop an intervention on the level of UoMs.

Here, the significance of municipalities and mohafazahs was acknowledged, yet many UoMs are not geographically continuous and coherent. Moreover, they do not have the power to impose taxes (they mostly rely on membership fees) and thus they do not have financial capabilities. Lastly, the presence of several unions (different political affiliation) in the same governorate complicates any coordination attempt and imposes different governing structures.

The question here remains: How would different governorates coordinate and collaborate with each other when it comes to issues like public transportation, etc.

Since we have four major cities growing beyond administrative limits (namely Beirut, Tripoli, Saida and Tyre), hosting 65% of the population and including 80% of the economic activity, it is important to think of alternative city scales to study cities.

There is no administrative entity (central or local) capable of taking control and intervening on current urban and planning issues mainly because most of these issues intersect and overlap in a complicated manner along different governorates. Climate change report in 2016 says that the impact of climate change will cost the Lebanese economy millions of dollars. These issues cannot be solved on an administrative or local level. Additionally, the CDR and the DGUP cannot take responsibility as well due to their limited capacities.

- **Issue-based approach:** to identify transversal issues such as housing, transportation, etc. and establish platforms capable of providing data on the chosen sector and associated acupuncture projects and strategic interventions. The NUP would coordinate the function of these platforms and reassign the roles of different planning actors in a complementary manner. The issue here will no longer be regarded as national or local but rather addressed on different scales in different ways (policy/ regulation/ implementation).

**Argument:** We do not have an urban policy capable of acting on different scales to address urban issues. 70% of the cars causing traffic in Beirut come from outside Beirut. How can we address this issue if the municipality of Beirut is tackling the issue within its municipal boundaries? (BRT, for example).

Should we establish an institution/ institutional framework that can act on the action scale of the agglomeration (Greater Beirut) and connect the relevant sectors?

It has been proposed that as a start, we should operate within the existing institutional framework starting from pressing issues on the national level, and later develop policies to cover other topics.

Ideally, following this approach would suggest that we create a framework for several municipalities (for example, Beirut, Dahyieh, Bourj Hammoud, Sin el Fil) to discuss the present issues. Later phases would entail consultations and workshops to come up with a roadmap for interventions.

Note: The committee favors this approach as it is more flexible and it helps identify important issues and the relevant involved actors that play a major role in the process of addressing such issues.

- **City-scale approach:** This approach would later lead to an intervention on the institutional level.

Argument: It is preferred that suggestions stay within the capabilities of the Technical Committee and not go through institutional reformation.

The political framework in Lebanon and the sectarian divisions would conflict with any development strategies at a small scale. Thus, it is better to zoom out and understand the holistic image to choose an issue that is transversal.

### ***Four main points were highlighted***

- Identify different challenges (housing, transportation, urban services, etc.), the involved stakeholders, and the following scale of operation and intervention.
- Address the proliferation of informal services, such as private transportation (Bus No. 4), and discuss the issue of integrating them within the urban service provision system.
- Develop policies that allow us to intervene on the city scale. Example: land prices in Lebanon are strongly tied to our financial policies, and there are no available tools for the government to take pieces of land with specific cultural or social value off the market (HCUP cannot respond to this issue alone, since reducing the exploitation ratios is challenging). Consequently, if we cannot change the exploitation ratio, we can introduce a tax of a certain amount on any development that is built on a classified plot of land. This would help facilitate the implementation of the NPMP/LT and indirectly control urban sprawl.
- The voting system is unjust and the municipality does not represent the dwellers of Beirut.

### **Key outcomes and way forward**

There was a consensus to adopt an issue-based approach. In order to identify the most important problems, specific indicators of deterioration would be taken into consideration to evaluate the situation at hand and thereby come up with priority issues to address.

The provision of natural resources (water) and the waste crisis that are both linked to public health, and the issue of public transportation were stated as the most pressing problems that should be addressed. It has been highlighted that the methodology should be set according to two time scales: (1) emergency short-term time scale, and (2) long-term time scale.

In light of what has been discussed, the committee identified public transportation as an issue that intersects with different sectors namely public health, environment, economy, planning, and at the same time, more than one municipality is suffering from the consequences of this problem. The committee agreed to address the issue of transportation as a major policy priority in order to encourage future, more comprehensive interventions that would include institutional reform.

On an institutional level, the first step would be to gather several municipalities (Chweyfet, Aramoun, Zouk...) to present public transportation as a pressing issue to be solved at a larger scale than Municipal Beirut. Later, the committee

could conduct workshops to identify priorities, discuss the case of informal services, such as Bus No. 4, and come up with policy guidelines for future interventions.

From an economic perspective, highways are regarded by developers and investors as areas of major economic significance as they are surrounded by commercial activities. It has also been proposed to coordinate with international and national non-governmental agencies as it could channel their aids and funds towards valuable projects and interventions and would contribute to supporting the central government by reducing the financial load.

### **Second technical committee meeting**

**Date:** Tuesday, March 20, 2018

**Location:** Office of the Minister of State for Planning, Conference Room

**Duration:** 1.5 hrs; 3–4.30 p.m.

**Attendees:** Hosted and organized by UN-Habitat team: Marwa Boustani, Maya Majzoub, Watfa Najdi; and the consultants Leon Telvzian, Jihad Farah; Technical Committee members: Christine Mady, Fadi Hamdan, Lamia Mansour, Mona Fawaz, Michel Samaha, Sami Feghali.

**Absent:** Ghaleb Faour, Nasser Yassine and Sami Atallah.

Meeting objective: Engaging in a discussion on the diagnosis report, its outline, and the presentation on the suggested/foreseen road map for NUP Lebanon.

#### **Main topics discussed:**

- Discuss and validate outline for the final report of phase 1: Diagnosis.
- Discuss and validate presented road map for NUP Lebanon.
- Update on transportation policy/event.

Meeting brief: The meeting started by identifying the purpose of the discussion, followed by the presentation of the proposed NUP outline and then by demonstrating the proposed NUP framework for Lebanon. Also, UN-Habitat discussed the possibility of having a transportation event in mid-April. It was also requested to provide an explanation of the main aim of the diagnosis report. Hence, it is provided below before demonstrating the meeting discussion.

Diagnosis report aim: Within the framework of UN-Habitat's NUP guidelines and in parallel with the NUA that targets development and management of urban areas through several pillars, including national urban policies, the diagnosis report adopts three NUA pillars in order to structure the analysis of NUP for Lebanon. The pillars include: urban legislation and regulations, urban planning and design, local economy and municipal finance. The objective is to elaborate an institutional mechanism that would enable/guide policy building taking transportation in Greater Beirut as a case study.

## Discussion of the diagnosis outline/report

### Decentralization:

On the issue of decentralization, Leon mentioned that both the current state (law of 1977) and the new proposed law in April 2014 will be discussed. As a follow-up, Mona mentioned that this section should also discuss the situation of Beirut by specifying the role of the governor, the municipality, and other actors. The section will also include the different roles of the UoMs and the current issues they are managing.

### Urban economy:

With respect to urban economy, the committee agreed to change the title of the first section to urban-based economy. Here, Mona explained that 65% of Lebanon's population is concentrated in five cities. Thus, these five cities can constitute a strong economic base for the development of the country. This can be achieved by studying the characteristics of each city and developing a specific economy that plays a complementary role in the Lebanese national economy. Mona added that this idea was included in the NPMPLT but was later disregarded because of sectarian conflicts. Sami Feghali: taking Tripoli as an example, the government can capitalize on the port, the railway, the Rachid Karameh International Fair, etc. (the characteristics highlighted by the NPMPLT) and introduce several projects that can enhance the economy in Tripoli.

Michel questioned the idea of giving each city a specific role (the city of tourism, the city of culture, etc.). He stressed that this idea should be studied thoroughly because the given role for each city has a great impact on the infrastructure, institutions and urban planning in general. In addition, if we were to use the NPMPLT, we should consider the physical

and demographic changes in the urban context that took place since 2009.

Jihad added that one of the reasons we always seem to be focusing on Beirut is globalization, since the city offers most of the activities that connects Lebanon to the global market. However, this resulted in an increase in the levels of inequality, housing prices and urban services.

Michel: The Lebanese economy does not follow a clear economic logic and is mostly based on services. For example, the wineries were originally found in Bekaa. However, due to sectarian conflicts and other security issues, some of these industries are moving their factories to Batroun, which is considered a safer area. This means that there is an illogical segregation of the economic activities in Lebanon, and business owners are influenced by the sociology, logistics and other factors of a certain area.

On the issue of municipal finance and local development, Lamia mentioned that the MoE hosted four conferences with different municipalities to introduce the new ways of dealing with solid waste, but the main issue was that there is not enough financial support for municipalities. The municipal taxes are not enough to cover the expenses of the municipalities.

Mona suggested that the section on municipal finance should be discussed under the topic of decentralization. Both sections could be under a broader title which is, institutional framework. This chapter would have subsections, such as city scale, institutions such as the municipalities and others, decentralization, municipal finance, etc.

As such, under urban economy, we would add the idea of the rentier economy, local economy, and public economy, although the latter is not very developed in the Lebanese context.

### Transportation:

Lamia mentioned that we can learn several lessons from the experience of the SISSAF Transport project that was managed by the MoPWT for a duration of three years but was not implemented.

Maya mentioned that UN-Habitat is planning for a transportation event in April. The committee suggested postponing it until after the elections, as it may be postponed due to time constraints/overlapping events.

### Resilience and risks theme:

Fadi: The issue of resilience is not embedded in the analysis of the report. It is important to ensure that the resilience aspect and sustainable development aspect are part of the analysis and not just added on titles. We should ask if the proposed policies and interventions are mitigating the risk

drivers or not? And are these risk drivers acting as hurdles to sustainable development?

Christine: In addition to resilience and sustainable development, the report must include a section on control implementation and corruption.

Today the main problem in Lebanon is not the lack of ideas, studies or plans, it is the coordination between actors and the fragmented governance system.

Resilience building is connected to two dimensions of the public sector. The first is the effectiveness of the public sector, as in how to transfer policies into projects and implement them, and the second is controlling corruption.

## NUP roadmap for Lebanon

Christine pointed out that there is a problem with engaging actors once the moderator formulates 3 final scenarios, thus not giving them the chance to review other possible scenarios, and this is still considered as a top-down approach.

Fadi stressed that to succeed we have to choose an issue that constitutes a cross-sectoral priority to all involved actors. As such, how can we ensure that this “moderator” will manage to capture all aspects of the issue at hand? Additionally, how can we ensure that these three proposed scenarios, even if they seem different, are not serving the same interest?

Fadi suggested that all scenarios that were formulated or found during the first phase of the study and were later excluded must still be listed for discussion at a later stage to give the committees a better sense of what is present at hand.

Lamia asked if the moderator will be formulating the scenarios, since in Lebanon there are no present scenarios and this is a very complex task. Here, the committee agreed to change the title “Scenarios” to “Concepts”.

Lamia suggested presenting the scenarios approach related to solid waste to the MoE similar to the PPDA. However, she mentioned that the approach did not work.

Christine said that for any strategy to be implemented, it should be decreed and this is where a lot of issues get stuck.

Mona said that having case studies that follow the same proposed methodology would be very helpful and informing in order to come up with certain mechanisms and strategies that would clear up the idea.

Michel said that for things to work in Lebanon, we should think of smart incentives to encourage different groups to gather and coordinate with one another for a greater gain. This would create a positive incentive mechanism that can trigger

or facilitate the coordination process between different actors to overcome the barriers or current conflicts of interest.

Mona suggested working on identifying sectors where coordination is a win-win and providing incentives that can increase coordination rather than adopting an issue-based approach, and researching Suzanne Parnell’s work.

## Consultative Meeting

**Subject:** Presenting outcomes of the diagnosis report

**Location:** UN-Habitat Lebanon premises

**Duration:** 2 hrs; 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

**Attendees:** Technical and Steering Committee members; Consultant; UN-Habitat team.

The minister highlighted the necessity of involving the private sector throughout the development of the NUP as it holds the economy.

There are three levels of urban design:

- NPMPLT (responsibility of the CDR): Initially, the plan was set to be updated every 5 years, but since it was drafted in 2002, it was never updated. The published report only constituted drafting the study with no strategies for implementation.
- The land use design guidelines for the Lebanese territory: There is no certified guideline that is applied to date (it was mainly set for GBA that included 53 municipalities to guide post-war reconstruction; yet, it was not taken into consideration and was not applied).
- The detailed guideline on the local level for cities and municipalities: It lacks strategic planning, so these principles should be much clearer and require updates.

Although many articles and laws require updating, current ones should be respected. For example, the marine property has been a public property since 1925. Today, there are more than 1,160 coastal violations because the law was not applied/enforced. The building code however needs update/cancellation, but some parts of it should be applied. Article 13 of that code gives authority to cancel a building permit and provide permits for projects that do not respect the environment or in case it trespasses spaces that are considered public property. Permits can be given for infrastructure work (electricity, water, etc.) and tree planting. This article was never used/implemented by municipalities in Lebanon. Therefore, despite the fact that it is always beneficial to update laws, the problem is not with the law itself. The main issue is that laws are not respected and applied properly.

The diagnosis report highlights that most projects only focus on the capital (Beirut), which was true in the 1990s. However, since the 2000s, some projects have addressed other cities

too, like the Cultural Heritage and Urban Development (CHUD) adopted by the CDR that targets five cities in Lebanon other than Beirut. With respect to the recommendations section, I join the Minister in the need to focus on the private sector and the PPPs in specific, especially that a lot of donor organizations are providing funding to enhance coordination between the public and the private sectors. Also, there should be a focus on real estate policies. The ongoing rise in real estate prices limits the implementation of a lot of the projects. Finally, it is very important to find a legal framework that would ensure the sustainability of strategic plans before handing them to a specific agency.

The comment will revolve around the political economy. Haphazard urban development in Lebanese cities occurred due to the lack of an economic developmental policy. We are in a context where cash, money interests and loans are manipulated. Therefore, there is a need to go back to the economic policies that were adopted previously in the Bank of Lebanon in order to give economic incentives. Large-scale investment plans, such as the CEDRE, are needed because of the current economic stagnation. However, in order for such investments/strategies to be effective, they should be backed by productive economic policies, which is not the case today.

There is a need for real estate policies. In the last 20 years to date, there has been a misconception in Lebanon that the real estate sector is a productive sector, but in reality it is not the case. This sector actually accentuates problems in the housing sector. The economy is not productive. Implementing real estate policies requires a political will and researching best practices in other countries that have succeeded.

Achieving an integrated transportation policy requires concerned stakeholders to coordinate together. Taking Beirut as an example, the municipality wants to have transportation projects for administrative Beirut only without considering municipalities in Greater Beirut. Other sectors also require a lot of reform, like the problem with the waste water, for example. We have two waste water treatment plants that do not work. Therefore, there is a need for concerned actors to sit together and coordinate/cooperate for targeted sectoral interventions for issues revolving around transportation, waste water, etc.

Municipalities/local authorities are an essential subject for debate. There has been a lot of lobbying for decentralization, yet municipalities are lacking the capacity to be autonomous decision makers. Also, some municipalities are working very independently without any consideration and should be held accountable for that.

There is a need to start thinking strategically by selecting one sector/issue, work on the legal framework and take the project to the Parliament for approval. We should not spend time nagging about the context but more time to thinking of strategies for reform given that cooperation with the civil society is essential.

The private sector is very significant and its involvement is required to adopt the capital investment plan and infrastructure projects. This cannot be realized without efficient and effective public service provision (solid waste, transport, etc.). There is a problem with the institutional framework and its organization, so there should be a platform whereby concerned stakeholders will gather and mainstream efficient policies to achieve integrated planning.

It is very important to find an institutional set-up that would respond to the ongoing issues, like developing a union/platform for Greater Beirut municipalities (joining all municipalities within that boundary) which never had a legal operative framework. There needs to be a local authority to solve issues related to urban planning, including basic and social urban services. This entity needs to be created in each urban agglomeration.

Public transportation in Beirut reaches 4%, while it should be at 40%. Developing additional infrastructure without planning is not the solution as proper planning should precede any project. Also, with respect to the concept of PPPs that has recently been very much promoted in Lebanon, it cannot work for all the sectors, as it needs to be planned and staged. For example, it is applicable in the context of port and airport development but regarding the transport sector, the government needs to develop the basis for the transportation network, then the private sector can propose investment projects.

The diagnosis report would have been analyzed differently if it was in a different context. The current socioeconomic/political framework and the fragmentation of stakeholders involved in decision making and current governance structures urge us to think of ways to formulate and implement sectoral policies. For this reason, the issue-based approach was suggested. The issue-based framework presented in the diagnosis report is participatory in nature; it would gather concerned stakeholders, including the community, to find solutions for sectoral problems that would be backed by a strategic, legal and socioeconomic framework.





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