

SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme

Stage 1

Stakeholder Consultation Report

SDG 6.5.1, degree of implementation of IWRM

Lebanon

13 August 2020



Prepared by:

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Consultation Facilitator: Barbara Tomassini, Senior Programme Officer, GWP-Med

Stakeholder Consultation Report for SDG 6.5.1

Executive Summary

Aiming at involving in the review process of SDG indicator 6.5.1 all relevant stakeholders, the Lebanese Focal Point (FP) shared the survey with about 20 representatives of various institutions and organisations, from government, NGOs, academia and research centres, international organisations, etc, asking them to fill the sections more relevant to their involvement in the water sector. Since the feedback received was very limited, the FP asked GWP-Med's support to organise and facilitate an online consultation workshop, hoping to gather additional input from stakeholders, particularly on the descriptive sections of the survey ('Status description' and 'Way forward').

In advance of the consultation workshop the FP prepared and shared with the identified stakeholders the compiled draft survey, after integrating the input received so far. This document served as the basis for the discussion during the online workshop, which was organised in the following interactive manner: participants were given a certain amount of time to read the texts included under all the questions of each section of the survey and were asked to comment/reflect on a question by question basis. Then a recap was provided on the final wording of each question and a consensus on the score. The same process was followed for all four sections of the survey. The Consultation Workshop involved twelve (12) stakeholders from nine (9) different institutions/organisations in Lebanon.

There has been overall agreement about the rate of progress described throughout the draft survey document that was shared from the FP with the participants. Some of them appreciated the fact that the current status of IWRM implementation in the country was depicted and reflected in a realistic way in that draft. Considering the difficult economic and political situation of the country it seems unlikely to achieve the global target in the coming 10 years. In the light of this, a National (interim) target setting exercise could bear useful and more realistic results.

The completed survey is being finalised and will be shared directly by the FP with UNEP.

1. Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 1: 'Enabling Environment'

The main challenges to progress in the country include, though not limited to, the following:

- Although IWRM is viewed as a target for the water sector in Lebanon, it is not yet implemented in an effective and coherent way at the National level. Law 77/2018 (Code de l'Eau) amended by Law 192 from 22.10.2020 that clearly supports an IWRM approach needs Decrees for its application.
- The lack of knowledge and data about river basins and most aquifers and their resources (quality and quantity).

The main challenges can be addressed with:

- A prompt implementation of the Code de l'Eau is key for moving faster towards IWRM application in the country, particularly by applying the 'whole basin' approach including basins' adjacent coastal and marine environment. This allows for the assessment of impact at a system level and offers the opportunity to solve upstream-downstream (for a river) and region to region (for a lake or groundwater resource) controversies.
- Financial and technical support (models, equipment, capacity building etc.) is needed for the study of the entire basins, including for the delineation of aquifers and the identification of their water resources. In particular, there is a need to develop specific models adapted to the aquifers and also to establish groundwater monitoring networks.

- Financial and technical support are needed to further enhance transboundary cooperation on the two river basins (El Kabir and Orontes) shared with Syria.

There is overall agreement on the fact that the rate of progress described throughout the survey is realistic and reflects the current status of IWRM implementation in the country. Considering the difficult economic and political situation of the country it seems not likely to reach higher scores in the coming 10 years. In this sense, a National (interim) target setting exercise could result very useful.

There have been no major points of disagreement during the consultation. The most interesting points highlighted are described below.

- One point raised during the discussion about this section relates to the status of policies, laws and plans to support IWRM at the sub-national level (1.2.a and 1.2.d). The existing laws regulating the water sector clearly define the institutions mandated for water resources management in the country, namely the Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW) and the four Water and Sanitation Establishments (WSEs) that work at different geographical areas covering all the country and are under the oversight of MEW. For this reason, no other actors or institutions were mentioned in the descriptive part related to this point ('Status description' and 'Way forward'). During the consultation workshop it was asked to clarify the role of other sub-National stakeholders, such as municipalities. In the past, municipalities had undertaken the management of small wastewater treatment plans and some are still keeping this function. The Focal Point clarified this by referring to the clear mandate defined by laws, and successively, this information was added in the descriptive parts of the survey related to this point.
- Another issue that was mentioned in this section aimed to clarify the reasons why the development of basin/aquifer management plans or similar (1.2.b) based on IWRM is not advanced. As already mentioned above, there is a lack of resources (human and technical) to achieve a complete knowledge of the river basins. In addition, the case of aquifers management and planning seems to be particularly difficult because of the karst geology of Lebanon (more than 65%) that does not make easy the delineation of aquifers and the identification of their resources, especially in the absence of data availability and monitoring. To be able to plan for aquifer management the development of special models is required, adapted to the geological features of the country, as well as the establishment of groundwater monitoring networks providing time-reliable data. The descriptive parts of this point were further elaborated to reflect the above issues.
- One recurring comment received during the consultation highlighted the importance of ensuring coherence between National and transboundary level scores. This is because the degree of IWRM in shared waters reflects the level of IWRM implementation at the National level. In the revised draft survey following the consultation the FP has revised overall the scores related to transboundary water management. During the discussion, the FP also highlighted that the high scores given in section 1 to transboundary issues results from the fact that a functional legal framework for transboundary water management exist on the two rivers shared with Syria. Furthermore, it stressed that once the new water law (Law 77/2018) will be finalised and application decrees ready this will also enhance transboundary water collaboration.

2. Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 2: 'Institutions and Participation'

The main challenges to progress in the country include the following:

- There is a considerable lack of human and financial resources at the relevant institutions. Capacity building is also needed.
- Communication and consultation among different relevant institutions is carried out on an ad hoc basis, often resulting in a poor coordination on issues of joint competence.
- Sharing of information, communication and consultation with the public are carried out on an ad hoc basis.
- There is poor knowledge about the set-up of RBOs or other collaboration schemes at every level (river, aquifer basins) also due to the lack of data and reliable information about the available resources. Moreover, the Regional Water and sanitation Establishments and other sub-national authorities are in most cases not experienced overall with integrated approaches to water resources.
- The participation of vulnerable groups is not explicitly addressed in laws policies and plans so far.
- Gender objectives are not explicitly included in existing water-related laws and plans at National, sub-National and transboundary levels. Consequently, also funding, human capacity, monitoring etc. are applied so far on an ad hoc basis.

The main challenges can be addressed as follows:

- PSP is considered among the options for supporting the water sector with financial and human resources and is foreseen by Law 77/2018 (Code de l'Eau) amended by Law 192 from 22.10.2020 . Public authorities' capacities need to be strengthened to be able to deal with PSP contracts and other aspects also in collaboration with the High Council for Privatisation and PPP and based on existing relevant laws (such as law 48/2017).
- A draft law prepared by the Ministry of Energy and Water in 2003 and related to the regulation of delegation and BOT projects for water and sanitation, still needs approval by the Council of Ministers.
- The Ministry of Energy and Water is currently building the infrastructure to host the Information and Training Centre for Water in Lebanon (Centre d'Information et de Formation aux Métiers de l'Eau-CIFME), that will provide training and capacity building for stakeholders of the water sector, including on IWRM. CIFME is also planned to serve as a platform for public participation on water issues. External support (by donors, etc) is needed for software, instruments, platforms, equipment (automatic stations, etc).
- A rapid application of Law 77/2018 (Code de l'Eau) amended by Law 192 from 22.10.2020 that foresees:
 - the operation of a National Water Council as a consultative body bringing together stakeholders from the public and private sectors. Its role is to define the general objectives and the orientation principles of a sustainable water policy at the National level.
 - the preparation of a Water Master Plan that is expected to define, among others, the information modalities of public authorities, socio-economic actors and the public about the objectives and measures to be undertaken in order to ensure a sustainable management of the water resources in the country.
- Capacity building of responsible authorities is needed overall about the concept and practices of IWRM and specifically about the set-up and functioning of RBOs, including by understanding the benefits and advantages of such organisations (both for National and transboundary water resources). It is also important to apply technological tools and modelling of the River Basins as a first step facilitating the identification of potential members of a future RBOs or similar structure. This also applies to aquifers that are poorly studied due to the issues mentioned above, and in particular the lack of data and monitoring. Donors' support is needed to this purpose.
- Awareness raising and enhancing the understanding of authorities about the importance to consider vulnerable groups relevant to the water sector and about the best means to inform and let them participate in decision making. This could be achieved through the Centre d'Information et de

Formation aux Métiers de l'Eau- CIFME and with the help of organisations specialised in reaching vulnerable groups in the WASH sector.

- Awareness raising and capacity building on gender mainstreaming for water-related institutions, including, among others, social analysis to consider attitudes and behavioural patterns related to water management and services with a gender perspective, disaggregating results by sex, and discussing why different stakeholders (female/male, youth) might have different perceptions and attitudes. This role could be undertaken by the Information and Training Centre for Water in Lebanon under the supervision of the Ministry of Energy and Water, provided enough human and financial resources are provided from external donors.

There is overall agreement on the fact that the rate of progress described throughout the survey is realistic and reflects the current status of IWRM implementation in the country. Considering the difficult economic and political situation of the country it seems not likely to reach higher scores in the coming 10 years. In this sense, a National (interim) target setting exercise could result very useful.

There has been no disagreement on this section of the survey. The only comment received during the discussion is described below.

- In relation to point 2.2.a it was stressed that it is not easy to identify the pertinent stakeholders for RBOs or other schemes, including for aquifers management, in the absence of data and monitoring networks.

3. Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 3: 'Management Instruments'

The main challenges to progress in the country include the following:

- Existing permanent monitoring networks (for quality and quantity of resources) are insufficient to fulfil IWRM needs overall at the basin/aquifer levels. Concerning aquifers, it has been already mentioned above the difficulty of delineating them and understanding the status of their water resources due to the particular geology of the country and the lack of data availability and monitoring.
- Water data and information are scattered among different institutions and organisation and need to be collected, evaluated and compiled in a unique system able to support decision making of water related institutions. The culture of collaboration among institutions – as already mentioned in the previous section – is not formalised and this sometimes prevents the gathering of existing data.

The main challenges can be addressed as follows:

- Despite the fact that Law 77/2018 (Code de l'Eau) amended by Law 192 from 22.10.2020 calls for river basin management plans to be prepared by the MEW, including surface and groundwater quantitative and qualitative status, it seems very difficult to achieve this without the support of the International community and donors in providing expertise, models and monitoring equipment.
- A National Water Information System (NWIS) to be set-up e.g under the framework of CIFME (the Water Information and Training Center) would not only support the data demand for various policy questions (e.g. related to water management, environment, economics, planning etc.) but also maximize synergies and reduce data management costs in the long run (e.g. applying the concept of data collected once and used for several purposes). The preparation of a NWIS requires human (experts) and financial resources that Lebanon under the current conditions cannot afford and therefore external help is needed. Its preparation also requires a legal framework that is under elaboration.

There is overall agreement on the fact that the rate of progress described throughout the survey is realistic and reflects the current status of IWRM implementation in the country. Considering the difficult economic

and political situation of the country it seems not likely to reach higher scores in the coming 10 years. In this sense, a National (interim) target setting exercise could result very useful.

There has been no disagreement on this section of the survey. No major points were raised during the discussion.

4. Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 4: 'Financing'

The main challenges to progress in the country include the following:

- Very limited National economic resources that can be allocated to water and sanitation projects and no specific allocations for IWRM Management so far. Therefore, the Government is interested in exploring PSP options. The existing PSP experience is still very limited in the country.
- Revenues raised in the water and sanitation sectors are not able to cover but a very small part of the costs needed for operation and maintenance.

The main challenges can be addressed as follows:

- There is a need for capacity building and training of the regional Water and Sanitation Establishments so that they will be ready to deal with infrastructure management and operation. This could be carried out through CIFME and its Training component, in collaboration with National and International experts.
- Although Law 77/2018 (Code de l'Eau) amended by Law 192 from 22.10.2020, once applied, could enhance funds allocation for IWRM elements, the current difficult economic and political situation of Lebanon is not conducive towards this and much external support might be needed for IWRM elements.
- Services need to be improved in order to increase the trust of people in the service providers and improve the collection of fees.

There is overall agreement on the fact that the rate of progress described throughout the survey is realistic and reflects the current status of IWRM implementation in the country. Considering the difficult economic and political situation of the country it seems not likely to reach higher scores in the coming 10 years. In this sense, a National (interim) target setting exercise could result very useful.

There has been no disagreement on this section of the survey. No major points were raised during the discussion.

5. Next steps

Considering the dire economic and political situation Lebanon is currently facing, it seems unlikely for the country to achieve global targets by 2030. During the workshop discussions, participants stressed on the fact that resources available at the National level for IWRM and the water sector in general are minimal, and this is not expected to change in the coming years. External help seems to be the only hope for moving forward, especially when actions requiring big investments need to be carried out.

Among the urgent actions identified for accelerating IWRM implementation and cope with existing challenges are the following:

- The provisions of the new water law 77/2018, Code de l'Eau, amended by Law 192 from 22.10.2020 need to be implemented without delay once the application decrees are ready. It is really important for the Government to finalise this process without delay because it will set in motion many interventions that are key for creating a proper enabling environment for IWRM (e.g. the National Water Council, the preparation of a Water Master Plan, etc.). Expertise might be needed for the preparation of application decrees once the review process of this law is concluded.

- There is a need to prepare water stakeholders to deal with IWRM implementation in the country based on the application of the new Law. This should include the creation and functioning of RBOs or other collaboration platforms as well as the operation and management of infrastructures, the communication with citizens and users, with due consideration of gender aspects and particular vulnerable groups. Additional expertise should be provided on how to deal with PSP contracts, since it's the Government intention to explore such type of collaborations.
- It is of great importance to increase the knowledge about available resources (quantity and quality), including river basins and aquifers/groundwater. Equipment and other technological tools allowing for the constant monitoring of these resources are needed, as well as software and models to facilitate the understanding of specific resources (e.g. studying aquifers located in karst areas). The available data should be used to set-up a first version of the National Water Information System, that will be progressively updated with new information from the monitoring networks and other technological tools applied. The NWIS will support water related authorities in decision-making processes and further planning for IWRM. The NWIS (Information about water resources) and the capacity building needs (Training about water resources related issues) mentioned in the previous point could be both facilitated by the Centre d'Information et de Formation aux Métiers de l'Eau (Center for Water Information and Training) under the supervision of the Ministry of Energy and Water.

LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex 1: List of Participants

Annex 2: Agenda

Annex 3: Facilitator's Comments

Annex 4: Photos

Annex 1: List of participants

Workshop participants

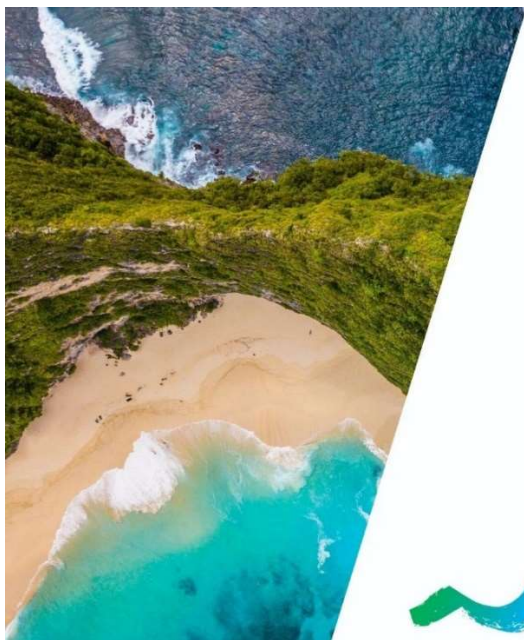
Name	Organization	Position
Eng. Mona Fakhri	Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), Lebanon	Director of Water
Eng. Samar Hejazi	Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), Lebanon	Head of water monitoring unit
Eng. Ranim Annous	Water Establishment of Beirut and Mount Lebanon	
Mr. Roy Yazbeck	Water Establishment of the Bekaa	Administrative Expert
Prof. Amin Shaaban	National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS)	Director of Research (Water Resources Management & Remote Sensing)
Prof. Fadi Hage Chehade	Lebanese University	
Mr. Michele Pierpaoli	EU Delegation to Lebanon	Responsible Water and Wastewater portfolio
Mr. Bassam Jaber	Les Amis de l'Eau	former Director General of Exploitation, Ministry of Energy and Water
UN ESCWA	Ms. Carol Chouchani Cherfane	Chief, Water Resources Section Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster
GWP-Med	Dr. Anthi Brouma	Deputy Regional Coordinator
GWP-Med	Ms. Barbara Tomassini	Senior Programme Officer
GWP-Med	Ms. Zoe Karka	Administration Officer

The entire consultation process, including the compilation of the draft review that was discussed with participants during the consultation and the further integration of comments received during that event, has been under the **supervision of the Focal Point for 6.5.1, Dr. Fadi Comair – Director General of Hydraulic and Electric Resources at the Lebanese Ministry of Energy and Water**. He has been assisted in the process by Eng. Ms. Mona Fakhri, the Director of Water.

Other stakeholders engaged (not attending the workshop)

Name	Organization/Position	Email address	Summary of inputs (e.g. question number(s), or full survey)
H.E. Dr. Adel Cortas	former Minister of Agriculture and President of Les Amis de l'Eau	acortas@dm.net.lb	He provided the overall scoring for each of the four sections of the survey

Please note that this Annex is supplemented by information in Annex E of the SDG 6.5.1 survey instrument, which reflects on the level of engagement from different stakeholder groups.



Country Survey Instrument for SDG Indicator 6.5.1

Degree of integrated water resources management implementation

On-line consultation workshop
29.07.2020 / 09:30-12:30



09:30-09:45 Welcome and Introduction

- Welcome and Introduction to the meeting
- Brief presentation of the participating stakeholders

09:45-10:00 SDG 6.5.1 - Background and overview

- Background to SDG 6.5.1 and the survey, 2017 baseline and an overview of the survey

10:00-11:00 Facilitated discussions

Questions under questions 1 and 2: 'Enabling Environment' and 'Institutions and Participation'

- Introduction and support to understand the sections and questions
- Discussions
- Reporting back and discussion - including agreeing on scores for questions in sections 1 and 2 in the survey and capture 3-5 key points from the discussion for the narrative sections to each question, to support the rationale or capture divergences

11:00-12:00 Facilitated discussions (continued)

Questions under sections 3 and 4: 'Management Instruments' and 'Financing'

- Introduction and support to understand the sections and questions
- Discussions
- Reporting back and discussion - including agreeing on scores for questions in sections 3 and 4 in the survey and capture 3-5 key points from the discussion for the narrative sections to each question, to support the rationale or capture divergences

12:00-12:30 Wrap up and closing of the meeting

- Follow up on any loose ends from the previous discussions
- Agree on next steps for follow up and monitoring of and accelerating progress on SDG 6.5.1
- Wrap up and closing of the workshop

Annex 3: Facilitator's Comments

Despite the efforts exerted by the Focal Point (FP) to involve a diverse number of stakeholders in the review process – approximately 20 different stakeholders from various institutions and organisations, from government, utilities, private sector, academia, etc, have been invited to provide their input before and during the consultation event– only a small number of stakeholders participated in the workshop.

Moreover, the active input provided during the consultation workshop has been quite limited. There might be several explanations for this. Some of the participants who had already filled the survey and shared it with the FP in advance of the consultation event, might have found their input already reflected in the draft survey prepared by the FP, which was compiled taking into account this contribution.

Others, particularly those working at a technical level (Water and Sanitation Establishments etc.), probably needed more time to understand the modalities of the review process in order to become active during the discussion. Whatever the reasons for the limited input received during the consultation, it seems to be a good practice for the future to raise awareness and inform relevant stakeholders well in advance about the way they can contribute to the review process and the importance for it, eventually through dedicated sessions for each of the different sections of the survey.

A positive point is that after integrating the input received during the workshop, the FP decided to allow for additional time so that all relevant stakeholders could provide further input (till 11th of August 2020) before submitting the final survey to UNEP. However, due to the terrible blast that happened in Beirut on the 4th of August 2020 and the related consequences, the FP anticipates receiving very limited, if any, additional feedback.

Annex 4: Photos

Due to the fact that the online consultation workshop was carried out online on Zoom platform no photos have been taken.