UNDP ART GOLD Lebanon Project

External Evaluation

(September 2014)

ART GOLD APPROACH AND INSTRUMENT SUPPORTING MUNICIPALITIES IN THE CRISIS RESPONSE

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**Executive Summary**

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| **AGL Programme** | ART GOLD LEBANON (AGL) was launched in March 2007 by UNDP in the four neediest areas of the country, characterized by high poverty rates and marked socioeconomic problems: North Lebanon, South Lebanon, Beqaa and Beirut Southern Suburbs. A new phase of the ART Gold Programme 2013-2015 is still currently under implementation as an integrated component of the UNDP “Social and Local Development Programme” (SLD). Despite what was initially planned in the “Proposal Strategy 2013-2015” (April 2013), this phase doesn’t have specific budget, due to the effect of the Syrian crisis in Lebanon and the priorities that occurred. Consequently, the ART programme has been incorporated in term of methodology and mechanism in the Lebanon Support Host Community (LHSP) project. |
| **Evaluation aim** | The aim of the present evaluation is twofold: On the one hand, it strives to assess the relevance, the effectiveness and the impact of AGL since it started operation back in 2007. On the other hand, it aims also to evaluate the possible sustainability of the approach and tools that AGL developed at local and national level as part of UNDP response to the Syrian crisis. The evaluation hence broadly reflects on the conditions under which UNDP can approach a crisis situation while maintain a development-oriented discourse, overcoming hence the rigid timeline division between relief, recovery and development. |
| **Methodology** | Although the ToRs define this evaluation as an “Independent External Evaluation of AGL Lebanon”, which might suggest a summative approach along the OECD-DAC criteria for evaluation. The complexities in AGL’s architecture (geographical diversity, multi-level and multi-stakeholders approach, decentralization, ...) lend themselves best to a formative participatory evaluation approach which is both backward and forward looking, especially in the light of UNDP’s explicit wish to explore possible synergies and incorporate learnings from this evaluation in the response to the Syrian crisis.The evaluation consisted in a qualitative assessment of programme strategy and operational instruments in order to analyse their implementation design and to identify the contributions and/or the obstacles in achieving results. Outcome-level evaluation, even if not being the primary focus of the evaluation, is embedded in the evaluation design. The evaluation took place during the period of July 14th – 25th 2014. Interviews were conducted with CDR Focal Point for AGL, UNDP Country Director, UNDP Portfolio Manager, AGL CTA, National Project Office staff as well as with the four AGL Area managers of North Lebanon, South Lebanon, Beqaa region and Beirut Southern Suburbs to review project relevance, outcomes and sustainability. Interviews and meetings with AGL key local stakeholders in the four areas as well as with local beneficiaries were held in order to get an overview of their assessment of the achievements, challenges and the future of AGL Project. |
| **Evidences from the three AGL pillars** | Data from interviews and meetings outlined both the achievements and possible limitations of the three pillars of the AGL. On the other hand, they provided a wealth of information about how the new context is affecting the way of working due to the Syrian Crisis and the relief vs. development dilemmaRegional and thematic WGs have achieved their intended role in assessing and prioritizing the local needs using participative and inclusive methods, but focused mostly on short to medium term planning.The 4 LEDAs constitute probably the most successful output of AGL and unique and much needed new approach in tackling local development from a territorial perspective within the Lebanese context, despite budgetary constraints and the operational conditions dictated by the Syrian crisis.During the AGL Phase I, DC provided many stimuli to the local stakeholders and promoted innovation through continuous exchange of expertise. DC seems to have lost its momentum during the Phase II of AGL, mainly due to the economic crisis that affected the Italian and Spanish municipalities. |
| **Relevance** | The evaluation findings confirm by-and-large the relevance of Phase I of AGL, but are less conclusive about Phase II, as it touches on the “relief vs. development dilemma” that host communities in Lebanon are facing and where the needs have shifted from longer term territorial planning into addressing day-to-day concerns emerging from the Syrian crisis. One of the key features of the AGL approach proved to be the tight association of participatory planning with the possibility to implement the project ideas and sectorial priorities that emerged from the participatory process. Municipalities and Municipal Unions are the most appropriate entry point of the programme, since they contributed to bridging the gap between the vision and aspirations at the local level and the (missing) sectorial and thematic priorities at the national level, confirming hence the “territorial articulation” dimension that lies at the core of the ART approach.The added value of AGL lies in its ability to combine all three pillars within one comprehensive framework and unleash the synergies in between the three, so that the sum of the three components exceeds the individual benefits from each component alone. ART can provide tools or instruments in addressing the new situation arising from the Syrian crisis. It has been brought forward in all the UNDP strategic documents addressing the Syrian crisis, most notably under the “Livelihoods and Social Cohesion Working Group” that UNDP is co-chairing with UNHCR or the Host Communities Support Platform which is also coordinated by UNDP. |
| **Effectiveness** | According to what is documented in the annual reports and to what has been reported by the stakeholders and area officers during the visits, AGL’s activities seem to have been implemented and their intended outputs achieved maturation The more evident achievements were at local level, despite it could sense different levels of “ maturation” amongst the four regional teams.The synergies between AGL and other components of the Social and Local Development Programme of UNDP at the central level seems also to have enhanced effectiveness, in the sense that the wider AGL network was also included in other projects and programmes executed by UNDP, leading hence to the consolidation of the existing relationships and mutual trust. |
| **Impact** | On the local level, it appears clearly that AGL has contributed to a paradigm shift in approaching local governance in the Lebanese areas where it intervened.Local stakeholders agreed on the pioneer role of AGL in leading participating territories into collaborative planning and in introducing peer-to-peer support by bringing relevant European experiences into these territories through decentralized cooperation. The culmination of these processes was the establishment of LEDAs as one of the first concrete materialization of Public Private Partnership at the service of territorial development in Lebanon, and in which AGL succeeded while many other projects and programmes have failed, blaming it on the restrictive national legislation of Lebanon.In the second phase of the AGL programme, it is struggling to keep a minimum developmental momentum amidst concerns on how to deal with the immediate social, economic and environmental repercussions of the Syrian crisis on the four territories covered by the programme. As it happened during its early start in 2007, the key challenge for AGL hence is to find niches under the present response to the Syrian crisis (probably under “stabilization” and “social cohesion” headlines) and implement its tools and approaches into both the UNDP programmes and the Lebanese national and municipal initiatives. |
| **Sustainability** | The AGL pillar with the most promising prospects for sustainability is the **LEDAs component**. The sustainability of LEDAs lies in their ability to establish themselves as a federating entity for all actors within the territories they serve, but also to offer a significant return on investment for their constituency.The experience of the ***Regional and Thematic Working groups*** is less conclusive, since the observed loss in momentum and the gradual slow-down and even stalemate in the activities of these groups indicates that some essential pre-requisites such as a minimum institutionalization of these groups under existing regional municipal coordination structures were not always attained within the lifetime of the programme. Despite the lack of decentralization’s law in Lebanon, the very recent decision of the Ministry of Social Affaires to adopt the crisis need assessment realized by WGs represent and important path toward sustainability, provided that it can become more systematic and not a one-time event.Most of the ***Decentralized Cooperation*** partnerships were time-bound, except those carried by Tuscany and Lazio regions in Italy which were carried along a more sustainable institutional model. Interesting also to note the growing proportion of EU-funded partnerships engaging AGL stakeholders. |
| **The Role of AGL in the Syrian Crisis response**  | With respect to how AGL can contribute to UNDP’s efforts in addressing the Syrian crisis, the findings of this evaluation suggest three possible entry points: 1. By mobilizing the AGL network, without necessarily sticking to the Regional and Thematic working group format or even to the AGL name, first because the needs generated by the Syrian crisis differ significantly amongst territories and even from one village to another, and second because in times of crisis, long term thematic planning is overshadowed by the need to address more pressing emergencies, and hence “branding” the response as “AGL” might create confusion.
2. By capitalizing on the LEDAs as a locally rooted implementation arm and which can transform funding opportunities available for the mitigation of the effects of the Syrian crisis into territorial development opportunities that bring together different territorial actors around a common thematic expertise and which can also help LEDA’s in developing their own resources.
3. By aligning different opportunities available for relief along a broader territorial development vision (for example aligning small scale agriculture development projects that are made available for the mitigation of the Syrian crisis effects into a broader territorial agricultural development plan)
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| **Lesson learned** | The incorporation of the AGL’s participative approach and its tools into the SLD and LHSP programmes represents the strongest impact of AGL and guarantees the sustainability of its added value in the new situation affected by the Syrian crisis. WGs can act as institutional and social actors for assessing and prioritizing local needs at the Municipality/Union of Municipality level if the financial context becomes institutionally more stable. In the new context heavily geared towards responding to the repercussions of the Syrian crisis (and which is more likely to continue at least over the short to medium term), WGs maintain a strategic role in needs assessments and in supporting territorial decision-making. It would be pertinent however to feature the WGs more prominently in the “Maps of Risks and Resources” (MRR) methodology.DC can provide useful external expertise but also networks, to be used in order to consolidate thematic partnership agreements. DC proved to be a very important opportunity for technical and financial support at local level, but it experienced a lack of capitalization of the lesson learned and of the methodologies shared among the partnersProbably one of the most important points that need to revised (independently from the Syrian crisis since it goes back to at least 2009 when it was flashed in the MTR) is what AGL can achieve at the national level and what mechanisms and tools need to be mobilized in this regard, against the specific background of the Lebanese national situation. |

**Introduction**

UNDP launched the ART Global Initiative in 2005, as part of its commitment to support countries in their efforts to accelerate progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and achieve Social Human Development (SHD). Since then, the Initiative has worked on enabling processes that improve the articulation between the local, national and international levels, promote a more effective use of internal and external resources and foster sustainable partnerships between territories and global networks for development cooperation.

ART GOLD LEBANON (AGL) was launched in March 2007 by UNDP in the four neediest areas of the country, characterized by high poverty rates and marked socioeconomic problems: North Lebanon, South Lebanon, Beqaa and Beirut Southern Suburbs. A new phase of the ART Gold Programme 2013-2015 is still currently under implementation as an integrated component of the UNDP “Social and Local Development Programme” (SLD). Despite what was initially planned in the “Proposal Strategy 2013-2015” (April 2013), this phase doesn’t have specific budget, due to the effect of the Syrian crisis in Lebanon and the priorities that occurred[[1]](#footnote-1). Consequently, the ART programme has been incorporated in term of methodology and mechanism in the Lebanon Support Host Community (LHSP) project.

The Syrian crisis, which started in 2011 and has been escalating ever since has posed huge developmental challenges on Lebanon. UNDP participates alongside UNHCR and other agencies in the Syrian crisis response, and focuses – among others – on strengthening social services delivery and livelihood of the host communities that are mostly affected by the Syrians refugees’ influx. Part of UNDPs response is articulated along the methodology and community outreach mechanisms championed by AGL during the last seven years (multilevel participatory approach, Working Groups, LEDAs, decentralized cooperation), such as – for example – the Lebanon Stabilization and Recovery Programme aiming to bridge crisis intervention on Host Communities in a short term, addressing specific needs, with medium term interventions on recovery and long term ones on development.

The aim of the present evaluation is twofold: On the one hand, it strives to assess the relevance, the effectiveness and the impact of AGL since it started operation back in 2007. On the other hand, it aims also to evaluate the possible sustainability of the approach and tools that AGL developed at local and national level as part of UNDP response to the Syrian crisis. The evaluation hence broadly reflects on the conditions under which UNDP can approach an emergency situation while maintain a development-oriented discourse, overcoming hence the rigid timeline division between relief, recovery and development.

1. **Description of the intervention**
	1. ***Background and context***

UNDP ART GOLD LEBANON (AGL) Programme is part of the ART[[2]](#footnote-2) Initiative that started in Lebanon in 2007 and is currently operating in four areas: North, South, Beqaa, and Beirut Southern Suburbs (BSS). AGL is an integrated component of the UNDP “Social and Local Development Programme” (SLD), which, focuses on eradicating poverty, strengthening local capacities and supporting government policies for development.

The national counterpart for AGL is the Council of Construction and Development (CDR), and the programme works closely with the line ministries of the targeted sectors in order to promote the on-going development process at local level and to bring closer the local and the national level. At the *local level*, AGL targets mainly local authorities (municipalities and Municipal Unions), but also civil society, trade unions, cooperatives and private sector. At the *national level* the main counterpart is the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) as well the respective Line Ministries targeted by the different components of the programme. At the *international level*, AGL benefits from the support of the ART Initiative at UNDP Geneva as well as partnerships mainly with European territories through decentralized cooperation.

AGL promotes a structured dialogue at a territorial level that aims at improving the articulation between local, national and international levels of development. It also promotes a more effective use of internal and external resources and fosters sustainable partnerships between territories and global networks for development cooperation. In this regard, AGL approach privileges “demand-driven development” and supports partners to adopt medium and long term processes based on consensus between all concerned stakeholders instead of the classical one time-off intervention.

These processes are supported by setting up Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs) and by developing territorial and thematic Working Groups (WGs) at municipal and regional level. Another important instrument is the financial and the technical support of the Decentralized Cooperation (DC) that links territories and promote exchange of ideas, knowledge and best practices.

The first phase of the AGL was executed between 2007 and 2012 and worked primarily on six sectors: Health, Municipal Social Services, Education, Environment, Local Economic Development (LED), Agriculture and Tourism[[3]](#footnote-3), with a total financing envelope of 15.5 million USD. A second phase was launched for three additional years (2013 – 2015). This new phase aims - according to its initial design – at continuing the decentralized cooperation momentum which was initiated during the first phase, activate the AGL National Committee[[4]](#footnote-4) and support the sustainability of the Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs) in the four regions of operation of the Programme. The process is also to be cross-fertilized and strengthened through decentralized cooperation partnerships. Five of these partnerships are planned during this second phase with 4 Italian regions (Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Puglia and Tuscany) as well as the City of Marseille.

Moreover, the proposed strategy for the 2013-2015 period[[5]](#footnote-5) will take into consideration the lessons learned during the past 6 years and the peculiarities of the Lebanese context and will focus on an integrated approach targeting 2 mains areas of intervention: Welfare (Health, Social and Education Sectors ) and Local Economic Development (LEDAs and Agriculture, Tourism, Environment Sectors) withGood Governance and Gender Equity as cross-cutting issues and with an estimated budget of 6M USD in 3 years (6 million USD) in addition to 1.5M USD freed from a guarantee fund for a micro-credit programme under Phase I and which was discontinued. However, it appears that due to the constraints dictated by the response to the Syrian crisis that no specific funding could be allocated to this phase and AGL has been incorporated in term of methodology and mechanism in the Lebanon Support Host Community (LHSP) project[[6]](#footnote-6)

The geo-political crisis in neighbouring Syria, which started back in 2011 and has been steadily escalating since, significantly affected the Lebanese scenario, shifting the focus of all international donors from development to relief. By June 2014 over 1.1 million refugees were registered or awaiting registration with UNHCR, equalling roughly 25% of the entire Lebanese pre-crisis population (one out of five persons currently living in Lebanon is a registered Syrian refugee). This sudden and large influx of refugees is now placing enormous pressure on the country and its people, especially those in the poorest areas, where refugee concentrations have been greatest. The crisis is not only challenging the country’s existing social and economic infrastructure, it is exacerbating significant development deficiencies such as unemployment, especially among women and youth, and profound disparities between the wealthy and the poor. In addition, the crisis brings to Lebanon a set of new tensions that threaten to undermine Lebanon’s delicate social and political balance of power while amplifying pre-existing inter Lebanese divisions and provoking increasingly negative reactions against the Syrian refugee presence.

In light of these impacts, a ‘resilience-based development approach’ was endorsed by the Regional United Nations Development Group (UNDG) in November 2013. The approach seeks to ensure that basic resources and infrastructures can cope with the pressure from the increased demand resulting from refugee flows, that households are supported to recover and that declining economic performance and deteriorating social cohesion can be stabilised[[7]](#footnote-7).

AGL approach and tools are thought by UNDP as an added value in contributing to Lebanon’s stability by strengthening the resilience of the most vulnerable host communities and key national institutions, linking crisis response to long-term development objectives[[8]](#footnote-8). In view of the current situation, the United Nations Development Programme jointly with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) launched the "Lebanese Host Communities Support Project" (LHSP) as a comprehensive, coordinated and durable response towards the Syrian Refugee Crisis and its implications on the country[[9]](#footnote-9). LHSP targets 62 communities and draws on several methodological insights inspired from AGL to further strengthen the capacity of national and local government and civil society actors for inclusive priority setting and conflict mitigation, dispute resolution, and participatory service delivery as well as enhancing business skills and marketing opportunities in vulnerable areas. LHSP aims to achieve three main goals: (1) increase the livelihoods and economic opportunities in affected areas; (2) strengthen the capacity of local and national actors to deliver basic services in a participatory and conflict sensitive manner; (3) improve the local level dispute resolution and community security.

1. **Evaluation scope and objectives**

***2.1 Scope of the evaluation***

According with the ToR, the evaluation is intended to:

1. Provide a comprehensive overall assessment of the ART GOLD Programme in Lebanon and capitalize on the results achieved in the framework of the relationship between the dynamics of local development and national development policy, strengthening of national and local capacities, programing and management of international cooperation, promotion and mobilization of decentralized cooperation with its support for south-south and triangular cooperation and the inclusion of gender as a crosscutting theme;
2. Capitalize on how the programme and its tools are being adapted and mainstreamed as a methodology to support the present local context affected by the Syrian crisis, in term of strengthening the capacities of national and local government and civil society actors to deliver basic services in an inclusive and participatory approach and their capacities in dispute resolution and community security;

The evaluation was also expected to analyse the lessons learned and best practices from implementation in order to taken them consideration during the remaining period of implementation of AGL. It is also expected that the results of the evaluation will feed into the UNDP Lebanon Office outcome evaluation

1. **Evaluation approach and methodology**

The evaluation took place during the period of July 14th – 25th 2014. Interviews were conducted with CDR Focal Point for AGL, UNDP Country Director, UNDP Portfolio Manager, AGL CTA, National Project Office staff as well as with the four AGL Area managers of North Lebanon, South Lebanon, Beqaa region and Beirut Southern Suburbs to review project relevance, outcomes and sustainability. Interviews and meetings with AGL key local stakeholders in the four areas as well as with local beneficiaries were held in order to get an overview of their assessment of the achievements, challenges and the future of AGL Project.

The full list of interviews and meetings held during the course of the mission are presented in the attached Mission agenda.

The evaluation team developed the evaluation approach and methodology before the beginning of the mission (Inception Report) and which was later discussed and re-adapted during a meeting with the Evaluation Committee (CTA + 4 Area Managers) on July 14th.

***3.1 Conceptual framework***

Although the ToRs define this evaluation as an “Independent External Evaluation of AGL Lebanon”, which might suggest a summative approach along the OECD-DAC criteria for evaluation[[10]](#footnote-10) The complexities in AGL’s architecture (geographical diversity, multi-level and multi-stakeholders approach, decentralization, ...) lend themselves best to a formative participatory evaluation approach which is both backward and forward looking, especially in the light of UNDP’s explicit wish to explore possible synergies and incorporate learnings from this evaluation in the response to the Syrian crisis.

From technical-methodological point of view it means that the evaluation consists in a qualitative assessment of programme strategy and operational instruments in order to analyse their implementation design and to identify the contributions and/or the obstacles in achieving results. Outcome-level evaluation, even if not being the primary focus of the evaluation, is embedded in the evaluation design. As such, the participatory involvement of programme staff, local, national and international stakeholders and beneficiaries in each one of the three evaluation steps is needed.

The initial intention was also to cross-fertilize the OECD-DAC standards with the recently developed standards of Equity Focused Evaluation principles[[11]](#footnote-11), examining *coverage, connectedness and coherence* of policies, however this proved to be quite challenging due to the difficulty in accessing stakeholders beyond UNDP staff and the immediate beneficiaries of the programme.

The entire approach was also inspired by Quinn Patton’s Utilization Focused Evaluation (UFE) where the emphasis is on the *intended users* of the evaluation as well as its *intended uses* and where “... the evaluator facilitates judgment and decision making by intended users rather than acting as a distant independent judge...” in Patton’s own words.

The evaluators as such did not approach this evaluation purely as “judges” of the AGL, but as facilitators of a ***collectively owned process that reviews critically implementation, understands what worked and what did not work and provides concrete actionable suggestions on how AGL can improve its performance*** and better serve its planned development objectives in the future, especially in the light of the recent paradigm shifts dictated by the Syrian crisis on Lebanon and their repercussions on the country (stabilization, reinforced support to host communities, adaptation of livelihoods approaches especially amongst the most vulnerable groups of the population, etc…

According with the ToRs, the key evaluation criteria (and corresponding evaluation questions) revolve around the DAC criteria for evaluating aid assistance: relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability.

***3.2 Analytical approach***

In order to answer to the evaluative questions, several types of information needed to be collected, in different times and at different level.

**Step 1** - Before the field visit start, the Evaluation team asked ART Lebanon team (in the Inception report and by specific email) to provide access to the full AGL documentation in order to complete a full secondary data review, with a specific focus on:

* Programme management and governance at national and local level (with details of contact persons)
* List of stakeholders at national and local level (with details of contact persons)
* List of LEDAs and WG (with details of contact persons)
* List of decentralized cooperation partners (with details of contact persons)
* Previous AGL evaluation report
* Performance monitoring data at national and local level
* National and local statistical trends related with the programme overall objectives (mainly: public access to primary health services; income generation and employment opportunities; conservation and respect of the environment; social integration of young people and their participation in local development)

It was possible however to consult only part of the documentation (annual reports 2011-12-13 and the consolidate report 2007-2012) prior to the start of the field mission, while other strategic documents were provided by the CTA as the evaluation unfolded[[12]](#footnote-12). It was not possible however to consult disaggregated reports (per category of intervention, area, sector, etc…) which forced the analysis to remain confined mostly at the macro-level.

**Step 2** – The limitations in secondary data and the adaptation of the evaluation plan for moving forward were available were then discussed with the Evaluating Committee (CTA and the 4 Area Managers) during the kick off meeting on July 14th 2014, in addition to the validation of the proposed scheduling of the field activity, considering staff availability and contextual/logistic possibilities.

**Step 3** - Information about relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability were collected through some 20 semi-structured interviews coupled with filed observations that the Evaluation team realized between 14th and 24th July 2014. Five of these interviews were at National level (UNDP Lebanon Country Director; UNDP Project Portfolio Manager; AGL CTA; AGL Area managers; CDR) and 15 at Local level (3 mayors in BSS and Beqaa; 4 Working Groups in BSS, Beqaa, North, South; 4 LEDAs in BSS, Beqaa, North, South; 4 ART local staff). (see Agenda)

**Step 4** - Information of the decentralized cooperation partners about relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability at local level were collected through two telephone interviews on 30th and 31st July 2014 with two Italian counterparts who participated in the decentralized cooperation activities

**Step 5** – Following the completion of the field visits, the evaluators presented the draft preliminary findings to the Evaluation Committee and the UNDP portfolio manager on July 25th, following which some findings were reviewed and/or readjusted, especially after taking stock of the mid-term external review report produced back in 2009 following the evaluator’s remark about the long programming cycle without an “evaluative pit-stop”.

***3.3 Limits and constraints encountered during the field phase***

The evaluators would like to thank the UNDP management, the Area Managers and through them all local stakeholders for their attention and support throughout the field phase. From a methodological standpoint, we should however flash the following constraints:

* The evaluation mission was realized during the Holy month of Ramadan, which limited the working hours for conducting interviews with local stakeholders[[13]](#footnote-13)
* The interviewed sample was pre-determined by the UNDP team, which poses a risk of positive bias
* Only one member of the AGL National Committee could be interviewed, and hence the evaluation of the national level influence is mostly perception based.
* The same constraint was applied with regard to Decentralized Cooperation partners, where only two phone/skype interviews could be conducted.
* Probably the most important and critical constraint was the limited availability of disaggregated secondary data, making it difficult to track the progress of individual components of the programme.

1. **Data analysis**

Data from interviews and meetings were very useful in order to analyse both the potentialities and the criticisms of the three pillars of the AGL. On the other hand, they provided many information about how the how the new context affect the way of their working due to the Syrian Crisis and the emergency-turn in the international cooperation.

Evaluation used the evidences from interviews, meetings and personal observation during the visits in order to do a SWOT analysis of the three pillars in the actual context. The following paragraphs describe the results of the analysis for each one of the three pillars.

***4.1 Working Groups (WGs)***

WGs works in the all target area of the AGL, many of them at municipal level but other also at regional/thematic level. They demonstrate to have achieved the competences in assessing and prioritizing the local needs using participative and inclusive methods. They do also experience a specific form of bottom-up equity empowerment, as an indirect effect of their involving different political and religious actors into a joint activity.

On the other hand, they present some internal weakness. A focus on rapid-response initiative is broadly widespread among the stakeholders at local level, thus the WG assessments hardly face medium and long term planning. Even if necessary, the start-up has been demanding, and the quantitative level of discussion resulted frustrating in comparison with the very few implementations. In some cases, the regional/thematic WGs do not owned a strategic point of view autonomous from the local and short-term perspective of the municipalities.

In some areas (BSS and North), the longer tradition in using participative approaches in socio-economic planning made the Municipalities better able to own the process and to incorporate WGs as part of their strategic planning tools al local and regional level.

In the present situation the scarcity of funding for implementing the planned projects, generate a sort of frustration in the identity of the WGs. The dependence of WGs governance from the Municipalities’ board is challenged hardly by the periodical electoral turn that can produce discontinuity in funding and in supporting their initiatives. It is not clear the functional connections of WGs with LEDAs, even if somewhere (North) LEDA emerged from the previous seminal experience of a WG.

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| **Internal Strenght*** WGs introduced the practice of collaboration between public, private professional and civil organizations that was new in the region
* WGs have competences in assessing and prioritizing the local needs
* WGs experience bottom-up equity empower among different political and religious actors
 | **Internal Weaknesses*** Culture of rapid-response (WG as ‘cahiers de doleances’)
* Too many discussions, very few implementations
* Some municipalities do not interpret the regional/thematic WGs as an added value to improve strategic and long term planning
 |
| **External Opportunities**- Municipality own and support the tool | **External Ties*** WGs (thematic and regional) were overwhelmed by the emergency
* Discontinuity in funding and supporting due to electoral turn
* Not clear the possible connections with LEDAs
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***4.2 Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs)***

The 4 LEDAs constitute probably the most successful outputs of the AGL. They represent the territorial leading actors for local economic development. Even if only recently (and not yet in every area), they recruited the resources and achieved the competences for supporting local enterprises in project planning and business development. They also consolidated the networks of partners that AGL provided through DC.

The lack of a medium-term budget plan do not guarantee the sustainability of the organizational costs. As well, the lack of strategies for data gathering and data analysis impede them to provide private companies or public bodies with even basic business intelligence services.

Against the background of the present situation, LEDAs have significant potentiality of development. Local enterprises ask for business administration and quality assurance services and public authorities could be interested in implementing territorial marketing initiatives. Even the new wave of funding from international donors due to the emergency could represent an opportunity for LEDAs to act as implementing partner for some development projects.

Anyway, these are potentiality for the next future. Now, LEDAs are in their starting phase and suffer a lack of external funding opportunities. The new donors’ focus is on Syrian crisis (not development) and the old one (AGL) is implementing a financial exit strategy that on the one hand challenge their sustainability, but in the other hand provoke their autonomy. There are not clear functional connections with the WGs.

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| **Internal Strenght*** Represent the territorial leading actors for local economic development
* Achieved competences in project planning and business development
* Provided networks of partners from DC
 | **Internal Weaknesses*** Lack of visibility of the added value of LEDA. Municipalities want to see concrete achievements of the funded projects
* Lack of a budget plan in order to guarantee sustainability of organizational costs
* Lack of data gathering and data analysis strategies
* Many meetings with the other LEDAs at technical level in order to train the officers or to apply for common ENPI projects, but no common activities in term of strategy.
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| **External Opportunities*** Business administration and quality assurance services asked by local enterprises
* Marketing support needed by the territories
* Recovery and development projects to be implemented via local agencies
* LEDA think to deliver some info-sessions in order to explain to migrants families about the opportunities for remittance-driven investments in the area
 | **External Ties*** Lack of funding opportunities in the starting phase
* New donors’ focus on Syrian crisis (not development)
* Not clear the possible connections with WGs
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***4.3 Decentralized Cooperation (DC)***

The DC provided many stimuli to the local stakeholders and promoted innovation through continuous exchange of expertise, especially in the first phase of AGL.

Unfortunately, the initial contacts than interrupted due to lack of funds for implementing projects (the post-2008 economic crisis hardly affected Italy and Spain that were the most powerful partners in DC). Sometimes the framework for DC has been too vague and the local stakeholders ask for a more pragmatic and continuous interest from the international partners. Despite the promises and the expected results, the DC experiences remained local and parochial: at international level ART failed in circulating the innovation and the best practices between national and international stakeholders.

DC remains a possibility to be explored and exploited by the local stakeholders. Programmes promoted by EU and other international donors usually ask for a decentralized component, and some of the local stakeholders already have consolidated experience in them (i.e. WGs Agriculture AG South, that participate in Leader+) that could be capitalized and disseminated.

However, potential international partners sometimes look for more consolidated expertise and curricula than those the WGs or the LEDAs could provide. Two more issues can discourage stakeholders in applying to EU funded programmes: they are hugely bureaucratic and demanding, and they risk funding niche initiatives and to not the strategic ones.

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| **Internal Strenght*** Promoted innovation through continuous exchange of expertise
* “The difference with other experiences of DC is that here Municipalities decided together what to do”
 | **Internal Weaknesses*** Initial contacts interrupted due to lack of funds
* Sometimes too vague framework for cooperation (need for more pragmatic interest from partners)
* Deficit in fostering innovation through circulating the best practices at ART International level
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| **External Opportunities*** Programmes promoted by EU and other international donors ask for decentralized component
* Consolidated experience of the territories in DC programmes (Leader+)
 | **External Ties*** Potential international partners look for more consolidated CV
* EU programmes are beurocratically demanding
* EU programmes risk to fund niche initiatives, not strategic
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1. **Evaluation Findings**

The ToRs highlight four particular DAC criteria to be explored in depth during the evaluation:

1. Relevance, especially in the light of the changes within the overall enabling environment that was dictated by the Syrian crisis and how the second phase of AGL can (or cannot) align itself to this change
2. Effectiveness, with regard to the work of AGL during Phase I (2007-2012) but also during the implementation setup of Phase II (2013-2015) and;
3. Impact, which mostly focuses on Phase I as the evaluation is taking place some 18 months after the end of its activities
4. Sustainability, in the light of the combined experience during Phases I and II beyond 2015 when Phase II ends.
	1. ***Relevance***

The evaluation findings confirm by-and-large the relevance of Phase I of AGL, but are less conclusive about Phase II, as it touches on the relief vs. development dilemma that host communities in Lebanon are facing and where the needs have shifted from longer term territorial planning into addressing day-to-day concerns emerging from the Syrian crisis.

Taken individually, each of the three “pillars” of ART/AGL is not new to the Local Development practices in Lebanon. Several projects have engaged in structured participatory processes with local authorities, most notably EU’s ARLA/LOGO programme[[14]](#footnote-14) and the Economic and Social Fund for Development (ESFD)[[15]](#footnote-15). Other organizations and programmes are actively promoting Decentralized Cooperation, whether under the umbrella of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) – Lebanon branch[[16]](#footnote-16), or through EU funded projects (MED-PACT, CIUDAD, CBC-MED and many others)[[17]](#footnote-17) and sometimes under bilateral cooperation (mainly France, Italy and Spain). Last but not least, several programmes are providing support to municipalities through capacity building and project implementation, the latest being USAID’s Building Alliance for Local Advancement, Development and Investment - BALADI [[18]](#footnote-18).

**The added value of AGL lies in its ability to combine all three pillars within one comprehensive framework and unleash the synergies in between the three,** so that the sum of the three components exceeds the individual benefits from each component alone. Interesting also to note that none of the projects mentioned above has ventured so far into a response to the Syrian crisis, while AGL has taken this challenge.

It was also interesting to note how the words UNDP and ART GOLD were used interchangeably by all stakeholders, which suggests that the boundaries between both seem to have vanished. So for the AGL stakeholders, ART “reflects” UNDP and vice-versa, to the extent that other donors wanting to intervene in the areas where AGL are working are often referred to as “UNDP”!

Figure 1 below presents a “tag cloud” of the trends in the answers of AGL stakeholders at the local level when asked to describe their “history” with the programme (excluding the words UNDP and ART GOLD which appeared too frequently). Obviously, AGL paved way for a new culture of participation, and is perceived by the majority of stakeholders as “different from other donors”, in the sense that it did not come with a pre-determined set of interventions, but – on the very contrary – responded proactively to the needs and priorities that emerged from the Regional and Thematic Working Groups that were brought together as part of the AGL approach.



Municipalities and Municipal Unions proved also to be the most appropriate entry point of the programme, since they contributed to the bridging of the gap between the vision and aspirations at the local level and the (missing) sectorial and thematic priorities at the national level, confirming hence the “territorial articulation” dimension that lies at the core of the ART approach. A further deepening of this “articulation” would have required however more decision making and financial autonomy, which unfortunately is still pending, waiting the approval of a structural reform leading to a true decentralization policy in Lebanon and despite the fact that decentralization is one of the flagship measures of the Taif accord[[19]](#footnote-19) but which – in practice – was never implemented.

As mentioned earlier, one of the key features of the AGL approach proved to be the tight association of participatory planning with the possibility to implement the project ideas and sectorial priorities that emerged from the participatory process. This clearly shows on the tag cloud as well, where the statement “Projects”, “Listened to Needs” and “Introduced us to Participatory Planning” seem to be the flagship features of AGL, but also the “commitment to continue” which emerged spontaneously from the discussions.

Unsurprisingly, local AGL stakeholders deplored the loss of momentum which appears to have taken place from 2012 onwards, when the earmarked funds for community projects under Phase I dried-up. The design of Phase II was also significantly impacted by the (escalation of the) Syrian crisis which also poses questions on whether the classical AGL design remains valid in an emergency context and whether it can address in an efficient and effective way the relief-to-development nexus.

**Relief-to-development through AGL**

Within the UN response to the Syrian crisis framework, it appears clearly that UNDP is stepping in as a major player in addressing the relief-to-development nexus. The work of UNDP acquires additional significance as the number of registered refugees exceeded 1.1 million by the end of July 2014 which poses serious threats on social cohesion in a country already fragilized economically and politically.

The “articulation” of the different dimensions of territorial planning and development and which was a key driver of AGL success during Phase I becomes somehow secondary to the concerns voiced out by the stakeholders that were interviewed during the field phase of this evaluation and which are summarized in the tag cloud below when they were asked to describe the way Syrian crisis is affecting their territories. For municipalities, the main concerns revolve around addressing water shortage, sewage, infrastructure, electricity and security problems, coupled with a general perception that the Syrians are monopolizing donor’s attention and support while Lebanese in general and Lebanese poor in particular are left on their own to face the effects of the crisis. Two other fundamental observations also emerge from the tag cloud:

1. The perception that Lebanese are feeling like “guests in their own villages and towns” and which can be the predicament for social unrest and ethnic clashes that can be triggered by any external shock[[20]](#footnote-20), and;
2. The absence of any form of additional support from the government to the local authorities despite the fact that the population size in some villages more than doubled, and which puts absolute priority on facing the direct impacts of the crisis at the expense of long-term territorial planning and development such as in AGL.

The question that poses itself hence is whether AGL can be one of the UNDP tools or instruments in addressing the new situation arising from the Syrian crisis. And subsequently, how can AGL adapt to the complex and continuously evolving landscape dictated by the Syrian crisis and where focus is primarily on relief while keeping its development-driven mandate and specificity?

For UNDP, it appears that AGL has become a “… natural way for approaching development…”[[21]](#footnote-21) according to the Lebanon Programme Manager, and AGL has been brought forward in all the UNDP strategic documents addressing the Syrian crisis, most notably under the “Livelihoods and Social Cohesion Working Group” that UNDP is co-chairing with UNHCR or the Host Communities Support Platform which is also coordinated by UNDP.

With respect to how AGL can contribute to UNDP’s efforts in addressing the Syrian crisis, the findings of this evaluation suggest three possible entry points:

1. ***By mobilizing the AGL network***, without necessarily sticking to the Regional and Thematic working group format or even to the AGL name, first because the needs generated by the Syrian crisis differ significantly amongst territories and even from one village to another, and second because in times of crisis, long term thematic planning is overshadowed by the need to address more pressing emergencies, and hence “branding” the response as “AGL” might create confusion.
2. ***By capitalizing on the LEDAs*** as a locally rooted implementation arm and which can transform funding opportunities available for the mitigation of the effects of the Syrian crisis into territorial development opportunities that bring together different territorial actors around a common thematic expertise and which can also help LEDA’s in developing their own resources.
3. ***By aligning different opportunities available for relief along a broader territorial development vision*** (for example aligning small scale agriculture development projects that are made available for the mitigation of the Syrian crisis effects into a broader territorial agricultural development plan)

We close this section on relevance by highlighting a major breakthrough that was achieved by the programme, namely managing to find a legal modality for LEDAs despite the very restrictive Lebanese legislation which prevents municipalities from working with the private sector and/or NGOs (and which puts an additional importance on the success of LEDAs in order to demonstrate the added value from this partnership)

On the other hand, a significant missed opportunity is the lack of articulation of the national dimension of the programme, either through a more proactive involvement of the National AGL Committee in providing guidance and oversight to the programme, or through critical feedback on policy issues and learning from experience from the field to the national level. In fact, each regional AGL programme managed to establish linkages with the concerned Line Ministry (Agriculture, Health, Social Affairs, …) but mainly at the field level, and these linkages usually did not transcend into the national level or across regions.

***5.2 Effectiveness***

The evaluators judgement on the effectiveness of AGL is mostly perception-based rather than empirical, due to the very limited access to secondary data within the timeframe foreseen for the mission, the absence of a baseline against which effectiveness (and also impact) can be determined, and the lack of a systematic monitoring and evaluation system (particularly indicators and their means of verification) which can enable a more informed approach to effectiveness.

It must be noted that these gaps are not new to AGL and were mostly flashed in the Mid-term External Review[[22]](#footnote-22) of the programme which took place in July 2009. The main findings of the MTR relevant to this evaluation are summarized in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Findings of the 2009 Mid-term review of AGL** | **Constraints observed during the mission** |
| Lack of systematic reporting which remains *ad-hoc* and based on requests from donors | The only secondary data relevant to AGL that we could review prior to the mission was the aggregated annual report for 2007-2012 as well as the annual reports for 2011/2012/2013 |
| Need for a more structured monitoring system | Despite the wealth of information and the realizations on the ground that we could observe, no baseline or regular reporting against indicators could be provided  |
| Lack of systematization of experiences, best practices and lessons learned | Despite the presence of a wealth of tacit knowledge (some AGL officers are the “living institutional memory” of the programme) no structured documentation on systematization or lessons learned could be provided  |
| Need to activate the National Committee and the Programme Management Board | The only national counterpart we could interview was CDR |

Maybe also to give justice to AGL management, other aspects of the MTR linked to the internal dynamics of the programme, such as the recruitment of key staff or a more pro-active involvement of the CTA and the Area Managers in the daily management of the programme could be very clearly observed, whether through their weekly meetings or through the interactions with the Area Managers on the ground, and their intimate knowledge of the area and its stakeholders[[23]](#footnote-23)

Based on the above, and according to what is documented in the annual reports and to what has been reported by the stakeholders and area officers during the visits, AGL’s activities seem to have been implemented and their intended outputs achieved, within the limitations described in the above table and which should be eventually addressed, at least during Phase II of the programme.

The more evident achievements that we could observe were at local level, although we could also sense different levels of “maturity” amongst the four regional teams (North and BSS more experienced than South and Beqaa), which can be also attributed to the change in the leadership at the Area Management level[[24]](#footnote-24), but all four offices are showing the same level of commitment and enthusiasm, and have an evident relationship of trust with the local stakeholders, in the sense that none of these stakeholders raised any substantive issue related to the performance of the local teams.

The full integration of AGL under the Social and Local Development Programme of UNDP at the central level seems also to have enhanced effectiveness, in the sense that the wider AGL network was also included in other projects and programmes executed by UNDP[[25]](#footnote-25), leading hence to the consolidation of the existing relationships and mutual trust.

As highlighted earlier, the evaluators would have loved to see evidence of systematization which consolidates the work done at the regional level into a wider national approach and contradicts the impression of working in fours “regional silos” rather than a national programme that gets nurtured from the feedback of the regional experiences, especially in terms of development of methodological and field guides, compendia of lessons learned, progress against baselines and objectives, etc… This does not rule-out the fact that “tacit systematization” had actually taken place, but it remains confined to the closed circle of immediate implementers and vulnerable to the changes in staff and/or municipal leadership.

The same applies to decentralized cooperation, where the AGL approach has the merit of being solidly anchored to a broader territorial perspective and linked to an in-depth knowledge of territorial actors, but there has been no systematization or critical feedback on the lessons learned from implementation whether on the positive side (what works well, how, with whom) or on the less positive (constraints, local realities, forms of cooperation, expectations of the different parties, etc..). It is also very difficult to have a say about the dynamics of the cooperation and whether all Decentralized Cooperation partnerships brought added-value to the participating territories and what can be done to improve and/or discontinue the partnerships with no evident added value.

Last but not least, the work of LEDAs seems to be confined to the territories they serve, although a horizontal collaboration between the four LEDAs could potentially lead to efficiency gains and cross-fertilization of approaches and methods (institutional setup, interaction with “clients”, development of joint projects, etc…)

We close this section of effectiveness by strongly inciting AGL to dare “take photos in funerals”[[26]](#footnote-26) in the future, in the sense of being more critical in its reporting about difficulties and challenges faced and because the entire AGL journey is taking place along a learning-by-doing mode where failure and/or bottlenecks has a learning curve as important as success.

***5.3 Impact***

Both evaluators believe that impact is better assessed from a contribution rather than an attribution angle and in that regard the contributions of AGL seem to be numerous, although based on the perceptions of evaluators rather than on empirical baseline or *ex ante* data.

Much like effectiveness, the impact of AGL on the sector-wide level and the national level is far less obvious than the one that could be observed at the local level, partly because of the absence of baseline and monitoring data (that can determine for example the impact of AGL on the beekeeping sector or the eco-tourism sector beyond what is reported in terms of outputs and activities) and partly because the interviews and the field visits were mostly directed towards UNDP management and senior staff as well as the local stakeholders and LEDAs.

On the local level, it appears clearly that AGL has contributed to a paradigm shift in approaching local governance in the Lebanese areas where it intervened. The programme started in the aftermath of the 2006 war on Lebanon in four of the most affected regions, and subtly channelled the momentum for reconstruction and recovery into longer-term territorial development.

Almost all local stakeholders agreed on the pioneer role of AGL in leading participating territories into collaborative planning and in transcending concepts such as health care from a reductionist dispensary approach into the wider and more comprehensive community health approach and in introducing peer-to-peer support by bringing relevant European experiences into these territories through decentralized cooperation. The same applies across all sectors where the programme intervened, namely education, municipal social support, agriculture and environment. Much like health, each of these sectors benefited from structured participatory processes at the thematic and regional levels and from exchange of experiences and know-how through decentralized cooperation.

The field visits reveal a marked maturity in the application of the Community Health Approach through the AGL model (particularly in BSS, but also in the Beqaa) as well as a new tradition of implementing Municipal Social Support Offices (also in BSS) and where convincing linkages have been made with the respective line Ministries, mainly Health and Social Affairs. The evaluators also noted during the field visit convincing linkages between the AGL model and the Ministry of Agriculture through the Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute – LARI (mainly in the Beqaa and North Lebanon), yet the empirical elements at hand are too few to transcend these linkages and/or collaborations into impact *per se*.

The culmination of these processes was the establishment of LEDAs as one of the first concrete materialization of Public Private Partnership at the service of territorial development in Lebanon, and in which AGL succeeded while many other projects and programmes have failed, blaming it on the restrictive national legislation of Lebanon. AGL (with the support and backup of UNDP) managed to bypass this restrictive enabling environment and has hence paved way for a new inclusive approach in addressing Local Development in Lebanon which allows to bring all territorial actors on board within a clear structured framework, while traditional approaches were previously restricted to municipalities and line ministries.

And while it is too early to critically evaluate the nascent LEDA experience[[27]](#footnote-27), the evaluators want to stress that LEDAs are “too important to fail” in the sense that a failure of LEDAs would abort any future effort to address local development from a comprehensive territorial approach along the model pioneered by LEDAs.

It is also interesting to note an unplanned positive outcome of AGL which is the fostering of consensus building and dialogue among various political/religious groups at local level, and which acquires additional relevance in the current troubled political context of Lebanon, and where virtually all regions bring together under an AGL umbrella stakeholders who disagree in politics but come together to think about the sustainable development of their shared territory.

We close this section by mentioning the impact of the Syrian crisis on the second phase of the AGL programme and where AGL is struggling to keep a minimum developmental momentum amidst concerns on how to deal with the immediate social, economic and environmental repercussions of the Syrian crisis on the four territories covered by the programme. In that sense history seems to be repeating itself, in the sense that AGL was facing a comparable situation during its early start in 2007 as Lebanon was still recovering from the 2006 Israel war on Lebanon and AGL managed to channel the recovery momentum into a developmental one from 2008 onwards and managed to mobilize international support to the process through decentralized cooperation. The key challenge hence would be to find niches under the present response to the Syrian crisis (probably under “stabilization” and “social cohesion” headlines) and implement its tools and approaches both into the UNDP programmes and the Lebanese national and municipal initiatives.

***5.4 Sustainability***

The sustainability of AGL appears to be intricately dependent on the possibility of its Boundary Partners to sustain the structures and processes initiated by the programme and continue “utilizing” them in a long-term planning and territorial development perspective, and most importantly, to find added-value and return on investment from any institutional and/or financial investment in AGL.

“Boundary Partners” is a terminology derived from Outcome Mapping[[28]](#footnote-28) and departs from the assumption that a programme with a set of pre-determined objectives (and often limited) resources should focus in its strategy on individuals, groups, and organizations with whom the programme interacts directly to effect change and with whom it can anticipate some opportunities for influence.

If we look critically at the AGL experience from a Boundary Partners angle, it appears clearly that the AGL pillar with the most promising prospects for sustainability is the **LEDAs component**. The institutional buy-in of LEDAs appears very strong since LEDA “owners” (Founders and Board) include Chambers of Commerce, Municipal Unions, Cooperatives, Civil Society, Academia and relevant Line Ministries. Their strategic and operational plans are also geared towards sustainability, in the sense that there is a clear UNDP exist strategy on one-hand (the 75%-50%-25% gradual phasing out of the UNDP support) and the possibility to collect membership fees and raise income by the LEDAs on the other.

As hinted earlier, the sustainability of LEDAs lies in their ability to establish themselves as a federating entity for all actors within the territories they serve, but also to offer a significant return on investment for their constituency. If we look at the list of the LEDA “owners” it appears clearly that any sustainability strategy should closely associate Municipalities and Municipal Unions as the primary “Boundary Partner”. In fact, most local development experiences in Lebanon have shown that Municipalities and their Unions are unable under the current municipal laws (and practices) to sustain Local Development Offices or Planning Bureaus and LEDAs in that regard can become a demand-driven and cost-effective solution for territorial marketing, investment promotion and sector-specific responses. A Municipality or Union would be ready to pay an annual membership fee for a LEDA (10,000USD in BSS, 1,350 USD in rural areas) if and only if it is getting direct and/or indirect benefits equivalent or exceeding this amount. Otherwise the municipal councils will oppose any further support to LEDAs.

LEDAs should also strive to build a portfolio of projects which serve the territory on one hand and which contributes towards the achievement of financial sustainability on the other (through management fees, financing of human resources expertise, etc…). UNDP is contributing in that regard by closely associating LEDAs to the Host Community Support responses to the Syrian crisis in their respective areas but LEDAs should actively seek additional financing opportunities outside the UNDP realm

The experience of the ***Regional and Thematic Working groups*** is less conclusive, since the observed loss in momentum and the gradual slow-down and even stalemate in the activities of these groups indicates that some essential pre-requisites such as a minimum institutionalization of these groups under existing regional municipal coordination structures (Cluster, Union, Local Development Office, etc…) were not always attained within the lifetime of the programme. In fact, the ToRs of these groups as described in the AGL operations Manual[[29]](#footnote-29) (2009) foresee quite an elaborate organizational structure but does not elaborate much on sustainably or institutionalization. One would argue here that the *raison d’être* of these groups is to serve as ad-hoc consultative bodies for AGL activities, but in this case a clear exit or “landing” strategy would be needed in order to manage the expectations of the local stakeholders. Despite the lack of decentralization’s law in Lebanon, the very recent decision of the Ministry of Social Affaires to adopt the crisis need assessment realized by WGs represent and important path toward their sustainability[[30]](#footnote-30).

The elements available for this evaluation do not allow as well for an in-depth analysis of the sustainability of the ***Decentralized Cooperation partnerships*** that were established and/or spearheaded under AGL, especially in the absence of AGL-specific analytical literature which allows rooms for comparison. It appears however, and based on the feedback on the sample interviewed, that most of the decentralized cooperation partnerships were time-bound (mainly due to the economic crisis that affected the Italian and Spanish municipalities), except those carried by Tuscany and Lazio regions in Italy which were carried along a more sustainable institutional model. Interesting also to note the growing proportion of EU-funded partnerships engaging AGL stakeholders, most notably CBC-MED. Typically these partnerships engage multiple territories and multiple actors, increasing hence the international exposure and the experience of participating territories, but the financial support derived from these partnerships is normally less than in the classical partnerships implemented by AGL.

1. **Best Practices and Lessons Learned**

The incorporation of the AGL’s participative approach and its tools (WGs, LEDAs) into the SLD and LHSP programmes represents the strongest impact of AGL and guarantees the sustainability of its added value in the new situation affected by the Syrian crisis.

WGs can act as institutional and social environment for assessing and prioritizing local needs at the Municipality/Union of Municipality level if the financial context becomes institutionally more stable. In the new context heavily geared towards responding to the repercussions of the Syrian crisis (and which is more likely to continue at least over the short to medium term), WGs maintain a strategic role in needs assessments and in supporting territorial decision-making. It would be pertinent however to feature the WGs more prominently in the “Maps of Risks and Resources” (MRR)[[31]](#footnote-31) approach currently implemented by LHSP.

One of the “shining examples” of the potential of AGL is the Primary Health Care experience in BSS and which also transcended into a broader Municipal Social Support program as well. In this particular context, the (proper) use of the WGs as the privileged negotiation tool for assessing and prioritizing the needs and using medium-term DC partnership (Tuscany Region and AUSL8) in order to effectively transfer thematic knowledge and expertise, together with the proactive commitment of the participating local authorities within the territory led to a sustained paradigm shift which positively affected the entire health sector in BSS.

It is worth mentioning that the AGL experience in BSS (introduction of a primary health care and its strategic integration with social assistance and education at municipal level) will be shortly up-scaled at national level through a forthcoming new agreement between UNDP and Lebanese Government[[32]](#footnote-32). This represents (in its methodology) how AGL should act mobilizing participative tools at local level (WGs, PHCC, SMO) in order to promote innovative initiative for achieving MDG while being aligned on the aid and development effectiveness principles (Paris, Accra and Busan) The evaluators recommend to systematize this experience through a case study.

According to the findings of this evaluation, municipalities and their Unions are unlikely to continue financing LEDAs in a way that guarantees their operational autonomy and financial sustainability beyond the present phase and hence LEDAs (and UNDP) should try and address this issue as soon as possible, because – as highlighted throughout the report – LEDAs are too important to fail as they open endless new possibilities for Local Development in Lebanon. On one hand, the 75/50/25 model seems too quick too soon for LEDAs to reach a critical size of operations, and on the other hand the Syrian crisis is affecting the enabling environment for achieving sustainability.

It must be noted that planning and innovation is not possible without consistent territorial data, which is cruelly missing in the existing LEDAs setup and should be developed further in LEDA’s future plans, especially that one of the core functions of LEDAs should be territorial marketing and investment promotion (bringing the IDAL[[33]](#footnote-33) model to a regional scale). It appears however that most LEDAs are trying to develop financial sustainability models through income generating projects, while it would be more realistic to develop a risk mitigation strategy for income generation based on contributions from LEDA members, fees generated from the management of an annual project portfolio and – if needed – fess from specific projects. More capacity building (and longer term mentoring and support) is needed in all of these areas.

In North Lebanon, a quite long tradition of inter-institutional negotiation between the municipalities and the other local bodies (Chamber of Commerce, enterprises networks and public and private research institutes) supported the rapid transformation of the regional ‘Economy’ WG into the LEDA. Due to its high legitimacy and fast organization of its board and staff, LEDA North is now aware of its potentialities in acting as autonomous centre supporting territories in planning and marketing, and providing services for local enterprises and international donors. The LEDA North expertise in supporting territories in elaborating their Local Development Plans is not an accident and it should be capitalize through a case study.

DC can provide useful external expertise but also networks, to be used in order to consolidate thematic partnership agreements. DC proved to be a very important opportunity for technical and financial support at local level, but it experienced a lack of capitalization of the lesson learned and of the methodologies shared among the partners. Sometimes DC contribution remained strictly embedded in the activity and do not fit into a strategic vision of the comprehensive ongoing process. BIC Lazio underlined this point, identifying some strategic opportunities for LEDAs to participate in some EU funded initiatives during next planning period 2014-2020.

Probably one of the most important points that need to revised (independently from the Syrian crisis since it goes back to at least 2009 when it was flashed in the MTR) is what AGL can achieve at the national level and what mechanisms and tools need to be mobilized in this regard, against the specific background of the Lebanese national situation. Since the evaluators were only able to interview only one national counterpart, we will not venture into a detailed analysis, but rather highlight that based on our observations in BSS (Health) and North (LEDA), national influence IS possible when there is convergence of the appropriate enabling elements.

1. **Recommendations**
2. Municipalities and Union of Municipalities have to be supported in incorporating WG’s analysis as part of their formal Local Development Plans.
3. Procedures for WGs organization, management and functioning have to be shared and compared among the areas where AGL operates. Best practices have to be documented and capitalized through specific case studies.
4. AGL has to guarantee a smoother phasing out of its financial support to LEDAs (75%, 50% and 25% between 2013 and 2014 is too quick too fast).
5. LEDAs have to rapidly demonstrate their autonomous competence in providing territorial marketing and investment promotion services to their territories and in acting as operational managers of project portfolios.
6. LEDAs have to invest in implementing a more structural and systematic procedures for quantitative data gathering and analysis of local socio-economic data.
7. AGL shall support to orient and to train LEDAs staff competences to become autonomous and effectiveness in project management and territorial data research.
8. Municipalities and Union of Municipalities have to be supported in incorporating LEDA’s analysis as part of their formal Local Development Plans.
9. Procedures for LEDAs organization, management and functioning have to be shared and compared among the areas where AGL operates. Best practices have to be documented and capitalized through specific case studies.
10. LEDAs should use the network of DC European partners in order to consolidate thematic transnational partnership agreements supporting local initiatives through EU financing schemes.
11. DC partners have to subscribe a medium-long term agreement with target communities, avoiding ‘eat and run’ approaches. Criteria for selection of the DC partners should be more focused on their specific technical added value and on their availability to continuity in the exchanges.
12. AGL has to guarantee a more intense coordination (both at management and implementation levels) between the different areas where the programme operates. Weekly meetings between area and portfolio managers have to be introduced systematically, not only in the more ‘critical’ phases of the programme life. Periodical meetings between LEDAs and WGs have to be institutionalized as part of their learning and disseminating processes.
13. AGL has to reactivate and use the National Committee as the institutional tools for periodic and systematic dialogue between UNDP and the Lebanese Government (Ministries and CDR). A quarterly meeting is recommended for the all duration of the programme.
14. ART International should support Lebanese local practices providing comparative case studies and best practices from all over the world referred to the most sensitive problems of the area (relief-development management; competences for achieving the financial autonomy of LEDAs; building local development plans; methods for participative territorial data gathering and analysis; diaspora engagement in local development; etc.). More efforts in capitalization and dissemination of the most innovative and effective solution to shared problems have to be developed.
15. Last but not least, AGL should implement the recommendations of its Mid-Term Review in 2009 which are echoed in the present evaluation (Results-based management, systematic M&E and systematization of lessons learned and experience from implementation).

**Annex 1 - List of acronyms**

AGL - UNDP “ART Gold Lebanon” Project

ART – UNDP “Articulation of Territorial Networks for Sustainable Human Development” Programme

BIC – Business Innovation Centre

BSS - Beirut Southern Suburbs

CDR – Lebanese Council for Development and Reconstruction

CTA – AGL Chief Technical Advisor

DC – Decentralized Cooperation

EU – European Union

IDAL - General Office of Investment Promotion

LEDA - Local Economic Development Agency

LHSP – UNDP/MoSA “Lebanese Host Communities Support” Project

M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation

MDG - Millennium Development Goals

MoSA – Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs

MRR – Maps of Risks and Resources

MTR - 2009 AGL Mid-term External Review

OECD-DAC – Development Aid Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PHCC – Primary Health Care Centre

SHD –Social Human Development

SLD - UNDP “Social and Local Development” Programme

SMO – Social Municipal Offices

ToR - Terms of References

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

WG – Working Group

**Annex 2 - List of people interviewed (Agenda)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **DAY** | **DATE** | **FROM** | **TO** | **MEETING****LOCATION** | **MEETINGS DONE WITH** |
| Monday | 14th | 2pm | 3pm | Office ART Gold | Marina Lo Giudice |
| 3pm | 4pm | Office ART Gold | Area managers: AGL North,Beqaa, South, BSS |
| Wednesday – BSS | 16th | 10am | 11am | Office ART Gold | BSS Area Manager  |
| 11.30am | 12.30am | Municipality ofHaret Hreik | Deputy Mayor |
| Thursday – BEQAA | 17/07/2014 | 08:50 AM | 10:30 AM | Depart from Beirut toHosh Harimi |  |
| 10:30 AM | 11:00 AM | Meeting with the Head ofHosh Harimi Municipality(Mr. Mahmoud Rabah) andvisit PHCC in Hosh Harimi | Head of Hosh Harimi Municipality:Mr. Mahmoud Rabah |
| 11:15 AM | 12:15 PM | Meeting with the Union of Al Sahel Municipalities | Head of Al Sahel Union of Municipalities: Mr. Mohammad Al MajzoubHead of Education Sector: Khaled SmailyMember of Education Sector: Ahmad MuradHead of Agricultural Cooperative For Milk Collection: Ibrahim Al Majzoub |
| 12:30 PM | 13:00 PM | Visit the PublicMarket in Ghazze |  |
| 13:15 PM | 13:30 PM | Visit the Agricultural Cooperative For Milk Collection | Head of Agricultural Cooperative for Milk Collection in Ghazze: Ibrahim Al Majzoub |
| 14:00 PM | 15:00 PM | Meeting with LEDA Team (LEDA’s Office, Zahle) | 1. Ali Abou Ali
2. Kamal Sayqali
3. Tony Hajjar
 |
| Friday | 18th | 10am | 11am | CDR | Amal Karaki |
| Monday | 21st | 4.30pm |  | Raghed Assi Office | Raghed Assi |
|  |  | 6pm |  | Luca Renda Office | Luca Renda |
| Tuersday – NORTH | 22th | 08:30 AM | 10:00 AM | Depart from Beirut to Tripoli |  |
| 10:00 AM | 11:45:00 AM | Meeting with LEDA  | Management Board of North LEDA |
| 11:45 AM | 12:30 PM | Departure to Akkar  |  |
| 12:30 PM | 13:00 PM | Visit the soil and water Lab inLARI Station  |  |
| 13:00 PM | 14:00 PM | Meeting withAgricultural WGin Akkar  | Michel Issa El KHoury the Head of LARI Station.Mohamad EL Khatib the head of union of beekeepers cooperative in Akkar.Hikmat Saaba, the representative of the United Agricultural cooperative in Akkar.Shahir Mohamad the head of agricultural cooperative in Drieb – Akkar , |
| 14:00 | 14:30 | Departure from Akkar to Tripoli |  |
| 14:30 PM | 17:00 PM | Quick Lunch andmeeting withNorth Team |  |
| 17:00 | 18:15 | Departure to Beirut |  |
| Wednsday – BSS | 23th | 10.00 | 12.00 | BSS - Meeting with the Management boardof the LEDA |  |
|  |  | 12.30 | 2pm | BSS - Meeting with theWorking group onEducation at Mreyjeh municipality |  |
|  |  | 6pm |  | BSS – Meeting with the Mayor of |  |
| Thuesday - SOUTH | 24th | 8:30am  |  | Departure from Beirut |  |
|  |  | 9:30  | 10.30 | meeting atSouth office |  |
|  |  | 11:00 am | 13.00 | meeting LEDA |  |
|  |  | 14:00 pm | 16.00 | meeting with Regional Working Group (Zahrani)) |  |
|  |  | 5:00 pm   |  | Departure to Beirut |  |
| Friday | 25th | 3 pm |  | Office ART | Debriefieng with Raghed Assi, Marina Lo Giudice, AGL Area Managers |
| Wednesday | 30th | 4.30pm | 6pm | ITALY | Telephone interview with Luigi Triggiano (AUSL8 Arezzzo and Tuscany Region) |
| Thursday | 31st | 12am | 13am | ITALY | Telephone interview with Andrea Belloni (BIC Lazio) |

**Annex 3 - List of key reference documents**

Panova E., UNDP ART GOLD Lebanon Project. External Review, UNDP, July 2009

UNDP, Proposed Strategic Guidelines for the ART GOLD Lebanon Programme, January 2008

UNDP, UNDP ART GOLD LEBANON PROGRAMME. Annual Report 2011, 2012

UNDP, UNDP ART GOLD LEBANON PROGRAMME. Annual Report 2012, 2013

UNDP, UNDP ART GOLD LEBANON PROGRAMME. Annual Report 2013, 2014

UNDP, UNDP ART GOLD LEBANON PROGRAMME. Report 2007 -2012, UNDP, April 2013

UNDP, UNDP ART GOLD LEBANON PROGRAMME. Proposed Strategy 2013-2015, UNDP, April 2013

UNDP, LEBANON STABILIZATION AND RECOVERY PROGRAMME. Supporting Resilience in a time of Crisis, 2014

UNDP, Lebanon Host Communities Support Project, 2014

**Annex 4 - Evaluation objectives, criteria and questions**

The general objectives of the evaluation are to:

* Establish the methodology’s pertinence in relation to the Programme’s objectives;
* Determine whether the Programme is effective in facilitating articulation among cooperation actors in the field - particularly decentralized cooperation actors - with the territories’ demands and national development strategies;
* Evaluate the impact of concrete development initiatives implemented through the projects and highlight the Programme’s main contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) at the territorial level;
* Capture the scale of interaction between different player at the sub-national/territorial level; the coordination between different levels of government or multilevel governance; the state-civil society interaction (participation of traditionally excluded groups), horizontal/vertical coordination mechanisms;
* Capture the level of improvement in donors’ harmonization, partners-donors’ alignment and local ownership of the Programme;
* Evaluate whether the Programme and its instruments are effective in strengthening local capacities for articulating territorial thematic networks and promoting Territorial Development Plans;
* Verify the degree of ownership, participation and involvement of the counterparts’ institutions and fulfilment level of commitments made;
* Estimate the contribution of the Programme to the international reflection on cooperation effectiveness from the territorial/local administrations’ perspective;
* Determine whether or how can best been integrated the territorial approach within humanitarian/emergency programmes, building upon the local development systems and mechanisms established in the respective regions to provide an integrated and cross sectorial response to the challenges derived from the Syrian crisis.

These objectives were discussed in-depth during the kick-off meeting of the evaluation with the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) and the four Area Managers of AGL, since they were far beyond what could be achieved within the foreseen resources allocated to the evaluation (2 weeks in the field + 1 week for preparation and report drafting). The CTA hence suggested approaching this evaluation more like a study and where the focus would be put on two main areas:

1. Learning from implementation and how this learning can feed into an improved implementation of the second phase of AGL and;
2. Advise on how AGL can adapt its approach and streamline it with the existing UNDP response to the Syrian crisis

The entire methodological approach and field inquiry was hence re-adapted to reflect on these two questions.

According with the ToRs, the key evaluation criteria (and corresponding evaluation questions) revolve around the following areas of inquiry:

* ***Relevance***: The evaluation assesses the degree to which the project takes into account the local context and development problems. The evaluation reviews the extent to which the objectives and pillars of the Programme (participatory approach through the working groups, Local Economic Development Agencies, and Decentralized Cooperation) are consistent with beneficiary requirements and needs, and assess whether the approach is coherent with the Country's policies. The evaluation will also review the extent to which the project design is logical and coherent, and it assess the link between activities and expected results, and between results and objectives to be achieved;
* ***Effectiveness***: The evaluation assesses the extent to which the Programme's objectives were achieved, compared to the overall project purpose. In evaluating effectiveness it is useful to consider: 1) if the planning activities are coherent with the overall objectives and project purpose; 2) the analysis of principal factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives;
* ***Impact***: The evaluation assesses the main impact effectively achieved by the ART GOLD Programme in the context of reference.
* ***Sustainability***: The evaluation assesses the project capacity to produce and to reproduce benefits over time. In evaluating the project sustainability, it is useful to consider to what extent intervention benefits will continue even after the project’s stop and the principal factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the project sustainability.

The present evaluation hence aims at identifying the contribution of the programme to the above-mentioned criteria and at generating lessons learned, both from implementation and from the evaluation process itself.

At international and national levels, the approach consists in a quantitative-qualitative assessment of programme strategy, implementation and sustainability, mixing the desk analysis of performance indicators of the main objective (collected during previous monitoring) with a participatory involvement of stakeholders and beneficiaries (collected during field visit).

At local level, an analysis of WG and LEDAs strengths and weaknesses will be conducted (through group and individual interviews), in order to assess their capacity of taking over the management of methodological innovations acquired through the programme and the capacity of these innovations to make them able to cope with the need caused by Syrian crisis.

The evaluation focuses on the following set of questions matching the standard evaluation criteria:

**Relevance**:

* Is the AGL’s strategy coherent with the priorities of the country?
* Is the AGL’s strategy coherent with UNDP thematic areas?
* At the time of the design and implementation of AGL, have aspects related to equity (gender, disabled, marginalized groups, ...) been taken into consideration?
* Has the AGL been designed to strengthen the capacity of relevant government actors, private, and organizations of civil society to support the development initiatives in the areas of implementation?
* To what extent has AGL been flexible to adapt its procedures and funding to emerging needs and or significant priority changes?

**Effectiveness**:

* How useful have been the products (National Coordination Committee, working groups, international guidelines, local Programme cycle, LEDAs) developed of the Programme to meet the needs of the audience?
* How useful has been the Programme to enforce the role of municipalities in the delivery of quality social services provided?
* To what extent has the decentralized cooperation brought added value in terms of partnerships and funding mechanism?

**Impact**:

* To what extent are introduced instruments and processes contributing to aid effectiveness at the local level through the harmonization of donors’ interventions;
* How effectively are practices and tools piloted locally being used as input for relevant policy development?
* To what extent is the AGL contributing to an increase in institutional capacities;

**Sustainability**:

* To what extent the ART methodology has been adopted by national or local governments as part of development plans harmonizing development interventions?
* To what extent the ART dialogue and consensus-building mechanisms (National Coordination Committee, Territorial Working Groups, and Local Programming Cycle) have been institutionalized and are led by national and local authorities?

**Annex 5 - Evaluation matrix**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Evaluation Criteria** | **Sub-criteria** | **Key Questions** | **What to look for** | **National Level** | **Local Level** | **Data Sources** |
| RELEVANCE | Degree to which the project takes into account the local context and development problems;  | Is the Programme strategy coherent with Human Development needs? | Has the Programme targeted areas and sectors been defined according with HD needs? | X |   | Programme reports; National HD reports; Past Programme Evaluation |
| Has been the Programme result-chain identified in order to address the HD needs? | X |   | Programme reports; National HD reports; Past Programme Evaluation |
| How does the Programme address the human development needs of intended beneficiaries? | X |   | Programme reports; National HD reports; Past Programme Evaluation |
| Has the programme been designed to strengthen the capacity of relevant government actors, private, and organizations of civil society to support the development initiatives in the areas of implementation? | Have the national development actors been involved in Programme design and implementation? | X |   | Programme reports; National counterparts |
| Have the local development actors (local authorities, municipalities, civil society organizations, private enterprises, ecc.) been involved in programme design and implementatino at local level? | X | X | Programme reports; Local counterparts |
| At the time of the design and implementation of the programme aspects related to gender have been taken into consideration? | Provide examples of how the initiative contribute to gender equity (what have been the most positive changes) | X |   | Evaluation Committee; National Counterparts |
| Who were been the leading actors? | X |   | Evaluation Committee; National Counterparts |
| Is the Programmem sufficiently sensitive to the emergency caused by refugee arrivals from Syria? | Did the Programme re-orient their objective due to the Syrian crisis? | X | X | Evaluation Committee; National Counterparts; Local Counterparts |
| What initiatives have been implemented in order to use the Programme to cope with the emergency caused by refugee arrivals from Syria? | X | X | Programme report; Evaluation Committee; National Counterparts; Local Counterparts |
| To what extent and how do the programme coordinated with the other international or national programmes to cope with the emergency caused by refugee arrivals from Syria? | X | X | Evaluation Committee; National Counterparts; Local Counterparts |
| Extent to which the objectives and pillars of the Programme are consistent with beneficiary requirements and needs; | Have the Programme target areas been identified according with beneficiary requirements and needs? | What analysis was done to identify the target areas? | X |   | Programme report; Evaluation Committee |
| Are the Programme objectives and pillars still consistent with the new requirements caused by Syrian refugees ? | Did the Programme realize an ongoing participative assessment of local needs and resources after Syrian Crisis? |   | X | Evaluation committee; Local Counterpart |
| Provide examples of how the Programme objectives at local level are still consistent with the new requirements caused by Syrian refugees |   | X | Evaluation committee; Local Counterpart |
| Who were been the leading actors? |   | X | Evaluation committee; Local Counterpart |
| Approach coherency with the Country's policies; | Is the Programme strategy coherent with the priorities of the country? | How does the Programme align with national strategies in the tematic areas (promoting public access to primary health services, increasing income generation and employment opportunities, promoting conservation and respect for the environment, fostering social integration of young people)? | X |   | Programme reports; National HD reports; Past Programme Evaluation; National counterparts |
| Can the national system be used to implement the Programme ? | To what extent have local actors being involved in Programme design and implementation? |   | X | Local counterparts |
| Extent to which the project design was logical and coherent | Are Programme approaches, resources, methods, conceptual frameworks relevant to achieve the planned outcomes ? | To what extent have the WG foster the achieving of the expected outcomes? |   | X | Local counterparts |
| To what extent have the LEDAs foster the achieving of the expected outcomes? |   | X | Local counterparts |
| To what extent have the decentralized cooperation partnerships foster the achieving of the expected outcomes? |   | X | Donor partners (decentralized cooperation) |
| Have been the resources allocated sufficient to achieve the objecteves of the Programme? |   | X | Local counterparts |
| EFFECTIVENESS | Extent to which the Programme's objectives have been achieved, compared to the overall project purpose | Are the planning activities coherent with the overall objectives and project purpose? | What outcomes did the Programme intended to achieve at national and local level in the tematic areas? | X |   | Programme documents |
| What changes can be observed at national and local level in the tematic areas as a result of the Programme implementation? | X | X | Evaluation Committee; National Counterparts; Local Counterparts |
| Which are the internal factors influencing the achievement (strenght) or non-achievement (weaknesses) of the objectives? | X | X | Evaluation Committee; National Counterparts; Local Counterparts |
| Which are the external factors influencing the achievement (opportunities) or non-achievement (ties) of the objectives? | X | X | Evaluation Committee; National Counterparts; Local Counterparts |
| How useful have been the products (National Coordination Committee, working groups, international guidelines, local Programme cycle, LEDAs)/methodology developed of the Programme to meet the needs of the audience? | To what extent did WG supporte participation of diasporas?  | X | X | Evaluation Committee; National Counterparts; Local Counterparts |
| To what extent did WG cope with internal conflictuality? | X | X | Evaluation Committee; National Counterparts; Local Counterparts |
| Which cooperation between Regional and Thematic WG? | X | X | Evaluation Committee; National Counterparts; Local Counterparts |
| To what extent did WG succed in avoiding project duplication and fragmentation? | X | X | Evaluation Committee; National Counterparts; Local Counterparts |
| To what extent is the LEDAs framework flexible? | X | X | Evaluation Committee; National Counterparts; Local Counterparts |
| To what extent can participative amd entrepreneurial approach cohexist in LEDAs?  | X | X | Evaluation Committee; National Counterparts; Local Counterparts |
| Provide examples (what have been the most positive changes) | X | X | Evaluation Committee; National Counterparts; Local Counterparts |
| Who were been the leading actors? | X | X | Evaluation Committee; National Counterparts; Local Counterparts |
| How useful has been the Programme to enforce the role of municipalities in the delivery of quality social services provided? | Provide examples (what have been the most positive changes) |   | X | Local Counterparts |
| Who were been the leading actors? |   | X | Local Counterparts |
| To what extent has the decentralized cooperation brought added value in terms of partnerships and funding mechanism?  | Provide examples (what have been the most positive changes) |   | X | Local Counterparts; Partners donors |
| Who were been the leading actors? |   | X | Local Counterparts; Partners donors |
| IMPACT | Main impact effectively achieved by the ART GOLD Programme in the context of reference | To what extent are introduced instruments and processes contributing to aid effectiveness at the local level through the harmonization of donors’ interventions? | Have been signed agreement among partner donors at local level in order to join common projects? |   | X | Programme documents; Local counterparts; Partner donors |
| Have been identified actions, spaces/structures for coordination among partner donors at local level?  |   | X | Local counterparts; Partners Donors |
| Provide examples of effective harmonization at the local level (what have been the most positive changes) |   | X | Local Counterparts; Partners donors |
| How effectively are practices and tools piloted locally being used as input for relevant policy development? | Have the WGs designed a local development plan for post-2012 ? |   | X | Local counterparts |
| Have LEDAs designed a local development plan for post-2012 ? |   | X | Local counterparts |
| To what extent did the Programme practices and tools involve the other local actors ? |   | X | Local counterparts |
| To what extent is the Programme contributing to an increase in institutional capacities? | To what extent the practices and tools piloted locally are lead by local authorities? |   | X | Local counterparts |
| Have the Programme been incorporated in Local/Municipal development Plans ?  |   | X | Local counterparts |
| SUSTAINABILITY | Programme capacity to produce and to reproduce benefits over time; | To what extent the ART methodology has been adopted by national or local governments as part of development plans harmonizing development interventions? | Has the ‘partecipatory approach’ (participative needs assessment and WG) became part of the national/local instrument for development interventions ? | X | X | National counterparts; Local counterparts |
| Has the ‘territorial planning’ (WG and LEDAs) became part of the local instrument for development interventions ? | X | X | National counterparts; Local counterparts |
| Have been signed cooperation agreement with decentralized coopetation partners at local level in order to join post-2012 common projects? | X | X | Evaluation committee; Local counterparts; Partner donors |
| To what extent intervention benefits will continue even after the project is concluded; | To what extent the ART dialogue and consensus-building mechanisms (National Coordination Committee, Territorial Working Groups, and Local Programmeming Cycle) have been institutionalized and are led by national and local authorities?  | To what extent the ART dialogue and consensus-building mechanisms have been institutionalized ? | X |   | Evaluation committee; National counterparts |
| To what extent the ART dialogue and consensus-building mechanisms are led by national and local authorities?  | X | X | National counterparts; Local counterparts |

1. Personal communication to the evaluators by Dr. Marina Lo Giudice, UNDP AGL Chief Technical Advisor during the drafting and validation phase of this report [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ART stands for Articulation of Territorial and Thematic Networks of Cooperation for Human Development [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Several annual reports (2011, 2012, 2013, 2007-2013) are available to follow the evolution of the project, as well as a mid-term external review (2009) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The design of the project foresees a National Coordination Committee The overall coordination of the project is performed by the National Committee (NC), which has as members the President of the Council for Development and Reconstruction, he UNDP Resident Representative, the General Director of Administrations and Local Authorities at the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, the General Director of Ministry of Economy and Trade, the General Director of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ambassadors of the donor countries contributing funds and technical assistance to the ART LEBANON Project [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See the document: *UNDP ART GOLD Programme. Proposed Strategy 2013-2015*, UNDP, Beirut, 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See footnote 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. UNDP, *Resilience-based development in response to the Syrian crisis*, UNDP, December 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. UNDP, *Lebanon Stabilization and Recovery Program. Supporting Resilience in a time of Crisis*, UNDP, 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. UNDP, *Lebanon Host Communities Support Project*, UNDP, 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. OECD = Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, DAC = OECD’s Development Assistance Committee check <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/55/0/44798177.pdf> for an updated (2010) version of the standards [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <http://www.mymande.org/sites/default/files/EWP5_Equity_focused_evaluations.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The list of the documents that have been consulted is in Annex 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Our particular admiration goes to the Area Managers and field staff who were observing Ramadan, yet made themselves available as much as the evaluation needed. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See <http://www.lb.undp.org/content/dam/lebanon/docs/Governance/Projects/3238.pdf> (page 7/41) under the UNDP project “Support to Civil Service Reform and Management Capacity of Public Administration” executed by OMSAR. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See [www.esfd.cdr.gov.lb](http://www.esfd.cdr.gov.lb/) for a description of the ESFD activities [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. [www.bt-villes.org](http://www.bt-villes.org/) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. [www.ciudad-programme.eu](http://www.ciudad-programme.eu/) and [www.enpicbcmed.eu](http://www.enpicbcmed.eu/) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. [www.baladi-lebanon.org](http://www.baladi-lebanon.org/) [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. See <http://ddc.aub.edu.lb/projects/pspa/conflict-resolution.html> for a comprehensive article explaining the Taif accord and the challenges facing its implementation [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. For example similar to what happened in the village of Arsal while this report was being finalized and where Informal Tented Settlements (ITS) were completely burned by angry locals following attacks by ISIS on the Lebanese Army. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Personal communication to the evaluators by Dr. Raghed Assi, UNDP Lebanon Portfolio Manager [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Surprisingly, no mention of the mid-term review was mentioned in the TORs of the present mission [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. A special mention to Mr. Abdelghani Ladkani, Field Officer of the Beqaa office and who is the institutional memory of the AGL in the Beqaa despite the change of 3 area managers over the last two years [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. The new South Area Manager took office in the beginning of 2014 (and was handling both the South and the Beqaa at some point), while the new Beqaa Area Manager has been in office for less than two months at the time of the field visits. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Throughout the interviews, the Area coordinators mentioned that other projects under the socio-economic development program of UNDP were executed through the AGL network. For example the fishermen’s port in Sarafand for the Union of Municipalities we met (Zahrani) which is executed under another UNDP program. In the North, projects in Dreib (we met the Head of the Union of LARI North) are executed under an MDG fund program. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. This term was first coined by a regional chapter of the American Engineering Association, who noticed that everyone in the development sector has a tendency to talk only about successes and overshadow failure, despite the very important learning dimension that can be derived from failure. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Institutional setup for LEDAs was finalized in 2011 and staffing and operations started at pilot level in 2012-2013 and is still ongoing, although the momentum is hindered by the repercussions of the Syrian crisis. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. See Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs- by Sarah Earl, Terry Smutylo, Fred Carden (Jun. 2001) [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Produced as part of AGL Mid-Term review by Elena Panova (July 2009) [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Same as 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. As described in the Lebanon Host Communities Support Project (2014), the MRR is a methodology for involving the communities in the production of a multi-sectorial action plan. It fosters the broadest participation of local authorities, civil society organizations and public sector representatives organized in a working group to identify risks and propose solutions, which are translated into local impact projects. The methodology gives the community a leading role in finding the solutions to its problems, in collaboration with all institutions mobilized at municipal level based on ownership and commitment for sustainability. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Personal communication to the evaluators by Dr. Marina Lo Giudice, AGL Chief Technical Advisor and Dr. Dott. Luigi Triggiano, AUSL8 and Regione Toscana. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)