

The Institutional Strengthening of the Ministry of the Environment

ISMOE

An Independent Evaluation

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List of Abbreviations

BDL	Banque du Liban
CDR	Council for Development and Reconstruction
COM	Council of Ministers
COP	Conference of the Parties
EA	Environment Assessment
ESIA	Environment and Social Impact Assessment
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ISMOE	Institutional Strengthening of the Ministry of Environment
IFI	International Financing Institutions
LEPAP	Lebanon Environmental Pollution Abatement Project
MENA	Middle East and North Africa Region
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
METAP	Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Program
MF	Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol
MOE	Ministry of Environment
MOF	Ministry of Finance
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions
NGO	Non -Governmental Organization
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
PMU	Project Management Unit
PROMARE	Protection and Sustainable Development of Maritime Resources
ProM	Programme Manager
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Strategic Environment Assessment
SOER	State of the Environment Report
StREG	Support to Reforms-Environmental Governance
TPM	Technical Project Manager
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	Unitec Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNSF	United Nations Strategic Framework
WB	World Bank
YMCA	Young Men’s Christian Association

Abbreviations used for Evaluation Results

HS	Highly Satisfactory
HU	Highly Unsatisfactory
MS	Moderately Satisfactory
MU	Moderately Unsatisfactory
S	Satisfactory
U	Unsatisfactory

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Executive Summary

I. General Background

1. *At the request of the UNDP/Lebanon which is supporting the Institutional Strengthening of the Ministry of the Environment (ISMOE) (The Project), an external evaluation was made by an Independent Consultant. The Project specific objectives are to: a) provide the needed support to the Ministry of Environment (MoE) to identify and assess technical needs at the national level for capacity development in environmental sustainability and, b) assist in the planning and programming for sustainable environmental development. The Project has two major components namely (i) Assessment of needs for capacity development in environmental sustainability and (ii) Planning and programming for sustainable development.*

2. *The above Project was designed in 2010 for 2 years with a possible extension of two other years ending in 2014. In fact it was further extended to six years instead of four ending on December 31, 2016. The Project is overseen by a Project Board consisting of three senior representatives of the MOE, CDR and UNDP and chaired by H.E. the Minister of the Environment. The MOE is the implementing partner to this Project. UNDP is responsible for ensuring technical and financial implementation of the project for monitoring and ensuring proper use of all funds to assigned activities. Project assurance is provided by the UNDP Energy and Environment Programme and a Project Management Structure was established in the Minister's office and was responsible for day- to- day management of the Project. The Project Management Structure consisted of 9 experts, contracted by UNDP and headed by a Project Manager who is also a Senior Environment Advisor to the Minister. At the time of this evaluation, the composition of the management structure was reduced to five namely the Project Manager and Senior Environmental Advisor to the Minister, the Senior Legal Advisor , the Financial Advisor, the Technical Project Manager, and the Senior Communication Consultant. The total committed amount till December 31 2015, is US\$ 6.05 million of which 5.63 million was allocated from the MOE regular budget (93%), 300,000 is the UNDP cash contribution and ~ 120,000 is the allocation from Solidère. The total disbursement till December 31, 2015 is approximately US\$ 5.08 million with a surplus amount of US\$ ~ 0.97 million left from previous years to be disbursed in 2016.*

II. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

3. *The purpose of this evaluation is to (a) assess relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of the project in terms of achieved outputs and results and contribution to outcome, including identification of lessons learned and good practice; b) revisit the current structure of the project and human resources, with a needs assessment, and an external performance evaluation of existing resources, value-added of various positions, and a gap analysis; and (c) provide recommendations in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the new UN Strategic Framework as well as national priorities.*

4. *The evaluation is a combination of project evaluation and outcome evaluation focusing on whether the activities of the project have resulted in the development of the output attributed to the project namely: "Enabling Environment for sustainable environmental development strengthened." Standard evaluation criteria were developed and related to relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, relationship with*

international financing institutions and donors and sustainability. The proposed methodology that was considered for this evaluation consists of (a) review of the project data and documents; (b) survey questionnaires; (c) an evaluation mission by the evaluator in Beirut from May 9-13, 2016, (d) an assessment of the present management structure and (e) evaluation summaries.

III. Summaries of Findings and Results

5. ***Relevance:*** *The evaluation found that the Project objectives of capacity development and policy and planning of environment sustainability are relevant to Lebanon and to UNDP and therefore the rating is satisfactory. The Project is technically sound in the sense that it has addressed both the capacity building component with the needs for promoting and programming for sustainable development though the interconnect between the two major project components was not laid out. At the Project level, project activities were included as part of an annual work plan prepared by the Project Management Structure and approved by both the MOE and UNDP. This has provided project management with considerable flexibility in deciding the nature, scope and content of individual project activities. Although the monitoring indicators were developed for the two project outcomes and outputs, there were no measurable monitoring indicators for the different activities of the project.*

6. ***Effectiveness.*** *The two Project objectives, which the result framework have considered to be project outputs, are likely to be attained by the end of the Project. The indicators for these are: that sustainable approach is on the agenda of the Council of Ministers, and this is forthcoming given that ISMOE Project has fully participated in the development of RIO +20 report as well as the in the preparation of Lebanon's implementation plan of the Sustainable Development Goals and the National Sustainable Development Strategy under preparation. Also the second target related to the issuance of legislation and its adoption was achieved given the enactment of the Law of the Designated Attorneys for the Environment (Law 251/2014), and of the decrees related to SEA, EIA and the environmental compliance of establishments. The overall evaluation is satisfactory. The Project was also instrumental in strengthening the capacity of the MOE at the institutional level and at the individual level. With respect to the achievement of objectives, the Project scores well on specificity, qualitative measurability and relevancy. It scores less well on time- boundedness.*

7. *However, there was no statement of risks or assumptions included in the result framework, which is considered as a shortcoming in project design. In fact, the Project were faced with two major risks: one internal which is the dysfunctionality at the level of the MOE director general (DG) office; and the other one external which was due to public misperception and misrepresentation as to the role and functions of the MOE . Nevertheless these two issues are not likely to affect the project outcome of environmental mainstreaming mainly because the Project through the professionalism, total dedication of its project management and its high ethical and integrity standards largely contributed to the dissipation of the internal issue by assuming larger responsibilities. As to the external risk, the Project has in fact largely contributed to improve the MOE image by conducting and disseminating studies on the major chronic environmental issues and defending them professionally in Parliament, COM and in the media. There is a general consensus among the*

stakeholders and the press that MOE is no longer considered a side-line ministry but is becoming more visible to the Parliament, the sector ministries, municipalities and to the public through its comprehensive knowledge of Lebanon's environmental issues. Project resilience to the future risk associated with the internal issue is unpredictable in view of the political economy and the frozen decisions of the Council of Ministers. Project resilience to a future risk associated to environmental mainstreaming is moderate to significant as the Presidency of the Council of Ministers is involved and committed to preparation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy. Project monitoring was in the form of quarterly and annual progress reports prepared by the project manager, reviewed and approved by the Project Board. The Project did not undertake any evaluation during the six years which is considered as a shortcoming in project implementation

8. ***Efficiency.*** Overall, the Project has used its financial resources efficiently as derived from the cost analysis of the different activities and its rating is satisfactory. The second component (55.6% of total cost) reflected a higher cost than the first component (44.4%). This is expected as the second component required a generation of reports, studies, preparation of laws and decrees, monitoring and inspection that were performed by local consultants and local consulting firms, whereas the first component was carried out primarily by the Project management and UN volunteers. Salaries of the project management, UN volunteers and local consultants were determined following UNDP salary grade structure. Contracts with local consulting firms were awarded on a competitive basis. The efficiency of the Project can also be measured in terms resource mobilization for such assistance. ISMOE has allocated staff time equivalent to US\$ 250,000 which contributed to the design and project preparation of about US\$ 112 million of project financing from international financing institutions and donors, another measure of good efficiency.
9. *The financing arrangements of this Project were quite complicated and involved a ten-step process which takes between 9-12 months for the funds to be transferred to UNDP; the longest duration is related to the issuance of the funds transfer sheet by the Ministry of Finance. So far in 2016, funds transfer in the amount of US\$ 895,000 has not occurred. The Government's rigid budget system did not easily accommodate the release of funds for the Project. Procedural bottlenecks impeded the timely availability of budget allocations to the project resulting in delays of more than 8 months. However the complicated financial arrangements did not disturb negatively the strategic directions of this Project given that the GOL allocation was uniform every three years and the Project has underspent during the first three years. This enabled the Project to increase its budget on the years of 2013-2015 in order to compensate for its low start up and implement new sub-activities.*
10. *The Project Management Structure is clearly described with responsibilities for each position defined in the annual work plan. At present the staff of the Project Management Structure is reduced to 5 instead of 9. Despite this reduction, the members of the Project Management went far beyond their TORs and their call for duties by assuming to the extent feasible, the functions and responsibilities of the four positions that are now vacant. The ISMOE Project Manager and the Senior Environmental Advisor to the Minister has fully fulfilled her position and her*

outstanding performance made her the backbone of the Ministry but has unfortunately overloaded her with many administrative responsibilities. The Senior Legal advisor has a unique and long term honorific experience in the administration and management of Lebanese civil service. Recruited to be the Legal Advisor for the Project, his functions have been further expanded as a de facto co-chief of staff of the Ministry, reviewing and commenting on all documents that would require the Minister's attention and signature. The technical project manager (TPM) is also a qualified and dedicated professional who was recruited to assist technically the project manager in her different project assignments. Given that there was a lack of competencies in air quality management among the MOE staff, the TPM was assigned to be responsible for the establishment and operation of the air quality management system, a complex undertaking that is not part of the ISMOE activities. The Program Manager (ProM) of the environment and energy department in UNDP/Lebanon was a member of the Project Board, and has fulfilled her responsibilities. The ProM was very supportive in empowering the project management and was instrumental in being flexible and finding solutions for accommodating the requirements of the Ministry of the Environment. The Energy and Environment Officer assumed the role of the project assurance.

11. *In this regard, a rapid assessment of the Project Management Structure showed the following gaps (a) None of the heads of services, who were nominated as of 2012/2013, has an expert that could assist in carrying the strategic and planning functions of the individual services because they are overloaded and understaffed, noting that the project design did not foresee such an arrangement; (b) New staff recruited through the civil service board (17 that will be increased to 27) are reported to be new to their tasks and ill prepared. They are not always supervised by more experienced staff and did not receive any training in project development; (c) There are at present insufficient coordination between the different projects implemented by the MOE especially those related to capacity building and institutional strengthening such as the EU-financed StRG and the World Bank/Italian Cooperation-financed LEPAP; (d) Staff in the project management structure were, contrary to what was anticipated, assumed large administrative tasks; (e) At present there are no appropriate services or departments serving as counterpart to all project activities; (f) There are no manuals and/or guidelines available at the MOE for designing, managing, and monitoring project activities whether at the project management structure or in the different services. Remedies to the above gaps have to be prioritized in function of the available resources.*
12. *Relationship of the ISMOE Project with the International Financing Institutions and Donors.* *One of the remarkable achievements has been the positive and narrow collaboration of the Project with the projects financed by the international financing institutions and donors mainly the EU financed StREG and the World Bank-Italian Cooperation -financed LEPAP. The services of the MOE were aware of the Project activities as the ISMOE assumed their role of major contributor, advisory and follow up on the major project activities. The International Financing Institutions were partly informed of the activities related to legislation, inspection and enforcement and resource mobilization for which there has been adequate linkages. Furthermore the Project activities have complemented and financed specific environmental activities related to the projects financed by the IFIs such as the monitoring and inspection by the YMCA watchdogs, the use of some 10 UN volunteers to assist the services and*

departments in their technical and administrative tasks, and the assignment to the Technical Project Manager to be responsible for the air quality monitoring system. The MOE and UNDP showed great flexibility and understanding in allocating the Project resources for these IFI-financed projects of an estimated amount of US\$ 1.01 million or 19.8% of the total Project expenditures. The use of ISMOE resources is laudable but it has incurred unnecessary large transactions costs to the Project.

13. *In summary, while the ISMOE project used its available resources efficiently, by design, the project's financing arrangements are complicated and the project management needs to be restructured. However project performance introduced a significant transaction cost in order to assist other projects, and lack of an establishment of a coordination and monitoring and evaluation mechanism constitutes a shortcoming that should be addressed in the next phase of the project.*

14. *Sustainability.* *The overall evaluation of the Project activities ranges from satisfactory to moderately satisfactory. Satisfactory achievements are on the review of existing strategies and plans, coordination of ongoing programs, assessment of environmental inspection with the Qaraoun lake as a pilot project development of detailed programmes and proposals, resource mobilization and preparation and issuance of legislation. The development of a prioritized inspection and enforcement plan is still a challenge as one of the short comings of the MOE is the weak monitoring and enforcement. Public awareness activities were rather limited and scattered and were generally not followed up either with more capacity building or with technical support as the impression is that these were rather modest.*

15. *The overall Project is rated as satisfactory as the rating was more satisfactory than moderately satisfactory. Never-the-less some achievements are likely to be sustainable. It is also too premature to achieve an overall sustainability in a Project with multiple activities within a span of six years, as institutional strengthening and capacity building are complex undertakings and time consuming and their results could be only measured in the long term. Overall the Project has helped Lebanon to launch an environmental agenda and start mainstreaming environmental issues, which momentum can no more stop given its importance and the expectations of the Government in this respect. Sustainability is therefore likely.*

IV. Lessons Learned

16. *The conclusion of this evaluation is that, on balance, the case for continuing the ISMOE project is strong, though it needs to evolve to meet changing circumstances. All levels of MOE management and many stakeholders are in favor of the continuation of ISMOE, as they review the benefits of the support they have received for policy development, institutional strengthening and capacity building. In particular, they see considerable value added, and recognize that ISMOE allowed them to address their problems.*

17. *A realignment of ISMOE work would be necessary to take account of the international and national challenges as well as the new opportunities that have occurred since the design of the original ISMOE project. The International challenges are the establishment of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agreement of the Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP-21) . The national challenges are the preparation of the*

Sustainable Development Strategy for Lebanon, and the UN Strategic Framework for Lebanon (2017-2020) which is also under preparation. Both documents aimed to be aligned with the SDGs and to the development of a low carbon economy. Also the StREG and LEPAP are now under implementation and are likely to complement ISMOE's activities related to strengthening the administrative and technical capacity of the MOE.

18. *In view of the change in the environment landscape, it is important that ISMOE evolves in infusing the selected concepts of sustainable development. These concepts for which a reformulated ISMOE can contribute are: (a) Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns in SDG 12; (b) Taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts in SDG 13; (c) Strengthening the means of implementation in SDG 17.*
19. *Based on the above, ISMOE should be realigned in two successive phases. Phase I is a continuation phase of the current ISMOE for 6-9 months in which the Project would Focus on four major interventions: (a) Development and preparation, through a consultative process, of a short and medium term vision for the Ministry of the Environment; (b) Offering a comprehensive training program on project development; (c) Preparing guidelines and procedures for project management, monitoring and evaluation; and (d) Designing and preparing the new ISMOE project for another four years (Phase II). The Project should disengage itself gradually from the technical support that the Project provided to other IFI-financed projects.*
20. *Phase II of the realignment is a four- year redesigned ISMOE project for which ISMOE new objectives should be to strengthen the momentum for policy reform and institution building that could contribute to economic growth, by better use of the environmental assets and resources and their protection against negative impacts of climate change. The newly designed project will re-align its activities to work at two levels for which no other individual donors or international financing institutions are systematically addressing: (a) much further at the upstream to develop with and for the decision makers, strategies, financial scenarios and actions plans to mainstream environment into specific sectors related to economic growth/poverty reduction, taking also into consideration both global and local benefits; and (b) much lower at the downstream to improve at the municipal level, public awareness, managerial and technical competence and public support for planning, designing, implementing and monitoring integrated environmental programs and projects.*
21. *If the reformulation of the Project is considered, there will be many operational implications that will be defined within the context of a new Project Concept Document. The newly reformulated ISMOE would focus on a few key issues, larger and better-funded project activities, and increasing emphasis on policy and on results on the ground. Four important implications are: project management, quality of the outputs, monitoring and evaluation, and level of financing.*
22. *One major implication is an urgent need to restructure the Project Management Structure along the following lines: (a) The Project Management Structure should consist of three tiers: (i) Tiers one is the staff to ensure a smooth operation of the Minister's office. This consists of the Senior Environment Advisor, the Senior Legal Advisor, a Public Relations and External Affairs Officer and an Administrative Clerk; (ii) Tiers two is the staff to ensure the proper implementation and completion of the project*

activities. This will consist of two co-project managers (one recruited by UNDP and the other one nominated from the senior MOE staff to endure continuity and ownership. Both will share the responsibility for day to day management of the project activities); an environment economist; a communication officer and a project assistant; (iii) Tiers three is the establishment of a group of senior national experts with international experience to twin with the head of the services. They will be responsible of policy development, strategic planning and quality control and monitoring of the project activities in their respective Services; (b) A steering committee chaired by H.E. the Minister of the Environment and assisted by the Senior Environment Advisor, and composed of the Ministers' advisors and the heads of services, should be established to provide overall policy guidance, review work programs and resolve any implementation issues related to all the projects co-financed by the international financing institutions and donors.

- 23. With respect of financing, it is anticipated that there is a surplus of almost US\$ 0.97 million from previous years in addition to the refund of ~ US\$ 380,000 from the refund of the Italian Cooperation for the LEPAP PMU, totaling US\$ 1.35 million exclusive of the 2016 GOL allocation of ~ US\$ 0.89 million . This amount could reach US\$ 2.24 million during 2016, and is sufficient to finance the four proposed interventions, recruit staff for the project management structure and launch the newly designed ISMOE project. However if the Project would extend till 2021, it should seek to diversify its resource base and reduce transaction costs in fund raising by (a) ensuring upfront commitments from the Ministry of Finance on financing the newly designed Project at the level of US\$ 895,000 year; (b) tapping into new resources from the Green Climate Fund after MOE be accredited.*

V. General Conclusions and Recommendations

24. The major conclusions of this evaluation are:

- a) The fact that the MOE has allocated 19% from its yearly budget and financed 93% of the project funds is a testimony of ownership to improve the environmental management system and its commitment to environmental mainstreaming.*
- b) The overall evaluation is satisfactory. Satisfactory achievements are on the review of existing strategies and plans, coordination of ongoing programs, enactment of legislation and preparation of studies. The development of a prioritized inspection and enforcement plan is still a challenge and public awareness, communication and lack of monitoring and evaluation are shortcomings.*
- c) The project activities provided significant actions on improving the technical and institutional capacity of the MOE and addressing national priorities that would lead to sustainable development.*
- d) ISMOE pioneering work on the legislation has and will substantially reinforce the legal framework which is considered essential towards moving forward to sustainable development.*
- e) ISMOE collaboration with international financing institutions and donors has been remarkable in terms of technical and indirect financial support they received.*

- f) ISMOE project management and its backstopping by UNDP/Lebanon has been exemplary in terms of professionalism, work discipline, flexibility, problem solving, and policy and technical knowledge. The Project Management stewardship was a key factor that has sustained the capacity building aspect of the project.*
 - g) ISMOE has added value to the improvement of the professional reputation of the MOE to what otherwise would have been a ministry that would have been circumvented or neglected.*
 - h) The project sustainability is rated as moderately satisfactory because its design was incomplete and did not meet all the requirements' expectations. Nevertheless some achievements are likely to be sustainable. At project completion, there are good prospects that the achievements of the development objectives will be maintained.*
- 25. There have been separate recommendations in several sections of this report, the overall recommendations are:**
- a) As the evaluation found that ISMOE showed promise of meeting the expectations set out in the Program Concept Document, a further extension followed by a reformulation of the objectives and outcomes of the Project are necessary to meet the challenges and assist in the formulation and implementation of the SDGs in Lebanon and the UN Strategy Framework.*
 - b) The design of the reformulated ISMOE should follow international practice described in the UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results (2009).*
 - c) The governance and management structures should entail MOE senior management involvement in core decision making from the outset to ensure country ownership and sustainability and a systematic mechanism for consultation with stakeholders and cross –services interactions should be promoted. In addition, devolution of the future project activities to the services and departments should be an encouraging step towards building sustainable capacity in the MOE.*
 - d) ISMOE audience should be expanded beyond the MOE. The ISMOE should expand its beneficiaries beyond the Ministry of the Environment staff and include also selected ministries and municipalities in order to reinforce the process of mainstreaming environment into other sectors.*

Chapter 1

The Institutional Strengthening Project

I. Introduction

1. Since its establishment in 1993, twenty three years ago, the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) has made substantial progress in its institutional and legal framework as described in many documents and reports¹ (SOER 1995, 2002, 2010, CEA 2011). These achievements were the product of the Government commitment to institutionalizing environment management with several international financing institutions (IFI) and donors that accompanied the environment management process through technical and financial assistance in the form of grants. The MOE was faced with two congruent challenges:

- A national challenge for building the Ministry' infrastructure in terms of human and budgetary resources, internal organization and operations, legislation as well as focusing on the environmental fundamentals in terms of policy planning and development, institutional building, project management and monitoring and enforcement. The environment management functions were financially supported by programs from the international financing organizations and donors such as the EU financed Life-Third Countries and SMAP, Italy, METAP, UNDP, and the World Bank.
- An international challenge to participate and meet Lebanon's International Obligations and Conventions. International financing institutions and donors were more and more committed towards assisting Lebanon meeting its commitment under international conventions on global environment as environment no longer an end to itself but a mean to induce global and local benefits. Financing from the GIZ, Norway, Spain, Japan, UNEP, UNIDO, FAO, MAP, the Ozone Multilateral Fund and the Global Environment Facility was instrumental in Lebanon's acquiescence of grants and to repair the degradation of the marine resources.

2. Being the smallest line ministry with 48 technical civil servants, and with the smallest budget allocation which increased from US\$ 3.8 million/year to US\$ 8.4 million a year², this ministry could have not survived without the technical and financial support from the international financing institutions and donors as well from the outsourcing its projects and programs management to UNDP appointed staff and local consultants who worked closely and in harmony with the civil servants of the Ministry staff. Yet this Ministry was very active; it prepared and generated a series of draft laws and decrees, standards and guidelines, national environment action plans etc.

3. The year 2009/2010 marks a milestone in the landscape of the infrastructure of the Ministry of the Environment. Having benefitted from more than US\$ 10.4 million³ in grants for institutional strengthening, which were almost closed by 2008, the Ministry was unable to sustain itself with a government budget of LP 7.325 million (US\$ 4.89 million) and 48 civil services in order to continue to support all the institutional building activities developed during past decade and meetings the commitment of this ministry to mainstream environment and move towards sustainable development.

¹ SOER

² MOE

³ Dr. Manal Moussallem, Private Communication May 2016

4. A snapshot of the 2009/2010 situation showed:
 - a) Dysfunctionality at the level of the MOE Director General office that has disturbed the working system at the Ministry and engendered low staff morale
 - b) Reduction of staff size and staff turnover towards the private sector for better salaries and benefits
 - c) Incomplete and vacant positions in the heads of services and departments which have affected functions, responsibilities and accountability
 - d) A freeze of new staff by the Government accompanied by a freeze in logistics, procurement and communication
 - e) A critical necessity to follow on and expand on the achievements and deliverables developed during the implementation of institutional strengthening projects financed by the international financing institutions and donors.

5. In view of the above constraints, the Council of Ministers has on October 25, 2010 agreed to recruit 23 employees⁴ after receiving also the approval of the Civil Service Board. The budget of the Ministry was subsequently increased to \$ 8.4 million in 2015 and an institutional strengthening project of the Ministry of the Environment (ISMoe, or the Project) financed from the MOE budget was authorized for 2 years in an amount of US\$ 970,000 for a program period 2010-2014, and was to be executed by UNDP office in Beirut. Furthermore, in order to fill in temporarily the human resources gap, the Italian Cooperation provided a Euro 2.5 million to the MOE of which Euro 600,000 were allocated to hire 20 Lebanese staff for one year as well as seconding experts to the Ministry.

6. It is within this context that the Institutional Strengthening Project of the Ministry of the Environment (ISMoe) should be understood. The fact that Government of Lebanon was ready to fill in this vacuum indicated its commitment to strengthen this ministry and allow it to continue to function albeit slow recruitment, staff overloaded, and working tensions.

II. Goals, Objectives and Components of the ISMOE Project⁵

7. The ultimate goal of this Project is to set-up an enabling environment for sustainable environmental development at the national level. Its specific objectives are to:

- a) provide the needed support to the Ministry of Environment (MoE) to identify and assess technical needs at the national level for capacity development in environmental sustainability; and
- b) assist in the planning and programming for sustainable environmental development.

8. This a capacity development project which is the process by which such capacity is being strengthened and sustained at the individual and institutional level. The key drivers to capacity development is ownership, enabling environment, incentives, leadership and knowledge. The Project has two components:

1. Assessment of needs for capacity development in environmental sustainability:

As a first step, national environmental indicators and data should be updated to establish the baseline. This would provide a clearer indication of the status of the environment in different sectors and will assist in determining technical, financial and

⁴ COM Decision 50 dated 25/20/2010

⁵ UNDP Amended Project Document February 2, 2010.

policy needs. In parallel, and in order to target the environmental inspection and enforcement capacity of the Ministry of Environment, the project will develop a range of activities reinforcing the capacities at the institutional level and focusing on the removal of barriers that hinder the inspection and enforcement of environmental policies, plans and activities. This includes undertaking a case study to delineate the short-falls and needs for effective environment inspection and enforcement and the enactment of all relevant application decrees and decisions and the assessment of different enforcement options (such as the environmental police).

2. Planning and programming for sustainable environmental development

As next step, the project will assist MoE in the formulation of an action plan/programme of work and resource mobilization for the implementation of the plan/programme. Reactivation of the NEAP (National Environmental Action Plan) process will also be carried out. The work will be undertaken in a participatory manner and the project will serve to coordinate the on-going and planned initiatives at the MoE. In parallel, the project will develop a communication plan for the Ministry of Environment to promote its mandate and activities in the environment sector and also raise public awareness on the most critical environmental issues.

9. The proposed activities under each of the two components were as follows:

Component 1: Assessment of needs for capacity development for environment sustainability

- 3.1: Review of existing strategies plans projects, studies
- 3.2: Identify data needs and gaps
- 3.3: Coordinate ongoing programmes and studies
- 3.4: Consult with stakeholders
- 3.5: Assess status of environmental inspection, Case study Lake Qaraoun

Component 2: Promoting and Programming for Sustainable Development

- 1.1: Development of national communication plan
- 1.2: Draft a prioritized action plan: reactivation of NEAP
- 1.3: Development of details programmes and proposals to push the action plan forward
- 1.4: Resource mobilization
- 1.5: Revise and issue needed legislation/decrees
- 1.6: Develop a prioritized inspection and enforcement plan

III. Project Design

10. The above Project was designed in 2010 for 2 years with a possible extension of two other years ending in 2014. In fact it was further extended to six years instead of four ending on 31 December 2016. The Project was considered as an amendment to an original UNDP project document signed in November 2004 for one year and with a funding amount of US\$ 41,034 for the purpose of strengthening the role of the Directorate General of the Environment in planning and programming, resource mobilization and capacity development. After a five-year gap, the Project document was amended with different objectives outputs and outcomes and for which a results based framework (as shown in Annex 1) was provided but was incomplete.

11. The amended Project document specifies the overall objectives, focused components, and “tentative” activities. But it did not clearly specify the results chain, the performance measures for each of the objectives, the intermediate outcomes, the risks and assumptions being sought in each of the components, or the extent to which activities would contribute to such the outcomes and objectives. For instance, the capacity building objectives of the Project have not been supported by a clear articulation of what kinds of capacity development would be built at the services or development levels of the Ministry, and how this would be achieved in the different services. At the individual activity level as well, no activities have measurable performance indicators at design.

12. Given the realities of funding in which the Ministry of Finance provides the yearly transfer to UNDP late in the calendar year, the design of this Project is considered more than a framework rather than a fully detailed multi-year project, into which specific activities were developed as part of an annual work plan that was approved by the MOE and UNDP, and could be fitted when funding was made available. Nevertheless the activities that have emerged in tables 1 and 2 below are consistent with the forecast made in the 2010 project document.

Table 1: Description of the Activities under the Institutional Strengthening Project of the MOE:**Component 1: Assessment of needs for capacity development for environment sustainability**

Sub- components	Sub-Activities
Review of existing strategies, plans projects, studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the World Bank study on the Country Environment Analysis • Follow up on SEA for the National Water Strategy • Follow up on the master plan for the protection of mountains, regulating land use in coastal zones and agricultural terrains • Jbail local environmental development • Review of the SWEEP-NET study on the cost of environmental degradation due to Municipal Waste in Greater Beirut • Review of the PCB environmental assessment report
Identify data needs and gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of office equipment, supplies, and cars
Coordinate ongoing programmes and studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical support provided by some ten UN Volunteers on a full time basis to 5 of the 7 different services in MOE
Consult with stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at international meetings and regional meetings (UN, EU, CAMRE) as well as brochures and information booklets for workshops and meetings • Environmental Assessment of the Syrian Conflict & Priority Interventions (2014) and Updated Fact Sheet -December 2015
Assess status of environmental inspection, Case study Lake Qaraoun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection guidelines prepared by the YMCA watchdogs • Preliminary survey and terms of reference for the preparation of the Qaraoun business plan

Component 2: Promoting and Programming for Sustainable Development

Sub-components	Sub-Activities
Development of national communication plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental awareness and raising activities • Brochures and information booklets • Documentaries and TV clips on Rio +20, renewable energy, MOE achievements • Communication campaigns

Sub-components	Sub-Activities
Draft a prioritized action plan: reactivation of the NEAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of the SOER 2010 • Preparation of the RIO+20 report • Update of the Environment Strategy Framework • (NEAP was substituted by the Sustainable Development Strategy currently under preparation by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers in coordination with the MOE) • Preparation of a series of reports to the UN Secretary General concerning the 2006 oil slick on the Lebanese shores
Development of details programmes and proposals to push the action plan forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master plan for the closure and rehabilitation of uncontrolled dumps (2011) • Business Plan for Combating Pollution of the Qaraoun Lake - Main Report (2011) • Preparation of the report on roadmap for quarries rehabilitation and initiation of preparatory studies for 15 pilot quarrying sites of various types across all Lebanon in 2014
Resource mobilization	<p>Participation in the design and development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EU-Financed Support to Reforms-Environmental Governance (StREG) Programme and the Protection and Sustainable Development of Maritime Resources in Lebanon (PROMARE) Programme; totalling ~ 27 million Euro. • The World Bank financed IDF grant for environmental compliance, the Technical Assistance through the Regional Governance and Knowledge Generation (ReGoKo) Project, the Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) Project, the Investment component of the Lebanon Environmental Pollution Abatement Project (LEPAP) Project and the Lake Qaraoun Pollution Prevention Project; totalling ~ US\$ 73 million • Italian Cooperation financed Baalbeck Solid Waste Project, the Solar Water Heating (SWH) Project, the LEPAP technical assistance component and the Hydropower project (a project for the MoEW in in close cooperation with MoE) totalling ~ Euro 8.0 million
Revise and issue needed legislation/ decrees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prepared documentation and participated in meetings related to the enactment of Law of the Designated Attorneys for the Environment (Law 251/2014), and of decrees related to EIA, SEA, Environmental Compliance, and National Council for the Environment ○ Supported the development and issuance of key Ministerial Decisions and Memos for strengthening environment governance, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EIA, IEE and SEA review procedures; • EIA and IEE appeal procedures;

Sub-components	Sub-Activities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation related to urban planning in EIA and IEE reports; • Qualification criteria of consulting firms conducting SEAs, EIAs, IEEs and Environmental Audits; • Procedures for the registration of EIA and IEE reports; • Procedures for environmentally clearing industrial licensing requests. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supported the preparation of draft laws and draft decrees related to air quality, protected areas, integrated solid Waste management, organization of the Environmental Police, the National Environmental Fund, etc.
Develop a prioritized inspection and enforcement plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Setting an initial basis for a system for inspection and enforcement as “Environmental Watchdogs for Environmental Protection” (e.g., periodic, proactive and reactive inspection of nature reserves and sites, quarries, hospitals and healthcare waste treatment facilities, as well as solid waste treatment facilities) ○ Review of the EIA system in MOE

IV. Organization and Management

13. The Project is overseen by a Project Board consisting of three senior representatives of the MOE, CDR and UNDP. MOE is considered to be owner of this project and chairs the Project Board, UNDP is the supplier of technical services and the Council of Development and Reconstruction (CDR) was considered to be the senior beneficiary of the project as CDR is responsible for designing and implementing national development projects.

14. The MOE is the implementing partner to this Project. UNDP is responsible for ensuring technical and financial implementation of the project for monitoring and ensuring proper use of all funds to assigned activities, timely reporting of implementation progress as well as undertaking of mandatory and non-mandatory evaluations for each of their respective components. UNDP is also be responsible for the procurement of goods and services and the recruitment of personnel will be provided in accordance with the UNDP procedures, rules and regulations

15. Project assurance is provided by the UNDP Energy and Environment Programme. Its responsibility is to provide objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions and that appropriate management milestones are managed and met

16. A Project Management Structure was established in the Minister's office and was responsible for day to day management of the Project, project documentation and monitoring and provision of policy and technical advice, as well as technical services to be carried out by individual consultants and/or consulting firms. A nine member project team consisted initially of a full time Project coordinator which assumed a dual function of the Project Manager and Senior Environmental Advisor to the Minister, a part-time Senior Legal Advisor, a part-time Administrative Advisor, a Financial Advisor, a Technical Manager, a Senior Communication Consultant, an External Affairs Officer, a Project Assistant and an Administrative Assistant. At the time of this evaluation, the composition of the management structure was reduced to five namely the Senior Environmental Advisor and Project Manager, the Senior Legal Advisor, the Financial Advisor, the Technical Project Manager, and the Senior Communication Consultant.

V. Project Financing and Disbursement

17. At the time of launching this Project, the initial funding for this project was for two years (2010 and 2011) with an planned budget of US\$ 970,935 of which US\$ 870,935 was in the form of an in cash contribution from the Government and US\$ 100,000 was the UNDP contribution as shown in table 2. The total disbursement till December 31, 2015 is approximately US\$ 5.08 million with a surplus amount of ~ US\$ 970,000 left from previous years to be disbursed in 2016.

Table 2: Project Financing (February 2, 2010- December 31, 2015)

Co-Financiers	Committed Amount in US\$	Disbursement Amount in US\$ till Dec. 31, 2015	Remaining Amount in US\$ as of Dec. 31, 2015
Government of Lebanon	5,627,225	4,660,720	966,505
Solidère	119,968	119,857	~0
UNDP	300,000	300,000	0
Total	6,047,193	5,080,577	966,505

18. Based on the initial two- year budget, an amount of US\$ 551,975 was allocated to the first project component "Assessment of needs for capacity development in environmental sustainability" and the amount of US\$ 418,960 was allocated for the second project component on "planning and programming for sustainable development". Additional budget approvals were included in the annual work plan for the two components, and were provided to UNDP at irregular intervals during the Lebanese fiscal year cycle.

Chapter 2.

The Evaluation Approach and Methodology

I. Purpose of the Evaluation

19. Since the Project is planning to close in 31 December 2016, UNDP has requested that an independent evaluation to be conducted in accordance with the UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results (2009).

20. The purpose of this evaluation is to :

- a) assess relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of the project in terms of achieved outputs and results and contribution to outcome, including identification of lessons learned and good practice;
- b) revisit the current structure of the project and human resources, with a needs assessment, and an external performance evaluation of existing resources, value-added of various positions, and a gap analysis; and
- c) provide recommendations in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the new UN Strategic Framework as well as national priorities.

II. Assumptions and Criteria for the Evaluation

21. The evaluation is a combination of project evaluation and outcome evaluation focusing on whether the activities of the project have resulted in the development of the output attributed to the project namely: **“Enabling Environment for sustainable environmental development strengthened.”** and assessed to what extent the project has contributed to the intended outcome namely the **Government equipped for obligations set forth by international conventions**. Given that the result framework for this project was limited to the first two years and was incomplete, the evaluation interpreted, in consistence with the UNDAF outcome **“Environment consideration are mainstreamed in sectoral and local level strategies policies”**, that reference to international “conventions” meant Lebanon’s Commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in particular **Target 7a which states “to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources”**. Two distinctive elements can be identified in that core objective of MDG #7a. First, there is a need to integrate environmental considerations in sectoral policies (environmental mainstreaming), as the fundamental way of achieving progress on environmental outcomes. Second, the focus should be on environmental outcomes themselves, and the associated need for baseline environmental information and environmental monitoring. Both elements are reflected in this Project.

22. Based on the above, standard evaluation criteria were developed and related to relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, relationship with International Financing Institutions and sustainability, and could be summarized as follows:

Relevance

- **Alignment:** To what extent does the project arise out of a consensus or formal agreement? To what extent is it consistent with the strategies and priorities of Lebanon and UNDP?

- **Design of the Project:** To what extent is project design technically sound, and to what extent does it take account of different and interests of MOE staff, foster the confidence and trust among MOE staff necessary for project implementation, and have clear and monitorable objectives?

Effectiveness

- **Achievement of objectives:** To what extent has the project achieved, or is it likely to achieve, its stated objectives?
- **Capacity building:** To what extent has the project contributed to building capacities at the Ministry's level?
- **Risk to outcomes and impacts:** To what extent are the outcomes and impacts of the project likely to be resilient to risk over time? To what extent have the risks to project outcomes been identified and measures to integrate them been undertaken?
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Has the project incorporated adequate monitoring and evaluation processes and taken care of available findings?

Efficiency

- **Efficient use of resources:** To what extent has the project realized, or is it expected to realize, benefits by using a reasonable levels of time and money?
- **Financing:** To what extent have financing arrangements affected positively or negatively the strategic direction, outcomes, and sustainability of the project?
- **Governance, management, and legitimacy:** To what extent have the governance and management arrangements clearly defined key roles and responsibilities; fostered coordination among donors; contributed to or impeded project implementation and achievement of its objectives; and entailed adequate monitoring of project performance and evaluation of results?

Sustainability

- To what extent are the positive outcomes of the Project likely to be maintained on their own after its termination? This refers to ownership, policy support and responsibility of beneficiary institutions, to their institutional and financial capacity etc.

III. Proposed methodology

23. The proposed methodology that was considered for this evaluation, consisted of:
- a) A review of the project data and documents
 - b) Survey questionnaires
 - c) Mission evaluation in Beirut from May 9-13, 2016
 - d) Assessment of the present management structure
 - e) Evaluation summaries

a. Review of project data and documents

24. The following documents in Table 3 were provided by UNDP and many were reviewed by the evaluator within the time limit allowed, namely:

Table 3: Documents provided for the evaluation

1. The Project Document
2. The Amended Project Document dated February 2, 2010
3. The Annual Progress Reports
4. The major Project Activities namely
a. The review of existing strategies/plans/projects/studies
b. The coordination mechanism for on-going programs and projects
c. The consultation mechanism with stakeholders
d. Assessment of status of environmental inspection
e. The prioritized action plan
f. Proposals to move the action plan forward
g. The Resource Mobilization mechanism
h. The legislation/decrees prepared
i. The inspection and enforcement plan
j. The update of the Environment Strategy Framework
k. Business Plan for the Qaraoun Lake
l. Master Plan for the Rehabilitation of Dumps
m. National Report to the UN Rio+20
n. Lebanon Environment Assessment of the Syrian Conflict
o. The Jbail sustainable development report
p. The Secretary General Reports on the oil slick on the Lebanese shores
5. The Financing plan of the Project
6. The status of commitment, disbursement by activities
7. The Management Structure of the Project
8. The Minutes of meetings of the Project Board
9. The review of annual reports of the Project Assurance Programme

b. Questionnaire

25. A specific questionnaire was sent in advance to the evaluation mission which took place in Beirut from May 9-13, 2016. The questionnaire was divided in four sections namely:

- A. Questions on Capacity Development of the MOE related to
 - 1) Staff competencies
 - 2) Organization and functions
 - 3) Causality
- B. Questions on Capacity Development Outcomes related
 - 1) Initiative
 - 2) Results
 - 3) Networking
 - 4) Coherence
 - 5) Causality
- C. Questions on Project Design and Implementation related to
 - 1) Relevance
 - 2) Effectiveness and Efficiency
 - 3) Project Management
- D. Questions on Project Exit and Future Cooperation

c. The evaluation mission of May 9-13, 2016

26. Subsequently the evaluator travelled to Beirut and held separate interviews during five days as well as telephone conversations with 30 senior staff and representatives from senior staff of the MOE, the Parliamentary Commission for the Environment, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, key line ministries and agencies (such as Ministry of Justice; the Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR); the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR)), as well as other stakeholders such as the Central Bank of Lebanon, the International Partners (UNDP; European Union; Italian Agency for Development; and the World Bank) as well as the media (see Annex 2 for the persons interviewed). The interviews that were conducted focused on those activities that the respondents were fully familiar with and could provide their insights with respect to the change which the project contributed in terms of capacity development, its outcomes and its project management. Inputs from the different interviews were incorporated in this evaluation.

Chapter 3.

Findings and Results of the Evaluation

I. Relevance:

A. Alignment

27. The project objectives of capacity development and policy and planning of environment sustainability are relevant to Lebanon and to UNDP and therefore the rating is satisfactory. The MOE has prepared a series of strategic documents that guided the environmental policies highlighted in successive Policy Statements from the Council of Ministers (COM). The Environment Strategy Framework (1996) and its update in 2013; the SOER (1995, 2002 and 2011); the Lebanon Country Profile for the Johannesburg Summit of 2002 and National Report to the UN Rio +20 Conference on Sustainable Development of 2012, have all articulated Lebanon's major environmental issues and challenges which were further exacerbated by weak policies and institutions and the inadequacy of governance structures. Nevertheless, the MOE has proposed the new vision that was used a rationale of the Law 690 of 2005 for reorganizing the MOE. The vision was based on the five major pillars: Sustainable Ecological Development, Protection through Prevention, Polluter Pays Principle, National Equitable Development and Mainstreaming of Environmental policy. The Project objectives are also consistent with the UNDP Assistance framework that environmental considerations are mainstreamed in sector and local level strategies. UNDP has been assisting the MOE since its establishment in 1993 and provided successive institutional strengthening support projects mainly through its capacity 21 programs.

28. The Project has arisen as a result of a formal consensus between the MOE and UNDP that the institutional building process that has started since the MOE establishment should be continued and strengthened and be focused on the capacity development of the Ministry staff and the need to further planning and programming that could lead eventually toward environment sustainability. Since its establishment and till 2009, i.e., during its first fifteen years, the MOE was relying almost entirely on grants from International Financing Institutions and Donors which, on some occasions, have driven their own agenda and priorities rather than the national development priorities. **This is the first Project in the history of the MOE that was 95% financed by the Government of Lebanon and designed entirely by MOE and UNDP in-country experts which by design confirm the full ownership of the GoL to this project.**

B. Design of the Project:

29. The Project is technically sound in the sense that it has addressed both the capacity building component with the needs for promoting and programming for sustainable development though the interconnect between the two major project components was not laid out. The design was planned for a two- year period which was extended for another four without changes or modification. The approach to capacity development was not conventional but focused primarily on the job training and learning by doing between the UNDP contracted staff and local consultants. Promoting and programming for sustainable development focused primarily on the development of strategic planning, legislative tools and monitoring tools as the basis for seeking implementation and action on the ground.

30. At the Project level, project activities were included as part of an annual work plan prepared by the Project Management Structure and approved by both the MOE and UNDP. This has provided project management with considerable flexibility in deciding the nature, scope and content of individual project activities. Inputs from the MOE decision makers and senior management have lauded such flexibility and confirmed that the different activities financed by the Project met their demand and needs and fostered the working relationship and confidence between the MOE civil service staff and the UNDP contracted staff. This was due most importantly to the professionalism, total dedication and knowledge at the project management level and particularly at the technical and administrative level with the provision of some 10 young and motivated UN volunteers which were integrated in the different MOE services for assisting in the administration and technical operations.

31. Although the monitoring indicators were developed for the two project outcomes and outputs, there was no measurable monitoring indicators on the different activities of the project and namely those activities that exceeded US\$ 0.5 million dollars (i.e. the development of projects and programs as well the development and revision of legislation).

II. Effectiveness:

A. Achievement of Objectives:

32. The two project objectives, which the result framework has considered to be project outputs, are likely to be attained by the end of the Project. The indicator for these are: that sustainable approach is on the agenda of the Council of Ministers, and this is forthcoming given that ISMOE Project has fully participated in the development of RIO +20 report as well as in the preparation of Lebanon's implementation plan of the Sustainable Development Goals (ongoing). The Project Management staff and the MOE senior staff are now a major contributor to the preparation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy which is overseen and led by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. The proposed targets for achieving the objectives are likely to be achieved owing to the enactment of the strategic environment assessment decree (SEA) and the preparation of the SEA for water and renewable strategies after they were formally approved by the COM - though it would have been preferable that the SEAs should have been prepared before the approval of these strategies. The Project has also prepared a series of studies such as the state and trends of the Lebanese Environment (SOER) published in 2011, the business plan for combatting pollution in the Qaraoun lake which was the basis for the allocation by the World Bank of US\$ 55 million for implementing the plan.

33. Also the second target related to the issuance of legislation and its adoption was achieved given the enactment of the Law of the Designated Attorneys for the Environment (Law 251/2014), and of the decrees related to SEA, EIA and the environmental compliance of establishments, and the National Council for the Environment; as well as the preparation of draft laws and decrees related to air quality, protected areas, integrated solid Waste management, organization of the Environmental Police, the National Environmental Fund, and compensation for the National Council for the Environment's members. These laws and decrees await the enactment by the Parliament (which has not been in session for the last two years) and the Council of Ministers respectively. Finally the target for increased capacity and awareness on sustainable is also likely to be achieved given the collaboration of line ministries and cooperation of sector ministries in the development of the RIO +20 report, the ongoing

National Sustainable Development Strategy, and the interest of the municipalities in being introduced to sustainable development elements such as the sustainable development coordinator report of the Municipality of Byblos, and the interest of the press in tackling the systemic and chronic environmental issues in Lebanon such as for illegal hunting, illegal use of quarries, and unsustainable solid waste management practices.

34. Table 4 provides a matrix on the project evaluation of its outcome, outputs and targets in function of the criteria of specificity which is a description of a specific change in the future; the measurability which assesses qualitatively or quantitatively whether the results were achieved or not; the relevancy which reflects whether the results must be within the capacity of the MOE, relevant ministries and municipalities; time-boundedness which indicates whether or not the results should have an expected date of accomplishment - they should never be open ended.

35. The matrix shows that the overall evaluation is satisfactory. The citing of this evaluation is not intended to be comprehensive. The project scores well on specificity, qualitative measurability and relevancy. It scores less well on achievability and time boundedness.

Table 4: Project Evaluation Summary of Outcome, Outputs, Targets and Indicators

Type	Title	Status	Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Relevant	Time Bound	Overall
Outcome (UNDAF)	Environment Considerations mainstreamed in sector and local level strategies	O	S	MS	S	S	MS	MS
Outcome	Government Equipped for Obligations set by International Conventions	C	S	S	S	S	MS	MS
Outcome Indicators	Environment action plans developed for the relevant ministries and decentralized structures	O	S	S	S	S	MS	MS
	Technical units within the Ministry operational and having a higher level of technical expertise related to each concerned convention	O	S	S	MS	S	S	MS
Outputs	Environmental Action Plans/strategies developed: SOER and Environment strategy framework	C	S	S	S	S	S	S
Targets	CONCRETE action plans to promote sustainable development	O	S	S	S	S	S	S
	Legislation issued and adopted	C	S	S	S	S	S	S
	Increased capacity and awareness on sustainable development policies	O	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
Indicators	Sustainable Development Approaches on the agenda of the Council of Ministers	O	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS

Status: I – initiated; O – Ongoing; C – completed

B. Capacity Building Activities:

36. The Project was instrumental in strengthening the capacity of the MOE at the institutional level and at the individual level. At the institutional level, the Project established an institutional support mechanism that allows MoE to identify and assess technical and administrative needs at the MOE's level and develop a series of action and business plans for addressing the chronic environmental priorities of the country. The assessment of the needs indicated unfilled positions at the different services and departments, weak administrative functions and lack of proper logistic and office equipment.

37. At the institutional level, the Project was instrumental in (a) the preparation, adoption, and implementation of an in-house recruitment law; (b) assisting the Minister's office in the appointment of all high level positions (heads of services, departments, and divisions); (c) supporting the Minister's office in the recruitment of about 20 technical and administrative staff in 2011 (15% of planned workforce) and in the approval of the Council of Ministers in October 2014 to recruit 27 additional technical staffing (32% of planned for the same category); (d) preparation and issuance of other ministerial decisions and circulars related to human resources management, and national coordination of bi-lateral projects; and (e) outsourcing an NGO as a watchdog for assisting the different services in conducting field visits and regularly monitoring the different installations and natural reserves and sites.

38. At the staff level, the daily working interaction between the MOE staff and the UNDP contracted staff has, in the view of the senior management of the MOE, led to the improvement of the competencies of the MOE staff through better thinking, improved decision making and knowledge sharing, improved quality of reports, and provision of substantive comments on reviewing reports prepared by consulting firms. The efficiency related to timeliness and work quality of their respective departments has improved especially from the administrative side and for which the Project has also financed office partitions and office equipment and supplies contributing to the improvement of the working environment for the MOE staff.

39. Capacity building is also covered under the activities related to the second component: Promoting and Programming for Sustainable Development. These activities aimed to disseminate knowledge related to the different activities. Nevertheless, knowledge transfer is also included in the different awareness raising activities, the SOER of 2010 as well as the programs related to the master plan for the closure of dumps, the business plan for combatting pollution in the Qaraoun river and the road map of the rehabilitation of the quarries.

C. Risk and Outcomes:

40. As mentioned earlier, there was no statement of risks or assumptions included in the result framework, which is considered as a shortcoming in project design. In fact, the Project was faced with two major risks: one internal which is the dysfunctionality at the level of the MOE director general (DG) office and this resulted in lowering staff morale and adversarial confrontation; and the other one external which was due to misperception and misrepresentation as to the role and functions of the MOE which was exposed to strong criticism and public upheavals such as for not properly handling the municipal waste management crisis in Greater Beirut. Finger pointing to the Ministry of Environment has been

systemic whenever there is an issue related to pollution or natural resources degradation. MOE is always considered to be the scapegoat, as these issues are always politicized with finger pointing to a Ministry that by law has no executive powers. Nevertheless these two issues are not likely to affect the project outcome of environmental mainstreaming mainly because the Project, through the professionalism total dedication of its project management and its high ethical and integrity standards, largely contributed to the dissipation of the internal issue by assuming larger responsibilities related to supporting the Minister's office in day- to -day management, policy advice and providing additional technical assistance and support.

41. As to the external risk, the Project has in fact largely contributed to improve the MOE image by conducting and disseminating studies on the major chronic environmental issues such as the master plan for the closure and rehabilitation of uncontrolled dumps and the business Plan for Combating Pollution of the Qaraoun Lake; all of these reports describe quite well the roles and functions that should be played by the concerned ministries and municipalities and define the role of the Ministry of the Environment. There is a general consensus among the stakeholders and the press that MOE is no longer considered a side line ministry but is becoming more visible to the Parliament, the sector ministries, municipalities and to the public through its comprehensive knowledge of the environment issues, the applications of the EIA, SEA and environmental compliance.

42. In summary, Project resilience to the future risk associated with the internal issue is unpredictable in view of the political economy and the frozen decisions of the Council of Ministers. Project resilience to a future risk associated to environmental mainstreaming is moderate to significant as the Presidency of the Council of Ministers is involved and committed to preparation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy to put Lebanon on a sustainable development path though the preparation of the plan whose approval and application are yet to be determined.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation:

43. Project monitoring was in the form of quarterly and annual progress reports prepared by the project manager. These reports listed the major achievements of the Project and each annual report was reviewed and approved by the Project Board chaired by the Minister of the Environment. Minutes of the Annual Board meetings were limited to a presentation of the project manager of the detailed achievements of the Project during a particular year. There was no reference to the significance and justifications of the project activities with respect to the achievements of outputs or outcomes, comments on the time table of the project activities (planned versus actual time), status of disbursements, constraints and issues during implementation, lessons learned, and plan for the next year cycle. There were very few substantive comments and guidelines from the Project Board. The Project did not undertake any evaluation during the six years mainly because the Government financial commitment is on annual basis with no certainty for providing funds at any specific time. Given such constraints project monitoring and evaluation were hampered by such financial arrangements.

III. Efficiency:

A. Efficiency in the use of resources.

44. Overall, the Project has used its financial resources efficiently and its rating is satisfactory. An analysis of the financing of the different activities was undertaken, based on the work plan and expenditures of the project and shown in table 5 below.

Table 5: Summary of costs of the Project Components

Component 1: Assessment of needs for capacity development for environment sustainability	Approximate costs As of December 31 2015, in US\$
Review of existing strategies plans projects, studies	350,000
Identify data needs and gaps	375,000
Coordinate on -going programmes and studies	853,000
Consult with stakeholders	370,000
Assess status of environment inspection	200,000
Subtotal	2,148,000
UNDP overhead	107,400
Total Component 1	2,255,400

Components No 2: Promoting and Programming for Sustainable Development	Approximate costs As of December 31 2015, in US\$
Development of national communication plan	260,000
Daft a prioritized action plan reactivation of the NEAP	295,000
Development of detailed programmes and proposals to push the action plan forward	970,000
Resource mobilization	250,000
Revise and issue legislation/ decrees	550,000
Development of prioritized inspection and enforcement	370,000
Subtotal	2,695,000
UNDP overhead	134,750
Total Component 2	2,829,750

Summary of cost of components 1 and 2 in US\$:

Component 1	Component 2	Total
2,255,400	2,829,750	5,085,150⁶

45. Cost analysis showed that the second component (55.6% of total cost) reflected a higher cost than the first component (44.4%). This is expected as the second component required a generation of reports, studies, preparation of laws and decrees, monitoring and inspection that were performed by local consultants and local consulting firms, whereas the first component was carried out primarily by the Project management and UN volunteers. Salaries of the project management, UN volunteers and local consultants were determined following UNDP salary grade structure. Contracts with local consulting firms were awarded on a competitive basis with 70% of the total score allocated to the technical offer and 30% allocated to the

⁶ Rounding figures

financial offer. Hence the project funds were efficiently utilized. Furthermore the major costs in this project were on coordination of on-going projects and programs of the MOE, the development of projects and programs, development of legislation and on monitoring and inspection, reflecting the proper use of the project resources on soft but tangible results that improved the efficiency of the project for serving both the MOE projects and programs, its legislation and its monitoring and enforcement capacities as well providing useful studies for line ministries and stakeholders to design projects based on quality background studies.

46. The efficiency of the Project can also be measured in terms resource mobilization for such assistance. Resource mobilization is reflected by: (a) a reduction of the transactions costs of institutional strengthening projects financed by other international financing institutions namely the EU, the World Bank and the Italian Cooperation resulting in substantial saving in time and in resources for the preparation of their projects namely the EU financed StREG (Euro 8.0 million) and LEPAP (US\$ 18 million); (b) the direct causality whereby the ISMOE project has generated studies that enabled the IFI to finance their projects such as the World Bank Pollution Prevention of the Qaraoun River, (US\$ 55 million) and Protection & Sustainable Development of Marine Resources in Lebanon (Euro 17.0 million for the MOE) and (c) indirect causality whereby the ISMOE Project has contributed its expertise and facilitated the collaboration of the MOE services in implementing the Italian Cooperation financed projects in Solar Water Heaters and in the Integrated Management of Municipal Solid Waste for the cazas of Baalbeck and Hermel (US\$ 2.5 million). ISMOE has allocated staff time equivalent to US\$ 250,000 which contributed to the design and project preparation of about US\$ 100 million of project financing, another measure of good efficiency.

B. Financing arrangements:

47. The financing arrangements of this Project were quite complicated and involved a ten-step process which includes inter alia, a review of the Court of Lebanese Accounts and authorization of the MOF for fund transfer.

48. The 10 step- process takes between 9-12 months for the funds to be transferred to UNDP with the longest duration is related to the issuance the funds transfer sheet by the Ministry of Finance. So far in 2016, funds transfer in the amount of ~ US\$ 890,000 has not occurred.

49. The GOL allocation for the years 2010-2012 has been ~ US\$ 935,000/year. This amount was reduced by the MOF to ~ US\$ 895,000 per year for the years 2013-2016. The total amount received from 2010 to 2015, including the UNDP contribution of US\$ 300,000, is US\$ 6.05 million, with a total disbursement of US\$ 5.08 million leaving a surplus of ~ US\$ 0.97 million to be spent in 2016 in addition to the LEPAP refund of ~ US\$ 0.38 million and exclusive of the expected of the GOL allocation for 2016 of ~ US\$ 890,000, totaling therefore US\$ 2.24 million for 2016.

50. Table 6 shows the funds made available to the Project for 2010-2015 and totaling 6.047 million with the corresponding disbursement of US\$ 5,084 million or 84% of the total GOL allocation. In 2010, 2011, 2012, there was a saving of ~ US\$ 1.4 million between the total allocation and the corresponding disbursement. These enabled the Project to finance additional

sub-activities, since the project components were so broad so as to justify such addition in the approved work plan. Therefore the savings were used to offset the increase in disbursement for the years 2013-2015 since for these three years the ISMOE budget exceeded the allowable project allocation.

Table 6: Approved Allocation, Budget and Disbursement (in US\$)

Calendar Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total ⁷
A.GOL allocation	994,000	1,020,000	935,000	895,000	895,000	895,000	5,627,000
B: UNDP allocation	100,000	120,000	80,000				300,000
C: Solidère	~ 120,000						120,000
D.Total allocation	1,214,000	1,140,000	1,015,000	895,000	895,000	895,000	6,054,000
E.ISMOE budget	169,209 ⁸	801,726	505,723	972,429	1,414,841	1,073,625	4,937,555
F.Disbursement	493,775	847,320	612,440	901,577	1,056,637	1,172,498	5,084,247
G.Difference (D-F)	+720,225	+292,680	+402,560	-6,577	-161,637	-277,498	969,753
% Disbursed F/D	40.7%	74.3%	60.3%	100.7%	118.06%	131%	84%

50. Table 7 highlights the project disbursement described in terms of inputs related to salaries, consultants, studies, workshops, equipment and supplies others, and UNDP overhead and are reflected⁷ as follows:

Table 7: Yearly Approximate Disbursement till December 31, 2015 in US dollars

Line items/years	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Salaries	143,304	199,519	197,368	283,290	360,583	686,199	1,870,263
Local Consultants	13,120	52,408	146,496	59,100	96,994	97,500	465,618
Studies	261,589	405,716	19,900	292,006	469,895	230,829	1,679,935
Workshops	28,430	30,365	63,710	125,529	24,601	2,924	275,559
Travel	4,846	2,406	41,738	19,641	3,179	6,263	78,073
Equipment	13,709	107,277	91,247	51,899	16,097	45,213	325,442
Others	7,051	10,509	27,419	32,089	34,972	47,737	159,777
UNDP O/H	21,726	39,120	24,562	38,023	50,316	55,833	229,580 ⁹
Total	493,775	847,320	612,440	901,577	1,056,637	1,172,498	5,084,247

51. The major disbursements were on salaries (US\$ 1.87 million) and on studies (US\$ 1.68 million) constituting about 70% of the total disbursement of the Project of which 33% was spent on UNDP contracted staff for project management and the 10 UN volunteers. These salaries are not exclusively for managing the project but also included technical support and assistance by the project management in the different activities of other projects (such as LEPAP and StREG).

⁷ After deducting bank transfer fees where applicable

⁸ Estimated from the annual work plan of the Amended Project Document dated February 2, 2010.

⁹ This O/H amount is less than the amount quoted in table 5 as in the former UNDP did not charge its O/H on its contribution of US\$ 300,000

52. In 2014-2015, the salary line item has increased by more than 90% due to the temporary payment of the staff of the Project Management Unit of LEPAP which was to be financed by the Italian Cooperation, but was withheld until signature of the LEPAP loan agreement between MOE and the World Bank (which occurred in 2014) and subsequent payment arrangements' modalities which occurred in 2015. As a result, these payments amounting to US\$ 386,849 were reimbursed to the Project in December 2015 and this will be reflected in the 2016 budget.

53. The Government's rigid budget system did not easily accommodate the release of funds for the project. Procedural bottlenecks impeded the timely availability of budget allocations to the project resulting in delays of more than 8 months. However the complicated financial arrangements did not disturb negatively the strategic directions of this Project given that the GOL allocation was uniform every three years and the project has underspent during the first three years. This enabled the Project to increase its budget on the years of 2013-2015 in order to compensate for its low start up and implement new sub-activities

C. Governance, management, and legitimacy:

a. Governance

54. The Governance of this project consisted of a Project Board, a Project Management Structure as well as Project assurance. The role of the Project board is to review and approve the annual work plan (AWP), provide guidance and taking management decision on a consensus basis. Based on the minutes of the meetings, the Project Board has endorsed unanimously all the activities submitted by the Project Manager. However, one member of the Project Board, the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), did not attend any annual meeting and there was no reason for this circumvention. Since CDR is responsible to design and implement national and local development projects on behalf of the GoL, its presence would have been valuable in providing guidance in the selection of the project activities. CDR however has directly benefitted from one major activity related Lake Qaraoun Pollution Prevention Project for which CDR is the implementing agency of a World Bank loan of US\$ 55million.

b. The Project Management Structure

55. The Project Management structure is clearly described with responsibilities for each position defined in the annual work plan. At present the staff of the Project management structure is reduced to 5 instead of 9 which included a Project Manager and Senior Environmental Advisor, a part-time senior Legal Advisor, a part-time Administrative Advisor, a Financial Advisor, a technical Project Manager for air quality, a senior Communication Consultant, an External Affairs Officer, a Project Assistant and an Administrative Assistant. The last three positions as well as that of the Administrative Advisor are now vacant; and despite this reduction, the members of the Project Management went far beyond their TORs and their call for duties by assuming, to the extent feasible, the functions and responsibilities of the five positions that are now vacant.

56. The Project Manager has occupied both the functions of the ISMOE Project Manager and the Senior Environmental Advisor to the Minister. She has developed trust and confidence and her outstanding performance made her the backbone of the Ministry, but has unfortunately overloaded her for always finding solutions ranging from rearranging office space to being responsive to many inquiries and required documentation at the technical and policy levels and all this, in addition to implementing her assignment in the most outstanding manner. Such heavy lifting is unsustainable and the present project management should be restructured in such a way that she should be freed from the routine and administrative tasks to concentrate on policy dialogue and reforms. She should be able to provide a general overview of the performance of the multitude of the projects being implemented by international financing institutions and donors at the Ministry and guide towards meeting sustainability in environmental management.

57. The Senior Legal Advisor has a unique and long term honorific experience in the administration and management of Lebanese civil service. Recruited to be the Legal advisor for the Project, his functions have been further expanded as a de facto co-chief of staff of the Ministry, reviewing and commenting on all documents that would require the Minister's attention and signature. In addition, the Senior Advisor has served as a mentor and counsellor for the Ministry staff who approached him regularly on a voluntary and friendly basis.

58. The technical project manager (TPM) is also a qualified and dedicated professional who was recruited to assist technically the project manager in her different project assignments. Given that there was a lack of competencies in air quality management among the MOE staff, the TPM was assigned to guide the establishment and operation of the air quality management system funded by StREG, a complex undertaking that is not part of the ISMOE activities, and certainly cannot be undertaken by one person. The TPM is also being involved in the review of the environmental audits that were financed by LEPAP in order to enable eligible enterprises to have access to the World Bank sub-loans

59. The Program Manager (ProM) of the environment and energy department in UNDP/Lebanon, who assumed Project Board Member, was extremely qualified for this position. The ProM was very supportive in empowering the project management and was instrumental in being flexible and finding solutions for accommodating the requirements of the Ministry of the Environment.

60. Given their overloaded assignments and the need to reconcile the different and numerous interests of the Ministry and of the International Financing Institutions (see below), the project management is fully supported personally by the H.E the Minister and his Senior Advisor. However, given the numerous additional tasks, the project management could not sufficiently ensure the analytical quality of knowledge and the monitoring and evaluation of the different activities.

61. In this regard a rapid assessment of the Project Management Structure showed the following gaps:

- a) None of the heads of services, who were appointed as of 2012/2013, has an expert that could assist in carrying the strategic and planning functions of the individual services because they are overloaded and understaffed. Some services departments are receiving

technical support from the UN Volunteers, but these do not have sufficient experience in policy and strategic formulation; noting that the project design did not foresee such an arrangement.

- b) New staff recruited through the civil service (17 that will be increased to 27) are reported to be new to their tasks and ill prepared. They are not always supervised by more experienced staff and did not receive any training in project design, project management and financing, and project monitoring and evaluation. In the absence of proper training, the newly recruited staff are likely to be overtaken by the Lebanese bureaucracy.
- c) There are at present insufficient coordination between the different projects implemented by the MOE especially those related to capacity building and institutional strengthening such as the StREG and LEPAP. Failure of the project implementation unit of these projects to involve other concerned departments and services in the planning and execution of their project activities resulted in a lukewarm interest at best and sometimes an uninspired contribution when called upon. This no doubt affects the ownership of the respective project outputs resulting in poor support for its dissemination and application. Alternatively the MOE decision makers should ensure that set environmental objectives, targets and results of these projects are met at the highest level.
- d) Staff in the project management structure were, contrary to what was anticipated, assumed large administrative tasks contributing to a lack of quality monitoring of the project and insufficient technical know-how.
- e) At present there are no appropriate services or departments serving as counterpart to all project activities. Because all concerned services and departments in MOE, and the concerned ministries were not sufficiently involved in the planning and implementation of project activities, the Project could have suffered from their lack of interest or neglect due to a lack of sufficient information dissemination that was supposed to be carried out by a senior communication consultant and an external affairs officer.
- f) There are no manuals and/or guidelines available at the MOE for designing, managing, and monitoring project activities whether at the project management structure or in the different services. There is too much reliance on the professionalism and judgment of the Senior Environmental Advisor/Project Manager in managing singlehandedly the project activities.

c. Legitimacy

62. The list of priority sub-activities for support and indicative work plan for each year are prepared by the Project Manager in close coordination with and on the endorsement of the MOE senior management. But beyond this, there is no formal mechanism for the Project to coordinate with the services of the MOE and other stakeholders at the national level in order to support a high degree of selectivity in the design of any new sub-activity. Possible exception is the development of the business plan of the Lake Qaraoun and the assessment of illegal dumps for which the Council of Ministers has specifically commissioned the MOE to undertake as part of their assignment. A formal consultation mechanism is required to avoid, on the one hand, any feeling that priorities are being supply-driven and ad-hoc decisions by the MOE or, on the other, that expectations of support are raised to unrealistic levels.

d. Relationship of the Project with the International Financing Institutions and Donors

63. One of the remarkable achievements has been the positive and narrow collaboration of the Project with the projects financed by the international financing institutions and donors mainly the EU financed StREG and the World Bank-Italian Cooperation-financed LEPAP. Notwithstanding the role of the ISMOE project as a facilitator and provider of high level expertise and driving force during the design of these two projects as well as of the World Bank financed Lake Qaraoun Pollution Prevention Project, the ISMOE project provided additional technical and financial resources during project implementation of the StREG and LEPAP on activities that were delayed but were crucial to the MOE needs otherwise some of these activities could have impeded the performance of these two projects and entailed further delays.

64. Table 8 summarized the contribution of the MOE, UNDP, and International Financing Institutions in the different project sub-activities. The services of the MOE were aware of the Project activities as the ISMOE assumed their role of major contributor, advisory and follow up on the major project activities. The International Financing Institutions were partly informed of the activities related to legislation, inspection and enforcement and resource mobilization for which there have been adequate linkages.

Table 8: Identification of Roles of UNDP, MOE, Sector Ministries, Beneficiaries

	Beneficiaries	Preparer	Sole financial contributor	Major Contributor	Minor Contributor	Advisory	Follow UP
Project Document	MOE	UNDP		UNDP	MOE		UNDP
Amended Project Document	MOE	UNDP		UNDP	MOE		UNDP
Annual Progress report	MOE	ISMEO	ISMEO				UNDP
Review of existing strategies	MOE/sector ministries	ISMEO and Consultants	ISMEO				
Identification of data needs and gaps	MOE	ISMEO	ISMEO				
Coordination of on going projects	MOE	ISMEO	ISMEO			ISMEO	ISMEO
Consultation mechanisms	MOE + civil society	EU and ISMOE		EU/ISMEO		ISMEO	ISMEO
Assessment of status of Environment Protection	MOE and municipalities	UNDP		EU		ISMEO	ISMEO
National Communication Plan	MOE	ISMEO		ISMEO/Italian Cooperation		ISMEO	ISMEO
Prioritized action plan : SOER and Env. Strategy framework	Ministries and Public	Consultants	ISMEO			ISMEO	ISMEO
Proposal for moving action plan	MOE and municipalities	ISMEO and Consultants	ISMEO			ISMEO	ISMEO
Resource Mobilization	MOE	ISMEO		EU-StREG, Italian Cooperation-WB LEPAP		ISMEO	ISMEO
Decrees/legislation prepared	MOE, PAR	ISMEO and Consultants		EU-StREG, Italian Cooperation-WB LEPAP		ISMEO/MOE	ISMEO/MOE
Prioritized Inspection and Enforcement Plan	MOE	Consultants		EU-StREG, Italian Cooperation-WB LEPAP		ISMEO/MOE	ISMEO/MOE
State and Trends of Lebanese Environment	Many stakeholders	ISMEO	ISMEO			ISMEO/MOE	ISMEO/MOE
Business Plan for Qaraoun Lake	Municipalities, CDR	ISMEO	ISMEO			ISMEO	ISMEO
Master Plan for the Rehabilitation of Dumps	Municipalities	ISMEO	ISMEO			ISMEO/MOE	ISMEO/MOE
National Report of UN Rio+20	Many stakeholders	ISMEO and Consultants	ISMEO			ISMEO	ISMEO
Lebanon Environment Assessment of Syrian Conflict	Many stakeholders	Consultants	EU			ISMEO	EU/ISMEO

65. Furthermore, the Project activities have strengthened and complemented specific environmental activities related to the projects financed by the IFIs. Table 9 summarizes below the activities that were financed by the ISMOE project during the implementation of the StREG and LEPAP. These activities could have not been implemented if delays did not occur in these two projects. The MOE and UNDP showed great flexibility and understanding in allocating the Project resources of an estimated amount of US\$ 1.01 million or 19.8% of the total Project expenditures. Such resources could have been used to plan and implement a coordination between the services that benefitted from the Project activities, and establish a proper monitoring and evaluation mechanism. The use of ISMOE resources is laudable but it has incurred unnecessary large transactions costs to the Project. At present, the ISMOE project manager attends as an observer the joint meetings held with the project managers of the StREG for coordination purposes only.

Table 9: ISMOE contribution to the IFI- financed projects till December 31, 2015.

Activities	Status of the activities in StREG ¹⁰ till December 31, 2015	Status of the activities in LEPAP ¹¹ till December 31, 2015	ISMOE support till December 31, 2015
Monitoring and enforcement: Draft seven new inspection and enforcement procedures in the sectors of (ii) classified establishments; (iii) quarrying; (iv) hospitals; (v) import of wastes/ goods – customs; (vi) spills/ threat to water sources; (vii) threats to biodiversity	Ongoing		Development by YMCA of 15 procedures for monitoring and inspection as well as hundreds of field visits estimated at US\$ 370,000
Identify equipment needs (such as air quality and noise monitoring equipment, related IT equipment, etc.), prepare the technical specifications for these equipment and support the procurement process if need be Environmental audits to eligible enterprises for the WB sub-loans	-Equipment identified and specifications completed. -Equipment purchase on going and scheduled to arrive in August 2016	On going	Provision by the technical project manager of assistance in the identification of needs and in the preparation of technical specification for 10 monitoring stations and one calibration laboratory. Cost estimated at US\$ 37,400 Provision by the technical project manager of support for reviewing environment audits. Cost estimated at US\$ 18,700
Upgrade the management system of the Ministry of Environment (workflow, archive and equipment inventory)	Assessment completed. The system upgrade is still on going		Provision of some 10 UN volunteers of which 5 are already working on the administrative system of the MOE. Cost estimated at US\$ 156,000
Establishment of the Project Management Unit		Completed and financed by the Italian Cooperation in 2016	Financing of the PMU from mid- 2014 to 2015, and until the World Bank was made effective in 2016. Total amount of US\$386,849 was reimbursed in 2016 to the ISMOE budget.
Strengthening the MOE capacity in environmental assessment for the industrial sector by establishing guidelines for sector ESA.		To be initiated	Local EIA consultant contracted to review and propose modification to the EIA guidelines. Cost estimated at US\$41,820

¹⁰ TOR of StREG¹¹ World Bank Project Appraisal Document

66. In summary, the rating is satisfactory to moderately satisfactory while the ISMOE project used its available resources efficiently, by design, the project's financing arrangements are complicated and the project management needs to be restructured. However project performance introduced a significant transaction cost in order to assist other projects, and lack of an establishment of a coordination and monitoring and evaluation mechanism constitutes a shortcoming that should be addressed in the next phase of the project.

IV. Sustainability:

A. Project's Achievements

67. Tables 10 A and 10 B provide an evaluation of the different sub-activities in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and outcome. The citing of achievements is not intended to be comprehensive but rather illustrative. Similarly, the evaluation of impacts must be considered provisional, given the incomplete data on which it is based.

Table 10 A: Project Evaluation Summary for Component 1: Assessment of needs for capacity development for environment sustainability

No	Activity Name	Status	Relevance	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Sustainability	Outcome	Overall
3.1	Review of existing strategies plans projects, studies	O	S	S	S	S	S	S
3.2	Identify data needs and gaps	C	MS	S	S	MS	MS	MS
3.3	Coordinate ongoing programmes and studies	O	HS	HS	S	S	S	S
3.4	Consult with stakeholders	O	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
3.5	Assess status of environmental inspection, Case study Lake Qaraoun	C	HS	HS	S	S	S	S

Table 10 B: Project Evaluation Summary for Component 2: Promoting and Programming for Sustainable Development

No	Activity Name	Status	Relevance	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Sustainability	Outcome	Overall
1.1	Development of national communication plan	C	MS	MS	MS	MU	MU	MS
1.2	Draft a prioritized action plan: reactivation of NEAP: SOER and Environment Strategy framework	C	HS	S	S	MS	MS	S
1.3	Development of detailed programmes and proposals to push the action plan forward	C	HS	S	S	S	S	S
1.4	Resource Mobilization	C	HS	S	S	S	S	S
1.5	Revise and issue needed legislation/decrees	C	HS	S	S	S	S	S
1.6	Develop a prioritized inspection and enforcement plan	U	S	S	S	MS	MS	MS

Status: I – initiated; O ongoing ; C – completed.

Evaluation: HS – highly satisfactory; S – satisfactory; MS – moderately satisfactory; MU – moderately unsatisfactory; U – unsatisfactory; HU – highly unsatisfactory.

68. The overall evaluation rating is satisfactory as there are more ratings satisfactory than moderately satisfactory. Satisfactory achievements are on the review of existing strategies and plans, coordination of ongoing programs, assessment of environmental inspection with the Qaraoun lake as a pilot project development of detailed programmes and proposals, resource mobilization and preparation and issuance of legislation. Identification of gaps and needs did not score well as these gaps were related only to logistics, so is the communication plan and consultation of stakeholders which are inter-connected. The development of a prioritized inspection and enforcement plan is still a challenge as one of the short comings of the MOE is the weak monitoring and enforcement. This review would like to reaffirm the priority should be given in ISMOE to public awareness and participation, which are essential for good environmental management. However, the efforts were rather limited and scattered and were generally not followed up either with more capacity building or with technical support as the impression is that these were rather modest.

B. Project Sustainability

69. The Project sustainability is rated as satisfactory to moderately satisfactory because its design was incomplete and did not meet all the total required expectations. Nevertheless some achievements are likely to be sustainable. At project completion, there are good prospects that the achievements of the development objectives will be maintained. Dialogue continues between the MOE and the UNDP to further strengthen institutional capacity of MOE for environmental management. The achievements of the project are not only likely to be sustained, but form the cornerstones for mainstreaming environment in the sectoral ministries. The achievements under component 1 include the strengthening of the MOE and of elevating

the environmental agenda of the Government and this is highly likely to be sustainable, particularly in the view of what is expected from Lebanon partners e.g. with the EU. The achievements in the legal strengthening include draft laws and decrees prepared under the project, many of them has been enacted. One might argue that the draft laws and decrees under consideration would not be passed in a foreseeable future because the Parliament is not active and the COM meetings are not regular. A more optimistic view stems from the experience in Lebanon and from other countries in the region which indicates that, on average, it takes 10 years to endorse environmental legislation. The review adopts this more optimistic conclusion and rates the achievements under this heading as likely to be sustainable.

70. Some of the project activities in component 2 are likely to become sustainable overtime namely the ownership of the program by the Government which is expected to continue its financial support, the depollution of the Qaraoun lake, and the project contribution to the National Sustainable Development Strategy. However given the present political impasse and its negative effects of inducing any policy reform especially the civil service reform, it is too premature not to circumvent the present civil service system of using UNDP as an international organization which through its integrity, and professionalism is recruiting the best Lebanese professionals based uniquely on their skills, talents and knowledge. Such valuable talents would be dissipated outside Lebanon or to the private sector and would constitute a loss in strengthening the overall environment management system in Lebanon.

71. UNDP served effectively as the convener of the program. Its role as a valuable technical partner was valued by MOE, sector ministries, stakeholders and IFIs, and its performance has been effective. UNDP should continue to support the main objectives of the Project and the achievements of project outputs.

72. It is also too premature to achieve an overall sustainability in a Project with multiple activities within a span of six years, as institutional strengthening and capacity building are complex undertakings and time consuming and their results could be only measured in the long term. But as the national capacity of the MOE is expected to grow over time, and there is now increased IFIs attention to environmental issues especially from the European Union, UNDP technical role should evolve by becoming more strategic and far sighted. It should focus towards increasing the momentum of environment policy reform and institution building that could contribute to economic growth by better use of environmental assets and resources and accompanied with of a gradual disengagement strategy.

73. Overall the Project has helped Lebanon to launch an environmental agenda and start mainstreaming environmental issues, which momentum can no more stop given its importance and the expectations of the Government in this respect. Sustainability is therefore likely.

Chapter 4

Lessons Learned

I. General

74. The conclusion of this evaluation is that, on balance, the case for continuing the ISMOE project is strong, though it needs to evolve to meet changing circumstances. It has performed a large number of priority activities and because of its rapid response and flexibility, it took even a number of roles for which other projects were late to perform. Its intermediation position has frequently been vital to get movement on identified needs. The Project has contributed to the improved competencies, organizations and functions of the MOE, and facilitate bridge building between MOE, sectoral ministries and institutes. Sustainability is likely. Some basic issues of governance and funding also need to be addressed, to lessen the long-standing precariousness of UNDP contracted staff in this Project.

75. All levels of MOE management and stakeholders are in favor of the continuation of ISMOE, as they review the benefits of the support they have received for policy development, institutional strengthening and capacity building. In particular, they see considerable value added, and recognize that ISMOE allowed them to address strategic problems like the completion of the legislation, and the preparation of studies such as the pollution prevention of the Qaraoun River, the review and status of the illegal dumps and illegal quarries as well professional advice from project management for which alternative funding is unlikely. The International Financing Institutions are neutral to positive on ISMOE continuation and several mentioned that the core of UNDP contracted staff is an added value for the implementation of their respective projects. All stakeholders recognize that ISMOE has developed policy and technical knowledge and facilitated access to decision-makers and senior MOE management.

II. New Challenges and Opportunities

76. A realignment of ISMOE work would be necessary to take account of the international and national challenges as well as the new opportunities that have occurred since the design of the original ISMOE project. These are summarized below.

77. At the international level, Lebanon has approved the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and its related 2030 Agenda agreed upon by all UN Member States at a summit in held in September 2015. The ISMOE amended project document was designed to be aligned with Target 7a of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The transition between the MDGs to SDGs is still at the working stage especially that the MDGs were largely designed to be funded from flow of aids from developed to developing countries. This did not materialize. The SDGs, with its 17 goals which have to be achieved between January 2016-2030, has brought the three aspects of sustainable development in a much more integrated way that the MDG did, and its emphasizes that countries have to take the challenge of improving their own revenue generation capacities¹². The sustainable development goals¹³ include targets and indicators

¹² Global advocacy of The Hunger Project, www.advocacy.thp.org

focused on measurable outcomes. They will take into account national realities, and respect of national priorities. Targets will be defined by each Government defining its own targets and taking into consideration national circumstances.

78. Also, as climate change is now unequivocal a global issue that is likely have significant economic damages and social tension especially in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the sustainable development concept is now broadened to include the protection and development of both local and global assets. In order to safeguard these assets, investment in low carbon and climate-resilient pathways for the green economy transition is highly required as it will link the socio-economic benefits with the environmental sustainability. In fact, the path towards a green economy requires first a reduction of the environmental damages caused by local and global pollutants¹⁴. Lebanon has approved the Agreement of the Conference of the COP-21 in May 2015, and the MOE has been assigned to develop Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA)¹⁵. NAMA refers to a set of policies and actions that Lebanon would undertake as part of a commitment to reduce GHG emissions thus ensuring maximization of contribution towards sustainable development.

79. At the national, level, the Government of Lebanon is preparing its National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) under the leadership of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and co-financed by StREG. ISMOE is also collaborating and providing its inputs. The NSDS will have major threads among them are Climate Change and Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), which is inherently linked to sustainable development and particularly in the economic sector. With the preparation of the NSDS, Lebanon will reaffirm its commitment to sustainable development and to its alignment with the SDGs.

80. The UN has also prepared in draft its UN Strategic Framework Lebanon for 2017-2020¹⁶. The three proposed goals are: (1) All people in Lebanon have peace and security; (2) Lebanon enjoys domestic stability and practices effective governance and (3) Lebanon reduces poverty and promotes sustainable development while addressing immediate needs in a human rights/gender sensitive manner. All the activities under each of the three goals will be guided by the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and related 2030 Agenda with relevant indicators and targets. Under Goal 3, the UNSF proposes to “focus on strengthening productive capacities and generating inclusive growth, improving equitable access and delivery of social services and promoting environmental protection and effective natural resource management”. Goal 3 will adopt the strategic approach of working towards a low carbon economy and in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and with the Climate Change Agreement of the Conference of the Parties (COP 21).

81. Within the MOE, two projects include an institutional strengthening and capacity building component namely the EU-Financed StREG and the World Bank /Italian Cooperation financed LEPAP which are supplementing the ISMOE activities. In StREG, it is expected that environmental inspection and enforcement will be strengthened, by the drafting of new inspection and

¹³ 68th Session of the UN General Assembly, report A/68/970

¹⁴ S.Arif and F. Doumani, A Strategic Investment Framework for Green Economy in the Arab Countries, ESCWA, May 2015,

¹⁵ Wikipedia website: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationally_Appropriate_Mitigation_Action>.

¹⁶ UN Strategic Framework Lebanon 2017-2020 in draft

enforcement procedures, the training of key stakeholders; the Ministry of Environment administrative capacity will be improved through the establishment the upgrade of the management system at the Ministry of Environment (workflow, archive and equipment inventory) and the environment policy will be enhanced through updating of the National Environmental Action Plan which was replaced by the preparation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy and initiating the mainstreaming of environmental policies.

82. Similarly LEPAP under its first component financed by the Italian Cooperation will provide technical assistance for the detailed design of environment audit (EA), environment and social impact assessment (ESIA) and compliance action plans (CAPs) to eligible enterprises so that their EAs/ESIAs/CAPs are prepared in accordance with the Environment Compliance Decree no. 8471-2012; it will strengthen the MOE capacity in ESIAs/EAs for the industrial sector by establishing guidelines for sector ESIA, and its enforcement and by providing formal and on-the-job training at the national and local levels in close coordination with the EU -StREG Project.

83. In view of the change in the environment landscape, it is important that ISMOE evolves in infusing the selected concepts of sustainable development which are peculiar to the Project defined in the SDG and be aligned with the UN strategic framework in Lebanon and with the National Sustainable Development Strategy that is being developed. These concepts for which a reformulated ISMOE can contribute are:

- **Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns in SDG 12** by achieving in 2030 the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources (target 12.2); achieving by 2020 the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment (target 12.4) and substantially reduce by 2030 waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse(target 12.5)
- **Taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts in SDG 13** by integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning (target 13.2)
- **Strengthening the means of implementation in SDG 17** by mobilizing additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources (target 17.3), enhancing international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals (target 17 (90)), enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development (target 17 (140)), and building by 2030 on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries (target 17(19)).

III. A Two -Phase Extension of the ISMOE

84. Based on the above, the evaluation recommends that ISMOE be realigned in two successive phases:

A. A continuation phase of the current ISMOE for 6-9 months in which Project would :

- a) Focus on four major interventions:
- Development and preparation, through a consultative process, of a short and medium term vision for the Ministry of Environment that delineates clearly the objectives, roles and functions of the MOE in aligning with the proposed selected SDGs above and for which the Ministry would be responsible and accountable.
 - Offering a comprehensive training program on project management, project financing and project monitoring to MOE senior staff and especially for the newly recruited civil servant staff.
 - Preparing guidelines and procedures for project management, monitoring and evaluation for the different services and departments of the MOE.
 - Designing and preparing the new ISMOE project for another four years as proposed below on the basis of the UNDP results based management framework.
- b) Disengage itself gradually from the technical support that the Project provided to other projects and dedicate staff and time in the implementation of the above activities.
- c) Proceed with the recruitment of a co-project manager, environmental economist and administrative assistant as well preparation of the TORs for the recruitment of the core team of experts. (see para 92)

B. A second phase of four years (2017-2021) for the implementation of the redesigned ISMOE

85. For the MOE to embark on the path of the new concepts of sustainable development, changes are needed in the way MOE should assist in environmental, social and economic development as well as in the way it assists other ministries in making choices among competing issues and priorities.

86. A new Sustainable Development Strategy is being prepared at the country level taking into consideration the SDGs which are now the strategic directions to be adapted nationally. Cross-sectoral strategies are increasingly recognized, however, the development of cross-sectoral strategies is still lacking in Lebanon. Therefore, existing strategies and initiatives should be brought closer together under: (a) a shared vision and a broad strategic environmental objectives; (b) a set of adaptable mechanisms to pursue these objectives, improve cross-sectoral complementarity, and smooth out inconsistencies; (c) clear definition of responsibilities, capabilities and financial resources to implement these mechanisms; and (d) a continuous monitoring and accountability mechanisms to track performance and actions.

87. Such a strategic approach implies a new way of thinking and working in Lebanon so as to move from: (i) considering environment as a liability that would drain budgetary resources to considering it as an asset which would generate financing through policy and institutional reforms; (ii) a focus on inputs and outputs (projects, laws) to targets and outcomes (impacts of projects and legal changes) derived nationally; (iii) a top down approach and centralized decision making into a system of information sharing, and improved governance; (iv) a dependence on external assistance to national resources mobilization through leveraging global benefits (GEF and newly multi-billion Green Climate Fund) and; (v) a reliance on the Ministry of Environment for guidance to catalyze the process of measuring performance and accommodating learning.

88. In order to assist the MOE to move to this new approach, ISMOE new objectives should be to strengthen the momentum for policy reform and institution building that could contribute to economic growth, by better use of the environmental assets and resources and their protection against negative impacts of climate change. This can be achieved by assisting the MOE in:

- Prioritization of sectors and sub-sectors based on sound economic criteria as each sector is linked to one selected SDG and many sectors are linked to three above SDGs. Emphasis will be on “how to” define realistic targets of performance, assess existing and future financial resources and income streams, and prepare scenarios on how to bridge the existing financing gaps to meet realistic performance targets. The tools of costs assessment of environmental degradation (COED) and strategic environmental assessment (SEA) will be developed at the sector and/or local level;
- Better upstream analytical work to demonstrate “how to” develop and implement outcome oriented strategies and on “how” can the MOE assist in addressing trade off among competing sectors;
- Demonstrating the application of cross-sectoral linkages at the local and community levels;
- Better monitoring, managing results and evaluating outcomes based on systematic measurements and with the provision of institutional incentives;
- Preparing a gradual exit strategy of UNDP support for institutional strengthening of the MOE.

89. The newly designed project will re-align its activities to work at two levels for which no other individual donors or international financing institutions are systematically addressing:

- Much further at the upstream to develop with and for the decision makers, strategies, financial scenarios and actions plans to mainstream environment into specific sectors related to economic growth/poverty reduction taking also into consideration both global and local benefits;
- Much lower at the downstream to improve at the municipal level, public awareness, managerial and technical competence and public support for planning, designing, implementing and monitoring integrated environmental programs and projects.

90. Both levels are now required to ensure environmental sustainability. At the upstream level, to catalyze policy reforms and develop target, and at the downstream level where the GoL and IFIs are focusing their investments and where the operational impacts can be measured. Working at the extreme levels of the development agenda, the ISMOE project would complement the work of other financial institutions working at the middle level for financing programs and projects. It will also pave the way for reducing transaction costs resulting for developing tools and guidelines for policy actions, strengthening technical and managerial capacity at the municipal level. Furthermore, expanding the audience beyond the environmentalists of the MOE would enable the newly designed ISMOE project to move from technical topics to more financial/ economic analyses, to knowledge sharing and to more policy formulation, and from ad hoc national activities to truly national priorities based on cost and benefits.

91. The key to the success for this new approach will be to leverage limited resources into maximum impact, by being selective not only in the ISMOE areas of involvement, but where environmental sustainability impact can be the greatest at the country level. This can be achieved by selecting limited areas of focus for which intervention will either fill an important gap in the environmental agenda of the International Financing Institutions and donors or complement the existing efforts already in place by the Lebanese environment- related Institutions and sector ministries.

92. The selection of these focus areas should be subject of a wide consultation that ISMOE can organize during the preparation of the Project and taking into consideration a set of realistic criteria:

- Adverse impacts on public health and/or serious degradation of key natural resources;
- Improve the quality of life of the poor and/or economic growth;
- Generate background studies for sustainable investments in the rural/municipal space to be supported by the financial institutions upon request from the Lebanese Government;
- Could have both local and global benefits

93. If the reformulation of the Project is considered, there will be many operational implications that will be defined within the context of a new Project Concept Document. The newly reformulated ISMOE would focus on a few key issues, larger and better-funded project activities, and increasing emphasis on policy and on results on the ground. Four important implications are: project management, quality of outputs, monitoring and evaluation, and level of financing.

94. As stated in the previous chapter, the current project management structure is totally understaffed and overworked: A five staff for the management structure is currently unsustainable. There is therefore an urgent need to restructure the project management along the following lines:

- a) The Project Management Structure should consist of three tiers
 - a. Tiers one: is the staff to ensure a smooth operation of the Minister's office. This consists of the Senior Environment Advisor that will be responsible for policy and strategic advice and assist the Minister on all technical matters related to Ministry. The Senior Environment advisor will be the official representative of the ISMOE project with UNDP and the Minister's office, the COM, the Parliament and the International Financing Institutions. He/she can also oversee and guide the project management (but not its day to day management); the senior legal/administrative/courier advisor to be responsible of quality review of all documentations pertaining to the Minister and act as his senior legal /administrative advisor; a Public Relations and External Affairs Officer to be the spoke-person of the Minister's office on all activities of the Ministry; and an Administrative Clerk to assist in the administration and secretarial functions of the staff.
 - b. Tiers two is the staff to ensure the proper implementation and completion of the project activities. This will consist of two co-project managers (one recruited by UNDP and the other one nominated from the senior MOE staff to endure continuity

and ownership, both will share the responsibility for day to day management of the project activities); an environment economist that will guide the environment mainstreaming and assist the services in policy development and oversee the group of experts (see para.c below); a communication officer to keep abreast the information on the documents generated by the Project to the services and departments of the MOE as well to the interest stakeholders and the media; and a Project assistant to assist the Project manager in coordinating the different project activities.

- c. Tiers three is the establishment of a group of senior national experts with international experience to twin with the heads of the services. They will be responsible of policy development, strategic planning and quality control and monitoring of the project activities in their respective Services. The senior experts would serve all services, particularly the Registrar office, the Urban Environment Service, the Natural Resources Service, the Environment Technology Service, and the Planning and Programming Service. One of their main objectives would be to nurture one of the senior staff of the services to be able to provide the policy and planning for the services within 2 years. The UN volunteers program should be gradually decreased at the expense of establishing the group of senior experts.
- b) A steering committee chaired by H.E. the Minister of the Environment, and assisted by the Senior Environment Advisor and composed of the Ministers' advisors and the heads of services, should be established to provide overall policy guidance, review work programs and resolve any implementation issues related to all the projects co financed by the international financing institutions and donors. The Senior Environment Advisor should be empowered to be able to be "on the top" of the implementation of these projects and recommend the necessary remediation measures for the Steering Committee to act. Minutes of the steering committee should be disseminated to the different projects' managers and published on the web site of the Ministry.
 - c) Emphasis should be put by the Project Management Structure in developing written guidelines /procedures for its staff and the MOE services to be able to plan, design, implement and monitor project development activities. The Project Manager should take the lead in contracting the services of international consultants to prepare these guidelines, organize 1-2workshops on project management, financial management and monitoring and evaluation for the different services and departments, and provide on the job -training especially for the newly recruited staff in the use of these guidelines.
 - d) There is an essential need that the Project Management Structure should not include new additional activities except with the four activities in the next chapter on the ISMOE future. The Project Management Structure should gradually moving away from continuing to manage all the project activities to being a catalyst in ensuring the activities developed under this Project are gradually managed by the relevant Services of the MOE. In order to ensure that the MOE heads of services are involved in the Project activities, the Senior Environment Advisor and Project manager should propose cross-sectoral coordination mechanism between these services.

95. Project management should therefore be decentralized to the MOE services with the provision of UNDP newly recruited experts serving as a twinning with the head of the services involved in the Project as part of the group of experts proposed above. There should therefore be a devolution of management of the newly project activities to the different services to ensure ownership and continuation after the Project ends. This should be formulated in the procedures and guidelines that should be prepared during the continuation of the existing ISMOE. Furthermore the quality of inputs and outputs should be assessed periodically by the Project Management Structure with the provision of an independent peer review system for all the studies and policies documents generated by the Project.

96. In the design of the new phase of the ISMOE, close attention should be given to ensuring that each project activities and the project as a whole has clear, monitorable, performance indicators with realistic assumptions and risks. An evaluation of project performance and impacts should be built in for every case; and a mid-term and project evaluation should be undertaken by independent experts.

97. As shown in table 6 above, there is a surplus of US\$ 0.97 million from previous years in addition to the refund of ~ US\$ 380,000 from the Italian Cooperation, totaling US\$ 1.35 million exclusive of the 2016 GOL allocation of US\$ 895,000 which total could reach US\$ 2.24 million during 2016. Such amount is sufficient to finance the four proposed interventions recruit staff for the project management structure and launch the newly designed ISMOE project. However if the Project would extend till 2021, it should seek to diversify its resource base and reduce transaction costs in fund raising

- Ensuring upfront commitments from the Ministry of Finance on financing the Project at the level of US\$ 895,000 year; and
- Tapping into new resources from the Green Climate Fund after MOE be accredited.

Chapter 5

General Conclusions and Recommendations

I. General Conclusions

98. The major conclusions of this evaluation are:
- a) The fact that the MOE has allocated 19% from its yearly budget and financed 93% of the project funds is a testimony of ownership to improve the environmental management system and its commitment to environmental mainstreaming.
 - b) The overall evaluation is Satisfactory. Satisfactory achievements are on the review of existing strategies and plans, coordination of ongoing programs, legislation and preparation of studies. The development of a prioritized inspection and enforcement plan is still a challenge and public awareness communication and lack of monitoring and evaluation are shortcomings.
 - c) The project activities provided significant actions on improving the technical and institutional capacity of the MOE and addressing national priorities that would lead to sustainable development.
 - d) ISMOE pioneering work on the legislation has and will substantially reinforce the legal framework which is considered essential towards moving forward to sustainable development.
 - e) ISMOE collaboration with international financing institutions has been remarkable in terms of technical and financial support they received.
 - f) ISMOE project management and its backstopping by UNDP/Lebanon has been exemplary in terms of professionalism, work discipline, flexibility, problem solving, and policy and technical knowledge. The Project management stewardship was a key factor that has sustained the capacity building aspect of the project.
 - g) ISMOE has added value to the improvement of the professional reputation of the MOE and to elevating its image.
 - h) The project sustainability is rated as moderately satisfactory because its design was incomplete and did not meet all the requirements' expectations. Never-the-less some achievements are likely to be sustainable. At project completion, there are good prospects that the achievements of the development objectives will be maintained.

i) General Recommendations

97. There have been separate recommendations in several sections of this report, the overall recommendations are:

- a) As the evaluation found that ISMOE showed promise of meeting the expectations set out in the Program Concept Document, a further extension followed by a reformulation of the objectives and outcomes of the Project are necessary to meet the challenges and assist in the formulation and implementation of the SDGs in Lebanon and the UN Strategy Framework.
- b) The design of the reformulated ISMOE should follow international practice described in the UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results (2009).
- c) The governance and management structures should entail MOE senior management involvement in core decision making from the outset to ensure country ownership and sustainability and a systematic mechanism for consultation with stakeholders and cross-services interactions should be promoted. In addition, devolution of the future project activities to the services and departments should be an encouraging step towards building sustainable capacity in the MOE.
- d) ISMOE audience should be expanded beyond the MOE. The ISMOE should expand its beneficiaries beyond the Ministry of the Environment staff and include also selected ministries and municipalities in order to reinforce the process of mainstreaming environment into other sectors.
- e) A clear disengagement strategy is also required. The questions of how much longer the ISMOE should continue to exist with UNDP management support beyond 2021 should be answered as to enhance MOE ownership and ensuring the sustainability of the project activities.

Annexes

Annex 1: Results framework for the MOE Institutional Strengthening Project

<u>Results</u>	<u>Indicators</u>	<u>Baseline</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Means of Verification</u>	<u>Risks and Assumptions</u>
Impact Statement					
Outcome Statement 1. Environmental considerations are mainstreamed in sector and local-level strategies and plans 2. Government equipped for obligations set by international convention	1.Environment action plan /strategies developed for the relevant ministries and decentralized structure 2.Technical Units with the Ministry operational and having a higher level of expertise to each concerned environmental convention				
Outputs 1. Assessment of needs for capacity development in environmental sustainability: 2. Planning and programming for sustainable environmental development	Sustainable Development Approach on the agenda of the Council of Ministers	Enabling Environment for sustainable environmental development remains limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete Action Plan to promote sustainable development developed • Legislation issued and adopted • Increased capacity and awareness on sustainable development policies 		
Activities <u>Component 1: Assessment of needs for capacity development for environment sustainability</u> 3.1: Review of existing strategies plans projects, studies 3.2: Identify data needs and gaps 3.3: Coordinate ongoing programmes and studies 3.4: Consult with Stakeholders 3.5: Assess status of environmental inspection, Case study Lake Qaraoun <u>Component 2: : Promoting and Programming for Sustainable Development</u> 1.1: Development of national communication plan 1.2: Draft a prioritized action plan: reactivation of NEAP 1.3: Development of details programmes and proposals to push the action plan forward 1.4: Resource Mobilization 1.5: Revise and issue needed legislation/decrees 1.6: Develop a prioritized inspection and enforcement plan					

Annex 2: List of Persons Interviewed

Ministry of the Environment

H.E Mr. Mohamad Al Mashnouk, Minister of the Environment
Mr. Ghassan Sayah, Senior Advisor to the Minister
Ms. Hind Joubran, Head of the Registrar
Mr. Bassam Sabbagh, Head of the Urban Environment Service
Mr. Nadim Mroueh, Head of the Natural Resources Service
Ms. Samar Malek, Acting Head of the Environment Technology Service
Ms. Nadia Al Ahmar, Acting Head of the Planning and Programming Service
Ms. Nancy Khoury, Head of the Department of Public Relations and External Affairs
Ms. Lara Samaha, Head of the Department of Ecosystems

UNDP

Mr. Luca Renda, UNDP Country Director
Mr. Edgard Chehab, UNDP Assistant Resident Representative
Ms. Jihan Seoud, Programme Analyst, UNDP Energy and Environment
Ms. Joelle Salamé, Programme Associate, UNDP Energy and Environment

ISMOE Project Management

Dr. Manal Moussallem, Senior Environmental Advisor and Project Manager
Mr. Edmond Esta, Senior Legal Advisor
Ms. Nour Masri, Technical Project Manager

Parliament

H.E. Mr. Simon Abi Ramia, Member of the Environment Parliamentary Commission

Presidency of the Council of Ministers

Ms. Salam Yamout, National ICT Strategy Coordination

Ministry of Justice/ Council of State

Mr. Wahib Daoura, Judge

Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR)

Mr. Youssef Saad, Head of Procurement

Banque du Liban

Mr. Wael Hamdan, Senior Director and Head of the Financing Unit
Mr. Mario Khoury, Financing Unit

Council of Development and Reconstruction

Dr. Wafaa Charafeldine, Head of the Financing Department

Lebanese Petroleum Administration

Mr. Walid Nasr, Head of Strategic Planning
Ms. Grace Rachid, Environmental Specialist

Newspapers

Ms. Suzanne Baaklini, L'Orient-le Jour

Ms. May Abi Akl, Annahar

International Financing Institutions and Donors

- Mr. Nicolas Ritzenthaler, Programme Manager-Agriculture and Environment, the European Commission in Lebanon (and responsible of StREG)
- Mr. Dietmar Ueberbacher, Environment Program Office, Italian Cooperation in Lebanon (and responsible of LEPAP technical assistance)
- Ms. Maria Sarraf, Lead Environment Economist, the World Bank (and Team leader of the Qaraoun Pollution Prevention Project)
- Dr. Alaa Sarhan, Senior Environment Specialist , the World Bank (and Team leader of LEPAP)