



Final Evaluation of the Municipal Empowerment and Resilience Project (MERP) - Lebanon

Prepared by Canadian Leaders in International Consulting (CLIC)
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PROJECT AND EVALUATION INFORMATION DETAILS

Project Information		
Project title	Strengthening the Long-Term Resilience of Subnational Authorities in countries affected by the Syrian and Iraqi Crises	
Atlas ID	00116813/00113796	
Corporate outcome and outputs	<p>Lebanon CPD (2023-2025) Outcome 2: Strengthened security, stability, justice, and social peace.</p> <p>Output 2.1 Institutional systems strengthened to manage multi-dimensional risks and shocks at national and sub-national levels.</p> <p>(Strategic Plan Signature Solution 3: Resilience Output 3.1)</p> <p>Output 2.3 Integrated conflict-sensitive and gender-responsive development solutions provided in municipalities hosting the country's most vulnerable communities to enhance their resilience (including in host communities).</p> <p>Lebanon CPD (2017-2022) Outcome 3.1: Productive sectors strengthened to promote inclusive growth and local development, especially in the most disadvantaged areas.</p>	
Country	Lebanon	
Region	Middle East	
Date project document signed	January 2019	
Project dates	Start	Planned End
	01 January 2019	31 Sep 2024
Project budget	\$ 16,715,328.90	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	\$ 16,385,328.90	
Funding source	EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis 'Madad Fund'.	

Implementing parties¹	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)	
Evaluation information		
Evaluation type	Project Evaluation	
	Final Evaluation	
Period under evaluation	Start	End
	01 January 2019	31 March 2024
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Evaluation dates	Start	Completion
	07 March 2024	June 15, 2024

¹ It is the entity(ies) that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and work plan.

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List of Acronyms

3RP:	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan
CB:	Capacity Building
CLIC:	Canadian Leaders in International Consulting
CSOs:	Civil Society Organizations
CTA:	Chief Technical Advisor
DG:	Director General
DGLAC:	Directorate General of Local Administrations and Councils
DIM:	Direct Implementation Modality
DTS:	Lebanon Digital Transformation Strategy
ENA:	Ecole Nationale d'Administration
EU:	European Union
FGDs:	Focus Group Discussions
GIS:	Geographic Information Systems
GIZ:	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GSM:	Global System for Mobile communications
Headway:	Iraq Component of the action "Strengthening the Long-Term Resilience of Subnational Authorities in Countries Affected by the Syrian and Iraqi Crises"
ICT:	Information and Communication Technology
IDPs:	Internally Displaced Persons
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
KIIs:	Key Informant Interviews
LCRP:	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
LED:	Local Economic Development
LHSP:	Lebanon Host Communities Support
MENA:	Middle East and North Africa
MERP:	Municipal Empowerment and Resilience Project
MoIM:	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities
MS Teams:	Microsoft Teams
MSMEs:	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
NGOs:	Non-Governmental Organizations
O&M:	Operations and Maintenance
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PwDs:	People with Disabilities
QINs:	Quarterly Information Notes
RBA:	Rights-Based Approach
RBAS:	Regional Bureau for Arab States
ROM:	Result Oriented Monitoring
RTO:	Regional Technical Office
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goal
TL:	Team Leader
ToC:	Theory of Change

ToR: Terms of Reference

ToT: Training of Trainers

UKAID: United Kingdom Aid

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNEG: United Nations Evaluation Group

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UNIFIL: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

UoMs: Union of Municipalities

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

Definitions:

Stakeholders: UN-Habitat, UNDP, RBAS, MoIM, DGLAC, service providers

Beneficiaries: DGLAC, Municipalities, UoMs

Direct beneficiaries: Citizens and residents who benefited from the public service projects implemented through MERP

1. Executive Summary

Background: The Municipal Empowerment and Resilience Project (MERP) is a joint initiative between the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat). It was funded by the European Union (EU) MADAD Regional Fund and implemented in close collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) and the Directorate General of Local Administrations and Councils (DGLAC). Launched in 2019, MERP aimed to support Lebanon's need for improved governance and service provision at the municipal level. MERP intended to address the impact of the refugee crisis on Lebanon's host communities, specifically targeting the Urban Community Al Fayhaa, the Federation of Municipalities of the Northern and Coastal Matn, and the Union of Municipality of Tyre, with a total of 92 partner municipalities and three partner Unions.

District	# Of Municipalities in the district	Targeted UoM	# Of municipalities in the UoM
Tripoli	4 (Qalamoun, Mina, Beddawi, and Tripoli)	Urban Community Al Fayhaa	4 (Qalamoun, Mina, Tripoli, and Beddawi)
Matn	54	Federation of Municipalities of the Northern and Coastal Matn	33
Tyre	62	Union of Tyre Municipalities	55

The Syrian Refugee Crisis and successive crises severely impacted local administrative capacities, increased demand for municipal services and resources, and intensified social tensions between host and refugee communities. MERP was uniquely positioned as a standalone project and thus distinguished itself from ongoing UN programs, such as the UNDP's Lebanon Host Communities Support Project (LHSP). It focused on local governance both vertically and horizontally, utilizing creative and flexible implementation approaches.

Vertically, MERP offered tools and support to MoIM, specifically aiding DGLAC to become an effective and efficient oversight body that supports municipal management. Horizontally, it empowered municipalities and unions of municipalities to enhance governance and technical capabilities to serve their citizens effectively and transparently. The collaboration between UNDP and UN-Habitat, driven by donor priorities and UN Lebanon's strategic plan fostered a coherent implementation strategy. Moreover, by operating independently of other ongoing programs, MERP was able to pilot innovative approaches to local governance, support technical capacity building using funding for public service provision, and strengthen the presence of the Regional

Technical Offices (RTOs) which contributed to crisis management and planning for local economic development, and provided needed direct technical assistance to DGLAC.

A notable achievement of MERP was its prompt crisis management support to the RTO in Bourj Hammoud Municipality following the explosion of the Port. The Basic Services and Local Economic Development (LED) interventions provided critical strategic planning needs to address the economic crisis and its impact on the municipalities. Looking ahead, UNDP and UN-Habitat have recognized the positive results and contributions that MERP achieved, and they plan to utilize the innovative governance support in the new Program Portfolio developed recently; the expansion of social services, livelihoods, and women's economic empowerment, supporting municipal finance, and overall support to stabilization and development. UN-Habitat equally recognizes that Lebanon's persistent crisis would benefit from improving the capabilities and financial stability of the RTOs.

This evaluation will demonstrate that Lebanon will need continued support to municipalities, MoIM, and DGLAC to address the consequences of previous and future crises looming over Lebanon due to local and regional tensions, and specifically due to the ongoing low intensity war between Israel and Lebanon, and the occupied Gaza Strip.

Context: MERP was launched and implemented amidst one of the most severe crises Lebanon has ever faced - a complete economic collapse, considered the worst since the mid-19th century.² This was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and its widespread consequences. This situation was further compounded by the Beirut Port Explosion, one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history³, which devastated nearly one-third of Beirut, killing hundreds, injuring thousands, and leaving over 300,000 people homeless.⁴ These overlapping crises had devastating effects on Lebanon's governance, particularly crippling the public sector and severely impacting municipalities. With the collapse of the Government of Lebanon, depleted financial resources, and the bankruptcy of the banking system which left most depositors without their savings, municipalities were left to manage the affairs of their citizens and the Syrian refugees almost alone. As the first-line service providers within a heavily centralized system managed by multiple ministries, municipalities faced unprecedented challenges. The ongoing crisis had multiple consequences, the departure and resignation of a large number of public servants at the national and local levels depleted what little capacity

² [Lebanon Overview: Development news, research, data | World Bank](#)

³ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/08/03/they-killed-us-inside/investigation-august-4-beirut-blast>

⁴ [Beirut's Devastating Explosion Equivalent to Several Hundred Tons of TNT, Experts Say : ScienceAlert](#)

municipalities had, and the centralized system has denied the ability to replenish their numbers.

Since 2005 Lebanon has been experiencing recurring crises weakened state institutions, and the political elites paralyzed the institutions of governance (parliament, government, judiciary, and municipalities). Compounded with the ongoing war in the South and a possible all-out war with Israel, Lebanon is in permanent crisis mode. This deteriorating context has forced MERP to continually adapt and innovate. MERP responded by implementing flexible strategies to support local governance and provide critical assistance during these multifaceted crises. To address these challenges, MERP has focused on enhancing technical capacities, providing emergency relief, and fostering community resilience.

Evaluation Overview: Canadian Leaders in International Consulting Inc. (CLIC) was contracted by the UNDP Lebanon Country Office to conduct the final evaluation of MERP. The purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the project's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues, including human rights, gender, and disability. The evaluation is intended to address accountability questions (backward-looking) and to identify learning opportunities to contribute to new approaches to local governance in Lebanon (forward-looking). The main audiences of the evaluation are (a) the MERP team and UNDP/UN-Habitat management, who are expected to use identified successful strategies to enhance future project design, implementation, and monitoring; (b) project beneficiaries, including municipalities, unions, and communities, who are anticipated to leverage the findings to better understand the benefits and challenges of similar future interventions; and (c) the Project Steering Committee, composed of the UNDP and UN-Habitat, EU, MoIM, and DGLAC, who will use the results to inform policy adjustments, allocate funding, endorse future projects, and ensure accountability and transparency to stakeholders.

Evaluation Methodology and Approach: CLIC used a mixed method approach and purposeful data-gathering methodology to gather data. The approach was participatory; CLIC collaborated with the MERP Team, United Nations (UN) agencies, and multiple stakeholders throughout the process to gather data and ensure that gaps were addressed. We also incorporated the contribution analysis approach to critically examine the project's theory of change, evaluating the alignment between intended outcomes and observed results, alongside the influence of external factors. Primary data collection included 18 consultations with UN and international stakeholders, 36 key informant interviews (KIIs) with municipal leaders and staff, and 11 focus group discussions (FGDs) with DGLAC/Municipal staff and direct beneficiaries, involving a total of 107 participants (70 men and 37 women). Additionally, secondary data was obtained through a detailed desk review of project documents and other sources available online. Other stakeholders and beneficiaries were identified but were unavailable due to departure of many public employees from their positions.

Key Findings: The following summary outlines the key findings of the MERP Final Evaluation, categorized based on the OECD Criteria utilized for this evaluation:

Relevance

- MERP is aligned with the overall needs of Lebanon's governance, particularly local governance as stated by the multiple public policy statements and international commitments. Evidence to this point was articulated by multiple public policy papers and validated by stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation.
- MERP aligns with both UNDP and UN-Habitat strategic objectives in Lebanon as demonstrated in the project documents and in the ability of the staff to articulate the link between the objectives and MERP outcomes and activities.
- This project is in line with SDGs 1, 11, and 16- but not SDG 5 (Gender Equality). Despite inclusion in the logic model, MERP staff struggled to address gender-specific outcomes due to the economic crisis and a political and governance system in Lebanon that undervalues women's roles, with stakeholders insisting that benefits extend to the whole community, including women.
- MERP was consistently recognized by stakeholders and beneficiaries as highly relevant.
- On multiple occasions MERP was adapted due to the multiple crisis and changing context. MERP remained relevant to the country's needs during times of crisis, particularly the need of municipalities as they required urgent assistance in delivering public services to their residents.
- The vertical and horizontal approaches employed made it relevant to stakeholders. Horizontally, it involved innovative capacity-building approaches based on municipal needs. Vertically, it provided tools and support to MoIM/DGLAC to improve communication and transparency between DGLAC and the municipalities.

Coherence

- MERP was coherent with the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) but fell short in addressing directly the needs of the refugees due to the resistance of the local authorities to address refugee-specific needs and/or challenges they are facing.
- There was coherence between the MERP project and the international contributions supporting municipalities in service provision and economic development.
- MERP was an independent project, not part of the LHSP, which led to a focus on local governance, more innovative approaches, greater flexibility, and improved adaptation to the challenging environment.
- The UNDP and UN-Habitat partnership garnered predominantly positive feedback, recognized for enhancing project efficiency, despite some criticisms related to administrative complexities and coordination issues.

Effectiveness

- Despite some challenges, the MERP project largely succeeded in meeting its intended outcomes and outputs as detailed in the Results Framework, though the level of performance and success varied.
- MERP was effective in addressing municipalities' needs, particularly in terms of capacity building, and enhancing their work processes and administrative interfaces.
- The strategies and tools provided by MERP played an effective role in enhancing the capabilities of municipalities to improve service delivery and community engagement, ultimately contributing to the economic empowerment of their communities.
- Capacity-building training provided to municipalities, Unions of Municipalities (UoMs), and DGLAC had mixed effectiveness. While training programs such as proposal writing, strategic planning, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) were successful and enhanced the capabilities of participants, areas like conflict resolution were deemed ineffective and some service provider engagements were considered less effective.
- Effectiveness was not achieved with all stakeholders as smaller municipalities lack the human resources necessary to fully benefit from the capacity-building efforts.
- The small and medium-sized Public Services/LED projects implemented at the time of the evaluation were considered very effective in achieving their intended results.
- MERP was not effective in convincing the municipalities to adopt transparent governance, specifically in areas of accountability the municipalities refused to disclose revenues and expenditures to the public. Public participation in decision-making was also not achieved.

Efficiency

- The project was generally viewed as cost-efficient given its scope.
- The project's efficiency was hindered by cumbersome administrative procedures, lengthy bureaucratic processes, and the requirement for multiple layers of approvals before initiatives could be implemented.
- MERP established a robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system that enhanced project efficiency by ensuring systematic progress tracking and continuous improvements.
- The difficult Lebanese context further affected product and supply procurement causing inefficiencies in implementation. The brain drain was acutely experienced by MERP as the Project was unable to recruit engineers and other professional consultants needed to support the implementation of small and medium-sized Basic Services/LED projects.
- Capacity-building activities were also challenging to implement due to COVID-19 and the shortage of gas, the inability of municipalities to pay salaries all caused disruptions. MERP successfully adapted and conducted online capacity-building activities such as online training and continued after restrictions were removed and funding improved for municipal staff transportation.

- MERP employed innovative approaches and tools such as the WhatsApp-based Hotline in Bourj Hammoud Municipality, DGLAC talk shows, and the Feedback and Complaints Mechanism to achieve results efficiently.

Impact

- The impact on DGLAC and MoIM could not be fully measured due to delayed approvals for specific outputs, particularly the Municipal Support Strategy, DGLAC Web Portal, and Automated Call Center.
- Overall, the project positively influenced municipalities, UoMs, and their staff, improving their capacity to design and manage public service projects, and enhancing their interpersonal and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills, which increased productivity and capabilities.
- Implemented small and medium municipal projects had a positive impact, successfully meeting community needs, providing substantial returns, building trust, and improving communication between municipalities and communities, thereby contributing to social cohesion and stability.

Sustainability

- MERP's sustainability is mainly threatened by the ongoing economic crisis and the limited capacity and financial resources of municipalities to operate independently.
- The political instability at both national and subnational levels complicates sustainability efforts; however, the UoM of Tyre and surrounding municipalities, with their higher political stability, exhibit more promising sustainability prospects, outperforming other regions according to data. At the same time they are facing the crisis of IDPs in the South as result of the war with Israel, at the same time they are also being attacked.
- At the output level, particularly for small and medium-sized projects, sustainability was built into the criteria and implementation strategy. Measures to ensure project sustainability included collecting service fees to maintain equipment and infrastructure, with some municipalities implementing a fee-for-service model.
- MERP developed innovative ICT tools, including the DGLAC Web Portal, Automated Call Center, a WhatsApp-based Hotline, accounting software, and computers. They have the potential for long-term sustainability if DGLAC and the beneficiary municipalities use them effectively. It is noteworthy that the introduction of digital technology fits with the Lebanon Digital Technology Strategy which is discussed at length below.

Cross-Cutting Issues: At the outcome level, the MERP log frame did not include specific indicators for key cross-cutting issues specifically gender, youth, and the inclusion of people with disabilities (PwDs). At the output level, the MERP team attempted to integrate cross-cutting themes, advocating for the inclusion of women, youth, and PwD in municipalities. However, stakeholders resisted, and in some cases totally rejected the

concept. The environmental issues were addressed somewhat as they were built in the procurement process for small and medium public service projects. In particular, governance in Lebanon does not prioritize these areas, municipalities and some stakeholders dismiss these issues due to what they term “more pressing concerns”. Notably, women make up less than 5% of elected officials at the parliamentary level⁵, with slightly higher representation in some municipal areas but similarly low numbers for municipal employees who are youth and women. ⁶The inclusion of PwDs was particularly limited, with many municipalities unaware of inclusive activities and few projects effectively integrating accessibility features. Future strategies should include developing specific indicators for cross-cutting issues at the outcome level and creating incentivized targeted initiatives to increase the participation and representation of women, youth, and other marginalized groups in municipal governance.

Contribution to Regional Coordination: The role of the Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) in the implementation of MERP and Headway was limited to providing administrative and financial reporting assistance to the country teams and facilitated dialogue with the donor. A thorough analysis of the results from Headway and MERP, combined with consultations with the implementing teams from both programs, leads us to conclude that RBAS’ absence from a programmatic role was a missed opportunity. Both projects would have learned from each other, as we demonstrate in the general findings, and the learning from other regional and international experiences would have been very beneficial to MERP and ultimately to both UNDP and UN-Habitat.

Unintended Results:

At the outcome level, MERP objectives did not plan to support the implementation of the Lebanon Digital Transformation Strategy 2020-2030, which was updated in 2022. MERP encouraged, supported, financed, and trained beneficiaries to adopt technology for efficiency, transparency, and capacity building. The implementation of ICT in local governance and service provision aligns with the three immediate objectives at the outcome level of the strategy: 1) Improve citizens’ transactions and their experience with government services, 2) Enable Lebanon’s digital economy and private sector to prosper, and 3) Transform public sector operations. The adoption of technology in day-to-day operations was identified by the two active UoM and by DGLAC as an important contribution to improving their operations, enhancing efficiency-especially due to staff departure, and increasing transparency.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

⁵https://lebanon.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/UNWLCO_WPP_BRIEF_FINAL.pdf
⁶[2100967-Lebanese-Electoral-Law-EN-WEB-final.pdf \(unwomen.org\)](https://lebanon.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/2100967-Lebanese-Electoral-Law-EN-WEB-final.pdf)

Relevance

Conclusion

MERP provided evidence of the relevance of local governance capacity development projects, given the several gaps in the understanding of local governance and the role of municipalities in service provisions. Nonetheless, weaknesses and gaps were identified that need addressing.

Recommendation

UNDP should institute governance capacity building in all its local development projects to empower municipalities. The starting point is to develop a module on the legal and governance requirements for both elected councils and non-elected staff. Future support for local governance requires a thorough study of the constitutional provisions, legislation, regulations, and policies of municipal governance before the implementation of projects focused on governance. Additionally, UNDP should coordinate with other UN agencies such as UNICEF, UN Women, and UNESCO to promote local governance and leverage their projects in support of improving municipal services, transparency and accountability.

Coherence

Conclusion

MERP was coherent with the international efforts supporting municipalities in Lebanon in service provision and economic development while uniquely enhancing local multi-level governance. However, its planning and implementation were mostly internal with minimal public participation due to municipal resistance, which stemmed from fear of negative reactions and a lack of skills, tools, and exposure to best practices. Despite MERP's efforts, convincing municipalities of the importance of public participation, transparency, and accountability principles remained a challenge.

Recommendation

All UN agencies, particularly UNDP and UN-Habitat, should embed good governance as a principle of their programming, particularly at the municipal level. Public participation, transparency, and accountability are required for good governance. Support to municipalities should be conditional on public participation in planning and decision-making specifically to ensure inclusion and accountability. Also, training municipalities and providing examples of successful public participation can address their resistance.

Effectiveness

Conclusion

Despite challenges, MERP succeeded in enhancing administrative capabilities and providing crucial capacity-building, notably integrating digital tools to improve communication and efficiency across municipalities, unions, and DGLAC. Strengthening RTOs, which have demonstrable experience, knowledge, and capacity in local planning,

preparation, and training, was also crucial in enhancing municipal capabilities in planning, coordination, and crisis management.

Recommendation

UNDP and UN-Habitat should be supplying, supporting, and encouraging the adoption of digital tools to address staffing shortage and to create efficiencies. All programs should focus on using digital technology to improve public participation in decision-making, including the inclusion of women, youth, and PwD. It is also supporting Lebanon's Digital Strategy, which MERP achieved in an unintended way.

UNDP UN-Habitat and multiple other UN agencies should consider supporting municipalities in developing crisis management strategies. RTOs should be strengthened to lead such a strategy in coordination with UoMs and DGLAC.

Efficiency

Conclusion

Administrative complexities typical of UN systems, alongside rigorous and multi-layered approval processes, led to significant procurement and operational delays, reducing overall efficiency. This fostered cynicism and concerns about partnering with UN agencies, particularly the UNDP. The lack of clear initial communication with service providers and municipalities compounded these challenges, further complicated by Lebanon's difficult context and brain drain. However, the partnership between UNDP and UN-Habitat played a positive role in enhancing the project's efficiency.

Recommendation

UNDP and all UN agencies need to improve their communication with service providers and municipalities and other beneficiaries to address the misunderstanding in their operations. Specifically, communicating clear terms, timelines for procurement, and payment timelines is critical to the reputation of UNDP.

UNDP and UN-Habitat should work with the donor community to integrate any new programming such as MERP to be implemented within the portfolio approach to ensure efficiency, improve effectiveness, and build for sustainability. The portfolio approach will provide a comprehensive approach, but it is important to ensure that co-implementation as One UN is maintained.

Impact

Conclusion

MERP enhanced capacities in municipalities, unions, and their staff, with its small and medium projects significantly meeting community needs and boosting local economic development. However, the impact would have been greater with a fully established local economic development plan. Additionally, while RTOs crucially enhanced the

overall impact, their financial structure unintentionally had a negative effect, where initial financial issues led to internal conflicts over staff payments.

Recommendation

UNDP should support the establishment of the local economic development plans that were intended to be established by MERP. It is important that they are linked to the LHSP Portfolio objective: Support the stabilization and development of business and Economic Employment objectives.

UN-Habitat should consider the creation of rotating positions for municipal staff who are interested to serve at the RTO. This would include a new compensation package allowing the benefit to staff and be included as an exit strategy. These positions would be drawing staff from the member municipalities and compensating them on top of their current salary scale. These could be positions for a period of one year. It could be seen as a performance-based bonus to cover increased responsibilities, transportation, and incidental expenses. This initiative would enhance the professional skills of municipal staff members who join the RTO and foster improved communication and understanding between the RTO and the municipalities. In the short term, this arrangement could be facilitated by UN Habitat, which would support the transfer and rotation of skilled staff through the RTO. This should be planned as part of the exit strategy, learning from the previous experience that led to conflict over the different salary scales.

Sustainability

Conclusion

The sustainability of MERP is compromised by limited capacity and financial resources among municipalities, unions, and DGLAC. While its innovative ICT tools could achieve long-term sustainability if effectively utilized, the success of these tools, the provided manuals, and the broader project depends on continuous support and extended training. Also, the success of municipal small and medium projects, despite their high revenue potential, is threatened by a lack of transparency and accountability.

Recommendation

UNDP should institutionalize a municipal training program with public Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA) to provide ongoing training to newly elected municipal leaders, and capacity building for staff and service providers. In the past, UNDP developed a Parliamentary Training Program within the Parliament of Lebanon to train newly elected members of parliament on their parliamentary and legislative roles and to the staff and ongoing capacity building. An institutional program can utilize digital and hybrid training modalities to minimize staff disruption and cost.

UNDP should provide ongoing support to DGLAC to effectively use the digital tools MERP developed and provide support to the staff to be able to respond to the requests of the municipalities and unions. DGLAC needs long-term support, ongoing capacity building, and tools to conduct its regulatory and oversight role.

UNDP and UN-Habitat should work with DGLAC to develop administrative regulations and policies to encourage municipalities to be transparent in their financial reporting and management of revenues generated from external sources. The lack of transparency will reduce trust and potentially destabilize communities. Municipalities in Lebanon are elected mainly based on familial and political affiliations, lack of trust and conflict over resources management will cause conflicts.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Conclusion

MERP struggled to integrate gender, youth, and disability inclusion across all levels, hindered by stakeholder resistance and low prioritization within Lebanese governance. Additionally, the project did not implement stronger enforcement mechanisms or establish partnerships that could have enhanced inclusion effectively.

Recommendation

All UN agency projects should include conditionality specific to cross-cutting themes, particularly the inclusion of gender, youth, PwD, and environmental issues. It is also recommended that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) be supported to lead public campaigns to inform and create awareness on this issue. Particularly, UN Women and UNICEF should encourage coordination between CSOs and municipalities to conduct awareness campaigns and lead consultation processes focused on women, youth, and people with disabilities, which would improve understanding of these issues. There are a number of CSOs and NGOs active across Lebanon, they should be supported to create awareness campaigns focused on inclusion.

Regional Component

Conclusion

RBAS's role in this project was limited to supporting the project's administrative and financial management and liaising with the donor, missing an opportunity by not participating in a programmatic role. Indeed, there are many recent developments in supporting local authorities and municipalities globally, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Many countries in crisis, some for over a decade, have relied on municipalities to provide direct services to citizens, residents, refugees, and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) due to central governments being in permanent crisis or their mandates have elapsed.

Recommendation

RBAS should play a role in providing technical support, lessons learned from the region, and connections to other international examples of good governance at the municipal level. Also, given recent global developments in supporting local authorities and municipalities, particularly in the MENA region, RBAS should be the conduit for raising awareness amongst UN agencies and staff related to these achievements and lessons learned.

2. Introduction and Overview

This document is the final evaluation report of the Municipal Empowerment and Resilience Project (MERP), covering the project from its onset in January 2019 until March 2024. MERP is a joint initiative by UNDP and UN-Habitat, implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM). This evaluation's main aim is to assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the MERP project. The evaluation seeks to formulate actionable recommendations, lessons learned, and best practices for future similar interventions and reflect on the project's joint nature, both regionally and in terms of UN collaborative programming.

The primary audience for this evaluation includes the MERP team, UNDP/UN-Habitat management, project beneficiaries (municipalities, unions, and communities), and the project steering committee, which includes the European Union (EU), MoIM, and DGLAC. Each group has a vested interest in the outcomes of this evaluation: The MERP team and UNDP/UN-Habitat focus on operational details and strategic implementation. They are expected to use successful strategies identified during the evaluation to enhance future project design, implementation, and monitoring. The beneficiaries are anticipated to leverage the evaluation findings to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the benefits and challenges of similar future interventions. As the governing body and funders, the Project Steering Committee needs this evaluation to verify that their investment has achieved the intended results. The evaluation will also guide their decisions regarding policy adjustments, funding allocations, and future project endorsements, and assist in demonstrating accountability and transparency to project stakeholders.

The structure and content of this final evaluation report adhere to the UNDP's latest Evaluation Guidelines dated June 2022. The report begins with an overview that summarizes the context in which the project was designed and implemented, along with the country's developments throughout the implementation period that influenced the course of its execution. It then provides a summary of the intervention being evaluated, the MERP project. This is followed by a description of the evaluation's scope, purpose, and criteria. The report then outlines the evaluation processes, detailing the research

methods used for data collection and the analytical methods employed for data analysis. Subsequently, it presents the main findings according to the core evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues such as human rights, youth, gender, and disability. Additionally, the report discusses the joint nature of the program. Finally, it concludes with the lessons learned and recommendations for the implementation of similar projects in the future.

3. Description of the Intervention

3.1 Background-Context

Since the onset of the Syrian crisis in 2011, more than 14 million Syrians have been forced to flee their home, with around 5.5 million of these individuals having sought refuge in neighboring countries, primarily Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, and Iraq⁷. Lebanon stands out as the country with the highest per capita refugee population, hosting approximately 1.5 million Syrian refugees in addition to 13,715 refugees from other nations.⁸ The influx of refugees has significantly strained Lebanon's already limited resources and services, including infrastructure, healthcare, and education, compounding state challenges and undermining economic stability, social services, the political environment, and security.⁹

Within this context, Lebanon's public institutions and local authorities have been facing increased pressure to provide essential services to a rising number of refugees, displaced individuals, and vulnerable residents. In particular, municipalities have been struggling to provide shelter, quality public services, and job opportunities for both local and displaced populations while also maintaining security and mediating community tensions. Although the central government mandated that municipalities take action to respond to the Syrian refugee crisis, the municipalities have received little to no support or guidance, leaving them to navigate these complex challenges largely on their own with their scarce resources and strained systems.¹⁰

This complex situation was further exacerbated by the multifaceted crises that occurred in Lebanon starting in 2019. Since 2019, Lebanon has grappled with an unprecedented socio-economic crisis, further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, which

⁷ UNHCR. (2024). Syria Refugee Crisis Explained. Available [here](#).

⁸ UNHCR. (2022). LEBANON - NEEDS AT A GLANCE – 2022. Available [here](#).

⁹ Cherri, Z., Arcos Gonzalez, P., & Castro Delgado, R. (2016). The Lebanese–Syrian crisis: Impact of influx of Syrian refugees to an already weak state. Available [here](#).

¹⁰ Mercy Corps. Municipal Guide Successful Municipal Strategies to Respond to the Syria Refugee Crisis. Available [here](#).

intensified the country's instability and worsened its economic turmoil. The situation deteriorated further following the devastating explosion at the Port of Beirut on August 4, 2020, which eroded governance, deepened trust deficits, and exacerbated poverty and vulnerability across the country.¹¹ The post-2019 period witnessed a sharp rise in inflation, with the Lebanese currency devaluing by 82% from 2019 to 2021, dramatically increasing the prices of essential goods and services.¹² By 2023, inflation remained in triple digits, projected to hit 231.3%¹³, and the country recorded the highest food inflation rate in the Arab region, with prices reaching nearly 110 times their 2019 levels.¹⁴ Moreover, Lebanon experienced a significant decline in economic growth, with output dropping sharply in the post-2019 period. According to the IMF¹⁵, between 2019 and 2022, the country's output contracted by approximately 40 percent. Unemployment has also escalated since the onset of the crisis in 2019, rising from a rate of 11.4 percent in 2018-2019 to 29.6 by January 2022.¹⁶

Amid these upheavals, vulnerable groups in Lebanon have been profoundly impacted, seeing a marked escalation in poverty and severe restrictions on access to essential services, with multidimensional poverty rates soaring from 42% in 2019 to 82% in 2021.¹⁷ The plight is even more dire for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, whose conditions have deteriorated further, with 90 percent of them needing humanitarian assistance¹⁸ and nine out of ten living in extreme poverty.¹⁹

Additionally, the outbreak of the war in Gaza on October 7, 2023, has intensified Lebanon's challenges. The spillover of this conflict to Lebanon's southern border has led to casualties, displacement, and significant destruction, affecting Lebanon's economy

¹¹ USIP. (2020). After Beirut Blast, What's Next for Lebanon's Broken Political System?. Available [here](#).

¹²ESCWA. (2022). Release of new purchasing power parities for the Arab region: Real sizes of Arab economies. Available [here](#).

¹³ World Bank. (2023). Lebanon Economic Monitor - Fall 2023: In the Grip of a New Crisis. Available [here](#).

¹⁴ ESCWA. (2023). Beyond the budget: investigating food accessibility, affordability and nutrition amid the food price crisis in the Arab region. Available [here](#).

¹⁵ IMF. (2023). Lebanon: 2023 Article IV Consultation-Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Executive Director for Lebanon. Available [here](#).

¹⁶ CAS & ILO. (2022). Lebanon Follow-up Labour Force Survey – January 2022. Available [here](#).

¹⁷ ESCWA. (2021). Multidimensional poverty in Lebanon (2019-2021). Available [here](#).

¹⁸UNHCR et al. (2023). <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/vasyr-2022-vulnerability-assessment-syrian-refugees-lebanon>

¹⁹ UNHCR. (2022). UNHCR Lebanon: Fact sheet, April 2022. Available [here](#).

and social services.²⁰ By March 2024, the conflict caused the displacement of 90, 859 individuals, with 52 percent being female,²¹ spreading across 10 Lebanese districts, including Tyre, Saida, and others. Furthermore, the conflict has severely damaged infrastructure, with numerous businesses closed, buildings ruined, and critical agricultural areas impacted by pollution, land degradation, and the loss of soil fertility.²²

Amidst this severe situation, Lebanese municipalities stand on the pivotal frontlines in responding to the unfolding crisis. Their ability to effectively address these issues is significantly hindered by enduring structural challenges such as limited financial resources, lack of staff and skilled human resources, highly centralized/bureaucratic systems, weak accountability, and inadequate planning, in addition to overlapping mandates and conflicting responsibilities between municipalities and line ministries.²³ These pre-existing issues have been exacerbated by the economic downturn. With the depreciation of the Lebanese currency, the municipal sector has been harshly affected by the crisis due to a shortage of funds and the Lebanese government's reluctance to fulfill its annual commitments to local authorities.²⁴ Their main funding source, the Independent Municipal Fund, has seen drastic cuts, severely affecting their ability to deliver essential services and maintain operations, especially in the face of rising costs and lower tax revenues. Furthermore, the repeated postponement of municipal elections until May 2025²⁵ threatens to further destabilize local governance and jeopardize externally financed initiatives aimed at enhancing fundamental service provision.²⁶ Furthermore, amid this funding shortage, there has been an unprecedented surge in resignations, and many municipal workers are not coming to work due to the significant decrease in the value of their wages.²⁷

It is worth noting that this ongoing multifaceted crisis occurs within a context of deep and structural gender inequalities. Lebanon, with a score of 0.628, ranked 132nd in the

²⁰ UNDP. (2023). Gaza War: Preliminary Findings on the Socio-Economic and Environmental Impact on Lebanon. Available [here](#).

²¹ OCHA. (2024). Lebanon: Flash Update #13 - Escalation of hostilities in south Lebanon, 7 March 2024. Available [here](#).

²² UNDP. (2023). Gaza War: Preliminary Findings on the Socio-Economic and Environmental Impact on Lebanon. Available [here](#).

²³ UN-Habitat. (2022). Strengthening The Long-Term Resilience Of Subnational Authorities In Countries Affected By The Syrian And Iraqi Crises. Available [here](#).

²⁴ KAS. (2023). Municipal Challenges and Solutions for Local Development. Available [here](#).

²⁵ Diwan (2024). Delaying Lebanon's Municipal Elections, Again. Available [here](#).

²⁶ Wood, D. (2023). Lebanon Needs to Hold Municipal Elections. Available [here](#).

²⁷ <https://www.salamwakalam.com/articles/638/between-deficit-and-prosperity-some-municipalities/en>

world in the 2023 Global Gender Gap Index.²⁸ Indeed, women in Lebanon continue to face systematic discrimination and violence, a consequence of outdated nationality laws and various religious-based personal status laws.²⁹

The challenges encountered mainly the COVID-19 pandemic, persistent government political paralysis, ongoing devaluation of the Lebanese Pound, frequent power and internet outages, and loss of equipment and materials, have adversely affected the project's implementation, leading to delays and requiring strategic adjustments to cope with the emerging circumstances. A detailed discussion of these adjustments and how the context influenced the project's implementation will be provided later in the report. Furthermore, with the ongoing conflict in South Lebanon and, at the time of writing this final report, evidence and concerns over the potential escalation of the violence across Lebanon, UN agencies and municipalities may need to change their profiles from public service project support to crisis planning and management support.

3.2. Overview of the MERP Project

The action, “Strengthening the Long-Term Resilience of Subnational Authorities in Countries Affected by the Syrian and Iraqi Crises”, is a multi-country, multi-partner, and multi-year initiative implemented by UNDP and UN-Habitat country offices in Iraq and Lebanon from 2019-2024. The action is based on the objectives of the EUTF MADAD: “To address longer-term resilience needs of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries, as well as supporting host communities and their administrations.” As such, it aligns with the framework of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP, 2018-2019) and the related national response plans. The action responds to the “3RP Resilience/Stabilization component”, specifically its Livelihoods/Social Cohesion sector.

To better identify and enhance communication at the country level, both country components have been given shortened names: 'Headway' for Iraq and 'Municipal Empowerment and Resilience Project' (MERP) for Lebanon.

This evaluation covers the Lebanon component of the project, MERP. The overall objective of MERP is to strengthen the long-term resilience of subnational authorities in Lebanon as well as host communities, refugees, and displaced persons affected by the Syrian crisis. The project aims to achieve this through the enhancement of local multi-level governance systems, improved local economic development, and better access to basic services. Key stakeholders involved in the implementation of MERP include UNDP,

²⁸ WEF. (2023). Global Gender Gap Report 2023. Available [here](#).

²⁹ HRW. (2022). World Report 2022: Lebanon. Available [here](#).

UN-Habitat, MoIM, DGLAC, and EU. UNDP and UN-Habitat have carried out the day-to-day implementation of the MERP, coordinating with the EU's in-country delegations. MoIM/DGLAC has served as the main direct partner throughout the implementation of all project activities while the EU has funded the project.

The overall project objective is structured around the achievement of three specific objectives, listed below with their corresponding outputs.

Objective 1: Subnational authorities have enhanced capacities to engage in holistic, area-based planning and consider different scenarios that respond to the needs of host, refugee and IDP populations

- **Output 1.1:** Efficient and timely municipal work processes to address impact of crisis are strengthened through an enhanced administrative interface
- **Output 1.2:** Greater understanding and awareness by all local actors of their role in managing the impact of the crisis achieved
- **Output 1.3:** Strengthened sub-national government capacity on raising revenues and financial management.

Objective 2: Service delivery is increasingly responsive, and generates greater social stability outcomes, based on the needs of host, refugee and IDP populations

- **Output 2.1:** Strengthened local capacity to develop, design, coordinate and implement strategic projects that will alleviate the impact of the crisis
- **Output 2.2:** Priority basic services interventions are identified and implemented.

Objective 3: Subnational authorities are empowered to facilitate local economic development and have better access to municipal investment that benefits the extension of safe public services and economic opportunities for host, refugee and IDP populations

- **Output 3.1:** An Enabling Economic Environment is created with active engagement of local authorities, the private sector, and LED associations.
- **Output 3.2:** Capacity at local level to identify, develop, design, and implement interventions with an economic multiplier impact improved.

The Theory of Change (ToC) underpinning this multi-country initiative is based on the premise that enhanced coordination among various actors, including public sectors, development partners, private sectors, and civil societies, maximizes impact and efficiency in crisis response. It also emphasizes the empowerment of sub-national authorities to effectively meet the localized needs of communities and refugees through a well-coordinated approach.

Specifically, in Lebanon, the ToC (see Annex 1) for the project centers on boosting the resilience and self-reliance of host communities and refugees through transparent, technically sound, and participatory local needs assessments and planning processes. It also entails equipping municipalities with essential systems and skills for service

planning, delivery, and monitoring. Moreover, the ToC involves mechanisms for directing investments into vital services and livelihood opportunities that respond to locally assessed needs, actively involving civil society and the private sector. The alignment of locally developed projects with national strategies is also a critical component of the ToC, as is the involvement of stakeholders across all levels in decision-making processes. Additionally, a core component of this theory involves strengthening municipal finance systems to increase locally generated revenues and attract private investment.

Due to these strategic measures, the program anticipates expansion and rehabilitation of service delivery in host communities, making these services more responsive to locally defined priorities. This will boost self-reliance among host communities and refugees through increased economic activity and improved livelihood opportunities. Local authorities, including municipalities and line ministry directorates, are expected to become more independent, and capable of planning and implementing projects with less external assistance. Furthermore, there will be a greater sense of social capital within host communities, creating more opportunities for inter-communal interaction and relations.

Ultimately, the MERP Project envisions a holistic approach to building resilience in communities affected by the Syrian crisis, focusing on empowering local authorities, enhancing service delivery, and promoting economic development, laying a foundation for sustainable development and improved well-being for both host communities and refugees.

The project’s geographic focus areas include three unions of municipalities: the Urban Community Al Fayhaa, the Federation of Municipalities of the Northern and Coastal Metn, the Union of Tyre, and 92 of their member municipalities.

Overall, the Project aims to contribute to the outcomes and SDGs of the below-mentioned frameworks:

Country Programme Document (CPD) ³⁰	(CPD 2023-2025) Outcome 2: Strengthened security, stability, justice, and social peace. (CPD 2017-2022) Outcome 3.1 Productive sectors strengthened to promote inclusive growth and local development, especially in the most disadvantages areas.
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³⁰ https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3998937/files/DP_DCP_LBN_3-EN.pdf?ln=ar

United Nations Strategic Framework 2017-2022 (UNSF) (Lebanon)/United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2025 (UNSDCF):	(UNSF 2017-2022) Core UN Priority 3: Lebanon reduces poverty and promotes sustainable development while addressing immediate needs in a human rights/gender sensitive manner. (UNSDCF 2023-2025) Peace and Gov1.1: Accountability, transparency, and effectiveness of state institutions at national and local level, including on key strategic reforms improved
Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP):	Outcome 1: Strengthen the ability of municipal, national, and local institutions to alleviate resource pressure, reduce resentment, and build peace
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	<p>Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere <u>Target 1.4:</u> By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.</p> <p>Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls <u>Target 5.5:</u> Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.</p> <p>Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels <u>Target 16.6:</u> Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels <u>Target 16.7:</u> Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels.</p> <p>Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. <u>Target 11.3:</u> By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated, and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.</p>

The project is funded by the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, known as the 'Madad Fund,' with a total funding of \$16,715,328.90. The human resources included 11 fixed staff members from the project's onset until March 2024: 1 Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), 3 Field Coordinators, 1 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Specialist, 1 LED Specialist, 1 Municipal Finance Specialist, 1 Capacity Development Specialist, 1 Admin & Finance Officer, 1 Communications Officer, and 1 driver. Additionally, 3 engineers were involved intermittently to support various aspects of the project.

MERP was launched in January 2019. Due to delays primarily caused by the evolving context of the country, the project implementation has been extended to March 2024.

Additionally, there is a current no-cost extension in place until September 2024, covering only the remaining activities. Moreover, a mid-term review of this project was conducted in 2022/2023.

4. Evaluation Scope and Objectives

4.1. Evaluation Scope

The **scope** of the final evaluation is to assess the project intervention in Lebanon. The scope covers three outcomes of the project and the project's implementation period from January 2019 to 31 March 2024. The evaluation will geographically encompass Beirut (MoIM, DGLAC), the Union of Al Fayhaa, Tyre, and Metn, as well as the municipalities that participated in MERP's activities. It encompasses the groups targeted by MERP, including host communities, refugees, and displaced Syrians. The evaluation is intended primarily for the MERP team, UNDP/UN-Habitat management, participating municipalities, the Unions of Municipalities, the MERP Steering Committee, the EU, DGLAC, MoIM, and the communities benefiting from the grants and the overall results of the project.

4.2. Evaluation Purpose and Objectives

The overall **purpose** of the final evaluation is to assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the Lebanon component of the action and to generate recommendations. In addition, the evaluation shall provide suggestions to overcome challenges and generate lessons learned and good practices for the implementation of similar projects in the future. Lastly, the evaluation should also assess the specific approach around joint programming between UN agencies as implemented in the Lebanon component and identify related lessons learned. Specifically, the objectives of this final evaluation aim to:

- Analyze the impact of the country dynamics on the original design/scope and results of MERP and the mitigation measures implemented by the Project to adapt to these changes.
- Identify the level of achievement and analyze factors that enhanced or impeded results, and if results contributed towards the country programmes of UNDP and UN-Habitat.
- Assess the extent to which gender, human rights, and disability were mainstreamed in MERP approach and activities.
- Review the MERP monitoring and evaluation system.
- Assess the sustainability of MERP activities and the level of national ownership over what has been accomplished/implemented to maintain the project's effect.

- Assess the impact of the implemented municipal projects and generate lessons learned.
- Identify lessons learned, recommendations, and best practices that can be considered in the planning and design of a future project phase or similar programmes, particularly in the current Lebanese context.
- Identify potential insights on the added value of the “multi-country, multi-partner, and multi-year” approach.
- Appraise UN collaboration and identify lessons learned to enhance the implementation of future joint initiatives.
- Assess the project’s contribution to gender equality, women’s empowerment, and human rights.

The results of the evaluation will be used to ensure accountability (backward-looking) regarding project outcomes, inform stakeholders about the findings and lessons learned, guide the planning and design of future project phases (forward-looking), and provide insights regarding UN collaboration and joint programming. The evaluation also encompasses several cross-cutting themes: Rights-Based Approach (RBA), disability inclusion, gender mainstreaming, environmental sensitivity, sustainability, climate change, and the do-no-harm principle.

4.3. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation is based on an indicative list of questions based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee’s evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability as defined and explained in the UNDP evaluation guidelines.³¹

4.4. Evaluation Questions

An initial review of the MERP project documents and preliminary discussions with UNDP/UN-Habitat management and MERP staff established a foundation for reviewing and refining the evaluation questions detailed in the Terms of Reference (ToR), which is provided below (Annex 2). Also, the Key guiding questions for each evaluation criterion are presented at the beginning of each subsection within the findings section. We made several modifications to these questions. Mainly, we reformulated the questions in the ToR to make them more understandable and easier for participants, stakeholders, or beneficiaries to respond to. Additionally, we restructured the questions because the original number was too high to be covered within the given timeline, and we added

³¹ [See section 1 of UNDP Evaluation Guidelines \(2021\).](#)

some questions related to the joint programs of UN agencies. This led to a revised set of questions and sub-questions outlined in the Inception Report.

5. Evaluation Approach and Methods

5.1. Evaluation approach

This final evaluation adopted a **participatory approach**, recognizing that input from the main partners, including UNDP, UN-Habitat, MERP teams, and UNDP RBAS, is necessary throughout the evaluation process. From the initial design phase to the final data collection and analysis, the involvement of these key stakeholders has been crucial to enriching the evaluation. The evaluation team, led by the Team Leader (TL), ensured clear and timely communication with all project partners to incorporate their insights effectively.

This final evaluation also incorporated the **contribution analysis approach** to examine the program's theory of change. We have critically assessed the logic and assumptions behind MERP's intended outcomes against observed results and external factors. This approach enabled us to clarify MERP's contributions to these outcomes and enhance the understanding of the factors influencing success and shortcomings.

Additionally, our evaluation implemented a **gender-sensitive approach** guided by the Gender Principle in a Conflict Environment across the overall methodology, data collection, analysis, and reporting. We followed this approach based on both UNDP's and CLIC's principles on gender considerations and as we are aware of the unique impacts and costs borne by women since the uprising began, including physical, emotional, and psychological aspects. Our data collection teams included both male and female evaluators, and we made concerted efforts to include women in the focus group discussions. In our reporting, we disaggregated data by gender, and our analysis identified specific gender-related weaknesses in the project as well as in the general governance of Lebanon. Furthermore, our approach aimed to ensure inclusivity of stakeholders, considering gender, social status, political and organizational roles, and vulnerable groups like disabled people. However, in practice, there was no inclusion of disabled individuals in the interviews, for example. Nonetheless, we assessed the impact of MERPP on social inclusion, specifically focusing on disability inclusion.

Our evaluation also adopted a **mixed-methods approach**, integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies to comprehensively capture data. The questionnaire is divided into two sections: The **qualitative part** involves open-ended questions designed to gather detailed narratives and insights from beneficiaries and stakeholders. The **quantitative part** consists of closed-ended questions based on a Likert scale from 1 to 3, which quantifies respondents' knowledge and experiences. In our mixed-methods approach, we complement the quantitative questions from the interviews by also

quantifying the qualitative data gathered from open-ended questions, applying numerical analysis techniques to enhance our understanding. The integration of these methods enables a thorough analysis, allowing findings from one method to inform and enhance the interpretation of the other. This robust triangulation of data ensures a deep and systematic exploration of informants' perspectives, effectively combining the depth of qualitative data with the precision of quantitative metrics.

The evaluation methodology is structured into four phases. The process started with the **Desk Review Phase**, where secondary data provided by the project was thoroughly reviewed and consultations with the project team were held to gain a deeper understanding of the project. These consultations were rushed due to the closure of MERP and the dispersion of the team. This was followed by the **Data Gathering Phase**, which involved collecting primary data through stakeholder consultations, KIIs, and FGDs. Next, the **Data Analysis Phase** focused on triangulating and analyzing both the primary and secondary data gathered. Finally, the **Reporting and Validation Phase** included finalizing the analysis, reporting the findings to UNDP, and conducting a validation session to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the report before its submission.

The evaluation was conducted from the first week of March until the fourth week of June 2024. Additionally, the table below provides an overview of the final evaluation phases, tasks, timeline, milestones, deliverables

Table 1: Phases of the final evaluation

Phase	Description	Time Period	Deliverable
Inception Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review of project documents and preliminary meetings with UNDP/UN-Habitat and MERP Staff. - Drafting and submitting an Inception Report, Work Plan, and Data Collection Guidelines 	Mar 7 – Apr 22	Approved Inception Report (Apr 22, 2024)
Data Collection Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A thorough desk review of project documents and reports. - Implementation of KIIs, FGDs, and a debriefing on preliminary findings. 	Apr 23 – May 17	Debriefing Presentation Online Session (Jun 6, 2024)
Data Analysis and Reporting Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of the collected data and aggregation of findings in alignment with evaluation objectives, criteria, and questions, assessment of project 	May 18 – Jun 25	Final Evaluation Report Brief

	contributions to results, and development of strategic recommendations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drafting the final evaluation report (ongoing) - Addressing MERP and stakeholders' comments (planned) - Conducting a validation session before submitting the final revised report. - Submitting final Review Report (planned). 		Knowledge Product
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5.2. Data Collection Methods

The primary data was collected from stakeholders and beneficiaries categorized into four groups:

Category 1: Direct Stakeholders including the EU as the donor, MERP staff, and the teams from UNDP and UN-Habitat.

Category 2: Includes MoIM and various service providers.

Category 3: Comprises institutional beneficiaries like DGLAC represented by two interchangeable DGs, presidents of UoMs, General Managers, mayors of participating municipalities, and directors of RTOs. It also includes staff who participated in and benefited from MERP activities.

Category 4: Consists of direct beneficiaries such as residents of the municipalities, potentially including refugees and host community members, specifically women and the vulnerable who directly benefited from small and medium public service projects funded by MERP. ³²

Research and data collection methods included:

³² The completed projects at the time of the evaluation are: Improving access to renewable energy and basic services in Srifa; supplying the inhabitants of the village of Toura with household water; rehabilitating and maintaining roads and supplying public services to the inhabitants of Jbel El Botom; installing on-grid PV panels and solar street lighting in Deir Qanoun El-Naher; rehabilitating the sewage line in the northwestern region of Teirdebba; rehabilitating El-Hesbeh public market in Tyre; enhancing forest management and reducing fires in Qornet Chehwan; establishing a green business center in Nabay; and installing a solar photovoltaic power plant in Nabay. The ongoing projects include: three bus projects in Deir Qanoun Naher, Deir Kifa, and Abbassieh; increasing cultivated lands and reducing costs for farmers in Teirdebba; improving rural tourism in Bekfaya; establishing an innovative space for learning and working in Tripoli; improving livelihoods for youth in Beddawi; and rehabilitating and equipping the fire brigade unit of the Urban Community of Al-Fayhaa.

Desk Review of Secondary Data: In-depth review of project documents such as the MERP Inception Report, Project Document, M&E Framework, Annual Progress Reports, and Quarterly Information Notes (QINs), among others. A comprehensive list of documents reviewed is provided in Annex 3.

Stakeholders’ In-depth Consultations: A total of 18 consultations were conducted with 11 held in person and seven conducted online via MS Teams. Participants included the MERP Team, UNDP, and UN-Habitat staff involved in the design and implementation of MERP, as well as UNDP-RBAS, Iraq UNDP/UN-Habitat, and the EU Donor. A detailed breakdown of these consultations is available in Table 2.

Key Informant Interviews: A total of 36 KIIs were conducted where 22 were in-person and 14 were remotely via Zoom/Teams, as shown in Table 3. The interviewees were selected based on their roles and involvement in the project and included presidents of UoMs and the general managers, mayors of participating municipalities, directors of the RTOs, the Director General (DG) of DGLAC, the Colonel of MoIM, and various service providers (Categories 2 and 3).

Focus Group Discussions: A total of 11 FGDs were conducted: three in Al Fayhaa, four in Tyre, three in Metn, and one with DGLAC staff at MoIM, as detailed in Table 3. These discussions primarily involved staff from RTOs, UoMs, municipalities, and DGLAC, all of whom participated in and benefited from MERP activities and resources (Category 3). Additionally, residents of the municipalities, potentially including refugees and the host community who directly benefited from the small and medium public service projects funded by MERP (Category 4), also participated in these discussions.

De-Briefing Session: The field data collection phase concluded with an online debriefing session held on June 6, 2024. This session included key stakeholders such as the MERP team, and UN-Habitat/UNDP management. The purpose was to present the preliminary findings of the MERP Review, discuss these findings, and address any data gaps.

Table 2: Number of In-depth Consultations

In-depth Consultations	# of interviews conducted	In Person	Online
MERP Staff	8	4	4
UNDP-RBAS	2	1	1
UNDP	3	3	0
UN-Habitat	3	3	0
EU Donor	1	0	1
UNDP/UN-Habitat Iraq	1	0	1
Total	18	11	7

Table 3: Number of KIIs and FGDs

	KIIs (In-Person)	KIIs (Online)	Total KIIs	Total FGDs
Metn	9	1	10	3
Tyre	7	2	9	4
Al Fayhaa	3	3	6	3
MoIM	2	0	2	1
National Service Providers	1	8	9	N/A
Total	22	14	36	11

Due to the ongoing fluidity of the context of Lebanon and the departure of many public servants from their positions, as well due to the security risks, it was agreed that a **purposive approach** was more appropriate to the context. A total of 107 persons (70 males and 37 females) participated in the interviews. This approach was driven by the need to acquire in-depth insights from various stakeholders directly involved with or affected by MERP, including UNDP, UN-Habitat, the EU, MoIM, local municipalities, UoMs, DGLAC, RTOs, and the diverse communities benefiting from the project. The selection of individuals for KIIs, FGDs, and consultations was based on their extensive experience with the project. This purposive sampling has enabled a focused data collection from those most knowledgeable about and impacted by MERP’s activities, facilitating a rich, nuanced understanding essential for evaluating the project.

All tools and guidelines, along with a list of all individuals contacted for feedback, inputs, and insights during the evaluation data collection phase as well as the Evaluation Matrix, are included in the Annex section below (Annexes 4, 5, and 6, respectively)

5.3. Summary statistics of stakeholders who participated

The evaluation considered the perspectives of various stakeholders targeted by the project. The evaluation team engaged a total of 107 individuals through KIIs, FGDs, and consultations. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution across categories, and Figure 2 details the gender breakdown. Notably, a substantial proportion of participants were men, comprising 70 out of 107 (65%), while women accounted for 37 participants (35%). It is important to highlight that the majority of the female participants were from UN staff and service providers, rather than direct beneficiaries of the project.

Figure 1 : Distribution of Participants by Stakeholder Category

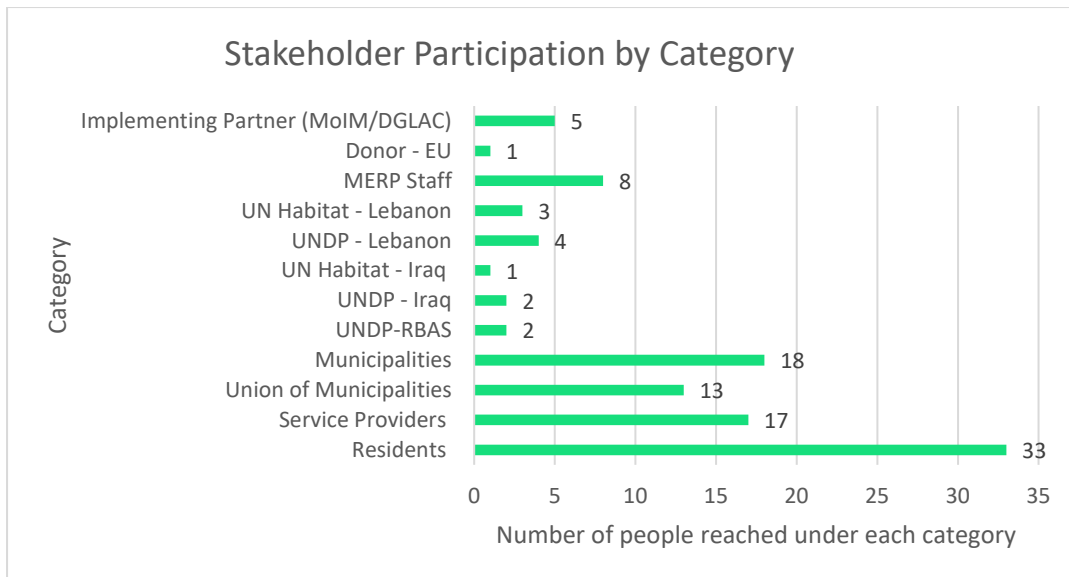
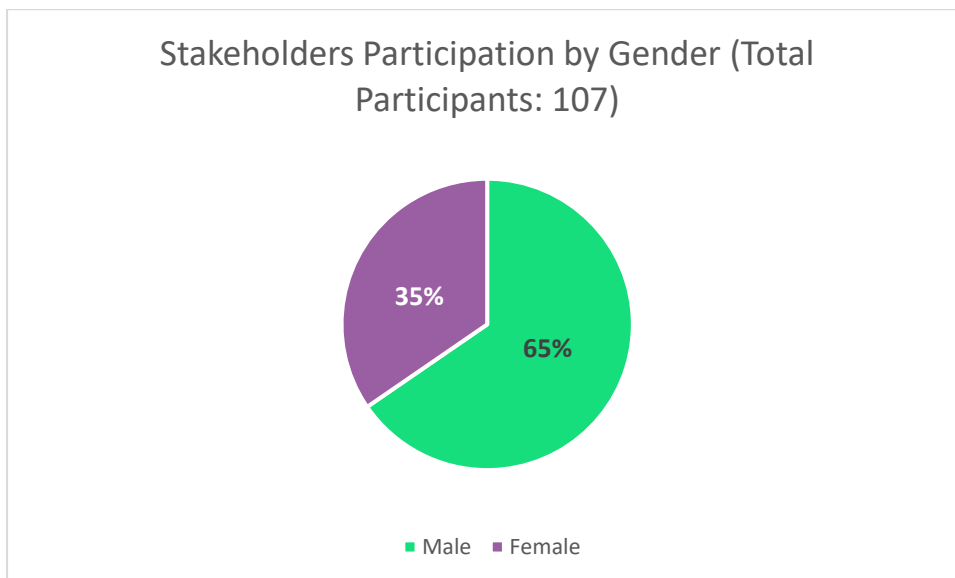


Figure 2: Distribution of Participants by Gender



5.4. Ethical considerations

The MERP final evaluation was carried out in accordance with the principles outlined in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) “Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation” (see Annex 7). It was conducted in compliance with CLIC’s principles and UNDP Ethical Guidelines. Data was collected with the consent of beneficiaries, local authorities, and government officials. At the start of each interview and focus group discussion, participants were briefed on the evaluation’s purpose, the use of the information gathered the expected duration of the interview/discussion, and additional details to help them understand the potential risks and benefits involved. They were also informed that their participation was entirely voluntary, and that all data collected would remain confidential and anonymous, only to be used for analysis purposes. To ensure

confidentiality and adherence to the Do No Harm Principle, data was anonymized, and the report does not disclose the names of individual respondents but instead lists the names of institutions/groups and the number of persons interviewed in each.

5.5. Background information on the evaluators

The evaluation team is composed of a team leader (Mazen Chouaib), a national evaluator (Hania Chahal), and five enumerators who were assigned across three regions: Metn, Tyre, and Al Fayhaa. Mazen Chouaib holds a master's degree in public administration from Norwich University. He has over 20 years of experience in designing, implementing, and evaluating international development projects focused on governance. He has led missions. Hania Chahal is a Lebanese national with a master's degree in food economics and marketing. She has around 20 years of professional experience, during which she has conducted numerous evaluations and assessments for developmental projects of various organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Mercy Corps.

5.6. Limitations of the methodology

Challenges Faced During the Data Collection Phase

The data collection phase of the project encountered several challenges. However, with the continuous and dedicated support of the project team, we were able to employ effective mitigation strategies to minimize the impact on the overall evaluation. Below is an overview of the specific issues we faced:

- **National Holidays:** The data collection coincided with a week of holidays, which delayed processes and affected the overall data collection timeline. Despite these delays, we managed to complete this phase without impacting the overall project timeline and deliverables.
- **Remote Interviews:** Due to the unavailability of some stakeholders for in-person meetings, interviews were conducted using MS Teams or Zoom.
- **Stakeholders' Availability:** Some original technical staff and service providers who were involved in the project implementation had left their positions or were unavailable due to travel. Nevertheless, the MERP project team made efforts to contact them, resulting in some interviews being conducted with alternative personnel or, in certain cases, being canceled.
- **FGDs:** Facilitating FGDs was particularly challenging due to a lack of support from some mayors and officials, who reported low beneficiary interest in municipalities such as Nabay, Teirdebba, Srifa, and Tyre UoM. Despite these challenges, the project team's assistance enabled the conduct of most planned FGDs, but one in Teirdebba was canceled.

- **Inclusion of Women and Syrian Refugees:** Attempts to include women and Syrian refugees in the data-gathering phase were unsuccessful. Efforts were made to ensure that at least one woman participated in each FGD; however, three FGDs were conducted without any female participants. Additionally, only 35% of the individuals reached by various data collection methods were female, with the majority of them being UN staff and service providers, not direct beneficiaries of the project. The limited participation of women and Syrian refugees can be attributed to their minimal presence during project implementation and their indirect involvement in some project activities. Moreover, the project's focus on public governmental entities limits the specific participation and involvement of these groups due to the nature of the targeted stakeholders.

6. Data analysis

The evaluators organized the collected data into OECD/DAC key assessment categories: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues including human rights, youth, gender, and disability aspects of the project. Guided by the Evaluation Matrix, the team systematically assessed the information and data using predefined coding categories aligned with the evaluation criteria. We complemented this with emergent coding to capture new themes and insights beyond the initial framework, thereby enriching our analysis. Data from desk reviews, consultations, KIIs, and FGDs underwent content analysis to ensure a quality evaluation against the indicators in the results framework (see Annex 8) and key evaluation questions. This process included thorough organization, comparison, and synthesis of data.

Qualitative data analysis methods included content analysis, description, comparison, and explanation. For qualitative data obtained from KIIs, themes aligned with the core evaluation questions and assessment areas were identified and quantified to derive some quantitative data and frequencies. This complemented the quantitative data collected through the second part of the questionnaire, which included questions on each criterion and cross-cutting issues based on a Likert scale from 1 to 3, where 1 signifies "Not", 2 is "Acceptable/Yes", and 3 means "Very". These scale questions were asked in KIIs and individually for the participants in the FGDs. For the analysis of quantitative data, we examined the frequency and distribution of our results. Although the dataset is not large, it helped us triangulate and validate the findings. It is important to note that not all participants answered every question; they responded only to those relevant to the components of the project they were familiar with. Therefore, when mentioning most participants or giving an exact percentage, we refer only to those who responded to the corresponding question, not all participants.

Data triangulation was achieved by cross-validating findings from multiple data sources and types. For instance, qualitative insights were compared with and complemented by

quantitative findings, and data insights gathered from KIIs were cross-referenced with those from FGDs. Our analysis also integrated information obtained through a comprehensive desk review and relevant documents that were shared with us.³³ Specifically, the monitoring data, including annual and quarterly progress reports, the MERP review, and the results framework, significantly supported our evaluation. This data helped us identify achievements, setbacks, influencing factors, and the team's mitigation and adaptation actions. The detailed monitoring data provided strong evidence that was extensively used to triangulate and enrich our analysis, ensuring qualitative insights and quantitative results were contextualized and validated by extensive documentary evidence. By cross-referencing these diverse sources, we enhanced the robustness and validity of our findings.

Ongoing participation and consultation with the UNDP and UN-Habitat Team contributed to the improvement of the methodology design, facilitated relations to ensure data was available to the team, recommended improvements to the data-gathering process, and identified gaps in the analysis.

Data Bias

During the data collection phase of the evaluation, some types of biases were identified that could potentially affect the accuracy and objectivity of the findings. Below, we outline the key sources of bias and their implications for the evaluation:

- **Grievances over Payment Processes:** Some contractors and service providers were not pleased with the UN financial process. While MERP staff attempted to address these issues, the complexity of the processes was either not articulated sufficiently or not understood well. Extensive delays during COVID-19 were highlighted and understood, and banking issues took a long time to address. This dissatisfaction led some to express negative opinions about the project, potentially resulting in biased feedback. It is important to note that some vendors indicated that Lebanon's economic and banking crisis had put them under stress and heightened their sensitivity to delays.
- **Confusion over Procurement Rules and Conditions:** Some contractors/service providers did not fully understand the rules and conditions for procurement and felt that it was a long and tiring process and/or perceived it as unfair or inefficient. This misunderstanding caused them to give biased feedback, focusing on perceived flaws in procurement rather than on the project's effectiveness. It was stated by service providers that while the staff "promised" and/or stressed that the process and approvals were received, the delays continued which contributed

³³ It is important to note that financial data was not provided, as conducting a financial assessment was not part of the ToR.

to their loss of time and money as a result. This issue contributed to their own procurement delays and challenges with their own supply chains.

- **Selective Responses:** Some respondents only answered questions related to their specific components and were unwilling or unable to respond to other questions, not feeling knowledgeable enough or qualified to answer. This introduced a bias in the data gathered, as it limited the scope of feedback to their specific components only.

To ensure a sound evaluation despite these identified biases, we implemented several mitigation strategies. Regarding the biases from grievances over payment processes and confusion over procurement rules, which contributed to negative responses, it is noteworthy that the number of participants affected by these issues was relatively small and not representative of the overall participant group. Each affected response was individually analyzed and contextualized with corroborating evidence from various sources, such as additional KIIs, FGDs, and desk reviews. For biases resulting from selective responses, we analyzed responses question by question. This approach allowed us to ensure that any generalizations or statistical assertions, such as the frequency of certain opinions, were based solely on the subset of participants who answered those specific questions, thereby enhancing the validity of our findings.

7. General Findings

This section of the report details the findings and analysis from the final evaluation of the MERP Project, structured to reflect the project's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, inclusion, and cross-cutting issues.

7.1. Relevance

The relevance of the MERP project was assessed through the extent to which the MERP approach, activities, and expected outputs and outcomes have been justified and have responded to beneficiary needs, the country's policies and context, and the donor's priorities.

The specific key guiding questions used to assess the project's relevance are as follows:

- To what extent were MERP approach and activities, particularly on system strengthening, in line with national priorities, UNDP/UN-Habitat country programme outputs and outcomes, UNDP/UN-Habitat Strategic Plans, and applicable SDGs?
- To what extent did the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country programme outcome?
- To what extent was MERP appropriately designed and executed to meet the needs of targeted sub-national authorities and beneficiaries, including

women and other groups that warrant specific attention? How did the project respond to the emerging needs arising from the crisis, including gender-specific issues and challenges, as relevant?

- Considering the multiple crises that have impacted Lebanon since the project's inception, to what extent has MERP maintained its relevance in relation to the context and needs?
 - What were emergent factors within the context that negatively or positively affected the relevance of the planned interventions of MERP? To what extent was the project appropriately responsive to the changes in the political, economic, financial, and institutional context in Lebanon, including in terms of changes related to gender?
- **MERP project is highly relevant and in line with Lebanon's strategic priorities, the objectives of the UNDP/UN-Habitat country programs, the EUTF MADAD, and applicable SDG goals.**

The MERP project design is focused on key outcomes, including enhancing municipal capacities to better respond to the needs of host communities and refugees, generating greater social stability outcomes, and boosting local economic development. Locally, the project has implemented a range of activities related to social stability, governance, basic services, and local economic development.

These objectives align with the strategic priorities of the UNDP and UN-Habitat programs in Lebanon, as outlined in their respective country programs and strategic plans. For example, it is aligned with the UNDP Country Programme Document for Lebanon (2023-2025)³⁴ Outcome 2: Strengthened security, stability, justice, and social peace. The project is also aligned with the following three focus areas of the UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025)³⁵: 1) Poverty and inequality, addressing the inequality of opportunities through investments that move people above the poverty line; 2) Governance, helping countries manage emerging complexities and "future-proof" their governance systems; and 3) Resilience, aiding countries and communities in building resilience to shocks and crises such as conflict, climate change, disasters, and epidemics. MERP is also in line with the Habitat Country Programme Document for Lebanon (2021-2023)³⁶ Sub-Focus Area 1.2: Improved social protection systems, reduced poverty and

³⁴ https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3998937/files/DP_DCP_LBN_3-EN.pdf?ln=ar

³⁵ <https://www.undp.org/lebanon/publications/undp-strategic-plan-2022-2025>

³⁶ <https://unhabitat.org/habitat-country-programme-document-lebanon-2021-2023#:~:text=The%20overarching%20goal%20of%20the,planned%20and%20managed%2C%20environmentally%20sound%2C>

spatial inequality in urban and rural communities, and Sub-Focus Area 3.1: Resilient built environment, infrastructure, and utilities.

Additionally, the desk review, consultations with key informants at UNDP and UN-Habitat, and feedback from the EU donor confirm that the project aligns with the objectives of the EUTF MADAD. It reflects the donor's strategic priorities, emphasizing the inclusion of communities in crisis for strengthening resilience among populations affected by the Iraqi and Syrian crises.

At the global level, the MERP project outcomes contribute to the following three SDGs. **Goal 1.** End poverty in all its forms everywhere; **Goal 11.** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable, and **Goal 16.** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. However, the project does not directly contribute to **Goal 5.** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The Project Document was revised on multiple occasions, though stated in the logic model, MERP staff were unable to encourage nor convince the direct stakeholders and beneficiaries to address gender-specific outcomes. While the project attempted to incorporate gender considerations into its activities as much as possible, it failed to address gender as planned. Several contextual, political, and social issues need addressing in Lebanon. The overwhelming contextual issues, such as the deep economic crisis and the impact of the refugee crisis, overwhelmed municipalities and their ability to focus on anything other than providing services to the entire community. The political crisis in Lebanon has been ongoing for a long time, and it is argued that the economic crisis is a consequence of the political situation. Lebanese politicians and political parties have not promoted equity in governance by including women. For instance, women represent fewer than 5% of municipal council members, and staffing levels are similarly low. Indeed, the government in Lebanon has neither promoted nor regulated gender-specific policies to address equity in the country's governance structures.

At the output level, the team made attempts to promote the inclusion of women in decision-making. Municipalities were encouraged by MERP and service providers to target women while conducting assessments to identify public service projects (small and medium-sized projects). The evidence from the research, the consultations, and the responses from the municipalities validate that there was resistance and pushback to inclusion and focus on gender. The same resistance was faced in the inclusion of people with disabilities, youth, and refugees

- **MERP significantly contributed to its ToC at the outcome level and to that of the country program in Lebanon.**

MERP has demonstrated strong alignment with its ToC, which aims to enhance local governance and community resilience through interconnected mechanisms. Starting with the mechanism for area-based needs assessments, MERP conducted three comprehensive LED assessments targeting UoMs to analyze the local impacts of economic and financial crises. These assessments were participatory, transparent, and technically rigorous. To support municipalities, MERP provided training in areas such as strategic planning and equipped sub-national authorities with strategic manuals and essential tools to enhance their capabilities in planning, delivering, and monitoring services. Additionally, MERP extended significant support to RTOs to bolster the technical capacity of municipalities. Regarding the mechanism for investing in services and infrastructure, MERP strategically directed funds towards basic services and LED projects. Concerning financial empowerment and revenue generation, MERP supported municipalities with training in financial planning, management, and proposal writing, and conducted financial assessments along with implementing municipal finance solutions. In terms of aligning with national policies, MERP ensured that all local initiatives were in line with national and regional policies. Lastly, it also provided strategic support to national authorities, such as MoIM and specifically DGLAC. In conclusion, MERP's adherence to its ToC is reflected in its implementation of these mechanisms and actions, demonstrating a comprehensive approach to fostering robust local governance and enhancing community resilience across Lebanon.

Moreover, MERP has contributed to the ToC outlined in the Country Programme Document (CPD)³⁷ for Lebanon. By enhancing the capacities of MoIM/DGLAC, MERP aligns with the first pathway of the CPD's ToC, which focuses on collaborating with the national government to translate the national reform agenda into actionable strategies, public administrative reforms, and digital governance improvements. Additionally, MERP directly contributes to the second pathway by improving crisis response capabilities and service responsiveness of municipalities and implementing priority basic services interventions, which helps protect the rights of the most affected groups. Furthermore, MERP enhances the third pathway by promoting local economic development and fostering coordination among national and subnational authorities through a risk-informed approach. By conducting thorough analyses of social, economic, political, conflict, and environmental risks, MERP effectively anticipates and mitigates potential impacts. This strategic foresight is vital for bridging humanitarian and development programming, preventing unintended consequences in Lebanon's complex context, and driving sustainable

³⁷ <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-05/CPD%20Lebanon%202023-2025.pdf>

governance and inclusive development in line with what is feasible given the political context. Overall, MERP's efforts have contributed to these three pathways and ultimately advanced the core of the CPD's ToC, which focuses on rebuilding trust between the state and its citizens.

- **MERP is relevant and aligned with the overall needs of Lebanon.**

MERP targets the resilience and stabilization needs of vulnerable communities through a balanced approach, supporting both long-term developmental initiatives and facilitating immediate outcomes that provide substantial improvements to the living conditions of both host communities and refugees. First, MERP is highly relevant to the critical needs of Lebanon for enhancing local governance and building municipal capacities. These capacities face increasing challenges in Lebanon due to enduring structural issues, which have been exacerbated by the unfolding crises as detailed in the context analysis above. Additionally, key informants from service providers have noted that, in the absence of a recent decentralization strategy and national training program in Lebanon, MERP has specifically worked on some of the components that need to be in a future national municipal capacity-building strategy. These components mainly include their approach to small and medium-sized municipal projects, the use of technological tools, the work on the financial management systems, and the local area development planning. Moreover, the project is also crucially relevant to Lebanon's need to develop new decentralization laws and processes, an ICT strategy that was not implemented, and access to information law, among others.

- **The provision of basic services through MERP's small and medium municipal projects is highly relevant for both the municipalities and their residents.**

Confronting a multifaceted crisis, national authorities in Lebanon have increasingly relied on sub-national authorities to fill the gaps in service delivery. The accumulated challenges, from the Syrian refugee crisis to recent national crises, have drastically increased the burden on the sub-national authorities. Confronted with the expanding responsibility to manage basic services, including water and electricity supply, as well as public health and safety, within the limits of diminishing or inadequate budgets, the implementation of small and medium-sized projects targeting basic services has proven to be relevant to the immediate needs and realities of both municipalities and their residents.

Based on the interviews, all of the municipalities that benefitted from MERP's small and medium-sized projects indicated that these projects were highly relevant, especially the smaller municipalities that lacked funding, thereby providing added value. These municipal projects were pertinent to the needs of the beneficiaries, addressing essential basic services such as water and electricity,

enhancing public safety, upgrading infrastructure, and stimulating economic growth. Residents of these municipalities who participated in the FGDs consistently affirmed that the projects met their specific needs. These findings were further validated by secondary data, including the MERP inception report and various assessments. Notably, the MERP review reached the same finding, highlighting that support for basic services and municipal projects were the most relevant of MERP's interventions in the current municipal context.

Simultaneously, the MERP approach to municipal projects has ensured the relevance of these initiatives, proving particularly beneficial to the participating municipalities as it offered a key opportunity to enhance their capacity through hands-on learning and coaching. Initially, MERP launched a call for proposals, inviting municipalities and unions of municipalities to submit small and medium project proposals that meet specific needs and comply with MERP's requirements. These projects were selected through a detailed evaluation process. This selection strategy was instrumental in ensuring the relevance of the projects as it allowed municipalities to identify and propose initiatives that were pertinent to their own contexts. Furthermore, the approach included hands-on coaching for the development of these project proposals, empowering municipal staff to apply the skills acquired in other calls for proposals as well. It is worth noting that only municipalities that had successfully completed the basic services design and implementation training and related coaching services provided by MERP were eligible to receive funding for medium and large municipal projects. This setup not only facilitated the application of new knowledge and skills but also ensured that municipalities with weaker capacities received the necessary support to develop full project proposals and feasibility assessments, ensuring that these municipalities could also qualify for and benefit from the process.

- **MERP is highly relevant to the needs of municipalities and unions, with the work done with RTOs to support them being crucial; however, at the DGLAC level, some activities were considered more important than others.**

The vertical and horizontal approaches employed made it relevant to stakeholders. Horizontally, MERP implemented creative approaches to capacity building based on municipal capacity assessment they provided training in line with the requirements for project implementation, strategic local economic development planning, and providing tools for daily municipal governance management. Vertically, it provided tools to MoIM/DGLAC to improve communication between DGLAC and the municipalities, through the portal provided access to laws, regulations, and policies that were hard to find, and conducted multiple rounds of discussions between the MoIM, experts, and municipalities to address multiple governance-related topics.

100% of the respondents from municipalities and unions of municipalities indicated that the project was relevant to their needs. This was also validated by the qualitative data, which revealed that the project was aligned with their requirements for better strategic planning, effective resource mobilization, securing funding through strong proposal writing, better crisis response, and enhanced financial and administrative operations. The capacity-building components were well-matched with the needs of both municipalities and their staff. Specifically, the trainings provided were highly relevant to the capacity development needs of the beneficiaries, focusing on crucial areas such as digitization, mediation, and conflict resolution, and were intended to prepare the human resources for the future.

Additionally, the support provided to RTOs through MERP was seen as very relevant by the municipality of Bourj Hammoud and UoMs of Tyre and Al Fayhaa. Municipalities in Al Matn were unable to give their views on the RTO. These RTOs offer technical assistance to UoMs, and municipalities in planning, coordinating, and executing priority interventions. Feedback from FGDs with RTO staff and key informants, including service providers and RTO supervisors, along with consultations with UN staff, underscored the importance and relevance of the work done with RTOs, indicating that RTOs are a constant need and that these offices fill gaps in municipalities with their support and enable municipalities to be more responsive to their communities particularly at times of ongoing crisis as was evidenced in the immediate support provided by the Bourj Hammoud RTO to humanitarian assistance following the Beirut Port Explosion. In the FGD of Tyre UoM, participants highlighted that MERP's support for the RTO was crucial. They believed that the RTO provides municipalities with relevant data, it assists in raising the profile of the region, which is used to approach donors with project proposals and requests.

However, at the DGLAC level, some activities such as the development of the web portal, provision of IT equipment, and the municipal support strategy were seen as important, others such as the DGLAC review and the communication strategy were considered less important. Notably, the triangulated data indicated that none of the municipalities or unions felt the project aligned with the DGLAC strategy, as a strategy was either lacking or not available for the municipalities to review. 100 percent of municipal participants stated that DGLAC has not been relevant to their work.

- **MERP successfully fostered a sense of ownership among stakeholders at the municipal level. However, it fell short of creating ownership of national stakeholders such as MoIM and DGLAC.**

The consultations with UN staff and the available documents revealed that the project's design phase was missing the participation of all beneficiaries. According to insights shared by UN-Habitat and UNDP, MERP was conceived based on their prior experience in Lebanon and the identified needs they identified over time. The design was shaped by the urgency to act, as directed by the funder, leading to a project that was somewhat "parachuted" onto the beneficiaries without prior consultation. This approach aligns with the UN's Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) used in Lebanon, which allows UN organizations to implement projects directly without sub-national authorities involvement in decision-making. This approach may have been the result of the absence of the Government of Lebanon, as MERP was to be launched in 2019 when the Government of Saad Al Hariri resigned, and ensuing political chaos and paralysis gripped the country.

At the municipal level, ownership was achieved, this is corroborated by the fact that 100% of the key informants from the municipalities/unions confirmed they were consulted on their projects from the beginning. It was stated that the small and medium-sized projects were the municipalities' own ideas based on their own needs. The responsiveness of MERP to the requests of the municipalities contributed to a sense of ownership, which was considered a successful aspect of MERP's execution.

- **Despite numerous challenges, MERP remained relevant to the country's needs during times of crisis, particularly the need of municipalities as they required assistance in delivering public services to their residents under a very challenging context.**

MERP was implemented during an unprecedented economic collapse in Lebanon, exacerbated by a financial crisis, currency depreciation, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Beirut Port Explosion. These crises severely crippled Lebanon's governance and public sector, significantly impacting municipalities that were left to manage the affairs of their residents alone. The desk review and interviews with various stakeholders and beneficiaries indicated that during this crisis, the relevance of MERP's basic service projects to the municipalities' needs became particularly significant. MERP provided critical support to these overwhelmed municipalities at a time when they were most vulnerable and in greatest need of assistance in delivering public services to their residents.

Additionally, the capacity-building component of MERP remained relevant during these challenging times. With resources scarce, strategic planning was crucial for maximizing existing resources and attracting additional funding. Manuals on GIS, resource mobilization, and strategic planning proved particularly relevant, as they were designed within the context of the crisis to help municipalities strategically manage scarce resources and attract funding. Furthermore, the financial solutions provided by the project continued to be critical as managing

revenues and grants was essential during such difficult times. Staff of municipalities struggled to participate in the training, particularly as a result of COVID, cost of fuel, lack of salaries, etc.

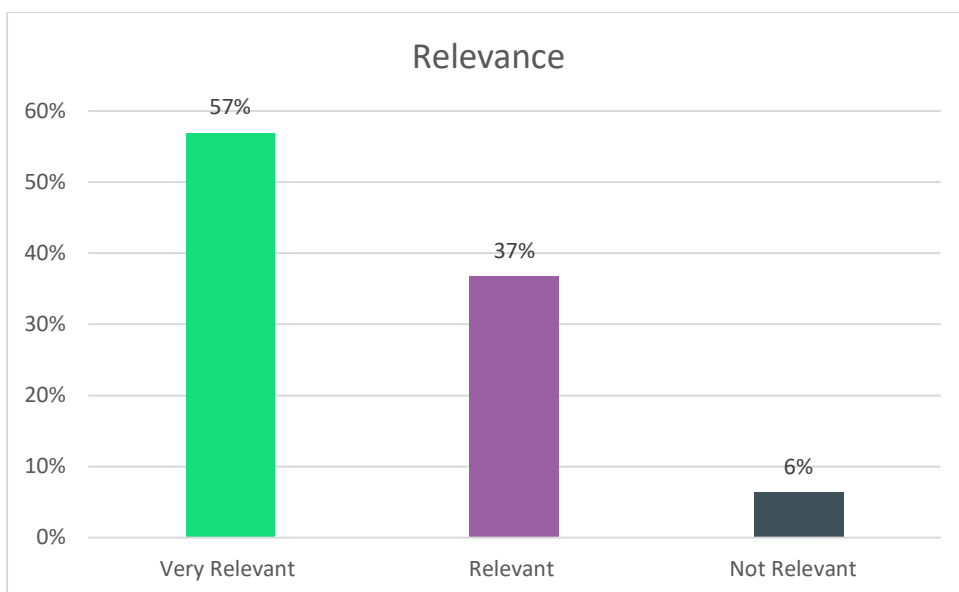
- **MERP was responsive to the changing context, but the multifaceted crisis in Lebanon challenged its implementation and led to the emergence of more immediate and basic needs.**

100% of the key informants confirmed that the crisis significantly impacted the planned activities and the achievement of the project's outcomes, a finding supported by both the desk review and qualitative responses. The desk review indicated that the prevailing conditions in Lebanon necessitated major adjustments to the project's activities, outputs, and targets. Consequently, the MERP team revised the log frame and adapted the project's approach. All participants indicated that MERP was responsive to the challenges, and though they complained about the slow pace when changes were required, they demonstrated appreciation. For example, to adapt to COVID-19, the project implemented an innovative hybrid modality for organizing events, such as the DGLAC talk shows. Another example is the implementation of the Bourj Hamoud hotline following the Beirut Blast. Moreover, due to the exchange rate crisis, the approach to small-scale projects was redesigned. The Project continued with the small-scale projects but focused on quick-impact measures addressing rising tensions, COVID-19, and the economic crisis. Additionally, the Project stopped transferring funds to municipalities and instead contracted on their behalf which increased implementation costs and impacted the efficiency of the project. However, short of taking on this role MERP would not have been implemented in time and on budget. Based on municipal needs, the project also shifted its focus from pure operations and maintenance (O&M) plans to developing more comprehensive business development plans.

Additionally, interview responses indicated that the multi-faceted crisis in Lebanon affected the implementation and mainly slowed down its execution. The implementation was mainly affected by diminished public sector salaries causing demotivation and employees leaving, power and internet outages restricting working hours, loss of equipment and materials, COVID-19 illnesses, delayed ministry decisions, and increased prices necessitating new tenders and bureaucratic procedures, all of which led to delays. Some stakeholders argue that Lebanon's ongoing crisis at the time of implementing the project led to the emergence of more immediate and basic needs, which overshadowed the actual purpose of some project activities. At that time, DGLAC, municipalities, and unions were preoccupied with dealing with the effects of the crisis. As a result, some activities planned under the project, such as the communication strategy, were not seen as top priorities.

- Quantitative Result:** The quantitative results displayed in Figure 3 are based on responses to questions asked at the end of the KIIs and the FGDs. Participants were asked to rate whether they believe that MERP is "very relevant," "relevant," or "not relevant." As previously highlighted, the displayed percentages represent the proportion of respondents who selected each option among those who answered this specific question, not the total number of participants. The results show that more than half, approximately 57%, considered the project to be very relevant. About 37% found it relevant, and only 6% felt that the project was not relevant at all. These findings align with insights from the qualitative analysis and validate the overall relevance of the project as perceived by the stakeholders.

Figure 3: Percentage Distribution of Responses on Project Relevance (Out of 79 Respondents)



Source: Based on calculations derived from responses obtained during KIIs and FGDs

7.2. Coherence

The coherence of the project was assessed by the extent to which other interventions supported or undermined the action.

The specific key guiding questions used to assess the project's coherence are as follows:

- Is there any overlap or complementarity with other ongoing/planned action(s) managed by UNDP, UN-Habitat, other donors, or the civil society that need to be addressed/considered for future interventions?
- To what extent did the collaboration between UNDP and UN-Habitat and the multi-country approach provide added value to the project?

- **MERP was coherent with the regional framework 3RP but fell short in addressing directly the needs of the refugees due to the resistance of the local authorities.**

The MERP project was designed to align with the 3RP regional framework, specifically the Resilience/Stabilization component within the Livelihoods/Social Cohesion sector. The 3RP emphasizes innovative approaches, such as supporting local institutions, mitigating social tensions, and promoting self-reliance and economic empowerment for all affected populations.³⁸ Specifically, the MERP project was aligned with the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) 2023, particularly its **Outcome 1**, which aims to strengthen municipalities, national, and local institutions' ability to alleviate resource pressure, reduce resentment, and build peace.³⁹

However, despite this coherence with the regional framework, the MERP project fell short in directly addressing the needs of refugees. This shortfall was primarily due to resistance from local authorities. Municipalities were bold in pushing back against addressing refugee issues, displaying less concern than the project had hoped. Most municipalities and the Government of Lebanon generally do not see a need to specifically focus on refugee support, operating under the belief that strengthening host communities would indirectly benefit refugees.

- **There was coherence between the MERP project and the international contributions supporting municipalities in service provision and economic development.**

Municipalities indicated that GIZ, UNHCR, WB, USAID, UKAID, UNESCO, and UNIFIL⁴⁰ are mostly working on projects in the communities. Most of these international organizations' efforts are concentrated on supporting cash-for-work projects, refugee support, small-scale economic development, and job creation, which align with MERP's objectives to ensure improved local economic development and better access to basic services. For example, GIZ's initiatives in Lebanon center on economic development and employment.⁴¹ Similarly, MERP's coherence with UNHCR's efforts⁴² is evident through their shared focus on mitigating the impact of the refugee influx by enhancing local infrastructure and providing essential services to both host and refugee populations, supporting municipalities with various basic service projects. However, this work does not

³⁸ <https://www.undp.org/arab-states/events/launch-2024-3rp-regional-strategic-overview>

³⁹ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/100389>

⁴⁰ The full names corresponding to these acronyms are provided above (List of Acronyms)

⁴¹ <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/370.html>

⁴² <https://www.unhcr.org/lb/support-to-host-communities>

appear to focus on governance, hence MERP complements these initiatives by focusing on the enhancement of local multi-level governance.

- **MERP, being a standalone project and not part of the LHSP, led to a focus on local governance, utilization of innovative approaches, flexibility, and adaptation to the challenging context.**

According to the desk review and consultations with the UN staff, it was the donor's request to have the MERP project as a standalone project and not to be part of the UNDP LHSP. It is important to highlight that the MERP Project is intended to be very different from LHSP with a separate team, branding, and mode of operation. Furthermore, the two projects are very different in what they are fundamentally attempting to achieve with LHSP having a stabilization focus whereas MERP intervention is focused on systems strengthening and more developmental in its approach.

On one hand, it was expressed that LHSP would have created more efficiencies through scale, depth of experience, and technical capabilities. LHSP provided engineering and technical support and assistance, but long after the project had exhausted all other avenues to recruit in-house engineer consultants. However, as a result of being placed outside of other ongoing programs, MERP was able to implement creative and innovative approaches to local governance, support ongoing technical capacity through the RTOs, and provide technical support to DGLAC that is because it has flexibility more than being under a structured program. Also, because it is a standalone and it was operating within a very difficult context, the project team was able to make a lot of adaptations needed for better implementation.

As UNDP transitions to a Portfolio model, greater synergies and efficiencies in the system are anticipated. However, this shift poses challenges in ensuring effective collaboration and partnership with other UN agencies. MERP has demonstrated valuable collaborative practices, setting a precedent for implementing projects as a unified UN agency effort within the new portfolio structure.

- **The UNDP and UN-Habitat partnership received predominantly positive reviews.**

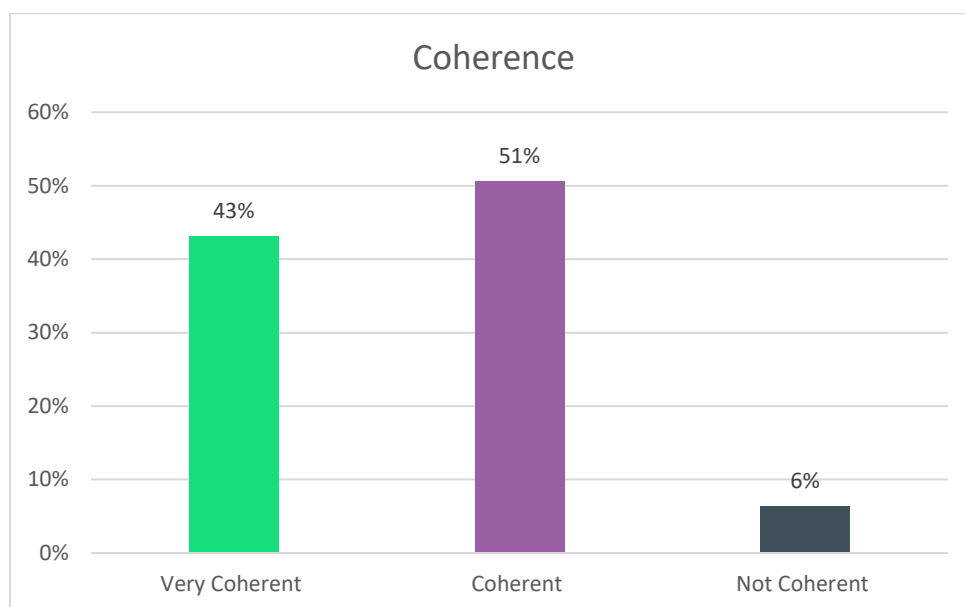
For certain individuals mainly at the level of DGLAC and service providers, the UNDP and UN-Habitat partnership was well-recognized, but opinions were divided. Some found it inefficient and challenging due to administrative complexities and lack of coordination, while many others praised the smooth, unified collaboration and seamless teamwork. However, at the municipalities and unions of municipalities, around 79% agreed that the partnership was positive and had added value, while 21% said they did not know the difference.

Additionally, they all (100%) believed that a partnership between two UN agencies leads to higher funding.

The positive effect of the partnership is also validated by the responses of UN staff. It was highlighted that the success depended on effective management and personalities, and the ability to consult with both agencies' technical and legal teams. Additionally, the flexibility to choose which agency signed particular projects or utilized faster procurement processes enhanced project efficiency. However, some staff highlighted significant challenges including Human Resources discrepancies that caused disruptions and issues with coordination as each agency sometimes operated independently. It is also worth noting that a comprehensive evaluation of joint programming in a regional context is discussed separately in Section 9.

- **Quantitative Result:** According to the quantitative results displayed in Figure 4, the majority of respondents, approximately 94%, considered the project to be coherent or very coherent. In contrast, only 6% felt that the project was not coherent at all. These findings are consistent with insights from the qualitative analysis, further validating the overall coherence of the project as perceived by the stakeholders.

Figure 4: Percentage Distribution of Responses on Project Coherence (Out of 79 Respondents)



Source: Based on calculations derived from responses obtained during KIIs and FGDs

7.3. Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the project was assessed by the extent to which the planned objectives and results were achieved, including factors that contributed to or detracted its achievement.

The specific key guiding questions used to assess the project's effectiveness are as follows:

- To what extent were MERP outcomes achieved; what has not/has been achieved?
 - What factors have contributed to the achievement of outcomes, and what were the major constraints that affected the achievement of the MERP goal (if any)?
 - Has MERP contributed to any unintended effects, positive or negative, short-term, or long-term? Have there been any unintended gender effects (access to and control of resources, social norms change, gender practical and strategic needs, gender roles, etc.)?
 - To what extent have MERP activities been responsive to the needs of targeted people; host communities, refugees, and displaced people, as well as their gender-specific needs?
 - To what extent has MERP strengthened the capacity of sub-national authorities to engage more effectively with host, refugees, and displaced populations and to better address their needs, including in terms of addressing the needs of women and girls?
 - To what extent has the project managed risks effectively, including in relation to risks faced by women, youth, and marginalized groups?
 - In the past four years, how have country dynamics/ongoing crises impacted MERP, particularly in relation to the original design/scope, and results and to what extent was MERP able to continuously adapt and, therefore, achieve the intended results?
 - To what extent was MERP able to contribute to systems strengthening, particularly at the level of MoIM, DGLAC, and municipalities/Unions of Municipalities?
-
- **Despite the challenges encountered, the project's effectiveness is evident in the achievement of its outcomes and outputs specified in the Results Framework, although the level of performance and success varied across these outcomes and outputs.**

The level of performance and achievements varied across the objectives and outcomes of MERP. Below, we present a detailed analysis of the project's achievements, structured around the three main objectives and their corresponding outputs. Additionally, the achievements of the MERP project against the Results Framework Indicators are detailed in Annex 9, where the figures of the progress are verified through desk review based on QIN Q4 2023.

Objective 1: Subnational authorities have enhanced capacities to engage in holistic, area-based planning and consider different scenarios that respond to the needs of host, refugee and IDP populations

This objective was partially achieved at a higher level. The municipalities/UoMs have enhanced capacities to engage in planning. However, they have shown a complete lack of interest in participatory planning that includes refugees, women, and vulnerable populations. Consequently, the principles of good governance have not been met as originally planned.

Planning, project identification, and implementation are conducted internally with little to no public participation. For the municipalities, public participation, transparency, and accountability are not priorities, nor have they been mandated by the central government. In an effort to foster greater accountability and transparency, MERP provided municipalities with finance solutions, including a requirement for municipalities to publish their budgets, but not all of them complied with this requirement. Despite these efforts, MERP struggled to convince stakeholders of the importance of these principles. Concerns about public scrutiny and fears of corruption allegations discourage the sharing of information with the public. It is a missed opportunity that this objective was not achieved.

- **Output 1.1:** Efficient and timely municipal work processes to address impact of crisis are strengthened through an enhanced administrative interface

To achieve this output, MERP developed an interface that enhanced vertical and horizontal coordination and communication among sub-national authorities, focusing on municipalities/UoM, and the DGLAC. On the vertical level, MERP organized DGLAC talk shows that addressed municipal concerns and established an automated call center and web portal, supported by a communication strategy also developed by MERP. Although approval for the operations of the call center and the web portal was recently received from MoIM, these efforts are designed to increase awareness of DGLAC's support and services among local authorities and ensure efficiency and coordination between MoIM/DGLAC and municipalities/unions, ultimately benefiting citizens.

Moreover, MERP provided capacity-building training to municipalities, DGLAC, and UoMs, as well as tools like accounting software and computers to improve the administrative capabilities of the municipalities. Despite these efforts, there are missed opportunities in terms of enhancing the efficiency of work processes, particularly as reliance on municipal governments has been increasing. Municipalities have been crucial in providing services such as water management, electricity production and distribution, economic development, and law enforcement in some instances.

Due to Lebanon's centralized governance structure, these services are often provided informally, or "off the books." Municipalities have been generating

revenues through unofficial means such as donations, service fees, and other methods, which are not recorded in their official financial accounts. This has led to legal issues, with some municipalities facing accusations of corruption and other serious problems. Additionally, due to public sector regulations, any hiring by municipalities requires the approval of the Minister of MoIM.

- **Output 1.2:** Greater understanding and awareness by all local actors of their role in managing the impact of the crisis achieved

The project implemented creative approaches and strategies, such as dialogue forums, to enhance the awareness of all actors about their roles. Specifically, the DGLAC talk show addressed numerous questions related to the legal framework, and constitutional mandates, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders within the local governance ecosystem.

However, a sustainable approach to awareness-raising, consultations, and discussions on the division of responsibilities between the central government, DGLAC, and multiple ministries is lacking. While MERP introduced a creative and innovative approach that has the potential for sustainability, this will only be possible if the MoIM and DGLAC effectively utilize the provided tools (such as a web portal, communication strategy, and talk show) to promote clarity and enhance awareness of roles and responsibilities.

Moreover, this output includes mediation and conflict resolution training. While the mediation and conflict resolution trainings were successfully implemented, the original plan to establish three mediation units within the targeted unions was not achieved. These units were intended to reduce tensions and enhance the roles of UoM and municipalities in mitigating conflicts and managing crises. According to the MERP Review, the failure to establish these units stemmed from a public sector hiring freeze, depleted budgets, and municipal financial resources still being collected in Lebanese Pounds, rather than any reluctance from UoM. In addition, while acknowledging the challenging circumstances of the period, marked by significant uncertainties and staff turnover, this component was not well executed by the training institute that was supposed to support these units. It is important to note that staffing these units does not necessarily require dedicated full-time personnel; alternatives could have included leveraging available staff, volunteers, or community leaders who are skilled in conflict mediation. This approach highlights the critical role of public participation in these efforts.

Additionally, the establishment of the Bourj Hammoud hotline was intended to increase the municipality's ability to respond to crises. However, due to

challenges such as limited motivation among municipal staff and the departure of supporting RTO staff, the hotline did not function as intended.

- **Output 1.3:** Strengthened sub-national government capacity on raising revenues and financial management.

MERP achieved this output by providing technical support to subnational authorities through training. Small and medium-sized projects contributed to this result through the creation of sustainable projects. MERP offered training in planning and financial management and provided accounting software and tools. It also offered proposal writing training to help municipalities pursue revenue-generation ideas.

However, due to perceived legal constraints on including revenues generated from sources not provided by the Government of Lebanon, municipalities indicated that these revenues are managed in an “off the books” approach. There is a real risk involved in raising revenue for municipalities, but they have had to do it due to the crisis. According to municipalities, the legal framework does not permit them to include non-governmental revenue in their official accounting. Any revenue generated must be transferred to the Ministry of Finance at the Central Bank, and then transferred back to them through the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM). This new revenue is being used to cover day-to-day needs, salaries of employees, and infrastructure projects, but without the ability to officially account for these funds, municipalities cannot be accountable.

- **Objective 2:** Service delivery is increasingly responsive, and generates greater social stability outcomes, based on the needs of host, refugee and IDP populations

At the higher level, Objective 2 was partially achieved. Output 2.2's interventions in basic services were responsive to the immediate needs of host communities and refugees. However, these did not result in increased stability among host, refugee, and IDP populations. This lack of stability was due to the insufficient engagement of refugee communities both at the higher project level and at the level of specific outputs. Furthermore, the municipalities showed little interest in involving the refugee communities.

- **Output 2.1:** Strengthened local capacity to develop, design, coordinate and implement strategic projects that will alleviate the impact of the crisis

MERP achieved this output by coaching UoMs and municipalities to write full proposals for municipal basic services and LED projects, and by strengthening RTOs, which played a significant role in enhancing their ability to effectively plan, coordinate, and implement these projects and similar ones. MERP funded the rehabilitation and equipping of offices, recruited RTO staff, and provided ongoing financial support to these offices. Moreover, MERP prepared manuals and strategies to enhance the long-term replicability and scalability of RTO operations. These initiatives were instrumental in empowering the RTOs to provide essential technical support to municipalities and UoMs, enhancing their ability to effectively plan, coordinate, and implement small-scale projects tailored to the needs of host and refugee populations. However, there were significant issues with salary disparities as RTO staff paid directly by MERP received higher salaries than their superiors and colleagues in the municipalities, which created tension and negatively impacted the work.

- **Output 2.2:** Priority basic services interventions are identified and implemented.

Small projects were successfully achieved. At the time this report was written, there were some projects still unfinished due to the situation in Lebanon. These projects have been discussed in detail earlier in the report and were considered to be successfully implemented in line with Output 2.2.

- **Objective 3:** Subnational authorities are empowered to facilitate local economic development and have better access to municipal investment that benefits the extension of safe public services and economic opportunities for host, refugee and IDP populations.

Objective 3 was partially achieved at a high level. Subnational authorities were provided with capacity-building, tools, and funding to implement local economic development projects. These projects have directly led to enhanced investment and benefits across multiple municipalities.

- **Output 3.1:** An Enabling Economic Environment is created with active engagement of local authorities, the private sector, and LED associations.

This output was achieved through the implementation of small and medium-sized projects, as the primary focus of most municipalities was to enhance economic activities and engage the private sector. Larger municipalities reported better results because they focused on projects that improved

infrastructure, thereby generating revenue for the private sector, especially micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Additionally, in pursuit of this output, MERP successfully conducted three LED assessments for the targeted UoMs, with results shared at regional advocacy meetings, and completed the LED policy. However, the project was unable to develop the LED plans following the assessments due to time constraints. The project only developed the ToR before the activity was canceled and the plans were not developed.

- **Output 3.2:** Capacity at local level to identify, develop, design, and implement interventions with an economic multiplier impact improved.

Output 3.2 was achieved. MERP provided experts who trained and supported municipalities and UoMs in identifying, developing, designing, and implementing interventions that had specific and clear economic multiplier effects. While some beneficiaries have not yet deployed these projects due to context-related issues, such as difficulties in registering vehicles, the majority of the projects were in alignment with Output 3.2.

- **MERP's support for municipalities and unions, mainly through the municipal small and medium projects, was widely seen as effective and responsive to the needs given the current situation in the country.**

All of the municipalities and unions indicated that the support from MERP was effective, except for one indicated that it was somewhat effective because the size of the funding they received was too small. This is validated by the qualitative data from the interviews and the desk review which demonstrate overall satisfaction. For example, in Bekfaya, Tyre (El Hesbeh project), and the Union of Municipalities Al Fayhaa (Fire Brigade project), it was reported that the projects effectively addressed and resolved actual problems faced by the communities. These projects were implemented during difficult times when the government could not undertake such initiatives. Additionally, many respondents agreed that the project was effective in reducing economic burdens, by providing renewable energy, lowering fuel costs, improving access to essential services, such as water, and stimulating economic activity in various municipalities. Furthermore, some beneficiaries stressed that small and medium municipal projects played an effective role in improving communication and interaction between municipalities and their communities. 100% of participants suggested that more funding is required to increase the project's impact and make it more effective.

- **MERP played a role in enhancing the abilities and capabilities of municipalities and unions to engage more effectively with the targeted groups and address their needs.**

According to feedback from municipalities and unions, around 67% confirmed that MERP provided effective support, while 33% did not respond. This support included trainings in ICT, financial management, proposal writing, and planning, aimed at improving service delivery and community engagement. The effectiveness of these initiatives is evidenced by reports from four municipalities/unions, which noted improved capacity and increased efficiency due to the use of ICT.

Additionally, the implementation of small and medium-sized projects facilitated better communication and increased trust between municipalities and the communities they serve, as reported by two municipalities. Moreover, the LED Assessments conducted in three unions provided crucial insights for economic empowerment in their regions. A service provider noted that significant efforts were made to emphasize the practical application of these assessments, with Tyre UoM being particularly responsive. However, one of the key informants from municipalities/unions indicated that LED assessment was a concept still far-fetched for many municipalities and unions, suggesting that more time is needed for it to be fully embraced and promoted. Additionally, a WhatsApp-based hotline was established at Bourj Hammoud Municipality in response to COVID-19 and the Beirut explosion. According to a FGD with RTO staff, this hotline became an essential communication tool between the municipality and the community. Yet, a key informant mentioned that despite its benefits during the crises, the hotline faced challenges like staff turnover, changing circumstances, and technical issues that temporarily halted its operation until these issues were resolved. Overall, while MERP facilitated significant advancements in municipal engagement with their communities, the full potential of some initiatives was not realized. Nonetheless, the efforts laid a solid foundation for future enhancements.

- **Capacity-building trainings provided to municipalities, UoMs, and DGLAC had mixed effectiveness, and although their implementation was challenging in Lebanon's context, beneficiaries persevered.**

Interviews and previous assessments revealed that many capacity-building training were generally well-designed and effective. For example, the project effectively improved municipalities' ability to deal with donors, especially in writing proposals, through trainings on proposal writing along with coaching. This enabled them to practice and write a full proposal to be financed by MERP, preparing them to write proposals for other donor agencies. A key informant from one of the unions noted that this was their first time independently preparing a complete proposal, including the budget, following the training and

coaching. Additionally, one municipality indicated that they received more funding because they learned how to write a proposal. Training in other areas such as Strategic Planning, GIS, and Resource Mobilization were also effective. Moreover, according to a service provider, the Training of Trainers (ToT) was effective, received highly positive feedback, and was met with good reactions from union staff. The concept of training one staff member within the union to train others, rather than bringing in an external trainer, positioned the union itself as a resource.

However, some of the capacity-building training was perceived as less effective due to the ineffectiveness of some service providers. Stakeholders expressed dissatisfaction with some service providers. Efforts were made to include national service providers, particularly public sector institutions such as ENA and the Basil Fleihan Centre for Public Finance, but these efforts were unsuccessful as demands were seen to be unrealistic under the UNDP's conditions for procuring services from public institutions. Additionally, the training for conflict resolution was seen as ineffective according to participants, UN staff, and reports from the desk review.

At the DGLAC level, feedback indicated that the trainings received were insufficient and the duration too short. There was a consensus among different respondents, not only at the DGLAC level, on the need for extended training periods, continuous support, and a follow-up phase for the project. They argued that the original timeframe proved inadequate for moving from understanding concepts to implementing actionable plans within the communities. Therefore, there was an emphasis on the need for a second phase dedicated to ensuring that beneficiaries can effectively implement the learned skills and address any challenges they face.

The internal reporting indicates that the implementation of the Capacity Building (CB) was very challenging due to the context of Lebanon, a comment validated by DGLAC and several beneficiaries. They were faced with a shortage of gas, a lack of salaries, and their day-to-day duties coupled with the impact of the crisis on their families. Regardless of these challenges, many beneficiaries persevered; they credit the design of the CB and the innovation and flexibility of the MERP team to this achievement.

- **MERP significantly strengthened systems at the level of municipalities and Unions of Municipalities; however, its effectiveness was less pronounced among smaller municipalities and at the level of DGLAC.**

MERP played a crucial role in strengthening the systems within municipalities and Unions of Municipalities by providing extensive capacity-building training, manuals, and essential tools like accounting software and computers, thereby enhancing their administrative capabilities. Additionally, significant support was provided through RTOs, which facilitated tailored assistance to these bodies.

However, the effectiveness varied, as smaller municipalities often lacked the human resources needed to fully leverage the capacity-building efforts and utilize the provided tools effectively. Hence, future efforts should focus on addressing resource limitations in smaller municipalities

At the level of DGLAC, MERP's support included the provision of manuals, a web portal, an automated call center, a comprehensive communication strategy, and municipal support strategies, accompanied by necessary training and tangible resources like computers. However, stakeholders at the DGLAC level stated that the selection of service providers/companies was inadequate, leading to significant issues that affected the project's overall effectiveness. Many were unable to understand the requirements and faced technical difficulties, resulting in a process that required excessive effort. Additionally, DGLAC faced several challenges in adopting the capacity-building support they received. Particularly, there were delays due to the Minister's inability to dedicate time to review and approve the adoption of the new strategy and the acceptance of the platform and other capacity-building support. MERP staff consistently made efforts and appeals to DGLAC, and it was only recently that they were informed of the Minister's approval of the capacity-building services package, which will enable DGLAC to commence their work. This assessment is corroborated by feedback from municipalities and unions, indicating that 50% of participants felt the project did not significantly impact DGLAC's operations. Conversely, the other 50% noted improvements in staff effectiveness due to the project's capacity-building efforts. Moreover, the fact that MERP heavily depended on the participation of the central government (MoIM and DGLAC), which was hindered by internal political issues, negatively impacted the success of MERP. The project faced continual challenges with DGLAC, including a lack of capacity and political will to support the municipalities, leading to ineffectiveness in project execution.

- **MERP has contributed to unintended positive effects, particularly in responding to unforeseen crises.**

A notable example is the effective use of the WhatsApp-based hotline at Bourj Hammoud Municipality following the Beirut blast. Originally designed to support the municipality in coordinating effective response efforts and addressing longer-term community needs, the hotline quickly became a critical tool for emergency response, such as reporting on damaged buildings following the blast and COVID-19-related concerns. Although not initially intended for emergency use, the adaptability of the hotline allowed for rapid communication and coordination during the crisis, which was a very effective use of resources and significantly contributed to addressing humanitarian and emergency issues. However, Due to a lack of local buy-in, the hotline mechanism that was piloted in Bourj Hammoud will not be scaled to other unions/municipalities.

- **The ongoing crises impacted the overall effectiveness of the project; however, MERP was effectively adapted to manage these challenges, enabling the achievement of the intended results.**

The desk review and interviews highlighted several factors influenced by the crisis that affected the project's success. These factors included delays mainly due to the crisis and external factors, which posed a challenge to the project's effectiveness. For instance, service providers faced long delays followed by tight deadlines. Additionally, the financial crisis led to a diminishing value of public sector salaries, which in turn caused employee demotivation, reduced their ability to perform at full potential, and sometimes led to their departure. This was validated by responses from KIIs with municipalities and unions, where approximately 27% identified the financial situation as the most significant issue faced in their work, and about 45% indicated that the multiplicity of crises in Lebanon posed major problems. The remaining respondents did not mention any challenges.

The flexibility of the project team, especially in dealing with the crisis, proved to be effective. The project team was sensitive to ongoing challenges, facilitated well, and was well-integrated as a team. Most municipalities, UoMs, and DGLAC, along with service providers, acknowledged the team's crucial role in providing effective support. Specifically, approximately 91% of service providers' responses confirmed the effectiveness of the support received. Those who disagreed cited the process as tiring and felt that the team complicated the process. Moreover, this positive assessment is reinforced by feedback from all surveyed municipalities and unions, with 100% stating that their partnership with MERP worked well.

- **MERP effectively managed risks on a rolling basis, but factors remained beyond control.**

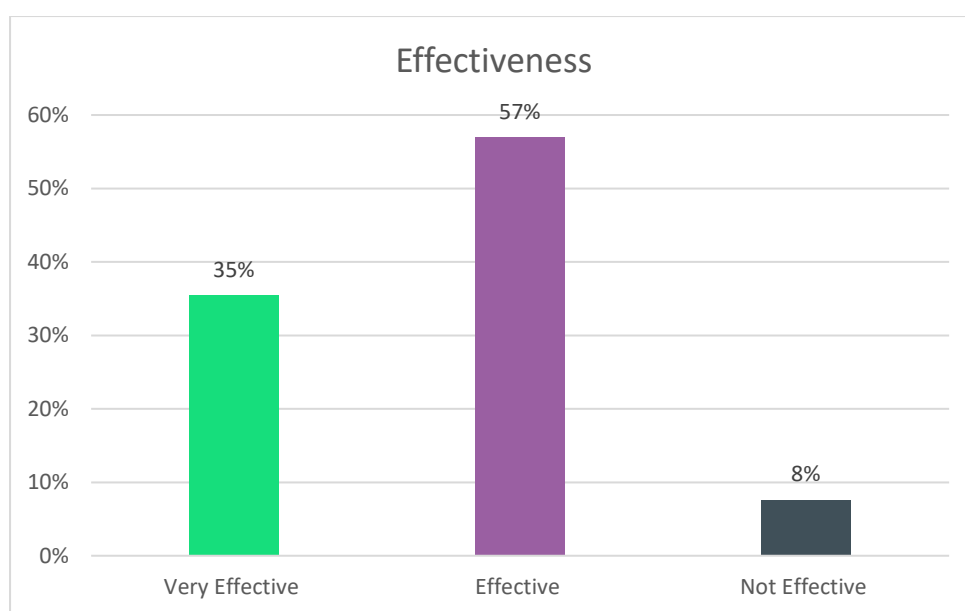
The MERP project faced numerous challenges due to political instability, economic crises, and the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in various risks. Tensions from social unrest, elections, and economic decline disrupted activities, affected resource distribution, and shifted government priorities. Economic issues such as banking restrictions caused payment delays, reduced municipal revenue, and prompted government office closures, impacting project momentum. Legal and administrative hurdles, coupled with the global shipping crisis, complicated project timelines, and potential COVID-19 lockdowns posed further threats to ongoing activities.

The desk review reveals that given the numerous risks, MERP has considered a comprehensive set of risk-mitigating measures. First, the project aligned its activities with the municipalities' and community's needs, for example, in response to municipalities prioritizing crisis management and resilience planning over traditional capacity building, MERP adapted its training curriculum to focus on resource mobilization and attracting funding tailored specifically for crisis

scenarios. Also, to address tensions, the project emphasized a participatory approach and established a feedback and complaint mechanism within the project. In response to the economic crisis, MERP relied more on local recruitment during the implementation of municipal basic services/LED projects and developed thorough sustainability plans for the projects. To combat the COVID-19 pandemic, the project adapted by moving capacity-building activities online, utilizing platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and WhatsApp to ensure accessibility and continuity. Despite these efforts, the multifaceted crises in Lebanon significantly affected the implementation and effectiveness of the project, with some factors remaining beyond control.

Quantitative Result: Figure 5 illustrates the percentage distribution of respondents' opinions on the project's effectiveness. The data indicate that more than half of the respondents find the project's effectiveness to be acceptable, which supports our qualitative findings under this criterion. Approximately 35% of respondents consider the project to be very effective, while only about 8% believe it is not effective at all.

Figure 5: Percentage Distribution of Responses on Project Effectiveness (Out of 79 Respondents)



Source: Based on calculations derived from responses obtained during KIIs and FGDs

7.4. Efficiency

The efficiency of the project was assessed by the extent to which MERP resources (funds, expertise/human resources, time, etc.) were optimally used to achieve the intended results

The specific key guiding questions used to assess the project's efficiency are as follows:

- To what extent have MERP activities been implemented in a cost-efficient manner? Could the same results have been achieved with less resources?
- What has been done well, and what could have been improved?
- To what extent has the project M&E system ensured effective and efficient project management?
- Was the communication and visibility strategy for the project adopted? Was it cost-effective in terms of promoting the project and its achievements?
- What lessons learned were drawn throughout the implementation phase that contributed to the efficient implementation of activities?
- Did the partnership between UNDP and UN-Habitat contribute or detract from achieving results efficiently?
- What innovative approaches and tools were used by staff to achieve results efficiently?
- **MERP was cost-efficient with the available funding; however, opportunities for better human resource management could have further enhanced efficiencies.**

Of the municipalities and unions surveyed, around 46% reported that the funding was efficiently utilized given the scope. However, nearly 23% were unaware of the budget details, about 15% cited excessive delays caused by UNDP and UN-Habitat, and another 15% felt that the funding was not efficiently used. Additionally, around 33% of the municipalities/unions indicated that it was not possible to do more with the allocated resources, while nearly 67% reported that the funding was insufficient. Qualitative responses further corroborate these findings, highlighting challenges faced by municipalities, unions, and service providers due to limited funding. Some respondents noted that the funding for small and medium-sized municipal projects was inadequate and, in some cases, forced them to amend the projects to fit the budget or secure another source of funding to complete the project. Others had to reduce certain project aspects, especially logistical ones, due to tight budget constraints. Moreover, it was highlighted that while the resources were deemed sufficient in theory, the reality was different, as they could not adequately respond to the rising challenges due to limited financial resources. It is important to note that our findings on financial resources are solely from the beneficiaries' perspective, as conducting a financial assessment was not part of the ToR.

On the human resources front, the project allocated resources according to the need and complexity of the assignments. It appears that all staff were fully occupied with the implementation, given its complexity. However, efficiencies could have been realized had the project been managed within existing programs such as the LHSP and existing UN-Habitat projects. For example, using regional

representatives/officers who are already involved in other projects and are well-known to municipalities and unions could have reduced costs. Furthermore, while LHSP eventually offered engineering and technical support, this assistance was only provided after all possibilities for hiring in-house engineering consultants had been fully explored, suggesting that earlier integration of these resources could have improved efficiency and impact.

- **The evaluation concludes that certain factors impacted MERP's efficiency.** Earlier assessments of the MERP project highlighted its efficiency challenges, with the Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM) monitoring report specifically categorizing its efficiency as "poor". This was primarily due to extensive delays, necessary adjustments in procurement management triggered by the Lebanese Pound's devaluation, and the complexities arising from coordination between two distinct UN agencies within a regional framework. The subsequent project review indicated a modest improvement in efficiency, yet it confirmed that the project still did not meet the expected standards. This final evaluation reaffirms these earlier findings regarding the factors affecting efficiency.

First, the final evaluation concludes that the Project's efficiency was affected by cumbersome administrative procedures, lengthy bureaucratic processes that were time-consuming, and the need for multiple layers of approvals before initiatives could be launched. For Example, approvals for specific tasks are required from both UNDP and UN-Habitat, with further endorsements needed from government partners like DGLAC and MoIM, depending on the document under review and the endorsement it requires. The procurement rules were complex and difficult to manage, especially for staff largely recruited from outside the system. MERP funds were split between two UN partners, requiring staff to navigate multiple procurement rules to identify efficient procedures for achieving results. This is validated by the responses of UN staff who agreed that procurement posed significant challenges. They reported that the CTA spent a considerable amount of time handling HR, procurement, and recruitment issues. Moreover, some service providers found the communication with the MERP staff regarding procurement procedures and rules, as well as the payment process, to be frustrating. While they did not blame the individuals rather the promises that were made regarding timing of payments and needs led to financial challenges to some. Some service providers reported disruptions from market supply shortages and a lack of necessary equipment, reducing the project's efficiency. The desk review confirmed that foreign currency instability, fluctuating exchange markets, and sporadic operations of state institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic and financial crisis intensified these procurement issues. Additionally, the challenging Lebanese context further complicated these efforts, contributing to a brain drain that obstructed the recruitment of key engineers and consultants essential for small and medium-sized Basic Services/LED projects. Furthermore,

the MoIM and DGLAC delayed the implementation of many outputs, but MERP persisted until it recently received the approvals for implementing the tools. Additionally, the implementation of capacity-building activities faced challenges due to COVID-19 restrictions, causing delays. Nevertheless, MERP successfully adapted by conducting online capacity-building activities, such as online proposal writing training sessions.

When considering what could have been done differently, responses from municipalities indicated that around 50% reported that nothing more could be done, while 50% did not comment. Meanwhile, qualitative responses from service providers suggested several improvements for better efficiency, including improved communication across all parties, better collaboration among technology specialists, and strengthening the roles of consultants and researchers.

- **The partnership between UNDP and UN-Habitat had an impact on the project's efficiency, presenting both challenges and benefits.**

On one hand, key informants indicated that collaboration between these organizations occasionally impeded efficiency due to the presence of multiple administrative layers and the involvement of various organizations, which complicated processes and led to delays. On the other hand, it was reported that a significant advantage of this partnership was the ability to leverage the strengths of different agencies. For instance, some projects benefited from one agency's faster procurement processes compared to others, thereby enhancing overall project efficiency.

- **The M&E mechanisms of the MERP project have demonstrated a strong capacity to manage and enhance project efficiency and effectiveness.**

Throughout the MERP project, performance was systematically monitored against indicators laid out in the Results Framework, ensuring a consistent assessment of progress towards overall objectives. Key actions were taken to track progress and ensure that all aspects of the project were continuously examined and improved upon. First, the project established a comprehensive M&E framework and plan to guide data collection, management, and analysis, effectively tracking progress. An M&E Reporting Officer was appointed to oversee this crucial function, confirming that the M&E plan was thoroughly implemented.

Another key monitoring mechanism was regular reporting. In compliance with EU requirements, UNDP and UN-Habitat submitted QINs and quarterly narrative reports to the European Union Regional Trust (EUTF). These reports not only highlighted the progress made against targets but also detailed challenges and risk management actions. Annual progress reports were meticulously structured to report achievements relative to the six outputs and three outcomes of the

project. There are 26 quantitative indicators in total, distributed across the levels of overall objectives, outcomes, and outputs. Achievements were consistently tracked against these indicators at the outcome and output levels. Notably, the project demonstrated the capacity to disaggregate data, such as by gender and nationality.

The monitoring efforts also included several assessments and reviews. First, A ROM report was implemented on behalf of EUTF. Following this, towards the end of 2022, an M&E consultant was engaged to review the MERP project. This review aimed to assess the project's achievements, extract lessons, and generate recommendations for the final phase and potential future projects, building upon the findings of the earlier ROM exercise. Currently, we are conducting the final evaluation. This robust system of M&E ensures that all aspects of the project are continuously scrutinized and improved upon, enhancing overall effectiveness and impact.

- **MERP exhibited a comprehensive and dynamic approach to risk management and adaptation measures, crucial given the unstable political and economic landscape.**

Desk review reveals that the MERP team made a conscientious effort to monitor risks through a well-maintained project risk log. This log identified risks across several categories, mainly social and environmental, financial, operational, political, safety and security, socio-economic, and strategic. Each risk was analyzed for its likelihood and impact, alongside planned activities for treatment and the expected effects of these treatments. Given Lebanon's unstable political and economic conditions, the team regularly re-evaluated the risk landscape, updating the risk log annually to adapt to new threats and opportunities, and included a dedicated section on these updates and mitigation measures in the annual progress reports. This adaptiveness was integrated from the planning stages of the project, ensuring that risks were managed as dynamic factors within the project plan, rather than static elements. It was also evident that the presence of field staff, and the continuous dialogue between the project staff and beneficiaries (DGLAC, UoMs, municipalities), was reflected in the adaptation. Indeed, the flexibility and responsiveness of the project's risk management framework, along with the project team's sensitive and well-integrated approach to ongoing challenges, proved effective in navigating the crisis and achieving project objectives efficiently.

- **The MERP project's management structure effectively coordinated strategic decision-making and operational oversight, ensuring the project adapts efficiently to Lebanon's challenging conditions and aligns with its defined objectives.**

MERP features a robust management structure that integrates strategic guidance and operational oversight through its high-level Steering Committee (SC), Advisory Committee, and dedicated staff across multiple operational levels. First, high-level SC was established at the project's inception and comprised representatives from the EU, MoIM, DGLAC, UNDP, and UN-Habitat, playing a crucial role in guiding the project strategically, overseeing execution, and enhancing synergy among various initiatives under the EUTF mandate. The first SC meeting was conducted on July 4, 2019. However, subsequent meetings sometimes faced disruptions, such as the cancellation of the November 2019 meeting due to government resignation and later challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these disruptions, the project continued to engage stakeholders through Advisory Committee meetings, which brought together a group of local and international experts and partners to discuss ongoing progress, address contextual challenges, and develop effective strategies for overcoming them.

Operational roles within the MERP are strategically positioned at the MoIM, DGLAC, UNDP offices, and Union levels. At the MoIM and the DGLAC, key roles such as the CTA, Media and Communication Officer, Capacity Building Officer, M&E Officer, and specialized officers for Municipal Finance and Local Economic Development direct and oversee project activities. Additional support comes from National United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Engineers and an Admin/Finance Assistant at UNDP, enhancing project implementation with local municipal teams. At the union level, Field Coordinators across three regions facilitate ground-level operations and community engagement. Additionally, to ensure cohesive management, project staff report to the CTA, whose accountability lies with both organizations and the advisory committee.

Moreover, the project is supported by regional technical assistance from the UNDP RBAS, ensuring coordination and compliance with EU regulations and contractual obligations across Iraq and Lebanon. This efficient structure enables robust project management, adaptability to local needs, and successful achievement of strategic goals within Lebanon's complex environment. Feedback from interviews with the project team and donors confirms the efficiency of the management structure, revealing the project team's skillful handling of various rules and regulations, which, although challenging, was well managed. This is corroborated by service providers' positive responses and the acknowledgment from municipalities and unions, who attribute the project's success in this challenging context to the management, adaptiveness, and flexibility of the MERP team.

- **MERP efficiently communicated its activities and achievements both internally and externally, successfully reaching a large number of audiences.**

MERP maintained a strong focus on enhancing communication and visibility throughout its implementation. The desk review and key informant interviews highlighted that the project employed multiple tools and channels to communicate its goals and achievements and enhance its visibility. For example, Steering Committee meetings were regularly held to capture lessons learned, discuss scaling opportunities, and share project results with relevant audiences. Updates and activities were actively promoted, covered, and shared across websites, social media platforms, and television, achieving substantial reach. In 2022, for instance, UN-Habitat and UNDP significantly increased the project's visibility by publishing a large number of social media posts that reached over 211,600 people. Regional events were also organized to launch activities and introduce the project to stakeholders in targeted areas. Moreover, to engage internal staff and keep them informed about project updates, the project launched a quarterly e-newsletter. MERP established a communication strategy to DGLAC and developed an online platform to improve communication with municipalities. Another example is that as part of the hotline system developed for Bourj Hammoud Municipality, a campaign was initiated to educate residents on using a new WhatsApp-based hotline for support. Overall, the project's communication and visibility plan was efficiently executed, effectively reaching beneficiaries and key stakeholders across all levels. The significant reach and engagement levels achieved indicate that the investment in these activities was cost-effective and justified by the outcomes.

- **Various lessons learned were drawn throughout the implementation period of MERP that contributed to the efficient implementation of activities.**

Throughout its duration, the MERP project maintained rigorous documentation and sharing of lessons learned, mainly documented in the annual reports of 2020, 2021, and 2022. This systematic approach was crucial for continuously improving the efficiency of the project's operations. The main lessons learned during these years include:

- Taking an agile approach when it comes to planning, and adapting to new situations and opportunities as activities are being implemented proved to be crucial for maintaining project momentum and responsiveness.
- Integrating contextual challenges throughout ToRs for service providers ensures that potential issues are anticipated and managed proactively.
- Project Field coordinators play a key role in implementation by building relationships with municipalities and UoMs and by following up on permits, municipal decisions, receiving copies of decisions, etc.

- Moving some assignments in-house (with the use of consultants) could help in avoiding the lengthier procurement processes for institutional assignments.
- Moving meetings and workshops online, and adopting a blended approach if needed, while making sure that they are tailored to the context of each UoM, enhanced operational flexibility.

- **MERP effectively utilized a range of innovative approaches and tools to enhance efficiency and achieve significant results.**

MERP introduced several innovative electronic tools to boost efficiency, including the DGLAC web portal, an Automated Call Center, and a WhatsApp-based Hotline in Bourj Hammoud Municipality, which significantly enhanced public engagement and awareness. In addition, innovative efforts in communication were key, particularly through initiatives like DGLAC Talk shows, a Feedback and Complaints Mechanism, and the DGLAC communication strategy, which were crucial for promoting dialogue on municipal issues and enhancing the knowledge base among practitioners.

The project's strategy for local governance and capacity building was distinctly innovative, utilizing competition for funding basic service projects as a central mechanism to stimulate engagement and support. This approach effectively kept stakeholders engaged and prevented a loss of interest. Additionally, MERP's support of RTOs was also an innovative approach to enhancing municipal technical capabilities.

- **Quantitative Result:** Figure 6 shows that a higher percentage of respondents (nearly 56%) found the project's efficiency to be acceptable, while approximately 35% deemed it very efficient. Only about 9% responded that the project is not efficient at all. This aligns with our qualitative findings regarding efficiency.

Figure 6: Percentage Distribution of Responses on Project Efficiency (Out of 78 Respondents)



Source: Based on calculations derived from responses obtained during KIIs and FGDs

7.5. Impact

The impact of the project was assessed by the extent to which the MERP project generated or is likely to bring differences at different levels directly or indirectly, positive, or negative, intended, or unintended, or higher-level effects.

The specific key guiding questions used to assess the project's impact are as follows:

- What contribution has MERP made towards reaching the goal outlined in its results framework? What could have been done differently to achieve better results?
- What is the impact of the implemented municipal projects (small/medium-scale projects), and what can be done better?
- To what extent did all intended target groups, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, benefit from the intervention with a focus on municipal projects?
- What have been the intended or unintended gender impacts of the project (access to and control of resources, social norms change, gender practical and strategic needs, gender roles, etc.)? How were these impacts mitigated? What could be improved to ensure more effective contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment?

Before delving into the results of the project's impact, it is important to note that any project impact needs time to be observed. Since some of MERP's activities are still in implementation and others have just been completed, more time is needed for the impact to be reflected or measured. Specifically, at the time of writing this report, the impact could not be fully measured at the level of DGLAC and the MoIMs. This is mainly because some activities at the DGLAC level have

yet to be implemented, following recent approvals by MoIM and DGLAC that occurred after the data collection. These activities include the Municipal Support Strategy, DGLAC web portal, and automated call center. Additionally, it is worth noting that a follow-up evaluation will assess the impact of these activities, along with other ongoing small and medium projects.

- **MERP has made significant contributions toward achieving the goal outlined in its results framework.**

MERP has exerted significant efforts toward achieving the goals outlined in its results framework, focusing on enhancing governance capacity both horizontally and vertically. Vertically, it provided tools and support to MoIM and specifically to DGLAC. Horizontally, MERP used innovative approaches to capacity building, offering training tailored to municipal needs that included project implementation, strategic local economic development planning, and tools for daily governance management. However, there were mixed views on the impact of these capacity-building efforts: 69% of municipalities/unions reported improved capacity, while the remaining participants saw no improvement.

These findings are supported by detailed feedback on specific capacity-building components. For example, the training on proposal development was found to be empowering and had a significant impact, enabling participants to secure additional donor-funded projects. Moreover, training sessions on resource mobilization, GIS, and strategic planning transferred essential skills to participants, who then applied these skills within their own contexts. For instance, after strategic planning training, a service provider reported that a union used the learned content to develop its own strategic plan and conduct resource surveys, moving beyond theoretical applications. Moreover, one service provider reported that training on mediation skills yielded tangible benefits, with staff noting improved management and receiving recognition for enhanced performance. However, no significant impact was reported from the conflict resolution training. In terms of LED assessments, Tyre UoM notably benefited the most compared to other unions due to its stability, as reported by a service provider.

Financial assessments and solutions received mixed responses. Key informants from Al Fayhaa UoM reported that the financial assessment was highly beneficial and effectively implemented, evidenced by MERP's financing of new computers, servers, and a GIS system, bringing their technology up to date. This was corroborated by a service provider who noted that municipalities/unions like Al-Fayhaa were proactive in implementing financial solutions due to strong leadership, but others, especially smaller municipalities, showed hesitation, not fully realizing the potential revenue benefits of these projects. Additionally, MERP

developed a website to facilitate the publication of financial reports and trained municipalities on how to use it, but many did not adopt this practice.

Overall, while all data indicated no negative effects and around 92% of the municipalities/unions indicated a positive long-term impact of the project, there were specific concerns about the impact. First, as mentioned above, some municipalities noted an improvement in ICT usage; however, the impact will likely be clear for medium and larger municipalities, where some service providers questioned the capacity of smaller municipalities to effectively utilize the ICT tools they received to achieve real impact. Additionally, in terms of the project's impact on municipalities and unions' understanding of their roles, around 50% of municipalities/unions reported a positive effect, while another 50% observed no impact.

On the other hand, MERP made a substantial contribution to its overall goal through small and medium-sized basic service projects, the impact of which will be discussed in the following section.

- **Implemented municipal small and medium projects had a positive impact on the community.**

All respondents (100%) from all the categories agreed that these projects had a positive impact. They highlighted that these projects met community needs, filled gaps, and prevented issues, ultimately leading to a positive return for the region. It was also reported that these municipal projects improved trust and communication between municipalities and communities, which helped build social cohesion and reinforce social stability. Furthermore, participants agreed that the impact of the project was larger than usual due to the needs that resulted from the lack of funding. Additionally, some municipalities indicated that the small and medium projects were critical for them because they wanted to show their communities that they were actively working to serve their interests. Hence, given that they did not have much financing to do anything, this project gave them legitimacy.

- **Implemented small and medium-sized municipal projects were inclusive and significantly benefited the intended target groups, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable.**

Feedback from interviews, mainly those with benefited municipalities and FGD with residents, confirmed that these projects effectively ensured inclusivity, allowing all community members to benefit. In particular, some respondents noted that the most disadvantaged groups received the most significant benefits. For instance, a key informant from one of the benefiting municipalities in the Tyre region reported that the most vulnerable benefited immensely from the project which increased cultivated lands and reduced costs for farmers. Similarly, FGD

participants in Tyre highlighted that the El Hesbeh project particularly aided vulnerable groups as both sellers and customers. Farmers, in dire need of selling their produce, benefited from the market's structure, and the poor, purchasing necessities at lower prices, also gained significantly from this market. Additionally, it was reported that the palace project in Tripoli supported those most in need as primarily poor groups utilized the library facilities to study and prepare research.

- **MERP attempted to impact women as much as possible, but the impact remained limited.**

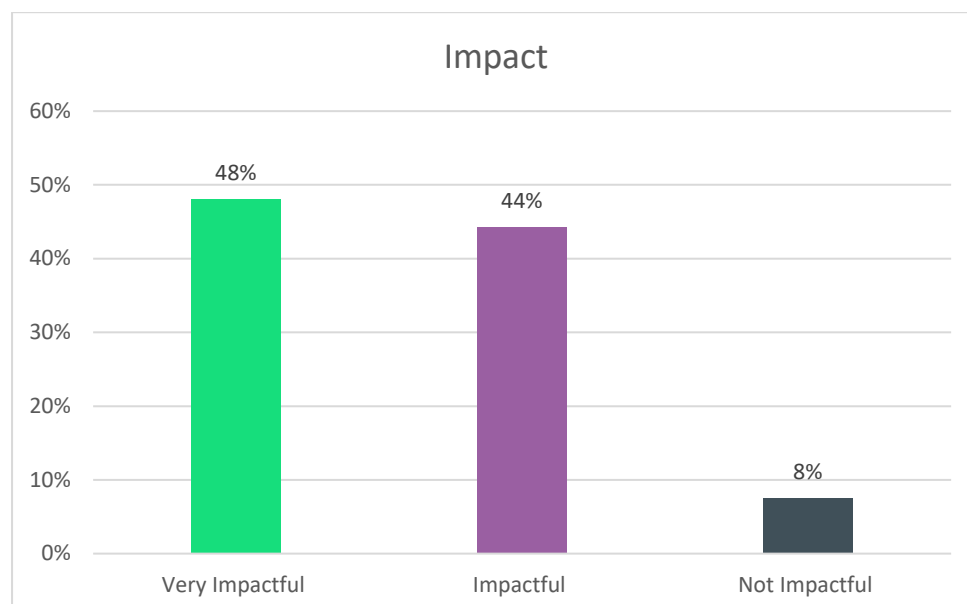
Desk reviews and interviews with the project team revealed multiple efforts to integrate gender considerations into the project. These efforts included promoting the inclusion of women in decision-making, integrating gender aspects into manuals and reviews, engaging female experts, and providing equal opportunities for training. Further details on these inclusion efforts will be elaborated in the cross-cutting issue section. Despite these efforts, there was a positive impact on women, but it remained limited.

Specifically, there was no direct focus on women in the development capacity activities, trainings, or the small and medium municipal projects. However, service providers reported that women were considered in different manuals, yet no clear effect on women was observed, such as no clear impact of the DGLAC reviews and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for RTOs, and LED assessments. Concerning the impact of MERP on increasing women's participation and their roles at both national and municipal levels, all respondents from municipalities/unions (100%) indicated that the project had a positive effect through its activities. Additionally, 33% of out of these municipalities and unions reported that women were actively involved as staff and volunteers in implementing the projects. This was also validated by responses from service providers and FGDs. Regarding the small and medium-sized municipal projects, no project specifically targeted women. However, some projects primarily benefited women. For instance, in the Beddawi municipality project, which focuses on empowering youth by developing their skills in construction and agriculture, women are the primary beneficiaries, as they constitute the majority of the workforce in agriculture, according to a key informant. Similarly, the palace project in Tripoli primarily benefits women. Conversely, projects like the EL Hesbeh benefited men more, while projects like the fire brigade, water and sewage, and Bickfaya rehabilitation were seen to benefit both genders equally, reflecting a broader community impact rather than targeted gender outcomes.

- **Quantitative Result:** Figure 7 illustrates that approximately 48% of respondents found the project to be very impactful, while about 44% rated the impact as

acceptable. Only around 8% stated that the project was not impactful at all. These results coincide with our qualitative findings presented above.

Figure 7: Percentage Distribution of Responses on Project Impact (Out of 79 Respondents)



Source: Based on calculations derived from responses obtained during KIIs and FGDs

7.6. Sustainability

The sustainability of the project was assessed by the extent to which the benefits of MERP project activities continue or will likely continue in the long term after donor funding has been withdrawn.

The specific key guiding questions used to assess the project's sustainability are as follows:

- What risks may jeopardize the sustainability of MERP contributions to the outcomes, and how has the project addressed or considered this?
- To what extent has MERP well-designed and planned its exit strategies?
- To what extent has MERP successfully and effectively engaged the project partner to ensure their ownership over what has been implemented and, therefore, the project's sustainability?
- What could have been done differently to enhance the continuity of MERP effects?
- What are the key lessons derived from the rich experience provided by the project that can be used by UNDP, UN-Habitat, the donor, and the government to enhance decision-making and programming and the benefit of the project?

- **Several risks jeopardize the sustainability of MERP's contributions, primarily due to the ongoing crisis and the limited capacity and financial resources of municipalities to manage independently.**

MERP has operated in a highly challenging context, making sustainability at the outcome level difficult to measure. The public sector in Lebanon faces a significant brain drain, with many municipal staff leaving for other opportunities. Political instability and the sensitive political economy at the national/subnational levels further complicate sustainability efforts, particularly evident in internal disputes within MoIM, DGLAC, and UoMs. However, in regions with political stability, such as the UoM of Tyre and its surrounding municipalities, sustainability prospects are more promising, as data indicates these areas are outperforming others. Additionally, financial difficulties and the inability to recruit and train new staff were also identified as major obstacles for the municipalities and the public service sector. Indeed, sustainability remains a key challenge frequently highlighted in the interviews, particularly regarding maintaining the results achieved given the current crisis and municipalities' limited capacity and financial resources to manage this independently.

MERP has significantly worked to enable beneficiaries, municipalities, and municipal unions to generate sustainable revenue through municipal financial solutions and small to medium-sized projects. However, substantial risks remain as the current legal framework prevents municipalities from including non-governmental revenue in their official financial accounts. This revenue, essential for daily operations, employee salaries, and infrastructure projects, cannot be formally recorded, reducing accountability and threatening the sustainability of these initiatives and the project as a whole.

- **MERP was well designed, but some components of it are more sustainable than others.**

For capacity building activities, respondents noted the sustainability of manuals, strategies, and documents, which serve as essential tools enabling municipalities to continue their developmental journey. MERP also employed and developed several innovative electronic tools, such as the DGLAC Web-Portal, DGLAC Automated Call Center, and WhatsApp-based Hoteline at Bourj Hammoud Municipality for public participation and awareness raising. These tools have the potential for long-term sustainability if DGLAC and the beneficiary municipalities use them effectively. At the time of writing this report, DGLAC had only approved the utilization of the platforms, namely the Web portal and the automated call center. However, while DGLAC has the approvals, the leadership expressed concerns over the department's ability to launch and manage these tools and the communication strategy, given the lack of staff.

Concerning Municipal small and medium projects, the evaluation finds that their sustainability is high to their ability to generate revenue. Sustainability was integrated into the criteria for these projects. There are specific approaches to ensure their sustainability; for example, some projects involve collecting service fees that directly fund the maintenance of equipment and infrastructure. In some cases, municipalities are implementing a fee-for-service model. Additionally, these projects were conceived by the municipalities themselves, enhancing a sense of ownership and potentially improving sustainability. In addition to this, MERP had developed Business Development plans for small and medium-sized projects to support their O&M and sustainability. The project review confirmed this approach's effectiveness, highlighting that the careful consideration of investment types, required technical skills, and operation and maintenance costs, coupled with business development plans, market assessments, and integrated skills training, ensures that municipal governments can sustain these projects as long as there is demand, user benefits, and self-generated revenue. This was further validated by feedback from municipalities/unions indicating that while 20% of respondents found it difficult to sustain the project results, the remaining 80% reported that sustainability was effectively integrated, allowing them to maintain the projects through service fees.

It is worth noting that the efforts made for RTO were a way to maintain the sustainability of the projects. A standard operating manual, a capacity development strategy, and an exit strategy were developed for the RTOs to enhance the long-term replicability, scalability, and sustainability of the RTOs. Key informants from service providers indicated that without external support, it is challenging to ensure sustainability. However, we can build on what has been achieved with the RTOs. This was validated during the FGDs with the RTO staff, who indicated that for the sustainability of the RTOs, the funding period should be extended. This would ensure that trained and qualified personnel do not leave, which would negatively impact sustainability.

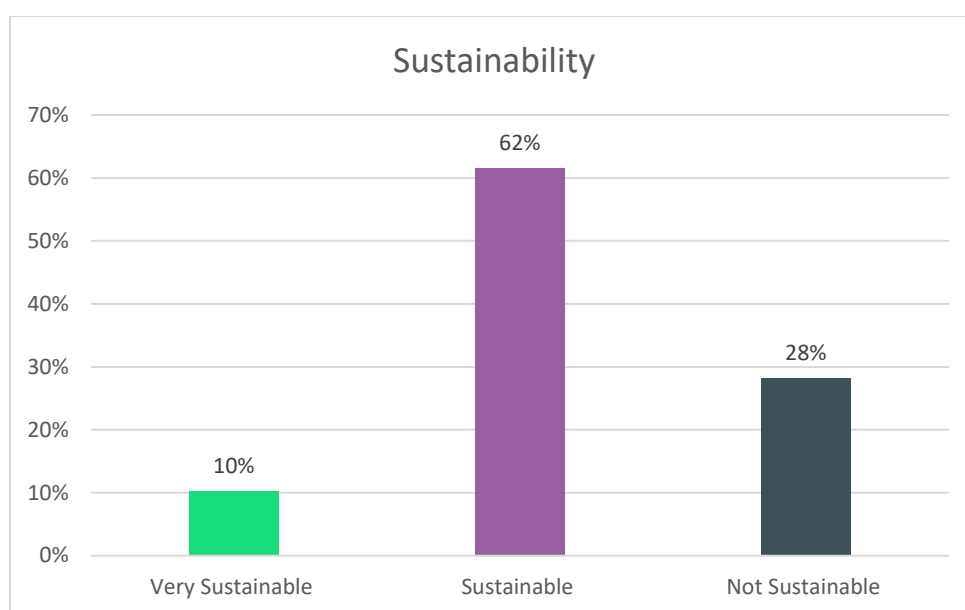
- **This evaluation outlines some lessons learned and suggests actions for better sustainability, as indicated by key informants.**

Various lessons learned and recommendations to enhance the continuity of MERP's effects were identified. For example, some municipalities and unions noted the need for better coordination among international donors, municipalities, and NGOs to improve sustainability. Others pointed out that the planning was neither sufficient nor realistic. It was suggested that projects should be more realistic given the situation in Lebanon and take into account the institutional conditions within the country. Several municipalities and unions also indicated that more funding was required. Furthermore, it was recommended to

raise community awareness on how to maintain resources and results through educational courses or awareness lectures and to continue monitoring the project even after its implementation to ensure better sustainability.

- **Quantitative Result:** Figure 8 validates our main findings regarding sustainability, illustrating that it remains a challenge. Only 10% of respondents indicated that the project is very sustainable. However, approximately 62% considered the project's sustainability to be acceptable. Conversely, a significant portion, about 28% of respondents, stated that the project is not sustainable at all.

Figure 8: Percentage Distribution of Responses on Project Sustainability (Out of 78 Respondents)



Source: Based on calculations derived from responses obtained during KIIs and FGDs

7.7. Cross-Cutting Issues

Overall indicators were not specified for the cross-cutting issues, MERP did not build for human rights indicators, gender, and youth-specific indicators at the outcome level. At the output/activity level, there were efforts to include gender perspective and inclusion.

Human Rights

This cutting issue was assessed in this evaluation by the extent the poor, and physically challenged, women, men, and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups have benefited from the project.

Most key informants (around 83%) from municipalities indicated that the economic benefits of small and medium municipal projects have helped vulnerable communities

and that inclusivity in these projects effectively ensures their benefit as they are part of the society. For instance, enhancements like improvements in electricity supply have been beneficial to people with disabilities. However, there are some small and medium projects, primarily those related to infrastructure, that have integrated accessibility features to make them accessible to all people, including those with disabilities.

Youth and Gender

This cutting issue was assessed by the extent to which MERP has fulfilled the youth and gender integration requirements and the extent to which the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Gender considerations were taken into account in the project's activities to the extent that is possible. Based on a desk review, MERP emphasized gender in all its ToRs issued for procurement. MERP also disaggregated data by gender in all M&E reporting and addressed gender topics in communications, including talk shows about women's roles, and prominently featured women in communication products, quarterly newsletters, and visuals. Efforts included integrating gender aspects into manuals and reviews, promoting the inclusion of women in decision-making, and providing equal opportunities for training. Regarding youth, because the project mainly dealt with public institutions, youth participation, and involvement were somewhat limited due to the specificity of the targeted stakeholders. Our data indicates that around 80% of participants from municipalities and unions reported that both youth and women participated in the project. This is validated by responses from key informants and FGDs. For example, women were included in trainings and implementation, and considered in the manuals; for instance, a recommendation for employing women was made in the DGLAC review. Additionally, the project actively encouraged municipalities to seek women's opinions and participation during capacity-building activities and featured many female experts and women's groups in panel discussions. Town hall activities included women experts. Moreover, several activities and projects specifically benefit women, such as the project in Beddawi, where women are the primary beneficiaries as they constitute the majority of the workforce in agriculture, and the palace project in Tripoli, which primarily benefits women and youth. All service providers indicated that they raised the issue of gender and encouraged the inclusion of gender needs assessments as a minimum of good governance; they were dismissed. They stated that they made their efforts as per their contractual obligations and based on their belief in the importance of the inclusion of gender in public policy and economic development. Concerning youth, one municipality noted that the UNDP conducted interviews and collected feedback from youth.

The question of gender inclusion through MERP activities from conception to implementation was very challenging. The data indicates that even women public

servants were dismissive of the concept of gender equity in public service and gender inclusion in the planning and execution of public services. For example, one respondent stated that “women would feel safer because we have improved lighting in the village.” Another woman public official stated dismissively, “Well, they can now park their cars when they shop.” One public official noted that our staff is more than 50% women employees. While MERP made efforts and encouraged women's participation, the requirement for gender inclusion was not a conditionality for funding projects. As stated earlier, while there are women in elected positions and women in the municipalities, the evidence in this evaluation demonstrates that there were no champions for women, nor for PwDs which we will expand on further. MERP did not champion the inclusion of women and gender equity; efforts were timid and that may be due to the difficult context of Lebanon and MERP. If contrasted with the implementation of the Headway project in Iraq, according to UNDP and UN-Habitat, the conditionality of gender inclusion and equity was enforced from the application process to implementation. Indeed, MERP could have significantly enhanced its efforts regarding the inclusion of women and youth. Despite the clear directives from the UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025⁴³, which places a specific focus on empowering women and ensuring their equal participation in governance, the project did not meet these strategic thresholds. Confronted with municipal reluctance towards gender-focused initiatives, the project did not implement stronger enforcement mechanisms that could have bolstered gender and youth inclusion. For example, the selection process for municipal proposals could have been a pivotal point for enforcing gender and youth inclusion. Proposals that incorporated significant measures to engage women and youth should have been favored in the funding process. Furthermore, the project did not capitalize on potential strategic partnerships with organizations like UN Women, thereby missing out their expertise in gender issues.

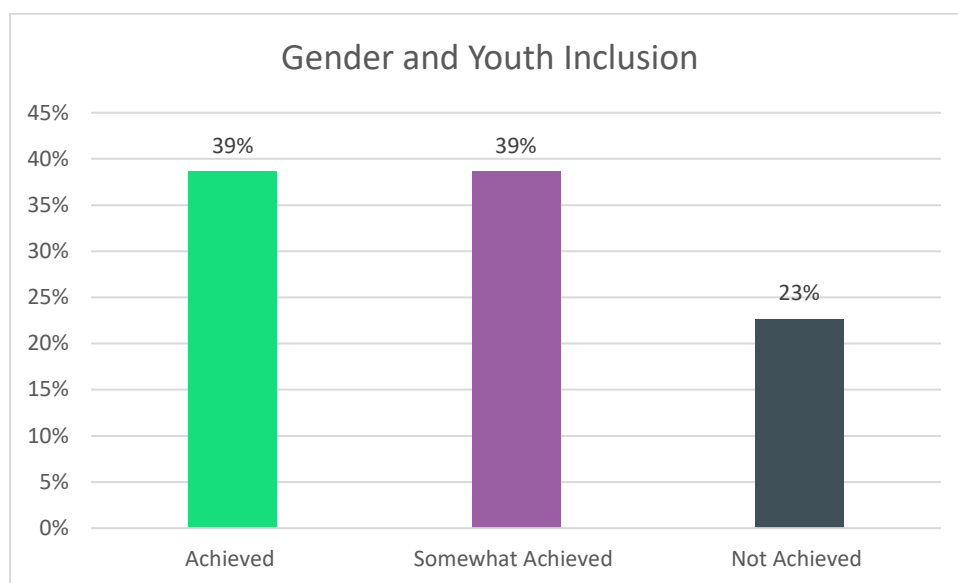
Recently the issue of gender was conflated with the push for recognition of LGBTQ+ rights. The evidence for women's equity and rights needs advocacy and resolute steps to demonstrate their importance. For example, a campaign with women and men, including the inclusion of community leaders, would have served the issue of gender equity in governance and access to services. As simple as a demand for consultation of women through a needs assessment would have demonstrated by doing the importance of inclusion. Similarly, MERP failed to push for transparency; according to 80% of the staff in the municipalities, they were not informed of the size of the funds that their municipalities received.

⁴³ [Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025 | UNDP](#)

Concerning youth, MERP could have collaborated with the youth councils supported by UNICEF in Lebanon and sought guidance from frameworks like UNICEF's National Youth Policy⁴⁴ for better youth inclusion. Generally, under CPD, the UNDP mandates that at least 20 percent of all activities should specifically focus on gender equality and women's empowerment.⁴⁵ Both UNDP and UN-Habitat strategic objectives also emphasize the integration of gender and youth as crucial elements, indicating that MERP should have committed more significantly to these cross-cutting issues.

Quantitative Result: Figure 9 reveals that approximately 39% of respondents indicated that the project successfully achieved gender and youth inclusion, while a similar percentage reported that the inclusion of gender and youth was somewhat achieved. Around 23% indicated that the project did not achieve any inclusion for gender and youth.

Figure 9: Percentage Distribution of Responses on the Gender and Youth Inclusion in the Project (Out of 75 Respondents)



Source: Based on calculations derived from responses obtained during KIIs and FGDs

People with Disability

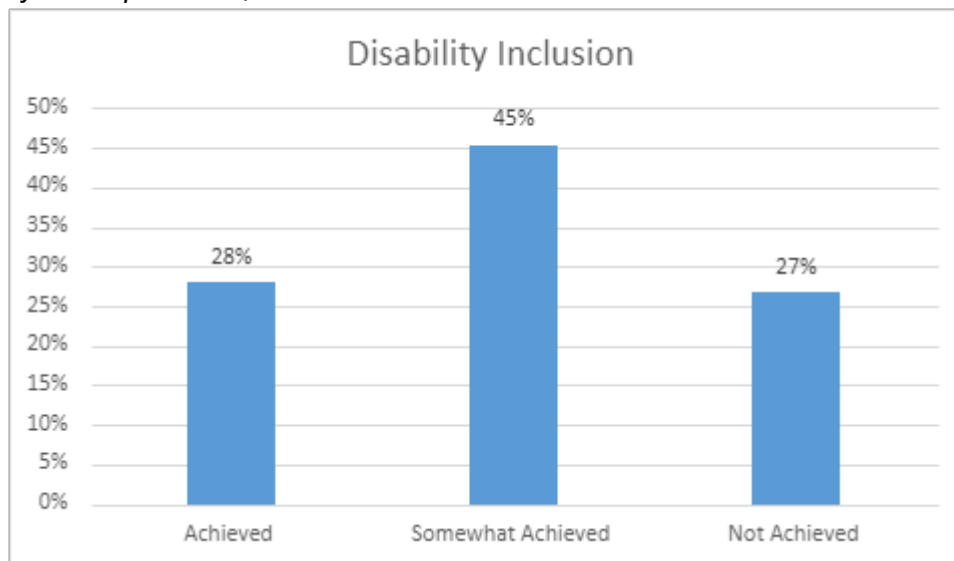
⁴⁴ <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/reports/national-youth-policy-action-plan>

⁴⁵ <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-05/CPD%20Lebanon%202023-2025.pdf>

This cross-cutting issue was assessed by the extent the rights of PwD were considered and respected in project design and implementation

Many respondents, around 80% of municipalities/unions, for example, were not aware of any specific inclusion of disabled people in the project's activities. This lack of awareness is reflected in the quantitative results shown in Figure 10, where only 28% of respondents indicated that the inclusion of disabled people was achieved. Additionally, 45% felt it was somewhat achieved, while about 28% stated that disability inclusion in the project was not achieved. Although no one identified specific activities, meetings, or assessments of the needs of the disabled, one municipality noted that road improvements included access for PwD. Another staff member from the same municipality mentioned that the municipality created a couple of benches where disabled people could sit. Another staff member skeptically remarked, "These plans work in Paris and London; they don't work here." Similar to the issue of gender, the right to inclusion of the disabled is a fundamental human right that is not taken seriously or even considered in local governance, especially within the participating municipalities. Furthermore, PwD inclusion was not a condition for funding.

Figure 10: Percentage Distribution of Responses on the Disability Inclusion in the Project (Out of 75 Respondents)



Source: Based on calculations derived from responses obtained during KIIs and FGDs

Environment

The environmental issues were addressed somewhat as they were built in the procurement process for small and medium public service projects. Some small and medium municipal projects have taken environmental issues into consideration, particularly those related to renewable energy (Solar Projects). One key informant from

the municipalities reported that their project solves a major problem by providing essential resources to citizens at a lower cost and with less environmental impact.

8. Intended and Unintended Consequences

Intended: Role of RTOs in Crisis Management:

According to a UN-Habitat Lebanon representative, the RTOs were established by the organization in 2006 following the war between Israel and Lebanon, which resulted in the destruction of villages, towns, and parts of the city of Beirut. The RTOs were created as a unique initiative to support the large-scale reconstruction effort following the war and due to the lack of local capacity. Staffed by local experts and employees funded externally but governed by public service rules, the RTOs played a critical role in providing technical capacities to UoMs. According to UN-Habitat, it is a unique structure in Lebanon.

Given Lebanon's constant state of crisis, the impact on the public service's capacity to attract talented employees and experts is significant. The RTOs have emerged as a well-placed structure to assist UoMs in developing regional crisis management plans, collaborating between municipalities and donors to identify specific needs for emergency, humanitarian assistance, and public coordination. Larger municipalities will require assistance in dealing with the potential impacts of conflict, crisis, and displacement of people. Although the larger municipalities such as Beirut, Sidon, and Tripoli have the resources and access to capacities, they may still need support in planning for crises. The RTOs are experienced in planning for crises, conducting regional assessments of needs, providing technical training for crisis management, and offering stable, long-term support to local development.

There is an unintended negative impact of the RTO structures: the financial crisis, particularly at the beginning, resulted in internal conflicts over the payment of RTO staff, who benefited from receiving their salaries in USD, versus their counterparts and colleagues from the local municipalities who received their salaries in the much-depreciated Lebanese currency (Lira). The decision was made to pay the salaries in Lebanese Lira, which led experienced staff to leave the RTO in two municipalities. This was not an issue before the currency deteriorated, but it was a consequence of it, creating two types of salary scales. However, to attract talent to the RTOs and encourage the employment of experts, a new financial structure needs to be considered, as many talented Lebanese experts in the public and private sectors are seeking opportunities in other sectors and countries.

Lesson Learned: Developing an exit strategy will be required as demonstrated in the expectations of the UoMs that UN-Habitat would continue to provide funding for the

long term. A sustainable funding mechanism to attract and retain talented emergency preparedness staff is required.

Unintended: Coherence with Lebanon Digital Transformation Strategy (DTS):

A review of the DTS demonstrates that the public sector in Lebanon is a late adopter of ICT and digital tools. Lebanon established a strategy in 2007, which was only updated by the DTS for 2020-2025. Since the assassination of Prime Minister Hariri in 2005, Lebanon has experienced multiple political and governance crises, including periods without a Prime Minister, dissolved parliament, and a vacant presidential seat, continuing to the present day. Digital transformation can provide solutions to many of the challenges facing Lebanon and can be a crucial tool for service provision, transparency, accountability, and overall economic transformation.

While MERP's outcomes were not directly linked to the DTS, it resulted in an unintended contribution to the adoption of DTS objectives by Lebanon's public sector, particularly the municipalities. According to the DTS "the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities has a developed platform for passports, a platform for identity cards that was updated in 2014 which is the main pillar platform for automating Civil Status, a platform for data of electoral lists and voters' lists, and platforms for criminal records - identity verification and others within the Internal Security Forces."⁴⁶ MERP introduced a new platform, the DGLAC web portal, that has already improved internal communication for the DGLAC and is expected to significantly impact the municipalities and the public once launched. Additionally, MERP provided equipment such as computers, networks, software, and Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) tools to municipalities, enhancing their communication, efficiency, and transparency.

Any new projects focusing on local governance, economic development, and local support would benefit from building on the established systems and capacities for digital adoption and utilization. According to two UoMs, the use of digital and ICT tools has significantly enhanced their ability to support and collaborate with municipalities. Specifically, it has minimized the impact of employee loss, as these tools have improved the efficiency of these two institutions.

Institutionalization of Capacity Building:

The skills capacity needs of municipalities are extensive, according to findings from desk reviews, consultations with MERP staff, and publicly available reports. Lebanon's public

⁴⁶ [DT_EN.pdf](#) p.8.

service, especially its municipalities, requires ongoing capacity building. MERP attempted to recruit ENA, the national public service training institute. However, according to project documents and MERP staff, discussions were challenging as ENA had not previously conducted training programs for local administration. Additionally, due to the financial crisis, the ENA team sought payment for their services, a requirement that was not permissible under UN rules.

A similar experience occurred with the Institute of Finance, the Basel Fleihan Institute of Finance, which is a unit within the Ministry of Finance dedicated to training the public and private sectors. Establishing a relationship was difficult; according to the MERP team, the conditions set by the Institute were hard to meet.

The institutionalization of the capacity-building program developed by MERP should be housed within a national institution to make it accessible to municipalities and local councils across Lebanon. If feasible, it would be beneficial for ENA to revise the training program in close collaboration with DGLAC and UNDP/UN-Habitat staff, making it mandatory for staff of municipalities and following every election cycle.

9. Assessment of the Joint Nature of the Program (Regional Component)

The regional approach is always challenging but necessary to share experiences and learn from each other for a better impact. Despite having shared objectives and funding, there was no interaction between country teams. Following a review of Headway and an in-depth analysis of MERP, we have concluded that the two projects could have benefitted from learning from each other. Both deployed innovative approaches to project implementation but could have gained insights from these experiences and those of others in the region. Therefore, RBAS should have been included in a programmatic capacity to facilitate learning between the two projects and to draw on regional experiences. Particularly for Lebanon, the experiences of Libyan municipalities and the Ministry of Municipalities would be relevant. Lebanese municipalities are becoming self-reliant, raising their own revenues, and engaging in strategic infrastructure projects funded by the international community. The municipalities have gradually assumed more leadership in managing health, education, transportation, economic development, and employment. Lebanese municipalities are slowly moving in this direction. Furthermore, the cross-cutting issues were not well received by the municipalities. Headway faced a similar experience but chose to build the cross-cutting issues as mandatory requirements for funding local projects. Headway was successful with this approach.

The UNDP and UN-Habitat teams in Iraq could have benefited from the RTO model established by UN-Habitat and supported through MERP. Similarly, adopting MERP's approach to implementing small and medium-sized service projects could have

potentially enhanced the impact of Headway. Additionally, MERP's innovations such as the Policy Dialogue and communication strategy could serve as valuable models for any regional local governance project. RBAS could leverage these insights to facilitate the exchange of ideas and promote learning from other innovations in local governance implementation across the MENA region.

In addition, the policy changes introduced by Headway, particularly its refugee-centric approach, encouraged a humanist/Do-not approach to working with refugees and host communities. Specifically, HEADWAY focused on humanizing the refugee experience in Iraq by integrating Syrian professionals, entrepreneurs, and artists to collaborate and achieve results.

On the other hand, the innovative contributions made by MERP in communication are crucial, particularly in fostering dialogue on municipal affairs and enhancing knowledge among practitioners, and should be shared during the implementation phase. Notably, MERP established a national municipal regulatory library and a communication website. Additionally, the development of the Feedback and Complaint Mechanism represents a significant contribution to improving municipal governance and capacity building. Another key contribution to enhancing municipal technical capabilities is the role the RTOs play, specifically, the role they play in disaster management, access to technical expertise, and ultimately the development of a cadre of human resources who would remain at the exit point. Upon discussion with the UN-Habitat Iraq, it was revealed that the RTO experience was not shared.

Therefore, facilitating the exchange of experiences between UNDP and UN-Habitat in Iraq and Lebanon could significantly enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of local service provision. This is particularly relevant as both countries face similar challenges, including ongoing conflicts, refugees and IDPs, and environmental risks that could lead to future crises.

Lessons Learned, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Lessons Learned

- The project was innovative in developing the capacity of staff and elected municipal leaders by using public service projects as leverage. Data demonstrates that funding was critical for all municipalities to achieve their objectives and demonstrate responsiveness to public needs.
- MERP identified that municipalities had knowledge gaps as far as legal and regulatory issues, particularly in managing crises and the increased demand on their resources. The communication strategy and the Policy Dialogue were important tools to improve knowledge and dialogue on critical issues.
- Municipalities are taking over providing water, electricity generation, road maintenance, and employment creation. These were services provided by the

central government. They are maintaining coordination with ministries to ensure they are within the law, but ministries are not able to implement while municipalities can generate revenues to implement these projects and services.

- Municipalities do not believe that public participation is important nor required to develop public service projects. It demonstrates that basic principles of good governance are not understood.
- Gender equity, equality, and participation are seen as foreign concepts by most participating municipalities. Data demonstrates that even women beneficiaries believe that it is a luxury in a crisis situation.
- Governance: DGLAC's capacity to guide legal and governance is limited due to 1. Impact of context. 2. The public sector continues to lose employees, leading to a loss of experience and capacity.
- Municipalities that are within unions that have political stability such as Tyre, have higher chances of achieving development results. They are more cooperative, and coordination between the Union and the municipalities is easier.
- UN agencies working together brought value to the beneficiaries, who worked as one and recognized that the UN is operating as one.
- MERP was not integrated within the ongoing LHSP program and similarly for UN-Habitat resulting in inefficiencies and loss and opportunity to build on existing relationships and knowledge.
- The public sector has experienced a significant brain drain. Short of an infusion of new human capital municipalities will soon be unable to provide services. Given the legal framework, the municipalities are unable to create permanent positions.
- Municipalities demonstrated a willingness to adopt digital tools to improve efficiencies within their administration and services. The larger municipalities found it easier to adapt than the smaller municipalities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The political and economic crisis in Lebanon has prolonged the suffering of many Lebanese citizens. The Lebanese government has been paralyzed and unable to provide basic services. Given the extreme centralization of power in Lebanon, municipalities were not given the resources nor the tools to be the providers of services such as electricity, water, sewage, etc. Since the start of the crisis, pressure has been placed on the municipalities to provide these critical services while suffering from structural weaknesses and the impact of the economic and political crisis. So far, it appears that a real resolution for this crisis is not on the horizon. As well, the brain drain that Lebanon suffered as a consequence has compounded the problem faced by the public sector and specifically the local municipalities. The crisis is attributed to the lack of good governance, transparency, and accountability. Furthermore, Lebanon always scored low on the inclusion of women and the vulnerable in its governance structure.

Criteria	Conclusion	Recommendation
Relevance	<p>MERP provided evidence of the relevance of local governance capacity development projects, given the several gaps in the understanding of local governance and the role of municipalities in service provisions. Nonetheless, weaknesses and gaps were identified that need addressing. Moreover, MERP's alignment with national priorities, the strategic objectives of both UNDP and UN-Habitat, and specific SDGs underscores its pertinence. Also, despite challenges posed by an ongoing economic and political crisis, MERP adapted dynamically to changing contexts, ensuring that its interventions remained aligned with the immediate needs of municipalities for public service delivery.</p>	<p>UNDP should institute governance capacity building in all its local development projects, starting with a module on the legal and governance requirements for both elected councils and non-elected staff. Future support for local governance requires a thorough study of the constitutional provisions, legislation, regulations, and policies of municipal governance before the implementation of projects focused on governance. Additionally, UNDP should coordinate with other UN agencies such as UNICEF, UN Women, and UNESCO to promote local governance and leverage their projects in support of improving municipal services.</p>
Coherence	<p>MERP demonstrated strong coherence with overarching regional strategies and global initiatives, effectively navigating the complexities of Lebanon's local governance landscape. While MERP aligned well with international efforts supporting municipalities in Lebanon in service provision and economic development, it uniquely expanded its focus to enhance local multi-level governance, complementing existing initiatives by addressing governance aspects that were not their primary focus. However, MERP's planning and implementation were mostly internal with minimal public participation due to municipal resistance, which stemmed from fear of negative reactions and a lack of skills,</p>	<p>All UN agencies, particularly UNDP and UN-Habitat, should embed good governance as a principle of their programming, particularly at the municipal level. Public participation, transparency, and accountability are required for good governance. Support to municipalities should be conditional on public participation in planning and decision-making. Also, training municipalities and providing examples of successful public participation can address their resistance.</p>

	<p>tools, and exposure to best practices to effectively lead public participation processes. Despite MERP's efforts, convincing municipalities of the importance of public participation, transparency, and accountability principles remained a challenge.</p>	
Effectiveness	<p>Despite some challenges, MERP largely succeeded in achieving its objectives by enhancing administrative capabilities and providing crucial capacity-building, notably the integration of digital tools which effectively improved communication and efficiency across municipalities, unions, and DGLAC. Through this integration, MERP supported Lebanon's Digital Strategy in an unintended way. Additionally, the effective implementation of small and medium-sized Basic Services/LED projects contributed significantly to the project's overall achievements. Also, a key factor in the overall success of the project was the robust support provided to municipalities through the strengthening of RTOs, which was instrumental in enhancing municipal capabilities in planning, coordination, and crisis management. These RTOs have demonstrable experience, knowledge, and capacity to lead local planning, preparation, and training.</p>	<p>UNDP and UN-Habitat should be supplying, supporting, and encouraging the adoption of digital tools to address staffing shortage and to create efficiencies. All programs should focus on using digital technology to improve public participation in decision-making, including the inclusion of women, youth, and PwD. It is also supporting Lebanon's Digital Strategy, which MERP achieved in an unintended way.</p> <p>UNDP UN-Habitat and multiple other UN agencies should consider supporting municipalities in developing crisis management strategies. RTOs should be strengthened to lead such a strategy in coordination with UoMs and DGLAC.</p>

Efficiency	<p>MERP was largely cost-efficient given the scope, but several internal and external factors limited its overall efficiency. Administrative complexities typical of UN systems, alongside rigorous and multi-layered approval processes, led to significant procurement and operational delays. This resulted in cynicism and concerns about partnering with UN agencies, particularly UNDP. Additionally, the absence of clear initial communication with service providers and municipalities compounded these issues, particularly within the challenging Lebanese context that also intensified a brain drain and further complicated procurement. Nonetheless, MERP's remarkable adaptability and implementation of innovative tools helped maintain momentum and achieve its objectives efficiently, with the partnership between UNDP and UN-Habitat also playing a positive role in enhancing the project's efficiency.</p>	<p>UNDP and all UN agencies need to improve their communication with service providers and municipalities and other beneficiaries to address the misunderstanding and lack of credibility in their operations. Specifically, communicating clear terms, timelines for procurement, and payment timelines is critical to the reputation of UNDP.</p> <p>UNDP and UN-Habitat should work with the donor community to integrate any new programming such as MERP to be implemented within the portfolio approach to ensure efficiency, improve effectiveness, and build for sustainability. The portfolio approach will provide a comprehensive approach, but it is important to ensure that co-implementation is maintained.</p>
Impact	<p>MERP had a positive effect on municipalities, unions of municipalities, and their staff by enhancing their capacity to design and manage projects, alongside improving their interpersonal and technological skills. The project's small and medium initiatives were particularly impactful, meeting community needs, fostering trust, enhancing communication, and boosting local economic development. However, if the local economic development plan had been</p>	<p>UN-Habitat should consider the creation of a compensation package for new rotating positions at the RTOs. These positions would be drawing staff from the municipalities and compensating them on top of their current salary scale. These could be positions for a period of one year. To further support this initiative, the UN could offer a performance-based bonus to cover increased responsibilities, transportation, and incidental expenses.</p>

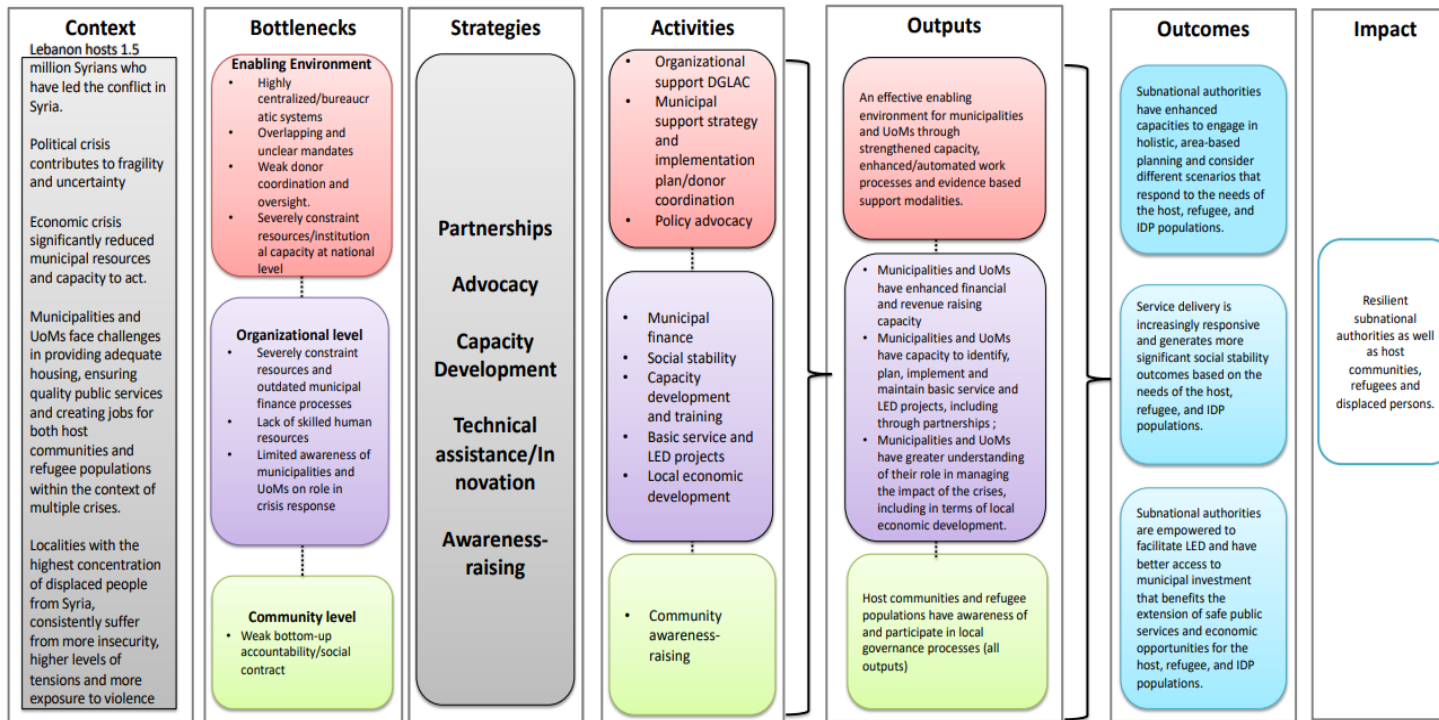
	<p>established as intended, it could have had a greater impact on the communities. The overall impact was also bolstered by the crucial role of the RTOs, but their financial structure unintentionally had a negative effect, where initial financial issues led to internal conflicts over RTO staff payments.</p>	<p>This initiative would enhance the professional skills of municipal staff members who join the RTO and foster improved communication and understanding between the RTO and the municipalities. In the short term, this arrangement could be facilitated by UN Habitat, which would support the transfer and rotation of skilled staff through the RTO.</p> <p>UNDP should support the establishment of the local economic development plans that were intended to be established by MERP. It is important that they are linked to the LHSP Portfolio objective: Support the stabilization and development of business and Economic Employment objectives.</p>
Sustainability	<p>The sustainability of the MERP project is compromised by several risks, primarily the ongoing political/economic crisis and the limited capacity and financial resources of municipalities, unions, and DGLAC to operate independently. MERP has introduced several innovative ICT tools, such as the DGLAC Web Portal, Automated Call Center, WhatsApp-based Hotline, accounting software, and computers, that hold potential for long-term sustainability, provided they are effectively utilized by DGLAC and the beneficiary municipalities. However, the success of these tools, the provided manuals, and the broader project hinges on the provision of extended training periods, continuous support, and a comprehensive follow-up phase. Additionally, the sustainability of municipal small and medium projects is</p>	<p>UNDP should institutionalize a municipal training program with ENA to provide ongoing training to newly elected municipal leaders, and capacity building for staff and service providers. In the past, UNDP developed a Parliamentary Training Program within the Parliament of Lebanon to train newly elected members of parliament on their parliamentary and legislative roles and to the staff and ongoing capacity building. An institutional program can utilize digital and hybrid training modalities to minimize staff disruption and be cost-efficient.</p> <p>UNDP should provide ongoing support to DGLAC to effectively use the Digital tools MERP developed and provide support to the staff to be able to respond to the</p>

	<p>potentially high due to their revenue-generating capabilities. Yet, the lack of transparency and accountability within municipalities poses a serious threat to the sustainability of these initiatives</p>	<p>requests of the municipalities and unions. DGLAC needs long-term support, ongoing capacity building, and tools to conduct its regulatory and oversight role.</p> <p>UNDP and UN-Habitat should work with DGLAC to develop administrative regulations and policies to encourage municipalities to be transparent in their financial reporting and management of revenues generated from external sources. The lack of transparency will reduce trust and potentially destabilize communities. Municipalities in Lebanon are elected mainly based on familial and political affiliations, lack of trust and conflict over resources management will cause conflicts.</p>
<p>Cross Cutting Issues</p>	<p>MERP faced significant challenges in embedding cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth, and disability inclusion at both the outcome and output levels. Despite attempts to promote the roles of these marginalized groups, resistance from stakeholders and the low prioritization of these issues in Lebanese governance hindered focused efforts. However, the project failed to implement stronger enforcement mechanisms and establish partnerships with relevant stakeholders that could have strengthened gender, youth, and disability inclusion.</p>	<p>All UN agency projects should include conditionality specific to cross-cutting themes, particularly the inclusion of gender, youth PwD, and environmental. It is also recommended that NGOs and CSOs be supported to lead public campaigns to inform and create awareness on this issue. Particularly, UN Women and UNICEF should encourage coordination between CSOs and municipalities to conduct awareness campaigns and lead consultation processes focused on women, youth, and people with disabilities, which would improve understanding of these issues. There are a number of CSOs and NGOs active across Lebanon, they should be supported to create awareness campaigns focused on inclusion.</p>

Regional Component	<p>RBAS's role in this project was limited to supporting the project's administrative and financial management and liaising with the donor, missing an opportunity by not participating in a programmatic role. Indeed, there are many recent developments in supporting local authorities and municipalities globally, particularly in the MENA region. Many countries in crisis, some for over a decade, have had to rely on municipalities to provide direct services to their citizens as the central governments have been in permanent crisis or their mandates have elapsed. Local municipalities have had to address service issues for their citizens and residents, including refugees and IDPs.</p>	<p>RBAS should play a role in providing technical support, lessons learned from the region, and connections to other international examples of good governance at the municipal level. Also, given recent global developments in supporting local authorities and municipalities, particularly in the MENA region, RBAS should be the conduit for raising awareness amongst UN agencies and staff related to these achievements and lessons learned.</p>

10. Annexes

Annex 1. Theory of Change



Enabling environment (national level)
Organizational systems (municipal level)
Demand (community level)

Colors represent analytical or conceptual alignment between the types of barriers, activities and potential outputs.

Annex 2. ToR for the Final Evaluation

Terms of Reference Municipal Empowerment and Resilience Final Project Evaluation

Background and context

PROJECT INFORMATION		
Project title	Strengthening the Long-Term Resilience of Subnational Authorities in countries affected by the Syrian and Iraqi Crises	
Atlas ID	Lebanon: 00116813/00113796 Iraq: 00117563/00114309	
Corporate outcome and output	<p>Lebanon CPD (2023-2025) Outcome 2: Strengthened security, stability, justice, and social peace.</p> <p>Output 2.1 Institutional systems strengthened to manage multi-dimensional risks and shocks at national and sub-national levels. (Strategic Plan Signature Solution 3: Resilience Output 3.1)</p> <p>Output 2.3 Integrated conflict-sensitive and gender-responsive development solutions provided in municipalities hosting the country’s most vulnerable communities to enhance their resilience (including in host communities).</p> <p>Lebanon CPD (2017-2022) Outcome 3.1: Productive sectors strengthened to promote inclusive growth and local development, especially in the most disadvantages areas.</p>	
Country	Lebanon: Unions of Municipalities of Tyre, Al Fayhaa, and Maten North Iraq: Governorates of Dohuk, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Ninewa	
Region	Middle East	
Date project document signed	January 2019	
Project dates	Start	Planned end
	01 January 2019	31 March 2024
Project budget (Lebanon)	\$ 16,715,328.90	
Funding source	EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis ‘Madad Fund’.	

Implementing parties⁴⁷

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

⁴⁷ This is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

The Impact of the Syrian Crisis on Lebanon

The impact of the Syrian Crisis on Lebanon has reached an unprecedented scale in the history of complex, displacement-driven emergencies. In April 2012, 32,800 Syrian refugees were registered or awaiting registration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Lebanon. By October 2018, the Government of Lebanon estimated that the country was hosting 1.5 million refugees, a quarter of the total Lebanese population.⁴⁸

The refugee crisis places tremendous pressure on Lebanon's services and resources, particularly at the decentralized level. Municipalities face challenges in providing adequate housing, ensuring quality public services, and in creating jobs for both host communities and displaced/refugee populations. Furthermore, localities with the highest concentration of displaced people from Syria, including all large cities of Lebanon and their suburbs, consistently suffer from higher levels of tension than other areas in Lebanon.⁴⁹

In 2019, a popular uprising was triggered by the onset of a severe financial crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 further exacerbated the country's instability and intensified the ongoing economic crisis. The devastating explosion at the Port of Beirut on August 4, 2020, further aggravated governance and trust deficits, and deepened poverty and vulnerability across the country. Inflation reached triple digits, peaking at 211 percent year-on-year in January 2022.⁵⁰ The dramatic depreciation of the national currency combined with informal capital controls, lead to a drop of 85 percent in purchasing power.⁵¹

Lebanon's GDP has contracted by over 58 percent and real GDP per capita has experienced a continuous decline for five years, falling by 37.52 percent.⁵³ Unemployment stands at nearly 30 percent with youth facing an unemployment rate of 47 percent. Poverty, based on the national poverty line, was estimated at 50 percent in 2021.⁵⁴ Multidimensional poverty affects 82 percent of Lebanese households, double of what it was in 2019.⁵⁵ Around one-third of the Lebanese population and half of Syrian

⁴⁸ Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, *Lebanese crisis response plan 2017-2020 (2019 Update)*, Beirut, (<https://www.unhcr.org/lb/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2019/04/LCRP-EN-2019.pdf>), Accessed December 2019

⁴⁹ The 251-vulnerability map identifies the most vulnerable localities in Lebanon. They host 87 per cent of the displaced from Syria and 67 per cent deprived Lebanese. *Lebanese crisis response plan 2017-2020 (2019 Update)*

⁵⁰ UNDP Country Programme Document 2023-2025.

⁵¹ UNDP Country Programme Document 2023-2025.

⁵² GDP was US\$ 55 billion in 2018 and is projected at US\$21.3 billion for 2022; real GDP per capita was at US\$ 9,226 in 2018 and is estimated at 3,912 for 2022 (Source: World Bank).

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⁵⁴ World Bank (2020). *Lebanon Economic Monitor: The deliberate depression*, Fall 2020

⁵⁵ UNESCWA (2021). *Multidimensional poverty in Lebanon (2019-2021): Painful reality and uncertain prospects*, Policy Brief 2, Beirut.

refugees face acute food insecurity.⁵⁶ The situation for Syrian refugees, already dire prior to the crisis, has worsened, with 90 percent of families needing assistance to meet basic survival needs.⁵⁷ Many Lebanese, including skilled professionals, are leaving the country. These developments are eroding the country's foundation for long-term development and social cohesion, with intra-Lebanese tensions reaching a peak of 40 percent in August 2022.⁵⁸

This catastrophic situation, labeled as "self-inflicted" by the World Bank⁵⁹, is rooted in decades of poor governance and accountability deficits. Lebanon's institutional and political system, with confessional control of state institutions and resources, has long lost the ability to address people's needs and protect them from escalating risks.⁶⁰ The May 2022 parliamentary elections brought some changes to the traditional political landscape, but not enough to effect significant changes in the pre-existing balance of political powers ruling the country. These elections resulted in a divided parliament unable to elect a new country president and to subsequently form a new government able to undertake the much-needed financial, economic, and institutional reforms needed to bring the country back from the brinks of financial, economic, and social disasters.

Amidst this dire situation, municipalities are on the frontlines of the crisis response. However, the crisis has also affected local authorities in terms of resources and capacity. They are further impacted by structural constraints in the local governance system. Remaining municipal financing sources for services and local development are dominated by unpredictable and conditional funding streams which, in addition to being insufficient, also exacerbate territorial inequalities and corruption risks. Prior to the crisis, municipalities heavily relied on the Independent Municipal Fund (IMF) for their income, with smaller municipalities and unions depending on it up to 90 and 70 percent, respectively. Moreover, the fiscal transfers from the IMF have always been irregular, and delayed, and now also have been rendered meaningless by the crisis. In August 2022, municipalities collectively received only LBP 725 billion⁶¹ (equivalent to approximately US\$9 million⁶²) for the year 2020, compared to an amount that would have been around US\$500 million before the crisis.

With the decrease (or absence) of local municipal tax revenues –due to loss of income and increased poverty levels-, rising fuel costs, breakdown of the national electricity grid,

⁵⁶ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (2022). [Lebanon Acute Food Insecurity Report](#)

⁵⁷ UN Lebanon (2022). "[Inter-Agency Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon](#)".

⁵⁸ UNDP/Ark [Perception survey, Wave XIV](#), August 2022

⁵⁹ World Bank (2020). [Lebanon Economic Monitor: The deliberate depression](#), Fall 2020

⁶⁰ UNDP Country Programme Document 2023-2025.

⁶¹ The IMF allocation almost did not change since 2017 (LBP 700 billion) in spite of the country's surge in needs and currency devaluation.

⁶² Exchange rate of LBP 80,000 per dollar

and restrictions on staffing, municipalities, and unions of municipalities in Lebanon are facing increased challenges to deliver essential services to their communities, and to cover operation and maintenance costs of municipal equipment and machinery.

This multifaceted crisis occurs within a context of deep and structural gender inequalities. With a score of 0.644, Lebanon ranked 119th in the world in the 2022 Global Gender Gap Index.⁶³ While compared to other countries in the region Lebanon performs relatively well in the subindexes of educational attainment (placed 90 out of 146) and health and survival (placed 75 out of 146), it does less well in economic participation (135 out of 146) and political empowerment (110 out of 146). Lebanon has made only incremental progress against international commitments, including Article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which calls for the elimination of discrimination against women in the political and public life, and SDG 16.7 which stresses responsive, inclusive, and participatory decision making at all levels.

According to the Human Rights Watch 2022 report,⁶⁴ women in Lebanon continue to face systematic discrimination due to the archaic nationality law and multiple religion-based personal status laws. Discrimination includes unequal access to divorce, child custody, inheritance, and property rights. In refugee and displaced communities, women are the most food insecure and significantly more likely not to have a legal residence or access to adequate shelter.

This complex situation puts tremendous pressure on the sub-national authorities to deliver quality services and to create income-generation opportunities for their communities.

The project to be evaluated

The action, “Strengthening the Long-Term Resilience of Subnational Authorities in countries affected by the Syrian and Iraqi Crises”, is a multi-country, multi-partner, and multi-year initiative implemented by UNDP and UN-Habitat country offices in Iraq and Lebanon from 2019-2024. The action is based on the objectives of the EUTF MADAD: “To address longer-term resilience needs of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries, as well as supporting host communities and their administrations.” As such, it aligns with the framework of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP, 2018-2019) and the related national response plans. The action responds to the “3RP Resilience/Stabilization component”, specifically its Livelihoods/Social Cohesion sector.

63 <https://economics.creditlibanais.com/Article/211167#en>

64 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/lebanon>

Overall, the joint action seeks to enhance the resilience of host and refugee populations, through interventions where a UN Partnership has a strong added value. This includes supporting institutionalization and operationalization of integrated multi-tier planning and supporting basic social services as well as local economic development. This includes enhancing employment opportunities, providing affordable housing, and improving the management of natural resources.

The action further seeks to address the resilience and stabilization needs of impacted and vulnerable communities through a balanced approach. This involves supporting longer-term efforts for better systems and capacities for local development while facilitating shorter and more immediate results that would help host communities and refugees improve their standard of living with tangible benefits.

Both country components adopted shortened names agreed on with the EU Delegations to better identify the project at the country level and for communication purposes. Namely ‘Headway’ for the Iraq component and ‘Municipal Empowerment and Resilience Project’ (MERP) for the Lebanon component.

This evaluation covers the Lebanon component of the project, as the Iraq “Headway project” was completed in April 2022, and a final evaluation was conducted from 12th June 2022 – 22nd September 2022. However, the Iraq project team will be involved to contribute to the assessment of the added value of implementing a multi-country approach and by reflecting on the findings of the final evaluation in Iraq (Headway).

Municipal Empowerment and Resilience Project (MERP)

The main objective of MERP is to enhance the resilience of the host and refugee population in communities impacted by the Syrian crisis. This is achieved through strengthened local multi-level governance systems, enhanced local economic development, and improved access to basic services, in partnership with the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM).

The project’s geographic focus areas include three unions of municipalities: the Urban Community Al Fayhaa, the Federation of Municipalities of the Northern and Coastal Metn, the Union of Tyre, and 92 of their member municipalities.

The primary beneficiaries of the project are the host communities, Syrian refugees, and displaced individuals residing in the three targeted Unions of Municipalities, taking into account gender and the needs of vulnerable groups.

District	# of municipalities in the district	Targeted Union	# of municipalities in the Union
Tripoli	4 (Qalamoun, Mina, Beddaoui, and Tripoli)	Urban Community Al Fayhaa	4 (Qalamoun, Mina, Tripoli, and Beddaoui)

Metn	54	Federation of Municipalities of the Northern and Coastal Metn	33
Tyre	62	Union of Tyre Municipalities	55

Project objectives, outcomes, outputs

The overall goal of the action is to **Strengthen the Long-Term Resilience of Subnational Authorities in countries affected by the Syrian Crisis.**

The objectives and corresponding indicators and outputs of the Lebanon component (MERP) are listed below:

Objective 1: Subnational authorities have enhanced capacities to engage in holistic, area-based planning and consider different scenarios that respond to the needs of host, refugee and IDP populations

Output 1.1: Efficient and timely municipal work processes to address impact of crisis are strengthened through an enhanced administrative interface

Output 1.2: Greater understanding and awareness by all local actors of their role in managing the impact of the crisis achieved

Output 1.3: Strengthened sub national government capacity on raising revenues and financial management.

Objective 2: Service delivery is increasingly responsive, and generates greater social stability outcomes, based on the needs of host, refugee and IDP populations

Output 2.2: Priority basic services interventions are identified and implemented.

Objective 3: Subnational authorities are empowered to facilitate local economic development and have better access to municipal investment that benefits the extension of safe public services and economic opportunities for host, refugee and IDP populations

Output 3.1: An Enabling Economic Environment is created with active engagement of local authorities, the private sector, and LED associations.

Output 3.2: Capacity at local level to identify, develop, design, and implement interventions with an economic multiplier impact improved.

The project aims to contribute to achieving the indicators of the below-mentioned frameworks:

Country Programme Document (CPD) ⁶⁵	<p>(CPD 2023-2025) Outcome 2: Strengthened security, stability, justice, and social peace.</p> <p>(CPD 2017-2022) Outcome 3.1 Productive sectors strengthened to promote inclusive growth and local development, especially in the most disadvantages areas.</p>
United Nations Strategic Framework 2017-2022 (UNSF) (Lebanon)/United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2025 (UNSDCF):	<p>(UNSF 2017-2022) Core UN Priority 3: Lebanon reduces poverty and promotes sustainable development while addressing immediate needs in a human rights/gender sensitive manner.</p> <p>(UNSDCF 2023-2025) Peace and Gov1.1: Accountability, transparency, and effectiveness of state institutions at national and local level, including on key strategic reforms improved</p>
Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP):	<p>Outcome 1: Strengthen the ability of municipal, national, and local institutions to alleviate resource pressure, reduce resentment, and build peace</p>
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	<p>Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere <u>Target 1.4:</u> By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.</p> <p>Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls <u>Target 5.5:</u> Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.</p> <p>Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels <u>Target 16.6:</u> Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels <u>Target 16.7:</u> Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels.</p> <p>Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. <u>Target 11.3:</u> By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated, and</p>

⁶⁵ https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3998937/files/DP_DCP_LBN_3-EN.pdf?ln=ar

	sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.
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The prevailing circumstances in Lebanon, as mentioned above, such as the financial and economic crisis, popular uprising, and the Beirut Blast, significantly impacted originally planned activities and the achievement of the project outcomes, outputs, and targets. Consequently, the MERP team revised and amended project activities and adjusted the log frame (indicators and targets) accordingly. This was reflected in an inception report that was developed for the project in 2020, as well as the revised DoA as part of two no-cost-extension requests.

Purpose, scope, and objectives

UNDP and UN-Habitat propose to conduct a final evaluation for MERP. The evaluation shall cover the period of the project since its inception in January 2019 until 31 March 2024. Geographically, the evaluation will encompass the three areas and groups targeted by MERP, including host communities, refugees, and displaced Syrians.

The overall purpose of the final evaluation is to assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the Lebanon component of the action and to generate recommendations. In addition, the evaluation shall provide suggestions to overcome challenges and generate lessons learned and good practices for the implementation of similar projects in the future. Lastly, the evaluation should also assess the specific approach around joint programming between UN agencies as implemented in the Lebanon component and identify related lessons learned.

The evaluation's specific objectives are as follows:

To analyze the impact of the country dynamics on the original design/scope and results of MERP and the mitigation measures implemented by the Project to adapt to these changes.

To identify the level of achievement and analyze factors that enhanced or impeded results, and if results contributed towards the country programmes of UNDP and UN-Habitat.

To assess the extent to which gender, human rights, and disability were mainstreamed in MERP approach and activities.

To review the MERP monitoring and evaluation system.

To assess the sustainability of MERP activities and the level of national ownership over what has been accomplished/implemented to maintain the project's effect.

To assess the impact of the implemented municipal projects and generate lessons learned.

To identify lessons learned, recommendations, and best practices that can be considered in the planning and design of a future project phase or similar programmes, particularly in the current Lebanese context.

To identify potential insights on the added value of the “multi-country, multi-partner, and multi-year” approach.

To appraise UN collaboration and identify lessons learned to enhance the implementation of future joint initiatives.

To assess the project’s contribution to gender equality, women’s empowerment, and human rights.

The primary audience of this evaluation is the MERP team, UNDP/UN-Habitat management, project beneficiaries (municipalities, unions, and communities) and the project steering committee, including the EU, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, and the Directorate General of Local Administrations.

The results of the evaluation will be used to ensure accountability around project outcomes, inform stakeholders on the findings and lessons learned, guide the planning and design of future project phases, and provide insights regarding UN collaboration and joint programming.

The evaluation should cover the following cross-cutting themes: Rights-Based Approach (RBA); disability inclusion; gender mainstreaming; environmental sensitivity, sustainability, climate change; and do-no-harm. The above-mentioned themes have an equal priority to UNDP and should be considered throughout this evaluation. The data collection process should be able to address these cross-cutting themes equally and effectively.

Criteria and key guiding questions

The evaluation will be based on an indicative list of questions based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee’s evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability as defined and explained in the UNDP evaluation guidelines.⁶⁶

The evaluators shall focus on the following areas and are expected to critically reflect on the questions presented below. These questions will be further broadened and agreed upon by the evaluators and the UNDP/MERP team during the inception phase.

Relevance: looks at the extent to which MERP approach, activities, and expected outputs and outcomes are justified and respond to beneficiary needs, the country’s policies and context,

⁶⁶ [See section 1 of UNDP Evaluation Guidelines \(2021\).](#)

and the donor's priorities. More specifically, the relevance of MERP should be assessed through the following guiding questions:

To what extent were MERP approach and activities, particularly on system strengthening, in line with national priorities, UNDP/UN-Habitat country programme outputs and outcomes, UNDP/UN-Habitat Strategic Plans, and applicable SDGs?

To what extent did the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country programme outcome?

To what extent was MERP appropriately designed and executed to meet the needs of targeted sub-national authorities and beneficiaries, including women and other groups that warrant specific attention? How did the project respond to the emerging needs arising from the crisis, including gender-specific issues and challenges, as relevant?

Considering the multiple crises that have impacted Lebanon since the project's inception, to what extent has MERP maintained its relevance in relation to the context and needs?

What were emergent factors within the context that negatively or positively affected the relevance of the planned interventions of MERP? To what extent was the project appropriately responsive to the changes in the political, economic, financial, and institutional context in Lebanon, including in terms of changes related to gender?

Coherence: looks at the extent to which other interventions supported or undermined the action. Specifically, the coherence of MERP should be assessed through the following guiding questions:

Is there any overlap or complementarity with other ongoing/planned action(s) managed by UNDP, UN-Habitat, other donors, or the civil society that need to be addressed/considered for future interventions?

To what extent did the collaboration between UNDP and UN-Habitat and the multi-country approach provide added value to the project?

Effectiveness: looks at the extent to which the planned objectives and results were achieved, including factors that contributed to or detracted from its achievement. More specifically, the effectiveness of MERP should be assessed through the following guiding questions:

To what extent were MERP outcomes achieved; what has not/has been achieved?

What factors have contributed to the achievement of outcomes, and what were the major constraints that affected the achievement of the MERP goal (if any)?

Has MERP contributed to any unintended effects, positive or negative, short-term, or long-term? Have there been any unintended gender effects (access to and control of resources, social norms change, gender practical and strategic needs, gender roles, etc.)?

To what extent has MERP been appropriately responsive and adaptive to the needs of national and sub-national priorities, particularly in the prevailing context? To what extent have MERP activities been responsive to the needs of targeted people; host communities, refugees, and displaced people, as well as their gender-specific needs?

To what extent has MERP strengthened the capacity of sub-national authorities to engage more effectively with host, refugees, and displaced populations and to better address their needs, including in terms of addressing the needs of women and girls?

To what extent has the project managed risks effectively, including in relation to risks faced by women, youth, and marginalized groups?

In the past four years, how have country dynamics/ongoing crises impacted MERP, particularly in relation to the original design/scope, and results and to what extent was MERP able to continuously adapt and, therefore, achieve the intended results?

To what extent was MERP able to contribute to systems strengthening, particularly at the level of MoIM, DGLAC, and municipalities/Unions of Municipalities?

What are the lessons learned for a potential second phase or future programmes?

Efficiency: looks at the extent to which MERP resources (funds, expertise/human resources, time, etc.) were optimally used to achieve the intended results. More specifically, the efficiency of the MERP project should be assessed through the following guiding questions: To what extent have MERP activities been implemented in a cost-efficient manner? Could the same results have been achieved with less resources?

What has been done well, and what could have been improved?

To what extent has the project M&E system ensured effective and efficient project management?

Was the communication and visibility strategy for the project adopted? Was it cost-effective in terms of promoting the project and its achievements?

Impact: looks at the extent to which the MERP project generated or is likely to bring differences at different levels directly or indirectly, positive, or negative, intended, or unintended, or higher-level effects. The evaluation will focus on the main changes/effects resulting from MERP to strengthen the resilience of sub-national authorities and host/refugee and displaced communities. More specifically, the impact of the MERP project should be assessed through the following guiding questions:

What contribution has MERP made towards reaching the goal outlined in its results framework? What could have been done differently to achieve better results?

What is the impact of the implemented municipal projects (small/medium-scale projects), and what can be done better?

To what extent did all intended target groups, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, benefit from the intervention with a focus on the municipal projects?

What have been the intended or unintended gender impacts of the project (access to and control of resources, social norms change, gender practical and strategic needs, gender roles, etc.)? How were these impacts mitigated? What could be improved to ensure more effective contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment?

Sustainability: analyses whether the benefits of MERP project activities are likely to continue in the long-term after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable. More specifically, the sustainability of the MERP project should be assessed through the following guiding questions:

What risks may jeopardize the sustainability of MERP contributions to the outcomes, and how has the project addressed or considered this?

To what extent has MERP well-designed and planned its exit strategies?

To what extent has MERP successfully and effectively engaged the project partner to ensure their ownership over what has been implemented and, therefore, the project's sustainability?

What could have been done differently to enhance the continuity of MERP effects?

What are the key lessons derived from the rich experience provided by the project that can be used by UNDP, UN-Habitat, the donor, and the government to enhance decision-making and programming and the benefit of the project?

Human rights

To what extent have poor and physically challenged women, men, and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from this project?

Youth and Gender

To what extent has MERP fulfilled the youth and gender integration requirements?

How were the gender-specific needs and priorities identified and incorporated into the project's design and planning including identification of the gender-related constraints/gaps in the project assessments?

In what way did the project address the distinct needs and priorities the needs of women and men, including youth throughout its implementation? What specific strategies or actions were implemented to promote gender equality and women's empowerment throughout the project's lifecycle? To what extent were these strategies / actions gender-responsive or gender-transformative? How effective were these strategies in practice and what can be improved?

Were gender-specific targets or indicators set to measure progress on gender equality goals? How were these targets monitored and measured, and what insights were gained from gender-specific data and feedback to adapt project approaches?

What institutional gender/youth gaps, needs, and challenges were identified during the project design, and how can these be addressed in future interventions to enhance gender equality outcomes and promote the meaningful participation and representation of women and youth?

How did the project engage with targeted local authorities including municipalities and union of municipalities to raise awareness on gender equality and enhance their gender-related capacities? What impact did these efforts have on promoting gender mainstreaming at the institutional level?

How did the project facilitate the meaningful participation of women and other marginalized gender groups in decision-making processes, including project planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation? What challenges were encountered in ensuring their participation, and how were these challenges addressed?

To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and women's empowerment, and what specific outcomes can be attributed to the project's gender-responsive approaches?

What were the main gender-specific challenges faced during the project's implementation, and how were they tackled? Were there any innovative or effective approaches employed to promote gender equality and inclusivity?

What were the key lessons learned from integrating gender equality and gender mainstreaming in this project, and how can these lessons be applied to future initiatives to further enhance gender-responsive or transformative programming?

Disability

Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved throughout MERP interventions, design, and implementation?

Will persons with disabilities benefit from the project interventions?

What institutional People with disability gaps, needs, and challenges need to be addressed in future interventions?

What was done well and why? What can be improved?

Based on the above analysis, the evaluator is expected to provide overarching conclusions on the results, and provide lessons-learned and recommendations on how future interventions should adjust programming, partnership arrangements, resource mobilization strategies, and capacities. Guiding evaluation questions will be further refined by the evaluator and agreed with UNDP and the stakeholders in the inception report.

Methodology

The evaluators are expected to develop a detailed methodology explaining how the evaluation criteria will be addressed at the inception phase. The methodology and workplan plan should be defined in the technical proposal and will be further updated and refined during the inception phase. In general, the evaluators are expected to use a mixed-method approach using various tools and techniques to capture both qualitative and quantitative allowing for triangulation to increase the validity and rigor of the evaluation findings, and engaging with stakeholders, and partners of the project, as much as feasible, at all levels during the data collection and reporting phases. In addition, the chosen methodology should be aligned with the evaluation of the Iraq component that was conducted between 12th June 2022 – 22nd September 2022 (annex 8)

The evaluation should begin with a desk review of project documents. MERP team will provide all necessary documentation, including the Document of Agreement (DoA), inception report; work plans; project and assessments reports, M&E tools and monitoring data collected, previous evaluation reports, financial data, and relevant correspondence in addition to the Iraq component final evaluation report. The desk review may suggest several preliminary findings that could be useful in reviewing or fine-tuning the questions outlined above.

As part of the inception report, the evaluators should develop an evaluation matrix (see Annex 3). It includes the evaluation questions aligned with the tools, data sources and collection methods, and analysis plan for each question. This ensures that a multitude of data sources are considered and the triangulation of data for each question. The data collection tools should include, but not be limited to, the following elements:

Semi-structured interviews with key informants (men and women) such as government officials and members of local, national, and coordination bodies.

Survey with a representative random sample of the directly targeted communities to assess the project's outcomes and impact of the implemented services

Focus Group Discussions with people benefitted from the capacity development activities (men and women).

Interviews with the project team and UNDP/UN-Habitat management in Lebanon and Iraq.

Consultations with donors/ partners and relevant national Non-Governmental Organizations.

Data should be collected on the sub-national level in the above-mentioned targeted areas and on the national level. An indicative list of persons and beneficiaries to be interviewed will be prepared by the MERP team.

The inception report should also include a risk management plan detailing possible risks, their impact on the evaluation process, and mitigation measures. The final methodological approach, including the interview schedule, field visits, and data for this evaluation, should be clearly outlined in the inception report and fully discussed and agreed upon between UNDP, UN-Habitat, and key stakeholders.

Field-related work on national level and in the three targeted areas and relevant logistical arrangements should be made by the evaluators and are under their responsibility. Evidence obtained and used to assess the results of MERP's interventions should be triangulated from a variety of sources. The MERP team will assist in identifying key stakeholders and facilitate the schedule of interviews, focus group discussions, and site visits when and where required.

The methodology needs to employ an inclusive and conflict and gender-sensitive approach, which needs to be elaborated in the inception report. This includes the use of disaggregated data, outreach to diverse stakeholder groups, and explicitly consider data-collection and analysis methods that integrate gender considerations.

The evaluation's findings should lead to elaborating specific, practical, achievable recommendations directed to the intended users. Also, the evaluators are expected to develop case studies or dedicate specific sections in the final evaluation report to assessing the collaboration between UNDP and UN-Habitat in Lebanon and the multi-country approach to assess the added value and generate lessons learned and best practices.

The evaluators will organize a meeting toward the end of the evaluation, with participation from key stakeholders, UNDP, MERP team/management, and partners to present and validate preliminary findings and fill in any data gaps. This will be followed by the submission of a draft report. The draft will be subject of a methodological review by UNDP, MERP technical team. Based on the provided feedback, the final report will incorporate the necessary adjustments.

Products (deliverables)

The consultants will produce the following:

Inception report (10- max. 15 pages + annexes): based on the ToR, preliminary meetings with MERP staff and UNDP and UN-Habitat management will be conducted. This will be followed by a desk review of MERP project documents (e.g. DoA, MERP inception report, Theory of Change, assessments reports, and M&E-related documents).

The inception report will incorporate a final set of questions and determine the stakeholders of key informant interviews (KII), Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and survey. The evaluators are expected to develop an inception report of a maximum of 15 pages (plus annexes) to introduce the assignment, clearly define the methodology, evaluation matrix, data collection and analysis methods, limitations, and risk management plan, and workplan detailing the fieldwork schedule, required resources for the evaluation activities, and milestone deliverables and their updated timeline. The inception report will be reviewed by the MERP team, UNDP, and UN-Habitat. The evaluators are expected to incorporate received feedback and comments.

Implementation of the evaluation: data collection and analysis: the data collection phase will be initiated once all stakeholders agree on the inception report. The evaluators are expected to conduct the data collection and analysis process with all identified stakeholders and beneficiaries through in-person meetings and discussions or pre-approved virtual meetings. UNDP will provide all required data and facilitate the evaluation process. The MERP M&E officer will support the evaluators as required.

Debriefings. Immediately following the data collection and preliminary analysis, the project may ask for a preliminary debriefing and findings.

Draft evaluation report (max. 50 pages) and validation: the evaluators are expected to submit a draft report (max. 50 pages, including a draft executive summary of no more than 5 pages), including findings and recommendations of the evaluation. Findings and recommendations will be validated with MERP team, UNDP, and UN-Habitat, in addition to relevant stakeholders during a meeting (Ministry of Interior and Municipalities and DGLAC). Comments and changes provided in response to the draft report should be retained by the evaluators to show how they have addressed comments (audit trail).

Final Report (max. 50 pages): the evaluators should revise the draft report and provide the final report incorporating MERP comments and stakeholders' feedback. The final report should be max 50 pages and include an executive summary of max. 4-5 pages describing key findings and recommendations. The structure of the report should follow the UNDP evaluation guideline:

Introduction — Summarizes the context, review purpose, and questions.

Evaluation methodology — includes the data collection sources, tools and process, and analysis approach.

Findings and conclusions — Evidence-based findings for each question.

Recommendations — Propose a feasible number of relevant and actionable recommendations derived from the findings and conclusions.

Brief and knowledge product: the evaluators are expected to prepare a 4-page knowledge product summarizing the findings and lessons learned and propose the best methods, tools, and formats to communicate these findings and lessons to enhance the use of the results.

The minimum content that needs to be included in the inception and reports is provided in the annex section. The reports should address all the quality criteria mentioned in the

[UNDP Evaluation Guidelines](#). The final report should also adhere to the UN editorial manual (Annex 12).

Consultancy firm Qualifications:

The consultancy firm wishing to be considered for the service described herein should have and prove the following qualifications.

A minimum of seven (7) years of experience in carrying out evaluation assignments.

Technical capacity: A minimum of five (5) similar evaluations of development programmes implemented by International NGOs and/or UN agencies in Lebanon.

Economic and financial standing: total annual turnover must not be less than 250,000 US Dollar.

Profile of requested staff

The consultant will include in the offer a proposal regarding the team composition and structure with recent CVs. The requested team should be composed of two (2) evaluators; 1) team leader (international evaluator), and a national evaluator.

Team Leader/international evaluator

Education

At least a **Master's degree** in Social Sciences, Public Policy/Administration, economics, Development Studies, or other fields relevant to the assignment.

Experience

At least **ten years of professional expertise** working with International Organizations on local governance, local economic development, decentralization, socio-economic stabilization, crisis response and recovery, or development.

At least **ten years of experience** in project design, monitoring, and evaluation methodologies and approaches.

Proven experience in evaluating projects of a similar nature and scope.

Proven experience in data collection, instrument development, and qualitative and quantitative data analysis is essential.

Proven experience conducting evaluations within the United Nations system is strongly preferred.

Proven experience in analytical and problem-solving skills and the ability to draft recommendations

Demonstrated experience in gender-sensitive evaluation and analysis.

Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and other cross-cutting areas such gender equality, disability issues, rights-based approach, and capacity development.

Excellent report writing skills.

Excellent knowledge of the Lebanese system and context.

Proven experience working with Lebanese public institutions and sub-national authorities is strongly preferred.

Corporate Competencies

Knowledge of UNDP programming principles and procedures, the UN evaluation framework, norms and standards, and Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA).

Demonstrates commitment to the UN values and ethical standards.

Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality, and age sensitivity and adaptability.

Treats all people fairly and with impartiality.

Good communication, presentation, and report writing skills, including proven ability to write concise, readable, and analytical reports and high-quality publications in English.

Ability to work under pressure and to meet deadlines.

Flexible and responsive to changes and demands.

Client-oriented and open to feedback.

Language

Fluency in English. Knowledge of Arabic is an advantage.

National Evaluator

Education

At least **Master's degree** in Social Sciences, Public Policy/Administration, economics, Development Studies, or other fields relevant to the assignment.

Experience

At least **ten years of professional expertise** working with International Organizations on local governance, local economic development, decentralization, socio-economic stabilization, crisis response, and recovery, or development in Lebanon.

At least **ten years of experience** in project design, monitoring, and evaluation methodologies and approaches.

Proven experience in evaluating projects of a similar nature and scope in Lebanon.

Proven experience in data collection, instrument development, and qualitative and quantitative data analysis is essential.

Proven experience conducting evaluations within the United Nations system is strongly preferred.

Proven experience in analytical and problem-solving skills and the ability to draft recommendations

Demonstrated experience in gender-sensitive evaluation and analysis.

Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and other cross-cutting areas such gender equality, disability issues, rights-based approach, and capacity development.

Excellent report writing skills.

Excellent knowledge of the Lebanese system and context.

Proven experience working with Lebanese public institutions and sub-national authorities is strongly preferred.

Corporate Competencies

Knowledge of UNDP programming principles and procedures, the UN evaluation framework, norms, and standards, human rights-based approach (HRBA).

Demonstrates commitment to the UN values and ethical standards.

Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality, and age sensitivity and adaptability.

Treats all people fairly and with impartiality.

Good communication, presentation, and report writing skills, including proven ability to write concise, readable, and analytical reports and high-quality publications in English.

Ability to work under pressure and to meet deadlines.

Flexible and responsive to changes and demands.

Client-oriented and open to feedback.

Language

Fluency in English and Arabic is required.

Description of tasks:

Evaluation Team Leader (international consultant)	Evaluation Team (national consultant)
Lead the entire evaluation process, including communicating all required information with UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	Assist the Evaluation Team Leader in the collation and desk review of Programme Documents
Finalize the research design and questions based on the feedback and complete inception report	Based on the approved inception report, assist in the coordination of data-gathering activities, including focused group discussions with clusters of respondents
Leads the coordination and conduct of data gathering activities: desk review, focus group discussions	Assist in data gathering: Field interviews and focus group discussions;

Data analysis, final report consolidation and submission	Data analysis and drafting of report.
Deliver and present the draft final report to the Reference Group	Co-present the final report and document comments

The evaluators should be independent of any organizations that have been involved in designing, executing, or advising any aspect of the intervention that is the subject of the evaluation

Ethics

“This assignment will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’. The consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing data collection and reporting on data. The evaluators must also ensure the security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners.”

All evaluators will need to sign the pledge of ethical conduct before starting the consultancy.

Implementation arrangements

MERP project is jointly commissioned by UNDP and UN-Habitat. The main focal point for this evaluation will be the UNDP M&E Officer. The M&E Officer will oversee the whole assignment process, provide technical guidance, and ensure the independence of the process and that the evaluation policy is followed. The M&E Officer will ensure close coordination with UNDP and UN-Habitat. The MERP M&E officer will provide logistical support to the evaluation consultant and support in making any refinements to the work plan of the selected Consultant (i.e., key interview partners; organize meetings; and conduct field visits (if and when necessary and if the security situation permits). UNDP and the project team will not attend interviews/Focus Group Discussions conducted by the evaluator with key stakeholders.

The evaluation manager will convene an evaluation reference group comprising of technical experts from partners and UNDP with gender balanced to enhance the quality of the evaluation. The reference group will review the inception and the draft evaluation reports, providing detailed comments related to the quality of methodology, evidence

collected, analysis and reporting. The reference group will also advise on the conformity of the evaluation process to UNDP and UNEG standards. Detailed comments will be provided to the evaluators in an audit trail within the agreed timeframe. Comments and changes by the evaluator in response to the draft evaluation report should be retained to show how they have addressed comments. The final report will be approved by the evaluation commissioner. UNDP, with the support of relevant stakeholders, will develop the management response to the evaluation within two weeks of report finalization.

This TOR shall be the basis upon which compliance with assignment requirements and the overall quality of services provided by the Consultant will be assessed by UNDP.

As part of the assignment:

UNDP will provide the list of additional documents (see Annex XZY) to the selected evaluators

The evaluators are expected to:

Use their own office

Use their laptops and other relevant software/equipment.

Use their own communication platforms, mobile, personal email address etc., during the consultancy period.

Arrange all required field visits/trips.

Time frame for the review process

The consultancy is expected to be implemented over 8 weeks. The detailed workplan will be agreed upon between the UNDP and the selected evaluators. The evaluators will be required to visit partners and activities on locations.

ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED # OF WORKING DAYS	DATE OF COMPLETION	PLACE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Phase One: Desk review and inception report				
Meeting briefing with MERP team and management	8 days	At the time of contract signing	UNDP or remote	UNDP CO, MERP M&E Officer
Sharing of the relevant documentation with the consultant		At the time of contract signing	Via email	MERP M&E Office
Desk review, review design, methodology and updated workplan including the list of stakeholders to be interviewed		One week after contract signing	Home-based	Evaluators
Submission the inception report (15 pages + Annexes)		Two weeks after contract signing		Evaluators
Incorporating comment and developing final inception report	3 days	Three weeks after contract signing	UNDP	MERP M&E officer and technical team
Phase Two: Data-collection mission				
Consultations and field visits, interviews, and focus groups, survey	15 days	Five weeks after contract signing	Field visits	MERP to provide list of partners, project staff, local authorities, NGOs, etc.
Debriefing to UNDP/UN-Habitat and key stakeholders	1 day	Five weeks after contract signing	UNDP	Evaluators
Phase Three: Report writing				
Preparation of draft report (50 pages maximum excluding annexes), executive summary (4-5 pages)	10 days	Seven weeks after contract signing	Home-based	Evaluators
Draft report submission		Seven weeks after contract signing	Home-based	Evaluators
Debriefing with UNDP/UN-Habitat	1 day	Seven weeks after contract signing	UNDP	UNDP/UN-Habitat, MERP team, and Evaluators

Finalization of the review report incorporating additions and comments provided by project team and management.	5 days	Seven weeks after contract signing	Home-based	Evaluators
Submission of the final report to MERP project (50 pages maximum excluding executive summary and annexes)		Eight weeks after contract signing	Home-based	Evaluators
Brief and knowledge products	1 day	Eight weeks after contract signing	Home-based	Evaluators
Estimated total days for the review	44			

Application submission process and criteria for selection

a. Technical Proposal Evaluation		Score Weight	Points Obtainable
1	Eligibility and qualifications	10%	100
	A minimum of seven (7) years of experience in carrying out evaluation assignments. <i>Less than 7 years of experience= 0pts, 7 years of experience= 25 pts, 8 to 10 years = 30 pts; 11 to 14 years = 40 pts; 15 years and above = 50 pts</i>	5%	50
	The Consultancy Firm has conducted a minimum of five (5) similar evaluations of development programmes implemented by International NGOs and/or UN agencies in Lebanon. <i>Less than 5 evaluations = 0 pts, 5 evaluations = 20 pts, 6 evaluations and above= 30 pts</i>	3%	30
	Turnover of the firm not less than:		
	250,000USD = 15 points Above 250,000 = 20 points	2%	20
2	Proposed Methodology, Approach, and Implementation Plan	40%	400
	Proposed methodology, approach on how the evaluators will conduct the required tasks (100 pts)	20%	200
	Proposed Time plan, workplan (100 pts)	10%	100
	Overall consistency of the proposal with the Terms of Reference (100 pts)	10%	100
3	Management Structure and Key Personnel	50%	500
	Team Leader/ International Evaluator		300

a. Technical Proposal Evaluation	Score Weight	Points Obtainable
<p>At least Master's degree in Social Sciences, Public Policy/Administration, economics, Development Studies, Local Governance, or other fields relevant to the assignment. (50 Points)</p> <p><i>Bachelor's degree= 0 pts, Master's degree= 25 pts, PhD=50 pts.</i></p>	30%	
<p>At least 10 years of professional expertise working with International Organizations on local governance, local economic development, decentralization, socio-economic stabilization, crisis response and recovery, or development. (40 Points)</p> <p><i>Less than 10 years= 0 pts, ten years=20 pts, between 11 and 15 years=30 pts, more than 15 years=40pts.</i></p>		
<p>At least ten years of experience in project design, monitoring, and evaluation methodologies and approaches.(40Points)</p> <p><i>Less than 10 years= 0 pts, ten years=20 pts, between 11 and 15 years=30 pts, more than 15 years=40 pts.</i></p>		
<p>Proven experience in evaluating projects of a similar nature and scope. (40 Points)</p> <p><i>One project in similar field = 0 pts, two– Three projects in similar field = 5 pts, 4 to 5 projects =20 pts, more than 5 projects in similar field = 30 pts.</i></p>		
<p>Proven experience in data collection, instruments development, and qualitative and quantitative data analysis. (30 Points)</p> <p><i>Data collection, instruments development, and qualitative or quantitative data analysis= 10 pts; data collection, instruments development, and qualitative and quantitative data analysis =30 pts</i></p>		

a. Technical Proposal Evaluation	Score Weight	Points Obtainable
<p>Proven experience conducting evaluations within the United Nations system. (20 points)</p> <p><i>No=0 pts Yes=20 pts.</i></p>		
<p>Proven experience analytical and problem-solving skills and the ability to draft recommendations. (30 Points)</p> <p><i>No=0 pts Yes=30 pts.</i></p>		
<p>Proven experience in report writing skills. (30 Points)</p> <p><i>No=0 pts Yes=30 pts.</i></p>		
<p>Proven experience working with institutions and sub-national authorities is strongly preferred. (20 Points)</p> <p><i>No= 0 pts Yes= 20 pts.</i></p>		
<p>Fluency in English. (10 Points)</p> <p><i>Not fluent in English=0 pts Fluent in English=10 pts.</i></p>		
<p>Evaluation team/National evaluator</p> <p>At least Master's degree in Social Sciences, Public Policy/Administration, economics, Development Studies, Local Governance, or other fields relevant to the assignment (50 Points)</p> <p><i>Bachelor's degree= 0 pts, Master's degree= 25 pts, PhD=50 pts.</i></p> <p>At least 10 years of professional expertise working with International Organizations on local governance, local economic development, decentralization, socio-economic stabilization, crisis response and recovery, or development. (20 Points)</p> <p><i>Less than 10 years= 0 pts, ten years=5 pts, between 11 and 15 years=10 pts, more than 15 years=20pts.</i></p>	30%	200

a. Technical Proposal Evaluation	Score Weight	Points Obtainable
<p>At least ten years of experience in project design, monitoring, and evaluation methodologies and approaches.(30Points)</p> <p>Less than 10 years= 0 pts, ten years=15 pts, between 11 and 15 years=20 pts, more than 15 years=30 pts.</p>		
<p>Proven experience in evaluating projects of a similar nature and scope in Lebanon. (20 Points)</p> <p><i>One project in similar field = 0 pts, 2 to 3 projects in similar field = 5 pts, 4 to 5 projects =10 pts, more than 5 projects in similar field = 20 pts.</i></p>		
<p>Proven experience in data collection, instruments development, and qualitative and quantitative data analysis.(20Points)</p> <p><i>Data collection, instruments development, and qualitative or quantitative data analysis=5 pts; data collection, instruments development, and qualitative and quantitative data analysis =20 pts</i></p>		
<p>Proven experience conducting evaluations within the United Nations system. (10 points)</p> <p>No=0 points Yes=10 pts.</p>		
<p>Proven experience analytical and problem-solving skills and the ability to draft recommendations. (10 Points)</p> <p><i>No=0 pts Yes=10 pts.</i></p>		
<p>Proven experience in report writing skills. (10Points)</p> <p><i>No=0 pts Yes=10 pts.</i></p>		
<p>Proven experience in Lebanon working with Lebanese public institutions and sub-national authorities is strongly preferred. (20Points)</p> <p><i>No=0 pts Yes=20 pts.</i></p>		

a. Technical Proposal Evaluation		Score Weight	Points Obtainable
Fluency in English and Arabic is required for this task. (10Points)			
<i>Not fluent in English and Arabic=0 pts Fluent in English and Arabic=10 pts.</i>			
Total			1,000

Weight Per Technical Competence	
5 (outstanding): 96% - 100%	The individual consultant/contractor has demonstrated an OUTSTANDING capacity for the analyzed competence.
4 (Very good): 86% - 95%	The individual consultant/contractor has demonstrated a VERY GOOD capacity for the analyzed competence.
3 (Good): 76% - 85%	The individual consultant/contractor has demonstrated a GOOD capacity for the analyzed competence.
2 (Satisfactory): 70% - 75%	The individual consultant/contractor has demonstrated a SATISFACTORY capacity for the analyzed competence.
1 (Weak): Below 70%	The individual consultant/contractor has demonstrated a WEAK capacity for the analyzed competence.

Note: only applicants obtaining a minimum of 70% of the technical scores will be considered for financial evaluation.

Note: Should an applicant not submit a methodology and approach, the application will not be evaluated.

Payment terms

Payments will be made upon acceptance and approval by UNDP of the planned deliverables based on the following tentative payment schedule:

Terms of Payment	Percentage (%)
First payment will be paid upon submission of the final inception report.	15%
Second payment will be paid upon finalize the field visit.	30%
Third payment will be paid upon submission and acceptance of the first draft evaluation report.	30%
Fourth and final payment will be paid upon submission and acceptance of final report.	25%

TOR annexes

Annex 1: Project document, accessible here: <https://www.undp.org/lebanon/projects/municipal-empowerment-and-resilience-project-merp-0>

Annex 2: Other documents to be consulted

UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (2021), accessible here: <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/>

UN Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, accessible here:

<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/547>

Annex 3: Sample evaluation matrix (Pg. 113) - to be included in the inception report, accessible here:

http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/PDF/UNDP_Evaluation_Guidelines.pdf

Annex 4: Code of conduct forms, accessible here:

<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>

The Consultant will be requested to read carefully, understand, and sign the “UN Code of Conduct.”

Annex 5: Suggested minimum content/ guidance on Inception Report Template

[Inception report template](#) (section 4)

Annex 6: UNDP evaluation report template and quality standards (pages 117-121), accessible here:

http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/PDF/UNDP_Evaluation_Guidelines.pdf

Annex 7: UNDP Evaluation quality checklist (page 8-21)

Annex 8: Headway project final evaluation report.

Annex 9: MERP activities chart

Annex 10: MERP Review Report 2023

Annex 11: List of MERP documents, amongst others: DoA, MERP inception report, Theory of Change, assessments reports, M&E-related documents

Annex 12: UNDP Editorial Manual

Annex 13: [Applying a Human Rights and Gender Equality Lens to the OECD Evaluation Criteria](#)

Annex 3. List of Secondary Data Reviewed

List of UNDP Documents Reviewed
File Name
MERP Final Evaluation - Terms of Reference - 21 July - Clean
ToC Updated
MERP Contact List
MERP Activities Chart
List of ongoing activities
Signed Addendum no 3_Annex I (Project Document)
UNDP_Evaluation_Guidelines
M&E Framework 15022022-Updated
MERP Review Report_Final_May_3_2023
Municipal Empowerment and Resilience Project
Final inception report clean 24 feb
EUTF SYRIA - ROM REPORT
MERP Retreat Bkerzay, May 13th, 2022 Summary of Sessions

Developing the Capacity of Three selected Unions of Municipalities on Mediation Skills and Supporting in Establishing Mediation Units at the Unions Training Delivery (Phase III of the Project) LBN/PS/2020/71
LED: Thinking Central Government Policymaking for Local Economic Development: National Recommendations to Revitalize Local Economies in Lebanon
Union of Municipalities as Enablers of Local Economic Development: Urban Community of Al Fayhaa
MADAD First Annual Progress Report UNDP_UNH Iraq & Lebanon_Jan-Dec 2019
MADAD Progress Report 2020 UNDP-UNH Iraq & Lebanon
MADAD_Annual Progress report UNDP-UN-Habitat Iraq & Lebanon
MADAD_Annual Progress report 2022 UNDP-UN-Habitat Iraq & Lebanon
Q4 Joint Progress Narrative Report UNDP-UNH Lebanon
Q1 2020 Joint Progress Narrative Report UNDP-UNH Lebanon latest
Q2 2020 Joint Progress Narrative Report UNDP-UNH Lebanon
Q3 2020 Joint Progress Narrative Report UNDP-UNH Lebanon
Q4 2020 Joint Progress Narrative Report UNDP-UNH Lebanon
Q1 2021 Joint Progress Narrative Report UNDP-UNH Lebanon
Q2 2021 Joint Progress Narrative Report UNDP-UNH Lebanon
Q3 2021 Joint Progress Narrative Report UNDP-UN-Habitat Iraq
Q4 Joint Progress Narrative Report UNDP-UNH Lebanon
Q1 2022 Joint Progress Narrative Report UNDP-UNH Lebanon
Q2 2022 Joint Progress Narrative Report UNDP-UNH Lebanon
Q3 2022 Joint Progress Narrative Report UNDP-UNH Lebanon
Q4 2022 Joint Progress Narrative Report UNDP-UNH Lebanon
Q1 2023 Joint Progress Narrative Report UNDP-UNH Lebanon
Q2 2023 Joint Progress Narrative Report UNDP-UNH Lebanon

Q3 2023 Joint Progress Narrative Report UNDP-UNH Lebanon comms_comments MAW
Q4 2023 report_Final
Annex 3 Headway Project Final Evaluation - Final Report - 1 October 2022
EUTF SYRIA - ROM REPORT

Annex 4. Data Collection Tools

Annex 4.1. KII Category2 Guide

	Semi Structured Interviews (45 minutes-60 minutes)
Category 2	<p>Please indicate which stakeholder category they represent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoIM • Service Provider
	<p>Please begin by thanking them for their availability for this interview. Whether the person you are interviewing is from the MoIM or a service provider: Please inform them that you need to read this consent form and to have clear response consenting or not consenting to this interview. Indicate that this interview has two parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Qualitative where you will ask them open ended questions 2) Quantitative which will require brief answers. <p>The whole interview should not take more than 45 minutes.</p>
Consent Form	<p>Good morning/good afternoon: \My name is ()</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I represent Canadian Leaders in International Consulting Inc. We are an independent third-party evaluator contracted by UNDP to conduct an evaluation of MERP. • Purpose of evaluation: The evaluation is intended gauge the impact of the Project, it will give the EU, UNDP, UN-HABITAT, the MoIM, and stakeholders an understanding of the results of the project and recommendations for future programming focused on local governance. • Your opinion and perspective on the project's implementation, the impact on your community and your recommendations for future programming are important to this evaluation. All information will be confidential and anonymous. We will not include your name in the report or quote you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this evaluation. • I will be taking 45-60 minutes of your time. I would like to record the interview if you allow me, but if you are uncomfortable, I would request your consent to type your answers into the computer/tablet.

	<p>Consent provided: Yes No</p> <p>Signature of evaluator/enumerator affirming that consent was understood and obtained from the interviewee.</p> <p>Signed by: Name and position</p>
Criteria	Open Ended Questions and sub questions; please elaborate/encourage the participant to elaborate.
Relevance:	<p>Can you please explain your engagement with MERP? Were you consulted from the start of the design of MERP?</p> <p>How were MERP objectives relevant to the needs of your department/organization?</p> <p>To what extent were the approach and activities/projects implemented by MERP were in-line with needs and priorities</p> <p>How were objectives of MERP in line with the strategic priorities of Lebanon?</p> <p>How did the crisis in Lebanon affect the implementation of MERP and the outcomes that you were expecting to achieve?</p>
Coherence	<p>What was the impact of the partnership between the UNDP and UN-HABITAT on your department?</p> <p>Are you aware of other UN agencies or international donors supporting MoIM and the municipalities?</p> <p>How can the partnership between the two UN agencies support your objectives?</p>
Effectiveness	<p>Would you consider the support you received from MERP effective? If yes or no please elaborate?</p> <p>How could have MERP been more effective?</p> <p>what do you think went well - in terms of implemented activities, outcomes, results, program strategy, partnership with governments, coordination with other donors and programs, media / communication, visibility...and why? and what do you did not go well? Have there been any positive or negative effects as a result of MERP activities?</p> <p>How effective was MERP in responding to the changing context in Lebanon?</p> <p>Was MERP effective in supporting UoM and municipalities? And how could another project do that more effectively?</p>

	<p>How was MERP able to strengthen the systems and capabilities of DGLAC to support the UoM and municipalities?</p> <p>What kind of impact has MERP had on supporting the MoIM in improving gender equity?</p> <p>What are the achievements of MERP within these three years?</p> <p>From your perspective,</p> <p>Also, to cover the learning aspect:</p> <p>From your perspective, what is the main learnings derived from the implementation of MERP?</p> <p>What are potential recommendations that can build on what achieved so far?"</p> <p>What are gaps that MERP was not able to address in the current project?</p> <p>What were challenges that you faced throughout your work and how did you address them?</p> <p>For MoIM attending the steering committee:</p> <p>From your perspective, was the steering committee able to fulfill its role in providing overall guidance and oversight at the strategic level to the project team? How were its actions and decisions provided to the project team?</p>
Efficiency	<p>How much have MERP activities been implemented cost-efficiently? Could the same results have been achieved with less resources?</p> <p>What has been done well, and what could have been improved?</p>
Impact	<p>What has MERP's impact been on MoIM and DGLAC?</p> <p>What has MERP's impact on the staff's ability to perform their roles effectively and efficiently?</p> <p>How do you describe the impact of MERP on the UoM and municipalities understanding of their roles and responsibilities?</p> <p>Has MERP had an impact on increasing the participation of women and their roles at the national and municipal levels?</p> <p>Will there be long term effects of MERP on municipal governance and capacities?</p>
Sustainability	<p>How will you be able to sustain the results of MERP?</p> <p>What should MERP planned to ensure that the results achieved would be sustainable?</p> <p>What do you recommend that another project do to ensure sustainability of results?</p>

Human rights	To what extent have poor and physically challenged women, men, and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from this project?		
Youth and Gender	The UN and donors are committed to strengthening the role of women, youth and other marginalized groups in all programming: How did MERP empower women and youth participation at the MoIM and DGLAC level? What could have been done to achieve this objective? What are the challenges facing projects like MERP in mainstreaming youth and gender in local governance and project activities?		
Disability	How were people with disabilities included in MERP activities? Were they encouraged to participate in any of the activities? What was done well and why? What can be improved?		
Indicator:	These questions will be asked at the end of the interview to confirm these indicators: Scale Measurement for tracking: 3 (Very) 2 (Acceptable/Yes) 1 (Not) Do you believe that MERP was:		
Relevance	Very Relevant	Relevant	Not relevant
Coherence	Very coherent	coherent	Not coherent
Effectiveness	Very effective	Effective	Not effective
Efficiency	Very efficient	Efficient	Not efficient
Impact	Very impactful	Impactful	Not impactful
Sustainability	Very sustainable	Sustainable	Not sustainable

Gender and youth inclusion equality and mainstreaming	Achieved	Somewhat achieved	Not achieved
Disability inclusion	Achieved	Somewhat achieved	Not achieved
Lessons Learned			
Recommendations			
Any other comments			

Annex 4.2. KII Category3 Guide

	Semi Structured Interviews (45 minutes-60 minutes)
Category 3	<p>Direct beneficiaries 1: This is a mixed group of institutional beneficiaries;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DGLAC represented by the DG (two DGs who were interchangeable), presidents of the UoMs and the General Managers, the mayors of the participating municipalities, and the directors of the RTOs.
	<p>Please begin by thanking them for their availability for this interview. whether the person you are interviewing is from the MoIM or a service provider: Please inform them that you need to read this consent form and to have clear response consenting or not consenting to this interview. Indicate that this interview has two parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Qualitative where you will ask them open ended questions 2) Quantitative which will require brief answers. <p>The whole interview should not take more than 45 minutes.</p>
Consent Form	Good morning/good afternoon: \My name is ()

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · I represent Canadian Leaders in International Consulting Inc. We are an independent third-party evaluator contracted by UNDP to conduct an evaluation of MERP. · Purpose of evaluation: The evaluation is intended gauge the impact of the Project, it will give the EU, UNDP, UN-HABITAT, the MoIM, and stakeholders an understanding of the results of the project and recommendations for future programming focused on local governance. · Your opinion and perspective on the project's implementation, the impact on your community and your recommendations for future programming are important to this evaluation. All information will be confidential and anonymous. We will not include your name in the report or quote you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this evaluation. · I will be taking 45-60 minutes of your time. I would like to record the interview if you allow me, but if you are uncomfortable, I would request your consent to type your answers into the computer/tablet. <p>Consent provided: Yes No</p> <p>Signature of evaluator/enumerator affirming that consent was understood and obtained from the interviewee.</p> <p>Signed by: Name and position</p>
Criteria	Open Ended Questions and sub questions; please elaborate/encourage the participant to elaborate.
Relevance:	<p>Can you please explain your engagement with MERP? Were you consulted from the start of the design of MERP?</p> <p>How were MERP objectives relevant to the needs of your department/organization?</p> <p>To what extent were the approach and activities/projects implemented by MERP were in line with your needs and priorities?</p> <p>How were objectives of MERP in line with the strategic priorities of DGLAC/UoM/municipalities?</p> <p>How did the crisis in Lebanon affect the implementation of MERP and the outcomes that you were expecting to achieve?</p>

Coherence	<p>What was the impact of the partnership between the UNDP and UN-HABITAT on your department?</p> <p>Are you aware of other UN agencies or international donors supporting municipalities?</p> <p>How can the partnership between the two UN agencies support your objectives?</p> <p>What are the challenges? What would you recommend should be changed or improved to take better advantages of this joint programming approach?</p>
Effectiveness	<p>Would you consider the support you received from MERP effective? If yes or no please elaborate?</p> <p>How could have MERP been more effective?</p> <p>Have there been any positive or negative effects as a result of MERP activities?</p> <p>How effective was MERP in responding to the changing context in Lebanon?</p> <p>Was MERP effective in supporting UoM and municipalities? And how could another project do that more effectively?</p> <p>How was MERP able to strengthen the systems and capabilities of DGLAC to support the UoM and municipalities?</p> <p>What kind of impact has MERP had on supporting the MoIM in improving gender equity?</p> <p>How effective was the process of developing and implementing the small and medium projects?</p> <p>What are the achievements of MERP within these three years?</p> <p>From your perspective, what do you think went well - in terms of implemented activities, outcomes, results, program strategy, partnership with governments, coordination with other donors and programs, media / communication, visibility...and why? and what do you did not go well?</p> <p>Also, to cover the learning aspect:</p> <p>From your perspective, what is the main learnings derived from the implementation of MERP?</p> <p>What are potential recommendations that can build on what achieved so far?"</p> <p>What are gaps that MERP was not able to address in the current project?</p> <p>What were challenges that you faced throughout your work and how did you address them?</p>

	<p>For DGLAC attending the steering committee: From your perspective, was the steering committee able to fulfill its role in providing overall guidance and oversight at the strategic level to the project team? How were its actions and decisions provided to the project team?</p>
Efficiency	<p>How much have MERP activities been implemented cost-efficiently? Could the same results have been achieved with less resources? What has been done well, and what could have been improved?</p>
Impact	<p>What has MERP's impact been on MoIM and DGLAC? What has MERP's impact on the staff's ability to perform their roles effectively and efficiently? How do you describe the impact of MERP on the UoM and municipalities understanding of their roles and responsibilities? What was the impact of the small and medium size projects on the beneficiaries and on the community? Has MERP had an impact on increasing the participation of women and their roles at the national and municipal levels? Will there be long term effects of MERP on municipal governance and capacities?</p>
Sustainability	<p>How will you be able to sustain the results of MERP? What should MERP planned to ensure that the results achieved would be sustainable? What do you recommend that another project do to ensure sustainability of results?</p>
Human rights	<p>To what extent have poor and physically challenged women, men, and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from this project?</p>
Youth and Gender	<p>The UN and donors are committed to strengthening the role of women, youth and other marginalized groups in all programming: How did MERP empower women and youth participation at DGLAC level? At the local community level? What could have been done to achieve this objective? What are the challenges facing projects like MERP in mainstreaming youth and gender in the activities?</p>
Disability	<p>How were people with disabilities included in MERP activities? Were they encouraged to participate in any of the activities?</p>

	What was done well and why? What can be improved?		
Indicator:	These questions will be asked at the end of the interview to confirm these indicators: Scale Measurement for tracking: 3 (Very) 2 (Acceptable/Yes) 1 (Not) Do you believe that MERP was:		
Relevance	Very Relevant	Relevant	Not relevant
Coherence	Very coherent	coherent	Not coherent
Effectiveness	Very effective	Effective	Not effective
Efficiency	Very efficient	Efficient	Not efficient
Impact	Very impactful	Impactful	Not impactful
Sustainability	Very sustainable	Sustainable	Not sustainable
Gender and youth inclusion equality and mainstreaming	Achieved	Somewhat achieved	Not achieved
Disability inclusion	Achieved	Somewhat achieved	Not achieved
Lessons Learned			
Recommendations			
Any other comments			

Annex 4.3. FGD Category3 Guide

<p>Category 3</p>	<p>Focus Group Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Direct beneficiaries 1: The staff who participated and benefited from MERP activities and resources.
	<p>Please begin by thanking them for their availability for this interview. whether the person you are interviewing is from the MoIM or a service provider: Please inform them that you need to read this consent form and to have clear response consenting or not consenting to this interview. Indicate that this interview has two parts: 3) Qualitative where you will ask them open ended questions 4) Quantitative which will require brief answers. The whole interview should not take more than 120 minutes.</p>
<p>Consent Form</p>	<p>Good morning/good afternoon: \My name is ()</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · I represent Canadian Leaders in International Consulting Inc. We are an independent third-party evaluator contracted by UNDP to conduct an evaluation of MERP. · Purpose of evaluation: The evaluation is intended gauge the impact of the Project, it will give the EU, UNDP, UN-HABITAT, the MoIM, and stakeholders an understanding of the results of the project and recommendations for future programming focused on local governance. · Your opinion and perspective on the project's implementation, the impact on your community and your recommendations for future programming are important to this evaluation. All information will be confidential and anonymous. We will not include your name in the report or quote you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this evaluation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will be taking 45-60 minutes of your time. I would like to record the interview if you allow me, but if you are uncomfortable, I would request your consent to type your answers into the computer/tablet. <p>Consent provided: Yes No</p> <p>Signature of evaluator/enumerator affirming that consent was understood and obtained from the interviewee.</p> <p>Signed by: Name and position</p>
Criteria	Questions and sub questions
Relevance:	<p>Can you please explain your engagement with MERP? Were you consulted from the start of the design of MERP?</p> <p>How were MERP objectives relevant to the needs of the municipalities, host communities, refugees and displaced people?</p> <p>Where MERP approach and activities/projects/training implemented by MERP were in line with your needs and strategies?</p> <p>How were objectives of MERP in line with the strategic priorities of DGLAC/UoM/municipalities?</p>
Coherence	<p>What was the impact of working with both the UNDP and UN-HABITAT on your plans within the same project?</p> <p>Are you aware of other UN agencies or international donors supporting municipalities?</p> <p>How can the partnership between the two UN agencies support your objectives?</p>
Effectiveness	<p>How effective was MERP in responding to the changing context in Lebanon?</p> <p>How effective was the support you received from MERP?</p>

	<p>How was MERP able to strengthen the systems and capabilities of DGLAC to support the UoM and municipalities?</p> <p>What kind of impact has MERP had on supporting and improving gender equity at the municipal level?</p> <p>How effective was the process of developing and implementing the small and medium projects?</p> <p>In what ways MERP activities or plans enabled you to better fulfill your work / position requirements? To facilitate or improve on the delivery of your work responsibilities?</p> <p>What are the achievements of MERP within these three years?</p> <p>From your perspective,</p> <p>what do you think it went well - in terms of implemented activities, outcomes, results, program strategy, partnership with governments, coordination with other donors and programs, media / communication, visibility...and why? and what do you did not go well?</p> <p>Also, to cover the learning aspect:</p> <p>From your perspective, what is the main learnings derived from the implementation of MERP?</p> <p>What are potential recommendations that can build on what achieved so far?"</p> <p>What are gaps that MERP was not able to address in the current project?</p> <p>What were challenges that you faced throughout your work and how did you address them?</p>
Efficiency	<p>How much have MERP funded projects in your community been implemented efficiently? Could the same results have been achieved with less resources? What has been done well, and what could have been improved?</p> <p>In what ways MERP activities or plans enabled you or contributed to improve the efficiency of municipal work and service delivery?</p>

Impact	<p>What has MERP's impact on the staff's ability to perform their roles effectively and efficiently?</p> <p>How do you describe the impact of MERP on the UoM and municipalities understanding of their roles and responsibilities?</p> <p>What was the impact of the small and medium size projects on the beneficiaries and on the community?</p> <p>Has MERP had an impact on increasing the participation of women and their roles at the national and municipal levels?</p> <p>Will there be long term effects of MERP on municipal governance and capacities?</p>
Sustainability	<p>How will you be able to sustain the results of MERP?</p> <p>What should MERP have planned to ensure that the results achieved would be sustainable?</p> <p>What do you recommend that another project do to ensure sustainability of results?</p>
Human rights	<p>To what extent have poor and physically challenged women, men, and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from this project?</p>
Youth and Gender	<p>In what way did the project address the distinct needs and priorities the needs of women and men, including youth throughout its implementation?</p> <p>How did the project facilitate the meaningful participation of women and other marginalized gender groups in decision-making processes, including project planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation?</p> <p>What challenges were encountered in ensuring their participation, and how were these challenges addressed?</p>
Disability	<p>Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved throughout MERP interventions, design, and implementation?</p>
Indicator:	Scale Measurement for tracking: 3 (Very) 2 (Acceptable/Yes) 1 (Not)

These questions will be asked at the datathe interview to confirm these indicators:	Do you believe that MERP was?		
Relevance	Very Relevant	Relevant	Not relevant
Coherence	Very coherent	coherent	Not coherent
Effectiveness	Very effective	Effective	Not effective
Efficiency	Very efficient	Efficient	Not efficient
Impact	Very impactful	Impactful	Not impactful
Sustainability	Very sustainable	Sustainable	Not sustainable
Gender and youth inclusion equality and mainstreaming	Achieved	Somewhat achieved	Did not achieve
Disability inclusion	Achieved	Somewhat achieved	Did not achieve
Lessons Learned			
Recommendations for future programming			
Any other comments			

Annex 4.4. FGD Category4 Guide

Category 4	<p>Focus Group Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Direct beneficiaries 2: They are the MSMEs, entrepreneurs, residents of the municipalities who may be refugees and host community including women and the vulnerable. They have had direct benefit from the small and medium public service projects funded by MERP.
	<p>Please begin by thanking them for their availability for this interview. whether the person you are interviewing is from the MoIM or a service provider:</p>

	<p>Please inform them that you need to read this consent form and to have clear response consenting or not consenting to this interview.</p> <p>Indicate that this interview has two parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Qualitative where you will ask them open ended questions 2) Quantitative which will require brief answers. <p>The whole interview should not take more than 120 minutes.</p>
Consent Form	<p>Good morning/good afternoon: \My name is ()</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · I represent Canadian Leaders in International Consulting Inc. We are an independent third-party evaluator contracted by UNDP to conduct an evaluation of MERP. · Purpose of evaluation: The evaluation is intended gauge the impact of the Project, it will give the EU, UNDP, UN-HABITAT, the MoIM, and stakeholders an understanding of the results of the project and recommendations for future programming focused on local governance. · Your opinion and perspective on the project's implementation, the impact on your community and your recommendations for future programming are important to this evaluation. All information will be confidential and anonymous. We will not include your name in the report or quote you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this evaluation. · I will be taking 45-60 minutes of your time. I would like to record the interview if you allow me, but if you are uncomfortable, I would request your consent to type your answers into the computer/tablet. <p>Consent provided: Yes No</p> <p>Signature of evaluator/enumerator affirming that consent was understood and obtained from the interviewee.</p> <p>Signed by: Name and position</p>
Criteria	Questions and sub-questions

Relevance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering the multiple crises that have impacted Lebanon since the project's inception, to what extent have the projects you benefited from been relevant to your needs?
Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any overlap or complementarity with other ongoing/planned action(s) managed by other donors, or the civil society in your community that?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the effects of MERP, positive or negative, short-term, or long-term? • Have women benefited from the projects? what was the effects in terms of (access to and control of resources, social norms change, gender practical and strategic needs, gender roles, etc.)? • To what extent have MERP projects been responsive to your needs; host communities, refugees, and displaced people, as well as their gender-specific needs? • Have you noticed/experienced any improvement in the performance and engagement of the municipalities with you? (Host, refugees, and displaced populations) and has there any noticeable improvement in addressing their needs, including in terms of addressing the needs of women and girls? • What are the achievements of MERP within these three years? • From your perspective, what do you think went well - in terms of implemented activities, outcomes, results, program strategy, partnership with governments, coordination with other donors and programs, media / communication, visibility...and why? and what do you did not go well? • Also, to cover the learning aspect: From your perspective, what is the main learnings derived from the implementation of MERP? What are potential recommendations that can build on what achieved so far? What are gaps that MERP was not able to address in the current project? What were challenges that you faced throughout your work and how did you address them?

Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has been done well, and what could have been improved in the design and implementation of the projects you are benefiting from? • How were you informed of the project and how effective was the message you received?
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the impact of the implemented municipal projects (small/medium-scale projects), and what can be done better? • To what extent did all intended target groups, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, benefit from the intervention with a focus on the municipal projects? • What has been the impact of the capacity building activities on the municipalities abilities to serve their community?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What risks may jeopardize the sustainability of the projects? • How can these projects be sustainable?
Human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have poor and physically challenged women, men, and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from this project?
Youth and Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the project facilitate the meaningful participation of women and other marginalized gender groups in decision-making processes, including project planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation? • What challenges were encountered in ensuring their participation, and how were these challenges addressed?
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved throughout MERP interventions, design, and implementation?
Indicator: These questions will be asked at the end of the interview to confirm these indicators:	Scale Measurement for tracking: 3 (Very) 2 (Acceptable/Yes) 1 (Not) Do you believe that MERP was?

Relevance	Very Relevant	Relevant	Not relevant
Coherence	Very coherent	coherent	Not coherent
Effectiveness	Very effective	Effective	Not effective
Efficiency	Very efficient	Efficient	Not efficient
Impact	Very impactful	Impactful	Not impactful
Sustainability	Very sustainable	Sustainable	Not sustainable
Gender and youth inclusion equality and mainstreaming	Achieved	Somewhat achieved	Did not achieve
Disability inclusion	Achieved	Somewhat achieved	Did not achieve
Lessons Learned			
Recommendations for future programming			
Any other comments			

Annex 5. List of Stakeholders Interviewed

Stakeholders and Beneficiaries	Position	Entity	Mode of Interview / Methods of Data Collection	Number of Persons Interviewed	
				Male	Female
	Mayor	UoM Northern & Costal Matn	In Person/ KII	1	
	Mayor	Municipality of Bickfaya-Mhdseh	In Person/ KII		1
	Municipal Member	Municipality of Bickfaya-Mhdseh	In Person/KII		1
	Residents	Bickfaya Municipality Grants	In person/ FGD	2	1

Metn	Mayor	Municipality of Nabay	In person/KII	1	
	Municipal Member	Municipality of Nabay	In person/KII	1	
	Residents	Nabay Municipality	In Person/FGD	4	1
	Mayor	Municipality of CHAB	In Person/KII	1	
	Municipal Council Member	Municipality of Bourj Hammoud	In Person/KII	1	
	Staff	Bourj Hammoud Municipality	In Person/FGD	3	2
	Renewable Energy Engineer	Green Essence Solar Company	Online/KII		1
	Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Founder	Spicetec	In Person/KII	1	
	Architect and Urban Designer	Municipality of Bickfaya-Mhdseh	In Person/KI		1
Tyre	Mayor	UoM Tyre	In Person/KII	1	
	Head of Financial Section	UoM Tyre	In Person/KII	1	
	Staff	UoM Tyre	In Person/ FGD	3	
	Owners' of El Hesbeh	Tyre Municipality	In Person/ FGD	6	
	Mayor	Abbasieh Municipality	In Person/ KII	1	
	Mayor	Srifa Municipality	In Person/ KII	1	
	Residents	Srifa Municipality	In Person/ FGD	3	1
	Mayor	Teirdebba Municipality	In Person/ KII	1	
	Mayor	Toura Municipality	In Person/ KII	1	

	Residents	Toura Municipality	In Person/ FGD	4	
	General Manager	Khalifeh Co. Engineering	In Person/ KII	1	
	Construction consultant	Rafik El Khoury Consulting	Online/ KII	1	
	Project Manager	Asaco Solar Company	Online/ KII	1	
Al Fayhaa	Mayor	UoM Al Fayhaa	In Person/KII	1	
	Director	UoM Al Fayhaa	In Person/KII		1
	Staff	UoM Al Fayhaa	In Person/FGD	1	5
	Municipal Council Member	Tripoli Municipality	Online/ KII	1	
	Municipal Council Member	Beddawi Municipality	In Person/KII	1	
	Project Manager	NGO-Renee Moawad Foundation	Online/KII		1
	Trainer	Balamand University	Online/KII		1
	Fire Brigade Chief and/or Staff	UoM Al Fayhaa	In Person/FGD	8	
	Director and Staff of Nawfal Palace Public Library - Tripoli	Tripoli Municipality	In Person FGD	2	1
MoIM	DG	DGLAC	In Person/ KII		1
	Colonel	MoIM	In Person/ KII	1	
	DGLAC Staff	DGLAC	In Person/ FGD	1	2
	Administrative Manager and Civil Engineer	Beeld Enterprise	Online/ KII		1
	Partner/Consultant	Beyond Group	Online/ KII	1	

National Service Providers	President	Innovative Institutional IDEAS	In Person/ KII	1	
	Development Expert and Senior Trainer	Center for Professional Mediation at the USJ	Online / KII		1
	Director, Research	Siren	Online/ KII		1
	Professional Services Manager	Integrated Digital Systems (IDS)	Online/ KII	1	
	President	NGO-Cites Unies Liban/Bureau Technique des Villes Libanaises	Online/ KII	1	
	Country Representative/Consultant	NGO-Democracy Reporting International (DRI)	Online/ KII	1	
	External Consultant	Triangle	Online/ KII	1	
United Nations	Head of Country Programme	UN-Habitat	In-Person/ Consultation	In-depth	1
	Head of Urban Governance Unit	UN-Habitat	In-Person/ Consultation	In-depth	1
	Programme Planning and Coordination - Deputy Head of Country Programme	UN-Habitat	In-Person/ Consultation	In-depth	1
	The Programme Manager and the Programme Associate	UNDP	In-Person/ Consultation	In-depth	1

Portfolio Manager UNDP	UNDP	In-Person/ Consultation	In-depth		1
Regional Coordination	UNDP-RBAS	In-Person/ Consultation	In-depth		1
M&E Advisor	UNDP	In-Person/ Consultation	In-depth		1
Chief Technical Adviser	MERP	In-Person/ Consultation	In-depth		1
Media and Communication Officer	MERP	Online/ Consultation	In-depth		1
Former Field Coordinator	MERP	Online/ Consultation	In-depth		1
Field Coordinator-South	MERP	Online/ Consultation	In-depth	1	
Capacity Development Officer	MERP	In-Person/ Consultation	In-depth		1
Former LED officer	MERP	In-Person/ Consultation	In-depth	1	
Former Municipal Finance Officer	MERP	In-Person/ Consultation	In-depth	1	
M&E consultant	MERP	Online/ Consultation	In-depth		1
Paola Pagliani	UNDP-RBAS	Online/ Consultation	In-depth		1
The Head of UN-Habitat in Iraq, the SDGs Project Manager at UNDP Iraq and the Programme Analyst at UNDP	UNDP/ UN-Habitat Iraq	Online/ Consultation	In-depth	2	1

Donor	Representative for the EU Trust Fund for the Syrian Crisis	EU	Online/ Consultation	In-depth	1	
Sub-total					70 (65%)	37 (35%)

Annex 6. Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation criteria	Questions	Sub questions	Data sources	Data verification method
Relevance:	MERP Outcomes, outputs, activities and approaches respond to national priorities and needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent were MERP approach and activities, particularly on system strengthening, in line with national priorities, UNDP/UN-Habitat country programme outputs and outcomes, UNDP/UN-Habitat Strategic Plans, and applicable SDGs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data. 	In depth interviews with MERP, UNDP, UN-Habitat, In depth interviews with EU Madad Fund KII with stakeholders:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent did the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country programme outcome? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data. 	Third party service providers KII with national beneficiaries:
	MERP Outcomes, outputs, activities and approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What were emergent factors within the context that negatively or positively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring 	MoIM, DGLAC KII with local beneficiaries:

respond to local priorities and needs	affected the relevance of the planned interventions of MERP?	reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	UoM, municipalities FGD with local beneficiaries: staff of UoM and municipalities FGD with direct beneficiaries: residents, MSMEs
MERP Outcomes, outputs, activities and approaches respond to UN And donor priorities and needs	▪ To what extent was the project appropriately responsive to the changes in the political, economic, financial, and institutional context in Lebanon, including in terms of changes related to gender?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
	▪ Is there any overlap or complementarity with other ongoing/planned action(s) managed by UNDP, UN-Habitat, other donors, or the civil society that need to be addressed/considered for future interventions?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
	▪ To what extent did the collaboration between UNDP and UN-Habitat and the multi-country approach provide added value to the project?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
	▪ To what extent did the national and local stakeholders find MERP relevant to their needs and priorities?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Considering the multiple crises that have impacted Lebanon since the project's inception, to what extent has MERP maintained its relevance in relation to the context and needs? 		
Coherence :	Was MERP in coherence with stated national priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was MERP coherent with the Lebanon Government development priorities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data. 	<p>In depth interviews with MERP, UNDP, UN-Habitat,</p> <p>In depth interviews with EU Madad Fund KII with national beneficiaries: MoIM, DGLAC KII with local beneficiaries: UoM, municipalities</p>
	Was MERP in coherence with UN priorities, including CPD, LCRP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was MERP Coherent with the UN overall (CPD 2023-2025) and (CPD 2017-2022) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data. 	
	Was MERP in coherence with stated local priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UNSF 2017-2022) Core UN Priority 3: (UNSDCF 2023-2025) Peace and Gov1.1; LCRP: Outcome 1: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data. 	
	Was MERP in coherence with UN priorities, including SDGs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SDG Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term 	

			assessment, - Primary data.	
		▪SDG Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
		▪SDG Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
		▪SDG Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
Effectiveness:	Were planned objectives achieved?	▪ Has MERP contributed to any unintended effects, positive or negative, short-term, or long-term? Have there been any unintended gender effects (access to and control of resources, social norms change, gender practical and strategic needs, gender roles, etc.)?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	In depth interviews with MERP, UNDP, UN-Habitat, In depth interviews with EU Madad Fund

<p>Did the planned activities achieve the objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has MERP been appropriately responsive and adaptive to the needs of national and subnational priorities, particularly in the prevailing context? To what extent have MERP activities been responsive to the needs of targeted people; host communities, refugees, and displaced people, as well as their gender-specific needs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data. 	<p>KII with stakeholders: Third party service providers KII with national beneficiaries: MoIM, DGLAC KII with local beneficiaries: UoM, municipalities FGD with local beneficiaries: staff of UoM and municipalities FGD with direct beneficiaries: residents, MSMEs</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In the past four years, how have country dynamics/ongoing crises impacted MERP, particularly in relation to the original design/scope, and results and to what extent was MERP able to continuously adapt and, therefore, achieve the intended results? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent was MERP able to contribute to systems strengthening, particularly at the level of MoIM, DGLAC, and municipalities/Unions of Municipalities? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the lessons learned for a potential second phase or future programmes? 		

Efficiency:	Were activities, expertise, time and human resources deployed efficiently?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent have MERP activities been implemented in a cost-efficient manner? Could the same results have been achieved with less resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data. 	<p>In depth interviews with MERP, UNDP, UN-Habitat,</p> <p>In depth interviews with EU Madad Fund KII with stakeholders:</p> <p>Third party service providers</p> <p>KII with national beneficiaries: MoIM, DGLAC</p> <p>KII with local beneficiaries: UoM, municipalities</p> <p>FGD with local beneficiaries: staff of UoM and municipalities</p> <p>FGD with direct beneficiaries: residents, MSMEs</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What has been done well, and what could have been improved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data. 	
	Were the resources material and human utilized efficiently to achieve intended results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has the project M&E system ensured effective and efficient project management? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was the communication and visibility strategy for the project adopted? Was it cost-effective in terms of promoting the project and its achievements? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What lessons learned were drawn throughout the implementation phase that contributed to the efficient implementation of activities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term 	

			assessment, - Primary data.	
		▪Did the partnership between UNDP and UN-Habitat contribute or detract from achieving results efficiently?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
		▪What innovative approaches and tools were used by staff to achieve results efficiently?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
Impact:	looks at the extent to which the MERP project generated or is likely to bring differences at different levels directly or indirectly, positive, or negative, intended, or unintended, or higher-level effects. The evaluation will focus on the main changes/effects resulting from MERP to strengthen the resilience of sub-national authorities	▪ What contribution has MERP made towards reaching the goal outlined in its results framework? What could have been done differently to achieve better results?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	In depth interviews with MERP, UNDP, UN-Habitat, KII with stakeholders: Third party service providers KII with national beneficiaries: MoIM, DGLAC KII with local beneficiaries:

	and host/refugee and displaced communities.			UoM, municipalities FGD with local beneficiaries: staff of UoM and municipalities FGD with direct beneficiaries: residents, MSMEs
		▪What is the impact of the implemented municipal projects (small/medium-scale projects), and what can be done better?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
		▪ To what extent did all intended target groups, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, benefit from the intervention with a focus on the municipal projects?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
		▪ What have been the intended or unintended gender impacts of the project (access to and control of resources, social norms change, gender practical and strategic needs, gender roles, etc.)? How were these impacts mitigated? What could be improved to ensure more effective contribution to gender equality and women’s empowerment?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
Sustainability:	analyses whether the benefits of MERP project activities are likely to continue in the long-term	▪ What risks may jeopardize the sustainability of MERP contributions to the outcomes, and how has the project addressed or considered this?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term	In depth interviews with MERP, UNDP, UN-Habitat,

after donor funding has been withdrawn.		assessment, - Primary data.	KII with stakeholders: Third party service providers KII with national beneficiaries: MoIM, DGLAC KII with local beneficiaries: UoM, municipalities FGD with local beneficiaries: staff of UoM and municipalities FGD with direct beneficiaries: residents, MSMEs
Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable.	▪ To what extent has MERP well-designed and planned its exit strategies?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
	▪ To what extent has MERP successfully and effectively engaged the project partner to ensure their ownership over what has been implemented and, therefore, the project's sustainability?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
	▪ What could have been done differently to enhance the continuity of MERP effects?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
	▪ What are the key lessons derived from the rich experience provided by the project that can be used by UNDP, UN-Habitat, the donor, and the government to enhance decision-making and programming and the benefit of the project?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	

UN agencies joint programming:		▪What was the added value of UN agencies working together?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	In depth interviews with MERP, UNDP, UN-Habitat, KII with stakeholders: Third party service providers KII with national beneficiaries: MoIM, DGLAC KII with local beneficiaries: UoM, municipalities FGD with local beneficiaries: staff of UoM and municipalities
		▪What was the value added of multi country programming?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
		▪What was the value added of multi partner programming	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
		▪What was the value added for multiyear programming	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
		▪Appraise UN Collaboration	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term	

			assessment, - Primary data.	
		▪What were the lessons learned from joint programming?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
Cross Cutting Issues:		▪Were women meaningfully consulted and contributed to the impact of MERP?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	In depth interviews with MERP, UNDP, UN-Habitat, KII with stakeholders: Third party service providers KII with national beneficiaries: MoIM, DGLAC KII with local beneficiaries: UoM, municipalities FGD with local beneficiaries: staff of UoM and municipalities FGD with direct
Contribution to Gender Equality Gender and Youth Mainstreaming: Human rights:		▪Rights based approach, was this approach articulated to the beneficiaries and stakeholders?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
		▪Was it reflected in the documentation?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
		▪Were disabled and vulnerable consulted at the Objective Level and on the output/activity level?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring	

			reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	beneficiaries: residents, MSMEs
		▪Were the disabled and vulnerable included in the project activities?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
		▪How were the gender-specific needs and priorities identified and incorporated into the project's design and planning including identification of the gender-related constraints/gaps in the project assessments?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
		▪What specific strategies or actions were implemented to promote gender equality and women's empowerment throughout the project's lifecycle?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	
		▪Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved throughout MERP interventions, design, and implementation?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.	

<p>To what extent has MERP fulfilled the youth and gender integration requirements</p>	<p>▪Will persons with disabilities benefit from the project interventions?</p>	<p>- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.</p>
	<p>▪What institutional People with disability gaps, needs, and challenges need to be addressed in future interventions?</p>	<p>- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.</p>
	<p>▪What was done well and why? What can be improved?</p>	<p>- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.</p>
	<p>▪In what way did the project address the distinct needs and priorities the needs of women and men, including youth throughout its implementation?</p>	<p>- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.</p>
	<p>▪To what extent were these strategies / actions gender-responsive or gender transformative?</p>	<p>- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term</p>

			assessment, - Primary data.
		▪How effective were these strategies in practice and what can be improved?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.
		▪Were gender-specific targets or indicators set to measure progress on gender equality goals? How were these targets monitored and measured, and what insights were gained from gender-specific data and feedback to adapt project approaches?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.
	To what extent have poor and physically challenged women, men, and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from this project?	▪What institutional gender/youth gaps, needs, and challenges were identified during the project design, and how can these be addressed in future interventions to enhance gender equality outcomes and promote the meaningful participation and representation of women and youth?	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.
		▪How did the project engage with targeted local authorities including municipalities and union of municipalities to raise awareness on gender equality and enhance their gender-related capacities? What impact did these efforts have on	- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.

		promoting gender mainstreaming at the institutional level?	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪How did the project facilitate the meaningful participation of women and other marginalized gender groups in decision-making processes, including project planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation? What challenges were encountered in ensuring their participation, and how were these challenges addressed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and women's empowerment, and what specific outcomes can be attributed to the project's gender-responsive approaches? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪What were the main gender-specific challenges faced during the project's implementation, and how were they tackled? Were there any innovative or effective approaches employed to promote gender equality and inclusivity? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.

		<p>▪What were the key lessons learned from integrating gender equality and gender mainstreaming in this project, and how can these lessons be applied to future initiatives to further enhance gender-responsive or transformative programming?</p>	<p>- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.</p>	
<p>Environmental sensitivity, sustainability, climate change:</p>		<p>▪How did the design of the project incorporate UN environmental sustainable policies, procedures, and how well were they integrated into the project objectives, and activities?</p>	<p>- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.</p>	<p>In depth interviews with MERP, UNDP, UN-Habitat, KII with stakeholders: Third party service providers KII with national beneficiaries: MoIM, DGLAC KII with local beneficiaries: UoM, municipalities FGD with local beneficiaries: staff of UoM and municipalities FGD with direct beneficiaries: residents, MSMEs</p>
		<p>▪Was UN climate change policy incorporated into the project design, objectives and activities?</p>	<p>- Secondary data: project document, inception report, progress and monitoring reports; mid term assessment, - Primary data.</p>	

Annex 7. Signed Pledge of Ethical Conduct



ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION

PLEDGE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT IN EVALUATION



UNEG
United Nations Evaluation Group

By signing this pledge, I hereby commit to discussing and applying the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and to adopting the associated ethical behaviours.



INTEGRITY

I will actively adhere to the moral values and professional standards of evaluation practice as outlined in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and following the values of the United Nations. Specifically, I will be:

- **Honest and truthful** in my communication and actions.
- **Professional**, engaging in credible and trustworthy behaviour, alongside competence, commitment and ongoing reflective practice.
- **Independent, impartial and incorruptible**.



ACCOUNTABILITY

I will be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken and responsible for honouring commitments, without qualification or exception; I will report potential or actual harms observed. Specifically, I will be:

- **Transparent regarding evaluation** purpose and actions taken, establishing trust and increasing accountability for performance to the public, particularly those populations affected by the evaluation.
- **Responsive** as questions or events arise, adapting plans as required and referring to appropriate channels where corruption, fraud, sexual exploitation or abuse or other misconduct or waste of resources is identified.
- **Responsible** for meeting the evaluation purpose and for actions taken and for ensuring redress and recognition as needed.



RESPECT

I will engage with all stakeholders of an evaluation in a way that honours their dignity, well-being, personal agency and characteristics. Specifically, I will ensure:

- **Access** to the evaluation process and products by all relevant stakeholders – whether powerless or powerful – with due attention to factors that could impede access such as sex, gender, race, language, country of origin, LGBTQ status, age, background, religion, ethnicity and ability.
- **Meaningful participation and equitable treatment** of all relevant stakeholders in the evaluation processes, from design to dissemination. This includes engaging various stakeholders, particularly affected people, so they can actively inform the evaluation approach and products rather than being solely a subject of data collection.
- **Fair representation** of different voices and perspectives in evaluation products (reports, webinars, etc.).



BENEFICENCE

I will strive to do good for people and planet while minimizing harm arising from evaluation as an intervention. Specifically, I will ensure:

- **Explicit and ongoing consideration of risks and benefits** from evaluation processes.
- **Maximum benefits** at systemic (including environmental), organizational and programmatic levels.
- **No harm**. I will not proceed where harm cannot be mitigated.
- **Evaluation makes an overall positive contribution** to human and natural systems and the mission of the United Nations.

I commit to playing my part in ensuring that evaluations are conducted according to the Charter of the United Nations and the ethical requirements laid down above and contained within the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. When this is not possible, I will report the situation to my supervisor, designated focal points or channels and will actively seek an appropriate response.

Hagen Chawira

March 1, 2024

(Signature and Date)

Annex 8. Results Framework

Intervention logic	Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement	Baseline	Target	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions	
Lebanon						
Overall Objective: Strengthen the long-term resilience of targeted subnational authorities and their host/refugee populations in countries affected by the Syrian crisis.						
Specific Objective 1: Subnational authorities have enhanced capacities to engage in holistic, area-based planning and consider different scenarios that respond to the needs of host, refugee and IDP populations;						
Specific Objective 2: Service delivery is increasingly responsive, and generates greater social stability outcomes, based on the needs of host, refugee and IDP populations.						
Specific Objective 3: Subnational authorities are empowered to facilitate local economic development and have better access to municipal investment that benefits the extension of safe public services and economic opportunities for host, refugee and IDP populations.						
Overall objective	Strengthen the long-term resilience of targeted subnational authorities and their host/refugee populations in countries affected by the Syrian crisis.	Number of Sub-national government structures are capacitated to plan and implement priority interventions	0	15 Municipalities 3 Unions of Municipalities, and subnational government are coordinating their efforts to plan and implement priority specific investments to respond to the needs of host and refugee population 20% increase of people displaying propensity for conflict resolutions	Final Evaluation Attendance Records Pre/post training assessment Local Economic Development plans developed DGLAC web portal developed and call center	Government maintains current policy on refugee population, respecting non-refoulement. Planned elections do not lead to serious deterioration of political climate or security in country. The economic crisis and other events, do not lead to major inter-communal violence No significant changes in legislative environment that directly impact the project Elections do not lead to further divisions at the local level

		# Of vulnerable Lebanese and refugees have access to improved services. (Sex disaggregated)	0	1,705 Traders/MSMEs 3,309 Lebanese and Syrian Head of Households. 480,681 Lebanese and Syrian Individuals	Beneficiaries list or Municipal records	Host communities continue to host refugees
		# Of vulnerable Lebanese and refugees have access to employment opportunities (Sex disaggregated)	0	163	Employment Sheet	
Specific Objective 1	Subnational authorities have enhanced capacities to engage in holistic, area-based planning and consider different scenarios that respond to the needs of host, refugee and IDP populations	# Of subnational authorities display improved and more transparent financial management practices	0 (based on the Municipal Finance Assessment)	at least 5 Municipalities publish budgets and hold public consultations and 3 Union of Municipalities	Final evaluation report Municipal Finance Solutions Report	Local authorities actively support and engage in the project design, implementation and monitoring
Output 1-1	Efficient & timely municipal work processes to address impact of crisis are strengthened through an enhanced	# Of subnational authorities benefiting from improved interface between different levels of Government.	0	at least 33 municipalities and (Third of municipalities members at the unions) 3 Unions of Municipalities	DGLAC web portal and Call center. Communication strategy and progress report Attendance Record	Local government personnel have expected basic knowledge and skill to respond to the implementation and monitoring role of the Action
		# Of DGLAC staff trained on administrative and municipal-related topics.	0	At least 10 Staff		

	administrative interface.	Activities: <u>1. National policy advocacy</u> Activity 1.1: The Director General of Local Administrations and Councils review is conducted Activity 1.2: Donors' coordination mechanism is established Activity 1.3: Policy Advocacy dialogue is ensured				
Output 1-2	Greater Understanding and awareness by all local actors of their role in managing the impact of the crisis achieved	# Of Municipal Council members and civil society actors attending training sessions (Sex disaggregated)	0	At least 80 Municipal council members and civil society actors from 30 Municipalities and 3 Unions of Municipalities are trained	Attendance sheets Developed Curricula Progress reports	Local governments receptive to institutional strengthening and avails personnel for training, particularly on-the-job training for refugee response related initiatives
		# Of Curricula developed on issues associated with managing impact of the crisis and other conflicts.	No curricula exists	1 Curricula developed		
		# Of mayors, RTO staff engaged in the Crisis Response coordination structures at the local level	0	6 mayors, 3 RTO staff	MoU with UoMs/Municipalities The delivery notes of the hotline	
		Activities: <u>2.Social Stability</u> Activity 2.1: Mediation Units are established at union level Activity 2.2: Involvement of the Subnational Government structures in the Syrian Crisis Response coordination mechanism is facilitated				
Output 1-3	1.3 Strengthened sub national government capacity on raising revenues	# Of Subnational authorities published budgets	0 (based on the Municipal finance Assessment)	at least 5 Municipalities and 3 Unions of Municipalities publish budgets	Final evaluation and monitoring reports	Local authorities actively support and engage in the project design, implementation and monitoring National and local policies and strategies take into consideration
		# Of subnational authorities with additional sources of local revenues	0	at least 5 Municipalities and 3 Unions of municipalities identified additional sources of local revenues	Municipal Finance Solutions Report Attendance Records	

	and financial management	# Of subnational authorities staff/officials/RTO trained and coached on priority topics (sex disaggregated)	0	At least 80 municipal staff/officials/RTO		decentralized financing modalities, applied to the refugee context Local government personnel have expected basic knowledge and skill to respond to the implementation and monitoring role of the Action
		# Of technical guidance documents on public advice developed – (COVID-related, to align with EUTF KPI 43)	0	1 guidance document	The approved developed guidance document	CoVID-19 will influence context for the coming months
	<p>Activities:</p> <p><u>3. Municipal administration, finance and/or other training</u> Activity 3.1: Training for UoM/municipalities is provided</p> <p><u>4. Municipal Finance Assessments and Solutions</u> Activity 4.1: Municipal Finance Assessment for municipalities and Unions of Municipalities are conducted Activity 4.2: Municipal Finance Solutions are designed and implemented</p>					

Specific Objective 2	Service delivery is increasingly responsive, and generates greater social stability outcomes, based on the needs of host, refugee and IDP populations	# Of vulnerable Lebanese and refugees benefitted from the implemented small-scale projects. (Sex disaggregated)	No available data	200 Farmers 1,080 Lebanese and Syrian Heads of Households. 6,250 Lebanese and Syrian Individuals.	Beneficiaries list/ letter or Municipal records	Host communities continue to host refugees Market price and cost of inputs remain stable during the implementation period Local and national authorities actively support and engage in the project design, implementation and monitoring
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Output 2-1	Strengthened local capacity to develop, design, coordinate and implement strategic projects that will alleviate the impact of the crisis	# Of subnational authorities staff/officials received on-the-job training on planning and public service delivery and local economic development. (Sex disaggregated)	0	at least 80 staff from 20 municipalities and 3 Unions of Municipalities staff are trained. At least 30% of the trained staff are women	Attendance Record Technical dossiers prepared	Local government personnel have expected basic knowledge and skill to respond to the implementation and monitoring role of the Action
		# Of Regional Technical Offices established and operational	2 offices	3 Offices		
		Activities <u>5. Basic services</u> Activity 5.1: The Regional Technical Offices (RTOs) are strengthened				
Output 2-2	Priority basic services interventions are identified and implemented (UNDP & UN-Habitat)	# Of small-scale basic services interventions implemented	No strategic projects identified	11 interventions	Handover letter/ the delivery note. Project Reports; Monitoring and site visit Reports Evaluation Report	Sufficient number of good quality projects
		# Of Operation and Maintenance plan for small-scale basic services interventions	No maintenance plans exist	11 O&M plan	Developed O&M Plan	
		Activities: <u>5. Small-scale Basic services</u> Activity 5.2: Municipal Basic Services interventions (small scale) are implemented				
Specific Objective 3	Subnational authorities are empowered to facilitate local	# Of Local Economic Development plans in the crisis context developed for the Unions of Municipalities.	0	1 Plan for each union for Metn UoM (1), Tyre UoM (1)	LED plans developed	Private sector supports and engages in refugee response Market price and cost of inputs

	<p>economic development and have better access to municipal investment that benefits the extension of safe public services and economic opportunities for host, refugee and IDP populations</p>			and Urban Community of Al-Fayhaa (1)		remain stable during the implementation period
		# Of vulnerable Lebanese and refugees have access to employment opportunities (Sex disaggregated)	0	163, including the number of job opportunities that will be sustained as a result of MERP interventions.	Employment Sheet	
		# Of vulnerable Lebanese and refugees benefitted from the implemented BS/LED projects. (Sex disaggregated)	0	1,505 MSMEs/traders 2,229 Lebanese and Syrian Head of Households 474,431 Lebanese and Syrian individuals	Beneficiaries list/letter or Municipal records	
<p>Output 3-1</p> <p>An Enabling Economic Environment is Created with active engagement of Local Authorities, the private sector, and LED associations</p>	# Of partnerships initiated between subnational authorities and private sectors or non-governmental sector	0	3 Partnerships	Partnership agreement	Private sector and entrepreneurs interested in furthering engagement in public/private partnership	
	# Of awareness sessions conducted with municipalities/unions to promote partnerships with private sector and non-governmental sector	0	At least 2 Awareness sessions	Attendance Record		
	<p>Activities:</p> <p>6. Local economic development assessment and strategy</p> <p>Activity 6.1: LED assessment is conducted</p> <p>Activity 6.2: Local Economic Development plans in the crisis context developed for the Unions of Municipalities developed.</p>					
<p>Output 3-2</p> <p>Capacity at local level to identify develop, design and implement</p>	# Of Medium/large-scale basic services/LED interventions implemented.	0	7 Interventions	Handover letter/ the delivery note. Project Reports.	Sufficient number of good quality projects	

interventions with economic multiplier impact improved				Monitoring and site visit Reports Evaluation Report	
	# Of implemented medium/large-scale basic services/LED interventions that are gender sensitive.	0	3 interventions	Gender-sensitive project list and Hand-over letter	
	# Of Operation and Maintenance plan developed for medium/large-scale basic services/LED interventions.	No maintenance plans exist	10 O&M Plan	Developed O&M plans	
	Activities: 7. Basic service/LED interventions Activity 7.1: Medium/large-scale basic service/LED interventions are implemented Activity 7.2: Complaint mechanism for Basic Service/LED interventions is established				

Annex 9. MERP Project Achievements Against Results Framework Indicators

Note: The progress achieved reflected below is based on Q4 2023.

Overall Objective, Outcomes and Outputs	Performance Indicators	Indicator Baseline	Targets and Milestones (initial as per Project Document)	Progress	Level of Achievement
Overall Objective: Strengthen the long-term resilience of targeted subnational authorities and their host/refugee populations in	Indicator 1: Number of Sub-national government structures are capacitated to plan and implement priority interventions	0	15 Municipalities 3 Unions/Cluster of municipalities, and subnational government are coordinating their efforts to plan and implement priority specific investments to respond to the needs	Capacity building was provided, assessments were conducted. Project was unable to	Somewhat Achieved

countries affected by the Syrian crisis.			of host and refugee population 20% increase of people displaying propensity for conflict resolutions	develop plans for investments. Conflict resolutions indicators were not achieved.	
	Indicator 2: Number of vulnerable Lebanese and refugees have access to improved services. (Sex disaggregated)	0	1,705 Traders/MSMEs 3,309 Lebanese and Syrian Head of Households. 480,681 Lebanese and Syrian Individuals	Direct/Indirect Beneficiaries: Total: 18,878 Female: 10,183 Male: 8,695 Lebanese: 16,406 Syrian: 2,409 Palestinian: 51 Other nationalities: 12	Fully Achieved
	Indicator 3: Number of vulnerable Lebanese and refugees have access to employment opportunities	0	163	Total: 305 Female: 7 Male: 298 Lebanese: 119 Syrian: 138 Palestinian: 48	Fully Achieved
Outcome 1: Subnational authorities have enhanced capacities to engage in holistic, area-based planning and consider different scenarios that respond to the	Indicator 1.1: Number of Subnational authorities display improved and more transparent financial management practices	0	At least 5 municipalities and 3 union/Cluster of municipalities published budgets	0	Not Achieved

needs of host, refugee and IDP populations					
Output 1.1: Efficient & timely municipal work processes to address impact of crisis are strengthened through an enhanced administrative interface.	Indicator 1.1.1: Number of subnational authorities benefiting from improved interface between different levels of Government	0	At least 33 municipalities and (Third of municipalities members at the unions) 3 Unions of Municipalities	0	Not Achieved
	Indicator 1.1.2: Number of DGLAC staff trained on administrative and municipal-related topics.	0	At least 10 Staff	3 DGLAC staff (2 women and 1 man)	Somewhat Achieved
Output 1.2: Greater Understanding and awareness by all local actors of their role in managing the impact of the crisis	Indicator 1.2.1: Number of Municipal Council members and civil society actors attending training sessions (Sex disaggregated)	0	At least 80 Municipal council members and civil society actors from 30 Municipalities and 3 Unions / clusters of Municipalities are trained	53 persons trained (32 women and 21 men representing 14 municipalities, 2 UoMs)	Somewhat Achieved
	Indicator 1.2.2: Number of Curricula developed on issues associated with managing impact of the crisis and other conflicts, including guidance notes targeting local level leaders	No curricula exits	1 Curricula developed	1 training curriculum of five modules developed	Fully Achieved

	Indicator 1.2.3: Number of mayors, RTO staff engaged in the Crisis Response coordination structures at the local level	0	6 mayors, 3 RTO staff	1 mayor and 1 RTO in Bourj Hammoud municipality	Somewhat Achieved
Output 1.3: Strengthened subnational government capacity on raising revenues and financial management	Indicator 1.3.1: Number of subnational authorities published budgets	1 (Note: this baseline was amended as one municipality already published its budget)	at least 5 municipalities and 3 union/Cluster of municipalities published budgets	2	Somewhat Achieved
	Indicator 1.3.2: Number of subnational authorities with additional sources of local revenues	0	at least 3 Municipalities and 1 Union of Municipalities	0	Not Achieved
	Indicator 1.3.3: Number of subnational authorities staff/officials/RTO trained and coached on priority topics (sex disaggregated)	0	At least 80 municipal staff/officials/RTO	Total: 132 Women: 61 Men: 71 Representing: 20 Municipalities, 5 Unions, 18 Civil Society, 5 Community members, 3 Other Public Institutions	Fully Achieved

	Indicator 1.3.4: Number of technical guidance documents on public advice developed – (COVID-related, to align with EUTF KPI 43)	0	1 guidance document	1 advocacy note developed on the release of the Independent Municipal Fund to enable municipalities to better respond to the Covid-19 pandemic	Fully Achieved
Outcome 2: Service delivery is increasingly responsive, and generates greater social stability outcomes, based on the needs of host, refugee and IDP populations.	Indicator 2.1: Number of vulnerable Lebanese and refugees benefitted from the implemented small-scale projects. (Sex disaggregated)	No available data	200 Farmers 1,080 Lebanese and Syrian Heads of Households. 6,250 Lebanese and Syrian Individuals.	Direct/Indirect Beneficiaries: Total: 18,717 Female: 10,106 Male: 8,611 Lebanese: 16,300 Syrian: 2,400 Palestinian: 5 Other nationalities: 12	Fully Achieved
Output 2.1: Strengthened local capacity to develop, design, coordinate and implement strategic projects that will alleviate the impact of the crisis	Indicator 2.1.1: Number of subnational authorities staff/officials received on-the-job training on planning and public service delivery and local economic	0	at least 80 staff from 20 municipalities and 3 unions/cluster of municipalities staff are trained at least 30% of the staff are trained. At least 30% of the trained staff are women	82 persons trained on planning and public service delivery and local economic development (2022):	Fully Achieved

	development. (sex disaggregated)			75 persons (21 women and 54 men) representing 18 municipalities (1 in North Lebanon, 5 in Northern and coastal Metn, 12 in South Lebanon) and 7 persons (4 women and 3 men) representing 2 UoMs (Al Fayhaa' Union and Tyr Union of Municipalities) - Women: 25 - Men: 57	
	Indicator 2.1.2: Number of Regional Technical Offices established and operational	2 offices	3 offices	3 offices established and operational (1 RTO office established in 2021)	Fully Achieved
Output 2.2: Identification and implementation of priority interventions (UNDP & UN-Habitat)	Indicator 2.2.1: Number of small-scale basic services interventions implemented	No strategic projects identified	11 interventions	6	Somewhat Achieved
	Indicator 2.2.2: Number of Operation and Maintenance plan for Basic Services/Procurement interventions	No maintenance plans exist	11 O&M plans	5	Somewhat Achieved

<p>Outcome 3: Subnational authorities are empowered to facilitate local economic development and have better access to municipal investment that benefits the extension of safe public services and economic opportunities for host, refugee and IDP populations.</p>	<p>Indicator 3.1: Number of Local Economic Development plans in the crisis context developed for the Unions of Municipalities.</p>	0	1 Plan for each union for Metn UoM (1), Tyre UoM (1) and Urban Community of Al-Fayhaa (1)	0	Somewhat Achieved
	<p>Indicator 3.2: Number of vulnerable Lebanese and refugees have access to employment opportunities (sex disaggregated)</p>	0	163, including the number of job opportunities that will be sustained as a result of MERP interventions.	Total: 305 Female: 7 Male: 298 Lebanese: 119 Syrian: 138 Palestinian: 48	Fully Achieved
	<p>Indicator 3.3: Number of vulnerable Lebanese and refugees benefitted from the implemented BS/LED projects. (Sex disaggregated)</p>	0	1,505 MSMEs/traders 2,229 Lebanese and Syrian Head of Households 474,431 Lebanese and Syrian individuals	Direct/Indirect Beneficiaries: Individual: Total: 161 Female: 77 Male: 84 Lebanese: 106 Syrian: 9 Palestinian: 46	Somewhat Achieved
<p>Output 3.1: An Enabling Economic Environment is Created with active engagement of Local Authorities, the private sector, and LED associations (UNDP)</p>	<p>Indicator 3.1.1: Number of partnerships initiated between subnational authorities and private sectors or non-governmental sector</p>	0	3 Partnerships	5	Fully Achieved

	Indicator 3.1.2: Number of awareness sessions conducted with municipalities/unions to promote partnerships with private sector and non-governmental sector	0	At least 2 Awareness sessions	6 sessions conducted for 16 municipalities and 3 unions (2021)	Fully Achieved
Output 3.2: Capacity at local level to identify develop, design and implement interventions with an economic multiplier impact improved (UNDP & UN-Habitat)	Indicator 3.2.1: Number of Medium/large-scale basic services/LED interventions implemented.	0	7 interventions	5	Somewhat Achieved (some projects are still in progress)
	Indicator 3.2.2: Number of implemented medium/large-scale basic services/LED interventions that are gender sensitive.	0	3 interventions	0	Not Achieved
	Indicator 3.2.3: Number of Operation and Maintenance plan developed for medium/large-scale basic services/LED interventions.	No maintenance plans exist	10 &M Plans	4	Somewhat Achieved