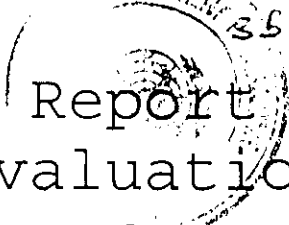


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Report of the Forward Evaluation Mission on the Lebanon LA21 Process

September, 1999

Republic of Lebanon
Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform
Center for Public Sector Projects and Studies
(C.P.S.P.S.)

Ms Sheilagh Henry, ICLEI

Mr Renaud Meyer, UNDP, Lebanon.

Dr Nizar Mohamed, global Capacity 21 Adviser.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The three aims of this "forward evaluation" mission were to analyse the outputs of the Capacity 21 programme on Local Agenda 21 to identify lessons and insights that may usefully guide and serve as follow-up for future activities. Using these lessons as a guide, the team was asked to outline the main response to the intention of the UN System Common Work-plan in Lebanon to formulating an integrated programme to strengthen municipalities, and implement the right to development at the local level.

The evaluation team was asked to take into account the experience of the LA 21 process in the four pilot projects, UNDP's experience at the local level through other on-going programmes, and other UN agencies' activities at the local level in Lebanon.

The evaluation team worked with the Capacity 21 team in Lebanon to adapt the ICLEI self-assessment module for LA21s to suit the circumstances of the pilot municipalities in the Capacity 21 programme.

Assessment

The overall assessment of the LA21 programme by the evaluation team was that the programme management team in the Ministry of Environment (MoE) had done an excellent job in managing the project, within the constraints of a sketchy programme design and its own mandate on environmental management. The UNV project co-ordinators have laid a solid foundation for LA21s in all the municipalities, establishing LA21 committees in all the pilots and increasing awareness of the LA21 process amongst a range of stakeholders.

The particular strengths of the programme are excellent teamwork and the way in which the co-ordinators have integrated into their communities. The Capacity 21 team has made considerable progress in spite of inadequate preparatory training in the requisite skills. The weaknesses of the programme include a "cook-book" approach to the LA21 process in the municipalities, not utilising the particular strengths of each municipality, a lack of responsiveness to the needs and priorities of municipalities, an undue emphasis on environment as an entry point, and a lack of networking between pilots.

The areas that could be strengthened in the closing stages of the programme include:

- Closer liaison between municipalities and government line agencies and the Ministry of Interior.
- Networking between pilots to share experiences and learn from each other.
- Promote step-by-step approaches to problem.
- Ensure that all the pilots have training in project preparation and writing of proposals.
- Integrate Agenda 21 into municipalities processes and existing mechanisms.
- Promote understanding in the pilots that Agenda 21 is more than just environment.
- Improve Stakeholder involvement in the LA21 process, especially women.
- Improve access to financial and other resources from central government agencies as well as other sources (donors, NGOs, etc).
- The current draft Resource Guide needs to be revised to better meet the particular conditions facing the four pilot municipalities in the LA21 programme, as well as serving as a basis for a Resource Guide-cum-toolkit for a future programme.

The evaluation team also looked at the relevance of the UTDA proposal for the LA21 programme and has a number of reservations about this proposal, and recommends a revision of the proposal to better meet the needs of the programme. These include specific overseas exchange visits, training, and provision of small grants for priority projects in municipalities.

Lessons Learned

The lessons learned from the LA21 programme include:

- ⇒ That a project or programme design has to find a balance between providing clear direction and guidance and allowing for flexibility.
- ⇒ The programme should be designed using participatory and analytical approaches.
- ⇒ The entry points for a programme must be demand-driven and not supply-driven.
- ⇒ The programme must be tailored to the municipality or community, within the overall framework of the LA21 and/or programme philosophy.
- ⇒ That capacity building is an important prerequisite for a LA21 programme as the concepts and practices of participatory and analytical approaches to local governance are relatively new in Lebanon.
- ⇒ A Resource Guide is needed but must be tailored to the specific needs, priorities and conditions of municipalities in Lebanon.
- ⇒ Future programme for local government must back-up capacity building activities with access to funding for the implementation of priority projects.
- ⇒ Networking with an emphasis on exchange visits, designed to promote dialogue between municipalities from Lebanon and overseas
- ⇒ The LA 21 process must work within the existing national legislative, legal and institutional framework.

The 'spirit' of Agenda 21 should become part of the normal 'culture' of a municipality.

Future Programme

The evaluation team has proposed that a future programme for capacity building for local government in Lebanon would work through, and support, existing regional development programmes of UNDP.

This programme would be formulated through a six month preparatory assistance phase, which would begin early in 2000, after the completion of the current programme. The programme components would support the Government of Lebanon-UNDP CCF by working through and supporting the UNDP regional programmes. These components include a preparatory phase, capacity building, implementation of priority projects in municipalities, mainstreaming to ensure sustainability, and information for decision-making.

The total cost of the future programme for capacity building for local government (components one to five) would be approximately \$800,000, including an allocation of \$70,000 for the preparatory phase (component one).

The national counterpart for the future local government programme should be the Ministry of Interior, although in the interim, the team suggests a programme manager located in the UNDP country office to co-ordinate programme activities. This programme manager would

work closely with the programme officers and managers of the four regional programmes. Four National UNVs, located in each of the regional development programmes, would assist this programme manager and work with the staff of the regional programmes. In future as roles and responsibilities are clarified and institutional capacity is strengthened, the Ministry of Interior should assume a more active role in programme management.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

That the Capacity 21 team revise the draft Resource Guide, using the experiences gained in the pilots, with advice and peer review from Capacity 21 as well as other sources such as ICLEI.

Recommendation 2

That Capacity 21 enable the Capacity 21 team to access, by email, the services of a Capacity 21 Adviser to peer review the revision of the Resource Guide.

Recommendation 3

That MoE and the UNDP Country Office review the proposed UTDA contract, and revise it to address the specific needs of the Capacity 21 pilots during the last phase of the project.

Recommendation 4

That the future programme for capacity building for local government in Lebanon support and work through the four existing UNDP regional programmes in Lebanon.

Recommendation 5

That the future programme for capacity building for local government in Lebanon be designed through a 6 month preparatory assistance phase.

Recommendation 6

That the preparatory assistance phase is formulated by a joint UN agency team during a three-week mission. This design team would include representatives from the UNDP – Country Office, WHO, Habitat, and Capacity 21. This international programme formulation team would work and support a national design team which includes members of the future programme team, as well as representatives from Lebanese Government agencies such as the Ministry of Interior and MoE.

Recommendation 7

That the future programme for capacity building for local government in Lebanon utilise existing national capacities and organisations, as well as the capacity of the pilot municipalities and the MoE as training resources.

Recommendation 8

That Capacity 21 consider providing additional funding of up to \$300,000 towards the implementation of the future programme for capacity building for local government in Lebanon.

Recommendation 9

That the UNDP Country Office utilise existing funds, previously allocated to the preparatory assistance project for strengthening local authorities, for funding the

preparatory assistance phase of the future programme, including the in-country costs of the formulation mission.

Recommendation 10

That Capacity 21 provide the services of a Capacity 21 Adviser to the formulation mission for the preparation of the future programme for capacity building of local authorities in Lebanon.

Recommendation 11

That the Capacity 21 programme management in MoE help pilot municipalities to make a smooth transition from programme funding activities to a self-reliance by providing assistance in the areas suggested by the evaluation team.

Recommendation 12

That the UNDP Country Office initiate discussions with potential partners in the future programme from UN Agencies and other donors.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
CONTENTS	7
ABBREVIATIONS.....	8
INTRODUCTION	9
PURPOSE.....	9
BACKGROUND	9
APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY.....	10
EVALUATION OF THE LA21 PROGRAMME.....	11
BACKGROUND	11
SELF-ASSESSMENT MODULE	12
RESULTS OF SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHOPS.....	12
PROGRAMME DESIGN	15
PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT.....	15
PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION.....	18
THE FINAL PHASE.....	19
LEARNING FROM THE LA21 PROJECT	23
LESSONS LEARNED.....	23
THE LA21 PILOTS: POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION	27
A FUTURE PROGRAMME FOR STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN LEBANON.....	28
BACKGROUND	28
CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF A FUTURE PROGRAMME	31
KEY FEATURES OF A FUTURE LA21 PROGRAMME	33
CONCLUSION: NEXT STEPS.....	40
APPENDIX 1: ITINERARY.....	42
APPENDIX 2: SELF-ASSESSMENT MODULE.....	43
ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF ORIGINAL QUESTIONS IN ARABIC.....	43
APPENDIX 3: LOCAL AGENDA 21 GUIDING PRINCIPLES	47
APPENDIX 4: DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PROGRAMME FORMULATION MISSION	48
REFERENCES	50

ABBREVIATIONS

CCF	Country Co-operation Framework
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
IMTI	International Management Training Institute
LA21	Local Agenda 21
LIFE	Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MOMRA	Ministry of Municipalities and Rural Affairs
NGO	Non-government Organisation
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SUNY	Southern University of New York
SURF	Sub-regional Resource Facility
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNRC	United Nations Regional Co-ordinator
UNV	United Nations Volunteer
UTDA	United Towns Development Agency
WHO	World Health Organisation

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The three aims of this "forward evaluation" mission were to:

- (1) "Provide a comprehensive analysis of the outputs of the Capacity 21 programme components relating to Local Agenda 21;
- (2) Identify a set of appropriate lessons and insights from the LA21 experience and the experience of other UN agencies at the local level that may usefully guide and serve as follow-up for future activities;
- (3) Outline the main thrust for future activities, i.e. "a forward look", based on lessons learned to respond to the need of the UN System Common Work-plan in Lebanon for formulating an integrated programme for strengthening municipalities, and implementing "the right to development at the local level."¹

In carrying out the evaluation, the team was asked to take into account the experience of the LA 21 process in the four pilot projects, UNDP's experience at the local level through other on-going programmes, as well as other UN agencies' activities at the local level in Lebanon. The ToR also required the evaluation team to use the ICLEI self-assessment module for LA21s in carrying out the evaluation.

Background

In 1994, following 20 years of civil unrest in Lebanon, UNDP-Lebanon initiated a Capacity 21 programme to assist the country to respond to severe environmental deterioration. The first phase of the project was financed by Capacity 21 and UNEP. The aims of this phase were to integrate environmental concerns into policy and legislation. In 1997, the UNDP office and the Lebanese Ministry of Environment (MoE) financed and initiated a second phase Capacity 21 programme for promoting sustainable development at the institutional level. This second phase² of the Capacity 21 programme supported, among other activities, the establishment of four Local Agenda 21s (LA21) at the level of municipalities and conglomerations of municipalities. The project provided the necessary technical and financial support to formulate and initiate the implementation of local agendas in each of these pilot projects. Capacity 21 support to launch the LA21 process was initiated in April 1998 and is expected to end by December 1999.

In January 1999, the UNRC System in Lebanon agreed that the issue of local governance is a focus area for the System and will be implemented within the UN System Common Work Programme. A recent preliminary survey done by the SURF-Governance for the UNRC³ office revealed that there are over a dozen on-going or planned UN projects in Lebanon involving local government and municipalities, in addition to projects that work with local government at the *qada* or *muhafaza* levels. The UN organisations involved in initiatives with local government are UNDP, FAO, UNICEF, WHO and UNV. The types of activities that involve local government include capacity building, human resource development, networking, and supply of equipment. Most projects seek to improve the efficiency and

transparency of local government and municipalities in the delivery of services, as well as promoting participatory approaches to Sustainable Human Development.

Approach and Methodology

The evaluation mission was carried out in Lebanon from Monday 30 August to Friday 10 September. The **evaluation team** consisted of:

1. Ms Sheilagh Henry, Programme Officer with the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), an international NGO;
2. Mr Renaud Meyer, Programme Officer, Education and Local Governance, UNDP, Beirut.
3. Dr Nizar Mohamed, Capacity 21 adviser, Capacity 21 (team leader).

The evaluation team consulted a range of stakeholders to enable it to fulfil the objectives set out in the ToR. During the first week of the mission, meetings were held with UNDP staff, representatives from the Ministry of Environment (MoE), the Lebanon Capacity 21 team[•], community representatives in each of the four pilot projects, as well as a donor agency. Details of the full itinerary for the evaluation mission are given in Appendix 1.

The evaluation team used participatory approaches throughout the mission to ensure that all stakeholders in the LA21 process in Lebanon were able to contribute to the work of the team. These approaches included discussions with the Capacity 21 team to adapt the ICLEI self-assessment module⁴ to conditions in Lebanon, and to tailor the questions to the stage of development of the Local Agenda 21 process in each of the pilot projects. The revised questions were translated into Arabic for use by the pilot projects. This modified version of the self-assessment module was used in each of the four pilot projects to enable them to assess their own progress, as well as to contribute to the overall evaluation of the LA21 project by the team. Community representatives involved in the LA21 process carried out the self-assessments in participatory workshops in each of the four pilots. These workshops were all conducted in Arabic, with translation provided to the evaluation team.

In addition, debriefing meetings were held with two groups of stakeholders: the first with staff of UNDP-Lebanon and representatives of UN agencies in Lebanon, and the second with representatives of national stakeholders. The emphasis in the first meeting was on the lessons learned and the design of the future programme for LA21 in Lebanon. The emphasis of the second was on both the evaluation of the existing programme, and the design of the future programme. This meeting included two government ministries - MoE (the co-operating agency for Phase II of the current programme) and the Ministry of Interior (which has recently taken over responsibility for Municipality and Rural Affairs in Lebanon). Representatives from each of the four pilot projects also attended, as well as some NGOs, staff of several UNDP programmes involving municipalities and local communities, and donors.

In retrospect, this final debriefing would have been better split into two separate meetings. The first to discuss the proposal for the future programme for strengthening local government with national-level stakeholders and donors, as well as UNDP and UN agencies. The second meeting would have been to discuss a more thorough and open evaluation of the

[•] The Capacity 21 team refers to the team of four environmental specialists (the national UNV volunteers) and the programme manager, co-ordinator, technical specialist, and other support staff in the Capacity 21 programme in Lebanon. This team is known in Lebanon as the Capacity 21 team, and this term will be used throughout the evaluation team's report.

existing programme, allowing for and more specific discussion of the future of those projects with the relevant stakeholders, including municipality representatives.

EVALUATION OF THE LA21 PROGRAMME

Background

The LA21 project in Lebanon, a joint initiative between the Ministry of Environment (MoE) and UNDP, began in April 1998, just before the municipality elections in June 1998, the first in Lebanon for 35 years.

The Capacity 21 team in the MoE consists of four environmental specialists (UN National Volunteers), each responsible for one of the pilot municipalities. The LA21 Capacity 21 team in the MoE consists of a project manager, a LA21 co-ordinator, a technical officer, and four other professional and administrative staff.

Project Objective(s)

The principal objective of the LA21 project, as stated in the project document⁵, is:

“To establish 4 Local Agendas 21 for municipalities or conglomerations of municipalities”.

Within this objective, only one output was stated in the project document:

“Provide necessary technical and financial support [to] formulate and initiate the implementation of at least 4 Local Agenda 21s for municipalities within the Capacity 21 framework of environmental monitoring and awareness.”

In implementing the project, the Capacity 21 team elaborated on this objective to articulate a vision and goals for the overall LA21 project, which are stated in their first summary report⁶:

Box 1: The Lebanon LA21 Vision and Goals

VISION

To establish an effective and nationally co-ordinated Local Agenda 21 planning process for all Lebanese municipalities by 2007

GOALS

- 1 to pilot four municipal Local Agenda 21 (LA21) processes to serve as learning models for a national LA21 program
- 2 to build sufficient national municipal planning capacity to sustain a national LA21 program
- 3 to develop a national LA21 program office and resource centre at the Ministry of Environment to sustain and co-ordinate Lebanon’s long-term LA21 processes
- 4 to link Lebanese LA21s in a national network and to build linkages with regional and international LA21 processes

These goals and the project objective provide a yardstick for the evaluation team to assess progress achieved in the project. The evaluation team used the modified ICLEI self-assessment module as a basis for the pilot projects to evaluate their progress.

Self-assessment module

ICLEI produced a pilot Self-Assessment Module through its Local Agenda 21 (LA21) Guidance and Training Programme as part of ICLEI's contribution to the evaluation procedures of the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign. The module is intended to help municipalities assess the progress and sustainability potential of their Local Agenda 21 action planning process. It can also be used to evaluate progress made by local and regional authorities participating in the Campaign in response to their commitment to the Aalborg Charter.⁷

The evaluation team, working closely with the Lebanon Capacity 21 team, adapted the ICLEI module, developed for European municipalities, to suit Lebanese conditions and, in particular, the needs of each of the four pilot projects. The team decided that only the first set of exercises of the ICLEI module was appropriate for the stage of development of LA21s in the pilots. The questions in exercise I of the ICLEI module were used as a framework by the team to formulate questions that would be appropriate and suitable for the Lebanon pilots.

The sets of questions for the Lebanon LA21 self-assessment module (Appendix 2) were grouped under six broad headings (adapted from the ICLEI module's Exercise 1). These were:

- ⇒ Partnerships
- ⇒ Community-based Issue Analysis
- ⇒ Action Planning/Implementation
- ⇒ Action Plans
- ⇒ Measuring Progress
- ⇒ Future Steps

Within this framework, only those sets of questions appropriate to each of the pilot were used during each of the workshops. For example, the section on 'Action Plans' was only used in Aley as this pilot had begun the formulation of an action plan. The emphasis of the questions was on self-assessment so that each pilot could evaluate their own progress, rather than making comparisons between the different pilots. The evaluation team used the results of the different self-assessments to evaluate overall progress for the LA21 project. All questionnaires were translated into Arabic before use in the workshops.

Results of Self-assessment Workshops

Participants at each of the workshops came from the municipality council and/or LA21 committee(s), while in some workshops, other interested members of the community also participated. A high level of commitment to the LA21 process was demonstrated in all of the pilots. Numbers attending the workshops ranged from 10 for the (half-day) Borj El Barajneh workshop, to between 20 and 35 in each of the other (full-day) workshops. In three workshops, Aley, Bekaa, and Borj El Barajneh, the mayor(s) attended the entire workshop indicating that the sense of commitment extends to the highest level.

All small group discussions and plenary reports in the workshops were in Arabic, with English translation where necessary. Only the introductory plenary sessions were in English with translation into Arabic. Each workshop began with trust building activities for the whole group of participants. After this, participants were divided into smaller groups of 4 to 6 people on the basis of common interests: for example, by LA21 sub-committees (Aley and Jal El Dib), municipality (Bekaa - a conglomeration of 25 municipalities), or LA21 committee and community members (Borj El Barajneh). Each interest group answered the sets of questions set out in Appendix 2 (Part A), and then reported back in plenary to all participants on the 9 questions listed in the presentation guidelines (Appendix 2, Part B).

In three of the workshops, there was good representation by women (at least one third of the participants); this reflects the prominent role that women are playing in the LA21 committees in at least two of the pilots (Jal El Dib and Aley). In the Bekaa workshop, only one was present (and did not stay the whole day). The importance of a gender balance in the LA21 process, including committees, needs to be conveyed to all pilots and efforts made to include more women, using culturally appropriate mechanisms.

The full results of the workshops are to be analysed and distributed to all pilots by the Capacity 21 team. A summary of the results to this evaluation is given below for each of the pilot projects:

⇒ **Partnerships** - in all of the pilots, there was some form of working relationship between the LA21 committees and the municipality council, with all pilots having council representatives in the LA21 committees. The means of communication was mainly through meetings (e.g. Borj El Barajneh, Bekaa). In some cases, the LA21 committee acted as a link between the community and the council (e.g. in Jal El Dib), whilst in Aley, the council hosted the LA21 process. Suggestions from the workshops for strengthening this partnership stressed a closer working relationship between the council and the LA21 committees. This could be achieved through more regular and more frequent meetings (Jal El Dib, Bekaa), joint implementation of activities, as well as a co-ordinated work plan between the council and the LA21 committees (Bekaa, Jal El Dib). A greater involvement in the LA21 process by council was seen as a way to help improve transparency and to implement concrete activities by mobilising council resources (Jal El Dib). The recruitment of a co-ordinator was also mentioned as a possible mean to improve the interaction between committees and the municipal council (Aley).

The main way suggested for strengthening the relationship between the council and the LA21 committees was to promote participation by all stakeholders. All the pilots identified some groups of stakeholders who were not represented in the LA21 process. These groups included youth (all pilots), religious groups (Aley, Jal El Dib, Bekaa), and the private sector (although, interestingly, most of the people in the LA21 process are volunteers who are active in the commercial sector in their working life).

All four pilots appeared to lack any substantive knowledge or information about the activities and achievements of the LA21 process in other pilots. This lack of networking between pilots is a major constraint to ensuring the sustainability of the LA21 process at the end of the Capacity 21 project (see below).

There is also an apparent lack of integration of LA21 principles (see Appendix 3) into many sectors of the municipalities. LA21 still exists as a separate committee or entity within the municipality rather than as part of the operational process within each municipality as a whole. Further integration should be seen as a long-term goal.

Borj El Barajeneh identified a problem that is unique to that municipality - the large number of displaced people (over 300,000 compared with some 30,000 native residents). The displaced people do not feel part of the community in Borj El Barajeneh (for example, they cannot vote in that municipality) but are sometimes unable to go back to their original communities. This is a major challenge facing the municipality in building partnerships within the communities.

- ⇒ **Community-based Issue Analysis** – this process has been carried out in all four pilots although the degree of acceptance of the results was variable. Although most municipalities have urgent environmental problems that need to be addressed, in some cases, the emphasis on environmental priorities has failed to take into consideration more pressing social and economic issues. Moreover, some groups felt that the LA21 process had not included some key environmental issues affecting their municipalities. For example, two groups in the Bekaa considered that their major environmental problems of pollution of the river and solid waste disposal were not included in the list of priorities. In Borj El Barajeneh, one group felt that issues of urban planning and overcrowding were left out, whilst in Jal El Dib, one group felt that issues of air pollution (other members of the LA21 committee disagreed) and potable water were not addressed. Many of the gaps appear to result from a number of factors: failure to involve all stakeholder groups in the analysis; the lack of an in-depth analysis of issues and possible solutions; a lack of communication within the LA21 process (e.g. in Jal El Dib) and between the LA committees and the council.
- ⇒ **Action Planning/Implementation** – all pilots identified human resources as their greatest asset, both in terms of numbers of people willing to give up time and effort to the LA21 process and the capabilities and commitment of these individuals, as well as their organisations, such as NGOs, neighbourhood committees, etc. They also identified the need for more training for these individuals and organisations to enable them to work better together and to be more effective in utilising their inherent potential for the good of the community as a whole. In some cases, the emphasis on formulating action plans has led to a frustration with the process – “too much talk, too little action”. This is very much a result of the lack of financial resources identified as a major constraint by all pilots, but is also partly due to over ambitious projects and a lack of planning to tailor activities to resources available. In some cases (Bekaa) it may also be due, in part, to a failure to identify existing resources within the community that are available for use by the LA21 project.
- ⇒ **Action Plans** – only one municipality (Aley) answered this set of questions, as they are the only ones to formulate an action plan as yet. They identified the need to collect additional information on social factors as well as economic information on important sectors such as tourism. Adoption of the action plan by the council would require the commitment of the mayor, active support for implementation of LA21 activities by the council, as well as better co-ordination between the LA21 committee and the council.
- ⇒ **Measuring Progress** – Many of the indicators of progress suggested by participants were measures of process such as participation and commitment of stakeholders (Aley, Bekaa, and Borj El Barajeneh), co-operation (Jal El Dib), and a common understanding between all stakeholders. Other more easily measurable indicators included implementation of project activities and action plans.
- ⇒ **Future Steps** – the groups suggested a variety of concrete and not-so-concrete actions that could be taken to internalise the “spirit of Agenda 21” into the normal functions of the municipalities, as a step towards sustainability. These included allocation of

municipality resources to implementing priority projects (Bekaa), a database of priority issues, better co-ordination in planning and implementation (Borj El Barajeneh, Bekaa, Jal El Dib), and better access to outside sources of funding (Bekaa), and more environmental awareness activities (Jal El Dib, Borj El Barajeneh). Aley focused on logistical aspects such as the appointment of a co-ordinator and integration of LA21 committees into existing municipality council mechanisms.

Programme Design

The programme design, as set out in the project document, was sketchy, perhaps deliberately so in order to allow for flexibility. However, this did not take into account the lack of experience and knowledge about LA21 or participatory processes in Lebanon. The project design also focussed solely on **environment as the LA21 process**, rather than emphasising environment as an entry point for tackling sustainable development issues within the municipalities.

Providing guidance to the programme team on a number of critical issues could have strengthened the project design:

1. **Criteria for selection of pilots** – how to develop these and to apply them in an objective manner, within given resource, political and time constraints;
2. **The approaches** to be used in initiating first contacts with pilots, and how to build on existing mechanisms and structures;
3. **Strategies** to overcome the lack of financial resources within the project for actual project implementation - e.g. by helping to identify and mobilise additional resources from other sources;
4. **Training for LA21 staff** – possible types of capacity building required, where to access the training resources, access to overseas training for the Capacity 21 programme team (as opposed to those from municipalities). For example the Capacity 21 team would have benefited from training in skills such as facilitation, conflict resolution, team building, building partnerships, monitoring and evaluation.
5. **Peer review and support** from outside Lebanon - (e.g. through a pairing arrangement with a LA21 in another country or through regular access to the services of a Capacity 21 Adviser).

However, in spite of these constraints, the programme staff have done an excellent job during the initial stages of project implementation to crystallise the vagueness of the project document into more concrete goals and specific activities¹⁸. This initiative has been one of the main reasons for the success of the LA21 project in Lebanon.

Programme Management

The MoE is the government agency responsible for the overall management of the LA21 programme. This Ministry has done an excellent job in managing the project, albeit within the constraints of its own mandate on environmental management. The expertise built up in the Capacity 21 unit within that Ministry, particularly on promoting participation for environmental management within a LA21 framework has laid a solid foundation for continued support to the four pilot municipalities in further development of their LA21

processes and plans. This has gone a long way towards achieving goal 3 (see above Box 1 page 5) to help sustain a national LA21 project in Lebanon.

The Capacity 21 team has, in addition, taken great pains to prepare detailed and analytical reports on progress in each of the pilots, as well as in the overall project. These reports indicate that programme staff are monitoring the effectiveness and impacts of project activities and results. The particular strengths of the national Capacity 21 team lie in the excellent support that has been given to the UNV co-ordinators and the manner in which the team works together, providing support for all field staff.

However, there are some areas in which the project management could be strengthened:

- ⇒ **Flexibility** – although the Capacity 21 team has adopted a flexible approach to some extent (for example by elaborating on the sparse objectives set out in the project document), the degree of flexibility has not been sufficient to allow the project to be tailored specifically to each of the pilots. In some ways, a ‘cook-book’ approach has been taken, especially with regard to the steps of a LA21 process. It appears that the flexibility in the project was a forced response to field situations rather than a management decision to be responsive to the needs of individual municipalities. Although this ‘learning by doing’ approach is useful in project management, it needs to be institutionalised and supported by changes in project management and implementation which allow the lessons to be analysed and adapted to the needs of different municipalities.
Flexibility in terms of the allocation of project resources (time and efforts) between the different pilots to meet their differing needs would have enabled the project to be more **responsive** and to make better progress in areas like Bekaa, which have a need for investment of greater resources.
- ⇒ **Selection of pilots** - the pilots selected for the project were diverse in terms of socio-economic status, environmental problems, social organisation and religious groups. As a result, there was little common ground between them and consequently very little sharing of experiences. A more analytical but practical approach to the selection of pilot project sites was needed to ensure that the pilots chosen were manageable within the limited human and financial resources available. For example, the conglomeration of municipalities in the Bekaa project (25 municipalities) was just too big for one co-ordinator to handle.
- ⇒ **Networking and co-operation** with other central government agencies needs to be strengthened. At present, other government ministries are not involved in the management of the LA21 project; it is important that central (such as the former Ministry of Municipalities and Urban Affairs, now merged into the Ministry of Interior) and line agencies (e.g. agriculture, health, etc) are fully involved in the LA21 project. This will help avoid institutionalising the false impression that LA21 is an environmental issue rather than a way of promoting sustainable development at the municipality level. Furthermore, this networking with government agencies would facilitate the identification of potential partners and resources for municipality council members at the central level.
- ⇒ **Networking between the pilots** is also virtually non-existent although project personnel did share their experiences with each other. All pilot projects expressed a desire to know more about each other’s LA21 projects. As one of the four primary goals is to promote national networks, the sharing of information, experiences and personnel between the pilots would be a first step.

- ⇒ **Networking with other UN programmes** – as part of a UNDP programme, the LA21 project could have networked with other UN programmes where municipalities are involved to exchange lessons and experiences in the support provided to local communities, in the framework of these other programmes. This would have promoted a sharing of experiences and learning from each other.
- ⇒ **Networking with LA21 municipalities in other countries**– the LA21 programme has facilitated visits by representatives from the pilot projects to municipalities in Belgium involved with LA21, as well as to Dubai. Feedback from those involved in the visits indicated that they all found the visits worthwhile. However, the project missed an opportunity to establish more sustainable linkages between the overseas municipalities and the pilot projects through exchanges between the municipalities rather than a one-off visit. For example, exchange visits by the Belgian municipalities to Lebanon would have enabled them to get a better understanding of the situation in Lebanon, and allowed them to perhaps provide more relevant support and advice to each other. Furthermore, the follow-up to these visits could have been better implemented and used as a platform for discussions on lessons learned, and shared with other pilots.
- ⇒ **Team work** - although the LA21 co-ordinators worked as a team, this stopped at personal interactions rather than systematic peer support and review. This includes sharing of facilitation tasks and evaluating each other's performance and providing feedback to help team members to improve their performance. This shortcoming can, however, be rectified to a large extent during the final phase of the project (see below).
- ⇒ **Training** - There was a lack of initial intensive training for the Capacity 21 team in participatory techniques at the beginning of the project that has constrained the project from fulfilling its full potential. The short training provided was too superficial, especially in light of the lack of experience and expertise about the LA21 process in Lebanon. The co-ordinators have been left to teach themselves and, as a result, much of their work has been based on theory rather than practical experience – they have followed published methods, without grasping the underlying essence of the methodologies. This applies particularly to training in basic skills such as facilitation, the key processes of a LA21, analysis and prioritisation of issues, and action planning.
- ⇒ **Monitoring and reporting** – The Capacity 21 team has consistently produced excellent periodic reports with clear analysis and reporting on key successes as well as gaps. However, these have not resulted in actions to build on successes or to remedy shortcomings in the project. For example, the need to move beyond environmental issues to address sustainable development issues in the pilot projects was identified in the early stages (e.g. in the first report⁹). However, no concerted action has been taken to rectify this situation by identifying ways to tackle the situation from the sharing of experiences.
- ⇒ **The Resource Guide** – produced for use by municipalities is a good start but needs considerable modification before it could be useful in the Lebanese context. In some ways, the guide contains too much information, much of it irrelevant to Lebanon. For example, the section on indicators, particularly defining indicators, is too academic to be meaningful for the pilots. There is also a need for more practical advice on organisation of committees within the context of existing structures, as well as on stakeholder involvement. Both of these need to be firmly grounded in Lebanese experiences. This is discussed further in the conclusion below.

Republic of Lebanon

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Center for Public Sector Projects and Studies

(C.P.S.P.S.)

Programme Implementation

The four pilot municipalities chosen for the Capacity 21 project are very diverse in terms of size, socio-economic status, and religious affiliations. Details of each of these pilots are given in the regular project reports¹⁰ and will not be repeated here.

The UNV project co-ordinators have done an excellent job in all the municipalities, laying a solid foundation for a future LA21. They have integrated well with their communities and established a rapport with key members of the community, both those involved in the LA21 process as well as the mayor and members of the municipality council. This has been achieved in spite of the difficulties faced in dealing with such a diversity of municipalities with little capacity building for the team in the requisite skills. As stated in the project reports, the co-ordinators had to find out their own information from various sources that were available to them. These included publications such as the ICLEI Local Agenda 21 Planning Guide¹¹, and resources available through the Internet (these publications are listed in the draft Resource Guide for Lebanese municipalities). Many of these guides, such as the ICLEI Planning Guide, were intended as a guide only – practitioners were meant to adapt these methods to suit their own situations. With little or no external advice or support, the co-ordinators have tended to follow procedures set out in overseas publications, which were not necessarily appropriate for a municipality in Lebanon.

Capacity 21 provided support for the programme team through a Canadian intern who spent some six months in Lebanon helping the project with issues such as monitoring and identifying key resources. This intern provided the team with much needed analytical skills but did not have the experience of LA21 processes that was particularly needed in Lebanon. The services of the intern needed to be augmented through the provision of technical advice from national (e.g. from some of the NGOs) or from international advisers (such as the Capacity 21 network of advisers).

In many ways, the UNV project co-ordinators have allowed pilots to move at their own pace through the LA21 process. This reflects a degree of flexibility that could have been institutionalised into the overall project to great advantage. If this flexibility could have been applied to, for example, the approach used to first work with a municipality, then the co-ordinators would have been in a better position to make use of existing mechanisms for community participation in the municipality as an entry point, rather than introducing the LA21 process as a new idea. It was not always necessary for the LA21 prescribed steps of community-based issue analysis, action planning and formulation of action plans to be applied rigidly. Identifying, integrating and building upon existing mechanisms and experiences of local community participation would have anchored the LA21 process more firmly in the work of the municipality council, and ensured that priorities already identified by the community and/or council were used as a more relevant entry point. The **sustainability** of the LA21 process would then have been better assured.

Representation by women in the LA21 committees and in the process varies between pilots. In some, for example Aley and Jal El Dib, women are taking a very active role. However, in others such as Borj El Barajeneh and Bekaa, their involvement is a lot less than that of men. This will need to be addressed through awareness raising about the importance of involving women and other underrepresented groups such as youth and the elderly; this can be best done through the stakeholder identification process.

Although the UNV co-ordinators have worked well with their communities, they need to keep in mind the importance of working with a number of individuals or groups in a municipality in order to promote wider involvement from the community in the LA21

process. The team has to find a balance between encouraging leadership and avoiding a situation where an individual can dominate and control the process. The enthusiasm of individuals, if harnessed and guided for the benefit of the community as a whole, can be a positive attribute rather than a hindrance. This would enable the co-ordinators to assist the LA21 pilots to identify the considerable individual and group capabilities within the communities, and harness these for the benefit of the municipality's LA21 process. At present, much of these talent and capacity remains unused by the LA21 projects, even though the self-assessment workshops identified human resources as their main asset (see above).

The Final Phase

The LA21 programme in Lebanon has laid a solid foundation over the last 15 months and, as the Capacity 21 programme enters its last three months, it is critical for sustainability that the progress made is consolidated through a number of key interventions. These interventions would help the project to make more substantial progress towards its stated goals (see Report of November 1998). These interventions are listed below in order to assist the LA21 in preparing its work plan for the last three months of the Capacity 21 programme, and to facilitate the transition from the Capacity 21 funded programme to a partnership between the MoE and the LA21 pilots. These are not listed in any order of priority; rather, it is up to the Capacity 21 team to consult with the pilot projects to determine the order of priority.

- ⇒ **Closer liaison between municipalities and government line agencies** as well as the Municipalities and Rural Affairs Division of the Ministry of Interior. This would help the pilot LA21s to access those services provided directly by central government to municipalities through the line agencies. The linkages with government agencies are a necessary condition for sustainability of the LA21 process and its integration into the main day-to-day activities of the municipality councils. Examples where this would benefit the LA 21 projects include Borj El Barajeneh (social services), Jal El Dib (Health) and Bekaa (agriculture).
- ⇒ **Networking between pilots-** this is one of the most important interventions, and one that can be done most easily with lasting and tangible benefits. The UNV co-ordinators have already laid the groundwork for this and there is an eagerness amongst the pilots to work more closely with each other. Some of the ways in which the Capacity 21 team can facilitate this networking is by:
 - Arranging visits between members of LA21 committees in the four pilots;
 - Identifying what human resources are available in each of the pilots and which could be shared within other pilots;
 - Joint facilitation of workshops by co-ordinators from different pilots;
 - Promoting sharing of expertise between LA21 committees in different pilots;
 - Promote sharing of different leadership styles so that all pilots become aware of how universal community participation can be best promoted;
 - Sharing of experiences about involvement of all stakeholders, particularly women. Some pilots have been able to do this well and their experiences can be shared, keeping in mind the cultural differences between the different sectarian groups.
 - Encouraging joint small-scale projects;
 - Promoting sharing of experiences between pilots;

- Promoting co-operation on joint problems (e.g. the pollution of the Litani river in Bekaa).
- ⇒ **Promote step-by-step approaches to problem solving** - this is an important part of the LA21 process, which some pilots have found difficult to grasp. They have tried (and failed) to tackle the big issues and, as a result have become disillusioned. However, other pilots have adopted a step-by-step approach and tackled the more manageable issues first. This has helped boost community self-confidence and promoted unity. These experiences could be shared through the networking between pilots.
- ⇒ **Training** – although some LA21 committee members in all the pilots have had some training in project preparation and the writing of proposals, these skills have to be more widely available within the community if the LA21 process is to be sustained beyond the life of the Capacity 21 project. The Capacity 21 team needs to identify key members in each of the pilots and provide more intensive training in these skills, specifically to enable them to transfer their skills to other members of their communities. The International Management Training Institute, (IMTI), which has already done some training for the project, is probably the best resource for this. Some of the funds currently allocated to the UTDA contract could be better used for this training (see below).
- ⇒ **Integrate Agenda 21 into municipalities processes and existing mechanisms** the Capacity 21 team should utilise the evaluation workshops as a time to take stock and to identify, with their pilot municipalities, how the “spirit”¹² of Agenda 21 could be integrated into the day-to-day work of the municipality through influencing the municipality councils and their existing municipality committees. In the time remaining to the project, it would only be possible to increase awareness of the importance of this issue. However, given the high level of commitment of LA21 committee members and the mayors in all four pilots, this would be a major step towards sustainability of the LA21 process.

A major part of this process would be **awareness and understanding** amongst the Capacity 21 team and the LA21 committees in all the pilots that although environment is an important component of sustainable development, **Agenda 21 is more than just environment**. The key principle of an integrated approach to tackling social, economic and environmental problems facing the community needs to be stressed, as well as principles such as a long term perspective and the need to address issues of equity (including gender). The Resource Guide could include information on how communities could go about doing this exercise (see below).

- ⇒ **Stakeholder involvement** - the evaluation workshops have indicated that there are gaps in the involvement of stakeholders in the LA21 process in all four pilot projects. The Capacity 21 team needs to address this issue in each of the pilots. This would be best done in small group exercises in workshops involving not just the LA21 committees, but other stakeholders from the community as well. The Resource Guide could include information on how communities could go about doing this to ensure a more equitable stakeholder balance on LA21 committees (where it is not already there).
- ⇒ **Gender** - The involvement of women in the LA21 committees must be promoted so that they are empowered to take up key decision-making roles in each of the LA21 committees. This would of course, be done within the cultural context of the particular

community. In those areas where the barriers to the involvement of women are strongest, the use of a women's committee to look at issues of importance to women and their role in that society could be used as an entry point. For example, in Borj El Barajeneh, many women are actively involved in council activities providing social services. Their involvement could be built on to promote their participation not only in the LA21 process, but also in the mainstreaming of LA21 into the municipality's council activities. The Resource Guide could include information on how communities could go about doing this to ensure a more equitable gender balance on LA21 committees (where it is not already there).

- ⇒ **Information on resources available within the community** – in ensuring that all stakeholders have been identified and empowered to participate in the LA21 process, the Capacity 21 team could also help communities to identify the human and other resources available within the community. This would help complete the analysis started during the evaluation workshops and assist the pilots to begin implementation of small projects to implement their LA21 plans. The Resource Guide could include information on how communities could go about doing this exercise (see below).
- ⇒ **Improved access to financial and other resources** from central government agencies as well as other sources (donors, NGOs, etc). Although the current draft of the Resource Guide lists some agencies that provide funding, etc, this information is not specific enough to help the LA21 committees at a practical level. The Capacity 21 team needs to research the possible sources of funding and other assistance, identify barriers to access (such as central government regulations), and to formulate practical guidelines that could be included in the revised Resource Guide (see below).

Resource Guide for Municipalities

The current draft Resource Guide needs to be revised to better meet the particular conditions facing the four pilot municipalities in the LA21 programme, as well as serving as a basis for a Resource Guide-cum-toolkit for a wider project (see below). The revision is possible now, in light of the experiences that the pilots have accumulated over the last 15 months – and the Capacity 21 team should be able to carry out this revision during the last three months of the project.

Recommendation 1

That the Capacity 21 team revise the draft Resource Guide, using the experiences gained in the pilots, with advice and peer review from Capacity 21 as well as other sources such as ICLEI.

Recommendation 2

That Capacity 21 enable the Capacity 21 team to access, by email, the services of a Capacity 21 Adviser to peer review the revision of the Resource Guide.

Some of the key issues that the Capacity 21 team could include in the revised guide include:

1. Short simple explanations, tailored to Lebanese conditions, of the various stages of the LA21 process. These would be based on the experiences of the pilots. A useful way to do this is to prepare the explanations first in Arabic with assistance from the LA21 committees, and then to translate this into English for peer review.

2. A toolkit with “how-to” practical exercises for participatory analysis on issues such as stakeholder identification, problem analysis, strategic and action planning, logical framework analysis, etc, tailored for use by communities and/or municipalities, as well as project co-ordinators. This would serve as a basis for a more comprehensive toolkit for the future LA21 programme.
3. Case studies from other developing and developed countries on the LA21 process that are relevant to Lebanon.
4. International and national networking opportunities, including an analysis of existing programmes.
5. A guide to funding sources accessible to Lebanese municipalities, giving information on the types of projects funded, the amounts of funding available for various purposes, addresses, contact people, and how to prepare proposals. This should include government, NGOs, as well as bilateral and multilateral donors.

The UTDA Contract

The LA21 management within MoE is well aware of the need to ensure the sustainability of the LA21 process in the four pilot projects, and of the limited resources available for the LA21 process from the MoE once Capacity 21 funding is finished. In order to assist the pilot municipalities during the transition between the Capacity 21 programme and going out on their own, with only limited support from MoE, the LA21 programme has proposed that UTDA be sub-contracted to help the pilots during this transition phase.

The evaluation team has looked at the relevance of the UTDA proposal for the LA21 programme and has a number of reservations about their proposal. These are:

1. The UTDA proposal is not based on the significant progress achieved by the four pilots and the project as a whole. The proposal appears to introduce its own agenda without relating it to the groundwork already done in the Capacity 21 project.
2. The UTDA proposal does not address the needs and priorities of the LA21 pilots. Rather, it appears to be a generic proposal for LA21 projects that is being applied to the pilots in the Capacity 21 project.
3. The proposal for overseas visits by the municipalities and the technical visits to Lebanon by European cities is laudable, but unless these visits address specific needs for the pilot municipalities, they could end up being a waste of time and money.
4. The proposal does not address the need for the type of “how-to” toolkit needed by the pilots; rather it proposes “more of the same”, i.e. another resource guide similar to the one in draft form.
5. The proposal for an exhibit is irrelevant to the stage of development of the pilots – they have already achieved significant progress and the need is to consolidate this with specific training and awareness raising rather than general activities.

Recommendation 3

That MoE and the UNDP Country Office review the proposed UTDA contract, and revise it to address the specific needs of the Capacity 21 pilots during the last phase of the project.

The evaluation team considers that the funds could be used to address the following specific needs of the pilots:

- ⇒ **Overseas exchanges** - all the pilot municipalities would benefit from exchanges with overseas municipalities that have something to offer Lebanon in terms of their LA21 processes. These should be designed to promote dialogue between Lebanese municipalities and those overseas, i.e. they should be exchanges rather than visits from Lebanon to a developed country.
- ⇒ **Training** - there is an urgent need for further training of key individuals within each pilot in participatory planning and implementation methods, and writing of proposals. These individuals would then be able to train and/or help others in the community through action-oriented training. Joint training of the key individuals will help to initiate a sense of networking amongst the pilot projects.
- ⇒ Some of the funds should be made available to the pilots as **small grants**, to provide seeding money to enable them to carry out small projects, to complement their own resources as well as council funds (where available).

LEARNING FROM THE LA21 PROJECT

Lessons Learned

The LA 21 project has a number of key features which help to draw out lessons and best practices that give some guidance for the design and implementation of future programmes for strengthening local government in Lebanon. These lessons are discussed below under a series of headings derived from the evaluation of the Capacity 21 programme.

Programme design

The management of the LA21 programme has taken a creative and flexible approach in implementing a programme for which the design gave little or no guidance on critical issues. Although they have achieved a considerable success, this has been constrained by gaps in the initial programme design.

The **first lesson** to be drawn from this is to remember **the basic principles of project cycle management**. The design of a project or programme is a critical factor in determining whether it will achieve its stated purpose or not, and whether the achievements will be sustainable. The design must be worked out through a **logical and analytical** process. The results of this logical analysis is then articulated in a framework for the project or programme, which **clearly states its purpose**, and gives **some direction as to how** this purpose is to be achieved. However, the design **must not be taken as a blueprint** that is set out in the project document and rigidly adhered to during implementation. The design must allow managers some flexibility to be able to respond to needs of municipalities and changes of circumstance. **The project or programme design has to find that delicate balance between providing clear direction and guidance while allowing for a degree of flexibility.**

The **second lesson** is that this combination of an analytical but flexible approach to project or programme design can be best achieved through a **preparatory design phase based on participatory planning methods**. This allows for responsiveness to local conditions and flexibility of approach to be built into the project design, while helping to build capacity within a country through the process of designing the project or programme.

Entry points

The **entry points for a programme must be demand-driven and not supply-driven**. In other words, entry points must be selected by a programme team in response to actual and perceived community needs and priorities. The LA21 programme may help the community to identify and articulate their needs and priorities, but should not determine these according to its own agenda. This would help to anchor the project within the community and ensure that existing resources, initiatives, mechanisms and institutions within the municipalities are utilised to their best potential.

This is an important lesson from the Capacity 21 programme – the use of environment as an entry point has constrained the ability of the Capacity 21 team to respond to the actual needs of their community and to make the best use of available resources and existing mechanisms for participation within the municipalities. In some ways, many LA21 committee members see the resolution of environment issues as an end in itself, rather than as a means to achieve the ends of sustainable human development.

Flexibility

The underlying philosophy and principles of Agenda 21 stress the importance of flexibility in working with communities, as well as in analysis of community issues and formulation of LA21 action plans. **The entire LA21 process must be tailored to the municipality or community, within the overall framework of the LA21 and/or programme philosophy.** This includes aspects such as:

- selection of municipalities or communities,
- how the LA21 is initiated;
- the subsequent process and procedures followed;
- how the community involvement is organised;
- identification of resources and capabilities within the community;
- identification of stakeholders and their involvement;
- analysis and action planning;
- allocation of project resources (funds and people); and
- types of capacity building.

This **'horses for courses'** approach would enable the project to make optimal use of existing mechanisms and resources within the municipalities that promote sustainable development. This approach would also help to ensure that the LA21 project inculcates the 'spirit' of Agenda 21 into existing processes and mechanisms within the municipality. These are prerequisites for the sustainability of the LA21 process.

Capacity building

The lessons from the LA21 programme identify that **capacity building is an important prerequisite** for a LA21 programme as the concepts and practices of participatory and analytical approaches to local governance are relatively new in Lebanon. This capacity building is required at a number of levels:

1. **Capacity building for the programme team(s)** - The Capacity 21 team has had to learn as it went along about LA21 processes and principles. Although such a

pragmatic approach can be useful at times, it requires a team that has the capacity to translate generic principles and approaches to suit the needs and conditions of their own pilot projects. **This team also needs to have continued access to support and advice from an experienced source, either within Lebanon, or from overseas.** In the absence of the capacity building and external advice, the team's approach was to follow procedures set out in publications from overseas, which meant that many opportunities were missed. The teams require an understanding of the underlying process of Agenda 21 (see Appendix 3), as well as training in team building, leadership, dealing with different styles of leadership, facilitation techniques, and participatory analysis and planning methods. The programme team would then be able to tailor the training programmes to suit Lebanese conditions.

2. **Capacity building for the municipality councils and committees** is necessary to ensure sustainability and a smooth transition from an externally funded and managed project funding to a self-sustaining process. The types of training would be similar to that for the project teams, but would focus more on aspects of participation, leadership and management training relevant to municipality governments. The training would be tailored by the training teams to the particular situation of each municipality or groups of municipalities and would introduce municipalities to new ways of running their government and using their resources.
3. **Capacity building for communities** to empower them to participate in the activities of the municipality council as well as the activities of LA21 project. These will include awareness raising about Agenda 21 principles, as well as some training in participatory analysis and planning skills so that community members can make an effective contribution.

Training Guide

A **Resource Guide** is needed but must be **tailored to the specific needs, priorities and conditions of municipalities in Lebanon.** A manual (or even parts of a manual) 'borrowed' from overseas or elsewhere can be dangerous if applied rigidly. The LA21 process does not thrive on a prescribed approach, as it can be counter productive and inflexible, and miss out on opportunities and strengths within the community or municipality.

A more useful tool is a '**toolkit**' that brings together approaches, techniques, methodologies and experiences from a range of sources – both from LA21 sources and from other participatory planning approaches such as Participatory Rural Appraisal or PRA,¹³ or Participatory Action Research (PAR). These tools for the kit should be revised and adapted for Lebanese conditions by the Capacity 21 team working with their communities and municipalities, with assistance from local training resources (NGOs, other donor programmes, universities, etc) as needed.

Implementation of Priority Projects

The LA21 programme in Lebanon was funded with the underlying philosophy of Capacity 21, which is to act as a catalyst by building capacity in order to 'help people to help themselves'. Therefore the programme did not provide any direct funding for implementation of LA21 activities. This has led to much frustration and disillusionment within the community, and constrained community action.

Therefore, it is important that any **future programme for local government must back up the capacity building and organising activities with some form of funding for the implementation of priority projects**, albeit on a small scale. This would be best achieved in a future programme with small amounts of seeding money available as grants or loans to 'kick-start' the implementation of LA21 projects. The seeding money should also be supported by enabling access to other more substantial sources of funding from a variety of sources – the municipality itself, community action, central government sources, NGOs, and other donors, as well as promoting partnerships with the private sector for investment in the provision of municipality services. The emphasis throughout should be on support for cost-recovery and self-financing projects.

Networking

One of the stated goals of the LA21 programme was to **promote networking** to link the pilot projects to other municipalities within Lebanon, and with municipalities overseas. This is one of the areas not addressed as yet in the programme and one which provides a crucial lesson from the current programme – that the programme alone cannot provide the resources for capacity building that are needed for a sustainable LA21 process. Sharing of experiences between pilot projects, with other municipalities in Lebanon, and with municipalities overseas is a critical part of capacity building.

The sharing of experiences should not be seen as 'visits' or even 'study tours', both of which imply a one-way transfer of information. The emphasis should be **on exchange visits, designed to promote dialogue between municipalities from Lebanon and overseas**, to foster lasting networks that will promote continued peer support and assistance for both sets of partner municipalities.

National framework

The existing central government institutions such as line ministries are responsible for delivery of certain services directly to municipalities¹⁴. These services are meant to complement the work of the municipality councils. The current LA21 project appears to have involved only one line ministry, MoE, in the project activities and the relationship with other ministries (e.g. Ministry of Social Services in Borj El Barajeneh) appear to be incidental to the work of the LA21 projects. The LA 21 process must work within the **existing national legislative, legal and institutional framework** – this is crucial if the LA21 process is to be sustained beyond the life of the Capacity 21 project.

The existing legislative framework in Lebanon is an enabling one with respect to the functions of municipalities, at least in theory if not in practice. However, for sustainability, the LA21 projects must work alongside and through existing central government institutions to bring them in to the LA21 process. This is an important consideration for the design and implementation of a future programme for local government.

Sustainability

All the lessons summarised above contribute to the sustainability of the LA21 process and to the integration of the spirit of Agenda 21 into the normal day-to-day working of the municipality councils. The **'spirit' of Agenda 21** includes a number of key principles (Appendix 3) that would **become part of the normal 'culture' of a municipality** that is implementing a LA21. Thus some aspects of the LA21 process, such as participation are important, but only as the means to an end – not an end in themselves. The end goal for the

municipalities is sustainable human development – a just and equitable society that meets their basic needs and allows all citizens to participate and to achieve their full potential.

The LA21 process should also seek to identify existing community resources within the municipality – human, financial, and institutional – and utilise them for the benefit of the LA21 project. The aim is to ‘help people to help themselves’, hence Capacity 21’s emphasis on capacity building.

The LA21 Pilots: Potential for Replication

The Lebanon Capacity 21 programme on LA21 was designed as a pilot (see box 2). The purpose was to test, for the first time in Lebanon, an existing concept, i.e. that of a Local Agenda 21, which has been adopted in a number of different countries around the world with success. The Capacity 21 pilot project was timely as it coincided with the first municipality elections in Lebanon for 35 years and was consistent with the Ta’if Accord¹⁵ under which Lebanon is to institutionalise a decentralised system of government and revitalise local government. Thus the time was ripe for piloting a tried and tested LA21 process in Lebanon.

Box 2: Critical elements of Piloting¹⁶

- a) Testing a tried and tested approach for the first time in a new environment to evaluate its **effectiveness in solving an existing problem**.
- b) Testing an existing approach for the first time in a new environment to evaluate its **replicability**.
- c) **Demonstrate the practical application** of a new approach to help people understand its benefits and to **generate support and commitment**.
- d) Build up a **body of experience** about a new approach that can assist in further replication or upscaling.
- e) **Build capacity** within a country for implementing a new approach.

These critical elements provide a framework for answering the question: “What is the potential for replication of the LA21 concept in Lebanon?”

- a) **Effectiveness in tackling an existing situation** – the response would be a qualified “Yes”. The LA21 pilots have laid a solid foundation for further consolidation of the LA21 process in all four of the pilot projects, and have demonstrated the added value to the municipality of building unity and consensus around issues that affect the entire community. However, they have failed to fully exploit the potential benefits of the LA21 projects by focusing on the environment, and failing to address those social and economic issues of greatest concern to the four pilot municipalities. The “cook-book” approach has also meant that the LA21 has not been able to tap the existing resources, opportunities, capabilities, and mechanisms within the municipalities.
- b) **Replicability** – the response to this questions is definitely a “yes” in that many of the lessons learned and best practices adopted by the LA21 project can be replicated elsewhere in Lebanon, with the necessary modifications.
- c) **Demonstration of practical application** – within the four municipalities, the LA21 programme has certainly demonstrated the added value of the LA21 approaches,

particularly with regard to participation. They have focused on practical issues, albeit only within the constraints of environment. However, the workshop discussions indicate that at least some of the community participants see the potential for applying these approaches widely in the municipality.

The demonstration of the value added by the LA21 projects is less well known in other municipalities in Lebanon and amongst other players at the national level. This can be rectified during the closing three months of the project through concerted efforts to increase awareness of the LA21 project amongst line ministries and others from government as well as the donor community in Lebanon.

- d) **Build a body of experience** – the LA21 programme has built up a considerable body of experience on the application of the LA21 process in Lebanon, particularly amongst the core Capacity 21 team as well as in the pilots. This body of experience (at present within the MoE) is a national resource that should be made available to all government agencies, as well as to the future expanded local government programme in Lebanon (see below).

The most significant body of experience, with the greatest potential benefit, is amongst the members of the LA21 committees in each of the pilot projects. This body of experience must be nurtured and harnessed for the benefit of other municipalities through the future expanded LA21 programme.

- e) **Build capacity** – the project has built capacity for participatory planning approaches within the MoE as well as in the four pilot municipalities. This capacity needs to be further strengthened and linked to capacities within other organisations in Lebanon, both within government ministries, universities and the non-government sector. The foundations have therefore been laid for replication and upscaling of the pilot concept into an expanded programme for LA21 in Lebanon.

A FUTURE PROGRAMME FOR STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN LEBANON

This section of the evaluation report addresses the third objective in the team's terms of reference and outlines the main thrust for a future programme to strengthen local government in Lebanon. This section begins with some brief background on local government in Lebanon, identifies some key elements for the programme, and goes on to describe the main components of the programme, its linkages with the UN System Common Workplan for Lebanon, and the main recommendations of the evaluation team for the preparation of the programme.

Background

Local Government in Lebanon

There have been a number of comprehensive reviews^{17, 18} of local government in Lebanon in recent years and therefore only a summary of the current situation is given here.

There are three levels of local government administration in Lebanon. The country is divided into six governorates (Mohafaza) or districts, and 24 sub-districts ('Qada), and 708 municipalities:

- **Mohafaza** are headed by a Mohafiz (governor) who is appointed by the Council of Ministers and who report directly to the Ministry of Interior. The Mohafiz represents the government at the district or regional level. His role is to administer all laws, regulations, and directives from central government at the district, sub-district, 'qada, and municipality levels, as well as administering all matters relating to civil servants. The Mohafaza are purely administrative districts without any legal personality.¹⁹
- **'Qada** are sub-districts, with each Mohafaza being divided into 3-6 'qada (except for Beirut). With the exception of those qada' where the Mohafiz has his office, the 'Qada are headed by a Qa'immaqam, appointed by the Council of Ministers. 'Qada are purely administrative units without any legal personality, with tasks similar to the Mohafaza.
- **Municipalities** are headed by an elected municipality council with decision-making powers, and an elected mayor or president of the municipality as the executive. The municipalities are legal entities under two recent pieces of legislation: the Legislative Decree 118 of 30 June 1977, subsequently modified by Law 665 of 29 November 1997. They are defined by Decree as "a local administration that enjoys within its geographical boundaries the power delegated to it by law. It enjoys moral personality and administrative and financial autonomy within the limits defined by law."

The 1977 legislation and its modification in 1997, provide a sound enabling legislative and legal framework for a decentralised system of local government in Lebanon. This legislation gives the municipalities the responsibility to provide services within their jurisdiction in a number of areas such as public health, environment, public education, and social affairs. In theory, the municipalities also have powers to raise revenues from a number of sources such as certain property taxes, fees, licences, and permits. However, in reality, the municipalities are dependent on central government for much of their revenue whilst their ability to deliver many services are constrained by lack of finance, qualified staff, and poor infrastructure. As a result, many services are provided by line government ministries, many of which have representation in the municipalities or the 'qada.²⁰

Current Initiatives for strengthening Local Government

Since the Ta'if Accord of 1989, and the recent municipality elections in June 1998, there has been considerable donor interest in strengthening local government in Lebanon. These include a number of initiatives from bilateral donors, among which:

- ⇒ USAID funds a rural development programme implemented through a number of US NGOs, which provides training and funding for local communities to implement social and economic development projects.
- ⇒ USAID also provides funding for training activities for municipalities through the Lebanon Office of the SUNY Project (Southern University of New York), which is a valuable training resource for any future capacity building programme.
- ⇒ The International Management and Training Institute (IMTI), which provides training in participatory planning methods for local government and NGOs, is a valuable local resource. IMTI is also funded through USAID.
- ⇒ The CERMOC (Center for Research and Studies on Contemporary Middle East), funded by the French Government, carries out research into local government issues which could be relevant to the future LA21 programme.

⇒ UTDA, an international NGO with an office in Lebanon, and which is funded by donors and municipalities in Europe, provides training and opportunities for exchange visits by Lebanese municipalities to European cities.

In addition to these bilateral programmes, the UN system has a number of initiatives that impact on local government in Lebanon. A survey of these initiatives was carried out in April 1999²¹ and identified the following:

- UNICEF – is involved in three projects on primary health care services for mothers and children, literacy and vocational training for working children, and basic education. These projects work with several municipalities in partnership with government agencies, and UNICEF, as well as cost sharing from NGOs. This is a model similar to the LA21 programme - municipality, central government agency (MoE), and UNDP - and could provide an opportunity to bring in other central government agencies (in addition to MoE) into the future programme.
- WHO – although WHO do not have a specific project working with municipalities in Lebanon, they have a number of initiatives that impact on local government. These include:
 - The Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies is currently carrying out a review of laws and regulations governing municipal councils to assess the ability of municipalities to operate and manage Ministry Public Health Centres.
 - WHO is to launch a joint pilot project with the Ministry of Public Health in four 'qadas and one Mohafaza to build comprehensive district-level health information systems.
 - WHO is also involved in the development of “healthy villages” in the Baalbeck-Hermel regional development project under UNDP.
- FAO – in partnership with the World Bank and the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO is helping to disseminate information to all municipalities to help them define their needs for local rural development.
- UNDP – a number of initiatives under the CCF – see below.

This brief summary indicates a number of ongoing initiatives, which the future local government programme would be able to link up with. There is also significant potential for a co-ordinated and joint approach for the UN system to work with municipalities.

The Government of Lebanon - UNDP CCF

The main purpose of the Government of Lebanon – UNDP Country Co-operation Framework is to assist the Government to promote sustainable human development²² by focusing assistance on three thematic areas: (1) Governance and Institution Building, (2) Social Development and Poverty Alleviation, and (3) Management of the Natural Environment.

Within the overall CCF, there are a number of sectoral programmes, which address one or more of these areas of focus. These include protected area conservation, conservation of agro-biodiversity, protection of Wetlands and Coastal Areas, etc. Many of these are likely to have potential linkages with the future local government programme. However, the best opportunity for linkage of the local government programme would be through the cross-sectoral regional programmes, which provide the best entry points for the future programme to strengthen local government in Lebanon (see discussion and recommendations below).

Critical elements of a future programme

The evaluation team has identified some critical elements for a future programme for capacity building for local government in Lebanon. These elements are derived from the lessons learned from the existing LA21 programme, and are grouped below under headings similar to those used for the lessons from the current project (but not necessarily in the same order). These critical elements, which should be part of the design, management and implementation of the future programme, are:

Entry points

The future programme for capacity building for local government in Lebanon should **work through and support** the existing UNDP regional programmes as entry points. Utilising these four regional programmes would help the capacity building programme for local government to build on the groundwork already established by ongoing programmes, and would help to ensure that the interventions of the programmes support the priority needs of municipalities. The future programme would also introduce the regional programmes, where necessary, to the participatory and integrated approaches to sustainable human development inherent in Agenda 21. The four regional development programmes are:

- ⇒ Leb/96/100 United Nations Integrated Rural Development Programme for Baalbeck-Hermel
- ⇒ Leb/98/004 National Programme for Improving Living Conditions (implemented in the region of Akkar)
- ⇒ Leb/98/001 Reintegration and Socio-Economic Rehabilitation of Displaced (implemented in the region of Chouf)
- ⇒ Leb/96/004 South Lebanon Post-Conflict Socio-Economic Rehabilitation Programme.

By working through and supporting the regional programmes by building capacity for participatory and integrated approaches to development, the future local government programme would be able to strengthen municipalities in implementing the right to development at the local level.

As stated in the lessons identified from the current LA21 programme, the emphasis should be on a **demand-driven** approach (i.e. meeting the needs and priorities of municipalities) rather than a supply-driven one (i.e. what the programme has to offer).

The local government programme should be seen as a **supporting** programme that helps each of the regional programmes to achieve its objectives and to contribute to the overall goal of the Lebanon CCF by promoting sustainable human development through empowerment of municipalities and local communities. Thus each of the regional programmes and the LA21 programme would work together to produce shared outcomes in terms of the UNDP Strategic Results Framework for Lebanon.

Programme design

The local government programme should be designed so that it is able to respond to the needs and priorities of each of the municipalities in which it is operating, rather than imposing any outside agenda on them. In this way, the programme would take an integrated approach to the work of the municipalities and not choose a thematic entry point. The programme should also target its resources strategically, and work with individual

municipalities, rather than trying to tackle groups or unions of municipalities in order to make the best use of available resources.

This will require a **flexible** and incremental approach to the design of the programme, best achieved through a preparatory assistance phase lasting about six months. The preparatory phase would use analytical and participatory planning approaches to identify the details of each of the programme components, the types of interventions needed, and the approaches to be used (see below). In this way, it would be possible to help ensure that the programme both **supports** the efforts of each of the regional programmes and is **responsive** to the needs and priorities of each of the municipalities included in the programme.

The future local government programme would seek **to build on existing mechanisms and processes** within the municipalities, to ensure optimal use of their own resources, maximise the chances of ownership and promote sustainability of the spirit of Agenda 21.

The future programme would also build on what has been achieved within the current Capacity 21 programme for LA21. This could be best achieved by ensuring that the future programme is initiated immediately after the end of the current LA21 programme. The future programme could then:

- ⇒ Utilise the increased awareness of LA21 approaches, within the UN System, to establish linkages with the UNDP regional programmes and projects of other UN agencies.
- ⇒ Use the existing participatory planning capacity within MoE to both support and help the future programme get off to a good start, and to ensure that this capacity is shared with other Lebanese government ministries.
- ⇒ Harness the capacity within the pilot municipalities for LA21 approaches by involving key people from the pilots as resource people in the training activities and the preparation of the future programme.

Capacity building

The main focus of the future LA21 programme should be on capacity building for all stakeholders – the programme teams, municipalities, national government agencies likely to be involved in delivery of programmes at the municipality level, and community beneficiaries. The emphasis would be on a flexible and responsive approach to capacity building, utilising national resources as much as possible. The existing LA21 programme team within MoE, as well as key people in each of the pilot municipalities, are a valuable resource that can be tapped for capacity building for the future programme.

Implementation of projects

The future local government programme would focus on capacity building, but would also assist communities and municipalities to implement priority or pilot projects. This would help avoid the situation with the existing LA21 programme whereby LA21 committees are frustrated and disillusioned because they see much talk, but little action. The programme would seek to facilitate access to funding (e.g. through the UNDP regional programmes) rather than providing direct funding.

To enable municipalities to implement actual solutions to problems identified through the programme, **revolving funds** for municipalities focusing on income-generating activities and **micro-credit schemes** to support local projects are possible options for inclusion in the

programme to be formulated. The delivery mechanisms for these are likely to be through the existing activities of the regional programmes, supported by the capacity building programme. There would also be an opportunity to bring in other UNDP Global programmes such as the Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) which seek to promote partnerships between local government and the private sector in order to provide essential municipality services.

UN System

The future LA21 programme would work within the existing UN framework, i.e. through the UN System Common Workplan in Lebanon. Whenever possible, the programme should try and bring in, or link up, with existing activities of the UN system, either small-scale projects, (e.g. UNICEF) or sectoral programmes (e.g. WHO). This would enable the programme to make optimal use of the varied expertise of the UN system within Lebanon, as well as on the global scale. Examples include the small-scale projects of UNICEF carried out in co-operation with national agencies and NGOs, the considerable experience of WHO in the global "Healthy Cities" campaign, the expertise of FAO in agriculture and forestry, the experience of Habitat in the "Sustainable Cities" campaign, as well as UNDP's own experience with the PPP global programme.

National framework

The future programme would work within the existing government framework, seeking to influence it to provide a supportive and enabling environment for empowerment of local government in Lebanon. The supportive and enabling national framework is consistent with the Ta'if Accord, and the legislative decrees of 1977 and 1997, which together provide the enabling legislative and legal framework for promoting decentralisation by strengthening local government in Lebanon.

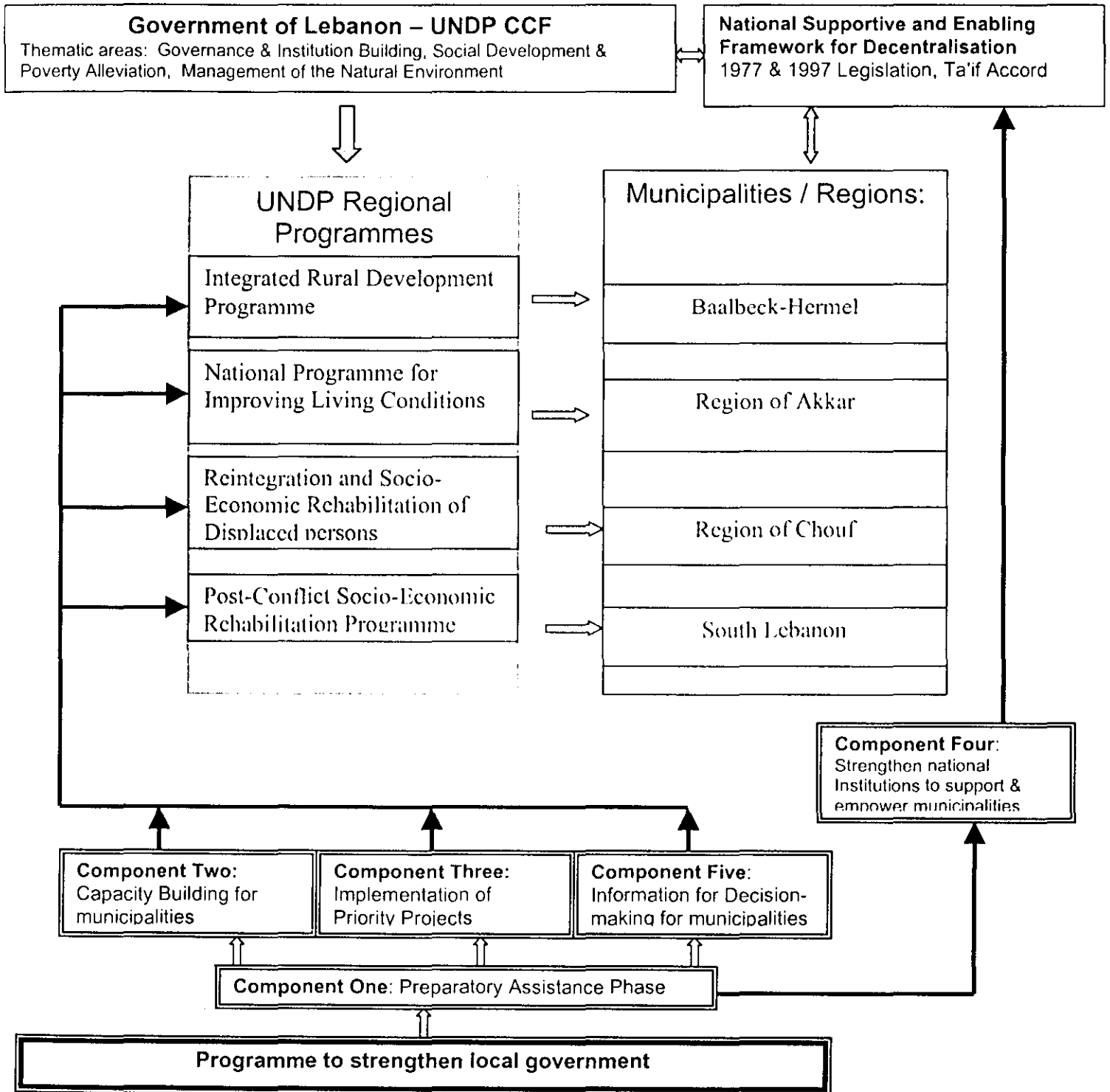
Decentralisation has been identified as a key element of the general reform of administration implemented by the government in Lebanon, but the process itself is still at a very early stage. The recent merger of the Ministry of Municipalities and Rural Affairs with the Ministry of Interior is one of the first decisions taken by the Government in this field.

Key Features of a future LA21 programme

Programme components

The programme components would correspond to the programme's immediate objectives, and support the Government of Lebanon-UNDP CCF by working through and supporting the UNDP regional programmes (Figure 1). These components include a preparatory phase, capacity building, implementation of priority projects in municipalities, mainstreaming to ensure sustainability, and information for decision-making.

Figure 1: Proposed programme for strengthening local government in Lebanon.



Recommendation 4

That the future programme for capacity building for local government in Lebanon support and work through the four existing UNDP regional programmes in Lebanon.

Component One

The first component of the future programme would be a **Preparatory assistance phase** to formulate a detailed programme strategy and design for the capacity building programme to strengthen municipalities.

Recommendation 5

That the future programme for capacity building for local government in Lebanon be designed through a 6 month preparatory assistance phase.

The detailed strategy and design of this preparatory phase would be worked out by an international programme formulation team during an initial mission of about three weeks at the start of the preparatory phase (see Appendix 4 for draft ToR). The international team of 3 to 4 people would include representatives from the UNDP Country Office, a key UN agency such as Habitat, and Capacity 21.

Recommendation 6

That the preparatory assistance phase is formulated by a joint UN agency team during a three-week mission. This design team would include representatives from the UNDP – Country Office, WHO, Habitat, and Capacity 21. This international programme formulation team would work and support a national design team which includes members of the future programme team, as well as representatives from Lebanese Government agencies such as the Ministry of Interior and MoE.

During the formulation mission, the international team would work with a national team, helping to build capacity within that team for participatory planning through appropriate training and advice, using the design of the preparatory phase as an actual case study. The national team will then be responsible for the preparation of the detailed design for the future programme for strengthening local government, with support and peer review from the international team as required. The national team would include:

- ⇒ The four national UNVs from the future local government programme, who will be located in each of the four regional programmes;
- ⇒ The national programme manager for the future programme;
- ⇒ A representative from the division of Municipalities in the Ministry of the Interior;
- ⇒ Two representatives from the current Capacity 21 team within the MoE.

In preparing the detailed programme design, the national team will consult with all stakeholder groups within each of the four regional programmes to ensure that the programme design reflects the actual needs and priorities of the municipalities involved. This team will also consult potential partners for the programme such as the specialised UN agencies, multilateral and bilateral donors, and relevant government agencies such as the line ministries. The team will also draw on the experiences of the four pilot projects in the Capacity 21 programme in designing the components of the future programme. During the preparatory phase, the international team would provide support and advice to this national team as required by email, phone or fax.

The possible outputs from this preparatory phase include:

- ⇒ **Identification of capacity building needs** in the programme teams, municipalities, communities and in the national government counterpart agencies.
- ⇒ **Identification of training resources** in Lebanon.
- ⇒ **Identification of opportunities and needs for networking** of municipalities, within Lebanon, and overseas (e.g. through UN programmes such as the “Healthy Cities” campaign).
- ⇒ Identification of **opportunities for support of priority projects** within municipalities, e.g. through donor or central government funding, or through programmes such as the PPP.
- ⇒ **Recommendations on approaches** to be adopted for each of the four regional programmes, especially on how other UN agencies and central government agencies are to be included in the programme.
- ⇒ Criteria for selection of municipalities, formulated in consultation with the national government counterpart agency and the UNDP regional programmes.
- ⇒ Linkages established with central government line agencies, the Ministry of Interior, other UN agencies, and programmes of other donors.

Component Two

Capacity building The programme would take a broad view of capacity building to include training, exchange visits, peer support, and networking with municipalities in Lebanon and abroad. The capacity building would be at a number of levels:

- ⇒ LA21 and regional programme teams;
- ⇒ Municipal councils and committees or groups within each of the municipalities involved in the programme;
- ⇒ Local communities who are involved in, and benefit from, the programme.
- ⇒ The national counterpart agency and line ministries working with the regional programmes and the LA21 programme.

The capacity building activities should be tailored to the needs and capabilities of each of these target groups. The programme should utilise and strengthen existing **national** training resources (e.g. IMTI), with support and advice from outside where required. The programme would also utilise the capacity for LA21 approaches that has been built in the pilot municipalities, as well as in the MoE.

Recommendation 7

That the future programme for capacity building for local government in Lebanon utilise existing national capacities and organisations, as well as the capacity of the pilot municipalities and the MoE as training resources.

This component would also include the preparation of a **Resource kit** for use initially by the programme training teams, but which would be adapted by the training teams for eventual use by the municipalities themselves, as well as national government agencies.

The expected **outcome** would be the establishment of systems and capacities for participatory planning and implementation in all municipalities, which would seek to

influence the culture within municipalities and to strengthen their ability to promote the right to development at the local level.

Component Three

Implementation of priority projects - The future programme would focus on capacity building but, by working through the regional programmes, it would enable communities and municipalities to access funding for implementation of their priority projects. This would be best achieved through the regional programmes by providing access to small amounts of seeding money available either as grants or loans to 'kick-start' the implementation of LA21 projects. The seeding money should also be supported by enabling access to other more substantial sources of funding from a variety of sources -- the municipality itself, community action, central government sources, NGOs, and other donors. The focus would be on a self-sustaining process -- support and funding for activities that are income generating and for micro-credit schemes. The emphasis would be on support for cost-recovery and self-financing projects, possibly through promoting partnerships with the private sector.

Component Four

The component would facilitate the development of a supportive and enabling environment at the national level that could support and strengthen local government in Lebanon. The programme would work within the existing legislative framework in Lebanon (the 1977 and 1997 decrees) to assist the Government put that legislation into effect by helping to strengthen the national-level institutional framework for empowering municipalities. This includes those national-level institutions whose activities and powers define the ability of local government to carry out the functions designated under existing legislation. The programme will focus on capacity building and institutional strengthening of central government ministries with responsibilities for municipalities, such as the Ministry of Interior, and line ministries responsible for delivery of services at the local level (e.g. Ministry of Social Services).

The national counterpart for the future local government programme should be the Ministry of Interior. The activities under this would enhance and strengthen the capacities of this Ministry to provide a supportive and enabling national framework for local government in Lebanon. One of the first tasks would be to assist this Ministry to articulate and implement a national policy for decentralisation in relation to local authorities, to put into effect the Ta'if Accord as well as the 1977 and 1997 legislation.

In the long run, the programme should be located in the Ministry of Interior as soon as this government agency clarified its interests to interact with, and benefit from, the programme.

Component Five

This component would focus on two areas. The **first** would be to enhance decision making at the local level by developing and/or enhancing integrated **information systems** accessible to all stakeholders. This would include the municipality councils as well as their communities. The emphasis would be on sustainable development information that includes social, economic and environmental information. This information would also enable national ministries and agencies to improve the delivery of their services at the municipality and local levels.

The **second** would be to develop and implement **monitoring and learning** strategies within each of the regional programmes. These strategies would enable the programmes to monitor their own performance and to incorporate lessons learned into their programmes as they are being implemented. The strategies would also be used by municipalities to monitor their performance and to make course changes as needed. The monitoring and learning strategies would help to take an integrated approach to the Strategic Results Framework and promote an integrated approach by the regional programmes.

Programme management

The national counterpart for the future local government programme should be the Ministry of Interior. This agency should therefore host the implementation mechanism. But during the early stages, this arrangement may not be possible as that Ministry has just recently taken over responsibility for local government from MOMRA. Therefore, the evaluation team suggests that an implementation mechanism including a programme manager be located temporarily in the UNDP country office to co-ordinate programme activities. This programme manager would work closely with the programme officer acting as the focal point for local governance, as well as with the programme officers and managers of the four regional programmes.

Four National UNVs, located in each of the regional development programmes, and ideally originating from these regions, would assist this programme manager and work with the staff of the regional programmes already established in the field. These UNVs would facilitate the implementation of activities with the municipalities and network so as to benefit from the experiences and lessons learnt in each of the four regions.

In future however, as roles and responsibilities are clarified and institutional capacity is strengthened, the Ministry of the Interior should assume a more active role in programme management.

Programme Funding

The evaluation team estimates that the total cost of the future programme for capacity building for local government (components one to five) would be approximately \$800,000 for a three-year programme of support. The evaluation team has also indicated the sources of funding for each of the components – this is a preliminary indication at this stage for components two to five. The only firm recommendation is for component one, the preparatory phase – the detailed budget and sources of funding for the other components will be worked out by the formulation mission during the preparatory phase.

Capacity 21 provided funding for the LA21 programme in Lebanon, which has laid the foundations for the future capacity building programme for municipalities. This future programme will support the regional programmes, and help to integrate their activities by building capacity for integrated and participatory approaches within municipalities in the four regions. In this way, the future programme will enable the application of Agenda 21 principles (such as participation and integration) into the UNDP country programme.

This provides the rationale for follow-up funding by Capacity 21 to support the future programme for local government in Lebanon, by supporting the global Capacity 21 strategy to promote the mainstreaming of Agenda 21 principles into UNDP country programmes.

Recommendation 8

That Capacity 21 consider providing additional funding of up to \$300,000 towards the implementation of the future programme for capacity building for local government in Lebanon.

The preliminary estimates by the team for the programme funding, broken down by components, are:

Component One - an allocation of \$70,000. This would be used for the preparatory phase of the programme, including the in-country costs of the programme formulation mission. The main costs in the budget for this component would be for the work of the national team that would be responsible for working out the detailed design of the future programme – salaries and operational expenses of the programme manager and the four UNVs located in each of the regional programmes.

The source of funding of the preparatory phase should come from the UNDP Country Office TRAC funds that had been previously allocated to the preparatory assistance project in 1997²³. This would cover the national costs of the preparatory phase, including in-country costs of the formulation mission.

Recommendation 9

That the UNDP Country Office utilises existing funds previously allocated to the preparatory assistance project for strengthening local authorities, for funding the preparatory assistance phase of the future programme, including the in-country costs of the formulation mission.

Additional in-kind contributions (e.g. in the form of international advisers) would be sought from participating UN agencies. For example, Capacity 21 could provide the services of a Capacity 21 Adviser to assist with the formulation mission. Similar contributions would be sought from the UN agencies involved in the formulation mission.

Recommendation 10

That Capacity 21 provide the services of a Capacity 21 Adviser to the formulation mission for the preparation of the future programme for capacity building of local authorities in Lebanon.

Component two - the capacity building activities for the municipalities in the four regional programmes. This would include training for the programme teams in participatory planning methods, and to promote the establishment of systems and capacities for participatory planning and implementation in all municipalities. The total allocation for this component would be about \$400,000.

The sources of funding would include a contribution from Capacity 21 as a follow-up to the current LA21 programme (see recommendation 8), the UNDP Country Office through TRAC and mobilisation of other resources, partnerships with UN agencies and bilateral donors (such as USAID) already active in this area. Some Government contribution (mainly in-kind) would also be expected.

Component three - would provide seeding finance for implementation of priority projects. At this stage, the allocation for this should be a nominal amount as the aim would be to promote funding from national sources and government cost sharing for the provision

of municipality services. The suggested initial allocation from programme funds for this component is \$100,000; additional funding for this component would be from Government contributions to be identified during the preparatory phase in consultation with the relevant government agencies. **This allocation would have to be substantially increased from Government contributions for the objectives to be effectively achieved.**

The main source of funding for this component would be the Lebanese Government contribution through the national ministries such as Ministry of Interior and line agencies responsible for delivery of services at the municipality level, as well as contributions from the municipality governments themselves.

Other sources could be UNDP programmes such as LIFE (which provides funds for local environmental initiatives), PPP (which promotes public sector- private sector partnerships), other UN agencies, and programmes of other donor agencies such as USAID and international NGOs. The UNDP Country Office would play a key role here in mobilising additional resources from the donor community in Lebanon.

Component four - capacity building activities at the national level. The estimated cost of this component would be \$130,000. This funding would come from Capacity 21 and the UNDP Country Office funds. Some Government contribution (mainly in-kind) would also be expected.

Component five - establishing information and monitoring systems. The main contribution from the programme would be an allocation of \$100,000; this would need to be backed up by contributions from the Government, as it would be facilitating the establishment of information systems needed by local government and central government for their day-to-day activities.

The **sources** for this funding could include contribution from the UNDP Country Office, co-financing from other UN agencies, as well as other bilateral and multilateral donor agencies. Government contribution (in-kind as well as financial) would also be expected.

CONCLUSION: NEXT STEPS

The evaluation team has proposed that a future programme for capacity building for local government in Lebanon work through and support the existing regional development programmes of UNDP. This programme would be formulated through a six month preparatory assistance phase, which would begin early in 2000, after the completion of the current programme. The evaluation team has identified the following immediate steps for this process:

The first step is for a smooth transition for the pilot municipalities from project funded activities to a self-sustaining process and mechanisms. In order to promote sustainability of the achievements of the current programme, and to rectify shortcomings, the evaluation team has recommended a number of activities for this transition phase. These are listed in the section on "The Final Phase" (page 13-15). These activities would be carried out by the programme managers in MoE, in consultation with the UNDP Country Office.

Recommendation 11

That the Capacity 21 programme management in MoE help pilot municipalities to make a smooth transition from programme funding activities to a self-reliance by providing assistance in the areas suggested by the evaluation team.

The second step would be for the UNDP Country Office to initiate discussions on the proposed future programme with the UN agencies in Lebanon that are part of the UN System Common Workplan. These agencies are likely partners both in the preparation and implementation of this programme to strengthen local government in Lebanon. The Country Office would also use this opportunity to mobilise additional resources for the implementation of the programme. Therefore, it is important that potential partners are involved in the preparatory phase and the design of the programme itself.

Recommendation 12

That the UNDP Country Office initiate discussions with potential partners in the future programme from UN Agencies and other donors.

The third step would be a formulation mission which would include the potential key international partners, such as WHO (bringing in expertise from the global “Healthy Cities” programme), Habitat ((bringing in expertise from the global “Sustainable Cities” programme) and Capacity 21. This mission should spend about three weeks in-country and consult with municipalities, central government ministries and agencies, NGOs, donor agencies, and the UN System partners in preparing the details of the preparatory assistance phase. During this mission, the international team would also help to build the capacity of a national team, which would take the lead role in the actual formulation of the future programme for strengthening local government.

APPENDIX 1: ITINERARY

Day	Activity
Monday 30 August	UNDP Country Office: Programme Officers and Deputy Resident Representative SURF team: Moez Doraid, co-ordinator, and Ramla Khalidi Beyhoum Capacity 21 team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mounir Bu Ghanem, Project manager • Rami Abu Salman, Technical Officer • Alia Husseini, LA21 Awareness Officer • Anwar Andary, LA21 Specialist (Borj El Barajeneh) • Marwan Husseiky, LA21 Specialist (Bekaa) Dr Berj Hatijan, Director General, MoE
Tuesday 31 August	Meetings with Capacity 21 team and UTDA – Mr Bechir Odeimi Visit to municipality of Jal El Dib to meet with LA21 committee members
Wednesday 1 September	Visit to municipality of Aley to meet with LA21 committee members Visit to Bekaa pilot project to meet with LA21 committee members
Thursday 2 September	Visit to Borj El Barajeneh to meet with LA21 committee members Meeting with Capacity 21 team
Friday 3 September	Meeting with UNDP programme managers Meeting with Christian de Clercq, Senior Adviser to UNRC Meeting with USAID
Saturday 4 September	Self-assessment workshop in Aley
Monday 6 September	Self-assessment workshop in Bekaa
Tuesday 7 September	Self-assessment workshop in Jal El Dib Meeting with CERMOCC
Wednesday 8 September	Self-assessment workshop in Borj El Barajeneh
Thursday 9 September	Meeting with IMTI, Jean Dib El Hajj Meeting with Christian de Clercq, Senior Adviser to UNRC Debriefing for UN System representatives Debriefing for stakeholders from pilots, government, UNDP programme managers, and donor agencies.
Friday 10 September	Meeting with SUNY, Mahmoud Batlouni, Director Debriefing for UNDP staff and Resident Representative

APPENDIX 2: SELF-ASSESSMENT MODULE

English Translation of Original Questions in Arabic

Part A: Questionnaire

PARTNERSHIPS

1. List all stakeholders and their association in the Local Agenda 21. These stakeholders are the different communities who live in the pilot municipality and the various sectors (business, farming) and other groups (NGOs, local government, youth...) who are involved in the municipality.
2. Who has not been involved?
3. Is the stakeholder list comprehensive?
4. Which of the stakeholders was involved in the multi-stakeholder meetings?
5. Which of the stakeholders was involved in the LA 21 planning?
6. How often were the multi-stakeholder meetings?
7. What is the relationship between the LA 21 committee and the municipality, and how do you describe the cooperation and coordination between them?
8. How can this be strengthened?
9. What are the strengths of the LA 21 committee meetings in addressing the LA 21 issues?
10. What can be done to improve that? List 3 suggestions.
11. What sub-committees were formed? To address which issues?
12. Which stakeholders were involved in these sub-committees?
13. State your community vision.
14. Which stakeholders were involved in formulating this vision?
15. How does this vision relate to the vision of the municipality?
16. Do you still agree with the vision? How can it be better improved?
17. Has your municipality formed any partnerships or cooperation with other municipalities or other LA 21 projects in other countries?
18. What are the results of this partnership or cooperation?

COMMUNITY-BASED ISSUE ANALYSIS

1. Have detailed assessments of local priority problems/issues been carried out?
2. Please *summarize* these issues according to priority.
3. How were these issues identified and *prioritized*?
4. Which stakeholders were involved in carrying out this process?

5. What do you think of these issues/priorities? Do you still agree that they are priorities?
6. What others would you include now?
7. Do you consider that tackling these issues will help achieve the LA 21 vision?
8. Do you consider that tackling these issues will help address the underlying problems of the local community?
9. Do you consider that these assessments identified environmental, social and economic issues equally, or did they focus on one sector more than others?
10. What suggestions do you have for the LA 21 to take a more integrated approach, tackling all issues equally?

ACTION PLANNING/IMPLEMENTATION

1. Is your committee in the process of establishing its LA 21 Action Plan?
2. What are the resources available in the community?
 - a. Human:
 - b. Financial:
 - c. Other (supporting NGOs...)
3. Using these resources, what activities have been initiated within your community?
4. What stakeholders have been involved in these activities? Elaborate.
5. How can these activities lead to the formulation of the action plan?
6. How do these activities contribute to achieving:
 - a. The vision of the LA 21?
 - b. The expectations of the local community?
 - c. *The goals/plans of the municipality?*

ACTION PLAN

1. Which stakeholders are involved in drawing up the action plan?
2. What data was collected prior to that?
3. What additional data should have been gathered?
4. Will the LA 21 action plan be consulted upon with the municipal council?
5. If the action plan has been established, how does it help achieve:
 - a. The vision of the LA 21?
 - b. The expectations of the local community?
 - c. *The goals/plans of the municipality?*
6. If the action plan has been established, does it contain:
 - a. Goals:

- b. Targets:
 - c. Indicators:
 - d. Timelines:
 - e. Roles and responsibilities:
7. If the action plan has been established, are its targets achievable?
 8. What resources have been secured for the implementation of the LA 21 action plan?
 9. What resources (cash or in-kind) has the municipality secured for this action plan?
 10. Have all issues/priorities been tackled? If not, how will these issues be tackled and incorporated within the action plan?

MEASURING PROGRESS

1. What are the key elements you propose to measure the progress of the LA 21?
2. Who would you propose to involve in measuring the progress?

FUTURE STEPS

1. What are the steps to be taken to internalize the LA 21 process into the work of the municipality?
2. To move forward, what assistance do you need from:
 - a. Community members:
 - b. Municipal council:
 - c. Capacity 21 unit at MoE:
 - d. Government agencies:
 - e. Donor agencies:
 - f. Other (universities, media, private sector...)
3. What activities can be carried out to guarantee the participation of all sectors of the community?

Part B: Presentation Questions

PARTNERSHIPS

1. What is the relationship between the LA 21 committee and the municipality, and how do you describe the cooperation and coordination between them?
2. How can this be strengthened?
3. Which stakeholders were not represented in the LA 21 committee?

COMMUNITY-BASED ISSUE ANALYSIS

4. Do you consider that there are any other issues or problems that were not included in the priorities? List these problems.

ACTION PLANNING/IMPLEMENTATION

5. What are the resources available in the community to support the planning and implementation of the LA 21 process?
 - d. Human:
 - e. Financial:
 - f. Other (supporting NGOs...)

ACTION PLAN

6. What additional data should have been gathered before the establishment of the LA 21 action plan?
7. How can you ensure the adoption and implementation of the LA 21 Action Plan by the municipality?

MEASURING PROGRESS

8. What are the key elements you propose to measure the progress of the LA 21?

FUTURE STEPS

9. What are the steps to be taken to internalize the LA 21 process into the work of the municipality to sustain the process?

(Arabic translation to be inserted by Country Office).

APPENDIX 3: LOCAL AGENDA 21 GUIDING PRINCIPLES²⁴

A Local Agenda 21 strategy for sustainability is a **process** of planning and action to improve and maintain the well-being of people and their environment. The **purpose** of a Local Agenda 21 is to mobilise and focus a local government's efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Experience from around the world has shown that there are eleven key principles of a Local Agenda 21: - transparency and accountability

- Improving and maintaining **the well-being of the local people and their environment**. The focus is therefore on the social and economic well-being of people and the environment in which they live.
- 2. The overall goal is sustainable development, that is it **integrates social, economic or environmental goals** rather than focussing on just one sector or issue;
- 3. The objectives are **strategic and tactical** in that they focus on the main priorities for the province or municipality rather than trying to do too much.
- 4. The formulation of the Local Agenda 21 is a **process** that develops as it goes along and builds on its achievements. This means that **monitoring and evaluation** are critical elements of the strategy and action plans.
- 5. **Participation** ensures that all stakeholders take responsibility for carrying out their allocated tasks. The process is therefore driven by a partnership between local government, enterprises and the community.
- 6. **Communication** is the lifeblood of a Local Agenda 21 - this works through the exchange of information, negotiation, and learning from each other.
- 7. The strategy is a **process of planning and action** through which a long-term vision is developed, decisions are made about priorities, action plans are drawn up and implemented.
- 8. The Local Agenda 21 is **integrated into decision making** at the local level as part of the operation of the province or municipality. In other words, the Local Agenda 21 should not be seen as being external to the normal work of the local government - it must become part of the normal operations of that government.
- 9. Local Agenda 21 promotes **transparency** in the decision-making processes of the local government, and **accountability** of the local government to its community.
- 10. The aim is to **build capacity** at the local level from an early stage so that the local authorities and communities are able to take charge.
- 11. Outside assistance is restricted to **kick-start** the process rather than directing the formulation of the Local Agenda 21.

APPENDIX 4: DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PROGRAMME FORMULATION MISSION

Background

In January 1999, the UNRC System in Lebanon agreed that local governance is a focus area for the System and will be implemented within the UN System Common Work Programme. Accordingly, in September, 1999, UNDP-Lebanon initiated a "forward evaluation" of a Capacity 21 programme which supported, among other activities, the establishment of four Local Agenda 21s (LA21) at the level of municipalities and conglomerations of municipalities. The overall aim of this evaluation mission was to "Outline the main thrust for future activities i.e. "a forward look" based on lessons learned to respond to the need of the UN System Common Work-plan in Lebanon for formulating an integrated programme for strengthening municipalities, and implementing the right to development at the local level".

Objectives

To assist the UNDP Country Office to design a capacity building programme to strengthen municipalities in Lebanon by

- formulating a strategy for a preparatory assistance phase for the future programme;
- identifying the main components of the future programme;
- providing training and assistance as necessary to a national team that would carry out the detailed consultations to prepare the design of the future programme;
- recommending the methodology and approaches to be followed by the national team in preparing the detailed design of the future programme.

Tasks

A The formulation team will consult with the following organisations and individuals in-country, including the four regional programmes to discuss development needs and priorities of municipalities:

- ⇒ Relevant central government, including the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Environment, and other line agencies with responsibility for service delivery at the municipality level.
- ⇒ The staff of the four regional programmes, and the municipalities expected to be beneficiaries of the programme.
- ⇒ Organisations involved in capacity building activities for local government in Lebanon.
- ⇒ National and local NGOs and community-based organisations, including Women's NGOs and other organisations with an interest in local government.
- ⇒ UN agencies and their programmes which are active in strengthening local government in Lebanon
- ⇒ Other donors with an interest in strengthening local government in Lebanon.

B The formulation team will work with the national team to prepare a detailed description of the preparatory phase and a strategy for the preparation of the main capacity building programme. The design for the preparatory phase should include:

- A clear and concise statement of the proposed programme objectives and components;
- A detailed description of the preparatory phase
- A detailed logframe matrix for the preparatory phase setting out objectives, outputs and activities, including inputs from partner governments, and identifying risks and constraints, detailing possible risk management strategies;
- Recommendations for a resource-cum-toolkit for the programme;
- Requirements for capacity building for the national team;
- A draft financial budget for the programme
- Proposed organisational and management structures
- Terms of reference for the national design team.

C The formulation team will provide training and advice to the national team as required during the mission. In addition, international members of the formulation team will provide ongoing support and advice to the national team during the preparatory assistance phase.

Outputs

The formulation team will provide the following outputs from the mission:

- A workshop with potential programme stakeholders and beneficiaries to discuss their recommendations and the details of the design for the preparatory assistance phase
- A design document for the preparatory assistance phase, including a logframe matrix
- Detailed terms of reference for the national team

Republic of Lebanon
Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform
(Center for Public Sector Projects and Studies
(C.P.S.P.S.))