Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development

Action in Lebanon

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Project: Regional Consolidation and Networking of expertise

RECONET

Guide on Tangible Results
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I. The Lebanese Municipalities Context

1) The current situation of the Lebanese Municipalities

In Lebanon, the municipal body consists of a decision-making authority represented by the municipal council and by an executive authority represented by the Mayor. On the municipal council level, members running the elections do not undertake pre training on the municipal law and do not realize what are their competences and their responsibilities. On the staff level, all local authorities in Lebanon suffer from the same issues which are the lack of human and financial resources, and lack of training. The staff usually is under-qualified and does not participate in regular capacity building and training sessions. A municipal orientor should be provided by the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities to orient the Municipalities in their daily work but this post does not exist. Local authorities find themselves forced to send consultations to the Ministry asking for legal advice, a step which is time consuming and requires efforts.

The Ministry of Interior and Municipalities support the training of Municipal staffs through various donors, foundations and Universities on the daily municipal issues, an effort that will help in the realization of decentralization in the future.
Decentralized cooperation that brings technical knowhow in less time, less effort, and less cost, is kind of a solution for local authorities. However, decentralized cooperation needs missing high level local technical staff that could compete with the foreign experts. Alsoit cannot help in legal and purely local problems.

The implementation of Local Development offices is gaining momentum in those Mediterranean cities that have developed urban sustainable development strategies. The ministry of Interior and Municipalities is encouraging the realization of such offices view their importance at the local level, and their ability to regularize the relationship between the elected local municipalities, and the civil society. In Lebanon, the Unions of Municipalities need help from other unions who speak their municipal language and have experienced the same problems, to exchange with them their know-how, and learn from their experience.

Accordingly, Municipalities and Unions of Municipalities need to help each other since they all speak the same municipal language and have experienced the same problems, and to exchange their experience, their know-how, and their best practices. They are in need to embark on daily training
answering their daily needs and specially chaperoning them in issues that are new to them.

The RECONET project tried to tackle the impact of the above context and tried to answer the need for capacity building, training, and awareness. The action addressed subjects like local development, strategic planning, tourism, decentralized cooperation, and social inclusion.

2) The urban strategic planning in Lebanon

Many municipalities have already elaborated their urban strategic plans with a support of international donors. Some of them have already finished their plans, and some are still working on it. The regional situation had some impacts on the cities who have already elaborated strategic plans, and maybe a fine tuning or updating of such plans is needed based on the demographic changes that occurred within the cities. Most of the cities working on strategic planning depend on the donors and on external experts to elaborate the strategic plan because of the absence of needed expertise in their staff and because of financial resources to contract such expertise for the period following the elaboration of the plan. Such donors and experts are not available after the elaboration of the plan and such cities are in need of further support during the phase of
implementation of the strategy specially the monitoring and evaluation phase.

3) The Urban Community of AL FAYHAA: A leader in decentralized cooperation and local development

The Al Fayhaa Union of Municipalities (AL FAYHAA) is a union of four municipalities: Tripoli, Mina, Beddawi, and Kalamoun, located in North Lebanon at around 85 Km. north of the Capital Beirut. AL FAYHAA is very active in decentralized cooperation since year 2000, and gained experience in urban issues, through many sustainable projects financed by the EU through different programs like: SMAP, MEDPACT, ENPI CBCMED, and by other international donors like the Cities Alliance and the World Bank. During the last decade, Al Fayhaa succeeded in establishing urban development units that are considered new to the Lebanese municipal structure. The Tripoli Environment and Development Observatory (TEDO) was the first observatory to be created in Lebanon in the year 2000, and is still active due to its inclusion in the organogram of AL FAYHAA. TEDO supported the elaboration of the AL FAYHAA Urban Development Strategy AFSDS. This strategy led to the elaboration of a feasibility study of a Local development
Bureau LDB, through a financing from the French Ministry of Foreign affairs and the cooperation of the city of Marseilles. The crisis management center financed by Italian Cooperation, and the EU financed Call Centre are two sustainable projects that were realized recently. Through the EU financed ENPI CBCMED program USUDS project (www.usuds.org), AL FAYHAA realized also recently an knowledge transfer center (KTC), responsible for dissemination, training, and facilitation actions for other cities in all matters related to urban sustainable development strategies. ThisKTC is now the Middle East antenna of MedCities network and cooperates with a similar KTC in Sfax-Tunisia, and a KTC for methodology and best practices in Malaga-Spain. All three KTC's use the digital space created through the technological platform www.usuds.org for learning and e-work of collaborative groups led by the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona acting as General Secretariat of MedCities.

All above initiatives and gained experiences are valuable assets that AL FAYHAA, within RECONET, disseminated to other Non-State Actors (NSAs), Unions of Municipalities, and Universities, trying to support them and build their capacity in matters of decentralized cooperation and in other multiple daily municipal issues like strategic planning, public awareness,
public participatory approaches, environment, tourism, social inclusion, rebuilding the trust between citizens and municipal institution through networking, and a continuous exchange of experience.

II. RECONET: The PROJECT

1) Description

The action entitled Regional Consolidation and Networking of expertise "RECONET" aimed at creating a daily communication network between the Urban Community of Al Fayhaa and four organizations, a daily assistance and exchange of experience and knowhow process about urban issues using internet applications (Facebook, Twitter, Skype..), and the USUDS Platform and its applications (debates, Community, Best Practices Catalogue, etc.). The action allowed the partners to find solutions to the problems they are facing by using tools available at AL FAYHAA like the Knowledge Transfer center KTC, the Urban Observatory TEDO, the complaint center (CC) and the Local development bureau (LDB), still under realization, thanks to the feasibility study elaborated recently with the financing of the French Ministry of foreign affairs and the support of Marseille. Al Fayhaa brought its experience in decentralized cooperation. The two universities had an Ad Hoc role in providing the technical and scientific support in issues
of information technology (IT), communication and networking, social and economic development environment, tourism, awareness campaigns, and capacity building. The KTC brought a support to the cities who finished their strategic plan, in the process of elaborating the business plans for the projects, in the monitoring phase and in the evaluation phase, in revising such plan due to any demographic or to any other issues as a result of the current regional situation, in realizing partnerships with other cities within a decentralized cooperation networking process and by disseminating the best practices to such cities. For the Unions of Municipalities who do not have a Strategy, the action was a first initiative on capacity-building and to lead them to develop their own Strategy in the future. MedCities brought its wide experience in many urban issues like strategic planning and decentralized cooperation.

\( a) \) **General Objectives**

- Create a communication network aiming at exchanging, through the use of internet applications, the experience in Municipal sectors.
- Group together with AL FAYHAA, the two Unions of Municipalities of Koura, and Jerd El Kaiteh, the Manar
b) **Specific Objectives**

- Develop a communication network.
- Enhance dialogue and interaction.
- Enhance municipal management and good governance.
- Consolidate the expertise of the partners.
- Enable citizens and NGO's to play a more active role in public issues.
- Raise awareness towards local development bureaus.
- Exchange experience in administrative, financial, and technical sectors.

c) **Target Groups and Final Beneficiaries**

The final beneficiaries are all the components of the civil society who profit from the action through participatory approach consultations in the policy making, enhancement of the municipal governance, elaboration of projects aiming at fighting poverty, creating jobs and leading to youth and women inclusion. The publications carried out will enrich the database of the USUDS project, which seeks to promote urban sustainable development strategies in the Mediterranean.
d) Estimated Results

The general result of the project is to initiate the start of the implementation of the role of the local authorities in realizing regional development and policy making at the local level. The exchange of experience, the training and cooperation of the partners with Al Fayhaa, the workshops to be realized about strategic planning and local development, will encourage the partners Unions of Municipalities to embark, after the termination of the project and with the gained experience, on the elaboration of their own Urban Sustainable Development Strategy and draft of a Vision, Mission, Strategic frame and projects that will summarize the policy of each individual Union towards its cities. Indicators also could be created to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the projects. The capacity-building will be a continuous process through such networking and through the four technical workshops that will address four important urban issues of: Urban strategic planning, local development offices, urban observatories and decentralized cooperation.

The two missions that Al Fayhaa will carry to the two partner Unions will be the breaking-the-ice phase, and it will initiate the exchange of experience.
The Applicant will be a major player in the action, assuring the technical and management side of the action and mainly managing the communication network.

- **R1- The realization of a Coordination Office.** The Applicant will have a major role in the action through the coordination office that will be realized in the Union within the action. A coordination office manager will be subcontracted by the applicant.

- **R2- Assessment missions to co-applicants.** One mission will be realized to each of the two unions of municipalities of Koura, and Jerd El Kaiteh to assess their needs and priorities.

- **R3- Assessment missions to the associates.** One mission will be realized to each of the associates to assess their field of experience and their good practices.

- **R4- The realization of four technical workshops** about the four topics that are very crucial to the daily worries of the Municipalities: Urban strategic planning, Local development office, urban observatories, and decentralized cooperation.
• **R5-Capacity building.** Represented by the training of pre-selected elected and municipal members. Ten elected members and two staff member from each of the two unions will be trained in six major municipal fields: (Municipalities, Employees, governance, public private partnership PPP, public awareness, municipalities and central administration, geographic information system GIS)

• **R6- Realizing the communication network.** It will allow the exchange of experience and information between applicant, co-applicant and associates

• **R7-Exchange of knowledge and experience.** It is represented by the mutual exchange of experience between the applicant, the co-applicants, and the associates, each in its specific field of expertise

• **R8-Realizing the final assembly.** During the assembly the guide on best tangible results will be presented. Around 250 copies of this guide will be printed and disseminated.

**e) The Main Activities**

• Creation of a coordination office of the project in Al Fayhaa.
• Realization of two missions by the staff of Al Fayhaa to the two Unions to analyze their needs.

• Creation of a web based communication network grouping AL FAYHAA with the two Unions of Municipalities, and the two Universities,

• Training of elected council members and staff.

• Realization of four workshops, one in each partner's organization.

• Hold a final assembly in AL FAYHAA to present the network and a guide on achieved tangible good results.

**f) Duration and Budget**

• 18 Months

• 76,000 Euros

**2) The Partners and their expectations**

AL FAYHAA signed four cooperation agreements with two unions of municipalities and two universities, one public and one private, all of them located in the governorate of North Lebanon. Within the agreements, the partners looked to achieve cooperation in many urban development issues like environment, social, economic sectors, capacity building and urban planning. Each of the partners had the opportunity within the project to exchange experience and knowhow with the
relevant parties per his experience and needs. The roles were assigned to them in such a way that they offer to partners their experience in the respective field and in return they get profit from the experience of the partners. So the roles are assigned according to the offer-demand formula and in other words according to the WIN-WIN principle.

**The Union of Municipalities of Koura (PP1)** composed of 30 Municipalities. The Union was created in 15/04/2003 by decree No. 9970. Its administrative center is in the city of Amioun. The cooperation agreement was signed in 2005 and consists in cooperation in the sectors of Environment, Social and economic development, capacity building of rural public institutions and urban planning. The union expected to gain experience in the sectors of experiential tourism, a subject that the associate the Union Of Municipalities of Jezzine has great experience and in urban sustainable strategic planning from the Al Fayhaa and the two associates who had already elaborated a strategic plan (Dannieh and Jezzine). Being a rural area, the Union desires to exchange best practices in the management of large preserved areas and in experiential tourism due to the presence of a large forest grouping numerous types of rare trees.
The Union of Municipalities of Jerd El Kaiteh (PP2)
Composed of nine Municipalities, the Union was created in 23/12/2005 by decree No. 1099. Its administrative center is in the city of Hrar. The cooperation agreement was signed in 2011 and consists of cooperation in the sectors of Environment, Social and economic development. The Union expected to exchange experience and good practices with the realized network and rely on the training sessions to enhance its knowledge in urban planning and local development. Also the union considered that the action will provide a support to the civil society, and the public and private sector. The Union hoped to disseminate through the network, the aspects of the area especially related to environment and tourism. The union expected to gain experience in the sectors of experiential tourism, a subject that the associate the Union of Municipalities of Jezzine has great experience and in urban sustainable strategic planning from the Al Fayhaa and the two associates who had already elaborated a strategic plan (Dannieh and Jezzine).

The Manar University of Tripoli (MUT) (PP3), a private university located in Tripoli in the Governorate of Northern Lebanon. The cooperation agreement was signed in 2010 and
consists in cooperation in the sectors of Environment. MUT offered its experience in IT technology and in Tourism and environment based on its department of IT and faculty of Tourism and faculty of public health. Since MUT is a private University and has the capabilities in many sectors, the IT department of MUT was responsible for the realization of the communication network, for the monitoring of the flow of activities and for the training. In this respect, MUT cooperated with the IT department of the Applicant and trained the staff of the Applicant, partners, Associates to the use of the network. In the same way, the Tourism department in MUT shared the experience and know how in the sector of tourism with the partners and Associates.

The Faculty of social sciences in the Lebanese University, Branch 3, (PP4) a public university located in Tripoli. The cooperation agreement was signed in 2011 and consists in the cooperation in the sectors of social sciences and culture. The University provided the support in all matters related to the urban social sector. In addition, it shared with the partners and associates its experience in matters related to public consultation and awareness, support to women, gender, childhood, third age, handcrafts, and schools drop out.
3) The Associates and their added value

The associates are Municipalities or Union of Municipalities who are active in the Municipal work in Lebanon and gained experience in many municipal sectors like tourism or decentralized cooperation, their presence in the network allowed the co-applicants to share and profit from such experience and try to transfer good practices after needed relevant adaptation to their specific territories. The associates became also recently members of the network MEDCITIES very active in Mediterranean Urban issues. All the associates will be invited to share the communication network and exchange their experience in their vast field of expertise.

The Dannieh Municipalities Union (PA1). Situated in North Lebanon, the Union has elaborated recently an urban development strategy. The Union shared its own experience in strategic planning, in public participation and cooperation with the NGO'S. The Union shared its experience in the volunteering work and the development of the Municipal culture and presented its experience in reserves (Lazzab forest). In return it gained experience in urban observatories, local development offices and citizens complaint centers.
The Municipality of Zgharta–Ehden (PA2) Situated in North Lebanon 10 minutes from the applicant, the municipality elaborated and disseminated recently its strategic plan. It presented its experience in the usage of historical and natural heritage to serve sustainable development and in return it gained experience in the sectors of experiential tourism, a subject that the associate the Union of Municipalities of Jezzine has great experience.

The Union of Municipalities of Jezzine (PA3). The Union is in South Lebanon. The Union is very active and offers the typical Lebanese landscape, mountainous region around 30 minutes from the sea and where tourism is an added value for the area. Being a rural mountainous area that offers the typical Lebanese landscape and very famous for its waterfalls, handcrafts and its unique Pine forests, it offered to the partners the Union of Municipalities of Koura and the Union of Municipalities of Jerd El Kaiteh its experience in sustainable development strategy, experiential tourism, in branding the city, and in the Public Private Partnership based on the gained experience in the project" Maison de La Forêt". It needed to share experience with other cities facing problems in winter off
season tourism, local development offices and citizens’ complaint centers.

**MedCities (PA4).** With its huge experience in urban sectors, in decentralized cooperation, in Mediterranean municipalities and in strategic planning, it brought great help to all partners and associates, even in administrative and financial sides of the project. It brought great support also to the network with its wide experience in Best Practices in all the Mediterranean basin. The Metropolitan Area of Barcelona, acting as General Secretariat of MedCities, offered the resources of its USUDS Platform (www.usuds.org) to the partners of the project. It also provided assistance in defining the contents of the four workshops of the project. MedCities facilitated the cooperation and exchange of experiences in urban sustainable development strategies with other cities of the Mashreq.

**The Municipality of Byblos (PA5)** is a very active municipality. It received a prize as the best touristic city in 2015. Lately the municipality realized an important public garden. This project was chosen as a Best Practice within the USUDS project. The Municipality realized pedestrian roads within the city and, a free public shuttle network for the tourists. Through its Public Private partnership the municipality
rehabilitated a lot of old buildings within the city. Its presence in the network as an associate is an added value (PA6) finished its strategic plan in July 2014 within the USUDS project. It elaborated also a pilot project about poverty. Being in the middle of the road between Jezzine and Tyre in south Lebanon who elaborated lately a strategy about tourism through the T NET project financed by the EU, Saida was also an added value to the partners and associates and gained experience as a future partner in future touristic networks south Lebanon.

4) The project Sustainability

The Financial Sustainability was guaranteed by the nature of the project. The running cost of the action after completion, is a minimum and is reduced to just the invoice of the internet provider. The provision of internet is an activity that is usually paid from the administration budget.

At the institutional level, the project did not require any additional staff to be contracted. Partners and associates staff who are engaged in the communication action, are all regular employees and are paid from the applicant’s budget. The project led to a better quality control in the partners and associates' administrations and consequently to a better governance and encouraged the partners to introduce such tools in their
administration especially that ministry of Interior and Municipalities is encouraging the realization of local development bureaus in the municipalities and unions.

At the Environmental level, the project presented a positive impact due to the exchange of information between all partners about good practices in dealing with environmental municipal issues.

III. The Communication Network

1) Managing the Communication Network

The Union of Municipalities of Al Fayhaa managed the communication network during all the duration of the action, thanks to the coordination office CO that was created and to the KTC. The CO brought together on the network the different partners and associates, and made available to them different tools available at the Union of Municipalities of FAYHAA and the possible sources of information, knowhow, and Best Practices available within the network and within the KTC.

2) The network

It is a web based network that grouped the applicant together with the partners and associates allowing them to exchange all needed information via an internet based application enabling them to communicate on a daily basis, and exchange all needed
information. It is a kind of remote sensing web based mutual training that allowed the partners and associates to ask questions on daily municipal issues, exchange information, and know how in the most direct and fast way.

3) The software Application
The used software application was the Microsoft office 365 Business Premium that provide the partners and associates with:

- An email system where users can search and find each other’s emails comprehensively. This can be done using an SMTP mail such as Microsoft exchange server.
- A common file storage repository where users can share files and edit them comprehensively.
- A social network where people can socialize and discuss topics concerning the project.
- Mobility by providing mobile apps to accommodate these services, and files to be stored in the cloud.
- Productivity tools that can be used online such as word, excel, and PowerPoint online.

An application called YAMMER similar to face book was available for the partners and associates so that they can
socialize within RECONET. Also a genuine Office license was delivered.

**IV. The RECONET Kick Off meeting**

The Kick Off meeting was held on August 25th, 2015 with the participation of the First counsellor-Head of cooperation section of the EU commission in Beirut, the Mayor of Tripoli, and H.E the Governor of North Lebanon. The meeting was also attended by most of the partners and associates of the project. Introductory speeches emphasized on the importance of the project in building partnership and networking between the municipalities and the universities and institutions of civil society. All aspects of the project were presented together with the general objectives, the specific objectives, the results, work packages, and the activities that should be carried by each partner and associate. For all, the project is an opportunity to build a partnership, get trained, and prepare the partners for the new EU program ENI CBCMED which is expected to be launched in 2017.
The technical, administrative, and financial sides of the project were also presented including issues about reporting the necessity to appoint a focal point, and open a bank account for the project.

At the end, a one-hour plenary discussion about the project was realized and the meeting ended by the signature of a partnership agreement between the applicant and the partners.

V. Assessment of Partners and Associates needs

One mission was realized to each partner and associate. The purpose of the missions is to meet the President and any other relevant elected council member and also relevant staff of the two Unions. Kalamoun, which recently joined the applicant – Al Fayhaa was also assessed.
The mission will assess, prioritize, and specify the needs of the two unions in knowledge exchange. Based on such assessment, the applicant will make available such information from its internal local tools (KTC, Observatory, local development bureau - once realized) or from other co-applicants or associates.

The following issues were discussed during the needs assessment missions: the city, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, vision, situation in strategic planning, needs and priorities in Social cohesion-

Civic Engagement-Economic-Environment-Local Development, expectations from the tools available in Al Fayhaa, actual and planned projects, what experience & knowledge to be shared with the network partners.
VI. Capacity Building

The capacity-building was a continuous process through the networking and through the four workshops. It addressed four important urban issues of urban observatories, local development offices, urban strategic planning, and decentralized cooperation and was targeting mainly the elected municipal council members and staff

1) The training sessions

Training sessions were organized by the applicant where elected members and staff from each of the two unions of Koura and Jerd El Kaiteh were trained.

Training sessions were held about major municipal issues as follows:

The Municipalities.

The training was about the relation between the Municipalities and the administrative control power and was based mainly on the articles of the municipal law that regulates the relation between the Municipal council on one side, and the Kaemkam, Governor and Minister of interior and Municipalities on the other sides. Eleven articles (from article 56 to article 66) of the municipal law 118/1977 were explained and discussed. The attendees discussed with the trainer the difficulties they face in applying the said articles. Deep explanation of the articles was
also provided by the trainer. The session showed how important is the direct communication between the municipalities and the central administration and how much efforts and time it could save in the daily municipal operation. The session turned to be a communication session rather than just a training session.

**Local Development / Strategic Planning / Governance/ Public Private Partnership PPP.**

The training explained the issues related to urban local development mainly the importance of having a local development bureau, the resources, pillars of sustainable local development, difficulties and challenges of the urban local development, the strategic planning, and governance pillars.

**Decentralized cooperation.**

The training included the subjects of twinning, challenges facing decentralized cooperation in Lebanese municipalities, and the process of accepting grants.

**Municipal Employees.**

The speaker presented the different issues related to the employees in the municipalities and how to elaborate a municipal organogram for the employees and the stages it takes to get it approved.
**Public awareness.**

The training explained the role of the municipalities in raising the awareness of the citizens and the tools such as the urban observatory, the complaint center, the media, and the awareness campaigns.

**The Geographic information system GIS.**

It was a technical presentation that explained the context of GIS and how it helps in managing the information. It explained the importance of having the GIS system in the municipalities and how much it helps in the management of the municipality whether on the mayor, or council, or employees’ level. It showed also the importance of the human resources in managing the system and the necessity to start low profile and then add the features that needed, together with the importance of the system in the governance's transparency issue since it helps mayors and employees control the maintenance and the sock issues in addition to the control of the tenders, bill of quantities, and invoices of sub-contractor.
**Writing of proposals of the EU projects.**

This session highlighted the methodology in writing concept notes and full application forms to the EU financed programs specially that the new ENI program will be launched soon in fall 2016. Elaboration of Log Frame analysis was included.

**The ENI program strategy and priorities.**

The priorities of the new EU financed program ENI were presented so that the partners can decide upon the projects to be submitted based on their city’s priorities.

**The last training session** was left until the termination of the municipal elections and it was about the Municipal law 118/1977. It was held at the North Lebanon Governorate and moderated by the head of the Municipal department in the North Lebanon Governorate. The session meant to allow the new elected council members to have a deep idea about the
municipal responsibilities. All main titles of the municipal law were presented and discussed and mainly: the relationship between the Mayor and the elected council members, holding of municipal council sessions, resignation, formation of council committees, relation of council members with employees, absences from the council meetings, etc…

2) The workshops
Four technical workshops were held within Task 1.4 of the project: Dissemination of tools of local urban development about four topics: 1) Local development office, 2) Urban observatories, 3) Decentralized cooperation, 4) Urban strategic planning. Each of the four partners hosted one of these workshops as follows:

Workshop on Local Development
The workshop about local development offices was hosted by the Faculty of social sciences in the Lebanese University
(Partner PP4), in the headquarters in Beirut, it focused on the importance of the realization of such office in the organogram of the municipalities. Such office being the maestro of development in the cities, and the necessary structure to guarantee the follow-up of the strategy and to foster the implementation of strategic projects. It also pinpointed its specific objectives, its relation with the municipal committees who are the sources of development projects, its relation with the civil society, and its main task of monitoring and evaluation of the realized projects ensuring that the objective, for which such projects were realized, is reached.

The importance of the decentralized cooperation in general and the bilateral cooperation between the universities and the municipalities in special were highlighted. During the workshop, the feasibility study of the Local Development Bureau in Al Fayhaa financed by the French Ministry of Foreign and European affairs and UCLG was presented, highlighting the importance of local development bureaus in municipalities.
Successful experience of local Lebanese development bureaus of Brital, Sin El Fil, Chiyah, and Ghobairy were also presented.

**The Workshop on Urban Observatories**

The workshop on Urban Observatories was held at the Manar University of Tripoli MUT, partner (PP3) in RECONET.

The importance of urban observatories in general, the activities carried by the Urban Observatory of Al Fayhaa TEDO, operational since the year 2000, and the Sin Fil observatory were presented.

The experience of UN HABITAT in realizing Observatories and technical Bureaus in South Lebanon was presented.

The concept of Cultural Observatories was also presented. The Urban Community of Al Fayhaa is in the process of establishing a Cultural Observatory in cooperation with the Business Incubation Association in Tripoli BIAT, and the financial and technical support of the Deputation of Barcelona.
The workshop about decentralized cooperation

The Workshop about Decentralized Cooperation was hosted by the union of Municipalities of Jerd El Kaiteh (PP2) on November 12th, 2016.
The workshop emphasized on the necessity for the cities to support and cooperate with each other, exchange experience and know how in the daily municipal issues. The speakers highlighted the importance of decentralized cooperation in achieving a sustainable local development and the necessity of involving the components of the civil society in the process of strategic planning and in defining the needs and priorities of the citizens.

The Urban Community of Al Fayhaa and the Union of municipalities of Jerd El Kaiteh presented their experience in decentralized cooperation and the projects realized within such cooperation.

The Municipalities were invited to prepare for the new ENI CBCMED program, due to start early 2017, and start mounting partnerships and projects according to their priorities.
3) The meetings

The Handcrafts between tourism and development

On Thursday September 22nd, 2016 at 17:00 pm a session entitled “The Handcrafts between tourism and development” was held at the premises of the Co-Applicant (PP3) the Manar University of Tripoli (MUT).

Speakers presented the problems of the Lebanese handcrafts sector, the tourism, as well as the history of customs in Tripoli.
At the end, were exchanged issues and experience in matters related to the tourism sector.

**The Role of the Faculty of social sciences in supporting the municipalities at the research and social and technical level**  

On October 13th, 2016, a meeting about the social sector was held at the premises of the Faculty of Social Sciences in the Lebanese University Branch 3, (PP4). The meeting was about “The role of the Faculty of social sciences in supporting the municipalities at the research and social and technical level”

Dean and academic staff members from the faculty presented the research powers that the faculty has and that can go in parallel with the vision and the status quo of the municipalities. They emphasized on the role that the faculty can play in supporting municipalities at the local
development level and in various subjects such as: statistics, demographic analysis, and human resources.

Universities are Knowledge and Innovation Centers and important players in the local development process. They have good resources and are important resources as well, and contribute to the launching of expertise and talent in the local community. They are source of volunteering work through the involvement of students in field surveys where they apply what they have learned to address the priorities of the local community.
VII. Training on Networking and Office 365 Business Premium

The session was the first out of many training sessions to follow. One license was delivered for each of the concerned partners and associates. The trained IT staff, will be responsible of training his organization on the use of the office software. A Power Point was presented about the program.

- This Office is much needed when we work from many places.
- The features are as follows:
  - 50GB mailbox for each user.
  - 1 Tb file storage and sharing.
  - HD video conferencing.
  - Cloud services allow to access files from anywhere, whether business files or personal files and collaboration tools.
  - The one drive is an online storage additional service. Users can work on the same file at the same time.
  - Versioning allow saving docs before and after editing.
  - 10 MB maximum size of mail.
• 14 portals are available.
• Delve and Sway are like power point but more advanced.
• The new feature of the office is that it concentrates more on sharing.
• Yammer is similar to a social media application.

The installation of the Office software will help in bringing together on the network the different partners and associates and make available to them different tools available at the Urban Community of Al Fayhaaa. It will permit also to highlight what the partners and associates can bring to the network and possible sources of information, knowhow, and Best Practice.

**VIII. RECONET: An innovative project**

One of the aspects of innovation of RECONET was the cooperation between the applicant-the Union of Municipalities of Al Fayhaaa, the partner municipalities, the associates, and the Governorate of North Lebanon. The realized training sessions on the daily issues related to the administrative control on Municipalities broke the ice between the participants.
Another aspect of innovation was the association of the Al Fayhaa Knowledge Transfer Center (KTC) which dynamited the project and provided a strong background, sustainability and strong capitalization of efforts. The KTC is one of the pillar tools in the project. Its intervention created a good platform for exchanging of knowledge and widened its scope by tackling daily municipal topics like strategic planning, local development, public awareness, public participatory approaches, environment, tourism, and social inclusion, rebuilding the trust between citizens and municipal institution and capacity building.

The innovation of the project is revealed also in the fact that it offered daily live possibility for all the partners and associates to interact between each other and exchange information and experience which reduced the time and efforts in solving daily municipal issues. Such exchange was through the networking via internet applications.
IX. The Role and added value of the KTC

The Al Fayhaa KTC intervention was an added value to the project and to partners and associates. It used the project network to disseminate the activities realized by the KTC during RECONET implementation so that all partners and associates could get informed, follow, and profit from them. Such activities were:

1) Elaboration of concept notes for two associates Union of Danniyeh, and Municipality of Zgharta-Ehden.

2) Realization of a proposal for a baling facility in Tripoli and procurement of street sweeping car for Dannieh, facing the Syrian displaced crisis.

3) Updating the strategic plan of Al Fayhaa by adding an annex about Kalamoun after it joined the Union.

1) Concept Notes

   a) Preventing the degeneration of the agricultural sector in Dannieh Municipalities Union

The Dannieh Municipalities Union has elaborated in 2012 a sustainable development strategic plan based on participatory approach. The reason behind the plan was to elaborate a comprehensive and strategic development vision that paves the
way for the achievement of human development goals by optimizing the use of different resources. In the strategic plan, the short term intervention consisted in developing the agricultural sector and farmers (especially small and medium farmers), establish agricultural cooperatives together with complementary activities related to food industry in all its forms. The Agriculture sector is very important to the Dannieh citizens, especially with the presence of the agricultural cooperation. Agro economic projects are sustainable through the provision of the necessary land. The region has the worst economic stagnation and the poorest agriculture sector. The general objectives of the proposed action is to prevent the degeneration of the agricultural sector that support about 70% of the local population and enhance and increase the living standards of a large category of population which relies on agriculture as the main source of income. Gender will be a major part of the proposed action. The Specific Objectives of the action aim at modernization of the agricultural products, agricultural practices and tools, enhancing quality of products, improving the marketing of agricultural products, promoting integrated markets of food products locally and internationally, enhancing the presentation of the products, and bringing agro food products closer to the tastes of European Consumers. Promoting the entrepreneurship of farmers and branding of the Dannieh region, the creation of jobs, the retention of young
talents in the local territory and social inclusion, are otherspecific objectives.

**b) Realization of a Tourism office in the Municipality of Zgharta-Ehden**

The positive image of Ehden-Zgharta district, helps promote a tourism policy. Thanks to the geological nature of the district, its extension between the coast and the mountains, the renowned hospitality, richness in water sources, fountains, forests, caves and vegetation in Horsh Ehden Nature Reserve which is unique in the world together with the archaeological sites such as churches, statues of historical figures, and relevant tombs. These territorial characteristics help to forgean original tourist identity, which differs from the dominant model in the Mediterranean, the beach tourism "mass". The proposed action: "Tourist office: A major driver of tourism and economic development of Ehden", allows to establish an operational structure that can bring together both municipality, and other stakeholders, elaborate a participatory and joint action plan, and promote awareness of the tourist impact on the territory and the population. Hence, and from the synergy that will be created between all the actors in the sector, the office establishment will lead to a better management of tourism projects and ensure proper promotion of the region, while
preserving the heritage and the environment on one hand, and economic development on the other hand.
The innovative nature of the action lies in the determination of an original tourist location for the district of Zgharta-Ehden, alternative to the dominant model of tourism "mass", and bring an added value generator for managers and tour operators. The action will allow to emerge Zgharta-Ehden as a tourist destination that attracts and satisfies today’s tourists and also clients from the Lebanese urban areas, the diaspora, and other customers from the Mediterranean.
The tourist office is a window in which the tourism resources of the city and its region are exhibited, valued so as to encourage visitors passing to renew or extend their stay there. Activities, hotel resources, other forms of accommodation, monuments, sites, museums, various local sights are exhibited there, in addition to the ad hoc or regular cultural events such as concerts, exhibitions and shows. The proposed action aims, through an associative / institutional collaborative approach to establish a responsible tourism strategy over the long term essentially based on the creation of hiking loops, and heritage discovery and networking with the Lebanon Mountain Track (LMT) and the Qadisha Valley.
The Tourist Office will advise visits, simplify life for tourists, develop the sites, information on activities, coordinate service providers, and organize collective operations.

2) Writing of Quick Win projects to face Syrian refugees’ Crisis.

a. Baling Facility for Tripoli Municipality

In Lebanon, the collection of municipal solid wastes is the competence of municipalities. The management of the treatment process (sorting, sanitary land filling…) is the competence of the central government. The Naameh landfill, (operating for almost 17 years), was closed recently. The NIMBY syndrome did not allow the concerned ministries from finding alternative locations of landfills all over Lebanon. Street demonstrations against realizing landfills are a daily action and collection of garbage stopped for lack of a dumping places. The streets and any available open parcels, are full of municipal solid wastes. The Municipalities found themselves faced with citizen demands to collect the wastes from the city's streets without being ready for such an operation, especially that most municipalities are facing an increase of the solid wastes quantities due to the Syrian refugees’ problem.
Awareness and Media campaigns asked all citizens to do a source sorting.
Since 2011, and as per the other Lebanese municipalities, the problem of the Syrian refugees impacted Tripoli negatively, and especially the municipal solid wastes sector. The daily production of municipal solid wastes jumped from a daily production of 300 Tons to 450 Tons with a net increase of 50%. The landfill, which was supposed to close few years ago, is still operating over its original capacity and is overflowing. The separation at the source is not yet a popular scenario for the citizens, despite the continuous awareness campaigns recently carried in most of the Lebanese territories. All residential and commercial solid wastes are mixed together and compacted in the hydraulic cars and transported to the landfill without any separation, thus losing the possibility of Reusing and Recycling. No need to mention here that the suggested project will reduce by around 10% the quantity of solid wastes reaching the landfill.

The proposed project aims at realizing a baling facility in one of the region of Tripoli - Jabal Mohsen, to reduce the bulky wastes in street containers and value portion of the recyclable material (cardboards, paper, plastic, and aluminum cans) by minimizing its flow to the Tripoli Landfill. The Municipal solid
wastes quantities of the project area are estimated to be about 10% of the Al Fayhaa union quantities of 450 Tons (45 Tons per day), resulting into 6 Tons per day of cardboards, paper, plastic, and aluminum cans.

The project is a typical pilot cooperation project engaging the municipality of Tripoli, the NGO who is realizing the activities and carrying the awareness campaign, and the private sector represented by the final recipient of baled recycled material.

**General Objective:**
Reduce the bulky wastes in street containers and the flow of recyclable material to the Tripoli Landfill.

**Specific Objectives:**
1- Allow more space in street containers for organic and non-recyclable wastes.
2- Reduce the wastes collection cycle.
3 - Create jobs for vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees.
4 - Decrease the quantity of wastes going to street containers.
5- Establish a cooperation between local authorities, private sector, and NGO of the civil society.
6- Establish a pilot facility that could be replicated in other areas.
**The Proposed activities:**

- Collection of cardboards, papers, plastic and aluminum cans from Banks, pharmacies, schools, mini markets, and private dwellings.
- Compressing and Baling of collected recyclable material.
- Land transportation to specialized recycling centers in Beirut in trucks.
- Realizing awareness campaigns in the region of operation.
- Distribution of special bins to most sources of recyclable waste in the region.

**Jobs creation:**

Between 6 to 10 vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees will be employed by the facility.

**Sustainability:**

The project is self-sustainable through the selling of the baled recyclable material.

**Environmental issue:**

The project is environmental by excellence. It answers the rule of the 3R’s: Reduce, Recycle, and Reuse.

The material collected will be directly from the source without any mixing with organic and any other polluted wastes, and
therefore the operation will not impact the neighboring area by any odors.

b. Street sweeper for Dannieh Municipalities Union

The territorial strategic plan of Dannieh region listed 16 projects in the action plan to reduce the damage of the environment because the environment is considered one of the most important aspects of the region and certain practices threaten its sustainability. Some of the causes of this damage are the lack of efficient waste management mechanisms.

General Objective:

- To mitigate the effect of refugee crises influx in waste management of the Union of Municipalities of Dannieh.

Specific Objective:

- To improve street cleaning causing risks to population of the region, both inhabitants and refugees.
- To increase the capacities of the Union of the Municipalities of Dannieh in waste management.

The sanitation and the waste removal is a priority for the Union of Municipalities of Dannieh. The Municipalities are institutionally responsible for street sweeping which becomes recently a complicated mission due to the high influx of Syrian refugees in the region. According to different reports, the
amount of waste collected in municipalities has increased by 50% since the beginning of the refugee crisis in 2012.

The increased number of population influence the quantity of street waste and multiply the manual collection cycle, especially during the summer season, which leads to an increase of workers and municipalities expenses that suffer already from a shortage of resources and lack of public funding.

The biggest problem lies in the environmental pollution and the chaos caused by the inability of municipalities for a rapid response to resolve this problem which increases the misery experienced by the refugees and the inhabitant of the region. Moreover, the fact that the city is dirtier also increases social unrest and conflict since refugees may be seen as the cause of this situation.

The problem lies mainly in the lack of technical equipment to carry out this work. A Mechanical street sweeper has been identified by the Union of Municipalities as the best solution to face it. It would help keep vehicles and pedestrians safe by keeping debris off the roadway, and streets well maintained, helps protect surface water quality, would help to cover all the region in a more effective way that increases the effectiveness and the frequency of street sweeping at a lower cost and help
to pick up any kind of sediment and small debris, in addition to dirt and dust and that is much better of the manual work and definitely reduces municipalities’ expenses, and cost of street sweeping.

Accordingly, it is necessary to provide the Union with a street sweeper for its environmental benefits. This action will help the union of municipalities, it will improve the life conditions, and offer a healthier environment for the inhabitant of Dannieh region and mitigate the impact of the activities of the Syrian refugees.

c. **Updating of strategic plans**

1. **Urban Community AL Fayhaa**

Although the Al Fayhaa AFSDS was accomplished by the end of 2011, still its elaboration started in 2008. Almost five years have passed and there was a necessity to carry a first revision because of the following:

- The recent joining of the City of Kalamoun who at that time, was not an official member of the Union of Al Fayhaa.
- The planned new coastal zone of Beddawi.
- The stressful impact of the Syrian refugees.
• The economic, social, and environmental impact of the new Special Economic Zone (TSEZ) in the port of Tripoli.

• The assessment of any studies that occurred in Al Fayhaa during the period 2012 – 2015 i.e. after the termination of the Al Fayhaa AFSDS, especially related to the area of Tebbaneh and Bael Mohsen where fighting was going on.

An individual consultant was contracted to realize the above intervention which ended by March 2016.

X. **The Indicators: Qualitative and Quantitative**

To evaluate the RECONET project, specific indicators to measure the activity, performance, and confidence of partners and associates were identified. The tangible results are based on such indicators.

**The Quantitative Indicators:**

1. **Key Performance Indicators**

   • Number of concept notes written.
   
   • Number of written projects.
   
   • Number of updated strategic plans.
2. **Indicators of Trust**

- Type and number of training sessions and number of participants.
- Type and number of workshops and number of participants.
- Type and number of meetings.
- Type and number of interventions in cooperation with the North Lebanon Governorate.
- Number of disseminated events on the project website.

3. **Governance indicators**

- Number of internal meetings.
- Number of visits to partners and associates.

**The qualitative indicators:**

The qualitative indicators will tackle the situation at the partners and associates in the action.

- Degree of activity of the project site.
- Degree of improvement achieved in the municipal process.
- Degree of intervention of partners and associates
- Degree of interaction, maintenance of dialogue and enhancement of daily communication between partners and associates.
• Degree of exchange of experience and of good practices between partners and associates.

• Degree of interaction between local authorities and public/private universities.

• Degree of restored trust between the civil society and the local authority.

• Degree of enhancement of cooperation between local authority and Governorate.

• Degree of sustainability of the project after termination.

XI. **Summary: Achieved tangible results**

➤ **Institutional reinforcement**

Great positive influence on the institutional reinforcement of partners and associates was recorded at the technical, social, and policy levels.

**Technical level:** The daily exchange of information and experience between the partners and associates reinforced their institutions through an additional knowledge in various IT and Municipal fields. The project lead to a continuous stream of mutual learning and of continuous training. It saved time and efforts and helped avoiding uncommitted mistakes in the Municipal administration
**Social level:** Dealing within the project with subjects like Urban local development led the partner municipalities and unions of municipalities to deal with social issues in a deeper way, especially in the fields like Syrian displaced, municipal complaints, school dropout,

**Policy level:** The partners and associates were deeply informed about the tools available at the Union of Al Fayhaa, the Applicant, such as the KTC, the Urban Observatory and the Citizen Complaint center. They assessed closely the efficiency of such tools and the great help they bring to the municipal administration.

- **Cooperation between local authority and central government institutions**

Choosing as speaker for training sessions about municipalities and employees, the head of the municipal department at the North Lebanon governorate who experiencesdaily the problems of municipalities, broke the ice with the participants. The Governorate role exceeded its role of administrative control, into the role of orienting and advising.

- **Tackling new daily hot topics in municipalities**

The chosen subjects of the training sessions were of major importance for the participating partners and associates.
Training sessions covered new hot daily topics in municipal life such as local development offices, urban observatories, Geographic Information Systems, complaint centers, strategic planning, public awareness, and private public partnership PPP.

- **Deep Interaction between local authorities and private/public Universities**

  The action offered a daily live possibility for all the partners and associates to interact between each other and exchange information and good practices which reduced the time and efforts in solving daily municipal issues, thus creating a mutual profit and a Win-Win situation. The presence of one public and one private university within the partners paved the way for a technological transfer. Universities got more involved in public issues and deepened their knowledge about the daily municipal problems and the urban local development requirements.

- **Exchange of experience and know how**

  The project enhanced the daily communication and exchange of good practices between the partners and associates which reflected better management and higher level of municipal governance. Topics dealing with governance pillars and how to
realize such good governance were discussed. The action had
the support and expertise of the associate, Metropolitan Area of
Barcelona (AMB), acting as General Secretariat of MedCities
and other associates, member of MedCities. The experience of
the AMB in best practices exchange on urban issues was a
guarantee to the success of the project. The network was
enriched by the associates experience mainly in strategic
planning, experiential tourism, hiking and handcrafts (Jezzine),
Strategic planning, cooperation with NGO’s (Dannieh
Municipalities Union), usage of natural heritage (Zgharta-
Ehden).

The KTC is well placed in issues of exchange of experience and
information. The KTC’s objectives are dissemination, training
and facilitation actions for other cities in the region that show
interest in knowledge exchange and networking. The KTC
operated locally and in full throttle on the exchange of
experience related not only to strategic planning, but to other
urban issues like local development, offering in this way to
partners and associates, a wide range of best practices and
proven experience in complex urban issues.

➢ Maintenance of Dialogue

The project maintained dialogue between local authorities and
the civil society. Municipal elected members, municipal staff,
experts and local actors participated and shared points of view in the four workshops with topics about local development bureaus, urban observatories, strategic planning and decentralized cooperation.

➢ **Support partners and associates in the writing of concept notes**

Two concept notes were elaborated in cooperation with the two local authorities and the technical support of the KTC. Agents from the two local authorities were involved in the writing of the two concept notes. The concept notes were based on the strategic plans of the Dannieh Municipalities Union, and the municipality of Zgharta-Ehden. The ideas of the two concept notes are based on the priorities of the next EU financed program ENI CBCMED. They will allow the two local authorities to present them to the program once the calls for proposals are published or to other international donors.

➢ **Tackling the Syrian displaced crisis**

The Syrian refugees’ crisis impacted most Lebanese municipalities. Some of them received almost as much as 50% of their total citizen’s number. Most of the international organizations and donors turned their activities towards helping displaced Syrians in facing this dilemma. At the local
authorities’ level, the municipalities faced a quick increase of the generated solid wastes quantities, a deterioration of the cleanliness of the public spaces and streets, and many social problems. Two project ideas were written by the KTC to the Municipality of Tripoli and to the Dannieh Union of Municipalities to help facing the Syrian displaced crisis. UNDP is helping in the implementation of the Tripoli project regarding the realization of a bailing facility.

➤ **Updating of Strategic plans**

The strategic plan of Al Fayhaa was disseminated end 2011. Some changes occurred afterwards such as the joining of the Kalamoun City and the Syrian refugees’ crisis. This led to the updating of the AFSDS strategy through a technical and financial support of the KTC.

➤ **Getting prepared for the new EU financed ENI CBCMED**

As a result of the training sessions and workshops, partners and associates are ready to embark on the new financed EU program ENI CBCMED due to start in 2017. The priorities and strategy of the new program were presented in the training sessions and disseminated on the RECONET project page on the internet.
Partners and associates are now ready to answer the calls for proposals and send projects concept notes relevant to the ENI. The applicant, the Union of Municipalities of Al Fayhaa is now ready to lead new projects and be the main applicant and beneficiary in new proposals after getting experience in the technical, financial and administrative sides of EU programs.
## XII. Annex: RECONET actors Names and coordinates

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<td>team of expert</td>
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