SAIDA DIAGNOSIS.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT
Saida Urban Sustainable Development Strategy

Local Expert Team

Strategic Diagnosis Report

Executive Summary
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report is devoted to the strategic diagnosis of the six transversal issues generated at the end of the descriptive memory phase.

The diagnosis departs from the descriptive memory report but proceeds within a cyclical process of reworking and reformulation of data and of positions as new material is collected or offered. The strategic diagnosis therefore involves a great deal of collecting data, consulting with working groups, validating positions and revisiting initial readings. It also addresses the concerns raised by the Steering Committee across all the transversal issues; particularly their primary concern with the issue of poverty.

The strategic diagnosis involved great deal of collecting data, mapping based on aerial photographs and verified by field visits, validating positions and revisiting initial readings. In the absence of unified and targeted datasets, the available material is fragmented and uneven. Due to the absence of some critical data, the diagnosis process involved basic field work and conducting of surveys, besides processing secondary sources triangulating several quantitative and qualitative sources of data from different years. In some cases, statistical variables were created to elaborate the data so as to be in line with the team’s definitions within the areas of focus of each transversal issue. Against this background, data presented in the report does not always coincide. Nevertheless, and after triangulation of the data with the field observations, the working team is confident that the data is representative of factual trends and characteristics, and conveys the physical and socio-economic reality of the city of Saida.

Another main source of data has been the semi-structured in-depth interviews that the team has conducted with key informants in Saida such as municipality officials, people working in civil society, fishermen, craftsmen, and syndicate representatives. In addition, the team has also benefitted from the working group meetings, where the team’s data and ideas where discussed, verified, and new issues were raised.

The diagnosis conducted in this phase and recorded in this report will be followed by the strategic framework. A key link between the diagnosis and the strategic framework is the vision for the city. The team conducting the strategic diagnosis therefore decided to adopt a vision from those articulated by the working groups to guide their diagnosis and to be tested. This methodology is intended to create linkages between the various phases on the USDS study and to anchor itself around a vision for the city formulated and reformulated through the process of consultation with the local community.
2.0 Problem Definition

Cultural and Natural Heritage
The descriptive memory report concluded that Saida is rich with cultural and natural heritage. Its built heritage is marked by archeological, architectural and urban artifacts that date from 4000 B.C till Modern times. Its landscape and natural heritage is marked by rural landscapes, ancient orchards, river corridors and springs. Saida is also rich with artistic and social practices that are integral to its heritage. These are marked by traditional trades and crafts such as fishing, farming and carpentry around which festivals, social and economic practices take place.

Saida’s heritage however is largely neglected, threatened and underutilized. Its historic inner core has suffered deterioration due to high congestion, outdated infrastructure, aging housing stock, and migration of inhabitants. Despite recent efforts, Saida’s rich heritage stock remains largely inaccessible and untapped as a cultural and economic resource. Many of its archeological sites are not open to the public and most of its monuments are not restored or adaptively re-used. Natural and landscape heritage sites are not recognized or protected from environmental and human impact. The old city has limited access and is not well advertised or networked with tourist destinations. The infrastructure and the facilities are not adequate. This adds to the problem and does not allow for long stays in the city.

The city’s traditional activities are still present and strongly associated with the history and character of the city but are threatened by lack of planning and financial support. Fishing has always had a core economic role from which the city takes its name since ancient times. Fishing is also at the core of social heritage. It has established over the centuries patterns of spatial, social, and regional networks and practices. Glass making, soap making and wood carpentry are also key practices that have either disappeared or sustained themselves over the centuries, and have become integral to Saida’s character and reputation, along with the sweets Saida is so famous for. In addition to that, the city does not have a museum for its traditional crafts or artifacts. It does not have training programs or subsidies to sustain traditional crafts and integrate them into the local economy. Festivals around religious holidays and seasonal agricultural and fishing practices have disappeared or are threatened by political tension and financial challenges.

It must be acknowledged however that since the rehabilitation of key monuments such as Khan Al-Franj and the rehabilitation and establishment of private museums such as the "Audi Soap Museum, an increasing number of groups of students and tourists both local and international have visited Saida’s historic core. All efforts remain within the old city, focused on single monuments, fragmented and diverse in their agendas and approaches to restoration and rehabilitation. They lack coordination and a greater strategic frame. There is a dire need at all levels, from awareness campaigns, to protection measures, funding, upgrade of the infrastructure and urban environment, revitalization of traditional industries and trades, to a long term heritage management plan.

In the light of these observations, a strategic intervention on heritage needs to undertake specific challenges, linked in the report to the baseline documentation work carried out for the purpose of
this diagnosis. The documentation covers monuments and heritage sites listing, an assessment of restoration projects in the old city, the spatial integration of the old city with its surroundings, a critical reading of the legal framework for heritage protection and zoning, and estimations on the current performance of the tourism sector.

The challenges identified along these tracks include: a comprehensive survey and an historical registry; preserving the historic housing stock, considering monuments and residential fabric as part of a single living heritage; breaking the isolation of the old city, promoting its socio-economic revitalization by activating its spatial and institutional linkages with the rest of the city; ensuring affordability of restoration projects in relation to the actual socio-economic profile of the residents; the approval of reforms of planning regulations; the implementation of a comprehensive scheme of information, promotion, facilities and services to encourage tourism.

The report investigates this reading and problematic of cultural and natural heritage leading to the identification of the strategic objectives listed below, towards recommendations to be developed in the strategic framework phase.

Green / Open Space Network
The focus of Transversal Issue 2, Green/Open Space Network, embraces by definition all green areas within Municipal Saida, past, present and those with future potential for greening, such as natural and agricultural heritage, river and sea landscapes.

The critical analysis highlights the following issues:

a) Coastal urbanization, unplanned urban expansion and unregulated development are transforming the diverse and verdant landscape of Saida into a grey, homogenized, characterless fabric;

b) The encroachment of rivers corridors and minor watercourses undermines their ecological health and spatial integrity.

c) Unmonitored solid waste and sewage discharge and applied morphological changes to the coastline affect watercourses and coastal and marine environment, while its biological and visual impacts are not assessed.

d) The expanding urban footprint with the growth of population and building densities threaten open landscapes, both natural and agricultural, with the incremental fragmentation and loss of green areas, negatively impacting on the inhabitants’ physical and psychological wellbeing.

e) In the absence of protection laws, increasing urban density threatens the Ottoman water channels that historically irrigated agricultural land in the Saida coastal plain.

f) The prevailing perception of agriculture as an activity of the past, of no value in the future development of the city, undermines options to adopt a strategy aligned with the 21st century vision of urban agriculture, as a sustainable approach to urban greening.

g) An outdated understanding of amenity and green/open areas foregrounds the creation of traffic related green areas and municipal parks, ignoring available options for green networks, along river and infrastructural corridors that can better serve the expanding urban footprint.

h) Saida Municipality outsources part of its services to local contractors. The absence of landscape management expertise within the Municipality implies a lack of supervision and monitoring of the quality of the services provided by contractors.
The investigation focuses on three major landscape components: agricultural landscape, water resources and municipal open spaces. These tracks are analyzed critically to highlight the above listed issues.

1. **Agricultural landscape:**
   Agriculture under the landscape approach acquires additional value as it serves as green/open space that improves the quality of urban living both by visual and ecological impacts. Saida’s agricultural landscape needs to be protected as integral to the heritage of the city and as potential green space in future development. Today it constitutes 33% of the city’s area mainly by fruit trees orchards, with the frequency and the size of production varying between north and south.
   Three factors affect agricultural activities: most importantly the availability of water for irrigation, the land tenure/ownership and the farmer relation to the market. There is neither legal framework nor strategy that helps in ensuring the continuation or the preservation of such activity versus the pressure of real estate development. Three trends were identified to best describe the agriculture landscape situation: the fast rate of shrinking agricultural landscapes prioritizing realty development over agriculture, its fragmentation, and the outdated practices.

2. **Water Resources**
   The ecological planning framework applied in the strategic analysis of water resources in Municipal Saida focuses on the different water and hydrological components (direct and indirect) as landscape. It considers equally relevant the ecological health and the spatial integrity of river corridors and marine waterfront, its cultural significance as natural heritage and its potential as amenities and as part of sustainable future urban greening strategies.
   Protecting the ecological health and spatial integrity of Saida’s water resources as multifunctional landscapes means to preserve the dual relationship of the city to sea and mountain.
   The analysis highlighted the different causes of pollution of streams, ground water and marine resources: the notably uncontrolled expanding urban footprint with channeling of minor watercourses and spatial encroachment onto river domain; the untreated sewage infrastructure that mixes with streams to discharge in the sea with the mismanagement of stormwater resources; the solid waste dumping and excessive pumping of ground waters. Findings warn on the increasing water pollution and scarcity, and the risks of ground water salination. The problem resides mainly in the inability of the municipality to plan in an integrated water management perspective, to control sources of water pollution at its boundaries and upstream of the city, and in the multi-jurisdictional status of the water sector.

3. **Municipal open spaces**
   The landscape framework expands the analysis of green/open areas in Municipal Saida beyond parks, traffic related green areas, sports and cemeteries, by (a) identifying potential green areas (b) reclaiming heritage landscape as place and culture specific green areas, and (c) integrating existing and potential components into a network of green areas up-to-scale with the needs of the growing footprint.
   To comply with international standards, Saida needs to raise the per capita green area allocation to 3.0 m². Developing a network of green areas would make this possible, contributing to quality urban living, health and wellbeing.
   The identification and analysis of all green open municipal spaces from the gardens to traffic related highlighted the relevance of innovative approaches to urban greening. The analysis recognized...
potential corridors like the Corniche and railway that could contribute to the establishment of green open spaces network.

The current situation can be explained mainly by the lack of proper management and maintenance by the municipality, together with the limited accessibility and use, and the misuse and pollution of the maritime domain. In this context, a number of constraints need to be addressed: the limited understanding of urban green space, the insularity of existing green spaces, the unregulated and inefficient management and the underutilized marine waterfront.

**Urban Infrastructure**
The main problems common to all infrastructural systems operating in Saida are summarized below in four points: a) municipal management capacity; b) vagueness of collective vision; c) weak competitive edge; and d) non-equitable distribution.

The management capacity of the municipality to plan, steer and sustain infrastructural systems is rather limited despite the highly entrepreneurial role of the current municipal council. As municipal finances are not organized on a cost enter basis and are not thereof reflective of services provided, the true cost of providing infrastructure is not transparent to the public. Therefore, further development of infrastructure is always hijacked by the political process. Moreover, technical solutions are often shortsighted, as the funding for works comes with restrictions as to the types of technology used.

Faced with serious limitations on management resources, the city is in constant reactive crisis-management mode. And when the city is actually being proactive, it is doing so in a sector by sector approach unable to link interventions by an integral cycle, linking technical, financial (cost recovery) and environmental requirements. This often leads to sub-optimal solutions and a dependency on expertise that can only be engaged during construction type projects funded by the central government. Most of the municipal achievements come under the rubric of physical projects but not better services. Indeed, the channels through which the city engages the wider public to evaluate its services are all informal, missing the opportunity of public participation, mobilizing community knowledge and/or resources to solve urban problems.

Enhancing the management capacity of the Municipality is thus a double deck challenge for Saida, with efficient service delivery mirroring community mobilization. Achieving such rights-duties correlation seems all the more urgent in relation to energy and water management, and to disaster preparedness, particularly in poor areas where physical and economic conditions multiply the impact of hazards.

As for the second point, a collective vision remains vague because infrastructure in Saida is developed as a late response to urban growth not as an instigator for it. Private growth has set unsustainable low density growth patterns that are very costly to service over the long run, with the public subsidizing private indulgence in land speculation.

The city is carrying projects and lobbying for more without having a comprehensive outlook on how these projects will generate sufficient revenue to cover even their maintenance costs. Moreover the
yearly depreciations of public assets and related increase of national debt resulting from these projects seems not being considered as an indicator for decision making.

This in itself is a symptom for the vagueness of the vision for the city and its long term sustainability. As each project is considered by itself and not part of a comprehensive vision, great opportunities for maximizing the benefits of public infrastructure projects through minor additional marginal costs are being entirely missed.

The various authorities working on the different infrastructural services in the city are often only competent to engage in their sector specific issues. It is the role of the municipality to explore areas of synergies, including the relevant municipalities in the greater Federation of Saida-Al-Zahrani, as municipal borders do not apply to infrastructural networks.

The wastewater network of greater Saida is taken as an example, showing that the advantages of alternative solutions for integrated water management would be easier to grab if technical constraints were addressed by a comprehensive plan and if the Federation was resilient.

Regarding its competitive edge, Saida represents a typical administrative and service center living of its old glory. Its locational advantages are no longer relevant in an increasingly decentralized Lebanon, and fragmented Eastern Mediterranean region. Particularly in the last two years, what Saida is boasting in terms of infrastructural achievements is significant considering the magnitude of local obstacles that had to be overcome. Yet, the systems for sustaining management, finance, monitoring and evaluation, and eventually resident satisfaction achievements are still lagging behind.

Cities often use their infrastructure advantages as a main marketing tool to attract investments and convince their residents to continue their commitment to the city, as shown in the report by the case of the island of Mallorca. Beirut locational advantages and the intensity of development taking place in the South are gradually reducing the city’s critical advantage. Saida needs to consider its infrastructure developments in that regard.

Today, Saida’s infrastructure is not corresponding to any of the urban visions that its residents expressed they would like to have for their city. The current port location is a major hindrance to the old city’s potentials as a tourist destination. The highway system is planned to ease the access to the capital rather than to focus on Saida’s focal role as a destination. Solid waste and wastewater plants were located right at the tip of the Corniche, the Maritime Boulevard, reducing its viability as a sea front promenade.

The lack of equity in its distribution is also a major concern when considering Saida’s infrastructure. The two main zones of poverty in Saida are the ‘Ain Al-Helwe refugee camp and the Old City with its southern vicinity, where infrastructural lacks adds on the limited livelihoods, multiplying the far reaching effects of poverty. The Camp, completely overrun and devastated after the 1982 Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon, was rebuilt in haste and is today home to some 50,000 to over 70,000 people, with recent arrivals of Palestinian refugees from Syria. Most maintenance and repairs are coordinated on a case by case basis by the Popular Committee and UNRWA with ever decreasing funds. Compiled with the fact that half of the camp area is actually beyond the mandate of UNRWA,
the situation in the camp is becoming very dire. ‘Ain Al-Helwe comprises some 25% of the residents of greater Saida. It is still treated as a no-man’s land when it comes to the provision of public infrastructure.

In the old city and its southern edge, public infrastructure fairs slightly better as CHUD has undertaken some major investments in the old city along with municipal funds. Private foundations are also contributing to the improvements of the public infrastructure in the historic core. However, these interventions do not entail the maintenance and operation of the infrastructural assets after their installations. The Municipality has undertaken to start a major 15 Million USD project to upgrade the water, wastewater and pavement in a large zone in the south and east of the old city. This project will contribute to the improvement in the quality of life for many of the poor residents in that zone. However, infrastructure projects in poor neighborhoods are one of the main drivers of gentrification. They should be accompanied by social projects and special programs to assist the residents; otherwise the poverty problem will only be refocused to another poorer zone in the city. The case of the historic city of Shibam in Yemen is presented in the report as an example of how an infrastructure project can play a major role in preserving the intangible as well as tangible heritage.

Local Economic Development
In order to address Saida’s economic problems, it is important to understand their root causes and multiple origins as well as anticipate the future. In order to understand where the economic shortfalls are coming from, and how new challenges and opportunities will emerge within emerging regional and international trends, three key aspects of local economy are addressed. These are: a) the role of local government in supporting the local economy; b) real estate speculation and its backlash on investment opportunities; c) the city’s competitive edge.

Saida Municipality does not have a sufficient critical mass to support an integrated economy. Crude municipal demarcation lines divert important tax revenues away from Saida, though Saida is bearing the brunt of the surrounding municipalities’ services, preventing collective and integrated approaches to economic development. Most of the industrial activities are zoned out of the main municipal boundaries of Saida through local and national planning directives. Land prices in Saida have become prohibitive for any feasible investment in job creating and value-adding enterprises. Real estate investments have created unrealistic expectations for land values in the city, reaching from 2 to 6 times those of neighboring municipalities.

Industrial functions are thus shifting to the Ghazieh and Al-Zahrani area, while Saida and its surrounding eastern municipalities are being confined to retail and residential functions, as detailed in the report. This is an indirect consequence of the Lebanese system of tax collection between the national and municipal revenues which is creating a disincentive for looking at non-direct and long term advantages of diversifying investments in other types of enterprises. The role of the municipality as a catalyst to promote investment is only noticed through the municipal efforts to attract certain types of infrastructural investments into Saida, also inclined to attract further real estate speculations. The long term increase in the local GDP expected to result, by typical multiplier effects, from the total package of these investments will tend to favor return
reaching only the upper strata of the population, with most of the related tax base increases going to the central government in terms of income and value added taxes, anyway expected to return less than half of the depreciation of the assets being built.

Most importantly, the Saida municipal budget is too limited to create any leverage for investments, and can barely afford to care for the basic maintenance of municipal services. Collective partnerships to promote investments and market the city as a destination for investments are only informally carried out, not for lack of will but for lack of understanding of the role of the municipality as a catalyst for the local economy.

Real estate speculations are an important factor of the high land prices in Saida given its low densities. The city can still absorb more development but its real estate market is pushing investments away, blocking important lands for future speculation. Municipal land uses were documented for the city of Saida to have a rough estimate of the working of the real estate market. The city can still preserve most of its agricultural land, and increase its urban density to absorb 50% more residents. Trends in agricultural production offer a case in point to show how the Saidawi’s are missing important value adding investment opportunities by concentrating mainly on real-estate speculations. Meanwhile the residential stock of the city is developed beyond the capacity of the city’s demographics to absorb it, at the expense of overcrowded and poor living conditions for the majority of Saidawis. The net result is unnaturally high land prices, beyond the local demand’s capacity to pay.

Moreover, it is not only housing demand that is being pushed away from the city but also other commercial and industrial investments that can actually produce value added in the economy. Most big investments in Saida have taken the shape of new malls for the most part underperforming and with very limited multiplier effect in the local economy.

Regarding its competitive edge, Saida’s central position vis-à-vis other cities and regions in the south is only going to be undermined as the rest of the South regions are evolving and developing their local services. Even the limited advantages experienced in the health and education sectors will soon be reduced by decentralization. Saidawi enterprises must have some incentives and entrepreneurial leadership for proactive marketing and to set up outposts, linkages of its services to other regions, and partnerships to increase their accessibility.

For example, along the Eastern Mediterranean coast, several ports function as main linkages to the inland, to Syria, and beyond to Iraq, Jordan and the Gulf States. Yet, most Saidawi’s still view the port as a local rather than a regional potential. Saida is forfeiting its opportunity to capitalize on a strong port by accepting to develop a small local port with no free zone potential and little in terms of other port amenities. Coordinating with Al-Zahrani to create a mutually beneficial facility can serve both growth poles.

On the other hand the current port being developed in the Alexander Gulf (the Egyptian port) will further reduce the potential attractiveness of the old city as a tourist destination. In the case of Tyre (Sour) to the South, the city has opted to abandon the small port there in favor of strengthening the tourist potentials of the town. Saida is neither capitalizing on a strong commercial port nor is it
abandoning it in favor of strengthening the heritage image of the old city. As it stands, Saida has had a considerably hostile attitude to tourism, which is not seen as an immediate generator of economic resources in the city by most interlocutors. Any realistic plan for evolving tourism in the city would require the municipality to develop a long term strategy where the city would have to sacrifice some of its resources to build its tourism infrastructure and establish its brand. Saida has the potential to grow its tourism sector in the immediate future to about three to four times its current level with the introduction of minor improvements in local conditions. But it will need to think through many important issues such as the final location of the port and its role, and developing a network of tourism infrastructural services. Prospects for increasing the tourism share in the local economy show that even a meager increase in returns is superior to the economic impact of the port as envisioned in its new location. On the other hand, should the city decide to really invest in its tourism potentials, without serious marketing and adjustments to the approach of supporting tourism in the city, it could reach an annual visitation figure compatible with what the city of Byblos (Jbeil) is attracting at the moment.

Tourism will never be the magical solution for the local economy in the city as some are portraying it to be. Still Saida has the potential to contribute greatly to the development of such an important sector.

Employment in Traditional Crafts and Trades
The transversal issue of employment in traditional productions and trades studies the demand for craftsmen and traditional labor as well as the supply markets for the end-products. The vast majority of employment within traditional crafts, as per the present definition, is semi-skilled work. The elaborations are based on statistics from the 2004 Household Living Conditions survey outline the division of semi-skilled workers into the different sectors of employment, and their distribution across the various manufacturing activities. The number of semi-skilled workers in Saida is estimated, based on triangulation of several data sources, to be around 9,000 workers, of which 32% work in businesses that fall under the definition of traditional crafts and trades. Other semi-skilled workers are employed in manufacturing of concrete and metal products (excluding machinery and equipment) (28%), and construction (15%).

It is evident that a significant number of people (around 3,000) work in traditional crafts. The two largest traditional industries are furniture and bakeries (including sweets). These two industries appear to be the only two traditional-to-Saida industries that have succeeded in introducing technology and/or know-how to their production process, and expanding their capacities. This is most probably due to that fact that their products have remained contemporary and the demand for them has not declined. These sectors have witnessed an "industrialization process" and relatively large investments, e.g. El-Baba sweets, Gandoline sweets, Classic Home, and Home Design. However, these investments have relocated from the old city to the eastern boulevard (i.e. sweets) and the industrial zone south of the city (i.e. furniture).

The rest of the traditional productions have significantly dwindled and have been reduced to a small number of family businesses that are most often not being transferred to the younger generations,
and are thus threatened to disappear. At the same time, these crafts are closely linked to the living heritage existing in the city. They are intrinsically connected to the image of the city, where their output represents the commoditization of this heritage. Several macroeconomic, social and political factors have contributed to the erosion of traditional crafts and products, with the exception of the abovementioned bakeries and sweets production as well as industrial scale furniture. In the present days, where the local demand for such products has decreased - people buy ready-made shoes, clothes, wooden utensils, leather accessories, etc. - the bulk of the demand should come from national and international tourism. However, tourism in Saida is underdeveloped, and is mostly restricted to day visits to the archeological sites and restaurants. The old city, where most craftsmen operate (and reside), is not yet marketed as a main tourist attraction due to the haunting stereotype of it being an unsafe ghetto. The recent years have witnessed a large scale process of renovation and restoration of the old city with the attempt to revitalize this area and attract tourists. However, a lot of effort still needs to be done in terms of raising the security and safety in the area, opening tourist information centers, creating tourist maps and brochures, and other promotion tools.

The low demand for traditional products has rendered it unattractive to young people, such as people with vocational, including university level, formation. Most of the workers in this sector of activity are above 50 years of age, and they use outdated methods of production. This is further exacerbating the risk of disappearance of these crafts. To counter this phenomenon, a process of technological upgrading that enhances the quality of products without compromising their authenticity should be initiated. High quality traditional products of high cultural and material value would be an additional attraction for tourists and residents to visit the old city seeking to purchase them.

In the absence of efforts to raise the quality of traditional crafts and create market demand, the households working in this sector of activity will continue to suffer from poverty and social exclusion. Due to the low income currently generated from this activity, 65.6% of the craftsmen live under the national poverty line. In the present diagnosis, the working team will look in more detail into the socio-economic conditions of the households working in traditional crafts. Improving the work conditions of these workers and promoting their products and artifacts would contribute to enhancing the living conditions of many households.

In a strategy based on the cultural and living heritage of Saida, the constructed image of the city can give an added value (premium price) to the traditional industries' output on one hand, and the promotion of these industries preserves the living heritage on the other. In addition, this process will strengthen the people's sense of ownership of the city's image, as they will benefit from it and be major contributors to its maintenance.

**Institutional and legal framework**

The current governance situation in terms of the decision making process in Saida can be described as a set of players, namely national institutions, political leaders, private actors and civil society organizations, each performing a set of projects in a given direction, with the municipality approving of and supporting the interventions, but having a limited role in deciding upon them. The report
examines the role of decision makers in the implementation of the major interventions in the city, in the fields of a) infrastructure, b) restoration projects and c) social protection and safety nets.

With regard to infrastructure, the national institutions such as the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) and Ministry of Public Works, are either directly, or through cooperation with the political leaders of the city, implementing or planning to implement large scale projects. Although this is part of the responsibilities of the national institutions in terms of their application for the national master plan strategy, the municipality plays a minor role in deciding upon the types of projects, their locations, or their scale.

Implementation of such projects in Lebanon usually follows a political process of consensus decision making that distributes large infrastructure projects across regions, cities, religious communities, and political affiliations. This takes places as part of a "political game" that often reaches a complex equilibrium that distributes public spending across Lebanon. Political parties and influential political leaders in Saida usually play a central role in defending Saida's share in the national "pie" of projects. Furthermore, these Saida politicians work on providing funds from international donors and private investors to implement infrastructural projects. This process is part of Lebanon's known political economy system of dependency relations and clientelism, where local and national level political elite play an intermediary role between the local communities and the state.

Looking at restoration and renovation works, apart from infrastructure implementation and planning, Saida has witnessed since the early 2000's significant efforts in reshaping Saida's old city and its vicinity through works of restoration and renovation. Decisions on such projects were made through two different processes. The first is related to public intervention through donor funds, such as the Cultural Heritage and Urban Development project (CHUD), funded by several international donors and implemented by CDR. The CHUD project that initially to work in Baalbeck, Tripoli (Trablous), Tyre (Sour), and Byblos (Jbeil), included Saida in its work plan thanks to political mechanisms similar to the ones described for infrastructure. Nevertheless, it did implement significant renovation works in the old city, which had positive impacts on that region. The second process of renovation works is driven by private actors in Saida such as the Hariri foundation, Zeidan foundation, ‘Audi Foundation, Debbaneh family, etc. These actors are playing an active role in heritage preservation efforts, such as renovation and restoration of the old city and establishment of private museums. In both these processes, the role of the municipality is limited.

As per social protection services to the poor and vulnerable households, these are mainly provided by some foundations and civil society organizations. As a matter of fact, Saida is home to a large network of NGOs. This network of NGOs works with both Palestinian and Lebanese residents and is primarily composed of NGOs with a welfare approach to development. This network constitutes an important institutional base, including best practices of development, and has often acted as a substitute to public institutions and/or the municipality in tackling socio-economic issues. Coordination between this network and the municipality does exist, especially that several of the municipality council members have a civil society activism background. There is a positive potential for the further development of this relation between the municipality and the civil society actors.
Overall, the development initiatives in Saida, although beneficial to the city overall, are being done in coordination with the municipality rather than higher level cooperation and consultation. This creates cases of repetitive and redundant interventions, inequality in the distribution of social assistance among the residents, and lack of efficient coordination between the various initiatives. The residents are not effectively involved in the decision making process since the municipality itself, which is the only elected body in the city, plays a limited role in this process. The decisions are also not made with a regional development vision and thus the union of municipalities does not seem to be an active player that is consulted on developmental decisions.

In addition to the above political and institutional limitations, there is a range of legal and financial limitations that are hindering the municipality from acting as an independent and capable institution. In the absence of a national institutional and legal framework that incorporates the interests of municipalities into the decision making process, major policies, projects and interventions will continue to be made with little or no consultation with the municipal body. The later sections of this report will highlight the major legal and financial impediments that face the municipality of Saida, similarly to all large municipalities in Lebanon, and the changes that need to be made in order for the municipality to be able to take a central role in the decision making processes in the city.

3.0 Strategic Objectives

Based on data collection and analysis and based on the various discussions with the working groups, the steering committee and other interlocutors in the city, the strategic diagnosis identifies specific objectives for each transversal issue. These objectives are reformulated in a comprehensive list in the table below. They are grouped under broader headings or general objectives addressed across different transversal issues, reflecting the cross-cutting methodology applied in the Strategic Diagnosis phase. Moreover, the sectoral relevance of each strategic objective is addressed, looking forward to the following Strategic Framework phase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Objectives</th>
<th>Strategic Objectives</th>
<th>Sector of relevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving socio-</td>
<td>To ensure the continuous diversification of the economic base of the city and the viability of all sectors through technical support and training to ailing sectors to adapt to new economic realities and conditions; To develop full cycles of development to attract and retain qualitative investments particularly in the tourism sector and to link these networks to efforts to preserve the tangible and intangible heritage of the city; To integrate marginalized groups into the city</td>
<td>Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic conditions of residents</td>
<td>services and economic development such as poor Lebanese families, and Palestinian refugees; To create local incentives empowering local communities by self help and pro-poor advocacy; To promote innovative economic enterprises (nature and agri-tourism, recreational services); To address traditional livelihoods (fishing, agriculture and related cottage industries) by institutional capacity building of organizations representing workers and businesses involved in traditional crafts; To restore the historical housing stock engaging the residents through subsidies and training according to consistent and affordable restoration guidelines and techniques; To seek employment opportunities for owners and residents of the old city;</td>
<td>Economy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustaining environmental health</td>
<td>To ensure ecological integrity of key elements (water courses, marine, groundwater) and public health and safety (seasonal flooding, water pollution); To plan for a Blue-Green Landscape Network that incorporates all the key green and open spaces; To enhance the system of managing infrastructure to lead rather than respond to needs; To develop a proper monitoring and evaluation process tracking the way infrastructure is actually serving the community, protecting its environmental assets, improving its quality of life, increasing the equity in the distribution of services, enhancing the mobility of residents and goods;</td>
<td>Landscape</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecting the city to its surroundings</td>
<td>To link the old city culturally, spatially and economically with the greater city and beyond; To promote amenity and quality living by increasing quantity and continuity/connectivity of green / open spaces; To preserve the city historical link with the sea, with the coastal orchards and with the hills; To closely link the development of future infrastructural projects to a comprehensive vision for developing the city in order to allow Saida to regain its competitive edge locally and regionally;</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination, cooperation and networking</td>
<td>To develop a comprehensive plan for the old city to ensure and guide coordination among the various actors and projects for restoration;</td>
<td>Design</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To develop a framework for true cooperation among the municipalities in the greater Saida area in a manner to ensure that duties and rights of every party are clearly defined and adhered to by the various members of the Federation;</td>
<td>Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To coordinate with the Union of Municipalities of Saida/Al-Zahrani to identify regional development projects and to organize and structure the tax base and tax collection in the city and its surroundings;</td>
<td>Governance</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>To assure coordination among the various mega projects and develop cross sectoral synergies and mutual benefits;</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To create formal and informal networks for branding the city and marketing its potential assets;</td>
<td>Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To create mechanisms of technology transfer among concerned parties in order to increase quality and quantity of production to meet market demand;</td>
<td>Economy</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>To rethink the administrative boundaries of the Municipalities of Greater Saida or their administrative framework to increase social cohesion and integration</td>
<td>Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobbying with the national institutions for implementing, amending and/or developing legal frameworks</td>
<td>To adopt and implement the decentralization law as well as numerous other laws pertaining to the finances and responsibilities of municipalities</td>
<td>Governance</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>To elaborate a new zoning for the old city including micro schemes based on improved data and wider survey;</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To protect Saida’s landscape distinctiveness as bridging marine and land landscape albeit reframing the landscape to address 21st century vision for the city;</td>
<td>Landscape</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>