

Joint Workshop – NWSS 2024-2035 and Study of socio economic barriers to subscription

18 July 2024

Intro

The HawkaMaa-EU project aims to provide WASH assistance to support water governance and public water and wastewater services in Lebanon for host and refugee communities. A consortium formed of different organizations is at work; the implementing partners of the project are ACTED, ACF, WW-GVC, LebRelief and Solidarités International with the support of IMPACT, LCPS, Nahnoo and LEWAP. Under this project, LEWAP's role is to conduct workshops around topics of high relevance for the water Sector.

On 18 July 2024, a joint workshop combining two sessions was conducted in BDD from 10:00AM till 4:00PM.

The first part revolved around the new national water sector strategy for 2024-2035 presented by M. Suzy Hoayek advisor of the Ministry of Energy and Water followed by an interactive discussion co-led by Alain Maroun the technical team leader for the Water Reform Programme. This session revolved around presenting the newly launched 2024-2035 National Water Sector Strategy (NWSS), aligned with Sustainable Development Goals and integrated water resources management to emphasize reform implementation, infrastructure development and system optimization to ensure water security and quality service.

The second part consisted on presenting the study of the socio economic barriers to subscription payment and servicing in the Lebanese water sector in partnership with LebRelief, IMPACT and Information International. This conducted study aims to explore opportunities for water policies that promote the inclusion of economically vulnerable populations in Lebanon.

The presentation of the study revolved around answering the following questions:

- What are the socioeconomic barriers – for rights holders - to subscribe to public water supply in Lebanon (physical, financial, legal...)
- What is the perception of rights holders on institutional capacity to deliver water, (comparing Water Establishments and other institutions)?
- What is the right holders' willingness/capacity to pay for services considering the new revised tariffs of the 5-year recovery plan?

National Water Sector Strategy 2024-2035

The water sector in Lebanon is facing tremendous challenges ranging from demographic pressure, water pollution and inadequate treatment, climate change effects and socio-economic and political fragility. Improvements should be done at the level of infrastructure and management; according to the NWSS the status of the water sector is as per below:

- Lebanon taps into 45% of its water potential; with poor infrastructure in storage and transmission, there is an overreliance on groundwater from public and private wells
- Critical water losses; in terms of non-revenue water and irrigation efficiency
- The collection rate at the level of the 4 regional water establishments is not exceeding 50% in each
- Shortage of technical and managerial personnel at the level of the regional water establishments and the ministry of energy and water

To dive in the NWSS, the vision is to empower Lebanon's water sector to achieve equitable access to public water, wastewater and irrigation services through sustainably managed water utilities, while ensuring water security and a climate resilient sector for future generations.

The mission of the strategy is to sustainably manage and efficiently distribute the water resources, ensuring safe, equitable and affordable access to public services, while restoring water quality, paving the way for an Integrated Water Resources Management.

The four guiding principles of the NWSS are:

- Integrated water resources management
- Citizen centered services
- Resilience and energy efficiency
- Stakeholder Engagement

The strategy focuses on 4 main pillars:

- **Pillar 1:** Enhanced water security: By 2035, the MoEW aims at increasing water storage capacities (through dams for large storages) developing a full operational data management and monitoring system (through an integrated hydrological information system for informed decision making and relating it to integrated water resources management initiatives), complying to water quality improvement and pollution prevention measures (by applying the standards for reuse and drinking water, establishing the polluters pay principle, training technical personnel on water safety plans and speed up the construction of wastewater treatment systems) and allocating proper water sources to increase hydropower production. Moreover, a stormwater management plan should be developed to reduce the risk of flooding, erosion and water pollution and an enhanced natural aquifer recharge plan will be developed.
- **Pillar 2:** Improved provision of public services: By 2035, the MoEW aims at reaching the 90% of the population in terms of water supply (by focusing on the highly populated areas), and around 60% of the population in terms of proper wastewater treatment and management (by focusing on optimizing and rehabilitating current systems and plants and increasing the number of household connection); as for the irrigation services to increase irrigation efficiency and irrigable

lands (by modernizing irrigation systems, encouraging for rainwater harvesting and storage and implementing the LIBNOR acceptable TSE reuse standards)

- **Pillar 3: Sustainable utilities:** By 2028, the MoEW aims at recovering the operating costs of water and wastewater services through the adjustment of tariff and increase collection and subscription rate; and the water sector transformation fund to start financing the transformation of the sector. By 2030, 15% of the annual turnover of Water Establishments is mobilized for investment in further development of the service. By 2035, non-revenue water is reduced and cost of energy reduced and a full digitalization of the regional water establishment achieved.
- **Pillar 4: Good governance and leadership:** By 2030, the MoEW should be implementing the sector reforms related to governance, performance management and monitoring and evaluation. By 2035, the MoEW aims at fully implement digital solutions and advanced technologies for data driven decision making.

To access the strategy, click [here](#)

Socio economic barriers to subscription payment and servicing in the Lebanese water sector

Under the HawkaMaa-EU project, a study on the socio-economic barriers to subscription was conducted across Lebanon. 600 surveys were done in Akkar, North, Beirut, Mount Lebanon, Baalback/Hermel, Beqaa and South. Seven focus groups were conducted in each governorates.

A set of questions was conducted with households and feedback from local citizens was collected – a set of recommendations were concluded based on the results as per below:

- Improve water supply reliability and quantity: improving infrastructure, increase supply house, water meters etc.
- Address affordability concerns: one of the concerns of the citizens is the tariff being expensive for them – transparent billing and pricing can alleviate this concern
- Enhance water quality and safety: more awareness among the public and water treatment practices
- Customer service and trust building: which is one of the major challenges faced in the sector – lack of trust between citizens and regional water establishments
- Smart meters should be considered – after everything set in place (regulations, pricing etc)
- Consider public private or possibly public public partnerships
- Policy reforms

To know more about the results of the study, visit the presentation [here](#) and the final report [here](#)