



## Public- Public partnership

# Water and Wastewater management

Workshop on Public Public Partnership:

Under [#HawkaMaa EU](#) project, [LEbanese Water Actors Platform - LEWAP](#) in partnership with Nahnoo and WW-GVC organized a workshop on Public Public Partnership on 7 February 2023 in both modalities online and in person.

The workshop was attended by all actors in the sector and focus was given to municipalities and water establishments as the workshop discusses modalities of partnership between them.

The aim of the workshop is to support Nahnoo in finalizing the Public Public Partnership study that they are conducting under this project and to collect feedback on the MoU they have developed as a contractual mean of collaboration between water establishments and municipalities to improve water and wastewater services in Lebanon.

The flow of the workshop was as below:

- Testimonial from Mr. Mohamad Dergham – union of municipalities of Dahye: presenting the situation in his area and recommendation for improving services
- Presentation of the public public partnership study results and the MoU developed by Nahnoo
- Testimonial from Mr. Ghassan Tayoun – union of municipalities of Zgharta-Ehden: presenting the current situation in his area and recommendation for partnership
- Testimonial from Dr. Ibrahim Nassar – union of municipalities of Baalback-Hermel: presentation of the situation in his area and recommendations
- Intervention from BMLWE and NLWE: response and feedback on the study and testimonials
- Intervention from the audience

### Testimonial from Mr. Mohamad Dergham – union of municipalities of Dahye

The workshop started by a testimonial from the union of municipalities of Dahye Mr. Mohamad Dergham presenting the situation in his area where citizens are illegally connecting to water and wastewater infrastructure due to the lack of financial and technical support from Beirut and Mount Lebanon Water Establishment.

In this extent, the union took charge of dividing the area into zones and collaborated with donors (such as JICA and the EU) and NGOs (such as ACTED and UNICEF) to make sure citizens are getting access to water and wastewater services. Moreover, the union is taking charge of paying for water and electricity to provide services to their citizens even though BMLWE installed water meters to collect the fees from citizens.

However, even with these means of collaboration, the provision of water and wastewater services is not sustainable – the municipalities are not capable of providing continuous financial support to keep their citizens satisfied. Mr Dergham suggested that donors should finance directly the regional water establishments and further coordination should be done on funded and implemented projects to guarantee better services.

### Presentation of the public public partnership study results and the MoU developed by Nahnoo

Ms. Amanie Majed from Nahnoo presented the study that is being developed on Public Public Partnership and the main outcomes collected from Regional Water Establishments (RWEs) and municipalities.

37 union of municipalities took part of this study and all regional water establishments; it was found that some municipalities are taking charge of water and wastewater services even with the presence of regional water establishments – in some cases neither the municipality nor the establishment can intervene as certain groups or cults are controlling water resources. The laboratories at the level of RWEs are not functioning due to the lack of electricity affecting the quality of water provided to households and the quality of wastewater discharged into the environment. Nahnoo asked the water establishments about their feedback regarding public public partnership; Bekaa Water Establishment (BWE) and North Lebanon Water Establishment (NLWE) are welcoming to this idea however Beirut and Mount Lebanon Water Establishment (BMLWE) and South Lebanon Water Establishment (SLWE) have an opposing point of view. For more information regarding the outcomes of the surveys, you can access the presentation [here](#)

Furthermore, Nahnoo's legal expert drafted an MoU to showcase the possible means of collaboration between municipalities and water establishments and this was presented briefly; please note that this is considered as a tool for possible collaboration and not a full fledged MoU that should be or will be implemented between municipalities and water establishments

### Testimonial from Mr Ghassan Tayoun – union of municipalities of Zgharta-Ehden

Mr Ghassan Tayoun highlighted the lack of intervention and organization of water and wastewater services at a river basin level; the Litani River Authority should have a role here however they throw the responsibility on the water establishment. Coordination is key to improve and provide better services to citizens; the financial crisis in the country is being used as an excuse by some to avoid intervention of governmental institutions in their areas (speaking of municipalities and water establishments).

Mr. Ghassan continued by stating that municipalities are considered by water establishments as alien to the sector intervening illegally in providing water and wastewater services (contrary to law 221 that states that RWEs should be the sole responsible entity for providing water and wastewater services). Moreover, he stated that the ministry of energy and water is not fully on board with Public Public Partnership unless municipalities take in charge of collecting the tariffs only without intervening in providing services. Law 221 should be mandated, land management could be an option for better management and provision of water and wastewater services and municipalities should be given a role in that.

#### Testimonial from Dr. Ibrahim Nassar – union of municipalities of Baalback-Hermel

Dr Ibrahim Nassar mentioned how municipalities, being the closest to citizens in each area, are being held accountable for water supply shortages, putting them in the front line of ongoing crises; he emphasized that municipalities role is to support water establishments but should not be held accountable.

Three main areas were highlighted by Dr. Nassar and that should be tackled by the water establishments; water sources, infrastructure for water and wastewater and management of water and wastewater services including collection of tariffs.

Two main water sources for Baalback-Hermel water supply are Yammouneh and El Baraka, but with the current discharge of wastewater into those sources and the violations from local citizens, the union is looking into aquifers and groundwater however this raises another issue: water pumping and the need of electricity to do so.

The union is in continuous contact with Bekaa Water Establishment (BWE) and supporting where they can however there should be a clear mechanism or agreement with the establishment on who should do what and the municipalities should not be given the role of collecting tariffs only.

#### Testimonial from Mr. Gaby Nasr – North Lebanon Water Establishment

Mr Gaby Nasr started off his intervention on their positive responsiveness to Nahnoo's survey – he continued by describing the situation in the North where all water committees were merged to one water establishment as per law 221 however there are some issues with some municipalities that are still taking charge of water and wastewater services. He highlighted the need to reorganize the sector and who should do what. This is currently ongoing by the water reform team led by AFD who are relooking into the water sector as a whole and who should be doing what in terms of establishment, ministry and municipalities. With the ongoing crisis, some municipalities are taking charge of water and wastewater services however as per law 221 they should not intervene in that area. USAID are currently working on an MoU on public public partnership between water establishments and municipalities at the level of wastewater services as part of upcoming law 192 that governs the partnership between municipalities and water establishments. Mr Nasr concluded that the establishment should be fully responsible of water and wastewater services however they can create partnership with certain municipalities to provide better services

#### Testimonial from Ramzi Saliba – Beirut and Mount Lebanon Water Establishment

Up until 2018, BMLWE was fully autonomous and capable of taking charge of water and wastewater services; however the political and economic situation that happened afterwards more collaboration with international donors and organization was created to guarantee the

provision of water and wastewater services. Current collaborations are happening with the municipality of Chouf on tariff collection and with the municipality of Dahye on water metering; however everything should be done under law 221

#### Intervention from the audience

Many interventions and points of view were mentioned by the attended audience, this is summarized as per below:

- The Ministry of Energy and Water is not against Public Public Partnership however it should be under the law and without eliminating the role and responsibilities of regional water establishments – centralization of services should remain
- Some municipalities are taking charge on their own to improve water and wastewater services however others do not have the capacity to do so – leaving certain areas with better services than others even under the jurisdiction of the same water establishment
- Law 221 should be mandated to include municipalities and detail the nature of relationship between water establishments and municipalities
- There should be an independent ministry for municipalities and not under the ministry of interior as is the situation currently – and this ministry of municipalities should be the one governing the role and work of municipalities in every sector including the water sector
- Consider private public partnership to improve service delivery especially in terms of financial and technical support
- Projects – once signed with donors and organizations – should be sustainable and ongoing and not end after funding is done