

Water Executive Committee	
Inaugural meeting	
Date, location	10:00-12:00, Thu 15 th June 2017, MoEW L2 conference room
Chair	H.E. Cesar Abi Khalil, Minister of Energy and Water
Presentations, facilitation	Rander Nemer, Advisor to Minister Luciano Calestini, UNICEF Deputy Representative
Notes	David Adams, LCRP Water sector coordinator

Agenda:

1. Opening - H.E. Minister Cesar Abi Khalil
2. Introductions
3. Terms of Reference (TOR) of Water Executive Committee (30min) - UNICEF
 - a. Presentation of TOR
 - b. Discussion and agreement of TOR (including membership and thematic subgroups)
4. Stabilisation project identification, prioritisation and approval process (30min) - MoEW
 - a. Presentation on stabilization project prioritisation, identification and approvals
 - b. Discussion and agreement of process
5. Joint work-planning (30min) - UNICEF
 - a. Presentation of example work-plan and concept of joint stakeholder work-planning (including plans, commitments, partnerships)
 - b. Discussion and agreement on approach
6. AOB and next meeting

Presentation:

Refer to attached *WEC mtg presentations 15June2017 v3.pptx*

1. Opening remarks (H.E. Minister Cesar Abi Khalil)

Welcomed participants to meeting.

Before the crisis and at the time of developing the National Water Sector Strategy (NWSS) in 2010 the water sector of Lebanon was already in a bad state with, for example, a water deficit of 600 MCM per year. With the Syrian crisis, Lebanon and the water sector are now burdened with more than 1.5 million displaced Syrians worsening the situation. Despite these challenges the Ministry has accomplished a lot in the past few years, thanks to the support of those around the table. However, the needs far outweigh the support that has been provided to date. Other countries like Turkey are receiving more international support despite Lebanon having the most displaced Syrians per capita.

We are already experiencing a shortage of funds in 2017 and the Ministry does not have a clear picture of what is being programmed or planned by different donors or organisations.

No project can be executed without the approval of the Ministry. This is the prerogative of the Ministry enshrined in article 66 of the constitution. NGOs that are not registered should not be implementing

projects, this is to avoid examples such as drilling a well that depletes the source and consequently raising tensions in the community.

The ministry has expended its budget after only 6 months. Lebanon has taken a huge burden of the Syrian crisis off the world and particularly Europe. It's thus incumbent upon Europe and others to ensure continued support.

2. Introductions

A "tour de table" was done to allow participants to present themselves. Participants list is below.

3. Terms of Reference of Water Executive Committee (Luciano Calestini)

It was proposed that comments and suggestions regarding the draft TOR be put in writing following the meeting.

The concept of the Water Executive Committee is partly based on the example of Education's RACE Executive Committee (REC) which meets every month.

Discussion

Sally Zgheib: Stressed importance of having a coordination forum so stakeholders in the sector are informed of different initiatives/projects. Efforts on stabilisation should be aligned. The TOR seems ambitious. As a world bank, under the water global practice, we are focusing our efforts in order to ensure that we are providing the support needed for the water utilities which will allow us to support the institutions that would fix the pipes (quoting our previous senior director). With respect to the draft TOR, each task listed is in itself a project that would be considered standalone, two examples were provided: 1) for the item 'Review of public financial management systems to increase and sustain service provision' under the 'governance' sub-committee; it was noted the World Bank already had an experience through two projects at the ministry of finance (FMR1 and FMR2 -Fiscal Management Reform) but the latest project, FMR2, was closed 6 months early because it wasn't performing well. 2) With respect to the 'operation and management' sub-committee in the draft TOR, it was noted that the Water Establishments have their own framework thus how would the WEC address this? This task would need to be prepared by the WE. As donors, we can help the Water Establishment in developing their framework but we cannot develop their own implementation framework. The role of the donors is to support the government framework / provide capacity building but not to develop their plans.

Silvia Naveira Campos: Proposed scope of the WEC is broad: if it is concerned with policy level, how would deal with operations? Missing the voice of the Water Establishment DGs. The TOR touches on many elements but doesn't go into necessary details. Would like to see the donor coordination group meetings happening again. The last donors' meeting was held last year.

Randa Nemer: Focus of WEC could be on Syrian crisis with continuation of donor coordination group meetings in parallel.

H.E. Abi Khalil: Does not see a need for Water Establishment DGs who can be represented by the DG of Tutelle. The Water Establishments should implement the policy and directives of the Ministry. The WEC

should be a policy level forum for the Syrian crisis response. Lebanon did not start the Syrian war but is suffering the consequences and is acting as a dam for Europe holding back the flood of refugees. Lebanon needs Europe to increase its support. Energy is a big problem in the country with Syrians using 5hrs of electricity per day.

Raymond Tarabay: There is a need to clarify scope of WEC between responding to the Syrian crisis and the development.

Randa Nemer: We will restart the donor coordination group meetings.

Sana Saliba: There has been and still remains confusion between humanitarian and development.

Randa Nemer: Proposed the donor coordination group meetings could focus on development and the WEC on the Syrian crisis.

Raymond Tarabay: Suggested to copy paste the Education sector REC.

Mario Abou Zeid: The Syrian crisis response needs to be strategic and address the needs of Lebanese. On this basis projects and interventions should consider development needs therefore aligning with Ministry and Government priorities and ensuring coordination with and between other sectors.

Luciano Calestini: Is there a Terms of Reference for the donor coordination group meetings? If not then perhaps this could be developed?

Silvia Naveira Campos: No there is no TOR. But this should not hold up or prevent the recommencement of the meetings.

Luciano Calestini: Suggested that meeting participants submit in writing their comments and suggestions regarding the meetings agenda items.

Rami Wehbeh: Would the WEC facilitate additional members or participants on an adhoc basis since other stakeholders are not represented.

Randa Nemer: The intention is to have a committee with a limited membership that would be more efficient and use sub-groups to feed into the committee.

H.E. Abi Khalil: Suggested that additional participants could be invited on a case by case basis.

Raymond Tarabay: Noted that the Education sector REC is relatively small group of participants.

Randa Nemer: Suggested 10 days for submission of comments/suggestions from participants.

Emmanuel Gignac: For UNCHR, which has a decentralised operation, the counterparts of its Field Offices are the Water Establishments whilst for the Beirut office it is the Ministry. However, experience has highlighted that there is gap in communication between the National and Sub-national levels and it is therefore important to ensure inclusion of the Water Establishments.

4. Stabilisation project identification, prioritisation and approval process (Randa Nemer)

Notes during presentation:

Slide 12: Irrigation in the South is mostly covered by Litani River Authority. Only BMLWE is investing in its systems the other WEs are focused on Operation and Maintenance.

Slide14: Randa Nemer: The investment plan is under the PMO. Since the end of 2015 MoEW have been asking Water Establishments for the priorities. 20% of the municipalities are independent of the Water Establishments.

H.E. Abi Khalil: Municipalities implementing and managing water and wastewater independently is against Law 221. However the Water Establishments do not have the capacity to take over these municipalities. But in practice when these municipalities fail to manage the water or wastewater service provision MoEW is forced to take over.

Slide15: Randa Nemer: For wastewater and irrigation and stormwater it is better for sector partners to coordinate first with MoEW.

Slide16: Randa Nemer: Noted that prioritisation is a problem and vulnerability is everywhere not just in the 251 most vulnerable cadastres. Only 36% of Lebanese have safely managed water in their homes.

Slide17: Randa Nemer: It is crucial that there is agreement on approval process and prioritisation criteria.

Discussion

Sana Saliba: USAID has agreed its program of works. Is the WEC or MoEW suggesting changes or additional steps?

Randa Nemer: No changes proposed but as long as USAID coordinates with MoEW for approvals.

H.E. Abi Khalil: Highlighted the need for coordination with MoEW, noting an example of a KfW project that was planned with the Water Establishment but which MoEW discovered was going to duplicate efforts. MoEW will sometimes not approve a project because it is aware that the Water Establishment will not be able to manage the O&M since MoEW subsidises the Water Establishments and it will ultimately mean donors money is wasted.

Technical standards and regulations are in place and it is necessary to coordinate with MoEW.

We are experiencing a period where the cabinet is the most productive it has been in 10-20 years; a budget has been passed for the first time in 11 years, a backlog of decrees have been passed, the new electoral law is about to be passed. The country is moving forward and welcomes support from participants and the international community as a whole.

Rami Wehbeh: Would the WEC have a role in the approvals process?

Randa Nemer: Does not believe so but it needs to be agreed now or following up in writing.

Sana Saliba: Can projects be identified and selected through different processes or do we need to ask MoEW for projects?

Randa Nemer: Whatever approach is used there needs to be projects should be pre-approved by MoEW.

Sally Zgheib: Clarification is required between development projects vs small projects.

Farid Karam: Some projects are defined by NGOs and donor, for example the EU, but are not coordinated with MoEW.

Silvia Naveiro Campos: Clarified that Water Establishments changed the scope of works during the design phase.

Rami Wehbeh: Confirmed that there have been numerous incidences where USAID has had to change projects following initial identification of agreed project.

Randa Nemer: If pre-approval has been granted by MoEW there is less risk of problems.

Luciano Calestini: On the topic of masterplans there needs to be a clear and transparent evidence based process for prioritising projects. Agencies are accountable to donors who are accountable to tax payers it is therefore critical to demonstrate with evidence the reason for a project to be prioritised.

Simone Abou Jaoudeh: Noted that NGOs previously went to Water Establishments for priorities but there are instances now where these agencies will coordinate with MoEW and Water Establishments but will be requested to implement different priorities.

Randa Nemer: Recommended that the NGOs go first to MoEW for priorities as it will be responsible for commissioning.

Emmanuel Gignac: Field offices have a need to involve their counterparts, the Water Establishments, in identifying projects.

Randa Nemer: If the identification process is through MoEW then there will not be problems.

Raymond Tarabay: Recommends going first to MoEW for pre-approvals. Does not understand the concerns being raised.

Emmanuel Gignac: Believes the concerns are less about policy but more about process or mechanism.

Jihan Seoud: Noted that the 251 vulnerable cadasters should not be the limiting criteria for targeting projects. However, these communities are highlighted in the LCRP and therefore the Government (particularly with the Ministry of Social Affairs as the main counterpart to the LCRP) should work on amending this because not all donors accept to work outside these communities. O&M is an important consideration that should be flagged at the policy level as a recommendation for the Government of Lebanon to take action on given that the Water Establishments often do not have the financial, technical or human resources to operate and maintain the water networks/systems that are installed. The Wadi Khalid project was given as an example.

Randa Nemer: Reiterated that if agencies do not come to MoEW first then their will continue to be problems with O&M.

Jihan Seoud: There is a risk of excluding areas where O&M is not guaranteed, for a big project for instance, but where there are vulnerable people in need with no services.

Randa Nemer: MoEW needs to balance the long-term development needs and the short term needs when making decisions.

Emmanuel Gignac: Although not on the agenda specifically flagged the question of how to address prioritization and approval of humanitarian activities. Would this fall into a sub-group? Agreed that it was important for participants to send in comments and suggestions on approvals process and prioritization.

5. Joint work-planning (Luciano Calestini)

MoEW would like to know what are the plans and commitments donors and partners have for the sector.

Discussion

Rami Wehbeh: USAID have a program that MoEW are aware of.

Silvia Naveiro Campos: EU has been working with CDR on developing projects but is not sure if MoEW is aware?

Randa Nemer: MoEW is not aware of this.

Sally Zgheib: The World Bank operates differently. The ongoing projects are ratified at the parliament level. The world bank assistance and/or projects in any country are aligned with national strategies to support achievement of country priorities. During World Bank missions, the ministry of finance and the line ministries (in the case of water, the Ministry of Energy and Water) and all the implementation agencies are informed through official letters. A Country Partnership Framework (CPF) is prepared for each and agreed with the Government of Lebanon. It defined the World Bank Group (WBG) program and the associated results framework. The latest CPF for Lebanon is the one for the period FY17-FY22. The agreed Framework outlines the World Bank Group's work in Lebanon over the next 4-5year period for all the sectors and not only the water sector.

Luciano Calestini: It is clear that standardizing workplans is not possible but there is need to improve communication with MoEW.

Emmanuel Gignac: Would like to discuss further with H.E. Abi Khalil the case of UNHCR to ensure clarity on planning process.

Randa Nemer: How is UNCR planning for 2017 under the LCRP?

Emmanuel Gignac: UNCHR currently has \$16.8m in funds for water sector but details on plans would be another discussion.

Raymond Tarabay: Germany follows a process of annual discussions with MoEW.

6. AOB and next meeting

Presentation and Draft minutes to be circulated to participants of meeting, before COB Monday 19th June (David Adams).

Participants of meeting are requested, before COB Friday 30th June, to:

- a. Submit in writing comments and suggestions pertaining to the TOR and other agenda items.**
- b. Make any necessary corrections to the draft minutes of the meeting.**

Final draft minutes and consolidation of comments and suggestions to be circulated the following week, before COB Friday 7th July.

Next meeting to be during 3rd week of July (tentatively 10:00-12:00 on Thursday 20th July)

Meeting attendance:

#	ORGANIZATION	NAME
1	MoEW	H.E. Cesar Abi Khalil
2	MoEW	Randa Nemer
3	MoEW	Mahmoud Baroud
4	MoPH	Farid Karam
5	MoSA	Mario Abu Zaid
6	The World Bank	Sally Zgheib
7	BPRM	Robert Ward
8	EU Delegation	Silvia Naveira Campos
9	German Embassy	Raymond Tarabay
10	Germany KfW	Anbara Abu-Ayyash
11	USAID	Rami Wehbeh
12	USAID	Sana Saliba
13	CISP	Simone Abou Jaoudeh
14	CISP	Simone Di Michele
15	UNDP	Raghd Assi
16	UNDP	Jihan Seoud
17	UNHCR	Emmanuel Gignac
18	UNICEF	David Adams
19	UNICEF	Luciano Calestini
20	UNICEF	Olivier Thonet

Apologies:

21	Global Affairs Canada
22	Rene Moawad Foundation