

# REFORMING URBAN PLANNING SYSTEM IN LEBANON

FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH/ASSESSMENT

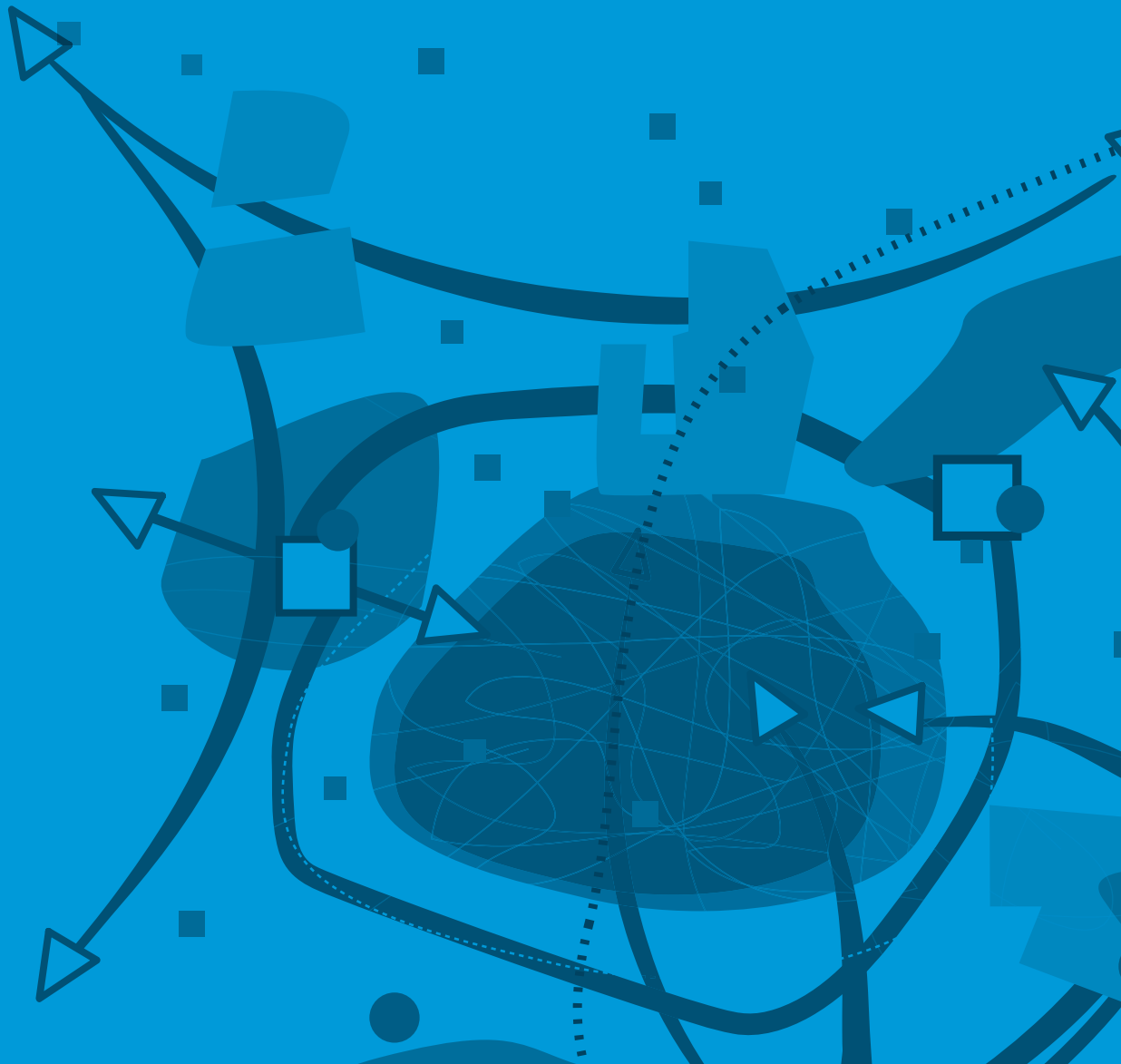
JUNE - 2013



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# DEFINITIONS

**Urban Planning System:** involves the various approaches, processes and procedures adopted by relevant actors at the centralized (formal) and decentralized levels and could be applied on different scales: local, regional and national.

**Master Plan:** refers to the physical plans (focusing primarily on land use and zoning) that are adopted and applied by the Directorate General of Urban Planning. Generally, master plans cover municipal boundaries.

**National Physical Master Plan:** endorsed by the Council of Ministers in 2009, this Plan provides a guiding framework for urban planning and land use in Lebanon. It defines the principles of development for various regions as well as the basics of the usage of territory for all areas. It also proposes facilities and sites of planned activities, specifying their objectives, dimensions and locations.

**Local Strategic Planning:** implemented at the regional scale (involving a number of municipalities and towns), it is a planning tool that is proposed by UN-Habitat, and based on intensive desk reviews, field assessments and practices. The end result of this process is a development plan that covers a defined geographic area and is directly linked to the spatial characteristics of the area.

**Strategic Plan:** It is a planning document which is based on bottom-up and participatory approaches, and focuses on the socio-economic characteristics and competitive advantages of the targeted geographic area. Lately, strategic plans are promoted as regional planning tools at the level of unions of municipalities.

**Regional Urban Development Planning:** is a proposed planning framework that takes into consideration the specificity of the Lebanese context and builds on existing planning practices and approaches through consolidation and standardization. As a result of this framework, the Regional Urban Development Plan is developed to define the strategic development directions and actions for a specific geographic area, with direct association to the spatial and territorial features and characteristics of the area.

# LIST OF ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

CDR - Council for Development and Reconstruction

CHUD - Cultural Heritage and Urban Development Project

DGU - Directorate General of Urbanism

EGM- Expert Group Meeting

HCUP - Higher Council for Urban Planning

MoE – Ministry of Environment

MoIM - Ministry of Interior and Municipalities

MoPW – Ministry of Public Works

NPMLPT – National Physical Master Plan of the Lebanese Territories

OEA- Order of Engineers and Architects

PAT - Plan d'Aménagement du Territoire

SDATL- Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement du Territoire Libanais

SDRMB - Schéma Directeur de la Région Métropolitaine de Beyrouth

STRADDT - Schéma Régional d'Aménagement et de Développement Durable du Territoire

UN-Habitat - United Nations Human Settlements Program

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# UN-HABITAT GLOBAL GOALS

UN-Habitat envisions well-planned, well-governed, and efficient cities and other human settlements, with adequate housing, infrastructure, and universal access to employment and basic services such as water, energy, and sanitation. To achieve these goals, derived from the Habitat Agenda of 1996, UN-Habitat has set itself a medium-term strategy approach for each successive six-year period. The current strategic plan spans from 2014 to 2019.

While every new strategic plan is in continuity with the previous one, this approach allows for a better response to emerging urban trends such as new demographic, environmental, economic, spatial, and social developments. It permits necessary readjustments to address change and evolutions and creates opportunities to incorporate lessons learned

## UN-HABITAT'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2019 AND ITS SEVEN FOCUS AREAS

Current trends of rapid urbanization – with over half of the world's population now living in cities, and 90% of urban growth taking place in developing countries – coupled with recent global economic turmoil, growing poverty, and rising consequences of climate change have created the need for such strategic readjustments.

After a recent and successful reorganization of its internal structure to improve efficiency and to optimize the use of its resources, UN-Habitat is presently addressing its mandate through the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan. The plan outlines seven focus areas:

- Urban legislation, land, and governance,
- Urban planning and design,
- Urban economy,
- Urban basic services,
- Housing and slum upgrading,



- Risk reduction and rehabilitation, and
- Research and capacity development.

The “Reforming Urban Planning System in Lebanon” assessment falls under the urban planning and design focus area. UN-Habitat is addressing Planning and Design globally through tackling various issues which are further explained below.

## URBAN PLANNING & DESIGN

The current rapid urbanization, especially in cities of the developing world, is bringing about many challenges in the spatial distribution of people and resources, as well as in the use and consumption of land. In some regions, urban land has grown much faster than the urban population, resulting in less dense and more inefficient land use patterns. Car-centered urban models are still the widespread norm, with strict zoning policies dividing urban space into residential, commercial, and industrial areas. These horizontally sprawling cities find it gradually harder to deal with an ever increasing urban population, and are not sustainable over the long-term, owing to overwhelming negative externalities such as congestion, infrastructure issues, pollution, and social disaggregation.

Largely due to the absence of urban planning strategies, frameworks, and coordination, population growth tends to result in large conurbations and urban sprawl, as residents spill from the core municipalities to occupy land in surrounding urban centers, often lacking accompanying services, amenities, and infrastructure. As a result, pressure on land and natural resources as well as mobility and energy constraints start to have a negative effect on the urban economy and overall efficiency of the city region.

## URBAN DESIGN: THE LOOK AND FEEL OF A CITY

In regards to urban design, many cities still underestimate the importance of a city’s look and feel, public spaces, and public infrastructure, failing to fully comprehend the correlation with quality of life, social development, and other key components of human wellbeing. Likewise, appealing cities are more likely to attract a creative, innovative, and skilled workforce and the investments that are needed to drive the urban economy. Unfortunately, when this understanding is present, lack of finance and capacity often deprioritizes urban design in favor of more urgent development needs such as enhancing the provision of basic services.

At a regional level, cities tend to grow along infrastructure corridors, emerging as new engines of growth. Very often, however, this growth is unplanned and uncoordinated between cities, thereby leaving the region to miss out on a wide range of social, economic, and environmental opportunities.

## IMPROVING URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN

In general, one of the key hindrances to good urban planning is the lack of adequate frameworks and legislation at the national or sub-national level. In particular, the mismatch between local needs and national urban planning frameworks is increasingly recognized in many countries.

Our cities must become spaces that facilitate social, economic, and environmental progress. For cities to develop in a sustainable and inclusive way, they must become

more compact, absorbing population growth by increasing their density. Only through agglomeration will cities have the power to innovate, generate wealth, enhance quality of life, and accommodate more people in a sustainable manner (with a smaller environmental footprint through lower per capita resource use and lower per capita emissions than any other settlement pattern).

Orderly expansion requires that strong regulatory frameworks accompany the planning process. At the country level, a national urban policy need to be set up in order to provide an overarching coordinating framework that will deal with the most pressing issues related to rapid urban development. As a key reference for legislative institutional reform in regards to urban matters, the national urban policy will also serve to orient sectoral ministries and urban service providers. In addition, the policy acts as an opportunity to promote consultation with urban stakeholders.

### BALANCING ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASPIRATIONS

In order to balance the economic and environmental aspirations of the wider area at the regional and supra-municipal levels, collaborating authorities need to coordinate urban planning through regional and metropolitan plans. These plans are needed for infrastructure optimization between neighboring cities, for the establishment of locations for strategic facilities, and for gains maximization related to regional development and competitiveness. From the environmental perspective, plans need to take into account ecosystem and biodiversity protection, natural disaster prevention (such as avoiding floods or erosion), and provision of recreational opportunities.

### PLANS FOR EXPANSION AND DENSIFICATION

At the city level, plans for expansion and densification are needed to accommodate the expected growth in a sustainable and future-proof way. Planning considerations have to provide for a rational urban structure to minimize transport and service delivery costs, to optimize the use of land, and to support the protection and organization of urban open spaces. Planning initiatives should include suburban densification, area redevelopment, layout of new areas with higher densities, brownfield development, the rehabilitation of land previously used for industrial purposes, building conversions, and transit-oriented developments.

The goal of expansion and densification plans is the provision of enough land and spatial structures to support urban development and to attract investments. Cities need to ensure the availability of large areas of land for development, thus reducing land prices and speculation. To accommodate a growing population with a smaller ecological footprint — while realizing economic agglomeration advantages (including lower costs of providing infrastructure and services), as well as strengthening social interactions and reducing mobility demand — authorities also must incorporate densification strategies (e.g. allowing mixed land use and taller building structures).

### RETHINKING PUBLIC SPACES

City authorities also need to rethink public spaces such as parks, green areas, and streets. Well-designed public space not only contributes to improving the overall visual character, but also invigorates economic activities and enhances the functionality of the city. High

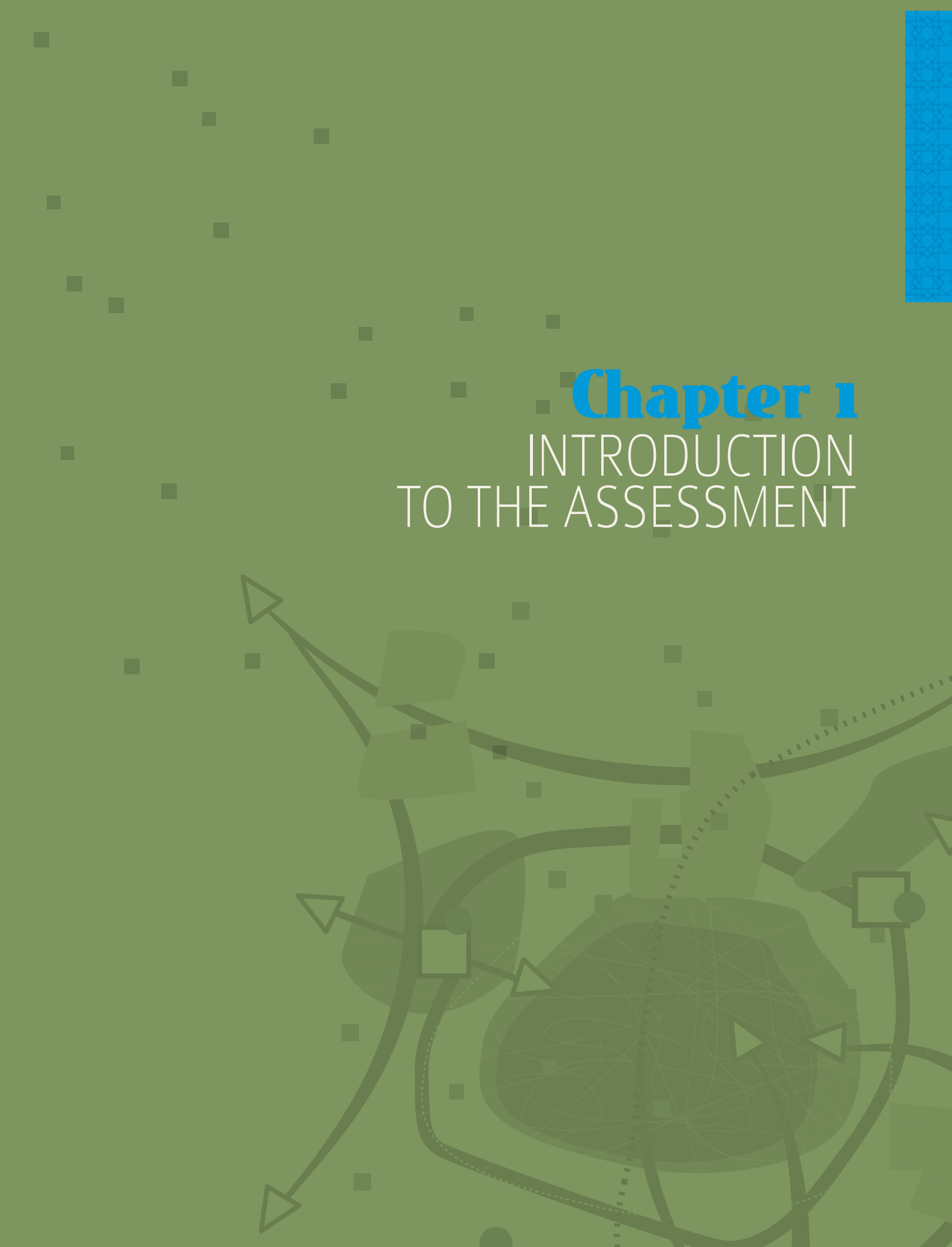
density neighborhoods with adequate public space and infrastructure that facilitates non-motorized and public transport encourage walking, cycling, and other forms of eco-friendly mobility, thereby reducing carbon emissions and cutting down reliance on fossil fuels.

Furthermore, the provision of pedestrian friendly streetscapes and public structures where residents can gather — such as athletic, recreational, or cultural centers — will promote social connectivity and diversity, thus making neighborhoods more cohesive, lively, and ultimately more attractive to residents and investors alike. From an environmental point of view, city planning should create a green economy that is not reliant on fossil fuels. When designing their urban development plans, authorities should incorporate low emission strategies as well as resilience to climate change.

### UN-HABITAT'S WORK ON URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN

UN-Habitat supports governments at the city, regional, and national levels to improve policies, plans, and designs for more compact, socially inclusive, and better integrated and connected cities that foster sustainable urban development and are resilient to climate change.

UN-Habitat's approach to urban planning and design emphasizes preventative, problem-focused planning, and encourages planning in phases, beginning with ensuring adequate access to basic urban services, especially water and sanitation, and linking planning with financial capacities. Combined with modern technology, better urban planning can solve many of the problems that cities are facing, and lead them to prosperity.



# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION TO THE ASSESSMENT



# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION TO THE ASSESSMENT

### 1. BACKGROUND

Nearly three years after its re-establishment in Lebanon, UN-Habitat in Lebanon has been addressing issues related to urban planning through various normative and technical support activities. As part of its country programme, UN-Habitat has implemented a two and a half year project “Improved Municipal Governance for Effective Decentralization in Lebanon”. The project goal was to promote institutional reforms at the national and local levels in order to empower local authorities and enable them to play a leading role in improving living conditions in Lebanon and decreasing regional development disparities.

To achieve this goal, three main objectives were determined:

- Supporting the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) in empowering municipalities in Lebanon;
- Improving the technical, planning, administrative and financial capacities of municipalities; and
- Promoting national information exchange and networking among municipalities in Lebanon.

The project was not only able to achieve significant results, but also contributed to building strategic partnerships with key national stakeholders involved in the urban sector, notably, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM), the Directorate General of Municipalities, the Directorate General of Urbanism (DGU), the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) and the Order of Engineers and Architects (OEA).

From a normative perspective, UN-Habitat has recently developed two main publications of direct relevance to the urban planning sector in Lebanon.

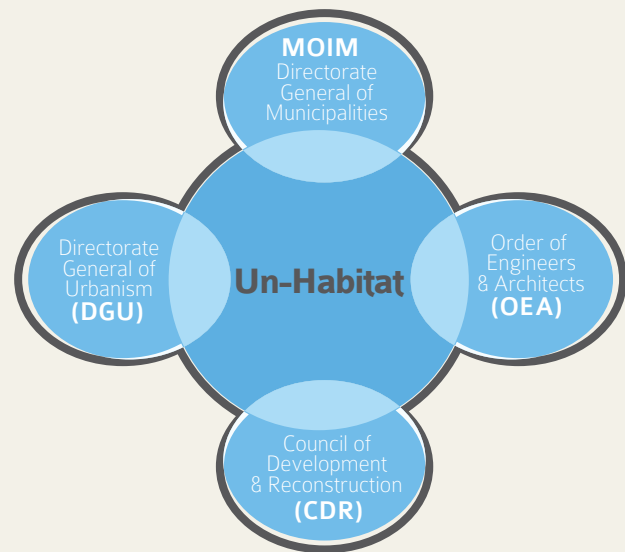
- The first publication “**Lebanon Urban Profile**” is a desk review that looks at five main themes of relevance to the urban sector: population and urban growth, the urban economy, urban development, urban environment and urban governance. It concluded with emerging urban issues that focus on Lebanon’s urban divides.
- The second publication is a training guidebook on “**Local Strategic Planning**” and is used as a reference by experts and practitioners to empower local authorities and allow them to develop local strategic plans at the level of municipalities and unions of municipalities. This guidebook is strongly aligned with existing national planning procedures and has received the endorsement of the MoIM.

The elaboration process of the training guidebook mobilized key national stakeholders involved in urban planning. In this context, co-organized with the DGU, an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) was held on April 2012. The EGM was seen as a first step towards initiating a national dialogue on the reform process of the national urban planning system. The EGM concluded with a number of recommendations (see annex 2) that can be grouped under three main actions:

- Developing and promoting the notion of regional planning
- Applying regional planning and securing its alignment with the national planning frameworks
- Cooperation and coordination processes

As a follow up, UN-Habitat has developed a project proposal which aims to harness the various opportunities that have been concluded after more than three years of the Program’s active involvement in the urban planning sector in Lebanon. The proposal takes into consideration both, the new strong partnership developed recently by UN-Habitat and the Lebanese institutions involved in territorial and urban planning; and, the increasing demand for strengthening and mainstreaming spatial planning at different scales: local, regional and national.

The project proposal encompasses 3 key phases. While **Phase-I** involves conducting a quick assessment/research on planning institutions and practices in Lebanon with the



aim to propose a roadmap for the elaboration of sound urban planning frameworks, **Phase-II** and **phase-III** will focus on the development and pilot-testing of those frameworks. It is noteworthy to mention that along the implementation of phases-II and III, comprehensive capacity building and awareness raising programs would be designed to target 3 various levels of stakeholders; DGU staff, municipalities and unions of municipalities; and engineers. The two-year project will also highlight the implications of the adopted frameworks on the existing planning laws and regulations, recommending required modifications to reform the urban planning system in Lebanon.

UN-Habitat was able to mobilize seed money to initiate **phase-1** of the project (the assessment phase). This 3-month exercise has resulted with a series of findings and recommendations that will be detailed and presented throughout the sections of this report.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The assessment aims to achieve the following:

- Examine and understand existing planning practices in Lebanon focusing on the considered territorial scale, roles of involved public institutions, applied methods and tools, and binding laws and regulatory frameworks.
- Propose a future roadmap for the reforming of the urban planning system in Lebanon which includes achievable action-oriented steps and activities.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology for conducting the assessment involved 3 key steps:

- **Establishment of the research team:** it comprised 1 urban planner practitioner/team leader, 2 AUB master-degree students/graduates in urban planning, 2 planners/engineers who are employees within the Directorate General of Urbanism. The team was coached and supported by UN-Habitat country team throughout the whole assessment process.
- **Desk review:** before conducting individual and group interviews, the team reviewed thoroughly a number of documents that were directly or indirectly related to the field of urban planning in Lebanon. Those were, but not limited to, existing laws and regulation, mandates of public planning institutions including the scope of work of their relevant departments and units, and their organizational structures. In addition to that, the team has also evaluated reports of achieved master plans and those related to conducted strategic planning exercises.
- **Data collection and analysis:** this involved undertaking an extensive number of Individual and group interviews with General Directors and key staff of ministries and public institutions involved urban planning. Meetings were held with the Heads of unions of municipalities (3) who have

accomplished, or are still in the process of elaborating strategic plans. A working session was held with urban planning practitioners with the aim to analyze part of the gathered data. Ex-General Directors of urban planning were also interviewed (see list of interviewees – Annex 1).

The analysis and validation of gathered data were undertaken throughout the assessment process. This comprised weekly working sessions involving all the members of the research team. In addition, interviews with some key personnel of public institutions were held twice or more in order to analyze and validate collected data.

This report describes the key findings and recommendations of the undertaken assessment.

The background is a solid yellow color. On the left side, there is a complex abstract graphic composed of various white and light yellow elements: curved lines, arrows pointing in different directions, small squares, and a circular shape with internal lines. On the right side, there is a vertical blue bar with a white geometric pattern. The text 'Chapter 2' is in a bold, blue, sans-serif font, and 'RETHINKING URBAN' is in a smaller, grey, sans-serif font below it.

# Chapter 2

## RETHINKING URBAN



# Chapter 2

## RETHINKING URBAN

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Cities and regions are not only growing in number, they are also growing in influence. There is a growing consensus among experts and decision makers that cities and metropolitan regions are becoming the focal points of economic and political power at the expense of nation States. They are becoming the test bed for the adequacy of political institutions, performance of governmental agencies, and effectiveness of urban governance.

This situation is paving the way to important opportunities for urban development. Cities and regions hold tremendous potential as engines of national growth and provide economic and social development, creating jobs and generating ideas through economies of scale and creative and innovative civic cultures. However, these opportunities are undermined by a number of imposing challenges such as growing inequality, urban sprawl, environmental degradation and social exclusion.

The globally growing rapid urbanization is urging to reconsider the whole socio-political, territorial and regulatory structures that were traditionally adopted during the past century.

### A. Rethinking the Role of Governments

Nowadays, considering the role of Government in urban development clearly protrudes the analysis of public policies of a nation State. The last decade has witnessed a proliferation of theoretical approaches that have been sought to identify changing models of urban governance: the central-local relations of Government; the growing influence of urban regimes and municipal coalitions; and regional organization.

The two main challenges are:

- a. The rise of local community as a new territory for the administration of individual and collective existence;
- b. Processes of globalization of economic relations.

In other words, the political power of the State-centered model of regulation and arbitration of social conflicts has been challenged in a number of areas. Among these are:

- The lack of confidence in the capacity of the political realm to address both the problems of modern societies, and the emergence of a civil society that claims greater say in the organization of power;
- The fragmentation of policymaking systems caused by decentralization and federalist dynamics;
- The emergence of new issues such as environmental protection, exclusion, integration and governance that can no longer be addressed by sector-based policies, but require integrated approaches and a quest for synergy between institutions with different action approaches, cultures and temporalities;
- The consolidation of new areas of collective action, notably in urban regions where various forms of social movements have long challenged top down political integration.

This situation implies to shift gear from a needs-based approach to a rights-based approach. This trend means that the scope of urban development is changing from a supposed needs or problem-solving approach to a broadly adaptive rights-based approach, which comes together with a profound change in the vision of sustainable urbanization. However, two issues need to be addressed, namely:

- What kind of planning is required to meet the needs of different types of urban management? and,
- How effective urban frameworks can be efficient at regional and national levels?

## B. Rethinking Cities and Regions

Urban populations are spreading out beyond their old city limits, thereby rendering traditional municipal boundaries and, by extension, traditional governing structures and institutions, outdated. Conceptualizing the vast and often diffuse metropolitan territories and their spread across

existing municipal boundaries is a difficult task. The absence of an internationally agreed-upon definition of urban or metropolitan areas tends to exacerbate these urban planning challenges.

Governing metropolitan and regional areas has, therefore, become much more complex than governing a lone municipality, since a decision taken in one city affects the whole region in which the city is located. Thus the urgent need for balanced territorial development policies embedded in regional planning and governance frameworks. There are, however, at least two sets of challenges for the implementation of these policies, at the institutional and social levels:

### 1. Institutional level

- The absence of institutional consensus about the delimitations of a clear urban territory for planning purposes, which tends to undermine the potential for joint action and interventions;
- Legal restrictions on the formulation and implementation of plans and programmes by municipalities, beyond their political and administrative jurisdictions.

### 2. Social level

- The challenges of equitable development among different groups in metropolitan areas point out to the need for major improvements in the provision of public services such as health, decent shelter, education, water and sanitation;
- Urban poverty has been increasing, and in many cities and regions, spreading outwards, making the peripheries of some metropolitan areas the poorest and most under-served settlements.

In all cases, a territorialized region is an important focus of mobilization. It is important to distinguish this analytical shift towards what is called political spaces. The concept of political space forces us to rethink the relationship between territory and politics. It is worth noting that the municipality in this context is the most promising political space for resolving this tension, because it intertwines State institutions with social movements. The ambiguous political power of the municipalities is that they do not see themselves as self-sufficient.

Thus, cities, as catalysts of socio-political mobilization, encompass both spaces of social claims and territorialized spaces. They are arenas for collective action and rights.

### C. Rethinking Sustainability

There are many challenges to achieving more sustainable and inclusive cities and regions. However, as far as State institutions are concerned, these can be summarized as follows: a lack of clear public policies, fragmented decision making processes, multiple planning institutions with a lack of a shared and negotiated consensus, and a lack of coordinated planning action and implementation.

The regional planning framework is one of several tools that can address some of these questions and contribute to a shift towards a new development paradigm. One of its central goals is to overcome the different fragmentation processes that cut into the social fabric, leading to the exclusion of individuals and social groups from access to different common goods that are considered essential today, such as elementary social rights, education, basic services, housing and employment.

### D. Rethinking Governance

Solutions to urban problems are increasingly being sought at the local level as central governments concede responsibilities in basic service delivery, thereby making it possible for local authorities to take charge of services which would affect the daily lives of their residents. However, there are several obstacles to ensuring that decentralization works effectively. They can be summarized as follows:

- a. Transferring responsibility for the provision of basic services to urban municipalities with growing urban populations is likely to face serious obstacles, unless those municipalities are also given extra revenue mechanisms to fund those services;
- b. Local authorities sometimes lack adequate managerial capacity to take on new functions;
- c. Decentralizing functions from national to local Government are not enough: appropriate mechanisms should also be put in place to confer to civil society organizations, labor unions, the private sector and others an effective role in the urban planning processes;
- d. There is a need to deal effectively with competing sub-national jurisdictions (Governorate, District (Cada), union of municipalities, municipality, urban, local etc....).

It is within this context that new institutional forms of local governance are emerging in municipalities.

### E. Rethinking Planning

Neither the city nor planning are what they used to be. In the last few decades, mainly under the pressure of urban sprawl, economic globalization, increasing social and ethnic differentiation, the city lost some of the most basic elements that defined it since antiquity: density, centrality, demarcation between urban, rural, functional, and economic complementarities between its neighborhoods. Today's city is a loose agglomerate of quasi-autonomous socio-spatial entities, each evolving "independently". Moreover, urban planning itself as a discipline, theory and practice, has witnessed important changes over the same period.

However, this new "urban condition" is perceived with very different appreciations in the intellectual and the political spheres. In fact, the decades since the late sixties has known a proliferation of competing planning theories. These theories reflect different philosophical, political and practical positions on deep cultural, political and economic changes.

But somehow, these different theories and approaches to planning faced difficulties in asserting themselves and conquering the planning practice. That is how we are witnessing a clear move in this decade into an eclecticism in the planning practice, where urban planners tend to take "a bit of this, and a bit of that" to formulate and manage their projects.

Moreover, decentralization and market power have also attracted more stakeholders in the planning arena with very different and conflicting interests and agendas. In consequence, it has heavily weakened the legitimacy of "functional" administrative and public urban planning.

However, in the age of the agglomerated city, planning still has an important role and could be constructed from the bottom-up, not necessarily by articulating development initiatives but by building on them.

Interestingly, urban planning and urban development are both, somehow, processes bringing together different actors (politicians, planners, technicians, economists, civil activists) and objects (spaces, construction materials and tools, in addition to a large set of legal, administrative, managerial, conceptual, scientific, literary and negotiation tools) and connecting them in different ways.

Ultimately, considering these connections analyzing

and assessing how actions of local municipal actors, spaces and projects would meet the requirements and expectations of our cities and regions, in light of rapid social transformation, unstable economy, a threatened environment, and a fluctuating political situation. In other terms, how these actions would:

a. inform us on how these local actors experiment the different scales, tools, actions, laws and regulations,

and put together and coordinate different development and planning initiatives and frameworks at the local, regional, national and international levels, and

b. help us identify the key elements or obstacles encountered by these local actors to achieve legally bounded and coherent plans and actions.







# **Chapter 3**

## URBAN PLANNING IN LEBANON



# Chapter 3

## URBAN PLANNING IN LEBANON

### INTRODUCTION

Lebanon is a highly urbanized country with 87% of its population living in urban areas. The urban growth and the accelerating drift to major cities and coastal towns were not accompanied by any state policies or plans, which turned those cities and towns into a single urban area that is challenged by the lack of basic services, in addition to transport and environmental problems, with traffic congestion and a deterioration of the natural environment.

Although Lebanon has a number of national actors concerned with urban planning, the state policies in this particular sector remain minimalistic. Those key concerned actors include the local authorities (municipalities and unions of municipalities), the Directorate General of Urbanism (DGU), the Higher Council for Urban Planning (HCUP), the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), and other sector ministries.

Urban planning in Lebanon is being executed in a highly centralized manner. As a key governmental agency, the DGU is responsible for developing and reviewing master plans all over Lebanon. It should be mentioned that the Master Plan only provides guidelines and recommendations that still need to be reinforced by means of mandatory laws and relevant policies and regulations. The HCUP includes representatives from several ministries, as well as specialists in urbanization, and is responsible for advancing recommendations that guide urban planning at a national level.

As for the CDR, it was founded in 1977 to take charge of reconstruction and rehabilitation projects. To regulate urban growth, the CDR was assigned the task of developing a

National Physical Master Plan for the Lebanese Territory. The final output represents a national ‘general guiding framework’ to urban planning and land use in Lebanon to which all actors involved in planning must abide. The National Physical Master Plan for the Lebanese Territory is an officially endorsed document (2009), which has raised awareness and urged public and private stakeholders to address urban planning for local development; however, today the need arises to complement this national guiding framework with regional urban planning frameworks.

In parallel, the role of local authorities in urban planning is also gaining a significant importance, specifically in light of the increasing interest of donor agencies to partner with municipalities and community representatives to develop Local Strategic Plans.

Historically, Lebanon has witnessed over the past century significant developments, which involved positive and negative implications on the urban planning sector. Major changes within the planning system had started immediately after the Ottoman Era with the French Mandate, prospered remarkably during the Era of President Fouad Chehab, yet severely deteriorated during the years of the civil war.

Since the French Mandate up until nowadays, the urban planning sector in Lebanon has been exceptionally affected by the French planning systems and frameworks. While France has witnessed fundamental changes and improvements within its urban planning sector, moving into the concept of regional planning, Lebanon is still depending on traditional planning tools that were developed and applied during the past century.

### Historic Overview Of The Planning Sector In Lebanon

1926 - 1920	First years of the French Mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Work on the land-title registry began to replace the Ottoman Defter Khan system</li> <li>◦ Cadastral survey began</li> </ul>
1932	Five-year plan for Beirut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Included municipal codes and provisions for public spaces and gardens, sanitation, and infrastructure</li> </ul>
1940	Establishment of the Ministry of Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ The first urban land-use maps of the entire city (detailed to the level of individual buildings) were created for the seemingly parallel uses of both, city authorities and the military</li> </ul>
1950s - 1941	Ecochard Era	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ The first comprehensive Master Plan for Beirut was developed</li> <li>◦ Master plans for several cities were developed</li> </ul>
1950 - 1948	“The Palestinian “Nakba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Influx of thousands of Palestinian families to Lebanon</li> <li>◦ Establishment of refugee camps</li> </ul>
1954 – 1952	Ernst Egli (Swiss planner)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ The first approved Master Plan for Beirut prepared based on Ecochard’s plans from the early 1940s</li> </ul>
1964 – 1959	IRFED Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Developed a survey of the socio-economic situation for 60 villages and the major Lebanese cities. This resulted in formulating a five-year plan, which included an agenda of public investments</li> </ul>
1960s	The Fouad Chehab Era	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Large-scale and state-led infrastructure projects were achieved all over the country</li> </ul>
1961	Doxiadis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Drafted a comprehensive housing plan for the whole country</li> </ul>



1977	Cancellation of the Ministry of Planning	◦ The Ministry of Planning was cancelled
1977	Establishment of the CDR	◦ The Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) was established with flexible planning and implementation mandates
1990 - 1975	The Civil War	◦ Fundamental changes in the demographic distribution in Lebanon due to massive displacement ◦ Chaotic illegal expansion of urban areas
2005 - 1991	PM Rafic Hariri Era	Introducing the concept of private share-holders companies: ◦ Solidere was commissioned to design and implement a new plan for the downtown of Beirut, 80% of which had been removed by the end of the war ◦ Elyssar project was supposed to relocate nearly 80,000 citizens who live in informal illegal settlements in the Southern Suburbs of Beirut, providing them with new housing. The project remains on hold due to the lack of funding and to political complications
2009 - 2002	NPMPLT	◦ Preparation and endorsement of the National Physical Master Plan (NPMPLT)

It is worth mentioning that historically and up-to-date, all planning frameworks and tools adopted by concerned institutions in Lebanon have placed more emphasis on land use and zoning issues, while placing less focus on visions for future development of the different regions.

This chapter will address the urban planning sector in Lebanon from four different perspectives; the territorial scale, concerned planning actors, planning tools and frameworks, and the existing laws and regulatory frameworks. Each section will include a factual background and a situational analysis.

## 1. EXISTING TERRITORIAL SCALE

One of the problems with traditional planning is the representation of space and its borders. In a context of increasing and intensifying flow of information, people, goods and transport on the one hand, and expansion, diffusion and fragmentation of urban space on the other, the limits and boundaries of existing administrative and political geographical divide of municipalities and public and administrative authorities' territories tend to overlap

or even disappear.

This brings up 3 key questions;

- How do planning authorities integrate these different scales and temporalities?
- On what basis: issues, politics, economics, social, administrative, competencies, etc.?
- How and to what extent do existing planning perimeters map or match with the existing national, regional and local planning, political, administrative or spatial divisions?

### 1.1 The geography of administrative territories:

#### Governorates and Districts

Lebanon was initially divided into five governorates (muhafazat); Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North, Beqaa, and South. In 1983, the Governorate of South Lebanon was divided into two; South and Nabatiyeh. In 2003, the Cabinet of Ministers endorsed the establishment of new governorates, that is Akkar and Baalbek/Hermel. However, the legal, administrative, and institutional setups for those two governorates remained pending, and practically they

still follow the mandate of other districts in Lebanon.

**The eight governorates include 25 districts (Cada) distributed as the following:**

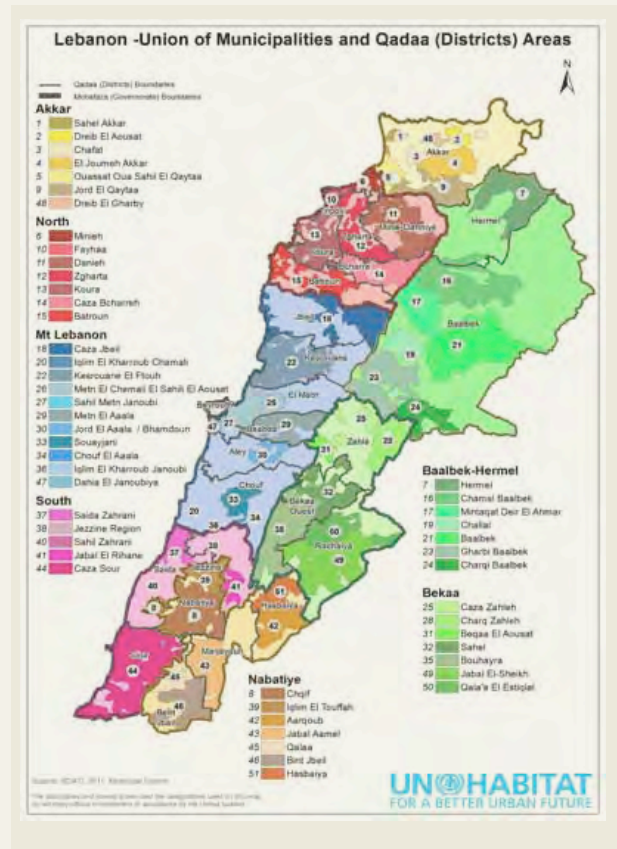
Governorate:	Districts:
Beirut	Beirut
Mount Lebanon	Jbeil, Keserouan, Metn, Baabda, Aley, & Chouf
North	Tripoli, Minieh/Donnieh, Zghorta, Batroun, & Koura
Akkar	Akkar
Beqaa	Zahle, Western Beqaa, & Rachaya
Baalbeck/Hermel	Baalbeck & Hermel
South	Saida, Tyre, & Jezzine
Nabatieh	Nabatieh, BintJbeil, Marjeyoun, & Hasbaya



**Municipalities and Unions of municipalities:**

The whole geographic area of Lebanon is distributed among 1396 territorial localities, which represent the cities, towns and villages of the country. Most of those localities are governed by municipalities (1080 municipalities exist in Lebanon). According to the Municipal Law (legislative decree no. 118/77): “The municipality is a local administration exercising, within its territorial scope, the powers entrusted thereto by the law. The municipality shall hereby enjoy legal personality as well as financial and administrative independence”. The number of municipalities in Lebanon is relatively large when compared to the country’s surface area and demography.

A new regional political space is emerging recently in many parts of Lebanon in the form of union and federation of municipalities.



Municipalities and Unions of Municipalities can be divided into three levels. Those have been classified according to the urban expansion trends and to the prevailing local political context.

### At the level of municipalities:

- a. **Small municipalities** are primarily located at the peripheries and witness a continuous decline in the size of their population (number of registered voters exceeds the number of residents and people coming from other villages and towns). This reality has two implications. On one hand, these municipalities lack human and financial resources (either from the money transferred through the Independent Municipal Fund or from revenues generated by local taxes). On the other hand, migration constitutes the major challenge for the sustainable development process in such municipalities.
- b. **Small and medium-size municipalities** with residents exceeding registered voters. In general, these municipalities are either the administrative capital of a Cada or are located in the suburbs of big cities. However, even in cases where such municipalities are more resourceful due to the large tax revenue, urban pressure constitutes a major threat to the sustainability of the environment and the social structure of these municipalities.
- c. **Major cities** enjoying significant resources and large-scale administrative bodies. These municipalities have a vast experience in the field of municipal work. Nevertheless, despite the fact that they represent vital economic hubs in Lebanon of high demographic density, they require continuous monitoring and evaluation of their strategies in order to face the urban transformations and respond to their development needs.

### At the Level of Unions of municipalities:

- a. **Large-scale unions** of municipalities covering a large surface and sometimes an entire Cada with diverse territorial characteristics. For planning purposes, those unions should consider dividing the area either into homogenous geographical regions or into sub-regions agreed upon between affiliated municipalities.
- b. Unions of municipalities that are **not connected geographically**. This type poses a challenge in relation to planning as some key issues might not be convenient for all the municipalities affiliated to the union. Furthermore, this type requires flexible planning encompassing a number of orientations that respond to common challenges shared by a group of municipalities that are geographically connected.
- c. Two or more unions of municipalities **sharing homogeneous territories**: In that case, it is essential to

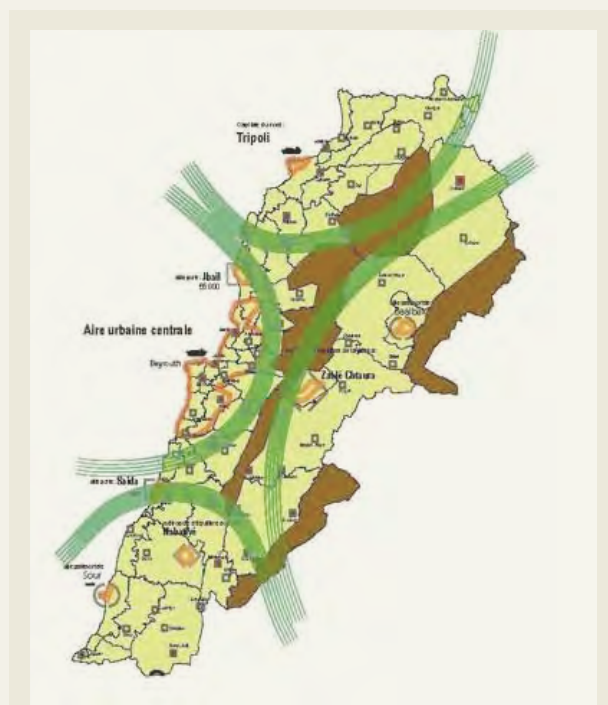
undertake comprehensive planning covering the whole territory of the involved unions.

## 1.2 The geography of administrative planning territories

### Proposed urban structure (NPMPLT)

The NPMPLT has proposed an urban structure for the whole country. It consists of **four** major regions that should operate as the organs of the same body, and comprises:

- a. The Central Urban Area, which includes the governorates of **Beirut and Mount Lebanon**. This region is characterized with the highest density of population as well as the existence of the main economic activities and the presence of key public institutions. The borders of this Region start from Jbeil, in the North, reaching Damour, in the South, including towns and villages located within max altitude of 750 m above sea level.
- b. In **the North and Akkar**, the agglomeration of Tripoli has presently 48% of the population, whereas the small cities and villages of the area account for 52%. This region is featured with high density of population residing in rural areas (half of the residents in the two governorates, combined).



Map showing the four major regions in Lebanon as per the NPMPLT.

Within the rural areas of the two governorates of the North, some villages are considered more important than others and play the role of relay-villages.

- c. *The Beqaa and Baalbeck/Hermel* is today the area with the lowest urbanization rate: only 34% of the population of the Beqaa live in the two major agglomerations, Zahle/Chtaura and Baalbeck. This proportion of “city dwellers” is likely to increase because of tertiary activities and industrialization. Despite the urban development, the majority of the population of the Beqaa and Baalbeck/Hermel will continue residing in small cities and villages. Among these different relay-cities, the development of Hermel will be a particular challenge, given the economic and social difficulties that the entire Cada is experiencing.
- d. The Urban structure in *the South and Nabatiyeh*: This region involves three major cities; Saida, a harbor-city between the South and Beirut; Tyre, a patrimonial city with a remarkable natural and agricultural framework; and Nabatiyeh, the dynamism of which continues and is expected to play an even more important role in the future.

In total, these three agglomerations gather 44% of the resident population of the two governorates of the South. This proportion is expected to rise up to 48% due to the increase in tertiary works and industrialization.

### Master plans and Building Code

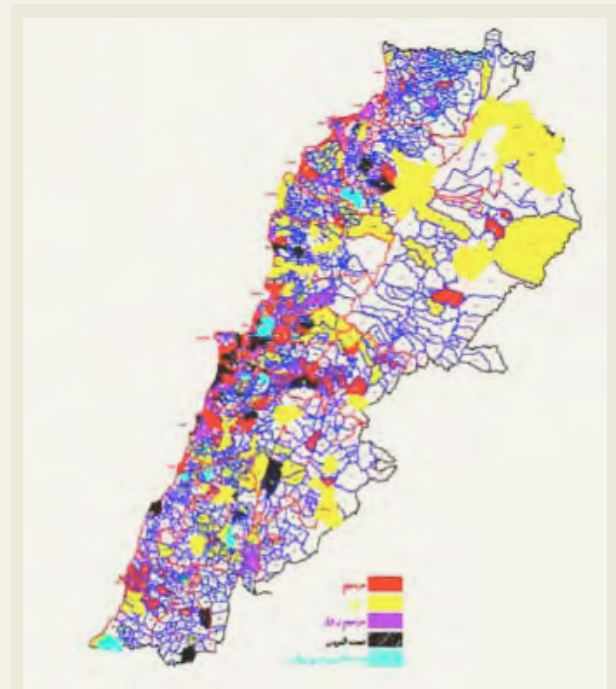
This map clearly shows two main zones. The first, void of colors, represents the unplanned territories. The other, with multiple colors, represents the multiplicity of the Master Plan typologies, cluttering and governing the remaining part of the national territories. Each color coded area has its own legal status and its own set of regulations and conditions.

Moreover, the following should also be noted:

- The urbanization, outside the perimeter covered by Master Plans, represents 75% of the national land, and occurred during the last 40 years according to Building Code regulations only, which are applicable to zones not covered by urban planning regulations;
  - Not all Master Plans have the same spatial impact. Some are not covering well-defined governance or political entities.
- Some, labeled under study, can freeze the development

of a region for unlimited time. While others, with varying statuses, can conflict or even contradict enacted ones. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of many different Master Plans, within the same naturally defined region, can even undermine its harmonious development in some instances;

- Different types and shapes of DGU territories are cross cutting and sometimes overlapping the administrative and the political territories. Each governed by its own logic, depending on the initiator, the terms of reference with the consultant, the stakes or the interests of the parties involved.



*The master plan territories based on the DGU*

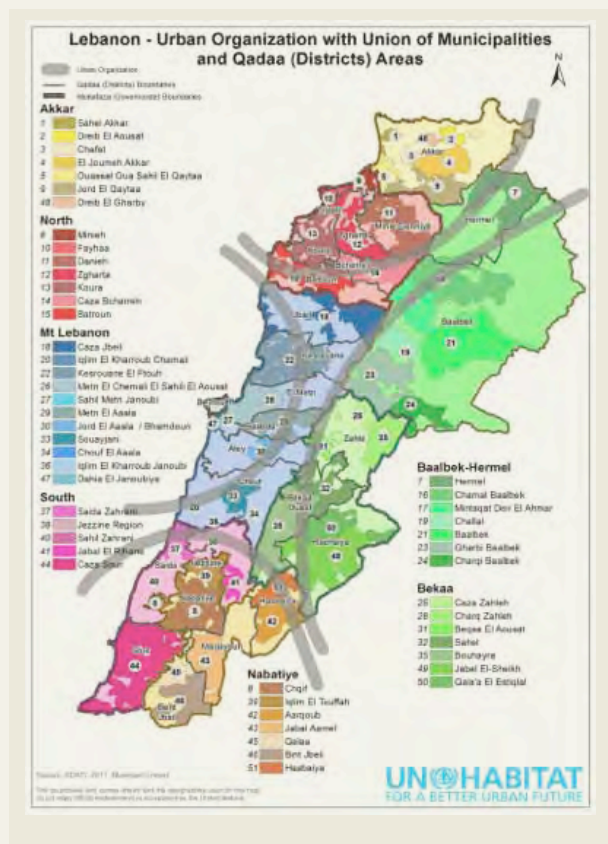
### 1.3 Overall Conclusions of the Territorial Scale

- a. The overlay of the Administrative and Planning territories and Geographies do not align. They are induced by different logics and governed by different governance systems, each serving different objectives without coordination.
- b. The national administrative divisions were created based on political and sectarian considerations bearing a negative adverse on the planning process. In fact, the present geographical delimitation of Districts

(Cada) in Lebanon embraces in many cases regions that are heterogeneous geographically, socially and economically. This in turn limits the possibility of adopting these Cada as an integrated homogeneous entity in the planning process.

- c. The major urban centers of Beirut and Tripoli clearly encroach henceforth on many districts (Cada), creating a double incoherence. On one hand, these Cada become composite entities like a suburb around a city, interacting more with this city, even though located in another Cada, and less than with the rural hinterland which belongs to the Cada of the suburb in question.
- d. Planning territories surveyed by Master plans are strictly bound by municipal administrative perimeters and governed by the scope of the works and the terms of reference negotiated between the DGU and the expert. These perimeters could simply be geographical outlines, not necessarily associated to any kind of political or governance authority system or a coherent and meaningful delimitation, unless it concerns a municipality or a union of municipality; Cada and Muhafazats are thus far excluded from this process. The political decision making process is hence replaced by the technical expertise of the DGU. Land uses become the 'political' tool by which the DGU imposes its will on the local stakeholders.
- e. Un-surveyed territories are uncharted territories by official Master plans. They could be considered residual territories not governed by specific land use; however, they affect the local, regional and national settlement landscape by abiding to one national rule of construction, regardless of context and specificities.
- f. The territorial issue of the limits and boundaries of existing planning perimeter is in fact a negotiation process between local interests, represented by municipal authorities (communitarian, partisan, economic or social, etc.) and central administrative and political agencies: DGU, CDR, Mohafazat, and sector ministries, etc.

- b. Different planning perimeters may also have to be considered when falling within a clearly identified coherent territory, depending on other variables, such as specific land use, or specific sectors such as economy, agriculture, industry, tourism, etc.
- c. The planning perimeter should also consider territorial and human resources in different areas, and the links that could be integrated through strengthening the networks towards a common vision which would suggest a new geography to deal with for planning that is not limited to any administrative or municipal border.



## 2. KEY PLANNING ACTORS

Planning brings together a large number of actors who often claim their own tools, procedures and temporalities (DGU/CDR/UoM/Ministries/Private sector/etc.).

This section will try to address 3 main questions;

- Is there any platform or instance at local, regional or national level for negotiation and coordination between stakeholders and planning and development actors

(Union of Municipalities, regional DGU antennas, Cada council, Mohafazat)?

- How is decision-making processed (under whose authority and by which methods)? And who has the final say?
- To what extent does the negotiation process undermine the deep-seated traditional politico-administrative system, jurisdictions and powers?

## 2.1 Local Actors

### Municipalities

Legislative decree no 118/77 and the municipal laws authorize municipalities to play a leading role in the local planning processes. In fact, they are the key local agents concerned in the management of their territories, including identifying their capacities and discerning their problems. According to the Municipal Law (Article 49), they can, in collaboration with the DGU, draft their master or detailed plans, designs as well as regulations, and parceling projects. In order to do this, municipalities commission a consulting expert or firm to undertake the study, and later submit it to the Higher Council for Urban Planning.

However, and in most cases, municipalities are unable to lead this process on their own due to many challenges:

- 1- Regulatory;
- 2- Financial;
- 3- Administrative and technical;
- 4- Politics and decision-making;

### Conclusions:

- a. Because of the many challenges facing them, municipalities are improvising and performing a patch work planning, or a "pastiche" planning, as ad-hoc development in the form of public gardens, embellishment of the public realm and domain, social initiatives, rezoning, and land parceling projects for further urbanization. However, they do so without consideration for the larger context with regard to neighboring municipalities. This results in diminishing the possibility of ensuring collective actions, mutual benefits, better services, and thus a balanced sustainable development.
- b. Municipal ad-hoc development is considered a positive tool which paves the way for various initiatives and

projects no matter how disconnected they may seem to be. However, with the absence of a planning framework and clear vision, the municipalities are facing problems, which arise on the long run whether gradually or abruptly. The municipality then becomes concerned with solving present problems that could have been prevented if a clear vision or plan is set from the start.

- c. Municipalities are facing important political challenges imposed by changes on the higher levels of government. The political situation on the national level that led to the municipal elections of 1998 is no longer what it was. As of 2005, the high political polarization on the national level has had its consequences on the local level, where parties and communities chose to move towards more aggressive local strategies to enroll municipalities and NGOs in their own networks. This pressure is destabilizing some of the municipal actor-networks, and local actors acknowledge the limits of municipal action. Hence, scaling up begins to seem as a way to stabilize the municipal actor-networks and capitalize on local expertise and experiences. To have a say on strategic issues, mainly economic, municipalities are creating or integrating municipal unions.

### Union of Municipalities

Since two decades, and in an attempt to face the various regulatory, financial, administrative, political and decision making challenges, a number of Municipalities joined forces and gathered under the umbrella of a "new" administrative structure: the Union of Municipalities.

Different considerations, mainly political and confessional, shape the form of Unions of Municipalities. These considerations affect considerably the number of municipalities that have or haven't joined Unions of Municipalities or even the geographical distribution of those unions.

Municipal unions are mainly, proximity based coalitions whose territories are subject to major changes, most notably processes of abandonment, the departure of their driving forces, sub-urbanization and peri-urbanization, which affect not only urban spaces but also natural spaces. These changes involve numerous

stakeholders (businesses, local authorities, associations, etc.). Consequently, the demand and the desire of these stakeholders call for a move from local government to local governance.

Two main categories of proximity for the unions of municipalities were identified during the assessment: on one hand, geographical proximity, which can be subdivided into permanent proximity and temporary proximity, depending on the nature of the stakes, and on the other hand, organized proximity based on the sense of belonging and similarities. However, both could also be jointly in the workings. Geographical proximities seem not only to allow neighboring stakeholders to get to know one another and to discuss and develop possible solutions, but also directs them into conflict situations in cases of, say, competing land uses or difficult neighborly relations; while organized proximities, on the other hand, seem to develop alongside the development of utilities networks, a sense of identity and belonging, and even similarities due to shared cultures, references and goals. These organized proximities enable local stakeholders to discuss matters together, as well as to compete, become acquainted with one another or be in opposition to each other, though without compromising the links established between them, or discard efforts to achieve a common objective when facing obstacles.

But all of these differing municipal unions confront the same challenge: how to live side by side and work together for the successful and harmonious development of the areas where they live, despite their differences and the fact that they often do not share the same visions and expectations of the development.

For example, in the case of the southern suburbs of Beirut, the union encompasses existing territories, which are very much based on the control of one political party. This creation is known as The Dahiya. The union here is a) in the continuity of the municipal actor-networks efforts of the last decade and it built on their experimentations; and b) an effort to integrate the different actor-networks into a larger one dealing with issues out of the municipal capabilities. In fact, one of these issues is the place of these suburbs in the larger metropolitan development of Beirut.

The case of the union of municipalities in the south-eastern suburbs is largely different. Local family clans

in this case control the different municipalities and have strong attachment to their localities and their autonomy. The creation of the union here: a) does not coincide with any significant reference to the municipal actor-networks and remains open to new memberships, b) is somehow a formation of a cartel that can give weight to these local actors and put them on the negotiation table. Compared to the southern suburbs, no territorial systemic planning approach defining complementarities is actually possible. Nevertheless, these municipal actor-networks are trying to engage in common reflections about issues of first priority at the union level, like youth and education.

### Conclusions:

- a. The unions represent an important aspect of the municipal issue; they are the main actor entrusted to implement planning and development initiatives and directives at local and regional levels.
- b. Creating a common vision of what the union should be and what it should do is a key challenge to mobilize actors and help merge the different municipal actor-networks.
- c. The process of Municipal Unions is still in its first phases; but clearly in line with the municipal revival in Lebanon. It builds on its experience to complement the shortcomings of the municipal actor-networks on the planning dimension. They represent networks trying to restructure their urban environments and ensure development in their areas. Local divergences are surely important variables leading the municipal actor-networks on different tracks; but at the end the stakes are practically the same: linking complex governance to a fragmented socio-spatial urban space, while securing the stability of the network and restructuring the urban and rural landscape.
- d. The margin of maneuver is limited for municipal unions in dealing with well-established and organized actor-networks on the national level with large resources (DGU/CDR/ Sector Ministries, etc.) since they hold many of the resources and jurisdictions capable of blocking or destabilizing their initiatives and projects.
- e. Unions of municipalities are emerging actors reclaiming more powers and competencies and looking for institutional restructuring through additional legal planning tools and agencies.
- f. Unions of Municipalities are still incapable of imposing

their agenda regarding development projects on the different local and national (central) actors.

## 2.2 National Actors

### Directorate General of Urbanism (DGU)

The Directorate General of Urbanism (DGU) is headed by a Director General and comprises two divisions : the Central Administration (Headquarters) and the Regional Offices. Complementary to its main function, the DGU reports to a Higher Council of Urban Planning (HCU) headed by the Director General. The HCU is the clearing and approving body for any master plan before its submittal to the Council of Ministers.

#### The Central Administration:

It is organized into two departments and three units, each is led by a director. As laid out in the decree number 10490, the DGU has the following overall responsibilities:

- Elaborate master plans for Lebanese villages and cities and define land uses according to the demographic, economic and social condition of the regions. This work is done in collaboration with the DGU, municipalities, and technical offices.
- Provide the necessary studies for the road network in the different regions through the Department of Planning. The aim of this network is to provide connections inside the villages and between regional and primary roads that are implemented by the Ministry of Public Works, and national roads that are implemented either by the CDR or the MoPW.
- Monitor the implementation of plans in collaboration with municipalities, line ministries, Mohafazat, Cada and Union of Municipalities, and report to and request approval from the Higher Council of Urban Planning concerning the developed master plans.
- Support municipalities to develop the necessary studies for the municipal projects and supervise the implementation phase.
- Supervise and follow up on the work of its technical offices and units in the regions, provinces, and districts. These units are mainly responsible of buildings permits and lands sorting.

#### Structure of the DGU

The DGU is organized into Diwan, two Departments, and three Units, as follows:

1. Diwan
2. Department of urban planning studies
3. Department of municipalities' projects
4. Unit of secretariat of the higher committee for urban planning
5. Unit of information and documentation
6. Units of urban planning in the Mohafazat and provincials centers

The Department of urban planning studies in the DGU is responsible of developing the master plans through its different units. It is organized into five units:

1. Urban Design Unit
2. Urban Planning Unit
3. Unit of Private Land Pooling and Subdivision
4. Unit of Public Land Pooling and Subdivision
5. Unit of Programs and coordination

#### Master Planning

The responsibilities of the Urban Design Unit :

- Formulate studies, designs, and detailed guidelines for urban planning systems for cities and villages.
- Classify the areas and determine the different land uses.
- Define the lots needed for public buildings as well as educational and schools buildings, hospitals, public gardens, playgrounds, and open green spaces.
- Study the traffic circulation, update the road' plans, and widen the public spaces, the side parking on the street, and the proposed bridges that are within the authority of the DGU.
- Prepare the documents and maps needed for all the dues mentioned above.
- Prepare the studies and detailed designs that show the parcels and the boundaries of the real estate with the appropriate scale: 1/500 or 1/1000 or 1/2000 or 1/5000

The responsibilities of the Urban Planning Unit:

- Study and develop the detailed plans for the DGU's approved plans and designs.
- Study, develop, adjust, improve, and expand the secondary plans and define the location of open spaces and parking areas.
- Specify the lands and real estates that will be owned.
- Prepare the documents and maps needed according to the approved and signed plans, enlargements, open spaces, and parking mentioned above



### **Land pooling and Subdivision**

The responsibilities of the Private Land pooling and Subdivision Unit :

- Study the applications for land pooling and subdivision that are submitted by the public agencies and the individuals from the different Lebanese regions, and check their relevance to the existing rules and regulations, designs and plans. This unit does not deal with the applications that are within the tasks assigned to the DGU units and departments in the provinces and districts.
- Provide a certificate of conformity to the land pooling and subdivision applications in the different Lebanese regions according to the existing rules and regulations.
- Provide the planning unit with the land pooling maps and the different units and departments in the provinces and districts after confirming them.
- Provide suggestions concerning the execution of roads, squares, and gardens under the expense of municipalities and private owners.

The responsibilities of the Public Land pooling and Subdivision Unit:

- Prepare the land pooling and subdivision projects for the different regions, and coordinate the work between the different land pooling committees.
- Prepare a list with the names of the owners and the different rights.
- Report the certified projects to the concerned parties, real estate units, and survey units.
- Prepare the draft decrees that announce the land pooling and subdivision regions.
- Specify the real estates that will be planned and organized through owning the regions, or real estate companies, or public land pooling and subdivision.
- Specify the real estates that will be planned in the future precisely the ones that are in proximity to public land pooling and subdivision regions and might be influenced by them.

### **Coordination**

The responsibilities of the Programs and Coordination Unit:

- Define the programs and establish the needed studies in the different fields within the DGU in addition to specifying the future needs.

- Specify the touristic, natural, archeological, and industrial areas and study the different ways to develop, maintain, finance, and operate these areas.
- Propose the green spaces and identify the areas with natural views, historic cores, and heritage buildings that need to be preserved and studied.
- Cooperate with the different public organizations, institutions, and parties that care about the environment, health, agriculture, industry, housing, and archeology when setting the studies and the primary foundations for the designs and plans for the different regions.

### **The Regional Offices:**

- Regional Offices are relay self-supported administrative units in the Cada and Muhafazats, reporting directly to the Central Administration through the head of these units.
- The main mission of the regional offices is to assist local municipalities, within their jurisdictions and administrative perimeter, in legal, planning and technical issues and matters. The legal and planning activities take the form of consultancy and follow up on certain studies. However, the main task is to review the building permits and construction documents, and secure their formal approvals by the local municipalities.

### **Conclusions:**

- a. The DGU is a key public planning actor: A well-structured public administration, within the Ministry of Public Works, with a clear mandate, covering a wide range of planning and building domains and matters.
- b. The DGU, the main planning actor on the local level, is keen and open to adopt new planning approaches, but still faces difficulty in maneuvering within its somewhat rigid structure on one hand and its outmoded mandate on the other. Moreover, no clear understanding and procedures of collaboration and harmonization with the other key planning actors are in place. Its relations with the municipalities follow strenuous patterns. They both compete and sometimes clash due to the conflict between the political representation of the municipalities and the technical/legal representation of the DGU in the planning process.
- c. The DGU fulfills its mission through three means: the administrative regulatory tools, the regional technical offices and the HCUP.

d. The administrative regulatory and legal tools are the means by which the DGU, as a leading public actor, establishes planning and building processes with local public and private actors, such as municipalities and developers. The technical regional offices' mission is to assist these local actors, follow up and implement the technical outputs of these planning and building processes. The HCUP, with representatives of line ministries and experts, serves as an approving body and safe passage to the Council of Ministers for these planning and building processes.

e. However, many issues and obstacles, each in its own category, are challenging and preventing the DGU from achieving its stated objectives. These are internal and external challenges:

#### 1. Internal :

- The mandate seems to be challenged and somewhat superseded by local, regional and international developments on the urban, social, economic, political as well as conceptual and disciplinary levels.
- Lack of financing; no new planning studies and master plans were awarded since two years.
- Cities and regions are no longer what they were in the eighties, and consequently the tools are no longer adapted to actual conditions. Issues such as land use, spatial, aesthetic, preservation and hygienic dimensions were only privileged; new set of issues are now at the core of urban planning concerns, such as social, economic and territorial dimensions. They, in turn, call for different types of planning tools.
- The administrative structure is laid according to auto-sufficient departments and units in a fragmented vertical fashion with weak horizontal coordination. In some cases, they tend to overlap and overextend when it comes to large-scale development and land pooling and subdivision processes, such as the case of large development like BeitMisk or others.
- The regional offices' scope of work is limited mostly to administrative and technical regulatory issues. Any initiative on sustainable development projects depends mainly on an individual initiative.
- The HCUP may be lacking the required expertise to deal with complex urban issues on local, regional and national levels, such as balanced development and proposed laws and regulations.

- Issues related to skills, statuses and immunity: 1) staff recruitment does not necessarily fit into planning competencies and skills, and 2) some of the head of departments are on interim basis, thus alienating already fragile decision making process.

#### 2. External:

- From local actors who are reclaiming more powers and a say on matters related to their territories: Some are contesting even the procedures by which central planning is being imposed on them.
- From powerful national actors such as the CDR and sector ministries: The CDR, is not only the governing reference concerned with norms and planning directives on national level, but also competes with the DGU as a provider of regional planning studies and projects, and specific ministries as providers of infrastructure, urban services and urban and environmental norms and criteria.
- From international actors, such as the EU, the World Bank, etc. as they deal directly with union of municipalities for the urban planning, and the development of their territories.

## The Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR)

### Mandate

The Council for Development and Reconstructions was established in 1977 by the decree number 5. The CDR is a public organization which reports directly to the Council of Ministers with corporate standing, financial and administrative independence. The law was revised in 2003 and the decree 10941 was created to address the organizational structure of the CDR.

### Organizational Structure

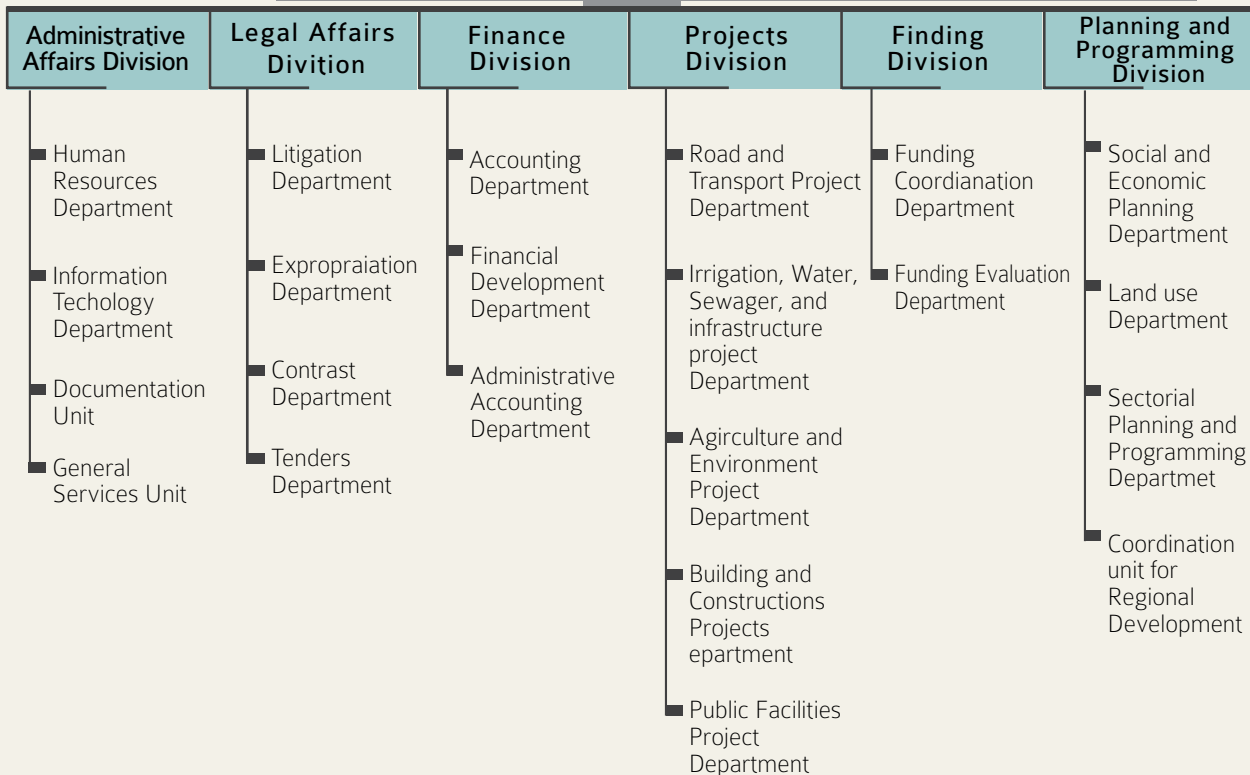
CDR is divided into three bodies of different levels:

- 1-The President and the Board of Directors composed of full-time members: The President, two Vice Presidents and Secretary General.
- 2-The President and the Council Bureau which includes part-time and full-time members.
- 3-CDR Divisions: Administrative Affairs Division, Legal Affairs Division, Finance Division, Projects Division, Funding Division, and Planning and Programming Division.

# COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

## PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### PRESIDENT AND COUNCIL BUREAU



### Institutional Setup

The CDR, which reports directly to the Council of Ministers, was first established to devise a master plan for Lebanon. In terms of planning, CDR has the prerogative to develop general plans and programs for reconstruction and development in addition to social, economic and financial policy recommendations to be submitted to the Council of Ministers. The CDR also coordinates with ministries, municipalities, and public or private institutions and works closely with consultancy firms and international organizations for the planning process, implementation and/or funding.

The CDR should also prepare budgets for the implementation of the plan, and recommend bills of a reconstruction and development nature to the Council of Ministers. According to the decree 10941, the CDR may also propose laws to be approved by the Council of

Ministers provided they fall within the urban planning and construction framework.

Thus, its power over planning issues and matters is more important than that of specialized agencies. Given its statutes, CDR can even substitute for ministries and state agencies, not only for financing matters, but also for the study and execution of development projects, even in the town planning domain. However, nothing has been put in place to follow up and pursue a metropolitan planning policy since the SDRMB (Schéma Directeur de la Région Métropolitaine de Beyrouth) and the traffic study in the eighties. As a consequence, and despite the grouping of competencies within the same organization and its central position in the State structure, town planning is still the outcome of sectoral policies whose incoherencies are still being felt by experts and residents alike.

### **Contribution to Planning**

Today, the CDR is considered to be an active and credible institution, which devises plans for different areas in Lebanon, and has also proved to have the power and tools to implement them. As an efficient public institution, the CDR receives various international and national funds, and allocates them to large-scale projects in the country. The CDR acts independently; it has weak links with the DGU especially in coordinating plans. The CDR's coordination with the local community varies according to the type of the project undertaken; however members of the CDR state that the municipality is the starting and ending point, and thus is a key actor in addition to unions of municipalities to devise a framework for regional planning.

According to the law the CDR should operate on a national level only; however the CDR addresses regional planning albeit in general terms. The first attempt in this regard was through studies conducted by experts in the field of planning. Furthermore, the Cultural Heritage and Urban Development (CHUD) project by CDR focused on the old cities as spaces of heritage. However, throughout the process, the project team realized strong links between the transportation, culture and various sectors, which equally affect the historic core and needs to be addressed. Thus the CDR proposed to take on a strategic plan for Tyr as the second phase of the project. Furthermore, the CDR is currently conducting a regional plan for the area of Akkar.

### **Sector Ministries**

Urban services, such as electricity, potable water, garbage collection or environment protection and heritage preservation, etc., are usually part of Master Plans, as they provide balanced development and equity for the local communities.

However, sector ministries have their own policies that do not necessarily take into consideration the issues raised by Master Plans at local or community level. They provide urban services according to their own sectoral policies and procedures. For example, the Ministry of Energy and Water has its own policy of providing electricity for the various regions in the country using territorial divisions different from the district level. The Ministry of Public Works could also conceive and execute road networks crossing cities and villages without prior consultation with the local authorities. The Ministry of Environment may

also grant permits for quarries in certain locations.

Hence, this creates a different geography of services and projects by sector ministries at the national level, bypassing all other types of national or local planning geographies.

## **3. PLANNING FRAMEWORKS AND TOOLS**

Lebanon is still lacking national frameworks that guide the planning process at the level of public policies. At the institutional level, the public entity entrusted with planning responsibility is inexistent. The Ministry of Planning was eliminated in the 1960s. The outbreak of the civil war (1970-1990) has exacerbated the overall situation. During the war period, the role of state institutions was limited to providing basic and essential services responding to emergency needs only. Until today, planning matters overlap between many ministries and public agencies, notably: the Council for Development and Reconstruction, the Directorate General of Urbanism, the Higher Council for Urban planning and, in certain cases the municipalities.

Faced with the tremendous challenge of articulating local dynamics with larger ones, municipalities and union of municipalities are still trying to find their way, mainly by experimenting different tools. Several tools that are in place are mainly attached to the central government. It is also important to mention international donors who are also present with their own tools. However, each of these tools has its own set of constraints and implementation rules and regulations. Moreover, these tools are keen to be mobilized and instrumented depending on the particular situations and according to variables related to the municipal actor-networks' profiles or stakes.

The key questions related to this section are:

- To what extent are these frameworks adapted to the evolution taking place at municipal and unions of municipalities? And,
- Can they accommodate new approaches in planning for sustainability?

This section will review the main available tools related to planning and planning frameworks, namely: NPMPLT, Physical Master Plans and Strategic Plans.

### 3.1 National Physical Master Plan for the Lebanese Territories (NPMPLT)

The National Physical Master Plan of the Lebanese territory (Schema Directeur d'Aménagement du Territoire Libanais – SDATL) is a comprehensive land-use plan for the entire Lebanese territory. The plan aims to achieve unity, rationalized expenditures and a balanced development on a national level to include cities and villages.

The development of the NPMPLT was possible due to enacting two laws in 1977. The first law held the CDR responsible for creating a comprehensive master plan for Lebanon while the second stated the role of the DGU in the planning process in Lebanon. Through a bid, the CDR chose the partnering organizations and the process of creating the NPMPLT started. The plan was finally approved and adopted in 2009. The NPMPLT decree has involved the establishment of a managerial committee consisting of members from different ministries and headed by the head of the DGU. Based on the decree, the committee should meet at least 4 times a year to discuss and propose alterations to the NPMPLT.

The plan was developed based on the following 8 general guidelines:

- structuring the territory along main urban centers,
- developing an inclusive economic plan,
- providing public facilities in an efficient and effective strategy,
- developing the territory's transportation network,
- urban development respecting the specificities of each area,
- developing a strategy to preserve the natural wealth in the territory,
- managing the water resources, and,
- solving the problem of wastewater, quarries, and solid wastes.

#### Conclusions:

- a. Although the national report on the National Physical Master Plan for the Lebanese territory (which is considered one of the main national planning tools) was issued and received the approval of the Council of Ministers in May 2009, it is limited to determining general orientations associated with land use, without

specifying the procedural mechanisms that facilitate its use at the level of line ministries and public administrations.

- b. The report provides a general national planning framework with general guidelines, however with the various planning actors, which work independently in Lebanon, this report provides a leeway to be analyzed and implemented in a fragmented manner.

### 3.2 Physical Master Plan

The **DGU** is responsible for developing and reviewing master plans for the cities and villages all over Lebanon. According to the urban planning code no. 69/1983, there are three categories of urban tools related to three scales of planning.

1. **The territorial land use plan (plan d'aménagement du territoire (PAT)):** According to article 4, all local urban planning plans and regulations should be in conformity with its content, and as such should also serve as the main framework for the other two categories. However, no subsequent article defines explicitly its content, nor the implementation mechanisms or the authority that would be in charge of its application. This absence of any explanation of the nature of the relations with other types of planning, reflects probably the power structure in place since the eighties.

As a matter of fact, it is the CDR, directly attached to the Office of Prime Minister, which was entrusted to prepare the National Physical Master Plan. This plan, however, is governed by the logic of reconstruction rather than a vision related to urban planning legislation. That is why its implementation by the DGU (as a substitute for article 4) is plagued by sectoral and fragmented approaches, which contradicts the rationale of urban planning.

2. **The Master Plan (article 7):** This plan is solely legally binding for the public authorities. Its function is to promote the public interest by defining the major land use orientations and deciding on key issues of planning. In this regard, the code mentions urban extensions, balancing between urban settlements and natural and agricultural domains, delimitation of historic centers, delimitation of industrial zones and spaces dedicated to public infrastructure and the definition of traffic zones. Though ambitious, this type of plan was never implemented and whenever implemented occasionally,

it failed. In fact, Master Plans were never legally binding for public administrations, as all infrastructure projects were approved and implemented independently from Master plans. Moreover, the programming of public investment is mainly based on projects already listed with the various sector ministries and other public entities and whose implementation, depends, as a matter of fact, on the available external funding, while plans and programs are being regularly postponed.

3. **The Detailed Master Plan** (article 8): This plan is conceived at the scale of the plot and is legally binding for all citizens. It is the equivalent of the classic land use plan. This plan defines also the final zoning regulations, exploitation ratios, construction norms, street wall controls, and servitudes related to hygiene. All of which in conformity with the Master Plans (defining the main land uses). However, in real terms, detailed plans are very remote from the considerations mentioned in article 8 of the Code. In fact, they are reduced to zoning maps with tables of construction conditions and regulations. Certain detailed plans date back to forty years, and are still enforceable and legally binding, ignoring totally the deep transformations occurred in due course. Thus, reinforcing the idea that the right to build is eternal and opening the door for building infraction on grounds of economic and demographic needs.

This manifold approach is in fact alienating the whole planning process and objectives. Mainly the articulation of the Master Plan and the Detailed Master Plan was never clearly specified. Eventually, the Master Plan could act as the Detailed Master plan so long as it is established at a sufficiently precise scale. Conversely, there is no need for a Master Plan in order for the Detailed Master Plan to be valid.

If in practice the Detailed Master Plan has substituted the Master Plan, that is because the last paragraph of article 8 gives the following definition of the Detailed Master Plan: The plan and the detailed regulations could be elaborated for a given locality without having beforehand a Master Plan. In this case the plan and the detailed urban regulations act as Master Plans. This probably could be one of the reasons why Master Plans are being redundant.

Hence, real urban issues like regressing local economy, poverty, social segregation, spatial divide, etc. which form

the new urban issues of planning are being neglected, overseen and replaced by spatial, technical, legal and aesthetic considerations only. Moreover, the master plan tools are most used when the municipal core actors lack the needed resources to engage in their project. Its legal power has the advantage of presenting guarantees of stability to the municipality and its actions, consequently, making out of it a central tool for enrolling new strategic actors. At the opposite, a resourceful, large and diverse municipal actor-network may well discard the master plan tool or take the initiative to elaborate one on its own in order to get technical and legal coverage and approvals from the DGU and the HCUP.

### 3.3 Strategic Planning

The government has instigated strategic regional planning on a number of occasions, such as the Master Plan for the metropolitan region of Beirut for 1983-1986, the Socio-economic Programme for Post-conflict Development for Southern Lebanon in 1998-1999, the 'Schéma Régional d'Aménagement et de Développement Durable du Territoire (STRADDT)', for the Union of Municipalities of Tripoli 'Alfayhaa'. The latter was inspired by the French model of regional planning, and trying to overcome the ambiguity of the Master Plan as practiced in Lebanon. This was followed by other initiatives, namely for the Jezzine area, and presently for Tyre and Saida regions.

However, in spite of their value, strategic plans of this kind are encountering many challenges in the implementation phase according to members and presidents of the Unions of Municipalities. The main challenges are:

- The absence of formal approval by the Council of Ministers and therefore a lack of commitment to financing them;
- The absence of a programming phase following the drafting of the Plan;
- The management by a public body without the budget required for the implementation, or even the appropriate decision-making power.

## 4. LAWS AND REGULATIONS RELATED TO PLANNING

Elsewhere, as well as in Lebanon, the series of laws

and regulations reveals the paradox, which lies in the confrontation of two logics of spatial organization. One is based on forecasts, estimates and expected trends and evolutions, and the other is based on precepts and restrictions. This paradox can create a legislative frenzy that seeks to reorient the territorial dynamics and catch on the adverse effects of unplanned land use. However, lagging in time and under pressure, this form of legislation and regulation occurs mostly after socio-economic dynamics and social realities have already created new realities on the ground. Moreover, this regulatory proliferation tends to blur the transparency of the framework of legislative planning. In some cases, it can create ambiguities, which inhibit the respect of these requirements and prescriptions (encouraging the non-respect of the rules and regulations).

The key questions raised within this section are:

- To what extent and how can the multiplication of planning rules and regulations cause damage or ruin the idea of planning?
- How to control these rules, regulations and laws dealing with these territorial dynamics and their instruments? and,
- To what extent can the public policies and governance mechanisms reconcile the process and procedure as well as the prospective and regulation?

### **The Urban Planning Code**

The urban planning decree-law of 1983 is composed of three parts:

- Urban planning, which focuses on plans and regulations, and relevant planning conditions and possibilities (from article 4 to article 17);
- Urban planning operations in relation with operational arrangements that the government can use when undertaking a development project (from article 18 to article 24);
- The planning permissions, which focuses mainly on building permits and land subdivision (from article 25 to article 44), knowing that the most of the provisions related to building permits are within the building code.

In addition to the planning code, a large number of rules and regulations related to land rights and planning procedures are also addressed and scattered in various laws. A certain number of rules related to urban planning are contained in the new code of the environment, legislation on public

domain, the Forest Code, the legislation and laws on historic sites and monuments, the special legislation on expropriation, etc.

The absence and lack of proper referencing to other laws and legislations within the urban planning code denotes a legal and theoretical blur and uncertainty as to the relationship between the urban planning code and the other diverse legislations having an impact on the territories.

To cover all legislations, laws and regulations related to the public law governing relationships between the state, or its representatives and land owners is a hard task and goes beyond the scope of this assessment. In the following section, the most important ones will be tackled:

### **Municipal and Urban Planning Laws**

The municipal law (Decree 118/77) has devoted much of the planning competencies to the municipalities; however, the planning code, and in particular its article-11, has considerably restrained the power of local authorities by granting them only a consultative role in the implementation of their urban policies.

Article-11 clearly stipulates that according to municipal law, the master plans and regulations should be submitted to the concerned municipalities for their respective review. The municipal councils have a one-month period to express their opinions. If not expressed within a one-month period, they are effective and consequently will be submitted to the Higher Council of Urban Planning, who however has the authority to amend them.

On the other hand, Article-49 of the municipal law clearly stipulates that an urban plan has to be jointly approved by the DGU and the concerned municipality. In case of disagreement, it is up to the Council of Ministers to decide.

It happens that article-11 has been cancelled in 1996 following a petition by the Federation of Municipalities of Kesrouan, by denying the Council of Ministers the right to statute on municipal legislation as the Parliament has not provided the Council with such authority.

If this contradiction between these two legislative documents has been resolved by a court decision,

however, it is still in practice. This shows the absence of clear mechanisms in the management and mediation processes between central and local authorities.

Moreover, this contradiction is also an indication of a confusion of political order. This situation shows clearly that there is no real authority for the planning process, as other actors, namely the DGU, municipalities, land owners and consultants are also caught in this imbroglio of laws on hand and their contradictions.

### The Environment Code

The Ministry of Environment is mainly concerned with policies of national territorial planning insofar as they determine the use of natural resources and the equal apportionment (assignation) of pollution and waste.

The code of the environment is increasingly called in the formulation of urban planning projects and joint actions with administrations involved in the planning process.

As a matter of fact, some provisions of the code of the environment concern a large number of urban operations and actions and also construction practices, namely articles 21 and 22, which are directly linked to the concept and notion of projects.

Article-21 stipulates that any person, be from private or public sector, has to undertake an environmental impact study of projects that threaten the environment due to their size, nature, impact or their activities.

Article-22 defines what the term "project" means:

- Any implementation of construction works or infrastructure;
- Any intervention in the natural environment, notably which entail extraction of natural resources;
- Any program proposal, study, investment or planning covering an entire Lebanese region or any entire activity sector;
- Any alteration, addition, enlargement, rehabilitation or closing of activities already mentioned in the above-mentioned points.

The above two articles clearly indicate that any planning operation, land pooling/subdivision and construction, has to be the subject of impact assessment. However, these

articles are not yet being transformed into decrees, and consequently have no bearing on urban planning projects. Hence, the project, as defined above, and having a direct impact on the environment, is still merely a virtual project.

### The Building Code

One of the major problems of urban planning in Lebanon finds its source in the enacted regulations of the building code and other regulations to legitimize the constructability of lands not covered by the urban plans. Originally stipulated to counter the rampant phenomenon of illegal constructability, these regulations, however, ended up by encouraging construction for commercial ends and uses all over the national territory.

However, it is important to note that since 2005, a decision taken by the HCUP has reduced the exploitation ratios (coefficients) on lands not covered by urban plans. These ratios were decreased from 40 to 25% for floor areas, and from 80 to 50% for the total built up areas.

The NPMPLT, in turn proposes other measures to constraint further construction activities and operations, however, they are still not being implemented. The two main measures being: a) progressive taxation of construction; and b) the planning of municipal road networks at the national scale.

It is worth to note, that the regulations pertaining to the construction of lands not covered by urban plans, are not the lone responsible for the evolution and transformation of non-planned territories. The increased use of private land pooling and land subdivision operations, in both rural and distant areas, are favoring and leading to generalized constructability of the territories. This crucial problem has its origin and roots in the lack of coherent land and territorial policies.

Moreover, extensions of infrastructure networks needed to equip the private construction and land subdivision operations are, for the most part, financed by the state, despite the fact that the legislation provides for the participation of developers and builders to cover such expenses.

This adds to the failure of the planning authorities to avail a coherent urban policy on the actions of individuals.





The background is a dark, muted purple color. It features a complex network of thin, light-colored lines, some solid and some dashed, that crisscross the upper portion of the page. Scattered throughout are small, dark grey squares and triangles of various sizes and orientations. In the upper right corner, there is a faint, semi-transparent graphic of a computer monitor with a circular element on its screen. The overall aesthetic is technical and modern.

# Chapter 4

## THE WAY FORWARD

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### GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In today's urban environment and cities, urban development is not necessarily following urban planning. Simply by looking around, one can notice that urban development initiatives are booming everywhere: various local authorities, private developers even civil society actors are leading their own urban development initiatives. These developments, of different scales and kinds, are in their great majority non-state initiatives and do not necessarily fit in a metropolitan or a regional urban strategic plan.

Moreover, planning is increasingly thought and developed by other actors than planners. Actors that want to use planning to find their place in complex governance landscapes. The urban social and economic divide, on one hand, and fragmentation of spaces, geographies and tools, on the other, has led to the multiplication of these actors, especially local actors, like municipal unions.

In continuity of the municipal revival dynamics, the findings show that these local municipal actors are capable of networking, experimenting and learning, moving to larger scale perspective even in extreme conflicting conditions. Local divergences are surely important variables leading the municipal actor-networks on different tracks; but at the end the stakes are mostly the same: linking complex governance to a fragmented socio-spatial spaces, while securing the stability of the network and restructuring the urban and rural landscape.

However, this evolution towards a larger strategic perspective by municipal unions does not necessarily mean that a viable or a sustainable municipal planning will consequently emerge on this scale. It is key to agree that planning is a more comprehensive exercise than development. Planning, among other things, aims at articulating different aspects of sustainable social, economic and political life. Consequently, new dimensions like

participation, legitimacy and the articulation to other territorial scales, all new questions with their own stakes will certainly emerge and should be taken in consideration in any new planning initiative.

Clearly, planning today is changing where new ways of thinking and constructing the city are experienced. There is a clear need for propositions that focus on the development of a localized network of actors that would work together in order to develop “bottom-up” or “outside-inwards” planning agendas and territories. These propositions should regard themselves as ways to deal with the increasing fragmentation of space and society and the development of multi-scale actors in today’s network society. New tools are to be put forward, and more importantly, effort is to be made to charter new ways for gathering resources and organizing actors to act together in a synchronized way on the urban realm.

The main questions to address:

- What would be the “ideal” setting for actors to gather and organize in a synchronized way?
- Where to fit this setting in the existing State system?
- What would be the implications if new planning frameworks were developed and put in place: At the institutional level? At the level of existing human

resources? At the technical level?

- What would be the spatial and governance attributes of these settings? Is it the Union of Municipalities, the Cada, the Muhafazat, etc?
- Should new political order relations be considered? New bi-laws? New legislations? New political entities and instances?

This assessment clearly shows that planning should be thought at a different scale. This scale, however, challenges the existing political and geographical divisions of the regions in Lebanon. Moreover, the urban and the territorial evolutions and transformations taking place bear witness of different logics and workings than those of the existing divisions. Hence, administrative divisions constitute an unavoidable issue and a main challenge in any reflection on the essence and the scope of any meaningful urban and territorial planning at regional level.

However, more than a simple realignment and readjustment exercise of the existing territorial divisions to the new urban realities is taking place, and beyond the new territorial divisions of the Union of Municipalities, the issue that must be addressed is to define a planning region in Lebanon and its constituents.

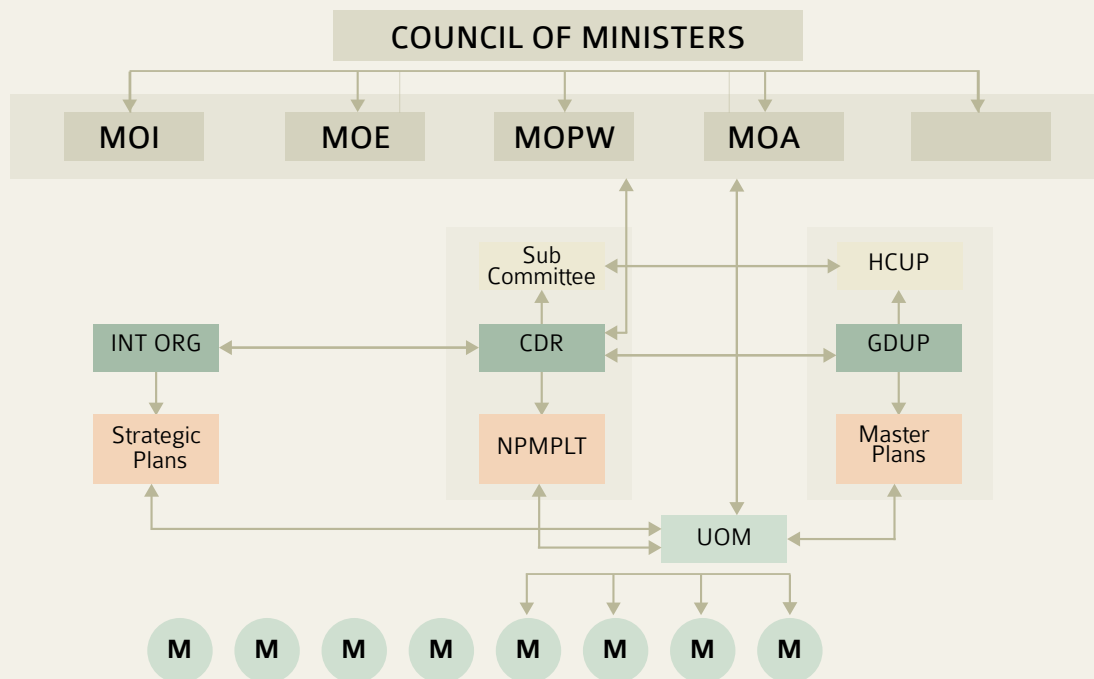


Table showing the relation between the different institutions involved in planning in Lebanon

As a matter of fact, it is no longer sufficient to remedy the urban fragmentation, the “confessionalization” of territories and the inefficient urban administration by improvised projects and activist or imported initiatives.

The administrative division of territories from development and planning perspective should be addressed at the conceptual level: a new meaningful division is only possible by addressing the conceptual social, economic and political issues of what may constitute a region in the Lebanese context.

Furthermore, the impact of the new territorial management units, like the Unions of municipalities, overlaid upon the existing administrative divisions, need rethinking and a thorough investigation and understanding as a next step in defining what might constitute a new regional level of planning in Lebanon.

## THE WAY FORWARD

Based on the presented findings and analysis, the way forward necessitates interventions on four key levels: The territorial scale, institutional setup, planning tools and methods, and legal frameworks.

### 1- The Territorial Scale

On the territorial scale level, it is important to start by reviewing and assessing the process and implementation of similar practices to address the regional level in planning in order to propose or adapt such practices to the local context. Addressing the territorial scale would not be possible without national consultation, which is an important step to reforming the process and assess the applicability of regional planning frameworks.

A highly debated question in the realm of planning is to be addressed: “On what scale do we intervene?”. This question is also relevant and key to be addressed in the case of Lebanon, as the research unveils how planning seems to be confined within administrative and geographic boundaries in Lebanon which do not always respond to the respective territorial offerings, thus it is important to define the scale to be studied and addressed and more importantly to allow the territory to inform the scale of regional planning. Finally, the territory is very much

defined by the legal framework which channels the current planning practices, and thus it is important to identify the legal implications when addressing the territorial scale.

### 2- Institutional Setup

This report provides a preliminary assessment and analysis of the key institutions involved in planning in Lebanon, namely the DGU, CDR, UoMs, and OEA. The research shows that the involved parties have a great potential, and thus the first step would be to build on their existing setup to strengthen their institutional capacities and allow them to synchronize their efforts to better contribute to planning. Providing technical assistance to these institutions is important to make sure that they have the tools and capacities to channel planning efforts towards sustainable regional development. The preliminary assessment also showed that arguably, each institution operates independently, and in many cases is unaware of main planning projects that are taking place in the country due to a very weak system of coordination. Hence, it is important to establish coordination frameworks, which would allow these institutions to work closely together towards a common goal and thus allow for more transparency, participation and consultation. In parallel to the intervention on the institutional level, legal implications should be identified and addressed.

### 3- Planning Tools & Methods

Considering that the most common ways in which urban planning and development came about in Lebanon is based on administrative or geographic scopes; then developing a framework to apply regional planning is critical and should be supported by first and foremost sophisticated regional planning tools. Regional planning frameworks are expected to fill in the existing gap between applied central and local planning tools. It is anticipated that regional urban development frameworks would serve as an intermediary between national tools; NPMPLT, and local frameworks; master and strategic plans. The endorsement of regional plans by the HCUP and the issuance of specific decrees for each of them would contribute to the applicability of both, master and strategic plans.

### 4- Legal Frameworks

This report has presented an overview of the existing legal frameworks and more importantly presented those pertaining to planning in Lebanon. However, further

detailed revisions of the planning codes, laws, and degrees is necessary to inform a better understanding of what could be possible and applicable in this context. The review would also highlight key gaps in the legal system, and thus is important to determine the required modifications on laws and regulation. The legal framework should be addressed in parallel to national consultations to address the laws that would impede the establishment and implementation of regional sustainable development. These steps would result in developing a plan of action, which clearly includes the proposed modifications.

It is crucial to ensure that national consultation about the change to take place is made in parallel to every step forward to make sure that everyone is being involved in the process. This consultation would address the

public institutions on the central level such as ministries, and on the local level such as municipalities. Academic institutions would be consulted as well to ensure that the change is informed by updated and relevant planning theory and practice. Furthermore, professional entities would be consulted namely the “Order of Engineers” as well as national experts. The way forward is a long and timely process especially that a new framework is being introduced to a challenging context which requires defining new scales, building on the institutional set-up, elaborating and testing planning tools, and proposing modifications to legal frameworks. Thus, the way forward is a process of adaptation, revision, and consultation, which will hopefully lead to planning to better respond to our unique geography and flourishing cities.



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# LIST OF INTERVIEWED PERSONS

Name	Institution	Title
Planning Institutions		
Mr. Elias Tawil	Directorate General of Urbanism	Director General
Ms. Mona Bitar	Directorate General of Urbanism	Engineer
Mr. Habib El Rayess	Directorate General of Urbanism	Head of Urban Planning Studies Division
Mr. Wajih Abi Habib	Directorate General of Urbanism	Head of Urban Design Unit
Mr. Ahmad Hamzeh	Directorate General of Urbanism	Head of Administration Department
Mr. Ali Ramadan	Directorate General of Urbanism	Head of Private Land Pooling and Subdivision Unit
Mr. Fadi Saliba	DGU Regional Office - Keserouan	Head of Office
Ms. Elissar Abdel Samad	DGU Regional Office - Chouf	Head of Office
Mr. Mahmoud Moussa	DGU Regional Office - Jezzine	Head of Office
Ms. Wafa Charafeddine	Council for Development & Reconstruction	Head of Funding Division
Mr. Ibrahim Chahrour	Council for Development & Reconstruction	Head of Planning Division
Mr. Sami Feghali	Council for Development & Reconstruction	Head of Private Land Pooling and Subdivision Unit
Ms. Nancy Awad	Council for Development & Reconstruction	Specialist in Environment & Land Use Management

Ministries		
Mr. Berge Hatjian	Ministry of Environment	Director General
Mr. Dany Gedoun & his team	Ministry of Industry	Director General
Unions of Municipalities		
Mr. Khalil Harfouch	Union of Municipality of Jezzine	President
Mr. Mohamad Saadiyeh	Union of Municipality of Donnieh	President
Mr. Ali Ezzedine	Union of Municipality of Tyr	Vice President
University Professionals / Experts		
Dr. Mosbah Rajab	Lebanese University	Urban Planner – Expert
Dr. Serge Yazigi	University of Balamand	Urban Planner – Expert
Dr. Mona Harb	American University of Beirut	Urban Planner – Expert
Mr. Mohamad Basbous	Order of Engineers & Architects - Beirut	Secretary General
Mr. Mohamad Fawaz	Ex. Director General of Urbanism	Senior Urban Planner