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Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 07-Nov-2024 | Report No: PIDIA00473



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Project Beneficiary(ies) Lebanon	Region MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA	Operation ID P504170	Operation Name Second Greater Beirut Water Supply Project
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing (IPF)	Estimated Appraisal Date 07-Nov-2024	Estimated Approval Date 12-Dec-2024	Practice Area (Lead) Water
Borrower(s) Lebanese Republic	Implementing Agency Council for Development & Reconstruction, Beirut and Mount Lebanon Water Establishment		

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The project development objective is to improve the water supply services in the Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon area.

Components

- Component 1: Completing remaining bulk water infrastructure
- Component 2: Strengthening treatment processes for improved water quality
- Component 3: Reforms for improved utility operations
- Component 4: Project management and capacity building
- Component 5: Contingent Emergency Response Component

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

Maximizing Finance for Development

Is this an MFD-Enabling Project (MFD-EP)?	No
Is this project Private Capital Enabling (PCE)?	No

SUMMARY

Total Operation Cost	258.00
Total Financing	258.00



of which IBRD/IDA	243.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

World Bank Group Financing

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	243.00
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Non-World Bank Group Financing

Counterpart Funding	15.00
Borrower/Recipient	15.00

Environmental And Social Risk Classification

Substantial

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

B. Introduction and Context

Project Strategic Context

1. **Lebanon’s ongoing multi-faceted crisis has deepened the urgency of ensuring water security and the sustainability of water services, both of which are critical for human well-being and economic development.** The country’s financial challenges and political instability, aggravated by the broader conflict in the region which has damaged vital infrastructure throughout the country including in the Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon (GBML) area, have led to a collapse of basic public services, exacerbating poverty. Multiple development challenges and unaffordable dollarized maintenance costs have severely hindered the effective planning, implementation, and maintenance of water infrastructure and hindered the sustainability of water services. Recognizing that water plays a pivotal role in Lebanon’s future and economic development, the Government of Lebanon (GoL) is implementing a water sector reform embodied in its updated National Water Sector Strategy 2024-2035 (NWSS) which seeks to (i) enhance water security, (ii) improve public service delivery, (iii) support sustainable utilities, and (iv) ensure good governance and leadership. Achieving this vision requires significant infrastructure investments to secure the country’s water supply, while enhancing existing systems to deliver top-quality services to all citizens. A key focus of the NWSS is to drive innovation and investment in digital monitoring, decision-making tools, and processes to strengthen the water sector’s resilience to climate change. However, success also depends on building sustainable water utilities by implementing legal, institutional, and financial reforms, alongside improving service management.



2. **The proposed Project will contribute to this vision by improving water supply services in the GBML area and enhancing the performance of the Beirut Mount Lebanon Water Establishment.** The proposed Project is expected to build on the Bank's ongoing water engagement, while supporting the implementation of sector reform actions by the GoL at the level of the BMLWE. It will address critical water security needs by focusing on essential investments to increase water supply in the most water-deprived areas of GBML, which currently receive less than a quarter of the water needed to meet demand. In addition, the Project will help the BMLWE tackle severe operational and commercial inefficiencies, exacerbated by the multiple ongoing crises, thereby contributing to its financial recovery and to enhancing the future reliability of public services.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

3. **Water in Lebanon is paradoxically abundant, yet scarce.** Precipitation in Lebanon is among the highest in the MENA region,¹ with annual water resources exceeding demand; however, around 70 percent of rainfall occurs between November and March (wet season) and storage of surface water is inadequate, creating a significant water availability gap from April to October (dry season). Despite an estimated per capita renewable water availability of 848 cubic meters, climate-change-driven rainfall seasonality is expected to worsen this gap, with projections indicating a 50 percent reduction in dry season water availability by 2040.² Climate projections for Lebanon indicate an increase in temperatures, by up to 2.2°C by 2040 and 4.4°C by the end of the century. Greater rainfall variability is also expected, which could lead to more intense floods and longer droughts. Factors such as reduced snowpack, increased evaporation, reliance on karst groundwater, and insufficient storage exacerbate the challenges, leaving populations vulnerable to drought and putting pressure on both surface and groundwater resources.

4. **The institutional setup of the water sector in Lebanon encompasses a range of different institutions and stakeholders.** The main institutional players in the Lebanese water sector include: The Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW), the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), and the Water Establishments (WEs) and the Litani River Authority (LRA):

- (a) *The MoEW* is the primary regulatory agency for the water sector, overseeing resource management, budget-financed investments, technical supervision of water establishments, and the establishment of water standards and pollution control legislation.
- (b) *The CDR*, established in 1977, is a financially autonomous public institution accountable to the Council of Ministers (CoM) and is responsible for planning, securing financing for, and executing public investment projects, coordinating reconstruction efforts in collaboration with line ministries.
- (c) *WEs*: municipal water is provided by four consolidated WEs, which operate under MoEW with a degree of autonomy, responsible for managing potable water supply, irrigation, and wastewater services, setting tariffs based on socio-economic conditions, ensuring water quality, and relying on their own funds without central budget support.
- (d) *The LRA*, formed in 1954 to facilitate the integrated development of the Litani River Basin under the MoEW, is responsible for the water governance over the entire basin in coordination with all concerned parties.

¹ Precipitation ranges from 700 to 1,000 mm along the coastline to 1,600 mm in inland mountain areas.

² Groundwater structures of Lebanon are mostly karstic implying that they do not allow storing water to be carried over to dry season; most of the water that enters the karstic aquifers rapidly reaches the sea.



5. **Insufficient enforcement of the Water Law 221, enacted in May 2000, has hindered the progress towards an effective governance framework for integrated water resources management, resulting in fragmentation and poor coordination, though recent actions aim to address these issues.** Progress in implementing integrated water resources management principles is lagging compared to the regional average.³ The Water Law started the reform of the sector by defining the MoEW's role in policy, bulk water supply, and regulation; and reducing water sector fragmentation through the consolidation of 22 water service providers into four WEs. However, without the necessary by-laws for enforcement, the law has not been implemented, and responsibilities remain fragmented across various ministries. This fragmentation causes overlaps and a lack of accountability, alongside poor stakeholder coordination and insufficient reliable data for effective planning and policymaking.⁴ To address some of these challenges, the following reform actions have been completed: (i) Approval of the National Water Council's internal procedures at the level of the Prime Minister's office, which seeks to enhance coordination across sector stakeholders; (ii) finalization of six water law decrees for better regulation of groundwater extraction, licensing, and enforcement, among other aspects; (iii) MoEW's approval of WEs revised organigrams for better organizational structure and formal appointment of utility managers.⁵

6. **Although the MoEW has attempted to enhance financial sustainability through annual water tariff increases, current rates are still insufficient for the WEs to cover operational costs, much less capital expenditures.**⁶ In Lebanon, households pay a yearly lump sum tariff for water for one cubic meter per day,⁷ which dropped from about \$200 to under \$20 due to inflation during the economic crisis.⁸ After several adjustments, the annual lump sum tariff is now around \$150, and the MoEW has plans to gradually return to pre-crisis levels. Additionally, the collapse of the energy grid and frequent electricity outages exacerbate the situation, increasing fuel costs and complicating water production and service delivery. To ensure gradual improvement in the financial sustainability of the WEs, the MoEW is developing with the support of development partners a phased tariff strategy to be completed in 2025.

7. **Despite the relatively high coverage rate of public water networks (90 percent) in the GBML area, continuity of supply is extremely low, forcing households to rely on expensive water supplies and impacting the sustainability of the BMLWE.** Water supply in the GBML area is largely insufficient, with the BMLWE relying only on water supply from groundwater wells or springs. This shortfall in water availability is a critical barrier to ensuring a reliable water supply in the GBML area and limits BMLWE's ability to expand its subscriber base and increase revenue. Some Greater Beirut residents receive only ten hours of water per week during the dry season, and many areas lack adequate supply even in the wet season due to uneven resource distribution and insufficient infrastructure. The public sector's failure to meet basic water needs has led to an informal market for water trucking, which can consume up to 16 percent of household income in summer.⁹ Additionally, there are approximately 100,000 private unlicensed wells. Moreover, the influx of internally displaced people into Beirut and the existence of significant refugee populations further intensifies the water

³ UNEP. 2021. Progress on Integrated Water Resources Management. Global Indicator 6.5.1 Updates and Acceleration Needs.

⁴ Responsibilities for water management regulation and enforcement, irrigation, and water supply distribution are spread across the Ministry of Energy and Water, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Public Health, and Ministry of Defense who oversee the municipalities that manage individual water and sanitation schemes.

⁵ Per interim since permanent appointment is frozen.

⁶ MoEW. 2022. Roadmap to Recovery of the Water Sector in Lebanon. [URL](#)

⁷ Although the payment of the yearly tariff entitles each subscriber to dispose of 1 cubic meter per day, the WEs lack the capacity to control the volume of water withdrawn, which often results in a single subscription to an entire apartment building, or commercial subscribers registered as household subscribers.

⁸ Sayrafa exchange rate for 2022 equal to LBP20,000.00 for US\$1.00.

⁹ Alamine. 2022. Water rich and thirsty – Taping Lebanon's renewable health. Synaps Network. [URL](#)



deficit, straining resources and complicating management efforts. Concerns about service continuity and water quality also force many to rely on costly bottled water, adding to their financial burdens and generation of plastic waste.

8. **Nationally, physical and commercial water losses are estimated at around 40 percent, exacerbated by unregistered users accessing the public network.**¹⁰ Similarly, BMLWE estimates the non-revenue water (NRW) levels at around 40 percent in the GBML Area, but the variability in supply and lack of control over unregistered users complicate accurate measurement. The high NRW levels are primarily due to commercial losses, including unregistered users accessing water from the public network and commercial subscribers being misclassified as household consumers. While much of BMLWE's water distribution network is relatively new, inadequate maintenance is likely to also have led to physical losses. The reliability of estimates for both commercial and physical losses is uncertain, as BMLWE's customer records are outdated, there is no customer-level water metering, and the inconsistent supply hampers effective leak detection. To address these challenges, BMLWE plans to reduce losses by defining zones to update customer records, establishing District Metered Areas (DMAs), installing household water meters in areas with more reliable supply, and implement targeted communication campaigns.

9. **Insufficient wastewater management and poor agricultural practices pose a risk to surface water quality.** Over the past several years, water quality in the Litani River basin has significantly declined. This deterioration is mostly driven by the discharge of around 40 million cubic meters per year of untreated municipal wastewater from approximately 70 communities,¹¹ but it is further exacerbated by certain agricultural practices. Moreover, as of 2023, over 318,000 Syrian refugees were registered in the Beqaa Valley,¹² often living in informal settlements that lack proper sewage connections and relying on unsustainable agricultural practices with excessive use of fertilizers. This surge in informal settlements, coupled with the Government of Lebanon's inability to maintain and operate many of the existing wastewater treatment plants in the area,¹³ has contributed to the deterioration in the water quality of the basin. As a result, and according to LRA, coliform bacteria levels in the upper basin are 200 times higher than legal limits in the wet season and 5,000 times higher in summer, while Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) levels exceed legal thresholds by tenfold, and nitrate and phosphate concentrations are 3 to 5 times higher than permitted.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

The project development objective is to improve the water supply services in the Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon area.

Key Results

- People provided with safely managed water (Number of people), target of 1.8 million;
- Volume of additional potable water distributed in the project area meeting WHO drinking water quality standards (Cubic meters/year), target of 91 million cubic meters per year.
- Non-Revenue Water (NRW) reduction in the Project target zones (Percentage), target reduction of 15 percent;
- Increased collection rate in the Project area (Percentage), target increase of 10 percent.

D. Project Description

¹⁰ Towards a Sustainable Water Sector – Lebanon's National Water Strategy 2024-2035.

¹¹ Litani River Authority

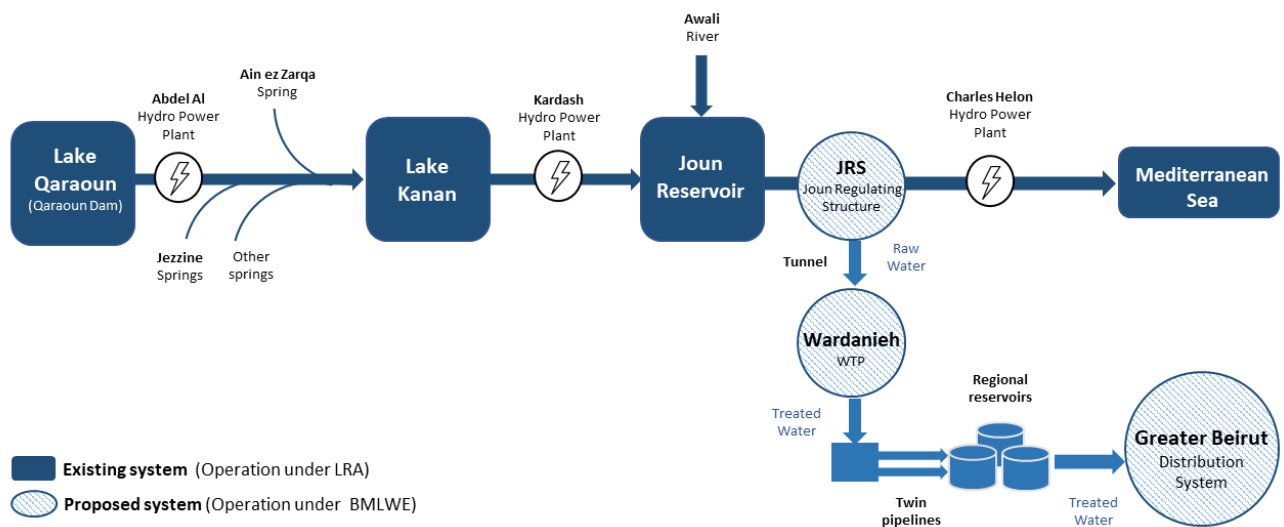
¹² UNHCR. [URL](#)

¹³ As of July 2024, only eight out of the thirteen wastewater treatment plants are working, mostly supported by donor funding.



10. **The proposed Project is a follow-on operation to the Greater Beirut Water Supply Project (GBWSP, P103063).** In December 2010, the World Bank approved this US\$200 million investment project (Loan No. 7967) to finance the GBWSP. The financing plan included US\$140 million to be financed by the BMLWE and US\$30 million by the GoL. The GBWSP, scheduled to close in April 2025, aims to provide an additional 250,000 cubic meters of water per day in the GBML area. Its design marked the first time water would be sourced from surface water sources, specifically the Awali River, springs, and the Lake Qaraoun fed by the Litani River. The GBWSP infrastructure includes an inter-basin bulk water conveyance tunnel that feeds into a gravity-based "source to tap" water supply system to deliver a reliable, year-round supply to the area. The LRA operates all infrastructure along the Litani, including a series of hydropower plants and dams that the bulk water supply system relies on.¹⁴ A schematic of the proposed inter-basin bulk water supply system is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Inter-basin bulk water supply system.



11. **The proposed Project builds on the ongoing water reform agenda and the progress already achieved under the GBWSP, while addressing the emerging challenges described above.** The proposed Project (hereinafter “the Project” or “SGBWSP”) will finance the completion of the water supply infrastructure, ensuring the achievement of the objective of bringing additional water supply to extended areas of GBML. In addition, the Project will support the necessary add-ons to the Wardenieh WTP to manage increased levels of pollution expected at different times of the year. The SGBWSP will also support institutional strengthening to improve the operational and commercial performance of the BMLWE in line with the MoEW vision for the recovery of the sector outlined in the NWSS 2024-2035 and the conclusions of analytics funded by the World Bank and other donors.¹⁵ The project will consist of five components:

Component 1: Completing remaining bulk water infrastructure.

12. This component will finance investments to complete the remaining bulk water infrastructure started and significantly advanced under the GBWSP to ensure water is conveyed to the existing water supply distribution network

¹⁴ Water allocation to Greater Beirut during the dry season is ensured by Presidential Decree No. 14522, issued on May 16, 1970, which allocates 3 cubic meters per second (equivalent to 50 million cubic meters) of potable water from Lake Qaraoun to the region from April to October.

¹⁵ Country Climate and Development Report (CCDR), World Bank’s Utility of the Future (UoF) Program: 100-day action plan, and AFD’s Digital Transformation Roadmap and Action Plan.



serving the GBML area. It will also finance the required construction supervision services for all the works. The component will have the following subcomponents: (i) completion of the remaining tunnel and ancillary works; (ii) remaining Pipeline Works, which include the completion of the twin transmission pipelines; and (iii) construction of three regional reservoirs to increase the overall resilience and efficiency of the distribution system by allowing the BMLWE to regulate the flow of the stream depending on the fluctuations in water demand.¹⁶

Component 2: Strengthening treatment processes for improved water quality

13. This component will finance adjustments (add-ons) to the Wardanieh WTP treatment processes to enhance the resilience of the Wardanieh WTP to variable raw water quality while maintaining operational costs within the financial capacity of the BMLWE. In addition, this component will finance activities to improve water quality management at the BMLWE, including the rehabilitation and upgrade of BMLWE’s laboratory at the Dbayeh through the expansion of existing facilities and the purchase of sufficient equipment, laboratory tools and chemicals, and the reinforcement of chlorination practices to ensure residual chlorine in BMLWE’s distribution network.

Component 3: Reforms for improved utility operations

14. This component will finance activities aimed at improving the operational, financial and customer orientation performance of the BMLWE, in alignment with the vision for the recovery of the sector in Lebanon. These activities are divided in three sub-components: (i) NRW reduction in four zones in the GBML area, (ii) modernization of BMLWE’s operational and commercial management systems, such as BMLWE’s Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure, the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software, customer management processes, and entity audits; and (iii) improved communications, which will finance the development and implementation of the BMLWE’s Communications Strategy and the implementation of semi-annual public awareness campaigns.

Component 4 – Project management and capacity building

15. This component will finance the operation of the Project Management Units (PMU). In addition, this component aims to address gaps in female representation in technical positions through focused training and capacity-building activities for women, enhancing their skills for technical and managerial positions. As such, this component will support a paid internship program that will target female participants to facilitate exposure to professional opportunities within BMLWE. The program will not be exclusive to women but will aim to have more than 50 percent of female participation. The BMLWE will benefit from the work of young and well-trained interns, while the new graduates will be certified on utility-related technical skills (like NRW reduction, SCADA management, asset management, etc.) and gain on-the-job experience that will enhance their competitiveness on the job market.

Component 5: Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC).

16. This component will have zero funding allocation and will only be triggered in emergency circumstances.

¹⁶ The expropriation decree for these reservoirs had already been issued under the GBWSP, however, the process, including compensations, was only completed for the reservoir Hadath 125 (37,800m³). The expropriation for the other two reservoirs was not completed as the GoL did not have the funds to cover all expropriation costs due to the country’s financial crisis.



Legal Operational Policies	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Area OP 7.60	No

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

17. **The activities of the proposed Project may result in substantial environmental risks associated with construction and operations activities.** Although construction risks are significant in nature, they are limited to the construction sites, are temporary and can be avoided or mitigated with proper implementation of Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) mitigation measures following the risk management hierarchy, and with strong ESHS site monitoring and supervision. Operational ESHS risks are mainly associated with the construction of the Wardanieh WTP and potentially the add-ons (depending on what is decided following the adaptive management approach described above), remaining tunnel works, remaining pipeline works and the regional reservoirs. During operation, key risks include upstream water shortage associated with abstraction of large quantities of fresh water from Joun reservoir, handling and disposal of sludge, use and storage of chemicals, and exposure of operators to fugitive chemicals, air emissions and noise. Accidents or abnormal operational conditions may pose significant environmental and health and safety risks to workers and the public. Such risks are substantial yet can be managed by proper design, good operational practices including continuous monitoring, operational arrangements for ensuring a yearly water allocation of 3 cubic meters per second to the Wardanieh WTP without affecting upstream uses, adherence to EHS requirements and preparation and implementation of emergency response plans.

18. **The social risks and impacts associated with the construction and operation phases are moderate.** This is due to the temporary, predictable and/or reversible nature of these impacts, the limited degree of social conflict, harm or risks to human security, the medium probability of serious adverse effects to human worker or community health and safety, and because the Project activities are medium in magnitude and/or in spatial extent. The risk of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) associated with labor influx is expected to be low as workers are recommended to be hired from surrounding local communities and will have close supervision oversight, similar to the arrangement under the first GBWSP. Moreover, no SEA/SH cases were reported and/or registered during the GWBSP implementation. The potential risk of ineffective communication and consultation with affected communities will be addressed through inclusive stakeholder engagement throughout the Project cycle. Temporary traffic disruptions and nuisances are anticipated during remaining tunnel and pipeline works which will be well communicated with the establishment and operationalization of a robust and widely disseminated Project grievance. Additional 8 plots which will be expropriated under the SGBWSP for the remaining pipeline works will be monitored in line with ESS5 principles and the RAP Addendum which has been prepared and disclosed on the client’s website at project appraisal.

19. **The proposed Project will be implemented under the ESF where the following ESS apply: ESS1, ESS2, ESS3, ESS4, ESS5, ESS6 and ESS10.** As such, the PMUs of CDR and BMLWE conducted an ESF Gap Assessment of the existing ESIA and prepared an ESIA Addendum which determined the E&S management plans necessary to meet the applicable ESF requirements. The PMUs, with the support of a qualified environmental and social consultancy firm have prepared, the ESIA Addendum, Stakeholders Engagement Plan (SEP), Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), the Labor Management Procedures (LMP) and RAP Addendum and will be which have been consulted on and disclosed by appraisal.



20. **The Project will rely on the performance of existing dams.** As part of the E&S assessment, it was determined that the Project will be relying on the performance of Qaraoun Dam and Joun Reservoir Dam. A recently Bank-approved project (Lebanon Renewable Energy and System Reinforcement Project - P180501)¹⁷ is relying on the same dams in addition to Annan Lake Dam. Tier 1 dam safety assessment was conducted for these dams. This assessment included independent dam safety inspection and assessment as per requirements of the World Bank's ESF. It included review of dam safety inspection and period safety review report; review of available design reports; review of recent O&M records and instrumentation monitoring; review of criteria and methodology for estimation of the design flood, flood routing, etc. to determine spillway sizing, field inspection, and other. Sufficient financial resources and expertise were secured to conduct Tier 2 assessment for Joun Reservoir Dam and implement the outcomes and interventions of all dams. The SGBWSP PMUs will have close coordination with LRA to ensure that the information on the progress in implementation of the relevant dam safety measures are shared and will ensure participation in relevant technical meetings as needed.

21. **Both PMUs have strong familiarity with the Bank's safeguard policies and limited familiarity with the ESF.** During Project implementation, both PMUs will need to strengthen their E&S monitoring, supervision and reporting capacity. Therefore, E&S site supervision will be conducted as part of the engineering supervision contracts with clear scope on the E&S supervision requirements and dedication of key personnel to carry out E&S site supervision. Additionally, before commencement of Project activities, both PMUs will hire E&S specialists to have the overall project oversight of satisfactory implementation of the ESCP provisions, provide updates as needed in the quarterly progress reports and ensure satisfactory operation and monitoring of the Project grievance mechanism.

22. **Grievance Redress.** Communities and individuals who believe that they are adversely affected by a project supported by the World Bank may submit complaints to existing project-level grievance mechanisms or the Bank's Grievance Redress Service (GRS). The GRS ensures that complaints received are promptly reviewed in order to address project-related concerns. Project affected communities and individuals may submit their complaint to the Bank's independent Accountability Mechanism (AM). The AM houses the Inspection Panel, which determines whether harm occurred, or could occur, as a result of Bank non-compliance with its policies and procedures, and the Dispute Resolution Service, which provides communities and borrowers with the opportunity to address complaints through dispute resolution. Complaints may be submitted to the AM at any time after concerns have been brought directly to the attention of Bank Management and after Management has been given an opportunity to respond. For information on how to submit complaints to the Bank's Grievance Redress Service (GRS), visit <http://www.worldbank.org/GRS>. For information on how to submit complaints to the Bank's Accountability Mechanism, visit <https://accountability.worldbank.org>.

E. Implementation

Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

23. **Institutional arrangements.** The MoEW will have overall responsibility for executing the Project. The Ministry will delegate the implementation of Components 1 and 4 to CDR, and the implementation of Components 2 and 3 to BMLWE. Component 5 will be delegated to both CDR and BMLWE.

24. **Implementation arrangements.** Project implementation will capitalize on the experience developed by the existing PMU arrangements under the GBWSP. CDR and BMLWE are currently implementing the GBWSP under the

¹⁷ Lebanon Renewable Energy and System Reinforcement Project (P180501) – PAD: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099091124181525582/pdf/BOSIB1c260299b0c71a0c11b95eb42d17a7.pdf>



guidance of the MoEW and have developed capacity to implement Bank-financed projects. Both PMUs at CDR and BMLWE will be headed by a Project Coordinator, and will be responsible for the day-to-day management, procurement management and monitoring and reporting on the Project. Each PMU will be reinforced to include a financial management officer and an engineer. Further, both PMUs will share an environmental, health and safety specialist and a social specialist to follow up on the implementation and monitoring of the environmental and social requirements. In addition, the BMLWE will include an additional engineer to serve as focal point and coordinator for the implementation of Component 3 reform activities, and the social specialist will also follow up and coordinate on the communication and gender activities.

25. **The detailed Project implementation arrangements will be described in the Project Operations Manual (POM).** The preparation of a POM acceptable to the Bank will be an effectiveness condition.

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