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SUPPORT TO PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM IN LEBANON

دعم إصلاح الإدارة العامة في لبنان

**EXPERTISE
FRANCE**
GROUPE AFD

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EXPERTISE FRANCE

PROJECT UPDATES



TRANSVERSAL ACTIVITIES

- **Pilot administrations:** The Presidents of the five public administrations beneficiaries of the project meticulously selected pilot administrations, with a citizen-centric approach, to seek convergence of project activities (civil service reform, public procurement reform, preventing and fighting corruption). Following several meetings and discussions, unanimous consent was reached regarding the selection of the Municipality of Saida and the Establishment of Water for Beirut and Mount Lebanon (EBML), in which the amelioration of service-delivery would benefit the citizens directly. Cooperation was officially confirmed by both administrations.
- The project has recruited **interns (13 in 2024)** for a 3-to-6-months program to support public administrations and their staff in implementing project activities. Interns have been assisting civil servants and have the opportunity to learn on the ground the functioning and mandates of oversight bodies.

- **Capacity building and knowledge transfer:** One of the core elements of sustainability is empowering public administration with the skills, tools, and knowledge needed to operate independently. Training programs focus not only on immediate operational needs but also on fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional development.
- In 2024, **10 civil servants** participated in Paris in the **Programmes internationaux courts (Pic) 2024 of the Institut National du Service Public (INSP)**
- Expertise France developed a **Contingency plan**: Engagement of local experts, online trainings and missions to France for civil servants to work with the French experts.

COMPONENT 1 UPDATES

Modernizing the Civil Service for a better service delivery to citizens

1) Initiation of the drafting of the Lebanese public professions' directory: to improve the human resources management system

The Civil Service Board has established a working group of 28 controllers, dedicated to the Lebanese public profession directory. This group is organised in 5 sub-groups, each coordinated by a rapporteur. Each sub-group is responsible for specific functional domains (e.g. Foreign Affairs, Public finance...). The working group is supported by a short term expert in order to ensure the adequate integration of the Lebanese public professions directory within the Lebanese system. Moreover, a short term expert was recruited to gather job descriptions previously developed, as well as all deliverables produced in the context of previous and ongoing public administration reform projects implemented by OMSAR, to ensure that all initiatives of the RAP project are based on existing literature and knowledge, and is coordinated with relevant stakeholders.

The working group has benefited from training sessions conducted by the DGAFP experts, based on the experience of France in producing this HR tool for public administrations.



Figure 1 - Methodological training session of the DGAFP on 4th July 2024

The working group has worked during the summer on drafting a list of all functional domains in Lebanon, and their definitions, which they presented to the DGAFP during a workshop early September. This workshop allowed the DGAFP to provide the working groups with clear recommendations, guidance and methodology for the pursuit of the work to ensure progress. A first version of the list of domains and their definitions has been finalised by the CSB in both the Arabic and French languages.

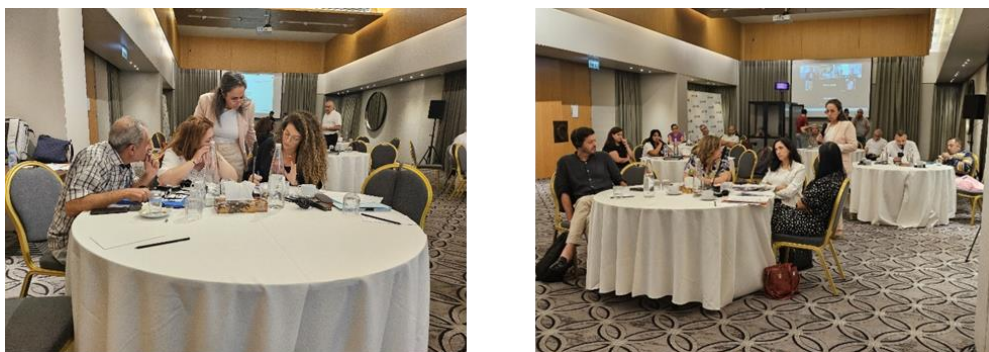


Figure 2 - Workshop on the Lebanese public professions' directory with the DGAFP - Sept 2024

The working group is currently working on the listing of professions in all functional domains, which will constitute the framework of the Lebanese job directory, before drafting professions descriptions. Profession descriptions will aim at serving as a framework for specific job descriptions in public administrations, by providing specific criteria such as definition, main activities, expected skills, evolution trends.

A study visit to France is being organised with the DGAFP to take place early January for the 5 working group rapporteurs. This study visit will further support the progress of the working group and will permit to showcase French case studies.

2) Direct support to reinforce the role of the Civil Service Board

The Civil Service Board is supported by a long-term expert, who has helped the CSB to initiated a diagnosis of the CSB's functioning. This diagnosis aims at supporting the CSB to identify main opportunities to adapt its operations to its mandate and ambitions, and lay the trail for the draft of a multi-year strategy.

Two additional local short-term experts have also been recruited to perform specific streams of work:

- The compilation of the laws and texts related to the Lebanese civil service and HR management, in addition to texts related to the mission, mandate and role of the Civil Service Board, in coordination with a CSB working group. This compilation will constitute the basis for a study on the potential improvement of the texts on civil service in Lebanon.
- The compilation of the CSB's jurisprudence over the past 5 years, with the intent of creating a platform on which such jurisprudence would be available through a user-friendly searching tool. The short-term expert coordinates with CSB working group on the matter. This work will pave the way to improving the drafting of the CSB's annual reports.

The Civil Service Board President and senior staff have participated to various training programmes at the *Institut National du Service Public* (INSP). They notably attended the INSP programme on State Human Resources Management in May 2024, and participated to side meetings with key partners including the DGAFP and Expertise France.

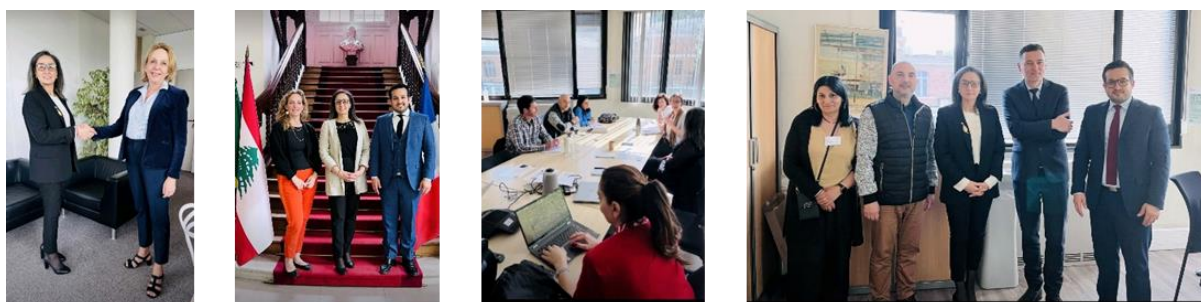


Figure 3 - Visit of the President of the CSB and senior staff to the INSP and DGAFP in May 2024

3) Structural investments

Expertise France has launched significant infrastructure-focused investments at the CSB, including the implementation of IT infrastructure works, the renovation of the conferencing area, the development of a new website, the provision of necessary IT equipment and the implementation of capacity-building activities for its staff.

A roadmap for a new HRIS has been developed and a call for tender will soon be launched to advance on this level. This HRIS should overhaul public sector HR management, enhancing efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

In addition, EF has also proceeded with the installation of a solar power system at the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA) and will soon start the mapping and assessment of the available ENA training programs.

COMPONENT 2 UPDATES

Enhancing transparency in Public Procurement to improve competitiveness and attract quality service providers

1) Operationalization of the Public Procurement Authority (PPA)

Technical support to the PPA: A group of local experts has been mobilized to support the PPA:

1. Assisting procuring entities with procurement procedures and contract management
2. Providing clarifications of the current procurement legislation
3. Providing support for various procurement tenders and projects
4. Assisting contracting authorities to establish and maintain tender committees.

These efforts are coordinated by a long-term expert, providing guidance to the PPA on best international practices.

SBDs Update Standard Bidding Documents (SBDs) are being updated to ensure compatibility with the Public Procurement Law (PPL), to streamline procurement processes for procuring entities and to enhance compliance.

The PPA is currently working on the development of standard bidding documents for “goods” based on the lowest price. Regular coordination meetings are being organized in order to finalize this document.

At a later stage, experts will assist the PPA in updating the SBDs for goods based on the best offer and in finalizing the SBDs for works. An international short-term expert will be engaged to provide virtual support for this activity.

This activity is being coordinated with GIZ to foster synergy among actions and prevent duplication of efforts.

Performance Report Progress The PPA is currently working in compiling its first performance report. This report will provide insights into the achievements and areas for improvement within the new public procurement system established by the law and by the public procurement strategy in Lebanon during the recent period. It is based on data received from procuring entities regarding their purchases since the establishment of the PPA, in accordance with PPL requirements

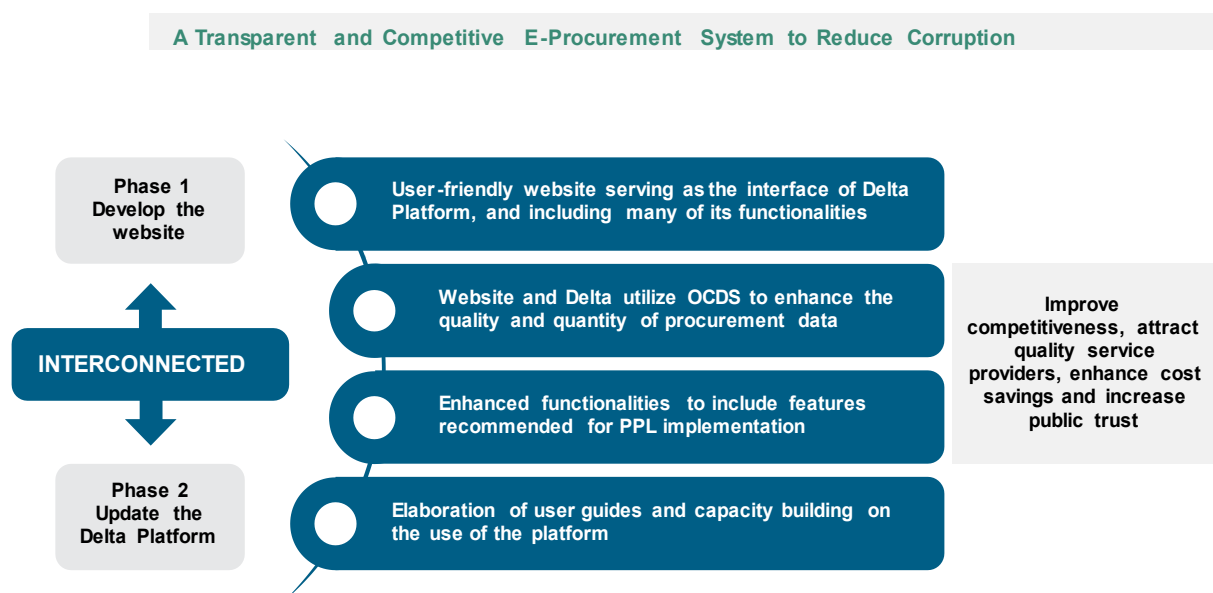
The PPA established a task force comprising the PPA focal point and three interns, to collect, review, and validate this data. An IT expert was also recruited to support the task force in this effort. Weekly meetings are held to monitor progress. As soon as the validation is complete, the PPA supported by experts will analyze the data and draft the report.

Communication Strategy in Motion The PPA is currently preparing a comprehensive communication strategy with the support of a communication expert. This initiative aims to enhance the PPA’s outreach and visibility and stakeholder engagement.

Reinforcement of the PPA’s physical and technological infrastructures The renovation of PPA premises is underway to create a supportive environment, facilitating productive collaboration and increasing overall efficiency. Additionally, solar energy solutions are being implemented to ensure sustainability of PPA operations despite the ongoing electricity shortages. Building the IT infrastructure is also in progress to upgrade the PPA’s technological framework and enhance its operational efficiency and service delivery.

PPA Decrees approval by the Council of Ministers are on hold. In August 2024, the Civil Service Board gave its opinion on the decrees, relating to the functioning of the PPA, to the Council of Ministers, as stipulated in the Public Procurement Law. The decrees will be on the agenda for the upcoming Council of Ministers meeting. Without the adoption of these decrees, the PPA cannot fully function and exercise its mandate.

Website Development Underway The new website has been developed and is currently undergoing final testing before launch. Comprising several functionalities of the Delta e-procurement platform, it is designed to enhance user experience and accessibility and features tutorials and user guides. Public entities will be able to connect, publish information, and access essential tools tailored to their needs while complying with legal requirements. The website also includes robust statistical tools for improved data analysis and reporting. Pilot administrations and procuring entities will be invited to a presentation of the website and training sessions to ensure a smooth transition. Stay tuned for a fresh online presence that truly reflects the PPA mission and services!



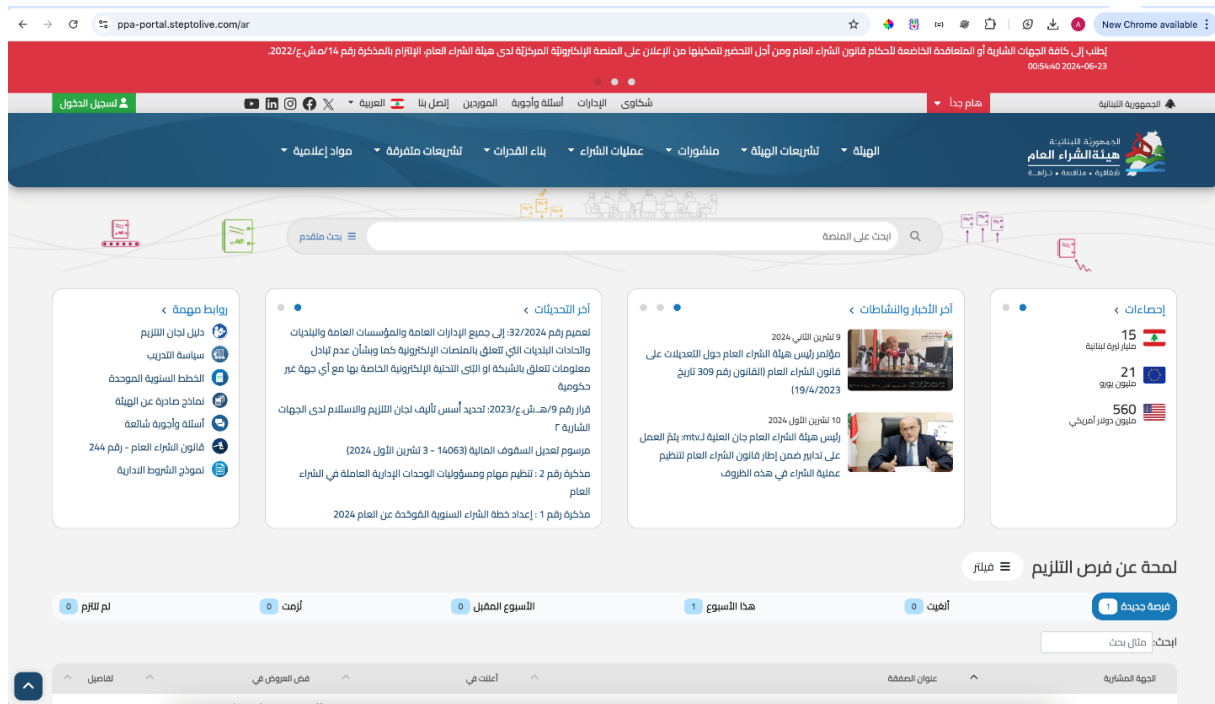


Figure 4 – Main page of the web portal

2) Capacity building in public procurement

Institute of Finance Contracting is underway to enhance the capabilities of public buyers across the Lebanese public sector as per article 72 par.1 of the Public Procurement Law. The activity will start in January 2025, and aims to improve public procurement professionals' proficiency in applying the PPL and instill principles of efficiency, transparency, and accountability in procurement practices.

Empowering procuring entities Workshops have been organized by the PPA with procuring entities, namely with the Central Bank of Lebanon and with the Ministry of Public Works, to discuss common issues and explore solutions in public procurement processes. The workshops tackled the practical challenges faced daily in implementing the law, and participants worked together to develop effective responses to these issues.



Figure 5 – Workshop on the 10 Sept 2024 with the Ministry of Public Works, in the presence of the Minister, Mr. Ali Hamieh; and workshop on the 16 May 2024 with the BdL

COMPONENT 3 UPDATES

Strengthening the role of oversight bodies in fighting and preventing corruption

Updates on work at the Central Inspection:

1) Audit capacity building: Improving performance and governance of public administrations

Continuous support is being provided for the effective implementation of the tools and methods provided during the previous ACT project, also funded by the European Union. A French expert conducted additional audit capacity building exercises from the 27th to the 31st of May, and on the 22nd to the 24th of July, for a group of 12 inspectors from the Central Inspection, covering risk-based auditing based on the international standards developed by the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA). The inspectors completed a post-training evaluation and will receive certificates to attest to their knowledge. Inspectors are ready to conduct audits in pilot administrations.

Also, the CIB is continuing work on activities related to audits of the Bouar public hospital. This work builds on what was achieved in the previously implemented ACT project in order to enhance the performance of the audited hospital. A group of inspectors met with the expert to plan the follow-up on the recommendations issued within the audit report previously produced regarding the hospital. The inspectors organized the recommendations based on priority, and will organize a visit to the hospital to meet its director and discuss the next steps, when the situation will allow it.



Figure 6 – Training on audit methods at the CIB, May 2024



Figure 7 – CIB delegation at INSP, Paris

In November, the President of the Central Inspection, Judge Georges Attieh, one General Inspector and one Inspector participated in a training programme on “*Lutter contre la corruption*” at the Institut National du Service Public (INSP) in Paris. They also participated to side meetings with key French public administrations, including with the Comité Interministériel du Contrôle et de l’Audits internes (CICAI).

2) Digitalization of processes and documents:

The capacity building work was completed regarding the digitization of the Central Inspection's paper archive. And therefore, the work was initiated on the system and more than 120,000 papers have been digitized by CIB staff, noting that the effort is still ongoing.

The illustration of the Central Inspection's complete workflows is in its final stages, and all processes are being finalized in preparation for their digitalization. The procedures that will be digitalized are:

- The audit process.
- The annual work program.
- The annual report.
- The treatment of complaints.

3) Improvement of the working environment:

Solar energy system: The procurement of a full solar energy system is currently in progress for the Central Inspection. The system will ensure the essential energy needs of the administration. The installation of the system is expected to start in January 2025.

Renovation of meeting room: The project team has initiated the work on renovating a meeting room at the Central Inspection. This renovation will include the provision of the required furniture, necessary civil works, and the installation of audiovisual equipment for state-of-the-art conferencing solutions.

Equipment: IT equipment and licensing, including laptops, printers, and anti-virus licensing were provided. The Central Inspection was supported with the reparation of the administration's glass doors that were preventing the use of several areas in the building.

Updates on work at the Court of Accounts:

1) Roadmap with the French Court of Account: Regularity and performance audit

The Lebanese and French Courts of Accounts coordinated among focal points in order to plan the upcoming activities. This work aims, among others, to improve practices relating to regularity and performance audits, carried out in conjunction with account and management controls. A roadmap was approved on activities that will achieve the aim of the work, such as developing an inventory of the legal bases and practices of the Lebanese Court of Accounts, support for the drafting of control guides, training in control practices, and support for targeted controls in pilot administrations.

2) Digitalization of processes and documents

IT infrastructure at the General Prosecutor's office was renovated, paving the way for any expected digitalization steps, including the implementation of the IT workflow, as was done in the ACT project for the rest of the Court.

Trainings were conducted at the Court of Accounts on the Court's **new IT workflows system**, developed and installed during the previous ACT project, in order to enable its staff to properly make use of it. The training was attended by the president of the CoA, presidents of chambers, judges, controllers, auditors, and IT department.

The new IT workflow system was handed over to the IT department and the creation of usernames for each employee was initiated. The utilization of the new workflow system requires resources and dedication to ensure a proper initiation, so the general prosecutor's office and a pilot chamber were chosen in order to implement this system and test its efficiency and process.

A short-term junior IT expert has been contracted to provide the Court of Accounts with support in implementing the needs for a successful transition to the newly installed digitalization solutions, especially with the deteriorating situation in the country.



Figure 8 – Training on the IT workflows at the COA

Updates on work at the National Anti-Corruption Commission:

International experience and transfer of knowledge: The Agence Française Anticorruption (AFA) and the Haute Autorité pour la Transparence de la Vie Publique (HATVP) agreed on a roadmap with the NACC. Both French partners were expected to have a mission to Lebanon to meet their counterparts at the NACC. The mission was postponed due to the situation in the country.

Legal expert for Conflict of Interest: A senior legal expert has been identified by the project team to update and disseminate the Conflict-of-Interest report developed under the previous ACT project, to reflect the current legal and regulatory framework in Lebanon, and increase awareness on the topic. The work on Conflict of Interest converges with the mandate of the NACC, especially regarding the asset declarations.

Updates on working with Civil Society:

Investigative journalism initiative: A grant to Canal France International (CFI), the French media development agency, is currently being finalized for the implementation of an investigative journalism initiative to train and support Lebanese investigative journalists in their work, and to produce journalistic pieces that investigate the implementation of Anti-Corruption laws in the country. The initiative is expected to build a network among the journalists and organizations working with the field, and contribute to the development of investigative journalism in the Lebanese media sphere.