

From recovery to sustainable development: National Webinars and Regional Workshop on Integrated recovery policies toward the SDGs in selected Northern Africa and Western Asia Region Countries in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.

**Pilot Country
Republic of Lebanon**

**National Webinar
Wednesday 27 January 2021
(4:00 pm to 7:00 pm Beirut Time)
(9:00 am to 12:00 noon NY Time)**

Organizers:

**United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)
League of Arab States (LAS)**

in close coordination with:

**United Nations Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO) and United Nations
Country Team (UNCT)**

in partnership with:

**Government of Lebanon represented by
National Committee of sustainable Development - Cabinet of Ministers**

CONCEPT NOTE

1. Background

The project is in response to the UN Secretary General's call for shared responsibility and global solidarity in responding to the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and its three objectives (1) tackle the health emergency; (2) focus on the social impact and the economic response and recovery; and (3) help countries recover better toward the SDGs . The project is designed to provide capacity building support to a number of Northern Africa and Western Asia region countries to strengthen the capacity of their national stakeholders to develop coherent policy options across sectors and design a consultative process to develop and implement an integrated strategy that requires adequate level of stakeholder engagement.

This approach will also emphasize the need for sound monitoring and evaluation and statistical systems, analytical capacity as well as financing and aligned budgeting.¹

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) embody the strategic vision and aspirations of all countries for the future of development. Its implementation will require comprehensive actions at the global, regional and national levels, as indicated in General Assembly Resolution 70/1 on Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, a new emphasis is placed on how policy coherence and better integrated planning mechanisms can help countries strengthen their planning processes, develop holistic development frameworks reflecting global, regional and special commitments, and achieve their national development objectives in a more effective, efficient, equitable and sustainable way.

Considering the widespread socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretary-General has called for increased support to developing countries that have limited capacity to respond to the crisis. Any such support should include promoting strong, integrated policies and policy coherence at the national level.

The recent launch of the “Decade for Action and Delivery” that seeks to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This global health crisis has impacted all countries, including countries in Northern Africa and Western Asia region and focus has now shifted entirely towards urgent action to save lives, repair livelihoods, and mitigate the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the age of the Sustainable Development Goals, the pandemic is posing a real risk to the ability of countries to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda and other national development priorities. To this backdrop, the COVID-19 issues will be embedded into the National Webinars and Regional Workshop discussions of engagement, systemic design and institutional architecture. It will also include consultations on the direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic on making progress towards sustainable development in each of the participating countries and formulate recommendations on development actions and recovery policy options.

2. Target Countries:

Participation in the webinars and regional workshop will target selected countries impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic including **Lebanon**. The national webinars in each of the participating countries will be country-specific and bring together a wide range of Government and CSOs representatives engaged in national implementation of the COVID-19 recovery plans and building back better towards the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

For the regional workshop, up to 4 participants per pilot country including policymakers, senior technical and/or planning officials, academia/ science institutions and private sector

¹ UN Secretary General Report: SHARED RESPONSIBILITY, GLOBAL SOLIDARITY: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. March 2020

representatives will be invited to the workshop. A balance of male and female participants will be sought from all countries.

United Nations representatives from participating Country Teams, Multi-Country Offices, ESCWA and LAS will also be invited to discuss how best to support the participating countries in developing coherent policy options across sectors, how governmental efforts to incorporate the SDGs into their national action plans and strategies, budgets and coordination among line ministries can be improved and enhance stakeholder engagement when developing and implementing recovery policy actions.

3. **Strategy (main activities/approach/methodology)**

The project will start with national webinars in each of the participating countries, including **Lebanon**. The Webinar will bring together a wide range of Government as well as representatives from private sector, CSOs and international organizations, engaged in national implementation of the COVID-19 recovery plans, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Each Webinar will be country-specific, responsive to the national priorities and discuss formulating recovery policy options in the aftermath of the health crisis that accelerate the implementation of their national sustainable development strategies.

The national webinars to be followed by in-person workshop that brings together Government and CSOs representatives from the participating countries and focus on integrated planning methodologies that can be used in short-term and long-term national recovery planning processes to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and initiate a discussion on how it can also be trickled down to budgeting practices and monitoring and evaluation systems throughout the policy cycle. It will combine short theoretical introductions with case studies and hands-on activities involving the development of system maps. It will also provide space for countries to interact and share and learn from each other's experiences.

The webinars and workshop will build on the (impact) analysis and policy options already conducted by ESCWA, LAS, several sectoral ministries in the countries and by other stakeholders like universities and think tanks and relevant to both the immediate public health pandemic emergency, and the mid- and long-term post-pandemic socio-economic recovery. The project's activities will therefore use integrated planning methodology to ensure that those sectoral analyses and plans are optimally articulated to one another into robust and coherent policies that nurture potential synergies and negotiate necessary trade-offs within the framework of the national 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

The webinar in Lebanon will also address the compounded crises in the country—specifically, an economic and financial crisis, followed by COVID-19, and lastly the explosion at the Port of Beirut (PoB) on 4 August 2020. This adds to long-term structural vulnerabilities that include low-grade infrastructure—a dysfunctional electricity sector, water supply shortages, inadequate solid waste and wastewater management—public financial mismanagement, large macroeconomic imbalances, and deteriorating social indicators.

4. **Timeframe**

- A national Webinar in each of the participating countries will be organized during December 2020 and January 2021.
- 3-Day Regional Workshop will be organized during the first half of 2021 (pending lifting Pandemic travel restrictions)

5. **Objective:**

The national webinars and regional workshop aim at strengthening the integrated and coherent policy planning capacity of the national stakeholders in Lebanon and the participating countries in West Asia and North Africa regions involved in mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

Expected Results

EA1. Increased knowledge of **Lebanon** and participating countries national stakeholders of integrated planning approaches to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 Pandemic.

EA2. Increased capacity in **Lebanon** and participating countries national stakeholders in adapting relevant integrated planning methodologies and tools, including tools and methods used by other countries, to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and accelerate the implementation of their national sustainable development strategies.

6. **Venue**

- National Webinars are virtual (utilizing UN offered technological platforms for virtual events)
- Regional Workshop to take place in Cairo, Egypt. Venue TBC, in consultation with ESCWA and LAS.

7. **Focal points**

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Draft Programme / Agenda

Time	Topic
04:00 – 04:20 PM	<p>Welcome and Opening Remarks (Moderator: Mr. Sami Areikat, DESA/ DSDG National Strategies and Capacity Building Branch)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Najat Rochdi, UNRC, Lebanon - Mr. Amson Sibanda, Chief, DESA/ DSDG National Strategies and Capacity Building Branch) - Mr. Youness Abouyoub, Chief, ESCWA/ ECRI Governance and State-Building Section. - Ms. Nada El-Agizy – Director, Sustainable Development and International Cooperation, League of Arab States (LAS)
04:20 – 04:50 PM	<p>Session 1 (Moderator: Ms. Howaida Barakat, DESA/ DSDG Regional Consultant)</p> <p>Speaker: Ms. Ola Al-Sidani – Representative of the National Committee for Sustainable Development, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Republic of Lebanon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome Remark - Presentation on Lebanon national precautionary measures and institutional set-up to minimize the implications of COVID-19 <p>Speaker: Ms. Yousra Sidani Balaah– Member of Beirut City Municipal Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local administration and achieving sustainable development goals: the experience of Beirut Municipality in facing the repercussions of the Coronavirus pandemic amid the current economic, financial and social crises.

04:50 – 05:00 PM	Discussion, Q&A
05:00 – 05:20 PM	<p>Session 2</p> <p>(Moderator: Ms. Howaida Barakat, DESA/ DSDG Regional Consultant)</p> <p>Speaker: Mr. Rabih Sabra – Director General of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Beirut & Mount Lebanon - National Committee for Sustainable Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Resilience of the Lebanese Private Sector facing Covid-19 and Role in SDGs <p>Speaker: Ms. Amira Mourad – Head of Investor Relations, IDAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public-Private-Partnership in achieving sustainable development goals. The role of the Investment Development Authority in Lebanon (IDAL) in supporting the private sector during the Covid-19 Pandemic amid the current economic, financial and social crises
05:20 – 05:30 PM	<p>Speaker: Dr. Rita Rehayem – National Committee for Sustainable Development – NGO Representative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of the Lebanese civil society in containing and mitigating the socio-economic implications of Covid-19 Pandemic on the citizens amid the current economic, financial and social crises
05:30 – 05:40 PM	Discussion, Q&A
05:40 – 06:50 PM	<p>Session 3</p> <p>(Moderator: Mr. Sami Areikat, DESA/ DSDG National Strategies and Capacity Building Branch)</p> <p>A joint presentation by the UN organizing and participating agencies: Highlighting the potential support and cooperation possibilities to assist Lebanon in its recovery path from COVID-19 and advancing towards the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. The coordinated response will also consider the special context of Lebanon including the current economic, financial and social crises that exacerbated the pandemic’s impacts on the country.</p> <p>Ms. Celine Moyroud, UNDP Resident Representative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Socio economic impacts of covid-19 Pandemic compounded by financial and social crisis in Lebanon. <p>Dr. Iman Shankiti, WHO Representative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health impact of COVID-19 and WHO response in Lebanon.

	<p>Ms. Karolina Lindholm, UNHCR Deputy Representative (Protection)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion and protection of the refugees in Lebanon <p>Ms. Yukie Mokuo, UNICEF Representative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social protection and supporting Lebanon’s most vulnerable children <p>Mr Karam, ESCWA/ ECRI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Areas of institutions development support to Lebanon. <p>Mr. Darian Stibbe, Executive Director, The Partnering Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accelerating and scaling up effective partnerships in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. Country level experiences. <p>Mr. Ola Göransson UN DESA/ DSDG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential partnership support that can be provided to Lebanon through the UNRC's office <p>Mr. Sami Areikat, UN DESA/ DSDG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN DESA Policy Briefs in response to COVID-19 - Introduction of UNDESA-UNITAR training program to strengthen the integrated planning capacity of national stakeholders involved in recovery policies and building back better towards the SDGs. - Session 3 Discussion, Q&A
06:50 – 07:00 PM	Closing Remarks