

LEBANON

ETF COUNTRY PLAN 2009

Summary

After the Doha Agreement and the formation of a government, Lebanon is facing a wide variety of challenges ranging from political reforms to regaining the trust of the Lebanese people and reviving the economy.

Lebanon is one of the main Mediterranean beneficiaries of community assistance and the EU, through its various instruments is Lebanon's leading donor. The main goal of the longstanding EU-Lebanon partnership is to promote the development of Lebanon as a democratic, politically open and economically strong neighbour of the EU. Today the legal basis for this relationship is laid down in the EU-Lebanon Association Agreement which was adopted in 2002 and entered into force on 1 April 2006. The EU-Lebanon Action Plan (January 2007) gave new impetus to bilateral relations in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Based on the respect of democratic principles and fundamental human rights, both documents, provide a framework for political dialogue, co-operation in economic policy as well as close co-operation in the social field and a better understanding amongst cultures.

A Lebanon Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013 and a National Indicative Programme 2007-2010 have been adopted by the EU. The assistance provided was refocused after the 34 day military conflict in order to commit to real help for the government and society in the reconstruction and reform of the country Policy Instrument. In July 2008, the European Commission announced a total of €42 million in assistance to Lebanon under the European Neighbourhood Programme (ENP). Core sectors for this assistance would be the development of the private sector, local development in Northern Lebanon and the modernisation of the justice system. Under the ENP the volume of assistance to Lebanon will be €187 million between 2007 and 2010.

1. Challenges and issues in human capital development

There are several challenges that the new Lebanese government will have to address in the coming period. Major challenges are related both to the situation in the labour market and the critical decline in quality of the education system.

- **Labour Market:** The striking features of the Lebanese employment situation include high youth unemployment, the low contribution of women to the economy and production, the size of the informal sector, the influx of foreign workers into the country's labour market, Palestinian refugees and the large number of skilled Lebanese people seeking and obtaining employment abroad. The new government is currently undertaking a survey of household income and expenditure. While reconstruction investments and the rapid growth of the economy will increase employment opportunities to a certain extent, unemployment is still estimated to be between 15 and 20%. The unemployment rates for first-time job seekers seem to be twice the national average.
- **Enterprise policy and human capital development:** Lebanon is fully involved in and continues to implement the Euro-Med Charter for Enterprise. The assessment exercise lead by the EC in collaboration with the ETF, OECD and EIB, revealed limited development in entrepreneurship education and training in terms of both policy and delivery in lower and upper secondary education.

- Another key feature of the assessment is the development of entrepreneurship as a primary pillar of career guidance and counselling. The pilot experience of the MEDA regional project “Education and Training for Employment” through the work with INJAZ highlights the necessity to consider entrepreneurship as a realistic career option.
- In terms of skilled manpower within the enterprise environment, Lebanon stands out for its efforts in promoting trade skills for enterprises and, particularly, management development for expanding businesses in four regional enterprise centres where public and private funds are dovetailed to good effect. However, a concerted effort is required to build baseline data on enterprise training needs and training take-up. This will be important to determine the effectiveness of start-up training where significant public funds are allocated, and upon which policy adjustments and more efficient resource allocation could be deployed.
- **Education system:** Before the civil war, Lebanon had one of the best education systems in the region, with one of the highest levels of literacy among the 15 and over age group. The civil war destroyed the education system, many schools were closed and international teachers and lecturers left. Lebanon saw the creation of an alternative, private education sector. Even with the end of hostilities with Israel the situation continued to deteriorate, as many schools were damaged or served as shelters for displaced persons. Access to education is also limited due to discrepancies in personal wealth. Enrolment in universities (both public and private) dropped significantly. Therefore, education reform is another major challenge, especially in terms of graduates training in those skills currently demanded by the labour market. Initial steps have been taken to prepare a strategic plan for the primary and secondary sectors, as well as for Vocational Education and Training (VET). However, many significant challenges are still to be addressed, such as developing institutional capacity at all levels (Ministry of education, Directorate General for Vocational Education and Training, VET institutions), enhancing the role of social partners in the steering, management and delivery of the VET system, and creating a clear framework for lifelong learning.

Comment [ARM1]: What is INJAZ

EU priorities in Lebanon

The main priorities underlined by the EU-Lebanon action plan in the field of education, training and youth focus on the reform and modernisation of education and vocational training systems within the framework of Lebanese plans, in order to promote competitiveness, employability and mobility, to bring Lebanon closer to EU standards and practice. This covers, among others, the following strands:

- reform primary, secondary and vocational education to improve quality, and ensure human resources development for teachers, professors and administrative bodies.
- enhance the adaptation of higher and vocational education to the needs of the labour market by better involving entrepreneurs, social partners and stakeholders from civil society
- reform higher education in line with the principles of the Bologna process, in particular as regards the definition and implementation of a homogeneous system of evaluation and quality assurance, and build institutional capacity for policy development and implementation.
- enhance the capacities of institutions and organisations involved in developing and implementing quality assurance in the field of education and training,

ETF intervention strategy 2009-2011

The ETF will contribute to the achievement of the objectives set up by the European Union in its support to Lebanon taking into account the major challenges identified above. The ETF intervention strategy, built around the pivotal role HCD can play in economic growth, competitiveness and social equity, and given the current situation of the country which is distinguished by a lack of coherent policy orientation and clear leadership in HCD sector, will focus on three main axes:

- fostering entrepreneurial learning,
- developing social partnership in TVET,
- supporting the EC Delegation in preparing an SPSP for education

Entrepreneurial learning

In the framework of the Barcelona process, all Southern Mediterranean countries committed to implementing the Euro-Med Charter for Enterprise. The Charter sets an ambitious agenda for improving the conditions for enterprises to become competitive. The Charter looks at 10 different dimensions, two of which focus on the human capital dimensions set against the growing awareness that a skilled and knowledgeable workforce is critical to competitive enterprises and employment. The Charter also affords particular emphasis to entrepreneurship education and training considered key to developing young people's awareness and readiness in considering entrepreneurship as a realistic career option.

As a follow-up of the EC intervention through the charter and MEDA-ETE projects, the ETF will further support the development and pilot implementation of a Lebanese entrepreneurship learning strategy in a lifelong learning perspective. The objective of this strategy is to create a comprehensive framework for entrepreneurship education engaging all parts of the education system and forming an interface with enterprise and services already offered by an active non-governmental sector. This entails an important partnership and the participation of all concerned stakeholders (education, employment and industry ministries, employers and workers organisations, schools and other non-governmental interest groups).

Expected outputs:

- Establishment of entrepreneurship learning policy partnership and strategy building,
- Understanding of the concept and potential of the key entrepreneurship competence developed, as well as its implications for the overall system in terms of Curriculum development, teacher training and school management. This could include a pilot implementation,
- Dissemination and embedding of the pilot experience of the MEDA-ETE component 3 on entrepreneurship in career guidance: training of trainers and career guidance counsellors, and implementation of the relevant entrepreneurial modules in the national curricula,
- Establishment and application of employer-driven national Training Need Analysis (TNA) indicators with the appropriate stakeholders as a pilot in selected sectors,
- Supporting the development of a system to record enterprise training needs and training take-up.

Social partnership in TVET

A pilot project in the food industry, supported by the EC Delegation since 2007, closely links private and public stakeholders to develop curricula and manage a TVET school. Nevertheless, this initiative while interesting is rather isolated. Social partners are not fully active in the governance system of the education and training sector. Roles and responsibilities of both enterprises and employee representative bodies still require clarification.

Based on EC experience a larger and longer term intervention is needed to support social partners in playing a major role in the design, steering and management of TVET reforms in the country. This should cover capacity building activities and facilitation of social dialogue in the TVET sector.

The ETF intervention intends to analyse social partnership for the TVET sector in Lebanon and provide social partners (employers and workers organisations, the Ministry of Education, higher education services dealing with TVET and other relevant stakeholders) with adequate capacities to play their role in the governance of strategic TVET sector reform.

Expected outputs:

- Stocktaking and study on the role and responsibilities of social partners with recommendations for further developments are prepared
- Analysis and planning:
 - A mechanism to ensure full social partner involvement of in TVET governance developed in partnership with public and non-public stakeholders,
 - Awareness raising and capacity building campaign undertaken for social partners through a study visit in the EU and a peer visit to Jordan
 - Feasibility study on the establishment of new units (including job profiles and action plans) to deal with the increased responsibilities in the fields of TVET and employment carried out for each of the social partners
- Implementation:
 - Concept and action plan defined in the feasibility studies implemented in the different social partners with ETF support.
 - Staff of the new units will participate in capacity building actions jointly developed and implemented by the ETF and Jordanian stakeholders.
 - Monitoring activities providing feedback to the social partners ensured by the ETF.

Support to the EC Delegation in preparing an SPSP for education

This strand aims to enable development partners at country level to work jointly with the government to review national education sector plans and priorities and bring stakeholders together around a national education sector plan, as a basis for pooling support through a sector budget or a general budget support process

Although different proposals for the reform of primary, secondary and vocational education have been prepared through the support of different donors, these strategies are lacking overall coherence and links with the socio-economic development of Lebanon particularly given the specificities of its labour market.

In the context of expected support to the education sector, the ETF may provide, upon request, support to the EC Delegation in Lebanon during the different phases contributing to the design of a Sector Policy Support Programme (SPSP). This will cover an introduction to SPSP instruments and modalities for Lebanese institutions and their participation in the identification and feasibility phases.

The ETF could also provide basic analysis on TVET and employment and support appropriate strategic development in the country in a lifelong learning perspective adapted to its needs.