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Social Communication Approach

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List of Abbreviations

KIIs Key Informative Interviews.....	10
RWEs Regional Water Establishments	4
ACWUA Arab Countries Water Utilities Association	4
CISP Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli	4
CPR Communication Protection Research	10
ENPI European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument	5
FGDs Focus Group Discussions	10
Gruppo di Volontariato Civile.....	4
NGOs Non Governmental Organizations.....	4
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.....	5
WE Water Establishment	24

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Background

Why a Social Communication Approach?

This Manual presents a comprehensive methodology for bridging the gap between water users (citizens) and public institutions (water utilities) and to foster water accountability, and targets actors implementing water projects with a strong social and behavioral change component.

The Regional Water Establishments (RWEs), created by the Law 221 of 2001 for the management of potable water, irrigation and wastewater, have always suffered of a hindering lack of resources. From sufficient or underqualified staff to increasing water scarcity, from problematic infrastructure to lack of funds, all these factors undermine the RWEs ability to provide quality services to end users. In addition, the RWEs, by law financially autonomous, struggle to obtain revenue from end users, particularly in North Lebanon and in Bekaa Valley (i.e. in Bekaa, payment rate is only 32%).

These factors undermine the RWEs ability to operate and maintain systems, which leads to poor service provision. In return, unreliable service is one of the primary reasons for people not to pay the water fees. However, subscription and payment rates are not directly correlated to the quality of the service received: if a poor water provision is a sufficient reason not to pay water fees, a good water provision alone is not enough to motivate people to subscribe and pay. Other factors as historical context, trust in public institutions, confessional and political dynamics influence people's attitude regarding the RWEs and constitute complex barriers or incentives to water accountability.

MiyahCon is a consortium composed of three international NGOs

GVC, CISP and ACWUA, who are implementing the project "Promoting Sustainable Management of Water Services and Resources in Countries Affected by the Syrian Crisis" financed by the European Union MADAD Regional Trust Fund. The project runs from 2016 to 2020 and works with the RWE and citizens to improve dialogue and increase trust and accountability for a more sustainable public water service.

Since one of the main objectives for achieving financially autonomous RWE is to decrease non-revenue water, the technical improvement of infrastructure alone is insufficient. Much of non-revenue water is the result of non-technical losses, comprised of illegal connections, tampering or bypassing in the existing network, or refusal to pay for service. Therefore, **MiyahCon** believes that the improvement of infrastructure should be accompanied by a strong social component, to holistically ensure the reliability of the water service.

For this reason, **MiyahCon** based its strategy on three pillars:

- ▶ Infrastructural interventions to improve water provision.
- ▶ Institutional support to the WEs, to increase their capacity to operate, maintain and manage water services.
- ▶ Social interventions to encourage a responsible use of water services, from water conservation to water accountability through regular subscriptions and payments.

The Social Communication Approach developed by **MiyahCon** aims to forge positive water user behavior. The approach aims to drive citizens away from alternative unregulated water sources, which are more costly and are operated in poorly controlled conditions, towards the use of public water supplied by WEs, as the only institution responsible for guaranteeing fair and sustainable exploitation of water resources. By increasing the proportion of citizens subscribing to and paying for public water services, the financial and environmental sustainability of water provision will be increased. In the process, **MiyahCon** raises the awareness of water users on the value they attribute to water resources to grow more responsible consumption behaviors.

Why a Social Communication Manual?

The present manual was developed and refined over the course of 5 years under 3 different development projects funded by ENPI, UNHCR and the European Union MADAD Regional Trust Fund. It illustrates the methodology driving MiyahCon’s Social Communication Approach with the objective to share the experiences gained from the implementation of activities spread over five years in several areas across Lebanon.

The manual demonstrates the design of a participatory social strategy and its application in complex sociopolitical environments by engaging all main stakeholders involved in water management, ranging from the institutional (Water Establishment and Local Authorities) to the societal (e.g. the local social fabric comprised of local leaders, focal points and citizens).

In order to increase the feasibility and replicability of the Social Communication Approach, the authors conducted the following steps to redact the present methodology:

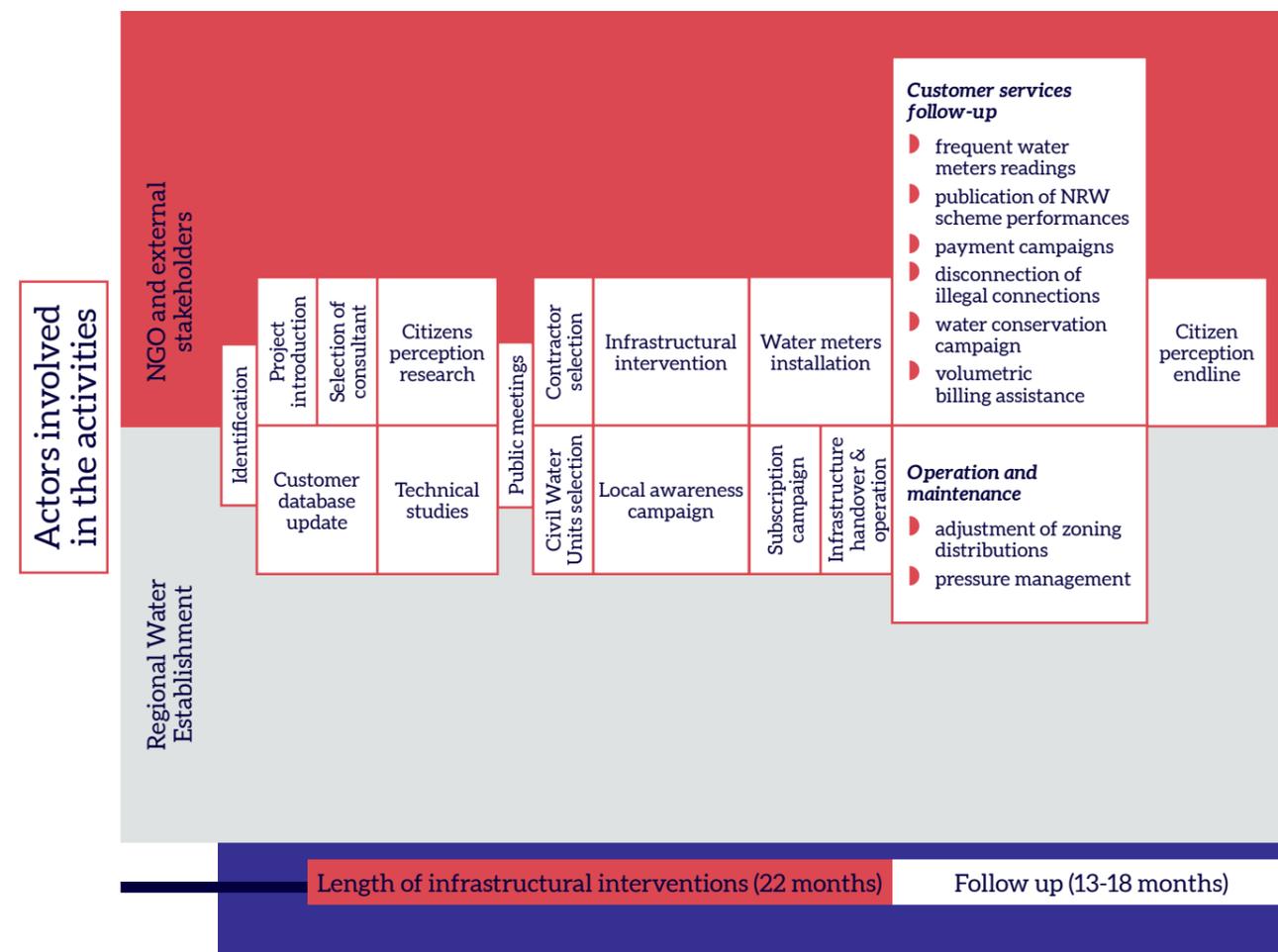
- ▶ Scaling-up from local experiences and contexts, and systematizing steps and activities, with the purpose of proposing general steps, applicable regardless of the target locations’ specificities. However, it should be noted that knowledge of a target locations’ social characteristics, and the adaptation of this manual’s general steps in the form of suitable and effective activities, are prerequisites for the replication of the methodology.
- ▶ Prioritized and selected activities that maximize output (in terms of reach, effectiveness, etc.) with minimum inputs (in terms of time, personnel and costs), from a great variety of approaches piloted during the last years.

The approach draws from the principal-agent model, that treats Social Accountability as an extension of new public management. This introduces the idea of “client power” as conceptualized in the World Development Report (World Bank 2004). In our scenario, the client is the citizen who is the “customer”, whereas the RWE, the government institution that has failed to gain the trust of citizens.

The approach looks to raise citizen awareness and sense of ownership of public services, using marketing, public relations (networking), and participatory approaches. Various media tools are assessed and chosen based on their potential to impact the population’s behaviour; while messages conveyed are evidence based and well suited to non-experts.

MiyahCon encourages the replication of the methodology by any actor intervening in the Lebanese water sector and further exchange on lessons learnt.

Finally, it should be considered that the Social Communication Approach has been developed as part of the three pillars approach, and should always be understood in the framework of a program comprising infrastructural, social and institutional components. The figure below shows the standard chronogram of such a program, with a particular attention in aligning the infrastructural intervention steps with the social ones to ensure that there is a positive professional relationship between the two parties.



Social Approach in Action

Step by Step

Phase I

Preparation

The following phase acts as an introductory and preparatory step for organizations implementing water related projects in one or multiple localities.

1.1 Project introduction

In a volatile sociopolitical environment, a considerable amount of time can pass between project design and project start, and subsequently conditions of the targeted localities could shift from what was previously assessed. These changes will affect the validity of the project and failure to detect them and adapt accordingly, can put project implementation at risk. Hence, program inception should start with informing the local authorities and targeted community about the project and re-confirming their support.

The opportunity to meet stakeholders at the start of the project should not be limited to formal authority figures, but should also include key stakeholders, such as representatives of political parties, religious groups and large families. This phase takes place across several meetings and could take up to a few weeks. The first meetings shall target municipal authorities (Mayor and Municipal Council members), to get their endorsement and permission to conduct further activities.

During these meetings (see Annex 1 for “municipality meetings” and “stakeholder meetings”), the implementing organization can:

- ▶ Introduce/reintroduce the organization;
- ▶ Introduce the project components (infrastructural, social and institutional) and their approximate timeline;
- ▶ Agree on criteria for selection of daily workers from the locality (enumerators, animators, topographic surveyors etc.) if relevant;
- ▶ Clarify that any infrastructural intervention will be handed over to and managed by the RWE, and secure the Municipality’s and Stakeholders’ collaboration with the RWE;
- ▶ Explain the next steps, with particular attention to transparent procedures in case of selection of consultants and/or contractors (e.g. public tenders);
- ▶ Make room for inquiry and clarification.

This will allow stakeholders to understand the impacts the project may have on them, and the level of cooperation that the project requires on their part. Moreover, these meetings present an opportunity to network with and between stakeholders, which plays a role in creating a cooperative network, necessary for project implementation.

A useful deliverable of this Induction Phase would be the signature of an MoU between the implementing organization and the Local Authorities (Municipalities), to ensure the commitment of the latter. Whenever this is not possible, Minutes of Meetings offer a good alternative to turn recorded verbal agreements during meetings to a tangible document that could be referred to by both parties as the basis for cooperation.

1.2 Bridging the gap between stakeholders

The success of projects in the water sector is dependent on good cooperation between RWEs and customers. In rural areas, interaction between RWEs and customers is done through the municipality, which represents its citizens' interests.

The history and relationship between municipalities and RWEs is often riddled with distrust. It is therefore essential to ensure that there is a positive professional relationship between the two parties.

To create a more trusting relationship, the implementing organization has to find common ground and play the role of mediator, so to mitigate tension between the two. This can be achieved by organizing "Municipality/ RWE Meetings", which bring together stakeholders from each side and create a conducive environment for dialogue, while highlighting the added value the project would bring.

Phase II

Context analysis

Context analysis is a main step to understanding prevailing conditions during the project's early stages and to inform the following project implementation in one or multiple localities.

2.1 Technical data collection

During this initial phase, the selection of the consultant supervising the technical works is completed and a preliminary design with different options to improve the water service of the locality is ongoing. The technical analysis aims to gather and confirm information about the locality and the water service, and thus allow further programming (choice of infrastructure, network operation, etc.) in line with the specificities of the targeted locations. This is important because often, there is discrepancy in data provided by different sources, incomplete data, or data that fails to reflect the situation on the ground (e.g. as built drawings do not correctly reflect the actual infrastructure).

Engineering firms charged with carrying out the infrastructural works might overlook the social facet of the intervention, further highlighting the importance of collecting data such as, but not limited to:

- ▶ Demographic (population figures and population seasonality from municipality or the Mukhtar, versus physically counting the units);
- ▶ Cadastral borders of the municipality compared to water scheme coverage (the water scheme could cover more than one locality or vice versa);
- ▶ Current operation practices including zoning in different areas of the locality, pressure regulation, etc.

It is also important to understand what level of service improvement beneficiaries expect and which kind of technical interventions they anticipate the project to implement.

Data collection can be done through different modalities spanning from municipality meetings to Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). This data collection can also be delegated to a consultant, if properly guided. However, it may be a missed opportunity for the project implementer to get to know the locality.

2.2 Customer Database Update

A Customer Database Update is the process of identifying and geo-referencing the existing subscribers to the public water service, usually recorded in a database at the RWE (see *CUSTOMER DATABASE UPDATE MANUAL, GVC, 2018*). The Customer Database Update Manual developed as part of the **MiyahCon** project in 2018, lays out a 14-step process, that includes a field phase, mapping, data analysis and handover to the RWE. In its primary scope, it provides a picture of which units are subscribed to the public network, and which subscribers are paying or not, through a cross-check with RWE data for the locality. If broadened (assessing all units of the locality and not only the subscribed ones), it can provide a comprehensive mapping of the whole population (demographic and socio-economic data).

The Customer Database Update should be implemented prior to the Citizen Perception Research (CPR), as its findings allow for a representative sampling of the survey, and for a selection of participants to FGDs by socio-economic status, geographical/confessional origin and similar behaviors (payers / non-payers).

However, in some cases the Customer Database Update cannot be conducted at the beginning of the project due to mistrust from citizens towards the RWE. In other cases, its scope cannot be extended to a comprehensive mapping, for instance if the process is implemented by RWE staff directly. In these cases, the population profiling can be integrated directly in the interviews of the CPR (see *CITIZENS PERCEPTION RESEARCH MANUAL, GVC, 2019*), through additional socio-economic questions and increased sampling to allow for clustered analysis.

Besides data collection, the Customer Database Update can serve as dissemination of information about progress, challenges, and awareness raising about water in their locality, thus allowing customers to make fact-based decision about their behavior.

2.3 Citizen Perception Research

The CPR (also often referred to as baseline citizen survey) is a sociological analysis meant to collect information by:

- 1 Assessing stakeholder and power dynamics in the target localities;
- 2 Assessing citizens' water consumption and expenditure on water;
- 3 Assessing citizens' perception of the water services they receive;
- 4 Assessing communication and media channels to reach the audience;
- 5 Recommending processes that could improve subscription and payment rates.

The CPR uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative tools for its assessments, which are used to inform the subsequent phases of the Social Communication Approach. The quantitative survey seeks to understand the specific water supply and consumption dynamics of the locality, including residents' payment and nonpayment rationales and their attitudes towards proposed solutions.

The quantitative tools are complemented with Focus Group Discussions FGDs and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), that allow to gather qualitative data from a range of different stakeholders such as municipality officials, Mukhtars, local organizations, the Social Stability Committees (where relevant), the RWE local fee collectors and operators, residents and private water suppliers.

Assessing stakeholder and power dynamics that underpin the communities is an important aspect of the CPR, to understand how these dynamics influence the water users' ability and willingness to pay for water fees. Municipalities are often not the only institutional entity that citizens refer to, or that can support with changing users' attitudes and behavior. Instead, identifying influential families, religious groups, parties and other respected and networked stakeholders will help target messages more effectively, taking into consideration the dynamics inside the community as well as external factors that can influence the attitude of users towards service providers.

Through the CPR, triggers of behavioral change can be identified, including financial factors such as the amount of money households spend on alternative water sources, or moral factors such as water theft or environmental protection. In addition, the CPR seeks to understand the power dynamics that underpin the community and the extent to which these dynamics influence the inhabitants' ability or inclination to pay their water fees.

Phase III

Communicating analysis findings to stakeholders

Once data about the locality has been collected, the resulting technical and social picture is disseminated to the community, to obtain endorsement and trigger reflection.

3.1 Validation of the technical intervention

During this step, one of the options for infrastructural improvement proposed by the consultant (developed under 2.1) is chosen. Before proceeding with the final design and works tender, it is important to assess the social validity of selected interventions. This means assessing the technical intervention based on the target community's needs, and making sure that no social group is disadvantaged.

The technical design should pay particular attention to an equal distribution system for all users, and ensure pressure regulation that will reach all users in the community. Improved pressure and equitable distribution of water in the system will help prevent social tensions and address the technical complaints highlighted most frequently by the users.

This is done through meetings with selected population representatives, such as by neighborhood or confession. Meetings can have different modalities, including stakeholder meetings, municipality meetings and/or "neighborhood meetings" (Annex 1), or a combination of these, depending on the characteristics of the targeted community. Prioritizing the diversity of attendees is key to protecting groups prone to marginalization, especially in multicultural and multi-confessional regions.

During these meetings the challenges of the water system are presented, both from an operational and infrastructural point of view, and the selected intervention is presented, highlighting its pros, cons and expected outcomes. In case of problematic locations, characterized by conflicts over the water resources (e.g. unfair distribution between neighborhoods), this process can take several months until acceptance and endorsement are reached.

3.2 Public Meetings to present analysis findings

Creating stakeholder ownership of the project is fundamental to ensuring positive and sustainable impact. Ownership is fostered throughout the project, starting with "public meetings" (Annex 1), to inform residents about the findings of the context analysis (Phase II) including the technical and sociological assessment and about the intervention agreed upon with the key stakeholders (see 3.1.).

Local Authorities and RWE representatives should mandatorily take part in these meetings, in line with their commitment to the project objectives and to respond to the concerns of their citizens and water users. This step is important as it enhances the engagement of citizens in the process and gives them the opportunity to openly discuss their views, raise their concerns to relevant institutions at the meeting (e.g. RWE, Municipality, implementing NGO). The concerns usually revolve around:

- ▶ the need to cancel old debts,
- ▶ The need for local operators,
- ▶ complaints about the quality of the received service, etc.

In some cases, public meetings could be replaced or supplemented by neighborhood meetings, specifically in cases where the target location is too vast (above 30,000 residents) to have all parties represented in a single meeting without compromising effectiveness.

3.3 Additional activities for increasing ownership

In addition to the steps described above, other activities can serve as tools to increase and consolidate the ownership of the project by the target population. Among those activities are the locality brochure and accompaniment of the tender process.

Locality brochure: findings from the Context Analysis, notably the social and technical assessment, could be summarized in a brochure, along with the planned infrastructural intervention and the expected improvements it will result in. This is generally very well received and appreciated by the stakeholders (see Annex 2 for an example), as it updates them on progress throughout the project.

Accompaniment of tender process: the selection of contractors for works execution is a critical phase where tensions and conflicting interests arise (due to stakeholders trying to push for the selection of specific contractors, as opposed to the transparency of the tendering process).

MiyahCon considers it to be good practice to:

- 1 inform Municipal Council and other relevant authorities (Local Chamber of Commerce, Union of Municipalities etc.) about the transparency procedures in place, the complaint mechanisms available, the criteria for tender selection etc.;
- 2 invite Municipal Council and key stakeholders to attend the tender site visit, which serves as an opportunity for them to acquaint themselves with the existing infrastructure;
- 3 invite Municipal Council and other relevant authorities to the tender opening session and/or inform them about the results.

Phase IV

Communication for awareness raising

Once works have been launched, social teams will keep beneficiaries informed on project progress and they can also identify and address any issues or complaints that arise in target localities.

4.1 Validation of the technical intervention

Not only is it beneficial for sustainability when citizens feel ownership of project activities, but it is also necessary for tailoring the project to their needs, while proactively overcoming challenges. In this case public meetings and neighborhood meetings are not the most suitable modalities as they do not offer consistent attendance throughout infrastructure implementation, requiring a repetition of the project introduction.

For this reason, institutionalizing long-term local stakeholder engagement through identifying community representatives is important. These focal points receive regular updates about the project and transfer them to their community. They need to be selected with care, and might not be the same stakeholders who helped in the context analysis. They should be characterized as proactive information sharers, rather than just knowledge holders. These representatives can be chosen through neighborhood meetings among Mukhtars, family leaders, neighborhood delegates or local activists, as long as their number is sufficient to cover all the main groups of the targeted locality. Their role can be informally defined, or institutionalized through the creation of a group. In the **MiyahCon** project, such representatives were identified for each community in which the project operates and formed “Civil Water Units”.

The advantages of institutionalization lay in creating a dedicated and accountable unit that would survive beyond project implementation, in order to continue bridging the gap between citizens and the RWE, especially on aspects where the RWE customer service or the municipalities require further local support to fulfil this objective.

So, on one hand, Civil Water Units are closely informed about project progress and in turn communicate this information to citizens; on the other hand, they are trained on internal procedures of RWEs, including maintenance, complaint mechanisms, subscription, payment, and registration, among others. This enables them to assist citizens in their interactions with RWEs. While this initiative may be successful in some areas, it may not be the case in others, as its success is dependent on factors such as culture, history, and sense of citizenship.

The feeling of ownership may be reinforced by a complaint hotline. The hotline which usually takes in feedback from beneficiaries about the project at large, can also receive complaints concerning water in target areas. Besides being able to refer these complaints to the establishment (if it has the capacity to take in complaints), complaints provide the implementing organization with information about the situation on the ground. This allows it to tackle challenges proactively.

4.2 Ensuring a continuous flow of information with stakeholders

Regardless whether the community representatives have been constituted in Civil Water Units or not, it is fundamental to regularly share project progress updates with them, ideally on a monthly basis. Site visits can be organized to show progress of works and inaugurate partial achievements, and will constitute a key occasion to raise stakeholders’ awareness about the processes behind the water provision, from water source to tap.

On top of these Stakeholders meetings, updates can be communicated through neighborhood meetings (when specific for certain areas), “follow up meetings/ informal gatherings”, and municipality meetings. Additionally, other media can be used to spread information more widely, including project newsletters, posters and/or street banners, WhatsApp messages on Municipality/Locality groups, Social media pages and updates (examples in Annex 2), etc.

4.3 Tailored communication materials and messages

Having identified the triggers of behavioral change during the CPR and audience analysis, it is possible to design tailored messages and modalities for the awareness campaigns.

FIGURE 1. AWARENESS CAMPAIGN PLANNING



Behavior can best be predicted from the “intention to execute behavior”, which in turn is determined by a person’s:

- ▶ **Attitude:** how beneficiaries think about a proposed behavior;
- ▶ **Subjective norm:** influence of surrounding people, organizations and institutions on behavior;
- ▶ **Own effectiveness:** the personal, subjective estimate of the ease or difficulty of carrying out the behavior.

Therefore, messages should be selected based on their likelihood to affect at least one of the above factors and to nudge users towards the adoption of the good practice. Messages may cover themes such as accountability, water conservation, illegal connections, and ownership of water challenges. For example, an awareness campaign may revolve around the negative impacts of illegal connections, which range from depriving neighbors from water access, to contributing to the non-sustainability of water services. Different messages should be targeted at corresponding stakeholders.

In communication literature, 3 main modalities (Figure 2) of awareness raising for behavioral change are available.

The first is the social/local mode, which is characterized by low-reach medium level content. It may come in the form of informal household awareness visits or neighborhood meetings. Since it consists of close interaction and a small number of stakeholders, it requires a high level of active public involvement, and results in a high level of audience influence (e.g. public meetings).

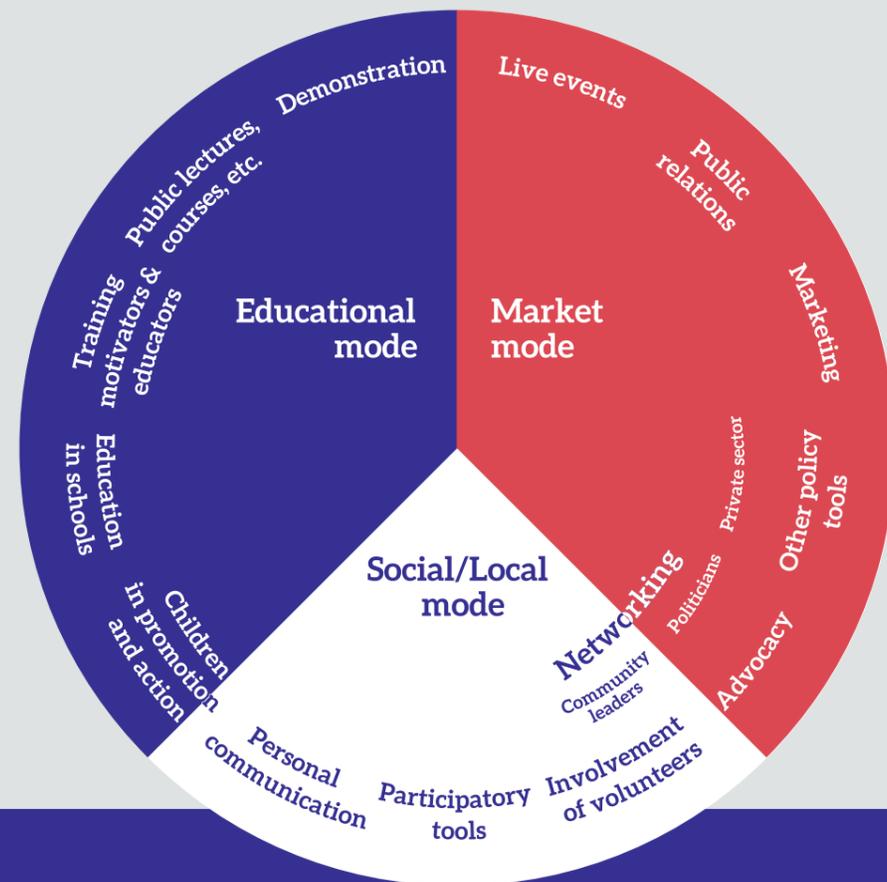
The second is the market mode, denoted by large-reach simple content that requires a low level of active public investment. This can be done through social media campaigns, billboard ads or mass distribution of brochures. Although it typically results in low levels of audience influence, the implementing organization can improve it by motivating the audience to respond (e.g. include a quiz with prizes).

Thirdly, the educational mode is comprised of medium-reach and relatively complex content. This usually involves a specified target with the same “learning objectives”, such as children or parents. Due to size and complexity, it requires a high level of public activity and results in a medium level of audience influence.

Each mode brings a set of tools to the table, that can be combined according to the message and the target audience.

MiyahCon partners selected different tools and messages after a process of trial and error based on their suitability, which can vary from one area of intervention to another. For example, education of children, suitable for some areas in North Lebanon, was found to be ineffective in other areas because parents and children did not have a serious exchange about what the children were learning in school, thus limiting the dissemination of information provided to them. Photographic contests coupled with the use of social media (Instagram) proved effective in some areas, but were found unsuitable in others. In some localities, residents interacted more on WhatsApp than Facebook, arguably because of their age. Several aspects may have an impact on success, including age, income level, sex and occupation, and they should all be taken into consideration.

FIGURE 2. CAMPAIGNING MODES AND TOOLS



GVC USED THE FOLLOWING MEANS AS PART OF ITS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN:

APPROACH	TOOLS
Marketing	Announcements, brochures, handouts, slogans, public displays, billboards, door-to-door campaigns, and newspaper articles
Social media	Use of platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp
Public relations	Press conferences, press releases, and strategic releases of research data
Public events approach	Festivals, conferences, theater, marathon, street fairs
Education (children)	Awareness sessions and activities (e.g. photo contests and activity days) within and outside schools
Public participation	Meetings and sessions with existing community groups, neighborhoods or locality residents
Networking	Creating strategic relations between active and like-minded individuals, social groups and institutions through meetings between Municipalities, Civil Water Units and the Water Establishments
Advocacy	Involvement and influence of decision-makers formally or informally

FIGURE 3. EXAMPLES OF CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FROM THE FIELD

	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Social media	In some cases, especially when the target audience was older, participation was low. In others, some negative public comments originated from citizens' dissatisfaction or mistrust, and thus set a negative perception of the project for the whole audience. Reliance on pictures and little text means that messages are less detailed. Initiating, monitoring and using hashtags has positive impact, but requires substantial attention and effort.	Social media provide cheap and fast ways to reach vast audiences. Depending on how tech savvy the audience is, social media can facilitate audience interaction and constitute a platform for dialogue and discussion. Instagram and, to a lesser extent Facebook, give the implementing organization access to younger generations by using messages that are visual and concise.
Awareness sessions for children	In some cases, activities in schools did not benefit the project's visibility in the area, as parents did not engage in meaningful conversations with children. Continuity of the learning experience requires repeated engagement with the same group of children to have maximum impact.	Children may not be the best equipped to receive messages on water accountability or water management, however they were receptive for the message that extensive work is needed to treat and transport water, a process shown through an animation and drawing / photo competition. In addition, they can be very receptive to simple messages about the value of water and environment.
Meetings	Unless carefully planned, meetings run the risk of reaching a very small segment of the community, thus providing a skewed view of the communities' opinions. In some cases, more powerful or extroverted and verbal community members, dominated the meeting, limiting the possibility to hear other views. Also, if attendees vehemently disagree on some points or do not trust each other, the conversation can spiral out of control and lead to more tension.	Meetings provide all participants with a chance to voice their concerns, issues, and ideas, and thus represent an effective participatory tool. Meetings are particularly useful to tackle complex issues and explore alternative strategies. In the project, they have proven most successful for creating consensus around action on complex issues that require broad-based community input.
Door to door visits	Messages were more or less well received depending on the person answering the door (men-women, older-younger...), rendering it challenging to prepare different scenarios for each member or "role" (for example, while women traditionally have more control over household water consumption, men are more receptive about external decisions, such as status of subscription and payment)	Face-to-face delivery of messages results in 10 times more recall than a message delivered through mass media. Social workers can build trust that cannot be achieved otherwise, and can tailor the messages to the specific situation of the receiver / visited family.
Newsletter	The design/printing of material that is both attractive to readers and able to clearly convey messages is time consuming and costly. The task is strenuous due to the validation process within NGO Consortia or projects. Readership rates are commonly low.	Newsletters target an audience segment that is not tech-savvy and would rather read from paper than on-screen. Newsletters are also important for visibility, especially when displayed in public spaces, such as municipalities.

Phase V

Mobilization and behavioral change

Once technical works are complete, the water service improves. Subsequently, activities in the Social Communication Approach aim at creating behavioral change amongst citizens based on the improved water supply, encouraging them to subscribe and pay. For this purpose, different types of incentives can be agreed upon with the RWE.

5.1 Subscription and payment campaign

Subscription campaigns target non-subscribers previously identified through the Customer Database Update. Payment Campaigns target existing users who shall confirm their subscription.

Subscription campaigns are best implemented after the operation of new infrastructure, when citizens had time to observe and experience improvements in the water service (first option). Sometimes however, this is not possible, for example when the connection of new subscribers falls under the responsibility of the contractor. In that case, subscription campaigns can be conducted towards the completion of infrastructure works, but before operation of the system (second option).

This second option is only applicable when citizens and local authorities have basic trust in the RWE and the implementing NGO. Nevertheless, this second option can pose an additional challenge: customers start paying water fees from the moment they subscribe, regardless if they receive water or not. In case there are significant delays between the subscription and the system operation, this may result in customer frustration, erosion of trust and subsequent refusal to continue paying the water fees.

In certain cases, **MiyahCon** partners have successfully bypassed these issues by launching two subscription campaigns: a first preparatory one for the collection of documentation (and identification of probable applicants) and a second official subscription campaign, where the previously identified interested citizens pay and activate the subscription.

INCENTIVES

Preliminary agreement with RWEs for financial and administrative matters is necessary.

Existing subscribers might have a huge past record of unpaid fees, which deters them from contacting the RWE to restart payments, in fear of fines for old debts. On the other hand, new subscriptions might not be attractive, as the initial tariff may be expensive (especially if applicants are charged for water meters, and/or house connections).

In all cases, procedures for debt handling need to be discussed with RWE (either exemptions, or partial amnesties, or other), as well as incentives to make subscriptions attractive for new applicants (e.g. free water meter, free domestic connections in case they are provided by the NGO, or temporary discounts to motivate applicants).

The type of agreement reached with RWEs will differ from one case to another, as multiple factors would be taken into consideration, such as the size of the target population, track record of subscription/payment, etc.

Payment campaigns are launched during RWE fee collection, which occurs on a quarterly basis. Ahead of collection at community level, the implementing organization raises awareness, with the help of local authorities and Civil Water Units, to spread the word about the payment campaign. During the campaign, the implementing organization ensures that collection at village level is accessible to citizens, for example, by having a fee collector present at the municipality.

Subscription and payment campaigns are comprised of several sub-activities that aim to:

- 1** inform citizens about the costs and needed documentation (usually through “Door to door visits” and flyer distribution);
- 2** facilitate the process (usually by supporting the Municipality in providing its citizens with requested documents, and scheduling specific dates when RWE staff will be available in the locality to register new applications); and
- 3** mobilizing people through repeated reminders / social media communications.

Subscription and Payment campaigns are the activities among the project cycle that require the highest effort from RWE staff. Therefore, the modalities and timelines under this step must be discussed in detail and planned with the RWE in advance, to align with their priorities and avoid straining their already stretched human resources.

5.2 Public celebration of project achievements for behavioral change

Showcasing the projects’ technical improvements to the public is conducive to behavioral change. This is done through large and small inaugurations, which present infrastructural improvements and instill a sense of pride among citizens. Inaugurations are usually attended by high ranking officials such as heads of municipal unions and ministers, allowing the implementing organization to connect with prominent stakeholders, who demonstrate support for the activities of the NGO in the sector. Inaugurations successfully link the social facet of the project to technical achievements, whereby the latter encourages favorable water behavior (subscription and payment), and supports the progress of the social strategy as a whole.

Phase VI

Follow-up

For project sustainability, follow-up and accompaniment are key to ensure that changes triggered by the project are maintained and challenges are overcome.

6.1 Supporting RWE operation

Although technical support shall be provided to local operators on how to operate and maintain the new infrastructure, the most important assistance the NGO should provide to the RWE, is to facilitate effective customer services.

It is common, that even after handover of the water scheme to the RWE, citizens will continue addressing concerns and complaints to the implementing NGO. It is crucial that this institutional function is transferred to the RWE, by informing customers and water users about ways to file a complaint, procedures to alert about malfunctioning etc. directly through the RWE customer service. At the same time, the NGO should support the local RWE staff, to ensure complaints are addressed accordingly.

6.2 Monitoring user behavior

In case domestic water meters are available and a volumetric tariff is applied by the RWE, it is important for social teams to accompany users on how to read the water meters, how to understand and reduce their consumption, and how to read their bills (especially in the case of a volumetric tariff).

In addition, follow-up payment campaigns shall be organized to encourage subscribers to pay their water fees. However, at this stage, an exclusive reduced fee offer will not be available, so the implementing organization has to rely solely on past infrastructural improvements and the ability of RWEs to enforce financial punishment, such as fines. In fact, maintaining increased payments rates is challenging, especially when RWEs fail to penalize non-payers. Payers are discouraged when they see non-paying neighbors benefit from water services equally. Therefore, implementation of these campaigns requires close coordination and cooperation of RWEs, who are responsible for deterring unwanted behavior.

6.3 Final Citizens Perception survey

To understand the impact of the implemented intervention, and identify constraints to regular payment, a final Citizen Perception survey should be organized at the end of the program, cross-checking information with the RWE payment lists.

The Final Citizen Perception survey should ideally be implemented one year or at least one summer after the operation of the infrastructure. It consists of an adapted version of the CPR or Citizen Survey baseline, conducted in the early stages of the project and also allows for comparisons in behavioral change.

Annex 1 Modalities

MODALITY	EXPLANATION
Focus Group Discussion	<p>Description: A gathering of a relatively small number of people (5 to 10) who are selected from similar backgrounds or experiences, to discuss a given topic (e.g. state of water infrastructure). The sessions are held in a comfortable environment and are steered by a moderator (and assistant moderator/recorder if need be) that assists the discussions using a topic guide.</p> <p>Added Value: FGDs allow the collection of good quality qualitative information, as its strength relies on allowing the participants to agree or disagree with each other so to provide an insight into how the group thinks about an issue, about the range of opinion and ideas, and the inconsistencies and variation that exists in a particular community in terms of beliefs and their experiences and practices.</p> <p>Limitations: The discussion is reliant on the willingness of stakeholders to come and talk openly. To facilitate this, a nominal invitation shall be delivered to profiled attendees (e.g. women, or youth, or persons with disabilities, or private boreholes owners etc.).</p>
Union of municipalities/ Municipality meeting	<p>Description: A meeting with union of municipalities is only necessary when working with multiple unionized municipalities. Otherwise, meetings would be set up with the Municipality directly.</p> <p>Added value: Guarantee endorsement by the public authority closest to the citizens, and responsible for authorization to public works, the security of teams and project activities.</p> <p>Limitations: Mayors and similar public figures usually have a busy time schedule. Meetings have to be short, and information should be presented gradually and concisely. In addition, local authorities may not represent all the groups of the locality (especially those more politically / socially layered), and may not share the information with their citizens.</p>
Stakeholder meeting	<p>Description: A stakeholder meeting is a strategic event that brings together major stakeholders, such as Mokhtars, influential political/religious figures, representatives of large families, etc. Meeting are usually comprised of 10 to 20 stakeholders.</p> <p>Added Value: Stakeholder meetings present the opportunity to get to know stakeholders, build relationships in a controlled environment, and observe interactions between them.</p> <p>Limitations: Not all stakeholders are on good terms or feel comfortable enough to express themselves freely in front of each other.</p>
Public meeting	<p>Description: Public meetings are open to all people living in the locality. The main target of public meetings are citizens, and to be considered legitimate, they should be attended by individuals from all the different societal segments.</p> <p>Added value: Public meetings are necessary when wanting to address the residents of the locality as a whole. Especially when discussing matters that affect everyone (e.g. network works throughout the locality which may impact road accessibility and noise levels).</p> <p>Limitations: Public meetings are meant to include everyone. People that attend may have different leverage and different social standing, whereby some segments may be disadvantaged or discouraged when trying to voice their opinions, because maybe traditionally they are assigned roles that limit their ability to interact.</p>

Neighborhood meeting	<p>Description: A gathering of individuals residing in a same area, to discuss common local issues. It is usually comprised of representatives of the main families of a said neighborhood.</p> <p>Added value: smaller meetings of this type give residents ownership of the discussed topic, and the opportunity to voice their neighborhood-specific concerns.</p> <p>Limitations: only traditional household representatives attend, leaving women and other marginalized groups unheard.</p>
Municipality/ WE meeting	<p>Description: meetings between the municipality and relevant RWE actors, such as those responsible for subscription or maintenance. While some meetings are set for practical reasons, others are purely set to strengthen the relationship between municipalities and RWEs. If multiple municipalities are involved, the meeting could take the shape of a workshop, where the RWE would be present.</p> <p>Added value: this allows the implementing organization to build trust between the two parties, and strengthen relationship for project and post-project operations.</p> <p>Limitations: if the meetings are not well facilitated and mediated, the situation can deteriorate if the two parties fail to agree or engage in a constructive discussion.</p>
Follow up meetings/ Informal gathering	<p>Description: follow up/ informal meetings are used to communicate updates to beneficiaries or follow up on any issues that arise in target localities. Informal meetings are meant to allow staff to share important events with project stakeholders, such as celebration and mourning.</p> <p>Added value: this plays a major role in strengthening the relationship between the implementing organization and stakeholders, and eventually create a sense of camaraderie. Informality may allow underrepresented segments such as women feel more comfortable with interaction.</p> <p>Limitations: meetings are usually unstructured.</p>
Inauguration	<p>Description: events to celebrate the completion of infrastructural works, or part of them. Usually comprising a cutting of ribbon and celebratory speeches. They are usually attended by local stakeholders, as well as high ranking government officials, such as Governor, General Directors and representative from the Ministry of Energy and Water. Press coverage is optional but recommended.</p> <p>Added value: they link the social facet of the project to technical achievements, whereby the latter encourages favorable water behavior (subscription and payment), and supports the progress of the social strategy. Inaugurations also a sense of pride among beneficiaries.</p> <p>Limitations: all infrastructural improvements need to be operational. Failure to operate or other incidents may lead to loss of credibility.</p>
Events	<p>Description: events are organized when the occasion calls for it (e.g. World Water Day, Ramadan, Christmas, etc.). They can include project related speeches or presentations from internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>Added value: this allows the implementing organization to strengthen ties with stakeholders, ameliorate the relationship between them, and spread awareness on relevant matters.</p> <p>Limitations: events usually host large numbers of people, and so require more preparation.</p>
Door to door visits	<p>Description: Visits to each household of the target locality to share messages with each family.</p> <p>Added value: Messages can be tailored to the specificities of each family, allowing deeper discussion on actual day-to-day concerns. In addition, they allow the engagement of underrepresented members of the households, including women and youths.</p> <p>Limitations: Residents are not always available or ready to listen.</p>

Annex 2 Media tools

TOOLS	EXPLANATION
Locality brochure	<p>Description: locality brochures present a great opportunity to share information about the project at locality level. The brochures showcases planned technical and non-technical improvements of the project, and are usually distributed during public meetings and during the subscription campaign, so to induce behavioral change and encourage citizens to subscribe to/pay the water service.</p> <p>Added Value: the brochure is locality specific, which makes it more interesting for residents.</p> <p>Limitations: unlike posters, the brochure contains more reading material and requires more effort from reader.</p>

EXAMPLE



TOOLS	EXPLANATION
Newsletter	<p>Description: short publication to be distributed on regular bases to update citizens on the technical and social progresses of the project.</p> <p>Added Value: The newsletter presents a good overview of project progress, and may also include a game (e.g. crossword) and prize. This pushes more citizens to read the document and interact with the project.</p> <p>Limitations: the newspaper format (with extensive descriptions) may discourage readers that are not frequent / skilled readers.</p>

EXAMPLE



NORTH BEKAA

7 | ISSUE 01

IMPORTANT NOTICE

After the spread of Hepatitis disease in Labwe Village, having caused more than 30 registered cases, panic spread among the citizens of Labwe and surrounding villages, attributing the origin of this disease to contamination of potable water. GVC intervened by analyzing water samples from Labwe borehole and reservoir, as well as inspecting the existing water network to verify if any waste water leaks would have contaminated the potable water. The results were positive, and the water in Labwe is totally drinkable and safe. This conforms to the investigation results done by the Ministry of Health and BWE, showing that there is no water contamination in the locality.

ACTIVITIES

More than 15 Focus Group Discussions were conducted in all localities: Ain, Labwe, Nahi Othman, Khodor, Jawhkeh, Mokat, Qaa, to share information about the project steps (study by the consultant, participatory validation of the interventions, tendering processes and transparency measures)

and collect information about the villages: social composition, potential conflicts, knowledge about BWE, understanding of the locally water system (problems and solutions) and expectations towards the project interventions. For each locality, at least, one meeting was organized to inform the Municipal Council, key stakeholders and active citizens about the results of the technical studies and validate the technical interventions to be implemented.



NORTH BEKAA

8 | OCTOBER 2018

CIVIL GROUPS

On August 2018, active citizens were called to create civil society groups to follow up on the project and facilitate its social activities, in the localities of Ain, Labwe, Moqraq and Toufayye.

CUSTOMER DATA BASE

Since April 2018, in collaboration with the BWE officers, GVC is conducting field data collection for mapping the existing subscribers and updating their information. The exercise has been finalized for the 558 subscribers of Toufayye, Nahi Osmane, Moqraq, and Noqra.

ACCOMPLISHED

The drilling of the new borehole was finalized at a depth of 415 meters with good water. Casing and screening were successfully installed. Development and pumping test foreseen in September.

Moqraq: The drilling of the new borehole was finalized at a depth of 315 meters with good water. Casing and screening were successfully installed. Development and pumping test is foreseen in October. Public meeting in moqraq, informing the citizens about the well and the water!

Bezaleh: Excavations of the improvement lines started to be laid to upgrade the distribution network.

Nahi Osmane: The drilling of the new borehole started by end of August in the new location donated by the Municipality. The committee informed the citizens about the launching of the civil works!

Qaa: 800 meters of network extension were completed in three neighborhoods. Chamber works and testing will be finalized in September!

Labwe: CDB in Labwe in progress. Water samples were taken for the hepatitis disease in the village



WORLD WATER DAY

In March 2018, 53 young students and scouts from the area attended a sensitization day to grow their awareness about the importance of water conservation.

CITIZENS SURVEY

More than 1,500 surveys were conducted in all the villages, visiting families door to door to assess: Water consumption, water expenditure, most common problems and solutions, knowledge of water institutions, wished level of water service and willingness to pay for it.

TOOLS
EXPLANATION

Social media (Facebook and Instagram)

Description: different social media platforms, notably Facebook and Instagram, can be used to highlight technical and non-technical progress in each locality. This gives beneficiaries the chance to stay up to date and voice any opinions/ concerns about the project. Social media campaigns are not equally successful across different locations, as some populations are more tech-savvy than others (e.g. due to demographic patterns like age).

Added value: low cost communication tool, that makes engaging material communicable, without the cost of printing.

Limitations: use of social media platforms differs from one area to another as engagement rates is not the same and vary among different localities.

EXAMPLE



MiyahCon

August 28, 2019 · 🌐

⋮

Happening now!

Children Activity in Bint Jbeil, part of the "Water Conservation Season" campaign within MiyahCon project, funded by EUTF - MADAD.

This activity is in collaboration with مؤسسة مياه لبنان الجنوبي - Slwe and the Municipality of Bint Jbeil.

مؤسسة مياه لبنان الجنوبي - Slwe

[European Union in Lebanon... See More](#)



MiyahCon
August 28, 2019 · 🌐

See more for English

في 22 آب، تم إطلاق حملة الإشتراكات في بلدة التوفيقية (البرّالية) بالتنسيق مع جمعية العمل التطوعي المدني الإيطالية "جي في سي" والبلدية، وذلك في إطار عمل مشروع مياهن الممول من الصندوق الإثتماني للإتحاد الأوروبي - مَدَد، حيث بدأ فريق عمل مؤسسة مياه البقاع باستقبال طلبات سكان البلدة للإشتراك في خدمة المياه. وقد استمرت الحملة لمدة 3 أيام حيث تقدّم حوالي الـ 100 شخصًا بطلب للإشتراك.

On the 22nd of August, the subscription campaign was launched in Tawfikie... See More

miyahcon • Follow
Enn Nabi Osmâne, Béqaa, Lebanon

miyahcon #MiyahCon #Project #European_Union #Trust_Fund-Madad #EUTF #EUMADAD #EUinLebanon #GVC #BekaaWaterEstablsihment #BWE #municipalities #water_meter #water_meter_box #subscriber #installation #Nabi_Osmane #Taoufiquieh #Bezzalieh

60w

60 likes
MAY 24, 2019

Add a comment... Post

miyahcon • Follow
North Governorate

miyahcon Last Friday, CISP team in coordination with North Lebanon Water Establishment organised a subscription campaign to water in El Fouar village. #NLWE #NorthLebanon #ElFour #Zgharta #CISP #Water #MiyahCon #Project #EUinLebanon #EUTF #Madad #citizens #municipality

66w

119 likes
APRIL 16, 2019

Add a comment... Post

TOOLS **EXPLANATION**

Project brochure

Description: project brochure can outline the project overview and/or state the expected achievements in numbers at regional and national levels.

Added value: the brochure can give the reader an overview of the project strategy and methodology, as well as contacts of implementing partners' representatives.

Limitations: unlike posters, the brochure contains more reading material and requires more effort from reader, and since this is usually a brochure for the whole project (not locality specific), the reader may lose interest.

EXAMPLE

TOGETHER WE ENSURE A TRUSTED WATER SERVICE

MIYAHCON consortium for water accountability in Lebanon
تعزير حسن مسؤولية المواطن تجاه قطاع مياه لبنان

In collaboration with:

- مؤسسة مياه البقاع BEKAA WATER ESTABLISHMENT
- مؤسسة مياه لبنان الجنوبي SOUTH LEBANON WATER ESTABLISHMENT
- مؤسسة مياه لبنان الشمالي NORTH LEBANON WATER ESTABLISHMENT

WHAT IS MIYAHCON ?

MiyahCon is a consortium financed by the European Union's MADAD fund composed of three international NGOs - GVC, CISP and ACWUA. The three NGOs work in collaboration with Water Establishments to improve public water services in Lebanon.

MiyahCon's approach is founded on three levels:

- **Infrastructural level:** Rehabilitate and upgrade existing infrastructure, wells, reservoirs and networks to be able to supply reliable water services.
- **Citizens level:** Promote citizens' participation in the process of water management by providing access to information, fostering accountability of public service, installing water meters and encouraging regular subscriptions and payments;
- **Institutional level:** Increase the capacity of Water Establishments to operate, maintain and manage water services through the provision of technical assistance and through improved customer services.

MIYAHCON'S PILOT PROJECTS

- In the Bekaa: El Qaa, Zabboud, Bejjaje, Nabi Osmane, El Ain, Toufiquiye, Laboue, Moqraq, Khodor, Nassriyeh and Qab Elias
- In South Lebanon: Bint Jbeil
- In North Lebanon: Akkar (Qatlabeh, Akroum) and Tripoli (El Fouar and Majdalaya)

In the year 2000, four Water Establishments were created in the Bekaa, South Lebanon, North Lebanon and Beirut and Mount Lebanon.

European Union
The EU Regional Trust Fund
الاتحاد الأوروبي
صندوق 'مندا' الإقليمي

About the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis, the EU Madad Fund:

Since its establishment in December 2014, a significant share of the EU's non-humanitarian aid for Syria's neighbouring countries is provided through the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, the EU 'Madad' Fund. The Trust Fund brings a more coherent and integrated EU aid response to the crisis and primarily addresses economic, educational, protection, social, and health needs of refugees from Syria in neighbouring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq, and supports overstretched local communities and their administrations.

For more information about the EU Trust Fund, please visit https://ec.europa.eu/trustfund-syria-region/content/home_en