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REPUBLIC OF LEBANON
MINISTRY OF
INTERIOR AND
MUNICIPALITIES



Funded by the European Union

Capacity Development Strategy for Regional Technical Offices



This document was produced with the financial support of the European Union. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of the European Union and the United Nations, including UNDP and UN-Habitat, or the UN Member States.

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List of Acronyms

ATI	Access to Information, Right to Access Information
CD	Capacity Development
CEFOM	Appui à la création du Centre de Formation des Municipalités Support to the Establishment of a Training Centre for Lebanese Municipalities
CoP	Community of Practice
DGLAC	Directorate General of Local Administrations and Councils
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GIS	Geographic Information System
ISWM	Integrated Solid Waste Management
IT	Information Technology
LAU	Lebanese American University
MERP	Municipal Empowerment and Resilience Project
MoIM	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
PFM	Public Financial Management
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
Q&A	Questions and Answers
RTO	Regional Technical Offices
SOM	Standard Operating Manual
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TWG	Thematic Working Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WWM	Water and Wastewater Management



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Introduction

As part of the planned handover of the Regional Technical Offices (RTOs) to their respective municipality or union, a Capacity Development (CD) strategy is hereby proposed to ensure that core competencies and skills are in place for the RTOs to fulfil their mandate in an autonomous and self-sustaining fashion. A CD matrix, appended to this document, offers a recommended menu of CD interventions that are geared toward this goal.

The CD matrix took stock of three baselines that assessed the capacities of the RTOs:

(1) MERP's RTO Assessment, which was finalised in December 2020; (2) available documentation on the role and challenges of the RTOs; and (3) interviews with RTO members, municipal officials, and RTO partners and counterparts, conducted between August and December 2021.

These baselines pointed to several capacity gaps preventing the RTOs from fulfilling their mandate. These can be summarised into four overarching needs:

1. The need to fulfil a specialised, evidence-based planning function across sectors.
2. The need to provide advanced technical expertise in specific sectors that are relevant to local governance in Lebanon (urban management, environment, public health, energy).
3. The need to actively support the financial sustainability of local authorities, through improved revenue management, donor relations, and fundraising skills (proposal development).
4. The need to assume a greater managerial and leadership role within the administration of the local authority.

Detailing the proposed CD interventions, the matrix comprises 11 elements, which are explained at greater length in the next sections. These elements are as follows:

- **Topic:** Focus thematic areas for proposed CD activities and programmes, identified based on the various assessments of capacity needs.

- **Objective/rationale:** Why the proposed CD intervention is needed and what competencies are expected to be acquired once it is completed.

- **Mandatory/optional:** Assigns the level of priority, whether the CD is mandatory or optional for CD providers and RTO partners to plan their CD activities.

- **Primary target group(s) in the RTO:** Who should be the primary beneficiaries of the CD in the RTO. Additional beneficiaries from outside the RTO can be further included but the core group of beneficiaries in the RTOs should not be omitted.

- **Primary CD Type:** What is the first CD intervention to be made to develop the needed skills and competencies, and what type/format should it have: training course, workshop, onboarding session, awareness session, MOOC, webinar/conference, coaching?

- **Continuing CD Type:** What is the follow-up CD intervention to be made to ensure that the acquired skills are retained, practiced, and perfected? What type/format should it have: coaching, advisory support, a Community of Practice (CoP)?

- **Minimum and maximum CD length (per hour):** What are the minimum and the maximum number of hours for the proposed CD activity? CD interventions should not be shorter than the minimum length advised, otherwise this would compromise the effectiveness of competence development. CD interventions may be longer than the maximum length indicated if there is a clear plan to avoid training fatigue.

- **Maximum estimated cost per hour (USD):** Estimated maximum cost of the CD activity per hour, beyond which the activity may no longer be cost-effective. Cheaper options are advised as a rule of thumb, as long as quality is not compromised.

- **Minimum and maximum total cost (USD):** Estimated maximum total cost of the CD activity. Same as previous.

The **owners of the CD matrix** are the RTOs, the local authorities, and the development partners who oversee the handover. It is therefore important to validate the matrix by these stakeholders.

While implementing the proposed CD framework, four **guiding principles** should be considered:

- **Context-specific design and delivery:** It is up to local authorities and development partners to contextualise their CD activities depending on their policy/programmatic priorities, their resources, and the needs of the RTOs.
- **Inclusivity:** The beneficiaries should be consulted and included in the identification and planning of the CD activities. The selection of topics and the scheduling of activities should be discussed with them beforehand. This helps agreeing on CD objectives and setting the expectations right.
- **Inter-agency coordination:** It is essential to ensure coordination and complementarity between the CD providers to avoid overlaps, duplication, and training fatigue. A comprehensive mapping of other CD providers should therefore be conducted before engaging in the CD, in consultation with MoIM's DGLAC.¹
- **Training at scale:** It will be more cost-effective to operate at scale by grouping the staff of neighbouring local authorities and RTOs together in the same CD activity.

Tools and materials to be used in CD activities.

A successful CD activity requires the preparation of tools and materials to be used before, during, and after the CD. In the different CD topics and formats proposed in the matrix, the use of the following tools and materials is highly recommended to enable a learning mindset among the participants. This variety of tools aims to foster a learning-by-doing method coupled with discussions and practical work.

¹ It is advised to explore avenues for cooperation with Cités Unies Liban – Bureau Technique des Villes Libanaises regarding the project "Appui à la création du Centre de Formation des Municipalités" (CEFOM).

TOOLS/MATERIALS	DESCRIPTION
Pre-work requirements	Planned readings to allow participants to think about specific challenges and questions.
Presentations	Presentations to create customised CD sessions that will be led by a facilitator or expert/trainer – to be shared before or after the activity.
Handouts	Handouts to provide reinforcement of the knowledge provided.
Case study	Case studies allow participants to analyse and discuss real cases.
Q&A session	Q&A sessions clarify information and allow participants to better understand the topic at hand.
Facilitated discussions	Can be an interactive group exercise, role play, simulation, or any form of discussion about a specific learning module or topic.
Assignments	Assigning “homework” or any kind of individual or group deliverables between a CD session and another (i.e., between two training days) will help the participants practice and perfect newly acquired skills.
Certificates	Certificates give recognition and motivation to participants that they have acquired or are developing a new skill.

Measuring improvement. To measure the effectiveness of the CD intervention, pre- and post-CD evaluation tools should be used. These could consist of evaluation forms (pre- and post-training

tests), self-assessment, peer assessment, surveys, classroom polling, testimonials, trainer observations/reports, external evaluation reports, etc.

1. CD Topics: Selection and Rationale

The CD matrix provides a comprehensive thematic spectrum to develop the competences of RTO staff. Under each thematic area, specific CD topics are provided. Based on the various sources and informants consulted, the CD framework identified 17 topics for RTO staff, each of which comprising 1 to 8 sub-topics. This resulted in a proposed menu of 70 CD interventions that CD providers and RTO partners can draw from in their (multi-)annual planning. The main topics are:

- **Induction Package for RTO staff:** Foundational onboarding material for RTO staff to ensure that all RTO staff use similar work tools and follow similar procedures.
- **Municipal Laws and Regulations in Lebanon:** The legal and regulatory framework for municipal governance and the wider governance environment in which the RTOs operate. The objective is to embed the RTO in the institutional framework of local authorities. This can only be done if the RTO members have a solid knowledge and understanding of the governance environment that they operate in.
- **Public Financial Management (PFM) in Local Authorities:** Same rationale as previous. The objective is that RTOs become a leading actor in the financial sustainability of local authorities through securing grants, optimising revenues, and improving how they are managed.
- **Public Procurement in Local Authorities:** The objective is that RTOs become leading agents in the implementation and mainstreaming of the July 2021 Public Procurement Law, considering that RTOs should pave the way for good integrity and accountability in local governance.
- **Evidence-based Strategic Planning:** RTOs were established to provide local authorities with specialised technical skills to help improve public service planning and delivery at the local and regional levels. Strategic planning is one of the core skills that are required for the RTOs to fulfil their mandate. This skill applies to specific sectors and can cut across sectors.
- **Urban Planning and Urban Management:** Same rationale as previous.

- **Environmental Governance in Local**

Authorities: Same rationale as previous.

Environmental governance is a core sectoral mandate of local authorities, for which advanced technical knowledge is needed, particularly in waste management, in view of the recurring crises. Local authorities, through the RTOs, should be also able to review and input on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) studies prepared by private consultants.

- **Energy System Governance for Local**

Authorities: The energy sector is in crisis and its decentralisation is high on the agenda of Lebanese and foreign policy professionals. Local authorities, through the RTOs, should become major actors in the energy sector, in terms of providing alternative energy sources, regulating, and monitoring the sector, within the boundaries of the municipal laws.

- **Public Health Control and Monitoring:** Same rationale as previous. Public health is a major sector in which local authorities can intervene by law. RTOs should become an active player in this regard.

- **Geographic Information System (GIS):** To fulfil the RTOs' role, the use of technology should be mainstreamed. GIS is an essential tool for planning, monitoring, and managing all kinds of facilities, infrastructure, and activities.

- **Advanced AutoCad Training:** Same rationale as previous. RTOs are routinely asked to prepare concept/design drawings (elevation, sections...) and execution drawings for municipal projects. The use of AutoCad is essential in this regard.

- **Security Training and Security SOPs:** The

hands-on SOPs and training municipal staff on how to use them should be included in any CD programme for RTOs.

- **Social media management:** If RTOs are expected to contribute to the sustainability of local authorities and to provide advanced expertise, social media management can be one of them. Managing the visibility of RTOs on social media is an important skill that can make a difference in terms of shedding light on the RTO's works, achievements, and attracting development partners.

- **Leadership and managerial skills:** Implementing the Standard Operating Manual (SOM) requires a great deal of skills in terms of team management and supervision, performance management, interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, etc. Several CD activities are included under this title, ranging from managerial to leadership responsibilities.

- **Project Cycle Management:** If RTOs are expected to assume specialised managerial skills, project management should be one of them, with all the tools and techniques that this entails.

- **Asset and knowledge management:** Same rationale as previous. RTOs can and should become a resource for the municipal administration. This includes the use of Excel, data management, filing and archiving, and how to conduct an inventory.

- **Project proposal development:** If RTOs are expected to contribute to the sustainability of local authorities and to raise funds with the support of development partners, project

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