

Government of Lebanon

United Nations Development Programme

Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform

A National E-Strategy for Lebanon – Leb/02/M07

Description:

The economic growth of Lebanon, the individual prosperity of its citizens and their integration in the borderless global era is significantly linked to deepening public understanding about technology through up-to-date education, training and awareness. This process will also have to motivate all involved policymakers, private businesses, academicians, students, researchers and citizens to be successful and sustainable. And as a result, Lebanon can come closer to become a center of excellence in the region, leading the Arab world in a more aggressive participation in the global information age.

The Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform has integrated the objective of developing and implementing an e-government strategy into the work plan of its project with UNDP for the year 2002. The purpose behind the proposed e-Strategy for Lebanon is to lay out the roadmap for the enabling building blocks for a national e-society covering information and communication technologies (ICT) infrastructure, institutional and legal frameworks and human resources from both the service user and service provider perspectives. This roadmap will for example allow for realizing in addition to e-Government, e-Commerce/e-Business, e-Learning and e-Banking applications.

Date: September 2002

Part Ia. Situation Analysis – minimum one paragraph, suggested maximum one page

State the problem to be addressed and provide a reference (and hypertext links) to the relevant outcome in the country programme. Explain the national institutional and legal framework and the intended beneficiaries. Provide a reference (and hypertext links) to the findings of relevant reviews or evaluations.

Lebanon has a dynamic private sector, eager to promote and implement e-Business, and a public sector, which is convinced of the importance of developing the needed legal and institutional framework. However, Lebanon lacks a comprehensive e-Strategy and suffers from an outdated regulatory framework, which impedes progress, despite the serious efforts that have been undertaken in the past years to loosen such regulation through the liberalization of some sectors.

The economic growth of Lebanon, the individual prosperity of its citizens and their integration in the global era is significantly linked to deepening public understanding about technology through up-to-date education, training and awareness. This process will motivate all involved: policymakers, private businesses, academicians, students, researchers and citizens to be successful and sustainable. This could make of Lebanon a center of excellence in the region, leading the Arab world in a more aggressive participation in the global information age.

There are several key factors that place Lebanon at an advantage in the region to excel in the “new economy”, and to contribute to the promotion of Arab culture in general and Lebanese culture in particular. These include mastery of the Arabic language and multilingualism (at least 3 other languages are practiced), a forward-thinking private sector, a strong banking sector moving towards e-Banking solutions, availability of various Internet services, competent human resources with diversified skills in ICT and other fields, an open media sector and a public sector that knows that the country’s key assets lie in the services industry such as trade, banking, and tourism.

For that purpose, several objectives need to be reached: the implementation of all necessary ICT-related laws; the establishment of a solid up-to-date and affordable communications (or hard) infrastructure; the availability of financial resources; the provision of training and awareness programs to the national society (to provide the informed soft infrastructure); the narrowing of the “digital divide” by making ICT available to all people whether living in cities or in rural areas; and, finally, the assurance that the Government plays a proactive role, in partnership with the private sector and academia, to stimulate widespread adoption and use of ICT. While some achievements in these fields have been realized in Lebanon, more needs to be done to reach the required level and to stay in tune with ICT development(s) and their impact on human development.

Part Ib. Strategy – minimum one paragraph, suggested maximum one page

Outline the national strategy including the national commitment to achieving the outcome. Explain in particular how UNDP will support policy development and strengthen national capacities and partnerships to ensure that there are lasting results.

Formal initiatives to mainstream ICT in post-war Lebanon (1991) began in the Public Administration, under the National Administrative Reform Programme. The Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR), established in 1993, was designated to lead e-Government initiatives (<http://www.omsar.gov.lb/english/egov2002e.html>), through technical assessments, preparation of specifications, and outsourcing functions. UNDP spearheaded the establishment of a Technical Coordination Unit, in OMSAR, whose primary mission has been to promote the modernization and development process. (www.omsar.gov.lb.)

within the public administration, while keeping the general public aware of these achievements through various communication channels.

In 2002, OMSAR assisted by UNDP reviewed and expanded its targets to the formulation and mainstreaming of a national e-Strategy, with the aim of expanding ICT as a tool for enhancing decision-making capacity in Government, promoting a citizen-based administration, increasing digital inclusion, as well as enhancing coordination and linkages with other UNDP/civil society/private sector programmes in the area of ICT for development.

(<http://www.undp.org.lb/programme/governance/institution/institution.htm>).

More specifically, the purpose behind the e-Strategy is to lay out the roadmap for the enabling building blocks for a national e-Society covering the information and communication technologies (ICT) infrastructure, the institutional and legal frameworks and the human resources from both the service user and service provider perspectives. Starting with an e-Readiness assessment (covering all of the above building blocks), the e-Strategy will identify and elaborate the measures required as per a high-level national business strategy to make the country at large, and its services industries in particular, ready to join the global e-Society. These measures are to be documented in a structured manner along with a high level plan of action for their timely realization and sustainability through continual modernization and updating.

The e-Strategy will build on lessons learned and identified needs for an enabling environment for ICT for development from previous and on-going initiatives in the areas of e-Government and Community Tele-Centers in remote communities across the country. Relevant success stories worth noting include assistance to the fiscal reform and rehabilitation in Ministry of Finance, notably the Custom's Administration and Directorate of Land Registry, where improvements in internal efficiency as well as speed and quality of services to citizens and the business community have been noticeable (www.finance.gov.lb). UNDP supports similar initiatives and approaches with other line Ministries as well as partners in the private sector and civil society. More recently, UNDP introduced the concept of the Technology Access Center in the liberated town of Bint Jbeil in southern Lebanon, in partnership with the Council for Development and Reconstruction and CISCO systems that donated the equipment. The purpose of the Center is to facilitate access for the local communities who otherwise have limited means or interest in accessing the Internet, or in using the computer for otherwise manual, labor intensive or time consuming practices. More centers are envisaged through OMSAR where the concept of Multi-purpose Community Tele-Centers has been scoped and designed for set-up in the 5 governorates of the country.

The National e-Strategy should integrate all essential areas under one strategic goal with well-defined objectives (e.g. to promote economic, innovation, and social development) using a specified set of principles. e-Government is one of the essential areas; others include e-Commerce/e-Business, e-Learning, and e-Banking. For each area, the strategy document should identify the specific role of the government to ensure the success of its achievement. For example, for e-Commerce one principle could be: leadership is a shared responsibility between the government and private sector - choices about new technologies and the exploitation of opportunities must be led by the private sector while the Government should be a model user of e-Commerce in implementing its e-Government programme through applications such as e-Procurement.

The project strategy will include:

- An E-readiness assessment.
- A e-strategy document based on the findings of the e-readiness assessment
- A national consensus building and information-sharing workshop. The workshop will present the findings of the e-readiness assessment and the key areas of the e-strategy. The workshop will provide the forum for selecting implementation priorities. The target audience is representatives of government line Ministries, public agencies, and the legislative, members of the private sector and civil society, national think tanks and academia, and members of the media including specialized journalists. The workshop will also invite the donor community in Lebanon in order to share with the results of the workshop to assist in the formulation of future programmes in this domain.

The project activities are essentially related to a UNDP supported project is OMSAR *Implementation of the Institutional Development Strategy for Lebanon (Leb/98/002)*, for which OMSAR is the Executing Agency. OMSAR and UNDP, through the above-mentioned project will directly manage the project and provide technical support through UNDP/OMASR professionals. Implementation of the e-strategy once formulated and mainstreamed will be pursued by OMSAR in the context of its joint partnership with UNDP through a new generation of the above mentioned project.

Part II. PROJECT RESULTS AND RESOURCES FRAMEWORK

<u>Intended Outcome as stated in the Country Results Framework:</u> Improved efficiency, accountability and transparency in the civil services and essential reforms established			
<u>Outcome indicator as stated in the Country Programme Results and Resources Framework, including baseline and target.</u> a) Average time for issuance of business license reduced			
<u>Applicable Strategic Area of Support (from SRF)</u> Efficiency and Accountability in the Civil Service			
<u>and TTF Service Line (if applicable):</u> ICTD Service Line 1			
<p><u>Partnership Strategy:</u> <i>The mechanisms will include collaborative activities including sectoral/programme linkages, crosscutting activities, seminars, media events, and other activities to mainstream reforms to the public (G-G-C). These partnerships will serve as the basis for implementing relevant UNDAF goals and objectives. OMSAR will be the national counterpart. UNDP will play the role of identifying crosscutting issues, facilitate and reinforce the partnerships, in addition to providing them with advisory and implementation services.</i></p> <p><i>- Main partners include the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Economy and Trade.. Other partners include the Council for Development and Reconstruction with respect to aid and technical coordination, as well as control agencies and line Ministries that stand to benefit from OMSAR and the project's advisory services and modernization assistance. Other Government partners and beneficiaries of UNDP assistance will be mobilized to undertake joint collaborative initiatives towards achieving the common outcome. They will contribute through active participation in group discussions (facilitated by UNDP) and collaborative exchanges between themselves through the UNDP respective projects. The government partners and representatives from the business community and academia are responsible for proposing the policy issues for approval to the higher authorities in the country, in addition to providing the general public with information through public events and media coverage.</i></p> <p><i>- Other main partners, in the area of soft assistance and advocacy include non-governmental organizations (NGOs) addressing issues of ICTD , and capacity building for internal governance, training companies, the media as well as national academic and research think tanks.</i></p>			
<u>Project title and number:</u> A National E-Strategy for Lebanon – Leb/02/Z07			
Intended Outputs	Output Targets for (years)	Indicative Activities	Inputs
1.1. A national e-Strategy document formulated and adopted	2002	1.1.1 Draw an e-Readiness situation map 1.1.2 Draft an e-Strategy document highlighting priorities and a preliminary implementation plan 1.1.3 Organize a consensus –building conference	1.1.1. ICT Strategist, Development Analyst and ICT Information and Data Analyst. \$30,000 1.1.3. National Conference: \$10,000

Part III. Management Arrangements - minimum one paragraph, suggested maximum two pages

The project activities will be completed in December 2002. It will be executed in accordance with the National Execution modality whereby the OMSAR, designated in this project document as the National Execution Agency (NEX), will execute the project on behalf of the Government of Lebanon, with the support of UNDP. All services shall be provided in accordance with UNDP procedures, rules and regulations. The Government, through its designated executing agency, shall retain overall responsibility for the execution of the project and shall be responsible for and bound by any contracts signed by the UNDP Resident Representative, on behalf of the Executing Agency and upon its request, for the procurement of goods and services and /or recruitment of personnel for the program. Costs incurred by UNDP Country Office for providing the above described support services will be partly recovered from the project budget.

The project will recruit an independent National ICT Strategist with a focus on e-requirements and solutions. Two junior professionals, a Development Analyst and an ICT Information and Data Analyst, will be recruited to assist the ICT Strategist. The IT Senior Strategy Advisor to the Minister of OMSAR and Project Director of Leb/98/002 will act as Project Manager. He will guide and provide direct technical support to the ICT Strategist and his/her colleagues. He will also designate a focal point from Leb/98/002 to regularly assist the ICT Strategist and his/her colleagues.

Leb/98/002 will also provide implementation support and lead the process of organizing the national consensus-building workshop. The workshop will be organized in the UN House in Beirut in December or upon the completion of the e-strategy and its approval by the Minister of OMSAR and UNDP

The SURF ICTD Policy Specialist will be approached to assist in substantive reviews and advice at four main juncture of the project: 1) the formulation of the e-readiness survey; 2) the results of the assessment; 3) the draft of the e-strategy; 4) the design of the national workshop. The SURF ICTD Policy Specialist will also be approached to participate in relevant meetings pertaining to above activities.

Time Frame:

July: Recruitment of ICT Strategist;
July/August: Recruitment of a Development Analyst and ICT Information and Data Analyst;
November: Submission of draft e-strategy
December: National Consensus-Building Workshop

Part IV. Legal Context

This project document shall be the instrument referred to as “Project Documents or other instruments” in Article 1 of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Government of Lebanon and the United Nations Development Programme, signed by the parties on 10 February 1986. The host-country executing agency shall, for the purpose of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement, refer to the Government cooperating agency described in that Agreement.

The following types of revisions may be made to this project document with the signature of the UNDP Resident Representative only, provided he or she is assured that the other signatories of the project document have no objection to the proposed changes:

1. Revisions in, or addition of, any of the annexes of the project document;
2. Revisions which do not involve significant changes in the immediate objectives, outputs or activities of the project, but are caused by the rearrangement of inputs already agreed to or by cost increases due to inflation; and
3. Mandatory annual revisions, which re-phase the delivery of, agreed project inputs or reflect increased expert or other costs due to inflation, or take into account cooperating agency expenditure flexibility.

Budget

The budget Total is \$40,000 that is allocated as follows:

- 1) \$30,000 for technical expertise, notably the National ICT Strategist and the two junior professionals: Development Analyst and ICT Information and Data Analyst;
- 2) \$10,000 for the Workshop logistics.

Government contribution consists of the input provided by the Senior IT Advisor and his colleagues under Leb/98/002. Their **cost contribution** is estimated at least \$35,000 covering salaries (calculations based on part-time allocations of salaries) and logistics support expenses.

PROJECT RESULTS AND RESOURCES FRAMEWORK -

ANNUAL OUTPUT TARGET

Year 1 - Potential risk factors consists of a delay (estimated 2 months) in the implementation of Conference due to delays in the document review process, and/or a potential change of Government.

WORKPLAN FOR YEAR 1 - 2002

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION		INPUTS DESCRIPTION	BUDGET LINE	BUDGET \$
1.1.1	Desk review and interviews to identify an e-Readiness situation map for the country at large,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National ICT Strategist • Development Analyst • ICT Information and Data Analyst 	17.01	20,000
1.1.2	Drafting of an e-Strategy document highlighting priorities and a preliminary implementation plan		17.02	5,000
			17.03	5,000
1.1.3	Organizing a consensus-building conference around the proposed e-Strategy	Conference facilities, simultaneous translation, documents, logistics	34.01	10,000
Total for output 1.1				40,000

Annex 1: ICTD – TTF Proposal (April 2002)

Service Line 1: National and Regional ICT for Development Strategies (e-Strategies)

Title: A National E-Strategy for Lebanon

Description: Lebanon has a dynamic private sector, eager to promote and implement e-Business, and a public sector, which is convinced of the importance of developing the needed legal, and institutional framework. However, Lebanon lacks a comprehensive e-Strategy and suffers from an outdated regulatory framework, which impedes progress, despite the serious efforts that have been undertaken in the past years to loosen such regulation through the liberalization of some sectors. The Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform has integrated the objective of developing and implementing an e-Government strategy into the work plan of its project with UNDP for the year 2002. The purpose behind the e-Strategy for Lebanon is to lay out the roadmap for the enabling building blocks for a national e-society covering the ICT infrastructure, the institutional and legal frameworks and the human resources from both the service user and service provider perspectives. Starting with an e-Readiness assessment (covering all of the above building blocks), the e-Strategy will identify and elaborate the measures required as per a high-level national business strategy to make the country at large, and its services industries in particular, ready to join the global e-Society. Key priorities shall be identified. These measures are to be documented in a structured manner along with a high level plan of action for their timely realization and sustainability through continual modernization.

The project should use as an input the e-Government strategy prepared by OMSAR with the bulk of the work to focus on identifying the national strategies for the other areas listed in Part I. B and the government's role in each.

Areas where the government can actively participate are: Leadership, Institutional development, Enabling Regulatory environment, ICT Education, Training and Awareness, Infrastructure development and coordination and collaboration with the private sector and academia.

National Outcome: National e-Strategy (NeS) Document

Output: National e-Strategy (NeS) and implementation plan by the end of 2002

Indicative Activities	Axis of Intervention			
	Legislative	Coordination and awareness/advocacy	Institutional Development	ICT
Survey and document all e-Strategy related achievements: an "e-Readiness situation map"	X	X	X	X
Identify remaining projects to realize full e-Strategy status	X	X	X	X
Prioritize projects to benefit from e-Strategy	X	X	X	X
Document National e-Strategy (NeS)		X		
Prepare NeS Implementation Plan		X		

Obtain government-wide consensus through seminars		x		
Secure related funding from International Funding Organizations		x		

The inputs needed consist of international consultants, national consultants, training activities, seminars and workshops.