

**\*\*DRAFT\*\***

**Republic of Lebanon  
National Capacity Self-Assessment  
Strategy & Action Plan for Capacity Development  
December 2007**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The overall aim of the National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) process was to determine national priorities for capacity development under the three UN Conventions negotiated at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit: the UN Convention on Biodiversity (UNCBD), the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD). Accordingly, Lebanon—as a signatory to the three Rio Conventions—assessed the progress made in their implementation so far and determined the specific NCSA objectives to be:

- (a) identifying capacity constraints with regard to the implementation of these Rio conventions
- (b) preparing a National Strategy and Action Plan that determines the necessary mechanisms for overcoming these constraints.

Over a two year period (10/2005-10/2007), the national NCSA process in Lebanon completed four major stages towards the realization of these objectives, namely: (i) *inception* (preparation of a work plan and stakeholder analysis); (ii) *stock-taking* (identification of all relevant activities, documents, policies and strategies); (iii) *thematic assessments* (analysis of Lebanon’s implementation of its commitments in the areas of biodiversity, climate change, and desertification); as well as (iv) *cross-cutting analysis* (assessment of capacity issues, constraints and needs that cut across the three Rio conventions). The resulting outputs have been finalized and are publicly available at the Ministry of Environment (MoE) website (<http://www.moe.gov.lb/Projects/Ongoing/NCSA.htm>).

The *Strategy and Action Plan* presented in this report is the final stage in the NCSA process and serves to as a key tool for following up on it in a sustainable manner. The main objectives for this Plan are:

1. To provide a *concise* summary of capacity development objectives, strategies, and priority actions that will lead to measurable improvements in the management of the thematic areas covered by the Rio conventions.
2. To ensure follow-up to the NCSA, by specifying implementation frameworks and strategies for the Action Plan,.

This Plan—which flows from the thematic assessments, cross-cutting analysis, and periodic stakeholder consultations conducted during the NCSAA process—will be available for public discussion and endorsement at a planned national meeting in which the concerned stakeholders from the government, civil society, and donor organizations will be present.

## II. STRATEGY FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT & ACTION PLAN

The Strategy and Action Plan for Capacity Development is based primarily on the three national Thematic Assessment reports (biodiversity, climate change, and desertification) and resulting Cross-Cutting Analysis study. It also incorporates the lessons learned from other NCSA processes across the world and the various relevant documents presented via the UNDP and GEF.

### Box 1: Capacity Development

The NCSA is essentially concerned with a country's *capacity* (*the abilities of individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions to address the priority environmental issues as part of efforts to achieve sustainable development*). *Capacity development* is thus a process of promoting changes for adoption of new duties, knowledge, behavior, values and policies in order to enable more effective sustainable development. The NCSA process aims to prepare a *capacity development plan*, defined as *the objectives and actions required to improve the ability of individuals, institutions and systems to make and implement decisions, and to functions in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner*.

The Plan provides sustainability by identifying the capacity development objectives and strategic principles, as well as providing a framework for implementation. The main objective of the Plan is strengthening of the systemic, institutional and individual capacities for implementation of the Rio conventions.

### A. Summary of Priority capacity deficit areas, capacity development objectives, and strategic principles

The cross-cutting paper identified seven *priority capacity deficit areas* across the systemic, institutional and personal levels with regard to the three Rio conventions. These are:

- A. National policy and strategy
- B. Legislative and regulatory framework
- C. Institutions, environmental management, and stakeholder participation
- D. Monitoring, assessing, and observation capacity (data management)
- E. Public awareness and education; knowledge/information-sharing and dissemination
- F. Science/research expertise and technology transfer
- G. Funding and incentive systems

It also derived the following *capacity development objectives*:

1. Mainstream Rio issues (biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation) to be mainstreamed within national plans/strategies.

2. Develop effective national policy planning tools/strategies
3. Enhance link between science and policy-making
4. Ensure passage of relevant legislation in timely and consistent fashion; harmonize laws
5. Implement and enforce legislation/standards dealing with biodiversity, climate change, LD
6. Train judiciary/lawyers on environmental matters
7. Strengthen capacity for—and coordination/cooperation among—institutions responsible for environmental management
8. Decentralize environmental management to allow for effective participation by local communities
9. Develop/upgrade monitoring and observation systems
10. Develop assessment and data management capacity
11. Improve public awareness regarding Rio issues/themes
12. Integrate Rio themes into educational curricula in schools and universities
13. Increase exchange and dissemination of information and knowledge
14. Improve scientific research and expertise with regard to Rio themes
15. Build capacity for environmentally-friendly technology transfer
16. Increase (national and international) funding mechanisms for implementation of Rio conventions
17. Develop appropriate incentives to promote Rio agreements

### ***Strategic Principles (expand a little)***

The following strategic principles—values and priorities—were developed based on the principles developed by the NSCA process. These principles include:

- 1- *Integration of capacity building into overall framework/strategy for sustainable development* (which integrates the environment, economy and society into all components of development);
- 2- *National ownership of process* (including gaining requisite political will and pro-active approach to setting priorities rather than submitting to donor-driven processes);
- 3- *Multi-stakeholder consultations and decision-making* (including de-centralization)
- 4- *Strengthening partnerships among public institutions, civil society, private sector, scientific/research communities, and local communities;*
- 5- *Adopting a holistic approach to capacity building* (individual, institutional, system).
- 6- *Dynamic nature of capacity building* (old and new, etc.)

### **B. Actions to be Implemented**

The action plan incorporate priorities from the cross-cutting synthesis as well as the thematic assessment reports. The activities below should be prioritized and adopted at the first meeting of the Working Group (WG) of convention focal points (see section III below for more on the WG).

The financial requirements for these activities have not been identified, as they need to be addressed by the WG. Once adopted, they should be provided for by both national budget and donor support.

Figure 1: Proposed Action Plan Activities

#	<i>Capacity Development Areas/Activity</i>	<b>Responsible institutions</b>	<b>Time period</b>
A	<i>NATIONAL POLCY &amp; STRATEGY</i>		
A.1	National sustainable development strategy and action plan	CoM, MoE, CDR	Two years
A.2	Strategy for international cooperation/implementation of MEAs (including prioritizing obligations and opportunities from the Rio conventions)	MoE, MFA	6 months
A.3	National strategy and action plan for GhG abatement	MoE	6 months
A.4	National Forest strategy and action plan	MoA, MoE	6 months
A.5	Revise and implement Land use planning and management strategy	CDR, MoA, MoE, DUP	6 months
A.6	Operationalize NBSAP, NAP, and INC respectively	MoE, MoA	On-going
B	<i>LEGISLATIVE &amp; REGULATORY FRAMEWORK</i>		
B.1	Operationalize Law 444 (environment code) by issuing decrees	CoM, parliament	
B.2	Implement draft laws/decrees/regulations that are pending (biosafety, access/benefit sharing, integrated coastal area management, EIA, SEA, ban on import of ozone-depleting substances, etc.)	Parliament, CoM	
C	<i>INSTITUTIONS &amp; ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT</i>		
C.1	Establishment of a Working Group (with requisite funding) that coordinates the implementation of the Rio conventions and prepares joint strategies for funding, reporting, research	MoE, MoA	1 month
C.2	Establish/ensure adequate funding for National biodiversity, climate change, and desertification committees	MoE, MoA	3-6 months
C.3	Create (non-technical) policy coordination and operationalization position(s) within MoE to support working group and national committees		
C.4	Training program for personnel in governmental institutions regarding policy analysis and negotiation skills		1-2 years
C.5	Program for training and strengthening of the capacity of local level for implementation of the Rio obligations		1-2 years
D	<i>MONITORING, ASSESSING, and OBSERVATION</i>		
D.1	National program for monitoring and data management in the three thematic areas observation and measuring methodologies and research)		
D.2	Creating national monitoring network (for the three		

	thematic areas)		
D.3	Development of national system of indicators for monitoring of the state in the three thematic areas		
D.4	Establishment of mechanisms for cooperation between data management institutions		
<i>E</i>	<i>PUBLIC AWARENESS &amp; EDUCATION</i>		
E.1	Strategy and Action Plan for public awareness and knowledge-sharing with regard to Rio Conventions		
E.2	Program for integration of biodiversity, land degradation/desertification and climate change issues in the education programs at all levels		
E.3	Strategy and program to raise awareness among decision-makers (parliamentarians, ministers and DGs, municipalities, etc.)		
<i>F</i>	<i>SCIENCE/RESEARCH EXPERTISE &amp; TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER</i>		
F.1	Strategy for intensifying research in three thematic areas (introducing comprehensive research and study methodologies, financing scientific-research activities, support of young researchers)		
F.2	National strategy for (environmentally friendly) technology development and transfer		
<i>G</i>	<i>FUNDING &amp; INCENTIVE SYSTEMS</i>		
G.1	Develop tax and customs incentives for environmentally friendly technology		
G.2	Create incentives for individuals and companies to adopt environmental friendly practices		
G.3	Development of criteria and procedures for financing projects in environmental sector in the thematic areas		

### III. STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The key to implementing this Strategy and Action Plan is anchoring them into national development priorities and policies. This, in turn, requires new and strengthened institutions and capacities necessary to translate the Rio agreements (and other international instruments) into action at the national and local levels. Of course, producing effective information and knowledge management (such as monitoring systems) and engaging the public (via awareness and educational campaigns) are fundamental principles that must underpin the whole process of implementation.

While the MoE—supported by international and national experts and funded by the national budget as well as by donor organizations—would take the lead role in implementing the Strategy and Action Plan, it can only be effectively implemented if all the concerned authorities (on the

national and local levels) participate in the true spirit of a sustainable development framework. This, to be sure, is very difficult given the current lack of (i) political will and awareness among Lebanon's decision-makers, (ii) institutional coordination among the various ministries and public authorities, and (iii) requisite funding, particularly from national sources. However, Law 444 (known as the Environment Code) already proposes an ideal structure which could address all three of these challenges. First, it proposes the creation of a **National Council for the Environment** (NCE) consisting of 14 members drawn equally from concerned ministries and civil society (including private sector). Second, it calls for the establishment of a **National Environment Fund** (NEF) enjoying financial and administrative autonomy, and which would receive both regular national funding via the national budget as well as international funding from donor organizations and foreign aid. The fact that Law 444 was passed by the Parliament represented an important step towards express political support. However, the Lebanese authorities have yet to issue the requisite decrees needed to operationalize the various component of the Environment Code. Doing so by establishing the NCE (along with the NEF) would thus send a powerful signal that there is political will to abide by Lebanon's national and international environmental commitments, including thus contained in the Rio agreements.

Figure 2 below depicts the envisioned implementation mechanism envisioned by this Plan.

It is proposed that the Council of Ministers (CoM) also establishes a cross-cutting "**National Steering Committee**" (NSC) composed of highest appropriate level of representation from the concerned line ministries that would serve as a decision/policy making (or, if this is not possible, advisory) structure for the issues covered by the Rio Convention. Such a NSC—which would report directly to the CoM until the NCE is enacted, after which it would report to that body—would thus deal with strategic planning, implementation and legislative requirements for successful implementation of the instruments and other related initiatives. The NSC should have its own budget allocation (with resource allocation responsibilities) and be vested with the necessary authority as fits its mandate.

The NSC, in turn, would work directly with **independent national committees** for biodiversity, desertification/land degradation, and climate change respectively. These thematic committees—composed of experts from academia, research institutes, civil society, and private sector as well as concerned ministries and public agencies--need to be established or operationalized effectively as soon as possible. Given the importance of forests as a cross-cutting issue and the fact that the Forest Principles were also negotiated at Rio, it is further suggested that a national forest committee be formed along the same lines.

It is further suggested that a "**Working Group**" (WG) be established as a permanent forum to enhance institutional coordination across the Rio conventions (and other MEAs as decided). The WG would meet regularly—at least once a month and otherwise be in correspondence—be composed of the convention focal points, and supported by the MoE (particularly the department responsible for international cooperation). The WG's mandate should include coordinating and following up with the Strategy and Action Plan implementation; preparing reports for joint funding, coordination and implementation to be given to the NSC for adoption; organizing the NSC committee meetings; coordinating with the thematic national committees; as well as

creating and regularly updating a dedicated webpage with all information, studies, and data from the three (or more) thematic areas.

The MoE would host the WG meetings, coordinate and provide support for the national committees, and of course play an important lead role in the NSC and NEC when they are formed. It is suggested that a convention policy/implementation team be created within the MoE to support (a) policy analysis and synergies across the thematic areas covered by Rio (and other MEAs as) and (b) to support the WG. The terms of reference (ToR) of those employed for this team should not be purely technical, but able to see the bigger policy picture.

FIGURE 2: PROPOSED ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION INSTITUTIONS

