

Assessing Budget Participation Readiness

THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS

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ABOUT THE PARTICIPATION READINESS SCORE

The Participation Readiness Score is part A of the state of participation measurement tool developed by TI-S. The Participation readiness Score is measured via a range of unique and proxy indicators that assess the extent to which the main pre-conditions and enabling factors of meaningful public participation in budget processes are met in a national or local context. It aims to measure readiness at an institutional level, drawing on broader contextual factors.

SELECTION JUSTIFICATION

- The selection was based on Transparency International -Lebanon Chapter sector priority.
- Since the assessment tool was not conceived to assess a sector, but rather an institution, the Ministry of Social Affairs, was selected to represent the sector, knowing that the social sector extends beyond the intervention of the selected ministry.
- As a matter of fact, the below assessment is indicative of the participation readiness of the Ministry of Social Affairs which is a key stakeholder in the social sector.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher followed the methodology detailed in the SANCUS Assessment Toolkit.

1. Selection of sector.
2. Selection of the relevant public institution to represent the sector.
3. Dissecting of indicators and development of supplementary questions.
4. Identification, for each indicator, the various sources of information (KIIs, media, websites, observations, etc.).
5. Conducting data collection.
6. Cross-analysing information.
7. Assessing indicators and justifying rating and responses.
8. Reviewing.

CHALLENGES AND GAPS

- KIIs sampling biases
 - The researcher faced some difficulties in defining the optimal sample size for KIIs.
 - The researcher faced some difficulties in defining the sample distribution strategy. The researcher opted for a distribution rather based on the areas of intervention (GBV, disability, social welfare, Child protection, etc.) and not on geographical location.
- Sectors specificity
 - The researcher has inferred that specific sectors (such as the social sector) are by nature conducive for more participation, while other sectors such as the energy comprising capital intensive industries are more prone to corruption and less open to transparency and participation (Toukan, 2016).
- Contradictions
 - Although the assessment is based on objective criteria that would allow the researcher to rate using multiple sources of information, one of these sources relied on the output collected from KIIs. In fact, the researcher might have been faced with contradictory opinion about the same subject.. For instance, some considered that the ministry was cooperative and already has an established public participation mechanism, while others considered that the ministry was closed to external suggestions and not ready to cooperate with the CSOs. The researcher faced some difficulties in identifying totally impartial answers vs biased/motivated answers..

- Public sectors buy-in
 - Transparency International – Lebanon Chapter face some difficulties in getting the ministries to commit to such exercises, especially in times of crisis when the priorities are obviously elsewhere. As a mitigation measure, the researcher attempted to interview former employees and TI-Leb will attempt to solicit the ministries feedback on the preliminary results in a later stage.

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

1. BUDGET TRANSPARENCY

A1.1 Production of Key Budget Documents & Fiscal Information





Assessment Pillar	A1. Budget Transparency
Indicator	A1.1 Production of Key Budget Documents & Fiscal Information
Indicator Question	<p>Which of the following key budget documents does the public institution produce? (Please select all that apply).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Budget Statement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Executive's Budget Proposal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enacted Budget <input type="checkbox"/> Citizens' Budget <input type="checkbox"/> In-Year Report <input type="checkbox"/> Mid-Year Review <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Year-End Report <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audit Report <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please Specify): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> None <p>Guidance: Please see here for more information on the characteristics and content of the key budget documents; each produced at different stages of a typical budget cycle.</p> <p><i>In locating key budget documents, researchers may refer to the website of the public institution, request direction from relevant public officials at the public institution, and/or refer websites or consult officials from other associated public institutions, such as the Ministry of Finance.</i></p>
<p>Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.</p>	<p>At the Ministry level:</p> <p>The Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) follows the regular procedure during the budget preparation process, similarly to any other public administration. The budget is prepared at department level, compiled at the general directorate level, and submitted as a budget proposal to the budget directorate the MoF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The MoSA does produce a budget proposal but does not publish it separately on its platforms. ▪ The MoSA does not publish its enacted budget separately on its platforms. ▪ The MoSA neither produces nor publishes any citizen friendly guide specific to its proposed or enacted budget. ▪ The MoSA neither produces nor publishes any in-year, or mid-year reports. ▪ The MoSA produces the closure of accounts on a yearly basis but does not publish it. ▪ The MoSA does not produced audit reports.

<p style="text-align: center;">Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.</p>	<p>At the government level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The government of Lebanon only produces a budget circular which is no longer considered a pre-budget statement. The concerned ministry does not produce any pre-budget statement. ▪ The Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) produces a budget proposal and submits it to the Ministry of Finance as part of the budget preparation process. The MoSA has never published its budget proposal on its website; Yet, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) used to publish the government Executives' budget proposal (EBP) (including the full version of the MoSA budget proposal), however during the last couple of years, the EBP is no longer available on the MoF's website. It is usually leaked unofficially to the media, yet it is always unclear which is the final version. ▪ The ministry's enacted budget is also published as part of the state enacted budget. It is systematically published in two versions: (i) a brief version published in the Official Gazette, (ii) a detailed version published on the MoF website. ▪ The Citizen's budget is only produced for the state budget including one single mention of the MoSA budgeted allocation for the upcoming year. Therefore, we decided not to consider that it is representative of the selected ministry budget. ▪ In year reports are rather general and not specific to ministries. They are produced based on treasury data and published with significant delays by the Ministry of Finance. ▪ Mid-year reviews are not produced at all. ▪ Year-End reports also referred to as "closure of accounts reports" are produced on a yearly basis but not available for the public. ▪ Court of account is mandated by the law to audit the closure of accounts and produce audit reports for each administration.
<p>Source(s) of Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Ministry of finance (MoF) website Link to the MoF website ▪ The official gazette Link to the official gazette ▪ The Institute of finance (IoF) website Link to the Citizen Budget ▪ The researcher knowledge and observation of the financial information management system linking the Ministry of Finance to all ministries and public administrations.

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

1. BUDGET TRANSPARENCY

A1.2 Online Platform for Budget Documents & Fiscal Information

Assessment Pillar	A1. Budget Transparency
Indicator	A1.2 Online Platform for Budget Documents & Fiscal Information
Indicator Question	<p>To what extent does the public institution maintain one or more websites or web portals for publishing institutional budget and fiscal information? (Please provide relevant links in the source(s) of information box below).</p> <p>Guidance: <i>This question assesses whether the public institution maintains a dedicated, functional online platform for the publication of its own budget and fiscal information; the question does not aim to assess whether the platform itself publishes up-to-date budget information (see A1.3).</i></p>
Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="443 1010 1453 1111">  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High (2): The public institution maintains a functioning website or web portal to support the publication of budget and fiscal information. <li data-bbox="443 1149 1417 1323">  <input type="checkbox"/> Medium (1): The public institution does not maintain its own website or web portal to support the publication of budget and fiscal information, but such information may be hosted on the website or portal of a different public institution (e.g., the Ministry of Finance etc.) <li data-bbox="443 1361 1453 1536">  <input type="checkbox"/> Low / None (0): The public institution, or other associated institution, does not maintain a functioning website or web portal to support the publication of budget and fiscal information; or the public institution does not produce key budget documents (refer A1.1). <li data-bbox="443 1552 847 1619">  <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-)
Justification <i>Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.</i>	The Ministry of Social Affairs maintains a functioning website or web portal to support the publication of budget and fiscal information
Source(s) of Information	The Ministry of Social Affairs Website www.socialaffairs.gov.lb

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

1. BUDGET TRANSPARENCY





A1.3 Public Availability of Key Budget Documents & Fiscal Information

Assessment Pillar	A1. Budget Transparency
Indicator	A1.3 Public Availability of Key Budget Documents & Fiscal Information
Indicator Question	<p>To what extent does the public institution make key budget documents (refer A1.1) available to the public?</p> <p>Guidance: To be considered 'available to the public', a budget document should be: 1) published on the official website of the institution or on that of another relevant public institution (e.g., Ministry of Finance), and 2) available free of charge and/or entail no additional cost to access. If both these conditions are not met, the budget documents cannot be considered available to the public.</p> <p>NB. This question is adapted from the International Budget Partnership's "Open Budget Survey Guidelines on the Public Availability of Budget Documents". Please see here for more information.</p>
Scoring	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High (2): One or more key budget documents are published on the official website or portal of the institution, or that of another public institution, and are available free of any additional cost.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medium (1): One or more key budget documents are available in hard copy format but are not available online, and thus entail additional cost to access.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low / None (0): Key budget documents are produced but are available for internal purposes / use only; or the public institution does not produce key budget documents (refer A1.1).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-)</p>
<p>Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A detailed version of the enacted budget specific to the Ministry of Social Affairs showing line by line appropriations is available as part of the state budget document published on the Ministry of Finance Website. ▪ Over the last decade, the proposed budget was rarely published. In fact, it was published for a couple of years by the MoF as part of the overall state budget proposal, but never published by the MoSA as a standalone document. ▪ The year-end report (closure of accounts), although produced at the ministry level on a yearly basis, it was never published. ▪ Relevant audit reports produced by the Court of Account are not published.
Source(s) of Information	<p>The Ministry of Finance Website: www.finance.gov.lb Link to the specific page publishing enacted budgets. The operational budget is detailed from page 759 to page 777 The investment budget is detailed from page 1000 to page 1001</p>

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

1. BUDGET TRANSPARENCY

A1.4 Public Availability of Budget Data in a Machine-Readable Format





Assessment Pillar	A1. Budget Transparency
Indicator	A1.4 Public Availability of Budget Data in a Machine-Readable Format
Indicator Question	<p>To what extent does the public institution ensure that the numerical data contained in the budget documents are made available to the public in a machine-readable format?</p> <p>Guidance: Budget data may be considered ‘machine-readable’ if it is in a format that can be easily processed by a computer (CSV, JSON, XML). Numerical data contained in PDF, Word (.doc / .docx), or HTML files do not qualify as machine-readable. Please see here for more information.</p>
Scoring	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> High (2): All numerical data contained in the key budget documents are available in a machine-readable format.</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Medium (1): Some of the numerical data contained in the key budget documents are available in a machine-readable format.</p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low / None (0): The numerical data contained in the key budget documents are not available in a machine-readable format; or key budget documents are not made available to the public (refer A1.3).</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-)</p>
<p>Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All numerical data contained in the key budget documents are only made available in a PFM format . Some aggregate indicators are available in an online version of the Citizen Budget which is Citizen budget dashboard. Although the dashboard is technically the front-end of a very disaggregated budget data re-produced in a tabular format on an excel sheet. The raw data sets are not made available to the public.
Source(s) of Information	<p>The Ministry of Finance Website Link to the Ministry of finance website The Ministry of Social Affairs website Link to the Ministry Social Affairs website The Institute of Finance website Link to the Institute of finance website</p>

¹ Although some PDF content can be extracted to excel, the budget data are not displayed in a tabular format with makes it almost impossible to use the new technology to extract a usable set of data.

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

1. BUDGET TRANSPARENCY

A1.5 Timeliness of the Availability of Budget Documents & Fiscal Information

Assessment Pillar	A1. Budget Transparency
Indicator	A1.5 Timeliness of the Availability of Budget Documents & Fiscal Information
Indicator Question	<p>To what extent does the public institution ensure that the key budget documents produced by the institution are made available to the public within a reasonable timeframe?</p> <p>Guidance: A timeframe may be considered 'reasonable' if the budget documents are published in time for the information they contain to be useful and relevant to all stakeholders. Please see here for accepted timeframes for the publication of specific budget documents based on international best practice.</p>
Scoring	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> High (2): All key budget documents produced by the institution are made available to the public within a reasonable timeframe.</p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium (1): Some key budget documents produced by the institution are made available to the public within a reasonable timeframe.</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Low / None (0): Key budget documents are made available to the public but not within a reasonable timeframe; or key budget documents are not made available to the public (refer A1.3).</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-)</p>
Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the Ministry of Social Affairs does not publish its budget in a standalone document. And since the MosA budget is published in full as part of the state enacted budget that is made available by the MoF, the researcher examined the timely publishing of the state budget as a proxy to rate this indicator. • The enacted budget, including the detailed budget of the Ministry of Social Affairs is considered to be published within a reasonable time frame 2-6 weeks after its approval by the parliament. • Since at least one of the key budget documents are made available within a reasonable timeframe, the researcher opted for option 2. Other budget documents are either not published or not made available to the public in a timely manner.
Source(s) of Information	The open budget survey questionnaire Link to the questionnaire (to check page 13)

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

1. BUDGET TRANSPARENCY

A1.6 Production of a Citizens' Budget

Assessment Pillar	A1. Budget Transparency
<p>Indicator</p>	<p>A1.6 Production of a Citizens' Budget</p>
<p>Indicator Question</p>	<p>For which of the following budget documents does the public institution produce a corresponding Citizens' Budget? (Please select all that apply).</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Executive's Budget Proposal <input type="checkbox"/> Enacted Budget <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please Specify): _____ </p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None (The public institution does not produce a Citizens' Budget) </p> <p>Guidance: : A Citizens' Budget is a simplified, non-technical representation of budget and fiscal information. They are designed to be understood by as many people as possible and thus encourage wider public engagement in budget processes. While this is important for all key budget documents, Citizens' Budgets typically correspond to the Executive's Budget Proposal and the Enacted Budget.</p> <p>Please see here for more information and examples of Citizens' Budgets.</p>
<p>Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Social Affairs does not produce a citizen budget. • The citizen budget produced by the Institute of Finance cannot be considered as representative of the Ministry of Social Affairs budget since the latter only shows a one line in the document.
<p>Source(s) of Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of finance website Link to the Ministry of Finance website • The Ministry of Social Affairs website Link to the Ministry of Social Affairs website

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

1. BUDGET TRANSPARENCY

A1.7 Public Availability & Timeliness of a Citizens' Budget

Assessment Pillar	A1. Budget Transparency
Indicator	A1.7 Public Availability & Timeliness of a Citizens' Budget
Indicator Question	<p>To what extent does the public institution make Citizens' Budgets available to the public, and within a reasonable timeframe?</p> <p>Guidance: To be considered 'available to the public', a Citizens' Budget should be: 1) published on the official website of the institution or on that of another relevant public institution (e.g., Ministry of Finance), and 2) available free of charge and/or entail no additional cost to access.</p> <p>According to best practice, the publication of a Citizens' Budget should take place at the same time as the corresponding budget document. For example, a 'reasonable timeframe' for the publication of a Citizens' Budget corresponding to an Enacted Budget would be no later than 3 months after legislative approval.</p> <p>Please see here for timeframes for the publication of specific budget documents based on international best practice.</p>
Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> High (2): The Citizen Budget is published on the official website or portal of the institution and published within a reasonable timeframe. <input type="checkbox"/> Medium (1): The Citizen Budget is published on the official website or portal of the institution but is not published within a reasonable timeframe. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low / None (0): The Citizen Budget is not published on the official website or portal of the institution, and thus not made available to the public; or the public institution does not produce a Citizens' Budget (refer A1.6). <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-)
Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.	The Ministry of Social Affairs does not produce any citizen budget specific to its budget.
Source(s) of Information	N/A

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

2. POLITICAL WILL

A2.1 Political Will of the Head of the Institution

Assessment Pillar	A2. Political Will
Indicator	A2.1 Political Will of the Head of the Institution
Indicator Question	<p>To what extent does the head of the institution* demonstrate support for public participation in decision-making processes?</p> <p>Guidance: Support for public participation and engagement in decision-making processes may take many forms. This may include initiatives or positive actions to introduce, encourage, or strengthen participation in decision-making processes, or references to public participation through speeches, statements, interviews, publications, and/or other official communications.</p> <p><i>* For the purposes of this assessment, the ‘head of the institution’ may be any individual, or group of individuals, legally empowered or officially charged with decision-making authority in relation to the overall function and administration of the public institution.</i></p> <p>Please see here (p.16) for more information on a range of potential considerations involved in measuring political will.</p>
Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="464 1133 1449 1238"> <input type="checkbox"/> High (2): The head of the institution leads, or proactively supports and advocates for public participation in decision-making processes. <li data-bbox="464 1272 1449 1447"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium (1): The head of the institution is neutral on the value and importance of public participation in decision-making processes and neither supports nor actively opposes initiatives to facilitate or strengthen such participation. <li data-bbox="464 1480 1449 1621"> <input type="checkbox"/> Low / None (0): The head of institution opposes or demonstrates limited interest in supporting initiatives to facilitate or strengthen public participation in decision-making processes. <li data-bbox="464 1655 1465 1796"> <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-): The head of the institution is willing to support and promote participation in decision-making but is unable to do so due to legal (refer A3), civic space (refer A4), or other constraints.

<p>Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.</p>	<p>On one hand, the researcher was only able to capture a few statements supporting the claim that the ministry is officially supportive of public participation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For instance, on July 16, 2020, the minister delivered an open speech during the consultation meetings for a new social protection strategy, highlighting the importance of the participatory approach to reflect all stakeholder's interests. • In June 2021, during the launch of "National strategy for older persons", the minister openly stated that the strategy was developed based on a participatory approach. <p>On the other hand, the feedback collected during Key Informant Interviews was not conclusive, as some considered that, despite all challenges the ministry, represented by its lead, is open and supportive, while others have contested the official position of the ministry considering that the latter is conditional to donor's support and requirements and only limited to formalities.</p> <p>Since the collected evidence does not clearly demonstrate advocacy or "proactive support" on the part of the head of the institution for participatory processes, the indicator is rated as 'medium'.</p>
<p>Source(s) of Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National News Agency (NNA) website: Link to NNA website • Lebanon files website Link to the website • Key Informant Interviews

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

2. POLITICAL WILL

A2.2 Political Will of the Institutional Staff / Public Officials

Assessment Pillar	A2. Political Will
Indicator	A2.2 Political Will of the Institutional Staff / Public Officials
Indicator Question	<p>To what extent do the institutional staff / public officials demonstrate support for public participation in decision-making processes?</p> <p>Guidance: Support for public participation and engagement in decision-making processes may take many forms. This may include initiatives or positive actions to introduce, encourage, or strengthen participation in decision-making processes, or references to public participation through speeches, statements, interviews, publications, and/or other official communications.</p>
Scoring	<p><input type="checkbox"/> High (2): Staff / public officials lead, or proactively support and advocate for public participation in decision-making processes.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium (1): Staff / public officials are neutral on the value and importance of public participation in decision-making processes and neither support nor oppose initiatives to facilitate or strengthen such participation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low / None (0): Staff / public officials oppose or demonstrate limited interest in supporting initiatives to facilitate or strengthen public participation in decision-making processes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-): Staff / public officials are willing to support and promote participation in decision-making but are unable to do so due to legal (refer A3), civic space (refer A4), or other constraints.</p>
<p>Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessment could not identify compelling evidence to suggest that the staff / public officials at the MoSA either support or oppose public participation initiatives and thus the indicator is rated as 'medium'. The insights from the KIIs does not draw on direct contact with MoSA staff but rather on stakeholders' interaction with MoSA staff. Some clearly stated that some staff elements are open to interaction and facilitate the counterpart works with the ministry, while others can be reluctant to cooperation despite clear guidance from the top. Remark: we could not rely on any press coverage since public officials are not allowed to speak to the media without prior approval from the minister.
Source(s) of Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Informant Interviews

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

2. POLITICAL WILL

A2.3 Institutional Understanding of Open / Good Governance

Assessment Pillar	A2. Political Will
Indicator	A2.3 Institutional Understanding of Open / Good Governance
Indicator Question	<p>To what extent does the head of the institution, and public officials at the institution, understand the concept, principles, and/or features of open / good governance, or public participation in decision-making processes?</p> <p>Guidance: <i>Public institutions may demonstrate understanding of the topic(s) through, for example, an ability to elaborate key concepts, attendance at related training programs or workshops, or evidence of prior exposure to activities or initiatives promoting transparency, participation, and accountability.</i></p> <p><i>The institution would possess a 'high' level of understanding if the head of the institution and institutional staff, i.e., at both levels, consistently demonstrate a strong understanding of the topic and exposure to related activities or training.</i></p>
Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> High (2): The public institution possesses a high level of understanding of the concepts, principles, and features of open / good governance.<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium (1): The public institution possesses a moderate level of understanding of the concepts, principles, and features of open / good governance.<input type="checkbox"/> Low / None (0): The public institution possesses limited or no understanding of the concepts, principles, and features of open / good governance.<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-)

<p>Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.</p>	<p>Since the researcher did not have the opportunity to interview the ministry administration/staff, he could only rely on external sources showing evidence of “prior exposure to activities or initiatives promoting transparency, participation, and accountability.” For instance, the ministry was part of the national effort to improve the governance of the public sector through digitization. The minister clearly stated that using the data-driven platform of “IMPACT” to implement the DAEM (Arabic for Support) program is key to improve productivity, efficiency, and transparency. Since publicly available evidence does not confirm the concepts, principles, and features of open/good governance are not mastered across the institution, the researcher relied on available evidence</p>
<p>Source(s) of Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central inspection board website: Link to the article • DAEM IMPACT landing page: Link to the article Link to a video

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

2. POLITICAL WILL

A2.4 Institutional Commitment to Open / Good Governance

Assessment Pillar	A2. Political Will
Indicator	A2.4 Institutional Commitment to Open / Good Governance
Indicator Question	<p>Is the public institution part of any formal or informal arrangements and partnerships at a national, regional, or global level that aim to promote and support the principles of open / good governance?</p> <p>Guidance: Evidence of institutional commitment to open / good governance may comprise any formal or informal arrangements or partnerships in the open / good governance space, including membership of global or local initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership or participation in civil society forums and working groups.</p>
Scoring	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (2): The public institution is a member of one or more formal or informal institutional arrangements or partnerships.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No (0): The public institution is not a member of any formal or informal institutional arrangements or partnerships.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-)</p>
<p>Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Social Affairs is and was part of many initiatives that promote or support the principles of open/good governance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gender focal point at the ministry is part of the network led by the National Commission for Lebanese Women whose mission is to promote women's rights in the Lebanese society, enhance gender mainstreaming in public institution, and insure gender equality in the social, political, economic and legal spheres • The Ministry was part of the national training network that covered several topics including good governance. • The higher council of childhood (which an institution affiliated to the ministry) was leading the Global Money Week. • The Ministry is also part of the Child Protection working group and the case management national task force.
Source(s) of Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher knowledge of the ministry • No official published documentation could be identified • The website of the NCLW • The website of Aflatoun

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

3. LEGAL MANDATES & OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

A3.1 Constitutional Provisions on Public Participation

Assessment Pillar	A3. Legal Mandates & Operational Frameworks
Indicator	A3.1 Constitutional Provisions on Public Participation
Indicator Question	<p>Does the country's constitution, or equivalent supreme law, enshrine the right for citizens to participate in decision-making process?</p> <p>Guidance: Please specify the relevant constitutional provision(s) in the justification box below.</p>
Scoring	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes (2): The country's constitution, or equivalent supreme law, explicitly provides for citizen participation in decision-making processes.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (0): The country's constitution, or equivalent supreme law, does not explicitly provide for citizen participation in decision-making processes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-)</p>
<p>Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Constitution of Lebanon does not provide for the right to participate in decision making.
<p>Source(s) of Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presidency of the Republic website: Link to the constitution

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

3. LEGAL MANDATES & OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

A3.2 Local Laws & Governing Legislation on Public Participation

Assessment Pillar	A3. Legal Mandates & Operational Frameworks
Indicator	A3.2 Local Laws & Governing Legislation on Public Participation
Indicator Question	<p>To what extent do the laws, polices, and/or regulations establishing or governing the function of the public institution provide for public participation in decision-making processes?</p> <p>Guidance: <i>Legislative provisions outlining public participation may include a wide spectrum of participatory approaches ranging from active involvement in decision-making processes to citizen consultations and satisfaction surveys.</i></p> <p><i>Please specify the name of the legislation / policy that contains such provisions and provide links where available in the source(s) of information box below</i></p>
Scoring	<p><input type="checkbox"/> High (2): The governing laws / regulations include a binding provision(s) that explicitly mandates public participation in decision-making processes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medium (1): The governing laws / regulations include a non-binding provision(s) that recommends, but does not mandate, public participation in decision-making processes.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low / None (0): Governing laws / regulations do not exist or do not include provisions that mandate or recommend public participation in decision-making processes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-)</p>
Justification <i>Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.</i>	<p>The Public Accounting Law 14969/1963 that organizes the budget preparation process in Lebanon, does not stipulate any provision on public participation and consequently does not grant citizens the right to public participation in decision making.</p> <p>The law 212/1993 establishing the Ministry does not stipulate any provision on public participation and consequently does not grant citizens the right to public participation in decision making.</p> <p>The decree 5734/1994 organizing the Ministry's operation does not stipulate any provision on public participation and consequently does not grant citizens the right to public participation in decision making</p>
Source(s) of Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lebanese University Website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to law 212/1993 establishing the Ministry of Social Affairs Link to decree 5734/1994 organizing the Ministry of Social Affairs Link to Public Accounting law 14969/1963

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

3. LEGAL MANDATES & OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

A3.3 Regulatory Framework on Access to Information

Assessment Pillar	A3. Legal Mandates & Operational Frameworks
Indicator	A3.3 Regulatory Framework on Access to Information
Indicator Question	<p>To what extent does the country's regulatory framework grant citizens the right to access public information?</p> <p>Guidance: <i>The regulatory framework around access to public information may include laws or policies, including executive directives, on Access to Information or Freedom of Information Acts, and are often implemented by a government agency mandated to enforce and coordinate the provision of such information.</i></p> <p><i>Please specify the name of the legislation / policy that contains such provisions and provide links where available in the source(s) of information box below.</i></p>
Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High (2): The right to access public information is guaranteed through dedicated legislation on access to information and enshrined in the constitution, or equivalent supreme law.<input type="checkbox"/> Medium (1): Specific provisions on access to public information are included in relevant, non-binding policies and guidelines but are not mandated by law and/or enshrined in the constitution.<input type="checkbox"/> Low / None (0): The right to access public information is not guaranteed through dedicated legislation, enshrined in the constitution, or included in any relevant policies and guidelines.<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-)

<p>Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right to access public information is guaranteed through the Access to information law 28/2017 and its amendments. • The access to information law is dedicated legislation granting all citizens the right to access all state information including all data, reports, documents, contracts, decisions, etc. and any other type of document produced by a state entity, while respecting the confidentiality of personal information and excluding specific fields such as defence, national security, etc. It also requires the administration to publish specific documentation automatically, including document disclosing financial information. • The public procurement law 244/2021 requires all procuring entities to publish procurement documents on a central online platform.
<p>Source(s) of Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanese university website: Link to the Access to Information Law 28/2017 and its amendments article 5. Link to Public Procurement Law 244/2021

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

3. LEGAL MANDATES & OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

A3.4 Institutional Experience with Participatory Processes & Mechanisms

Assessment Pillar	A3. Legal Mandates & Operational Frameworks
Indicator	A3.4 Institutional Experience with Participatory Processes & Mechanisms
Indicator Question	<p>To what extent does the public institution have prior experience in facilitating and implementing participatory processes and mechanisms?</p> <p>Guidance: <i>The public institution may demonstrate prior experience in a wide range of public engagement activities and initiatives, often varying in quality and depth. However, this question focuses on assessing the existence of participatory processes and the extent to which the institutional leadership or staff possess experience in this regard.</i></p> <p><i>To qualify as 'recent' experience, the participatory process or mechanism should have been implemented within the past 24 months of this assessment.</i></p> <p><i>Please see here (p.19-20) for more information on the broader importance of experienced personnel and political management skills in ensuring that the results of participatory processes successfully feed into policy decisions.</i></p>
Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High (2): The public institution has significant, recent experience facilitating and implementing successful participatory processes and mechanisms. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium (1): The public institution has infrequently facilitated and implemented participatory processes and mechanisms with mixed results and success. <input type="checkbox"/> Low / None (0): The public institution has limited or no prior experience in facilitating or implementing participatory processes or mechanisms. <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-)

<p>Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher has detected an existing participatory mechanism in the ministry under the label of “Common Projects”. • A common project is the materialization of a cooperation between a non-governmental organization and the ministry where both parties secure co-financing to deliver a service. The project is jointly designed and developed. • This mechanism is institutionalized: a department is dedicated to managing this initiative, and a yearly budget allocation is foreseen under the budget line 1.14.2.1 labelled “Common health and social projects in cooperation with the civil society organizations”. • Yet, the feedback from KIIs has pointed out that participation if existent, is only for formalities. Besides, the researcher could not assess the quality of the initiative, therefore the researcher will opt for the conservative option 2.
<p>Source(s) of Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ministry website: Link to the page showing the ministry organigram • The ministry of finance website: Link to 2022 budget law • Key Informant Interviews

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

3. LEGAL MANDATES & OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

A3.5 Quality of Budget Process & System

Assessment Pillar	A3. Legal Mandates & Operational Frameworks
Indicator	A3.5 Quality of Budget Process & System
Indicator Question	<p>To what extent does the public institution implement a high-quality budget process and system?</p> <p>Guidance: This question draws on an OECD survey that aims to benchmark good budget practices. Please see here for more information. As outlined in this survey, there are several features or practices that may comprise a 'high-quality' or successful budget process and system. These include: 1) aligning the budget process with strategic priorities; 2) ensuring transparency, access, and openness; 3) adhering to budget timelines; 4) presenting comprehensive and accurate public finances; 5) facilitating inclusive participation; 6) ensuring effective budget execution; 7) providing for independent audits.</p> <p>If scored 'high' or 'medium' on account of meeting three or more of the above criteria, please provide specific examples of practices implemented at the public institution at any stage of the budget cycle (formulation, approval, execution, or oversight) in the justification box below.</p>
Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> High (2): The public institution consistently implements a high-quality budget process, meeting a minimum of five listed criteria around good budgeting practice across the budget cycle. <input type="checkbox"/> Medium (1): The public institution implements a moderately effective budget process, meeting a minimum of three listed criteria around good budgeting practice across the budget cycle. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low / None (0): The public institution does not implement an effective budget process, rarely or inconsistently meeting criteria around good budgeting practice across the budget cycle. <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-)

<p style="text-align: center;">Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanon still adopts a line-item budget. The current budget structure, by default, does not allow the establishment of automatic and direct linkages between spending lines and policy objectives. Although MoSA runs multiple programs and services, its budget is still focused on spending items rather than programs objectives. For instance, the ministry would review the previous year's spending on salaries and wages or other items and would project to spend the same amount or a bit more for the upcoming year and consequently allocate an equivalent amount in the budget proposal. While in the ideal situation, it should build the annual plan based on policy objectives such as (i) increasing the ministry's capacity to manage CP cases, (ii) cover 90% of requests for GBV support, etc. On the fiscal level, the MoF did not implement a binding medium term budgetary framework with clear fiscal goals and ceiling per ministry. The framework showing in the circular is rather indicative and brief. • On the transparency level, Lebanon lacks behind, registering low scores compared to peer-countries such as Jordan. • The budget timeline is not respected across the process. Line-ministries are more likely to abide by the official deadline when submitting their draft budgets, however the remaining of the processes has been subject to systematic delays over the last decade or two. • Institutional coverage is not comprehensive. Even at the ministry level, Social Development Centres SDCs and emanating projects may not be totally covered by the ministry budget, as they have a financial buffer to mobilize external financing that does not show in the state finances. Technically, and even though the ministry's budget is being made available to the public, it might not be totally reflective of the ministry real finances. • Independent audit is not being conducted on a regular basis due to the lack of human capacity hindering the efforts of supreme audit institutions. • Budget execution is subject to ad-hoc budget amendments including additional spending provisions, systematic transfers from the reserve line, treasury advances without prior guarantee of paying back.
<p style="text-align: center;">Source(s) of Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanese University website: Link to the public accounting law no 4969/1963 • The Institute of Finance website: Link to the citizen budget • The International Budget Partnership website: Link to the Open Budget Index – Lebanon page • Transparency International website: Link to the regional comparative study • Budget circulars

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

4. CIVIC SPACE

A4.1 Civic Space Conditions

Assessment Pillar	A4. Civic Space
Indicator	A4.1 Civic Space Conditions
Indicator Question	<p>a. What is the CIVICUS Monitor rating of civic space conditions in the country of the public institution? Please refer here for the latest ratings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Closed <input type="checkbox"/> Repressed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Obstructed <input type="checkbox"/> Narrowed <input type="checkbox"/> Open <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (No Country Rating available) <p>b. To what extent does the public institution operate in conditions of open civic space?</p> <p>Guidance: : Please see here for more information on how civic space conditions under each CIVICUS Monitor rating category are broadly understood. If civic space conditions at a specific institution / municipality are worse, or better, than the country rating, please describe how this is so in the justification box below.</p>
Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> High (2): The state enables and safeguards civic space; authorities provide space and platforms for open dialogue with the public (CIVICUS Rating equivalent: Open). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium (1): The state allows individuals and civil society to exercise rights and freedoms, but with occasional violations and restrictions (CIVICUS Rating Equivalent: Narrowed). <input type="checkbox"/> Low / None (0): Civic space is heavily contested, significantly constrained, or completely closed (CIVICUS Rating Equivalent: Obstructed, Repressed, or Closed) <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-)

<p>Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided. Lorem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This indicator attempted to assess the various aspects of civic space conditions according to the CIVICUS methodology, covering the freedom of assembly and expression, the freedom of speech, the media, and access to information, through direct Key Informant Interviews. • Most respondents to Key Informant Interviews considered that citizens and CSOs are free to organize and exercise their rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly, and expression. • However, many of the respondents argued that this right was either violated or challenged by the political authorities. Others have considered that exercising this right does not necessarily translate into a positive result. • Many respondents (4/6) to Key Informant Interviews considered that the ministry might sometimes oppose criticism and free speech and might retaliate by halting the cooperation with concerned CSOs. • Many respondents (4/6) to Key Informant Interviews considered that, despite the fact free media is guaranteed by law, most of the media is controlled by political groups leading to self-censure. • All respondents to Key Informant Interviews considered that access to the ministry information is very limited. • Additionally, experience has shown that during the last couple of years the minister has rather been understanding and open to protests.
<p>Source(s) of Information</p>	<p>Key Informant Interviews Link to the press article showing the minister reaction to protests</p>

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

4. CIVIC SPACE

A4.2 Civil Society Participatory Environment

Assessment Pillar	A4. Civic Space
Indicator	A4.2 Civil Society Participatory Environment
Indicator Question	<p>To what extent do citizens voluntarily participate and get involved in the work of independent civil society organisations (CSOs)?</p> <p>Guidance: This question draws on the <i>Varieties of Democracy</i> indicator (V-Dem Indicator 3.10.0.5) exploring the involvement of people in civil society organisations. In making this rating, researchers may enter the relevant country and variable (i.e., “CSO participatory environment”) to generate a graphical representation of trends linked to the assessed variable here.</p> <p>Please see here for the codebook of V-Dem Indicators.</p>
Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> High (2): There are many independent CSOs, and it is common for people to be at least occasionally engaged with CSO work.<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium (1): There are many independent CSOs, but public involvement in CSO work is minimal.<input type="checkbox"/> Low / None (0): Most CSOs / associations are sponsored by the state, and public involvement is limited or not purely voluntary.<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-)

<p>Justification <i>Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided.</i> Lorem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the V-Dem indicator (original scale), Lebanon scores 2.69, which suggests that although the country has many diverse CSOs, popular involvement is minimal/limited. • According to most respondents (5 out of 6) to the Key Informant Interviews, the involvement of citizens in the work of independent CSOs depends on the nature of work. Some line of work requires technical expertise which renders the engagement of citizens very limited if non-existent. Since hosting and managing volunteers requires a cost, NGOs would rather avoid what they consider unnecessary rotation of people with very little added value to the sector. • Additionally, voluntary enrolment programs might be costly for small CSOs, specially that such programs are characterised by high rotation and low return on investment. • Since there are many independent and diverse COSs in Lebanon, and since the researcher cannot assess the level of citizens involvement of all these CSOs, the researcher based is assessment on the V-Dem indicator and the feedback from KIIs and opted for a conservative choice concluding that the public involvement in CSO is limited/minimal.
<p>Source(s) of Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to the V-Dem indicator • Key Informant Interviews

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

4. CIVIC SPACE

A4.3 CSO Consultation

Assessment Pillar	A4. Civic Space
Indicator	A4.3 CSO Consultation
Indicator Question	<p>To what extent do policymakers, either at the national or local level, consult CSOs on policies relevant to their membership or domain?</p> <p>Guidance: This question draws on the <i>Varieties of Democracy</i> indicator (V-Dem Indicator 3.10.0.3) exploring the consultation of civil society organisations on policies relevant to their members. In making this rating, researchers may enter the relevant country and variable (i.e., “CSO Consultation”) to generate a graphical representation of trends linked to the assessed variable here.</p> <p>Please see here for the codebook of V-Dem Indicators.</p>
Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> High (2): Relevant CSOs are recognised as stakeholders in various policy areas and are formally or informally consulted on such issues.<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium (1): A select group of CSOs are recognised as stakeholders in various policy areas are occasionally consulted on such issues.<input type="checkbox"/> Low / None (0): CSOs are not recognised as stakeholders in policy areas are often not consulted in the formulation of policies.<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-)

<p>Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided. Lorem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the V-Dem indicator (original scale) the government of Lebanon scores 0.92 on a scale of 0-2, which suggests that the government rarely considers CSOs opinion. 0.92 refers to the following statement as defined by the V-Dem methodology: To some degree. CSOs are but one set of voices that policymakers sometimes take into account. • According to some respondents to KIIs, the government may sometimes enlist or mobilize CSOs after policies are adopted, but it does not often consult with them in formulating policies. For instance, the draft law on the Rights of Disabled Persons was amended several times before being promulgated without taking into account the considerations of the concerned category of people represented by specific CSOs. • According to the press review, CSOs were extensively consulted on the social protection strategy. Although the consultation process was managed by an external party, it was still initiated based on the demand of the ministry. • According to the respondents to Key Informant Interviews, CSOs are rarely consulted by policy makers. Respondents have identified two main motivations behind a consultation process if the latter was initiated by policy makers: (i) either the project donor has required the recipient of funds to engage in a consultation process, or the CSOs listed for consultation share the same political affiliation with the policy making. Yet, and since the motivation behind the consultation is not decisive in the rating of this indicator, option 2 is the most accurate.
<p>Source(s) of Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Informant Interviews • Link to V-Dem Indicator • Link to the press coverage article.

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

4. CIVIC SPACE

A4.4 The Right to Peaceful Assembly





Assessment Pillar	A4. Civic Space
Indicator	A4.4 The Right to Peaceful Assembly
Indicator Question	<p>To what extent do state authorities respect citizens' right to peaceful assembly?</p> <p>Guidance: This question draws on the Varieties of Democracy indicator (V-Dem Indicator 3.15.1.3) exploring the extent to which state authorities respect and protect the right to peaceful assembly. In making this rating, researchers may enter the relevant country and variable (i.e., "Freedom of Peaceful Assembly") to generate a graphical representation of trends linked to the assessed variable here.</p> <p>Please see here for the codebook of V-Dem Indicators.</p>
Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High (2): State authorities allow and protect peaceful assemblies except in rare cases of lawful, necessary, and proportionate limits.<input type="checkbox"/> Medium (1): State authorities sometimes allow peaceful assemblies but often arbitrarily deny citizens this right.<input type="checkbox"/> Low / None (0): State authorities rarely or do not allow peaceful assemblies and may use force to prevent them.<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (-)

<p>Justification Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided. Lorem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the V-Dem indicator (original scale), Lebanon scored 3.14 over 4 which indicates that “Mostly. State authorities generally allow peaceful assemblies, but in rare cases arbitrarily deny citizens the right to assemble peacefully”. • According to the respondents to Key Informant Interviews, state authorities allow peaceful assemblies most of the time. Yet, it requires pre-approval form the security forces. • A quick review of the press coverage showcases that many protests were allowed against the ministry of social affairs without reverting to force or abuse by the security forces • Based on the different source of information, and since the indicator does not assess the approval forms required by the authority to allow peaceful assemblies, option 1 is the most accurate to reflect the reality..
<p>Source(s) of Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Informant Interviews • Link to V-Dem Indicator • Press coverage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link 1 Link 2 Link 3

ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

4. CIVIC SPACE

A4.5 Citizen Readiness to Participate

Assessment Pillar	A4. Civic Space
Indicator	A4.5 Citizen Readiness to Participate
Indicator Question	<p>To what extent are citizens ready to engage and contribute meaningfully to participatory decision-making processes?</p> <p>Guidance: Citizens' readiness to engage and contribute meaningfully to a participatory decision-making process may be demonstrated through one or more of the following criteria. Please select all that apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prior Experience in or Awareness of Participatory Processes <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of Public Finance Management / Budget Processes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Organised Civil Society and Citizen Groups (see A4.2) <input type="checkbox"/> Citizen Trust in the Public Institution* <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please Specify): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> None / Not Applicable <p>The meeting of these criteria may be determined through, inter alia, interviews with citizen stakeholders and CSO representatives, feedback from public institutions, and/or the use of composite indicators. Please substantiate all selections and indicate the corresponding sources of information below.</p> <p>* Please see here (p.43) for more information on different approaches to measuring citizen trust in a public institution.</p>
Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/>  High (2): Citizens demonstrate a high level of readiness (i.e., meet three or more criteria) to participate in a decision-making process. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  Medium (1): Citizens demonstrate a moderate level of readiness (i.e., meet one, but less than three, criteria) to participate in a decision-making process. <input type="checkbox"/>  Low / None (0): Citizens do not demonstrate sufficient readiness to participate meaningfully in a decision-making process. <input type="checkbox"/>  Not Applicable (-)

<p>Justification <i>Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the score provided. Lorem</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most respondents to KIIs have stated having prior experience in or awareness of participatory process. • Knowledge in public finance meets the basic level but is not elaborate to improve the negotiation power of CSOs. This was confirmed during the training sessions on public financial management (back in 2019) organized by TI-LEB and targeting the CSOs staff in the “Mouwazana coalition”. • Civil Society and Citizen Groups’ level of organization is moderate, and this claim was backed by the insights highlighted in question A4.2 showing that involvement of people in civil society organizations is rather limited. • According to KIIS, Citizens trust in the public sector is fragile, yet most of the respondents to KIIs believed in the role of the state.
<p>Source(s) of Information</p>	<p>Key Informant Interviews</p>

SCORING

ASSESSING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BUDGET PROCESSES

Assessed Public Institution:

[Ministry of Social Affairs in Lebanon]

Date / Period of Assessment:

[March-June 2023]

Assessing Organisation / Researcher:

[Transparency International – Lebanon Chapter]

External Reviewer:

[Anoukh de Soysa]

Assessment *

Medium

A. Participation Readiness

19 / 38
(50 %)

B. Participation in Practice

N/A / 46
(N/A%)

C. State of Participation

N/A / 84
(N/A %)

* Please select the overall assessment rating of the State of Public Participation in Budget Processes in accordance with the following key:

- High:** A State of Participation Score between **80% – 100%**
- Medium:** A State of Participation Score between **50% – 79%**
- Low:** A State of Participation Score between **0 – 49%**

STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES

- The researcher has inferred that (i) the social sector is by nature conducive for more participation, and (ii) the ministry's line of intervention requires de facto a close cooperation with the civil society organizations.
- Despite all odds, MoSA's environment is rather characterized by a favourable political (overall 5/8) and acceptance of participation and an institutional commitment to good governance. Additionally, the Civic space conditions (6/10) favours the engagement of citizens and CSOs in the public sphere.
- The ministry, with minor efforts, can drastically improve the participation readiness score and can become a role model for public participation in Lebanon specially that it has already institutionalized an operational framework that could host an elaborate participation process.

GAPS & AREAS TO IMPROVE

- The researcher has concluded that the main gap hindering public participation is the lack of conducive legal framework (3/10). In a context of crisis and scarcity of public resources, if public participation is not rendered compulsory by law, the administration never be prioritized it over what is considered as urgent matters..
- Replicating Lebanon's previous experience of lobbying, passing, and adopting the access to information law is key to put the country on the right path towards institutionalizing public participation.
- Another area of weakness is the limited fiscal transparency (5/10) which is a key requirement for a meaningful participation. The ministry can invest more time and effort to render its programmatic and budget data accessible to the public in a timely manner and using formats that allow easy manipulation of data and indicators.
- Another area to improve revolves around building the capacities of local NGOs to monitor budget and programmatic data and information, to improve their lobbying skills and techniques, and to influence the budget process at all levels.

PARTICIPATION READINESS SCORE

Part A: Participation Readiness: 19 / 38 (50%)

A1. Budget Transparency: 5 / 10

The ministry has the needed infrastructure to render the budget data and information available to the public. Yet some budget documents are neither automatically produced nor systematically made available to the public. The ministry budget documents are not simplified and presented in a citizen friendly format. The budget data is not uploaded in a machine-readable format to improve overall accessibility.

The ministry can easily and drastically improve the transparency score by producing a citizen budget, and by publishing their raw data in machine-readable format.

A2. Political Will: 5 / 08

The ministry's line of work has undeniably favored the creation of an environment sensitive to participation. Occasionally, the ministry's lead openly spoke in favor of participation, while the staff is usually open to the dialogue with the CSOs. Yet, the ministry is not always receptive or reactive to the external party's feedback and input.

The ministry can adopt a more structured and positive narrative regarding public participation when it comes to official announcements, speeches, press release, etc.

A3. Legal Mandates & Operational Frameworks: 3 / 10

Neither the constitution, nor the legal framework governing the ministry's operations, enshrine or grant citizens the right to public participation. In Lebanon, only access to information is guaranteed by the law. On a positive note, the operational framework facilitated the institutionalization of an initiative that can be qualified, to a large extent, as participatory.

A national effort is required to improve the quality of the legal framework and to render public participation processes binding by law.

A4. Civic Space: 6 / 10

The assessment has shown weaknesses at both the demand and the supply ends. On one end, and although the conditions for civic space are acceptable, CSOs are not systematically recognized as stakeholders in policy areas are often not consulted in the formulation of policies. On the other end, citizens do not seem to be adequately organized and ready to participate.

A national effort should be invested to instill a culture of free speech, free media, private-public dialogue, and finally a culture of shared responsibility and duty of participation.

RESEARCH PROCESS

Reference sections labelled:

- Methodology
- Challenges and gaps

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The main sources of information consisted of:

- Desk review of relevant websites including the concerned ministry's website, the ministry of finance website, the institute of finance website, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers website.
- Desk review of media and press coverage.
- Key informant interviews with CSOs and international organizations supporting the ministry's work (overall 5 KIIs with NGOs serving the category of people that are targeted by the ministry disabled, children, women, and poor, and 1 KII with an international organization that is main donor to the ministry)..

NOTES / ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- The researcher believes that the ministry of Social Affairs has an interest to improve overall transparency for the sake of highlighting the scale of its coverage and the relevance of its interventions.
- The researcher believes that some institutional upgrades are enough to improve the ministry overall performance, such as the automation of administrative data collection and the integration of all programmatic and budget data.
- The researcher believes that the ministry of Social Affairs could be a fertile ground for pilot participatory approach in Lebanon, given the nature of the sector which is conducive to participation, and given the existence of an institutional arrangement that could facilitate the implementation of such initiatives.

SUPPORT GRAPHS & FIGURES

Figure 1: CSO participatory Environment rating in Lebanon



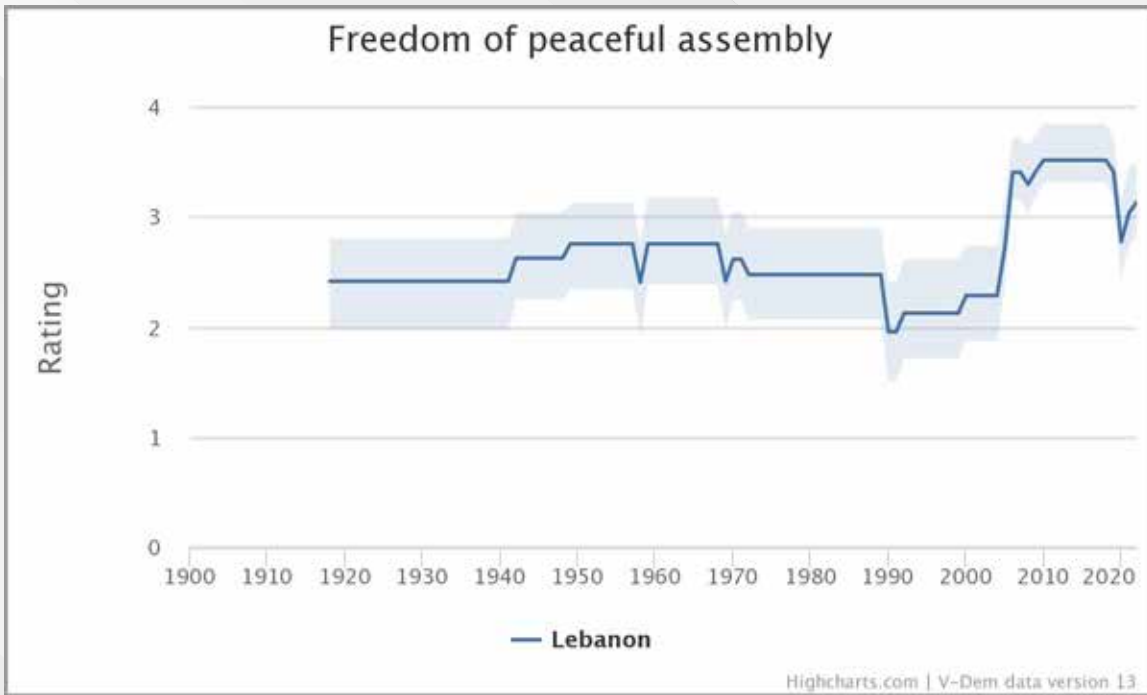
Source: V-Dem Indicator, retrieved online Variable Graph – V-Dem

Figure 2: CSO consultation rating in Lebanon



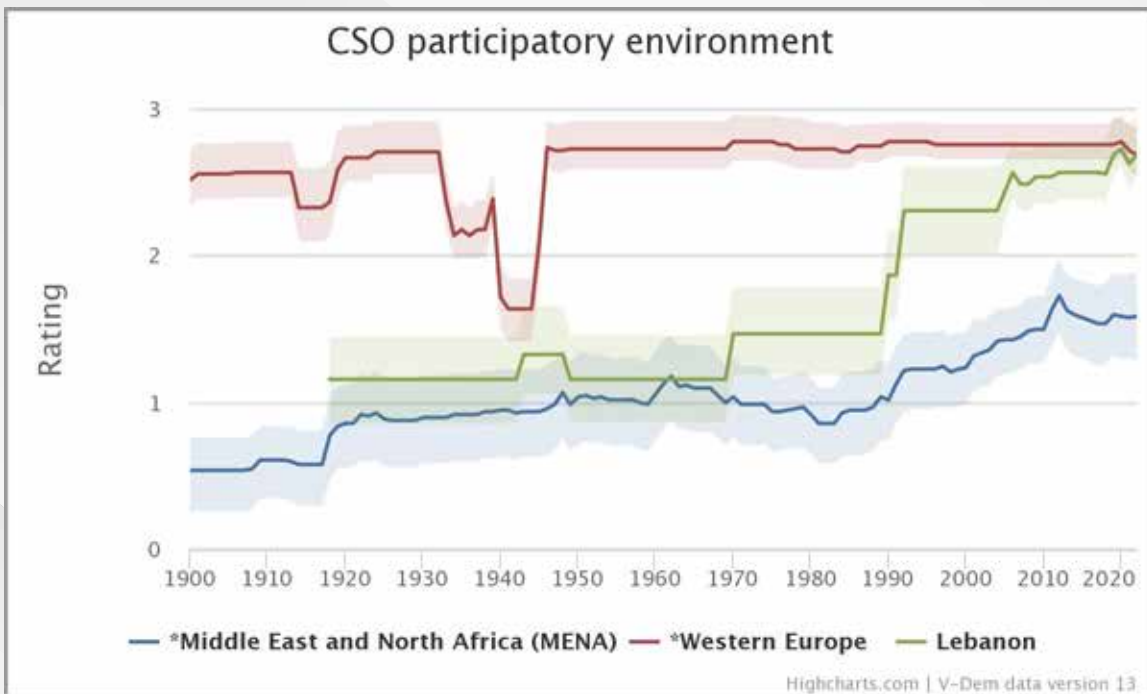
Source: V-Dem Indicator, retrieved online Variable Graph – V-Dem

Figure 3: Freedom of peaceful assembly rating in Lebanon



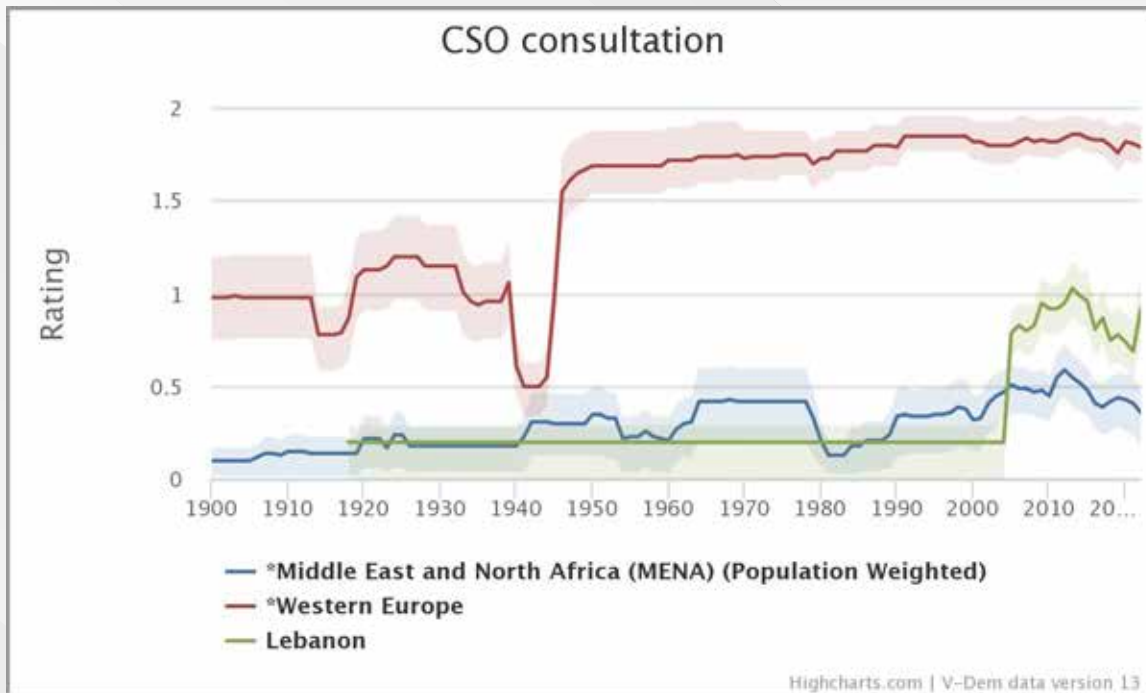
Source: V-Dem Indicator, retrieved online Variable Graph – V-Dem

Figure 4: CSO participatory Environment rating in Lebanon compared to the MENA region and Western Europe



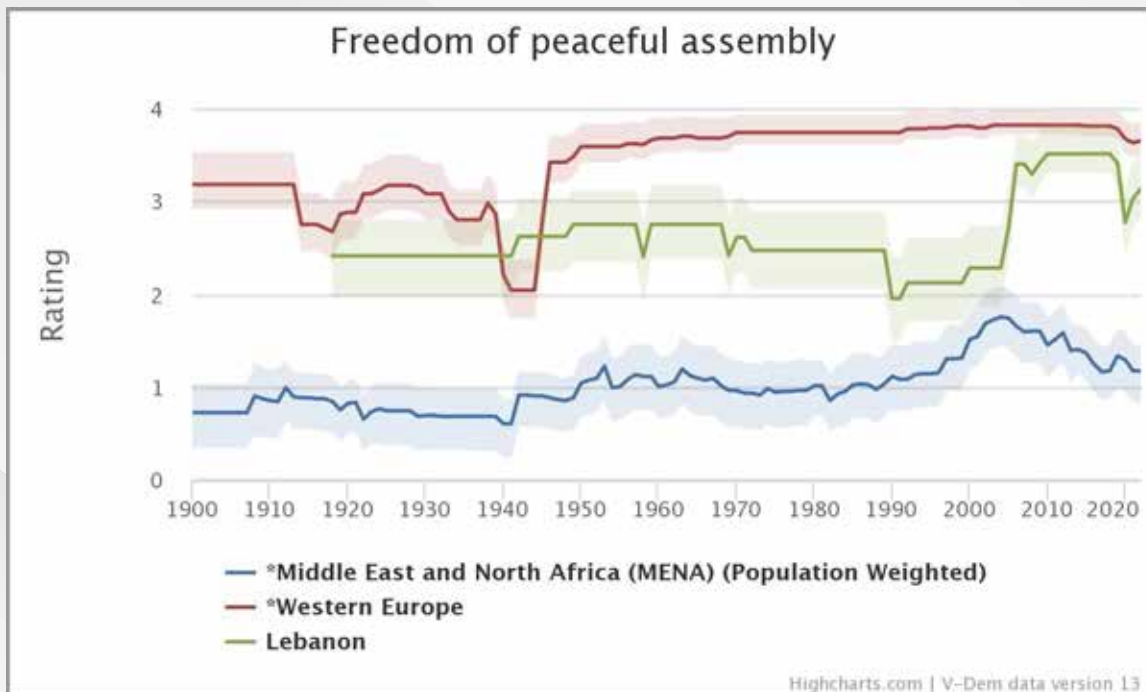
Source: V-Dem Indicator, retrieved online Variable Graph – V-Dem

Figure 5: CSO consultation rating in Lebanon compared to the MENA region and Western Europe



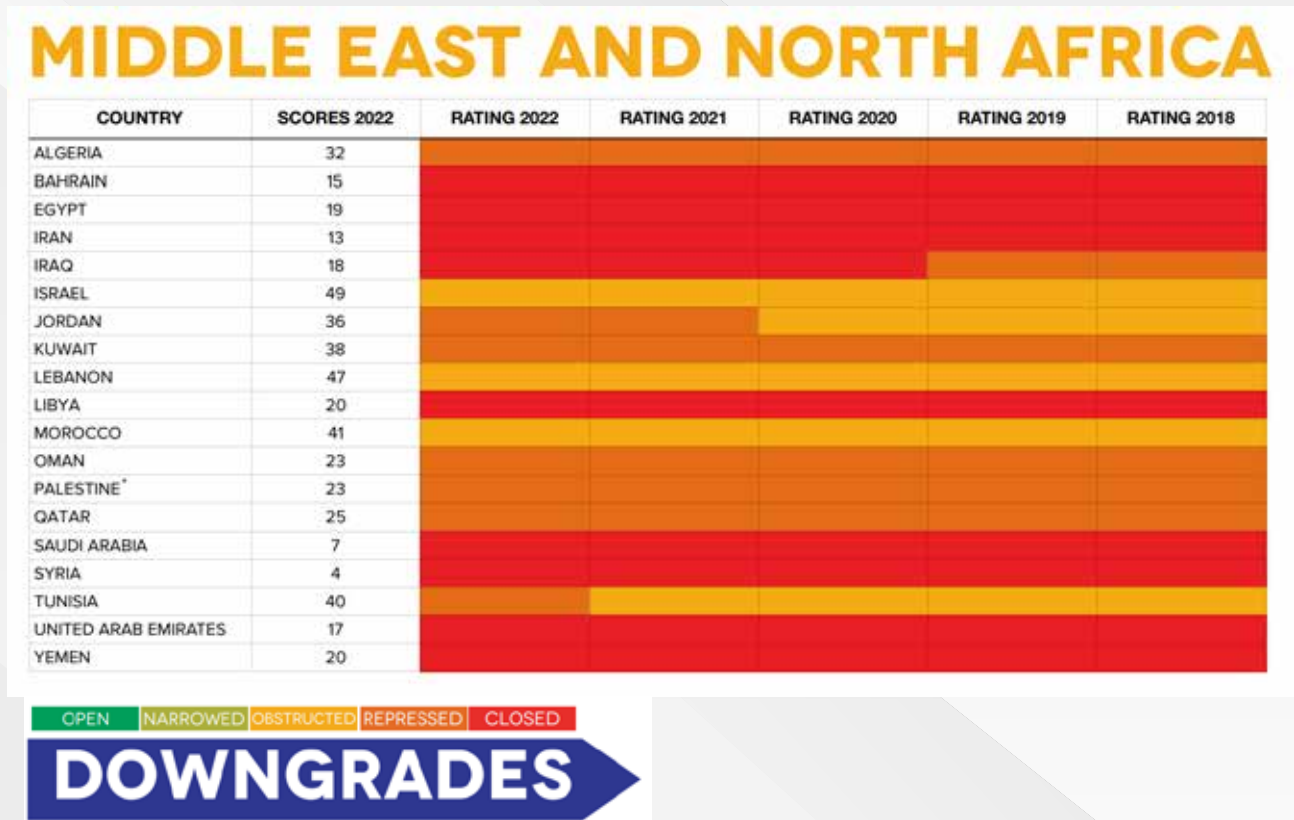
Source: V-Dem Indicator, retrieved online Variable Graph – V-Dem

Figure 6: Freedom of peaceful assembly rating in Lebanon compared to the MENA region and Western Europe



Source: V-Dem Indicator, retrieved online Variable Graph – V-Dem

Figure 7: Civic space conditions in Lebanon compared to the MENA region



Source: Civicus Monitor report, retrieved online [GlobalFindings2022.pdf](#) (contentfiles.net)

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