

FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

STRENGTHENING THE RIGHT TO KNOW THROUGH
LEBANON'S RIGHT OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION LAW



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ABBREVIATIONS

Transparency International Lebanon- No Corruption	TI-LB
Akkar Network for Development	AND
Smart Municipality Academy (SMA)	SMA
National Anti-Corruption Commission	NACC
Tripoli Institute for Policy Studies	TIPS
Training of Trainers	TOT
Access to Information	ATI
Focus Group Discussions	FGDS

INTRODUCTION

Transparency International Lebanon – No Corruption (TI-LB), under the Right To Know project, supported three partner civil society organizations, Akkar Network for Development (AND), Smart Municipality Academy (SMA), and Tripoli Institute for Policy Studies (TIPS), in advancing the Right to Access Information (ATI) through a comprehensive capacity-building and awareness program.

The initiative began with a four-day Training of Trainers (ToT), held from July 3 to 6, 2025, which equipped 15 participants from the partner organizations and TI-LB with in-depth knowledge of the ATI Law and practical facilitation skills. Building on this foundation, 15 infosessions were held across six municipalities (Hemleya, Jdeideh, Hrar, Meshmesh, Tripoli and El Mina) in July 2025, bringing together citizens, municipal representatives, and local stakeholders. These sessions created an inclusive space for dialogue between communities and municipalities, encouraging discussions on transparency, accountability, and the importance of exercising the right to access public information.

Following the info sessions, TI-LB conducted training needs assessment to capture participants' reflections, areas for improvement, and topics of interest. In response, a second ToT was held from September 2 to 5, 2025, followed by three two-day training workshops between September 27 and October 5, 2025, which engaged 93 participants across six municipalities. These sessions deepened participants' understanding of the ATI Law, its scope, procedures, and exceptions, while offering hands-on exercises on how to prepare and submit ATI requests. Importantly, the workshops also fostered collaboration between citizens and municipal representatives, strengthening both the demand and supply sides of transparency.

As a result of this interactive learning environment, many participants were inspired to take initiative and apply what they had learned in real-life settings. Motivated by a stronger understanding of their rights and civic responsibilities, several individuals began drafting and submitting ATI requests to various public administrations, municipalities, and ministries. In total, 10 requests were prepared and submitted by participants from the three two-day training workshops. Throughout this process, TI-LB's legal advisor, Mr. Elias Hayek, provided technical guidance and support to ensure that participants could confidently navigate the procedural requirements of submitting ATI requests and follow up effectively with the entities concerned.

This engagement demonstrates the tangible impact of the training activities, transforming participants from passive recipients of knowledge into active right-holders seeking to hold institutions accountable and promote a culture of openness in their communities.

Objectives of the Project:

The Project overall goal was promoting the effective implementation of the Right to Access to Information Law in selected municipalities through a community-driven, gender-responsive, and evidence-based approach. This was achieved by empowering local communities, civil society organizations, local authorities and municipal staff through targeted awareness campaigns, capacity building, inclusive outreach, and hands-on support in submitting and following up on ATI requests.

The Project's key objectives are:

- (1) Three municipalities identified and engaged as pilots for local ATI implementation.
- (2) Capacity of civil society organizations strengthened to support communities in accessing public information.
- (3) Local communities, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities, empowered to understand and exercise their ATI rights.
- (4) Increased awareness and public engagement through targeted outreach campaigns and training.
- (5) Advocacy and legal support mechanisms activated to address rejections of ATI requests and promote accountability.
- (6) Evidence generation and learning institutionalized through systematic tracking, success story documentation, and lessons learned reporting.

The project's target audience includes local civil society organizations, municipal officials, community leaders, and members of the public in the selected municipalities, with a strong emphasis on inclusive participation and gender equality.

Objectives of the Report:

The main objective of this report is to document the project's achievements in promoting and exercising the Right of Access to Information Law across the targeted regions, highlighting how the interventions contributed to strengthening transparency and citizen engagement. The report presents ten success stories that illustrate the tangible outcomes resulting from the training sessions and the practical application of ATI procedures by participants. In addition, it aims to analyze the barriers and challenges encountered throughout the implementation process and how these factors influenced the submission and follow-up of ATI requests. By examining both progress and gaps, the report seeks to contribute to broader transparency efforts in Lebanon and provide a foundation for sustainable reform. Finally, it offers actionable recommendations to enhance future implementation of the ATI Law, improve coordination with municipalities, and support citizens in effectively requesting and obtaining public information.

Access to Information Submissions:

The following table details the specific Access to Information (ATI) requests submitted by 10 participants following the training workshops delivered by TIPS, SMA, and AND. It is important to note that most of the administrations or municipalities that received the ATI requests were trained during the aforementioned training sessions. The municipalities varied from different geographical locations; Hrar Municipality, Hweich Municipality, Jbeil Municipality, Hamana Municipality, Tripoli municipality and Mina Municipality. Most of these municipalities are well-prepared to respond to these ATI requests as they have been trained. Thus, this table outlines the partner CSO, the topic of the request, the public administration it was sent to, the submission status and date, and any replies received.

CSO	Topic	Individual	Administration	Phone number	Status	Date of submission	Date of Reply
TIPS	Solid Waste Collection Contract of Lavajet with Union of Fayhaa Municipalities and the schedule of the trucks that collect the wastes in Tripoli	Marwan Ayoubi	Tripoli Municipality	81-224853	Submitted	22-Oct-25	29-Oct-25
	2023-2024 Budget Mina Municipality	Zamzam Moukdad	Mina Municipality	81-456249	Submitted	13-Oct-25	11-Nov-25
	Dispute regarding the marking of a residential zone near Badawi- Tripoli Municipality	Omar Abdallah	Tripoli Municipality	81-618241	Submitted	13-Oct-25	20-Nov-25
	Contract between municipality of Tripoli and the company that did public works in front of the Lebanese University in Qobbe	Mahmoud Al Fayssal	Tripoli Municipality	81-255911	Submitted	14-Oct-25	17-Nov-25
	Contracts signed with waste collection companies within Jbeil Municipality. Number and details of contracts signed between Jbeil Municipality and waste collection companies during the years 2023 and 2024 Including the value of each contract, the mechanism for selecting the contractor, and the implementation period.	Abir Tanios El Boustany	Mayor of Jbeil, Dr. Joseph Al-Shami	76-828665	Submitted	13-Oct-25	29-Oct-25
SMA	2023-2024 infrastructure projects in the town of Yahchouch 1. Details of infrastructure projects implemented or being implemented in the town of Yahshoush during the previous two years 2023-2024 (such as road networks, water, sanitation, public lighting...) 2. Names of entities or companies undertaking these projects. 3. The cost of each project, its source of funding, and the specific time limits for its completion. 4. A copy of any documents or reports documenting the implementation stages of these projects.	Jennifer Assaf	Mayor of Yahshush Patrick Zouein	81-520731	Submitted	13-Oct-25 17-Oct-25	4-Nov-25

CSO	Topic	Individual	Administration	Phone number	Status	Date of submission	Date of Reply
SMA	Obtaining a certified true copy of the 2024 budget of the Hammama Municipality. A copy of this budget for the year 2024 via the email account referred to above or to contact us to receive the documents.	Georgette Al Rahi	Hamana Municipality	03-980378	Submitted	13-Oct-25	4-Nov-25
AND	Hrar Municipality - ATI request Waste Management Project and 2024-2025 Municipality Budget	Israa hassan antar	Hrar Municipality	76-326924	Submitted	16-Oct-25	17-Nov-25
	ATI request - transportation	Saidi Mehdi eldin al Mostafa	Hrar Municipality	81-430156	Submitted	13-Oct-25	12-Nov-25
	ATI request- solar panel project	Doha Hamze	Hweich Municipality	70-492062	Submitted	13-Oct-25	12-Nov-25

Following the training sessions delivered by the Tripoli Institute for Policy Studies (TIPS) and coordinated by TI-LB, four participants proceeded to submit ATI requests between October 13 and October 22, 2025, targeting both Tripoli and Mina Municipalities. The submitted requests addressed diverse issues of public concern, including the 2023–2024 budget of the Mina Municipality, a dispute over the marking of a residential zone in Tripoli, a public-works contract executed in front of the Lebanese University in Qobbe, and the solid waste collection contract between Lavajet and the Union of Fayhaa Municipalities, including the operational schedule of waste collection trucks.

All requests received responses within the legal timeframe. Notably, the request concerning the solid waste contract, submitted on October 22, was answered within one week, although only partially: the municipality provided the contract but clarified that it did not possess the requested truck collection schedule. The submission format, sent via WhatsApp as a scanned, non-selectable PDF, may have added some limitations in accessibility for both parties.

Similarly, participants trained by the Smart Municipality Academy (SMA) demonstrated strong engagement with the ATI Law. Three ATI requests were submitted to three different municipalities: one to Jbeil, one to Yahchouch, and one to Hamana. These requests covered a range of topics such as waste collection contracts in Jbeil (2023–2024), infrastructure projects in Yahchouch, and a certified true copy of the 2024 budget of Hamana Municipality. All requests received responses, an encouraging indication that the municipality proactively promotes transparency through public disclosure.

In Akkar, three participants trained by the Akkar Network for Development (AND) submitted ATI requests on October 13 and 16, 2025, directed to the municipalities of Hrar and Hweich. These requests concerned a waste management project in Hrar, transportation services within Hrar, and a solar panel installation project in Hweich. Two of the three requests, the solar panel and transportation inquiries, were answered promptly. The remaining request, related to waste management, is still pending; however, the requester was contacted by the municipality and informed that relevant documents are currently held by the former administration in coordination with the deputy (قائم مقام). The municipality assured the requester that efforts are underway to retrieve and provide the requested information.

Results and Analysis

The submission and follow-up of ATI requests across Tripoli, Mina, Jbeil, Yahchouch, Hamana, Hrar, and Hweich provide valuable insights into both community engagement and municipal responsiveness following the project's interventions. As a start, all 10 ATI requests that were submitted received the information required. These results must be understood within the broader context of the project's activities, which included 15 information sessions and three two-day training workshops in the three target regions, designed to engage both the demand side (citizens and CSOs) and the supply side (municipal officials).

The submission and follow-up of ATI requests across the seven targeted municipalities demonstrate clear signs of progress in the implementation of the Access to Information Law. Municipalities that had participated in the project's info sessions and training workshops showed notably higher levels of responsiveness, indicating that the capacity-building activities contributed to increased familiarity with ATI procedures and expectations.

Across multiple municipalities, responsiveness improved in both timeliness and quality of communication. Tripoli Municipality, for example, responded to all of the three requests it received, providing partial or full information depending on what was available internally. These responses provide suggest greater awareness of ATI obligations compared to prior years. Mina Municipality delivered its response within the legal time-frame, signaling strengthened procedural readiness and a clearer understanding of its responsibilities. Similarly, Jbeil, Yahchouch, and Hamana Municipalities fully answered the requests submitted to them, positive indicator of emerging habits of proactive disclosure. In Hrar and Hweich, two of the three requests were answered, and for the remaining one, the requester was contacted directly and informed that the relevant documents were archived by a previous administration. This communication reflects a willingness to cooperate and an acknowledgment of administrative challenges rather than refusal.

At the same time, the participants' engagement reflects a shift from basic awareness to meaningful action. After completing the training sessions, participants demonstrated their ability to identify relevant public-interest topics, formulate ATI requests, and follow up with municipal offices. The diversity of submitted topics, ranging from waste management contracts and municipal budgets to infrastructure projects and zoning concerns, shows that community members were not only understanding the law but also seeing its relevance to their everyday lives. This transition from learning to practice was one of the clearest indicators of the project's success.

Importantly, the interaction between trained participants and trained municipalities generated a positive momentum that neither group could have created alone. Municipalities were more prepared to receive and process requests because they had recently been exposed to practical guidance. Citizens were more confident in submitting requests because they had been trained and supported. As a result, exchanges were more constructive, responses were more forthcoming, and both sides demonstrated improved engagement. This was evident in municipalities that responded quickly and transparently, as well as in cases where municipal staff contacted requesters to clarify constraints or provide updates.

Overall, the findings show that the project's targeted, region-focused approach led to measurable improvements in how ATI is understood and practiced. Municipalities showed greater openness and readiness after being directly engaged, while participants became more proactive and better equipped to exercise their rights. Together, these outcomes reflect a positive shift toward a more transparent and participatory relationship between communities and local authorities. The experience also reinforces the importance of continued engagement with both groups to sustain this momentum and build long-term practices of openness across Lebanon.

Strengthened Responsiveness, Citizen Action, and Regional Engagement

Despite the challenges encountered, the ATI submissions generated significant positive outcomes that reflect the progress achieved through the project's capacity-building efforts and the strengthened engagement between communities and municipalities.

The implementation of ATI activities across the three regions generated meaningful progress at multiple levels, municipal, citizen, and regional. Municipalities that participated in the 15 information sessions and the three two-day training workshops demonstrated clear improvements in their ability and willingness to apply the ATI Law. Municipalities such as Tripoli, Mina, Jbeil, Yahchouch, and Hamana responded promptly and constructively to ATI requests, providing documents, clarifications, and guidance. These responses reflect a growing institutional readiness and signal that the training delivered to municipal staff is translating into improved administrative practice and a stronger commitment to transparency.

At the same time, participants transitioned from learning about ATI to actively exercising their rights. Ten individuals submitted ATI requests across the three regions, addressing issues that directly affect community well-being, including municipal budgets, infrastructure projects, waste collection agreements, energy initiatives, and public works contracts. The fact that all ATI requests submitted through the project received responses, either with the requested documents or with explanations, demonstrates a significant shift in both municipal engagement and participant confidence. This outcome shows that the intervention successfully empowered citizens to move from knowledge to real-world action, using the ATI Law as a practical tool to seek clarity on public services and local governance issues.

The relevance of the topics raised in the ATI requests shows a deep connection to everyday community needs. Participants did not treat ATI as a theoretical exercise; they used it to engage with issues that influence local development, service quality, and resource allocation. This relevance contributed to a more constructive interaction with municipal officials. In Yahchouch and Hamana, timely responses reflected openness and a willingness to share information. These exchanges indicate early signs of improved dialogue, mutual understanding, and trust, an important foundation for ongoing cooperation.

The regional dimension of the project further amplified its impact. Implementing ATI activities across diverse districts created a visible momentum for transparency that extended beyond individual municipalities. By engaging local actors in Akkar, Mount Lebanon, and North Lebanon, the project demonstrated the relevance of ATI to regional development and encouraged municipalities to align with national transparency standards. The multi-region approach increased the visibility of ATI efforts, fostered wider institutional interest, and highlighted the importance of equitable access to information across different communities. This regional engagement strengthened not only local governance practices but also contributed to a broader culture of accountability and well-being that extends across district boundaries.

Finally, participants' confidence grew significantly due to personalized support from TI-LB, partner CSOs, and the legal advisor. Many individuals initially hesitated due to concerns about municipal reactions or unfamiliarity with administrative procedures. Through step-by-step guidance, they overcame these barriers and felt more empowered to participate in public life. This increased confidence—combined with strengthened municipal capacity—created a more effective and collaborative environment for applying the ATI Law.

Barriers and Challenges

While the project demonstrated notable progress in both municipal responsiveness and citizen engagement, several structural and contextual challenges continue to limit the full and effective implementation of the ATI Law.

Despite clear improvements in ATI awareness and engagement across the targeted municipalities and regions, several structural and operational challenges continue to hinder the full and efficient implementation of the law. One significant barrier relates to records management. Many municipalities still struggle to locate documents from previous administrations, with files often stored off-site, poorly archived, or no longer traceable. These longstanding documentation weaknesses directly affect response timelines and highlight the need for better-organized archives and digital systems.

Challenges also emerged from the submission process itself. Some participants submitted requests using non-standard formats, such as scanned PDFs shared through WhatsApp, which can complicate internal processing and verification. To address this, municipalities across the three regions have begun receiving additional training with the Elias Hayek, TI-LB Legal Advisor, to improve their understanding of ATI procedures, documentation handling, and standardized processing requirements.

Operational barriers external to municipalities also played a role. LibanPost, which serves as an important channel for submitting ATI requests, experienced multiple system outages and delays, creating frustration and preventing timely submissions. Meanwhile, the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC), being accessible only in Beirut and lacking an online complaint mechanism, limits citizens' ability to escalate or follow up on delayed or unanswered requests, particularly those living outside the capital.

On the citizen level, initial reluctance presented another challenge. Several participants expressed hesitation due to fears of harming their reputation, concerns about how municipalities might react, or general unease about engaging with public authorities. Through continuous guidance and reassurance from TI-LB and the partner CSOs, these concerns were addressed, enabling participants to move forward with confidence and ultimately exercise their right to access information.

Collectively, these challenges highlight the importance of sustained support—both to institutionalize ATI procedures within municipalities and to empower citizens with the knowledge and confidence needed to use the law effectively. At the same time, they underscore the necessity of improving administrative systems, submission channels, and national-level complaint mechanisms to ensure that the ATI ecosystem functions reliably and transparently across Lebanon.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Lessons Learned

The project highlighted several important lessons that can guide future efforts to strengthen the implementation of the ATI Law across Lebanon. First, municipalities that participated in the information sessions and two-day workshops demonstrated significantly stronger readiness to process ATI requests. Their timely and complete responses showed that direct engagement not only improves technical knowledge but also encourages a more proactive and compliant institutional culture.

At the same time, the project reaffirmed that many citizens remain hesitant to submit ATI requests without ongoing support. Concerns about reputation, personal exposure, and uncertainty about administrative procedures created initial reluctance among participants. However, consistent guidance from TI-LB, partner CSOs, and the legal advisor helped build trust and confidence, demonstrating that individualized assistance remains essential for encouraging meaningful civic engagement.

Despite these positive developments, structural and administrative weaknesses continue to limit effective access to information. Many municipalities faced difficulty retrieving older documents, experienced coordination gaps within departments, or processed requests submitted through non-standard formats such as scanned WhatsApp PDFs. These issues reveal the need for clearer internal workflows and more organized records management systems.

Additionally, external barriers played a significant role in shaping the submission process. LibanPost, intended to facilitate ATI requests, experienced repeated system outages that caused delays and discouraged follow-up attempts. Such logistical challenges emphasize the importance of diversifying submission channels and establishing more reliable procedures to ensure that citizens can exercise their rights without facing unnecessary obstacles.

Together, these lessons highlight the interconnected nature of municipal readiness, citizen empowerment, and administrative efficiency, each of which must be strengthened to build a truly robust and accountable ATI ecosystem in Lebanon.

Recommendations

To strengthen the implementation of the Access to Information (ATI) Law and improve the responsiveness of public institutions, several key recommendations emerged from this reporting period. First, municipalities should work toward institutionalizing ATI procedures by establishing clear internal workflows, designating ATI focal points, and ensuring that municipal staff receive regular orientation on their roles and obligations. This would help reduce inconsistencies and improve the timeliness and quality of responses. Strengthening municipal records management systems is also essential. Municipalities would benefit from support to digitize archived materials, organize legacy documents, and adopt standard filing and retrieval procedures, all of which are critical for enhancing access to information.

In parallel, TI-LB and partner CSOs should continue providing tailored legal and technical guidance to citizens, including one-on-one coaching, simplified request templates, and follow-up support. Such assistance helps individuals feel confident and protected when exercising their right to know. Additionally, diversifying submission pathways is important to reduce reliance on LibanPost, which has often presented logistical challenges. Alternative secure channels, such as direct filing at municipalities, online submission portals, or email systems supported by acknowledgment receipts, would significantly streamline the process.

Strengthening dialogue between municipalities and community members remains vital. Regular, structured exchanges would build trust, help local authorities better understand community information needs, and reinforce a rights-based culture of transparency. Finally, ATI awareness should be integrated across broader local governance programs, including those focusing on waste management, municipal budgeting, and service delivery. Embedding ATI principles into these ongoing initiatives will help ensure that transparency becomes a sustained institutional norm rather than a one-time intervention.

Key Messages of the CSOs

The purpose of this section is to capture partner CSOs' qualitative insights on the implementation of ATI-related activities, including trainings, information sessions, and community engagement, in order to better understand community perceptions, operational challenges, and emerging opportunities for strengthening ATI practices across Lebanon. These reflections provide essential context that complements the quantitative findings and help identify actionable lessons for future programming.

SMA – Partner CSO Reflections

SMA described its overall experience implementing ATI activities as smooth, constructive, and highly valuable. The collaboration between the team, municipalities, and community members facilitated an effective roll-out of info sessions, trainings, and engagement events, ultimately contributing to the broader goal of strengthening local transparency and citizen participation.

According to SMA, community awareness of the ATI Law evolved significantly throughout the project. While participants initially joined the sessions to gain general knowledge about the law, they gradually began to recognize its practical relevance to their daily lives. As discussions deepened, many participants started linking ATI to personal concerns and local issues—realizing how access to information could help them obtain answers, advocate for their needs, and engage more confidently with municipal authorities and public institutions.

The implementation process was not without challenges. The tight project timeline required precise coordination to avoid scheduling conflicts with other CSOs, adding pressure to deliver activities within fixed dates. Reaching persons with disabilities also proved difficult despite efforts to ensure venue accessibility and inclusive outreach, highlighting the need for more targeted engagement strategies in the future.

Several factors contributed to the success of the intervention, particularly the strong cooperation from municipalities. Local authorities not only attended the sessions but actively encouraged citizens to participate. This collaborative spirit helped strengthen relationships between communities and municipal staff and reinforced transparency as a shared value rather than a one-sided obligation.

A key lesson SMA highlighted is that providing citizens with knowledge and a safe space to engage dramatically boosts their confidence and motivation. This was especially evident when participants began submitting ATI requests: many showed exceptional determination, enduring long waits at LibanPost and making repeated visits to municipal offices to follow up on their requests. Their persistence—whether inquiring about municipal budgets, contracts, or other local matters—demonstrated how awareness of one's rights can empower citizens to actively champion accountability within their own communities.

For the future, SMA recommends expanding ATI interventions to additional municipalities and community groups to amplify the project's impact. Continued capacity-building for both municipal staff and citizens is essential to ensure long-term, effective implementation of the ATI Law. SMA also emphasized the need to address the persistent "system error" at LibanPost, which frequently obstructed ATI submissions. These technical failures not only discouraged citizens, but also complicated requests directed at private-sector entities collaborating with government bodies, where responsibility for handling ATI queries remains unclear. Addressing this barrier would help ensure that LibanPost fulfills its role as an accessible, reliable submission channel and encourages more citizens to exercise their right to access information.

AND – Partner CSO Reflections

AND described its experience implementing the ATI activities as enriching and transformative, both for the team and for the communities engaged. The Training of Trainers (TOT) played a central role in equipping the team with the confidence and practical skills needed to conduct effective sessions. Through coordinated outreach with the Jurd Union, municipalities, and local communities, the team was able to foster meaningful conversations around transparency, citizen rights, and good governance. The two-day training proved particularly impactful, bringing together motivated community members who demonstrated strong readiness to act, especially through their willingness to submit ATI requests. Overall, the experience significantly strengthened transparency awareness in the Jurd region and reinforced AND's role in promoting accountable and participatory local governance.

Before the project, most community members had limited awareness of the ATI Law and little understanding of how to exercise their right to access public information. The concept of transparency was not widely recognized at the local level, and engagement with municipal processes was often minimal. After the project, however, a notable shift occurred: participants became more informed, more curious, and more proactive. Many asked detailed questions during sessions, expressed clear interest in submitting ATI requests, and recognized how access to information could influence local issues such as project implementation, resource allocation, and service delivery.

Despite this progress, the team faced important challenges. A major obstacle was the initial resistance and skepticism among community members. Many believed that submitting an ATI request would lead nowhere, reflecting long-standing mistrust in public institutions. This skepticism made early engagement difficult and slowed participation. The team addressed this by prioritizing trust-building, contextualizing ATI through real-life examples, and encouraging participants to start with small, manageable steps. Gradually, this approach helped shift attitudes and demonstrated that the ATI Law can be practical and effective when properly used.

Several factors contributed to the success of the intervention. The participatory approach, combined with the skills gained from the TOT, helped AND tailor the sessions to participants' needs and concerns. Strong collaboration with the Jurd Union, municipalities, and community members created a constructive environment where questions could be openly discussed. The willingness of participants to seek guidance for their ATI submissions further strengthened the impact of the activities, showing that the training extended beyond theory and into practical application.

A key lesson highlighted by AND is the importance of trust and practical demonstration. In communities where skepticism is deeply rooted, merely explaining the law is not enough. Instead, showing how ATI can lead to tangible outcomes, and providing sustained support throughout the process, empowers people to reclaim their role as active citizens. This project reaffirmed that with the right guidance, communities can overcome long-standing doubts and begin to engage meaningfully in transparency and accountability efforts.

For the future, AND recommends expanding awareness efforts to reach more remote and underserved communities, where knowledge of ATI remains minimal. Continued capacity-building for both citizens and municipal staff is essential to ensure consistent understanding of ATI procedures and to improve responsiveness at the municipal level. Strengthening support and follow-up mechanisms would further consolidate trust and encourage more citizens to submit requests. Finally, promoting stronger collaboration among civil society, municipalities, and government entities will be critical in fostering a sustainable culture of transparency across Lebanon.

TIPS – Partner CSO Reflections

The implementation of the ATI activities, including trainings, information sessions, and community engagement, was both challenging and highly rewarding. Across Tripoli and El Mina, the project bridged the gap between Lebanon's legal frameworks and local realities, creating spaces where discussions about transparency and accountability became meaningful and actionable for citizens. Through direct engagement with youth, women, civil society actors, and local committees, participants gained practical knowledge about their rights under the ATI Law and learned how to submit information requests effectively.

Before the project, awareness of the ATI Law among community members was extremely limited, with many perceiving it as a distant, theoretical law with little relevance to daily life. Following the trainings and outreach activities, participants reported a marked improvement in understanding and confidence. Youth and community actors felt empowered to engage with municipal and public institutions, request documentation related to budgets, local projects, and municipal decisions, and discuss transparency as a regular part of community life. Notably, discussions around accountability became more normalized, particularly among young leaders who now see ATI as a gateway for broader civic oversight.

Beyond individual and community-level impact, the project catalyzed institutional interest. Newly appointed members of the Free Economic Zone Authority, Port Authority, and municipal offices approached TIPS requesting capacity-building support on ATI and anti-corruption laws. This demonstrated a growing recognition within institutions of the value of transparency, a shift from passive compliance to proactive engagement, and trust in civil society actors to strengthen governance processes.

Several challenges shaped the project's implementation. Community skepticism was a major hurdle, as many citizens doubted the law's practical effectiveness due to historical opacity in governance. Capacity gaps among participants required trainers to simplify legal concepts and provide step-by-step guidance. Additionally, a compressed implementation timeframe limited opportunities for follow-up and engagement with slower-moving institutions.

Key factors contributed to the success of the intervention. The use of young trainers added credibility, energy, and relatability, making sessions more engaging and sustainable, as these youth leaders are now equipped to continue disseminating ATI knowledge. Practical exercises, such as drafting ATI requests and role-playing interactions with institutions, helped participants directly connect the law to real-life scenarios. An inclusive participant mix, including women, youth, and people with disabilities, further strengthened learning and ensured that discussions reflected diverse perspectives and experiences.

The project highlighted that cities often considered peripheral, like Tripoli, can become central drivers of accountability. Empowering marginalized communities to exercise their right to information can redefine national discussions on transparency. Localized engagement demonstrated that meaningful governance reforms do not have to start in Beirut, they can emerge from communities closest to the daily consequences of weak transparency.

To sustain and scale these achievements, several steps were recommended. Strengthening local implementation through targeted training for municipal staff and newly appointed authorities ensures efficient processing of ATI requests. Institutionalizing ATI focal points or helpdesks can reduce citizen frustration and provide clear points of contact. Developing user-friendly digital tools, including online platforms or mobile-friendly forms, would enable citizens across Lebanon, particularly in regions far from Beirut, to submit and track requests, ensuring equal access to information. Such tools would also streamline institutional responses, enhance transparency, and reduce regional disparities in ATI usage.

Endline Report – Integration of Findings, Insights, and Recommendations

The endline evaluation of the Right to Know project aimed to assess the effectiveness of interventions in improving citizens' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding the ATI Law across urban and rural areas in Lebanon. The evaluation focused on understanding public awareness, use of ATI rights, perceived barriers, and the impact on women's empowerment and civic engagement. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining a quantitative survey with qualitative focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of the project's outcomes and real-world impact. The evaluation also sought to identify actionable lessons and recommendations to enhance the law's accessibility, enforcement, and sustainability.

The endline survey included a representative sample of participants across multiple regions, covering both urban and rural contexts. A total of 1,200 respondents participated, including 610 women and 590 men. Age distribution was broad, encompassing youth (18–30 years, 35% of respondents), adults (31–50 years, 45%), and older adults (51+ years, 20%), ensuring diverse perspectives. Respondents were selected from targeted regions, including Akkar, Tripoli, and Metn, to capture geographic variation in awareness, usage, and perceptions of the ATI Law.

The survey revealed a modest increase in awareness of the ATI Law, rising from 27.8% at baseline to 37.5% at endline, with women and rural respondents reporting lower levels of awareness compared to men and urban participants. Usage of ATI rights remained low, with only 4.4% of respondents who were aware of the law having submitted a request, though this marked an increase from 0.6% at baseline. Confidence in requesting information increased from 22.1% to 31.1%, while belief in the law's potential to reduce corruption rose from 26.6% to 47.1%. Despite improved awareness, significant barriers persisted, including fear of retaliation, institutional non-compliance, reliance on personal connections (*wasta*), bureaucratic delays, and limited procedural knowledge. Survey results also indicated growing public optimism about the ATI Law's impact, with 31.1% of respondents perceiving tangible benefits in daily life, such as improved access to local information, support in exercising rights, and enhanced oversight of public institutions.

Nine FGDs were conducted across Akkar, Tripoli, and Metn, targeting youth, women, and the general population. FGDs provided deeper qualitative insights into the law's practical impact, barriers, and citizen perceptions. Participants, aware of the ATI Law, generally understood its purpose but had limited knowledge of procedures and exceptions. NGOs were consistently identified as the primary source of information, with government outreach seen as inadequate. Women highlighted the law's role in empowerment and oversight but reported additional societal barriers, including gender bias and fears of harassment. Youth emphasized the ATI Law's value for academic research, professional development, and civic activism. Common challenges identified across FGDs included institutional resistance, bureaucratic obstacles, and reliance on personal networks. Participants suggested multi-pronged strategies to improve access, including awareness campaigns, simplified and digital submission procedures, legal protection for applicants, and independent oversight mechanisms. Overall, FGDs confirmed the survey trends while providing richer context on social, cultural, and institutional barriers, particularly for women and rural communities.

Based on the endline evaluation findings, a comprehensive set of recommendations has been proposed to strengthen the implementation and impact of Lebanon's ATI Law. It is recommended that coordinated, government-led public information campaigns be implemented to clearly explain the ATI Law, its purpose, and the steps citizens can take to exercise their rights. Outreach should prioritize regions with the lowest awareness levels, particularly rural areas and marginalized communities, while communication channels should be diversified to include TV, radio, local municipalities, public libraries, schools, and universities, in addition to NGOs and social media. Awareness materials should be developed in simplified and accessible formats, such as infographics, short videos, and illustrated guides, with gender-sensitive and youth-friendly content delivered through women's associations, youth centers, and vocational institutes. Clear and simplified explanations of ATI rights should be provided via easy-to-understand FAQs and step-by-step guides detailing submission procedures, expected timelines, exemptions, confidentiality rules, and appeal mechanisms.

To facilitate access, request forms should be standardized through a unified national template available digitally and in printed form across public institutions. Educational materials should also be widely accessible, including Braille, audio versions, and sign language videos, ensuring persons with disabilities can fully exercise their rights. ATI support hubs within municipalities, local NGOs, and public service centers are recommended to assist citizens in preparing and submitting requests, alongside free legal assistance for appeals, rejected requests, and cases where institutions fail to comply. Publicizing successful ATI cases is crucial to demonstrate tangible benefits and increase perceived relevance among citizens. A unified national digital ATI portal should be developed to enable users to submit, track, and appeal requests online, incorporating downloadable guides, timelines, templates, and user support tools, while public digital kiosks and training programs can promote digital inclusion, especially for women and older adults.

Institutional measures should include mandating ATI focal points in all public institutions to manage requests and track compliance, setting clear response timelines and penalties for non-compliance, and providing continuous training for public-sector staff on ATI procedures, legal obligations, exemptions, and effective citizen interaction. Visibility of existing support tools, such as OMSAR guides, NACC materials, and civil society resources, should be increased within government agencies. Strong legal safeguards are essential to protect applicants from retaliation, discrimination, or intimidation, complemented by confidential complaint mechanisms for reporting barriers or misconduct. Clarification of exemptions related to national security, privacy, and judicial matters is necessary to prevent misuse.

The establishment or empowerment of an independent oversight body, potentially under the NACC, is recommended to monitor compliance and issue binding decisions, alongside promoting public feedback channels and participatory monitoring through community scorecards or digital platforms to track institutional performance. Integrating ATI education into school and university curricula through civic literacy modules will ensure long-term awareness and engagement. Public campaigns should promote the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC), explaining its role and how citizens can submit complaints or report violations, while improving the accessibility, usability, and multilingual functionality of its website with direct links to ATI resources. Bureaucratic barriers should be tackled by simplifying administrative procedures and reducing internal bottlenecks, complemented by proactive disclosure of high-value information such as budgets, procurement data, appointments, and spending to build public trust. Finally, monitoring ATI implementation progress through regular national performance reports detailing requests received, processed, rejected, and appealed will ensure transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

The recommendations outlined above, combined with the findings from the success story, demonstrate tangible progress in promoting awareness, understanding, and use of the ATI Law among citizens. The success story highlights how targeted interventions—such as community workshops, youth and women engagement, and NGO-led outreach—have positively influenced knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding access to information. When paired with the recommended actions, including awareness campaigns, digital platforms, legal safeguards, and institutional reforms, these efforts provide a comprehensive pathway to strengthen transparency, accountability, and civic participation in both urban and rural areas. Together, the findings and recommendations underscore the project's impact and the potential for sustainable, long-term improvements in citizens' ability to exercise their right to information.

CONCLUSION

This report illustrates how targeted project interventions have effectively raised awareness and strengthened understanding of Lebanon's ATI Law, particularly among youth, women, and communities in both urban and rural areas. Through focused community engagement, capacity-building, and collaboration with NGOs, participants reported increased confidence in exercising their rights, greater motivation to hold authorities accountable, and enhanced appreciation of transparency and anti-corruption mechanisms. While challenges such as institutional barriers, societal biases, and low digital literacy remain, the project's innovative approaches, awareness campaigns, trainings, user-friendly tools, and advocacy, demonstrate tangible progress in bridging gaps between the law's intent and citizen access. This report underscores the importance of sustained outreach, inclusive participation, and civic empowerment as essential components for ensuring that the ATI Law becomes a practical and transformative tool for transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in Lebanon.



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