

Evaluation Report

MENA Region Initiative as a Model of Nexus Approach and Renewable Energy Technologies in Jordan, Tunisia, and Lebanon (MINARET)

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Abstract:

The objectives of this evaluation were to assess the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the MENA Region Initiative as a Model of Nexus Approach and Renewable Energy Technologies in Jordan, Tunisia, and Lebanon (MINARET) to generate information on the level of achievement of the project's objectives, and to formulate recommendations as an input to upcoming discussions concerning the preparation of a new project with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation (SIDA). In terms of relevance, effectiveness and impact the project scores well. The NEXUS approach with a focus on integrating water, energy and food security aspects at municipal level remains very relevant in this resource scarce region. The modality of working through RSS/NERC (and its partners) to target municipalities in three regions has been effective and has shown to provide credibility. Short term impacts of the project are considerable, and the foundations for a longer-term impact have been put in place.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BEI	Baseline Emission Inventory
BOT	Build-Operate-Transfer
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KII	Key Information Interview
MINARET	MENA Region Initiative As a Model of NEXUS Approach and Renewable Energy Technologies
NERC	National Energy Research Centre
NGO / CSO	Non-Governmental Organization / Civil Society Organization
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
PPP	Public Private Partnership
RSS	Royal Scientific Society
SEAP	Sustainable Energy Action Plan
SECAP	Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan
UN SDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation

Preface

This evaluation report was written by SaafConsult B.V. in October – December 2020 and serves as an evaluation of the MINARET project for SIDA and RSS/NERC to assess the extent to which the project has reached its objectives so far. The MENA Region Initiative as a Model of Nexus Approach and Renewable Energy Technologies in Jordan, Tunisia, and Lebanon (MINARET) (November 2016 – August 2021) is a project that has been executed by RSS/NERC, IUCN and Horizon for Green Development, with SIDA financially contributing to its core activities.

RSS/NERC assigned the external evaluation of this project to SaafConsult in order to (i) appraise the extent to which the project's objectives have been achieved and (ii) evaluate the overall impact of the project in the intervention areas and (iii) to formulate recommendations as an input to upcoming discussions concerning the preparation of a new project with support from SIDA.

SaafConsult has been assigned to a variety of evaluations before and can therefore said to be experienced in this field. The final approach of the evaluation has been decided upon together with RSS/NERC.

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, it was not possible to visit all project locations physically. However, some locations in Lebanon were visited physically, as one of our colleagues resides in Lebanon.

This evaluation report includes the information and content that has been received and analysed by the team of SaafConsult B.V., in discussion with RSS/NERC, as well as with many other stakeholders. We would like to thank RSS/NERC for their cooperation and all their effort for putting us in touch with stakeholders involved in the MINARET project. Moreover, we would like to thank all interview participants for their time and effort.

Executive Summary

This document is the final report of the evaluation of the MENA Region Initiative as a Model of Nexus Approach and Renewable Energy Technologies in Jordan, Tunisia, and Lebanon (MINARET) project. The project was implemented starting November 2016 and will be closed in August 2021. In brief, the main objective of the project was, “to strengthen regional cooperation within the MENA region through implementing a water-energy-food nexus approach integrated with renewable energy technologies at municipal level”.

The project operates in three countries and works with one municipality in each country, to wit: Al Karak in Jordan, Monastir in Tunisia, and Jdaidet El Chouf in Lebanon. The project is implemented by the National Energy Research Centre of the Royal Scientific Society in Jordan, with the IUCN ROWA office as a key partner, as well as Horizon for Green Development.

The evaluation of the MINARET project was done according to the criteria of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC), which looks at the strategic elements of the work and not so much at the specific details. In terms of the OECD DAC criteria, the criteria the ToRs asked the team to refer to were:

- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Impact

The NEXUS approach with a focus on integrating water, energy and food security aspects at municipal level remains very relevant in this resource scarce region. The relevance was further underlined by the COVID-19 crisis, in which the measures introduced by the project proved their value. Finally, relevance for women and disadvantaged groups was specifically targeted with the result that in the short-term women and children in the targeted municipalities are on the forefront of the MINARET interventions.

The modality of working through RSS/NERC (and its partners) to target municipalities in three regions has been effective and has shown to provide credibility. Through a regional organisation such as NERC the acceptance of the NEXUS concepts was high. IUCN, also a seasoned regional organisation Horizon, contributed strongly to ensuring that all relevant stakeholders were targeted.

Short term impacts of the project are considerable, and the foundations for a longer-term impact have been put in place. Savings of electricity, water and improved access

to food have strongly impacted the thinking of the three municipalities in terms of how to tackle resource scarcity.

MINARET has laid the foundation for a broader application of the NEXUS approach in the region, whilst simultaneously addressing capacity gaps at municipal levels and improving access to services and influence for women and disadvantaged groups.

Key recommendations are presented in bold below:

In terms of Relevance:

- 1. It is recommended that for a next stage, formal and periodic (annual) reflection moments are inculcated that considered the relevance of the interventions into the project planning to ensure that relevance remains high.**
- 2. It is recommended that more attention is given to developing a relevant regional cooperation between municipalities on the basis of common interests for future implementation of similar projects.**
- 3. The projects' focus on gender was very relevant and well structured. However, it can be taken further and expanded in a next phase, specifically improving the focus on roles of men and women.**

In terms of Effectiveness:

- **Output based planning,**
 - **Managing expectations,**
 - **Onset risk management,**
- 4. To improve effectiveness, local RSS counterpart (if available) in each country could be considered. The project design would then not only focus on municipalities but would work with NGOs/organisations in each country that would be a direct counterpart of RSS/NERC.**

In terms of Impact:

- 5. For a next phase it is recommended that fewer financial means are spent on direct financing of items such as PV systems, LED lights, well rehabilitation, etc. To ensure more sustainability the relevance and usefulness of the NEXUS approach has to be internalised by the project partners. This would then be manifested by the degree to which they incorporate NEXUS approach elements in their own budgets, organisational structures and organisational systems.**

Next steps:

- 1. It is important to note that the groundwork that has been laid is used to further build the national and regional capacities of the communities / municipalities / NGOs to manage their own water/energy/food security. A broader approach is recommended whereby RSS identify partner organisations of its own stature and standing in the partner countries and works in cooperation with them to disseminate and develop the Nexus work.**
- 2. For a possible new phase for SIDA it is recommended that preparations start on a next phase so that the objectives of the programme can be further safeguarded and that WEF NEXUS approaches can be integrated into economic sectors development models and policies. This can be done by enabling the environmental governance and integrating the climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning. This broader approach will promote the national/regional mechanisms for raising capacities and strengthen sectoral directions at MENA countries. The inclusion of more countries could be also suggested where many similar issues are prevalent.**
- 3. RSS/NERC may consider the establishment of a dedicated unit to address NEXUS issues. In that way RSS/NERC would be able to support municipalities and partner organisations to further the adoption of the NEXUS approach to address concrete resource issues at local level.**

1 Introduction

1.1 PURPOSE

The objectives of this evaluation were to assess the relevance, effectiveness and impact of MINARET to generate information on the level of achievement of the project's objectives, and to formulate recommendations as an input to upcoming discussions concerning the preparation of a new project with support from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

The purposes of the evaluation were:

1. To help SIDA and Royal Scientific Society (RSS)/National Energy Research Centre (NERC) to assess progress of the on-going project;
2. To serve as an input to the decision on whether the partnership shall continue and if so,
3. How a possible phase (Phase II / New project) would be designed to serve the requirements of Swedish Development Cooperation.

The evaluation was designed, conducted, and reported to meet the needs of the intended user [represented by the RSS/NERC].. Other stakeholders that were kept informed about the evaluation included the implementing partners and Horizon for Green Development.

1.2 APPROACH

The evaluation of the MINARET project was done according to the criteria of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC), which looks at the strategic elements of the work and not so much at the specific details. In terms of the OECD DAC criteria, the criteria the ToRs asked the team to refer to were:

- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Impact

So, the main questions, as also indicated in the terms of reference, were:

1. Is the project doing the right things?
2. Is the project achieving its objectives?
3. What difference does the intervention make?

It was also understood that the evaluation would not go into small minutiae or details of the program but would look at the strategic elements and the achievements in that context. The team looked at the level of cooperation, synergy and complementarity of

the various organisations in a constructive and positive manner to phrase and developed options for continuation and to make sure that lessons learnt were taken into account.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

During the inception phase, a stakeholder analysis was conducted by the consultancy team, making use of the analysis already done during project implementation by IUCN. Subsequently, the stakeholders were classified as primary and secondary stakeholders. This resulted in a non-random sample selection of interview respondents for the evaluation. The consultancy team has decided upon a list of primary and overarching stakeholders to approach for interviews, and, considering the scope of this evaluation, this list of respondents was assumed to be sufficient to give a clear overview and evaluation of the project. RSS has provided the consultancy team with contacts of any stakeholder the team wanted to approach and aimed at a maximum variation sample of stakeholders to interview in order to represent a full range of the stakeholders involved in the project. (Table 1).

Table 1 – List of interview respondents per municipality.

Municipality	Representation of	Name of Stakeholder
Jdaidet El Chouf	Mr. Nizar Hani	Shouf Cedar Society/SBR (SCS)
	Mrs. Rania Fatayri	Jdaideh Women Organization - Baqaata
	Mr. Nabil Sarideen	Green Orient Association
	Mrs. Nahed Fatayri	Support to Women Cooperatives and Associations in the Agro-food Sector Project
	Mr. Ousama Chedid	Representing Farmers
	Mr. Hisham Al Fatayri	Mayor of Jdaideh Municipality
	Mr. Hilmi Harmoush	Mayor of Samqaniyeh
Monastir	Mr. Monther Al Marzouq	Mayor of Monastir Municipality
	Mrs. Wafa Ghandouz	Representative of Monastir Municipality
	Mr. Ahmad Al Souqi	President of Grand Blue Association
	Mr. Amin Sayadi	President of Active Citizens for Development Association
	Mr. Najib Salameh	President of Voice of the Children Association
Al-Karak	Ms. Sajeda Al Rahayfeh	Representative of Al-Karak Municipality
	Mr. Rami Jaafrah	President of Momya society

Semi structured interviews were conducted in order to touch upon the different objectives, while at the same time leaving the opportunity for the respondents to share any information they wanted to. The interview questions were formulated by the

consultancy team in order to assess the degree to which the objectives of this evaluation as presented in the terms of reference were attained. Furthermore, as far as time allowed it, four focus group discussions (FDG) were held in Lebanon (Table 2). The group discussions resulted in an elaboration of the information. All interview and focus group sessions were recorded, and written notes were taken.

Table 2 – List of Focus Group Discussions in Lebanon and its members.

FDG	Members	Organization / Function	Date
1	Nabil Sarideen	Green Orient	17/11/2020
	Rafic Fatayri	Farmer	
2	Chadi Ismail	Popular Committees of Jdaitet Al-Chouf	17/11/2020
	Rania Fatayri	Jdaidet-Al-Chouf- Baqaata Baqaata Women Organization	
	Nahed Fatayri	Farmer	
3	Nizar Hani	Al-Shouf Cedar Society / SBR	18/11/2020
4	Raeda Sareildine	Progressive Women's Union – Jdaidet Al-Chouf	18/11/2020
	Diana Haidar	Progressive Women's Union – Jdaidet Al-Chouf	
	Ousama Chedid	Farmer	

The qualitative data was analysed by the consultancy team in order to gain in-depth insights into the project. The data collection served to answer the evaluation questions. As the interview questions were semi-structured, a qualitative analysis was useful for this evaluation. This analysis was done by interpretation of the data and ongoing discussions among the members of the consultancy team. Finally, all outcomes were integrated to evaluate the project.

2 The Evaluated Intervention

2.1 THE MINARET PROJECT

The MENA Region Initiative as a Model of Nexus Approach and Renewable Energy Technologies in Jordan, Tunisia, and Lebanon (MINARET) was a four-year project (November 2016 – August 2021) and was designed to address the unique sustainability challenges and opportunities of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region by increasing local and regional sustainability capacities using the synergies between renewable energy technology and efficiency, water management and food security. The project was aligned with SIDA's strategy and its goals of environmental improvement, reduced climate impact and increased resilience to environmental impacts, climate change and natural disasters. MINARET responded to these goals by putting emphasis on environmentally sustainable development and climate resilience. The project also embraced five of the UN Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 5-Gender equality; SDG 6- Water; SDG 7- Affordable and clean energy; SDG 11-Sustainable cities and communities; and SDG 13- Climate action.

The project was built with an overall objective: to strengthen regional cooperation within the MENA region through implementing water-energy-food nexus approach integrated with renewable energy technologies at municipal level, aiming at addressing the unique sustainability challenges and opportunities of the MENA region by increasing local and regional sustainability capacities using the synergies between renewable energy technology and efficiency, water management, and food security, to mitigate climate change impacts and combat poverty.

MINARET had five specific objectives:

Objective (1): to build municipality's resilience to climate change through renewable energy/energy efficiency technologies, water management techniques and food security approaches.

Objective (2): to strengthen institutional capacities of the relevant governmental authorities involved in the project.

Objective (3): to promote inter-municipal regional cooperation to enhance good governance, and equitable dealing with the needs and human rights.

Objective (4): to reinforce the role of women, youth, marginalized groups in developing and implementing Nexus approach.

Objective (5): to develop a MENA dialogue platform focusing on knowledge sharing, education and lessons learnt at national, regional policy levels.

Within the three municipalities the project implemented several activities. A summary of these activities is presented below in table 3:

Table 3: list of projects

Targeted Locations	Water Pilot Projects	Energy Projects	Socio-economic Projects
Jdaidet el Chouf - Lebanon	<p>Farmers' projects in the lower part of Barouk river and channel rehabilitation in the upper part of the river in Jdaidet el Chouf, Lebanon.</p> <p>The intervention will work closely with another water/energy intervention that seeks to install a solar powered water pump at the Barouk River next to the canal. The pump will provide access to water to 25 different farms using a 3-kilowatt PV system, by pumping around 12 cubic meters per hour of water from a stream multiple times per week to 25 different tanks, totaling 150 cubic meters in volume. Farms in the area will have constant access to water that is vital for farming.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement of inefficient lighting system at the main building of Jdaideh Municipality with efficient LED lamps. • Replacement part of old inefficient street lighting units with efficient LED street lighting units. • Installation of PV system with batteries for drinking water tanks in Jdaideh Municipality. • Installation of PV system with Batteries at the main building of Jdaideh Municipality. • Installation of a PV farm in conjunction with a socio-economic element to reduce the need for diesel generators in providing power to homes in Jdaideh Municipality. 	<p>Jdaideh Women Organization</p> <p>Solar Farm to reduce the need for diesel generators in providing power to homes in Jdaideh and Revolving Fund managed by the Jdeideh Women's Organization.</p> <p>The savings from the reduction of diesel costs will generate \$2,000 every month, which will be used to establish a revolving fund for the community. The fund's purpose is to provide relaxed loans to individuals who want to invest in eco-friendly technologies in their homes such as solar panels, solar water heaters and energy efficient LED light bulbs</p> <p>The Jdeideh Women's Organization established a Water Users Association for farmers (Farmers' Cooperative). The Water Users Association will ensure cooperation between farmers through sharing knowledge and farming techniques to maximize overall yield and wellbeing of the crops. The association will also establish farming process cooperation plans between the organization and the farmers, where the organization selects the crops to be farmed during each season and the farmers apply these plans.</p>
MONASTIR Municipality - Tunis	<p>Rainwater harvesting tanks (well) for use in municipal gardens and farmers in Monastir, Tunisia.</p> <p>The activity will oversee the excavation of a well and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement of inefficient lighting system at the main building of Monastir Municipality with efficient LED lamps. • Replacement of inefficient lighting system at the Central Market in Monastir 	<p>Nature Hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main aspect of the socioeconomic intervention in Tunisia involves the creation of a Nature Hub that will include a shop (Dukkan) that will support sustainable practices and sell eco-friendly hand-made products.

Targeted Locations	Water Pilot Projects	Energy Projects	Socio-economic Projects
	<p>installation of a tank in it with a capacity of almost 750 m3, for the purpose of rainfall collection. In the Monastir municipality, a local soccer stadium roof contains a rain catchment system that is not utilized in any manner, and currently releases collected water onto the streets eventually reaching the ocean. The tank will be filled using rainwater at least twice a year.</p> <p>The municipality currently waters the stadium lawn with clean potable water, costing it around \$2000 a month for a total of \$24,000 a year. The intervention will install a solar water pump at the tank to pump the collected rainwater to the stadium, saving \$24,000 a year for the municipality for a system payback period of 2 years. Using the monthly savings, the municipality will begin applying the same project in other areas and facilities in Monastir, among them a large swimming pool that uses a large amount of water resources.</p>	<p>Municipality with efficient LED lamps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Replacement part of old inefficient street lighting units with efficient LED street lighting units. ● Increased number of electric vehicles (EV) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The HUB will serve the following groups: ● Academia: by securing a Youth Center where they can receive job training, capacity building and practice in three sectors: biodiversity, climate change, renewable energy, and ecofriendly food production. ● Small enterprises; where entrepreneurship will be supported by securing the Natural shop (Dukkan) to sell their hand-made products. ● Quriat island and its researchers by installing PV System as a model of the clean and renewable source of energy and small water treatment plant which will secure a clean drinking water. ● Women CBOs that will be trained on how to produce ecological products such as ecological fishing nets. ● Voice of Children Organization <p>Another social aspect will be implemented in Sawt Al-Tifl CBO, an organization that supports orphans and single mothers. The organization currently spends large monthly amounts to pay for water and electricity. MINARET will provide them with a PV system and a solar pump to reduce these amounts significantly and provide the organization with beneficial savings. This intervention will provide work opportunities, and the savings will support eco-friendly projects that include weaving, farming and establishing a production kitchen that will bring in revenue.</p>
<p>KARAK Municipality - Jordan</p>	<p>Decorative plant nursery using treated water, composting and solar pumping in Lajoun in Karak, Jordan.</p> <p>Al-Karak municipality currently spends \$120,000-</p>	<p>Possible use of solar water pumping.</p>	<p>Ecotourism Hub</p> <p>The socioeconomic intervention in Jordan holds an ecotourism aspect that involves enhancing a visitor’s center (Ecotourism hub) managed by the Momya Organization. The intervention will help build the capacity of the organization while fixing the visitor’s</p>

2 THE EVALUATED INTERVENTION

Targeted Locations	Water Pilot Projects	Energy Projects	Socio-economic Projects
	<p>\$150,000 a year on roadside plants for the purpose of minimizing and preventing erosion. The project aims to utilize a stream produced by a water treatment plant to irrigate decorative plants by pumping the water using solar power. The intervention will create the plant nursery on municipality land and will install a solar water pump and a solar farm to power it. This is an addition to the existing solar farm in the area that will provide the energy for all non-water pumping related needs.</p> <p>The project will be profitable when the municipality starts producing its own plants, saving around 50% of the annual budget allocated for this purpose. The new income will be a driving factor for the creation of jobs through the new source of income, while the income will be used to fund other NEXUS projects by the local development unit at the municipality. The project will also assist in restoring Al-Karak's ecosystem through the regrowth and spread of plant species native to the area.</p>		<p>center and adding signage to bring it to a fully operational level. Solar panels will be installed to provide power to the center while the reuse of gray water in farming will add the element of water management to fulfill the NEXUS approach.</p> <p>The center will provide services to tourists and sell them organic and homemade products with a focus on dairy, such as Jameed and Ghee, that Al-Karak is known for.</p>

3 Findings

In this chapter the evaluation team has presented the findings of the evaluation. The findings are structured as per the template. This means that there are no conclusions and recommendations in this section. The conclusions are presented in Chapter 4, and the lessons learned and recommendations are presented in Chapter 5. Chapters 4 and 5 build on Chapter 3.

3.1 RELEVANCE

The relevance of the synergies between renewable energy technology, water management and food security at a grass-roots level was established inter alia by the implementation of the Green Neighbourhood Development Project in Sahab Municipality in Jordan by RSS/NERC. The experiences from this project were analysed by RSS/NERC and the lessons learned used to develop the programme document.

The evaluation team has found that the focus on renewable energy, water efficiency and food security has proven to be a truly relevant approach to tackling resource scarcity issues of municipalities in the three selected countries. The team has also found that the use of the Nexus approach, whereby the three elements were integrated¹, has provided municipal departments in the target municipalities with tools to address resource scarcity.

In all three municipalities the mayors or their representatives informed the evaluation team that the project interventions adopted by them resulted in immediate benefits and savings in terms of electricity use and/or water.

Based on the assessment of the project's objectives stated in the Inception Report (2018), the project proponents modified the design of the pilot projects and the approach used in order to ensure relevance for stakeholders. The updated design addressed the identified gaps based on the needs assessment initially conducted in the inception phase of the project. Identified needs included (1) taking into consideration the legislative jurisdiction/limitations of each stakeholder, (2) lack of communication, (3) switching the focus from agriculture to food, and (4) providing the same equal attention to energy, water, and food (See Chapter 3: Looking Back of the 2018 Inception Report for more details).

¹ See the presentation of Prof. H. Hoff on the definitions and elements of the Nexus approach.

Another strong element in terms of relevance was found to be the focus on women, disadvantaged groups and the poor. In Monastir the team of the NGO “Voix de l’Enfant” informed us that the support of the MINARET project was extremely timely and relevant in terms of providing disadvantaged women and their children with improved means to ensure their livelihoods.

Also in Al-Karak the work with women and disadvantaged groups illustrates the relevance of the project and the fact that the project addressed the needs of various stakeholders, some of whom were likely to have their rights violated.

Relevance was further illustrated by the statements of the representative of the municipality of Al-Karak. Ms. Sajeda Al Rahayfeh ² indicated that the Nexus approach introduced and operationalised by the project team empowered the municipality to tackle water, energy and food issues, by offering practical, doable and payable interventions that were linked to each other, complemented each other, and added value to each other.

In Samqaniyeh, the practical application of the Nexus approach provided water to farmers and eased the pressure off the residential water supply, which was previously used to irrigate small plots.

Furthermore, also in Lebanon, the water channel cleaning and installation of a solar powered water pump (i.e.: Water Pilot Project) in addition to supplementing the power generation of Jdeideh Women’s Organization with solar panels (i.e.: Energy Pilot Project) were often singled out as essential in relieving two main baseline grievances: the scarcity of water in the area (especially in late summer) and the high costs of electricity procurement incurred by the municipality and the residents.

3.2 EFFECTIVENESS

Based on the KIIs, FGDs, and the literature review, the evaluation team found that the MINARET project was implemented through the creation of a task force within each of the three municipalities (see appendix II for the questionnaires used). The plethora of workshops and meetings during the launch and implementation period, to which various stakeholders were invited, ensured that beneficiaries from across all groups were involved in the process. Most objectives were achieved, however the inclusion of refugees was not addressed,³ in addition an online knowledge sharing Platform with plenty of useful project reports was created. To be able to ascertain knowledge sharing the number of hits and frequency of use by the stakeholders would need to be known.

² The representative of the municipality of Al-Karak, Jordan, Mrs. Sayed Al Rahajfeh

³ As indicated in the inception report.

The effectiveness of the project implementation was demonstrated through several approaches as presented below.

One of the interviewed farmers in Lebanon lauded the launch of the process and the way the projects were chosen. According to the respondent, the projects were chosen based on a needs and gaps assessment where it was determined that residents were financially struggling with providing irrigation and electricity and the available solution were not sustainable. Indeed, a common thread in the Lebanon-based KIIs and FGDs was the importance of the water pilot project in alleviating the impacts of the drought spells usually witnessed in late-summer when wells dry up, as well as providing supplemental income during the double crisis that hit the country in late 2019-early 2020 (financial crisis + COVID-19 pandemic).

According to various respondents in Lebanon, including the Mayors of Samqaniyeh and Jdaidet el Chouf, a farmer⁴, and several NGO representatives⁵, the project was able to introduce the Nexus approach to the local governments. Developing holistic solutions by tackling several sectors as well as the importance of sustainable development was embedded in the point of view of the beneficiaries. The integrated approach was referenced in other non-MINARET-related meetings as a way to solve other problems faced by the beneficiaries.

Both the Mayors of Al Karak (Jordan) and Jdaidet el Chouf (Lebanon) observed there were legislative obstacles to the implementation of the project due to their limited jurisdiction. However, the Jdaidet el Chouf mayor remarked that despite administrative and bureaucratic obstacles afflicting Lebanese governance, there were measures taken by the Ministry of Energy and Water to support the water and energy component of the project, a matter that was considered encouraging. Additionally, the Mumia Eco-Tourism Center in Wadi Al-Karak was added as a side trail on the National Jordan Trail which is part of the country's tourism board, placing the site on a national platform in cooperation with national entities. The Horizon team also helped in promoting the side trail with local tourism service providers.

Within every municipality, a task force was formed to follow up with the project on the ground. According to the Active Citizens NGO in Tunisia, the relevant mayors in Lebanon, and Ms. Sajeda Al Rahayfeh in Jordan, the projects were well implemented. Projects such as the LED and PV projects in Tunisia, the Farmers' projects in the lower part of Barouk river and channel rehabilitation in the upper part of the river in Lebanon, and encouraging conservation in Wadi Al-Karak were considered successful.

Also, in Lebanon, women and people with disabilities were involved throughout the process in terms of beneficiaries and stakeholders. During implementation, the project proponents took definitive steps to include both marginal groups. In fact, Ms. Nahed Ftayri, a female farmer, asserted that the revival of the agricultural plots was a valuable

⁴ Ms. Nahed Fatayri

⁵ From Shouf Cedar Society and Green Orient

experience that provided her and other female farmers with a new source of income by selling the harvest surplus and the production/selling of Mouneh⁶. She stated that the project encouraged her and fellow farmers to engage in an FAO funded project to further their agricultural management skills. Also, the socio-economic pilot project which involved the “Jdeideh Women’s Organization” was considered by many as the foremost example of effective reinforcement of women in the village. Other examples of prominent involvement of women is seen in Al Karak, Jordan, where women are involved in crafting products for purchase at the Mumia Eco-Tourism Center as well as providing local experiences for visitors.

From the early stages of the Project, the MINARET inception report went into the assigned gender roles in the three project locations. Also, three reports were developed by the MINARET team to assess situational state of gender issues in the three participating countries.⁷ The reports delved into gender issues on a national level substantiated by direct interviews with stakeholders. A Gender Strategic Action Plan (GSAP) was developed based on the findings of the aforementioned studies. The plan aimed at identifying main strategies to include the gender component in the MINARET projects.⁸ However, in terms of quantitative analysis, it should be noted that the evaluation team could not find follow-up assessments with definitive quantitative indicators on the gender component in the implemented activities. This means that there was no tallying or analysis of the women-to-men ratio of the participants, beneficiaries, and stakeholders. Nevertheless, the evaluator found **clear signs of women involvement** in the implemented projects.

Even though there are many positive examples of effectiveness, there are also some signs of slowed processes, especially in terms of the first period of project implementation. As reported by interviewed stakeholders the project was initially afflicted with unstable management with many changes happening with little clarification. This was also noted as a reason for delays in the project at the start.

Also, in Lebanon, the Shouf Cedar Society (SCS)⁹ representative remarked that decisions at the start were taken slowly *though it is not clear which decisions exactly*) and that there were delays in payments to the municipality. Plus, they reported knowing that some components of the project like the GIS capacity building for the municipal

⁶ Mouneh is the practice of preserving food through various techniques (drying, pickling...etc.)

⁷ Situational Assessment of Gender in Tunisia (year unknown)

Situational Assessment of Gender in Lebanon (year unknown)

Situational Assessment of Gender Issues In Jordan (year unknown)

Available here: <https://minaretproject.com/gender-equality/>

⁸ The link to the GSAP on the MINARET website was broken when an attempt to access happened on December 6th, 2020

⁹ The Al-Shouf Cedar Society / SBR were identified as a primary stakeholder as per the stakeholder analysis presented in the Inception report (October 2020) and the MINARET stakeholder analysis, accordingly they are an informant on the project.

board were not implemented.¹⁰ Moreover, in Lebanon, a stakeholder initially identified during the stakeholder engagement process was no longer involved in the Project without clarification. The representatives from the Progressive Women's Union¹¹ informed the team that after being invited to the first two workshops and public consultations in late 2016-early 2017, they were no longer involved in the process.

Across the three municipalities, a recurrently reported obstacle to the implementation was the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing economic downturn.

3.3 IMPACT

The impact of the MINARET project (what difference does the project make?) was considered at two levels:

1. Short-term impacts
2. Longer term impacts

The evaluation team has found that the combination of capacity building measures linked to concrete, on the ground projects focused on solar energy, water savings, ecosystem conservation and other elements served to convince the target groups of the project that the NEXUS approach can make a difference.

We found that the project made a very measurable and concrete difference in the short term by:

- Improving livelihoods of disadvantaged women in all three countries;
- Providing savings on electricity bills by installing solar PV systems and/or LED lighting, hence making more money available for other NEXUS interventions and other energy saving interventions;
- Supporting water savings in small-scale agriculture by introducing water saving and water harvesting techniques;
- Strengthening biodiversity and ecosystem conservation measures, thereby improving livelihoods.

We found that the project made a very measurable and significant difference in the longer term as well, by:

- Empowering municipal workers to tackle issues of water, energy and food/ecosystems;
- Embedding an understanding and appreciation for the importance of tackling NEXUS issues at local level;

¹⁰ This component is indeed under evaluation pending availability of budget.

¹¹ Progressive Women's Union were identified as a primary stakeholder as per the stakeholder analysis presented in the Inception report (October 2020) and the MINARET stakeholder analysis, accordingly they are an informant on the project.

- Providing a set of tools and skills to take NEXUS issues forward at municipal level.

This last set of impacts is particularly important as a foundation to continue with municipalities to develop measures and implementing activities in the future to tackle resource scarcity.

MINARET also supported the Municipalities of Al-Karak, Monastir, and Jdaidet el Chouf to join the Covenant of Mayors by providing technical support in identification of solutions for reduction of CO₂ emissions by improving energy efficiency and renewable energy use. The preparation of the BEI (Baseline Emission Inventory) and the SEAP (Sustainable Energy Action Plan) / SECAP (Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan) based on the Covenant of Mayors methodology linked to the establishment of task forces in the municipalities will ensure continued impact of the project in the municipalities and beyond them.

4 Evaluative Conclusions

In this chapter the consultancy team has presented the conclusions of the evaluation. These conclusions build on the findings as presented in Chapter 3.

4.1 RELEVANCE

The following section presents the relevance of the project and whether it responded to the priority issues and the needs of the various stakeholder groups (see pertinent questions from the TOR above).

It is the evaluator's opinion that the project did address the needs of the beneficiaries and to a significant extent responded to the project's objectives. The pilot activities were able to address the needs of the beneficiaries, even during unforeseen circumstances. Based on the stakeholder engagement documents, the project seems to have taken systematic steps to include various groups.

As mentioned in Section No. 3 (Findings – Relevance), the project design was altered in order to meet stakeholder's request for better project engagement and addressing their priority needs. This indeed highlights how the project stayed relevant even after its launch. The change was significant enough for the stakeholders to consider the level of communication and focus on food security and the rest of the grievances to be adequately addressed.

Interestingly, stakeholders in Tunisia and Lebanon both reported that objectives were vague at the launch of the project; that it was unclear how the different components of the project would converge to solve the various issues. The gender component in particular was unfamiliar, as with sustainable development which was initially unknown or neglected by the beneficiaries. Per the inception report, the stakeholders also reported that they felt they were not involved in the project design. However, at the 3-year mark of the pilot projects most respondents reported that the solutions provided were relevant. The pilot projects targeted their basic unmet needs such as water availability, lowering the costs of electricity, job creation, and involvement of women in the work force.

It can also be argued that Objective (2 - to strengthen institutional capacities of the relevant governmental authorities involved in the project) was not entirely achieved. The bureaucracy of the institutional establishments and difficulty with implementing change to governance was reported in all three countries, with a particular example that was repeated between several stakeholders (primary and overarching) regarding the procurement of an electric/hybrid car as part of the renewable energy pilot project. Similarly, with Objective (5 - to develop a MENA dialogue platform focusing on

knowledge sharing, education and lessons learnt at national, regional policy levels) as the regional interchange was limited to workshops and conference and no continued platform for dialogue was sustained.

More recently, recent regional and international crisis (*COVID-19 pandemic + Lebanese financial and political crisis*) added another layer of instability to the implementation of the pilot projects. Remarkably, beneficiaries in Lebanon felt that the project helped them endure the difficulties they faced. The Mayors of Jadaidet and Semqaniyeh reported that the water pilot project allowed more residents than expected to restore/harvest their degraded agricultural land during the lockdowns. This particular pilot project was praised despite it being first considered of lesser relevance. This was also mentioned by all the interviewed farmers.

In terms of gender reinforcement, the baseline conditions seem to indicate that as a concept it was “not fully understood and seen in a negative light by key project stakeholders”. Based on the recent stakeholder engagement, both men and women confirmed how the pilot projects were able to provide women (including farmers) with job opportunities, unprecedentedly. Also, the socio-economic pilot project was considered crucial in successfully involving more women and giving the Jdeideh Women’s Organization a strong position to be further involvement in the future.

4.2 EFFECTIVENESS

The main objective of the project is defined as follows, “to strengthen regional cooperation within the MENA region through implementing water-energy-food nexus approach integrated with renewable energy technologies at municipal level, aiming at addressing the unique sustainability challenges and opportunities of the MENA region by increasing local and regional sustainability capacities using the synergies between renewable energy technology and efficiency, water management, and food security, to mitigate climate change impacts and combat poverty.” This is a different formulation of the main objective of the project than in the original project document. It seems the section, “aiming at addressing the unique sustainability challenges and opportunities of the MENA region by increasing local and regional sustainability capacities using the synergies between renewable energy technology and efficiency, water management, and food security” has been added during the implementation of the project. On the other hand, the final section of the original objective, “...address gender equality, and empowerment of women, youth and other marginalized groups, including refugees” seems to have disappeared from the more recent definition of the objectives.

The main objective described above has been sub-divided into five specific objectives:

Objective (1): to build municipality’s resilience to climate change through renewable energy/energy efficiency technologies, water management techniques and food security approaches.

Objective (2): to strengthen institutional capacities of the relevant governmental authorities involved in the project.

Objective (3): to promote inter-municipal regional cooperation to enhance good governance, and equitable dealing with the needs and human rights.

Objective (4): to reinforce the role of women, youth, marginalized groups in developing and implementing Nexus approach.

Objective (5): to develop a MENA dialogue platform focusing on knowledge sharing, education and lessons learnt at national, regional policy levels.

Here too the section, “...especially for refugee’s surviving in and around municipalities” for objective 3 seems to have dropped off over time. It is concluded that the priorities during implementation of the project shifted from including refugees to focusing on the resident population.

It should also be noted, that there was a clear reliance on the involvement of the “Jdeideh Women’s Organization” in Lebanon, plus the inclusion of the Women CBOs in the nature Hub and “Voice of Children” in Tunisia as the sole indicator of women involvement. This was clearly apparent during the interviews, where participants referred to these NGO as proof of a gender focus. In fact, there are multiple opportunities to include gender aspects that are worthy to be considered in the future phase of the project. Examples would be contracting women led companies in the installation and maintenance of the provided equipment, supporting non-gender-based-NGOs¹² that include more women among their members, promoting farming and entrepreneurship in the village as an equal employment opportunity, capacity building to beneficiaries to develop the needed skills to own lands/businesses and manage them, etc.

The project outcomes are captured in the table below with conclusions in the second column. The legend is presented below.

Legend

Less Compliant with outcome	Somewhat Compliant with outcome	Compliant with Outcome
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Projected Project Outcomes	Conclusions
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¹² Examples would be environmental NGOs or social NGOs.

1. On-the-ground NEXUS model along with municipality and community provide value of solving a resource need, and demonstrating the local economic growth and value of EWF	In all three municipalities an “on-the-ground” NEXUS model and useful applications of this model provide value for solving resource related issues.
2. Project environmental, socio-economic benefits and costs identified.	The project was effectively able to clarify the environmental and socio-economic benefits of the project.
3. Replicated NEXUS process along with value chain to implement environmentally and socio-economically projects	The project was effectively able to bring across the utilitarian nature of the NEXUS approach for municipalities.
4. Sustained and expanded project within the community borders through key stakeholders	The project was able to sustain the project effectively during the implementation period.
5. Transferred knowledge from project municipalities to other municipalities their border and/or work with	Transfer of knowledge was mainly structured around workshops and stakeholder meetings. The knowledge was offered, but no data is available about the adoption of the knowledge by other municipalities.
6. More effective communication established between the community and the municipality aiming at enhancing their performance, share the know-how among them, and leverage support and partnerships	The project has supported the improvement of communication between selected community organisations and the municipalities.
7. Access gained by municipalities to a network of knowledge, partnership and access to finance	The project has made the municipalities aware of networks, and through the Covenant of Mayors provided possible access to knowledge, partnerships. There is no proof of improved access to finance.
8. Enabled favorable PPP environment	No validation of this outcome was found (partially due to COVID-19 restrictions).
9. Sustained revenue source for municipalities	The project has helped municipalities realise one-time savings. In some cases the sustainability for the revenue source needs to be proven over time.
10. Local jobs availed	On a small-scale employment was created.
11. Replicable process for identifying, developing and attracting finance to NEXUS developed	The groundwork for access to finance has been laid.

4.3 IMPACT

The evaluators found that the MINARET project had a significant impact at its' scale. The pilot projects had several outcomes, both direct and indirect as well as long and short term, that the beneficiaries were able to attribute to its implementation. A breakdown of the impact of each outcome is provided in the table below.

Legend

Less Compliant with outcome	Somewhat Compliant with outcome	Compliant with Outcome
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Projected Project Outcomes	Impact conclusions
1. On-the-ground NEXUS model along with municipality and community provide value of solving a resource need, and demonstrating the local economic growth and value of EWF	The NEXUS approach contributed to improvement of financial stability within the municipalities. The concept of sustainable development and horizontal integration of water-energy-food was acquired by the beneficiaries.
2. Project environmental, socio-economic benefits and costs identified.	The stakeholders and beneficiaries are able to identify concrete examples of various benefits from the project.
3. Replicated NEXUS process along with value chain to implement environmentally and socio-economically projects	There are talks among the farmers in Lebanon to expand the success of the project into further projects that can benefit from the success of the current ones.
4. Sustained and expanded project within the community borders through key stakeholders	The stakeholders were able to expand the outcomes of the project in other areas, though this was only to the extent anticipated.
5. Transferred knowledge from project municipalities to other municipalities they border and/or work with	In Lebanon, the project was able to marginally benefit the nearby Samqaniyeh municipality mainly due the overlapping borders and jurisdiction. This was not observed elsewhere.
6. More effective communication established between the community and the municipality aiming at enhancing their performance, share the know-how among them, and leverage support and partnerships	The project has supported the improvement of communication between selected community organisations and the municipalities.
7. Access gained by municipalities to a network of knowledge, partnership and access to finance	The project has made the municipalities aware of networks, and through the Covenant of Mayors provided possible access to knowledge, partnerships.

	There is no proof of improved access to finance.
8. Enabled favourable PPP environment	No validation of this outcome was found. Activities related to this outcome were halted due the COVID19 lockdowns.
9. Sustained revenue source for municipalities	The project has helped municipalities realise savings and increase revenue for local NGOs as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual savings from electrical and water costs, • Increased revenue for the Mumia Organization (Jordan), and • The savings made by the Jdaidet Al-Chouf’s Baqaata Women Organization (BWO) from the installed solar panels (instead of the diesel generator), resulted in developing a “Village Small Loan Program”. However, the fund is run by BWO, but not the municipality. Accordingly, these cannot be considered sustained revenue source <u>for municipalities</u>.
10. Local jobs availed	Some increase in employment opportunities were found to have been created. The increase is small scale and local.
11. Replicable process for identifying, developing and attracting finance to NEXUS developed	Access to finance has not been implemented yet. Though ground work has been laid through the design of municipal investment funds.

5 Lessons Learned and Recommendations

We have combined the lessons learned and recommendations in this report, as lessons learned are often formulated as recommendations, and the two are closely related.

5.1 RELEVANCE

In terms of relevance, it is important to note that in principle relevance should be re-asserted throughout the implementation of the project. What was relevant at the beginning of the project may not have been relevant later on in the project. Examples of developments that have changed the relevance throughout the MINARET project are COVID-19, revision of municipal rules and legislation, and elections.

The MINARET project was well able to adjust to changing circumstances during implementation, albeit with some delay at earlier stages of the project. It is recommended that for a next stage, formal and periodic (annual) reflection moments are inculcated that considered the relevance of the interventions into the project planning to ensure that relevance remains high.

Also, the relevance at a regional level needs to be nurtured more. The relationships between the municipalities in the three countries are not strong and are only related to project implementation. There does not seem to be a broader cooperation between the three municipalities, thereby undermining the regional aspect of the project somewhat. It is recommended that more attention is given in future implementation of similar projects to developing a relevant regional cooperation between municipalities on the basis of common interests. This is also linked to the recommendations under impact that suggest that civil society organisations with similar qualities should be involved in implementation in each country.

The projects' focus on gender was very relevant and well structured. However, it can be taken further and expanded in a next phase, specifically improving the focus on roles of men and women. The current approaches to gender were laudable, but to some extent reinforced gender roles, rather than focusing on creating more equality between gender roles. This needs to be taken into account when developing new and follow-up activities.

5.2 EFFECTIVENESS

Overall the project is deemed effective. There were genuine attempts by the project proponents to imbed responses to priority issues and implement the five objectives while involving as many of the stakeholders as possible. Nevertheless, the project launch and implementation were afflicted by various situations that decreased its efficiency.

Firstly, it should be noted that the first year of the project was spent in stakeholder engagement and conducting needs assessments. This was a constructive step; it helped the project stay relevant by gaining stakeholder approval and support while minimizing potential opposition and satisfy priority needs as much as possible. This step was definitely why stakeholders developed a kinship to the pilot projects and a practice to take forward in future endeavours.

On the other hand, several reported that the project launch was less than ideal. According to the Project's Inception report (2018), the project was launched in November 2016, an introductory meeting was held with the project partners and beneficiaries in Jordan on November 11th, 2016. Next, the kick-off meetings were held in Jordan in February 2017, Lebanon in March 2017, and Tunisia in April 2017. By November of 2017, meetings were held again in each country to present the findings/recommendations from the assessments of the first year. According to stakeholders, the kick-off was reportedly slower than anticipated which may have affected the approval rating by the beneficiaries at the start. The novelty of the NEXUS approach was not clear either. The beneficiaries and stakeholders were completely unfamiliar with the concept which might have added to the ambiguity of the project at the start. During initial implementation, this pattern was repeated by personnel change within project management. It was also reported that payment processing was slow which also reduced the effectiveness of the project. To mitigate the aforementioned, the following is recommended:

- Output based planning,
- Managing expectations,
- Onset risk management,

To improve effectiveness, local RSS counterpart (if available) in each country could be considered. The project design would then not only focus on municipalities but would work with NGOs/organisations in each country that would be a direct counterpart of RSS/NERC. Switching from a regional management model to a local one would have cut down on processing time and facilitated admission into each country. Moreover, a more localized permanent presence can also facilitate dispersion of the NEXUS approach into other villages.

Finally, as indicated in Sections 3.2 (Findings - Effectiveness) and 4.2 (Conclusion – Effectiveness), there is a lack of quantitative analysis of the gender equality

component. Though it was clear that gender studies were conducted and their results were built into the design of the project, and women were included among the stakeholders and beneficiaries, it is not clear the reach of the project in these terms. Thus it is the recommendation of the evaluation team to keep track of this component in future phases in order to gauge the level of involvement of women and objectively determine whether the intervention was able to make a difference in their lives.

5.3 IMPACT

Short-term impact of the MINARET project was strong, effective and relevant. Using a combination of capacity building, awareness raising, and small demonstration projects, MINARET was able to attain most of its objectives. For a next phase it is recommended that fewer financial means are spent on direct financing of items such as PV systems, LED lights, well rehabilitation, etc. To ensure more sustainability the relevance and usefulness of the NEXUS approach has to be internalised by the project partners. This would then be manifested by the degree to which they incorporate NEXUS approach elements in their own budgets, organisational structures and organisational systems. This is also where access to finance comes in. To attain impact access to finance is important. However, this should not be through debt financing, which would burden the municipalities with debts, obligations and risk. More thought could be given to private sector finance such as BOT and PPP approaches, whereby finance would be mobilised from the private sector, and the municipalities would be able to pay for services (PV, LED, irrigation, et.) to allow the private sector to recoup its costs. Payment for services usually falls within municipal mandates, provided formal procurement rules are followed in each municipality.

Also, in terms of impact, it was noted by the evaluation team that the conversation has changed among municipal stakeholders from looking at each problem separately to understanding the link between water, energy and food security. The NEXUS approach has empowered the municipalities and beneficiaries to address these issues. This empowerment was strengthened by an increase in credibility for each municipality vis-à-vis their constituents. The reliable and timely provision of project services by MINARET contributed to this.

As an overall conclusion the evaluation team would like to complement SIDA and RSS/NERC and partners on the success of the project. The project has provided the foundation for a broader regional programme to address NEXUS issues at a local and regional level.

To conclude the evaluation team would like to add three recommendations on the continuation of this valuable work:

- 1. It is important to note that the groundwork that has been laid is used to further build the national and regional capacities of the communities / municipalities / NGOs to manage their own water/energy/food security. A broader approach is recommended whereby RSS identify partner organisations of its own stature and**

standing in the partner countries and works in cooperation with them to disseminate and develop the Nexus work.

2. For a possible new phase for SIDA it is recommended that preparations start on a next phase so that the objectives of the programme can be further safeguarded and that WEF NEXUS approaches can be integrated into economic sectors development models and policies. This can be done by enabling the environmental governance and integrating the climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning. This broader approach will promote the national/regional mechanisms for raising capacities and strengthen sectoral directions at MENA countries. The inclusion of more countries could be also suggested where many similar issues are prevalent.
3. RSS/NERC may consider the establishment of a dedicated unit to address NEXUS issues. In that way RSS/NERC would be able to support municipalities and partner organisations to further the adoption of the NEXUS approach to address concrete resource issues at local level.

1.2 Evaluation object

The four-year project is built with an overall objective: to strengthen regional cooperation within the MENA region through implementing water-energy-food nexus approach integrated with renewable energy technologies at municipal level, aiming at addressing the unique sustainability challenges and opportunities of the MENA region by increasing local and regional sustainability capacities using the synergies between renewable energy technology and efficiency, water management, and food security. to mitigate climate change impacts and combat poverty.

MINARET has *five* specific objectives:

- Objective (1):** to build municipality's resilience to climate change through renewable energy/energy efficiency technologies, water management techniques and food security approaches.
- Objective (2):** to strengthen institutional capacities of the relevant governmental authorities

Annex 2 – Questionnaires

Key Informant Interview (KII) Guide for primary/key stakeholders			
Interview DETAILS:			
Client:	RSS/NERC		
Project Name:	MENA Region Initiative as a Model of Nexus Approach and Renewable Energy Technologies		
Researcher Name:			
Interview Date:			
Start Time:			
End Time:			
Respondent Name:			
Respondent Position:			
INFORMED CONSENT			
<p>Hello, I am _____ and I am part of an Evaluation Team that has been tasked by the NERC to do this evaluation. The information that you can provide on your engagement with MINARET activities would be very helpful to our research. We will not discuss your responses with anyone and your name will not appear in connection to the information you give us. The interview will last approximately 1 hour. Are you willing to participate? (Y/N)</p>			
SECTION 1: Relevance: Is the project doing the right things?			
Detailed questions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Answers</i>		
Have you been aware of the project objectives from the start?			
Have the project objectives been achieved? If yes, in what way? if not, in what way?			
To what extent have the project objectives and design accommodated priority issues? (please ask the respondent example(s) of applicable priority issues).			
Does the project address the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries?			
Are you satisfied with the project?			
SECTION 2: Effectiveness: Is the project achieving its objectives?			
Detailed questions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Answers</i>		
What have been the main achievements of the project?			
To what extent has the project been successful in achieving the project results, including any differential results across groups?			
How is the situation in the municipality now that the project is ending?			
Which were the main hindering factors to achieve the objectives of the project?			
During implementation, were there systematic and appropriate efforts to include various groups of stakeholders?			
SECTION 3: Impact: What difference does the intervention make?			
Detailed questions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Answers</i>		
What are the immediate outcomes for the targeted beneficiaries that can be reasonably attributed partially or totally – to the implemented activities?			
Are there impact that can be attributed to the project which were not intended? Please name.			
Are there impacts that were intended but that did not materialise? Please name.			
Had you expected other impacts?			
SECTION 4: Additional questions			
Detailed questions (questions can be added as deemed necessary on the basis of responses given)/			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Answers</i>		
What kind of follow-up of the project or next phase would you like to see?			

Key Informant Interview (KII) Guide for overarching stakeholders.	
Interview DETAILS:	
Client:	RSS/NERC
Project Name:	MENA Region Initiative as a Model of Nexus Approach and Renewable Energy Technologies in Jordan, Tunisia, and Lebanon (MINARET)
Researcher Name:	
Interview Date:	
Start Time:	
End Time:	
Respondent Name:	
Respondent Position:	

INFORMED CONSENT

Hello, I am _____ and I am part of an Evaluation Team that has been tasked by the NERC to do this evaluation. The information that you can provide on your engagement with MINARET activities would be very helpful to our research. We will not discuss your responses with anyone and your name will not appear in connection to the information you give us. The interview will last approximately 1 hour. Are you willing to participate? (Y/N)

SECTION 1: Relevance: Is the project doing the right things?

Detailed questions

<i>Question</i>	<i>Answers</i>
Why do you think the project was relevant?	
How was this relevance established at the beginning of the project (baseline)?	
Did it remain relevant throughout project implementation? Can you give examples?	
How do you measure relevance in terms of gender?	

SECTION 2: Effectiveness: Is the project achieving its objectives?

Detailed questions

<i>Question</i>	<i>Answer</i>
Has the project achieved its objectives?	
How do you know that it achieved its objectives?	
If not, why not?	
What would you do differently in a new phase?	
Has the MINARET monitoring and evaluation (M&E) delivered robust and useful information that could be used to assess progress towards outcomes and contribute to learning?	

SECTION 3: Impact: What difference does the intervention make?	
Detailed questions	
<i>Question</i>	<i>Answer</i>
What are the immediate outcomes for the targeted beneficiaries that can reasonably be attributed partially or totally – to the project?	
What is the likely impact of the project beyond the direct beneficiaries?	
Are there any (unplanned) impacts of the project?	